

It's the time of the year to give thanks. Do we do that enough? Nope.



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



*Photo by Lisa Christensen*

### **In this season of giving, we give Thanks**

*By Don Cockerton, Acting Chair, and Derek Ryder, Director of Communications*

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. And so we pause to thank the people who have made the Friends of Kananaskis the success that it is. When we think about all of the incredible people who help us help trails, the list is so long that we are certain to miss folks, and for that we apologise.

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, and **Murray Ingstrup**, one of the Conservation Officers in East



Kananaskis. In addition to everything else they do, both sit on the Friends' Board as Government liaisons, so come to our Board meetings every month and put up with us! In addition to sitting on the Board, Jeff works directly with us and other groups to plan out trail care work, and both he and his 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). We also work closely with **James Cieslak**, the PLPP trails supervisor, **Michael Roycroft** and his staff at the Canmore Nordic Centre, as well as **Pat Ronald**, **Bill O'Connor** and **Joe Dick** of the Elbow/Sheep parks staff. We (and you) should also thank **Dave Hanna**, Manager of Operations and **Mark Storie**, the new Director of Kananaskis Country for Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Those nine are just 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 supporters:

- [TransAlta Utilities](#), who have been our Title Sponsor of our Trail Care Program for 2012. **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;
- [Mountain Equipment Co-op](#) has provided us with grants, loaned us meeting space, selected us for the Big Wild Bucks initiative, and generally been a great supporter of the Friends;
- [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 24 Hours to build and maintain the mountain bike trails used during the event.
- The [City of Calgary](#) provided us with funds under their granting program;
- The [Elbow River Watershed Partnership](#) received some funding from Shell's Fueling Change initiative for their Elbow River Watershed Field Study Program, and directed some of the funding to the Friends;



- We were honoured to receive a grant via **James Kirker** that came through the [Calgary Foundation](#). The grant came a somewhat circuitous route: from the Scott Daniel Seaman Memorial Fund via the Calgary Foundation. James recommended us for the grant, as he was the recipient of the Scott Seaman Outdoor Leadership Award at Strathcona Tweedsmuir School. James graduated Grade 12 at S-T in 2012. He may hold a record for the youngest significant donor we have.
- Many companies have donation matching programs; two in particular we want to recognize are the programs of [Cenovus Energy](#) and the [EnCana Corporation](#). 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. We thank them all, and and urge you to see how long the list is in our annual report.



We have outstanding relationships with many of the local mountain bike associations, and in particular, 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. We had several members stand up to assist on particular administrative projects (like **Olga Sokalova** and **Nadina Kaminer**). Without all of you, none of our projects get done. There are 773 of you at last count -- more literally every day -- and every one of you deserves our unending thanks.





In 2012, the Friends worked with two amazing staff. **Nicholas Dotchin** was our Trails Program Coordinator, who we thank for building up our program to the incredible 2,500 hrs we delivered in 2012. Nick loves hauling dirt and building trails, and it showed in every inch of trail he worked on. **Adrienne Needham** has been our Office Coordinator for several years. It doesn't sound like much, but she has kept our office intact, the Board in line, and managed every bit of the paperwork we move to handle

grants and tax receipts and Facebook and Twitter and... well, a lot. The Board all wants to thank Adrienne and Nick for all they have done for us.

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 a year of change, of consolidation, or renewal, of accomplishment, of (occasionally) long and challenging Board meetings. New folks have joined us (**Mark, Derek, Kim, Loralie, Manika & James**), some long standing members stepped down (**Joe & Erik**), and others continued on as they have for some time (**Don, Thy, Michelle & Hilary**). Your Board members put in lots of hours to make sure things run smoothly, and they each deserve a big thank you.

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### **About that Big Wild Bucks competition...**

We hope you are aware that the Friends was in the running for a funding competition co-sponsored by MEC and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society -- their "Big Wild Bucks" grant program, which started in 2008. [TheBigWild.org](http://TheBigWild.org) gives away a combined \$10,000 to three separate conservation organizations in Canada. Big Wild supporters and MEC members alike decided which three organizations of the five featured will receive a grant.

Alas, we did not place in the top 3. With over 12,000 votes cast in the competition, we were *just* out of the grant money, finishing in 4th place. But we want to thank everyone who voted for us. You showed your support for Kananaskis!

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### **And finally, about the New Year...**

The Friends has some very exciting announcements that will come with the January 2013 newsletter. Since this issue has been about offering all the thanks we could to all the folks we need to thank, we thought we would hold off with more news for an exciting start to 2013. Stay tuned, and we hope you and your family have a spectacular and safe holiday season.

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