

February 11 @ 9:00 **FINAL COPY**
Rocky Mountain House Museum

In Attendance

Wayne Crocker	Don Livingston	Jim Duncan	Jay Mills
Adena Earl	Rita Stagman	Kevin Gagne	Michael Doyle
Dennis Schafer	Cal Rakach	Doug King	Greg Ottway
Myles Jensen	Mike Adolph	Brad Andrews	Jeremy Cooper
Rod Burns	Larry Frischke	Jim Allen	Lisa Schrader
Chiara Feder	Danika Medinski	Mike Veltri	Grant Santo
Laura Raivio			

Chair

Wayne Crocker

Introduction

Round table conducted. Gord Sanders has stepped down, new rep for Trappers is Rod Burns.

Activity / Enforcement Update

Trail counter info has been uploaded with some interesting results even though we had some issues with a few of the counters. Trends at the dam are down, but results might be a little low since we did lose a counter. Tershishner is showing a downward trend. Crescent Falls, at both the staging area and east entrance, showing more use. At Hummingbird (AWA has counters there as well) trends were found to be similar in 2015 although ours were higher for Canary and Onion. Numbers were bang on for Hummingbird trail.

Question: Any thoughts as to why the Bighorn dam numbers are decreasing? May be due to 80% of the vehicles coming out now are side by sides, so less vehicles total. Or may be economy related. Timing restriction related? No, in looking at the data you can see each month individually and May and June were not the issue.

We have received more calls about illegal activities. Have put up cameras and signs to catch people going in to 40 Mile, with the new trail and bridge 4x4s are sneaking in. This area has been flagged this with CO's to focus on.

We had some funding issues on the PLUZ maps, so this year we are incorporating QR codes and Avenza to help alleviate the dependency on paper copies only. The big PLUZ brochures run about \$4500/yr for 15,000 copies and the small kiosk brochures about \$1700/yr for 14,000 copies. Edson is looking at this avenue as well because there is currently no Hinton/Coal Branch maps left.

The Red Deer Sportsmen's show is Feb 26-28. We have a booth again this year and Sol Gen separately as well. Everyone wants maps, users are also becoming more educated.

Signage Update

Last year had we had two seasonals for trail signage/maintenance. This year we are unsure if we get funding to have anyone. The flood recovery group, fire and Parks have volunteered to help out and Laura will continue. We are also waiting to hear on funding for signage.

Parks Staffing Update

Same budget this year for an extra 6 seasonal enforcement positions. In this district we've found that there's good cooperation between divisions so we work the entire land base, and it works well to meet the goals. Enforcement strategies will be staying the same and we are seeing an improvement in compliance. Wheels in water fines were up to about \$1500 here, in Canmore \$2500 (for example). CO's will continue to work on priority areas.

Question: Is there an opportunity for dollars to come back to build bridges, etc on water crossings? Not currently through Parks but there is an alternative measures program where offenders have to come back and fix the area. Does the judge have discretion to force volunteer hours, or something similar? Not that we're aware of. The types of people being stopped are not usually the type that are going to come back for community service.

Backcountry Trail Flood Rehabilitation Update

This will be the final season and we are entering last year of work this year. There is an information session scheduled for March 1st at the Canalta in Rocky.

BTFR gave presentation of work completed at Blackstone- bridge, Job/Cline - bridges, Kiska/Willson - rerouted rail trail, bridge, Upper Clearwater/Ram – Hummingbird trail bridge near H5 which was flown it out in pieces and consisted of fibreglass with wood decking. Timber creek bridge install - wagon usable, rubber matted.

*Timber Creek is an important class A bull trout stream. Do we take the ford out and leave it at bridge crossing only? People have said some horses won't cross the bridge. A rail is being installed and the bridge itself is rubber matted. There will also be an extended and flared hand rail. *Recommendation: Have all users use the bridge only.

Panther – rerouted wagon trail, about half completed. The contract work is being re-tendered this spring.

Totals for 2014-15: 350 trails, 71 bridges, 78 projects completed.

Plans for 2016 – North Bighorn - Bighorn trail – trail hardening, Sunkay – work, Whitegoat – looking at what can be done. Work on Joyce Creek loop, Landslide Lake and Pinto loops. Hummingbird -trail reroutes, Ranger Creek – reroute.

South Bighorn – Now the Timber Creek ford closure/reclamation as well as sled reroute and trail work, reroute around Sawmill avoiding bog and bridging of the spring this year to alleviate problems. Panther – finishing wagon route and a pack horse trail (Dormer trail). May be able to do some work on Skelton, and portion of CC8-CC9.

*Clearwater River Stumps trail – leave open to wagons or redirect all to new Timber Creek trail? Timber Creek bridge and trail were designed for wagons to get them out of the river. Discussion ensued – *Recommendation: to close Stumps to wagon and all back to the meadow. Will see on Sawmill trail after the bridge is put in on the reroute.

Thanks expressed thanks to the Bighorn Backcountry Flood Recovery Group for all their work in the last two years and upcoming season.

Timber Creek Trail

Work on the southwest side of Timber Creek to Sawmill and the bypass at Sawmill and the entire reroute heading to 40 Mile occurred this fall with donations of a D6 and hauling, as well as large amounts of time from the Olds Snowmobile Club and the Harness Club. Mike Doyle volunteered many hours with the D6 filling in trail and cutting drainage while taking material out. The reroute was made a suitable grade for wagons all along. He also worked on the washout between Forbidden and Skelton creek. Overall value of the donated work was \$27,000.

Comment – would like to see work continue on to the south to upgrade the washouts on the north side of YaHa Tinda.

Whitegoat Update

Many concerns are voiced about OHV usage and erosion, so Don looked at non-OHV usage and the flooding on these trails. Presentation contained pics of flooding and erosion, as well as areas that are completely blown out. These are currently not even good for horses to go through. Some points from the presentation are as follows:

- Design and condition of a trail in general does affect what happens when a flood event occurs.
- Rutting from wheels or horse trails can channel water down the trail surface and result in greater impact from the event.
- Motorized use on a trail does not necessarily result in a greater impact from the flood than on non-motorized trails.

Whitegoat Creek Trail

- The first trail is the trail from the Cline Waste Transfer site, up through the “sugar Bowl” into the headwaters of Littlehorn Creek. This trail was an industrial exploration trail from the 1960- 1970 era? It received sporadic OHV and snowmobile use over the years. In 2002 it was designated as a timed motorized snowmobile trail. Floods in 2005 made the Littlehorn portion impassable.
- Majority of the trail use in the last 15-20 yrs. has been non-motorized.

Opabin Creek Trail

- Very few users there now. National parks not maintaining their part of the trail anymore. Due to bad access can't really see it changing to more users.
- The Blackstone trail through the gap to the old well in the headwaters of the Opabin was drilled in the 1960's era?
- In 1986 the area became a Forest Land Use Zone and motorized use was prohibited. With the decline in ungulate populations and changing trends in summer equestrian pack trips, the area now receives very little use.

FOESA UPDATE

The Annual General meeting is February 20th with tickets currently still available. Work this past season started off in March hauling about 40 yards of gravel for highlines at Eagle Creek campground, equalling 37 highlines. April set up highline pipes. April 27th – 7 Mile got signage put up and we opened the gate. We are unsure on usage stats there but did a few repairs and cleanup. Want to highline one loop.

Bighorn campground – put in about 20 highlines. Stalls there are a lot of upkeep so installed more highlines. May – completed the signage. July 18-19 Hummingbird OHV rally. Bighorn horse rally. Pumped out Bighorn outhouses.

Shell is continuing to support and donated the Peppers Lake gravel pile. Gravel went into Hummingbird, Cutoff and 7 Mile. Highline project at Hummingbird replaced almost 30 highlines.

In 2016 the Bighorn campground is being expanded to the east, allowed by Parks Canada. Waiting for go ahead. James Lake trail – want to take back to a FOESA meeting and see if they can address fixing it. Currently 7 campgrounds means they are getting stretched on volunteers. The group may start focussing only on staging areas as opposed to including trail maintenance.

Comment: James Lake – we need a second look at the connector and to get a good assessment of cost and effort to repair/reroute it. If FOESA could get that it can be brought to steering.

Update On NSRP

Hoping the RAC report will be at cabinet this spring as the South Saskatchewan and Lower Athabasca are supposed to be going in to legislature. Until the RAC report is released and the minister decides what to do with the advisement, it's still sitting. Only thing moving forward is that the ability to write tickets is being tagged onto the South Saskatchewan report. South Saskatchewan and North Saskatchewan are spawning a lot of recreation based talks but nothing specific yet.

Open Floor

- FireSmart trail presentation will be for next meeting. FYI – The historical Clearwater barn was burnt down and weather station vandalized.
- Need to bring forward CTI again as they go forward. Lots of interest. Lots of compliance with changes there by giving options as opposed to being able to do much enforcement.
- Other prescribed burn presentation data is still on the books for this year.
- Eagle Creek to Scalp – if there's a plan devised could there be funding or approval? Is the intention to fix it for sleds? Recognize it is a winter only trail and there are additional wildlife restrictions.
- What is considered a snow vehicle? A vehicle designed to chiefly or exclusively run on snow and ice. A quad with tracks can beat its way down the dirt and is not restricted to snow. A sled with track and skis or a motorcycle with single track and ski wouldn't be doing that. The trail has to be able to take that impact all the way.
- Any discussions of allowing wagons north of the Ranch? Not allowed to have the wagons through the Ranch at this point.
- When creating more backcountry opportunities what kind of care and capacity is needed ecologically? At what point do you need to start providing backcountry facilities? Discussions are – what level of experience are you wanting? Rustic or provisions? More people coming or less? That is a topic on the recreation opportunity list at the moment.
- **Next standing committee meeting – Thursday, June 9, 2016**
- Field Day – Clearwater/Timber Creek suggestion for field day – date to be decided in June