



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



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The Program Report

by Joan Ford, Office Coordinator

June has been a busy month.

In the Canmore office first and foremost we were saddened by the departure of Rosemary Power. Her absence leaves a very large hole with enormous shoes to fill and the Canmore office is not the same without her. More on Rosemary later.

But we are picking up steam and endeavoring to patch together what will be a very busy year, with our first focus being getting our Crew Leader team ready. The Friends held a Crew Leader Workshop on May 28th in Calgary where our crew leaders got together, met one another and attended an overview of the coming summer. Newly updated and current Crew Leaders Manuals were also distributed to all attendees.

June 1st saw field training for the Crew Leaders at the Nordic Centre. By the end of June, the FOKC will be purchasing bear spray for each of our crew leaders to take with them as they head out on our upcoming trail days.



Our Crew Leaders has another busy weekend on June 7 and 8 meeting with Kyle for some hands on trail experience in the Elbow/Sheep area. Eight FOKC Crew Leaders cleaned up of 2 kms of the connector trail by the ranger station close to what used to be (before the 2013 flood) the Allen Bill Pond and gained valuable trail expertise along the way.

And finally, we held a First Aid training session for the Leaders on June 22nd. With all that training under our belts, we are looking forward to a safe season in the back country as we tend to the trails in Kananaskis.

June 14th was our first trail day of the season and was held along the Pocaterra trail complex in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. Alberta Parks put out the call and 18 volunteers put in a very hard day of work hauling logs and trees and clearing deadfall. By all reports from Parks it was a great success. To quote *“Andre was very happy with the work done. Way more than his crew of 2-4 can cover.”*



It was also an opportunity for the Canmore office to try its hand at the new program “SignUpGenius” for putting out call outs for volunteers and keeping track of volunteer

attendance. By all accounts, “SignUpGenius” has been successful. But as always, we appreciate any and all feedback from our members. How do you like it? Did it fit the bill as far as volunteer information and reminders go? Was it easy to use? [Send us a note](#) with any feedback you may have.

In the books for Wednesday, June 25th, we are gearing up for another trail day at Pocaterra to complete the work that was started on the 14th. Parks put out a call for 12 volunteers, and as of this writing, the trail day is fully booked with all 12 volunteers slots filled.

And last, but certainly not least, we are planning our **Annual General Meeting** which will be held on Saturday, June 28 at the Canmore Nordic Centre. We are kicking off with a bar-b-que at 12:00 noon (free food, please RSVP [on our website](#)) with the AGM to follow at 2:00. All our members are invited and it promises to be a lively and interesting (and filling) event. We hope to see you there!



Curious elk. Photo courtesy John Paczkowski, Alberta Parks

News from the Board

By James Early, Co-Chair

We already have a couple of trail projects under our belts, and we continue to extend our thanks to our Trail Program Title Sponsor, **Patagonia Banff / Calgary**, and we have plenty more to come over the course of this year.

We will be doing this, however, without the assistance of Rosemary Power. Regretfully, the Board accepted Rosemary's resignation from her position as Program Coordinator this past month and we are now in the process of searching for someone to fill her shoes. We are extremely grateful for Rosemary's efforts during her time with the Friends, and she will be missed. More on Rosemary later in the newsletter

In the words of Queen, however, (that's the band, not the Monarch), "*The show must go on*", and we are now looking forward to finalizing the details of an interpretive trail program where we will work hand in hand with Alberta Parks to systematically assess the state of interpretive trails in Kananaskis Country. Over the course of the next 10 years, Alberta Parks and the Friends are planning to undertake an overhaul of Kananaskis' interpretive trails to modernize interpretive signs at trail heads and along various trail routes. We expect an agreement, to this effect, to be concluded in short order.



Then we will need your help. We will be looking for your insight into candidate trails for interpretive sign projects and any suggested content that you might like to see. We will also be asking for your financial assistance, from small donations to large project-based grants. Perhaps you can sponsor a trail? Over the coming months you will be notified of the various ways and opportunities for you to become involved in this exciting project.

Finally, like Joan, I remind you that the Friends of Kananaskis Country's Annual General Meeting is fast approaching. Mark your calendars for **June 28, 2014, at 2:00 p.m.** The AGM will be held at the Canmore Nordic Centre, Meeting Room A. If you're interested in coming to the meeting or the BBQ that precedes it, please visit [our website](#) to RSVP.

Sad goodbyes to Rosemary

It is with sadness that the Board announces that Rosemary Power, our Program Coordinator for the last 18 months, has left our organization to pursue other opportunities.

Rosemary joined us in late 2012 as part of the restructuring of our Canmore office. She put in a huge amount of work coming up to speed on the role in the spring of 2013, and planning our 2013 trail care program.

After the floods, of course all that hard work was for naught, and she switched into super-human “flood recovery” mode, putting in a huge number of hours working on setting up trail care days, and personally volunteering on many of them — getting effectively no time

off for several months. In the fall, catching our breath, she switched into granting mode, and made flood restoration grant applications all winter long. In the last few months, she brought Joan Ford on and up to speed, insuring our on-going office a program continuity.



Rosemary has had a significant positive impact on our Society, and her legacy will be fondly remembered. We are sad to see her go.

ESRD Trail Reports

The Provincial Government has allocated another \$10M to rehabilitate back-country trails on Sustainable Resource Development managed lands. SRD Lands are those Provincial lands not inside a Provincial Park or Recreation Area. K-Country is a collection of various Parks and SRD lands, and has it's own \$60M targeted to flood damage restoration, so while this new \$10M is not primarily directed at K-Country, K-Country lands are eligible. You can read more about the way the \$10M is going to be spent [here](#).

On the bright side, if you get out onto SRD lands and see flood related damage that needs repair, the Government has set up a way you can report it. Click [here](#) to report flood damage you find.

We recommend that you post flood damage observations you make through this site generally. Parks and SRD are fairly familiar with the flood damage in the more popular and accessible parts of K-Country, but there are places like deep in the south part of K-Country (south of Mist Creek, the western and southern sections of the Elbow-Sheep Wildland Park, south of Highwood Junction, west of Etherington Creek and Cataract Creek, south of Plateau Mountain) that are less well traveled and where flood damage assessments have been more difficult.

The Recognition Program kicks off!

As was mentioned in the last newsletter, our recognition program for volunteers (you) is being implemented, courtesy of the Banff Community Foundation. Since we're a "Safety First" kind of organization, the first item that will be given out to all volunteers are work gloves.



These gloves feature tough split cowhide on the palms and fingers, and a breathable cotton backing emblazoned with the Friends logo. New pairs will be available from the Trail Crew Leader every trail care day, but if you get a pair, feel free to bring them back for subsequent work days.

Anti-Spam Legislation and The Friends

The Federal Government recently passed anti-spam legislation, which should reduce the amount of junk e-mail you get. They require us to have easy ways for you to say you don't want mail from us (*easy; everything we send you has an **UNSUBSCRIBE** link at the bottom*). But the way they implemented it means that even for us non-profit, charitable societies, we have to check that your *REALLY* want to hear from us. Our crack IT team (me) needs to implement this, though, so soon, you will get an e-mail from us asking you to not only re-subscribe to the newsletter, but to re-join the Friends. We hope you will. The trails in K-Country need you.

More trail work opportunities with the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association

Our friends over at the GBCTA are always on the lookout for assistance building and maintaining the trails in the greater Bragg Creek area. Most of their trails are for mountain biking and cross country skiing, but many are used for hiking, too. Unlike us, they plan their events well in advance, and because the work mostly on SRD lands, get to work independently of Parks. We occasionally team up with them on projects, and there's some overlap in what we do. If you like that space and are interested in helping them out, head over to the [GBCTA website](#) for more details.





The Critters of Kananaskis Country - White Tailed Ptarmigan

Fourth in a series by Derek Ryder

Kananaskis Country is home to a wide variety of creatures, great and small. Big ones, like bears and elk, get a lot of attention. In this series, I'm going to look at some of the ones we pay less attention to.

Padding around on feathered feet (see the photo at right), the white tailed ptarmigan is amazingly well adapted for its full time life above treeline in the "tundra" spaces of the mountains. They can tunnel into snowdrifts and hide from the cold in the winter. They stay together in larger groups during the cold season to conserve body warmth, and in fact they are experts at body heat management. Those feathered feet are an interesting adaptation; not only do they insulate their feet to minimize winter heat loss, they act as snowshoes. The already lightweight birds can literally walk on snow effortlessly.



For these birds are more walkers than fliers, and they don't even like to run. Other than to avoid predation, they virtually never fly. And it's a good job, too, for if you spook them into

flying, they can die due to heat build up. It's not uncommon to find a small flock, and rather than run away, they will wander around you slowly, trying to act invisible. Think it doesn't work? Just look at the photo at left.



Because like their cousins the Spruce Grouse, they are masters of camouflage, to the point where they are so convinced you can't see them that stepping on them is possible. In their summer coats, they match perfectly with the rock and tundra; in the winter, they turn pure white and disappear in the snow.

They build nests on the ground that are not hidden and are easy to step on, too, like the one at right. Once again, they rely on mom's camouflage to hide the nest while they're on it. The chicks –hatched in June -- start off with ragged, poor plumage and grow into their disguise over their first summer.



While not that common, in the right habitat, there are a lot of them. My two favourite places to find them are up at Sparrowhawk Tarns (where the photo at the top of this article is), and in Old Goat Glacier Basin. They don't make much noise – the odd, quiet, hoot is all you ever hear – so you see instead what appears to be rocks out for a walk, like the



guy to the left. They live in family groups of 2-6, but collect in groups of a dozen or more in the winter. I know of back-country skiers who see them wandering on the snow in the winter, though they tend to like flat meadow areas with willows rather than slopes worth skiing on.

These guys are part of the High Elevation Localized Species (HELs) research project being conducted by our friends at the Bow

Valley Naturalists. If you see a ptarmigan in your travels, feel free to register that sighting on [their website](#)



The Movies of K-Country: Brokeback Mountain

13th 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.

There is probably no more famous a K-Country movie than ***Brokeback Mountain***. Shot in 2004 and starring Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Randy Quaid, and Anne Hathaway, and based on a short story by Annie Proulx, it is a movie that made many people talk about its themes and subject matter.

There is a *LOT* of interest in where this movie was filmed. A Swerve Magazine that came in the Calgary Herald devoted an entire issue to the making of the movie (I still have it, somewhere). There's an [entire website](#) devoted to it. Just *some* of the filming locations include:

- The campsite where the famous controversial scene takes place: near the Goat Creek day use area;
- The second campsite: Mud Lake



- Jack ascending the ridge: Mt. Inflexible
- The picture of the mountains in Ennis' closet: Mt. Lougheed from the Wind Valley trailhead;
- Where supplies are dropped off: The Galatea Bridge
- The pup tent in the snow: Fortress ski area
- The argument with the bear: King Creek
- Driving into the mountains to go fishing: Hwy 742 near the Peninsula day use area
- The meadows where sheep are run: Moose Mountain.

And there are more. Most are mapped with photos at the site above. This is the preeminent “show off K-Country” movie, though for me, *Open Range* (which I wrote about in [February, 2013](#)) has better cinematography and makes K-Country look more welcoming. *Brokeback* is readily available in bargain bins for \$5-\$10.



Your Donations are Always Appreciated and Needed

We are pleased to recognize the contributions of the [Calgary Foundation](#), who in 2014, made a 4 year commitment to support the Friends in flood recovery efforts.

The Friends are also supported by the [Patagonia stores in](#)



[Calgary and Banff](#), who are our Title Trail Program sponsor, and suppliers of high quality gear for the outdoor enthusiast.

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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