



CUMBERLAND BRACES FOR VALLEY'S FIRST OFF-ROAD TRIATHLON

CUMBERLAND'S 100+ KM
OF WORLD-CLASS SINGLETRACK
ARE RENOWNED
FOR THEIR TECHNICALITY.

GET READY FOR CANADA'S TOUGHEST OFF-ROAD TRI

There's something new coming to the hills of Cumberland.

You can hear it in conversations among local trail enthusiasts. You can see it in the vibrant blue and gold posters starting to appear in shop windows. And you can feel it

in the energy that's slowly building in anticipation of the Comox Valley's newest endurance event.

On September 9, PACE Multisport Dodge City X will become the first cross (off-road) triathlon ever held in the Comox Valley. Competitors will swim 1.5

km through Comox Lake, mountain bike 23 km over some of Vancouver Island's most technical singletrack and then finish it off with a 9.5-km trail run that promises to 'separate the truly committed from the woefully unprepared.'

A relay option is also available, as is a

roughly half-distance 'sprint' course.

"It's called 'Canada's toughest off-road triathlon,' but it's the out-of-towners who are going find it the toughest," says rookie race director Ryan Parton. "Those of us who ride and run in Cumberland know the trails and I think to a certain degree we take them for granted. I don't think we fully appreciate just how technical they are to the uninitiated."

This 'gnarly' training ground has helped the Comox Valley produce a disproportionately high number of world-class cross triathletes, including 2017 Cross Triathlon World Championship silver medallist Derek Vinge and 2016 national champion Clay Ward. It seems it was only a matter of time before the Comox Valley hosted its own off-road triathlon, and yet the genesis of PACE Multisport Dodge City X was anything but inevitable.

In January 2017, Triathlon BC board member Vicki Lundine hosted a meeting at her Comox home with representatives from the Comox Valley Triathlon Club and the Comox Valley Road Runners (CVRR), with a goal of finding someone willing to host a cross event in



PACE MULTISPORT
DODGE CITY X
IS EXPECTED TO ATTRACT
UPWARD OF
150 COMPETITORS,
MANY OF THEM
FIRST-TIME VISITORS
TO THE COMOX VALLEY.

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RYAN PARTON, SHOWN HERE
COMPETING AT THE
2017 CROSS TRIATHLON
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS,
IS RACE DIRECTOR
OF PACE MULTISPORT DODGE
CITY X,
BEING HELD IN CUMBERLAND
SEPTEMBER 9.



Cumberland.

Cross triathlon is the world's fastest-growing type of multisport event and Triathlon BC was looking for ways to grow its membership. As a member of all three clubs at the table, and an accomplished cross triathlete himself, Parton had caught wind of the meeting and decided to attend.

"There was this moment when both CVRR and the triathlon club had said that they didn't have the capacity to take it on, and the table sort of went silent," he recalls. "That's when I put up my hand and said, 'I've never hosted a race and I don't have any time to do it, but I want to see this happen so I'm in.'"

Parton's then-coach, Lynda Magor of PACE Multisport, along with her coaching partner Leanne Gray, quickly stepped up to help him out.

"Leanne and Lynda have been fantastic," says Parton. "But it's not

just us – everywhere I go, people are telling me how excited they are and asking how they can help. We feel hugely supported in this."

Event sponsors quickly came forward, with Thomas Dargie (Investors Group), Fit Chiropractic, Trail Bicycles and Extreme Runners signing on as segment sponsors. (Black Press, publisher of *Trio Magazine*, is the event's media sponsor.)

All that local enthusiasm is proving to be infectious. Just a week after registration opened, a team of multisport athletes from Winnipeg had already signed up.

With so much excitement building, Parton and his team at the newly formed non-profit Steam Donkey Racing have just one burning question for would-be competitors: "Are you ready to get dirty?"

To register for PACE Multisport Dodge City X,
visit dodgecityx.ca.