



FRIENDS^{OF}
KANANASKIS COUNTRY

The Friends of Kananaskis Cooperating Society

ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 1, 2015 – MARCH 31, 2016





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Board and Staff, March 2015 – March 2016	3
2015: Stretching our Wings.....	4
2015 – 2016 Key Accomplishments.....	5
2015 – 2016 Business Plan.....	6
Chair’s Report.....	8
Governance Subcommittee Report	9
Program Coordinator Report.....	10
Subcommittee Reports:.....	13
Trail Care	13
Communications and Marketing	16
Human Resources	19
Fundraising and Donor Relations.....	19
Education & Events	22
Treasurer’s Report	24
In Closing, and In Thanks.....	25
2016 – 2017 Business Plan.....	28
Financial Statements	30

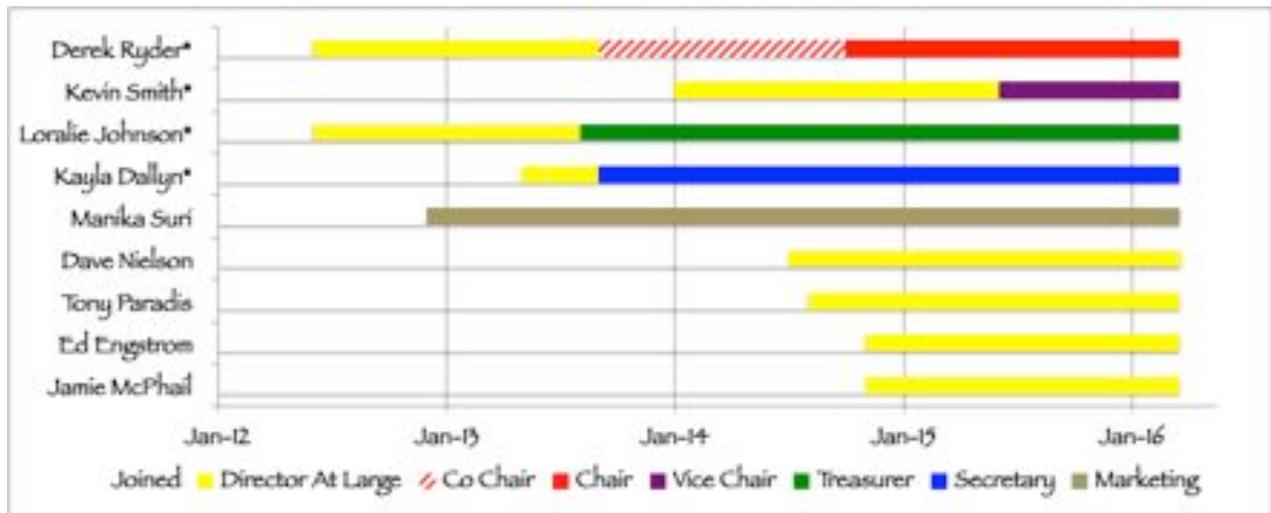


The Friends of Kananaskis Cooperating Society

BOARD AND STAFF, APRIL 1, 2015 – MARCH 31, 2016

Board of Directors

Current Officers marked with an asterisk (*)



Advisory Council

Name	Joined	Name	Joined
James Early	November 2014	Don Cockerton	November 2014
Gilleen Daffern	December 2014	Alf Skrastins	January 2015

Alberta Parks Representatives on the Board

Name	Position	From	To
Jeff Eamon	Supervisor, Trails	August 2012	December 2015
Jody Cairns	Trails Coordinator, Peter Lougheed Provincial Park	January 2016	
Kalyn Airie	Flood Recovery Volunteer and Partner Coordinator	November 2013	April 2015
Jenelle Remple	Community and Partner Relations Team Lead	September 2015	

Staff

Name	Position	From	To
Nancy Ouimet	Program Coordinator	July 2014	
Lawrence Nyman	Contract Bookkeeper	March 2015	

The Friends of Kananaskis Cooperating Society
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2015: STRETCHING OUR WINGS

by Derek Ryder, Chairman

Like the birds that soar over Kananaskis Country, the Friends spread our wings in 2015, enabling us to fly higher and faster than we have in the past.

With our organizational difficulties long behind us, we took advantage of our growing maturity as an organization and as a Board.

- Through our migration to an improved, province-wide system to track volunteers, we got a better understanding of volunteer hours and attendance;
- Our HR and Governance Subcommittees worked seamlessly together to advance much needed policies in the areas of Safety and Respectful Workplace;
- We worked with Alberta Parks to spearhead the re-invigoration of the Chester-Sawmill winter trail system to become a snowshoe destination of choice;
- We advanced other Governance work to enable working independently without Parks direct supervision on Parks sanctioned projects;
- We engaged the community in creating the Canmore Trail Alliance, building new partnerships with the Town of Canmore to support the trails on their landbase within K-Country;
- We pushed forward with interpretive trail improvement work;
- We expanded our Winter Speaker's Series to 3 events from 2

The idea of “independent” work enables us to create more volunteer activities for our members and give more back to Kananaskis Country. So often we are held back from offering volunteer opportunities because in the “Parks calls, We come” model, we are always awaiting their call. Projects like the new High Rockies trail, the Chester-Sawmill work, and the Canmore Trail

Alliance create opportunities for us to lead days on



Parks projects.

And we are not done. We are moving forward with engaging others and forging partnerships with groups like the Stewards, the Conservation Officer community and the Municipal District of Bighorn. We still seek ways to support the areas of K-Country with no trail support; primarily the Public land base, but also some of the community spaces as well.

Financially, we have been successful in accessing grants from organizations such as the Calgary Foundation, the Bow Valley Community Foundation and others. We are still seeking long term sustaining funding, and freely admit to a weakness in this area, though have a project underway that could help. The Finance Subcommittee has worked with our bookkeeper **Lawrence Nyman** to streamline our systems and processes, which has improved our cash management and lowered some of our costs.

Our Program Coordinator, **Nancy Ouimet**, is the powerhouse of our organization. She brings an engaging dynamic and a broad focus to what we do and what we could be doing.

While there was a huge amount of success in 2015-16, there were areas we felt we fell short on.

- While our trail care program was of a similar size as the previous 2 years, the number of different volunteers actually coming out has been dropping;



- We were exceptionally pleased to once again provide a significant donation for Alberta Parks for the purchase of trail



building and maintenance equipment, much like the wheelbarrows (*pictured in use on 2015's Fox Creek trail project*) we donated in 2013. However, the way the program was executed left much to be desired, and we received no recognition for it, defeating one of the purposes;

There were aspects of 2016 that the Board would not like to repeat, but that's true in every organization. As always, we learn from our mistakes and issues, make changes, and move forward. Our organization is stronger for our errors, and moving forward, we have great expectations for 2016 and beyond.

2015 – 2016 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided a donation to Alberta Parks of \$20,000 for the purchase of various trail building equipment;
- Spearheaded the Chester-Sawmill winter trail enhancement project;
- Kicked off the Canmore Trail Alliance aimed at engaging trail users in planning, design, construction and maintenance of trails in the Canmore area;
- Implemented much needed policies in the area of Safety and Respectful Workplace;
- Executed our first “independent” trail care days, working on Parks projects without direct Parks supervision;
- Our 2015 Trail Care season successfully hosted 38 trail care events, engaged 167 individuals who filled 330 volunteer slots, contributing over 1,800 hours to support Alberta Environment and Park's and Public Land trail crews;
 - Executed numerous trail care days in support of Alberta Environment and Park's Public Lands flood repair crews;
 - Assisted in flood and non-flood trail projects in 13 different locations, they included: Galatea Creek Trail, Canmore Nordic Centre, Boulton Creek Trail, Ribbon Creek Trail, Mount Shark Ski Trail, Mist Creek Trail, Elk Pass Trail, Diamond T Loop, Prairie Creek Trail, Jumping Pound Ridge, High Rockies Trail Project (Sparrowhawk & Buller Mountain) Highway 40 Clean Up.
- Hosted our first annual Trails Fest event to celebrate Kananaskis trails, people and culture.
- Kananaskis Country Speaker Series offered three highly engaging presentations.
- Commenced a new partnership with the Town of Canmore to assist with their trail projects.



2015 – 2016 BUSINESS PLAN

2015 Goals:

- Continue to deliver excellence in trail care; specifically related to flood issues
- Continue to develop education initiatives associated with trail care
- Maintain a focus on governance and fiscal management
- Continue to improve our fundraising and advance our fiscal position

Excellence in Trail Care

With a track record of several years of providing solid support to Alberta Parks and their trail care work, we wish to continue to be their “partner of choice” in providing support both to repairing flood related damage and regular trail maintenance. To achieve these goals we will:

Crew Leader Development – Continue to develop and deliver excellent Crew Leader training, and equip each trained leader with tools to assist them to execute their roles.

Understanding our resources – We will fully implement the use of Better Impact to track and manage our volunteer hours, and utilize this system to extract information and statistics that will enable us to assist our members in supporting trail care work.

Use of Membership – We will continue to seek ways to tap the membership for trail care ideas, and communicate these to TPR in keeping with our cooperating agreement. In addition, we will actively work with Alberta Parks to assist them in improving their trail condition reporting with this information.

Insure our services are provided to all areas of Kananaskis country – In addition to continuing to provide volunteer and tangible support to the Bow Valley, Peter Lougheed and Elbow/Sheep districts, we will (1) build our membership base to ensure we can provide excellent support to the Canmore Nordic Centre trails, and (2) seek ways to expand our partnership with ESRD for the non-Park land in Kananaskis, including exploring the creation of a separate cooperating agreement with them, and (3) explore new trail related project opportunities with partners such as McElhanney Consulting Services/Alberta TrailNet (High Rockies Trail) and Town of Canmore

Continue to deliver a strong volunteer recognition program – This will assist in getting our members to return again and again to assist in post-flood trail restoration.

Continuously improve partnerships with other trail and volunteer organizations – We will strive to maintain and improve our relationships with other partner organizations, including but not limited to, Alberta TrailNet, the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association, the Bow Valley Stewards, the Alberta Parks Ecology Team, the Wildlife Ambassadors, and others. Where possible, we will seek to build on mutual strengths and interests.

Education and Events

Working directly and indirectly with Park’s Education and Interpretive teams, the Friends will continue to develop and deliver environmental education programs, in line with its trails in keeping with The Friends’ Vision and Mission.

Trail-Related Education – Based on our agreement with Parks to rehabilitate Kananaskis’ interpretive trails, we will move forward with work to re-develop a minimum of 3 trails in K-Country in 2015

Speaker Series – We will continue to deliver this excellent education initiative, and in the 2015-2016 winter time frame, will pursue ways to further develop revenues from this series.

Trails Fest – We will host our second annual Trails Fest event in fall of 2016, aimed to build a stronger and more connected community of trail users across the Kananaskis Region, we will solicit sponsors to help off-set the costs of the event.



Continue to enhance connections with TPR Education Staff – To develop, support, or deliver formal and non-formal educational programs or tools related to trails to support the organizations vision in Kananaskis Country

Participate in the production of the Alberta Flood book – Partnered with Alberta Parks, Gilleen Daffern and Rocky Mountain Books, we will support the creation of a commemorative book covering the impact of the 2013 floods on Kananaskis Country.

Future Expansion of Education – The education committee will also assess potential for the future expansion of environmental education programs, with a particular focus on programs targeted at youth.

Board Governance

Continued focus on organization and fiscal management is necessary to ensure the continued success of the Friends of Kananaskis Country.

Policies – The Governance Committee and other committees as needed will continue to develop policies that ensure the smooth operation of the Friends. In particular, an Alumni (Elder) Policy needs to be created, and the HR Subcommittee shall determine whether any staff-related policies require development.

Orientation Manual – Building on the manual developed for new Board members, the Friends' will maintain an Orientation Manual for new paid staff.

Board Information Organization – We will maintain and keep current physical (at Canmore Office) and electronic governance documents in a central location.

Financial Excellence – The Friends' will maintain financial accounting and reporting excellence. In particular, we will enhance tracking of restricted funding & grants requirements. We will also make progress in increasing our donor tracking ability.

Fundraising

The Friends continues to make progress in gaining long-term certainty in funding, however there continues to be a lack of fundraising expertise on the Board. We retain the goal from 2014/2015 to develop a sustainable funding model. Our current fundraising plan revolves around the following strategies:

Continue aggressively pursue granting options – The Board continues with the “job requirement” set for the Program Coordinator in 2013 that they identify and apply for grants equivalent to 50% of their salary.

Develop Board expertise in Fundraising – In adding new members to our Board, we will specifically seek and give preference to those with fundraising expertise.

Seek creative fundraising options that the Board can execute – While the current Board lacks the expertise in large donor fundraising experience, we can pursue creative fundraising options that are within the Board's knowledge base. This will continue to be a focus and mandate for the Fundraising subcommittee of the Board in 2014.

Endowment Fund – To establish a long term, sustainable funding model, the Board will utilize revenues from to commemorative Flood book to establish the seed funding for an endowment fund; we will not use current operational income to fund the endowment

Establish standards for branding – With our exciting new logo, we will advance our brand through acquisition of items such as business cards, electronic signatures, pamphlets/ pictures, QR codes -- and cease using items with our old logo.



CHAIR'S REPORT

by Derek Ryder

I was asked this past year whether I knew that being Chair of the Friends was going to be so much work. The funny part is, it isn't that much work, though there are some issues that take up more of my time than others, and occasionally seem like work.

For instance, much of the work of the HR subcommittee of course occurs behind the scenes. 2015-16 had perhaps more behind the scenes work than we would have liked, but I'm personally pleased that we have such a strong HR team working these issues.

In fact, the Board team is amazing. Each member of the Board brings something unique, and brings their own strengths. I am proud to say that after high Board member turnover in the (now distant) past, **we changed out no Board members in 2015-16**. If you go back to the chart on Page 3 of this report, you can see that the team has been together for some time now. The changes we implemented based on recommendations of the HR Subcommittee have helped with this significantly. Our meetings are focused and deliver results. Our communication is solid. Our team is cohesive.

We are aware, however, that several Board members have served for a fair amount of time. Loralie (our Treasurer) has been on the Board since 2012, and she provided the Board notice that she will step away in June 2017, giving us lots of time to find a suitably qualified individual to join our Finance team. Board renewal is always good, as our "newer" recruits always bring excellence to the table.

We did have turnover with the Alberta Parks reps on our Board. **Jenelle Remple** joined us after her return from maternity leave, and after 4 years on the Board, **Jeff Eamon** stepped back and was replaced by **Jody Cairns** from the Peter Lougheed Park trails team.

As Chair, I can't imagine what our organization would be like without **Nancy Ouimet**, our Program Coordinator. Her time, interests, dedication and enthusiasm have driven so many projects for us. Our annual Trails Fest event is her "baby", as is the Chester-Sawmill plan and the Canmore Trail Alliance. She never ceases to amaze me, and amaze the organization.

I'm also pleased to have had **Kevin Smith** step up as Vice Chair this year. He and I compare notes on many topics, and together, we govern better.

We have called on the Advisory Council from time to time this year. James has helped us with several legal matters, Gillean and Alf weighed in on numerous trail-related issues, Alf and Don sat on the Chester-Sawmill Council and Don provided incredible historical insight and sage advice. I'm particularly pleased to know that team has our back.

I was incredibly honoured when Gillean approached me in early 2015 to co-author a book about the impact of the 2013 flood on Kananaskis Country in general, and the trails in particular. I was almost flabbergasted when she offered to direct all of the book's proceeds -- including her own fees -- to the Friends. The Board agreed that we could use those royalties to seed an endowment fund for the Friends, providing long term, sustainable funding for trail care in Kananaskis in perpetuity. The book is due out in the summer of 2016. I've seen advanced copies, and it's a keeper. That it has my name on the cover makes it all the more impressive -- to me, anyway.

I'm proud to be associated with the Friends, proud of what we have accomplished, and proud of where we are going. It is an honour to present this year's Annual Report.



GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

by sub-committee members Derek Ryder & Dave Nielson

In the Business Plan for 2015-16, the primary goal for Governance was to monitor and develop the organization's policies on an as-required basis. As the Friends organization matures, and works towards activities with less supervision and greater "independence", two policies and one document were identified as being essential: an in-house Liability Waiver, a Safety policy and a Respectful Workplace policy.

For the Liability Waiver, normally we use the one for Alberta Parks. But if we are working without their direct supervision, it does not apply. We were able to call on the assistance of Advisory Council member James Early in creating our own, which was ready for our first "independent" work project on the High Rockies Trail in the fall of 2015.

For the two new policies, the Governance Subcommittee worked closely with the Human Resources Subcommittee in developing both.

Creating the Safety policy was relatively easy. The Policy was developed, reviewed and approved by the greater Board in late July, and posted on our website.

The Respectful Workplace Policy was much more challenging. The Governance Subcommittee and greater Board felt it essential that our policy mirror and tie directly to the policies of Alberta Parks in particular, and the Provincial Government in general. While the Friend's Governance Subcommittee developed a policy for internal review in July 2015, it took numerous meetings and conversations with Alberta Parks staff to sort out how their policies and management framework regarding respect in the workplace, and our proposed policy and procedures, should integrate and merge.

Interestingly, the issue became a precedent setting one. The Friends was the first volunteer organization in the Province to broach the topic, and the "solution" had ramifications to the more than 100,000 volunteers in the province.

In the end, the decision was made not to develop an internal Friends policy on the matter, but to add a schedule to our Cooperating Agreement covering the matter – a schedule that was common to other volunteer organizations in the province. The proposed schedule was passed by the Board in January 2016, though there is still some work to do on the Cooperating Agreement to reflect that.

The Governance Subcommittee would like to thank and acknowledge the support we received from **Michael Roycroft**, **Jenelle Remple** and **Mark Storie** in formalizing this collaborative process.

Not related to policy development, but as part of overall Society Governance, electronic files were centralized onto Microsoft's SharePoint system, and consolidated with Office 365 for Business. This provides a more secure and readily accessible documentation solution than our previous methodologies.

Our approved Liability Waiver, Policies, Collaborative Agreement, and Bylaws are all available on our website under the Library page.



PROGRAM COORDINATOR REPORT

by Nancy Ouimet



2016 is our 20th Anniversary! Twenty years ago, the Friends of Kananaskis Country (Friends) was formed as a cooperating association with

what is now the Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) department of the Province of Alberta. The association's independent, non-profit mandate was to enable public participation within Kananaskis. In 2010, a review of the Strategic Plan was undertaken, where priority was given to the trail care and education programs supported by sound fundraising practices.

The Friends' objective is to enhance, protect, and share the unique natural and cultural experiences of Kananaskis Country through education, participation, and community engagement in keeping with our mission and vision:

Vision:

A Kananaskis Country of exquisite natural and cultural landscapes enjoyed by present and future generations.

Mission:

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

TRAIL CARE

The Trail Care program focused on delivering a safe, fun and meaningful way for people of all ages and abilities to give back to the Kananaskis Country trails they love. Maintenance of Kananaskis trails is the responsibility of AEP, and the Friends of Kananaskis Country works to support their efforts by coordinating Trail Care volunteer groups to assist with their trails projects. The majority of our 2015 Trail Care events were focused on repairing or rebuilding trails damaged

by the 2013 floods, work that has been ongoing since July of 2013.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

The season comprises May to October.

- 38 Trail Care days
- 1,814 Volunteer-hours recorded
- 167 Different individuals were engaged
- 330 Volunteer slots were filled
- 15 Volunteer crew leaders lead groups
- 1,353 Members on mailing list as of March 31, 2016

Volunteer participation and number of trail days was similar to 2014, however volunteer hours were lower than 2014, primarily due to shorter trail day events and better accuracy in reporting and tracking volunteer hours. It was observed that an increased number of members on the trail care distribution list did not however result in more volunteers signing up for trail days.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Trail care projects were undertaken in the following 13 areas within Kananaskis Country:

- Galatea Creek Trail (4 days)
- Canmore Nordic Centre (4 days + 1 Corp Days)
- Boulton Creek Trail (10 days)
- Ribbon Creek Trail (1 day)
- Mount Shark Ski Trail (1 day)
- Mist Creek Trail (1 day)
- Elk Pass Trail (1 day)
- Diamond T Loop (1 Day)
- Prairie Creek Trail (5 days)
- Jumping Pound Ridge (5 days)
- High Rockies Trail Project
 - Sparrowhawk (1 day)
 - Buller Mountain (1 day + 1 Corp Day)
- Highway 40 Clean Up (1 day)

We invested 10 days into rebuilding the flood-affected Boulton Creek Trail. This was one of our biggest projects. It started off with clearing brush



and trees off the new trail reroute. Once the trail was cleared, we decommissioned sections of the old flood-damaged trail, did the finishing work of removing rocks and roots, fixed the side hills and raked and tamped the trail's final tread. It was great to see several volunteers get personally invested in realizing this project.

To celebrate a great Trail Care season and give thanks to our outstanding volunteers, the Friends hosted its annual appreciation event October 21 at the Capitol Hill Community Association in Calgary. Over 60 volunteers gathered to cheer their hard work and learn about the High Rockies – Progress & Phase 2 project, an exciting addition to the Trans Canada Trail. Twenty prizes were handed out along with handmade trophies to commemorate the volunteer and crew leader of the year.

The 2015 volunteer Trail Care program was a continued success. Our commitment to training our volunteer crew leaders, maintaining strong partner relationships, and improved processes all complement our ability to offer a unique volunteer Trail Care program.

Aside from our volunteer Trail Care program, we spearheaded a two interesting projects where we could add value.

Chester-Sawmill Winter Trail Plan: The purpose of the Chester-Sawmill Winter Trail Plan was to develop recommendations for an enhanced winter trail network in the Chester-Sawmill area of Kananaskis Country. This plan explored the Chester-Sawmill winter recreational opportunities while carefully considering the approved park management plan. Recommendations were presented to Alberta Parks for consideration.

Canmore Trail Alliance: The Friends identified an opportunity to increase its trail stewardship role in the Canmore community; to revitalize and improve the current state of Canmore's existing trails through partnership, education and community engagement. Through the new Canmore Trail Alliance, a subset group associated with the Friends - Trail Care program, Canmore residents will have the opportunity to engage in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of trails in the Canmore area.

EDUCATION

In partnership with AEP Public Engagement team

(Interpretation and Education), we made progress on the Refreshing Interpretive Trails of Kananaskis Country project, securing funds to implement new signs at six different trail locations and drafting the concept messaging for most of the new panels. Most of these signs will be realized in 2016-17.



We continue to be impressed with the presentations and public engagement our Speaker Series has delivered. There are numerous experts who's work, passion, and connection with Kananaskis Country is awe inspiring and interesting. We look forward providing more of these great presentations.

FUNDRAISING AND DONOR RELATIONS

We dedicated time and effort to fundraising for our Trail Care and Education projects. It's an ongoing effort that we invest in year round. As such, we approached previous funding sources for renewed support and approached new sources. A comprehensive guideline that outlines our stewarding principal and objectives was developed to improve how we manage and recognize the donors, sponsors and foundations who support the organization, thus fostering relationships and funding retention.



CONCLUSION

2015 was a successful year as we worked to improve our systems, policies, and explore how we can continue to add value and play an integral role in stewarding Kananaskis trails. We strive to offer volunteer opportunities in all of our projects to enhance community involvement with our organization and to foster a powerful, broad-based

public connection with Kananaskis Country. Our members and the volunteers who give time and resources to our programs ultimately contribute to the organizations success. I resoundingly **THANK YOU** for supporting and being a part of the Friends of Kananaskis Country!





SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

TRAIL CARE

by committee members Kevin Smith, Ed Engstrom & Jamie McPhail

The Friends of Kananaskis Country, in consultation with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), have continued to focus on providing a Trails Program in support of both repairing flood related damage and regular trail maintenance throughout 2015/16. A new initiative was also begun to support the contractors working on the new High Rockies Trail in the Spray Valley region. This new section of the Trans Canada Trail will consist of a multi-use trail between Banff and Fernie that will be officially opened in July 2017 as part of the Canada's 150th celebrations. Since most visitors to Kananaskis come to use a trail, this ongoing focus allows Friends to position itself as the primary trails organization within Kananaskis Country.

The trail season started in May of 2015 and continued on into October. Activity was still somewhat restricted because the AEP required focus on remaining flood related large capacity projects such as bridge building or remote projects (access to the sites being greater than 5 km from the trailhead), which precluded the use volunteers. Even so, a total of 38 volunteer events occurred and 167 volunteers donated over 1,800 hours of effort. AEP

Projects occurred at the Canmore Nordic Centre (CNC), Galatea, Boulton and Ribbon Creeks, Mount Shark, Mist Creek and Elk Pass. Work was done with Alberta Environment and Parks – Public Land (previously named ESRD) at Diamond T, Prairie Creek and Jumping Pound Ridge and work

on the High Rockies Trail was done at Sparrowhawk and Buller. The work consisted of mainly summer trail work, but some winter only cross country ski trails such as Boulton Creek and Mount Shark ski trails were also included.

The following six program objectives were adopted by the board for the 2015/16 season and comments on results follow each objective.

Crew Leader Development – To will continue to develop and deliver excellent Crew Leader Training, and equip each trained leader with tools to assist them to execute their roles.

To ensure we have excellence in trail care execution, we continued the Crew Leader training program that was started in 2012. The last two years has seen improvements in training with development of both classroom and “in-the-field” training elements. In 2015, all Crew Leaders were required to be First Aid trained and were provided with First Aid kits for trail days. All Crew leaders were provided with Friends shirts to ensure they are easily identifiable on trail care days, and provided with hand saws for use on the trail.



In 2015, our Crew Leader Training Manual had minor enhancements, and the planned 2015 Crew Leader Refresher Training was delivered in two parts to 15 Crew Leaders. The first part was an in-class session in Calgary followed by a practical trail building session held at the Canmore Nordic



Centre. Overall there were 18 Crew Leaders. A trail day checklist was developed to ensure all safety and administrative requirements are covered on a trail day. Throughout the year, 15 of the Crew Leaders were able to lead volunteer projects. Continued emphasis on recruiting promising volunteers to become new crew leaders will be given again in 2016 by employing “shadowing” of experienced Crew Leaders, as well as strengthening the training offered including application of the AEP Respectful Workplace Policy and Radio Training, the latter in anticipation of some 2016 Friends trail projects being undertaken without AEP supervision.

Understanding our resources – We wilfully implement the use of Better Impact to track and manage our volunteer hours, and utilize this system to extract information and statistics that will enable us to assist our members in supporting trail care work. To support our goals, we will survey our membership’s interest in supporting trail care,

The AEP supported on-line resourcing system, Better Impact, was fully deployed on the Trail Care projects in 2015. The system was effective at providing a framework for trail care day sign-up for both Crew Leaders and general Volunteers. However since the tool application was in its infancy, we were not looking to develop detailed profiles of all active volunteers in 2015. While we recognize that we have an active and growing volunteer base, we know that some of our trail care activities require more experience, while others are easier for newcomers. We currently do not have the ability to effectively track and continually enhance the skills of our volunteer base, to become more effective at providing the right group of volunteers to projects. Our focus in 2016 will be to look at ways to enhance

our knowledge of our volunteer resource base and their skills.

We surveyed our volunteer base in 2015 with the objective of trying to better understand the motivations of our volunteers and use the information to improve our Trail Program. While the survey was not totally successful due to a lower than expected response rate, we were able to conclude that there is support for undertaking projects throughout Kananaskis Country, that there is support for work on all types of trails (e.g. hiking, biking, cross country) and a continuing need for trail care projects that allow participation on weekdays as well weekends.

Use of Membership – We will continue to seek ways to tap the membership for trail care ideas, and communicate these to AEP in keeping with our Cooperating Agreement. In addition, we will actively work with Alberta Parks to assist them in improving their trail condition reporting with this information.

We did not put much emphasis on tapping the membership for trail care ideas in 2015 apart from looking at general ideas in the survey mentioned above. The continued focus by AEP on completing flood related projects meant little or no resource to





tackle “on-the fly” projects. We expect this to change in 2016 with more work being focused on trail maintenance. We will continue to look at enhancements to our website, to allow us to become more interactive with our members in identifying and bringing forward trail care opportunities and ideas. This includes but is not limited to encouraging members to identify trail maintenance, construction or enhancement concepts.

Ensure our services are provided to all areas of Kananaskis Country – In addition to

continuing to provide volunteer and tangible support to the Bow Valley, Peter Lougheed and Elbow/Sheep districts, we will (1) build our membership base to ensure we can provide excellent support to the Canmore Nordic Centre, (2) seek ways to expand our partnership with ESRD for the non-Park land in Kananaskis, including exploring the creation of a separate cooperating agreement with them, and (3) explore new trail related project opportunities with partners such as McElhanney Consulting/Alberta Trailnet (High Rockies Trail) and the Town of Canmore.

As was discussed in the overall program achievements we were able to work on trail care projects with all of the local Parks representatives, (Peter Lougheed (James Cieslak), Bow Valley (Jeff Eamon), Elbow/Sheep (Pat Ronald/Kyle Jacobson)). We were able to develop separate paperwork to cover the proper documentation and insurance coverage on AEP – Public Land projects, and work with the lead contractor McElhanney to support the High Rockies Trail. We were also able to provide some seed funding for much needed equipment such as trailers. We expect to be involved across all areas of Kananaskis Country as the Trails Program continues.

We have also obtained sufficient insurance coverage to allow Friends led teams to work on projects without AEP support in 2016, which will further enhance our ability to cover all areas of Kananaskis Country

Continue to deliver a strong volunteer recognition program – This will assist in getting our members to return again and again to assist in post-flood trail restoration.

A number of initiatives were continued in 2015 to support volunteer recognition. Work gloves with the Friends logo were handed out during projects. Crew Leaders were given work shirts to provide them with better identification. Sponsor rewards were available for good work on the trail as well as to cover the cost of crew leader’s transportation.

An end of season volunteer appreciation evening was held in Calgary at the end of October. Over 60 people attended to listen to presentations, and to receive great prizes and recognition. In 2016 the intent is to continue to enhance our overall volunteer recognition program.

Continuously improve partnerships with other trail and volunteer organizations – We will strive to maintain and improve our relationships with other partner organizations, including but not limited to: Alberta TrailNet, the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association, the Bow Valley Stewards, the Alberta Parks Ecology Team, the Wildlife Ambassadors and others. Where possible, we will seek to build on mutual strengths and interests.

The Friends hosted an inaugural Trails Fest event at the beginning of the 2015 trail care season at the Canmore Nordic Centre to bring together multiple trail user and volunteer groups from around the region. This was both an opportunity to celebrate trails and their use, but also to bring together these diverse groups under a common theme. The event was very successful and will be held again in 2016 at the Delta, Kananaskis. Apart from continued good relationships with West Bragg Creek, relationships with the local biking groups are improving, joint projects have been planned with the Kananaskis Stewards in 2016, and new initiatives, building on the success of the Friends support of the volunteer group that built the new CNC warming hut, are being planned. A new partnership with the Town of Canmore has been



established to help support their trail initiative, with projects scheduled to commence in 2016 and onward.

CONCLUSIONS:

The Volunteer Trail Care Program was a continued success in 2015. While the number of projects undertaken was similar to that undertaken in 2014, somewhat limited by continued AEP emphasis on large flood mitigation projects, the linkage between the Friends and all of the Parks representatives covering the Kananaskis regions continues to improve. We continue to have a successful approach to getting volunteers on the ground and the successful deployment of Better Impact will

allow us to improve the accuracy of our trail care statistics going forward. There has been a continued large growth in the overall membership, but there has not been a corresponding increase in those volunteers out on the trail. We will continue to seek feedback from the membership in 2016 on the type of volunteering they are interested in, which areas should have the biggest focus, and on ideas to improve the volunteer experience. Finally we would like to thank all of the volunteers who gave freely of their time in 2015 to help enhance, repair and maintain the trails in Kananaskis Country.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

by committee members Derek Ryder and Manika Suri

The Friend's 2015-2016 Business Plan had several goals for Communications & Marketing, specifically in the areas of membership, newsletter readership, social media and branding. These were mostly accomplished through use of our key communications vehicles, our website and newsletter, supported by social media.

One specific goal in our Business Plan was to increase our local presence in the Bow Valley to better support trail work at the CNC. This was achieved through gaining an increased media presence both in advertising and news coverage in the local newspapers in the Bow Valley area, and initiating the Canmore Trail Alliance, which can be read about elsewhere in this report.

Our Website

After several years of a reasonably static format to our website, we found that it increasingly was preventing our users from seeing the material we post. Accordingly, it was re-organized in 2015, creating such things as:

- A library for forms and publishing governance documents;
- A dedicated page for TrailsFest, our premier annual event;

- Pages dedicated to our Speakers Series events;
- Splitting longer text intensive pages in several subpages;
- Adding an events calendar to make it easy to see upcoming trail care events and other activities.

As a result of this change and having relevant, easy to find content, our website traffic continues to be strong. Since going "live" in August 2013:

- The site has seen 58,445 visits, including 3,224 in May 2015 alone;
- The site sees an average of 63 visits per day;
- Peak hit rates in 2015-16 were seen in May 2015 with over 100 hits per day;
- The home page has been visited 18,810 times since going live, the pages for TrailFest 4,600 times, and the Volunteer Projects page where we post our trail care work has been seen 3,350 times.

We continue to add to the archive of past Newsletters on our website, update the space with fresh photos of highlighting Kananaskis' beauty,



and use our website to enhance the Friends brand and logo.

The data demonstrates that our website is an effective marketing tool for our events, is checked often for trail care projects and information, is a source for documents people need to volunteer, drives traffic to our donation sites and continues to achieve everything we want from it.

Membership

While not specifically tasked with membership management, the Subcommittee tracks and maintains our membership list.

Prior to 2015, volunteers wishing to join the Friends were routed through our website to a MailChimp page, which is used to send out our newsletter. People used this website as a portal to join the Friends and, upon joining, had the option to subscribe to our newsletter which is produced in MailChimp. Membership was thus tracked simply and accurately through the MailChimp signups, and newsletter subscriptions normally occurred simultaneously with new members joining. When trail care or other events were scheduled, MailChimp lists were used to refer them to a SignUp Genius page created for the event.

In 2014, the Alberta Government introduced a system for managing all volunteer activity in the Province, called Better Impact, specifically requesting all groups with Collaborative Agreements use it. The Friends migrated to this system in the spring of 2015. As a result, Friends the trail care members list was migrated to the new system, which was independent of MailChimp, our website and newsletter. Event notifications went out through Better Impact, and sign ups occurred in Better Impact as well. The newsletter remained in MailChimp, as it was impractical (if not impossible) to send it out via Better Impact.

This change created two separate distribution lists being managed in two different systems; a Trail Care list housed in Better Impact and a Newsletter list housed in MailChimp. As a result we had two membership counts that were not the same and could not be compared. Since MailChimp signups were effectively bypassed, newsletter growth stopped as new members joined through Better Impact.

Many of our members sign up using work e-mails. The economic downturn of 2015 saw a sharp spike in e-mail bounces from work e-mails that were no longer active, both on Better Impact and MailChimp newsletter mail-outs.



As a result of the migration to Better Impact, the Friends no longer has a reliable membership count. The MailChimp list is slowly declining. However, the Better Impact list has

been steadily growing with 1,500 members in March 2016, up from 1,350 about one year ago.

In the end, the best measure of our membership base is whether sufficient volunteers show up to our events. As our anecdotal evidence says volunteer supply exceeds trail care day demand, we do not believe membership is an issue, though continue to seek ways to improve our tracking of it.

The Newsletter

As noted, newsletter subscriptions have remained essentially stagnant, falling from 893 in March 2015 to 877 in March 2016. The switch to Better Impact basically eliminated new newsletter subscriptions. A majority of our decline in readership has been due to now inactive e-mail addresses; we have only had only 3 people unsubscribe in the last 12 months. Consequently, the change of volunteer management, and inactive emails, our Business Plan goal to grow the newsletter readership was not achieved.



On average, our newsletters are opened by 44.1% of our subscribers, or about 400 people per issue, and remains advertisement-free. Interestingly, each newsletter is opened over 1,200 times, this suggests we have many more readers than just the 400 who open it; they may forward it to their friends, or reference it repeatedly.

Our newsletter remains as our primary method of delivering our Education mandate, and we have published numerous articles on wildlife, flowers, special places, history, fire lookouts and other topics. In 2015, we started a multi-part series on the elements of Kananaskis Country, breaking down the area into its component parts. This series prompted significant interest, with hundreds of click-throughs to the rules and regulations of the parks, as well as maps and other information. We are indebted to **Duane Fizer**, Regional Information Content Coordinator of Alberta Parks for helping us make the information we publish accurate.

Branding

Our logo has become a powerful tool in establishing the Friends identity. It features a stylized boot print, showing our connection to trails, and our desire to “leave only footprints” as we explore K-Country. The boot tread pattern is in the form of stylized mountains, with the green of

the mountains above and the blue of Kananaskis’ lakes below. Interestingly, we received criticism that the boot print says that we only represent the hiking community, when in fact, we represent all Kananaskis non-motorized users. The Board considered augmenting the logo, but believe it represents who we are.

We have seen demand from volunteers to purchase the fabulous **Patagonia** shirts embroidered with our logo that our Crew Leaders wear. This is an opportunity the Board reviews from time to time, and have had a mixed response. Desire to purchase does not always equate to sales when these items come available. To create a new supply chain and ordering system for these items could detract from other areas of focus for the Friends, and no one wishes to repeat past failures we have had in retail operations.

Social Media:

The Friends maintains a fairly frequent presence on Facebook, and an occasional presence on Twitter.

We have found Facebook effective in communicating upcoming events, in particular the Speakers Series, and trail care days. It is also useful in rapidly disseminating news. Through the winter months, we occasionally provide links to articles on the outdoors and on avalanche conditions.

Twitter has been less effective for us. Oftentimes, the things worth tweeting need tweeting from places with no cell phone service, and events information seems to be communicated clearer through Facebook and the Friends website.

The Board has set a goal for 2016-17 to improve our social media presence. The Subcommittee is looking at ways to do this, including engaging volunteers from within the organization to support tools such as Instagram, and enhance our existing platforms.



HUMAN RESOURCES

By committee members Kayla Simpson, Derek Ryder & Kevin Smith

As noted in the Governance Subcommittee Report, both HR and Governance Subcommittees spent a significant amount of time in 2015 on the development of two policies: the Safety Policy and Respectful Workplace Policy. As the Friends organization matures and works towards activities with less supervision and greater “independence”, these two policies were identified as being essential to the organization and the way that trail work is conducted. Training was also provided to our Crew Leaders around the implementation of these policies.

The Friends are fortunate to have on our Board and HR Subcommittee a member who served for several years as an HR rep in branch of the Alberta Government in a department other than Parks.

This has served us well in attempting to understand and deal with the issues in creating policies that align with the ones of the Government groups we work with. However, even the subcommittee members were surprised at the amount of time, effort and energy that went into this policy work in 2015. Both policies were implemented this fiscal year.

In 2014-15, the HR Subcommittee recommended changes to the Friends Subcommittee structure and

Board Meeting frequency. These changes were recommended as a way to assist Board members in being focused, avoiding Board Member burn-out or time over-commitment as well as assist with Board Member retention. A commitment was made in the 2014-15 Annual Report to review these changes and understand their impact.

The HR Subcommittee believes that these changes have had the positive desired effect. The Board met in 2015-16 more often than the minimum requirement outlined in our Bylaws, but no more than was needed, and had fewer meetings than in the previous 2 years. Board retention has been enhanced as there was no Board Member turnover in 2015-16.

The subcommittees rarely meet unless needed. There were numerous meetings of the HR and Governance Subcommittees during the policy development work. The Trail Care Subcommittee met a few times as part of their season preparations. The other subcommittees met once or not at all during the year. In the end, feedback from Board Members at our March 2016 off-site suggested the subcommittee structure has mixed utility, but the Board opted to maintain it.

FUNDRAISING AND DONOR RELATIONS

by committee members Derek Ryder & Ed Engstrom

Support from foundations and corporations is critical to the success of the Friends of Kananaskis Country, in addition to the many individual donations we receive. The Friends are a non-profit organization that runs exclusively on donations. We raise money to support relevant, practical initiatives that not only benefit the people involved, but benefit the ecology and ecosystems of Kananaskis Country. Courtesy of outstanding work by Nancy Ouimet, granting success continued in

2015-16, with several grants received to support our programming. They included:

The Calgary Foundation:

One of our most significant supporters, the Calgary Foundation have provided





us with 4-years grant to assist in flood damaged trail recovery, a 2-year grant to assist in trail interpretive trail work, and a 2-year grant for implementing the Human Use Management project in partnership with the Town of Canmore and Kananaskis Parks.

TransAlta:



TransAlta renewed their support for our Trail Care program. They have a long-standing commitment to sustainability which results in support of organizations like the Friends.

Banff Canmore Community Foundation:



The BCCF provided support to develop the Canmore Trail Alliance aimed to engage Canmore area residents in trail building and maintenance through community initiatives that improve Canmore’s recreational asset, enhance its trail conditions, and educate the importance of ecological integrity and sustainability.

Patagonia Elements Inc:



The Patagonia Banff stores chose us as their 1% For The Planet, supporting our Trail Care program’s volunteer coordination and management, and crew leader training.

Husky Energy:  **Husky Energy**

Husky stepped forward with a 2-year grant to support Trail Flood Damage Restoration. Their in-kind grant was targeted to subsidize the transportation costs of Crew Leaders and other key volunteers in performing flood restoration work.

Twenty4 Sports:



Money was raised through the participants in the 24 Hours of Adrenalin race

held at the Canmore Nordic Centre to provide for maintenance and ongoing excellence of the mountain bike trail system in the Park.

Rotary Club of Canmore:



Provided support in promoting the Canmore Trail Alliance to engage Canmore area residents in trail building and maintenance community initiatives.

Various organizations and Clubs who support us, included: **Calgary Weekend Hikers, Spin Sisters, Cyclemeisters Calgary, Kananaskis Lakes Association, Prairie Mountain Hikers, Calgary Weekend Hikers, Fifth Dimension Outdoor Club, Stantec Consulting Ltd, Midtown Kitchen & Bar, CGarchitect Digital Media Corp, Dillon Consulting Limited.**

Many companies have donation matching programs; in particular we want to recognize the programs of **Cenovus Energy, EnCana, and ATCO Gas** for their support.

There’s a long list of individuals who provided us with donations. We thank them all for their generosity and support.

As mentioned in the Education and Events report, donations were received at the three Speaker Series events. The funds raised at these events covered the Series costs and support our programming.

In keeping with the goals set forward in our 2015-16 Business Plan, following are our outcomes:

Continue aggressively pursue granting options:

As outlined above, the Friends achieved success in securing funding to deliver educational programs, trail care activities and other programs that allow individuals and groups to experience Kananaskis Country through engagement and sharing.

Develop Board expertise in Fundraising:

The Board continues to specifically require a new Board member with fundraising expertise.

Seek creative fundraising options that the Board can execute:



Although the subcommittee didn't identify new fundraising opportunities, we created a comprehensive guideline that outlines our stewarding principal and objectives for managing and recognizing the donors, sponsors and foundations who support the organization. This focus on fostering our existing supports will hopefully result in increased funding retention.

Endowment Fund:

The Board has decided to not use operational income to establish an Endowment Fund.

Alternately, revenues from the commemorative Flood book co-authored by Gillean Daffern, Alberta Parks, and the Friends will be used toward an Endowment Fund.

While we have had success with our fundraising efforts, the Fundraising Subcommittee plans to continue to seek long term, sustainable funding in 2016-17.





EDUCATION & EVENTS

by Subcommittee members Manika Suri, Kevin Smith, Kayla Simpson, Dave Nielson & Jamie McPhail

The goal of the Education and Events Subcommittee is to:

“develop, implement and maintain educational programs and/or events for the benefit of volunteers, members and the general public, in keeping with the organization’s vision and mission.”

Following are the 2015-16 highlights based on the committee’s work plan as outlined in the Business Plan.

Trail Related Education

In partnership with the Alberta Parks Educations and Interpretation team, the Friends are working to refresh the interpretive trail signs in Kananaskis. This initiative will enhance visitors' knowledge, awareness and understanding about the natural aspects of the sites through the revitalization of signage panels, messaging and design.

The Friends was successful in receiving a two-year grant from The Calgary Foundation to support the replacement of interpretive signage in 6 priority locations. The 2015-16 approved locations include Heart Creek, Beaver Flats, Elbow Falls, Rawson Lake, Eau Claire and Ribbon Creek. As of March 2016, Heart Creek Trail signs are complete and Beaver Flats, Elbow Falls and Rawson Lake signs are near completion.

Speaker Series

The Friends hosted its third annual ‘Kananaskis Country Speaker Series’ at the University of Calgary in partnership with the U of C Palliser Club. We offered three engaging presentations that related to Kananaskis trails. On January 20th, Ben Gadd (*pictured at right*) spoke on Icefield bunnies, gullible bees and why the tallest mountain is not the highest. The event was a full house with over 300 people. Kevin

van Tighem presented on February 24th about Heart Waters - Restoring Alberta’s Rivers. Our final speaker was Matt Mueller with Kananaskis Public Safety, who discussed Mountain Rescue Operations on March 23rd. All events were very well attended and we received generous door donations to support Friends programming. The Series has proven to be a successful education program and provides an opportunity to connect with our members and the public during the winter season. We will continue to offer this program in 2016-17 with leading experts on topics related to Kananaskis in general and trails in particular.

Trails Fest

The Friends first annual flagship event ‘Trails Fest’ was held May 30, 2015 at the Canmore Nordic Centre to celebrate Kananaskis trails, people and culture.

The event showcased the many ways trails are used, with 30 trail recreational clubs and groups exhibiting what they do, two presentations and guided outdoor afternoon trail activities.

The event exceeded our expectations with 350-400 people attending and all components of the event well executed and attended. We will build on this events success next year at the 2nd annual Trails Fest and continue to build a strong and connected





community of trail users across the Kananaskis Region. Photos of the 2015 event are below.



Friends Program Coordinator, Nancy Ouimet, sat on a panel with Alberta Parks representatives, and commented on the youth's presentations regarding their proposed approach to the Chester-Sawmill trail enhancement initiative. This was a valuable experience for the participants and we were impressed by their creative and thoughtful recommendations.

Participate in the production of the Alberta Flood book

The Chair of the Friends Board of Directors, Derek Ryder, partnered with Alberta Parks and Gillean Daffern in the creations of a commemorative book covering the impact of the 2013 floods on Kananaskis Country. Published by Rocky Mountain Books, the proceeds from the book sales will go to support the Friends' work to continue to rehabilitate flood damaged trails in Kananaskis Country. The book is expected to become available to the general public in July 2016.

Future Expansion of Education

The Education Subcommittee was tasked to assess the potential expansion of environmental education programs, with a particular focus on programs targeted at youth. Although the subcommittee didn't strategically identify targeted opportunities, the above partnership with Alberta Parks – Education team continues to grow and offer interesting opportunities.

Continue to enhance connections with TPR Education Staff

The Friends participate in a pilot project developed by the Alberta Parks – Education Program to engage youth from five Calgary High Schools in the Chester-Sawmill trail enhancement proposal (official proposal developed and presented to Alberta Parks by the Friends in March 2016).

Conclusion

This area of the organization experienced significant growth, offering programs that both compliment and add value to the trails programming and meeting the 2015-2016 work plan.



TREASURER'S REPORT

by Loralie Johnson

Finance Subcommittee Members during the 2015 – 2016 Fiscal Year: Loralie Johnson, Tony Paradis & Derek Ryder

The Friends of Kananaskis Country was able to increase their cash position by 23% to \$237,418 from \$193,002 at our fiscal year-end. Gross Revenue rose up 82% to \$179,368 from \$98,327. Total Costs of our programs increased 13%, up to \$110,225 from \$97,385, mainly due to the CNC Warming Hut

During the next Fiscal Year, The Friends will set up an endowment fund with royalties received from the Flood book donation. We are also planning on placing a portion of our cash balance into a GIC and Savings account to increase the return on monies we hold.

The 2016 – 2017 program is expected to have a few more trail care days than last year which will continue to include building interpretative trails and providing additional equipment to various regions within Kananaskis to support trail work being completed by volunteers. The total cost for the season expected to be just under \$170,000 with approximately half the funding to be obtained from grant proposals that were submitted with a reasonable expectation that the funding would be received.

The financial statements are attached to and form an integral part of this Annual Report.



IN CLOSING, AND IN THANKS...

Annually, in our December newsletter, we pause to say thank you to the people and organizations who have made what we do possible. We always ask the question “Do we say thank you enough?” and the answer is always the same. **Nope.**

And so we pause to say thank you to the members of our team and our world who helped us help trails, and who graced us with wisdom, insight, energy and enthusiasm.

When it comes to people, we have to start with the staff of Alberta Environment and Parks. The Friends operate in partnership with AEP, providing manual labour, enthusiasm and energy; without the Parks Staff, the Friends don't really have much to do. This year, we're going to start at the top, and thank **Mark Storie**, the Director of Kananaskis Country Region. We took up way too much of his time, and that of **Michael Roycroft**, this year. Michael is Area Manager, Specialized Facilities & Trails, Kananaskis Region and in addition to having overall responsibility for trails in K-Country, is a big supporter of the Friends and a great person to work with. Also on the “thanks to the Senior Manager” list is **Dave Hanna**, Manager of Operations and **Don Carruthers-Den Hoed**, Head of Public Engagement and Inclusion for the Kananaskis Region. Don acts as a principal contact for us in many of our Education initiatives such as the Interpretive Trail program. Dave retired this year, and we will miss him. One of his replacements is **Deb Mucha**, who served on the Friends Board in 2013/14.

We probably spend the most time working with the AEP trails staff: **Jeff Eamon**, the Bow Valley Trails Supervisor, **James Cieslak**, the PLPP Trails Supervisor, **Kyle Jacobson**, the Elbow District

Trails Supervisor, **Aleks Macklem**, Events Supervisor at the Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park and **Dan Tatton**, Recreational Stewardship Coordinator, Central Region, Backcountry Trails Flood Rehabilitation Project, AEP. Each one of these folks have amazing trail crews, whom we also thank, led by such wonderful leaders such as Payte, Andre, Kat, Chris and Jody.

Beyond the trail crews, we have had the privilege to have **Jeff Eamon**, **Kaylyn Airey**, **Jenelle Remple** and **Jody Cairns** from Parks serve on our Board this past year and put up with us on a regular basis. Each has brought us insight, wisdom and assistance, and our Board was better for their presence.



Working the wildlife corridor issues in Canmore has resulted in expanding our work with Parks' Ecology staff, including **John Paczkowski** (on-going supplier of awesome wildlife camera images), super-duper Senior Ecologist **Melanie Percy** (and, for a while, acting Kananaskis West Manager), and **Scott Jevons**. Scott is the AEP GIS Specialist, and has helped us with maps for many of the projects we have worked, especially in the Chester/Sawmill area. We co-funded a project with the Ecology team's Ph.D. candidate

Cheryl Hojnowski researching grizzly bear interaction with trail users in K-Country.

We are increasingly partnering with similar organizations, and so have started to work closely with **Marie-Pierre Chappeland**, the Bow Valley Provincial Park Office manager and caretaker of the Steward program, plus Conservation Officer **Arian Spiteri**, who develops many of the projects for the Stewards. We were quite fortunate to have incredible support from a number of other Conservation Officers, including **Andy Rees** and in the development of the series on the elements of



Kananaskis. And to that end, we must thank **Duane Fizor**, K-Country's Information Officer, for his endless willingness to help us fact check the articles we put together for the newsletter.

The folks listed above are just the *senior* staff we work with. There are numerous other full time and seasonal AEP and Parks staff who helped out too, supervising or supporting our volunteer work parties, including Conservation Officers and others; it's such a long list we're not sure we even have all their names. We give thanks to all of these hard working, under-recognized folks from Alberta Parks, every one of who labours tirelessly to keep our Parks wonderful.

And this year, we also need to thank the folks working the High Rockies Trail under their partnership with Parks and Alberta TailNet. In particular, we thank **Darrin Langhorst**, HRT Project Manager (and FKC Crew Leader!) with McElhanney Consulting Services for keeping in mind ways that FKC could assist that project, and engaging us with several days of trail work on it. The HRT's primary trail build lead is our friend **Matt Hadley**, who not only works the HRT project but also provides the field training to our Crew Leaders every spring.

New this year, we are working closely with the folks at the Town of Canmore in assisting them with the Human Use Management initiative/project. Thanks specifically to **Lori Rissling Wynn** and **Megan Dunn** for their effort to build a partnership with the Friends. This is an ongoing and occasionally challenging conversation as we attempt to support a Community based approach to trails in the Bow Valley Corridor, and **Ken Davies** has been a

tremendous supporter we need to thank in this effort.

This year, several individuals stepped forward to advance the vision for trail re-development at Chester/Sawmill to enhance the snowshoeing opportunities in particular. **Alf Skrastins**, **Bob Truman** (yes, "Skier Bob" himself), **Don Cockerton**, **James Cieslak**, **Jennell Rempel** and **Morris Gaucher** each spent significant time in developing a plan which was presented to the Kananaskis trails Committee in November. We have had the pleasure to partner with the Canmore Nordic Centre – Meadow Hut project. This community project driven entirely by volunteers will benefit recreationalists. We would like to thank



the Meadow Hut committee members **John Gallagher**, **Neil Robinson**, **Don Gardiner**, **Ken Davies**, **Christine Hicks**, **Norbert Meier**, **Paul Ashton**, and **Lee Weiss** for their vision and leadership in realizing this great addition to the Canmore Nordic Centre.

Our Winter Speaker series held in Calgary could not happen without our association

with the **University of Calgary's Palliser Club**, and our friend **Vince Zafra**. Vince is tireless in his support of Kananaskis projects.

When it comes to energetic folks to thank, that includes **you**. First, we have our long list of **Trail Crew Leaders**. They plan their weeks around our trail care projects, and work with Parks staff to merrily lead you on our many projects. Without them, we have no projects. These superstars include: **Christina Azpiazu**, **Colin Graver**, **Colin Magee**, **Crawford Smyth**, **Darin Langhorst**, **Derek Ryder**, **Don Cockerton**, **Ghulam Jamro**, **Jeff Gruttz**, **Jorg Stuwe**, **Kevin Smith**, **Lloyd Jensen**, **Monty Gray**, **Nancy Ouimet**, **Terry Mullane**, **Tim Giese**, **Tim Pennie** and **Trevor Willson**. Then we have the folks who do the work, swinging the



pulaskis and driving in the shovels. Thank You to the over 160 volunteers who came out to handle a macleod and do trail work in 2015.

We had several folks step up to assist on particular administrative projects. **Olga Sokalova** is the continuing reason our website looks so beautiful. We don't have to call on her very often (which speaks volumes about how beautifully she built our website) but she is always there when we need her. Without you, the members of The Friends, none of our projects get done. There are over 1,400 Friends members at last estimate -- literally more every day -- and every one of you deserves our unending thanks.

Our organization just wouldn't work the way it does without the tireless efforts of our Program Coordinator **Nancy Ouimet**.

The Board is very proud of the work she has done, the bridges she has built, and the relationships she maintains with all our partners. She has represented us in numerous meetings, including the Kananaskis Trails Committee, Kananaskis Trails Advisory Group, Human Use project, the Interpretive Trails, the Warming Hut, and assisted in leading the Chester/Sawmill work. Her exceptionally cheery disposition has made working with her just awesome.

We have been ably and happily supported by **Lawrence Nyman** since March 2015. Lawrence and Derek had a fun time backstopping Nancy during her vacation this summer, and remarkably, didn't wreck the place!

We thank the members of the Friends Advisory Council: **James Early, Don Cockerton, Alf Skrastins** and **Gillean Daffern**. Each holds a

special place in their heart for Kananaskis, each has a long-standing commitment to support the Friends, and each provides deep knowledge of the importance of trails to K-Country visitors. We have bothered each of them from time to time this year, and we are thankful for access to their time, and their kind and prompt wisdom.

And finally, it may sound a bit self-serving, but as a Board, we want to thank all the members of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Kananaskis – **Derek, Loralie, Kayla, Kevin, Ed, Jamie, Dave, Tony** and **Manika**. We have had no Board



member turnover this year, which has been awesome as our great and willing group of volunteers has developed into the rhythm of effectively running the organization. This has paid numerous dividends this year in particular with several of the

issues that cropped up.

Derek needs to be singled out as, as not only has he been Chair or Co-Chair since October 2014, he writes, edits and produces the majority of the content of the newsletter, sits on all the sub-committees, represents the Friends in numerous meetings, writes the majority of the Annual Report, backs up Nancy when she is away, chips in as a Crew Leader at least 5 days per year, volunteers on at least 5 other trail care days, and seems to have an infinite amount of time to dedicate to the organization.

All of the Board members put in many hours to make sure things run smoothly, and they each deserve a big **thank you**.



2016 – 2017 BUSINESS PLAN

2016 Goals:

- Continue to deliver excellence in trail care; specifically related to flood issues
- Continue to develop education initiatives associated with trail care
- Maintain a focus on governance and fiscal management
- Continue to improve our fundraising and advance our financial position
- Enhance our communications and outreach

Excellence in Trail Care

With a track record of several years of providing solid support to all of Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and their trail care work, we wish to continue to be their “partner of choice” in providing support both to repairing flood related damage and regular trail maintenance.

Crew Leader Development – We will continue to develop and deliver excellent Crew Leader training, rolling out policies regarding Safety and Respectful Workplace, and developing standardized protocols and checklists.

Understanding our resources – We will actively mine the Better Impact system to extract information and statistics that will enable us to assist our members and Crew Leaders in supporting trail care work.

Use of Membership – We will develop a plan, and design a process, to engage our membership in providing input to trail care opportunities, and communicate these to AEP in keeping with our cooperating agreement.

Spearhead the Canmore Area Trail Alliance – As the Bow Valley Corridor faces pressures and conflicts regarding trail development and maintenance on a complex land base, the Friends are uniquely positioned to act as a focal point for that effort. We will actively engage in this endeavor, providing leadership, collaboration and community engagement.

Spearhead the Chester-Sawmill Trails Plan – In active support of AEP, and the snowshoe, XC ski and mountain bike communities, we will provide leadership to advance the Chester-Sawmill trail development plan and its implementation..

Rehabilitate trails in the Wildlife Corridors – Through a partnership with the Stewards and Conservation Officers, we will lead the project to close and rehabilitate the illegal trails that exist within the Ministerial-designated wildlife corridors in the Bow Valley.

Education

Working directly and indirectly with Park’s Education and Interpretive teams, the Friends will continue to develop and deliver environmental education programs, in line with its trails in keeping with The Friends' Vision and Mission.

Trail-Related Education – Based on our agreement with Parks to rehabilitate Kananaskis’ interpretive trails, we will move forward with work to re-develop a minimum of 3 trails in K-Country in 2016

Continue to enhance connections with AEP Education Staff – To develop, support, or deliver formal and non-formal educational programs or tools related to trails to support the organizations vision in Kananaskis Country

Board Governance

Continued focus on organization and fiscal management is necessary to ensure the continued success of the Friends of Kananaskis Country.

Improve the Board Member Recruitment process – The HR subcommittee will re-examine the process by which we identify and on-board new Board members, and bring recommendations to the Board for improvements.

Policy Development – We will develop a Volunteer Policy and a Trail Care Policy. The Governance Committee, and other committees as needed, will continue to identify and develop policies that ensure the smooth operation of the Friends. The HR Subcommittee will continue to monitor requirements for staff-related policy development.



Financial Excellence – The Friends will maintain financial accounting and reporting excellence. We will continue to improve our donor tracking ability.

Fundraising

The Friends continues to make progress in gaining long-term certainty in funding, however there continues to be a lack of fundraising expertise on the Board. We retain our long-term goal from 2014/2015 to develop a sustainable funding model. Our current fundraising plan revolves around the following strategies:

Develop Board expertise in Fundraising – In adding new members to our Board, we will specifically seek and give preference to those with fundraising expertise.

Continue aggressively pursue granting options – The Program Coordinator will continue to have a significant focus on identifying Grant opportunities and pursue the development of Grant applications.

Seek creative fundraising options that the Board can execute – While the current Board lacks the expertise in large donor fundraising experience, we need to identify creative fundraising options that are within the Board's knowledge base.

Actively promote the sales of the Kananaskis Flood book – Partnered with Alberta Parks, Gillean Daffern and Rocky Mountain Books, we will aggressively participate in the marketing and promotion of the new book commemorating the 2013 flood.

Create an Endowment Fund – To establish a long term, sustainable funding model, the Board will utilize revenues from the commemorative Flood book to establish the seed funding for an endowment fund; we will not use current operational income to fund the endowment

Communications and Outreach

The Friends needs to continue to build their profile in the community. These connections provide us with members, supporters, and lead to funding support:

Expand our branding – We will look for ways to enhance our logo to show inclusivity with all trail users. We will take the opportunity to celebrate our 20th Anniversary in 2016. We will seek ways to actively promote ourselves within the Calgary market, including active participation in Parks Day 2016 at Fish Creek.

Trails Fest – We will host our second annual Trails Fest event in June of 2016, aimed to build a stronger and more connected community of trail users across the Kananaskis Region, and we will solicit sponsors to help off-set the costs of the event.

Speaker Series – We will continue to deliver this excellent education initiative, and in the 2016-2017 winter time frame, and seek sponsors for this series to ensure it has an increasingly positive financial impact.

Continue to improve our volunteer recognition program – This will assist in getting our members to return again and again to assist in post-flood trail restoration.

Continuously improve partnerships with other trail related volunteer organizations – We will strive to maintain and improve our relationships with other partner organizations, including but not limited to, Alberta TrailNet, the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association, the Stewards, the Alberta Parks Ecology Team, the Wildlife Ambassadors, and others. Where possible, we will seek to build on mutual strengths and interests.

Ensure our services are provided to all areas of Kananaskis country – We will continue to provide volunteer and tangible support to the Bow Valley, Peter Lougheed and Elbow/Sheep districts and the Public land in Kananaskis, while exploring new trail related project opportunities with partners such as McElhanney Consulting Services/Alberta TrailNet (High Rockies Trail) and the Town of Canmore.

Maintain our excellence in membership communications – We will continue to produce and disseminate an educational and engaging newsletter, and continue to grow its readership. We will ensure our website is up-to-date, and benefits the organization with its functionality to promote our programs and encourage people to donate.

Build our Social Media Presence – We will increase our emphasis on promoting the organization and its programs through various social media channels, and will investigate ways to engage member volunteers to assist with this.



FRIENDS OF KANANASKIS COOPERATING SOCIETY

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Fiscal Year April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016

FRIENDS OF KANANASKIS COUNTRY COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2016

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)



LOCKWOOD DOYLE
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

Accounting | Tax | Business Advisory

NOTICE TO READER

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Friends Of Kananaskis Country Cooperating Association as at March 31, 2016 and the statements of operations and changes in net assets for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Canmore, AB

May 26, 2016

Lockwood Doyle Professional Corporation

CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

FRIENDS OF KANANASKIS COUNTRY COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2016

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	2016	2015
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 237,418	\$ 193,002
Short-term investments	5,688	5,641
Goods and services tax recoverable	2,298	779
Prepaid expenses	1,795	2,285
	247,199	201,707
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 1)	565	942
	\$ 247,764	\$ 202,649
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 4,339	\$ 4,374
Deferred contributions (Note 2)	168,401	115,910
	172,740	120,284
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	74,459	81,423
Invested in capital assets	565	942
	75,024	82,365
	\$ 247,764	\$ 202,649

On behalf of the Board

_____ *Director*

FRIENDS OF KANANASKIS COUNTRY COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

Statement of Operations

For the Year Ended March 31, 2016

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	2016	2015
REVENUE		
Donations and grants	\$ 179,319	\$ 97,981
Interest income	49	60
Sales	-	286
	179,368	98,327
EXPENSES		
Advertising and promotion	1,703	1,114
Amortization	377	428
Insurance	2,406	1,890
Interest and bank charges	449	157
Miscellaneous program costs	108,690	34,487
Office	2,037	4,659
Professional fees	2,205	2,100
Salaries and benefits	58,098	66,361
Sub-contracts	8,612	3,255
Supplies	-	376
Telephone	1,961	1,613
Travel	171	88
	186,709	116,528
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ (7,341)	\$ (18,201)

FRIENDS OF KANANASKIS COUNTRY COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended March 31, 2016

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	Unrestricted	Invested in Capital Assets	2016	2015
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$ 81,423	\$ 942	\$ 82,365	\$ 100,566
Deficiency of revenue over expenses	(7,341)	-	(7,341)	(18,201)
Amortization of capital assets	377	(377)	-	-
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 74,459</u>	<u>\$ 565</u>	<u>\$ 75,024</u>	<u>\$ 82,365</u>

FRIENDS OF KANANASKIS COUNTRY COOPERATING ASSOCIATION

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended March 31, 2016

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

1. CAPITAL ASSETS

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2016 Net book value	2015 Net book value
Computer equipment	\$ 2,232	\$ 1,667	\$ 565	\$ 942

2. DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS

Deferred contributions represent unspent externally restricted grants and donations for trail maintenance, education, research and other specific purposes. The changes in the deferred contributions balance were as follows:

	2016	2015
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 115,910	\$ 17,044
Donations and grants received	190,368	159,078
Amount recognized as revenue	<u>(137,877)</u>	<u>(60,212)</u>
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ 168,401</u>	<u>\$ 115,910</u>
