



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



In this season of giving, we give Thanks

By Don Cockerton, Past Chair; Derek Ryder, Co Chair and Director of Communication; and Rosemary Power, Program Coordinator

Last year at this time, we wrote:

As our incredibly successful year draws to a close, the spirit of the season causes us to pause and give thanks. Our organization is the definition of the word "teamwork." Virtually nothing we do can be done alone.

The year 2013 exemplified that thought. It feels like our entire world came together in response to the devastating floods, and coming out of that, we all emerged a stronger team. And so we pause to say thank you to the members of our team and our world who

helped us help trails, and who graced us with wisdom, insight, energy and enthusiasm.

We have to start with the staff of Alberta Parks. The Friends operate in partnership with Alberta Parks, providing manual labour, enthusiasm and energy, but without the Parks Staff, the Friends don't really have much to do. We can start with **Jeff Eamon**, the Bow Valley Trails Supervisor, **James Cieslak**, the PLPP trails supervisor, plus **Michael Roycroft**,



Jamie Carpenter and their staff at the Canmore Nordic Centre. We work directly with us those folks and other groups to plan out trail care work, and both they and their staff are the primary organizers and executors of the trail care work (including lots of trail care work that happens without us that you probably aren't aware of). This year we really need to recognize a few members of the Parks trail crews: **Matt Hadley**, who was sometimes at the Nordic Centre, and sometimes on Jeff's crew; **Laurie Chase**, **Manu Courtois**, and **Kat** from Jeff's crew, and **Jody** from James' crew. I can't imagine five more energetic, enthusiastic, dedicated and inspiring people to work with on a trail care day. We also work closely with **Pat Ronald**, **Bill O'Connor** and **Joe Dick** of the Elbow/Sheep parks staff.

Beyond the trail crews, we have had the privilege to have **Duane Fazor** and **Kaylyn Airey** from Parks sit on our Board and put up with us on a regular basis. Each has brought us insight, wisdom and assistance, and our Board was better for their presence. Parks' Ecology staff has also been very supportive, including **John Paczkowski** (supplier of awesome wildlife camera images), **Melanie Percy** and **Scott Jevons**. We (and you) should also thank **Dave Hanna**, Manager of Operations and **Mark Storie**, the Director of Kananaskis Country for Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Those folks are the *senior* staff we work with. There are numerous other full time and seasonal TPR staff who helped out too, supervising or supporting our volunteer work parties; it's such a long list I'm not sure we even have all their names. We give thanks to all of these hard working, under-recognized folks from Alberta Parks, every one of whom labours tirelessly to keep our Parks wonderful -- and on top of that, work directly with the Friends to help us help them help K-Country.

We have to thank our incredible corporate supporters and donors, the list of which is starting to get very long:

- [TransAlta](#), who were Title Sponsor of our Trail Care Program for 2012 and 2013. **Jessi-Ann Riddell** has been our primary contact there, but TransAlta staff have participated in trail care work, and many TransAlta employees are members of the Friends. TransAlta has a commitment to sustainability wherever they work, and our partnership with them is just one small example of how they work with communities to make them better;
- [OnwardUp](#), who selected us as their "1% for the Planet" partner;
- [Patagonia](#) and their parent company, **Elements**, held special sales of clothing to raise money for the Friends' post flood trail recovery work;



- The [Banff Community Foundation](#), who selected us as a recipient of a major grant to restore flood damage, and recognize the efforts of the volunteers we work with;



- The [Town of Canmore](#), who backed our efforts to rebuild trails in the area to support Canmore tourism;
- [Hosteling International](#), who supported us to replace a section of flood damaged trail for the Kananaskis 100 relay;



- The hiking and cycling clubs in the area, including **The Second Sixties Outdoor Club, the West Winds Seniors Hiking and Outdoor Club, the Cyclemeisters, The Tuesday Hikers, The Prairie Mountain Hikers, MnN Outdoor Club, Calgary Scrambling and Mountaineering Club, and The Meanderthals**, the hiking group of the **Canmore Senior's Association**;

- [Mountain Equipment Co-Op](#) has provided us with grants, donated merchandise for fundraisers and recognition, and generally been a great supporter of the Friends. Their Staff even selected us for a "staff choice" grant;



- [24 Hours of Adrenalin](#) chose to partner with us for the trail work we do in the Canmore Nordic Centre. Since 1995, 24 Hours has been hosting an amazing mountain bike event, one of the largest in North America with over 1,600 participants. The Friends work directly with 24Hour Sports to build and maintain the mountain bike trails used during the event;

- The [Insurance Professionals of Calgary](#), who selected us and our work as benefactors of their annual charity fundraising gala;



- Many companies have donation matching programs; three in particular we want to recognize are the programs of [Cenovus Energy](#), [TransCanada](#) and [Sun Life Financial](#). In each company, Friends members donated to us, creating a matching grant from the company.

- There's a long list of folks who provided us with smaller donations, and we thank them all. We thank them all, and urge you to see how long the list is on our website, on the [new page](#) we recently posted recognizing our individual donors.

On top of those donors, we also had numerous organizations stand up with donations of products or services to either give away as recognition to our hardworking volunteers, or as items we could use to fundraise with. Ready for that list?

- Donors to our Volunteer Recognition Event: **The Alpine Club of Canada, Alpine Helicopters, Boston Pizza, Canmore Caverns, Chinook Rafting, Delta Lodge at Kananaskis, Fairmont Banff Springs, Grizzly Paw Brewing Company, Jeff Gruttz, Lazy Loaf and Kettle, Lynx Leisure Inc., Murietta's Canmore, The Norseman X-Country Ski Shop, Rebound Cycle, Resorts of the Canadian Rockies, Rocky Mtn Flatbread Co, Rocky Mtn Soap Co, Sage Bistro, Trailsports, The Trough, Valhalla Pure Outfitters, Wildrose Brewery,**

and Yamnuska Mountain Adventures

- Donors to our Fundraising Night: **Rocky Mtn Books, Gillian Daffern, The Hillside Collective, Peter Oprsal (aka Bike Pirate), Precision Cycle, Thirteenth Avenue Photography, The Yoga Lounge, Westjet, Parlee McLaws & Topmade Enterprises;**



We have outstanding relationships with many of the local trail associations and groups, such as **Rocky Mountain Ramblers, Seniors Outdoor Club, The U of C Outdoor Center, the Bow Valley Mountain Bike Association** and we thank them for working closely with us. In particular, we need to thank **Eric Lloyd** and **Robert Sadee** of the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association. We work closely with many of these associations in planning and delivering trail development projects.

We have amazing support from the [Army Cadet League](#). It is a treat for us to get over 50 energetic young people to come and work on trails and their own personal leadership for several days.

When it comes to energetic folks to thank, that includes **you**. First, we have our long list of **Trail Crew Leaders**. They plan their weeks around our trail care projects, and work with Parks staff to merrily lead you on our many projects. Without them, we have no projects. Then we have the folks who do the work, swinging the pulaskis and driving in the shovels. Stars of our Crew Leaders and trail volunteers includes **Tim Giese, Derek Ryder, Karen Irvine, Lloyd Jensen & Alf Skratins**, all of whom put in many multiple days.



We had several folks step up to assist on particular administrative projects. **Olga Sokalova** is the reason our website looks so beautiful. [Chesley Ryder](#) did an awesome job of designing our new logo. Without you, the members of The Friends, none of our projects get done. There are 1,196 Friends members at last count -- literally more every day -- and every one of you deserves our unending thanks.





In 2013, our "Face of the Friends" has basically single-handedly kept the organization running through the most productive year ever. Our sole employee for most of the year, **Rosemary Power**, worked tirelessly, commonly 7 days a week for weeks on end, organizing volunteers, managing trail crews, swinging pulaskis, answering our mail, applying for grants, running events, and doing the impossible, and we can't thank her enough. Rosemary was assisted for a short while by **Mike Schragge**.

Even though his time with us wasn't extensive, we thank him for his contributions.

The floods cost many people in many ways. The Friends lost our bookkeeper of many years, **Lindsay Clayton**, to the floods when her house in Exshaw was damaged and as a result, she decided to move to Nova Scotia. She provided us with excellent service for years, doing far more than her "bookkeeper" title, and we miss her already.

And finally, it may sound a bit self serving, but The Board wants to thank all the present, new and past members of... **The Board of Directors of the Friends of Kananaskis**. It has been another year of change, of consolidation, of renewal, of accomplishment, of (occasionally) long and challenging Board meetings. New folks have joined us (**Kayla & Erica**), some long standing members stepped down (**Hillary, Mark & Michelle**), and others continued on as they have for some time (**Don, Thy, Derek, Loralie, Kim, James & Manika**). Your Board members put in lots of hours to make sure things run smoothly, and they each deserve a big thank you.

Coming in the New Year...

Out here in the Bow Valley, there are several organizations that put on excellent and well attended speaker series, including [WildSmart](#) and the [Bow Valley Naturalists](#). We felt that the Calgary community was missing out on educational opportunities like these, so we will be hosting a series of free talks for our members and the general public in Calgary starting in late January. Our speakers will focus on Kananaskis trails and other Kananaskis related topics near and dear to our members hearts. Speakers lined up so far include renown bear expert **Steve Herrero**, and former Director of Education for the Calgary Zoo, **Brian Keating**. Dates, times and locations are still being arranged, so stay tuned for more info!



"Gray Jays". By Sorrel Holmes. FOKC photo contest "Top 12"

A letter to You... from Alberta Parks

By Mark Storie

Greetings Friends of Kananaskis Country Board of Directors and Volunteers,

Well another year is coming to a close. Since my arrival to the Kananaskis Region in September of 2012, I have had the opportunity to meet a few of you, and had the pleasure to attend your season end gathering in Calgary in late October. I have followed with interest the projects undertaken by the Friends throughout the year.

Your passion, dedication, commitment to and for Kananaskis Country inspires visitors, your colleagues, and the AB Parks executive team. The nearly 4,000 hours logged in the field by volunteers had an incredible impact, helping to ensure that visitors were able to discover, enjoy and value this amazing place and experience the wonder that only time spent in the outdoors can foster.

The Board of Directors have met the challenge of rebuilding this amazing organization and I am delighted that the Friends of Kananaskis Country are on a sustainable footing, poised to prosper and develop over the coming years. Together, you dedicated more than 1700 hours of your personal time to help this amazing place and contributed more than \$30,000 in tools and equipment. These are impressive totals and while the numbers serve as a measure, it's the lasting impact of this incredible effort that I am truly thankful for.

The June 2013 flood took a toll on the landscape, on people's homes, businesses and

lives but through your passion, dedication and sacrifice, you helped hundreds of thousands of people find a place to relax, to unwind and enjoy the beauty that surrounds us. I sincerely appreciate your effort and would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Thank-you,

Mark Storie
Kananaskis Regional Director
Alberta Parks

One last thought...

It's also that time of year where we look at how we've given back over the year. Please take a moment and consider helping us help Kananaskis trails into the future with a year-end donation to the Friends. Just click [here](#) to go to our ATB Cares page where you can make a tax-deductible donation for 2013 before the year runs out. Trails love Christmas presents, too, and will thank you with awesome experiences in 2014 and beyond.

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