

Friends of the South Slopes

Summer 2009

FOSS Applies for Park Use Permit for Myra-Bellevue P.P.

Over the past several years, FOSS has undertaken many projects in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park under a Stewardship Partnership Agreement with BC Parks. In 2008, BC Parks' staff encouraged FOSS to apply for a Park Use Permit (PUP) instead of a Stewardship Agreement. Since then, the FOSS Board has explored the pros and cons of a PUP compared to the status quo (a Stewardship Partnership Agreement). After much discussion, the Board decided to apply for a PUP. This will allow FOSS more autonomy. We will submit an annual plan to BC Parks for their review and once they have approved it, we can engage contractors for projects and hire operators and equipment if needed, provided that WCB standards are met and the FOSS safety plan is followed. Our Park Use Permit was given preliminary approval by the Ministry of Environment.

Other volunteer groups such as the Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan are successfully operating under a Park Use Permit.



May 17, 2009—Salamander Trail, City of Kelowna's Harvard Road Linear Park

Lost Lake Trail Erosion Mitigation Project

FOSS contracted with the Okanagan Trail Riders Association (OTRA) to hire their Sweco 480 trail building dozer and its operator Terry Burke to do some much needed trail work in Myra-Bellevue.

The first project undertaken was the repair of Lost Lake Trail east of Spring By-Pass. This section of Lost Lake Trail was in poor condition because of years of spring run-off and erosion. In

the spring, the trail was a muddy mess. Terry ditched the west side of the trail, built some swales, removed some of the large rocks and leveled it out. Now we need some rain to compact the trail tread! A 2nd project has started on Fireweed Trail, and a 3rd project is being planned for Cpt. Nemo



Myra-Bellevue Has Been a Busy Place This Year!

Hundreds of people enjoyed the trails in Myra-Bellevue in May and June participating in four events sanctioned by local recreation groups:



KOAG hikers on Lost Lake Trail

May 24th – Twenty four members of the *Kelowna Outdoor Adventure Group (KOAG)* started out at the Harvard Road park entrance (Salamander Trail) and hiked up to Obelisk Junction on the Lookout Trail. On their return, they hiked the trails that led them to Lost Lake. They returned to Harvard Road via Lost Lake Loop, Lost Lake Trail, Galloping Trail and Fairlane. According to FOSS member Moshe Yarosky, who led the hike, it "T'was fantastic"!

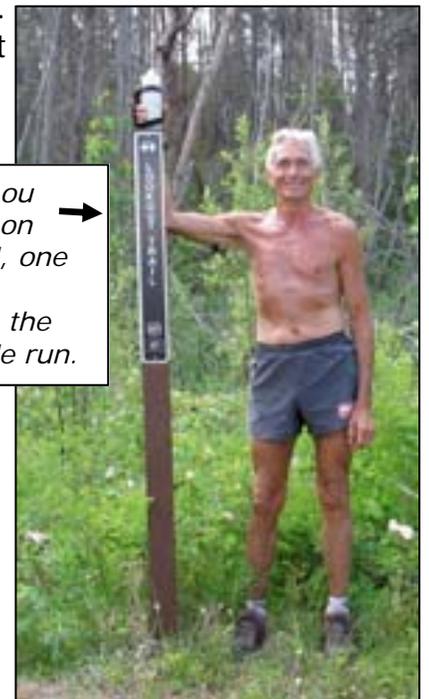
June 6th – Scorched Sole Trail Run.

The Kelowna Running Club hosted another successful 'Scorched Sole' run, with a record number of participants (121) and finishers (119). There were three options for the race, a 25 Km, 50 Km, or a 50 Mile ULTRA.

June 14/09 Lou Pals running on Lookout Trail, one week after competing in the Scorched Sole run. →

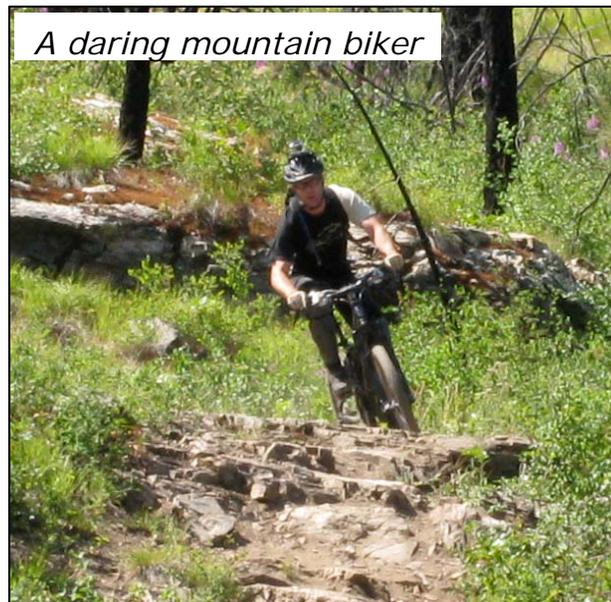
June 7th – Nineteen riders from Back Country Horsemen of BC/Okanagan Chapter

enjoyed a trail ride in the park, and lunch at Lost Lake. All made it safely back to the Stewart Rd. East parking lot except for Doug Black's pack mule, which decided that it knew a more direct route home to the Black's farm on June Springs Road. (We'll have some photos for the fall newsletter)



June 28th K-Town Kamilaze

Super D – Do you know how long it takes to cycle from the Kettle Valley Railbed to the Stewart Rd. East Parking lot? Well, if you were one of the racers in the *MTBco K-Town Kamikaze Super D*, it probably took you less than half an hour! Fifty one cyclists tested their mountain biking skills on the mostly downhill course, which started on Vapour Trail, with an uphill section on Pink Hwy Trail to the Connector before finishing on Lower Bench Trail. The winning time was posted by Mike Kittmer— 19 min. 37 seconds.



Summer on the South Slopes

The tinder dry conditions in our forests are being called “unprecedented”. Because of the risk of wildfires, the province has asked the public to voluntarily restrict their back country activities. On the South Slopes, we are only too aware of the dangerous conditions, as the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park forest fire is fresh in our memories.

Please recreate safely!

New Addition to FOSS website We hope that you enjoy the ‘gallery’ that was added to our website. Our webmaster is David Brooke, DWB Communication. David volunteers his time to FOSS, and we are grateful to him for keeping our website current. New photos are posted regularly. FOSS is working on adding a ‘trail conditions’ page to our website.

The website is: foss-kelowna.org



A natural rockery near the Powerline Trail, Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park



What animal left its mark behind on these trees on Lost Lake Trail, south west of Captain Nemo? An Elk? A Moose?

New Board Member Appointed

In June, Janice Casling joined the FOSS Board of Directors. There are still two positions open on the board—contact Herb Blamire at 250 764-8880

Captain Nemo Re-Route Project



With the prospect of the OTRA trail building machinery being available to FOSS this summer, a team of five FOSS members spent a good part of July 18th scouting out a new route for the upper end of Captain Nemo. It is currently too steep for most trail users other than downhill mountain bikers and is not suitable for equestrians to ride down, or for cyclists to peddle up.

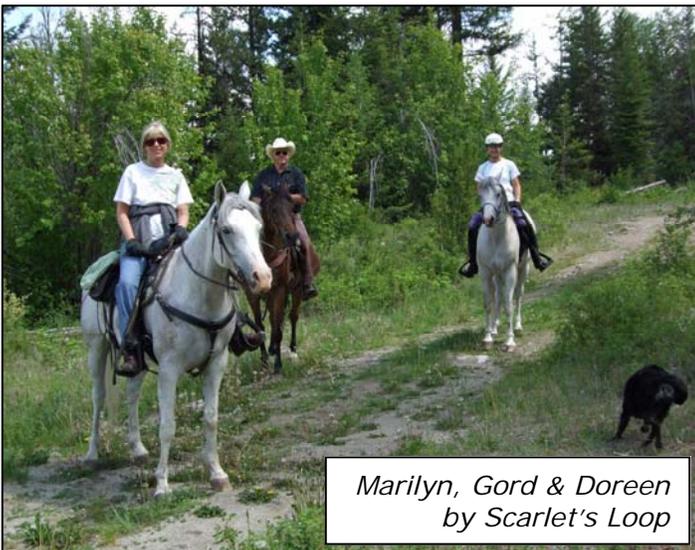
The project plan is to construct a sustainable trail with a better grade to connect the KVR to Lost Lake Trail. By decommissioning the fall-line section of trail and constructing a new section with switchbacks, Captain Nemo will be a good option for cyclists, hikers and equestrians.

Three team members—Isabel Pritchard, Doug MacDonald and Brad Wright, had their newly acquired trail building skills put to the test as they trekked back and forth looking for a workable route. The challenge will be to keep the maximum grade as close to 15% as possible.

There is an amazing amount of knowledge needed to build a sustainable trail that will work for rider, cyclist and walker, not wash out, and be useable whether you are ascending or descending. The training that Brad, Doug and Isabel received at the recent IMBA Trail Building School will be invaluable in future projects as well.

The second part of the Captain Nemo project is to mitigate the seriously eroded section at the north end of the trail. This will also require work on Lost Lake Trail adjacent to its junction with Captain Nemo. Water damage is significant, as can be seen in the photo to the right. Project funding for the Captain Nemo project is from the *Stuart Burns Memorial fund*.

Erosion-Lost Lake Trail near Cpt Nemo



*Marilyn, Gord & Doreen
by Scarlet's Loop*

Visiting Horseback Riders

Submitted by Anne Mackay

Several groups of visitors came to enjoy the MBPP trails this summer.

Gordon Detta and his wife Doreen live in the Belgo area but their farm has no access to trails so they trailered their horses over to Luxmoore many times this summer to explore our trails with Marilyn Westlake and myself. They LOVE our trails! When out riding, Gord spotted a cinnamon bear near Fairlane - it was actually what I'd call a blonde bear!

Gary Whitley and his wife Liz live in Cherryville

and came here to visit with me and ride our trails. Gary is a professional artist and while enjoying the ride in Myra-Bellevue, he took the time to photograph natural features in the park, as well as fellow riders and the profusion of wildflowers currently blooming - future subjects of paintings to come!

Signs for Mission Creek Trails

Submitted by Chick Jacques

Three of us old timers went off into the bush on Saturday June 13th to rediscover some trails in the Grouse Creek FSR area. FOSS had commissioned Anne Mackay and Doug Black to make some signs for the trails and our job was to put them up.

A huge thank you to **Valley MotoSport, Kelowna**, for loaning us "Tyrex," an incredible machine that Doug Black drove for the day. I was the scout/navigator as the **Endurance Riders Club (Endurance Riders Association of BC-equestrian group)** had used the trail 3 years ago so I was familiar with the area. In the intervening years there have been a lot of blowdowns so Dale Truitt, our chainsaw man, worked hard. We also had to make the trail wider as the Tyrex is a wide machine and not as maneuverable as a quad. We left the Grouse Creek FSR at 9:30 am and finally got back at 4:00 pm.



Doug, Chicki (on 'Tyrex') and Dale

The good news is we have a circuit! Go up McCulloch Road, turn left at Grouse Creek FSR. Stay on Grouse Creek FSR until you pass 2 roads on the right and just past the 2nd road you will see one of our signs, "Grouse Creek FSR." Watch for trail/signage on your left, "Lung Expander." Head down the trail, which will have pink ribbons down the left-hand side, and you will eventually get onto an old logging road in an old growth forest. Follow this until you come to a side-trail saying, "Royal." To follow "Lung Expander," stay to the right and follow the trail to Grouse Creek Main (well used by quads). Turn left onto the P and R trail (there is lots of signage at this intersection) and go uphill to McCulloch Road. If you had turned right, instead of left, at the intersection, Grouse Creek Main would take you down to Mission Creek.

Thank you to Jeremy Wipp of Valley MotoSport on McCurdy Road (2nd location in West Kelowna) for the use of the "Tyrex" machine used by the team putting up signs in the Mission Creek area

If you want to try the circuit, consider leaving a car at the top of P and R, which is on the left side of the road just before the 13 km marker on McCulloch Road (sign on tree just off the road). Drive to Grouse Creek FSR and continue to the Lung Expander trailhead as per instructions above. Do the hike, downhill to P and R and uphill to McCulloch Road, and drive back to the trailhead.

The trail is very soft, great for hikers, horses and mountain bikers. Use it! There are a lot more trails in the area that we will be working on over the summer.

"Trail Care" Training

On the weekend of June 19th, six FOSS volunteers joined twenty six other participants to learn about building sustainable trails. The Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan hosted the event, which was facilitated by the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Trail Care Crew. Training consisted of a half day in class and an afternoon field session held on Knox Mountain. Our volunteers are looking forward to using the lessons learned.

Blowdowns....Again!

This is a recurring subject in the FOSS newsletter. Although windfalls are an ongoing problem in Myra-Bellevue's Crawford Trail system, significant wind events like the storm we had on July 25th result in hundreds of blowdowns blocking trails.

Erin Gunoff (BC Parks Senior Ranger/East Okanagan) has an ongoing schedule to clear trails. However, with thirteen parks and protected areas in her area, and Ministry of Environment staffing once again reduced for 2009, she has a huge challenge to meet the

needs of all her parks and she has limited time to spend in Myra-Bellevue.

On August 2, Erin teamed with three MTBco volunteers who were recently certified as chain saw operators. The four of them spent a hot, dusty day bucking trees that had fallen over the MB trails. MTBco volunteers Ken Tucker, Brant Lyon and Andrew McIntosh gave up a day of their long weekend to help keep the trails open for all of us—hikers, runners, cyclists and equestrians. Thanks also to all the volunteers, FOSS members and others, who keep Myra-Bellevue's trails open for all of us.

Upper Crawford Trail is Cleared! *Submitted by Penny Gubbels*

The Crawford Trail in MBPP is an historically significant trail that takes you to the sub alpine meadows of Little White Mtn. It was constructed over a hundred years ago to provide access to Crawford Lake near the top of Little White Mountain. Its purpose was to control irrigation water flow to the Crawford fields, which are now Crawford Estates. The upper part of the Crawford Trail, south of the KVR, was not only used as access to Crawford Lake for irrigation, but it served as a horse packing trail to the fire tower on Little White Mountain. You can still see evidence of the telegraph line to the fire tower. *(This information is from "The Crawford Hiking Trail", an undated brochure published by the Regional District of the Central Okanagan).*



FOSS has received a lot of feedback from groups and individuals who want to see the Upper Crawford Trail cleared of windfalls. FOSS set this as a high priority when we talked to BC Parks about their 2009 work plan. We are very pleased to be able to tell you that as of August 5th, 2009, Upper Crawford Trail is open! We are grateful to Erin Gunoff who along with BC Parks' staff borrowed from other regions, has spent seven days over the past two months working with chain saws to clear blowdowns. On Aug. 5th I had the pleasure to work with Erin and Richard (the North Okanagan ranger) as their 'swamper'. This was the milestone day when they reached the junction of Crawford Trail and Little White Trail. Crawford Trail is cleared! This marks the end of this project for 2009, and no further clearing on Upper Crawford trail will be done this year by Parks' staff.

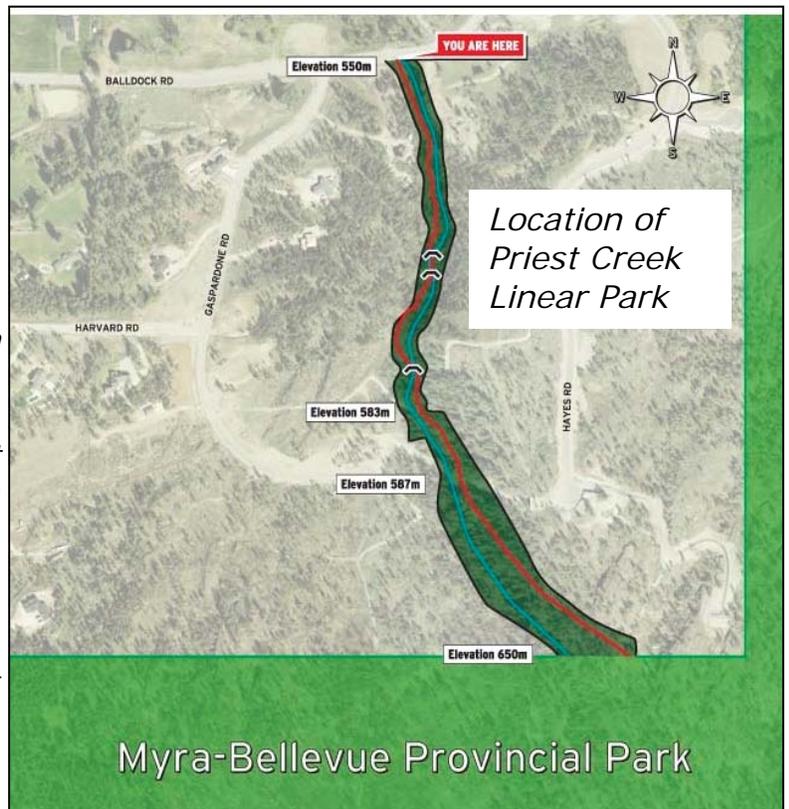


*Left: BC Park Ranger Richard, clearing windfalls from Upper Crawford Trail
Right: Same location when he's finished*

Priest Creek Trail Update

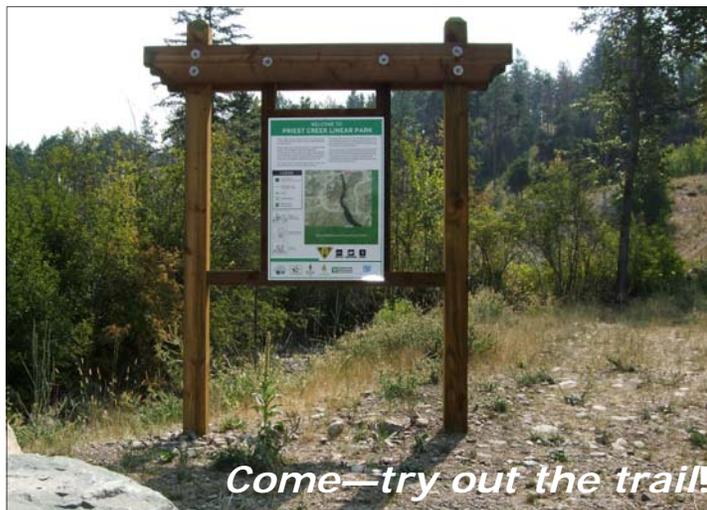
On July 4th, 2009, FOSS volunteers built the third and final bridge for the Priest Creek Trail Project. The sign kiosk located at Balldock Road was constructed in June by city staff, and information signs were erected by them on Aug. 5th. A grant from *TD Friends of the Environment Foundation* funded the kiosk and signs, and the native vegetation that will be planted in mid October. An *Evergreen-Home Depot Rebuilding Nature* grant paid for the lumber and hardware for two of the three bridges. FOSS funded the materials for the third bridge from its general funds. Two steel beams for one of the bridges were donated by *Kelowna Steel Fabricators*. The city of Kelowna Parks Department constructed the bridge approaches, and also funded the environmental studies, engineering drawings and site preparation. The City of Kelowna's Priest Creek Linear Trail connects Balldock Rd. to Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. The north end of the trail (off Balldock Rd.) has a gentle grade, while the southern half is steep and narrow.

As you enter the trail from Balldock Road, it follows Priest Creek through a Western Red Cedar/Cottonwood Forest. You will cross three footbridges before the trail leaves the valley bottom and steeply ascends to the



canyon top, where it ends at Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. There is a 100 meter elevation gain on the 850 meter length of the trail.

Priest Creek Linear Park is a shared use/non-motorized recreation trail. As of August 1st, the trail is roughed in. Further trail improvements will be made by the city and FOSS later this year.



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

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