

As the summer continues, the TransAlta trail care work continues. Have you helped re-build a flood damaged trail yet?



If You Admire the View, You Are a Friend Of Kananaskis



"West Wind Pass from Wind Ridge". FOKC Photo Contest Top 12

In this month's newsletter...

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August Trail Care Update

by Rosemary Power, Program Coordinator

After a slow start, it's been a busy and productive few weeks since the July newsletter was published. Initially lacking both access and funding, in addition to having many trail projects bogged down in the approvals process, the Friends of Kananaskis volunteers have managed to accomplish a great deal. Fourteen events since late July saw 183 volunteer days contributed toward multiple projects.



The Friends helped Parks crews re-link the Galatea trail to the Terrace trail at the suspension bridge. However, Parks plans to continue rebuilding further up Galatea were put on hold due to the massive devastation lying beyond the trail junction. The photo to the left is one of the old Galatea bridges still stuck in a log jamb.

Over 5 days, volunteers worked on the Fox Creek section of the Elk Pass trail in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. In the first section of the project, a massive, tangled logjam was taken apart and removed to save one bridge, and a stone gabion wall was built to save another. The gabion wall required several hundred bucket loads of rocks to be gathered by hand (the rockpile's in the photo to the right), carried to the bridge support and the rocks were placed into wire cages to protect the bridge footings.



In the second phase, a new section of trail was built through some challenging terrain and a new bridge prepared. Large tree stumps were removed, new ski trail was roughed in by hand, large pits were dug to create bridge footings, and sections of useless old trail were reclaimed. Both projects were tough work requiring strength and stamina.



Up in Bow Valley Provincial Park, 5 days were devoted to creating new sections of the Jewel Pass trail heading toward Barrier Lookout and Quaite Creek from the Barrier Dam area. This trail is designed with both hikers and mountain bikers in mind, with an improved grade for hikers and better terrain flow for bikers. It now loops past 2 magnificent waterfalls and incorporates a protective dry-stone wall at one of the waterfalls, pictured at left. Here, to start the

process, Parks crews roughed in a trail with a backhoe, removed fallen trees using

chainsaws, and built a new log bridge to start the project. Then the Friends volunteers worked with the Parks crews to sculpt trail sidewalls, build bridge accesses, pull stumps, "pave" wet trail sections with rocks, and reclaim short sections of the old trail that are no longer useable. The finished results of a new section of trail can be seen in the photo below right.

The week of August 26 - 30 will see continued work on the Jewel Pass trail and **volunteers are still needed**. For details, see the Current Projects page of our website [here](#). The new section of trail will be connected to undamaged portions of the old trail, then tied into the Quaitte Creek trail -- which is being entirely re-routed by Parks crews.



Many Kananaskis trails that just needed a "quick-fix" and have been repaired, however others require extensive planning and approvals for the construction of new trail sections. The Alberta Parks trail crews take on all these pre-build tasks. We are at the point that many trail projects are waiting for Parks internal approval before work can begin. As a result, volunteer projects are expected to be very limited in early September but late September and early October should see greater volunteer opportunities -- providing the weather cooperates. In addition, work will soon shift away from summer trails and onto the damaged cross country ski trails in order to prep them for the onset of snow. Parks currently thinks it will take up to 5 years to repair all the flood damage.



A deer struggles during the flood. Photo courtesy John Paczcowski, Alberta Parks

News from the Board

By Don Cockerton, Acting Chair

We recently welcomed both Kayla Dallyn and Erica Borgstrom to our board. They both bring valuable skills, Kayla in HR and Erika in finance, along with their keen volunteer spirit and youthful energy!

The board continues to work closely with Alberta Parks staff as they work through the list of trails that can be repaired. Heart Creek, Fox Creek ski trail, Quait Valley and Jewel Pass have been worked on or are ongoing projects. We note that some trails are so badly damaged that their future may be in doubt. Our main challenge is to effectively respond to staff requests for volunteer assistance on shorter notice than normal and we are amazed at how quickly our volunteers and crew leaders have been responding through the summer. Many thanks to Rosemary for working like crazy when necessary to make all this happen!!

Post flood, we have also received many generous donations of cash from individuals, groups, granting institutions and others to the tune of approximately \$30,000 to date! This money has been recently directed to the major purchase of equipment for Kananaskis Country staff to use, thus helping to increase the number of projects that volunteers can

help with through the fall and next year. You'll hear more about this in an upcoming news release. We are determined to continue to work closely with parks staff to “augment and assist, but not to duplicate” what government does.

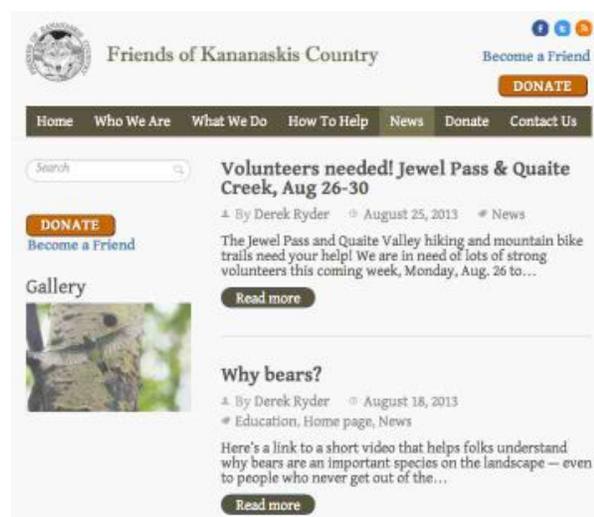
The board will continue monthly meetings with parks through the fall and winter and we look forward to continuously improving our practises and products including how we communicate with members and volunteers.

A huge thank you from all board members goes out to Derek Ryder and his volunteers who have recently been upgrading our website in addition to editing the newsletter. As always, your comments and questions are welcome!!

The Website's up and flying

Speaking of the website, thanks to some wonderful and ongoing support from Friends member and volunteer **Olga Sokolova**, our website revamp is nearing completion. If you haven't visited our site recently, you should! Here's just some of what you'll find if you just click the links:

- News and info that Friends members care about on both our [home page](#) and [News](#) page;
- Up-to-date volunteer calls and detailed descriptions of work on our new "[Current Projects](#)" page;
- Archives of our [2012](#) and [2013](#) newsletters. There are some cool articles about everything from rock glaciers to sand dunes. If you're new to the Friends, take a look back at what we've been up to;
- New and improved information about [how we work](#) which acts as an FAQ for new members;
- An overview about how [post-flood trail work](#) is happening;
- Background on our [major sponsors](#);
- New ways to [donate](#)



In the past, our website's been mighty static, but now you'll find it's a dynamic place with new info going up regularly. Come visit, and bookmark us to find the latest on volunteer projects you can get involved in!

Mark September 26th in your calendar!

Friends of Kananaskis Country is holding its first ever fundraiser on Thursday September 26, 2013 at Ceili's Irish Pub (803 - 8 Avenue SW in Calgary). All proceeds from this event will go to the rebuilding of trails in Kananaskis affected by the floods. Along with evening entertainment, we will be holding a Silent Auction, 50/50 draw, and a chance to win a **trip for 2 on WestJet!**



Tickets are only \$20, which include a free drink, and are available at info@kananaskis.org, at our Canmore office or at the door.

More info to come soon, see you on the 26th!

It's all about volunteering!

By being a member of the Friends, you're a volunteer helping Parks maintain K-Country. Here's a couple of things you might be interested in because you're a volunteer:

First, there's a free annual province wide volunteer conference for folks who help out with Parks, and **you're invited**. This year's conference is in Pincher Creek, September 14th & 15th. For info on the conference, click [here](#).

Closer to home, Friends member **Lauren Zabel** is an active volunteer with us, and a Parks interpreter, and past Friends volunteer coordinator. If this isn't enough, she is also a Masters candidate at University of Calgary. Her Masters thesis is on volunteerism in Kananaskis country. The objectives of her research study are to (1) investigate how volunteers perceive their role(s) within Alberta Parks, (2) gain insight into how Alberta Park's staff and partners in the Kananaskis Region understand volunteerism from their respective work units and experiences, and (3) offer recommendations on moving forward with positive volunteer management experiences for both staff and volunteers. She's looking for 45 minutes of your time to complete an anonymous, on-line survey. Interested? Click [here](#) to get more info and start the survey!

Help our friends help mountain bike trails!

Our friends over at the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association and Moose Mountain Bike Trails Society are teaming up with Bow Cycle to fix some bike trails in an "I Can't Ride... but I can dig!" event on September 14th. This is in place of the Bow80 bike race that was planned but cancelled due to flooding. Take a look at what they're working on [here](#).



Kananaskis Special Places Part 5: Glaciers

By Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

The greater Kananaskis area protects numerous special places, and in this series of articles, I'm going to take you to a number of my favourites. Some of these hide, and some are in the open but get passed by. All are worth exploring if you want to see the

unique bits of our beloved space.

Kananaskis Country is home to the most easterly glaciers in the Rockies, and several of them are quite accessible to mere mortals like me. In this two part series, we're going to look at K-Countries many glaciers, and talk about two that you can easily get to.

First, though, a warning: **glaciers can be quite dangerous**. They can hold features like crevasses and bergschrunds and seracs that can readily kill you. They commonly are in places where avalanches can occur. There are "safer" times to visit them, and "safer" glaciers to visit, but none are truly risk free.

By my count, there are at least 11 named glaciers in K-Country, and I'm probably missing some. There's the French/Robertson/Haig/Smith-Dorien complex, which probably at one time was just one big icefield. There are stand-alone glaciers like Lyautey, Mangin, Petain, Beatty and Northover. And there are small remnant glaciers like Old Goat and Rae.

The Haig glacier is K-Country's largest glacier, and home to the Canadian Olympic Development Association's summer cross-country skiing training facility. Yes, way back in the back-country is parked a track setter and groomer, used only during the summer to maintain ski trails on the Haig Glacier. It's a tough place to visit, though, as the closest place you can practically hang out to watch is the Turbine Canyon campground, a 15 km hike from the Interlakes Day Use area. From there, it's an additional 2.8 km, past the CODA cabin, to the access point for the glacier.

There are two readily accessible glaciers in K-Country, and you don't have to be in as good a shape as an Olympic athlete to access them. The first is the Old Goat Glacier, the second (which I'll describe next month) is the Rae Glacier. Old Goat and Rae vie for the title of "most easterly glacier in the Rockies". Rae is geographically farther east, but geologically, slightly west of Old Goat.

Old Goat is accessed by a hike on an unofficial trail of about 5 km, gaining ~500 m, from the Spray Lakes West road. Like all unofficial K-Country trails, the trailhead is not marked; it's across from Spray Lakes West campsites 16/17. There's a small parking lot just before the trailhead maintained for hikers. In the last few years, there have been several closures for bears, so check albertaparks.ca for warnings before you go (there was a warning put in place on August 19, 2013, for instance).

The first section of the trail is quite nice in a pretty creek valley, though there are now some flood-damaged bits. You arrive at Old Goat Falls after 3 km and a 140 m height gain without much work – save the last 400 m across a boulder field created by the flood.



This falls is the meltwater from the glacier, so it changes water volume throughout the day and dries up at certain times of the year. To get to the glacier from here, head up the trail in the scree slope well to the left of the waterfall. In 2 km, you'll climb the next 360 m, so it's steep, but it leads up through the home of pikas and marmots making it an entertaining climb.



The glacier itself isn't very big, and in places, it's covered in a bunch of rock. Depending on when you go, it could be covered in snow (June or early July) or just be an ice field (late August or September).



Like all glaciers, it is in motion, and visibly so. There are lines of flow clearly visible, and you can see them in the photo on the left. All glaciers are moving ice (or its not a glacier). The ice is always, always moving forward. Glacial recession occurs when it is melting back faster than it is moving forward. The ice moves because snow collects in an accumulation zone, which you can clearly see under the peak of Goat Mountain. The snow packs up, turns to ice, and the ice's weight causes it to slide downhill.

You can stop at the first overlook of the glacier, or go another ~2 km and 200 m up from here to a point where you can climb up onto it. You'll find most of that white stuff is not snow, it's ice, and ice is slippery (so be careful where its slightly steep near the toe). You might find the snow pink in spots. That's "watermelon snow" – snow covered in a single-cell algae called *chlamydomonas augustae* (there's a test later).



You'll also find water coming out from under the glacier through what looked from a distance like just scree but is in fact a thin layer of scree on top of solid ice (pictured at right). Much of the valley you're walking in is actually scree on ice, so the glacier itself is much bigger than it looks.



All glaciers sit on a layer of water, kept liquid because of the pressure of the ice above despite sub-zero temperatures. So all glaciers "leak" at the toe into a creek, and the creek flows all the time, though more so when its hot.

Looking around in the valley, you can see other glacial features. There's at least one lateral moraine (a pile of rock that sat between two glaciers), a terminal moraine (a pile of rock at the "end" of the glacier's farthest reach), and plenty of scratches on the bedrock where the glacier moved across it. There are also some fossils up here; not surprising because the glacier sits on the Sulphur thrust so has Mount Head exposure (see the article on K-Country fossils in the November 2012 newsletter [here](#) for more on this).

So long as you stay near the toe and don't head up there prior to June, your risk in visiting Old Goat is pretty low. There are no crevasses down low, and unless you head all the way up to the accumulation zone – for which you would need crampons, and there's a rather nasty bergshrund that could eat you – there's limited avalanche risk in the summer. Back-country skiers do ski this glacier in the winter, and I know someone who skis it at least once a month, every month of the year. In fact, if you believe the story [here](#), Old Goat was the scene of the world's first commercial heli-ski day led by Hans Gmoser

Old Goat's not that large but it is fun to explore. Next month, in Part 2 of this series, we'll dispel some myths about Rae Glacier.



The Movies of K-Country: *Inception*

8th in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

There have been many movies filmed in K-Country, some famous, some less so. In this series of articles, since I'm not a movie critic, I'm going to talk about these movies in a different light: how well they depict our favourite neighbourhood.



Inception is a 2010 science-fiction thriller starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael Caine, Ellen Page, Tom Berringer and a host of others. The plot is a very strange concept of entering people's dreams to steal secrets from them. If you find this idea hard to get your head around, well, you might find this movie confusing.

Inception is one of several big budget movies that took advantage of the facilities available at the Fortress Ski Resort to make movie magic. A major section of the movie was filmed there: the entire scene where the team assaults a mountaintop fortress. If you remember Fortress Mountain as a ski resort, everything from the base area to the Farside is instantly recognizable. But you'll ask yourself: Where the heck did that huge building come from, and where is it? It's not CGI. They actually built it on the top of the Farside ridge – and took it down when they were done. More importantly, it was the filming of this in 2009 that resulted in the re-building of the bridge over the Kananaskis River. It was the condemning of that bridge that caused Fortress to be shut down in the

first place. That bridge fix for *Inception* enabled other movies to be filmed there, and enabled the rebirth of Fortress as K-Pow Cat Skiing.

This is a PG-13 movie for the violence, a lot of which is in the scenes shot at Fortress. If you can understand the story (it took me a few watches) it's an interesting movie. I've seen it in the \$10 bins in many stores, and it is worth the price if you remember skiing there.



We extend our ongoing thanks to TransAlta, our Trail Care title sponsor. Without their support, we could not have executed the 2012 trail care program, and we are honoured to have them back as the title sponsor of the trail care program in 2013!



Your Donations are Always Appreciated and Needed

There are many ways to express your gratitude for Kananaskis Country and we are always grateful for contributions that help us maintain our programs and operations. Friends of Kananaskis Country is a registered charity in good standing and we provide charitable receipts for donations over \$20.00. You can reach us directly by mail at the address below, through the [donations link on our website](#), through [ATB Cares](#),

or [CanadaHelps](#). Thank you for your support!

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