



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

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



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Executive Director's Report

by Nancy Ouimet

It's that rewarding time of year when I get to tally all our Trail Days and volunteer hours. I'm always

amazed at the dedicated time and effort volunteers contribute to improving Kananaskis Country trails and the work they've accomplish. We are grateful for our partnership with Alberta Parks which enables our Trail program to offer these unique opportunities. A BIG THANK YOU and *pat on the back* to all the volunteers for their hard work - you're super stars!

Drum roll...presenting the 2017 Trail Report



FRIENDS
OF KANANASKIS COUNTRY

2017 Trail Report

42
Trail
Days

228
Volunteers

2,379
Hours

TRAIL PROJECTS



- 1 Day + 75 Volunteers + 331 Hours = Highway 40 Clean Up
- 3 Days + 17 Volunteers + 147 Hours = Tom Snow Trail
- 11 Days + 36 Volunteers + 392 Hours = High Rockies Trail
- 6 Days + 23 Volunteers + 195 Hours = Lantern Creek Trail
- 2 Days + 11 Volunteers + 81 Hours = Chester Sawmill Winter Trail Project
- 1 Day + 1 Volunteer + 8 Hours = Rawson Lake Interpretive Installation
- 3 Days + 40 Volunteers + 134 Hours = Canmore Nordic Centre
- 6 Days + 19 Volunteers + 219 Hours = Razor's Edge Project
- 9 Days + 24 Volunteers + 202 Hours = Canmore Nordic Centre Nationals MTB Race Course

Alberta Parks authorized FOKC to lead 3 trail projects

High Rockies Trail - resurface 2km of trail tread

Chester-Sawmill Winter Trails - reintroduce 12km of trails (2yrs project)

Razor's Edge - build 2km connector trail (2yrs project)

23 volunteers inventoried 144km of trails in the Kananaskis Public Land Use Zone

NEW PROJECTS



CANMORE TRAIL ALLIANCE

CANMORE
TRAIL
ALLIANCE

The CTA engages trail users in planning, design, construction and maintenance of trails in the Canmore area.

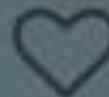
15
Trail
Days

53
Vol

526
Hours

We strive to offer volunteer opportunities to enhance community involvement with our organization and to foster a powerful, broad-based public connection with Kananaskis Country. Thank you to our volunteers and members for an outstanding Trail Stewardship season!

THANK YOU



Contact: info@kananaskis.org - 403-678-1593 - www.kananaskis.org

[Upcoming Volunteer Projects](#)

Razor's Edge Connector - Sun, Oct 29_

This project has been lots of fun so far, with interesting slope side cuts and rock slabs. The next and last building session of the year will be next Sunday, Oct 29. The sessions will run from 10:00am-4:00pm. We ask that you meet the Crew Leader at the Quaita Valley Gate either at 10:00am or 1:00pm. You are welcome to leave the project at any time. **No sign up required.**

Meeting Location: Park and meet by Highway 1 next to the [Quaite Valley Gate](#).

What to bring: Supportive footwear, gloves and bear spray, and if you haven't already filled out the Volunteer Agreement Form this year, [here it is](#).

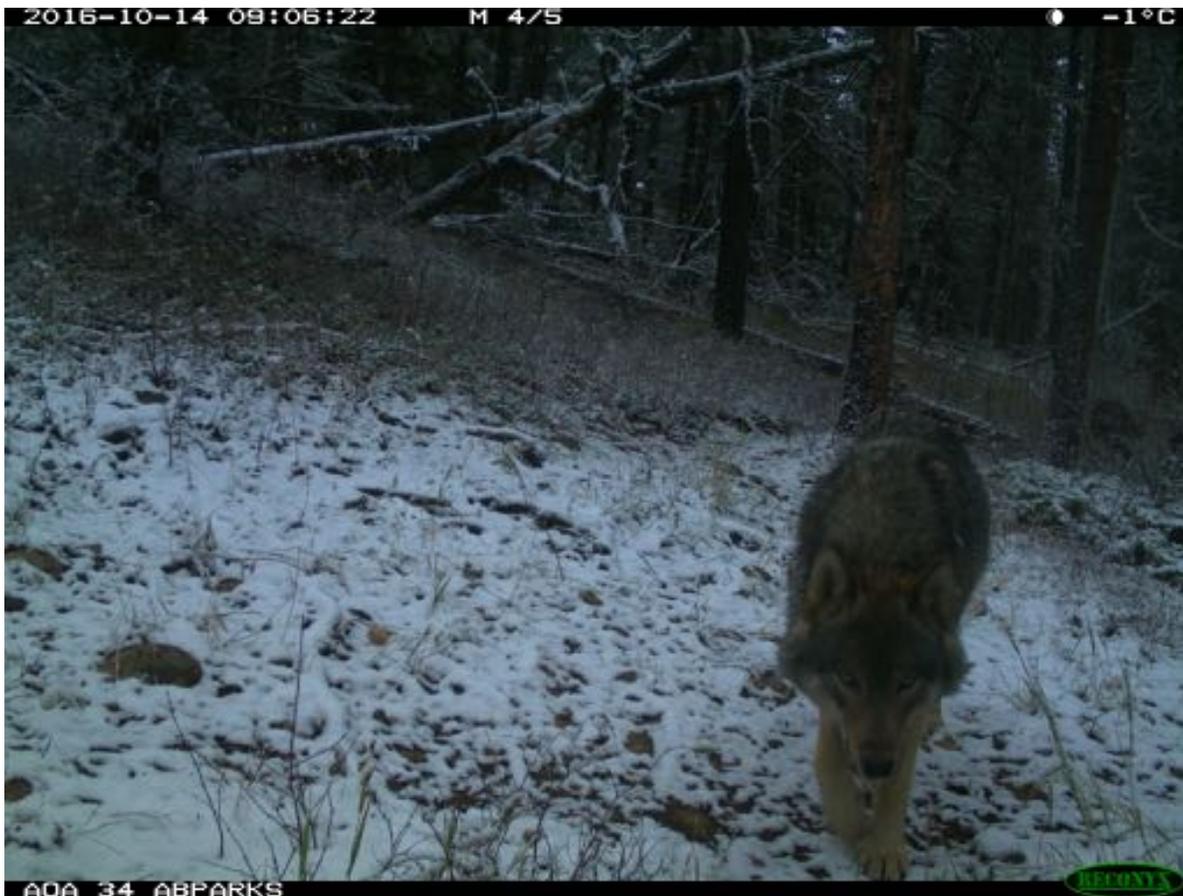


Volunteer Appreciation Event - October 25!

We look forward to celebrating our volunteers and members on Wednesday, October 25 at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Party. As you can tell in the above Trail Report, it's been a great (busy) trail season and there's lots to celebrate.

Next month's newsletter will have lots of photos and stories from the event, so stay tuned!





October wolf. Photo courtesy Alberta Environment & Parks

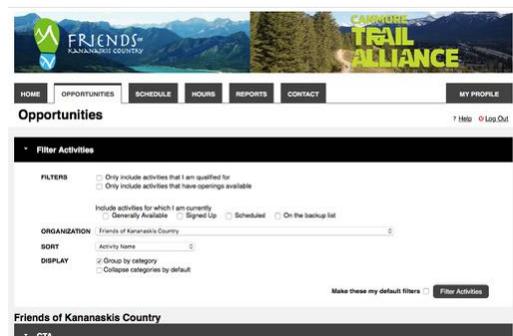
News from the Board -- 42,000 is a big number

By Derek Ryder, Chair

Just how important and impactful are volunteers – like you and other Friends of Kananaskis members – to Alberta Parks?

A few years ago, that was a hard question to answer. The only data available was collected by individuals, groups and organizations like ours, and submitted to Parks for collation. In 2012, we had everything in a big multi-tabbed Excel spreadsheet. Summarizing totals was not easy, summarizing by individuals was tedious and time consuming, and mining the data for information was nearly impossible. I can't even imagine what Parks had to do to sort out all the different reporting from all the volunteers throughout the province.

That all changed because of the 2013 Flood and outpouring of interest in volunteering. Flood restoration money paid for the province-wide adoption of the BetterImpact volunteer database that you use to sign up for most of our projects and log hours we've done. That system was rolled out in 2014, and in its first year logged ~14,000 hours of volunteer work in Kananaskis District (which includes Kananaskis Country, but also Fish Creek, Glenbow Ranch and other areas).



However, many groups (including us) were slow to fully implement the system for various reasons, or did so in stages, and so the hours captured by the system have grown dramatically every year as we get closer to logging 100% of volunteer hours in it. We still don't achieve 100%, but we're getting there, and Nancy makes the effort at this time of year every year to get our data better and more complete.

In 2017, the preliminary data is saying there were over **42,000 hours** put in by volunteers in the Kananaskis District. My rough math says that's over 25 person-years of work.

That 42,000 hours is made up of countless individuals like you, all doing a little bit. Most of our member volunteers only come out once a year and put in ~6 hours of work on a trail care day. That doesn't sound like much, but... add it all up, and the cumulative impact from +200 people each doing that is astounding. Your 6 hour contribution matters.

Every little bit you do adds to the impact that all of the volunteers have on Kananaskis. The same way each little donation we get helps us deliver our programs, every hour you put your hand up for has an impact, and adds to what we can accomplish when we work together.

And so I offer 42,000 thank you's to each and every person who works to help towards our vision of "*A Kananaskis Country of exquisite natural and cultural landscapes enjoyed by present and future generations.*"

Alberta Parks wants your input!

Redevelopment of the Lower Kananaskis River area from Barrier Lake Day Use to Canoe Meadows

Even if you're not a paddler, you're probably aware that the Lower Kananaskis River is a world-class whitewater destination. But it's more than that, with river surfing, accessibility restricted use at the dam area and a pretty stunning canyon ridge walk.

A new vision has been proposed for this awesome area to improve sustainability and access for all user groups, plus improving wildlife connectivity. It includes campground upgrades, bike facility infrastructure, improved parking and access, provision for drying areas for watersports equipment, improved trails and signage, creation of accessible trails, and much more. It represents the plan for the full build-out of the area, and will plot the path for years of work in the area.



The opportunity for comment on this one closes on **October 27th**. Click [here](#) to read more about the

project and find the links to offer feedback.



Safety in the Outdoors, Part 6

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

We all want to play safe in K-Country, and in this series of articles, I'm going to cover the basics of how to have a great day out there. Here's some of what the series will cover:

- What to **KNOW** before you go
- What to **CARRY** when you go
- What to **WEAR** to make sure your day is great
- What to **EAT** to keep your energy up
- What to **THINK ABOUT** while you're out
- What to **DO** if everything falls apart and you need help.

This series is being produced with the support of **Kananaskis Country Public Safety**, and in particular, thanks to **Morgen Funston** of KCPS for her wisdom and suggestions.



What to DO if you need Help

You have followed all of the advice in the previous 5 articles. You've prepared, you have the right stuff, ate well, are dressed right and have the right gear, and you have been mindful through the day.

But something has gone wrong. And now you need help from KCPS. What do you do now?

Your options are controlled by **WHERE YOU ARE**, and **YOUR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE**. Let's start by assuming you're in cell coverage – which actually covers a lot (but not all) of Kananaskis – or you have a sat phone. You are following the previous bits of advice and have STOPPED. Now stay put for a few minutes.

BEFORE you call for help:

- Use your phone to determine your **LOCATION**. Virtually all Smart Phones have built in apps that can use the GPS. Often it's the Compass app. In fact, take your phone right now and root around in it until you can find your latitude and longitude (*the screen shot at right is from the iPhone's Compass app; the lat/long is the 2nd line from the bottom*). Units don't matter – the numbers tell you what you need to know. Look it up. I'll wait... Now remember where that data is so if you're in an emergency you can get it quickly.
- Using your phone, take **THREE PHOTOS** looking around you. As long as you're not in a dense forest and have a sightline to a mountain or something, this will help KCPS know how bad things are by showing them the terrain you're in (this step won't help if you're on a sat phone).
- Way back in the 2nd article of this series, we talked about mapping apps on your phone. **LAUNCH YOUR MAPPING APP**. (If you don't have one and don't know which one to get, go download David Crawshay's [KANANASKIS TRAIL MAP](#) right now while you're reading this. I'll wait... Now launch it (Crawshay's app requires no data or internet connection). If you tap that little arrow in the lower left corner while you are anywhere in K-Country, you will be located on the map. Any dotted yellow line is a trail. Tap on the line and it will tell you what trail. Tap on a flag and it will name the landmarks, including mountain names. Make note of where you are and what trail you're near.
- If it's a climbing accident, **KNOW YOUR CLIMB CRAG AND ROUTE NAME**. KCPS is made up of climbers, and short of inventing your own route, they'll instantly know where you are.
- **TAKE AN INVENTORY** of the emergency gear your group has: spare food, water, clothes, etc.



Now you're ready to call. **Call 9-1-1 and tell them you need Kananaskis Dispatch**. If you're on a sat phone, 9-1-1 doesn't work, so in that case call the Kananaskis Emergency Services ("KES") number 403-591-7767 directly. Tell them:

- What your problem is – injured, lost, can't continue, etc

- The location lat/long that you got from your phone;
- What trail or mountain you were on and what you were doing;
- That you have Crawshay's trail map app and know exactly where you are;
- That you have photos of the terrain you are in
- What kind of supplies you have – food, clothes, etc

All sorts of things can happen at that stage, all of them good.

- KES may relay information and get you to send texts back and forth, or
- KCPS may call you back;
- They'll want your photos and (based on radio communication I've heard) will ask you to confirm your location about 5 times. Don't worry; they'll find you.
- If you didn't download Crawshay's app (and you could do it now [here](#)), KCPS can e-mail or text you a screenshot map of your location. Since a map of some kind is nearly essential to perform a self-rescue, it would probably help to **KNOW HOW TO READ A MAP**.
- KCPS may simply be able to use your location and photos to tell you how to get out of trouble (assuming you're not injured). They refer to these as "armchair rescues"
- KCPS often responds to multiple calls a day. If you're stable, can wait and are well equipped, other parties may be triaged for a rescue ahead of you.
- KCPS may send a helicopter for you. *See below for helicopter protocols.*
- If your phone battery starts running low, pull out that back up power pack that you bought when you read the "What to Carry" article and get it charged back up.



Now, what happens if you need help but you're nowhere near cell coverage? Now what?

The basic problem is that **NO ONE IS GOING TO COME AND FIND YOU IF THEY DON'T KNOW YOU NEED TO BE FOUND**. So this is the time you should have had the foresight to either carry a SPOT, inReach or other personal locator beacon, or to **LEAVE A ROUTE PLAN** with someone, including:

- what type of vehicle you're driving (with license plate),
- exactly where you'll be parked,
- how many in the party,
- the time you should be back, and
- the time they should call for help if you're NOT checked back in.

Now, I freely admit I should do this but don't when I'm out for fun (and I don't own a SPOT) – but when I'm volunteering with Parks, we carry SPOTs and have an established call in/call out procedure as well (*and, having accidentally not called out on occasion, know the cavalry are dispatched less than 60 seconds after I am supposed to check out. They take it seriously*). The Friends trail crews work with Parks staff with radios, and when we're not with Parks staff, Crew Leaders now carry an inReach, and

we are working on implementing a call in-call out process.

If you have a SPOT or inReach, **PUSH THE SOS BUTTON** and **stay where you are**. If you have an inReach, you will then text info back and forth to tell the precise nature of the problem or injury so the correct rescue gear comes to the scene. You'll also know when help will arrive. With a SPOT, you just have to be patient until help arrives. Both devices' emergency notifications will end up in the hands of KES, who will get KCPS or a Conservation Officer on their way to you. See below for what to do when the helicopter arrives.

If you left a plan with someone, it's up to them to call KES at the non-emergency number of 403-591-7755 and report that you're missing, so make sure they know who to call. You're then considered an "overdue" hiker, biker, paddler or whatever. Understand KCPS will **NOT** drop everything immediately to come find you, because people are overdue all the time for all sorts of non-emergency reasons (including stopping for an unplanned beer or ice cream at the end of the day, or locking your keys in the car like I did a few weeks ago). The first article in this series talked about the planning process, including the need to estimate time on trail. So the plan you leave should have two times: an estimated time you'll be back, and a "call for help if you're not back by" time.

Not long after an overdue report is received, the first thing that will happen is someone, usually a Conservation Officer, will come look for you (sometimes by boat), normally just trying to locate for your vehicle. If your vehicle's not where it was supposed to be, they'll report that it can't be found, and they'll notify whomever called it in, so being precise about your planned parking spot is critical. If your emergency contact, says you're still not checked out, typically a search will begin for your car at other nearby places. When/if they finally find it, actual searching for you can begin, and that's a function of remaining daylight and weather. However, if you're on a big, multi-day objective (like, for instance, the Aster Lake-Northover Ridge-Three Isle loop), just finding your car doesn't help much.

Leaving a route plan helps a lot if you're lost and confused, stuck, or injured, but you must realize that help won't come very fast, which is why you're carrying all that emergency gear discussed in previous articles in this series. As a general rule, you'll do best if you **stick together, stay stationary, and be as visible as you can be** (near or in a clearing, not in a dense forest) while you're waiting. Given that you're following the earlier advice of carrying an emergency kit, you can ride out a night (though it may not be fun).

- Consider moving **ONLY** if the situation you're in can't get any worse.



- If you're just lost, **RETRACE YOUR STEPS** to somewhere you know; don't continue on, and don't forget to use Crawshay's app to get you out.
- Consider lighting a smoky fire (because even when fire danger is low, a fire will get attention FAST. But please, don't start a forest fire in the process).

There is a way to accelerate getting help if injury is involved, however, but only if:

- You're not lost, **and**
- At least one person in your group is mobile, **and**
- The injured party is stable enough, in a non-life threatening state, and unlikely to get worse.

If, **and ONLY if**, all three conditions are fulfilled, start by getting the precise location of the injured party from your phone, make a note of it. Then use Crawshay's app to send someone to the nearest recognized trail (the more popular the better), and follow that towards the trailhead. Much as we think Kananaskis is an empty place, trails tend to have people on them, especially official ones, and there's ALWAYS traffic on the roads you can flag down. Intercept someone. Give them the location and nature of the injury, and get them to go find help. With your new saviours getting the cavalry, go back and re-join your injured party.

If the only way you can be helped is by helicopter, the helicopter will need a place to land nearby, or failing that, a clear area where a KCPS staff member or Conservation Officer can be lowered in on a long line to you or near you. After you know a helicopter is coming, it's a wise move to find a nearby clearing if you're mobile enough, because you can't be seen if you're in a dense forest.

Once you hear that helicopter, **KNOW THE UNIVERSAL HELICOPTER RESCUE SIGNAL** pictured at right,

because KCPS is going to want to know it's you. If you're stuck in a dense forest during the day, the wind is calm and you hear a helicopter, **SHAKE A TALL TREE**. Believe it or not, a single shaking tree is quite visible from above, according to KCPS.



Understand the most common places for accidents and problems requiring KCPS help isn't way in the back-country (though rolling an ankle can and does happen anywhere). Problems happen on places like Yamnuska and East End of Rundle that seem benign but tempt people to shortcut and get off route. On the bright side, overdue people are not all that common, and are almost always found within 18 hours of being reported. The cavalry can come quite fast in the right circumstances, and you can have a big role to play in getting them there as fast as you can by following the advice above.

In summary for what to **DO IF YOU NEED HELP**:

- Use your phone to get your **location**, take **pictures** and **map it**;
- Leave a **route plan, parking spot and check out time** with someone to speed up getting help;
- Carry a **SPOT or inReach** type device;
- Try to **contact KES** as soon as you know you have issues;

- Out of cell coverage, consider **sending someone to find help** in the right circumstance;
- Stay **stationary, visible and together** where possible;
- Leave where you are **only if you can't make the situation worse**.

***Postscript:** I once again thank Morgen Funston, who assisted KCPS for the summer of 2017, with her invaluable help and advice with this series, and her infinite patience in reviewing each article prior to publication.*



The Critters of K-Country: Blue Jay

24th in a series by Derek Ryder, Director of Communications

I grew up in Ontario where Blue Jays are a dime a dozen and fill the niche of their Gray Jay cousins as camp robbers, stealing food from picnic tables, sometimes while you're still eating it. I remember my mom being upset when I was younger because Blue Jays would steal the food she left out for the chipmunks at our cottage.



Here, not so much. Blue Jays are relatively rare, but are clearly expanding their range westward and are now almost common in the Bow Valley, which they were not even 10 years ago. I started seeing them a few summers ago in Kananaskis Village, and this summer I saw one in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park for the first time ever. There are even reports of them in the Radium area.

It should not come as a surprise that Blue Jays are expanding their range, as they are a member of the Corvid family like Crows and Ravens, and so are mighty smart birds. They are very tolerant of people and seem to like hanging around them, and so follow us wherever we go (especially wherever we'll feed them).

Though all Blue Jays start off looking alike, if you look closely, individuals allegedly can be differentiated by the pattern on their heads. However, all three of these birds pictured look the same to me, even though they can't be. Maybe I'm just not observant enough.



When they are not stealing your picnic or eating peanuts or sunflower seeds from your bird feeder, they are normally ground feeders going after seeds, berries, eggs, baby birds, insects and carrion. They are normally loud with a whole variety of screams and nasal calls, and often get into fights with magpies over food sources. They don't migrate, and I find they are much more commonly seen in the winter.



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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!

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