

Alberta TrailTracker



ATHABASCA RIVER RECREATION AND TOURISM OPPORTUNITY STUDY

Alberta TrailNet is currently conducting an inventory on recreation and tourism opportunities along the Athabasca River between Athabasca and Fort McMurray. This stretch of river is a key component of the Trans Canada Trail water route to the Arctic Ocean, and is envisaged as a future recreation and tourism destination resource within northern Alberta. The water route inventory will look at reaches of the river between Athabasca and Ft. McMurray. Approximately one quarter of the study area is contained within Grand Rapids Wildland Provincial Park.

This study is focused on research, documentation and description of the recreation and tourism opportunities along this spectacular stretch of the Athabasca River. Natural, cultural and historical information is being gathered and documented under this study as the area includes a number of historical and cultural features from the earliest known settlement of this corridor. The project also includes assessment and recommended portage access around the significant rapids along this section of the river. Work to upgrade the Grande Rapids landing and portage area was completed last year. The current study will inform planning for future upgrades to other landings and portages along this stretch of the river. A future study will look at the lower reaches of the Athabasca and Slave River route from Fort McMurray north to Fort Smith, NWT.

The Project Steering Committee is working to improve recreational access, safety, and recreation and tourism experiences along the Trans Canada Trail water route in Alberta. Study partners include Alberta TrailNet, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Paddle Alberta, municipalities and other stakeholders.



DANA MEISE'S "THE GREAT HIKE"

Dana Meise's hike across Canada is an extraordinary journey. Dana's mission is to walk the entire Trans Canada Trail, all 23,000kms of it, from coast, to coast, to coast. He started in Cape Spear, Newfoundland, May 6th, 2008, and since then has spent 6 months walking each year. This past summer he trekked across Alberta and on December 17, 2013, he reached his western-most goal of Clover Point, Victoria, BC. Over the next few seasons he will journey onwards to the Arctic Ocean, hiking to Inuvik, and then canoeing to Tuktoyaktuk. Coast to Coast to Coast by 2017! Canada's 150th birthday! What an amazing feat!

While in Alberta, Alberta TrailNet's Past President, Peter Barr, hosted Dana at his home and they spoke about trail development, the success of the Iron Horse Trail, and how positive Albertans were about trails.

Dana's inspiration beginning this epic adventure was a desire to learn about his roots and honor his father. Here are some entries from his Facebook page "The Great Hike" which capture the trials and tribulations of the Alberta portion of his adventurous hike.

JULY 16

Made it to Smoky Lake, Alberta, which was a nice, quick and easy 26km hike. What's with the Pumpkins you ask? Well every October this is home to the Pumpkin Festival. The largest one was over 1200lbs. And what do they do with such a large Pumpkin? Glad you asked! They lift it 100 feet into the air and drop it on a car smashing both to smithereens of course...Lol...what else would you do with it? Thanks to Hank the Mayor & Mark the Deputy Mayor for the conversation, company, supper & ice cream.



Dana visited Smoky Lake, pumpkin capital of Alberta.

JULY 26

I have to write this story since I am in the City of Champions (Edmonton) and it's very personal. When I was a kid my dad took me to West Edmonton Mall as we lived in Red Deer, Alberta, at the time. The mall was relatively new and the world's largest. To my surprise as a 12 year old, the Oilers were practicing there as a promo for the new giant WEM building. We were some of the first people there and so lined the boards. When the practice was done, players Gretzky, Messier, Kuri etc. came along the boards and shook all of our hands, mine included. I was elated beyond description. A few months later my dad complained of a headache. My Mom, sister and I were in Saskatoon at the time to visit a family friend in a coma from a car accident where my adopted Ukrainian grandpa had died. While there grieving, we got a phone call that my dad had collapsed. We rushed back to find he had been transferred to the University Hospital in Edmonton. I wasn't allowed to see my dad for some time but when I did I didn't recognize him. He was a 200lb, big bearded 'biker- looking' guy but when I saw him I didn't believe it was him. He was in and out of a coma, had lost nearly 80lbs, and was shaved with massive scars across his head from brain surgery. My family went from owning a business to living with a disabled dad on welfare. My dad is my hero as he fought for years to learn to walk again, however slow it was. He never really recovered and although my mom did her very best, eventually he had to live in a special care home. That didn't phase him at all as his freedom to walk was all he needed and walking was his favorite thing to do. We walked everywhere together. Then one day my sister called me that my dad had a stroke and will never walk again. I told everyone I was going to set a record walking across Canada. Now it's time to back up my mouth as I told my dad I would walk enough for both of us. How was I to know that years later while hiking the Trans Canada Trail I'd get a phone call in Brantford Ontario from none other than Walter Gretzky (lol...for the people not in North America that's Wayne Gretzky's dad). Walter had a brain aneurism just like my dad though not as severe. We talked about that. Walter said that he was told it was hereditary and asked if I got checked. I said I did. He told me Wayne wouldn't get checked and I told him he should and he agreed. When the conversation was just about over Walter said to me, "Dana I want you to call me from time to time so I know where you are." (He was tremendously impressed on my journey) I said, "OK". He replied, "No I really mean it, you have my number call me." Again I said, "OK". Then he said, "You know why I want you to call?", I paused, "Because there are a lot of people in the graveyard who would love to get a phone call." Since then I have called many times to say hello with updates. One of the coolest things I think about is the conversation Walter had with Wayne after our talk. He said "Wayne, there is a guy named Dana walking the whole country whose dad had an aneurism and he agrees you should get checked out."

Who could have known all that time ago that a handshake and a personal tragedy would have brought me to where I am today, revisiting these places doing what I said I'd do- shatter hiking records. P.S. my dad has just finished surgery for Cancer and I'll tell ya he's happy to be surrounded by all the nurses.

AUGUST 16

My journey is positive but I am a journalist and no one will buy a book of lies. So I must admit, I just got turned down for water and I'm painfully thirsty which = extreme fatigue. I went from a 5.2km/hr average to 4.8km/hr after hiking 30km so far with about 9-10 to go. There is nowhere to even filter water even if I wanted to. I can go days without food before I feel the effects as I've done many times but on a hot day it's only hrs before exhaustion takes a heavy hold. Times like these I dig deep, drop my head, steady the breathing, and shuffle along in a natural flow to prevent any unnecessary energy expenditure.



Rural trail in Lacombe County

AUGUST 16

So I got turned down for water but I should by now realize that after anything bad happens equally good often follows (Sir Isaac Newton the law of attraction and reaction). I need water so see a row of cars and a garage with a group outside. I walk up to people gawking at me in wonderment. I can't blame them; after all I have a giant back pack and came wandering off an old Alberta country back road just out of Ponoka. I ask for water first and foremost as I'm in desperate need. They graciously provide my life's needs. They are a gloriously large boisterous group that as I learn are celebrating the life of a family member lost. They tell me that their family member Richard Stebner, passed away on August 12 this year at the age of 84. They also tell me that should he have still been alive he would have been the first to greet me wandering down this lonely road.

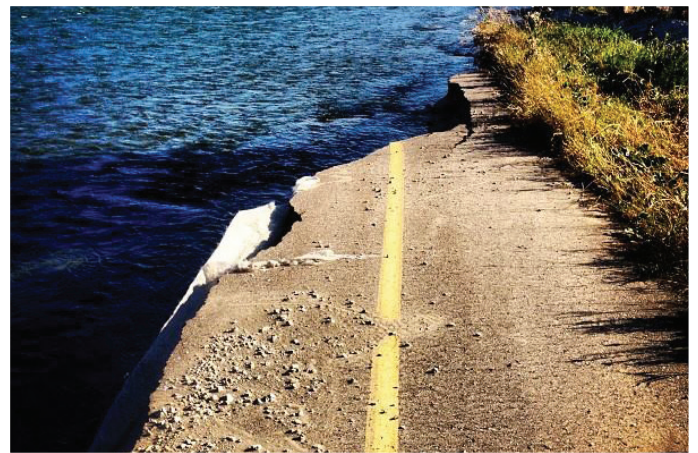
For a moment the loneliness of the trail was gone and a sense of family ensued then, the party over, I once again faced the unknown. Today I hike to celebrate Richard Stebner's life and give thanks to the kindness of the family he built. Thank you.

AUGUST 28

Here's a great early morning feel good story for ya. I arrive in Innisfail, Alberta and meet up at the Tim Horton's with Johnny Bachusky, the editor of the Innisfail Advocate newspaper. As we talk about my journey, the Assistant Manager learns of my trip and buys me a coffee and a sandwich. Interview complete, I hike back towards the trail looking for a place to rest, as I had already done 23km that morning. As I walk along, a woman recognizes me; a friend of hers follows my Blog. Turns out she owns Body Basics and is a massage therapist. Her name is April and she has no clients until later in the evening, so she lets me in to nap on the table while I charge gear. After a beautiful hour long nap, complete with candles and soothing relaxation music, I pack up to go. We meet up again and she has some soothing foot lotion for me as a parting gift. Later that night when I'm nearly in Bowden she drives out to deliver my supper. As I leave, I see I have a message from Cindy. She says she's left a package at the Macs store for me. I stop in and receive a gift bag. So a GREAT BIG thanks to Cindy her children Lily, Liam, and Rayn. Also a GREAT BIG thanks to April, Johnnie, and the Tim Horton's Assistant Manager. That really made my day.

SEPTEMBER 11

I've had to deal with many flooded sections of trail in my 14,300km walk but never this bad in a city. It's very difficult to find my way around Calgary's major freeways as you're not allowed to walk or it's too dangerous. This section is near the Deerfoot and it would be hrs of extra walking to find my way around it which could add another day to the hike. Now what?



Flood damaged trail in Calgary.

SEPTEMBER 29

I'm sending this message from Mount Engadine Lodge in the mountains. What a rough night/day last night. I hiked in the dark to reach my destination, found a flat spot and pitched camp. Then threw my food in a tree (I'll get to that story in

a minute) and snuggled in all warm and dry. About 9pm it began to rain, then it really began to rain, then the wind picked up to the point it was literally folding my tent on top of me. Morning came and the wind got worse. Still inside my tent, pinned down by rain, a massive gust ripped my fly half off pulling the pegs right out of the ground. So I scramble up as now it's raining in my tent, grab the fly and reinstall it. This is where it gets brutal...remember my food tied off in a tree as you should always do when hiking the wilderness...well the wind was so strong that it must have caught my food bag and snapped the branch it was tied to. Because there was the branch

still tied to parts of my torn up bag but nearly all of my food was taken by some kind of animal. It took my 6 days of food, Jerky, Oatmeal, Almonds, Granola Bars, and my Chicken Soup. All it left me was 1 container of a meal replacement called Vega, and my Green & Peppermint Tea. No I'm not kidding. I didn't want to lose another 2 days going back so I've decided to live off the meal replacement for the next 5 days which will be about 3000 calories a day-not enough. To top it all off it has rained on me for half the day and snowed on me the next. The good news is the lodge has put me up for a place to stay, supper and a breakfast. Thank you Chris & Shari-Lynn Williams.

RIDE WITH RESPECT PROGRAM COMES IN TO ALBERTA'S CLASSROOMS

Alberta students will be receiving a lesson in off-highway vehicle safety thanks to funding and a partnership arrangement between government and stakeholder groups.



An instructor talks to students about ATV safety.

The Ride with Respect program aims to reduce injury and death among snowmobile and ATV enthusiasts by bringing lessons on safety into Alberta's classrooms.

Between 2002 and 2011, there were 145 ATV related deaths, which is an average of 14 deaths per year. Sixteen per cent of those deaths were youth 16 years of age and younger.

The overall message of Ride with Respect is that riding off-highway vehicles can be a fun activity and an excellent way to enjoy all that Alberta has to offer, however riders have a responsibility to use respect to keep themselves safe, to ensure other trail users have the same opportunity to enjoy themselves, and to minimize their impact on the land.

The program is intended for children and youth from Grades 1-12 and is designed for use by instructors visiting a classroom. Delivering the program are representatives from the Alberta Snowmobile Association (ASA) and the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association (AOHVA).

Lesson plans include practical and age appropriate ways to ride with respect, backed up by injury statistics, manufacturer's recommendations, research, literature and best practices and legislation governing off-highway vehicle use in Alberta.

Ride with Respect was developed by stakeholders and experts in the safety, stewardship and education areas, including Alberta Transportation, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Education, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, AOHVA, ASA, Portage College, Alberta Safety Council and Alberta TrailNet, plus several OHV instructors.

For more information, or to book a school presentation, please contact the Alberta Snowmobile Association at 403-938-5811, or the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association at 403-673-3332. Visit http://www.aohva.com/ride_respect.php

SAMSON CREE NATION BUILDS TRAIL BY TINA NORTHWEST

The Samson Cree Nation community has long wanted to construct a trail alongside secondary Highway 611 East, a discussion that has taken place over a 20 year period. When Alberta Transportation constructed Highway 611 East in 1983, an increase in pedestrian related fatalities and vehicle incidents became a serious concern. People from the community who regularly accessed the on-road route on foot from their country homes into town were faced with constant uneasiness. The Samson Cree Nation has been walking the path of the highway as long as they can remember. Before the construction of Highway 611 East, old walking trails crisscrossed through the area. Since 1983 however there has been no other route that provided an area for walkers except the narrow shoulder area of the highway. In late 2012 however, things started to change. Through community dialogue, input, and communication with Alberta TrailNet and Alberta Transportation, new relationships would emerge. In November 2012, joint meetings, discussion, and planning would take place, which included a small committee of Samson Cree Nation members. Research and a time consuming process between the Samson Cree Nation and Alberta Transportation began as the two parties entered into a construction agreement. Neither party had experience with construction of a trail but Alberta Transportation did know all about road



planning, design and construction. Meetings, discussions, phone calls, and back and forth emails would eventually develop a supportive and collaborative team effort. Alberta Transportation took the lead role, providing an assessment and survey of the route, followed by design and costing. They then provided \$150,000 towards trail construction costs. The Samson Cree Nation took the lead in finding the additional dollars to ensure trail construction could begin. They would also contribute their natural resources, equipment and man power. Once everything was in place, the Samson Cree Nation prepared for construction of the trail with

a traditional Pipe ceremony. Immediately after, the Nation's Community Initiative Department began to brush the area with help from a crew from the Pesakastew Correctional Centre. This was the start of the community contribution effort.

The trail team hired additional resources - people who were experts in building a trail. Kowal Construction Ltd. supervised construction of the trail and a local community member was trail construction foreman. On August 19, 2013, construction began. Although the trail was not yet complete it was already in use. The team is planning for mid-summer to have the 10km trail completed with a gravel top. With enough financial support, the Samson Cree Nation aims to have the trail covered with asphalt within the next few years. Our plan is to make the trail more accessible to the community to support activities such as biking, skateboarding, rollerblading and running.



Trail development in progress east from Maskwacis along Highway 611.

YOU ARE INVITED!

The Grand Opening and ribbon cutting for the new Blackfalds fieldhouse Abbey Centre will take place on Friday, May 23 at 1 pm. The fieldhouse contains the only indoor section of Trans Canada Trail in Canada. It will be an incredible addition to the Lacombe to Red Deer recreational trail and the opening promises to be a special moment for all trail stakeholders.

HONORARY TRAIL OPENING AT RIDEAU HALL AND 24 SUSSEX A RESOUNDING SUCCESS



The plaque unveiling at 24 Sussex on May 24, 2013. In the back row, Valerie Pringle (Trans Canada Trail Foundation Co-Chair), Mrs. Laureen Harper (Honorary Chair of the TCT Chapter 150 Campaign), His Excellency Governor General David Johnston (TCT Honorary Patron), Hartley Richardson (Trans Canada Trail Foundation Co-Chair), Her Excellency Sharon Johnston (TCT Honorary Patron), Deborah Apps (Trans Canada Trail President & CEO), and Paul LaBarge (Trans Canada Trail Chair). Photo by Blair Gable.

A new honorary section of Trans Canada Trail was officially opened on Friday, May 24, on the grounds of Rideau Hall and at 24 Sussex by Their Excellencies the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, and Mrs. Sharon Johnston, TCT Honorary Patrons, and Mrs. Laureen Harper, Honorary Chair of the TCT Chapter 150 Campaign. Almost 100 Canadians, including Boy Scouts and members of the Trans Canada Trail Board, were present.

Starting at the Visitor Centre at Rideau Hall, the honorary section of TCT is approximately one kilometre, with a shorter section at 24 Sussex, directly in front of the Prime Minister's official residence. This new honorary section of the Trans Canada Trail is symbolically linked to the rest of the Trail, which will be fully connected from coast to coast to coast by 2017.

During the official opening, His Excellency thanked volunteers for their tireless work and welcomed visitors to discover the grounds of Rideau Hall by walking the new section of Trail.

"Without pioneers, both past and present, the Trans Canada Trail would not exist, nor would our country be what we

recognize it to be today," he said. "That is the gift we continue to enjoy, which is the reason why the completion of the Trail by Canada's 150th birthday in 2017 is such a worthy goal."

The honorary section of TCT takes visitors along the MacKay Walk and passes the Canadian Heritage Garden and the Pool of Unity to the front of the Residence around the Fountain of Hope, which is dedicated to Terry Fox. The Trail returns down the main driveway and past commemorative trees planted by visiting heads of state and dignitaries, towards the Visitor Centre.

"The Trans Canada Trail is a gift from one generation of Canadians to another," Deborah Apps, TCT President & CEO, said. "This honorary section of Trail at Rideau Hall and at 24 Sussex is a testament to our collective love for our land and its importance to who we are as a nation. On behalf of all Trail volunteers past and present, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Their Excellencies and Mrs. Harper for their steadfast support and recognition of the Trans Canada Trail."

Source: Trans Canada Trail

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN TRAIL COMPLETION

MATCHING FUNDS WILL HELP BRIDGE REMAINING GAPS IN TIME FOR CANADA'S 150 CELEBRATIONS.

The spectacular Kinsol Trestle on Vancouver Island was a fitting location for the recent Government of Canada event, where Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced funding that will help bridge remaining Trail gaps and connect Canadians from coast to coast to coast in time for 2017, the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

TCT Honorary Campaign Chair, Laureen Harper joined Prime Minister Harper in making the announcement.

The matching funds of up to \$25 million over four years will be administered by Parks Canada; the agreement will provide one federal dollar for every two dollars raised by the Trans Canada Trail.

"The Trans Canada Trail will allow Canadians and international visitors alike to enjoy some of the most breathtaking scenery. We would like to get the Trans Canada Trail completed by 2017 for Canada's 150th anniversary. It's a big job, but we're about 72 per cent done. Two of the things I love about the Trail are that it connects nearly 1,000 communities and

provides users with a unique perspective on our spectacular natural and cultural heritage," said Laureen Harper.



Left to Right: Paul LaBarge, TCT chair; Mrs. Laureen Harper, TCT honorary campaign chair; The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada; Deborah Apps, TCT president & CEO; and Hartley Richardson and Valerie Pringle, co-chairs of the TCTF.

Valerie Pringle, Hartley Richardson, co-chairs of the Trans Canada Trail Foundation, Paul LaBarge, TCT chair and Deborah Apps, TCT president & CEO were on hand for the announcement along with an enthusiastic group of boy scouts and girl guides, TCT supporters and trail enthusiasts.

"We are absolutely thrilled to have the Government of Canada's support for our bold goal of connecting the Trail by 2017," says Deborah Apps. "The Government's significant commitment to supporting TCT as a Canada 150 project, along with the

contribution of our generous donors, will continue to build enthusiasm for completing the Trail and creating a tangible on-the-ground symbol of our pride in our nation. We are so excited about celebrating our wonderful country on the Trail with Canadians from coast to coast to coast!"

Source: Trans Canada Trail

TRANS CANADA TRAIL DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS DATES FOR 2014

June 30, 2014; August 25, 2014; and November 3, 2014

Trans Canada Trail has confirmed its grant intake deadlines for new requests for funding. Concept plans for trail construction and planning/engineering study requests must be submitted by these dates to project@tcctrail.ca. For those submitting applications for this current trail building season it will be necessary to first submit the application to Alberta TrailNet (trailnet@telusplanet.net) as TrailNet must review and provide a letter of support for the application. Please note that you can find TCT grant information in the Trail Builder section of the TCT website www.tcctrail.ca. We advise project partners who wish to apply for funding from Trans Canada Trail to prepare applications for submission to TrailNet/TCT as soon as possible. Please contact TrailNet's office at 780-422-7150 or email trailnet@telusplanet.net if you have questions.

BRAGG CREEK TRAILS TO CONNECT TO NATIONAL NETWORK

BY CARMEN SOLANA-MARTIN OKOTOKS WESTERN WHEEL

Work to connect trails in the Bragg Creek area to the Trans Canada Trail can now begin thanks to financial support from the provincial government.

On Jan. 27, Banff-Cochrane MLA Ron Casey presented \$125,000 from the Province's Community Facility Enhancement Program to the Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association (GBCTA) to go ahead with plans to build a pathway that will connect with the Canada Trail. The GBCTA is proposing to construct the 7.7 km pathway in three phases, beginning in the hamlet, and ending at the West Bragg Creek parking lot which connects to a trail system in Kananaskis.

The provincial support gives the organization enough to now begin work on the almost 2.5 km first phase which will start at Bracken Road, in the hamlet of Bragg Creek, and continue to Mountain View Park in West Bragg Creek. "I feel really happy that we are able to advance this wonderful project and we hope to complete phase one by the end of the summer," said Robert Sadee, association president.

The \$125,000 provincial grant follows a \$125,000 grant received from the Trans Canada Trail organization, a \$60,000 recreational grant from Rocky View County, and \$10,000 from the GBCTA's fundraising efforts. The funds will cover the \$320,000 cost of the project's first phase. The Trans Canada Trail, a project initiated in 1992 to celebrate Canada's 125th year, is one of the world's longest networks of multi-use recreational trails. Once the trail is fully connected, it will stretch nearly 24,000 kilometres from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic oceans, through every province and territory, linking nearly 1,000 communities. The Trans Canada Trail Organization's goal is to connect the trail as a continuous route from coast to coast by its 25th anniversary and Canada's 150th birthday in 2017.

A section of the trail already exists connecting Canmore, through Kananaskis Country to the West Bragg Creek parking lot at the end of West Bragg Creek road. Sadee said the new trail will complete an important link in the network.

"We want to help Trans Canada Trail meet its objective for 2017 to create the world's largest trail network going from coast to coast," said Sadee. "As Bragg Creek is known as the gateway to Kananaskis, from

a trail perspective, this closes the gap between our hamlet and that beautiful trail network." "This trail will make it easier for our community members and visitors to carry out a healthy lifestyle and explore the Rockies." Sadee said the GBCTA has received tremendous financial support from trail users, local businesses, volunteers, as well as the Province and County. In 2012, the GBCTA received \$28,000 in donations for engineering studies from Alberta TrailNet, Trans Canada Trail, and Eagle Engineering.



Banff-Cochrane MLA Ron Casey presents a \$125,000 check from the Provincial government to Greater Bragg Creek Trails Association President Robert Sadee in Bragg Creek on Jan. 27. With the provincial funds and an additional \$60,000 from Rocky View County the association can start building the first phase of a pathway connecting the community to the Trans Canada Trail. (Left to right) Kim Biddle, Milt Ollenberger, Rocky View County Div. 1 councillor Liz Breakey, Banff-Cochrane MLA Ron Casey, Robert Sadee, Conrad Schiebel, and Peter Barr. Photo by Carmen Solana-Martin, Okotoks Western Wheel

"I would like to thank the tremendous volunteers of the GBCTA who have been working on this project for the last number of years," said Sadee. "We are extremely thankful for the ongoing support and look forward to continued partnerships with the Province, Rocky View County, Trans Canada Trail, Alberta TrailNet and our community." Casey said the trail project is a great tourism initiative and completing these trail links is very important to the community.

"A community like Bragg Creek has so many trails and outdoor activities to offer," he said. "Trails provide a really economical way for people to recreate and a great way for community members to get out and enjoy the outdoors." Casey said more work needs to be done to complete the project. "Hopefully we'll see, in the not too distant future, trails connecting Bragg Creek to Canmore and beyond," he said. "The potential to link these mountain communities together is amazing."

From the east there are two proposed routes of the Trans Canada Trail that will in the future connect Bragg Creek to Calgary, one via Cochrane, and the other via Highway 8, said Sadee. “We need to build the link from West Bragg Creek to Calgary and this project is our little piece of building that gap,” said Sadee. “We know there will be a trail between Redwood Meadows, Cochrane, Calgary, and Bragg Creek.”

Rocky View County Div. 1 councillor Liz Breakey said she is in complete support of the trail network which will (one day) connect the community to the west side of Calgary. “In terms of economic development it is a huge plus for this community,” said Breakey. “It will help our businesses and it puts us on the map.” For more information visit www.tctrail.ca and www.braggcreektrails.org.



NEW ALBERTA TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS CANADA'S AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

A unique trail opened in Central Alberta this past June 15. The eight-kilometre Central Alberta Regional Trail is a fully paved path stretching through rural countryside to connect the towns of Lacombe and Blackfalds, and features interpretive signage, a boardwalk and a gazebo.

Trail-opening celebrations took place at the Lacombe Research Centre, a 106-year-old Agriculture Canada facility that sits in one of the densest and most diverse livestock production regions in the country. TCT Board member Betty Anne Graves, MP Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin), MLA Rod Fox (Lacombe-Ponoka) and

have been other rural trails developed in our province, but none built to this standard and none in a highly populated area. “We have certainly appreciated the support of TCT and Alberta TrailNet in making this trail a reality and we are hoping this success will help to spur on trail development in rural municipalities through the prairies.”

Some of the interpretive signage was created by Grade 5 students, who researched and wrote about the local flora and fauna; the hope is that the trail will become a regular part of local school curriculum. The Lacombe Research Centre’s interpretive sign explains its



From left to right: Carol Simpson, Town of Blackfalds Councillor; Melody Stol, Mayor of Blackfalds; Betty Anne Graves, TCT Board member; (behind) Dana Kreil, Lacombe County Councillor; Paula Law, Deputy Reeve Lacombe County; Linda Strong-Watson, Executive Director of Alberta TrailNet; Debbie Olsen, President Central Alberta Regional Trails Society; Ken Wigmore, Reeve Lacombe County; Rod Fox, MLA; Cliff Soper, Lacombe County Councillor; Blaine Calkins, MP; Kelly Turkington, Acting Director of Operations, Lacombe Research Centre; Reuben Konnick, City of Lacombe Councillor.

Lacombe County Reeve Ken Wigmore spoke at the event and heard from enthusiastic trail users and builders about the importance of this trail to their community.

Debbie Olsen, President of the Central Alberta Regional Trails Society, commented on the significance of the Central Alberta Regional Trails Society in the bigger picture of trail building in the province.

“Lacombe County is a leader amongst rural municipalities when it comes to trail development in rural Alberta,” Olsen said. “There

history as one of the oldest federal research stations in Canada. “Building a new trail is a labour of love for your community, and that’s a good thing, given the challenges it can present,” Graves said. “It took a great deal of resourcefulness and determination to get this section of trail built and on behalf of the Trans Canada Trail, I commend the hard work and commitment shown by Lacombe County, Alberta TrailNet and the Central Alberta Regional Trails Society.”

The Trans Canada Trail contributed nearly \$290,000 to this \$1.13-million project.

Source: Trans Canada Trail



RAY DANYLUK RECEIVES NEW PROVINCIAL TRAIL AWARD

A new provincial trail award – the *Alberta Recreation Corridor and Trails - Trail Builder Award* has been created to recognize Alberta citizens for their outstanding work, dedication and contributions at the local, regional and provincial level. At its 2013 AGM, Alberta TrailNet presented this first time award to Ray Danyluk, in recognition of his exceptional commitment to building, not only his community and region, but his province and country.

Ray has long been a keen supporter of the role that recreation and sport opportunities play in the happiness, health and quality of life of persons of all ages and abilities. Actively engaged in organizing, coaching, fund raising and promoting sport and athletics, Ray was integral in initiating what became known as the Kubasa Run. This event evolved from a friendly running race among basketball players to a community-at-large family 10km run. This event was hosted at Ray's Banana Hills farm and included ages three to seventy-five, with old-fashioned races and a family picnic. The tradition has carried on for twenty years.

When Ray was first elected as a school board trustee, a priority was enhancing sports and recreational opportunities for all students in the school division. He accomplished this through improvements to school facilities, as well as enhancing funding for school sport and recreation programs.

As a St. Paul County Councilor in 1993, Ray supported community members who wanted to create a recreational trail on 34km of acquired CN rail line. This action set in motion positive effects throughout the entire province. In 1999 CN abandoned rail service on the Bonnyville – Coronado line in northeastern Alberta and the 34km section of trail grew and became the 300km 'Alberta's Iron Horse Trail'. Lengthy portions of the Iron Horse Trail became part of two national trail initiatives – the Trans Canada Trail and the Trans Canadian Snowmobile Trail.

As an MLA, Ray played a key role in the development of trail policy initiatives in Alberta, and was an advocate for the responsible and sustainable development of Alberta's provincial trail system.

Ray's dedication and leadership has helped raise the profile of trails in Alberta. His work, while provincial in scope, has resulted in national benefits and created effects that will last for generations to come.



Ray Danyluk accepts his Trail Builder Award.

TRAIL BLAZER AWARD 2013

BY SHEILA THOMPSON

The 2013 recipient of Alberta TrailNet Society's annual 'Trail Blazer Award' has helped 'blaze a path' for recreational trails in rural Alberta. Jerry Bidulock is the founding president of Riverland Recreational Trail Society (RRTS), 1999. RRTS is the not-for-profit society which oversees the development, maintenance and operation of 300km of Alberta's Iron Horse Trail, stretching east of Edmonton from Smoky Lake/Waskatenau to Cold Lake and Heinsburg. Through his tireless and unwavering efforts, Jerry has built partnerships with wide-ranging community interests: recreation groups, historical societies, tourism and economic development associations. The result is an unmatched trail system running through small town Alberta, open to motorized and non motorized trail users of all kinds. It is a source of local pride and regional identity. Alberta's Iron Horse Trail also stands as a model for rail-to-trail conversion in Alberta. The work of trail development and maintenance is ongoing and Jerry continues to be the backbone of these efforts.

With the intent of learning and applying best practices to trail development in Alberta, Jerry has twice co-hosted Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation Ministers on fact finding missions to Quebec to observe their extensive and well regulated

systems. He was an advocate and participant on the Alberta Recreation Corridors Committee (2002), and wrote, presented and saw ratified the Government of Alberta resolution: "Be it resolved that the Government of Alberta further respond to healthy lifestyle needs of Albertans by providing integrated management and development of outdoor recreational access opportunities in balance with protection of the Alberta wilderness and environment."

More recently, Jerry and other recreation stakeholders provided input to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, developed under the Land Use Framework, to help ensure the Plan recognizes the tourism and economic values of outdoor recreation experiences. This Plan now includes development of a regional plan for outdoor recreation, regional corridors and trails. Understanding that the work we do today will ripple through future generations, Jerry continues to actively meet with local governments and other stakeholders to raise the profile of trails and outdoor recreation opportunities and to gather support and assistance in developing a recreational trail plan for the Lakeland Area.

While on trail steward duties not long ago, Jerry Bidulock picked up a tiny rubber boot left forgotten beside the trail. This got him thinking about why he is so passionate about trails, and it also says a lot about Jerry. Firstly, it tells us that he spends countless hours maintaining and enjoying the trails of northeast Alberta. Secondly, it tells us he is doing this work for others and for the generations yet to come. Finally, that little boot landed on the desk of Alberta's Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation as a reminder of why we are building trails today. How fitting that Jerry Bidulock has now received his own 'Little Boot' in the form of the 2013 Trail Blazer Award.



Jerry Bidulock accepts the Trail Blazer Award for 2013 in St. Paul.

BATTLE RIVER TRAIL MAP NOW AVAILABLE

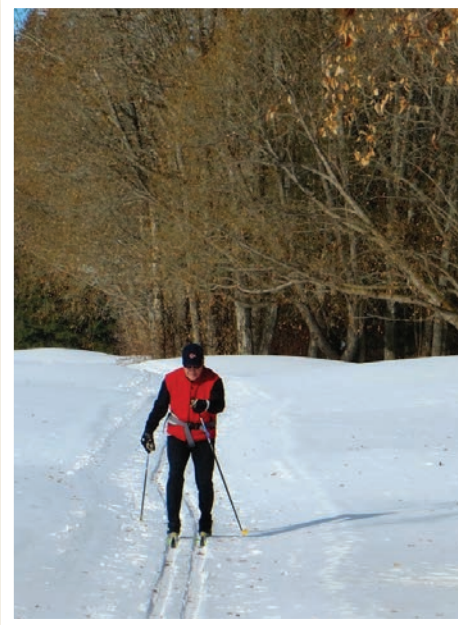
The Provincial Trail Map Project Steering Committee has completed the 5th in a series of 16 regional trail maps that will cover the entire province. The map highlights approved motorized, non-motorized and mixed use trails in the region.

The Battle River Trail map region is framed by three highways (Hwy. 16 on the north, Hwy. 2 along the west and Hwy. 12 on the south) and by the Saskatchewan border on the east.

This map and other maps in the provincial trail map series are available free of charge to the public through provincial and local tourism visitor centres, regional Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and Alberta Park offices, and through Alberta TrailNet's Edmonton office.



Battle River map area.



Out enjoying the trails!

Please call TrailNet at 1-877-987-2457 or visit www.albertatrailnet.com to view a digital version of the map.

Trails contribute to the social, environmental and economic health and well being of Alberta communities. These maps highlight recreational and tourism opportunities and are intended to help visitors and recreational users discover Alberta's beautiful natural settings in a responsible and sustainable way. Other maps available in the Provincial Trail Map series include: Northern Rockies, Grande Alberta North, Clearwater and Lakeland.



HELP SAVE THE BEAVER RIVER TRESTLE!

MARIANNE PRICE, ALBERTA'S IRON HORSE TRAIL



ATVs reach the trestle and are unable to cross it due to fire damage.

Alberta's Iron Horse Trail is a 300km long recreation trail in northeast Alberta. It is on the old rail right of way and is open year round for hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, ATV and snowmobile enthusiasts. The trail is a great way to travel from one community to another along the trail route, connecting with local people and experiencing some small town fun and hospitality.

The Iron Horse Trail boasts eighteen trestles with the largest spanning the Beaver River near Cold Lake. The trestle, an engineering marvel, towers 60 metres above the valley floor and is 450 metres in length.

In June of 2012, a devastating fire occurred on the northeastern end of the trestle. The fire burnt through the upper decking and support beams causing the trestle to be closed. Upon inspection by an engineering firm, we learned the damage was extensive and the trestle was in danger of collapsing. N.E. Muni-Corr Ltd. (the 10 municipality not-for-profit entity that owns the trail) engaged MacDonald & Lawrence Timber Framing Ltd., the same firm who worked on the Kinsol Bridge in B.C., to stabilize the trestle, do a

complete assessment, and produce tender documents for rehabilitation. While the tender documents are still in draft form, the estimate for rehabilitation is 1.2 million dollars.

Riverland Recreational Trail Society, the trail operator group, has launched a major fundraising campaign.

We are implementing an online fundraising platform which will enable us to work through social media to reach all trail supporters throughout Alberta and the western provinces. There are opportunities for individuals to donate directly or fundraise for us. We are appealing to other organizations to host fundraising events on our behalf and we are looking for people to share our story with their friends and families.

At our fundraising kickoff, we gave complimentary Iron Horse Trail caps to the first 250 people to donate \$250.00. We have some other exciting contests and events lined up and we encourage people to join us on our "Alberta's Iron Horse Trail" Facebook page for up to date information on the trail and the fundraising campaign. Contact our office at 1-877-645-4521 or email to info@ironhorsetrail.ca

GRANDE PRAIRIE: FIRST PHASE OF WAPITI DUNES TRAIL OPEN

Construction of the new paved trail network in the Dunes was completed in August 2013.

Construction of the Wapiti Dunes Trail System began in fall 2012. The County of Grand Prairie completed the first phase of the trail last spring. The Wapiti Dunes trail is a paved non-motorized,

The trail is meeting many regional needs. Residents of The Dunes, Dunes on 17 and Tamarack Estates now have a safe alternative walking route to use to visit neighbors. The trails are frequently being used as a place to rollerblade, bike and walk. The Wapiti Nordic Ski Club race team is using the trail for dry



Aquatera's Jim Smith (left) was presented with a certificate of appreciation from Grande Prairie county Reeve Leanne Beaupre, along side Aquatera's Chief Operating Officer Michel Savard.

walking/biking trail that is 5.6km in length. The parking area for accessing the trail is located on the south side of The Correction Line Road (Highway 668) opposite the road to the Aquatera Landfill. The trail leaves the parking area and quickly heads south, crossing the Canfor haul road, and then forms about a 4km loop which travels through the subdivisions of Tamarack Estates, The Dunes, Dunes on 17 and The Dunes Golf Course.

"We looked at three different loops and this is one that people felt comfortable with so we called it phase one," said County Director of Planning and Development, John Simpson. "On periphery, there's an opportunity to create some trail systems with one linking back to the city and Muskoseepi Park, and two would be to link Evergreen Park with these trails as well." The third trail, Simpson added, will be a trail linking Grovedale with a pedestrian bridge across the Wapiti River.



A section of paved trail at Wapiti Dunes.



land training. Many parents with young children are taking their children to the trail to teach them how to ride bicycles.

During the official ribbon cutting ceremony on August 27, bikers and walkers were already using the trail. Simpson said he was not surprised as it's a safer means for residents of the area to get out and walk or bike instead of using the side of the highway.

"You're taking your life into your own hands sometimes when you're walking along the roads... in a young community, people pushing baby strollers and all that kind of stuff. Now with the trail system completely off the roads, it's a much safer environment for people to walk in... I don't think it was more than ten minutes after we finished paving it that people were looking and walking and riding their bikes and different things on it."

County Reeve Leanne Beaupre agreed with Simpson and said it's not uncommon to see people out on the trail system teaching their kids to ride a bike or just going for a family walk. "It's a safe place for them to learn on the flat area where they're not worried about them running into a car or anything along that line," she said. "Lots of moms pushing carriages and people enjoying the scenery... It's totally amazing the amount of people that actually use the trails." At about the halfway point of the trail is the Dunes Golf and Winter Club. The clubhouse has refreshments for sale. The most beautiful part of the trail is the north end of the loop where one observes the beauty of the sand dunes landscape. The bench at the top of the hill is a popular resting location with a beautiful view. The trail was paid for by the County of Grande Prairie. Also,

considerable cooperation was received from other organizations to allow its construction. Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development provided the County with tenure across public land for the trail. Canfor allowed the trail to cross Canfor private land. Aquatera allowed the trail to be built on their easement. The Dunes Golf and Winter Club moved water lines that were in the way of the trail's path. The trail has been designated solely for the use of pedestrians and

cyclists. Any use of motor vehicles, including trucks, motorcycles or off-road vehicles, is prohibited under the Alberta Traffic Safety Act.

Source: County of Grande Prairie No 1
<http://www.countygp.ab.ca/EN/main/departments/parks-recreation/wapiti-dunes-trails.html>
 and Jocelyn Turner, Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune, Wednesday, August 28, 2013

WEBERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST ASSOCIATION

BY LISA RYBCHUK, WEBERVILLE COMMUNITY FOREST ASSOCIATION

Enjoying the spectacular hills of the Peace River valley just got a little easier following the concerted efforts of the Weberville Community Forest Association (WCFA). Responding to the wishes of its members, the WCFA embarked on a project to create a multi use recreational trail in the community, located north of the town of Peace River. After more than two years of planning, scouting, consulting, and mapping, the WCFA has created an 18 kilometer trail, which will serve as the first of hopefully many recreational trails in the area.



The WCFA is a not-for-profit society, represented by a Board of Directors made up of community members, landowners, and advisors from municipal and provincial government, industry, and non-governmental organizations. The association arose from a pilot project initiated in 2008 which examined private land forest management at a community landscape level. The project piqued

the interest of the local landowners who came together to form a society in 2009 under the name of the Weberville Community Forest Association (WCFA), and in 2010 they became the 15th member of the Canadian Model Forest Network, under the name of the Weberville Community Model Forest.



A trail rider visits with an officer from Environment & Sustainable Resource Development.

Though much of the work of the WCFA is forest related, the group extends its stewardship view to managing the landscape as a whole. "We see the recreational trail as just one part of the many benefits that the forested land provides. Whether on private land or crown land, the forests have a lot to offer the community", says Stan Jensen, Trail Development leader and Vice President of the WCFA.

The WCFA recreational trail, named the Nash Jensen Memorial Trail, is located on provincially owned land and is subject to 'Temporary Field Authorization' pursuant to the Public Lands Act. With this approval recently granted by Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, improvements to the trail can now be made in earnest. Much of the trail system has existed for years but most are in need of enhancement in order to be more rider friendly and to ensure any environmental concerns are addressed, such as water crossings and potential erosion on hillsides. With these considerations in place, the WCFA plans to install bridges and rig mats where appropriate and to redirect the trails away from steep slopes and private property.

In addition to the multi use trail, the WCFA intends to create an interpretive trail near the staging area whereby students and the general public alike can enjoy a leisurely walk through the forest out to a panoramic view of the Peace River before looping back to the trail head. The interpretive signage will highlight the flora and fauna of the area, including traditional uses of the native vegetation. As well, the WCFA plans to build an equestrian-friendly campsite, complete with corrals, fire pits, a lodge, and a cookhouse, at a clearing near the banks of the Peace River.

Designated as a semi developed multi use trail, the footing consists of natural soil and grassy vegetation over hilly terrain with intermittent water crossings. "Of course, we take any potential environmental impacts seriously and will be monitoring the condition of the trail on a regular basis. We encourage all trail users, motorized or otherwise, to respect the Code of Conduct for responsible trail use", states WCFA General Manager, Lisa Rybchuk. For more information visit www.wcmf.ca.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL ASSOCIATION



THE GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL ASSOCIATION

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:

Plans are coming together for our trail maintenance trip taking place from July 24 to 27 in the Hidden Creek area of the Great Divide but we need you!

This year our plan is to repair damage to the trail caused by last year's floods and re-establish the trail from Tornado Pass to Hidden Creek. We'll be repairing and building trail tread, removing brush and fallen trees, blazing and marking the trail, assessing damage to bridges and performing riparian restoration as required. For those of you new to trail building and maintenance, this year's trip will include a tool use and safety orientation so even if you don't have previous experience please consider getting involved.



GDTA Trail Maintenance Trip
2014 Where: Hidden Creek
When: July 24 to 27, 2014

Go outdoors. Play in the dirt. Sleep under the stars.

Make a difference. Get involved!

Email me, bradv98@hotmail.com, if you are interested in participating in this year's Trail Maintenance Trip.

Brad Vaillancourt
President, Great Divide Trail Association
www.greatdividetrail.com

670 COLLECTIVE MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

BY CHRIS DODDS, 670 COLLECTIVE MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

Southeastern Alberta is an absolute untouched mecca of mountain bike riding in Alberta. With a huge diversity of opportunities, from riding in mountain conditions in the Cypress Hills to biking in badlands and down coulees, there are a number of unique experiences that can be found in this corner of the province. With a longer riding season than the majority of Alberta, Medicine Hat and Redcliff are great places to be and even greater places to ride bikes.

Medicine Hat has always had a strong mountain biking community but was never formally organized. In late winter of this year a group of dedicated mountain bikers decided to get together, get organized and start something new. Thus the '670 Collective Mountain Bike Club' was born. The 'Collective' has two main goals: to develop and support riding in Medicine Hat and area; and to work as a trail advocacy group to promote, plan and build excellent mountain biking and trail experiences.

The 'Collective' is dedicated to developing trail opportunities and riding around southeastern Alberta, mainly in and around Medicine Hat, Redcliff and Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park, Alberta. This summer we have been working with Cypress Hills to open new trail and reopen a popular existing trail that has been closed due to flood damage and blow downs. In the short time we have been in existence we have helped to create and reopen approximately six kilometres of trail in the Cypress Hills. This includes a new trail around the Elkwater town site, and the popular Beaver Creek Trail that, weather permitting, will be reopened fall 2013. Moving forward over the next few years, the hope is to develop a trail plan for biking and hiking in the Cypress Hills and further expand the trail network.



Volunteers clear trails in the Cypress Hills Area.

The hope is to one day have an extensive trail system for riding in this part of the province. Including everything from epic cross country trails to fantastic downhill rides, this corner of the province can have it all.

So if you're looking for a great new place to ride, or would like to extend the riding season a little longer, come down to Medicine Hat and check out what's going on in this corner of the province. There's a great future for mountain biking down here and a very passionate group of people looking to make it happen.

If you're looking for more information, please feel free to check us out at: www.670collective.ca

NEW FEDERAL FUNDING FOR TRAIL DEVELOPMENT: NATIONAL TRAILS COALITION TO RECEIVE \$10 MILLION

Canada has a vast network of recreational trails, which allow Canadians to experience the outdoors and appreciate this country's natural beauty. Through Budget 2009, the Government provided \$25 million to the National Trails Coalition, a non-profit organization, to create, upgrade and sustain recreational trails throughout the country including nonmotorized, snowmobile and ATV trails. Additional funding was leveraged from the coalition and its partners and close to 500 projects were completed under this previous initiative. Economic Action Plan 2014 will provide \$10 million over two years, beginning in 2014-15, to improve and expand recreational trails across Canada. Watch Alberta TrailNet's website (www.albertatrailnet.com) in May/June for information on applying for this new grant funding.

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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 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.

My skills include: _____

