



# Bighorn Backcountry Standing Committee Updates

June 2023

## Projects

- Coliseum: The parking area at Coliseum is complete, however; they are finishing up the bridge crossing along the trail.
- Staging areas for Coral Creek, Owen Creek, Pinto Lake, Allstones, Hoodoo Creek, and Kinglet/ Tuff Puff will be closed for 1-2 days during the installation of asphalt, the final compaction of the gravels, seeding and minor deficiency works. All work to be completed by July 2023.
- All works are completed at these sites: Abraham Slabs Rustic Camping, Preachers Point North/South Rustic Camping, Wildhorse Creek Rustic Camping.
- Crescent Falls PRA and access road is closed until June 2024 for major upgrades at the PRA.
- Cavalcade construction (staircase and belay boxes) schedule for completion July 15, 2023.
- Phase 1 of the Black Mountain trails are scheduled for construction starting in July.
- Terishshner trail is schedule for upgrades starting in August.
- Bighorn Dam rustic camping and Terishshner connector trail upgrades starting in July. There will be construction closures starting with the lower dam moving to the Terishshner connector trail.
- Graveling of the Goldeye Lake loop trail that connects to the cross-country ski trails.
- Rail Trail surfacing and bridge installation starting in July between Saunders and Sunset Creek.

## Planning

- Alignments and design work for Hummingbird trail upgrades.
- Alignments and design work for Rail Trail phase 3 Sunset Creek to Chambers Creek.
- Feasibility planning for a parking lot above the Taunton Trestle.
- Design work for a parking lot for Thompson Creek trail head.
- Design work for the trail to Whitegoat Falls.
- Trail assessments for Pinto, Landslide, Kinglet, Lake of the Falls, and Allstones.
- Nordegg Trails Plan:
  - Three meetings with the Bighorn subcommittee (December, February and March) to discuss trails of importance, issues with trails, priorities for existing and future trails.
  - The subcommittee provided input and comments through on online map (Engagement HQ) after meeting #3.
  - Government staff will continue to meet as needed with individual sub-committee groups such as Nordegg Trails Society, summer motorized and winter motorized to gain input and discuss specific trails of interest.
  - Indigenous communities have the opportunity to participate in the subcommittee as well as to meet with government one on one to discuss Indigenous values and perspectives on trails in the Nordegg area.

- Timeline: meeting with stakeholder groups and Indigenous communities over the summer and early fall; draft trails plan for fall 2023

## Environmental Enforcement

- Enforcement officers continue to focus on land use issues across all land bases, including PLUZ. Primarily those issues include operation of motorized vehicles not on trail in a PLUZ, failure to comply with signs and notices in a PLUZ, failure to obtain Public Land Camping Pass (PLCP) and exceeding 14-day maximum stay.
- PLCP compliance has been high for the most part. Officers will continue to focus along the Highway 11 Corridor, as that appears to experience lower levels of compliance, relative to other areas. Continued confusion persists for some regarding the PLCP, National Park Pass and Kananaskis Country Conservation Pass.
- Motor vehicle use below the high water mark/bed/shore around Abraham Lake continues to be an issue, but less so than years previous. Restricting access through infrastructure upgrades at Abraham Slabs and signage at Cline Landing has certainly helped promote awareness and increase compliance at those locations. The new timing restriction changes from April 1 to April 30 has also aided in providing the public opportunity to lawfully access Abraham Lake during the spring time when ice may still be suitable for ice fishing.
- Throughout much of the spring, local officers from the Environmental Enforcement Branch and Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch have been supporting wildfire suppression efforts throughout the province. That support also included initial response to 310-FIRE calls for wood campfires in the Forest Protection Area during the fire ban and fire restriction.
- The May Long Weekend was quieter than anticipated, but that was attributed to the Fire Ban and OHV Restriction that was implemented in the weeks leading up to the long weekend. No fatalities were reported and most recreational users were aware and respectful of the fire ban and OHV restriction.
- The Panther road continues to be a focus for the Cochrane District Conservation Officer team. Proactive patrols, coupled with complaint follow-up, are expected to assist in alleviating the OHV-based concerns that local residents and lease holders are experiencing. This years PLUZ maps identify sections of the Panther road that have OHV access. These sections were signed in June 2023.
- Conservation Officers and Fish and Wildlife Officers are working closely regarding bear management issues along Abraham Lake, as bears move amongst Public Land and protected areas. Food conditioning and human habituation are concerns that Officers are addressing, with proper food storage and handling being a focus for education and enforcement.