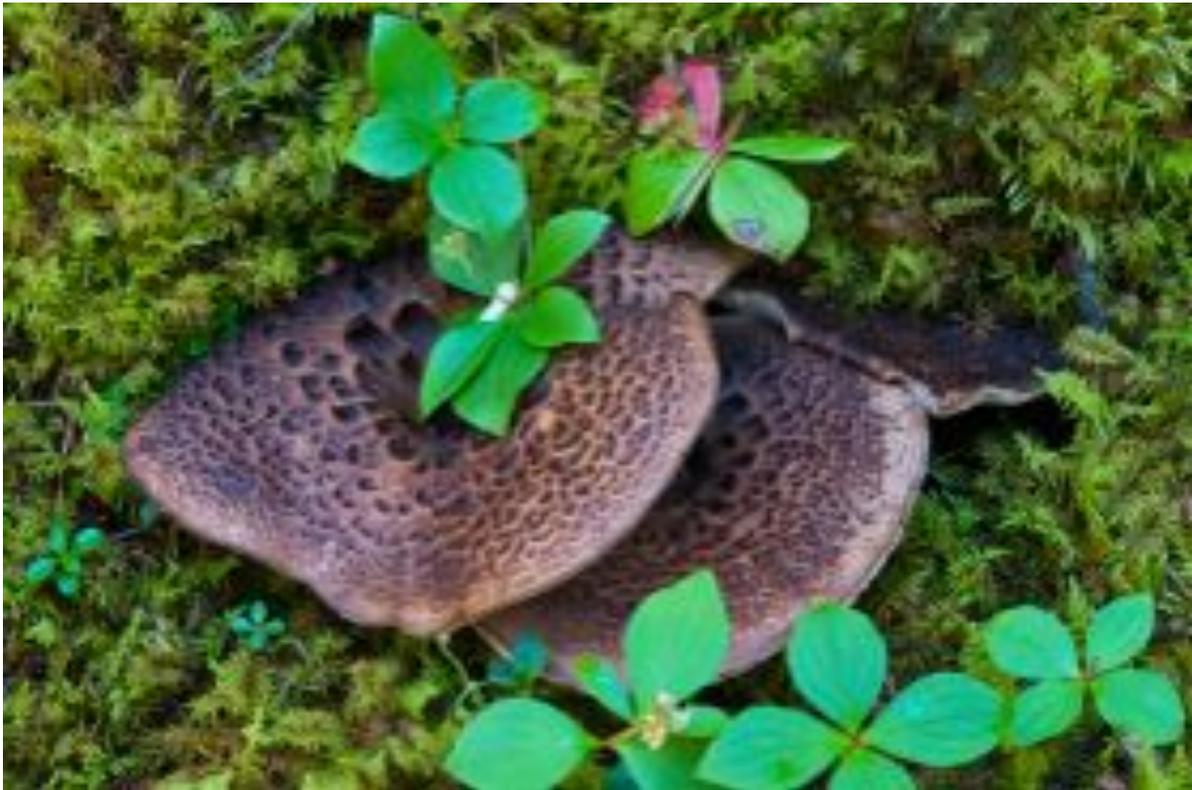


And the snow has returned. As have touchy avalanche conditions.



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



Robert Lee, "Mossy Mushrooms". FOKC 2013 Photo Contest Top 12

In this month's newsletter...

- January Trail Care update: What's on Deck?
- News from the Board: Look after your health, look after K-Country
- News from your Society: Welcome Joan Ford!
- What's in your Emergency Kit?
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February Trail Care Update: What's On Deck?

by Rosemary Power, Program Coordinator

Until last June, Ribbon Creek used to flow through a ravine, past thick forests of pine and spruce and past a wide path which hugged it's bank. Now, Ribbon Creek flows through a canyon, and where the trail used to be, there is only a void through which the sound of the stream rises from far below. Last summer's flood re-carved Ribbon Creek and many other waterways in Kananaskis County. This coming summer the canyon is going to change again; an Alberta Parks trail crew along with some heavy equipment are going to cut a new path. Galatea is also going to receive major trail work as are trails in the Kananaskis Lakes area. This will include Three Isle Lake and Pocaterra trails. The Alberta Government has provided money for most of the heavy work but **YOU** will be needed to help craft the rough tracks into hiking trails.

While summer 2013 was our busiest year ever for trail work, we were only able to tackle the most accessible trails and logistically easy, post-flood projects (note: I did not say physically easy). This year, the projects we will be tackling have received a great deal of careful advance planning from the Kananaskis trail crews and, after this, volunteers are needed more than ever.

Looking ahead, we hope to have crews of volunteers working on mountain bike trails bi-weekly at the Canmore Nordic Centre. Another 2 days per week will be flood repair work on trails in the Peter Lougheed, Galatea and Ribbon areas.

There is also a great deal of repair work to be done in the Elbow and Sheep areas. If this is not enough, we've been asked to help build a new section of the TransCanada Trail which will run from the top of Goat Creek Trail (just above Canmore) all the way down to Kananaskis Lakes. While last year's trail work was largely confined to week days, summer 2014 will include volunteer trail building opportunities most Saturdays and Sundays from June through September. Multi day trail repair trips into the backcountry are also likely to be on our schedule.

We will not be putting out a trail work schedule until much later in the spring but we will be providing you with updates as details of the upcoming projects emerge. Please plan to volunteer this summer; help us help rebuild Kananaskis trails.





Up close and personal with a cougar. Photo courtesy John Paczkowski, Alberta Parks

News from the Board: Look after your health, look after Kananaskis Country

By James Early, Co-Chair

This year the Education Subcommittee of the Friends of Kananaskis Country launched its Speaker Series. We opened in January with Professor Stephen Herrero, North America's preeminent bear expert, who spoke everything bear, bear-related and human-bear interaction. 140 people sat absorbed as Stephen spoke.

The same sized crowd was in attendance for our latest talk, Brian Keating's "Going Wild" presentation in February where he spoke "mountains", and of the benefits of getting outdoors. At that talk, Brian mentioned a statistic that has me worried, and also confirmed the reasons I am involved with the Friends of Kananaskis Country.

That stat is as follows: youth today spend 5% of their free time in the outdoors. That is compared to Brian's youth (I'm sure he won't mind me confirming that he is 58 years of age). In Brian's youth, children spent 80% of their time outdoors.



I reflected on one of my first tasks as a Director of the Friends. That was to write a little something about me. I wrote:

“[I am] excited to be involved with the Friends’ as this has allowed [me] to become actively involved in work that would encourage members of the public to share in the beauty of Kananaskis. Ultimately, the more people who witness the majestic K-Country, the more people will fall in love with it, and become aware of its environmental stresses and challenges. When that happens, more people will then become engaged with their environment and be more willing to act to ensure its conservation for future generations.”

I immediately considered two problems. First, if fewer children spend time in the outdoors, who is going care for places such as Kananaskis Country when I grow old? Second, what mental and physical impacts will this lack of connection with nature have on our children?

Those questions have stayed with me since Brian’s talk.

I recall reading a study a month ago that reaffirmed the link between nature and our health. That study, which appears in the Environmental Science and Technology Journal (UK), built on an earlier study that showed that people living in greener urban areas displayed fewer signs of depression and anxiety.

The recent study, co-authored by Dr. Matthew White of the University of Exeter (UK) found that the mental effects of, for example, a lottery win, tend to last for approximately six months before a persons’ mood returned to its “baseline”. However, according to this study, even after three years, mental health was still better in those that lived in greener urban areas than those who did not.

Dr. White’s study adds to a growing body of scientific evidence that getting outside and immersing yourself in nature does wonders for your health. In November 2013, the chief executive of the Woodland Trust (UK) announced that billions (of British pounds) could be saved by the National Health Service if people spent more time in green spaces.

A number of benefits are shown from spending time outdoors including: lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, improved immunity and reduced cortisol levels (which relate to stress). Learning abilities for children with Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder improve in addition to improved sleep quality. Post-surgery, patient’s whose hospital rooms have a view of nature are reported to complain of less pain, require less medication and shorter hospital stays. Spending time in the outdoors also improves a person’s attention and ability to focus. The list, quite literally, goes on.

Dr. John Railton is a cancer survivor and a member of Wellspring Calgary. He recently wrote:

“[h]umans are hardwired to live in the natural environment... [h]umans have known for centuries that natural settings promote healing... In a society where depression costs \$51

billion a year, according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, if even 10 percent of people improved their health by walking, hiking and experiencing the environment, we could save \$5.1 billion.

“A variety of studies suggest the benefits of being in nature are manifold: stress reduction, increased benefits from exercise, heightened physical and mental energy, positive impact on impulsivity, hyperactivity and ADS, reduced mental fatigue, mood improvement, increased levels of intracellular and anti-cancer proteins, and increases in levels of natural killer (NK) cell function.”

Researchers from Mount Royal University, in partnership with the Alberta Parks Research fund and the Alberta Addictions and Mental Health Research Partnership Program found, in 2012, that there was a trend toward improvement in symptoms of depressed mood, as well as greater health satisfaction, amongst other benefits, when the participants of the study visited Kananaskis Country and other natural areas.

It is clear that spending time in Kananaskis Country will improve your health. It is essential, therefore, that our children increase their time in nature from 5% of their spare time to 80%, or as close thereto as possible.



But, what about that first question, who is going care for places such as Kananaskis Country when I grow old?

Arguably, if we ensure that we, and our children, get outside, to maintain mental and physical health, then this question is moot.

Dr. Ken Norris, from Reading University, presented at the British Ecological Society's

annual meeting last year. He reiterated that green spaces improve wellbeing and, therefore, can be linked to out health.

He went further. He urged ecologists to do better when it comes to convincing people about the importance of conservation. Dr. Norris emphasized the “ecosystem services” concept, which places a value on ecosystem functions (for example, clean water, reducing pollution). He suggests that human wellbeing strengthens the case for conservation.

If we acknowledge, therefore, the significant impact that nature and natural spaces have on our health, and if we ensure that our children also learn this, then the voice will be there advocate on behalf of conserving our environment for future generations.

As I noted, above, one of the reasons that I joined the Board of the Friends of Kananaskis Country is to encourage people get out to Kananaskis Country and to appreciate nature so that those people will be inspired to conserve our environment. This is in line with the Friends of Kananaskis Country's vision, which is:

"[a] Kananaskis Country of exquisite natural and cultural landscapes enjoyed by present and future generations."

I hope that you will get out to Kananaskis Country this year, with your children, for the good of your health, and our environment.

Welcome Joan Ford!

The Friends are pleased to announce the addition of **Joan Ford** to our staff. Joan is taking over bookkeeping responsibilities from our long-time bookkeeper Lindsay Clayton, who got washed out of Exshaw in the June 2013 floods, and decided to move to Nova Scotia. Lindsay has been a delight to work with over the past number of years, and we will miss her.

Joan brings a bookkeeping background to her role, and in addition, will be using her extensive office administration experience to provide much needed back-up to Rosemary in our Canmore office. Don't be surprised if she answers the phone when you call us.

We're glad to have Joan on board!

A reminder of the 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 The Norseman XC Ski and Hike Shop 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."



We provided them with a full list of volunteers (no, they won't put you on a mailing list; all they have is your name), so all you need to do is drop in, and drop our name, to get your 10% discount.



Bobcat. Photo courtesy John Paczkowski, Alberta Parks

What's in your emergency kit?

by Derek Ryder, Co-Chair & Director of Communications

In my various volunteer roles with Parks, I have the occasion to spend time talking to the great guys at Kananaskis Public Safety and Kananaskis Emergency Services. Any chat with them invariably turns to accidents they respond to, and I'm always curious about how incidents can be prevented or better managed. They have repeatedly told me that most emergency situations they have to deal with could be prevented (or at least, their impact substantially lessened) by three simple steps:

1. Wearing correct footwear, especially in the summer;
2. Dressing properly, in layers, and carrying extra clothing;
3. Carrying an emergency kit that could see you at least tolerably through a night, or maybe two.

People think "emergency kit" and think big and bulky. The one I have put together weights about 500 grams, is very versatile, lives in my pack all through the year, is good for winter or summer, and was dirt cheap to assemble. It draws on my experience teaching outdoor survival about 35 years ago at Outward Bound School in Ontario. Here's what's in it:

1. **A space blanket.** This tiny thing, made of aluminized mylar, weighs nothing, and yet because it reflects about 97% of heat, is incredibly warm. Invented by NASA in 1964, it's windproof and waterproof, and if you don't want to wrap it around yourself, you can use it as an emergency rain shelter. Costs about \$2 at MEC.



2. **A closed cell foam "sit upon".** When you sleep outdoors, most of your heat loss is into the ground. Not only is a sit-upon thing useful when plunking down to picnic, it's waterproof, absorbs no water, comfy and keeps your butt from freezing. Sit on this, wrap yourself in a space blanket, lean up against a tree and you'll warmly survive a night. I cut mine out of a 1/2" sleeping pad to fit the size of my daypack. Probably would cost \$5.

3. A disposable, pocket sized **plastic rain poncho.** Windproof, waterproof, light. But in addition to acting as a back up raincoat, it has a lot more uses. It's big enough to act as a personal rain shelter or windbreak. You can use it to collect rainwater. It helps in first aid. Costs about \$2 at a Dollar store.



4. **A windproof butane lighter.** Lasts forever, lights when wet. Easier to store than matches. Butane lighters don't work well when cold, but 2 minutes inside your jacket and its good to go. Will burn much, much longer than a match, and with higher heat. Get the windproof kind, not a standard Bic lighter that won't stay lit when its windy. Costs \$2 at a gas station.



5. **An LED headlamp.** LED lights use very, very little power, so 3 AAA batteries will keep my 7 bulb headlamp lit for 30 straight hours without going dim. More versatile than a flashlight. Even cheap ones are waterproof enough to handle a rainstorm. Mine's a junky one I picked up at Winner's for \$8, but better quality ones are available and likely worth it. I keep one of the batteries in backwards so it doesn't accidentally turn on in my pack, and change the batteries out at the start of the hiking season each year.



6. **A compass** and a GemTrek **map.** Never will I go into the woods without them. My Silva compass is basic and cost all of \$15, and I've had it for years.



7. **A roll of travel toilet paper.** Leaves or moss for me don't make the grade, plus, try finding them in the winter. In addition, I can use toilet paper as gauze for a bad cut, and wrap it in a piece of plastic taken from my rain poncho as an emergency first aid kit extension.

8. **Band-aids.** While it would be great to carry a full-blown first aid kit, I'm not sure that's necessary. Either I've got blisters, cuts and scrapes that I can use a bandaid on, or I can do the toilet paper/plastic wrap trick, or the Public Safety guys better

find me fast.

9. **A water filter.** There are those who believe that they can drink from most any lake or stream in K-Country with impunity. More power to them, I say. I personally don't like intestinal parasites, so I carry this little water filter straw that filters out giardia and other nasties. Weighs nothing, cost me \$13 at Atmosphere. Filters up to 70 litres, which is more than several days supply. Remember the "Survival Rule of 3": you can only survive 3 days without water, and you need about 4 litres per day per person.



10. **A day of calories.** In the woods, sitting still, you'll need about 2,000 – 3,000 calories per day. But that "Survival Rule of 3" tells us you can survive 3 weeks without food. Your goal in carrying food is to give you energy, keep you lucid and thinking straight. So I carry 5 breakfast granola bars, and a handful of sesame snaps (on top of any food I am carrying for the day). They basically don't go bad (crumbly and beat up, but not bad). They each have a fair nutrition balance with carbs, protein and fat. They are each individually packaged. They weigh very little. And they each have 150 calories. I like the taste of them better than PowerBars, but PowerBars work, too. My 2,000-calorie supply weighs 300 grams and costs \$6. They live in my pack all year, and I throw them out and start with fresh every summer.



11. **A Swiss Army Knife.** Nothing like having a corkscrew in the woods. Or a toothpick. In truth, I hardly ever use mine, nor expect to in an emergency survival situation, other than using the tweezers to pull out splinters. But they're handy to help start a fire, or amuse yourself whittling while waiting for KES to come find you.



12. **A whistle.** Mine's from the Canadian Red Cross, and it is really stinking loud. If you're lost in the woods and call out for help, your voice – which doesn't travel all that well to begin with – will be gone in an hour. But you can blast away on the whistle (remember how to send an SOS in Morse code?) all day without even getting winded (though you will get deafened; mine's a 115 dB puppy). Somebody's gonna hear that. \$4.



13. **Fleece gloves and a fleece hat.** Amazingly warm, weigh nothing. In the winter, I wear a hat and gloves, but still carry this lightweight beanie as extra warmth, and my fleece Hot Paws gloves just in case my other gloves get wet. And a warm hat and gloves makes any summer unexpected night out more pleasant. You can get both most anywhere for \$5 each.

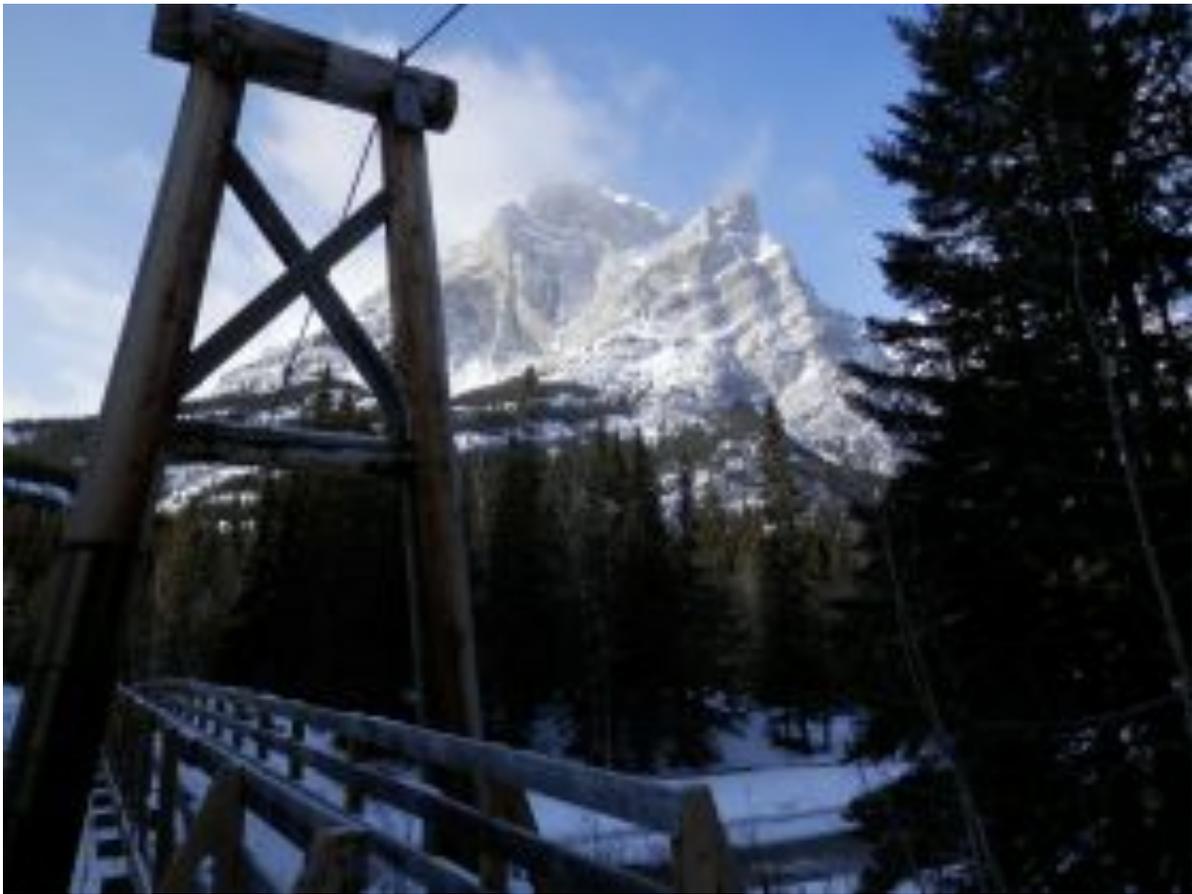


14. **An extra, season appropriate, warm layer.** In the winter, I carry – not wear – my down jacket. I wear the right clothes for the day, but carry my amazingly warm and

lightweight down jacket as a back up, “just in case”. In the summer, it’s either the down jacket, or a combo of rain jacket and warm fleece pullover. I don’t expect to or plan on wearing my emergency clothes (except my rain jacket). If I need them during the day, I have not dressed properly. If you need them during the day, what will you wear to stay warm at night when it’s even colder?



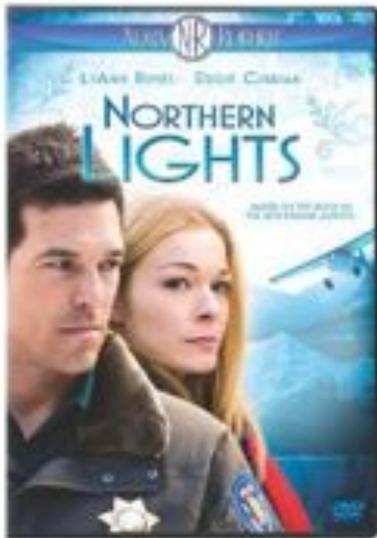
Above is my whole kit, and aside from the warm layers not shown in the picture, is the same kit winter and summer. Couple this kit with dressing properly in the first place, plus carrying your lunch and adequate water to start with, and that small kit will allow you to survive for quite a while in the woods. The cost is low, the space and weight it takes is negligible. There’s really no excuse for you to make up and carry a kit like this, too.



The Movies of Kananaskis: *Northern Lights*

10th in a Series by Derek Ryder, CoChair and 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.

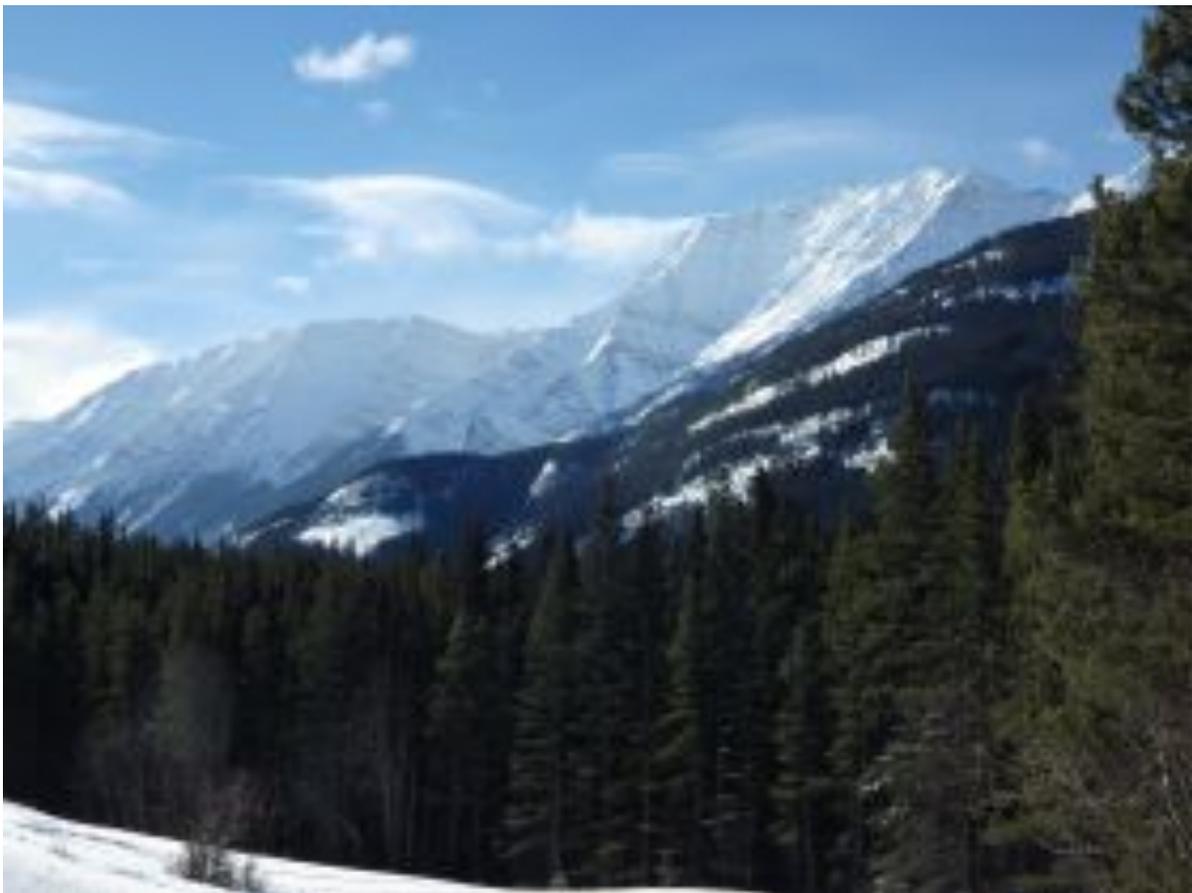


Today's movie is one for the ladies. Famous author Nora Roberts had several books turned into movies, including *Northern Lights*. This 2009 book was simultaneously made in to a "Made for TV" movie starring country singer LeAnn Rimes and Rosanna Arquette. Set in Alaska, the story involves a policeman who comes to town as the new chief, and stumbles into the discovery of the murder of LeAnn's Rimes father. It's pulp story telling and moviemaking, but...

It was filmed in a few familiar locations, including the Heritage Park, Bragg Creek, and at the Driftwood Day Use area on Spray Lakes. In the 1997 movie "*The Edge*" (with Alec Baldwin and Anthony Hopkins that I wrote about in instalment #3 of this series in the January 2013 newsletter), the Driftwood Day Use area was turned into a floatplane base in Alaska.

Here, it's also an Alaskan airport; the planes land on Hwy 742 and the Driftwood Day use area is the location of the "terminal" (they're flying into "Alaska" in a Canadian registered SuperCub, parked next to a Canadian registered Cessna 185). The first shots in the movie are Spray Lakes, and the gap above Canmore. The climber in the opening sequence is wearing MEC logo boots. Then they pan across Mt. Sparrowhawk and Read's Tower. My personal favourite is when they drop a panorama of K-Country peaks in the background of shots with the "Lunacy Lodge" (the Wainwright Hotel at Heritage Park) in the foreground.

It's not a great movie, and it's hard to find except on line. There were a series of 4 Nora Roberts books and movies all made in the K-Country area in 2009 (this one, *Midnight Bayou*, *High Noon* and *Tribute*). You have to be a die hard K-Country movie -- or Nora Roberts -- fan to want to find them all.



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!

Friends of Kananaskis Country
201-800 Railway Avenue
Canmore, AB T1W 1P1

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