



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



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Program Coordinator's Report

by Derek Ryder, Chair

I get to fill in this month as Nancy is on a course, which I will talk about below.

As November hits, we are officially at the end of the trail care season. Despite the fact that it was a rainy and sad July and August, our numbers for this year are still pretty compelling, and prove you all demonstrate that a bit of rain doesn't stop you from getting the job done:

- 45 Trail Care days were undertaken
- 1,764 volunteer-hours were recorded
- 187 different individuals were engaged
- 379 volunteer slots were filled



Trail Care projects undertaken in 13 locations:
Multiple days were done at:

- Canmore Nordic Centre (25 days)
- Prairie Creek Trail (5 days)
- Powderface Trail (2 days)
- PLPP Paved Bike Path (3 days)
- Tom Snow (2 days)



Single days were done at:

- South Canmore Habitat Patch
- Big Elbow Loop
- Black Prince Cirque Loop
- Mount Shark
- Dead Man's Flats Clean Up
- High Rockies Trail
- Chester-Sawmill
- Highway 40 Clean Up



It was really a shame that our big planned weekend attack on the flood damage in the Volcano/Gorge Creek had to be cancelled due to torrential rain and hideous, unsafe work conditions from the preceding 5 days of rain. We were really happy with the number of folks who put their hands up for that idea, and your enthusiasm for it tells us that we can try to organize more of those so long as we continue to offer a bunch of lead time for volunteers to plan.

The first year of the Canmore Trail Alliance was successful with 26 trail days having over 80 volunteers showing up for more than 145 work slots. Most of the work was done at the Canmore Nordic Centre, which included building several new trail connections and the lower extension of the Odyssey Trail.

- Number of volunteers: 80
- Number of turn outs: 145
- Number of hours: 672

- Number of trail care events: 26

We wanted to offer a BIG thank you to all the volunteers who contributed to maintaining and building trails in Kananaskis this summer. Your time and effort is much appreciated and we value your continued support as a Friends of Kananaskis Country volunteer and member.

Another BIG thank you goes to the Crew Leaders (*Cristina Azpiazu, Colin Graver, Crawford Smyth, Darin Langhorst, Darren Fantin, Dave Hanes, Derek Ryder, Don Cockerton, Ghulam Jamro, James Clark, Jeff Gruttz, Karen Irvine, Kevin Smith, Kris Thesen, Lloyd Jensen, Terry Mullane, Tim Giese, Tim Pennie and Trevor Willson*) who take the time to undergo annual training and make sure Trail Days are well executed and volunteers have a safe and enjoyable experience. These folks play a valuable role and we couldn't do it without them.

Lots of work lining up for next season, so rest up - enjoy the winter and see you on the trails in May.

Volunteer Appreciation Event A Great Party!

Our annual Volunteer Appreciation event was held on October 20th, and was just a lot of fun. Food was sponsored by Boston Pizza, Tim Hortons, Save-On Foods and Village Brewery. Lots of sponsors donated door prizes; we gave away 17, plus grand prizes to one Crew Leader and one Volunteers. Prizes ranged from helicopter trips from Alpine Helicopters, to cave tours from Canmore Caverns, to multi night stays at Mt. Engadine Lodge or the Delta in Kananaskis, to socks, MEC gift cards, and lots more.



Just under 60 people came to see **Peter Irwin** win Volunteer of the Year again (he won it in 2014), and long time volunteer but new Crew Leader **Karen Irvine** win Crew Leader of the Year. **Jim Beaton**, 2015's Newbie of the Year award winner, was also on hand to finally pick up his exquisite trophy.

In addition to great food and drink, **James Ceislack, Andre Belliveau** and **Duane Fazor** were on hand from Alberta Parks to give thanks and offer program updates.

Our guest speaker was **Cheryl Hojnowski**, who as part of

her Ph.D. thesis has been researching grizzly bear and human interactions in Peter Lougheed Park and the Kananaskis Valley for the last 3 years. She shared a fascinating presentation on how the bears are appearing to adapt to human behavior in order to live, eat and reproduce in the area. Cheryl's work has been funded with assistance from The Friends. Her talk was exceptionally interesting and we are hoping she will still be around in the first quarter of 2017 so that it could potentially be part of our Winter Speaker's Series. And speaking of which...

Winter Speaker Series Planning Underway

The Board team responsible for the Speaker Series has already started planning for the 2017 series. We are nominally targeting 3 talks again, one in each of January, February and March. Though the speakers have not yet been lined up, we're looking at bringing in:

- A Kananaskis district Conservation Officer to talk about what they do, how they work with wildlife, and ensure public safety;
- An author from the climbing or hiking community, with strong knowledge of Kananaskis;
- A wildlife biologist (like Cheryl) who can speak to critters that inhabit K-Country

I'd say "mark your calendars" but the dates are not yet finalized. Be sure to watch our website and Facebook or Instagram feeds for details as they are released!



October grizzly. Photo courtesy Alberta Environment & Parks

News from the Board -- Developing Ourselves

By Derek Ryder, Chair

The Friends, as a Society, is not static; far from it. In the last few newsletters, I have shared interviews I have done with past Chairs, and they clearly demonstrate that we are a dynamic organization, with regular, strategic step changes, that go far beyond the normal ebb and flow of the work we do.

So how does an organization like the Friends stay flexible and capable of managing a changing business, even though that “business” is (1) non-profit; (2) a charity; (3) focused on something as “simple” as trail care?

One way is for us as an organization to continually work on our skills. For instance, we have annual training for our Crew Leaders, some of which is refresher, but some of which is new regarding volunteer management or procedural improvements. Board members, if interested, take courses with the Board Development Program of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit.

Another is the continual Board focus on Governance. We are always looking at new policies that should be in place; we are currently working on Volunteer and Trail Care policies, as an example. Policies act as anchors for our organization to hold our core values and beliefs constant while we change.

And our Board believes in developing our staff to the extent we are able. I wrote the Program Director report for this issue because we sent Nancy Ouimet to school this week. And not just any school: the Banff Centre's Leadership School, where she's learning about Strategic Leadership. We are not a rich organization, and we were fortunate that Nancy was able to obtain a scholarship for the majority of the cost of this amazing course.



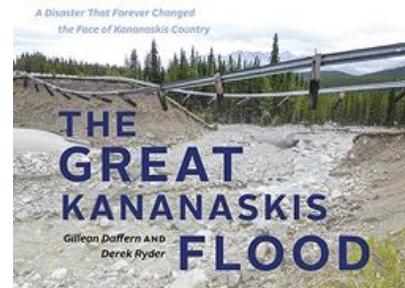
The Board believes in developing our organization, including all who participate in what we do. We hope we develop our volunteer's appreciation for the importance of trails to K-Country through the work they do on them. We hope that, through this newsletter, we develop our reader's understanding of what an amazing place K-Country is. This kind of development helps the Society's capability for achieving our Vision and Mission, even if that means a bit of change along the way.

We were on a Podcast!

Friends Chair **Derek Ryder** was recently interviewed on a podcast for [Eco Not Ego International](#). You can pick up the free podcast on iTunes [here](#) or on the Stitcher Radio App for Android [here](#). If you like the podcast, feel free to leave a review!

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 from [Amazon](#) (it's an Amazon best seller!) or [Indigo](#), through major and independent book sellers, or through the Friends office. Gillean and Derek will be signing books at the [Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival](#) at the Banff Centre on Sunday, November 6 at 11 AM.





Plants of Kananaskis Country: Usnea

2nd in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

There is not a person who visits Kananaskis who has not at some point noticed Usnea growing around them. The more common names for this lichen are Old Man's Beard, Sugared Beard, or Sugary Beard, and it is often confused with Spanish Moss which doesn't grow here; it's a native of more tropical climates. Usnea is a delicate looking, light green-gray hair that grows on live or dead trees, most commonly conifers and especially on Douglas Firs – but it also likes fences.

Usnea does not harm the tree it grows on in any way, and it does not gain nutrients from the tree. It just uses the tree as a convenient place to hang on and do its photosynthesis thing. Because it actually has a root ball that wedges into the bark, it is not a true epiphyte, though.



I'm cheating by calling Usnea one of the "plants" of K-Country, because it isn't a plant. They are in fact "fruticose lichen", a symbiosis of fungi (like a mushroom), and green algae. Their cell structure contains no cellulose, which plants have. For cell walls, they have the same material that lobsters and insects (and trilobites, for that matter) have for their exoskeleton -- chitin. Usnea grow in little masses and can reproduce in several ways:



fragmentation, asexual or sexual reproduction. They generally grow very slowly, but like the air they grow in to be clean. High sulphur dioxide levels in particular dramatically retard their growth, and so if you see long Usnea in a tree like the 3" long one in the photo, you know you're breathing really clean air.

Gently pull on an Usnea strand and you'll find it a bit elastic, not brittle, and when it finally comes apart, you'll see a fine cord about the width of human hair running up the middle of each stem.



Usnea prefer generally less humid forests, and my personal observation is that they are more prevalent on the north sides of the trees they live on in the K-Country forests near my house. Globally, there are over 400 sub-species of Usnea. While some strains of Usnea have anti-bacterial properties, and others are used to make dyes, there's no evidence that native Canadians used this lichen for anything.



The Critters of K-Country: American Dippers

17th in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

Winter birding in K-Country can be quite limited; chickadees, Clark's nutcrackers, nuthatches, grosbeaks, and maybe the odd woodpecker. But one all-year resident is worth finding for its weird and unusual feeding and flying style.

The American Dipper makes its home along fast flowing streams where, in the winter, there are holes in the ice so large water patches are available. It is not a particularly attractive bird; dull and uninspired gray. But when it lands in or right beside the water, as it stands there, it engages in a series of the quick (and somewhat silly looking) deep knee bends that give it its name.





In that it eats underwater insects and bugs, and winters in the mountains here, it's superbly adapted for life in -30° air, and diving into 1° water. It has a second eyelid that acts like a scuba mask and allows it to see underwater. It has scales that allow it to close its nostrils underwater. And it has overly generous oil glands that keep its feathers waterproof and it warm.

Dippers set up a territory along a section of a creek, and fly up and down it, singing their heart out. If you're near a babbling brook in winter and hear a song, it's probably a dipper.

Like the lichens, dippers, too, are an indicator of good environmental health, as it is intolerant of water pollution or water turbidity. I know of dippers that live on Pigeon Creek in Dead Mans Flats, King Creek down in Peter Lougheed Park, and both James Walker Creek and Commonwealth Creek near Mt. Engadine Lodge. According to Ben Gadd, the Canmore area in particular boasts North America's largest wintering population of dippers.



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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