

2022...A YEAR IN REVIEW



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President's Message

It's been another busy year! We concentrated our fieldwork on Mt Rose Swanson this year with a small amount of work at Thomas N Hayes Ecological Park. We continue to be involved with development referrals for the City of Armstrong. As well, we provided preliminary feedback to the City's Active Transportation Plan. We continued to help with the Township of Spallumcheen's Select Committee when required.

Two special events were held on Mt Rose Swanson this year to showcase this area to the public. Our community outreach at the Armstrong Farmer's Market and Green Fair continues to be a great way to connect with the public, provide maps and information, and obtain members.

It's also exciting to hear that significant funding has been received by the North Okanagan Rail Trail and that work will be started between Sicamous and Stepney Road, around Enderby in 2023.

Many thanks to the City and Township for their support and guidance and to all our members who have provided help out on the trails and at our community booth. Happy trails!

Marge



Board of Directors for 2023

Executive

President	Marge Sidney
Vice President	Ken Chapman
Secretary	Leslie Bogart
Treasurer	Pat Brinnen

Directors at Large

Andrej Arajs
 Ron Brinnen
 Glenn Gytenbeek
 John Irving
 Ron Neden
 Suzie Sims

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

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

Website

www.astrailsociety.com



Mt Rose Swanson Events

We held 2 special events on the mountain this year, **BC Trails Day and a Summer Solstice Hike**. For both events we teamed up with the **Friends of Rose Swanson (FoRSES)**.

BC Trails Day is a day for celebrating and caring for BC's trail systems, educating about responsible recreation and encouraging more British Columbians to enjoy trails and outdoor spaces. This initiative was launched by the **Outdoor Recreation Council of BC** and June 4th, 2022 was the 2nd annual event. With COVID we realized just how important our trails and the outdoors are to people.

We hosted 2 contests; a **“Three Peak Hike”** and a **“Virtual Scavenger Hunt”**. The Three Peak Hike involved participants travelling to 3 peaks indicated on a map and taking a selfie to prove they were there.



The Virtual Scavenger Hunt involved taking photos of a required list of items such as the bark of 3 different tree species, bedrock, a bug, etc.



All photos were to be uploaded to a website for verification and winners were chosen. **Thanks to Monashee Outdoors, Shepherds Hardware Outdoor Living Centre and Ok Valley Freeze Dry for prizes and Rancho Vignola for snacks.** Despite the inclement weather everyone had a good time! *Marge*

Our second event was a guided **Summer Solstice Hike** held on June 26th. It was a beautiful sunny evening! We met at the Mt Rose Swanson parking lot (65 people) and were bolstered with **snacks thanks to Rancho Vignola**. It took us ~1 3/4 hrs to reach a viewpoint on the north side of the mountain. For many it was their first time there.



We had support from the **Vernon ATV Club** to transport ice cream **thanks to Askews**, water/pop and spotting scopes, and also to provide emergency transport if required. Great views and socializing! We had hoped to offer night vision goggles and a telescope but unfortunately that fell through. At 10 pm it was time to head back using headlamps. For most it was their first time hiking in the dark! Many said that they would like us to host another hike like this again! It was a lot of fun! We will see what we can do! *Marge*



Mt Rose Swanson Projects

"You Are Here" Maps

The ASTS finished a much needed task in May. We renamed all of the main south trails, calculated their distances and installed posts with new signs at all trail junctions. Gone are the various colour names of trails and in are new tree names - Aspen, Douglas Fir, Jackpine, Jackpine Cutoff and Fir Cone. For historic reasons we have kept Centennial, but extended the route to keep it simple. The majority of this trail was constructed in 1966/67 to commemorate Canada's Centennial birthday.



In addition, there is also a trail, Cougar Connector, that connects these trails to the lesser known trails on the north side of the mountain. We know that these new junction signs will make it easier to locate yourself and safer to travel year round.

Marge



New Trail Name Signs

Remember the cedar tree that was illegally cut down next to the Mt Rose Swanson parking lot last year? The ASTS salvaged the wood and one of our talented woodworking members sawed it into boards and turned the pieces into stunning new trail signs!



Two teams of 4 worked together in September and 26 trail signs were erected on the main south trails, the better-known side of the mountain. These and the new 'You Are Here' Maps confirm that you are indeed on the trail you figured you were on.

Safety is paramount! Thank you for the positive feedback everyone!

Marge



Stream Crossing Remediation

Late September brought another ASTS work party. Another perfect day weather wise - sunny but not too hot, and no bugs! Our destination was an existing seasonal stream crossing on the south side.

This particular project had been on our minds for several years as the log forming the crossing had rotted to the extent that it was considered to be unsafe. We had great working conditions as the stream was dry!

The method of remediation was assessed on-site. The work was carried out in a few hours, using natural materials from the immediate vicinity of the crossing. Many hands make light work and we had a lot of fun - lots of laughing and joking!

Ran N

Trail Mapping

In order to familiarize ourselves with the trails that exist on Mt Rose Swanson, and as part of a data collection exercise for the Section 56/57 application, members of the ASTS GPSed every trail that we found. Most of the trails were walked by 2 to 4 members, between mid-April and mid-October. It took us, off and on, a year to complete this project. Continuous GPS positional data (tracks) were obtained using a Garmin Forerunner 245 sport-watch while walking. Simultaneously, details of trail name, distance walked, start, finish and junction locations were recorded in a notebook.

Approximately 10 kms of trails were tracked on the south side of the mountain and 30 kms on the north and west side. We probably walked 3 to 4 times those distances to get these tracks. We looked for side trails while exploring the major trails. Soon every break in the brush along the trail looked like a potential side trail! Most of the trails tracked are presently usable, but some need serious removal of brush and deadfall trees for future use.

The GPS tracks were emailed as KML files to a GIS technician at the **Columbia Shuswap Regional District**, who created maps from the data. It should be noted that legal survey quality GPS positions require a clear view of the sky, a significant set-up time and a good antenna. Walking through the bush only provides brief glimpses of the sky and a sport-watch has a tiny antenna (length less than 2cm). As a result, the raw GPS data does not produce a line accurately depicting the trail. The GIS program processes the data to produce a smoother looking curve. The resulting map certainly is not perfect, but is good enough for recreational use. Presently we cannot publish maps of these trails until the Section 56/57 application is approved by the Provincial government. We will be making a Section 56/57 application to obtain: recognition of the existing trails, permission to place structures and, add additional trails.

Ran N



A more Mundane Contribution

For those of you who have hiked the Thomas Hayes and Mt Rose Swanson trails ... and ... um, needed “to go” – hopefully you’ll have used the outhouses rather than “behind a tree”. What you may not realize is that one of the many miscellaneous tasks undertaken by Board members, is replenishing the supply of TP at both sites! Be thankful for small mercies, right?

Suzie



Promotional Events

In the spring we had our booth set up during the **Annual Green Fair** which is organized by the **Armstrong Spallumcheen Environmental Trust**. They focus on supplying bursary dollars for local students pursuing environment-related post-secondary education and support anything green. This is a good “fit” for us.

The Green Fair & Farmer's Markets



Additionally, once a month, in June, July and September we had our ASTS booth set up at **Armstrong's weekly Farmer's Market**.

We are always “in demand” for local trail information for visitors and residents alike – particularly for those who are new to the area. It’s fun, for example, when being quizzed as to where to go hiking, to turn and point directly at Mt Rose Swanson! **Thanks to the A/S Chamber of Commerce**, we have much printed information to hand out – maps, brochures and as always, our own knowledge. As most of us have lived here for many years, we also offer information on similar “places of interest” in (for example) Vernon, Enderby, Salmon Arm etc.

Finally, to finish the year, we set up a table at the Christmas Farmer's Market in Hassen Hall. There was a good turnout of people and the time passed quickly as it seemed that there was always someone stopping to chat.

We encourage people to support the Armstrong Spallumcheen Trails Society by joining us and these promotional events seem to be our best way of attracting new members.

Suzie



Thomas Hayes Ecological Park Projects

Building steps/Mesh on walkways/Levelling trails/Forest mulch added

All 4 of these projects were undertaken for safety to alleviate slippery conditions during rain, snow and ice events. Steps were built with wooden risers, held in place with rebar, on the steep hairpin corner at the viewpoint on the Otter Lookout trail. The 3 raised wooden walkways had wire mesh stapled to the planking, severe cross-fall on trails was levelled and forest mulch added in various parts of the Park.

Glenn



There is a notice board at the kiosk where one can make comments or suggestions. They do get read and are much appreciated.



Fence Repair

The fence was pushed well into the parking lot from the adjacent field by, we assume, the farmer who leases the field. It didn't take long to repair it. We were able to save the rails and some of the timber screws but had to replace 3 posts that were sheared off at the ground. We never did find out what happened!

Glenn



Bat Houses & Sign

One bat house was donated to us by a local resident who didn't have room for it in her yard. She requested we put it up in Thomas Hayes. We learned that 2 are better than 1 so bats have a choice of a cooler or warmer box depending on which way they are facing. The first was used as a template and a second one was built. They need to be installed within 500 m of a water source and to be a min. of 4 m off the ground with no obstructions below as bats swoop from underneath to get into the box. A plexiglass tray was installed under each box to catch their guano (bat droppings). That tells us if the house is being used or not. Also, if we choose, the guano can be sent away to ID the species. The informational sign was copied with permission from the **North Okanagan Naturalists**.

Marge



ASTS & Volunteer Hours

Nov 1, 2021 - Oct 31, 2022

Board Members = **1,680.50 hrs**

ASTS Members = **470.75 hrs**

Total Hours = 2,151.25

Nov 1, 2020 - Oct 31, 2021

Board Members = **1,645.75 hrs**

ASTS Members = **69.00 hrs**

Total Hours = 1,714.75

The hours show an increase over our last fiscal so we must be doing something right !!

Beyond just maintaining trails at the Thomas Hayes Ecological Park, and Mt Rose Swanson, both Board and General members were kept busy.

Doing what?

Participating in committees, digging post holes for Mt Rose Swanson's new "You Are Here" signs, placement of new trail name signs, GPSing trails, helping at our promotional Booth at Farmer's Markets and the Green Fair and a great deal of miscellaneous work!

We have much to be thankful for - the great gift of our volunteering members!

Hours at Thomas Hayes

Built stairs at Otter Lookout viewpoint	52 hours
Level side slopes on various trails	31 hours
Brush out vegetation at sides of trails	23 hours
Repair fence at parking lot	27 hours
Installing bat houses & sign	14 hours

Total hours working at Thomas Hayes 147 hours

Hours at Rose Swanson

Installed 11 posts for trail junction maps	51 hours
Maintenance work at seasonal run-off areas	92 hours
Creating/installing 26 new trail name signs	124 hours
GPSing all of the trails	212 hours
Locating and clearing trails	103 hours

Total hours working on Mt RS 582 hours

Suzie & Glenn

Trail Counters

In 2021 the ASTS bought and installed infra-red trail counters - 3 for Mt Rose Swanson and 1 for Thomas Hayes. They record how many users are on the trails and are **NOT cameras**. Sadly, 1 counter was stolen so we lost 41 days of data while we sourced and installed a new one (approx. \$800).

We found out that approx. 20,000 users were on Mt RS and 13,000 users visited Thomas Hayes in a 1 year period. This information blew us away! We can't distinguish between types of users or wildlife and a couple of the counters are on wide trails that people can be 2 or 3 abreast. This data is conservative but it gives us something to work with. The most active months are April/May and October, which surprised us, and obviously weekends and holidays have peak activity. It would have been fascinating to have had the counters operating prior to COVID and then during to compare. We are very sure the use of our trails 'exploded' as people were keen to do something other than stay cooped up at home. Our trails were ones of the few open. These counters also indicate a surprising fact: that some users are out-and-about from 5 am right through to almost midnight!

Ken & Marge

