

Friends of the South Slopes

Summer 2016



Summit of Little White Mtn., July 19, 2016

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Volunteers....Working for YOU on the South Slopes

Thousands of people enjoy the trails in Myra-Bellevue (nearly 59,000 'visits' recorded in 2015 by the BC Parks counter located at the Stewart Rd. East Trailhead) but how many are aware that the trail maintenance and improvements, including signage, in the Crawford Trails section of the park is done by either volunteers or contractors hired and paid for by volunteer groups? Both **FOSS** and **Mountain Bikers of the Central Okanagan** hold BC Parks Partnership Agreements and undertake projects in the park through an authorized Annual Operating Plan. So the next time you see a work party clearing a trail or repairing a sign—stop and talk to them! All volunteers appreciate being thanked by the people who benefit from their work. See page 2 for more photos of our volunteers at work this summer.

July 2016—A two day project in Myra-Bellevue, repairing sign posts that have rotted off and replacing them with metal spike post holders.

*Left, Post repairs at Long Pond
Below, repairs at Obelisk Junction.*



Park Enhancement Fund grant

FOSS will receive a \$2,500 Ministry of Environment Park Enhancement Fund grant this year. These funds are allocated to erosion mitigation projects in the Parks. In June, FOSS' board authorized renting an excavator for a Water Flow Control Project in Myra-Bellevue. A John Deere 50D Excavator was rented for three days from Winn Rentals. On July 4, 5 & 6, FOSS volunteer Herb Blamire operated the excavator and repaired the Priest Creek washout at



Bellevue Access Trail and did other water flow repairs on Blancher's Silver, Doc Savage and Swamp Thing. FOSS volunteers Malcolm Robson, Fred Gubbels and Anne Smyth each spent a day swamping and spotting for Herb.

Winn Rentals generously donated the excavator as an in-kind donation. This contribution is valued at \$1,100.00. We are SO grateful for this support.



Painting sign posts



Installing 3 updated kiosk panels

Adopt a Trail Volunteers working on their trails



Race Classic between Lost Lake Trail & Klassen (Corey Bransfield 'adopter')



Angel Springs Trail (Brad & Norm 'adopters')

The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORC)

is a tireless advocate for more funding for our provincial parks. The ORC's Objectives are:



- To promote the benefits of public outdoor recreation in British Columbia.
- To represent the interests of the outdoor recreation community to government, industry and the public.
- To advocate and facilitate access to public lands and waters for outdoor recreation.
- To foster responsible use of British Columbia's outdoors by recreational users through advocacy and education.
- To be a forum for the exchange of views between government, outdoor recreation groups and other organizations in matters related to outdoor recreation.
- To build bridges between outdoor recreation groups.

The ORC represents a wide range of recreational users ranging from conservation focused groups (like Nature BC), to trails groups (like FOSS) to off-road recreation groups.

At the ORC AGM held June 11, 2016, Resolution 2016-04 was passed unanimously

RESOLUTION 2016 - 04

To increase the funding for BC Parks

Proposed by the Executive Board of Directors. Moved & seconded (R. Schroeder/P. Harrison)

Preamble

BC's extraordinary provincial parks are truly world class! There are few countries in the world, let alone states or provinces, which can claim to have such an extensive park system. In addition to protecting thousands of hectares of British Columbia's varied ecosystems in which British Columbians can hike, climb, ski and paddle and otherwise enjoy the outdoors, it is these parks which are the true emblem of Supernatural BC and which attract visitors from all over the world. Our parks system is the largest provincial system in Canada, and yet it is one of the worst funded on a per-hectare basis in the country.

While many if not most British Columbians value their parks, as do many visitors from outside the Province, the BC Government does not appear to do so. For many years the BC Government has starved BC Parks of the operating funds required to adequately maintain the infrastructure in the parks and maintain the number of park rangers at the level required to provide adequate visitor services. The only parts of the Provincial Parks which are reasonably well funded are the front country areas with developed camp sites, which are administered through contracts with Park Facilities Operators (PFOs). The PFOs receive and retain fees from the public for their services and it is those fees which they use to maintain the facilities they manage. This anomaly in the park funding model leads to a distorted view of the Provincial Parks and an impression, by persons taking a superficial view, that the parks are adequately funded.

Resolution

Whereas the area of the BC Parks system more than doubled during the past 20 years from 6.5 million hectares to 14 million

hectares and the number of Provincial Parks and Protected Areas increased from 490 to 1,029 in 2014; and

Whereas in the same 20 year period the number of Full Time Employees was reduced from 486 to 195 in 2014, to be partially replaced with Park Facilities Operators who do not have the same responsibilities, knowledge or authority as Park Rangers, each of whom is responsible for up to ten parks; and

Whereas BC Parks' annual operating budget of \$31 million has barely increased since the year 2000; and

Whereas the demand for campsites in BC's Provincial Parks almost invariably exceeds the number available; and

Whereas the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in its November 2015 report recommended that the budget of BC Parks be increased; and

Whereas the 2016 Provincial Budget contained no significant increase in the budget for BC Parks;

Therefore be it further resolved that the Council and all its member organizations contact all BC's ministers and MLAs to ensure that they are aware of the inadequate state of funding for BC Parks; and

Be it further resolved that the Council call on like-minded non-government organizations with a similar interest in BC Parks to join a concerted campaign for a significant increase in the funding of BC Parks in 2017.

Be it further resolved that the Council urge the BC Government to increase the operating budget for BC Parks in order to maintain the infrastructure in the parks, such as trails, bridges and other facilities, and to hire more Park Rangers; and

Be it further resolved that the Council and its member organizations adopt and promote the following proposal to Ministers and MLA's, to be implemented by the BC Ministry of Finance in the 2017-18 Provincial Budget. Increase the annual operating budget of BC Parks by 10% a year for five years.

Wilderness Committee reports on Funding Shortfalls for BC Parks

It's an on-going concern with many recreation and conservation groups—the under funding of our provincial parks.

In June, Gwen Barlee, National Policy Director of the Wilderness Committee (formerly Western Wilderness Committee) was quoted as saying “ We’ve hit a new low. We now have fewer park rangers than spotted owls in BC”. “That's saying something, because spotted owls are one of the most endangered species in Canada and we are down to around a dozen in the wild. For the life of me, I can't understand why the BC government is starving our provincial park system of the staffing and funding it needs to operate.” The article stated that “the number of full-time (FT) park rangers in BC has sunk to a low of just seven individuals who are expected to patrol 14 million hectares of protected areas. The number of full-time rangers slumped from 27 positions in 2001, to 12 FT rangers in 2009 to just seven FT park rangers in April 2016.

The seven full-time park rangers in BC have to patrol protected areas the combined size of Denmark (4.3 million ha), Costa Rica (5.1 million ha) and Switzerland (4.1 million ha) from October to April.”

Ms. Barlee further comments that auxiliary park rangers are hired in the summer months, but the season for these positions has been shortened significantly with some auxiliary rangers only being hired for eight weeks. In 2009, there were 87 auxiliary rangers hired in the summer months. For a best case scenario in the summer there would be one ranger per 10 parks.

If you wish to read Ms. Barlee's press release in its entirety visit the Wilderness Committee's website: <https://www.wildernesscommittee.org/> and search for the press release.

Additional information from FOSS: Ms. Barlee references the number of full time ranger positions in BC. This number does *not* include *Seasonal* Senior Rangers. For example, in our Area, Okanagan East, there are no full-time Senior Rangers but there is one *Seasonally employed* Senior Ranger. Staffing in Okanagan East is comprised of: one full time Area Supervisor, one Senior Ranger (employed from mid May to mid October) and one seasonal ranger (employed mid-April until the beginning of October). The seasonal ranger is shared between Okanagan East Area and Okanagan South.

The Okanagan East Region is comprised of 27 Provincial Parks & Protected Areas, including MBPP & OMPP.

Hikers & equestrians on Fairlane Trail



Cyclists riding Lost Lake Trail



Bill Redston Memorial Walk/Cycle

Bill sat as a member of the FOSS' board from 1998 until the end of 2003. He passed away in November 2015. Bill was an avid mountain biker.

On Sunday July 10, more than 50 of Bill's family members and friends gathered at the Stewart Rd. East Trailhead to either cycle some of his favourite trails or walk to Teddy Bear Junction. Here are the cyclists, out on the trail.



In the photo on the right—Valerie Redston, Evie & Jackie Gordon and Rebecca Redston—at Teddy Bear Jnct. With the walking group.

The Redson family made a generous donation to FOSS in memory of Bill.



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO TRAIL USERS!

Hunting is a permitted use in Myra-Bellevue and Okanagan Mountain Provincial Parks



Information for Trail Users in Myra-Bellevue

- MB is a high use year-round recreational area used by dog walkers, hikers, cyclists, runners, horse back riders and other non-motorized recreation
- Trails are often in close proximity to one another
- Horses may be spooked by gunshots
- Unauthorized motorized vehicles are not permitted (including ATV & dirt bikes)

