



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



Robert Lee, "Mountain Reflections". FOKC 2013 Photo Contest Top 12

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November Trail Care Update: Gremlins

by Rosemary Power, Program Coordinator

Wow, what a crazy time! Hypothetically, the Friends of Kananaskis is primarily a summer operations based organization, and what a summer we had of it. Despite the insanity of our struggles to overcome floods and rebuild bigger and better than ever, I had imagined that this fall and winter would be a welcome relief with only minor items to finish up and last details to be entered into the computer. Surely this would take hours at most!

The first job to be completed was to compile our new mailing list of all our fantastic new (and returning) volunteers! We have 450 wonderful people on our list to add or update; yet this seemed like a quick task. Unfortunately, I was not aware that cryptography (code breaking) was one of my job requirements. To my surprise many of you use variations on hieroglyphics when filling out names and e-mail addresses! As a result, despite my best deciphering and decryption, our first mail out reached only a portion of our 200 new members. Fortunately, due to the healing power of tea when consumed in quantities only manageable by Costco, our members were sorted out. That being said, if you know someone who has not received this letter, please let us know so we can add them!

The second goal was the forbidden knowledge of Excel.

For those of you who use this program on a regular basis, you will know that it is simple, quick and effective for those initiated in its arcane workings. For myself, I attempted this sorcery only to find that the “spells” that the professionals use to magically transform documents require significant skill and coordination and perhaps some eye of newt.



Despite my distinct lack of these ingredients, I have managed to determine which of you put in 20 hours of volunteer time, and will be rewarded with a half price season's cross-country ski pass to the **Canmore Nordic Centre**. Our champion volunteers who exceeded 40 hours will be given a free season's pass! If you think that you earned a pass but haven't received an email about it, please let me know and we can look into it!

Due to the gremlins who seem to operate our database, one of our next projects will be to re-work and update our system, including how our waivers and papers are managed, so we do apologize for any and all problems that may have arisen. If you have any contacts with the gremlins, please ask them to organize themselves and find some discipline, as otherwise we will replace them next year with gnomes who seem to have a better ability to keep records. If you happened to be conspiring with the gremlins and not returning forms, we ask that you boycott their movement next year.

Much of our success this year is due to our generous private donors! I won't mention them all here, as I am not sure if you would all like to be mentioned by name. Some are mentioned below in a note in the "News from your Society" section. One in particular deserves special mention; on November 20th, our co-chair, Derek Ryder and I accepted grant funding for \$13,000 from the **Banff Community Foundation** during their legacy fund fundraiser at the Banff North Face store; this photo by Taryn Hajnrych shows

Rosemary accepting the cheque from Bill Fisher of the BCF.



The North Face provided donations to the BCF's "After the Flood Stewardship Fund". Monies from this fund are handed



out by the BCF to groups engaged in flood damage restoration. Some of these funds will help us create a Volunteer Recognition program for 2014 -- our way (and the BCF's) of saying thanks to the folks who help us help Kananaskis trails.

Thank you so much, to all of our wonderful supporters – you make Friends of Kananaskis possible, and the wonderful advances we have made in the last year we really owe to you!



Wolf cubs, with stick. Photo courtesy John Paczcowski, Alberta Parks

Several members of the Board have now participated in sessions associated with the proposed South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (“SSRP”), including Don, James, Rosemary and me. Other Board members are trying to get to upcoming information sessions.

In case you’re “off the grid” and not been paying attention to all the ads, the SSRP sets a land use framework for the entire South Saskatchewan River drainage area, which runs from the Montana and BC borders north to about halfway between Calgary and Red Deer, and over to the Saskatchewan border. This is a very large bit of the Province with a whole lot of people living in it. It is a space of heavy land use from agriculture, industry, recreation, residential and commercial activities. One could expect that trying to write a single land use policy that covers that whole area could make for an unwieldy document, and indeed that’s pretty much the case.

The session Rosemary and I attended was the full day stakeholder session in Canmore. About 40 stakeholders representing recreation groups (like us, off-road vehicle groups, ski and mountain guides), industry groups (mining, forestry, oil and gas), towns (Canmore, MD Bighorn), and a whole lot of others were in the room. Stantec Consulting was facilitating these sessions, and ran a specific process wherein we reviewed the 157 page SSRP recommendations, and discussed things we liked, things we didn’t like and things that were missing.



I honestly think it impossible to summarize this document and all the issues associated with it in one or two paragraphs with any degree of fairness. It does not lend itself to “sound bites” at all. It is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree.

What the SSRP does do is try to please everyone. It clearly sets out goals to provide a viable framework for industry. It sets out biodiversity goals. It sets out recreation goals, increasing the number and sizes of Parks. It sets out to protect water and air quality. It sets out to try be everything to everyone, even though it is based on a scenario of rather substantial continued population, industrial and commercial growth.

What is getting people concerned – and by “people”, I’m pretty sure I’m speaking for everyone who was in that room – is that you can’t please all the people all of the time. The act of protecting a watershed, for instance -- a goal of the SSRP -- is incompatible with certain industrial, commercial and recreational use in spaces in that watershed that could be permitted under the SSRP.

So the outcome of this has been that pretty much every organization is vehemently opposed to those sections of the plan where they believe you can't please everyone. CPAWS, for instance, is for [greater protection](#) of the Castle Wilderness area, creating more substantive protection than the proposed conservation areas (where, under the SSRP framework, you can still do everything from logging to of road vehicle use). The [Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association](#), on the other hand, are vehemently opposed to turning some of the areas in the Porcupine Hills into places where they would be forbidden or only restricted to a limited number of specific trails.

It was nice to see that everyone in the room was in support of increasing recreational opportunities in response to a growing population base. More campgrounds; expanding, combining and simplifying the parks in the Elbow and Sheep area; these are things that everyone can agree on.

The Friends of Kananaskis is not, per se, a Society that "advocates" for very much. Legally, we are a cooperating society that works to support Alberta Parks. And in that, the SSRP will create more opportunities for us to do that as Parks in K-Country get expanded and will need additional volunteer support. The Province clearly cares about Parks, and wants to see more of them, and make the existing ones better. In that sense, the SSRP has got it "right".

We are concerned, however, that an attempt to please everyone will result in pleasing no one. We suspect it better from a long term sustainability perspective to select spaces where a majority of stakeholders will be pleased while a select few will be upset, and vice versa. For instance, "logging allowed here but not here", rather than an approach that says "a little logging everywhere".

The SSRP process is important but unfortunately and unavoidably complicated. Our best recommendation is to get informed. Attend a session. Visit the website. Fill in the workbook. Let your voice be heard. Many have already and you can read their 32 pages of comments (on that 157 page document) [here](#).

A special offer for our 2013 volunteers

In special recognition of the effort put in by the Friends members who volunteered to fix trails with us in 2013, our friends at Norseman have an offer for you. They sent us the following e-mail:

"Norseman Ski & Hike Shop has been serving Calgary Outdoor community since 1971. Like any small business,



we are a part of a community. It is hard to describe our appreciation of volunteers that make the trails usable to the large number of Calgary outdoors enthusiasts. Kananaskis is the playground of Calgary. We are very thankful to the Friends of Kananaskis and their volunteers. We would like to offer our appreciation by giving a 10% discount on our regularly priced items to any of the volunteers. Please provide me with a name list and we will honour our commitment to Friends of Kananaskis."

So we have given the Norseman shop a full list of everyone who volunteered with us this past summer, and all you need to do is show up and identify yourself to get your 10% discount. If, when you get there, you find your name not on the list when it should be, blame the gremlins Rosemary mentions above, and contact her, and all will be straightened out.



"Sheep in Snow", Lawrence Ethier. FOKC 2013 Photo Contest, Honourable Mention

More grants, more thanks

In addition to the Banff Community Foundation grant that Rosemary mentioned above, the Friends also received some other significant donations this past month.

One of our current sponsors, Elements Inc, who you know as the Patagonia stores in both Calgary and Banff, passed along the news that they are increasing their sponsorship in 2013 with additional funding to the Friends. Earlier this summer, Patagonia held a clothing sale with the proceeds being directed to the Friends.



We were proud to be told that the employees at Mountain Equipment CoOp in Calgary selected the Friends as one of three organizations nominated by staff at the Calgary store for the Staff Choice Community Grant Program. After a recent vote, the Friends received the most amount of votes. MEC supports impactful and strategic grassroots organizations who conserve ecologically and recreationally important places and who inspire and enable Canadians to experience nature and lead active outdoor lives. “By supporting like-minded organizations such as the Friends,” said MEC, “we all help keep space for adventure.”

The Friends are honoured to have been recognized by these organizations. For information on how you or your organization can help the Friends make a difference, visit the Donations section of our website [here](#).

Flood mitigation proposals for rivers in K-Country

As we mentioned on our website, it's kind of obvious that the Alberta Government would prefer not to have another multi-billion dollar flooding event any time soon. I'm guessing everyone affected by the 2013 floods would agree at least in principle. So everyone is exploring ways to prevent them, or at the very least, reduce their impact. Canmore, for instance, is moving ahead with installing flood mitigation structures on Cougar, Stoneworks and other creeks in their area. The M.D. of Bighorn is looking at doing the same on Jura, Exshaw, Heart and Pigeon Creeks. These structures are generally designed to let floodwaters through but intercept and stop the rock debris; the debris is the stuff that fills the channels, drives the creeks to places they shouldn't be, plugs the culverts and knocks out the houses and bridges. After a flood event, the retained debris can be removed, and the structure is ready to catch the next load.

The structures above likely won't be that obtrusive nor create long term landscape changes. The Alberta Flood Recovery Task Force, on the other hand, has proposed the building of three very large flood control berms with space for gigantic dry ponds behind them at the headwaters of the Elbow and Highwood Rivers within K-Country, and a second set of berms in the foothills outside of K Country: one on the Highwood and one on the Sheep. These berms would create vast temporary lakes during flooding events that would collect debris and moderate the water release. Tony Daffern has done an awesome writeup detailing the proposal on his and Gillean's Kananaskisblog.com site [here](#).

Check out the news Parks XC Trails Condition reporting system

Alberta Parks has created a new trail reporting system for XC winter trails that is just starting to go live. You can read the latest full trail report [here](#), or go direct to the new live grooming report page [here](#). Our understanding is this reporting system will be rolled out through the rest of winter to cover other XC ski trails in K-Country. Congratulations to Parks!

And as always, Friends member "SkierBob" Bob Truman's [SkiHere.ca](#) site is full of current trip reports and conditions from K-Country and elsewhere.

Ski Trail Changes in PLPP & Chester Lake

We received the following **LONG** update from James Cieslak in Peter Lougheed, for those of you who are cross country ski fans:

The "old Pocaterra trail" from the "old" Come Along junction south to the "old" Lynx junction will no longer exist. This change was made to get the trail off of the Pocaterra creek flood plain and out of that drainage to avoid future flood issues such as those experienced in 1995, 2005 and this past June. In addition to it, the bridge and trail damage on Come Along trail has been repaired and it too will be open for skiing this winter. This winter's closures in PLPP will be Rolly Road trail (due to a bridge out) and Boulton creek trail (from Fox Creek trail-junction to Boulton Bridge trailhead). Stroil trail will no longer exist as the south 1/2 of it is now part of Pocaterra trail and the north 1/2 of it goes to nowhere. Pocaterra trail now exits its original course approximately 1/2km before the Rolly Road jct. and group camp. This portion of the trail now becomes part of Come Along trail that continues south on its original course and terminates approximately 200 meters shy of its original jct. with the "old" Stroil trail. The new Pocaterra trail heads south on high ground crossing Come Along trail once before joining it again. Pocaterra trail then follows the "old" Come Along trail for 200 meters then turns south on the "old" Stroil trail. It travels south on the "old" Stroil for approximately 400 meters before departing above the big hill and travels another 1.47km south until meeting Lynx Trail where it drops down onto the Spotted Wolf creek drainage. The last 150 meters (approximately) of Lynx trail is now part of the "new" Pocaterra trail before Pocaterra re-joins its old route for its duration. Although we made every attempt to avoid the steeper terrain, it should be noted that the "new" Pocaterra trail is predominantly a "Blue"-intermediate trail.

Elk Pass Trail has been repaired but will be missing one bridge for this winter season. We will shovel in a snow bridge for this up-coming winter however it will likely mean a later start than normal for the portion of trail between Patterson-jct. on the south and Hydroline-jct. on the north.

Whisky Jack and Fox Creek trails were both repaired and will function as before with no noticeable deviations.



The trails damaged near Chester trailhead have been re-routed and/or re-constructed. The snow shoe trails south of this trailhead will follow their original routes however there was significant damage at all crossings over the Headwall and James Walker creek drainages. These issues have not been addressed and will not be this winter. Snowshoers should expect difficult route finding and lots of obstacles to bypass in these areas. Both the snowshoe and backcountry skier access trails to Chester Lake will start at the same trailhead but will now head north/left and cross the creek immediately on the new constructed bridge. They will share the same trail for 430 meters before joining the old trail at which point the snowshoers will turn right and the skiers left. Both will follow their old routes for the duration. It should also be noted that there is now an access trail linking Burstall parking lot to the Chester trail.



Editors Note: We are pleased to present a guest article from the folks at Thirteenth Avenue Photography. In addition to being Friends' members, they generously donated several items for the silent auction held at our fundraiser on September 26th, 2013.

The Seasons of Kananaskis

by Andrea Halwas. Thirteenth Avenue Photography

As the seasons in Kananaskis Country change, my husband and I are forced to momentarily reflect on our lives. The onset of each new season motivates us to reminisce, remembering how many hikes we went on, how many moments with wildlife we shared, and also how quickly time passes. There is nothing better to remind us of the fleeting moments of our year than the seasonal changes in Canada. In writing this article it seemed that the theme would lead us to declare our favorite season. However; in recounting the years we have spent traveling the backcountry of Kananaskis, we discovered that it is impossible to claim to have a favorite season.

The photo above, taken by Andrea Halwas in Kananaskis in 2012, hangs on our office wall as inspiration throughout the year and to remind us of the amazing souls we encounter on our adventures in K-Country.

Spring in the mountains

We love spring in the mountains. It is fresh with the possibility of a great season of photography. The animals emerge from hibernation often with ridiculously cute young accompanying them. There is not much color, however there is abundance of wildlife roaming the roadside, and this is when our winter hibernation also ends. We commit to a weekly routine of rising at



5:00 am on the weekends to travel from Calgary to K-Country. We have to admit that springtime requires stamina, however we are so keen for any wildlife viewing opportunities that we are addicted to the excitement of a new year in the mountains.

This photo taken by Chad Larsen in Kananaskis in 2012 truly represents why we love spring. After all, who couldn't love this adorable, newborn, grizzly bear cub learning about the world?

Summer in the mountains

As summer begins, the animals trek further into the backcountry and we don't see them as often. However, this is when we have the chance to explore the beauty around us. We hike, we camp, we climb, and we play in the mountains. This is our escape from the city and we are never happier than when we drive west for a weekend adventure. The sun rises early and stays out late, offering us hours of daylight to explore the amazing Rocky

Mountain terrain. Even if we aren't discovering as many animals, the beautiful summer temperatures, the vast greenery, the incredible views from our hikes, and the abundant waterfalls make up for it.



Summer in K-Country brings the opportunity to escape the city and discover the beauty of the world around us. This photo by Chad Larsen was taken hiking around Upper Kananaskis Lake in summer 2013.

Fall in the mountains

Every fall we are stunned by the extreme color-show that the mountains put on. Throughout the year we forget how gorgeous, rich, and vivid the colors become in autumn. The larches have become our obsession and we hike every weekend in search for the next great larch photo. We love fall even though we are reminded that summer is fleeting, and another amazing season in the mountains is coming to an end. We become nostalgic with the beginning of fall, looking back on the year we had. As the days get shorter and frost lingers in the mornings, we occasionally run into wildlife on their hurried journeys towards hibernation. We accept that the animals are retreating for the season and we hike until the last possible light.

Every year we are mesmerized by the extreme and vivid colours as the seasons change. K-Country puts on a brilliant colour-show before winter descends. This photo was taken by Chad Larsen at Chester



Lake at the peak of larch season, in the fall of 2013.

Winter in the mountains

Winter is something we both dread and love. We dread the cold of winter, the realization that the animals have departed for the season, and we particularly dread the dark hours. However, we love getting the chance to also hibernate and prepare for the next season. We love snowshoeing the trails and we love watching our dog run like a mischievous deer in the snow. Winter is a blessing in disguise. It gives us down time, time to review our photos from the year past, and time to look forward to the next season. And occasionally, we find something special hiding in the snow.



Even though we predominately head to K-Country to snowshoe in the winter, every so often we run into something, like a moose trying to disguise himself in the white snow. Photo taken by Chad Larsen.

As Kananaskis enthusiasts, we know every turn, every picnic stop, and every trailhead. It is rather wistful to see K-Country in every season; however as we return every year we have new memories to revisit and new memories to make. The hardest part is picking our favorite moment because in the mountains, the beauty seems to outdo itself season after season.

Thirteenth Avenue Photography is a husband and wife photography team specializing in wildlife, landscape, and family photography. We strive to find the beauty that exists in our world and capture that moment in time.

Website: thirteenthavenue.ca

Blog: greenthirteen.ca

Facebook.com/[ThirteenthAvenuePhotography](https://www.facebook.com/ThirteenthAvenuePhotography)

Twitter.com/[Thir13enthAve](https://twitter.com/Thir13enthAve)



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, operations and help us restore flood damaged trails. 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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