



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



In this month's newsletter...

- Trail Care Projects Preview
 - Trails Fest - June 11 - Kananaskis Village
 - News from the Board: The Things You Find
 - Spring is Tick Season; Upcoming Spray Lakes Sawmills Open Houses; Congratulations to Deb & Don
 - Critters of Kananaskis: Columbian Ground Squirrel
 - Flowers of Kananaskis: Prairie Crocus
-

TRAIL CARE PROJECTS PREVIEW

by Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator

I trust you've had a wonderful winter, and starting to anticipate the upcoming Trail Care season. It's guaranteed to be another great year of flood and non-flood related trail projects with partners: Alberta Parks, High Rockies Trail (Alberta TrailNet/McElhanney), and the Town of Canmore. We are projecting about 40-50 trail events. Although 2016 trail projects are still being determined, we do have confirmed volunteer projects that we are excited to share with you. And so, drum roll...

Peter Lougheed / Spray Valley - Flood Recovery Projects

Trail	Estimate Date	Description	Volunteer Days
Fox Creek Trail	June / July	Approximately 150 meters of tread work. Volunteer component to include hauling / spreading / finishing work.	3-4 days
		Installation of (2) gabions (1m x 1m x 2m) at southern most bridge. Volunteer component to install / fill and armour around gabions.	1 day
Smith Dorrien Trails	June / July / Aug / Sept	Bridge construction and construction of trail re-route associated with the Upper Headwall creek crossing. Excavator required for the re-route on the north side and for the bridge crib on the south side. Reclamation of the old trail/crossing. Volunteer component to hand finish tread and banks behind excavator.	2-3 days
		Trail repairs along the lower trails near James Walker creek and around Sawmill day use to include repairing the Ford of the creek. Volunteer component to hand finish tread and banks behind excavator.	3 days
		Repairs to trail and ramps/Ford around the Upper crossing of James Walker creek. Volunteer component to hand finish tread and banks behind excavator.	1-2 days
Three Isle Trail	July / August / September	Gabion installation upstream of bridge over unnamed flood drainage approximately 200 meters south of the confluence of Three Isle creek and the Kananaskis river. Volunteer	3-6 days 1.5 hour hike approach both

		component to install / fill and armour around ways gabions.	
Upper Lake Trail	June / September	Sarrail Creek Bridge: Small re-route and finishing touches to ramps. Volunteer component to hand finish tread. Create viewpoint and re-install Bernie Kathol memorial bench c/w access trail below falls.	1 day Possibly 1 day
Elk Pass Trail	September	Finishing touches to repairs completed in 2013/14/15	Possibly 1 day
Pocaterra Trail	October	Complete remaining repairs to other flood damage started in 2014. Volunteer component to removing old bridge.	2 days
Chester-Sawmill	June - Sept	Following the Chester-Sawmill Winter Trail Enhancement Proposal approvals, volunteer to help implement recommendation focused on re-routes, brush work, and signage installation.	6-10 days

Peter Lougheed / Spray Valley - Maintenance Projects

Trail	Estimate Date	Description	Volunteer Days
Rawson Lake	TBD	Interpretive Signs Installation	1 day
		Rock hardening around the shore line	1 days
Mt. Shark	TBD	Maintenance on the 15km ungroomed trail	1 day

Public Land: Backcountry Trail Flood Rehabilitation Program

Trail	Estimate Date	Description	Volunteer Days
Volcano Ridge & Creek	August	Repair flood damage Multi-day: 2 night camping at Three Point	2-3 days
Canyon Creek	TBD	Repair flood damage	1-2 days

Bow Valley / Evan Thomas

Trail	Estimate Date	Description	Volunteer Days
Heart Creek	May / June	Interpretive Signs Installation	10+ days
Montane Trail	June-July	Trail maintenance	4+ days

Other BVPP projects to be confirmed soon

Canmore Nordic Centre

Trail	Estimate Date	Description	Volunteer Days
Long Loop	June-Sept	About 6km of new trail to be build	10+ days
Trail Maintenance	June-Sept	TBD	4+ days

Sheep Elbow

Trail	Estimate Date	Description	Volunteer Days
Projects to be confirmed soon			

Other confirmed projects include the **High Rockies Trail**, and municipal trails in and around the **Town of Canmore**.

We will be posting upcoming volunteer trail projects and opening sign-ups as soon as we can. For several of the above projects, the season needs to get underway before they can confirm when we can do our part.

If you don't already have a volunteer profile set up, and want to receive email notifications for upcoming Trail Care events, sign up [here](#).



We look forward to another great Trail Care season and seeing you on the trails!

TRAILS FEST - June 11 - Kananaskis Village

by Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator



On June 11th, the Friends of Kananaskis Country will host the 2nd annual **TRAILS FEST** at Kananaskis Village and we want you to join us! A celebration of Kananaskis trails, people, and culture, the event will consist of multiple activities that showcase the many ways trails are used.

- Connect with local hiking, biking, skiing and outdoor clubs & organizations showcasing their activities and how you can get involved.
- Learn what the Alberta Environment and Parks Backcountry Trail Rehabilitation Program on Public Land accomplished – and Phase 2 trail building of the newest Trans Canada Trail section: High Rockies Linkage project from Goat Creek to Elk Pass.
- Afternoon guided trail activity will include hiking, biking, trail running, bear spray demonstration and kid activities.

Event Itinerary

10:00 – 2:00 Connect with local Clubs & Organizations

11:00 – 12:00 Presentations:

- Alberta Environment and Parks Backcountry Trail Rehabilitation Program on Public Land
- Trans Canada Trail: High Rockies Linkage – Phase 2

12:00 BBQ Lunch (free)

1:30 – 3:00 Guided Activities

Activities to date will include:

<p>Bear Aware! (Family Fun)</p>	<p>Join a Kananaskis Country park interpreter for this fun and educational 1½ hour program designed for the entire family: Participate in the bear identification relay, look for bear signs in the bear country scavenger hunt, and play “The Campsite is Right”!</p>
	<p>Join a Kananaskis Country park interpreter and find out</p>

Stop and Smell the Witches' Broom! (Adult Hike)	about some of nature's "odd couples", learn about bears' life strategies, and identify some plants along the way on this 1-1/2 hour walk.
Intro to Orienteering	<p>Join Foothills Orienteering's internationally experienced orienteers for a 1-1/2 hour brief introduction to the basics of the sport of Orienteering. This clinic is are for everyone, regardless of fitness or experience.</p> <p>You can expect to come away with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Muddy shoes and a grin on your face! - Completing your first orienteering course - Better map reading skills - A new life-long activity to share with friends and family
WildSmart on the Trail	Join Wildsmart on this educational session focussed on being Wildsmart on the trails and how to carry bear spray and know how to use it.

For more information: www.kananaskis.org/trails-fest

And if you're a part of a club or group and want to exhibit what you do, contact Nancy at nancy@kananaskis.org or 403-678-5593.

We look forward to celebrating Kananaskis trails, people, and culture with you.



March 2016 cougars. Photo courtesy Alberta Environment & Parks

Letter from the Board: The Things You Find

By Derek Ryder, Board Chairman

Researching the background for the series on "The Elements of Kananaskis", The Friends name pops up a lot. A key source of data for these articles are the detailed Management Plans for the various areas of Kananaskis – and the management plans are the primary reference documents under which any proposal in the Parks systems are reviewed.

So I thought I would share with you a few extracts from these plans, such as this one from the [Bow Valley Protected Areas Management Plan](#) of 2002:

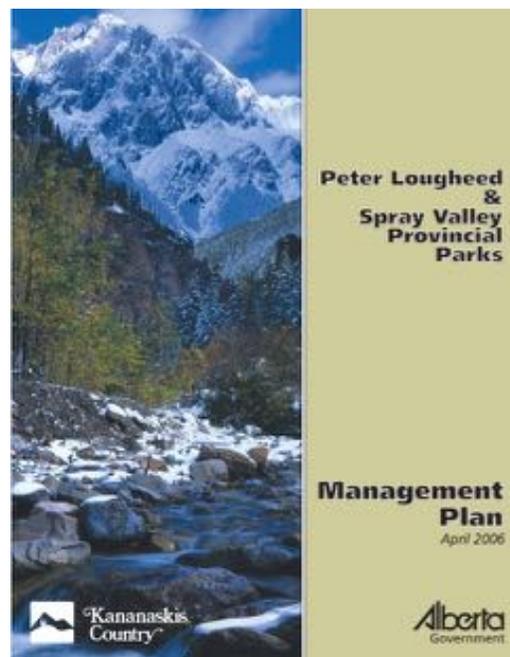
Staff will continue to work in partnership with the guides and outfitters and organizations like the Friends of Kananaskis Country to inform visitors and promote the kinds of tourism services and opportunities that are available within the Wildland Park.

Or this one from the [Peter Lougheed and Spray Valley Provincial Parks Management Plan](#) of 2006:

Parks and Protected Areas Division has a co-operating agreement with the Friends of Kananaskis Country to enhance the delivery of information and education materials and programs in these parks...

...Staff will continue to work with trail users to address impacts or conflicts as they arise. They will also continue to work in partnership with the Friends of Kananaskis Country which publishes trail information, receives donations for new trails or upgrades, organizes volunteer trail maintenance events or other kinds of support to the trails program.

Then there's this one, from the [Sheep River Provincial Park and Bluerock Wildland Provincial Park Management Plan](#) of July, 2008:



Map 3 indicates those trails in the Sheep area that are proposed to be upgraded, undesignated or added... Those approved would be built as resources permit through a partnership approach with the Friends of Kananaskis Country.

The Friends as an organization is embedded in the fabric of Kananaskis Country, and has been for some time. It's not a responsibility we take lightly. As we put together plans for what is looking like a very busy 2016 season, we connect with all the spaces of K-Country, from Parks to PRAs to PLUZs. If issues with non-motorized trails come up anywhere in the area, we are actually tasked in the Management Plans with helping out. As Chair, part of my job is to ensure that we are fulfilling the greater mandates in our Cooperating Agreement and Bylaws and those Plans – doing what we promise.

Spring is Tick Time *(a timely reprint from our May 2014 issue)*

As we move into spring, in addition to the start of the mosquito season, it's also prime tick season, which runs from late March to mid-June. Ticks are a member of the spider family, and while there are several kinds of ticks here, the most problematic one to people is the Rocky Mountain Wood Tick. Smaller than a thumbtack head, these little dudes hang out on grasses and wait for an accommodating host to brush by. Normally, they like sheep, elk, deer, moose and goats, but humans and rodents are also targets. They are attracted the carbon dioxide like mosquitos, and will move through grasses to sedentary potential hosts.

Once they grab on to you, they crawl around for a while looking for warm skin, preferably with lots of hair to hide in. Once they find it, they chomp down, burying their mouth parts in your skin, and start sucking out blood just like mosquitos. Only they hang on and bloat up (pictured above), increasing their size by 5 or 10 times. Once they get enough blood, they drop off, lay eggs and die.



While they're chewing on you, they can transmit disease, including encephalitis, typhus, Lyme disease, tick paralysis, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. So if one gets on you, it's best to get it off quickly -- not that hard because they're not fast and take a while to find a place to chomp down. If you're being bitten, don't try to burn it or squish it. Instead, use a pair of tweezers to grab the head and gently pull it out. Then put on some antiseptic to kill any leftover nasties.

If you find a tick on yourself (*which has happened to me twice in the last week*) or a pet, Alberta Health asks you to submit it for testing as part of a tick surveillance program. Take the tick to any Alberta Health Services Environmental Health office. Ticks will be tested to see if they carry the bacteria, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, that can cause Lyme disease in humans. Results of this program will help Alberta Health better understand the risk of Lyme disease in Alberta.

But prevention is easier. Wear long pants through till the end of June, and either wear gaiters or tuck your pants in your socks. Avoid walking through the middle of grassy meadows, or lounging in them over lunch. Don't run bare arms through deep grasses. Check yourself over at the end of the day looking for ticks attached to your pants. Shower after hiking. And keep ticks at bay.

The Alberta Government has some great info on ticks you can read [here](#) or [here](#).

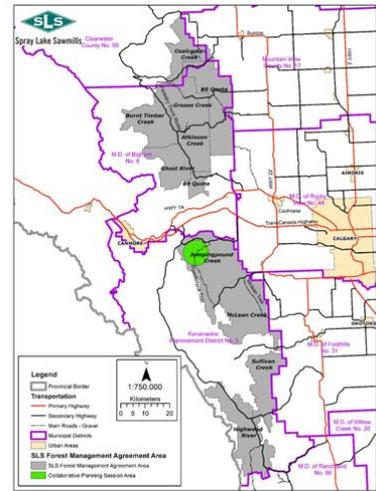
Upcoming Spray Lakes Sawmills Open Houses

Spray Lakes Sawmills has been operating in Kananaskis Country for upwards of 70 years. They have 2 upcoming Open Houses that Friends members may be interested in attending.

On Wednesday, May 4th from 3 PM to 7 PM in Cochrane at the Ranche House, they are doing their annual general Open House talking about their overall plans for the 2016 harvest season. You can read more about that session [here](#).

On Friday, May 13 from 10 AM to 3 PM at the Mill Office in Cochrane, there will be a detailed planning session for a specific area to be logged, the northern part of the Jumpingpound area, shown as the green blob in the [map to the right](#). This area contains popular trails including Lusk Pass, Cox Hill, Jumpingpound Ridge, Jumpingpound Summit and others. You can read details of that session [here](#).

Next month's newsletter will include an article about the Public Land Use Zone, where logging and other industrial and agricultural activities are permitted in K-Country.



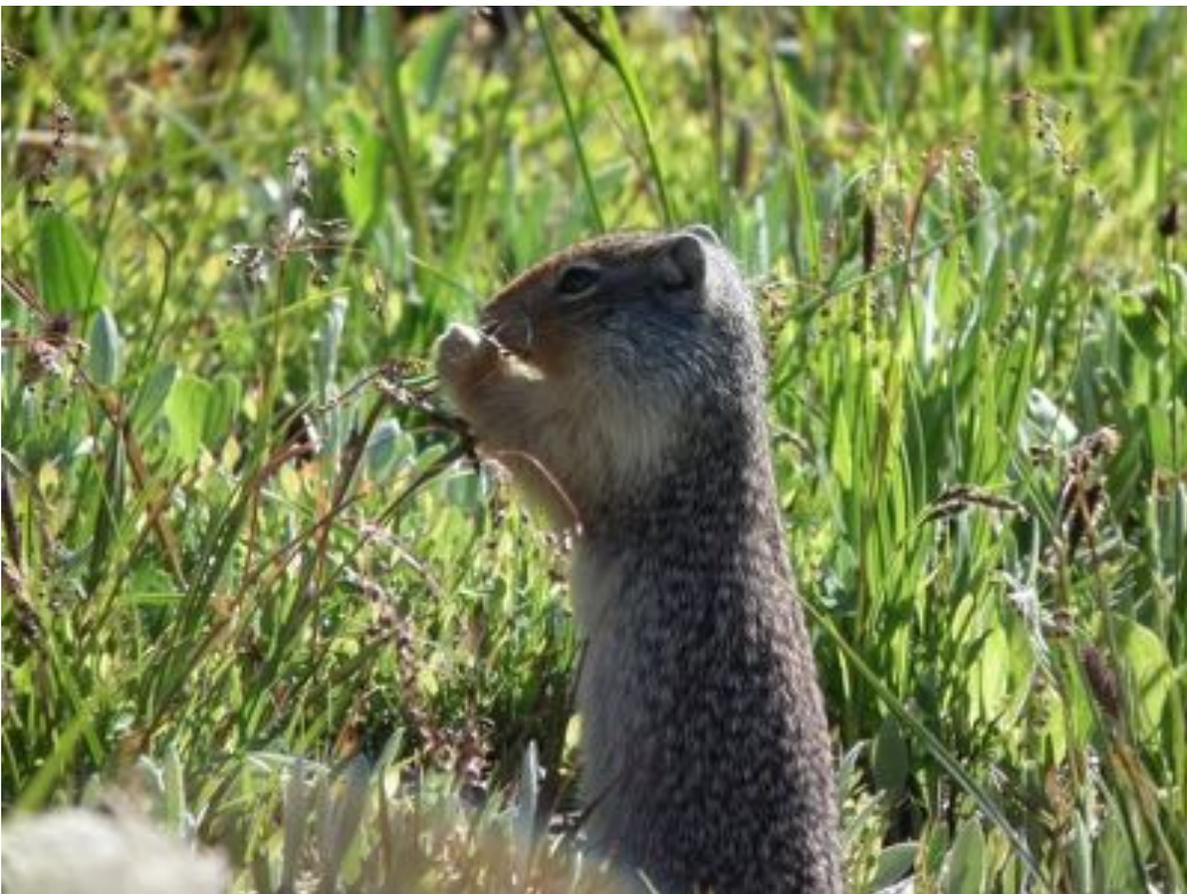
The Friends is not an advocacy group, so has no official position on logging. However, we have stated in the past that we do "advocate" for the trails. We have taken that to mean that if logging affects a trail, we will participate in conversations about trail re-routes, and advocate that trails that are adversely affected by logging will be addressed in some way, often by replacing that trail. And of course, we will offer to help with any re-builds or re-routes.

Congratulations to Deb Mucha and Don Carruthers Den-Hoed!

Recently, Deb Mucha and Don Carruthers Den-Hoed were both promoted to Kananaskis Regional Managers within Alberta Parks, Deb for the Kananaskis West region and Don for the Kananaskis East region. We are proud to be connected to both of them.

Deb sat on our Board from mid-2013 to early 2014, when she had to leave us as she took a role with Parks as a Planner. We also worked closely with Don, who was instrumental in stewarding the 2014 process of renewing our [Cooperating Agreement](#) with Parks.

We wish them both well in their new assignments!



The Critters of Kananaskis: Columbian Ground Squirrels

15th in a series by Derek Ryder, 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.

Back in the [August 2015 newsletter](#), I wrote about Golden Mantled ground squirrels. K-Country is home to 4 different varieties of ground squirrel, but the only other common one you will see is the Columbian (*Richardson's and Thirteen Lined are the other two, and they can really only be found in the extreme eastern grassland areas of K-Country*). I notice them a lot in the spring, when after up to 220 days of hibernation, the males emerge, filling up meadows. A great place to see them is Canmore; there's dozens of them that hang around the gas stations on the west side of town, and near the western railway crossing on both sides of Bow Valley Trail.





Columbians live in colonies, with a dominant male typically in a burrow in the colony's centre. Colony members share holes and interact with each other, including grooming behaviour. Research says they spend 50% of their awake time sitting upright, as in all of the photos. As noted, males emerge from dens first, and spend about 10 days fighting to gain mating rights. When the ladies wake up, the successful males mate, then 2-7 kits are born, popping into the open about 50 days after that, typically in early July. The young may not mate until they are 2 years old. They can live up to 13 years – if they aren't predated first by birds or other mammals, or dug up by hungry Grizzlies.

Unlike the simple tunnel structure of the Golden Mantled guys, Columbians make pretty complex homes. The main entrance, always with a dirt mound to sit atop, angles down to about 1 m, then levels. Down a main chamber is the summer bedding chamber, which can be almost a meter in diameter. Other tunnels radiate outwards from this chamber, usually underlying their feeding areas. Some of these tunnels have more subtle emergency entrances. Late in the season, a small hibernation chamber is dug, and a drain sump is dug below that to remove any water. The hibernation chamber is lined with bedding and grass. Hibernation starts as early as August, depending on elevation. During hibernation, they wake up regularly, at least every 19 days, to use the bathroom and eat some stored food.



They mostly eat grass, seeds and leaves, but will eat insects, and – each other. Dominant males will occasionally kill and eat juveniles, and there is some evidence they eat voles.



Columbians have a fairly detailed set of chirps, squeeks and shrieks. Some signal avian attackers, some ground based ones, and some are just to communicate back and forth. They can squeak like marmots, and it can be confusing in the high country to tell them apart by sound alone. Colonies are quite good at kicking out unwanted members, and repelling “invading” Columbians from other colonies.

It's never a good idea to touch wildlife (even the friendly ones who beg or hang in campgrounds), and these are no exception. They can easily carry fleas, and according to Ben Gadd, Columbians have been responsible for occasional cases of bubonic plague in the Rockies. They also often have the wood ticks that cause Rocky Mountain spotted fever.



The Flowers of Kananaskis: Prairie Crocus

4th in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

I freely admit, I am not the flower person in my family. That honour goes to my partner, Karen, who is forever stopping on trails to take pictures of every flower she sees. Her diligent and patient teaching has introduced me to some of K-Country's pretty spectacular flowers, both big and small, and in this series, I will be sharing her fabulous images of some of them.

Probably the most obvious harbinger of spring in the flower family is the Prairie Crocus, which is commonly the first flower to appear (so long as you ignore pussy willows, but that's for another article). On sunny southern slopes, flowers often appear just as the snows retreat. I've noticed this year that the crocuses are not so early; other flowers were out first.



It's a badly named plant. It's in the buttercup family, so isn't a crocus at all. Its alternate name, Pasque Flower, makes more sense in Europe; "pasque" means Easter, and in Europe, this plant blooms at Easter. Here, Easter tends to be too early for the flowers (as in this year). Another name for it, Wind Flower, is very uncommonly used and doesn't seem that appropriate; it came from the original Latin name *anemone patens*; anemone comes from wind, which is how the seeds are distributed. The new Latin name is *Pulsatilla patens* (nothing



to do with wind), so we're stuck with the name Prairie Crocus.

The flowers range from a deep blue and purple to almost whitish; I see more white or pale ones in K-Country. It's far more common on the prairie itself; it's the provincial flower of Manitoba and the state flower of South Dakota. On grasslands where cattle run, purple fields of dense crocuses are a sign of overgrazing.

When the flowering is done, they put out seed pods (pictured at right) that look a bit like anemone, all fuzzy and ball-like.



The Prairie Crocus may look pretty, but don't touch it. All parts of the plant contain **protoanemonin**, which is poisonous if eaten, and causes rashes on skin, especially mucous membranes. Native North Americans used it as an anti-rheumatic, crushing the leaves and rubbing them on joints, much as we would use Rub A535 today. They also used it to induce abortions or childbirth, and it's an ingredient in commercial "natural" preparations found today that treat premenstrual syndrome.



Your Donations are Always Appreciated and Needed

We are pleased to recognize the contributions of the [Calgary Foundation](#), [TransAlta](#), [Banff Canmore Community Foundation](#), [Patagonia Elements](#), [Husky Energy](#), and the many individual donors who support our work.

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!

Friends of Kananaskis Country
201-800 Railway Avenue
Canmore, AB T1W 1P1
403-678-5593

[follow on Twitter](#) | [like on Facebook](#) | [forward to a friend](#)

Copyright © 2016 Friends of Kananaskis Country, All rights reserved.



[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)