

The colours are starting to turn. Stay tuned for larch season!



**FRIENDS**<sup>OF</sup>  
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



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## Trail Care Updates and Upcoming Projects

by Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator

We predicted that August would be a busy Trail Care month, and it certainly was. We hosted 9 trail days plus 4 Canmore Trail Alliance trail nights with over 100 volunteers contributing more than 500 volunteer hours! Needless to say we accomplished a lot! Here's a summary of what we worked on:

*Black Prince Cirque Trail, Aug 6:* Following the installation of the new bridge over Smith-Dorrien Creek, on a rainy day, the volunteer trail crew helped clear brush that had overgrown on the trail.

**Fun Fact:** Mount Black Prince Cirque is named after a World War 1 Battleship that took part in the 1916 Battle of Jutland. But just who was the Black Prince? Edward of Woodstock, an "exceptional military leader", was known as the Black Prince for the black armor he wore. ([Source](#))

*Mount Shark Ski Trails, Aug 6:* Crew worked on brushing the 15km ski loop that joins with the Watridge Lake Trail. The trail will now be wide enough for machine grooming and track setting.

*Canmore Nordic Centre, Aug 13:* We continued to build the approved [Long Loop – Terminator Extension](#) which has since been named the Odyssey Trail.

*Dead Man's Flats Clean Up, Aug 20:* Read about this event below in the '[News From the Board - Building Community](#)'.

*Chester Sawmill Bridge Work, Aug 20:* A new bridge was recently installed across the Headwall Creek which required a trail reroute. The crew cleared logs and brush from the sides of the new trail and helped clean up the trail around the new bridge.

*Prairie Creek, Aug 24:* This was our last day of bio-engineering/willow staking in an area that had serious drainage issues. Willow staking has proven to be an effective approach to stabilizing banks and mitigating water issue areas.

*Powderface Trail, Aug 27:* The crew started the day off with a cup of coffee provided by MLA Cam Westhead! They then got to work on a reroute to upgrade the existing trail that got flooded by Powderface Creek. Half of the reroute was completed.



Canmore Nordic Centre, Aug 27: We had the honour of MLA Cam Westhead taking part in this trail building event, not to mention him treating the crew to pizza, plus our friends at An Edible Life provided cookies. We worked on, and completed, the lower section of the approved Odyssey Trail.



High Rockies Trail, Aug 28: The crew was split into two teams working from either end of the trail clearing logs and brush from the rough cut trail corridor. The crews met in the middle in the afternoon, having cleared about 2 km of the trail which will be machine built.

## Upcoming Trail Care Projects

### South Canmore Habitat Patch

The [South Canmore Habitat Patch](#) was delineated in the [Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Patch Guidelines for the Bow Valley: Updated 2012](#). This report recommended that a review of non-designated recreational trails be conducted in the South Canmore Habitat Patch to determine which trails should be closed and how the network of non-designated trails can be replaced by a designated trail system that accommodates the purpose of the habitat patch.



In an effort to improve the ecological integrity of the South Canmore Habitat Patch, the Town of Canmore has initiated trail improvements in this area including:

- Removal of hazard trees
- Installation of trail signage to indicate the recommended route through the area
- Decommissioning of redundant trails to reduce trail density

In partnership with the Town of Canmore, the Friends will help reclaim some of the less used trails in this habitat patch on Sunday, Sept 18.

### September Trail Projects

- South Canmore Habitat Patch: Sept 18
- Powderface Trail, reroute completion: Date to be confirmed soon

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

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



## A Trail Building Legacy Lives On

We were extremely grateful to inherit the tools once used by the Canmore Trail Minders (1992-2007). The group's vision was to build new trails that would be safe and enjoyable and have the least possible impact on the local landscape and wildlife with increased use.



The Trail Minders were instrumental in the development and maintenance of trails such as Ha Ling, Lady MacDonald and EEOR (East End of Rundle). These tools have helped create iconic trails! Their legacy will continue with the Friends of Kananaskis Country and Canmore Trail Alliance.

A big thanks you to the Trail Minders and Canmore Seniors Centre for donating the tools. To read more about this story and donation, here's a link to the Rocky

Mountain Outlook's article [Historic trail minders legacy lives on through tool donation.](#)

We would like to also take this opportunity to thank the [Town of Canmore](#), [Canmore & Area Mountain Bike Association - CAMBA](#), [Canmore Cycling Culture](#), and [McElhanney](#) for their donations to support buying trail building tools to outfit volunteer crews.

We're looking for more donations to build out a tool cache that will support volunteer trail work. To donate <http://www.kananaskis.org/how-to-help/donate/>.

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### Volunteer Appreciation Eventing - October 20

Mark your calendar, on the evening of **Thursday, October 20** the Friends of Kananaskis Country and Alberta Environment and Parks would like to take this special opportunity to **THANK YOU**, our outstanding volunteers and members for your time, effort, and contribution to our beloved Kananaskis Country Trails.

More details coming soon!

**YOU'RE OUR HERO!**



**FRIENDS**<sup>OF</sup>  
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

**CELEBRATING  
VOLUNTEERS**



Grizzly on a Canmore trail. Photo courtesy Alberta Environment & Parks

## News from the Board -- Building Community

By Derek Ryder, Chair

The Friends mission is:

***To cooperate with the Alberta Government and community to engage in the sound stewardship of Kananaskis Country through participation and education.***

To the Board, engaging with the community by creating opportunities for community members to participate in projects is “what we do”. It is our bread and butter, our reason for being. Recently, there have been two stellar examples of this, one ongoing and one single project.

The first is the [Canmore Trail Alliance](#), spearheaded by our wonderful Program Coordinator **Nancy Ouimet**. This project engages the Canmore and area community in participating in the design, management and maintenance of trails in the Canmore Area. It achieves this by having the Friends act as a facilitator to a number of interested groups in the Bow Valley, pulling the community together into an alliance to both engage in conversations about trail design, and creating opportunities for alliance members to participate in doing trail work together. The CTA was initiated almost a year ago, and grows stronger each month. Shown in the photo are Friends and other CTA members working on



a trail at the Canmore Nordic Centre.



The second project is our recent one day, Dead Man's Flats flood debris clean up blitz, which received substantial press coverage in the local media, including the [Rocky Mountain Outlook](#), [The Crag and Canyon](#), and twice on 106.5 Mountain FM, once [before the event](#) and once [after](#). Aware of an issue with flood debris in the hamlet which no one was addressing, the Friends approached the **MD of Bighorn** Council for permission to execute the project on their landbase. Once that was

obtained, we garnered backing from some of the Dead Man's Flats community businesses (including **Thunderstone Quarries**, the **Husky** station, and the **Mad Dog Cafe**) to support the community volunteers who would come out. While the project was publicized to Friends members, it was extensively promoted in the Dead Man's Flats community as an opportunity for the community to work together in making their hamlet beautiful again. And virtually all of the garbage was pulled out of the forest, making the project a success.

The trick with community building projects is that communities aren't built overnight, nor are they built by one project, or even a few projects; it takes a while for everyone to come on board. To that end, both of our community building projects could have more community members participate, but that's OK. Our Dead Man's Flats project was a one-off; the Canmore Trails Alliance is ongoing. We see that we are moving in a positive direction for each, and that's a good thing.

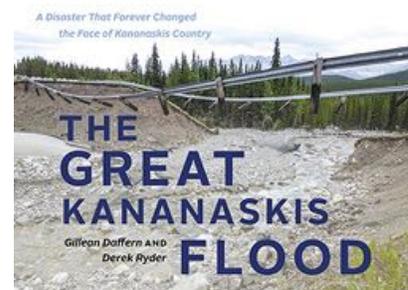


We will continue to look for ways we can engage the community in participating in the stewardship of Kananaskis. After all, that's what we do.

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## Have you got your book yet?

Don't forget to pick up your copy of the Great Kananaskis Flood Book, co authored by **Gillean Daffern** and Friends Chair **Derek Ryder**. Royalties from the book come to the Friends to help us continue our work of delivering sustainable trails for you to enjoy, and besides, it's 178 pages of photos of flood damage and how we're fixing it in your favourite space. Get your copy today online, through major and independent book sellers, or through the Friends office.



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**Larch season is coming soon!**

Looking at my photos from the last few years, I can say with certainty that larch season is coming, and the peak colour will be somewhere between September 15th and September 30th. Here's a list of just some of the awesome K-Country larch trails and routes where you won't have to worry about the crowds:

- Sparrowhawk Tarns
- Tryst Lake
- Tent Ridge
- Ptarmigan Cirque (*official trail*)
- Arethusa Cirque
- Odlum Ridge
- Running Rain Lake
- Burstall Pass (*official trail*)
- Chester Lake (*official trail*)
- Rummel Lake (*official trail*)
- Pocaterra Ridge
- Mist Ridge
- Grizzly Peak/Grizzly Col



Now, do remember one thing: larches are up high, and in late September, so are many grizzlies. Virtually every hike listed above includes wide open high alpine meadows that grizzlies love to be in prior to going to bed for the winter. So don't forget your bear spray!



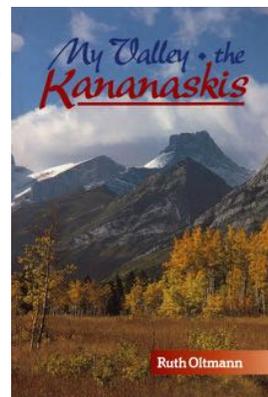
## Conversations with the Past: Ruth Oltmann

2nd 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 **Ruth Oltmann***

If you don't know Ruth, you're missing out. Ruth has a phenomenal history of ties to Kananaskis Country. She helped build the Ribbon Creek Youth Hostel in 1969, then came back to run the hostel for 6 years starting in 1972. She wrote the first hiking guide to the area in 1978, a year before the first edition of Gillean Daffern's Kananaskis Trail Guide. She worked at the UofC Field Station in 1979/80, and started working at the Barrier Lake Information Center for Alberta Parks in 1981, where she stayed until she retired in 2000. Along the way, Ruth wrote a series of books that are "must reads":

The first was "*Lizzie Rummel: Baroness of the Canadian Rockies*". It is the biography of the lady for whom Rummel Lake and Rummel Pass are named. Awarded the Order of Canada in 1980, Lizzie ran Skoki Lodge, owned Sunburst Lodge at Mt. Assiniboine, and worked with Ruth in The Bugaboos.



The second was "*The Valley of Rumours... The Kananaskis*", published in 1976, sharing a detailed history of the Kananaskis Valley.

Next came "*My Valley, the Kananaskis*", published in 1996. A bit of Kananaskis history and a bit on what growing up in the valley was like.

Finally came "*Ruthie's Trails*", published in 2011, documenting among other things the highlights of hundreds of trips she had taken in 60 years hiking, cross country skiing and scrambling in Kananaskis, Banff and elsewhere.



All 4 books are still in print and all 4 are still worth reading!

**D:** When were you on the Board?

**Ruth Oltmann:** My, but that was a long time ago. I turn 80 next year, and you try to remember dates when you're my age! I retired from Alberta Parks in 2000, and am pretty sure I joined the Board almost immediately. I served as Chair for about a year, I think, somewhere around 2000 or 2001.

**D:** How did you first get involved with the Friends?

**RO:** Well, it just seemed logical. I was running all the Kananaskis Information Centres when I retired. The Friends were doing great work but looking for sources of money. A bunch of us had the idea of letting the Friends set up retail shops in the Info Centers as a way to raise funds. Since I had been with the centres for the previous 19 years, I knew how to make it all happen.

**D:** What's changed since you were on the Friends Board?

**RO:** Well, there were no such things as trails to a lot of places when I started visiting Kananaskis in the 1970's. We would pull out a map, and just kind of decide to go somewhere. There wasn't a trail guidebook, so I wrote one! Gillean's came out a year later, and hers are so much better than mine, especially now. Every year I worked at the Info Centres, more people would come to Kananaskis. I think Gillean's a big part of that growth. We didn't keep track of "first ascents" back in those days, but I probably was the first one up a lot of peaks people are just figuring out how to get up these days. In the early 1970's, there weren't any ski trails around Ribbon Creek; a gentleman named Don Gardner was hired by the hostel association to build them. Don found and named Troll Falls, and he built a ski trail near it that he named Ruthie's Trail after me!

**D:** What's something you're proud of connected with the Friends?

**RO:** Hanging on my wall is a certificate I see every day. I have an Honorary Life Membership in the Friends of Kananaskis! I'm really quite proud of that, and I'll always treasure it.



**Bear country awareness: Red Osier Dogwood**

*2nd 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?

Not long after the shepherdia berries are all eaten or have dried up, starting in September, bears turn to another popular food, the berries of the Red Osier Dogwood. Dogwoods look willow-like, but have distinctive red stems that turn even more red after the first frosts. The berries first appear in July and are green, but they turn white as they ripen. Dogwood leaves turn a brilliant red in the fall.



Dogwoods like it moist, and commonly line creek beds, stream edges and lakeshores. The name "Osier" is from the French "osiere", meaning "that which grows in a stream bed" after all. Lac Des Arc's campground closes annually (like it has this year) in part because the lake's edge is lined with Dogwood, and bears know it. Dogwood is common in Willow Rock campground in Bow Valley Provincial Park, as well as Three Sisters Campground in Dead Man's Flats. All three commonly have fall bear warnings and closures.

The berries are edible but bitter, and were combined by native Canadians with sweeter berries to make them more palatable. Native Canadians also smoked the tender inner white bark after it was dried, would use the red outer bark for tanning and dyeing, and would weave the pliable stems into baskets.

Bears, moose and birds all like the berries and moose browse on the plant generally in the winter. There are many kinds of Dogwood in North America but only Red Osier and its much smaller cousin, the Bunchberry, grow in Alberta.



### **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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