

CBC News
Thursday, May 19, 2016

P.E.I. makes change after 2012 cycling death

P.E.I. changes Confederation Trail wording after cyclist hit by car on way to B&B

By Pat Martel



Elizabeth Sovis, with her husband Edmund Auger, just a few days before she was killed by a drunk driver while cycling on P.E.I. (Edmund Auger)

An Alberta man whose wife was killed four years ago while cycling on Route 13 near Hunter River is pleased the province is doing more to make cycling safer.

In July 2012, Edmund Auger and his wife, Elizabeth Sovis, were cycling along the Confederation Trail from Borden-Carleton to Hunter River.

Aunger said the cycling guide suggested there were accommodations along the Confederation Trail.

But it turned out, the couple's B&B was five kilometres away, along the busy road.

'Absolutely horrified'



Edmund Aunger's has been cycling the Trans-Canada Trail since his wife's death, raising awareness about cycling safety.

"My wife and I were absolutely horrified to find there was no sidewalk, no shoulder, no path," said Aunger.

"There was no means of getting to our Bed & Breakfast following the route that was recommended in the Confederation Trail guide except by riding on a two-lane road, with an 80 kilometre-an-hour speed limit and it had no rideable shoulder."

For the past four summers, Aunger has been cycling east from Victoria, B.C., on the Trans-Canada Trail, raising awareness about cycling safety at every stop.

The last leg of his journey next summer will take him to Prince Edward Island to the spot where his wife died in 2012.

"I had hoped when I first started out that my arrival in Hunter River five years after my wife's death would be a cause for celebration in the sense that there would be a safe route," said Aunger.

"It just seemed to me that it would be impossible to believe that after what happened and the fact that the Confederation Trail is being promoted as a safe place for people to walk and to cycle that something wouldn't be done — at the very least the brochures would be changed to make it obvious that there was no trail leading to the accommodation that is recommended in the brochure. I just assumed that they would do something, they would build wider shoulders, build a trail."

The province's Tourism department has already acted on Aunger's request. Tourism PEI's [online Confederation Trail page](#) now says getting to some accommodations requires roadway travel.

The province's Tourism minister, Heath MacDonald says the printed version will be changed in the future.

"There is a situation where accommodations are not necessarily right on the trail," said MacDonald, "And I think we have to do a better job to ensure people are aware of that."

Route 13 eligible for upgrades

P.E.I.'s Transportation minister Paula Biggar said thanks to a new agreement with Ottawa announced last week, smaller roads on the Island, such as Route 13, will be eligible for upgrades under the Build Canada Fund.

"So in terms of Route 13 in the Hunter River area, that's under review as well as a number of other areas, so when we get to that point of making our determination of the areas, it will be under consideration."

When contacted by CBC News, Aunger said he's encouraged the province will look at adding paved shoulders to Route 13, although he said his late wife would have preferred a bike path separated from the highway.

Aunger is also pleased the tourism department is clarifying that accommodations are not always right next to the Confederation Trail.

Edmund Aunger is hoping to have a proper memorial service next summer at the place where his wife died.

"I want to... I want to say goodbye to my wife in a way I couldn't when she was killed."