



## Successful AGM

71 F.O.S.S. members and guests attended the Jan. 11, 2007 AGM. Sharon Adams organized refreshments and the cookies were courtesy of the Luxmoore Rd. ladies. Mike Ladd from BC Parks & Terry Barton, City of Kelowna Park Planner, were the guest speakers.

## Your 2007 Board of Directors:

(Officers were elected at the Feb. 8th directors meeting)

- Dan Hobson , President
- Isabel Pritchard, Vice President
- Mark Coffey, Treasurer
- Penny Gubbels, Secretary
- Sharon Adams, Director
- Doug Black, Director
- Herb Blamire, Director
- Nick Fiorante, Director
- Anne Mackay, Director
- Cathy Richards, Director
- Pete Spencer , Director
- Dan Wood, Director



Terry Barton, City of Kelowna Park Planner, talking with JP Squire (Kelowna Daily Courier reporter) at the AGM

## Thank You .....

Telus, Terasen Gas, & Kelowna Cycle for donating door prizes for our AGM.

Also, Telus recently gave a \$200 "Dollars for Doers" grant to F.O.S.S. Telus recognizes the volunteer efforts of its employees and retirees by making donations for their volunteer hours (Dan Hobson volunteered in Aug. 2006 for the Little White Mtn. cleanup project).

## Two Directors Retire.....Three Newcomers on Board

At the Jan. 11 AGM, Daphne Richard and Grant Rice retired from the F.O.S.S. Board of Directors. Daphne was member of the F.O.S.S. Board of Directors since 1997, and served in various positions including President and Vice President. She was the key organizer of a public meeting held by F.O.S.S. in June 1998 that focused on saving public access to the trails on the South Slopes, and Daphne continued to stay passionately involved in the F.O.S.S. Access Committee. Recently, she assumed the position of President of Endurance Canada—a volunteer position that requires a huge time commitment. She will remain closely involved with F.O.S.S. as a volunteer.

Grant Rice, President of F.O.S.S. in 2006 and Treasurer of the Society for a number of years prior to this, is also very involved in a number of volunteer organizations. He retired from the F.O.S.S. Board to devote more time to his other interests. However, like Daphne, Grant will remain involved with F.O.S.S. as a volunteer.

**Best of luck Daphne & Grant....and thanks for your contributions to F.O.S.S..**

The 2007 Board of Directors welcomes three new faces—Doug Black, Pete Spencer and Mark Coffey.



# Watching for Signs of Spring!

## **ADOPT-A-TRAIL UPDATE**

Response to the Adopt-A-Trail program has been positive from F.O.S.S. members as well as BC Park officials! Area Manager Mike Ladd believes that we will have the first such program in a BC Park, although a search on the web indicates that there are numerous such programs in the east of Canada and of course many in the U.S.

To date, 20 FOSS individuals, as well as one group, the Central Okanagan Naturalists Club, have indicated they wish to adopt a trail. So far, the following trails have been 'adopted': Fairlane (Luxmoore to Priest Creek), Salamander, Heckle and Jeckle, Connector (Pink Hwy to Upper Bench), Natasha and Boris, Middle Bench, Pipers to Lost Lake, Windfall, Lower Vapour, Pink Highway, Galloping and the Okanagan Highlands trail (within Myra-Bellevue). If you are contemplating adopting a trail, please contact Anne Mackay at 764-6396 or email her at [annehorseheaven@yahoo.com](mailto:annehorseheaven@yahoo.com).



F.O.S.S. Director Anne Mackay at the AGM promoting F.O.S.S.' Adopt-A-Trail Program

By the end of March, we hope to have all the details finalized with BC Parks and we'll contact the Adopt-A-Trail volunteers to get together to review the program and to fill out applications, etc.

### ***F.O.S.S. Signs 2007 Volunteer Agreement with BC Parks***

On behalf of the Board of Directors, President Dan Hobson signed an agreement with BC Parks to cover F.O.S.S.' volunteer activities in Myra-Bellevue and Okanagan Mountain Provincial Parks until March 31, 2008.

In this agreement, the Friends of South Slopes Society will improve recreation opportunities and promote low impact, environmentally sensitive activities within Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park and Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. FOSS will continue to help restore habitat and facilities damaged by the 2003 fire & fire suppression activities. All projects will be reviewed and approved by BC Parks prior to construction. The quality of the projects will meet or surpass the BC Parks Facility Standards.

General activities will include the following:

- Assess damage to trails, bridges and other facilities; to arrange funding to reconstruct and/or rehabilitate;
- Relocate, restore, improve, and/or decommission trails that have been impacted by overuse, effects of water erosion or are deemed redundant;
- Relocate or clear trails of debris and minimize risk of soil erosion;
- Develop and institute an Adopt-A Trail program to provide opportunities to assist with the general care and maintenance of trails and trailhead facilities.

The Friends of South Slopes Society is approved to carry out the following specific projects for the 2007/2008 season, subject to review of specific detailed plans:

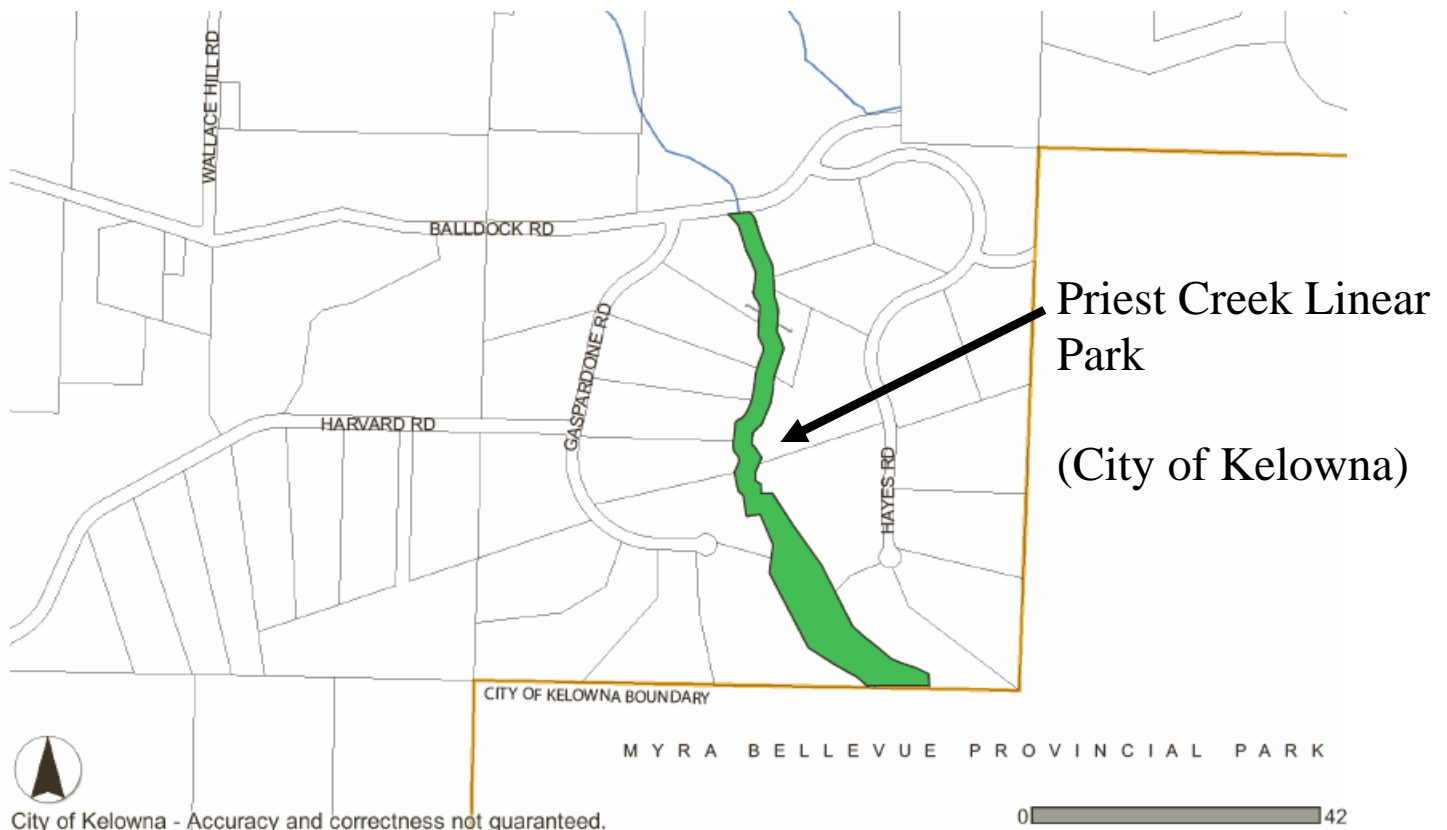
- Erosion mitigation projects;
- Bridge/boardwalk construction for Vapour trail;
- Stewart Burns memorial project;
- Installation of the interpretive signs on Angel Springs trail;
- Re-align Ridgeview trail;
- Continue the post and rail fencing along the Park boundary with the urban interface;

## ***Priest Creek Linear Park Trail***

F.O.S.S. is working in partnership with staff from the City of Kelowna Parks & Recreation Department to construct a trail in Priest Creek Linear Park. This proposed trail will connect Balldock Road with Fairlane Trail in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. City staff will design it and they have budgeted \$10,000 for this project. F.O.S.S. has applied for two grants and in addition will contribute \$5,000 to the project. If funding is received, construction of the trail is scheduled to start in late spring with a completion date of 2008. There are lots of challenges to this project— steep terrain, thick undergrowth, an area burned in the 2003 forest fire—and it is still to be determined by the city as to whether the trail can be built to a multi-use (non motorized) standard.

The Priest Creek Trail will provide the public with an opportunity to see an ecosystem that is uncommon in our area —a Cedar-Cottonwood forest. Bridges at creek crossings will protect the fragile ecosystem and prevent erosion and silting.

The City of Kelowna Parks Department and the Friends of the South Slopes Society will work collaboratively to ensure that the trail is integrated into the natural setting and that there is a balance between providing a recreational experience for the public while protecting of the ecology of the Priest Creek canyon.



### **Priest Creek Linear Park - Location Map**

(Map reprinted with permission of the City of Kelowna Parks & Recreation Dept.)

## ***Recent Donation from the Kelowna Running Club—Thanks!***

In June 2006, the ***Trails Group of the KRC*** held the ‘Scorched Sole’ 50 km trail race in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. This run was very successful, and to show its appreciation for F.O.S.S.’ trail improvement projects, the KRC made a donation of \$500.

The 2nd Annual Scorched Sole Ultra will be held on June 2nd, 2007. KRC contacts for the race are: Shirlee Ross (Race Director (250) 862-251 and Dan Crockett (Volunteer coordinator) (250) 861-1092

## South Slopes News

- **Gate to be installed at the Stewart Rd. East Trailhead**—Mike Ladd, Area Manager/BC Parks, advised F.O.S.S. that a security gate will soon be erected at the entrance to the parking lot. This is necessary because of ongoing problems with overnight vandalism, illegal activity, and damage to the surface of the parking lot at the Trailhead.
- **Spring snow melt has started**—please avoid trails that are muddy or where water is standing or flowing. If you are sinking in (hooves, tires or boots) you shouldn't be there! Please find alternate trails to enjoy. This applies to all South Slope trails.
- **Golden Mile Trail** - This is a registered Ministry of Transportation Right of Way near the end of Lakeshore Rd. It is a popular public access route between Lakeshore Rd. and Okanagan Mt. Provincial Park. The Golden Mile trail traverses private property and the land owner has applied to the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) to have his land rezoned. The F.O.S.S. Board presented a letter to the RDCO Board to retain this MoT Right of Way for the use and enjoyment of the public and requesting that it is left in its natural state as an undisturbed (no cross fencing or private gates permitted), linear, non-motorized trail allowing public access to Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park. Five F.O.S.S. Directors recently attended the public hearing for the rezoning application, where the protection of the Golden Mile Trail was one of the points of discussion.
- **Allen's Bridge**—donations in memory of Allen Pritchard, who passed away last year, have been set aside for future repairs and maintenance projects in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. A sign will be erected later this spring at the Hachey Creek Bridge on Fairlane Trail identifying the bridge as 'Allen's Bridge'.
- **Fixed Roof Accommodation in Myra-Bellevue** a 'no go'. No proposals were received.
- **Windfalls** - Over the winter, many trees have fallen across trails in the burn areas in the provincial parks. Once again you are reminded to follow the guidelines on the BC Park "Caution" signs that are located at the main authorized access points to the two provincial parks.
- **Snow shoeing**: Proof that this is a sport that is growing in popularity could be seen over the winter on many of the trails. The lower elevation trails were well trodden with snow shoe tracks as well as boot prints and cross country ski tracks.



Feb. 2007 Snowshoeing on the South Slopes  
Esme & Bonnie, visitors from Vancouver, enjoying  
a day on the trails



# ***Bighorn Sheep Transplant to Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park***

**(From a report written by Brian Harris, Ministry of Environment, Penticton)**

California bighorn sheep are native to the Okanagan and once roamed from the US border to north of Kelowna. However, more than a century of challenges and habitat changes including fire suppression, human development, agriculture, range loss, disease, over-hunting and competition with domestic livestock had reduced the bighorn range to a narrow, low elevation band primarily on the east side of the Valley south of Penticton. In 1999 the south Okanagan bighorns numbered at least 450. During the winter of 1999/2000, a pneumonia epidemic killed about 70% of these animals, and Recovery Plan was developed in response. One part of the Plan was expanding the bighorn range in the Okanagan by establishing healthy new sub-populations in suitable but unoccupied habitat. Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park (OMPP) was one such site.

In OMPP, after nearly a century of fire suppression, dense stands of Douglas-fir and yellow pine had invaded the rocky hillsides, grasslands and open forest and degraded the habitat preferred by bighorns. That situation



changed with the wildfire of 2003 which removed many of the encroaching trees and enhanced the grasses. A capability study found that the Park could support at least 90 bighorns.

The source of the animals for the transplant is a small farm near Keremeos, where in recent years as many as 40 bighorns spent the winter feeding on stored hay. These animals are part of a larger population of at least 300 bighorn sheep in the management area.

To trap the animals for the transplant, the bighorns were enticed to the selected site with a bait of rich alfalfa hay and apple pulp and captured by drop net.

On each of the three trapping days, once the net was dropped, volunteers applied blindfolds and hobbles which stabilized and subdued the captured animals. At a processing area, a veterinarian took biological samples and administered medication. All bighorns were ear tagged

and some 9 were fitted with a radio transmitting collar.

Three different release methods were used. In all cases the captured sheep were moved in a modified horse trailer to the boat launch at Okanagan Lake Park Campground. For the January 10 and 11 captures, the bighorns, still in the horse trailer, were loaded onto a self propelled barge and moved across Okanagan Lake to a release site near Commando Bay. On January 24, the larger rams were moved across the lake in a helicopter in specially designed nylon bags. The 7 ewes and lambs remaining in the trailer on January 24 were transferred to the release site in a plywood crate. A total of 34 animals, 21 ewes (4 ewe lambs) and 13 rams (6 ram lambs) were moved. Staff confirmed that 8 of the ewes in the first moves are pregnant and suspect that at least 4 of the ewes moved January 24 are also pregnant. The cost of the transplant project is about \$26,000.00. Most of the funding came from the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep.

Over the 3 capture days, there were at least 70 people involved, including representatives from BC Wildlife Federation, Wild Sheep Society of BC, Okanagan Guides Association, Conservation Officer Service, BC Parks, BC Environmental Protection Division, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band and Westbank First Nation and many interested private citizens.

## **Habitat Management for Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park:**

A BC parks' management goal for the park is the re-introduction of fire into fire maintained ecosystems. Following the wildfire of 2003 and the approval to transplant the bighorn sheep, a habitat maintenance plan was developed to prioritize identified burn sites for their value to bighorns. Reburning some selected sites is scheduled to begin in 2008 in order to maintain habitat condition and remove conifer seedlings.

## **Chain Saw Certification Training for Volunteers Cancelled**

After lengthy discussions with staff from the Ministry of Environment in Penticton, and after careful review of their safety requirements, the F.O.S.S. Board decided on March 8, 2007 that it would no longer authorize volunteers to undertake projects in MBPP & OMPP than involve the use of a chain saw. F.O.S.S. currently has six F.O.S.S. volunteers who are certified as 'buckers', and we were considering providing the training for 5-6 more. The decision to end any work involving the use of a power saw was based on a number of considerations:

- ◇ the costs involved to provide the professional chain saw certification course required as well as the cost to certify any volunteer chain saw operators in Level 1 First Aid
- ◇ whether FOSS should be assuming any role in clearing trails of windfalls using a chain saw. Of all the volunteer activities that F.O.S.S. undertakes, operating chain saws holds the highest level of risk
- ◇ the Board recognizes the importance of the detailed safety plan required by BC Parks for any volunteer operating a power saw, but the Board believes that to meet these requirements would be very difficult for a volunteer organization such as F.O.S.S., and it is not prepared to assume the responsibility for ensuring that volunteers always work in compliance with the required safety plan

The directors acknowledge the importance of keeping the trails open by removing windfalls. Therefore, the F.O.S.S. Board looked for a plan that would meet its commitment of keeping trails cleared without using volunteer 'buckers'. It believes that a positive solution has been found. F.O.S.S. President Dan Hobson presented Mike Ladd, BC Parks Area Supervisor, with the idea of scheduling a F.O.S.S. volunteer to assist a Parks' employee while they operate a chain saw and clear the trails. This would be set up in advance on a fixed schedule.

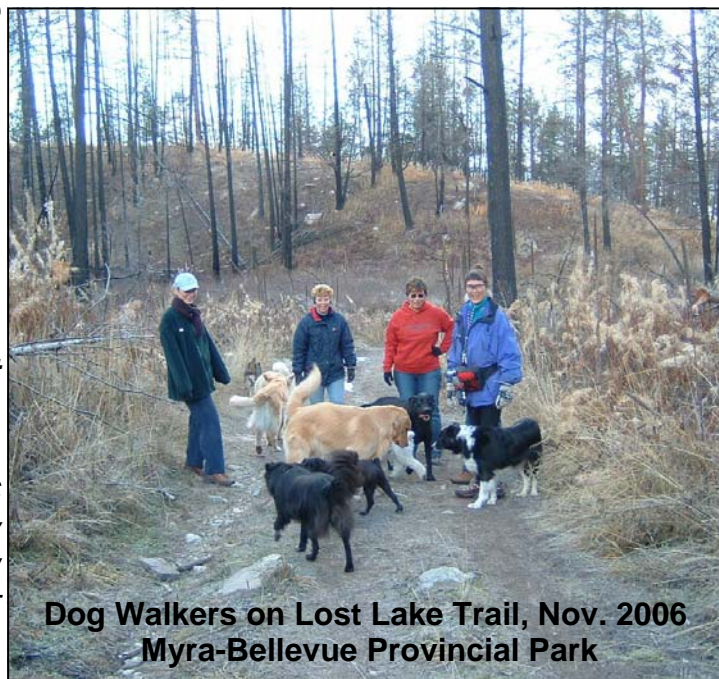
***Trails will get cleared and F.O.S.S. will join in true partnership with the land managers to make this happen.***

**Level 1 First Aid Training:** BC Park safety regulations require a person working with the qualified power saw operator to have a valid St. John's Ambulance Certificate in Level 1 First Aid. Therefore, F.O.S.S. is prepared to facilitate this training for volunteers who wish to work with the Parks' staff.

***Do you want to be part of this unique volunteer experience?*** If you can commit to assisting a BC Parks staff member in clearing windfalls from the trails in Myra-Bellevue or Okanagan Mountain Provincial Parks—and you want to find out more about the First Aid Training being offered by F.O.S.S.—please contact Dan Hobson at 861-2233 or contact the Board at [info@foss-kelowna.org](mailto:info@foss-kelowna.org)

***Do you already have your Level 1 First Aid Training????***

Contact Dan—you can start volunteering immediately! *(Please note that in most cases BC Park staff work during a regular Monday-Friday week schedule, and there may only be a few weekends during the summer when this volunteer opportunity may be available).*



**Dog Walkers on Lost Lake Trail, Nov. 2006  
Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park**

**How to Contact your F.O.S.S. Directors:**

**Mailing Address:** Box 28011 RPO East Kelowna, Kelowna BC, V1W 4A6  
**e-mail:** [info@foss-kelowna.org](mailto:info@foss-kelowna.org) **Website:** [foss-kelowna.org](http://foss-kelowna.org)

