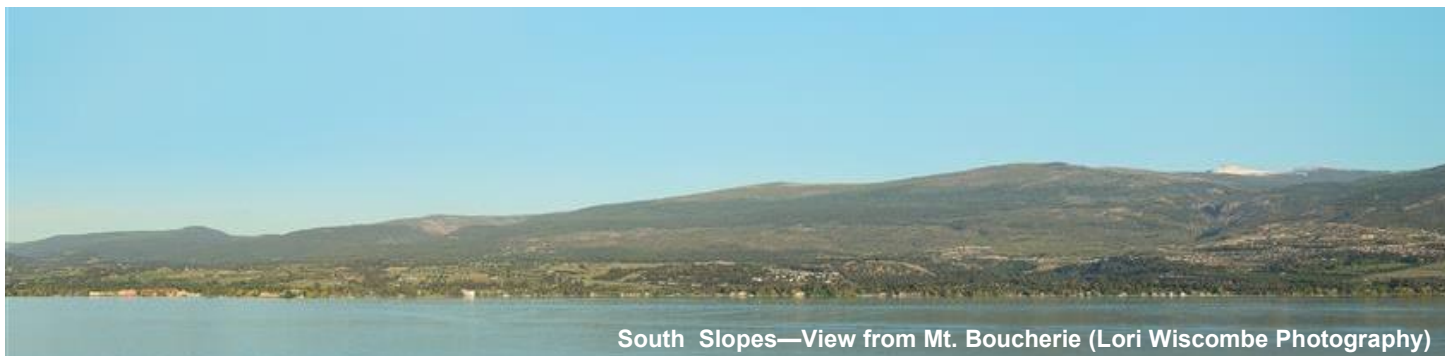


Friends of the South Slopes

Spring 2016



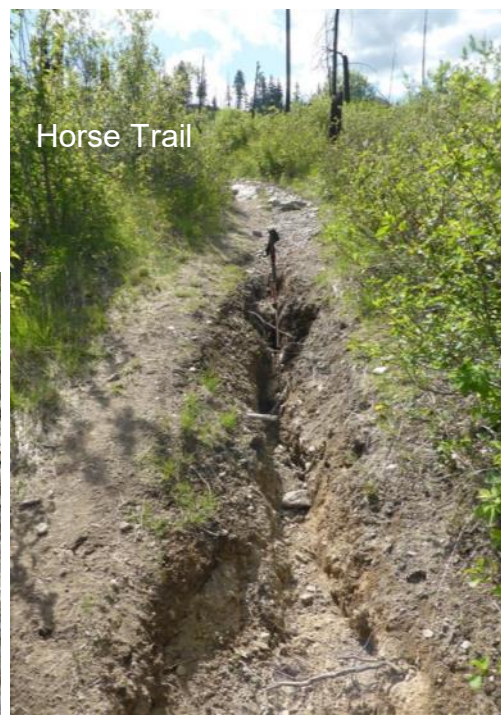
Box 28011 RPO East Kelowna, Kelowna BC V1W 4A6 <http://www.foss-kelowna.org> info@foss-kelowna.org

FOSS' Water Flow Control Project

One thing that is consistent is that every year since the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park forest fire, the trails in both Myra-Bellevue and Okanagan Mountain Provincial Parks have been impacted by water run-off. In some cases trails are eroded to the point of no return. Trails like Horse Trail in MB have been there for decades and were informally developed as 'social' trails without any planning or construction to recognized trail standards. In other cases, the impact on trails is a result of changes to water flow because of the fire.

Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan are developing a plan for the reroute of Horse Trail to bring it up to BC Parks' trail standards. FOSS supports MTBco and will provide help and equipment for the project as needed.

Regarding water flow challenges, FOSS director & VP Herb Blamire assisted by FOSS director Malcolm Robson assessed 50 km of trails in MB this spring and developed a mitigation plan to deal with some of the run-off and erosion issues. FOSS has been awarded a \$20,000 'matching funds' Canada 150 grant in 2017, and this funding will be applied to water crossings (bridges/culverts) and erosion mitigation projects. However, the start date for the Canada 150 Project is June 1, 2017. This year, FOSS will allocate additional funding to kick-start the plan. First and foremost will be the repair of Bellevue Access Trail at the Priest Creek crossing. Once FOSS receives approval for this, Herb and FOSS volunteers will start working on the Bellevue Access Trail washout using an excavator rented from Winn Rentals. Herb plans to be on the ground working by the end of June.



Springtime in Myra-Bellevue



Update on the Myra Wetland File (AKA 'The Meadow', 'Thunder Meadow')

If you look at the map of Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park, you'll see an 'exclusion' along the north boundary of the park. This land-locked 40 acre property known locally as "the Meadow" is privately owned—a fact not known by most of the trail users in the park. Every time you cycle, ride, run or walk Fairlane Trail east of Fairlane Loop Trail you are technically on private property. The owners of this land have not prevented the public from recreating on their property. The only way you'd even know that you are no longer in the park is if you notice the 'Park Boundary' signs located on the east end of Fairlane Loop and on the junction of the property line and Fairlane Trail. Jawbone and a corner of Lost Lake Trail near the Hachey Creek culvert are also located on this private inholding.

In 2008, the owners of the Myra Wetland property contacted the Province to start discussions on a boundary adjustment to Myra-Bellevue in order to construct a driveway to access their property. The driveway would have run from Harvard Rd. (near Lancaster Court), crossed the FortisBC transmission R.O.W. at a 90 degree angle, and then tracked east to connect with their property. While respecting the rights of the owners of this private property to seek access to their land and working to mitigate the impact on the park during this process, FOSS' board of directors also sought other options that would see this private property acquired as park land. FOSS' continued support for this goal is based on the high recreational and ecological values of the Myra Wetland and the impact on the park should the property be developed. To this end, directors 'shopped' the acquisition of this parcel of land to the City, Regional District, Province and many, many land trusts & non-profits. It was not FOSS' intention to try to fund raise and directly purchase the Myra Wetlands — property acquisition does not fall within FOSS' vision or mission and it is not what we do.

In 2013 the board proposed to BC Parks that a land exchange be considered and the Province and the Myra Wetland property owners entered into discussions culminating in a proposal to explore exchanging 5.7 hectares of parkland north of the Fortis transmission lines along Harvard Rd. and Sallows for the 14.8 hectare 'Meadow' property. This land exchange was proposed and supported by FOSS' board of directors .

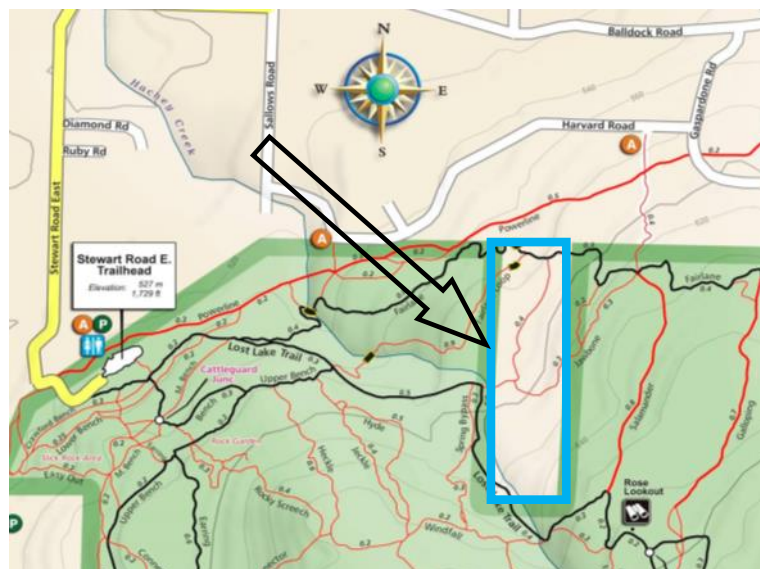
In April 2016 the proposed land exchange was vehemently opposed by the property owners that border the parkland being considered by the Province as part of a land exchange. Regrettably, much misinformation was circulated about FOSS' role in the process and the full scope of the land exchange proposal. On May 20th, 2016 BC Parks advised FOSS that the following letter was sent to the landowners that would be affected if the land exchange went forward:

"Acting on an original concept brought to our attention from the Friends of South Slopes, the objective of our ministry was merely to investigate the feasibility of securing an important key 16.4 hectare private inholding of the park (Harvard Road Vacant Acreage), while considering land for exchange that was more peripheral and isolated from the balance of the park. This was all in an effort to avoid the advancement of a boundary adjustment application (under the provisions of Provincial Protected Area Boundary Adjustment Policy, Process and Guidelines) that was submitted to our ministry by the ownership group of the Harvard Road Vacant Acreage in October 2012.

Although our ministry had not had reached the point of beginning formal consultation with adjacent landowners such as yourself regarding the land exchange proposal, we now acknowledge that the concept, specifically involving the park areas that lie adjacent to your property, has caused great concern to you.

At this point, BC Parks will be shifting our approach and looking to investigate other options that do not involve the immediate area of the park adjacent to your property. Our continued goal is to address the matter of private development interests related to the Harvard Road Vacant Acreage, while striving to conserve overall park values into the future."

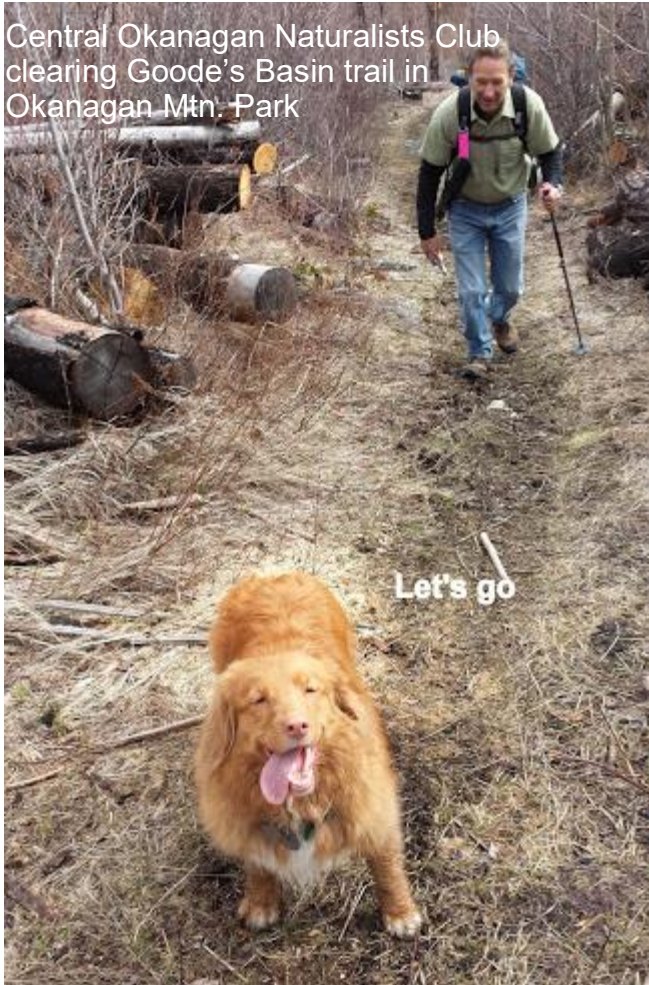
FOSS is awaiting further information from the Province on what its plans are concerning acquiring the Myra Wetlands and including it as parkland in Myra-Bellevue. Stay tuned! We will keep our members posted if there are any significant developments.



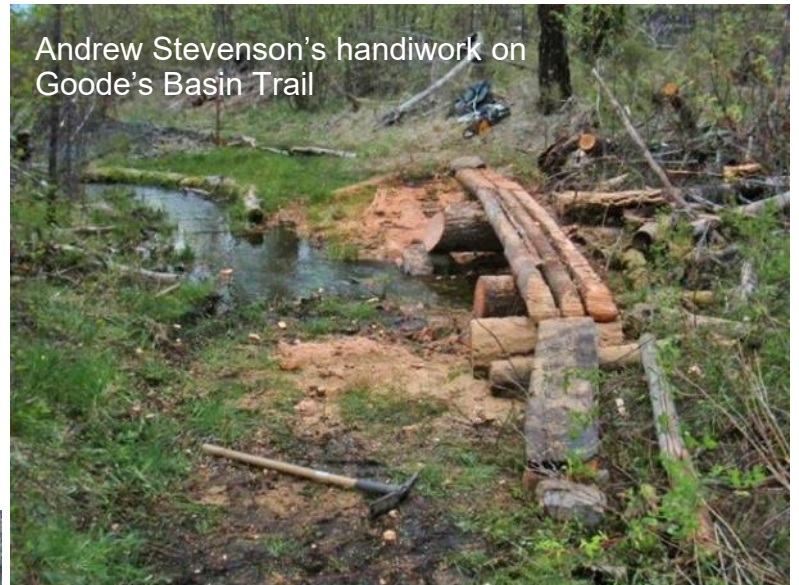
More background on
'the Meadow'/Myra-Myra Wetlands file on
FOSS' website: www.foss-kelowna.org

Adopt-a-trail Volunteers

Central Okanagan Naturalists Club clearing Goode's Basin trail in Okanagan Mtn. Park



Andrew Stevenson's handiwork on Goode's Basin Trail



Brad Gretzinger & friends, Angel Springs Trail.





← May 24, 2016—Adopt a Trail Sponsor P.A.C.E. Fitness held a trail maintenance day on Earring Trail. Thank you to Winn Rentals for the in-kind contribution of the rental of the brush mower.



Trailforks is a great website designed for mountain bikers and bike riding associations. Its got a wealth of information on trail conditions that is posted by trail users including Myra-Bellevue's Crawford Trails, Website: www.trailforks.com/region/crawford-trails/

Appointment of a New Director

We welcome Gail Forshaw back to the FOSS Board. Gail is returning to the board after a one year absence while she and her husband George hiked the Pacific Crest Trail. The Forshaw's presented a slide show of their adventure at FOSS' AGM in January.

After four years on the board, director Dan Hobson left as his "heart isn't in to trails and he's pursuing other passions".



The photo on the masthead for the Spring Newsletter was taken by Lori Wiscombe from the summit of Mt. Boucherie. Lori donated her time to take this photo, which will also be on the banner of the "South Slopes" panel at the Stewart Rd. East Trailhead kiosk. Three of the kiosk panels are being updated—South Slopes, Donations and the park map. The new panels should be installed in early July.

The story of the Pulaski (by Penny Gubbels)

One of the key tools for trail building and trail maintenance is a Pulaski — a combination of a mattock and an axe. F.O.S.S. has some Pulaski's in its tool inventory.

The back-story on the invention of the Pulaski is an interesting one. During a rails-to-trails cycling trip in Idaho in early June, I came across the story of Ed Pulaski. Ed was a U.S. Forest Service Ranger who during the "Great Idaho Fire" of 1910 was credited with saving all but five of his 45-man fire fighting crew by leading them to safety in an abandoned mine tunnel. The 'Pulaski Tunnel' is now registered on the U.S. Register of Historic Places. The super fire also known as "The Big Blow-up" burned nearly three million acres in north east Washington, northern Idaho and western Montana. If you want to read more about fire, check out: <http://www.1910fire.com/>

In 1911, following the fire, Ed Pulaski invented the tool that bears his name. One of Ed Pulaski's original 'Pulaski's' is in the Wallace Idaho museum. When you read about the conditions that existed in the summer of 1910, they sound eerily like the conditions in the Okanagan in 2003 during the Okanagan Mountain Park Provincial Park wild fire. Fortunately, we did not experience the loss of life that occurred in the "Big Blow-up" in 1910.

One hundred and six years later, and the Pulaski continues to be a valuable piece of equipment used by wild fire fighters.



Original 'Pulaski' in the Wallace Idaho Museum