



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



In this month's newsletter...

- Program Coordinator's Report
 - Updates and Recruiting Crew Leaders
 - Trails Fest -- June 11
 - Welcome Julia Lynx
 - New Supporters!
- News from the Board -- Organizational Transformation
- In other news: Coming Soon to an App Near You!, and a Banff BioBlitz
- The Elements of Kananaskis: Evan-Thomas Provincial Recreation Area
- Critters of K-Country -- Dark-Eyed Junco

Program Coordinator's Report

by Nancy Ouimet

The warm spring sun is melting the snow and uncovering the trails. We have lots of great volunteer projects in the hopper, starting with the **May 6 - Highway 40 Cleanup**. We'll be providing more details on other project as they get firmed up.

[Highway 40 - May 6 - SIGN UP HERE](#)

Call Out for Crew Leader

Are you interested in leadership and trail work? Why not consider becoming a Friends volunteer Crew Leader? The role of the Crew Leader is to ensure volunteer participants have a safe and enjoyable Trail Care experience. This person represents the Friends at the trail site and liaises with Alberta Parks trail crews.

We ask that people interested in becoming a crew leader have volunteered a minimum of two Trail Care days and are willing to volunteer as crew leader at least 2 times during the 2017 Trail Care season.

As crew leader, it is required that you have basic first aid certification. Full course and recertification training will be offered by Alberta Parks, free of charge, in the spring.

To ensure volunteer crew leaders are well prepared to lead volunteer groups we provide an annual Crew Leader training which consists of:

1. **Indoor Session:** Review the role and responsibility of the crew leader, risk management, first aid protocols, paper-work logistics, volunteer tracking, and trail day event reporting. This is a good opportunity to meet other crew leaders and hear more about our plans for the upcoming trail season. Crew leaders will receive a Crew Leader Manual that includes information related to the above outlined topics covered during the meeting in addition to information about trail anatomy, maintenance, construction and tools.
2. **Field Session:** Training is facilitated by a professional trail builder who will go over trail anatomy, and the specifics around how to construct a trail, followed by trail maintenance.

Crew Leader Training dates are being determined and will be towards the end of April and beginning of May.

Returning crew leaders are asked to also attend the training sessions. For more information on volunteering as a Crew Leader, or anything else you can help with, contact Nancy Ouimet, Program Coordinator, at 403-678-5593 or nancy@kananaskis.org.

Trails Fest



On June 11th, the Friends of Kananaskis Country will host the 3rd annual **TRAILS FEST** at the Canmore Nordic Centre 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.
- Trail related presentations.
- Afternoon guided trail activity will include hiking, biking, trail running, bear spray demonstration and kid activities.

Stay tuned for more exciting details about the event coming soon.

Welcome Julia Lynx

It is my pleasure to welcome our new team member, Julia Lynx! Julia will be acting as the Program and Events Assistant, helping with coordinating trail days, volunteers, events, in addition to the many other great things we work on at the office.

One of Julia's most favourite places on the entire planet is Kananaskis Country. She had the privilege of hiking the entire Pacific Crest Trail in 1994, and researching and hiking The Great Divide Trail with her spouse and guidebook writer Dustin Lynx in the late nineties. She has been living in Canmore, raising her two mountain teenagers. Julia has been a doula in the Bow Valley for 16 years and is also a performing singer-songwriter. From 2010-2016, she worked on the Bison Belong Campaign driving community involvement and support for the re-introduction of bison to Banff National Park.



Julia will be on-board starting April 17.

New Supporters!

We are grateful to receive funding from two new supporters this month:

Alberta Apparel

[Alberta Apparel](#) is a locally owned, run and sourced clothing design company in Alberta. 5% of all retail and online profits will be donated to the Friends. Alberta Apparel is all about supporting, educating and



promoting the Canadian Apparel industry, just like Friends of Kananaskis does for 4,200 km² of land. Alberta Apparel encourages Alberta businesses to think about the impact that apparel has on our environment and economy. They promote slow fashion, and quality over quantity. They are leaders in their field when it comes to investing locally and keeping money within our province. The hat is one of our favourites from their collection!



Canmore and Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA)

The [Canmore and Area Mountain Bike Association's](#) mandate is to advocate for mountain biking and strive for a vibrant and exciting trail system for all ages and abilities. CAMBA's donation will be used to support the Canmore Trail Alliance trail program. This program is part of our larger Kananaskis Trail Stewardship initiative, and aims to successfully engage Canmore area trail users in building and maintaining their local trails.





Wolf vs elk. Photo courtesy Alberta Environment & Parks

News from the Board -- Organizational Transformation

By Derek Ryder, Chair

As I have mentioned in the last few newsletters, the Friend's Board has been considering undergoing a transformation in the way we conduct our business. Back in January, for instance, I noted that the Board was looking at moving away from an Administrative governance model to a more Policy oriented model. These kinds of transformational steps are not to be taken lightly.

To that end, the Board's various subcommittees (notably Governance and Human Resources) have been looking at the ramifications of these decisions, and trying to plot a course through it. The Board, however, recognizes that we are not experts on it. Accordingly, it made sense to obtain some expert advice.

For our annual Board Retreat and Offsite in March, we decided to do just that. And we were extremely fortunate to be supported in our efforts by an Organizational Transformation grant from the **Calgary Foundation**. This grant is being used to access the services of a trained facilitator who happens to be an expert in non-Profit boards.



In the Offsite, with our facilitator's help, the Board spent some time reviewing Board liabilities and different Governance models. We looked at the various Duties and Responsibilities of Board members, and touched on the different roles and how they are filled under different Governance models. Through this, the Board gained confidence that were on "the right track" doing what we were doing. A few issues were identified, but generally, we had covered most of the bases.

Emboldened by our learnings from the day, the Board passed motions to change governance methodologies, a step that sounds simple but entails reviewing policies and Governance frameworks; there are lots of other larger exciting changes that will be announced as they happen. Our facilitator will be coming back to our June Board meeting to check on progress and help us make sure everything is set up for success.



We owe a significant debt of gratitude to the Calgary Foundation for supporting our Board in this effort. Your Society is better for their help.

Coming soon to an app near you!

Alberta Parks is in beta testing now for an app that will enable you to support various research or other projects. One part of the app supports reporting of various critters that need monitoring, plants and trees of interest and geological items, too. The app will provide data to the [HELs](#) project as well. Another part enables reporting of issues like graffiti, or trail maintenance problems. The app supports data collection offline using GPS locations, and allows photos and information to be captured on site for automatic uploading.

The idea is to enable folks -- such as the Friends members -- to assist in data collection for citizen science projects. Stay tuned for the apps official release!

You Can Help Out in the Banff BioBlitz

It's not K-Country, but its surely something that Friends members could find interesting. Banff Park is hosting a 24 hr BioBlitz on April 22nd for Earth Day and Canada's 150th birthday. This event is an intensive survey of living things "in a given area" within a set time, usually within the span of 24 hours or less. This year, you can volunteer to spend time in the field assisting a scientist working in small groups, conducting an inventory of amphibians at 24 sites in the National Park in the Bow River valley.



Interested? Find out more [here](#).



The Elements of Kananaskis: Evan-Thomas Provincial Recreation Area

6th in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

Kananaskis Country is not one park but a multi-use land base consisting of numerous parks and public lands, all managed under one framework. In this series, we're going to look at each part that makes up K-Country. We'll look at the history, the rules, and significance the area plays.

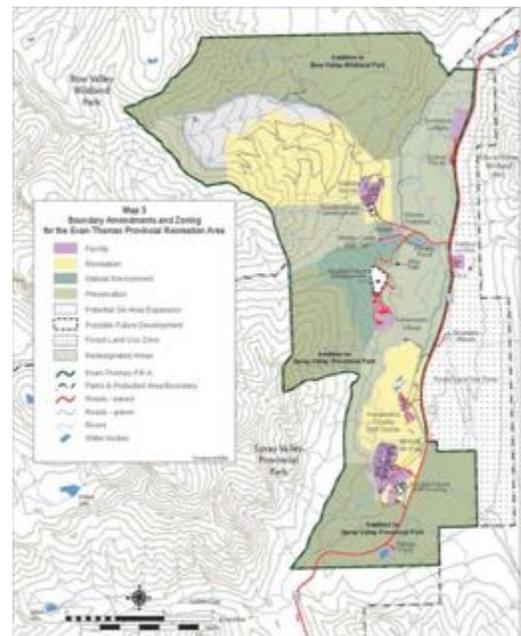
There are 7 land classifications within the Alberta Parks system, 5 of which you can find in Kananaskis Country: Ecological Reserves (*Plateau Mountain*), Natural Areas (*Ole Buck Mountain*), Wildland Provincial Parks (*like Bow Valley*), Provincial Parks (*like Spray Valley*), and Provincial

Recreation Areas (“PRAs”). There are almost 100 PRAs in K-Country. Back in [March 2016](#), I wrote about Heart Creek PRA providing more background on the way PRAs are regulated and managed. This month, I’m going to tackle the largest PRA of them all in Kananaskis: Evan-Thomas.

A PRA is also a park just like a Provincial Park, which are administered under the Provincial Parks Act. Accordingly, it’s easiest to think of a PRA as just a specifically designated Provincial Park. PRAs are generally small and encompass specific locations of more intensive recreational activity. But Evan-Thomas is large; it is, at 2,571 Ha (about 10 square miles), the 6th largest PRA in the Province.

The PRA’s name comes from the fact that it sits at the confluence of Evan-Thomas Creek with the Kananaskis River. The creek (and the mountain it sources from) was named after Rear Admiral Sir Hugh Evan-Thomas. He served in the First World War and fought at the battle of Jutland in 1916. Read more about him [here](#).

Evan-Thomas PRA was first established in 1982, but has had its boundaries change several times coincident with formations of, and expansions of, other surrounding Provincial Parks. The PRA map from 2004 is shown at right (*before parts were moved into Spray Valley and Bow Valley Wildland parks*). The PRA is bordered on the south and west by Spray Valley Provincial Park, on the west and north by Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park, a little 300 m section in the north east borders Bow Valley Provincial Park, and the PRA is bordered on the east by a small strip of Public Land Use zone (PLUZ) that is in turn bordered on the east by the Elbow-Sheep Wildland Provincial Park. The [“Evan-Thomas Provincial Recreation Area Management Plan”](#) is the guiding document for the area, but given it was last updated in October 2004, there are some parts likely needing update.



The PRA was envisaged in the K-Country master planning process as the core node for the provision of commercial/recreational tourism in Kananaskis. As I wrote in the article about Heart Creek, PRAs are managed to achieve conservation and preservation, but to also strike a balance between that protection and recreational use – always a challenging thing to do. There is a lengthy list of facilities in the Evan-Thomas PRA, including privately owned facilities on leased land...

- The Delta Kananaskis Lodge, *pictured at right*
- Kananaskis Wilderness Hostel (HI)
- The Sundance Lodges



...government owned facilities contracted out to the private sector...

- Nakiska Ski Resort (*which is owned by the Government of Alberta and operated under contract by Resorts of the Canadian Rockies*)
- Kananaskis Golf Course
- Mt. Kidd RV Park
- Kananaskis Village Centre

...and government owned and operated facilities like the Kananaskis Emergency Services building. This category also includes a number of official recreation facilities, including

- Ribbon Creek Day Use;
- Kovach Pond Day Use
- Evan-Thomas Day Use;
- The Kananaskis Village Helipad
- Beaver Ponds Day Use

Wedge Pond used to be in the PRA but is now in Spray Valley Provincial Park. Boundary Ranch is not in the PRA, but in that small strip of PLUZ east of the PRA.

There are about 64 km of official trails in the PRA, including:

- Parts of Ribbon Creek, Terrace, Skogan Pass, Stoney, Mt. Allan/Centennial Ridge and the Bill Milne paved bike trail;
- All of Kovach, Terrace Link, Troll Falls, Hay Meadows, Coal Mine, Link, Ruthie's, Hidden, Aspen and Village Rim



Only the left side of Troll Falls is in the PRA; the right side is in Bow Valley Wildland Provincial Park. The falls pre-flood are pictured above right.

In 2004, there were almost 1.25 million day use visits per year to all of the above listed facilities. It's a popular place to base yourself for recreational activities, which was its intent. Still, there are areas in the PRA designated as Natural Environment and Preservation zones (the significance of which I explained in the article on Spray Valley Provincial Park in the [January 2016 newsletter](#)).



There are seasonal closures in place in some areas of the PRA; notably the Mt. Allan/Centennial Ridge trail and the Stoney trail, both in place to protect winter feeding and calving grounds for sheep and elk respectively. The PRA is home to K-Country's largest sheep herd up on Mt. Allan, and a significant elk herd that hangs out in the meadows in the valley bottom. Wolves and bears of both types like the slopes of Mt. Allan, and grizzlies, elk and deer often feed on the Nakiska slopes, explaining why the management plan

does not permit summer use of those slopes for things like mountain biking, though the Management Plan is open to lift-assisted viewing. Weddings are one example of the kinds of activity for which lifts will run in the summer, and summer weddings at Nakiska are popular. There was provision made in the 2004 PRA management plan for a potential expansion of Nakiska should visitor demand prove it needed, and environmental and social impacts were acceptable. A few years ago, Nakiska expanded into that designated space, creating the new runs in the area called “The Monster Glades”.



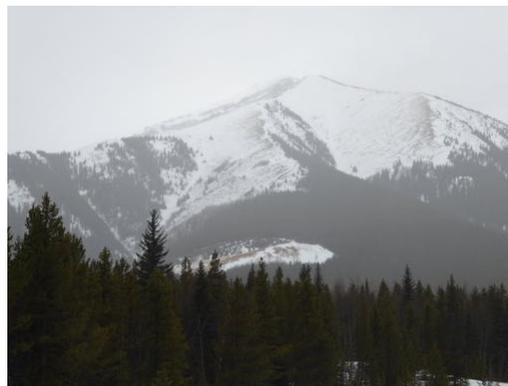
The slopes of Mt. Allan and Mt. Collembola in the Marmot Basin have been used in the past for various research purposes, and some of that continues today. Starting in the late 1940's, and continuing in the 1960's and 70', the Canadian Forest Service ran experiments to see the impact of different types of logging practices on the watershed. There were various experiments of the impact of forest thinning and of clearcutting. Nowadays, those same areas and study sites are being used for pure hydrological study purposes by the University of Saskatchewan, led by Dr. John Pomeroy. Dr. Pomeroy is the Canada Research Chair in Water Resource and Climate Change, plus Professor of Geography and Director of the Centre for Hydrology at the University of Saskatchewan, an Honorary Professor of the Centre for Glaciology, Aberystwyth University, Wales, a Visiting Professor of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and an Institute Professor for the Biogeoscience Institute of the University of Calgary.

Human use of the PRA goes back about 8,000 years, and numerous prehistoric sites were found along the Highway 40 right of way during its construction. Aboriginal people from as far away as Idaho and central and coastal British Columbia are known to have used and lived in the valley. Since their arrival in the area in the 1600's, the Stoney people have used places like Mt. Kidd and Wedge Mountain as cultural and vision quest sites.



Sections of the PRA were logged starting as early as 1886, and other areas burned by natural fires. Data back to 1783 demonstrates that fires sweep through the valley on average every 150 years, and almost everything in the PRA has burned at least once since 1883. The great Galatea fire of 1936, which burned 8,426 ha, effectively put an end to commercial logging as it burned a significant portion of the commercial timber in the PRA. A controlled burn of the Kovach meadows was planned for 2016 but not executed due to weather; its goal is to improve wildlife habitat; it will go ahead at some point. The burn executed a few years back on the slopes of Mt. McDougall just southeast of the PRA's facility areas. Interestingly, man-made forest openings (including the ski runs) constitute only 5% of the PRA.

The PRA was also home to coal mining, which ran from 1947 to 1952. Coal was discovered there in 1907. Before the 2013 flood, still visible were significant ruins of the mining town of Kovach that was situated near the Ribbon Creek parking lot. The reclaimed mine is still visible on Mt. Allan, as can be seen in the photo. It's the lowest cleared patch, and it can be visited on the Coal Mine trail. Before the mine was mechanized, horses were used for hauling, and they grazed in what is now called Hay Meadows. Hay Meadows is today the base of operations for monitoring the annual [migration of the golden eagles](#) which is currently underway; the site they use is the top photo. Click on the link to see the daily report and bird counts.



Because of the commercial activities in the PRA, people live there. There are two residential areas with “right to reside” designations and restrictions, one by the golf course and one at Mt. Kidd RV Park. There is also staff accommodation up at the Delta Kananaskis Lodge. And of course, the golf course itself is being rebuilt after being mostly destroyed by the 2013 flood, with a scheduled re-opening of 2018.

It is very unique for hunting to be permitted in a PRA, but it is in a small zone in the northwest corner. Anyone wishing to take advantage of the hunting opportunities in the PRA should check the hunting regulations first. Fishing opportunities in the PRA are limited and really only in the Kananaskis River – which isn't particularly good for fishing due to fluctuating river levels. Pre-flood, many brook trout made their homes in the ponds on the golf course. Always check the regulations before casting out that line.

Random camping is not permitted in the PRA, nor are any fires except in designated pits (primarily in campgrounds). But why would you want to random camp when you can use the incredible facilities at Mt. Kidd, which includes tennis courts, volleyball courts, a hot tub and a wading pool?

Thank to Kananaskis Regional Information Coordinator Duane Fizer and CO Arian Spiteri for assistance with this article.

Evan-Thomas Provincial Recreation Area:

Camping: Permitted at Mt. Kidd RV Park and Sundance Lodges.

Fires: Permitted only in designated fire pits.

Hiking: Parts or all of 16 trails.

Mountain biking: Permitted on designated trails, including a paved bike path.

Horseback Riding: Permitted on designated trails

Hunting: Permitted in the Marmot Basin area; check the hunting regulations for details.

Services: A lot: 4 day-use areas, 1 full-service hotel, 1 hostel, 1 downhill ski area, 1 golf course,

multiple commercial outfitters, etc.



The Critters of K-Country: Dark-Eyed Juncos

20h 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.

There are many harbingers of spring, such as flowers (like the Prairie Crocus that I wrote about in [April 2016](#)), but for many people spring marks the return of the migrating birds. The most popular and noticeable is the American Robin; another is the Varied Thrush, which I wrote about [March 2015](#). But for me, the first of the migratory returnee birds I see in spring in K-Country every year are the various types of Dark-Eyed Juncos. I have lots of pictures of them taken in early March, and as they stick around until as late as early December before migrating again. In fact, their arrival usually coincides with the first grizzly sightings, and their departure with the last ones.





There are at least 3 subspecies of Dark-Eyed Juncos that can be seen in K-Country. There's the "Slate Coloured", which is mostly a dull gray with a black head. There's the "Oregon" which has a rustier brownish body. And we occasionally see the "Northern Rockies" which is more brownish still. But... all three species interbreed; telling one from another is somewhat challenging, so they are normally all just lumped together as "Juncos".

They are easily identified in the forest; all the Juncos feature iridescent white outer tail feathers, which flash at you as they fly. There are some other sparrows that have this feature, but none are grey/black. They are ground dwellers, eating seeds, bugs and berries, and they love the stuff that falls on the ground from your bird feeder. They are also ground or near-ground nesters.

Juncos are rarely solitary and are often found in flocks of 5-20 birds of all sub-species. Juncos often have 2 broods a year, on a very accelerated pace. Eggs hatch 10-12 days after laying, and the chicks fledge 10-12 days after that. My experience with young Juncos is that they're pretty dumb; they are the number one species of bird that whacks into my windows. I have oftentimes rescued them by simply warming them in my hands until their headaches go away.





Your Donations are Always Appreciated and Needed

We are pleased to recognize the contributions of the [Calgary Foundation](#), [FortisAlberta](#), [TransAlta](#), [Banff Canmore Community Foundation](#), [Patagonia Elements](#), [Husky Energy](#), 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!

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 © 2017 Friends of Kananaskis Country, All rights reserved.



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