

# north shore news

## BCMC trail erosion a safety issue, hiker says

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North Vancouver hiker Ted Shandro on the BCMC trail, which he says is getting into bad and possibly dangerous shape. Photo Cindy Goodman, North Shore News

A North Vancouver hiker is warning the BCMC trail is in bad and possibly dangerous condition - and no one seems to know who should step up and maintain the trail for hikers' safety.

Ted Shandro has noticed more wear and tear on the trail since the Grouse Grind was "turned into a staircase" and it's showing in a few spots along the way.

Though there are few of spots where trees are hanging on by a few roots, particularly worrying for Shandro is a "car-sized" boulder about one sixth of the way up that sits on eroding soil and wobbles when stepped on.

"My concern is something bad if this breaks loose. I mean, oh my goodness, the other ones will eventually stop or come to a tree but this one is huge," he said.

As a regular user, Shandro sees evidence that someone comes in to cut up trees that have fallen over the trail but he's had no luck finding out who is behind it.

BCMC traverses land owned or leased by the District of North Vancouver, Metro Vancouver, Grouse Mountain as well as some private owners. When Shandro spoke to management at each, all he found was a jurisdictional quagmire.

"I am concerned there is some danger. On a good summer weekend, I'm sure there's a good 500 or 600 people who go up there," he said.

The district acknowledges it owns some of the land but says it is up to volunteers to do maintenance. "While some small areas of the BCMC trail are within the jurisdiction of the District of North Vancouver, the BCMC trail falls largely on Metro Vancouver and Grouse Mountain land," stated Stephanie Smiley, DNV's communications coordinator in an email. Grouse, meanwhile, issued a statement with a similar sentiment.

"The BCMC trail is not the property of Grouse Mountain. Therefore, we do not have any jurisdiction over any maintenance and upgrades the trail may require," stated Jacqueline Blackwell, the resort's manager of public relations in an email.

Metro has no part in the trail's creation or upkeep, according to a director.

"Metro Vancouver has never done, to my knowledge, any maintenance on the trail," said Bob Cavill, director of watersheds. "We're not certain how that trail originated and, if there is maintenance going on right now, who's doing it."

Metro could be supportive of any group that wants to voluntarily take care of BCMC but that group should know they'll also be responsible for the extra foot traffic and the substantial risk and liability that comes with it, Cavill said.

"It's not just one rock, I'm sure. Grouse Mountain is a steep mountain and there's risk from rotten tree branches falling and risks of rocks, risks of slippery earth and soil, ice in the springtime... There's a whole whack of risks that go with backcountry climbing," he said.

The B.C. Mountaineering Club, for whom the trail is named, could not be reached for comment.