



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



In this month's newsletter...

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Membership Poll - Share your input

by Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator

Over the last few years, the membership of the Friends of Kananaskis Country has increased significantly. While this was partly triggered by the strong desire of volunteers to help repair the damage caused by the Floods of 2013, in general there has been a growing interest in supporting the Kananaskis region. In reviewing the corresponding Trail Care activities over the past few years it has been noticeable that the number of volunteers actually getting out into the field to work on these activities has not mirrored the general increase in membership.

Given the expected extensive Trail Care program for 2015, and the potential for even more and varied projects in the coming years, this was a good time to poll the membership. The [short survey](#) is intended to provide the Friends of Kananaskis Country with background information that will be used to adjust the Trail Care program and highlight other initiatives that might be of interest to the membership. In particular we are interested in understanding what type of activities people want to work on, what areas of the Kananaskis region are of most interest, are there some days that are better than others to hold a project, and what can the Friends work on to enhance the volunteer experience.

We hope that you will take this opportunity to provide your valuable input and provide input that will help steer the future directions of our volunteer programs. Thanks for your time and contribution!

Link to survey: Click [HERE](#)

Join us at Trails Fest!

Come celebrate Kananaskis trails, people & culture!
Bring your hikers, bike, or runners & join a fun trail activity!
Connect with local clubs & organizations

TRAILS FEST

May 30 - 11 am - 3 pm
Canmore Nordic Centre

**Celebrate Kananaskis trails,
people & culture!**

Join us for festive activities & presentations
Connect with local clubs & organizations
All events free (donations welcome)

The Friends of Kananaskis Country is excited to introduce TRAILS FEST, a celebration of Kananaskis trails, people, and culture on May 30th at the Canmore Nordic Centre, 11am – 3:00pm. The event will consist of multiple activities that showcase the many ways trails are used. All events free.

Event Itinerary

11:00 – 12:00 Presentations:

- Realizing the West Bragg Creek All Season Plan presented by *Greater Bragg Creek Trail Association*
- Trans Canada Trail: High Rockies Linkage presented by *McElhanney Consulting Services*

11:00 – 1:30 Connect with local Clubs & Organizations

12:00 BBQ Lunch (free, donations welcome)

1:30 – 3:00 Guided Activities (hiking, biking, disc golf, running, orienteering, & more...)

For schedule and to sign up for a guided activities, go to our website at <http://www.kananaskis.org/upcoming-events/>.

We look forward to celebrating Trails Fest with you!

Don't forget Kananaskis Country is bear country – please bring bear spray!

Upcoming Trail Care Projects

Sat, June 13: Diamond T

Sat, June 13: Canmore Nordic Centre

Wed, July 15: Prairie Creek

Sat, July 18: Prairie Creek

Sat, Aug 8: Canmore Nordic Centre

Sun, Aug 9: Canmore Nordic Centre

Sat, Sept 19: Canmore Nordic Centre

To sign up: Click [HERE](#)



News from the Board

By Jamie McPhail, Board Member

2015 AGM

Our 2015 AGM will be held June 20 at the Canmore Nordic Centre from 2:00pm - 3:30pm in Meeting Room A, located in the CNC Day Lodge on the 1st Floor. Business will

include review of Bylaws. The AGM is open to our membership and the public.

Canmore Nordic Centre, Warming Hut

Friends of Kananaskis is partnering with the Canmore Nordic Centre Warming Hut Committee as the Fiscal Sponsor. In this role the Friends will take responsibility for financial administration and reporting.

The 30' x 30' hut, expected to be open Nov. 1, 2015, will be a winter-use only facility for cross-country skiers at the CNC meadow. It will be 2.5 kilometres from the day lodge, with a wonderful view of the meadow. Visitors will find a natural gas stove, tables, chairs and a picnic table, solar-powered lights, and its own toilet facility. The hut will be open from 7 am to 11 pm.

Users will find a beautiful and warm location, toasty on cold days and a fine spot to dive into the pack for lunch or a snack. Educational messages about the local environment and wildlife will be posted.

The warming hut will serve families and novice skiers in particular, enticing them further on fairly flat trails. In turn this should lessen traffic on Banff Trail.

The hut, and money raised will also create a sustainment fund.

Interested in helping?

Contact Ken Davies at ken@lumina.ca or by phone at 403-678-9418.



Kananaskis' Special Places: Caves Part 1

10th 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.

If you're trying to find places in K-Country that are truly "hidden", caves win. Often with only a tiny entrance, the caves of K-Country are readily missed from the outside, with their secret treasures hidden underground. K-Country has a reasonable number of caves, and in this 2- part series, I'll help you understand why that is and what's hiding in them.

But first a disclaimer: I'm no longer a caver. I spent time caving in Ontario some 40 years ago with my friend Steve, and learned a few things. The first and most important thing I learned is that caving can be dangerous. I was exiting a cave many years ago and about 50 m in from the entrance, I found a terrified young man whose lights had failed, stuck alone and in the dark. Caving requires skills and equipment similar to climbing. Never, ever consider caving without education on caving skills.





The best place to find out what caving is really like is in Rat's Nest Cave, Canada's 4th longest cave. Rat's Nest is inside Grotto Mountain just 10 minutes from Canmore, and while it is a Provincial Historic Resource, it is not a "show cave". There are no lights, no stairs, and no end of places to slither on your belly or squeeze through incredibly tight passageways with names like "The Laundry Chute" (Steve in the photos above)– or drop 20 m on a rappel, as Steve is doing in the photo at left. In Rat's Nest, you'll see what caving is really all about. Access to the cave for most people is only via a guided tour with Canmore Cave Tours (www.canmorecavetours.com).

K-Country is great for caves because the best caves are in karst topography. Some rocks can be dissolved by water, and the result of that is called karsting. Limestone, which makes up a whole lot of the Rockies, is readily if slowly dissolved by water (the process speeds up if the water is slightly acidic). Crack the rock to let the water in, apply plenty of water over time, and you'll end up with a karst feature like a sinkhole or a cave. You'll find karst features all over K-Country, including limestone pavement and sinkholes.

Rat's Nest started forming about 55 million years ago along with the Rockies themselves. Faults in the then-forming Grotto Mountain started to let water in, and for 20 million years, the cave just got slowly bigger. Then along came the ice age, and from 1.6 million to 12,000 years ago, glacial meltwater had a heyday making the cave bigger. Then the glaciers receded, the cave drained, and for the last 10,000 years, water has slowly dripped through the cave leaving minerals behind.

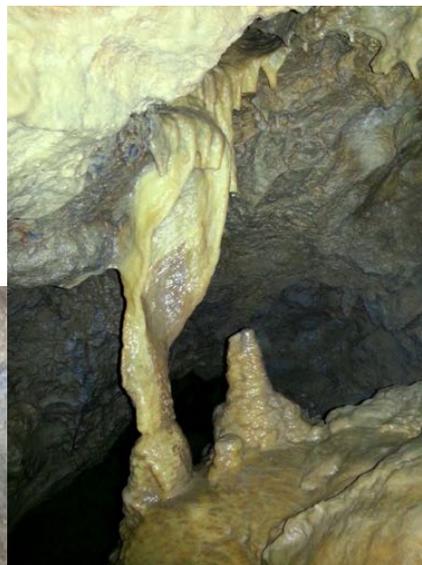


A visit to Rat's Nest will introduce you to spectacular cave formations, all as a result of the re-precipitation of minerals out of water, much the same way the same minerals form on your showerhead. Typical formations you'll see include:



- Flowstone, a rock that looks like creamy liquid dribbling down a wall – except it's rock;
- Soda straws, thin delicate hollow tubes that dangle from the ceiling pictured above, and grow at the rate of 1 mm per decade;
- Helictites, like tiny soda straws that seem to ignore gravity and grow in curlicue shapes;
- Cave curtains, draping sections of calcite;
- Stalacties and stalagmites, when they connect form the classic pillars and columns;

- Moon milk, something like flowstone that is in fact not forming as a rock but has organic matter in it;
- Rimstone dams, looking like terraces of some miniature agriculture.



And then there's the "other stuff" you find in Rat's Nest:

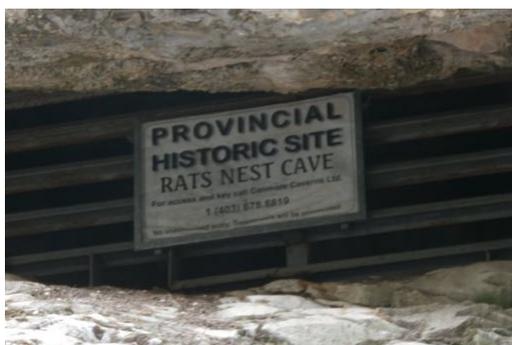
- Overwintering harvesters (daddy longlegs, for the uninitiated), in little clumps, as in the photo taken by Steve on our recent trip into the cave);
- Bushy tailed woodrats, or pack rats, for which the cave is named.



These are incredibly cute, looking like a cross between a pika and a chinchilla. There are numerous nests near the entrance, and while fast and agile, aren't particularly afraid of people;

- Bones. For thousands of years, animals have entered the cave, fallen in and died. There are buffalo bones galore, plus sheep and deer and goats and all manner of canid bones. There are even fish bones, assumed to come from ospreys or other fishing birds leaving their carcasses behind.

Some of the things you see in Rat's Nest are there because the cave is a constant 4° C and virtually 100% humidity all year round, hence harvesters and other bugs come in to winter. One thing you don't see is bats. For various reasons, there are virtually no bats in the cave.



[Canmore Cave Tours](#) offers two tours, an Explorer and an Adventure tour. Both go to similar places, but the Adventure Tour throws in the rappel and Laundry Chute tight slither, plus a few very tight squeezes. Both of these tours can be work and are not for the out of shape (I had lots of bruises after my recent foray into the cave).

For more info on Rat's Nest Cave, look for the book "Under Grotto Mountain: Rat's Nest Cave" by Charles J. Yonge. If you want to learn more about caving in Alberta, you can contact the [Alberta Speleological Society](#).

Next in this series, I'll look at some other caves in K-Country, including two where the temperature is not a balmy +4° all year round, but rather much chillier than that.



The Movies of Kananaskis: INTERSTELLAR

17th in a series by Derek Ryder, 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.

In the summer of 2013, the town of Canmore was all-abuzz with Mathew McConaughey sightings as he was filming INTERSTELLAR, a \$165 million sci-fi epic also starring Michael Caine, Anne Hathaway, Ellen Burstyn, John Lithgow, Casey Affleck, Wes Bentley, William Devane and Matt Damon. The primary filming in the area was done at night near the Goat Creek parking lot, and the intense lighting caused an ethereal glow to come from behind Ha Ling peak for several days. There were plenty of rumours about how much was being filmed in the area while the movie was shooting.

Alas, while lots of scenes were filmed in cornfields near Okotoks, Lethbridge, Fort MacLeod, Calgary (and even the Longview high school), the Kananaskis scenes last about 2 minutes, are entirely night shots, and can't be identified as being K-Country. Ah,

well.

The one scene airs at the 23-minute mark into the movie. McConaughey's character and his daughter have driven hundreds of miles to a latitude/longitude, which turns out to actually be the entrance to the Rundle Canal under Ha Ling peak. They break through the fence to find NASA's underground secret headquarters (which if it were actually where they say it is, would be really, really wet. And in Canada.) There's a shot of them driving on the Spray Lakes road (at night). And that's it.

I'm not a fan of this movie for a bunch of reasons (including a lot of scientific inaccuracy) AND for a "K-Country movie", there's nothing identifiable in it at all. Sigh.

Interestingly, both Anne Hathaway filmed BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN, and Casey Affleck filmed THE ASSASSINATION OF JESSE JAMES, in K-Country.



Your Donations are Always Appreciated and Needed

We are pleased to recognize the contributions of the [Calgary Foundation](#), who in 2014, made a four-year commitment to support the Friends in flood recovery efforts, and in 2015 made a two-year commitment to support the refreshing interpretive signage project.



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 restore flood damaged trails. Friends of Kananaskis Country is a registered charity in good standing and we provide charitable receipts for donations over \$25.00. 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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