

2024...A YEAR IN REVIEW



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- Vice President Ryan Sadler
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Glenn Gytenbeek

We are a Co-op Member.
Please support us when you fill up with fuel by using our Co-op #13260

President's Message

Our main focus this year was Mt Rose Swanson, both with a big construction project, smaller upgrading projects and data collection.

A kiosk had been in the works for a couple of years and this fall it finally came to fruition. It is complete with a map and educational signage and is located just south of the parking lot.

We want to see all values accommodated on the mountain, not just logging, hence, our other huge undertaking was, and still is, raising money for a Hydrologist and a Biologist we hired to conduct fieldwork during the summer. We should be receiving reports early in the new year and will share them with appropriate agencies.

Thomas Hayes Ecological Park remained in the background this year except for some trail clearing and minor upgrading.

This year we participated in 10 Community Events. They are great PR for us! The big surprise for us was to be chosen the 'Charity of Choice' for both the IPE and Farmstrong Cider Co's Winter Markets. These were both huge commitments in manpower and time but had the greatest exposure and money raised for Mt RS.

Many thanks to the City and Township for their support and guidance and to our membership for providing help, especially at the IPE and Farmstrong events. Happy trails!

Marge



ASTS Memberships

We are a non-profit society that relies on people such as yourself to support our initiative and maintain local trails. Please consider taking out a membership and helping us continue our work.

Yearly membership rates are:
Single \$10
Family \$25

Purchase your memberships through the "Join Us" tab on our website, or email us at astrailsociety@gmail.com
We accept e-transfers, cheques or cash.

Website

www.astrailsociety.com



Mt Rose Swanson Work Projects

MoTI Communications Tower Upgrade

We finally found out who owns the tower on Mt RS - the **BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure** (MoTI)! This tower houses radio communication equipment that allows employees to connect with each other and their various offices when they are out in the field. Communication technicians land there via helicopter to service the equipment inside. Once we found out the owner we asked permission to paint it to cover all the graffiti and then asked if they would supply the paint. Yes to both requests! Four litres of green Marine paint later and on a beautiful day in mid May, 6 of us packed up rollers, brushes, drop sheets, and an extension pole. It took about 4 hours for us to scrape the bad spots and then paint. Much better!

Ken



Biffy Upgrade

The same day we painted the tower we also painted the outside of the outhouse. It definitely needed an upgrade. A bit of scraping followed by roller and brush work. An hour later we were done. Very spiffy!

Glenn



Trail Clearing

After a windstorm there's always some trail clearing to be done in both Thomas Hayes and on Mt RS. We are on the trails for our own enjoyment quite often but we also hear about trees down from regular trail users. Thanks to members and the public for passing along this information. Early notice allows us to keep the trails in good shape.

A Bit of Trivia - Did You Know?

The question has been asked many times over the years, who were the features 'Millers Bluff', 'Turners Terrace', 'Harmes Heights' and Pauls Plunge' named after? Forty-seven years ago, in 1977, Chris Miller, Mike Turner, Kim Harmes and Barb Paul were 16 yr old 'Young Canada Works' participants. Their summer job was trail clearing on Mt RS. When they had finished their allotted tasks they still had time left in the contract. One of their father's had a woodworking shop so they decided to make signs and name certain spots after themselves. Three of 4 signs are still visible. Their leader was Jed and another participant was Regina Bress.

Glenn

Mt Rose Swanson Work Projects - cont'd

Constructing a Kiosk

It's interesting just how long things as simple as an information kiosk can take to come to fruition. Over 2 yrs ago the ASTS applied to **CN Rail** for a grant just under \$10,000. Thankfully we were successful. Part of the money went towards materials and printing costs for signage/educational panels and the rest was for the lumber/miscellaneous hardware required to construct it.



At the time we weren't ready to do the actual construction but we designed and printed 4 educational panels (Flora/Fauna/Species at Risk/History) at **Joyce's Signs & Autographics** (with money left over for a map) and pre-paid the lumber costs at **Shepherds Hardware**. The panel that demanded the most input was the map panel as that required hiking and 'GPSing' the existing trails and drawing them onto a map. ASTS members did the legwork and the drawing and Joyce did a very professional job of the finished product!

The next phase involved the construction. We picked a site between the start of the Centennial and Aspen trails just to the south of the parking lot. We laid out a template for the post locations, and dug and poured concrete into 4 foundation holes. This took 2 days, Sept 29th and Oct 1st. Thanks to the **Township of Spallumcheen** for donating 4 yds of gravel that we spread on Oct 12th for the base of the kiosk and along trails to the kiosk,



In the meantime, we had a work party to precut and prefabricate as much of the lumber as possible. A crew was put together and on Oct 21st all materials were delivered to the parking lot and construction started. It took 2 days to complete the kiosk, a project that we really enjoyed!

We hope that people learn from the information presented and that it enhances their experience on Mt RS!

School Groups to Thomas Hayes Ecological Park & Mt Rose Swanson

**Awaken Inquiry & Adventure Okanagan (AIAO)
and a
Home School Class**

We are pleased to see schools in the North Okanagan/Shuswap utilize Thomas Hayes Ecological Park and Mt Rose Swanson for class field trips! The ASTS was asked to organize/lead 3 trips this past year, 2 for the AIAO class from Vernon and 1 for a local Home School class. The AIAO program encompasses Grades 7-12 and provides rich learning opportunities that are rooted in place and nature based educational practices.

On Feb 7th we showcased Thomas Hayes to 18 students and their instructors along with Norbert Maertens (**North Okanagan Naturalist Club**).



We explored various aspects of the park's history; geological history, settlements of First Peoples around Otter Lake spanning countless generations and the Hayes family who lived here and donated this land to the Province. We also taught practical mapping and navigational skills with a compass and Norbert engaged the students with his vast knowledge on the local plants, animal tracks and scat.

On Apr 4th we took the same class to Mt RS, this time with 22 students. Our destination was the viewpoint on the north side of the mountain. Again we talked about the Indigenous history, how the mountain got it's name and the potential for future logging. All along the way we looked at the flora and evidence of fauna, even discovering a moose carcass! An eventful day!



A few days later, Apr 9th, we took 8 homeschool kids (ages 6-8) and 2 adults on a tour of Thomas Hayes. It was hard to keep up with their energy and questions but definitely a lot of fun! We stopped often and talked about what we saw around us.

It's awesome to see light bulb moments in students as they learn about nature and our relationship to it!

Marge

Community Events

We attended a number of Community Events this year such as; the Climate Action Ripple Effect, Pride in the Park, the Recreation Fair, the Pumpkin Festival, 3 local Farmers' Markets and the Farmers' Christmas Market. These events provided excellent exposure for us where we are able to tell people who we are and what we do, sell memberships and T-shirts and raise a bit of money. The big surprise for us was to be chosen as the **'Charity of Choice'** for both the **Interior Provincial Exhibition** and the **Farmstrong Cider Co.** Winter Markets. **THANK YOU** to both of these organizations for supporting us!! These events provided huge outreach for us. *Pat*

Interior Provincial Exhibition

The IPE ran from Aug 28th to Sept 1st. We decorated our forest themed booth the day before with an arbour, some plants/trees, hiking equipment, antlers, bird carvings, photos, maps, the kiosk information panels for Mt RS and received many compliments. Our location, front and centre in the Hassen Hall, was a prime spot. It had to be 'manned' from 10am to 9pm every day during the fair and if it wasn't for a lot of volunteer help from our membership we wouldn't have been able to do it. Thank You! We told people who we are, what we do, the areas we serve and maintain, sold a few memberships and T-shirts, raised a bit of money and handed out many area maps courtesy of the **Chamber of Commerce**. We were even able to ride in the IPE Chuckwagon float in the parade! The IPE was very generous in the funding they were able to provide to us.



Ran

Farmstrong Cider Co.

Farmstrong hosted 3 Winter Markets, Nov 17th, 23rd and 30th, at their property on the lower slopes of Mt RS. Our booth was located at the entrance. Again, we depended on a large number of volunteers to help us as the markets ran from 11:30am to 7pm and there were many tasks to cover. Thank You to everyone who helped! Our main message to attendees was that Mt RS is scheduled to be logged next winter and that limited data has been collected on some of the values. As a result, we hired Experts to collect some water, flora/fauna/at-risk-species data this past summer and we need to raise money to pay for their reports. We sold Mt RS hoodies/T-shirts, memberships and raised some money. In addition, Farmstrong supported our efforts by donating to Mt RS.

Marge



Community Service

Tree Planting at the IPE

We helped the IPE plant 14 - 600 lb Autumn Blaze Maple trees on their Wood Ave property in June. An excavator was able to dig all of the holes and a forklift placed the trees so we just had to backfill, stake and water them. These trees turned red this past fall and looked spectacular. Thanks to the **IPE** for beautifying this part of Wood Ave!

Marge



Invasive Weed Pull Day

The day after planting trees at the IPE property we went to Huculak Park along Meighan Creek to help the **Invasive Species Council** (Lara Phillips), **Kim Fulton** (aka Dr Fish) and the **Armstrong Wetlands Association** with an educational invasive plant and weed pull day with our local schools.

About 20 Grade 3 students walked from AES. They were given an introduction to invasive species by Lara and then they played a game led by Dr Fish called 'From Here or From Away'. Large flashcards had pictures of various plants and animals and the students had to figure out if they were native to BC or brought here from somewhere else.

Later that morning approximately 20 Grade 11 students walked down from PVSS. Each older student was buddied up with a younger student and with gloves, shovel and large garbage bag in hand they were directed to a big patch of invasive burdock along Meighan Cr. With all of these groups working it didn't take long to clear the area.

Chokecherry seeds (native to our area) were then planted in the disturbed bare ground to replace what was removed. Thanks to the **City of Armstrong** for disposing the garbage bags full of burdock!

Marge

A Wonderful Gift!

Kristy McLennan, owner/operator of **PV Blvd Coffee**, approached us this past fall asking if we would like 8 large boxes of "Rose Swanson Mountain" T-shirts and hoodies to sell as a fundraiser for our work on Mt RS. Yes please!! We couldn't believe the generous gift. Upon opening the boxes we saw the iconic view of Mt RS from town imprinted on all 4 sizes (S/M/L/XL) of black merchandise, and counted over 280 pieces. Wow!! Please support this business and say thanks to Kristy for her support.

We have been selling them at our Community Events ever since - \$20 for a T-shirt and \$40 for a hoodie. Most of them are in storage but if you would like one **Om Naturale Herbal Care Co** has generously agreed to sell them for us (and aren't taking a cut!) to give greater accessibility to the public. Drop in and say hi to **Terryn and Graeme**, browse the interesting products in their Tiny Farm Store and thank them for their support. They are located at 4885 Lansdowne Rd, Spallumcheen and are open 10am - 4pm Tues & Thurs. Hurry and get yours as they have been selling fast!!



Marge

Fundraising - Garage Sale & More

We need to raise money for the Experts (Hydrologist and Biologist) that we hired to conduct fieldwork (hydrological review and biological review) on Mt RS this past summer. To that end we held a garage sale on June 1st, unfortunately a soggy day. We generated a lot of goods amongst ourselves but also put the word out to the public and items poured in. Our local **Armstrong Museum & Art Gallery** generously offered their parking lot so we were visible to the people walking to and from the Farmers' Market as well as vehicle traffic. Despite the weather we sold almost everything and raised just over \$2,000. Thank you to everyone for your support!



We have received many wonderful donations/grants from organizations this past year for Mt RS. A huge **THANK YOU** to:

Vernon Outdoors Club

Armstrong Legion Branch #35

West Coast Environmental Law

Interior Provincial Exhibition

Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program

Horsey Ladies

Farmstrong Cider Co

Amount Totaling \$27,358

In addition, there have been many individuals who have supported us. **THANK YOU for your generosity!**



Ran

Trail Counters

Our 4 trail counters continue to give us valuable data. To the end of the year they have now been in place for 41 months.

Total use during that time:

Mt Rose Swanson = 66,824 users or ~1,630/month

Thomas Hayes Ecological Park = 37,062 users or ~904/month

The use of the trails at the end of Chamberlaine Rd on Mt RS continues to increase.

We didn't have much smoke this past summer, thankfully, but we did have a month of heat. Our trails are used year round.

The most active months continue to be Apr/May and Sept/Oct, and obviously weekends and holidays have peak activity. These counters also indicate a surprising fact: that some users are out-and-about from 5 am right through to almost midnight!

Ken



Beautiful Sights



The Aurora over Mt RS



Great Grey Owl in TH

Bent