

Former professor raising TC Trail awareness

Craig Lindsay

Edmund Auger was overcome with grief after his wife was struck and killed by a car while cycling in Prince Edward Island last year.

Auger, a former university professor from Edmonton, and wife Elizabeth Sovis had been cycling the Trans Canada Trail but had been forced to pull off and ride on a narrow highway with no paved shoulders in order to find lodging during their trip.

Sovis was hit and killed by a drunk driver.

In order to help deal with his grief, and to honour his wife, Auger decided to undertake a cross-Canada cycling trip to raise funds for the Trans Canada Trail and to raise awareness of cycling safety.

“When our children got older and moved out of the house, my wife and I took up cycling,” said Auger. “I’d been cycling since I was nine years old. My wife didn’t start until she was in her 50s. I had the idea that it would be fun to take our holidays on our bikes and cycle different parts of Canada.”

Auger has always been a big proponent of the Trans Canada Trail, which is an 18,000-km greenway and 5,000-km waterway meant to link Canadians from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans.

“Since my wife wasn’t very confident on her bike, she wouldn’t ride on the highways or roads with the cars,” he said. “So I organised the trips so we would stay on the Trans Canada Trail. We ran into problems right away.”

The trail project began in 1992 and is meant to be completed by 2017 for Canada’s 150th anniversary.

But with each province and territory responsible for their own section, certain areas have either not been completed or are in complete disrepair, said Auger.

“My wife resolved to work on getting the Trans Canada Trail finished so ordinary people would have a safe place to walk and ride their bikes,” he said.

Aunger quit his job and began his journey in Victoria in July of this year.

On July 23, Aunger passed through the Kootenay/Boundary, stopping in Grand Forks at the Trans Canada Trail sign.



Edmund Aunger stops at the Trans Canada sign at City Park in Grand Forks on July 23.

“(The trail) can’t get done in the remaining four years unless the people stand up and say, ‘This is important to us’,” he said.

“I believe most Canadians don’t want to ride their bikes on the highways. They want a safe place for them and their children to go, and unfortunately, most Canadians like that aren’t aware of what the Trans Canada Trail is, and how hard it is to get from one part of it to another.”

For more information visit www.ridethetrail.ca.