



2020...A YEAR IN REVIEW

President's Message

Despite COVID-19, 2020 was actually a very good year for the ASTS. We were able to get a lot of fieldwork done, attend many planning meetings and we were successful at obtaining grants. Members formed a bubble in late March and with everyone told to stay in their own community this led to working on many projects, both in the field, at a computer as well as learning how to use Zoom. We volunteered over 1,506 hours during the year.

Our fieldwork mainly centered on projects in Thomas N Hayes Ecological Park with a minor amount of work at Mt Rose Swanson. 2021 promises to finish some projects in Thomas Hayes, promote and identify a City Loop Trails and on Mt Rose Swanson we plan to do some signage, construct a memorial and perhaps an information kiosk.

We finalized the Thomas N Hayes Ecological Park Management Plan and received approval from Crown Lands. This allows us to build structures, trail and generally make improvements in the Park. Forming a partnership with both the City of Armstrong and the Township of Spallumcheen with Stewardship Agreements gives the Trails Society credibility, responsibility and a yearly monetary grant. We applied for grants to help us with projects and were successful at receiving money from VantageOne Credit Union, the North Okanagan Community Foundation and the Armstrong Co-

op's Fuel Good Day. A heartfelt "thank you" to those businesses and organizations.

Our President, Peter Rotzetter, passed away unexpectedly in Jan 2020. To the end of the year the ASTS received over \$1,000 to put towards a memorial for him on Mt Rose Swanson. It will be erected in 2021. We are a small but mighty organization and at the end of our Fiscal Year we had 45 Single, 12 Family, 3 Business and 2 honorary memberships. We are always looking for more members and need help with a number of varied tasks requiring skills beyond current capabilities.

We are providing input to the Armstrong Spallumcheen Trails Master Plan, the Spallumcheen Trails and Cycling Active Transportation Network Plan and the Sicamous to Armstrong Rail Trail. Our community outreach in 2020 consisted of promoting ourselves at the Armstrong Farmers Markets, the Co-op Fuel Good Day and the Pumpkin Festival.

Marge



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Board of Directors for 2021

Officers

President	Marge Sidney
Vice President	Glenn Gytenbeek
Secretary	Suzie Sims
Treasurer	Chris Williams

Directors at Large

- Pat Brinnen
- Ron Brinnen
- Ken Chapman
- Ron Neden
- Jill de la Salle

<h3>Trails Master Plan</h3>	<p>The consulting group, RC Strategies, had public input sessions for our local communities for the Parks and Rec Master Plan early in 2020. The ASTS was invited to two private meetings to comment on the Trails Master Plan portion of this larger plan. After considering it, we felt the future trail portion needed to be more specific and complete.</p> <p>To this end we created two "Wish Lists" of Trails for both the City and the Township. We submitted these maps and trail descriptions to RC Strategies and they will be included in their final report to both our local Councils. These Wish Lists were also submitted to the Township Planner. It is hoped that some of the suggestions can be implemented in the years to come to enlarge our local trail network. They are available for viewing on our ASTS website. We encourage everyone to add any trails that may have been overlooked.</p> <p>https://www.astrailsociety.com/future-projects/</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Jill</i></p>
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Co-Op Fuel Good Day

We had tremendous support from numerous drivers who fueled up their vehicles at the Armstrong Regional Co-op on September 15th – private individuals, folks from out-of-town, City and Township employees, area businesses; that's because the ASTS was the Regional Co-op's choice as recipient of their 2020 Fuel Good Day. Much earlier in the year, when the Co-op announced that they were once again requesting submissions from local non-profit Societies for their annual donation, two of us put our heads together and made a "pitch". We knew full-well the level of competition we faced but figured **"nothing ventured, nothing gained."** So imagine the sur-



prise and delight when we got a phone call from Jason Keis, Marketing & Sales Manager of the Regional Co-op, to tell us we had been selected as their 2020 winner! Well – how about that?

As the Co-op tells it ... **"Giving back to our communities is a proud tradition at the Armstrong Regional Co-op. For more than 98 years, the Armstrong Regional Co-op has proudly served its members and communities."**

It was built on a foundation of community involvement and service and through local support they are able to return profits to members and the community in which they operate. They care about our hometown and support causes that matter to our community.

On September 24th, the Armstrong



Spallumcheen Trails Society was presented with a \$2,625 cheque. Huge thanks go to the Co-op for choosing us and to Armstrong/Spallumcheen residents for supporting us. The funds we received will go towards maintaining and improving existing trails, building new ones and improving the signage in our beautiful part of the North Okanagan Valley.

Suzie



Website www.astrailsociety.com

 @armstrongtrails

Purchase your memberships through our webpage or email us at astrailsociety@gmail.com

ASTS Memberships

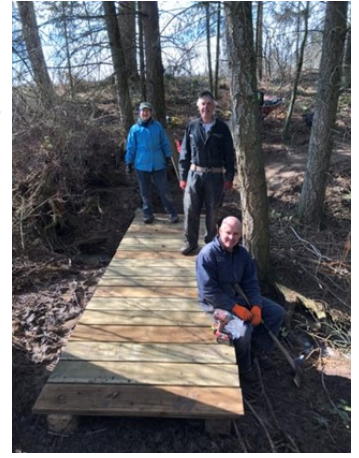
We are a non-profit society that relies on people such as yourself to support the initiative and maintain local trails. Please consider taking out a membership to help us continue our work.

Yearly memberships rates are:

Single \$10
Family \$25

Thomas Hayes Ecological Reserve

Well, 2020 got off to a great start in March at Thomas Hayes and we finished up the year here as well. First thing we constructed was a small boardwalk on “Coyote Loop” over the run-off channel from the large field. There was serious erosion and the channel was becoming difficult to cross. We did this small project just as the snow was melting and were able to slide supplies and tools over the snow which saved a lot of effort.



The parking lot was in poor condition. With a donation of no-post guardrails and gravel from the Township of Spallumcheen and machine time from a great neighbour, **Derick Jahn of Matrix Excavation**, who spread and graded the gravel, we made this a much larger and friendlier spot to park. We were very much appreciative of the donations. The park has had exceptional use due in part to the COVID pandemic as 16-18 vehicles were frequently counted, and many users for the first time.

It was noticed that the established lease from the Province stipulated that a park sign must be in existence, so we built one. We had great fun at work parties cutting and painting the letters. Special thanks goes to **Mike Boersma**, the farmer who works the fields on the way into the Park, for using his tractor to hoist the sign up. Now visitors are sure where the park is and don't park on neighbouring property.

New trail and Look-Out coming Spring 2021

As we are in close partnerships with the Shuswap Trail Alliance we utilized their expertise and had a Trail Building Workshop in the fall. We needed to learn the proper trail building techniques so what better than to have a hands on experience building a new trail that we have been imagining for some time. The new ‘Otter Lookout Trail’ was about ½ done over the course of two work days; it will offer a spectacular view of the south end of Otter Lake when officially opened in the spring of 2021. Some people have already discovered and are eagerly using it even though it isn't fully completed.



Our largest work project was the planning and construction of an information kiosk at the trail head. This involved a lot of work planning the design, calculating the material required, prefabbing the pieces and preparing the site before a great work day to erect it in October. The only items left to complete are the information panels. There will be a map of the Park, history of



the Thomas Hayes family and how the area became a Park, and the trees, flowers and animals that you might see when you go for a walk. The big reveal will be in the spring of 2021. The vision is that this information will be of interest and also help to educate all users of the Park.

Thank you PVSS grad class in moving the gravel from the parking lot to the base of the new kiosk! Hard workers with a great attitude!

We also now have a garbage barrel at the trail head which is being well used. Thank-you very much people. Little plastic poo bags thrown in the bush were not appreciated. We finished off the year in the snow again by improving the pit toilet. We placed it on a new raised base and replaced the roof with an added overhang. 2021 will see more accomplishments including the completion of the new trail, the kiosk and hopefully mini trail markers at all trail intersections.

Rail Trail Update

Shuswap – North Okanagan (Sicamous - Armstrong) Rail Trail

The 50 km long, non-motorized multi-user trail between Sicamous to Armstrong will be part of a trail extending south to Osoyoos and potentially into the USA. The trail is a joint project of the Splitsin, CSRD and RDNO. A Governance Advisory Committee is overseeing the project, with co-ordination being managed by the Shuswap Trail Alliance, led by Phil McIntyre-Paul. Several ASTS directors have been attending the Fundraising and Community Advisory Committee Zoom meetings since June 2020.

Fundraising started in November 2020 with the hiring of Alex de Chantal, a Mara Lake resident, as a short-term fundraising co-ordinator. The initial fundraising effort was the sale of greeting cards showcasing the natural beauty of the rail trail in winter by local artist, Otto Pfannschmidt. We are encouraging everyone to support this fundraising effort by purchasing these cards at Askews - they will match donations up to \$20,000! Cards are also available at Monashee Outdoors on 2595 P.V. Blvd in Armstrong.



Expect to see accelerated and widely advertised fundraising in 2021. The following is part of a recent press release: “One meter of hard packed aggregate trail surface costs \$160, and with 50,000 metres to go, the fundraising goal is \$8,000,000. If we can raise funds to surface the trail, those funds can help leverage government funding to address all the other layers.”

As we secure sufficient blocks of funding, we then work with the Rail Trail inter-jurisdictional partners to apply for provincial and federal grants and start building the trail – one step at a time.” More information can be found and donations made at www.shuswapnorthokanaganrailtrail.ca

Ron

Armstrong Farmers Market and Pumpkin Fest



All non-profit groups are invited to three free Saturdays every season to promote themselves at the Armstrong Farmers Market.

The ASTS took full advantage of that and participated on June 27th, July 25th and Sept 25th, as well as having a booth at the Chamber of Commerce sponsored Pumpkin Fest on October 10th.

We all enjoyed talking to members and newcomers to the area, while promoting our organization and the trails.

Local trail maps and pamphlets were handed out. Memberships and T-shirts were sold. As a result of these markets two new families and 11 new individual members joined the ASTS.



We also promoted the proposed Sicamous to Armstrong Rail Trail and the Co-op Fuel Good Day.

ASTS participation was well received by event organizers and the public. With the COVID restrictions this year, our local trails have seen more traffic than ever. Trail users were very appreciative of the information and the ongoing trail maintenance by all the volunteers.

Chris

Rose Swanson Accomplishments of 2020

A modest amount of time (approx. 200 hrs) was spent working on Mt Rose Swanson in 2020. It began in earnest on May 1st, with six volunteers doing a spring cleaning on all the trails. May 5th found us cleaning up the winter's accumulated garbage in the parking lot and what a mess it was! Over 40 pounds of nails from the burned pallets alone, plus other dumped yard waste. We would really appreciate it if folks would not dump yard waste or burn pallets. We also managed to improve water drainage on the Orange and Blue trails then. That was a really busy day!

Our next outing was on May 12th when we built 75 m of new trail on the Orange trail to bypass a seasonal muddy creek crossing. We were able to maintain the trail elevation and built a raised walkway over the creek with repurposed dead trees from the vicinity. That sure made it a lot easier as we didn't have to pack material in. We had a lot of fun with this one and the work crew affectionately named the walkway the "Orange Corona Crossing". Pun intended with the COVID reference! Amazingly all of this was constructed in one day!!!

July 28th was the next big work day as both the Orange and Purple trails received a major trimming with loppers,



saws, gas powered hedge trimmer, and rakes. Lesson learned this day - if temperatures are over 30° C on a work day, forget it and reschedule for a cooler day!

September 3rd consisted of a minor clearing of the Red loop which included removing 5 deadfalls across



the trail. Our last work day for the year was on November 2nd. The Red and Purple loops were cleaned up with branches cut back and deadfalls removed.

The ASTS Board members also enjoy hiking the trails on Mt Rose Swanson. We go with the intent of enjoying the fresh air and the scenery while we get some exercise but now we can't help ourselves. There have been many times when we include a saw or axe, some toilet paper for the outhouse or garbage bags for litter - in our day packs. We love the mountain but can't just walk by something that we see needs doing. Thanks to those people in the community who put in similar efforts to keep the trails in good shape. We don't know who you are but we see your ongoing efforts. It takes a community to maintain a trail!



Our focus in 2021 includes updating/replacing all trail junction maps on the trail system, and if we are really lucky, have help and are energetic, a new kiosk at the parking lot.

Glenn