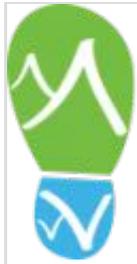


There's still fall hiking out there, if you know where to look!



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



In this month's newsletter...

- The Patagonia Trail Care Program Report: Season updates & stats
- News from the Board: Wanna come play?
- Other News: Alberta Parks Flood Rehabilitation Open House, cool videos
- Kananaskis Special Places: Upper & Lower K-Lakes
- The Critters of K-Country: Marmots

The Patagonia Trail Care Program Report

by Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator

Its official: fall season has settled in and the Trail Care season is winding down. I'm sad to be putting Trail Care days aside for the winter until spring returns, as I feel like I was just getting warmed up, having joined the Friends in late July. Now that I've had the chance to tally our volunteer days and hours, I am amazed at the amount of time and effort our volunteers dedicated towards Kananaskis Country Trails. To all our outstanding volunteers, you deserve a winter break, you've earned it! Rest up and get re-energized for next season, because it's going to be a good one as we commence our work on the Trans Canada Trail/High Rockies Trail, along with our regular trail work with Alberta Park.

Trail Care Update

This month we held:

- 4 trail days...
- At 2 different locations: West Bragg Snowshoe Loop Trail and Pocaterra Trail...
- With 37 volunteers contributing over 260 hours of trail work



Thank you to the volunteers and crew leaders who did amazing work!

Upcoming Trail Care Days

As mentioned above, the trail season is winding down. We currently don't have any trail days planned, but there may be one or two days' of work clearing ski trails. When we have confirmed dates, as always, we will send you a note and post it on the [Current Projects](#) page of our website.

Trail Care Season Highlights

It has been a successful volunteer Trail Care season, with over one hundred volunteers helping to rebuild and maintain Kananaskis Country Trails. I'd like to share some of the season's highlights so we can all celebrate and rejoice our accomplishments.

- 35 Trail Care days undertakes
- 2,107 Volunteer-hours recorded doing Trail Care events
- 160 different individuals were engaged
- 301 volunteer slots were filled

Trail Care projects were undertaken in the following areas:

- Allen Bill Pond
- Canmore Nordic Centre
- Cat Creek

- Highway Clean-Up
- Loggers Loop
- Mount Shark Ski Trails
- Pocaterra Trail
- Prairie Creek Trail
- Ribbon Creek
- Upper Kananaskis Lakes
- West Bragg Snowshoe Loop Trail



Lots of effort was put into rebuilding the upper section of the Ribbon Creek Trail. We held 10 Trail Care days working on the section starting where the Link Cross-Country Ski Trail meets Ribbon Creek up to the point where the trail passes the North Ribbon Creek bridge. The new trail is higher up on the slope compared to the old trail which followed the creek and washed away in the 2013 flood. It offers more views of the neighbouring mountains and has a nice single track flow. It will serve as a hiking trail in the summer and single track cross-country skiing in the winter.

Volunteer Feedback – Please & Thank You

We strive to provide a well-organized, safe and enjoyable volunteer experience through our Trail Care program and we hope this program is meeting your expectations.

However there is always room for improvement. We would appreciate your feedback so we can learn from it and make positive changes. Your feedback will add value to our program and your volunteer experience. You can download the volunteer feedback form [here](#), please & thank you!



Volunteer Appreciation Evening – October 29

On October 29th, the Friends of Kananaskis Country and Alberta Parks would like to take the opportunity to celebrate a successful Trail Care season and give thanks to our outstanding volunteers. There will be food & drinks, a slide show highlighting Trail Care days, great door prizes, and a feature presentation with **Darin Langhorst**, P. Eng with McElhanney Consulting Services. Darin will be presenting the High Rockies Trail, an exciting addition to the Trans Canada Trail. This 80km section of trail will connect the Goat Creek Staging Area with British Columbia at Elk Pass. Starting spring 2015, the Friends of Kananaskis Country will be working on various sections of this notable project.

EVENT DATE: Wednesday, October 29

EVENT TIME: 6:30 – 9:00pm

EVENT LOCATION: Capitol Hill Community Association 1531 21 Avenue NW, Calgary

RSVP [here](#). We look forward to celebrating with you!

Ways You Can Volunteer With Us

The good news is there's more than one way you can volunteer and be involved with the Friends of Kananaskis Country. You can sign up for a Trail Care day, become a Crew Leader, join our Board, or offer your expertise in an area our non-profit organization could benefit.

Trail Care: Our Trail Care program partners with the Government of Alberta to ensure safe, appropriate efforts to provide trail care and stewardship at the highest level of practice. Our projects engage volunteers at all levels of ability and intensity. Trail Care days run throughout the summer on both weekends and weekdays.

Crew Leader: The role of the Crew Leader is to ensure volunteers have a safe and enjoyable Trail Care experience. This person represents the Friends at the trail site and liaises with Alberta Parks trail crew. We ask that people interested in becoming a crew leader have volunteered a minimum of two Trail Care days and are willing to volunteer as crew leader at least 2 times during the 2015 Trail Care season. We will provide two days of training in spring 2015 to learn and practice leadership, safety and construction skills, and we offer first-aid basic training to those who are not certified.

Board of Directors: If you are compelled by our vision for "A Kananaskis Country of exquisite natural and cultural landscapes enjoyed by present and future generations" and would like to volunteer with us on an annual basis, we are currently recruiting Board members to join our team. See below for more information.

And if you have a gifted skill/expertise or something else you can offer such as IT support, we would be grateful for your help. For more information on volunteering with Trail Care, Crew Leader, or anything else you can help with, contact Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator, at 403-678-5593 or nancy@kananaskis.org.





A happy grizzly. Photo courtesy John Paczkowski, Alberta Parks

News from the Board: Wanna come play?

By Derek Ryder, Co-Chair

Being a Board Member is a fun and fulfilling volunteer “job”. It’s very rewarding to sit back and look at the ways our organization can move forward to support the Alberta Parks and the long-term future of K-Country.

In September, the Board had a very productive meeting looking at how we are organized to accomplish the above. As I mentioned last month, we passed a number of resolutions that will enable Board members better, and align our work in subcommittees better. We restructured and reduced the number of subcommittees down to the following critical four :

- Volunteer Trail Care
- Education & Events
- Fundraising
- Finance

We also passed the resolution to create the Advisory Council, and have already started the process of engaging with folks whose wisdom and advice enable us to be a better Board.

There are many ways for individuals who care about and enjoy K-Country to give back to the space that matters to them. As members of our Society, you have already demonstrated you care about K-Country. As donors to our Society, you've helped deliver the programs that matter to K-Country to restore it from the 2013 floods and keep it wonderful for generations to come. As volunteers who come out to work on trails, you've already put your caring into action.



Perhaps you'll consider joining our Board or Advisory Council, assisting us in designing and executing the programs that make K-Country a weekend escape and place of restoration for the millions of visitors who annually get out on trails and recover from their daily lives. If you're interested, just send a note to info@kananaskis.org.

Open House: Kananaskis Country Flood Rehabilitation 2014 / 2015

Join Alberta Parks for an open house and progress update on restoration and mitigation projects throughout Kananaskis. Speak with Alberta Parks representatives about:

- How the 2013 flood impacted current and future ecology, watershed management, and recreation in Kananaskis Country
- Planning, progress and completion for major Kananaskis flood recovery infrastructure projects, including trails, backcountry and frontcountry campgrounds, and day-use facilities
- Mitigation and planning for future flooding



Provide feedback on how flood damage and recovery has impacted your experience in Kananaskis, and learn how you can support the park.

Thursday, November 6, 2014

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Room 212, Elevation Place, 700 Railway Avenue, Canmore

For more information, contact Jill Sawyer jill.sawyer@gov.ab.ca or 403-678-5500 ext. 235

Fun grizzly bear videos

Every month, we publish photos taken by the wildlife research folks with Alberta Parks, courtesy of John Paczkowski, the Parks Ecologist. Occasionally, really interesting photos come up, and this past month, a remote camera caught a grizzly bear having an argument with a closed bear trap. If you ever wondered why you should stay in your car when a grizzly is nearby, [this video](#) ought to convince you.



In case you are wondering, there's a dead beaver carcass in the trap to be used as a lure, and the trap is locked shut as they were trying to catch and tag a different bear. Oh -- and the trap weighs well over 1,000 lbs.



Kananaskis' Special Places: Upper and Lower K-Lakes

Seventh in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

The greater Kananaskis area protects numerous special places, and in this series of articles, I'm going to take you to a number of my favourites. Some of these hide, and some are in the open but get passed by. All are worth exploring if you want to see the unique bits of our beloved space.

One of the parts of K-Country that you can't help but notice are the reservoirs. In later

articles, I'm going to talk about K-Country's natural lakes (there's really aren't that many of them), but in this one, I'll start looking at the big lakes in K-Country, all of which are hydro-electric reservoirs.



Lower and Upper Kananaskis Lakes are natural lakes that were made substantially bigger by the hydro projects. They were initially connected by a 1 km long river, and a 3 m waterfall. The Upper Lake was first dammed in 1932, but only to manage flow to the power plants far downstream at Seebe and Ghost. In 1942, a higher earthfill dam, Kananaskis Main Dam, was built across the outlet (now Upper Lakes Day Use Area) and another dam, Intake Dam

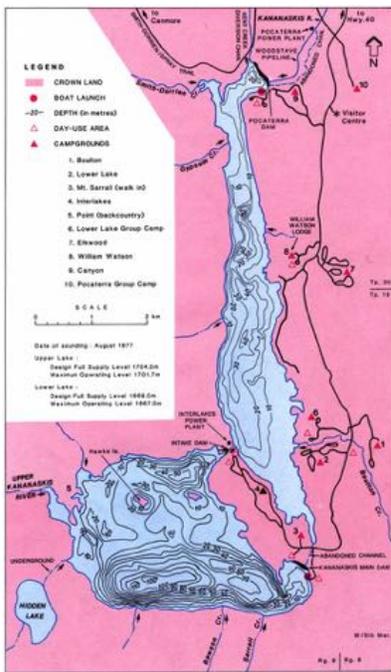
(at Interlakes), was built at the northeast corner of the lake. These dams raise the upper lake level 13.7 m above the natural level. From 1942 to 1955, water was released through a steel-gated pipeline at the Intake Dam, but still only to augment winter flow on the Bow River. In 1955, a power plant was finally built at Interlakes. Most water entering Upper Kananaskis Lake is stored from spring until October. Almost all drawdown is from November to February; some outflow is released between March and October depending on lake levels, runoff and demand for power.

Upper K-Lakes is DEEP, at a peak of 108 m. It is about 7.8 square kilometers in size, and collects water from a 139 square kilometer drainage basin.

Lower K-Lake was raised 11 m by the building of the Pocaterra Dam and power plant in 1955. In 1956, Kent Creek was diverted to flow into Lower K-Lake, and in 1959, both French and Burstall Creeks were diverted to run north to Spray Lakes instead of south to Lower K-Lake. Until recently replaced, water left the Pocaterra Dam through a leaky woodstave pipeline that you could see on the Kananaskis Canyon Interpretive Trail. On this trail, you could also see the old canyon that used to contain the Kananaskis River. TransAlta replaced that pipeline in 2013.



Lower K-Lakes is only about 42 m deep at its deepest. It is about 5.25 square kilometers in size, and collects water from a 307 square kilometer drainage basin.



Despite both lakes being popular fishing locations, neither K-Lake is good fish habitat, probably because both lakes are very low in nutrients. In 1860, both cutthroat and bull trout were reported in Lower Lake, but repeated introductions of cutthroat to Upper Lakes have all been unsuccessful. One study said the original Upper K-Lake was barren of fish prior to stocking. Both Upper and Lower Lakes have been stocked periodically since 1914, and annually since 1965. In 1981, an experiment was run trying to get rainbow trout to spawn in Smith-Dorien creek. Despite releasing almost 70,000 fish, no spawning was established. Use of live bait in the past introduced lake chub, longnose dace, longnose sucker and white sucker over the years, some of which have hybridized. Upper Lake in particular supports only a small fish population other than what is stocked each year. The survival rate of newly stocked fish is very low.

In order to improve the fishing, in 1967 thousands of opossum shrimp, a small freshwater shrimp about 2.5 cm long, were released by Fish and Wildlife Division into the Upper and Lower Kananaskis lakes. The source of these shrimp was Kootenay Lake, British Columbia, where they had been introduced from the Waterton Lakes in 1949. It took a few years for the shrimp to become well established but in a survey in 1982 they were found to be the food most extensively used by rainbow trout. The best way to see the shrimp is to open the stomach of a fresh-caught trout. The red colour of the fish flesh is partly due to its diet of these rosy crustaceans.



To quote the [Atlas of Alberta Lakes](#): “The Kananaskis Lakes support a popular sport fishery for trout, but the popularity may be attributed more to the spectacular scenery than to the success of angling.” And spectacular scenery it is.



The Critters of K-Country: Marmots

7th in a Series by Derek Ryder, CoChair and Director of Communications

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.

They are the stationary sentinels of the Rockies. They sit on rock perches, watching over the landscape, ruminating on life and you as you walk by. For they are Hoary Marmots, and, a more laid-back mountain critter is hard to find. These are not pikas, scurrying among the rocks in constant motion. These are not chickadees, that can't sit still for a moment. No, marmots are not in a rush, and when you find them, they are dead easy to photograph, as in many cases, they just won't move or change what you're doing as a result of you being there.





There are two kinds of marmots in K-Country. Yellow Marmots can occasionally be seen deep in the south part, but the most common by far is the Hoary Marmot, who become more prevalent the farther north you go. Both are members of the rodent family, and their closest cousin is the woodchuck or groundhog. Being rodents, they chew endlessly, and a marmots diet consists of anything green growing in the high alpine, including lichens. That's a lot of options, and by early September, marmots can get quite plump indeed.

One thing Hoarys are known for is their call – an ear piercing whistle. This is commonly a warning call, and in a high alpine cirque, it travels a long way indeed. The thing they warn about most are Golden Eagles, who predate them by blasting in fast and low, a scene I witnessed in 2013 on a K-Country trail. Hoarys mate only once every 2 years, with a brood of 3-6 pups, who are almost adult sized by the time they go back into their burrows for the winter in mid-September. The Eagle I saw picked off a young of the year.



Hoarys are also predated by Grizzlies, who dig up their burrows, and Wolverines, who can even dig them up in the winter.

As noted, they live in burrows, often with neighbouring pikas in the rock fields they commonly share. They hibernate from mid-September to early May. The start of larch season is often hibernation time, so if I go to Sparrowhawk Tarns to see the larches, I probably won't see marmots.

Other good places to find them include Old Goat Glacier, Yamnuska, Old Baldy basin, and Buller Pass. And I've seen them crossing the Smith Dorien-Spray Trail near Buller Lake, AND Hwy 68 near Lusk Pass. They may be denizens of the high alpine, but they get down low, too.



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 2014 Trail Care Program

Title 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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