

Wildlife Ambassador Program **By: Daniella Rubeling**

In the fall of 2006, a request for proposals from the Friends of Kananaskis Country – in conjunction with Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture – resulted in the development of a program where volunteers rove trails and campgrounds to educate residents and visitors about wildlife safety ethics and human-wildlife conflict in the Bow Valley: the **Wildlife Ambassador Program**. This program merged the goals and interests of three distinct groups: Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture, Friends of Kananaskis Country, and Bow Valley WildSmart, a community coalition of government, private and non-profit organizations.

Working closely with all three groups, a training program was developed that would teach volunteers about human-wildlife conflict, communicating, effective messaging, how to use props and many other techniques that



Volunteers showing off an elk antler

would enable them to be effective educators. We successfully recruited 15 committed and enthusiastic volunteers with a wide range of backgrounds; from a retired doctor, to a recent high school graduate, to a mother who wanted to set a good example for her 10-year-old son.

The volunteers completed three training workshops – two evenings and one full day – run by interpreters with Alberta Parks in Kananaskis Country. In the workshops they practiced talking about some of the species of concern (bear, cougar, and elk), using props such as a cougar skull or a bear claw to draw people's attention, and going through a variety of scenarios that they might encounter on a trail. I had a great time working with the volunteers during the training workshops and it was so exciting to see this project get up on its feet.

After their formal training, the Wildlife Ambassadors shadowed interpreters on trail roves where they could practice their new skills and receive feedback from 'seasoned veterans'.

The Wildlife Ambassadors have been on the trails since July 1st, 2007, spoken with hundreds of people in the Bow Valley, and put in over 500 hours of volunteer time! The Wildlife Ambassador



Wildlife Ambassador Program group photograph

season has come to a close for the year, but we look forward to some fun training opportunities in the winter and can't wait for next summer as we continue with the program and bring some new Wildlife Ambassadors on board!

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To call any Alberta government agency toll-free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000, then the 10-digit number, or hold for operator assistance.

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park Volunteer Trail Program

Submitted by Aaron Domes, Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park

The Friends of Cypress Hills submitted the following write-up about the event to the Medicine Hat News, which was printed on Tuesday, June 5, 2007.

In celebrating 75 years of Parks and Protected Areas in the province, staff and volunteers at Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park-Alberta have embarked on many exciting new projects, including one that focuses on improving the trail system within the park.

The Friends of Cypress Hills has initiated a Volunteer Trail Care program that allows trail users to contribute to the maintenance of a high-quality trail system. With over 50 kilometres of trail within the park that caters to hikers, mountain bikers, trail runners, cross country skiers and snowshoers, the trail care program will emphasize the importance of healthy trails by involving the community who uses them.

The program was kicked off this past Saturday, June 2 at the new

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park-Alberta Visitor Centre in Elkwater, where 20 eager volunteers joined together for an introduction to trail care maintenance. These individuals will become the first volunteer trail care crew leaders in the park. Led by Erika Jensen, a trail specialist from the Friends of Kananaskis Country, the crew leaders spent the morning at the Visitor Centre learning the mechanics of proper trail construction, tips on assessing trails for proper care, and how to conduct a safe trail care outing. This was followed by an afternoon of hands-on work on the Lakeside Trail at Spruce Coulee.

While insuring that the trails are in good shape for current users, the park also wants to entice novice hikers to the area. Park visitor and trail crew volunteer Peter Butler emphasized the link between good trails and new users. His goal is to “have more people participating in the park and to make trails more user friendly, especially at the start of the trails to create more opportunities for all levels of hikers.”



Cypress Hills Volunteer Trail Program

2007 Spring Host Campout

Submitted by Tony & Alberta Van Dyk, Campground Hosts

*2007 Spring Host Campout - Park Lake Provincial Park
April 27-29, 2007*

Currently, maintenance is being done on existing trails but the future goal is to create more trails in key locations so as to make a more interconnected trail system throughout the park. Aaron Domes, Visitor Services Specialist with the park emphasized the importance of keeping a well maintained trail system to take full advantage of the opportunities that the unique landscape of Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park has provided.

The 2007 Host Campout, held at Group Area A of Park Lake Provincial Park, was attended by Frank, Arol, Doug, Bev, Tony and Alberta Van Dyk. And, well, we all awoke to typical southern Alberta weather; sunny and windy.

Upon arrival at the campout, participants were given a goodie bag of information on Southern Alberta and on the history of Park Lake Provincial Park (which turned 75 years old this year), as well as other useful items.

Friday we toured the day use area and campground, negotiating around many branches and limbs remaining from the recent removal of hazardous trees in the campground.

Saturday started with more wind. After breakfast, Frank, Arol, Tony and Alberta went on a road trip to tour Woolford Provincial Park and St. Mary Reservoir Provincial Recreation Area. Saturday night was the traditional pot luck supper, without Brad's cake which was greatly missed.

Sunday morning was a flurry of coffee, farewells and picture taking. We all had a great time and hope to see your all at the next conference.

Tony and Alberta Van Dyk
Park Lake Provincial Park
Campground Hosts



Cypress Hills Volunteer Trail Program

2008 Host Campout

**Calling All Hosts – Current,
New and Retired**

The 2008 Host Campout is scheduled for May 2-4. Location of the event is to yet be determined. For more information contact Brad Marshall at brad.marshall@gov.ab.ca or at (780)427-9017.



Picnic in the Park & Parks Day 2007



Submitted by Mary Fittl, Visitor Services

On the eve of the summer solstice that marks National Aboriginal Day in Canada, under a brilliant clear blue sky, the long awaited opening of the new visitor centre at Writing-on-Stone/Aisinaipi National Historic Site was witnessed by several hundred staff, volunteers, VIP's and visitors.

Not a single cloud ventured into the sky this day; even the ever-present prairie wind was noticeably absent, as if conscious of the important event taking place. Folks used to this kind of southern Alberta summer day, sprouted umbrellas among the gathering crowd. Those without this essential accessory moved around constantly seeking any available shade. Cases of bottled water disappeared as fast as they could be opened.

Before the public ceremony could begin, VIP's and elders shared in a sacred pipe ceremony, privately, inside the visitor centre. Sometime after noon they emerged and began to assemble in front of the large crowd that was now seated and patiently waiting for these important people to arrive.

The honoured guests were drummed in a Grand Entry style procession around the circle and back to their seats to mark the beginning of the ceremony. After a brief welcome, the Blackfoot Elders offered an opening prayer and speeches alternated between various government officials and tribal representatives.

A highlight of the proceedings was a number of presentations from local young Blackfoot students about the Galileo Project. This project brings together tribal elders and Blackfoot school children with the Galileo Educational Network, a web site where precious traditional stories and knowledge are being collected for today's and future generations to benefit from. www.galileo.org

Drummers and dancers helped to impart the spiritual significance of this place and the events of the day, with many in the crowd joining in a round dance of friendship.

Finally the ribbon was cut and everyone was able to tour the centre inside and out, gathering in groups to explore the intriguing displays and to socialize, and taking full advantage of the impressive refreshment tables.

Through the entire day, the sun blazed overhead in its own celebration of the occasion. Sometime in the middle of the night that followed, the wind returned, and it seemed as though the spirits that inhabit the rocks at Writing-on-Stone were sighing with contentment that it had been a good day.



Submitted by Coral Grove, Volunteer Steward Coordinator

We did it – we had beautiful weather for the volunteer conference. No snow, no rain, no power outages, just beautiful weather, wonderful times and great people. The 2007 Alberta Parks Volunteer Conference was held at the Pioneer Ranch Camp, in Crimson Lake Provincial Park, near Rocky Mountain House. The camp was a great setting for the event, as it had everything on site; accommodations, food services, facilities for activities, trails and a beautiful view of the lake.

Conference attendees starting arriving Friday afternoon to register, settle into their accommodations and check out the camp. After everyone filled up on a fantastic meal, we were entertained by the Friends of Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site. They presented a theatrical puppet show “The Man Who Looked at Stars!”, about the life and times of David Thompson. On both Friday and Saturday evenings, attendees were also able to witness first hand why the lake received the name that it did. The beautiful crimson sunsets were amazing.

On Saturday, attendees were able to choose two activities to try, one for the morning and one for the afternoon. With choices like canoeing, hiking, horseback riding, archery and geocaching it was hard to decide. In addition to the fun, the tours offered time for both staff and volunteers from across the province to network and share one on one.

Saturday evening was the time to recognize six of the many hard working and dedicated individuals and groups that contribute to Alberta Parks in various ways. As part of our celebration of Alberta Park’s 75th Anniversary, Carey Booth wrapped up the evening by guiding us on a breathtaking visual tour of protected areas across the province.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, everyone packed up and headed off to the Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site. There, two guides lead us on a trip into the past, telling us the stories and showing us the remains of the old forts that once stood by the river. After the tours, everyone enjoyed a picnic lunch and visit on site before saying their goodbyes and heading home.

Planning is already underway for next year’s volunteer conference in Grande Prairie on September 12-14. The incredible diversity of Alberta’s northwest region, from native prairie and trumpeter swans to magnificent vistas and dinosaur bones, will be yours to explore.





ALBERTA PARKS

Explore the Diversity of Alberta's northwest region
Volunteer Conference 2008 ~ Grande Prairie

1-866-427-3582 www.albertaparks.ca **Alberta**

Volunteer Award Recipients



Staff Lifetime Volunteerism Award
Doug Pilkington



Outstanding Individual Steward
Award
Elmar Augart



Outstanding Group Steward
Award
Charles Priestly accepts on behalf
of Beaverhill Bird Observatory



Campground Host Hospitality
Award
Jim and Lucienne Salahub



Campground Host Hospitality
Award
Ron Bishop



Facility Enhancement Award
Mike Radik

Congratulations to the Red Deer River Naturalists

Submitted by Coral Grove

At the end of May, Dorothy Dickson, on behalf of the Red Deer River Naturalists, received the Red Deer City and County Heritage Recognition Award for the Innisfail Natural Area. The Red Deer River Naturalists have been stewards for this natural area since 1988. In expressing their thanks, Dorothy congratulated the Heritage Preservation Committee for their first time of giving the award for preservation of a natural area, rather than a man-made heritage site. This award is given to projects or persons that demonstrate excellence in heritage preservation in one or more of the following categories:

- 1) restoration and/or adaptive reuse of heritage buildings;
- 2) new design compatible in a heritage context;
- 3) neighbourhood or community revitalization;
- 4) conservation and preservation of natural features or built heritage;
- 5) significant interpretation, publication, research or education in the area of heritage.

Once again, congratulations on your well deserved award.



Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society Receives 2006 City of Calgary Award

Originally printed in the Friends of Fish Creek Newsletter

The 2006 City of Calgary Awards ceremony took place in the lobby of City Hall on the evening of Wednesday, June 13th, and the Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society was thrilled to have received a City of Calgary award for the category of Environmental Achievement for a Not-for-Profit organization.

Mayor Dave Bronconnier was the Master of Ceremonies for the evening and all the recipients enjoyed being congratulated at the podium and having their photo taken with him and their award, which itself is a one-sided, copper replica of the original City Hall building. Shaw Cable did a great job of broadcasting this event on live television and on monitors for the intimate audience of approximately 200. During their acceptance speeches, all the winners looked exceptionally sharp on camera in front of the background of hundreds of real flowers, which enhanced the ceremony's overall beauty.

The Friends appreciate this nomination and are grateful for this award, which will undoubtedly enhance their profile and increase publicity for their group. Overall, 2006 was a really great year for



Erika Almási-Klausz (past Project Manager), Bonnie Castle-Dixon (Executive Director), Phil Greer (Vice Chair), Tom Jackman (Chairperson), Roland Kirzinger (Environmental Education Liaison), Donna Elms (Director at Large), Chris Lalonde (Communications Coordinator).

the Friends as they saw their membership and volunteer base grow substantially. New Park Care programs that got underway last year were the "Tackle-the-Tansy" and "Battle-the-Burdock" events. The Trail Care program also showed substantial growth and accomplishment. The Speaker's Series location was moved to the Fish Creek Public Library due to the increased popularity of the presentations and larger audience groups.

The Calgary Awards have been awarded annually since 1994, and represent the city's official Citizen Recognition Program, which acknowledges individuals and groups in this city who have improved the quality of life for Calgarians. The Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society would like to thank MLA Art Johnson, and his assistant, Donna Elms, for nominating them for this prestigious award.

Board Leadership 2008

Ideas Into Action:

A Conference for Board Members of Nonprofit/Voluntary Organizations

March 29, 2008 at Grant MacEwan College, City Centre Campus, Edmonton

This conference is focused on board members of voluntary/non-profit organizations and will have a variety of sessions addressing the needs of both beginner and experienced board members.

If you want further information on Board Leadership 2008: Ideas into Action, please visit website: <http://www.ecvo.ca/boardleadership2008.html>, or email registration@ecvo.ca.

The following is a list of grants available from provincial and federal governments, and others which your organization/program/project may qualify for:

GRANTS AVAILABLE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

ALBERTA SPORT, RECREATION, PARKS & WILDLIFE FOUNDATION DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES PROGRAM

Purpose: provide support to Albertans working in the areas of sport, recreation, parks and wildlife for project and program related endeavors

Grant Framework: Typical grants range up to \$5,000.

Application Deadlines: January 1, May 1, October 1 each year

Phone Number: (780) 644-4897

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES PROGRAM (CIP)

Purpose: support project-based initiatives in areas such as community services, seniors services, libraries, arts and culture, sports, education, health and recreation.

Grant Framework: Funding is approved on a matching grant basis, to maximum of \$75,000.

If a group can demonstrate significant difficulty in raising matching funds, up to \$10,000 will be considered on a non-matching basis.

Application Deadline:

Applications can be made any time throughout the year.

Phone Number: 1-800-642-3855

WILDROSE FOUNDATION QUARTERLY GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose: support community service non-profit organizations in their ability to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow by investing in strong, caring and healthy communities.

Grant Framework: Funding is approved on a matching grant basis, to maximum of \$50,000

Application Deadlines: January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1.

Phone Number: (780) 422-2258

COMMUNITY FACILITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CFEP)

Purpose: provide financial assistance to build, repair, renovate or otherwise improve Alberta's extensive network of community-use facilities.

Grant Framework: Funding approved on a matching basis, to maximum of \$125,000.

Application Deadline: Applications can be made any time throughout the year

Phone Number: 1-800-642-3855

OTHER INITIATIVES PROGRAM (OIP)

Purpose: provide support to worthy Alberta projects which cannot be funded under the criteria or existing funding levels of other Alberta Lottery Fund grant programs

Grant Framework: Eligibility of the applicant and the project, and the amount of each grant is determined on a case by case basis.

Application Deadline:

Applications can be made any time throughout the year.

Phone Number: 1-800-642-3855

All the grants above may also be accessed through the following website: <http://www.tprc.alberta.ca/grantprograms>

FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE

ENVIRONMENT CANADA ECOACTION COMMUNITY FUNDING PROGRAM

Purpose: provide financial support to community groups for projects that have measurable, positive impacts on the environment.

Grant Framework: Funding is approved on a matching grant basis, to maximum of \$100,000.

Application Deadline: February 1/October 1

Website: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction>

Phone Number: 1-800-567-1570

FEDERAL GRANTS AVAILABLE

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE HABITAT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM FOR SPECIES AT RISK

Purpose: provides funding to “stewards” for implementing activities that protect or conserve habitats for species designated nationally “at risk” (endangered, threatened, or of special concern).

Grant Framework: Contact CWS for more information

Application Deadline: February 1/October 1

Website: <http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca>

Phone Number: (780) 951-8826

OTHER GRANTS AVAILABLE

ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION GRANT ELIGIBLE CONSERVATION FUND (GECF)

Purpose: Fund projects that meet and further the mission: to conserve, protect and enhance Alberta’s biological natural resources

Grant Framework: Grants are divided into two categories: Small Grants (up to \$2000) and Large Grants (over \$2000).

Application Deadline: Application submission January 1 to 31, 2008

Website: <http://www.ab-conservation.com/grants>

Phone Number: 1-877-969-9091

OTHER GRANTS AVAILABLE

ALBERTA ECOTRUST GRANT PROGRAMS

Purpose: Support community-based environmental action, while recognizing both the limited capacity of some groups and the need for adequate resources to undertake the important work of protecting our provincial ecosystems.

Grant Framework: Grants will support up to 75% of the total project costs. The remaining 25% must be matched.

Application Deadline: Community Grant – April 15/ October 15
Multi-Year Implementation Grant – June 15

Youth Environmental Stewardship Grant – December 10

Major Project Grant - February 15/August 15

Website: <http://www.albertaecotrust.com>

Phone Number: (403) 209-2245

ALBERTA STEWARDSHIP NETWORK WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose: Increased awareness and knowledge of local watershed and/or improved conditions of local watersheds

Grant Framework: Maximum grant is \$7500.

Application Deadline: 2008 deadline to be announced.

Website: <http://www.ab.stewardshipcanada.ca>

Phone Number: 1-877-727-5276

TD FRIENDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION

Purpose: Protect and preserve the Canadian environment, assist young Canadians in understanding and participating in environmental activities, support urban renewal and/or enhances cooperation among environmental organizations.

Grant Framework: The amount of each grant is determined on a case by case basis.

Application Deadline: At least three months prior to the start date of project.

Website: <http://www.td.com/fef>

Phone Number: (604) 654-8832

If you are interested in researching other foundation and granting opportunities, assistance can be provided by contacting Brad Marshall, Coordinator of Volunteer Services for Alberta Parks, at either (780) 427-9017 or email: Brad.Marshall@gov.ab.ca.

Seasons Greetings from the Volunteer Coordinating Committee!



2008 Vitalize Provincial Voluntary Sector Conference

VITALIZE is the premier annual conference for the voluntary sector in Alberta. Hosted annually by the Wild Rose Foundation, it provides a development opportunity with sessions that address the educational needs of Alberta's voluntary sector through cost-effective programming and networking. Board members, staff and leadership volunteers will all find value in attending.

Registration information available at www.vitalizeconference by March 15th.



*When: June 12, 13 & 14th,
2008*

*Where: Shaw Convention
Centre, Edmonton*

*Cost: \$120.00 (includes
conference fees, 5 meals and
hotel/shuttle service)*