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Man continues late wife's mission to make Trans Canada Trail safer for cyclists

With files from Jonathan MacInnes



A man in Moncton is continuing his personal campaign to make the Trans Canada Trail safer for cyclists

Safety for Trans Canada Trail cyclists

Edmund Aunger was in Moncton on Monday as he continued a deeply personal campaign to make the TransCanada Trail safer for cyclists.

His wife was struck and killed by a drunk driver, leaving him to continue the journey in her memory.

In 2012, Aunger and his wife Elizabeth Sovis were on a three-week cycling holiday through New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island using the TransCanada Trail.

The couple lived in Edmonton, but Aunger wanted to show his wife where he grew up and went to school in the Maritimes.



Edmund Auger and his wife Elizabeth Sovis were on a three-week cycling holiday through New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island when Elizabeth was struck and killed by a drunk driver. (Courtesy: Edmund Auger)

Aunger says she was hesitant because parts of the trail were along roadways. Four hours after crossing the Confederation Bridge, Elizabeth was struck and killed by a drunk driver.

“Her brain stem was severed by the impact and her body was thrown 50 meters,” says Aunger. “I can’t tell you how traumatic that was to see my wife die on the side of the road.”

On previous trips around the country, Elizabeth noticed many parts of the TransCanada Trail were motorized; it became her mission to work for a safe and non-motorized trail.

Aunger is now calling on the federal government to set minimum safety standards for the trail while cycling from Victoria to Prince Edward Island.

Support riders joining him are expressing concern over the shared portions of the trail.

“There's lots of places where there's really not enough room for a car and a bicycle to safely be in the lane,” says support rider Doug Jeffery. “Car drivers are often given the tough choice; they either have to swing out into opposing traffic or really encroach on the cyclist who's pretty vulnerable.”

“I've got this touring bike to do trails, but it has to go on the road,” says Doreen Jeffery. “I'm apprehensive about it.”

The final leg of the group's journey will stop in Hunter River, PEI where they will hold a memorial service for Elizabeth at the spot where she was killed.

“I fell in love with my wife when we were 12-years-old,” says Aunger. “We had an incredible relationship and I just had to do something for her.”

Aunger originally made a commitment of five years to fulfill his wife's goal of making the trail safe. He says he's not sure what will happen after his journey ends in Prince Edward Island.