

Friends of the South Slopes

Summer 2014



*Photo Credit: TBS Bike Parts
(Photo taken at BC Enduro Race, MBPP)*

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Park Information Board For Stewart Rd. East Trailhead

In early July, volunteers were busy cleaning the panels at the kiosk at the Stewart Rd. East trailhead in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. The kiosk is being prepared for a notice board that will be installed in late August. A center panel on the kiosk will display information on the park, news on upcoming events in the park (such as mountain bike races), scheduled trail maintenance days as well as information about FOSS and where trail maps can be purchased. The public can post notices of animals or articles lost or found in the park. This is not a 'buy and sell' board and no advertising or promotion of businesses or merchandise is permitted.

The Park Information Board is funded through a donation from fitness instructor Dawn Balic. (Photo on page 2)

Earlier this summer, FOSS volunteers cleaned the information sign panels at the Stewart Rd. East Trailhead and made room for a Park Information Board.

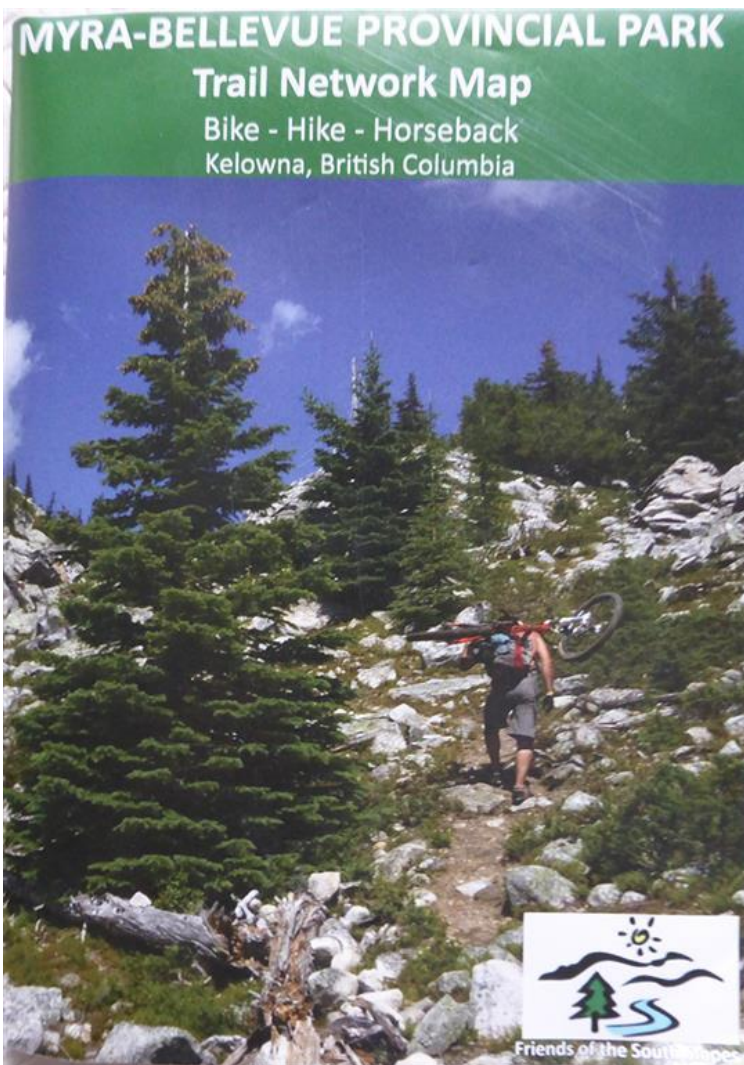


"Extreme Fire Hazard!" This was the headline on the front page of FOSS' 2003 Summer Newsletter. That newsletter was circulated just after the start of the Okanagan Mtn. fire but before the fire's disastrous run through Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park and neighbourhoods on the South Slopes. With the recent forest fires in the area, notably the Smith Creek fire, it's timely to ask everyone to use extra caution when you are on the trails—be fire aware. Nearly half of all wildfires started in BC are caused by human carelessness. More information on wildfire prevention & preparedness can be found at: <http://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/campaigns/wildfire-prevention-preparation.html>



Dawn Balic (left) Personal and Group Fitness Trainer, recently donated \$400 to FOSS. Dawn generously donated the registration fees from a "boot camp" she runs through her company *Body By Balic*

Dawn's website is www.bbb-fit.com/#1



Columbine on Swamp Thing



FOSS' Trail Map Into Its 4th Printing

The latest edition of FOSS' Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park trail map is now being sold. It is printed on high quality, tear and water resistant paper which improves its durability. There are lots of new photos on the map and our Adopt a Trail Platinum and Gold Sponsors are proudly listed.

The board would like to thank Grant Rice and Teresa MacKenzie who volunteered their time to get the map into print.

McCallum printers in Calgary donated some of their costs and once again local map maker Dennis Doulos donated back the money FOSS paid him to do the revisions and additions for the new map.



Dennis' website is:
www.blackmountainmapping.com

For a list of vendors who sell the trail map, check out the FOSS website
www.foss-kelowna.org

← ***Front cover of FOSS' Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park Trail map. The photo was taken by Andrew McIntosh on the Little White section of the Ok Highlands Trail***

Teddy Bear Junction, Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.

Nobody knows for certain when the first teddy bear appeared at the junction of Lost Lake Trail and Pink Highway or why it was left there, but some of the “old timers” remember a teddy bear there in the early 1980’s. This was nearly twenty years before the establishment of Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. The Crawford Trails area was Crown Land and cattle grazed across the hills. One local horseback rider remembers putting a plywood teddy bear cut-out in a tree in the mid 1980’s.

Over the years, people brought more “stuffies” to the site and after the 2003 wildfire the teddy bear population proliferated. Wind, rain, sun and snow break them down and their stuffing, trims and decorations get scattered around. Squirrels have

been observed carrying these materials into their nests—these synthetic substances are not good for the wildlife!

Teddy Bear Junction transformed from a quaint spot into an unsightly litter-covered area. BC Parks staff are ready to clean it up as it is not in accordance with BC Parks’ values or regulations. However, the FOSS board suggested a creative solution to the issue. Volunteers have begun to remove the deteriorating, rotting stuffed animals and a sign will be posted asking park visitors not to leave any new stuffies in the park. Perhaps consider donating them to a charity for kids!

This fall, a single new Teddy Bear will be in residence at Teddy Bear Junction....***have we piqued your curiosity????*** More information will be coming from FOSS later this summer.

The Legend of Teddy Bear Junction (from the creative mind of Isabel Pritchard)

One day long ago before this forest became a Provincial Park, a family decided to take a drive up to Lost Lake. One of the children took Teddy along. They had a nice picnic and on the way back the children fell asleep. As the truck bumped along the rough forest road, Teddy wanted to look out the window but somehow he fell out! There he was sitting on a dusty road as his family disappeared.



The next day some horseback riders came along, picked him up and put him on the branch of a tree so it would be easier for his family to find him. However, the family didn’t come back and poor Teddy looked lonely so a hiker carried up another little bear to keep him company. Slowly more bears arrived. Then a great fire roared through the forest and it was changed to ash and sooty dead trees. People were very sad to have lost their forest but when they came back to explore it again, there on a burned tree were two fluffy little white bears looking a bit dirty and smoky but still alive! It seemed like a reminder that the forest would come back and this made people feel better.

Those smoky white bears wandered away but the people missed the bears and so they started to bring more bears. Soon a whole town of bears were living in the forest and still more bears kept coming. A city full of bears grew up and they even moved into the suburbs! Some bears died and fell apart; others were pulled apart by squirrels and birds. Bits of polyester floated all around the forest and this became a hazard to the wild animals who tried eating it when it got mixed in with

their food. Polyester and plastic pellets do not decompose in the environment or in the stomachs of animals that eat them!

So the bears had to move and find new homes. Some went to stay with their relatives; others found children who really needed a friend. The bears cannot come back to live in the forest any more.

ALL bears found roaming near the old city will be sent away to find another place to live.

PLEASE....FOR THE SAKE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT....DON’T LEAVE ANY MORE TEDDY BEARS IN THE PARK.



(Above) Eric, from Inter-Mtn. Signs, installing "authorized vehicle" decals on FOSS' UTV. The signage acknowledges the financial support of the Central Okanagan Foundation, who provided some of the funding for the UTV.

FOSS gives a shout out to Inter Mountain Signs for donating their costs to go on-site to install the decals on the UTV.



Unauthorized Trail Building in Provincial Parks

BC Parks' Area Supervisor Ryan Elphick reminds us that no new trail construction can be undertaken in either Myra-Bellevue or Okanagan Mountain Provincial Parks without approval by staff in his office. Trail maintenance on an existing trail bed (such as brushing, water bars, drainage dips, raking etc.) can be done by FOSS volunteers through our BC Parks' Partnership Agreement but this does not include the building of new trails without full consultation and approval by BC Parks.

Illegal trails have not undergone the required environmental assessment and in addition they aren't identified on the park's trail maps and trail users could get confused or lost.

(Photo to left) In June, BC Parks staff decommissioned an unauthorized trail that they discovered in Myra-Bellevue Park. Let's work with BC Parks to maintain the awesome network of sanctioned trails in the two provincial parks and discourage the construction of illegal trails.



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The Central Okanagan Trail Alliance is a trail advocacy group that was recently formed in the valley. It's mission is to improve the Central Okanagan trail networks for the benefit of residents and visitors. It's area of interest lies within the boundaries of the Regional District of the Central Okanagan. It includes trails in civic, regional and provincial parks as well as those on private and crown lands.

Central Okanagan Trails Alliance



The Trails Alliance is an incorporated society with a board of appointed directors consisting of a representative from trail support organizations (such as FOSS, MTBco etc.) as well as from the government agencies who are the land managers. The Trail Alliance's objective is to be an advocate for all trail users— mountain bikers, off road motorcycles & ATV's, snowmobilers, cross country skiers, hikers, mountain sports, horse back riders, trail runners, hunters & fishermen.

Goals of the Alliance are to:

- secure funding for member volunteer groups (like FOSS!)
- undertake trail improvement projects
- promote the Central Okanagan trail networks
- increase tourism
- obtain legal land use for the Gillard trail system and
- improve and expand trails throughout the Central Okanagan Regional District.



← *Where's the trail???* This is Andrew McIntosh's view as he cycled Wild Horse Canyon Trail in Okanagan Mtn. Provincial Park. FOSS volunteers do their best....but the volume of undergrowth that is impacting the trails is overwhelming. FOSS' board of directors has set this issue as a high priority.



Lanced Leaved Stonecrop OMPP (Photo by Rick Gee)



A Volunteer's Work is Never Done!

(Left) AAT volunteers from Dan Crockett Trail Runners Group doing trail maintenance on Race Classic Trail.



MTBco volunteers brushing upper Earring & Hillbilly (Club is sponsor of Hillbilly).



P.A.C.E. Fitness, Adopt a Trail Sponsor, clearing Earring trail in late spring 2014.



A volunteer repairs a sign post at Lower Bench/Bench Trail junction.

Temporary "fix" for a rotted-off sign post



The Back Page...Recognizing our Adopt a Trail Sponsors



FOSS Director Gail Forshaw presents an appreciation plaque to Dan Crockett. The trail running club adopted Race Classic in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.



Marty Tymm of Fresh Air Experience receives a plaque from FOSS Director Penny Gubbels. The plaque acknowledges Fresh Air's participation in FOSS' Adopt a Trail Program. Volunteers from Fresh Air Experience are maintaining Galloping Trail in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.