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

A Look Back at 2024!

FOSS' Board of Directors would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your interest and support in 2024. What an amazing team of members, sponsors and volunteers we have, all playing such an important role in overseeing and maintaining Kelowna's iconic South Slopes.

FOSS is run by volunteers! The board members are volunteers and the majority of the work done on the trails is done by volunteers. From time to time FOSS engages qualified contractors for specific projects that require specialized equipment or expertise.

In 2024, FOSS' Trail Maintenance Volunteers logged over 3,200 hours of trail work/installations (like the benches at Rose Lookout, Lost Lake, Crawford Trail and Connector Trail) and they completed major rehabilitation projects on Myra Bailout Trail as well as constructing the Camp Huissi Trail on the KVR.

FOSS' Adopt a Trail Sponsors volunteered over 150 hours to maintain 'their' trails in 2024. Thank you to ALL the volunteers.

As is the case for most non-profit volunteer groups, FOSS relies on donations and grants to do all these great things on the South Slopes.

***January 6, 2025 FOSS
Volunteer Appreciation Night
Barn Owl Brewing Co.
Photo Credit: Alan Milnes***



It is with immense gratitude that we THANK everyone who donated to FOSS in 2024. There were many of you - and we thank and appreciate each and every one of you. We would like to particularly acknowledge donations of \$500+

Sergeyenko Family
Elizabeth Koersen
Wayne Goreski
Scott & Cynthia Walker
Two 'anonymous' donors

And these groups/Trusts/Foundation:
P.A.C.E. Sport Fitness
Peter & Laurie Thompson Family Fund
Rogers' Family Trust
Arthon Quarry
Central Okanagan Foundation
Circle Family Foundation
Myra Canyon Bicycle Rental & Tours



January 6, 2025 FOSS Directors Alan Milnes (left) & Milt Stevenson (right) accept a generous cheque from Ben & Joe Vos, Myra Canyon Bicycle Rental & Tours

What's In Store for 2025?

The board will finalize 2025 project proposals and present them at the April 1st AGM. We want to share information with you on a few of the larger projects that are in the planning stages:

- Electricity will be installed at the FOSS base at the Stewart Road East parking lot which will provide more reliable communication with crews, ability to transition to battery-powered equipment and ensure better protection from vandalism
- Continued work on the KVR includes restoring access to the historic work camps along the rail trail
- Major signage projects continue in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park
- Ongoing trail maintenance/improvement projects
- An updated trail map

.....And so much more!

*It's a dog's life in MBPP!
Photo Credit: Daphne Richard*



*Photo Credit:
Paula Levens*



*Winter on the Myra Canyon Trestles
(Photo Credit: Milt Stevenson)*

FOSS Introduces a New Logo!

In December, FOSS' Board of Directors adopted a new logo.

It's the same mission, but with a fresh look to our branding. It's a modern take on what we do! Advocating for well-maintained trails in areas of public recreation, through trail maintenance and upkeep and partnerships with the trail managers (BC Parks, Regional District of Central Okanagan, City of Kelowna, BC Recreation Sites & Trails) and working with other advocacy and non-profit groups, to protect and expand natural areas.



Advocating for Public Recreation

FOSS' Directors wear many hats! Improving trails and facilities on public lands on Kelowna's South Slopes is the most visible action, but there is more going on behind the scenes!

FOSS' **Strategic Relations Committee's (SRC)** focus is on advocating for more public recreation spaces on Kelowna's South Slopes and securing additional legal access points to existing parks and public lands. This advocacy started in 1996 when FOSS was incorporated as a Registered Society. Since that time, this advocacy has had some notable successes:

- 1996 - FOSS was established with two objectives: "proceed with an application for a park" (Note: in 1996 it was believed the Crawford Trails would be a Regional District of Central Okanagan Park) and to intervene in the application for a proposed gravel pit concrete/asphalt recycling plant on Crown land where the Stewart Rd. East Trailhead in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park (MBPP) is now located. That campaign was successful - the proposal was turned down.
- In the late 1990's - FOSS supported the recommendations of the Provincial Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) which resulted in the establishment of Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park in 2000. The Crawford Trails and beyond were protected! Although FOSS didn't have a seat at the LRMP table, FOSS director Isabel Pritchard did (representing Back Country Horsemen of BC).

- 2000 - FOSS led the opposition to a mining claim filed to extract tufa at Angel Springs. Our local MLA, John Weisbeck, presented FOSS' petition to the BC Legislature and in February, 2001 the Province expropriated the claim and Angel Springs became part of the new Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.

On the left - two of FOSS' lapel buttons from the mining opposition lobby



- 2003-05 - During subdivision development (what is now Harvard Rd. & Hayes Rd.), FOSS lobbied the City of Kelowna to establish the Harvard Rd. Linear Park, which connects Harvard Rd. to Salamander Trail in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park. During this process, Priest Creek Linear Park was created and also an access was secured from Hayes Rd. to MBPP.
- 2010 - FOSS partnered with the Regional District of Central Okanagan to construct 3 bridges in KLO Creek Regional Park - making it safe for the public to enjoy the park.
- 2018 - Myra Wetland - After 12+ years of lobbying by FOSS, this privately owned parcel of land was purchased by the Provincial government - an important addition to MBPP.
- 2019 - Targeted Grazing Project—This was a collaborative project between the Province of BC, the Forest Enhancement Society of BC, City of Kelowna & BC Cattlemen's Association. The Targeted Grazing Project was part of an overall fire mitigation initiative on City and Provincial land. During the development and implementation of the project, FOSS met with all the stakeholders and provided feedback to define the parameters of the targeted grazing, to ensure continued recreational access and reduce the impact on wildlife.

The Strategic Relations Committee (SRC) Today!

FOSS' vision is one of connectivity of trails across the South Slopes - linking people to our natural environment, advocating for non-motorized recreation and supporting conservation. **The SRC DREAMS BIG!** Imagine a recreation corridor that stretches from Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park across to KLO Creek and Mission Creek and connecting to the KVR. The SRC has many 'active' files'. Some are longer term goals (like securing legal public access from the Upper Mission to MBPP), and some goals we hope to reach more quickly. Nothing is off the table - whether it is new parkland acquisition by the City, Regional District or BC Parks - or Right of Way/Easements connecting us to existing public spaces. The Committee supports FOSS' vision of creating a legacy of sustainable and accessible trails on the South Slopes while respecting the natural environment and the flora and fauna that live here.

The committee meets regularly (either in person, by email or by phone) with staff from the Regional District of Central Okanagan, the City of Kelowna, BC Parks and the BC Parks Foundation and BC Recreation Sites & Trails. The committee also works closely with other community groups such as the Central Okanagan Land Trust and Friends of Mission Creek, who share FOSS' vision.

Save
the
Date

*April 1, 2025—Annual General Meeting Friends of the South Slopes Society
Watch for details in March*



To Our 2024 Adopt a Trail
Sponsors....

Thank You

FOR YOUR SUPPORT

2024 Adopt a Trail Sponsors:

AEM
Big White Resort
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Chainline Cycle
Chevy's Source for Sports
Central Okanagan Search & Rescue
Cyclepath
Dirt Feet
Fast Lines Consulting Ltd.
FortisBC
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Inglis Private Investments
Kelowna Cycle
KGH Emergency Department
Kourany-Varette Family
P.A.C.E. Sports Fitness
Sean Kelly Law
Shred Shed Kelowna
Ben Smit
Turbo Slugs
Wave Physiotherapy
Worman Resources
ZEP MTB Camps

*Sending a special thank you to **Sean Kelly Law** ... an Adopt A Trail sponsor since the launch of the sponsorship program in 2012. We bid Sean a fond farewell and best wishes as his family moves to the east*



Get Fat! (by FOSS Director Paula Levens)

Do you dread putting away your Mountain Bike when the snow starts falling? Tired of spending your winter glued to the indoor trainer, desperately trying to stay fit? Or maybe, you simply crave the serenity of a quiet, snowy forest. If so - it might be time to Get Fat! Fat Biking is Mountain Biking's slower, more peaceful and much more humbling cousin. If the idea of continually tumbling off your bike into fluffy snow while your buddy tries to rescue you from being simultaneously stuck under your bike and tangled in a bush sounds like fun... **You are Fat Bike People!**

So, now that we have established you are a two wheeled winter warrior, what do you need to get riding? Critically, you need a Fat Bike. A Fat Bike is essentially a mountain bike that can accommodate really wide tires. Fat Bike tires range from 3.8 inches to as wide as 6 inches with riders typically running tires that are 4.5 to 5 inches wide. They're kept at a much lower pressure than standard mountain bike tires, usually around 5-8 pounds. This low PSI gives your awesome Fat Bike exceptional traction in slippery, snowy conditions.

"But I don't own any Fat Bike clothing." No worries, you can just raid your closet and for any old winter gear. Old cross country ski pants – Perfect! Weirdly snug toque – Great for under your helmet! Ripped puffy jacket with half its down missing – Yes! Gloves of course - Preferably with a soft spot for nose wiping. And don't forget those nice downhill socks you bought to stay comfy in your unforgiving ski boots, they will feel amazing in whatever kind of footwear you can find.

Where to go? Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park is a fantastic starting point for your fat biking adventure. You can begin at the lower parking lot and gradually climb your way up to where the snow gets deeper. Alternatively, a quick drive up Little White FSR will take you to the upper half of Myra-Bellevue, where you'll find beautiful, snow-covered trails waiting to be explored. Keep in mind that Fat Biking is tough going, look for trails that have already had some traffic and be ready for some serious cardio. If it feels like you're riding the world's longest skinny, you're doing it right. Nothing challenges your ability to balance quite like Fat Biking! As always, remember that hikers, walkers and horses have the right of way. It can be more difficult to stop quickly in the Winter so always be aware of other park users.

Now, **get out there and enjoy winter riding.**
Embrace the Fat!