

Friends of the South Slopes

December 2023



Larch Trail,
Oct. 2023

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We acknowledge that our community is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Syilx/Okanagan people

To all our friends,

As we near the end of 2023, it is important to look back and appreciate what we have accomplished over these months. As a group, including more than 60 trained and certified volunteers, twelve board directors, many supporting organizations (BC Parks, PACE Sport Fitness, Regional District of Central Okanagan, City of Kelowna, Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT) and MTBCO to name a few), and countless unnamed others, we have managed and maintained the trails throughout Myra Bellevue Provincial Park and Okanagan Provincial Park for one more year. We replaced bridges, installed drainage systems, replaced signage, repaired older trails, cut new trails (BC Parks' approved of course!) where needed, and maintained hundreds of kilometers of trails.

FOSS is a growing organization and we are at a point where we can look forward to more strategic and long term initiatives. We will share our plans with you as they come to fruition.

We hope you've spent time and enjoyed the paths, the canyons, the trestles, the water falls, the wildlife, and the beauty of our South Slopes backyard. What our Directors and volunteers do is a labour of love for this incredibly beautiful landscape and we feel lucky every day we go out there and work. Our reward is to meet people and hear their appreciation and know they share the same respect for our parks.

Cam Kourany, President, Friends of the South Slopes



2023 Wrap up—FOSS Trail Maintenance Crews (Milt Stevenson, Committee Chair)

My trail crews put in 3,055 hrs. of direct time on the trails in 2023. I had a crew of 56 volunteers. There are several hundred kilometers of trails that FOSS is responsible for with our Partnership Agreement with B.C. Parks.

2023 trail maintenance involved 3 areas:

1. Kettle Valley Rail Trail (Myra Canyon Section)
2. Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park
3. Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park

Activities included:

1. Re-brushing and erosion control on existing maintained trails
2. Primary brushing on trails, some that have not had trail maintenance since the 2003 wildfire
3. New projects to improve existing trails for trail maintenance, emergency services and egress from the park.

Specific projects were:

1. Bringing the KVR rail bed and trails in Camp Morrissey up to standard in our first year taking responsibility for the Myra Canyon trails on the KVR
2. Reopening the majority of Goodes Basin trail in Okanagan Mtn. Provincial Park.
3. Working on Race Classic and Earring with a contractor, *Contour Trails*, to provide safe access for trail crews and COSAR (Central Okanagan Search & Rescue) to the Crawford Canyon side of MBPP.

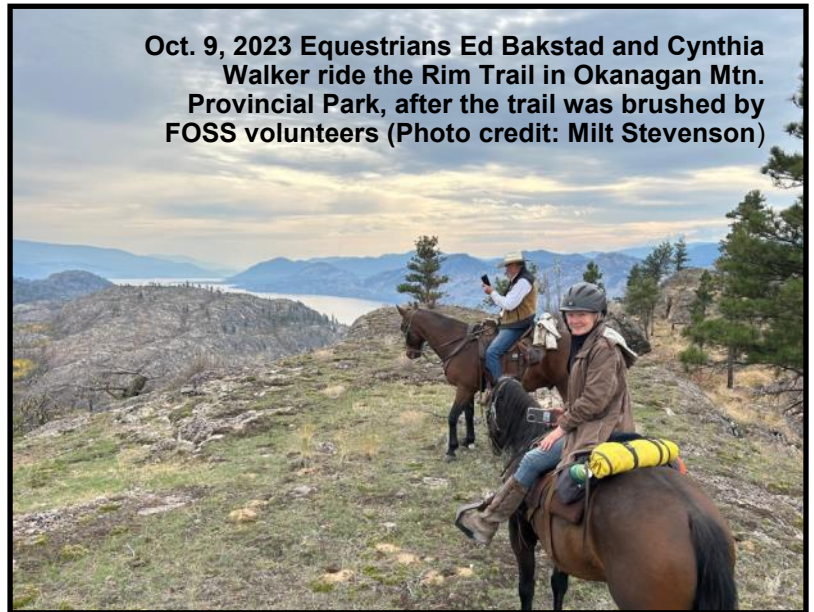
Finally we would like to thank all the trail maintenance volunteers from FOSS' Adopt-a-Trail Program and our members and supporters who have donated to FOSS in 2023.

FOSS would like to acknowledge and thank this years' \$500+ Donors:

Arthon Construction (Quarry)	Bert Murray	Peter & Laurie Thompson Family Fund
FortisBC	P.A.C.E. Sport Fitness	Ben Vos
Wayne Goreski	Rogers' Family Trust	Scott & Cynthia Walker
Elizabeth Koersen	Ivan Sergeyenko	



Oct. 9, 2023 Equestrians Ed Bakstad and Cynthia Walker ride the Rim Trail in Okanagan Mtn. Provincial Park, after the trail was brushed by FOSS volunteers (Photo credit: Milt Stevenson)



FOSS couldn't carry out the number of projects it does, or operate and purchase and repair equipment, without donations and grants. In 2023, FOSS received a \$703.18 grant from the Central Okanagan Foundation (COF). Following the Okanagan Mtn. Provincial Park wildfire, FOSS established an endowment fund with the COF and FOSS receives an annual grant distribution from this, **The MB/OMPP Legacy Fund**. This is the gift that keeps on giving!

Upgrades to Myra Canyon Trestles

BC Parks' contractor, **Cabin Operations** is re-decking the trail beds on the trestles, extending them the width of the trestles.

This will create more space for cyclists and walkers. When completed, it will extend the width of the trestle trail from 5 ft. to 9 ft.

Construction started this fall and has ended for the winter, but will be completed in the spring of 2024.

Cabin Operations worked on other projects on the South Slopes this year as well, notably upgrades to trails and the parking lot at the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park and the Gillard Climb Trail, for MTBco. They are also one of FOSS' valued Adopt a Trail sponsors.

Photo Credit: Cabin Operations



Yup! That was one big bear three intrepid hikers followed these tracks in November, on a trail on Crown Land east of KLO Creek.

It was a reminder to us to always be prepared in Bear Country. Normally, the average bear will go out of its way to avoid an encounter with a human, and we're counting on the statistic that 'groups of three or more hikers are rarely attacked'.

Attacks often happen when a bear is surprised. Making noise is recommended (the three ladies on this hike have no trouble making noise!)

And, we always carry bear spray with our fingers crossed that we will never have to deploy it.

If you are looking for information on how to manage recreating in Bear Country, go to gov.bc.ca and search for

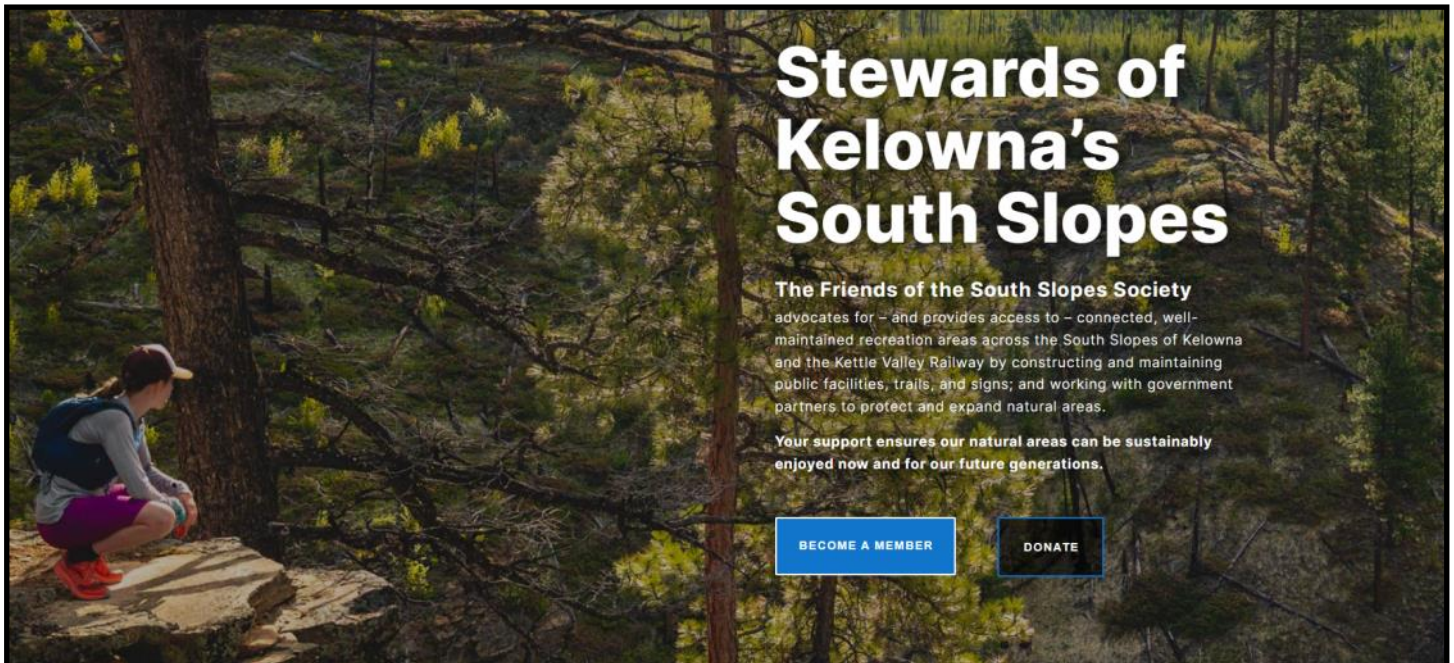
'Bear Smart'



2023 FOSS Memberships + Social Media

Membership In an effort to make our growing membership easier to manage, FOSS has signed up for a new membership service! Memberships can be set to automatically renew each year! If you haven't done so already, go to the FOSS website www.foss-kelowna.org and click the "Become a Member" button to see the new system. If you would like to make a donation, please click the "Donate" button. If you would like to sign up or donate in-person, we will see you at the AGM in the New Year! Thank you to everyone who supports FOSS – your memberships and donations make our work possible. And if you're an Instagram user, check out our new Instagram account [@foss_kelowna](https://www.instagram.com/foss_kelowna) We'll be posting plenty of cool photos and trail work updates this season.

For those of you who would rather not renew online but can't wait until the AGM, contact us at info@foss-kelowna.org and we'll send you the forms for snail mail membership renewal or donation.



Social Media As we wrap up another incredible year of trail maintenance and community engagement, we're thrilled to share some exciting news that's sure to enhance our collective experience: Friends of the South Slopes (FOSS) is revamping our social media presence, opening up new avenues for exploration, connection, and preservation!

In a world dominated by digital conversations, FOSS recognizes the importance of meeting our community members where they are—on social media platforms. Our mission is to deepen communication, foster collaboration, and spread the spirit of volunteerism across Kelowna and beyond. Here's a glimpse of what you can look forward to:

Trail Updates in Real Time: Stay Informed

Prepare for a wave of real-time updates, trail conditions, and upcoming events directly from the heart of the South Slopes. Whether it's the latest trail maintenance projects, opportunities to get involved, or environmental insights, our social media channels will keep you in the loop.

Engaging Visuals: Explore the Beauty

Say hello to captivating visuals! Our social media platforms will showcase the breathtaking beauty of the South Slopes, featuring photos, videos, and even some behind-the-scenes moments. Get ready to embark on a virtual journey through our beloved trails.

Collaborative Conservation Initiatives: Your Voice Shapes the Slopes

FOSS is all about community, and we want to hear from you! Social media will become a hub for

collaborative conservation initiatives, where your ideas, suggestions, and feedback can contribute to the ongoing preservation of the South Slopes. Together, we can make a lasting impact.

Join the Social Media Buzz!

Follow us on Facebook: Foss-Kelowna and Instagram: @foss_kelowna to become part of the FOSS social media buzz. Be the first to know, engage with fellow trail enthusiasts, and actively contribute to the preservation of our cherished trails. As we embark on this exciting digital journey, we invite you to spread the word. Share our posts, invite your friends, and let's make the FOSS community more connected and vibrant than ever before.

Thank you for your unwavering support. Here's to a future filled with trail exploration, community connection, and the continued preservation of the South Slopes!

P.S. Don't forget to use #fosskelowna when sharing your trail adventures! Let's make it trend and showcase the beauty of the South Slopes!

So, lots of changes are happening with FOSS Memberships and Social Media presence. FOSS is grateful to the Membership & Social Media Team—Hugh Culver, Logan Pay and Amanda White.

