

Grouard-Peace River Trail Net Celebrates Trans Canada Trail Construction Milestone

By Louisa Rich



Mabel Goulet, Robert Goulet and Louisa Rich (lt.- rt.), three of the Grouard-Peace River Trail Net Society's longest serving members, cut the celebration cake.

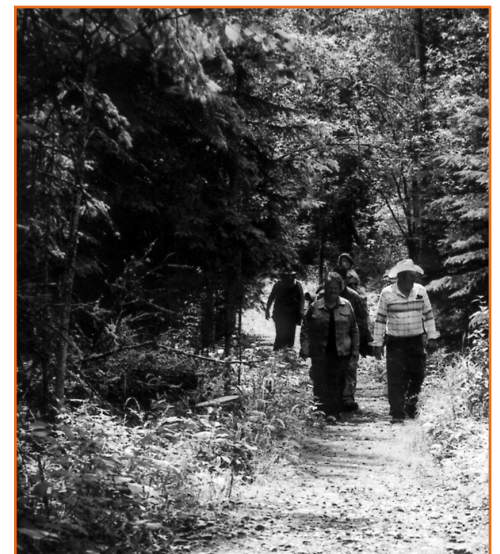
Grouard-Peace River Trail Net Society's annual Trail Day was held on July 5, 2008 at Hilliard's Bay Provincial Park on the north shore of Lesser Slave Lake. The event celebrated the Society's 10 year trail building achievements culminating in the reopening of 55 km of signed and maintained trail from the hamlet of Grouard to Big Point on Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta. This section of historic trail was at one time part of the main land route between the Towns of Slave Lake on the east end of Lesser Slave Lake and Grouard, on Buffalo Bay at the west end of the lake.

The event was well attended with people from Edmonton to Grimshaw and other areas of the province attending. Representatives from Town of High Prairie and the M.D. of Big Lakes, as well as Fred Godberson from the Klondike Trail Society, Fort Assiniboine brought greetings and congratulations. Will Marx gave greetings on behalf of the M.D. of Big Lakes stating "The M.D. Council is very positive about this trail. We have a historical trail they are very appreciative of." Patti Campsall, the Executive Director of the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation, was

in attendance from Slave Lake. She said that she would be very happy when this completed portion of the Trans Canada Trail would be completed further east and would join with Trans Canada Trail from Marten River to the Town of Slave Lake, thence on to Athabasca and Edmonton. As Patti said, "Someday we hope to join up for one big long hike!" Following refreshments and cake served by the Trail Society members, people split into various groups for guided walks on different portions of the completed Trail.



Grimshaw residents Ellie and Joe Jaskchke view the completed trail section along the north shore of Lesser Slave Lake.



Trail enthusiasts enjoy the afternoon out on the Grouard-Peace River Trail.

A Day on the Athabasca Landing Trail

By Richard DeSmet, Pioneer Trail North Foundation

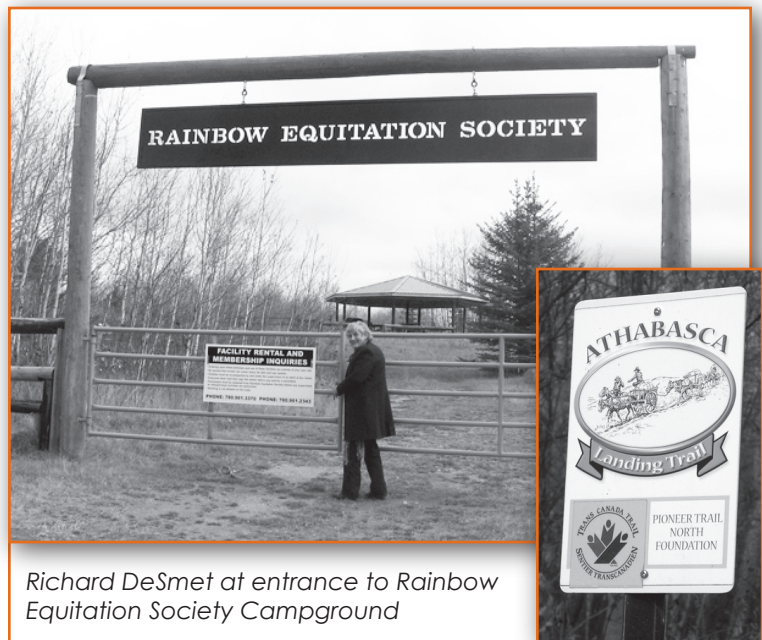
Every day is heritage day along the Athabasca Landing Trail. This was especially the case on an August weekend.

On August 23, I started out with a plan to clear some trail. As I walked out to the project, I ran into three people on horseback. The lead was a local lady, a member of Rainbow Equitation Society. She was showing two seniors from Quebec around the trail. In their French-Canadian accents, they gushed about how beautiful the site is.

With this visit over, I started back out towards my work site. Five minutes down the trail, I came across a couple from Norway; both in their late sixties, they were out for a walk. We talked about the trail and our plans for the future. Then, once more, I was off to work--but alas, it was not to be.



Old St. Mary's Church at Waugh was built in 1904.



Richard DeSmet at entrance to Rainbow Equitation Society Campground

About two kilometres in, I came across an elderly Chinese couple. They were out picking rosehips and blueberries. The lady was eager to tell me about the medicinal properties of these two plants. I was promised a sample of her preserves if I stopped by their home in Edmonton.

With my plans for the day pretty much shot, I headed back to the staging area. There I found that a party of six Polish couples had set up a stove and were barbecuing great big Polish sausages. Before I could open my mouth to speak, one of the men handed me a tall, green-coloured bottle of beverage (something called 'Golden Pheasant'). I soon learned that the youngest of the group was 68 years old and that they were out picking blueberries. I got only fleeting glimpses of the ladies--they were buzzing around with ice cream pails in hand. I don't think that the men picked many blueberries. In fact, I'm willing to wager a 10-dollar bill that they never got more than 30 feet away from those great big barbecuing Polish sausages.

I was informed that they would be back in two weeks time and that I was invited to stop by for another refreshment and some of those great big barbecued sausages. You know, I think I'm going to do just that. Trail building is a tough job--but somebody has got to do it.



Athabasca Landing Trail Steering Committee Established

An “Athabasca Landing Trail Steering Committee” was recently formed through a partnership between Athabasca, Westlock and Sturgeon Counties, the Towns of Athabasca and Gibbons, the Landing Trail Committee and Pioneer Trail North Foundation operator groups and Alberta TrailNet to further develop the Athabasca Landing Trail into a cohesive recreational and tourist destination. The majority of the trail is already registered as Trans Canada Trail. Located on county roads, municipal, private and public lands, and on a section of abandoned rail line, the trail corridor runs approximately 150 kilometres west and north from Fort Saskatchewan to Athabasca through urban, developed and semi developed areas, farmland, parkland and boreal forest, following portions of the historic Athabasca Landing Trail along the Tawatinaw River valley north to the Town of Athabasca. The Trail already supports a number of trail user groups (e.g. equestrian, cyclists, hikers, skiers, horse and wagon) and other recreational interests (history, bird watching, picnicking, etc).

The Steering Committee will be working with a consultant to develop an environmentally sensitive conceptual trail master plan that will: outline possibilities for further developing the Trail and trail services in a safe, responsible and sustainable manner; finalize the route and identify future off road options; and provide guidance for appropriate development, management and maintenance of the Trail.

Clearwater County



Public Notice

Rocky – Nordegg Trail Concept Plan Development

Clearwater County has engaged a consultant to prepare a Concept Plan for the development and management of an approximately 120 km recreational trail connecting the communities of Rocky Mountain House and Nordegg. The Rocky - Nordegg Trail project aims to develop a multi-use trail catering to a variety of motorized and non-motorized users in a safe and environmentally sustainable manner.

The consultant will be working in conjunction with the project Steering Committee to develop the routing, associated costs and future management/enforcement issues pertaining to the trail. During this concept development phase there will be opportunities for groups and individuals to provide input and ask questions about the trail project. Public Meetings are currently being scheduled and will be advertised.

At this point in time Clearwater County is requesting that any persons or groups interested in receiving updates as this project progresses submit a written letter to Clearwater County identifying themselves and providing contact information, specifically an email address at which they can be contacted.

Letters and media inquiries should be submitted to:

Clearwater County
Attention: Mike Haugen
Box 550
Rocky Mountain House, AB
T4T 1A4

Alternatively, letters may be submitted via email to: mhaugen@county.clearwater.ab.ca.

P.O. Box 550 · ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE · AB · T4T 1A4
Telephone: (403) 845-4444 Fax: (403) 845-7330
Homepage: www.county.clearwater.ab.ca E-Mail: admin@county.clearwater.ab.ca

Donor Panel Unveiling in Athabasca

By Nadine Hallett, Landing Trails Committee

The Riverfront in Athabasca was a place of celebration on Saturday May 24. A crowd gathered for the opening of new Skateboard and Splash parks which are located just adjacent to the Trans Canada Trail Pavilion. We took this opportunity to unveil a panel listing the names of people who have donated funds in support of the trail. We had at least 6 people travel from Edmonton, Calgary and other places to attend the unveiling of the names. We were thrilled to ask the two brothers pictured with me in the photo to represent all those people named on the plaque by cutting the ribbon. The brothers had grown up in Athabasca and it was fun to watch them meet old friends. David

Gregory of our trail committee also stands with us. A crowd of

at least 100 people including local media were in attendance. The Reeve of Athabasca County Charlie Ashbey, Mayor Colleen Powell and MLA Jeff Johnson all spoke. The Landing Trails Committee presented Trans Canada Trail walking sticks and pins as tokens of appreciation for their continued support of the trail. Christine Onysty set up a table of trail related materials for the public to take with them.



Attendees participate in the day's festivities.



Trans Canada Trail donor recognition ceremony, Athabasca.



Horse and rider tackle a challenging slope.

Willmore Wilderness Park

Willmore Wilderness Park is a pristine mountainous area with rugged forest and alpine expanses. The rivers and streams are crystal clear. Fast moving streams are a good source of drinkable water. The park is a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts, however travelers in the remote areas should have extensive outdoor experience or hire an outfitter/guide for their expedition. Motorized activities are not permitted due to the designation of the park. The only mode of transportation allowed in Willmore is by foot, horse or bicycle, with occasional ski touring during the quiet winter months.

Willmore Wilderness Park is 4,600 square kilometers (1840 sq. mi.) and lies directly north, but has fewer visitors than Jasper National Park. Adventurers can view a variety of wildlife — mountain goats, big horn sheep, elk, deer, moose, caribou, wolves, coyotes, wolverine, cougar, lynx, black bears and small game. Wild flowers are abundant in the summer months turning meadows into a rich tapestry of color. Fossil evidence shows the ancient history of the area including dinosaur tracks located just north of Grande Cache.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation is the steward of this beautiful and remote mountain park area. The Foundation works to preserve the area's history with a focus on the advancement of education of the park, restoring historical packtrails and sites, and enhancing use of Willmore Wilderness Park for Albertans and visitors.

Willmore Park has four major staging areas that support trail access. These include the Sulphur Gates, Cowlick Creek, Berland River and Rock Lake. Corrals are present for those who venture into the park by horseback. Trips through Eagle's Nest Pass, Jackknife Pass, Rocky Pass or the most westward passes on the Continental Divide are breathtaking and beautiful. Trails along the Divide meander through Forget-Me-Not, Fetherstonhaugh, and Morkill Passes. Horseback trips follow the old trails used by the outfitters of the past. Backpacking and mountain biking are great ways to get exercise and experience the scenery for those who do not use a horse.

Ambitious hikers or horseback riders can view spectacular alpine and sub alpine lakes. The largest lake in the park

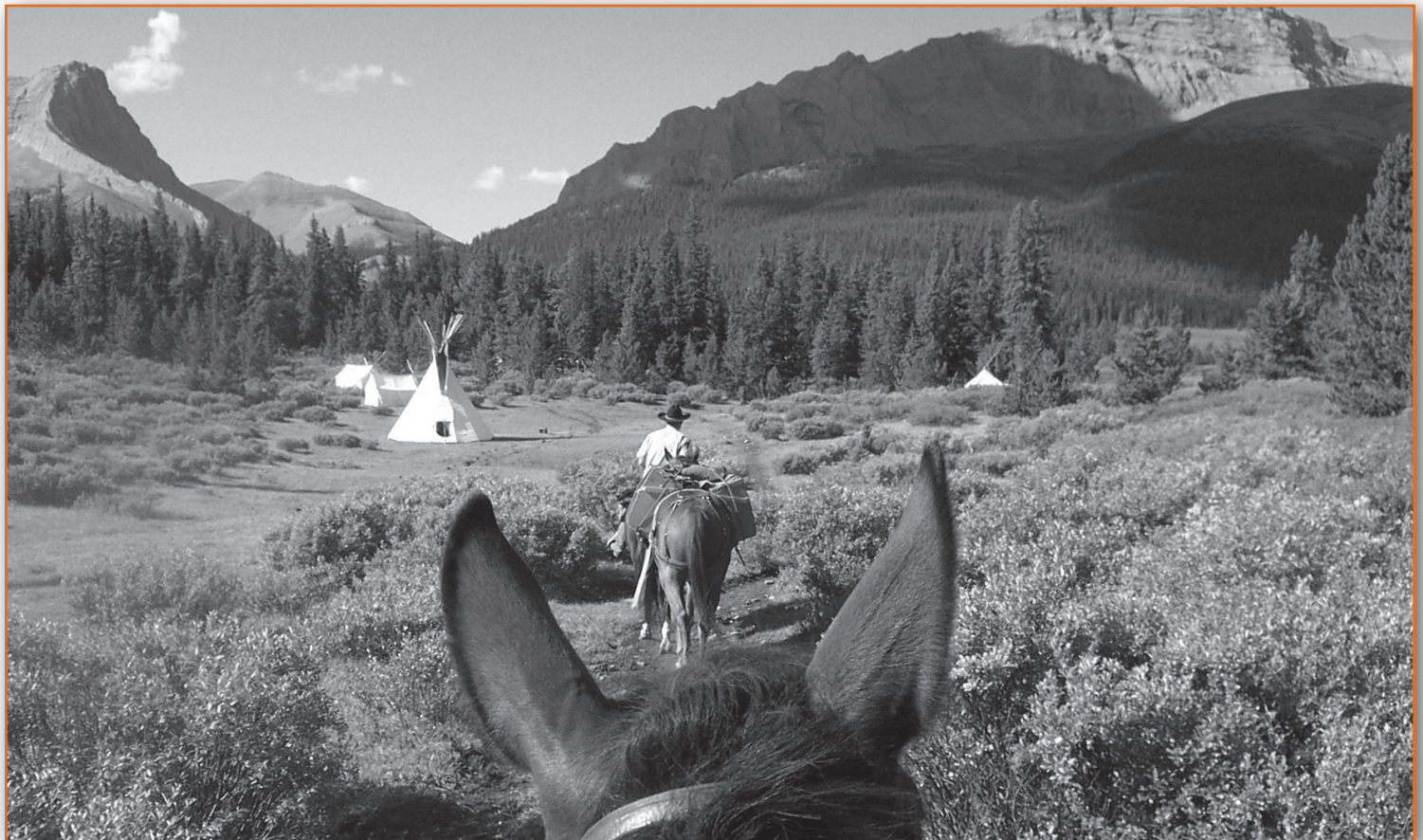
is Ptarmigan Lake. Serious outdoor enthusiasts can also travel to the Continental Divide. The Divide gives birth to many streams and rivers that supply water to the Peace and Athabasca River systems including the Sheep, Jackpine, Smoky, Berland, Sulphur, Muskeg and Wildhay. Rocky Mountain whitefish, rainbow trout and bull trout are common in many of Willmore's streams. Although Willmore is a park, trapping, hunting and fishing are allowed. The heavily timbered trails are often difficult to traverse. Dead-fall covers many of the original paths and work is needed to restore the travel-ways to their original condition, one of the Willmore Wilderness Foundation's goals.

Be prepared and take safety precautions when taking a trip in the park, as the weather is unpredictable and can change abruptly with river and stream levels fluctuating in response. The Willmore Wilderness Foundation strongly recommends that people interested in venturing into the Park consult with a commercial trail riding outfitter or an official from Alberta Parks and Protected Areas. A map of the area can be obtained by phoning Alberta Parks toll free 1-866-427-3582, by contacting the Hinton office at 780-865-8267, or by contacting the Grande

Cache Ranger Station at 780-827-3626. For more information on Alberta's Parks please visit www.albertaparks.ca.

The Willmore Wilderness Foundation office provides public information on trail conditions and river crossings, etc. For more information contact:
Susan Feddema-Leonard, Administrator at 780.827.2696
Email: info@willmorewilderness.com
or visit their website at www.willmorewilderness.com.

Willmore Wilderness Park forms part of Kakwa-Willmore Interprovincial Park, designated through an agreement between the Alberta and British Columbia governments in April 2006. In addition to Willmore, the new interprovincial park includes Kakwa Wildland Park (also located in Alberta) and British Columbia's Kakwa Provincial Park. The interprovincial park recognizes that the three parks share common mountain and foothills ecosystems and that cross-border visitation is common. British Columbia and Alberta parks staff work together on park planning, resource and visitor management, and other activities to the benefit of park ecosystems and park visitors. (Willmore Wilderness Park Map; Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation)



Eagle's Nest Pass Trail, Willmore Wilderness Park

Trans Canada Trail “Volunteer of the Year” 2007/08

Betty Anne Graves of Calgary, Alberta was recently awarded the Trans Canada Trail’s Volunteer of the Year award at its annual general meeting in Winnipeg, Manitoba in June. Betty Anne has been involved in trail development in Alberta and with the Trans Canada Trail since the first Banff meeting in 1994 when the Trans Canada Trail was publicly launched. She has been an Alberta TrailNet Board member since 1996 serving as Alberta representative to the TCT, then as President, and now Past President of TrailNet. In Alberta we face many challenges as the province struggles with rapid growth and transition to a more diverse and urbanized economy, accompanied by competing demands for land access. Trails and recreational access are a part of this larger picture and Betty Anne has provided calm and energetic leadership to our organization, always taking and keeping the high ground while seeking to understand and work towards long lasting solutions. This award recognizes Betty Anne’s commitment and work toward realizing the Trans Canada Trail vision of a national trail connecting people and communities from coast to coast to coast.



Valerie Pringle, Chair of the Board of Trans Canada Trail, presents a TCT Volunteer of the Year jacket to Betty Anne Graves, Past President, Alberta TrailNet.

On receiving the award Betty Anne stated “ It is a great honor to be recognized by those who also believe in the Trans Canada Trail and are working so hard to take what began as a dream to its present reality. Over the years I have met and worked with so many wonderful trail builders from all parts of Canada and have visited areas of the country, particularly in Alberta, which I would not have seen otherwise. Like many people, I love to be in the outdoors and believe trails provide an opportunity for everyone to get out and experience our wonderful country in a healthy, active way. I am proud to be among those who venture on to complete this enormous project.” Betty Anne enjoys challenging herself and sharing trail experiences around the world with friends and family. She is one of that unique breed of people - trail builders - who go beyond themselves to create trail experiences for others and who have a passion for the trail itself as an entity upon, and intricately connected to, the landscape that supports it. Congratulations Betty Anne on becoming ‘Trans Canada Trail 2007/2008 Volunteer of the Year’. We are proud of you!

Trans Canada Trail welcomes new President/CEO and Directors

The Board of Directors of Trans Canada Trail has announced the appointment of Deborah Aapps as President and CEO.

Ms. Aapps is a senior professional with more than 25 years of experience in health care, education, the arts and the not-for profit community. She previously served as Senior Vice-President of Communications and Community Relations for the Calgary Health Region, President and CEO of the Alberta Children’s Hospital Foundation and Executive Director of the University of British Columbia Alumni Association.

“The Trans Canada Trail is delighted to welcome Deborah Aapps as President and CEO,” said Valerie Pringle, Chair of the Trans Canada Trail Board. “She is well-known for her leadership in non-profit management, successful fund development campaigns, strategic communications and fostering collaborative relationships with key stakeholders. Her experience and skills are exactly what we need as we move forward in building the Trans

Canada Trail. Deborah has been a member of the Board for the last three years and she is passionate about the Trail as an important Canadian legacy project.”

The announcement of Ms. Aapps’ appointment was made at the Annual General Meeting of the Trans Canada Trail, held in Winnipeg on Saturday June 14. Members of provincial trail organizations were on hand to discuss the progress in developing trail sections across the country. At the meeting, four new directors were also appointed to the Board. They are:

Hartley T. Richardson, President of James Richardson and Sons, a private family-owned corporation with broad corporate interests. Mr. Richardson currently serves as a director of Canadian Pacific Railway and Angiotech Pharmaceuticals Inc. He is involved in a broad range of business and community organizations and charitable endeavours. He is a Member of the Order of Canada.

Edwina Stoaite, Vice-President, Global Expense Management and Sourcing with Manulife Financial. She is a senior professional with more than 25 years of broad financial experience and skills in corporate finance, securities operations, investor relations, communications and marketing.

Rick Morgan, President of Morgan Leadership Search. He has been engaged in senior executive search for over 25 years in both the public and private sectors and has worked on behalf of many of Canada’s top organizations. He is an avid trekker and outdoor enthusiast.

Claire Morris, President and CEO of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. She previously served as deputy minister of intergovernmental affairs in the Privy Council Office of Canada and as deputy minister of Human Resources Development Canada. She has extensive involvement in the community and voluntary sector.

Riverland Challenge

By Sheila Thompson



Riverland Challenge - cyclists ride along Alberta's Iron Horse Trail.



North Saskatchewan River - canoe portion of the Riverland Challenge.



Ross Stromberg poses along the spectacular North Saskatchewan River, one of the beautiful sites along Alberta's Iron Horse Trail.

Choose your pleasure: historical interpretation, beautiful scenery, companionship, physical challenge, good food. All were in abundance at the first ever Riverland Challenge, Saturday, May 31. The event centred on Fort George – Buckingham House (FG-BH), the first Alberta fur trade posts on the North Saskatchewan River. The 'brigade' of eighty participants in 40 canoes enjoyed a breakfast of tea and bannock before being addressed by 'Chief Factor' Ross Stromberg. He reminded them of the pace set by the early voyageurs - 50 strokes a minute, 50 minutes an hour for 14 hours a day while making their annual spring run back east.

Canoes launched to a black powder musket salute and made a 10 km dash downstream to Riverview. A part of the historic Carlton Trail, this site is recorded in the journals of David Thompson, the North West Mounted Police, Father Lacombe and others. From here, participants made a 5 km walk / run / hike enjoying beautiful river vistas and encounters with a costumed interpreter and Roy Scott's Red River cart. Hikers became bikers at the Lindbergh staging area. From there, they took Alberta's Iron Horse Trail and then quiet country lanes back 15 km to FG – BH.

Challengers were welcomed back at the finish line with a meal of traditional foods – bison, baked beans and saskatoon desserts. Prizes were awarded in the following categories. Oldest team: combined age 140 years. These fellows set the pace for everyone in the canoeing portion of the challenge. The youngest award went to a seven year old who, with the support of her family, made the whole circuit on her own steam. Many people won prizes for dressing in old time garb. The participant from farthest away went to a young man from Calgary. Many people came from Edmonton, Lac La Biche, Vermilion and St. Paul. As well, Lakeland College and Portage College were represented. At this point, several prizes were still left so further nominations were requested from the crowd. These included prizes to the one canoe that capsized and to a young woman whose bike broke down. She ran along the bike route and hitched rides in inventive ways to make her way to the finish line.

The last Saturday in May is the annual date set for the Riverland Challenge. Many 2008 participants plan to join the brigade again next year, May 30, 2009, to discover what challenge will await them.

Historic 100 Mile Journey Recreated

By Shannon Loutit

Imagine for moment that you are told an unbelievable story about a hero, who in the midst of something devastating got up and ran 100 miles to the next city just to get help. Now imagine that you are told that this hero ran the 100 miles through flooded terrain in a mere 16 hours and beat another messenger sent on horseback by a whole hour. WOW!

Wouldn't this just knock you off your seat or make you want to jump for joy at the sheer awesomeness of human spirit and capability?

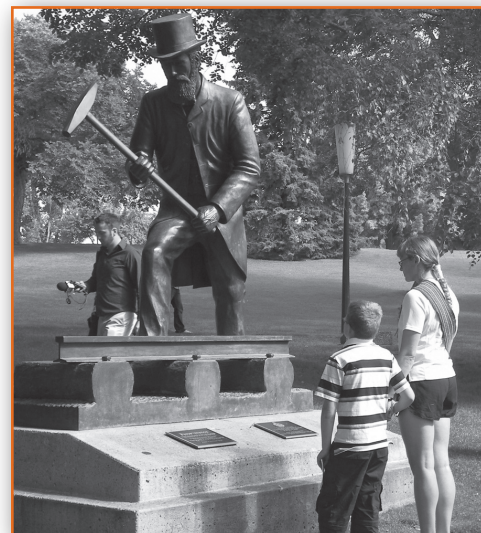
Now imagine you are told this same hero was your great-grandfather?

Four years ago my family heard this very same story, for the first time, of my great-grandfather Billy Loutit. We were told that in the spring of 1904, while he was a Métis mail carrier for the Hudson Bay Company, Billy ran 100 miles from Athabasca to Edmonton to get emergen-

cy help for the flood disaster in the area. Running along the Athabasca Landing Trail, he indeed made this trek in just 16 hours and did it an hour quicker than a messenger on horseback. Now each summer the community of Athabasca hosts an amazing cross country triathlon which they call the Billy Loutit Despatch Triathlon.

Words do not fully explain the feeling that comes from hearing about such an incredible feat, then finding out that you are connected to just such a hero. I can assure you though that the effects really do knock you off your seat, or as in my case, right off the couch.

Immediately after hearing this story, I took on the challenge to compete in the Billy Loutit Despatch triathlon. Having been a sofa spud for so many years with zero triathlon knowledge or experience, training for this event was a life challenge in itself. But after 4 months, on



Edmonton Legislature Grounds - Shannon and her son Damien take a moment for reflection before she begins her run.

July 23, 2004, I managed to complete Athabasca's unforgettable triathlon which began an extraordinary journey that would change my life forever and impact that of many others.

This journey would take me through many more triathlons and running events over the next 4 years including the Boston Marathon, and it would help see that a well deserving Canadian Hero, Tom Longboat would finally receive the credit he was so due. This journey would inspire many people across our country by reminding people of the abilities that each has lying within. Eventually this journey would lead me right back to its humble beginnings, the trail Billy ran 104 years ago.

On Friday, July 18, 2008, I returned to Alberta and re-ran my great-grandfather's historic 100 mile route to bring his spirit back to Athabasca. Joined by many people from across our country



Shannon is joined by Chief Wilton Littlechild of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 and others as she completes her run at Athabasca.



Alberta Legislature Grounds, Edmonton: Shannon says a few words at the launch ceremony before starting her own 100 mile journey.

including one of the world's best ultra runners, Ray Zahab, and inspirational author, Linda Wagar of Ottawa, history replayed itself in a new light. Also on hand were many incredible dignitaries from Alberta & Saskatchewan whom either partook in the send off ceremonies and/or ran with me along the way. Senator Lillian Dyck; Donovan Young, Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Relations; Doug Elniski, Alberta MLA; David Forbes, Saskatchewan MLA; Audrey Poitras, President Métis Nation of Alberta; Colleen Powel, Mayor of Athabasca; and Kim Ciampaneli, Hudson Bay Company Representative were present for the historic send off while Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of La Ronge, Saskatchewan, and Chief Wilton Littlechild of Treaties 6, 7 & 8 came out to run and cheer me on to the finish.

Starting at the Edmonton Legislative grounds where my great-grandfather ended his run in 1904, it took me just over 24 hours to complete my 100 mile trek north along portions of the historic Athabasca Landing Trail route, now part of the Trans Canada Trail. Running with the trail beneath my feet for hours was something I will never forget – “a pain worse than childbirth... but an ordeal that put a smile on my face.” As a matter of fact, when I close my eyes now, I can still see myself there and remember especially those who joined and encouraged me over the last portion of the route when all of my strength was gone.

Alberta's Secret Treasure. I have heard such words but never really understood what they referred to. Often they are spoken in a tone used to describe something so magical, so extraordinary and so unbelievable that to experience it would be like no other. Yet never had I seen it or experienced the true magic of this Secret Treasure, until now! Alberta's Secret Treasure refers to the province's beautiful trails, including the Athabasca Landing Trail which my great-grandfather ran. However, after

experiencing it first hand I have a much different explanation. To just say these trails are beautiful would be an extreme injustice for the experience is so much more. Every inch of trail invokes an utter appreciation for life and the sheer beauty of nature. To walk this ground is to step back into history and feel the heartbeat and spirit of so many that came before you. If for a moment, just a little moment you completely allow yourself to feel all that is around you, then you will truly understand why it is called the 'Secret Treasure'.

See you on the trails!

Gotta Run....

Shannon Loutitt

The New Messenger

Shannon is a Métis woman born in Yellowknife, NWT, in the spring of 1972. She was raised in the northern communities of Uranium City, Saskatchewan and Fort McMurray, Alberta. Currently she resides in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan with her life partner Robert and their 8 year old son Damian.



Shannon is joined by ultra-marathoner Ray Zahab (with backpack), who ran across the Sahara Desert in 111 days.

New Rural Trail on the Horizon

By Debbie Olson, President of the Central Alberta Trails Society (CARTS)



TCT trail south of Ponoka.

Talk trails to urban residents and you are likely preaching to the converted. Trails have long been recognized as one of the best-used and most cost effective recreational facilities in modern urban centres. They allow residents better access to open green spaces, promote healthy living and even affect economic development.

Unfortunately, trails have not always held the same appeal for rural residents. One of the challenges for stimulating support for trails and green spaces in rural communities has been the sense that there is already an abundance of open space. But things are changing in Alberta. More than ever, rural residents are looking for ways to stay active and walking and cycling are becoming more popular pursuits. Rural residents want better access to natural areas such as lakes and wetlands and many would like to see linkages between rural communities and urban ones.

Central Alberta is experiencing the benefits of this shift in attitude thanks to some innovative and forward-thinking rural municipalities who have taken the time to ask their residents what they want and followed through with a plan to make it happen. In 2005, Red Deer County commissioned an Open Spaces Master Plan that identified the need for trails as one of the most important recreational facilities to Red Deer County residents. A subsequent survey of residents in 2007 for the Recreational Facilities Master Plan reconfirmed the importance

of trails when county residents listed trails as one of the top recreational facilities they would like Red Deer County to undertake. "Residents have said they want trails and we have been working on a plan to answer that request," says Jo-Ann Symington, Community Services Manager for Red Deer County. "The Open Spaces Management Plan identified three trails that were a top priority and we are currently working on plans to build a 3.6-km trail from Springbrook to Penhold, a 6.8-km trail between Spruce View and Dickson and a one-km trail at the west end of Gleniffer Lake to provide public access to the Red Deer River."

The section of trail linking Springbrook and Penhold is planned to be part of the Trans Canada Trail and Red Deer County is hoping to apply for funding support from Alberta TrailNet and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation and to begin construction in 2009. "We see it as providing a valuable linkage between the communities of Springbrook and Penhold," says Symington. "We are in the process of surveying, completing the engineering for the project, and obtaining right of way. We plan to make it a showcase for the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta. There is a beautiful wetland area and there will be some opportunities for a unique design that has educational as well as recreational value."

The Springbrook to Penhold section of the Trans Canada Trail and the other rural trails

currently in the works at Red Deer County clearly demonstrate that attitudes are changing when it comes to rural trails in some parts of Alberta. The excitement about trails in Central Alberta is almost tangible and thanks to forward-thinking municipalities and hard-working trail advocates, we anticipate more exciting news about Trans Canada Trail development in Central Alberta over the coming months.

Update on Central Alberta

For many years, the communities of central Alberta have been meeting regularly through the Central Alberta Regional Trails Society (CARTS) to discuss ways to promote trails in this part of the province. Alberta TrailNet (ATN) and the Trans Canada Trail Foundation (TCT) have offered support and expertise as Central Alberta communities and volunteers have worked together to help foster support for trail initiatives. Here is an update on what has been achieved in the last few years and a glimpse at what is on the horizon for trails in central Alberta.

- A little more than two years ago, the map for the TCT was changed in Alberta to include a trail linking communities from Penhold to Wetaskiwin. This was the culmination of several years of work by volunteers and communities in central Alberta.
- Once central Alberta had a registered section of TCT, CARTS was able to hire

a TCT Coordinator (Derry Armstrong) thanks to funding support from the TCT Foundation.

- CARTS realized that limited funding was available for trails. Central Alberta communities brought forward a resolution at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association's annual general meeting to ask the Alberta government to better fund trails in this province. This resolution was passed with strong support from the AUMA.
- In order to link communities within Central Alberta, several bridges will be necessary. The two key bridges are located between Blackfalds and Red Deer over the Blindman River and in Ponoka over the Battle River. CARTS helped municipalities in those regions apply for and

receive funding from the TCT Foundation for the engineering of both of these bridges. We are currently working with communities to develop a plan to get these bridges built and in the past year, we received funding commitments of up to \$400,000 towards the construction of these two bridges. ATN has committed to fund \$100,000 towards each bridge and TCT Foundation has committed to fund \$100,000 towards the Battle River Bridge and will also provide funding for the Blindman Bridge. The TCT has also been approached to provide bridge funding.

- The Town of Ponoka is currently working on a grant application to ATN and TCT for trail adjacent to the planned bridge over the Battle River. The Town has set

aside a significant amount of funds for trail development and we hope to be able to make an announcement soon on the progress of this project.

- CARTS has been working closely with the Town of Lacombe, the Town of Blackfalds, the County of Lacombe and the County of Red Deer on a subcommittee originally struck to promote the building of the pedestrian bridge over the Blindman River. The committee continues to make progress on the bridge planning, but has also been working on a unique opportunity to build trail linking these communities. We hope to make an announcement on our progress in the near future.

Don Cockerton Awarded Prestigious Alberta 2008 Trail Blazer Award

Don Cockerton was honoured with the prestigious 2008 Trail Blazer award at Alberta TrailNet Society's spring annual general meeting at Kananaskis Village. The Trail Blazer award recognizes individuals who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives in support of trail development and recreational trail interests, devoting countless hours of volunteer time and effort on behalf of the greater Alberta community.

Don has had many notable accomplishments with a career focus on land use planning, protected area management and partnership development, especially around environmental mitigation, stewardship, and trail construction/maintenance. He began working as a planning researcher for Parks Canada in the 1970s and then joined the Alberta Forest Service as a recreational planner in Kananaskis Country in 1979. Primary achievements in the early years included a share of planning and management of the trails in eastern Kananaskis. More recently, he worked on management plans for the various parks in Kananaskis Country.

Peter Barr, President of Alberta TrailNet said, "Don's contributions to trails in K-

Country have been extraordinary. The Alberta public is fortunate to have dedicated professionals like Don. Due in large part to his efforts, Alberta has a well managed and world class recreational wilderness area with beautiful trails for all to enjoy. This award recognizes and expresses the greater trail community's appreciation of Don's work and dedication over the years."

On receiving the award Don said, "I feel lucky to have had the employment opportunities provided throughout my career and to collaborate with like minded individuals who share similar values toward recreation and trails."

Don has helped plan and develop snowshoe, cross-country skiing, hiking, interpretive, mountain bike and multi-use trails. He provides guidance and supports the work of many different groups and organizations including: Friends of Kananaskis, Elbow River Watershed Partnership, Calgary Snowmobile Club, Alberta United Recreationists Society, Alberta Equestrian Federation, Bow Valley Mountain Bike Alliance, the Great Divide Trail Association, the National Trail Association and Alberta TrailNet.

Previous Trail Blazer award winners have included: Glen French (2007), Louisa Rich (2006), Don Gardner (2005), Robert Bouchard (2004), Jeff Gruttz (2003), Norm Froom (2002), Sandie Anderson (2001), Rob Gardner (2000), Lloyd Lohr (1999), George Gordon (1998), and Douglas Campbell (1997).



Peter Barr, President of Alberta TrailNet (lt.), presents 2008 Trail Blazer Award to Don Cockerton (rt.).

Volunteers Recognized

Each year the Trans Canada Trail recognizes volunteers who have made significant contributions towards developing the Trans Canada Trail across Canada. Alberta TrailNet would like to join with the Trans Canada Trail Foundation in recognizing this year's recipients of 5 and 10 year pins.

5 Years

Landing Trail Committee, Athabasca:
Christine Onysty, Cheryl Wiese,
Milton Wiese

Grouard-Peace River Trail Net Society:
Fern Welch, Pat Riegel, Ray Lavoie

Central Alberta Regional Trails Society
(CARTS): Debbie Olson, Paul Pettypiece

Pigeon Lake Regional Trail Society:
Eric Seneka

Pioneer Trail North Foundation:
Vera DeSmet

10 Years

Landing Trail Committee, Athabasca:
David Gregory, Mike Pozniak,
Cary Gulka, Kim Rymer, Barrie Onysty,
Art Sharko (Athabasca), Sandi Anderson,
Roger Morey, Jim Woodward,
Mike Gismondi

Pigeon Lake Regional Trail Society:
Norm Froom, Karole Froom

Central Alberta Regional Trails Society
(CARTS): Jim Woychuk, Grant Johnson

Alberta Snowmobile Association:
Louise Sherren

Alberta TrailNet Society:
Linda Strong-Watson

Grouard-Peace River Trail Net Society:
Louisa Rich

Riverland Recreational Trail Society:
Marjorie Scott, Jim Scott

Board of Directors and Officers for 2008-2009

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| Reg Gunson | Vice President |
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We couldn't do it without you...

Many thanks to all our members and donors who have pledged their support to the Alberta TrailNet Society. Not only is your support a big boost to TrailNet financially, but your ongoing support benefits all trail enthusiasts and will help to continue to build Alberta's provincial trail network, including the Trans Canada Trail.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes! I want to support
Trails so sign me up as a Member.

Name _____

Address _____

City/Town _____

Prov _____

Postal Code _____

Phone _____

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Individual Member _____ yr x \$25 \$ _____

Organization _____ yr x \$50 \$ _____

Donation (RECEIPTS ISSUED) \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Make cheque payable to: Alberta TrailNet Society

Yes! I want to volunteer with Alberta
TrailNet or the Trans Canada Trail.

My skills include: _____

ALBERTA
SPORT, RECREATION
PARKS & WILDLIFE
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