

# 2023...A YEAR IN REVIEW



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## President's Message

2023 was even busier than last year and we have the volunteer hours to prove it! Fieldwork projects are always a lot of fun for us - out in nature, great people and it doesn't seem like work as there are always a lot of laughs. As usual we did quite a few projects in both Thomas Hayes Ecological Park and Mt Rose Swanson. This year we did more PR events than usual, 10 in total. The biggest one, with the most commitment, was 5 days at the IPE. We were asked to participate with a booth as the Charity of Choice was Mental Health. What better way to deal with this then to be outside? This provided huge exposure for us!

Aside from providing input to Township referrals and the Select Committee we also participated in the City's Open House and the Official Community Plan. The big project that we embarked on this year was to bring Mt Rose Swanson into the public eye. We would like to see all values on the mountain recognized, not just logging. 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*



### 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 [astrailssociety@gmail.com](mailto:astrailssociety@gmail.com)

**Website**  
[www.astrailssociety.com](http://www.astrailssociety.com)



# Thomas Hayes Work Projects

## Building more steps/Levelling trails/Stabilized viewpoint bench area

With the heavy snowfall we had last winter, of the 2 areas we look after, Thomas Hayes and Mt Rose Swanson, Thomas Hayes is the first to become snow and ice free. On Apr 21st and 28th we conducted 2 work parties with a total of 12 people who contributed 60 hrs of love to the Park. Tasks included adding more stairs to the Otter Lookout Trail near the bench, levelling the landing in front of the bench to prevent erosion, improving the cross fall of the same trail in various locations and tightening up the post of 1 sign. There was a lot of laughter around the last task as one person was doing the work while we were all watching, leaning on our tools. Remind you of anything? Our next work party was on June 28th when 6 Board members used 4 different tools; extended reach hedge trimmers and weed eaters, to hack back encroaching vegetation on all of the trails. Now we are good for summer! A total of 27 hrs was contributed that day.

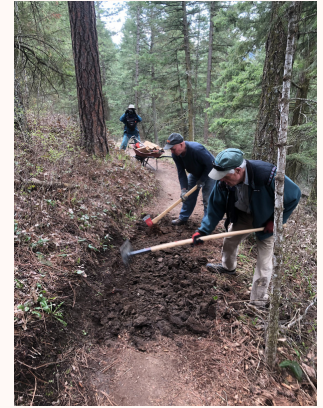
*Glenn*



## New trail reroute

We noticed that Poison ivy was growing near the fence along the western portion of the Coyote Loop Trail in the meadow in July. Poison ivy is a native plant and we didn't want to eradicate it but we didn't want people to brush up against it and get a reaction. An alternate trail just to the east was scouted out in late July. On Aug 2nd 4 of us spent about 16 hrs brushing out 150 m of new trail. It's a beautiful meandering trail through openings and light brush and we didn't cut down any trees. Signs notifying people of the alternative trail avoiding the Poison ivy were placed at each end of the new trail.

*Ran N*



## Spiffy Biffy # 1



Five of us spent a total of 25 1/2 hrs on Sept 31th cleaning and painting the inside of the Thomas Hayes outhouse - aka "Spiffy Biffy # 1". See us holding the tools of our trade! This was to finish off what was begun in Nov 2020 (raising the outhouse up about 6" so the door would open in the winter and installing a new roof with an overhang).

*Suzie*



# Mt Rose Swanson Work Projects

## "Porcupine help" - Not!

We found out that we have a porcupine on the mountain. One day while hiking the trails for pleasure in early Aug I noticed that 3 of our directional "You Are Here" signs at the trail junctions had the plywood backing chewed. They must like the glue in the plywood as they climbed the post and chewed the plywood around the edges of the aluminium sign. Well, we don't want our signs looking ratty so we decided to purchase some ¼" hardware cloth, enough to cover all of our "You Are Here" signs (11), and I spent 3 days in mid Aug (15 hrs total) hiking to each sign, removing the aluminium sign, covering the plywood backing with the mesh and reassembling the aluminium. One of the plywood backings was beyond repair and had to be totally replaced. So far that seems to have done the trick!

*Glenn*

## Jackpine Walkway upgrade

Aside from clearing windfall on the trails after a windstorm and trail brushing - regular maintenance, our next major project was our Jackpine trail raised walkway. On a last winter fun day cross-country snowshoe we came out at this walkway. Wow! The accumulation of snow on the deck of the walkway made the width very narrow and high, making the one railing about knee height. A safety issue as 1 misstep could send you in a hole and perhaps twist an ankle. On Oct 27th 5 of us hiked in carrying all of the tools necessary to fix this. Our plan was to increase the width of the deck by 2 stringers and add a second railing on the other side that was 10 inches higher than the 1st railing. Voila! Now we have a summer handrail and a winter handrail and the walkway is much wider and safer. Much better! We spent a total of 25 hrs on this project.

*Glenn*

## Spiffy Biffy #2



On June 17th, we wanted to concentrate on this facility on Mt RS. Five of us carried heavy, awkward materials and tools up the mountain. Our task was to replace the roof and paint the inside. Not only that, the ASTS provided a brand new plastic seat, proudly displayed by 1 member before it was actually installed (the paint was allowed to dry first)! The work party spent a total of 17 1/2 hrs on this project. *Suzie*

## Waterbars

Our last project of the year happened on Oct 31st. As the Centennial Trail can often have a lot of water running down it in spring due to snowmelt, causing erosion, we decided to construct some water bars. Four of us started from the parking lot and worked our way up the trail. Wherever we saw a ditch on the uphill side we knew that water would accumulate and eventually run down the trail. We constructed ~18 small trenches on an angle across the trail to move future water to the downhill side of the trail. Using a pick, pulaskis, shovels, a McLeod and a bar the digging wasn't that bad at all. After a total of 16 hrs we were done for the day and back home in time for Halloween! *Glenn*



## Gripes & Complaints

We were extremely displeased to see yard waste still being dumped in the RS parking lot. Also a new one to us, gallons of used cooking oil. Come on people, give your head a shake!!





# Thomas Hayes Events

We held 1 special event in the Park, over 2 days, this year, **Two BC Trails Days**. We teamed up with the **Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC)** for both days.

**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** in

2021. May 31st, and June 3rd, 2023 were the 2 dates chosen and our 3rd time participating in this event.

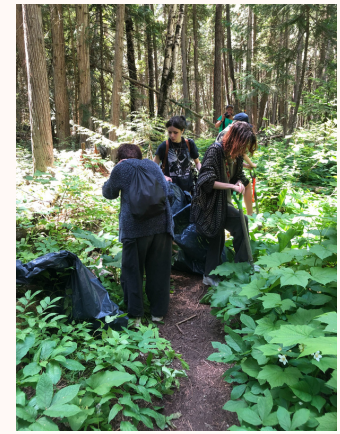
The first date involved only PVSS students and the second date was open to the public.

The students were taught about invasive plants found in the Park and then we conducted a weed pull.

The public could participate in a family scavenger hunt and/or a weed pull. Children were challenged to look closely at the flora and fauna along the trails, match it to a scavenger hunt sheet and take a photo as proof.

The scavenger hunt was a lot of fun and families enjoyed doing this with their kids. The weed pull was a huge success. Both days we targeted Giant mullein and were able to take 450 lbs to the landfill. Wow!

Special thanks goes to **Rancho Vignola** for supplying snacks to our participants and to **Lara of the ISCBC** for your knowledge and guidance! *Pat & Ran*



## Update on our Bat Houses

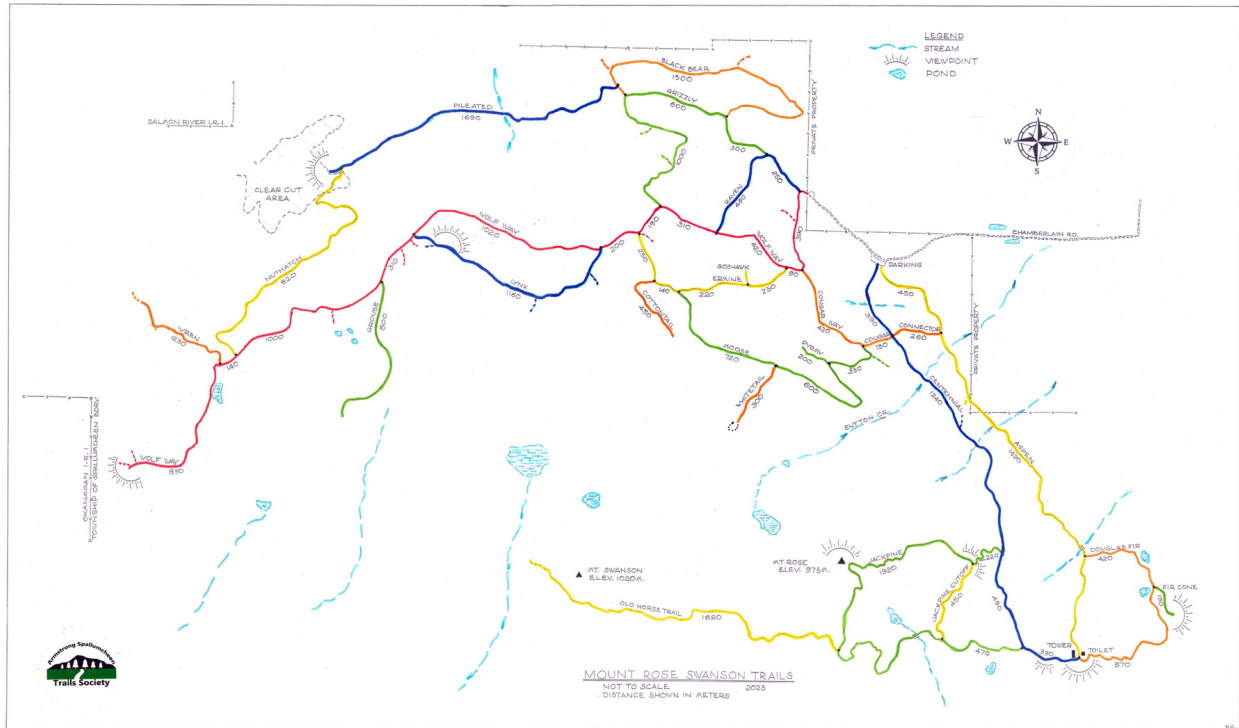
We have 2 bat houses in TH. They are located just west of Coyote Loop trail in the meadow, fairly close to water. They have been up for 1 full season and we thought we should check them out to see if they had been used. To our delight, 1 had been. We contacted BC Bats and were told that if we collected the guano (bat droppings) that we could send them away for DNA analysis to determine the species. This has since been done and we should get the results back this spring. Stay tuned!

*Marge*





**Our Latest Hand drawn Trail Map - Mt Rose Swanson**



*Ken*

***Promotional Events***

In 2023 we did more PR events than we have ever done - 10! The **Armstrong Spallumcheen Volunteer Fair** (Mar 14th), **Green Fair** (Apr 22nd), **2 BC Trails Days** (May 31st & Jun 3rd), **3 Farmers Markets** (Jun 24th, Jul 22nd & Sep 16th), **IPE** (Aug 30th - Sep 2nd), **Recreation Fair** (Sep 9th) and the **Christmas Market** (Dec 2nd).



**Green Fair**

We started the year off with the Volunteer Fair, hosted by our local **Chamber of Commerce (thanks)** and held at the Senior's Activity Centre. A Good time was had by all!  
**Volunteer Fair**



**Recreation Fair**



**Farmers Markets**



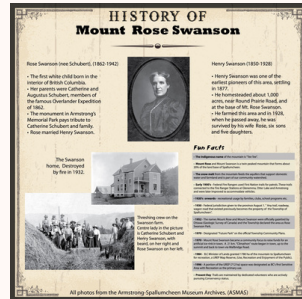
Aside from our usual green Fair and Farmers Market events that we have a booth at, we added the Volunteer Fair and the Recreation Fair (hosted by and **thanks to the Armstrong Curling Club**) this year. Both were new in 2023. All events offer a wonderful opportunity to sell memberships and T-shirts, promote our local trails and hand our maps (**thanks to our local Chamber of Commerce**). Our display usually attracts a steady stream of interested public.

*Pat & Ron*





Our largest event of the year, with the most number of volunteers and time commitment (19 volunteers, and ~ 200 hrs), was the Interior Provincial Exhibition, held Aug 31th - Sept 2nd. We were invited to participate as the IPE's 'Charity of Choice' in 2023 was Mental Health. What better way to deal with your mental health than to be outside! **Thanks to the IPE** we had incredible exposure, coming into contact with hundreds, if not, thousands of people.



We were able to display our new 4'X4' theme panels of Mt RS (Rare & Endangered Species, Flora, Fauna and History). We sold many memberships, a few T-shirts, talked about the excellent hiking in Thomas Hayes Ecological Park and Mt Rose Swanson. One thing of great interest to the public was talking about what logging is proposed for Mt RS, during the winter of 2024/25 and the possible future plans of a Conservancy for the mountain. Many people showed their support of a Conservancy by signing a petition.

*Pat & Ran*

## ***NO Rail Trail Connector***

The Ribbons of Green Trails Society, based in Vernon, is looking into finding a route to join the Okanagan Rail Trail, in Coldstream, to the Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail, in Armstrong. At the request of the Mayor of Spallumcheen, a member of the Board of Directors has been attending the meetings of this group since November. Three potential routes, each with challenges, have been identified and evaluation of these routes is in progress.

*Ran N*

## ***ASTS & Volunteer Hours***

Nov 1, 2022 - Oct 31, 2023

Board Members = **1,966.50 hrs**

ASTS Members = **178.25 hrs**

**Total Hours = 2,144.75**

Nov 1, 2021 - Oct 31, 2022

Board Members = **1,680.50 hrs**

ASTS Members = **377.75 hrs**

**Total Hours = 2,058.25**

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

An interesting breakdown for our past fiscal shows that we spend approx. 25% of our time doing Admin work, 20% on trail clearing and maintenance, 15% at our PR events, 28% at meetings and the remaining 12% on Misc. duties.

### ***What are the Misc. duties?***

Designing 4 kiosk signs for Mt RS (Flora, Fauna, Rare & Endangered Species and History), and familiarizing ourselves with all of the values on Mt RS, such as flora, fauna, wildlife winter range, aquifers and watersheds, Indigenous, timber, recreation, old growth, rare and endangered species, etc. Knowing this and then learning what we can do as a Society to help protect all of these equally important values within a very complex legal history.

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

*Marge*

## ***Trail Counters***

Our trail counters continue to give us valuable data. To the end of the year they have now been in place for 28 months. Total users for Mt RS = 43,102 or ~1,539/month and 25,864 users or ~924/month for TH. Use was down this past summer due to wildfires, heat and smoke but trails are used year round. The use of the trails at the end of Chamberlaine Rd has increased dramatically as more people find out about and explore this beautiful area.

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 & Marge*

