

2025...A YEAR IN REVIEW



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Board of Directors for 2026

Executive

- President Marge Sidney
- Vice President Ryan Sadler
- Secretary Wilma Koersen
- Treasurer Ron Neden

Directors at Large

- Andrej Arajs
- Glenn Gytenbeek
- Nick Gunner
- John Irving

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

President's Message

This past year we unexpectedly lost a very valued member of our Board, Bent Kristensen, and would like to dedicate this newsletter in his memory. He was a very kind man who was generous with his time. He loved the outdoors and was often on our trails, both for recreation and work parties. We miss him deeply.

Our big project on Mt Rose Swanson was the rerouting of a portion of Jackpine Trail from Centennial trail to the viewpoint overlooking Armstrong.

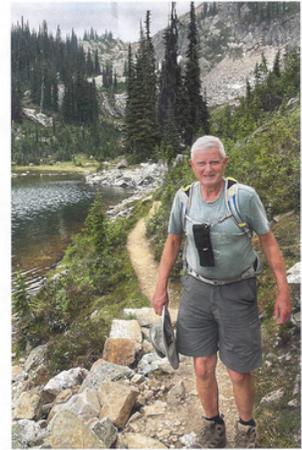
The latest word we have from BC Timber Sales (early Dec) is that they plan to put blocks up for bid on the north side of Mt RS off the end of Chamberlaine Rd in 2026. Thomas Hayes Ecological Park saw some invasive scotch thistle plant removal and some trail clearing.

This year we participated in 9 Community Events. They are great PR for us!

We co-hosted the film, "Trouble in the Headwaters" in Sept. It featured the hydrology research of Dr Alila done on clearcut logging in the Kettle River watershed which caused catastrophic flooding of Grand Forks in 2018.

Many thanks to the City and Township for their support and guidance and to our membership for providing help, especially at our Jackpine Trail rerouting and our PR events. Happy trails!

Marge



Bent Kristensen
Feb 20, 1948 – September 21, 2025

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
We accept e-transfers, cheques or cash.

Website

www.astrailssociety.com



@armstrongtrails

Mt Rose Swanson Work Project

Rerouting Jackpine Trail

The big project this year was rerouting a portion of the Jackpine Trail from Centennial to the lookout over Armstrong (Miller's Bluff). The original trail was steep, rocky and eroding. The new trail was laid out in April being mindful of the slope and sensitive areas and 11 work parties with 10 individual people took place in May to build it.

We used a saw to cut deadfall lying on the ground, pulaskis to remove the duff down to mineral soil, chop roots and pry out rocks, McLeods (fire fighting grubbing tool) to move soil and level the trail bed, and a shovel to fill holes where necessary. We also dug a few water bars to divert water off the trail and created a couple of steps using flat rocks.



The old, steep trail was covered up with lots of woody debris and some rocks to keep people off and reduce erosion. Signs were erected at either end saying 'Trail Closed'. The trail name sign, Jackpine, was also moved to its new location. The new trail is about 260 m long, about 40 m longer than the old trail and it took us about 220 volunteer hours from start to finish. We really like it as it winds its way through the forest, and for those who have never been to this viewpoint it comes at it from the back so you don't see the view until you get there. A nice surprise! We really enjoyed this project!

Glenn



Thomas Hayes Ecological Park Work Project

Invasive Weed Work Party

We often have work parties to keep these trails at their best, whether it be cutting tall plants that are leaning over the trails, removing deadfall trees or tackling invasive plants. Last spring, when one of our Board members and his wife were out hiking the trails for pleasure, they noticed that there was a new infestation of Scotch thistle. As there wasn't a large number we thought that we would get ahead of it and organize a work party to tackle this invasive plant.



On April 27th 6 of us took on this task. We were told that if we cut the plants off just below ground level, turn them over and leave them they wouldn't regrow. All of the trails were checked but the greatest concentration was on Chickadee Way. It didn't take that long to cut all we could find. On our way out we also cut down all of the burdock we could find. This plant is a much larger problem that we seem to be tackling every year!

Ran



Thomas Hayes Ecological Park & Mt Rose Swanson

Trail Clearing

We love our trails and you will often find us out on them just for pleasure. We often carry minor tools in our backpacks, just in case. There are also members of the public who love hiking and will report back if they see trees across the trails. We know that after wind storms that there will often be trees down so we try to deal with them as quickly as possible. This is an ongoing task and one that we actually quite enjoy!



Please email reports of downed trees to us.

Glenn



Rubber Boa Snakes found on Mt Rose Swanson

We had heard about Rubber boa Snakes being spotted on Mt RS but had never seen them ourselves until 2025. They are listed as 'Special Concern' under the Canada Species at Risk Act (SARA) and on the Yellow List of Rare and Endangered species in BC. We happened to come across 2 during the year; on a trail clearing day, June 1st on Aspen Trail, and on the Canada Day hike, July 1st on Jackpine Trail.

Through a connection with Dr. Karl Larsen, a professor at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, we learned that there was a research study being done on this little known species. A Masters student was conducting the research and as an aside was tabulating all locations and sightings reported across BC.

We were encouraged to send in the date sighted, GPS location and photo of our 2 sightings and also encourage other people who had sightings to do so as well to BCBoa@tru.ca. In doing this we wanted to learn more about this snake ourselves.

Rubber boas occur in relatively low density over their BC range and Mt RS is near the very northern end of this range. They are a slender, burrowing, nocturnal snake, 40-75 cm in length, not commonly observed. Many aspects of their life history remains poorly understood. Habitat degradation through forestry and urban development has likely caused population decline and they are protected under the BC Wildlife Act. They forage in coniferous forests, rocky slopes and riparian areas. Rock outcrops provide suitable hibernating, nesting and basking sites. Females give birth to 2-8 live young in the late summer or fall. Prey includes small rodents, shrews, birds, salamanders, snakes and other small animals which they suffocate in their constricting coils.

Rubber boas are one of BC's most cold-tolerant snakes. They are accomplished burrowers, good swimmers and climbers and can use their tails to grasp as they climb shrubs and small trees. They are not poisonous and pose no threat to humans.

Marge



Fundraising

We have been doing our best to continually raise money to pay our Experts (Hydrologist and Biologist) that we hired to conduct fieldwork (hydrological review and biological review) on Mt Rose Swanson in 2024. Organizations, businesses and individuals have stepped up to help, including: the donation of Mt RS T-shirts and hoodies from **PV Blvd Coffee**, 2 gift baskets that **Rancho Vignola** donated for draws and a percentage of the book, "Foraging as a Way of Life" by **Mikaela Cannon**, that we sell on her behalf. All of these items have been available at our PR events. A huge **Thank You** to everyone for your support!

We have received many wonderful donations/grants from organizations this past year for Mt RS. A huge **THANK YOU** to:

- VantageOne Credit Union**
- Armstrong Regional Co-op**
- West Coast Environmental Law**

Amount Totaling \$8,632

There is still \$\$ owing to our Experts! Please help us.

In addition, there have been many individuals who have supported us.

Amount Totaling \$5,274
THANK YOU for your generosity!

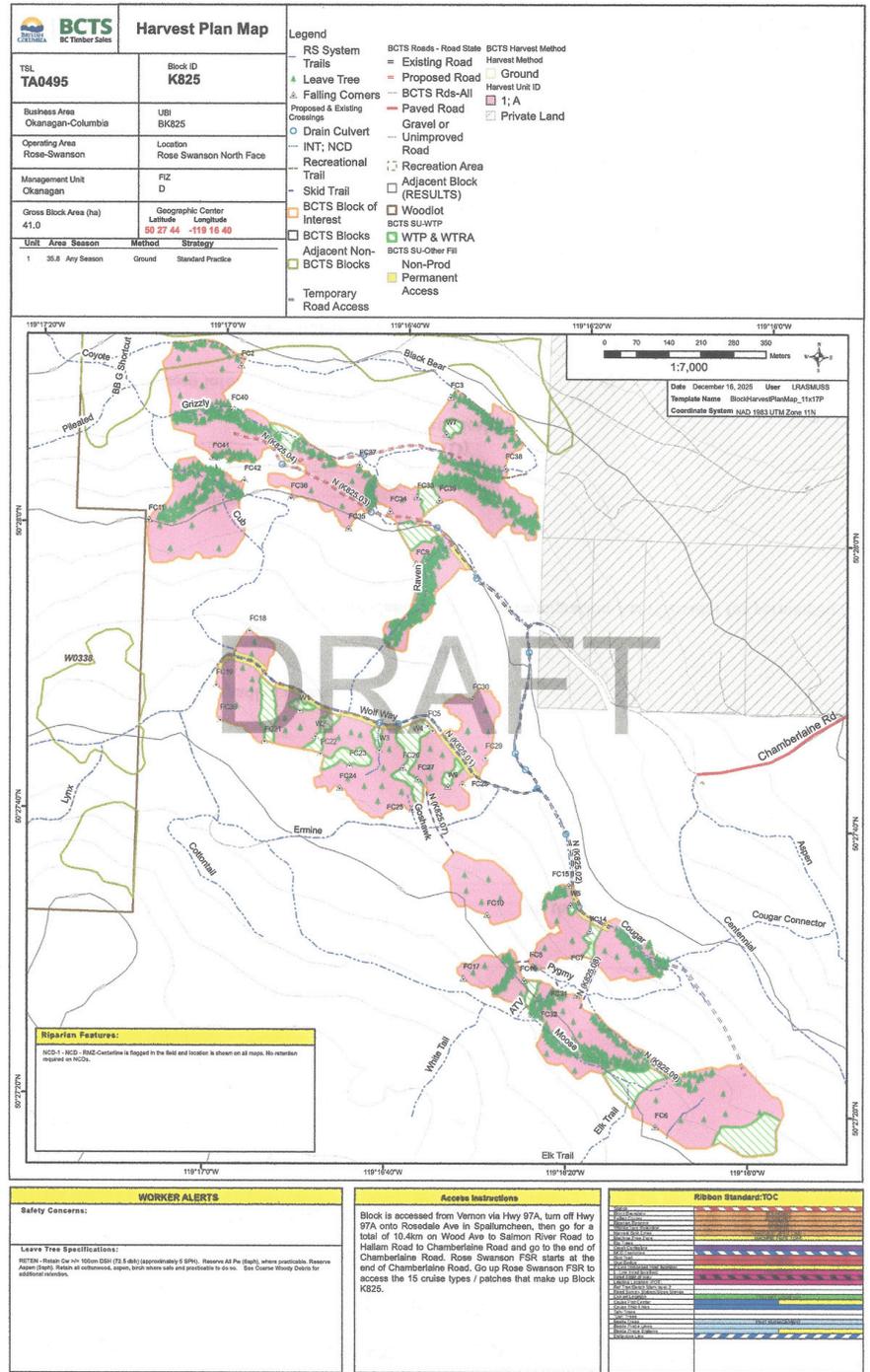
The ASTS

BC Timber Sales & the Potential Future of Logging on Mt Rose Swanson

As a result of ASTS members and the public seeing a lot of ribboning and metal tags on trees on the north side of Mt Rose Swanson we sent an email to BC Timber Sales in November 2025, asking for an update on future potential logging plans. A response was received on December 9th. It stated that the rough timeline is as follows:

1. Preliminary field layout - completed
 2. Updates of Mt Rose Swanson to the Select Committee - Dec 2025
 3. Incorporating feedback from the Select Committee in the field - early 2026
 4. Public referral - early 2026 for a 120-day comment period
 5. Incorporating feedback from public in the field - mid 2026
 6. Blocks put up for auction in Oct 2026
- They also attached a map (shown here) showing proposed blocks in relation to the trails on the mountain and a legend showing various symbols and ribbons for roads, culverts, wildlife tree patches, leave trees etc.

Surprisingly many local people are not aware of this eventuality happening within the next year or so. As you can see this will impact many of the existing trails that we enjoy hiking. The ASTS hired consultants/experts in 2024 to conduct studies (hydrological and biological) in the area over this issue in hopes that the BCTS will take their findings into account prior to any activity on the mountain. That remains to be seen. We hope to hold them accountable. Sometime in the near future BCTS will conduct a **public referral** period to ask for input on the various concerns over logging on the mountain. The ASTS as well as the public will be involved in that process. We will be informing our membership when that happens and hope you will make your opinions known to BCTS at that time. We care about Mt RS and want to ensure that all values are taken into account and protected.



“*Trouble in the Headwaters*”

Documentary film - Sept 9th

It was standing room only in the Vernon library for an event co-hosted by the ASTS and the North Okanagan Naturalist Club. This hard hitting film, produced by filmmaker Daniel Pierce, examines the disastrous 2018 flood event in Grand Forks and the hydrological connection to clearcut logging in the Kettle River watershed and features the work of Dr. Younes Alila. Dr Alila is an engineer and professor of forest hydrology at the UBC Faculty of Forestry, Vancouver and he spent 5 yrs conducting research in this area. Through his work here and elsewhere in BC he is able to show the connections between clearcut logging, flooding, landslides and drought.



Over 100 people attended our showing and the questions were interesting and thought provoking. Dan and Dr Alila are taking this film around the province in an effort to educate the public and put pressure on the government to change their policies regarding timber harvesting.



Ran

Trail Counters

Our 4 trail counters continue to give us valuable data. To the end of the year they have now been in place for 53 months. Total use during that time:

Mt Rose Swanson = 83,828 users or about 1,571/month.

Thomas Hayes Ecological Park = 49,704 users or about 938/month.

The use of the trails at the end of Chamberlaine Road on Mt RS continues to increase.

We didn't have much smoke this past summer, thankfully, but starting mid August we did have 1.5 months of heat.

The most active times of the day were 10 am to 5 pm with some early birds out 5 am and night owls out to almost midnight! The most active months continue to be Apr/May and Sept/Oct, and obviously weekends and holidays have peak activity. Our trails are used year round.

Our 5 yr software contract with Trafx, the company that supplies these trail counters, expires in July 2026 and we will be determining what we want to do after that time.



Ken

Canada Day Hike - July 1st



After rerouting a portion of Jackpine trail on Mt RS we thought 'Why not showcase it in a guided Canada Day hike?' Word was put out at our PR events, shared with our local Chamber of Commerce, emailed to our membership and posted to our Facebook page. A total of 21 enthusiastic people and 2 dogs joined us in the Mt RS parking lot on July 1st. We had a few people who had never been on the Mt let alone some of the trails we wanted to travel so it was great to showcase our special 'neck of the woods'. The youngest was 3 months old and the oldest was in their late 70's - a good mix!

We travelled up Centennial, stopping often to take breaks, and turned onto our newly rerouted Jackpine trail (for which we got rave reviews) to get to the viewpoint overlooking Armstrong. During our breaks there was lots of visiting as most people had never met each other and of course stories and laughter. At the top we unfurled our Canadian flag, sang O' Canada, took photos to mark the occasion and had a snack. Four people had to get back early so they retraced their steps while the rest of us continued on. We took Jackpine Cutoff to Jackpine and ended up further south on Centennial. From there we headed to the viewpoint at the tower that looks south to Swan and Okanagan Lakes. More photos ensued with our flag and a break to enjoy the view, We came back to the parking lot 3.5 hrs later via Aspen ending at our kiosk so we could look at the map to show our route to those that weren't familiar with our trails. A 5.5 km round trip and a great time was had by all!

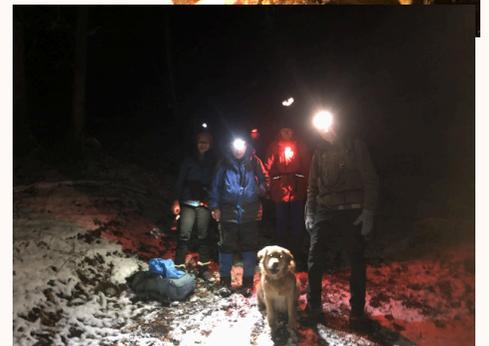
Marge

Winter Solstice Hike - Dec 21st

We hosted our 4th annual Solstice hike on Mt RS - a great way to welcome winter and celebrate the end of the year. Our destination was the north side of the mountain, well off the beaten trails, as we wanted to have a bonfire. Word was put out to our membership and 15 people plus 2 dogs started out from the parking lot just after 3:30 pm. We wanted to leave in the daylight and arrive at our destination at dusk where 2 other people were already on site. They welcomed us from a distance as we could see the orange glow of the bonfire through the trees. Now there were 17 of us in total. Unfortunately there wasn't a lot of snow on the ground, about 2 inches, but it gave a wintry look and feel. There was lots of visiting, stories, laughing and even singing a Solstice song! Cooking whatever we brought over the fire is always a treat. It just tastes better! There weren't many stars sighted through the clouds but the sparks from the fire looked beautiful whenever another log was added.

A highlight for all was hiking out with headlamps. The last few people didn't leave until 9 pm as they wanted to make sure that the fire was safely out. Good company and a fun time. Let's do it again next year!

Marge



Community Events

We attended many Community Events this year such as; the Green Fair, Pride in the Park, the Recreation Fair, Fieldstone's Farm & Food Festival, 3 local Farmers' Markets, the Farmers' Christmas Market and were invited back to the **Interior Provincial Exhibition**. These events provided excellent exposure for us where we are able to tell people who we are and what we do, sell memberships and T-shirts and raise a bit of money. The big surprise for us was to be invited back to the **IPE. THANK YOU** for supporting us!!

Marge

Interior Provincial Exhibition

The IPE ran from Aug 27th to the 31st. Our forest display along with hobby paraphernalia that you could do outdoors fit right in with their theme "The Hobbist Place on Earth". Our booth received many compliments. 'Manning' our booth was quite a commitment - 10am to 9pm for 5 days, but our



membership stepped up to help. If it wasn't for our volunteers we wouldn't have been able to do it. Thank You! We told people who we are, what we do, the trails we maintain, sold a few memberships and Mt RS T-shirts/hoodies, raised quite a bit of money for our work on Mt RS and handed out many area maps courtesy of the **Chamber of Commerce**. The big hit for us was for kids of all ages to draw their favorite outdoor activity with crayons on a large roll of paper!



Armstrong Farmer's Markets, May 17th, July 26th & Sept 20th

For the past number of years we have participated in the **Armstrong Farmer's Market**. As a non-profit society we are allowed 3 dates where we can have a booth for free to promote ourselves - a great PR opportunity!. This market is the oldest in BC and well attended by vendors and shoppers. Thanks to the organizers for this opportunity and privilege!

Fieldstone's Farm & Food Festival, Sept 28th

Fieldstone Organics contacted us earlier in the year saying that they would like to support our efforts on Mt RS and would we like to have a booth at their fall festival? Of course we said yes and **Thank you!** This is an amazing event that brings people from all over to view old fashioned techniques, and purchase home based or small business specialty and organic/natural products. We had a great day!



Farmers' Christmas Market, Dec 6th

The Christmas Market was our last event of the year. Many people stopped by our festive booth to support us by buying a membership, Mt RS hoodie/T-shirt and entering the draw for the **Rancho Vignola** gift basket that they generously donated - **Thank-you!**