



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



July 2016 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Friends!

In this month's newsletter...

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- Welcome to Dave Schultz
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Trail Care Updates and Upcoming Projects

by Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator

Needless to say, it's been a soggy month, with rainfall exceeding July's average. This type of weather doesn't make for productive trail work, so we had to end a few trail days early and unfortunately cancel the Volcano Creek Multi Day Camping/Trail Building Weekend (which has been rescheduled at a different location - see below upcoming trail days).

As we look forward to August sunny days, we have lots of trail days scheduled and a few more being planned in Peter Lougheed and with the High Rockies Trail.

Canmore Trail Alliance - Update

The Friends launched the Canmore Trail Alliance in May to engage trail users and local land stewards in trail maintenance and building in the Canmore Area through community initiatives that improve Canmore's recreational opportunities, enhance its trail conditions, and emphasize the importance of ecological integrity and sustainability.

Since June, the CTA has held trail days every Thursday night (6-9pm) and most Saturday mornings (9am-12pm) at the Canmore Nordic Centre. There's been lots of exciting trail building happening! Here's a summary of what's been worked on and accomplished.

Sherwood Forest Connector

The Sherwood Forest connector is a brand new bit of single track that links from the original Sherwood to EKG avoiding old double track, boggy, and eroded connections with bad sight lines. The new trail offers a combination of flow and tech more consistent with the rest of Sherwood and work is almost complete for an optional long log ride.

EKG Connector

There's a new single track connector for EKG at winter Junction #77. The new single track eliminates the less than inspired section of ski trail and creates some way better flow. An added benefit is that in winter many fat biker / skier conflicts will be avoided at this location.

Green Trail Connector

The new, yet to be named, green trail enters the forest at the west end of the Mine Meadow and connects with the new Odyssey Trail. Building out more of this trail will be the CTA focus for the month of August.

We will continue to work at the Canmore Nordic Centre throughout August and September as there is still several kilometers of new trail to build. For those of you who like building



trails, this is a great opportunity considering it's mainly being done with hand tools, and little machinery so far.

Canmore Nordic Centre - Trail Days Aug 13 & 27 will offer a few sign up options:

Half day: 9:00am -12:30pm or 1:00pm - 4:00pm or,

Full day: 9:00am - 4:00pm

Otherwise you can join the trail crew on Thursday nights 6:00-9:00pm, no sign up required, meet at 6:00pm at the [lower dirt parking lot](#). It's also Pub Night at the Bill Warren Training Centre on Thursday's which crews have been enjoying!



Upcoming Trail Care Projects

August 13: Canmore Nordic Centre

August 19-20-21: Cataract/Etherington Creek Multi-Day Backcountry Camping/Trail Building Weekend

August 24: Prairie Creek Trail

August 27: Canmore Nordic Centre

August 27: Powderface Trail

Canmore Trail Alliance: Trail days every Thursday night (6-9pm) at the Canmore Nordic Centre. See [CTA Website](#) for projects and location details.

For more information and to sign up: Click [HERE](#)

Kananaskis Regional Capital Project Investment Support

The Alberta government announced improvements to several provincial parks in the Calgary-Kananaskis region. Visitors will soon see new campsites and hiking trails, new shower buildings, more campsites with power, more picnic tables, expanded parking lots and refurbished day-use areas.

“Investing in our provincial parks will create more opportunities for families to enjoy the great outdoors while generating jobs, economic activity and tourism. The investments we are making today will ensure our children inherit these special places along with a stronger, more diversified economy.”

Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks

The province has earmarked more than \$25 million in capital funding over the next five years in the Kananaskis-Calgary region to upgrade, maintain, expand and develop parks infrastructure for:

Bow Valley Provincial Park

Peter Lougheed Provincial Park
Don Getty Wildland Provincial Park
Big Hill Springs Provincial Park
Elbow River Provincial Recreation Area
Sibbald Lake Provincial Recreation Area
West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area
Cobble Flats Provincial Recreation Area
McLean Creek Provincial Recreation Area
Gooseberry Provincial Recreation Area
Fallen Timber South Provincial Recreation Area
Kananaskis region (multiple capital maintenance projects)

The government's investment will support implementation of Alberta Parks' commitments under the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. It will also address facility upgrades and capital maintenance through Capital Maintenance and Renewal funding.

Among the projects is Kananaskis Country's West Bragg Creek Provincial Recreation Area trailhead parking lot expansion and added washroom facilities. Click [HERE](#) for a list of project locations and details.

For inquiries, please contact:

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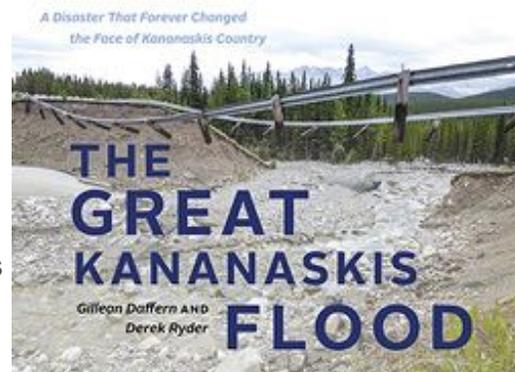
Mom and her 3 kids. Photo courtesy Alberta Environment & Parks

News from the Board -- The Great Kananaskis Flood Book

By Derek Ryder, Chair

The Friends are proud to announce that **The Great Kananaskis Flood – A Disaster that Forever Changed the Face of Kananaskis Country** is now available for retail sale!

In December 2014, **Gillean Daffern**, author of the indispensable [Kananaskis Trail Guides](#) book series and member of the Friends Advisory Council, approached the Friends Board with the idea for the book. We were all aware of the significant number of photographs that were available documenting the extent of the flood on K-Country. But we also all felt that the extent of the damage – especially in the back country – was not generally recognized.





As the Friends were heavily involved with Alberta Environment and Parks on doing flood restoration work on back country trails, we felt a book showing what we were all up against would be of interest.

Gillean asked if I would co-author the book with her, which for a K-Country lover is a pretty easy request to say “Yes” to. Alberta Parks, and in particular **Jill Sawyer**, jumped on board, eager to show off both the work that needed doing and the work that was being done. Volunteers donated photos, included noted professional photographers who had snapped iconic shots, and many of the people who were living and working in K-Country when the flood hit.

Local Canmore radio personality **Rob Murray**, who almost single handedly kept communication going in the Bow Valley during the disaster, authored the preface. [Rocky Mountain Books](#) stepped forward as publisher, and magically, after sorting through literally thousands and thousands of photos, our book was born.

All of the author and editorial proceeds from the book are coming directly to the Friends. The Board is committed to use the funds to continue doing flood restoration work, and to fund future trail work in K-Country.



I urge you to purchase a copy at the low price of just **\$25**. Not only will you get to see 175 pages of pictures of rubble and how it’s all being fixed, you’ll be giving back to the Friends and helping us continue to restore the K-Country we love. It’s available in most bookstores including [Indigo, Chapters and Coles](#), on line through such retailers as [Amazon](#) and [Google Books](#), independent book stores like [Pages](#) and [Café’ Books](#), through the folks at [Rocky Mountain Books](#) or even from the Friends office in Canmore. We’ll be doing a series of book signings through the summer, and will announce them through the Friends Facebook page and website.

You can also join us at the book launch party on Thursday, July 28 from 7-9 PM at the Georgetown Inn in Canmore. Come meet the authors, and pick up a copy of The Great Kananaskis Flood!



Conversations with the Past: Bob Lee

1st in a series by Derek Ryder, Chair

*In commemoration of the Friends 20th Anniversary Year, we wanted to look back into the Friends past. I looked up a few former Chairs of the Friends to talk to them about what the Friends looked like years ago. This month, I talk to **Bob Lee**.*

Derek Ryder: When were you on the Board?

Bob Lee: I was on the Board for about 8 years or so, and served as Chair for about a year. I'm not sure exactly when I joined; it was somewhere between 2000 and 2004, as I left the Board in 2012.

DR: How did you first get involved with the Friends?

BL: I was and still am a cabin owner down on Kananaskis Lakes. I was already involved with the [Elbow River Watershed Partnership](#), including starting as ERWP Chair in 2008, and I saw ways for the Friends and the ERWP to work together.



I have always been an avid outdoorsman and photographer, including a project I did in 2008 entitled “**A Photographic Journey Along The Elbow River**”, plus I was part of the 1986 Canadian Mt. Everest Expedition. Coincidentally, Don Cockerton joined the ERWP in 2009, and I was able to recruit him to join the Friends Board. *(Ed: Don served until November 2014 and currently sits on the Friends Advisory Committee)*

DR: Tell me about some of the things the Friends were involved with during your tenure on the Board and as Chair.

BL: Well, I think the best thing the Friends did while I was on the Board was boost our educational presence. In particular, through my connections with the ERWP, we jointly sponsored an educational program on water quality and water monitoring in the Elbow watershed. Several hundred students and teachers participated each year; it was a great program. That program ran from about 2006 to almost 2010. Friends members helped with an annual river clean-up, too, in partnership with the ERWP.

I was also proud to have engaged TransAlta as a sponsor, a sponsorship that lasts until this day. I was also busy with programs the Friends did back then like the Memorial Bench program and the retail operations.



DR: Tell me more about the retail.

BL: Some people may remember that the various Information Centres back in the mid-2000's had small retail gift shops in them. The Friends ran those for Alberta Parks, and it was the major source of revenue for the organization. Unfortunately, a volunteer organization isn't great at a full time retail gig, and the Board probably didn't give it the attention it deserved.

While I was Chair, Parks decided to shut down the retail and re-invent the Info centres. That ended up putting the Friends into a funding crisis, and that kind of led to the re-invention of the Friends that the current Board has overseen.

DR: What did sitting on the Friends Board teach you?

BL: Probably the most significant thing was true for both my time on the Friends Board as with the ERWP: the importance of communication. It makes a Board work as one, it gets a common message out, it prevents or solves conflict – can't make it work without it.



Bear country awareness: *Shepherdia*

1st in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

Kananaskis Country is home to a lot of animals, including bears. Recreating safely in bear country means understanding things from signs that bears are around, to what to do in a bear encounter. In this series of articles, we're going to help you learn about some really important "stuff" to be aware of in bear country.

As we wander in K-Country, we are travelling in a bear's home: their living areas, dining areas, and even their bathrooms. Recognizing food that bears eat can help raise your awareness of the possibility that bears are around where you are at any given moment.

Bears are omnivores, but while they love the ability to get a good protein source like an elk or a deer, almost 80% of a bear's diet is fruits and vegetables. This is true of both grizzly bears and black bears. You may have heard that bears love berry season, but what berries do bears eat?

While they love all berries, many (like wild strawberries) don't grow densely enough to interest a bear. A bear will eat 100,000-200,000 berries a day – the caloric equivalent of 65 Big Macs a day – during the heart of berry season. So a bear's favourite berries are ones that are densely packed on the bush, with a lot of bushes to choose from, and there are several of these. The first – and the one that is most significant so far in 2016 – is the bush known as Buffalo Berry, or Soap Berry or by its Latin name, *Shepherdia Canadensis*. 2016 has seen the best shepherdia crop in at least the last decade, and as a result, bear sightings and encounters are up in *Shepherdia* prone area.



Shepherdia is a bush native across Canada and much of the US that will grow to about 5' tall in this area. In berry season, the female plants will get 50 berries or more on a stem (male plants don't get berries). I've watched bears strip a stem of berries with one lick of their tongue, and a big patch of *Shepherdia* will keep a bear occupied for hours. Bears in berry bushes tend to get "head down and locked" and stop paying attention to anything other than their beloved berries, which is where we get in trouble, because the bears aren't looking out for us. Two recent incidents in Canmore with people and bears were as a result of folks unintentionally approaching bears who were sitting in bushes eating, and the bear chose to push the people away from their food source once surprised.



Shepherdia berries are usually red, but there's a minor sub-species that are yellow/orange. They have a sweet outer skin that is protein rich, but the inside is heavy with saponin, which is a form of soap. Native Canadians would crush the berries and mix them with water, using the mixture to wash clothes. Saponin has diuretic properties, too, so while edible and high in Vitamin C, eating too many will make you sick. Bears that eat a lot of berries poop out a lot of them; after extracting the sugar and protein, that diuretic property kicks in and the scat becomes red with berry innards

and runny.

Native Canadians called *Shepherdia* “buffalo berry” because if you look carefully at the backside of a *Shepherdia* leaf, it’s covered in brown spots that they thought looked like a buffalo herd as you can see in the photo. They would also use the berries to make “Indian Ice Cream”. A recipe for this is below.



Shepherdia generally grows in moister places low in valleys at elevations up to 1,600 m, though in Idaho can be found up to 2,500 m. It handles all sorts of dry, rocky, low nutrient soil types just fine.

It is not an alpine plant, however, meaning during Shepherdia berry season, it’s the trailhead areas and valley trails you need to be most wary around. In 2016, the berry crop is abundant in the Bow, Kananaskis and Spray valleys. The Canmore Nordic Centre has an excellent crop in 2016, as do the areas around Kananaskis Village, Lower and Upper Kananaskis Lake – and probably anywhere else they grow.

Indian Ice Cream

Makes 6-8 cups

1 cup *Shepherdia* berries

1 cup water

1 cup raspberries, strawberries or saskatoons (*optional*)

¼ cup sugar (to taste; boost to 1 cup if using just *Shepherdia* berries)

Add berries and water to a clean ceramic, glass or metal bowl (not plastic). Whip mixture with a beater on high until it has the consistency of beaten egg whites. Gradually and gently add sugar to the pink foam that forms. Serve foam immediately.



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](#), [Rotary Club of Canmore](#) and the many individual donors and clubs & organizations 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!

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