

Alberta TrailTracker

www.albertatrailnet.com



THE HIGH ROCKIES TRAIL

The High Rockies Trail is a non motorized multi use trail designed to accommodate hikers, bikers, cross country skiers, snowshoers, and other recreationists. Trail style and surface types vary over the length of the trail with some sections better suited to certain trail uses than others. Approximately half of the 80 km route consists of existing formal and informal trails, with the remaining 40 km being construction of new trail developed to a 'primitive' trail standard.

When complete, the High Rockies Trail will create connections between these various existing trails, upgrading them where necessary in order to create a continuous defined route for trail users to experience the Kananaskis Region in new and exciting ways.

THE HIGH ROCKIES TRAIL

PHOTOS 2015 - PHASES A-D HIGH ROCKIES TRAIL CONSTRUCTION



The approximately \$3 million multi year High Rockies Trail project consists of the following major elements of work:

- Construction of ~40 km of new trail;
- Crossing of ~60 drainages/creeks along the route;
- Installation of a long span bridge at Blackshale Creek;
- Trail clearing and improvements on existing winter use trails which will become all season trails;
- Installation of trailhead kiosks/signage along the route.

The vision for the High Rockies Trail is to become a world class destination, similar to trails such as the West Coast Trail on Vancouver Island or the Chilcoot Trail in Alaska. While the High Rockies Trail will ultimately create a key linkage for a continuous trail from Banff, AB to Fernie, B.C., the current project is focused on trail development between the Goat Creek trailhead and Elk Pass on the Alberta/BC border.

The project begins just west of Canmore in the Bow Valley Wildland Park at the Goat Creek trailhead. It meanders generally southward, passing along the east shore of Spray Lake Reservoir, and enters Spray Valley Provincial Park near Buller Mountain. Once the trail passes the access road to the Mount Shark area (near Engadine Lodge), the remainder of the trail lies within Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. Alberta TrailNet contracted EcoPlan International in 2011

to develop the trail concept plan (tourism business opportunity study), and on completion of that work Alberta TrailNet contracted McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. (MCSL) for the detailed design and planning of the trail. McElhanney is continuing to work with us as prime consultant on the project, providing project engineering and oversight and supervising the experienced companies that are constructing the trail. While much time has been spent developing the design alignment, the precise final routing of the trail is being confirmed in the field with Kananaskis Country staff during construction.

With a view to four basic guiding principles preservation, heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation, and tourism, Alberta TrailNet and McElhanney have worked in collaboration with Kananaskis Parks staff to develop the final alignment of the trail and ensure issues such as sensitive wildlife habitat, natural hazards and others have been considered in the alignment creation. Trail construction started in late 2014 with the project divided into 8 construction phases. The first 4 phases were completed in 2015. The remaining 4 phases are planned for completion by the end of 2016.

It goes without saying that there is a great deal of excitement in the trail community about this new long distance trail opportunity in our province – an excitement which is shared by Alberta TrailNet, McElhanney, AB Culture and Tourism and AB Environment and

Parks staff who have provided ongoing support and assistance to the Project, the Friends of Kananaskis volunteers who have assisted with some reclamation and construction tasks, the contractors working on trail construction, and project funders including the Government of Alberta, Trans Canada Trail, and private donors.

We look forward to celebrating the completion and opening of the High Rockies Trail with you in 2017, Canada's 150th Birthday. Alberta TrailNet is the lead on the High Rockies Trail project. Questions about the project, its purpose and partners can be addressed to Alberta TrailNet (1-877-987-2457).

The High Rockies Trail is a multiuse trail. Care must be taken as you proceed along this relatively narrow trail as there will be various users (hikers/skiers/cyclists/mountain bikers) on the trail including families, groups, and those of varying abilities – users have a duty of care to proceed and act in a way that does not endanger other users.



BEAVER RIVER TRESTLE RECONSTRUCTED

BY MARIANNE PRICE, ALBERTA'S IRON HORSE TRAIL

The Beaver River Trestle is a must see attraction along Alberta's Iron Horse Trail. It is the longest and highest of 19 trestles that became part of the trail when the Bonnyville-Coronado rail line was acquired by ten adjacent municipalities in 1999. Sadly, the trestle was damaged by fire in 2012. It has been a long road back, but repairs to the trestle have recently wrapped up. Like the Kettle Valley Trestles in the Okanagan and the Kinsol Trestle on Vancouver Island, the rebuilt Beaver River Trestle stands as a testament to the importance of trestle bridges along our trail systems. The Beaver River Trestle, which is 5 km south of Cold Lake, connects the City to the rest of the Iron Horse Trail. It is also part of the Trans-Canadian Snowmobile Trail.

A visit to the trestle is well worth the time, especially when the CF-18s from CFB Cold Lake are on manoeuvres overhead. Geocaches are hidden around the trestle and along the trail. It is a beautiful hike from Cold Lake to the trestle. ATVers can make a weekend trip by starting at the Smoky Lake staging area. It is about 163 km from there to the trestle.

The trestle is 750 m long and stands 60 m above the Beaver River Valley. The cost of repair was \$1,220,390 and another \$293,353 for engineering fees, stabilization, assessment and design work. Total cost for the project was \$1, 515,000.

Government of Canada (through the National Trails Coalition grant), Smoky Lake Trail Twisters, Government of Alberta (through CFEP grant), Snow & Mud.com, the ten municipalities and N.E. Muni-Corr Ltd. provided support for the project. There were also some small donations from the public.

On June 24, 2016, the grand re-opening of the Beaver River Trestle was celebrated with representatives from the Municipal and Provincial Governments on hand. The day's ceremonies included music from local talent Blair Johnson, an official ribbon cutting, and attendees enjoying burgers and hotdogs and a chance to inspect the rebuilt portion of the trestle up close.



Trestle rebuild work in progress.



Side view of Beaver Trestle rebuild.

SHEILA'S SUMMER 2016 JOURNEY

BY SHEILA THOMPSON

A SUMMER TOUR OF ALBERTA'S TRANS CANADA TRAIL (TCT)

After sitting on Alberta TrailNet's Board of Directors for many years, I felt it was time to get out and see what our Alberta trails really look like, standing on the ground. How do you describe the Trans Canada Trail? And how does the TCT fit into Canada's 150 Anniversary celebrations in 2017? This summer I set out to answer these questions by exploring the lengths of Alberta's Trail. Many thanks to my husband, Jim Hawkins, for joining me on this adventure. We had tons of fun. Thanks also to the staff and board members of Alberta TrailNet for their support. A special thank-you goes out to all the trail heroes we met along the way, people who feel that historic trails should be part of our legacy and are giving their personal time to develop and maintain new trails. Visit my blog tctsummertour.wordpress.com for more detail than I can provide here. Suffice it to say, we had a wonderful summer exploring Alberta thru the 'lens' of trails.

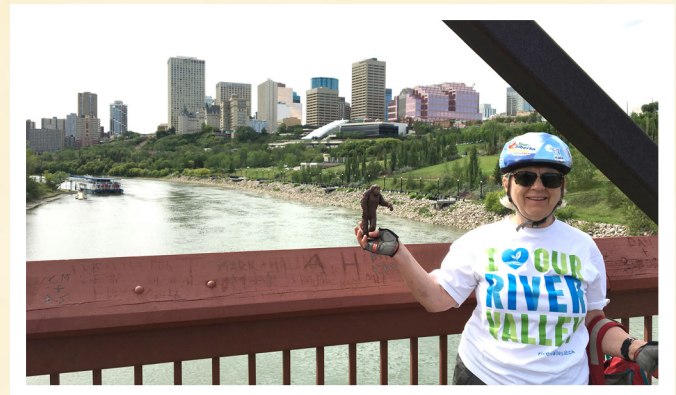


Biking on Alberta's Iron Horse Trail.

Most provinces have fairly straightforward TCT routing which enters the province, meanders a bit, then leaves to the next province. Not so Alberta. We have the distinction of all three branches (east/west and northern land and water routes) of the trail converging here – in the middle of our province- 3000 km in total. From June 4 to September 3, we explored as much of Alberta's TCT as we possibly could, and we got to most of it. Here are my impressions in a brief overview. Think of Alberta's TCT as a jigsaw puzzle and each trail segment as a piece of that puzzle, linking to each other to form a connected trail system.

HERE ARE THE AREAS WE VISITED THIS SUMMER:

1. **THE NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER – THE ALBERTA/ SASKATCHEWAN GATEWAY / THE RIVER / ALBERTA'S IRON HORSE TRAIL /THE HISTORIC VICTORIA TRAIL** – We started our journey on International Trails Day at the AB/SK border, our first TCT gateway, on Onion Lake Cree Nation lands along the River. Much of Alberta's history came in on this River and on the trails beside it. This is a big piece of the TCT puzzle. The Trail is nearly complete from the border to historic Lamoureux across the river from Fort Saskatchewan. There are historic sites up and down the river and many opportunities to combine canoeing downstream with biking back to your start point. This is an excellent section of the trail for learning Alberta's story while enjoying some paddling and pedaling.
2. A sizeable piece of our puzzle, the **CAPITAL REGION RIVER VALLEY** is a wonderful parkway system in search of a name. The initiative's lead agency, the River Valley Alliance, is working on development of a continuous trail from Lamoureux through Fort Saskatchewan, Sturgeon and Strathcona Counties, Edmonton, Leduc and Parkland Counties, and terminating at Devon. This main connector trail, part of the TCT, passes by many urban amenities, with connections to other nature trails and recreation facilities along the North Saskatchewan River.



Sheila and her Sasquatch companion on the Cloverdale Foot Bridge in Edmonton.

3. **ATHABASCA LANDING TRAIL (THE '100 MILE PORTAGE')** – Heading back to Lamoureux we followed the current on road route north through Sturgeon and Westlock Counties to the gentle Tawatinaw River Valley. Trail groups have been working on moving portions of the trail off road in this area. Start at the Tawatinaw Ski Hill, then travel north on Hwy 2A. This quiet

country road pretty much follows (was built on) the original trail. This piece links scenic little villages lining the bottom of the valley. The regional trail group and its partners are currently building trail and bridges at the north end towards Athabasca. Soon they will complete a pedestrian bridge over the Tawatinaw River where it flows into the Athabasca River. Another Canada 150 commemoration?

4. **ATHABASCA RIVERFRONT TRAIL** — A small but vibrant piece of the puzzle. Here the Northern Land and Northern Water routes converge.
5. **THE ATHABASCA AND SLAVE RIVERS** — This is a long blue piece of the puzzle surrounded by the dark green of Boreal Forest. Everything here is a superlative. The land, the rivers, the rapids, the Boreal Forest (part of the largest continuous forest on Earth), the Peace-Athabasca Delta (the largest freshwater delta in North America). It is humbling to stand on the banks of the Athabasca and look north. This river flows past major rapids (portages are being built), past Fort McMurray, into the Peace-Athabasca Delta, connecting to Lake Athabasca at Fort Chipewyan, and onwards along the Slave River with its own sets of mighty rapids and a land portage leading from Fort Fitzgerald to the AB/NWT border.



Sheila's photo of husband Jim Hawkins and friend on the trail past the Slave River Rapids.

6. **WOOD BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK** — The AB/NWT Gateway (the second of our gateway visits) — this very special piece of the puzzle is Canada's largest national park. Once again, superlatives! Access this section at Fort Smith, NWT, and be sure to visit the AB/NWT TCT gateway. Try timing your visit around a community event. We chose the longest day of the year, then also enjoyed Treaty Land Entitlement Days (Treaty 8). Paddlefest, on the August long weekend, has people kayaking the rapids along the 34 km Desnethé (portage) Trail.
7. **THE PEACE RIVER TRAIL: SMITH TO SAWDY** — This is an uninterrupted lengthy piece of the puzzle, 64 km of occasionally wet and miserable (we were travelling by horse and wagon) but very beautiful Boreal trail. In spite of the difficult going at times, it's our trail, a remote, mysterious trail along the beautiful Athabasca River, with nary a road or a house along it. This tough route led early Albertans from Athabasca to Slave

Lake to Peace River. It's a good trail for meditating on the misfortunes of early settlers and explorers. Olive Fredrickson wrote a vivid memoir, "The Silence of the North," which makes you grateful you can hike out of here to a modern world.



Horse and wagon journey on the Peace River Trail from Sawdy to Smith.

8. **NORTHSHORE TRAIL, GROUARD AND WILLIAM MARX TRAIL** — Slave Lake to Grouard — This piece is a shining jewel in the middle of Alberta. When finished (it's currently under construction) it will be 80 - 90 km of continuous trail thru mature Boreal forest, following Lesser Slave Lake's sandy beaches and rocky shoreline most of the way. Let's consider it our version of the West Coast Trail.



Scenic photo of trail at the North Shore of Lesser Slave Lake.

9. **TOWN OF PEACE RIVER AND FRIENDSHIP TRAIL** — This is a piece we continue to look for. The Friendship Trail connects Peace River and Grimshaw but currently lacks a trail operator group and needs a champion to improve and maintain the trail. There is a jewel of a park near Grimshaw that wants to connect with Peace River, but it is a work in progress. Peace River has good urban trails. We wondered — "How do we get to the spectacular views of the Heart & Smoky Rivers flowing into the Peace?" These were the trail systems we visited from Edmonton north. Then we headed south.

10. COWBOY COUNTRY — Colour this piece Alberta Blue, for its big, clear skies. The trail will eventually follow a more or less north south route passing through the towns and villages of central Alberta. Portions of the route follow the old C & E Trail in Ponoka County. Try to visit Ponoka's scenic trails when a Stampede is on. Here again is the story of beautiful urban trails that do not yet connect town to town, with one major exception. Here's a big shout-out to Lacombe County. Lacombe County has set the standard for the rest of Alberta with a first-rate paved trail connecting Lacombe and Blackfalds. The trail then runs south, crossing a pedestrian bridge on the Blindman River, connecting to a quiet rural road leading to Red Deer and its rich trail system.

11. CALGARY — Another successful piece of the puzzle. Calgary has commuter trails, urban trails along the Bow River (the main TCT route), and woodland trails. They all provide a wonderful way to experience Calgary. You don't have to wait for the Stampede, because something is always happening in Calgary.

12. C-2-C — CALGARY TO COCHRANE — This trail system is well on its way to becoming fully linked although certain trail connections have yet to be built on the west side of Calgary. Follow Hwy 1A west from Calgary and you'll come to the turn off to Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park (GRPP). Upstream of that is Cochrane. Cochrane has trails that connect to GRPP, but we started in Cochrane and managed to get lost. Next time, we will start from GRPP and find our way along the Park's well developed paved trails to Cochrane. Here is another trail that gives us history, beauty and personal challenge.

13. BRAGG CREEK — The Gateway and staging point to Kananaskis Country and its multitude of trails. The West Bragg Creek Trail is currently under construction and will be complete in 2017 — a real Canada 150 celebration for the folks who are working so hard on that section of the Trans Canada Trail.

14. CANMORE — GOAT CREEK TRAIL — BANFF — MOUNTAIN PARK LEGACY TRAIL — What can you say here? Isn't Alberta wonderful? All of the above and this too. Here's my plan. Cycle the Goat Creek Trail from Canmore to the Banff Springs Hotel. Enjoy some refreshments then visit Bow Falls. Cycle back to Canmore on the Legacy Trail. Sublime!

15. ELK PASS — the AB/BC TCT Gateway (the third and our final TCT gateway visit) — The final piece and now our summer time puzzle is done. We are told the new 80 km High Rockies Trail with its spectacular mountain viewscapes is almost ready — another brand new trail for commemoration of Canada 150 in 2017. Our border gateways are just that - gates connecting provinces and territories and community to community along the Trans Canada Trail.

The Trans Canada Trail has rebranded itself as The Great Trail. I get that. By spending time this summer on sections of Alberta's portion of the TCT, I have discovered The Great Trail. I have felt a connection to the peoples who came before us. I have been moved by the beauty of the land. I salute the people we have met along the way. And I cherish the personal adventures the TCT has offered up. The Great Trail, indeed.

LOVINGLY REMEMBERED: DAVID McCLEMENT (1930-2016)



David William McClement passed away peacefully on April 10, 2016 at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary at the age of 85 after a brief illness. David was born in Hanley, Saskatchewan. He attended the University of Saskatchewan and received his Bachelor of Commerce degree with "distinction" in 1950. He went on to take his Chartered Accountancy designation and started his career in Regina at the Goldie Hunt firm of chartered accountants. He moved to Calgary in 1955 where he met his wife Joyce. He then went on to do auditing for Peat Marwick, Mitchell. David joined the Loram Group in 1960 where he served in a number of senior positions for 35 years.

David has been a donor to the Trans Canada Trail and Alberta TrailNet since 1994 when he called Bill Pratt, one of the founders of the Trans Canada Trail and said he wanted to contribute to more than a metre, in fact he wanted to contribute to a kilometre of trail. Thus the TCT Kilometre Club program began and in 2000 his recognition panel was installed in the Calgary Pavilion. David has been particularly supportive of Alberta TrailNet in the undertaking to link the Trans Canada Trail in Alberta. He provided generous financial support to Alberta TrailNet through his charitable organization, the Flair Foundation. He appreciated the great benefits of trails, having watched the growth of the Calgary pathways system since 1956 and had used those trails from his home. He saw trails as an opportunity to discover how fortunate we are as Canadians to have access through trails to places of great beauty where we can learn about and enjoy nature and appreciate and foster good health. David was always interested in hearing of the challenges faced and the progress that was being made in Alberta. He always had words of encouragement and praise for the work done by Alberta TrailNet and trail builders in the province. He was awarded the Trail Blazer Award by Alberta TrailNet in 2010 for his outstanding support of trails in the province.

Alberta TrailNet's Board and staff extend their deepest sympathies to David McClement's family and friends. He will be greatly missed.



TOWN OF DEVON'S TRAIL SYSTEM HELPS TO 'GRAB LIFE'

BY MARC HAINE, TOWN OF DEVON

This past June, the Town of Devon unveiled the next chapter of the Devon river valley trails with a formal ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion and grand opening of the Devon River Valley Trail system. "Devon is well known as a healthy, active, sustainable and inclusive community, and these trails are widely used by residents and non residents of all mobility capabilities," said Devon Mayor, Stephen Lindop. "A huge portion of our residents list our river valley trails as our number one asset."

As part of the River Valley Alliance group, the new trail system in Devon, featuring a 306 step natural staircase, loops around Voyageur Park along the North Saskatchewan River, connecting the existing gravel, natural and paved trails with the Devon Lion's Campground. The enhanced 25 km trail system serves as a great place for friends and families to come together and enjoy the area's beautiful river valley setting and luscious green spaces for walking, hiking or bicycling.

"Our message," says Economic Development Officer, Marc Haine, "is that we want people to come to Devon to 'Grab Life.' We are already known within the cycling community, through the engagement of the Devon Bicycle Association (DBA) and other highly engaged organizations, as being a fantastic destination for cycling and healthy, active living. Now, we have the distinction of being a part of what will eventually become the longest park trail system in North America, in partnership with the River Valley Alliance, right here on Edmonton's doorstep."

Happenings like the Alberta Summer Games - mountain biking events that happened this past summer, along with the various DBA cycling events and Town initiatives such as the crazEcrew stunt team, Devon Days, Movies in the Park and the upcoming Christmas in the Park happening the latter part of November, provide vibrancy and activity in the river valley that not only attract residents, but bring visitors from all over the Edmonton region. Add to that the number of winter activities and events within the region, and there are plenty of reasons to come to Devon and 'Grab Life.'



The new staircase.



Devon residents love to keep active on the trails.

DEVONIAN TRAIL UPDATE

BY DAVE CROSS, PARKLAND COUNTY

The Devonian Trail Link, the newest recreational destination in Parkland County, is approaching its moment in the spotlight. By 2017, the trail will be another reason for Parkland County residents to feel a sense of pride in their community.

The Devonian Trail Link is a unique opportunity for not only Parkland County, but for the Capital Region as a whole, as it will create a link between neighbouring communities, allowing people to enjoy the amenities available throughout the area.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Parkland County is a shareholding member of the River Valley Alliance (RVA). The RVA's mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the North Saskatchewan River Valley and create one of the largest park systems in the world. To achieve this, the RVA developed a Plan of Action to guide the development of this park system. Parkland County Council adopted the RVA's Plan of Action in 2007. This plan formed a blueprint for development along the entirety of the river valley while integrating the plans of all seven participating municipalities, enabling the RVA to raise project funding on behalf of all of its partners.

One of the projects identified in the Plan of Action was the trail connection from Prospectors' Point Day Use Park to the Devonian Botanical Gardens. The Devonian Trail Link is the result of that idea.

This project began in the fall of 2013 with a conceptual planning phase to determine the public's thoughts on uses for the trail and potential trail alignments.

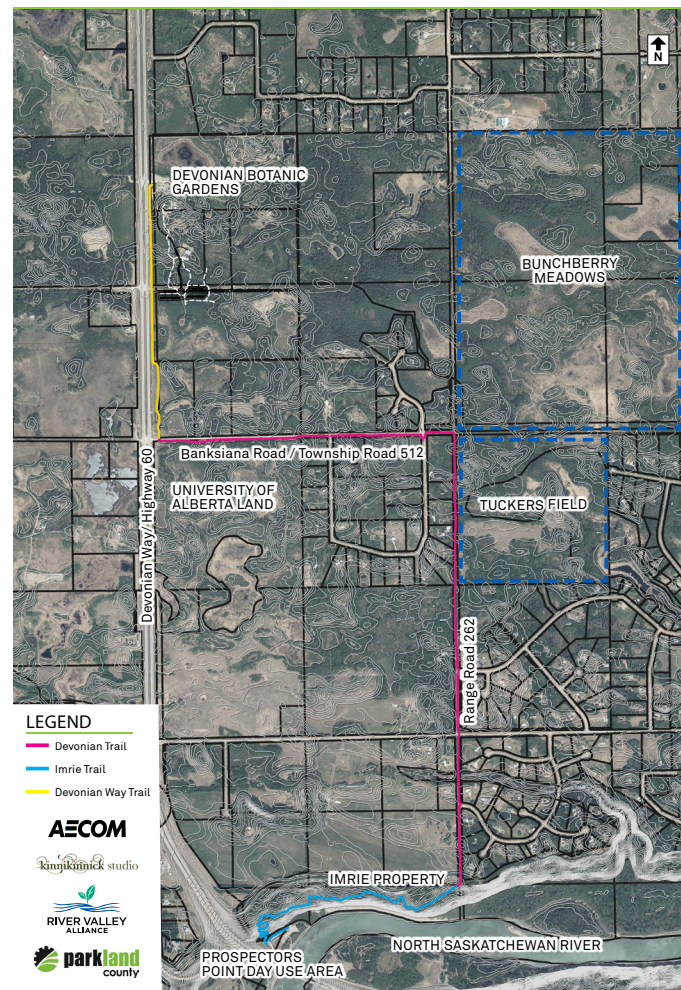
The trail alignment selected was based on a number of factors including:

- Runs along publicly owned lands.
- Ability to preserve a green corridor that is already connecting green spaces.
- Supports a pre-existing informal use as a trail in some of the area.
- Has a high scenic value in terms of the natural area it will run through.
- Connects the Devonian Gardens to the River Valley; links several subdivisions with each other;

- Connects Parkland County recreation areas, including Tuckers Field and Prospectors' Point, as well as an area called Bunchberry Meadows that the Nature Conservancy of Canada has an interest in acquiring and developing trails on.

The public provided a tremendous amount of feedback during this phase, which guided Parkland County in the design. A few notable changes based on this valuable feedback included a change in surfacing from asphalt to granular, reduction in trail width from 3.0 m to 2.4 m and leasing land to remove more of the trail from road right of ways. Overall, the trail will be less impactful on the environment it is running through, but still able to provide an aesthetically pleasing trail that can accommodate all the uses for which it was designed.

DEVONIAN TRAIL LINK





New trail near the North Saskatchewan River in Parkland County.

WHAT'S NEXT?

There are numerous benefits of trails in the community. They help make communities more liveable, help preserve and restore open space, provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health as well as providing educational and interpretive opportunities. This non motorized trail will provide a fantastic opportunity for walking, hiking, biking, equestrian use, running, nature appreciation and more!

Trail construction is currently ongoing with an expected completion in the spring of 2017. The Grand Opening is expected to take place in early summer of 2017!

Go to www.parklandcounty.com for more updates on the work that is being done.

SARAH JACKSON WALKS ACROSS CANADA

BY SHEILA THOMPSON

As more and more of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) is completed, more and more people are making a walk across the country. One such distance hiker is Sarah Jackson from Edmonton. Sarah recently completed a degree in sociology at the U of A and decided to go from the theoretical to the practical. Her question: What does it mean to be Canadian? Sarah started at Victoria in early June and headed east across B.C. Her overall impression was one of mountain passes and long stretches of isolation. West of Christina Lake she had to leave the trail due to a forest fire. In her determination to 'cover all the steps', she went back to that spot and recommenced. She seldom walked alone as family and friends joined her along the way.

At the end of September 2015 Sarah crossed over to Alberta's newest stretch of TCT at Elk Pass. She followed signed trails and mountain pathways to Canmore, then down Hwy. 1A to Cochrane. From there she was able to hike through Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park and on to Calgary. She frequently enjoyed the hospitality of strangers, especially as autumn turned to winter. In Airdrie she camped in someone's backyard. She continued through Bowden and Innisfail to Red Deer where parkland trails didn't even feel like being in a city. Blackfalds led to Lacombe and Ponoka. At Edmonton Sarah was joined by family and friends for a walk through the capital city.

When Sarah reached Waskatenau, she and her hiking companion Stephen Wynnyk found themselves on Alberta's Iron Horse Trail, the longest continuous section of the TCT in the province. They enjoyed the many rest stops and the charming small towns such as Boomtown era Vilna. At Elk Point and Heinsburg they stayed in wood-heated shelters. From Heinsburg they diverted south to Hwy. 45 to Dewberry and Marwayne, then on to the Saskatchewan border.

On January 31, 2016, Sarah and Stephen were in historic Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. They have found that as the weather got colder, the people got friendlier. Seeing people hiking along in winter is still a novelty. But as the Trans Canada Trail continues to expand and connect, more people will take the opportunity to find out at a grassroots level 'what it means to be Canadian' just like the young adventurer, Sarah Jackson.

As of October 20, 2016, Sarah has walked 7585.4 km. She is currently in the Toronto area and her goal is to reach St. John's later this fall. Follow Sarah on her blog at sarahrosewalks.wordpress.com



Sarah Jackson and hiking companion Stephen Wynnyk.

SAMSON CREE NATION TRAIL OPENING — MASKWACIS

BY TINA NORTHWEST



Left to Right: Doug Hart, Craig Mackinaw-Assembly of First Nations Chief, Bill Elliot - Mayor Wetaskiwin, Bruce Hinkley - NDP MLA Wetaskiwin & Camrose, Larron Northwest - Samson Cree Nation Councillor, Randy Ermineskin - Ermineskin Cree Nation Chief, Tony Alexis - Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation Chief, Kurt Buffalo - Samson Cree Nation Chief

On October 1, 2015 the inauguration of the Samson Cree Nation trail project was lead by community members, Chiefs from Treaty 6, Regional, and Maskwacis, along with provincial officials. The effort and partnership with Alberta Transportation completed the 8.4 km trail along Highway 611 East with a gravel top. G.W. Enterprises, contractor for the project, finished off the sand base with added clay and gravel. All aggregate materials for the project were from the Samson Cree Nation.

The trail was constructed to address and enhance the safety and security of nation members who walked daily on the highway from the rural to urban center of the community. The stats of R.C.M.P. and Alberta Transportation on accidental deaths on the highway were a concern which has been addressed by the new trail. The family members who have lost loved ones on the highway have expressed a great appreciation for the construction of the trail. Not only is the trail alternative transportation, but a place for healing with an opportunity to relate to others and with the environment.



Youth enjoyed an outing at the trail opening.

The path that sits along the ditch of the highway offers the space to reconnect to mother earth. Waters, birds, and trees are situated alongside certain parts of the trail offering us a glimpse into nature's beauty. Sensitivity to the noise of passing vehicles is reduced by the peaceful experience along the trail. There is a parking lot located adjacent to the trail. Beyond the parking lot you can stroll on the trail enjoying the scenery while looking out at the many water birds and muskrats that occupy the water. Signage is included to offer additional information regarding the trail.

A gentle reconnection back to one's mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well being is more than welcoming. The trail provides an atmosphere for social acquaintance. During the opening ceremony, Samson Cree Nation Chief Kurt Buffalo, reiterated a frequent theme of reconnection, while acknowledging, "We've been disconnected for so long, we are here today because of people that wish our community to prosper and move ahead. It's about reintroducing our people back to the gift of life and how precious that is".



Today, you can see the trail being used by youth in the community. Thanks to the mild winter, you will also notice an occasional cyclist, runner and walker(s). In 2013, the Maskwacis Health Services reported 1,200 of the members to have type 2 diabetes. There is now the potential to offer additional wellness opportunities with the use of the trail as a recreational facility situated for outdoor programming. In addition, nearby local schools also have the space to introduce continued land based teachings into their curriculum.

Although, the trail was constructed a short time ago, there is a sense of pride and hope that speaks for continued growth. With funding opportunities, the community wishes to develop the trail with asphalt. A paved walkway will encourage economic opportunity and drive. In summary, the Samson Cree Nation would like to thank Alberta TrailNet for all its work with trail development and efforts with helping build better communities and look forward to future successes. (Thank you) Hai Hai!



Elder Margaret Montour leads Chiefs and special guests on a walk along the trail.



TRANS CANADA TRAIL: CONNECTING THE GREAT TRAIL IN 2017

TRANS CANADA TRAIL



You may have noticed it online or in the news: People are talking about The Great Trail. As Trans Canada Trail (TCT) prepares to celebrate Canada-wide connection of the Trail in 2017, the charitable organization developed a new brand – The Great Trail – which it unveiled on June 25, 2016, in its annual Globe and Mail insert, and in conjunction with the launch of a new website. Trans Canada Trail continues to be the organization's corporate name as a not-for-profit organization, while The Great Trail refers to the physical trail itself.

The concept of The Great Trail is based on the notion of the horizon, the view that all of us share no matter where we stand on the Trail; a vanishing point that extends across Canada. The horizon is the one thing that we all have in common and that symbolizes all the possibilities that lie therein. It's a view that takes us forward, and it is looking ahead to the future that inspired the creation of this new brand platform. TCT's goal is to have The Great Trail connected from coast to coast to coast in 2017, in time for Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation. The new branding symbolizes the Trail moving forward and into the future as we approach a new and exciting stage. In truth, 2017 is not the end but rather the beginning of the next chapter in TCT's story, one that sees the organization improve what was created.

The Great Trail is ever-evolving and will continue to improve and grow beyond 2017, as TCT will continue to invite Canadians and visitors to experience the Trail, and support the ongoing need to sustain its integrity for future generations. Together with donors, provincial and territorial partners, all levels of government and volunteers, TCT is developing the longest and grandest multi-use recreational trail in the world. The Great Trail provides Canadians and visitors with opportunities to connect with nature, and with one another. We all have a connection to The Great Trail regardless of age, passions or beliefs. It is a national legacy, a sustainable gift that fosters unity, collaboration and connectedness. In the meantime, discover exciting ways to explore the Trail on The Great Trail blog, and be the first to know TCT's latest updates on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Designed for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch, The Great Trail app is now available for download in Apple iTunes's App Store. Android version coming soon. This app is a trail guide and trip planner for anyone who wants to explore the Trans Canada Trail.



GRIFFITH TRAIL: AWARD-WINNING SUCCESS STORY

ELIZE COETZER, THE GRANDE CACHE MOUNTAINEER

Over five years ago, a group of local volunteers set out to find a project that would be a successful Community Building Project. Today, their story has become an inspiring tale of a group of volunteers who would bring Award Winning success to our local community. The Griffith Trail revitalization project was nominated and selected as a winner for the Alberta Parks and Recreation Association (ARPA): Creating Supportive Environments Award.

The Griffith Trail runs right around town and was created about 35 years ago. The Trail was dedicated to committed community volunteer and at the time, Town Counsellor, Bettie Griffith, whose daughter still lives in town. Unfortunately, due to development and poor maintenance, the trail had become overgrown and unusable.

When the original group of volunteers met, their goals were to enhance local sense of community, as well as benefit the town from a recreational point of view. The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) got on board and provided facilitators to teach team building skills, as well as motivational speakers to the volunteers. Yvonne Rempel, Jackie Hill and Louise Krewusik were the initial team leaders on the project and together set out to find a “Community Champion” which would adopt this project as his or her own and see it through. After the revitalization of the Griffith Trail was chosen as the most viable project, committee meetings were held to start the planning phase. Planning included setting priorities, engaging the committee and building a business and volunteer contact list.

They soon realized however, that man power would not be enough to achieve their goals and that they needed machinery and qualified operators to make a success of this dream. This meant that they needed to reach out to local businesses and strengthen community partnership. The biggest breakthrough according to Yvonne was finding their “Champion”, Anton Hauck. Anton, having retired from his position as a teacher at the time, heard of the project from a community focus group and decided that with all the extra time on his hands, he wanted to get involved.

“I came to Grande Cache 37 years ago and the Town has been good to me and my children. I wanted to give something back,” says Anton. He explains that it was important to him to create

a “stroller friendly” trail that his children and grandchildren would also be able to use. He further explains that his biggest goal was “to get families outside, out of the house and away from video games”.

Anton jumped in to coordinate the project and with the help of his group of 5 volunteers and a lot of community and business support, was able to clear out the first 2.9 kms in the last two years. In addition to this, equipment, materials and labour to the value of about \$55,000 dollars have been donated on top of the \$25,000 dollars in grants that had been received from the Thrive Grant, ACE Grant, Choosewell Grant and Trans Canada Grant. Due to the generous donations from local businesses, hardly any of the grant monies raised have been used.

“This just goes to show what the right community project can do to bring people together,” says Yvonne. They hope to finish clearing out the last 18.5 kms in the next three years but it all depends on availability of equipment use, donated to the project. The trail is a multi use trail that is used for hiking, biking, as well as for ATV use. They hope to have speed limit signs posted within the next few weeks and are proud to have the Trail added to local Trail maps. Signage they hope to add includes trail head signs, directional signs, and history of Grande Cache interpretive signs as well as educational and informational signage. Other goals are to design viewing areas with tables and benches, and putting up bat and bird houses along the trail. Finally they hope to have the GPS Trail Route mapped out and made easily accessible with multiple access points.

Yvonne adds that they could not have gotten this far without their community partners which include local schools, industry, tourism, Municipality, local businesses, community organizations, SRD, Municipal District of Greenview, GC Institution, Alberta Health Services and cultural and Aboriginal Groups. “It is our intent to secure sponsorship for the upkeep and maintenance of a section or portion of the trail in order to ensure its long term viability and sustainability”, says Yvonne.

“We are creating a lasting legacy for all of us and future generations to come” says Yvonne in conclusion. The Award Ceremony was held on October 22nd at the Fairmont Chateau, Lake Louise. Accepting the award was project leader, Anton and wife Shelly Hauck.

TRAIL BLAZER 2016

PHIL LODERMEIER AWARDED "THE STANLEY CUP OF TRAIL BUILDING"



Phil Lodermeier is the winner of the 2016 TrailBlazer Award.

On Saturday, May 28, 2016, Phil Lodermeier, Lacombe County's manager of operations, received the highest recognition bestowed by Alberta's provincial trails organization. The Trail Blazer award from Alberta TrailNet Society recognizes an individual, organization or entity that has made significant contributions to, and demonstrated longstanding commitment and involvement in trail planning and development in Alberta. "It's like the Stanley Cup of Trails," said Betty Anne Graves, Calgary based Board member and Vice President of Communications for Alberta TrailNet. In selecting the recipient, Alberta TrailNet recognizes that Trail Blazer accomplishments often reflect the contributions and commitment of staff, elected representatives, community trail builders, stakeholders and volunteers within that community.

Lodermeier received the award in recognition of his efforts and involvement in building the Trans Canada Trail within Lacombe County. Lacombe County completed a beautiful section of trail from south of Blackfalds to Lacombe in 2013.

The County is currently working on a new trail north of Lacombe to connect with the trail in Ponoka County.

"Phil Lodermeier's passion and enthusiasm has been a catalyst in the development of trails within Lacombe County," said Paula Law, Reeve of Lacombe County. "The leg of the Trans Canada Trail between Blackfalds and Lacombe is a shining example of Phil's vision for designing and constructing trails. We are eagerly waiting to see what he has in mind for the section between Lacombe and Ponoka County to complete the County's portion of the TCT."

Lodermeier was presented the award in a ceremony on May 30, 2016. County staff members Bill Cade, Dale Kary and Brandon Maier were presented with Trans Canada Trail hiking sticks in recognition of their trail building work. "Even though it is a great honor to be selected for this award, the truth of the matter is that from start to finish the trail program has many champions in Lacombe County," said Lodermeier. "The trail would not have been possible without the support of County Council and their authorization of the time and funding towards the program. Lacombe County staff has embraced the challenges of designing, negotiating for land, building and maintaining trails and I am pleased to share this award with Bill Cade, Dale Kary, Brandon Maier, County Council and all of the Lacombe County staff."

The award, created by sculptor Rick Silas, is a beautiful large hand carved wooden hiking boot on a tree stump that features the names of the award winners engraved on brass plaques. It will be on display at the Lacombe County offices for the next 12 months. Each award recipient also receives a unique hand carved wooden replica of the large Trail Blazer Award made by sculptor Ilb Rasmussen.



Phil Lodermeier and fellow Lacombe County Award winners (left to right): Brandon Maier (Assistant Public Works Supervisor, Lacombe County), Bill Cade (Public Works Supervisor, Lacombe County), Linda Strong-Watson (Executive Director, Alberta TrailNet Society), Phil Lodermeier (Manager of Operations, Lacombe County), Betty Anne Graves (Vice-President of Communications, Alberta TrailNet Society), Dale Kary (Maintenance Foreman, Lacombe County), Debbie Olsen (Director, Alberta TrailNet Society)

GEORGE WAYNE - TRAIL BLAZER 2015

George Wayne is an octogenarian that puts most of us to shame, a driving force with boundless energy and a commitment to excellence in anything he undertakes.

George has been an avid horseman his whole life and this has steered him onto many trails. He has been actively involved as President of the Western Canadian Wagon Train Association for many years, is an active member of Alberta's Iron Horse Trail, and currently is the Vice President of the Athabasca Recreational Trails Association.

George is a trail builder extraordinaire. His interest in promoting, building and upgrading trails is his passion. He was instrumental in getting the Redwater River Bridge in place on the Athabasca Landing Trail.

He has been the Trail Master leading the construction of several sections of the Athabasca Landing Trail, the Peace River Trail, and Alberta's Iron Horse Trail. He was also involved in the organization of the Trans Canada Trail 2005 Relay.

George's vast knowledge of the local areas is an enormous asset when it comes to knowing what needs to be done and who can assist in getting it done. He was presented the Trail Blazer Award at TrailNet's May 2015 AGM in Hinton, AB.



George and his wife Lorraine are active members of the Western Canadian Wagon Train Association.

2017 PLANS FOR RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE

When Canada's sesquicentennial rolls around in 2017, Alberta's River Valley Alliance (RVA) will have lots to celebrate. Formed in 1996, RVA is a partnership of seven municipalities along the North Saskatchewan River, with Edmonton at its geographical centre. The Town of Devon and the counties of Parkland and Leduc are upstream. Strathcona County, Sturgeon County and the City of Fort Saskatchewan are downstream. An 88 kilometre stretch of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) runs the length of the Capital Region North Saskatchewan River Corridor. This is one of the largest trail and park systems in North America, encompassing a wealth of recreation facilities, historic sites and natural areas. Some people say this is on the original TCT, used by Sir George Simpson when he crossed Canada by canoe in 1841. He made a stop at the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Edmonton on the present day grounds of the Alberta Legislature. The downstream end of this parkway, at Lamoureaux, connects to both the northern TCT land route and to the eastern main route of the Trans Canada Trail.

With an eye on Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, 18 capital region initiatives will add seven docks and boat launches, a new pedestrian footbridge in Edmonton, a mechanized access amenity, a 'funicular' from downtown Edmonton to the Touch the Water Promenade, and 74 km of new trails. There will also be upgrades to Rafter's Landing in Edmonton and Prospectors Point in Parkland County.

Ironically, one thing the Capital Region river valley park system does not have is a name. Soon a call for naming suggestions will spark social media conversation throughout the region. This is our river, our valley: let's give it a name. Celebrations up and down the North Saskatchewan River Valley will be a highlight of Alberta's sesquicentennial festivities in September, 2017.

For more information visit: <http://www.rivervalley.ab.ca>



A view of the North Saskatchewan River near Prospectors Point.



New 'Graves Trail' in development heading north from Argenta Beach, Pigeon Lake



Lions Club developing new Irricana Trail.

PHOTO CREDITS

Alberta TrailNet Society
Tina Northwest
Alberta's Iron Horse Trail
Marc Haine, Town of Devon
Dave Cross, Parkland County
Pierre Lameroux
Sheila Thompson
River Valley Alliance
Trans Canada Trail
Reg Gunson
McElhanney Consulting Services Inc.

WRITING AND EDITING

Linda Strong-Watson
Shannon Maliteare
Barbara Johnston
Sheila Thompson
Marc Haine, Town of Devon
Dave Cross, Parkland County
Tina Northwest
Debbie Olsen
Trans Canada Trail
Elize Coetzer, The Grande Cache
Mountaineer
Marianne Price, Alberta's Iron Horse Trail

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www.albertatrailnet.com

We couldn't do it without you...

Many thanks to all our members and donors who have pledged their support to 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 us 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

Fax

E-mail

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.

