

2019...A YEAR IN REVIEW



An Incredible Year

2019 has been a busy year for the Society with work “bees” on Mount Rose Swanson and Thomas N. Hayes Ecological Park, attending community events doing outreach and offering our input at planning meetings with the local governments and the Shuswap Trails Alliance.

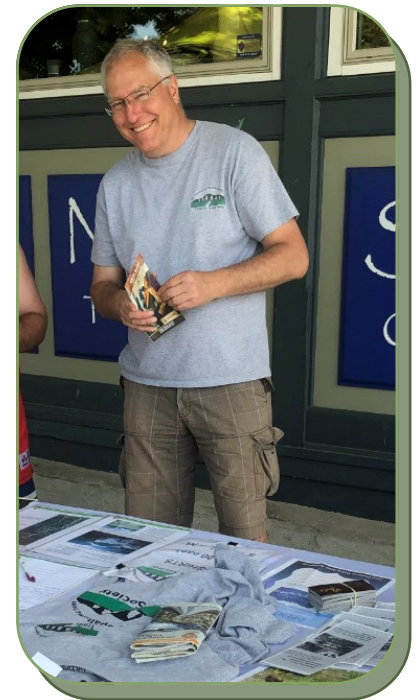
ASTS has led a community hike up to the look-outs on Mount Rose Swanson and encouraged folks to use the local trail network by advertising the information at a kiosk at the local Farmers Market and the Green Fair.

In addition, ASTS has attended meetings with the Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Armstrong to provide input to the Trails Master Plan and the

Official Community Plan. ASTS has also been represented at Shuswap Trails Alliance meetings to provide input to projects in the area as well as keeping abreast of plans for the Rail Trail from Sicamous to Armstrong.

It’s been a busy year for this dedicated group!! To top off the year, the Society was nominated for the 2019 Community Excellence Award for the Meighan Cr clean-up!

The executive meets monthly at the Chamber of Commerce office (third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 pm) and encourages members and interested individuals to attend.



Remembering Peter

Our Trails Society and the entire community has suffered an incredible loss. Our president, Peter Rotzetter, passed away on January 30, 2020. Peter’s gentle approach to friendships and partnerships, has left us feeling devastated and empty. Peter became our president in 2015 and his leadership has moved our society forward in so many ways. His humour, love for the outdoors and enthusiastic drive to improve and develop trails in our valley, will have a lasting impact in our area.



Sharing a Peter Story

One of my fun memories volunteering with Peter these past few years happened in Oct 2018. Peter, Ken and I were starting to build a raised walkway at the entrance to Thomas Hayes Park. One of the first jobs was to dig six holes, each hole was to be three feet deep to support our six inch by six inch support posts. So I had the two center post holes basically done when I noticed Peter on his knees, bent over his first hole with his tape measure out. Peter’s

hole was not only square, it was precisely 6.5 inches by 6.5 inches wide. Now I have dug a lot of holes for a lot of posts in my time, but I have never even considered digging a square hole for a square post. But that was Peter, attention to detail was very important to him, in everything he did. His post slid down into his square hole like a hand into a glove, and it was level to boot! Very impressive.

Service for Peter will be held at
**1pm on Thursday
February 6th at
Armstrong Bible Chapel.**

In lieu of flowers or gifts, Peter’s family has requested that if you would like to make a contribution in Peter’s memory that it be made to the Armstrong Spallumcheen Trails Society, care of Chris Williams.

His positive determination, organization and attention to detail will be missed by many residents of Armstrong. Ken and I can never dig a post hole again without thinking of Peter. Thanks for everything Peter, you are missed.

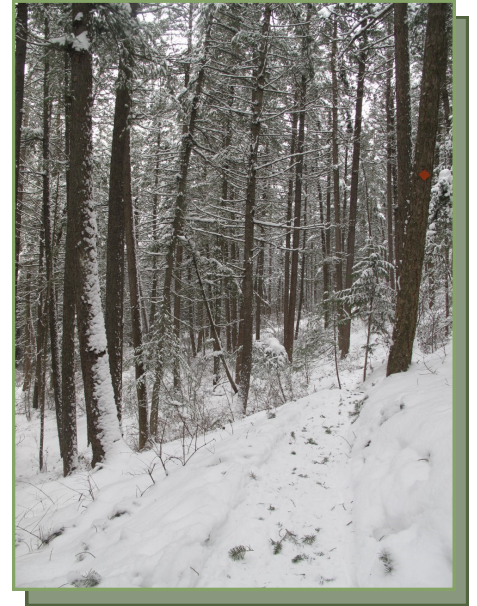
~ Glenn

My Tribute to Peter

Peter was very community minded which was very impressive as he and Jolanda only moved here 10 years ago. His strengths were organization, engaging the public, PR, hardworking, not just on time to meetings but arriving early to set things up, greeting people with a smile and a handshake, positive attitude, dedication, generosity and caring nature. He was our President

and the face of the ASTS. He made connections and put us in the position that we are today, an organization being on the cusp of great things – respected by both local governments as we will be able to offer valuable services to our Community in the future. Peter has left a huge hole for us to fill and will be sorely missed.

~ Marge



The gentle beauty of a forest under snow . Thomas Hayes. Photo by Suzie Sims.

Thomas N. Hayes Ecological Park

Located to the west of Thomas Hayes Road, Thomas N. Hayes Ecological Park is a 58.5 ha/142.83 acre Park. ASTS was very active during 2019 with both trail maintenance and upgrades. The Park is being used by diverse groups including residents, local school children for outdoor education classes, the Allan Brooks Nature Centre for a Day Camp, the Vernon Outdoors Club, the North Okanagan Naturalists Club and the visiting public year-round. It is estimated that the number of visitors is approximately 1,500/yr.

During the past year ASTS surveyed the Park to ascertain boundaries, cleared trails and made plans for new trails and a lookout. The proposed new trails are in their formative stages and are intended for the northern portion of the park. The viewpoint will over-look Otter Lake and the old windmill on the adjacent property. It should add much interest to the Park. This trail will continue south and meet up with Chipmunk Cut-off Trail. In addition another new trail will by-pass an area that is subject to flooding during spring freshet. The ASTS is working closely with the Township of Spallumcheen and the City of Armstrong regarding our plans. In addition, the Shuswap Trail Alliance will be leading a trail building workshop in the Park in the spring of 2020 so we can learn how to build trails to proper standards.

ASTS has designed an information kiosk to replace the old dilapidated map and sign erected many years ago. It will include an up to date map of the trails, history of the Park and information about the flora and fauna of the area. It is planned for an area near the parking lot

on Thomas Hayes Road. Plans are to erect the kiosk in 2020. Stay tuned!!

Thomas Hayes Park isn't only a spring, summer and fall nature reserve and trail system. It's also a magnificent place to spend a few hours in winter! You can snowshoe on the forested trails. The snow can tell stories; if you're lucky you might spot the tracks of some animal or the wing imprints of a bird as it swoops down on prey. Also, when covered with fresh snow, the mixture of pine, fir, cedar and birch form the most amazingly imaginative "creatures" and abstract works of art. Even in winter there are birds in the Park...ravens, bald eagles, chickadees. On a recent trip, one of our members came across a small group of young people training for an upcoming "eco-marathon" type of competition! Their coach was thrilled to bring his team to the Park and be able to run in the snow. The snow replicated the "resistance" of sand for their calisthenics training.

Take a Quiz... What local plants are these?



Photos by Suzie Sims

*Hint:
Common throughout
the Okanagan,
including Thomas
Hayes Ecological Park*

Look for an answer on last page...

East Rosedale to Powerhouse Rd

Located between East Rosedale and Whittaker Roads, the hiking route (in Phase II) has been flagged but ASTS is still awaiting input from the Township in order to proceed. This corridor is part of the Transportation Plan for the Township although it has not been upgraded at this time.

Rose Swanson Mountain

Rose Swanson Mountain – ASTS volunteers devoted many hours to general maintenance on Mount Rose Swanson during the year. Trails were cleared, especially after windstorms and heavy snows, repairs made to the outhouse along with a general clean-up. The outhouse was deemed salvageable so, thanks to donated material and workshop space, panels were prefabricated, painted and packed up the mountain in January. In May the garbage was cleaned out of the pit and cribbing secured to the base to seal it off. We are very pleased with our efforts. Fortunately there is little garbage along the trails other than unauthorized fire pits at the top of Mt Swanson. These are cause for great concern especially if lit during fire season. They were cleaned up to make the viewpoint more natural. Garbage remains a problem in the parking lot at the bottom.

On frequent hikes up the mountain it was noted by members that trail markers were being removed even though placed well out of normal reach. We would appreciate any ideas about why trail markers are removed as it is a safety issue. Motorcycles have been on the short western Green Trail up to Millers' Bluff, however, Rose Swanson remains a very popular hiking area and is enjoyed by many local citizens and

out-of-town visitors. ASTS would love to get an idea of the number of hikers who use the Rose Swanson trails as we know they are heavily used.

Logging is planned in an area to the west and north of the trail network within the near future. BC Timber Sales [BCTS] told the Society that logging is being allowed to control beetle infestations and clear dead wood on small blocks to decrease the possibility of wildfire. In August ASTS Board members went on a fieldtrip with BCTS representatives to our area of concern and were relieved to learn that the 3 closest cut-blocks will not impact the existing trails physically or visually. BCTS assured us that existing and proposed new logging roads will be rehabilitated and all areas of seasonal drainage will be avoided. The Society will continue conversations about the logging plans with BCTS in 2020.

Liaising with Local Governments

The Master Trails Plan for Armstrong Spallumcheen is in the works. Our Society has been directly involved in discussions and provided input to both councils for long range planning. This will hopefully feed into the new Official Community Plan due out in 2020.



Urban Trails

Have you explored the City Trails? Many people walk these trails as evidenced in the winter. ASTS Board members regularly walk them to do errands or for exercise and it isn't very often that "trail breaking" occurs. The hoar frost, the masked quietness and excellent snow covered city view are glorious. Most trails are relatively flat and it is common to see dog walkers or others out just getting exercise. Come the rest of the year it's wonderful to walk beside Meighan Creek, watch and hear the abundant birdlife in the wetlands and enjoy the wildflowers.

Shuswap Trail Alliance (STA) Events

Shuswap Trails Roundtable - This event was held Feb 13th in Sicamous and ASTS was well represented. It is good to be with so many like-minded people and provide input to projects happening in our area.

Okanagan Shuswap Century Ride – ASTS assisted the STA at their booth in Armstrong's Memorial Park on May 26th to promote the Sicamous to Armstrong Rail Trail. Planning is gaining momentum, public meetings are planned and donations for a tax deduction are being accepted. Please contact the ASTS for details.

Funding

We were delighted to receive funding from Urban Systems towards the construction of the Thomas Hayes kiosk. It is very heartening to know that there are businesses that are cognizant of our role in the community and are willing to contribute. Many thanks indeed!



Promotional Events of 2019

Spring Break Out Promotion – This event was hosted by the Chamber of Commerce in the Armstrong Activity Centre on April 6th. ASTS had a table set up but unfortunately the event was not well attended.

Monashee Outdoors Grand Reopening – Monashee Outdoors is a member/sponsor of the ASTS so at their grand reopening on June 1st they invited us to have a sidewalk booth to promote our Society. We had promotional material, maps and signed up a number of new members.

Meighan Creek Clean-up – A good group of volunteers (community and ASTS members) participated in this worthwhile activity.

Green Fair – The Armstrong Spallumcheen Environmental Trust and Dave Derbowka hosted the 14th Annual Green Fair in the Askew's parking lot in Armstrong on Saturday, April 21st. The ASTS participated and had a display set up. Although cold weather and gusty winds reduced the numbers visiting the Fair, there was interest in ASTS and the society's goals by those who attended. The Green Fair seems to increase in size each year and provides excellent opportunities to learn about the 'green' economy and low impact recreational opportunities such as offered by ASTS!

Countdown To Canada Day Hike— This ASTS guided hike continues to be a popular way to celebrate our nation's birthday and June 23rd, 2019 was no exception. ASTS set up an information tent in the parking lot where participants signed in and information was handed out to other hikers who wanted to hike on their own. Once again, the guided hike included Helen Sidney, a well-known 96 year old local area resident. She entertained other participants with her anecdotes during the hike up the mountain. As usual, the Canadian flag was unfurled when Millers Bluff was reached. Everyone sang a rousing rendition of "O Canada" and enjoyed a picnic lunch in the sunshine. An additional feature was offered this year to those participants who wanted to

continue on and explore other parts of the mountain including the second viewpoint of Mt Swanson. They made a round trip loop and ended up back in the parking lot just after the Millers Bluff participants.

Armstrong Farmers Market—ASTS had a booth at three Farmers

Markets to promote the organization and raise the profile of our local trail network. Through attending community events ASTS is becoming better known as questions are focused on where to go hiking, the state of local trails and the Sicamous to Armstrong Rail Trail. There is a lot of interest in our local trails, especially with folks moving into our area wanting recreational amenities. When learning what is offered they are very impressed.

We now have our own tent and a banner to use at events. Our new banner was used at the September market



and received very positive comments.

Festival of Trees - Each year ASTS decorates a Christmas tree for the Festival of Trees at the Armstrong Spallumcheen Museum and Art Gallery and donates a basket of goodies to be won by the highest bidder in the Silent Auction. 2019 was no exception. Our tree received many compliments and the Museum was delighted that so many community organizations support this worthwhile event where the proceeds are donated to local organizations supporting food banks.

We would like to thank our members for their continued support of the Armstrong Spallumcheen Trails Society!

There is a great deal of work going on behind the scenes to get the "red tape" out of the way so that we can begin to do what most people in our Community want. We need to get ideas from the membership as to what you want out of your Society so please come out and help at outings and clean-up days. Watch our website for details. www.astrailssociety.com

**It's been an incredibly busy year and 2020 promises to be even busier!
We hope you will continue your interest and support in the Trail's Society!**

Thank you!

Your Board

Glenn, Marge, Suzie, Terry, Petra, Ken, Ron, Chris, Heather!

And a special thanks to Ron for all of the lumber he donated for past and future projects!

Armstrong Spallumcheen Trails Society [ASTS] is a non-profit organization of dedicated volunteers working for the development, coordination, linking, preservation and use of trails in Armstrong- Spallumcheen. ASTS depends on public support to assist us in continuously improving the areas trail network. We encourage folks to support the Society by becoming members, local business supporters, volunteering or making tax deductible donations to the Society .