



**FRIENDS OF THE
SOUTH SLOPES**

December 2025

Happy Holidays!

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

Message from the Board of Directors

As we wrap up 2025, we want to thank you for another outstanding year of trail maintenance and park improvements. This was only possible because of the support of our membership, which directly fuels the work that FOSS was able to accomplish.

Thanks to your contributions, our FOSS “yellow shirts” were out on the trails nearly every weekday, working to keep the park safe, accessible and enjoyable for every visitor. This year alone, volunteers dedicated more than 4,500 hours, a remarkable achievement that reflects the strength of our community.

***Best wishes for a joyous Christmas
and may the new year bring you
happiness and endless adventures on the trails of
the South Slopes.***

FOSS Trail Maintenance Update

The largest trail improvement project in October was the re-brushing of Wild Horse Canyon Trail in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park. The logistics for undertaking this project were immense. All equipment needed to be moved to a property near the end of Lakeshore Road, and when the project was completed....it needed to be moved back to FOSS' Maintenance Facility. Many thanks to Brad Wright for making this happen.

Wild Horse Canyon trail was last brushed by FOSS volunteers two years ago. There has been significant regrowth since then. The project took six days, operating three bush brushers on a continuous basis. Work involved chain saw, pole trimming, erosion mitigation and brushing. Crews brushed Wild Horse Canyon Trail as far as Buchan Bay over to Goode's Creek. The day after the project was completed, high winds brought down six trees on the trail. One was a massive tree 28" in diameter. All these blowdowns were removed after FOSS returned their equipment to the Lakeshore Rd. staging area for the second time.

In Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park, fall projects included:

- Painting Pete's bridge over Hachey Creek and Fred's Bridge over Priest Creek;
- High winds resulted in several windfalls which the crews dealt with;
- Three FOSS volunteers explored Upper Crawford Trail south of the KVR. It is a rough single track trail which would be very challenging for the crews to work on;
- Volunteers refinished the more than twenty benches along the Myra Canyon section of the rail trail. This was accomplished with tools powered by FOSS' new battery power unit and power from some volunteer's EV's. Benches were restored to natural wood, giving a continuity throughout Myra Canyon Trail. This was a big job done with a crew of six, over four days;
- 56 pieces of rough sawn 2"x6"x12' fir were retrieved from a leaf-covered pile near the west entrance to the Camp Huissi Trail. These have been dry stacked and covered - FOSS will definitely find a use for this amazing timber;

Milt Stevenson, who manages FOSS' Trail Maintenance Program says "I continue to be amazed by the availability, work ethic and positive attitude of our FOSS Trail Maintenance volunteers. It is an honour to work with them. Special thanks to Al Milne, who put in a record number of hours" (in October).

Milt reported that his crews 'logged' 453 volunteer hours in October. Many of those hours were 8-10 hour days in Wild Horse Canyon.



When Milt said there were some BIG blowdowns, he wasn't exaggerating!



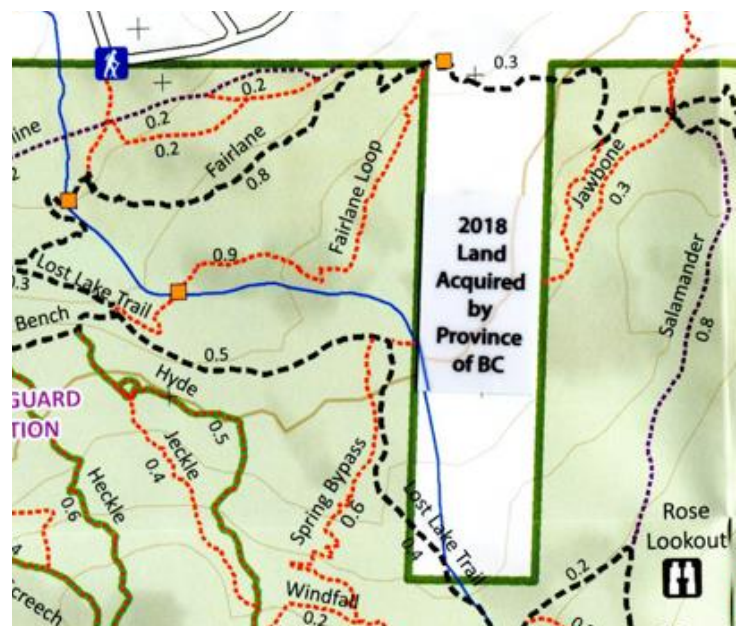
FOSS' Strategic Relations Committee - Who Are We? What Do We Do?

FOSS' Vision is for an extensive trail network on the South Slopes...a **Continuous Recreational Corridor** linking the Mission Creek Greenway, Scenic Canyon Regional Park, KLO Creek Regional Park & the City of Kelowna's Utility Property, through Crown land to Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park and the KVR. And dreaming bigger - we want to develop a link westward to the Johns' Family Conservancy Regional Park and Okanagan Mtn. Provincial Park.

In the nearly 30 years since its incorporation, FOSS has worked collaboratively with the public land managers (Province of BC, Regional District of Central Okanagan and the City of Kelowna), and community partners such as the Central Okanagan Land Trust to reach this goal. **FOSS' Strategic Relations Committee** (SRC) lobbies for additional parkland and protected areas and for new access points to public lands on the South Slopes.

This is a long-game for FOSS! For example, it took fourteen years of lobbying before the Myra Wetlands private property was acquired by the province in 2018 and integrated into Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.

The SRC is currently working with the three levels of government on a number of new proposals regarding land acquisitions and enhancing community access to public lands on the South Slopes.



STAY TUNED!



2018 Myra Wetlands land acquisition - the new Myra Wetlands Trail was constructed by FOSS' Trail Maintenance Crew in April, 2025.

Trails Into Fireguards - Looking back at the 2003 Okanagan Mtn. Provincial Park Wildfire

If you weren't hiking, cycling or riding the trails of Myra-Bellevue prior to the OMPP Wildfire, you might not know about the impact the fire suppression activities had on the park's trail system. Although there were only a few fireguards constructed in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park due to the rugged terrain and the extreme rate the fire spread (source: 2004 Wildfire Review-Gary Fillmon), there were several fireguards constructed in Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park.

With the park's extensive trail system, some of the trails north of the KVR were logical choices to expand and use as fireguards. The heavy equipment used and the machine operators that built these fireguards were an important part of the fire suppression plan. Twenty-two years after the fire, the locations of these fireguards aren't as noticeable as they were in the years immediately following the wildfire.



At the 'Big Rock' just south of the Myra Bailout/Angel Springs junction, traces of the 2003 fireguard are barely observable

In October 2003, the provincial government implemented the "BC Myra-Bellevue Operations Plan" for post-fire recovery in the park.

In this plan, the trees felled on some fireguards ("decked timber") were harvested for timber salvage and then the fireguards were decommissioned/rehabilitated by dragging trees, rocks and debris across the guard – closing the fireguards to ensure no possible access.

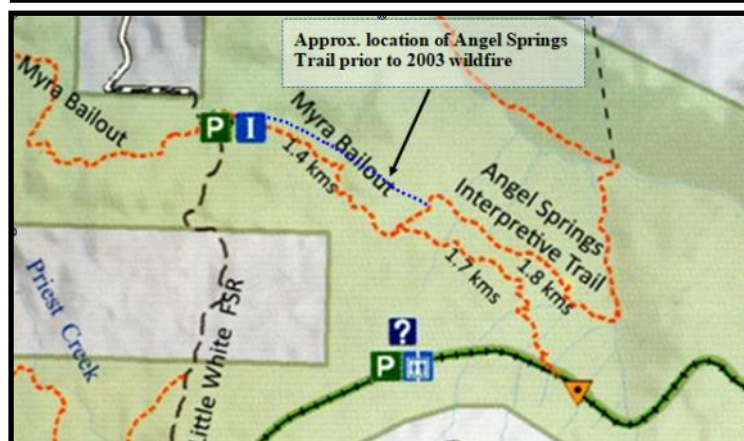
One of the fireguards was constructed on large sections of the Angel Springs Trail. Following the fire the Ministry of Forests rehabilitated it and there was no way for FOSS to cut a trail through the dense debris.

With the support of BC Parks, FOSS directors made four exploratory trips to search for a new

route for a trail to Angel Springs, south of the now decommissioned fireguard. This resulted in a plan to use the existing Myra Bailout Trail and to construct a new trail to Angel Springs at a junction with Myra Bailout Trail, 1.4 km from the Angel Springs parking lot.



Oct. 2003 – FOSS Director Isabel Pritchard walks the Angel Springs fireguard, prior to timber removal & decommissioning of the trail by the province



In June 2004, four FOSS volunteers cleared the new section of trail and connected it to a still intact section of the original Angel Springs Trail beyond the fireguard, resulting in just a short section of the trail needing to be constructed across the fireguard.

Bellevue Access Trail was also used as a fire guard, but in the BC Government's Myra

Bellevue Operations Plan, “Bellevue FSR to be restored to trail width”. So, Bellevue Access Trail was not decommissioned/rehabilitated by Ministry of Forests and remained intact. A major staging area to fight the wildfire was established in the area between Bellevue Access Trail and Blancher’s Silver Trail.

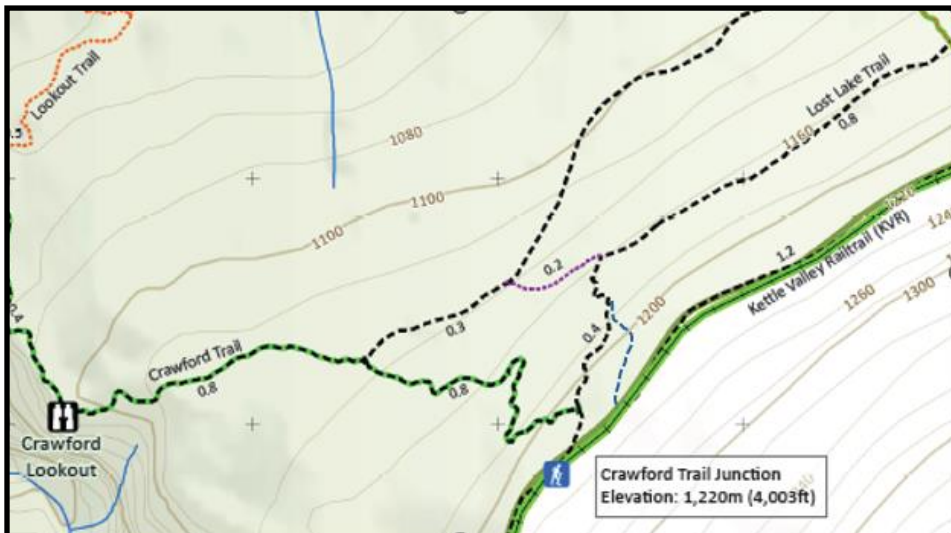
Other fireguards that were rehabilitated by MoF included: 1) the fireguard southwest of Little White FSR, about 500 m. up from the end of June Springs Rd. This fireguard crossed Myra Bailout Trail. Debris was scattered during restoration and FOSS

constructed a new trail south of the fireguard (Myra Bailout Connector);

2) There was a fireguard built just south of the junction of Myra Bailout Trail & the current location of the start of the Angel Springs Trail. This fireguard was constructed across to Little White FSR/Bellevue Access Trail, traversing through both provincial park land and private property. It was rehabilitated within the park;

3) Upper Lost Lake Trail to the KVR: When this fireguard was rehabilitated it was no longer useable as a trail. FOSS volunteers spent many hours tramping through the forest in search of a reroute and were able to connect it to Crawford Trail, approximately 100m from the KVR Rail Trail.

The blue dotted line on FOSS’ trail map below is the approximate location of Lost Lake Trail prior to the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park wildfire. 2003 map information is from the KMBC (Kelowna Mountain Bike Club) 1998 Crawford Trails map.



Nov. 2, 2025
Bellevue Access Trail today



The PERFECT Stocking Stuffer!

FOSS’ updated Myra-Bellevue Provincial Park Trail map is a PERFECT gift for your friends and family who still like to carry a paper copy of a map.

It’s pocket-sized and tear and water resistant and available from these local retailers:

Cyclepath

Kelowna Cycle

Play Kelowna

Mosaic Books

Diamond H Tack

Myra Canyon Bike Rentals & Tours (but you’ll have to wait to get one next year at their Myra Canyon rental site)





Generous Land Donation to Central Okanagan Land Trust (COLT)

On Nov. 20, 2025, FOSS Director Rick Ellery attended the announcement of the donation of a 7.5 hectare farm on Gordon Drive to the COLT.

Dorothy Thomson, who's from a local pioneering family, donated the property in memory of her late husband Ken. The future naming of the park will reflect that honour and carry his name. This generous donation will ensure that the natural features on the property are preserved and restored for local wildlife and for the community. COLT is enthusiastic about the property's conservation values. Retired UBCO aquatic ecologist Laura Hooker (a member of the COLT board) has explored the property and noted: "The old hay field and its intact organic soils, the bordering spring-fed waterway overhung by aged willows, and the copse of Black Cottonwood at the south end of the farm, are well worth conserving".

Ultimately the property will operate under a strategic plan, which is being developed. However, currently there is no public access to the property.

FOSS applauds Dorothy Thomson for her generous donation and to COLT for their great work protecting land in the Central Okanagan



Central Okanagan Land Trust |
Protecting, connecting, and preserving
the Okanagan's natural beauty

Website: <https://coltrust.ca>