

THE PACKRAT

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APRIL - MAY 2000

ACTIVITIES: Hiking, Backpacking, Skiing, Cycling, Climbing, Scrambling, Mountaineering, Educational and Awareness Programs, Social Functions.

MEETINGS: Every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.
Rosemont Community Hall, 2807 - 10 Street N.W.

MAIL: Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)
1111 Memorial Dr. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 3E4

TRIP INFO: 282-6308 Hotline and at meetings.

RMRA EXECUTIVE 1999-2000

President	Garry Denman
President	Danielle Tardif
Past President	Anita O'Reilly
Trips Director	Ron Hunter
Treasurer	Jennifer Oss
Secretary	Linda Eastwood
Social Director	Lois Neff
Programs Director	Carl Potter
Newsletter Editor	Suzanne Costaschuk
Membership (appointed)	Jean Amatt

EDITORS' NOTES

As we move into a warmer time of year, plans for participating in or volunteering for trail maintenance and running events are starting to surface. However, should the snow and cool air still entice you, you can join Dave Mulligan for an Easter ski trip to Mt. Wilson. A read through Bob St. John's article on his Banff to Jasper ski & car excursion may give you the drive you need to enjoy the last of the winter season.

There are several articles encouraging you to protest to the Alberta Government regarding the proposed Spray Lakes Development plans.

Lastly, Art Davies' life has been remembered in all the letters sent to the Editor.

Thank you for sending your articles in a timely manner, and please, keep them coming! A big thank-you to Gary Denman who received an article and then passed it on to me, and who delivered and picked up the Packrat to and from the printers.

Hope to see you over the next few months. Please send future Packrat contributions to

by May 24, 2000 or

hand them in directly to myself or Gary Denman during one of the Wednesday night meetings. If using email, it is best to send documents in Microsoft Word format.

Happy skiing and hiking. Suzanne Costaschuk

Doug's Roll

By Wally Drew

Doug Campbell wrote from Auckland, N. Z. in mid February and told about his roll in mid Dec. He took a fall on a muddy track down there and rolled 30 meters down a slope. Result: broken wrist, cracked knee cap, and a couple of sore ribs. He is now rid of crutch and arm cast and doing well. Can't keep a good man down long. Expect him back in late March.

Social Calender

Special thanks to Jean Amatt for organizing the SAIT Dinner on Monday, March 27. Twenty seven members and guests attended the five course dinner in the Highwood Dining room. Excellent food!!! Lots of fun.

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday, May 24 - Spring Open House

Sunday, May 28 - Spring Open House Field Day at Little Elbow Recreation Area followed by Potluck Dinner.

Thanks, Loris Neff.

16th ANNUAL GEAR SWAP !!!

The Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC) will hold it Annual Gear Swap and Outdoor Expo on Sat. May 6, 2000. The sale is from 12 noon to 4pm and the expo is from 11-4pm. Items sold on consignment may be brought to the sale site Fri. May 5 from 5-9pm, and on Sat. May 6 from 8-10am. The location of the sale & expo will be at Stu Peppard Arena, 5300 19th Street, SW, Calgary. For more info call CAOC @ 270-CAOC (2262).

Art Davis spent much time in preparing the trail up Exshaw Creek - especially building bridges across the creek, and in preparing the camp site.

He also helped the Canmore Group in the construction of a trail up Mt. Lady Macdonald.

It should also be mentioned that in preparing for the snow cave trips, Art would frequently go in a week earlier and build his own cave as well as a fire place. This would free him up so that he could assist others in building their own caves or else he would simply supervise the camp - wine goblet in hand!

By Wally Drew

STAMPEDE RUN-OFF



The Organizing Committee for the Stampede Run-Off could really use some help with this 3-day running event June 30, July 1, and July 2. They are looking for volunteers to fill various positions on each day.

The Calgary Herald Stampede Run-Off is one of Alberta's premiere running events in support of the Alberta Children's Hospital. Attracting 4,000 runners of all ages and abilities, the event relies on nearly 1,000 enthusiastic community volunteers to give a small amount of time to help us out. Volunteers are required in the Fitness Expo, registration, setup, course marshals, split times, white hat hospitality, breakfast tent, info desk and aid stations.

All volunteers receive a specially designed t-shirt and a complimentary race day breakfast. Volunteers also are eligible for exclusive volunteer draw prizes. Your time commitment can be as much or as little as you like. You can volunteer as a group or as an individual and you will also be invited to the volunteer appreciation night after the event.

If you are not sure how much time you have, please call us and we'll help you find something that suits your interests and time availability. For volunteer details and information call 264-2996 or 251-9070. For on-line registration, look up the website: www.calgarymarathon.com

Submitted by: Irene Willett, SRO Volunteer Coordinator, Fax/Phone: (403) 251-9070

"VOLUNTEERS...THE HEART AND SOUL OF ANY EVENT"

KANANASKIS COUNTRY TRAIL CARE

The *Friends of Kananaskis Trail Care Group* is looking to inspire all trail users to volunteer just one day of their time to help maintain the trail systems.

Scheduled work parties will occur on the second Saturday of each month from May through September. Besides the normal once-a-month Saturday work days, two demonstration projects are planned for the year 2000. West Bragg Creek trails and trails in the vicinity of North Fork and Mesa Butte campgrounds will be upgraded using equipment and increased volunteer labor.

If you are interested in coordinating a group from RMRA to join a work party or if you would be interested in training a crew leader please call Anita O'Reilly

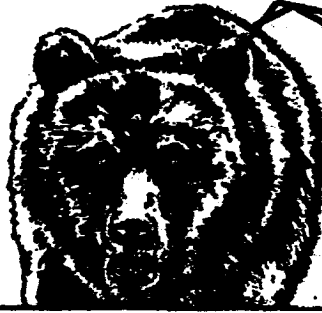
Easter Ski Trip by Dave Mulligan

April 21-23, 2000 (Fri, Sat, Sun): Mount Wilson, M110, Av, Mn 8, 26 km, 1800 m.

3 days, 2 nights tent camping at treeline, glacier travel, max 8 persons.

*Note: If insufficient snow or extensive cloud, then a 2 night trip somewhere eg. Fording River Pass
Please contact Dave Mulligan for more details.*

Kananaskis Coalition



Box 6398, Station D,
Canmore, Alberta, T2P 2E1
Phone: (403) 283 - 2025
(403) 270 - 2736

Shirley Tajcna asked me to e-mail the attached action alert for inclusion in the next issue of the Packrat news letter. I have also attached a form letter to the Premier opposing the proposed developments in the Spray Valley. Frequently updated information can also be obtained from the following web-site: <http://www.nucleus.com/~bcec>. Please contact me if you have any questions. Regards. *Dieter Gade, Interim-Chair, Kananaskis Coalition*

05 February 2000

ACTION ALERT

The Kananaskis Spray Valley – We need your help!

Are we about to lose another prime piece of our Kananaskis Country to a developer? It may happen soon, even though the overwhelming majority (over 85%) of the citizens of Alberta have stated in a government survey that they do not want any more development in K-Country.

What's Planned in the Kananaskis Spray Valley?

- Three different developments may proceed in and around Spray Lakes:
 1. 4-season "world-class" resort at the base of Tent Ridge.
 2. "Heli/Cat ski" operation on the slopes of Mount Sparrowhawk.
 3. Tour boat facility on the east bank of the lake.

1. The 4-season resort (600,000 visitors days annually) will combine a ski-hill on Tent Ridge with a capacity of up to 6000 skiers per day.

- 2 hotels (400 rooms)
- Heli-pad
- A convention centre, shopping facilities, restaurants and bars, various indoor and outdoor entertainment and recreation facilities, as well as staff accommodations.
- 27 hole golf course with club-house, shopping facility, driving range, liquor lounge & bar.
- Boating facilities

2. The helicopter and cat skiing operation at Mount Sparrowhawk will have a maximum capacity of 37,500 skiers per year.

- 3 heli-pads at the lake shore.
- Mid-Mountain Lodge at elevation 2,350 meters, 3 heli-pads.
- 4 warming huts (various elevation), 5 heli-pads.
- Offices, food service, fuel and general storage facilities and staff accommodation.

3. Tour boat facility on the east bank of the lake

(Sorry, we don't have the project description available yet)

Why should you be concerned about these developments?

- The base of Tent Ridge is situated in a unique position in that it is the 'hub' of a valley system that allows animal migration between Banff and the rest of K-Country. The establishment of such a large development would effectively create a blockade of wildlife movement.
- The area is a prime winter and summer area for the 'local residents' of the area (Bear, Moose, Elk, cougar, wolf, etc.).
- The area is also the "headwaters" for the local drinking supply of the Town of Canmore.
- These developments will take away the recreational enjoyment of being in the "wild" in one of last remaining "wild" valleys in Kananaskis.

Kananaskis Coalition

What can be done?

- These projects can be stopped. It is not too late.
- Public opinion is a very powerful weapon.
- This opinion must, however, be voiced.

How do I make my views heard?

- Contact the Alberta government and let them know:
 - You want to see the Kananaskis preserved in a wild state.
 - The best thing for the government to do would be to stop these developments without further delay, and designate the Spray and Kananaskis Valleys as Wildland Parks, so that their natural wonders can be protected for posterity, and for the enjoyment of all.
 - At the very least, ALL three developments should be subject to a cumulative impact assessment which will consider the environmental impact of ALL components simultaneously. They cannot be judged in a piecemeal fashion.
 - The Alberta government should do nothing to encourage these developments, by underwriting any of the expenses for the infrastructure (such as road upgrading) which these projects will require.

The Honourable Ralph Klein
The Premier of Alberta
307 Legislature Building
1080- 97th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2B7
Phone: (780) 427 2251; Fax: (780) 427 1349,
(Remember you can call free by first dialing 310-000)
Email: albertaconnects@gov.ab.ca

Hon. Gary G. Mar
Minister of Environment
Legislature Office
#227, 10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2B6
Phone: (780) 427-2391, Fax: (780) 422-6259,
E-mail: gmar@assembly.ab.ca

- Contact Genesis and request a copy of the project proposal and draft terms of reference for the environment impact assessment. Let them know that you do not want this development to go ahead.

Mr. Gobi Singh, CEO
Genesis Land Development Corp.
2882 11th Street NE
Calgary, Alberta, T2E 7S7
Phone: (403) 265 8079; Fax (403) 266 0746,
Email: genesis@genesisland.com, Website: www.genesisland.com

- Write, email, phone or fax your local MLA.
- Please send a copy of your letter to the Kananaskis Coalition
- Send a message immediately, don't wait.
- Get your friends and family to also send similar messages. Numbers of letters and messages count.

Attention Trip Co-ordinators and Members: FIRST AID COURSE

Has your first aid certification elapsed? Do you want to learn first aid skills and have fun? Would you like to feel more confident knowing what to do if an emergency arose in the backcountry? Do you want your money's worth? Then I have a suggestion for you.

This first aid course covers St. John Ambulance standard first aid course plus CPR, tailored for outdoor enthusiasts, complete with hands-on scenarios to simulate backcountry situations.

Some of the topics covered:

Medical-legal issues; Communicable diseases; Patient assessment; Artificial respiration and choking; One and two rescuer CPR; Shock; Wound management; Fractures; Dislocations; Head and facial trauma; Spinal injuries; Lightning; Heat injuries and dehydration; Cold injuries; Bites and Stings; Allergies and anaphylaxis; Respiratory distress; Diabetes; Outdoor first aid kits; Bivouac skills; Patient evacuation.

Realistic scenarios follow the instructions to re-enforce the theory learned.

What you get: 24 hours of instruction, level C CPR certification, and standard first aid certificate recognised by the Alberta Human Resources and Employment.

How much: \$105, no GST

When: Thursday April 27 and Friday April 28: 3 hours each night
Friday and Saturday April 29 & 30 all day.

It is scheduled for the in-between season, so you don't miss out on a ski or hiking trip.

Where: CAOC office (Memorial and 10 St. NW) on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The Sunday will be spent outside somewhere in the Foothills, exact location to be confirmed.

Payment: The absolute drop dead date for your payment is Wednesday April 19. Please make your cheque payable to the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. Drop off your cheque at our Wednesday meetings or mail to: Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association, c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council, 1111 Memorial Dr. NW, Calgary, T2N 3E4.

I encourage you to register early as this course will be offered to other Calgary Area Ski Club members and spaces are limited. Only paid registrations will be considered.

I believe this course is a good compromise between a more extensive and expensive Wilderness First Aid course (\$290 for 40 hours of instruction), and a standard St. John Ambulance course, which is not tailored to backcountry situations (\$85 for 16 hours). I especially encourage trip co-ordinators to take this course. Members of Rocky Mountain Ramblers may be eligible to a course subsidy up to \$30. Please fill in an application with our Trip Director Ron Hunter after completion of the course.

For more info: contact Danielle Tardif at _____ (evening) or

To: *The Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association*
From: *Brent Davis & Family*

The turn out for Dad's memorial service was beyond all belief. When I was asked how many people to expect I gave an estimate of between 30 and 100. The actual turn out was about 150. It was beyond my expectations and showed me how many lives Dad had touched.

The Ramblers were Dad's extended family. The stories that people brought up at the reception at our house after the service showed he was many different things to many people. Those memories are the way he would have wanted to be remembered. With so many of you attending our house you also brought a vitality back into a home which had been darkened by the unexplainable events of the preceding week.

Once we have had a chance to deal with the business end of this tragedy I will come to the club and announce the date for the final memorial on Mt. Lady MacDonald. The tentative time frame is around the May long weekend. My sister Anthea and brother Grant from Ottawa will try to come out and join us in the scattering of Dad's ashes.

I thank you for your warm and caring thoughts and hope that you can find some closure to this event which has affected so many lives.

Art Davis will be remembered by many members of the RMRA for his leadership of many types of trips. It was through him that many of us had our first experiences of building snow caves first at Ptarmigan heights overlooking Ptarmigan Lake at Boulder pass and later below South Molar Pass on Mosquito Creek.

These snow caves ranged from the simple one and two person caves to the more complex multi room structures many connected together by a series of tunnels. In February 1982 a group of us led, of course, by Art set up camp at Ptarmigan Heights and built a series of interconnected snow caves. The one we were in was a two room effort designed to sleep 6 persons. That evening all 18 of us had a surprise party to celebrate Art's 55th birthday complete with streamers, noise makers, a birthday cake and bang tang completed the evening. That evening we had two visitors, they were winter camping also at Boulder Pass and just had to see our snow cave complex.

Art was also known for his regular easy backpacks on the May long weekend which trudged about 3k up Exshaw Creek. Being a short distance we could carry many things that made the experience a little more comfortable. After setting up his tent, Art would be seen leaning back in his modified law chair (short legs), feet up on a stump enjoying a cigarillo and drinking wine out of his silver wine goblet. Also Art encouraged members to bring small children.

Art loved the area around Canmore. From the hikes in the Exshaw valley, the innumerable hikes up Mt Lady McDonald and the many easy hikes he coordinated in the Yamnuska Natural Area.

Art was a regular at the annual Thanksgiving weekend at Mosquito Creek camp out. The highlight of this event was the full roast turkey meal with all the trimmings served in the Mosquito Creek camp shelter. The following day various hikes would go out in the surrounding area.

On many of his trips Art could be observed taking notes of weather and trail conditions. At the reception held after the memorial service at Brent and Alma Davis' house we had the opportunity to leaf through Art's trip reports, some going back to the early 1970's.

He will be missed! Marg & Dick Lowndes

Art Davis 1927 to 2000

We are all here today to remember a man who was an inspiration to us all in many different ways. He was a companion and mentor to us all. He was a special man who was precious in many varied ways. He was also a private man who only let people into certain parts of his life. He was a father, grandfather, brother, nephew, uncle, cousin, friend and hiking companion. The quiet confidence, dignity and humour he showed in any situation brought him respect from all who knew or came into contact with him. He faced all his challenges on his own and fought all his own battles on his terms. He was always the first to offer assistance and always the last to ask for help.

Art was predeceased by his father Sam, mother Elsie, and youngest brother Eric. There were other family losses over the years which I cannot list for fear of offending anyone lest I miss someone, because the relative family that he was in contact with is extensive. Many people cannot be here today for health reasons and we understand that they feel the loss just as deeply as we do. Our prayers and best wishes go to them and we hope that they can come to a form of closure with this personal tragedy and know that Dad is now free of the demons he could not tell us of.

In his last two years Dad had a battle with depression with which he could not overcome and, that, was a private part of his life which he chose to struggle with on his own. We all wish now that he could have talked more openly about the last mountain that he had to climb. And we all would have helped carry his pack, but it was a journey that he could not share for reasons known only to him. To try to make sense of what appears to be an irrational act is impossible. What he saw and the pain that he felt had to have been beyond our comprehension for him to see this as his only option. His last written words were "Everyone, please forgive me." In spite of what seems like a selfish act, I hope everyone can respect his last wish and wish him eternal peace. I hope that we can also be reconciled, that

a pain, which we cannot understand, has ended for one we all love dearly.

Art was born on February 2, 1927 in North Bay Ontario. The Davis family at that time was father Samuel, mother Elsie, sisters Winnie and Doris, and brothers Jim and Eric. He grew up in the small town and developed a love for the outdoors at that time living at the edge of the northern Ontario bush. He and his brothers learned how to survive in the woods, hunt, fish and canoe. These were more than skills that they learned. For him, they became life styles. Even as a child he was a private person and in being so he was given the nickname of "Silent Sam". An intelligent child, he was held back in school, but finished high school at an earlier age than most. He entered the military at 17 by lying about his age and, in his words, the second world war fortunately ended after he finished basic training and he did not have to go overseas to see active service. Upon being released from military duty, he started working as an office clerk for the CPR.

In 1953 he married Jean Finlayson. Children then followed with Anthea in 1955, Brent in 1957, Glenn in 1958 and Grant in 1960. Due to irreconcilable differences Art and Jean separated in 1961. Their love for their children insulated and shielded them against any problems they had between themselves. The children's concerns always took precedence.

Art, then, took a job on the road with Prichard and Sons, a construction company involved in projects all over North America, as a payroll clerk. This took him to New Jersey, Illinois, California, Oregon and finally Alberta. In 1966 he was involved with the building of the Crossfield and Jumping Pound Gas Plants and decided that Calgary was a place to put down roots again. In 1970, both projects had come to an end and the company wanted him to relocate to another location and he terminated employment with them at that point. During his time in California and Oregon he had started hiking up mountains and when he moved to Calgary he continued and in 1968 he joined the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. His passion for the outdoors now became complete. There, he found a group of similar minded

people who enjoyed a range of activities suited to his personality. That association continued until 1998 when his depression precluded him from allowing his extended family from participating in his activities.

In 1970 Art had his children come to Alberta to visit. They went hiking and Art showed them the magic of the mountains, which had so captivated him. In 1971, Anthea, Glenn and Brent came out to visit him again for the month of July after he had terminated with Prichard and Sons and they traveled the Rocky Mountains, camping and hiking for a month. This instilled a life long love of the hills in them, which is currently being satisfied by them in their own ways.

In 1971 Art commenced employment with the Alberta Liquor Board and he was employed with them until November, 1988. On a Monday in November, 1988 he told his boss that he was tired of coming to work every day and that they should get his pension package together because he really didn't like dealing with the public anymore and wouldn't be coming into work after that day.

During the time from 1966 to 1998 he annually averaged over 2,500 miles of hiking during the summer and skiing in the winter with the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. His son Brent moved to Calgary in 1973 and was quickly drawn into the fold and another life long love affair with mountains had been mentored. His other children visited for holidays and that also involved hiking in the mountains whether they wanted to or not and, in their own way, they have special memories and a love of the hills. One of the most special is the naming of Bighorn Mountain in 1971 along with fellow mentor Jack Carter. This peak is on the Banff/Jasper border near the Columbia Icefields. The opportunity to name a mountain in Canada, let alone the world, today is almost unheard of and took many years of persistence from Art to achieve and it is an outstanding accomplishment all in its own.

The Rocky Mountain Ramblers were one of his labours of love. The friends he grew to know

through that organization are a constant source of inspiration. The common bond of the hills and outdoor activities is one that truly transcends. They have been a part of Arts life for over 30 years. It is one of the longest relationships that he has had, other than that of immediate family, in his life. The Ramblers were very close to his heart and spirit. They are his extended family and our thoughts go out to them for the pain that they are all suffering after not hearing from one of their true friends for the last two of years. His thoughts were with you, but because of the illness, with which he could not come to terms with, he couldn't face you. As I said earlier, he was the first to offer help and the last to ask for help. He has known most of you for over 20 years and some for over 30 years and you were his friends in the truest sense of the word. We have been in situations where we were joined by a rope. Our lives were joined by that rope. It is a bond only mountaineers can know and understand. I know dad was one of my best rope mates, but there was no rope strong enough for his last mountain. We have memories of snow cave trips, his birthday party at Boulder Pass, summits too many to count and backpacks. They are all special memories of man who quietly helped us all out. We have Helga Pattison to thank for the wonderful photograph of dad taken on a backpack on June 21, 1975, up the Spray River Valley which captures that twinkle in his eye and sly grin so common in the back country. He was always his best when the times were the worst and as I recall that day was stinking hot and we all had sore feet and 5 miles to go with full backpacks.

What do we come away from this with? My memory of the man is an accumulation of stories from the late 50's to February 2, 2000. His memory can't be tainted by 2 out of 73 years. The good in this mans life and what he passed on to countless other people is immeasurable. We all wish that we could have helped him in his final days, but "Silent Sam" didn't let us know of his pain and that the end was eminent.

"Everyone, please forgive me"
Dad, you are forgiven

Banff - Jasper Traverse, by Ski and by Car

by Bob St.John

As the title implies, this trip enjoyed mixed success. Although two members did ski out of Banff (Norquay) and did ski into Jasper, much of the intervening low elevation sections were bypassed. The major negative factor was that the snowpack this year was bottomless at and below treeline making travel at lower elevations time consuming and exhausting. After experiencing four days of hard trail breaking from Banff, the trip was re-routed to the northern half that had more sections above treeline.

Four members completed the traverse from Nigel Creek to Jasper in ten full days, (140 km, 4050 m elevation gain), skiing through spectacular terrain in Jonas Pass, Poboktan Pass, the Six Pass Route, and the Skyline Trail. During the traverse the weather did not fully cooperate. While we had three beautiful sunny days, the rest of the time was spent in mostly cloudy, blustery conditions. Continuous light snowfall and relatively warm temperatures made for damper conditions than we would have liked. Despite the weather and some sections of hard trail breaking, the group had an overall good experience on a trip that is seldom attempted. We all learned something new about winter camping over an extended period, and we all saw fabulous terrain that we want to visit again.

This particular traverse may not be offered often, but what was learned can and I am sure will be applicable to other similar adventures to be offered in the years to come. For those who wish more detail, the following is a chronological log of the trip.

December, 1999 to February, 2000: Eleven members expressed interest in the traverse and attended two planning meetings.

Feb 12-13: Seven members commit to setting the Fish Lakes cache up Mosquito Creek and over North Molar Pass. Alistair DesMoulins suffers a rib injury in Calgary and cannot make this trip. Six ski in with heavy packs, camp at Fish Lakes in -20 C temperatures, and ski out the next day. The ride back to Calgary is noteworthy for the general silence of the participants. The reality of heavy packs and cold temperatures for 20 days may be sinking in.

Feb 25: Arnold Westberg, Gail DesMoulins, and Bob St.John drive to Jasper to

leave the return vehicle at the Skyline Trail parking lot. On the way back they ski 8 km to the Poboktan campground to set the Poboktan cache, and leave a car cache at the Cline River bridge on highway 40. It was a good day with a 1000 km car trip combined with a 16 km ski trip. A distressing lack of snow was observed at both Jasper and Cline River. Bottomless snow was observed at the Poboktan cache site - a portent of things to come.

Feb 27, Day 1: Arnold, Bob and Kaare Berg start skiing at 7 AM from Norquay. Alistair and Gail cannot start with us due to work commitments, and will join us at the Fish Lakes cache on day 6. The trail to Forty Mile Creek is extremely icy - Bob and Arnold walk some sections. Snow conditions improve up the valley and good time is made. At the Mystic Cabin the trail is found to Mystic Pass, and trail breaking begins. We settle into a pattern of breaking trail for 30 or so steps, and then falling to the end of the line. We felt it was important to not over exert ourselves, and each one of us could have a short rest while the trail breaking continued. Our planned destination of the Mystic campground was reached by 2:30. Feeling good to be ahead of schedule, we continued up drainages leading down from the pass. For a time we were stymied by deep snow in a short but steeply confined canyon. By 5:30 we were up and over the pass, and at 6:30 made camp in the valley west of the pass. We soon found out that melting snow for three people's water requirements took longer than planned, and wished we had brought two stoves instead of one. (stats: 24 km, 670 m gain, 340 m loss, 11.5 hrs, overcast: lo -7, hi -2)

Day 2: Slow going with deep trail breaking down to Johnston Creek Trail. We are hoping the trail is broken to Luellen Lake. It isn't. Doubts begin to creep into our thoughts as our progress of 1 km/hr is too slow to make the Fish Lakes cache in time. Hopes rise again as a broken trail is found coming up from the creek about 2 km before the Johnston Creek Warden Cabin. As we cruise along at a good clip we wonder if it continues over Pulsatilla Pass, or over Badger Pass. Our cheerful thoughts sink when we see the tracks stop at the cabin. More trail breaking until we camp 1 km short of our destination - Luellen turnoff. All the gain of

the previous day is lost. (stats: 12 km, 150 m gain, 360 m loss, 10 hrs, overcast: lo -5, hi -2)

Day 3: Nicer day with sunshine, open meadows and mountain vistas instead of tree confined trails of the previous two days. Unfortunately the trail breaking was still arduous, but improved with elevation. We found keeping hydrated was a problem, and we made good use of open stretches of Johnston Creek. We reached Pulsatilla Pass at 5 PM and camped west of the pass above treeline, far short of our planned destination of Baker Creek. The night sky was fabulously clear with the stars seemingly within reach. A pleasant day overall but it ended on a dark note: Kaare's achilles tendons were painful, and he had to lie down in the tent all evening. While breaking trail in deep snow it is worthwhile to keep the ski tips up to prevent them from plunging down. Unfortunately the backs of the skis often sink down resulting in stretched tendons on the back of the legs. This effect is exacerbated with heavy packs. (stats: 13 km, 500 m gain, 100 m loss, 10 hrs, sunny: lo -6, hi -3)

Day 4: Spirits are high as we get an early start down Wildflower Creek, with the sun on the high peaks around the pass, and fast solid snow beneath us. At treeline things change with bottomless snow again. We reach Baker Creek at 1 PM, the last 700 meters taking 1 hour and 45 minutes. We were sinking up to our thighs with each step. In Feb, 1999 Kaare, Linda Eastwood and I had great fun skiing down the creek without any problems. After much discussion we decided to bail. To continue up Baker Creek to Baker Lake would have taken a full day, if not more, in those conditions. The snow around Skoki may have been better, and trails probably broken, but further on in the Little Pipestone and Pipestone Rivers conditions would probably be bad as well. Time was just not on our side. As well we were concerned with doing further damage to Kaare's still painful legs. As it was, getting out Baker Creek to Highway 1A would be a chore. So we turned south and continued with the heavy breaking, from time to time being stymied by the meanderings of the open creek. We soon found and followed the summer horse trail. As the pressure of keeping to a schedule had diminished we made an early camp right on the trail, and made a bonfire to dry clothes and raise spirits. (stats: 7 km, 460 m loss, 9 hrs, sunny breaks: lo -7, hi +2)

Day 5: The snowpack in Baker Creek was bottomless, but thin. Arnold found that it was actually easier to walk than to ski. After 2 km we

found a broken trail coming up the valley. Using this trail we breezed out to the trackset section by 10 AM and reached the Baker Creek Cabins by 11:30. That trail saved us at least a day, if not more. By its meanderings high up the side of the valley and along the creek itself we concluded whoever made it was searching for good snow as well. The rest of the day was spent trying to contact the DesMoulins (at the time they were skiing into the Fish Lakes cache), getting Kaare's car at Norquay (\$85.00 taxi fare), driving to Mosquito Creek to discover the DesMoulins car, having dinner in Lake Louise, saying goodbye to Kaare as he left for home, and staying at the Mosquito Creek hostel for the night (Arnold and Bob). We took the opportunity to dry out our gear which was now quite wet. (stats: 12 km, 330 m loss, 5 hrs, mainly sunny: lo -2, hi +5)

Day 6: Arnold and Bob skied up Mosquito Creek, over North Molar Pass to the Fish Lakes cache. We found Alistair and Gail's tent nearby, and soon met them coming up from the Pipestone Valley where they had been looking for us. As it happened, they had found a broken trail in the valley and had speculated we had overshot the Fish Lakes turnoff. Alistair's rib was still sore, and he had almost turned around the day before. Skiing was not a problem, but getting up from bed or doing kick turns or putting on his pack was painful. We discussed what to do next, and decided to try the northern part of the traverse from Nigel Creek to Jasper where the elevations were generally higher and the snowpack hopefully more solid. (stats: 15 km, 760 m gain, 365 m loss, 7 hrs, overcast)

Day 7: Skied back out to Highway 93 with all the cache supplies (about 100 lbs worth). Camped in the Mosquito Creek Picnic Shelter. (stats: 15 km, 365 m gain, 760 m loss, 6 hrs, overcast).

Day 8: Drove the DesMoulin's car to Nigel Creek and Bob's car from the Cline River cache to Poboktan Creek. We re-stocked our packs with 7 day's worth of supplies and started skiing up Nigel Creek. Much of the way we could follow an old broken trail, breaking new trail when we lost it on open windswept ground. We camped below the pass in trees near treeline. (stats: 6 km, 225 m gain, 4 hrs, overcast, windy, snowing, lo -10, hi -6)

Day 9: We skied up to a notch east of Nigel Pass and down into the south fork of the Brazeau River. The rock formations, huge boulders, cornices and wind scoops made for an interesting route down into the Brazeau Valley. We skied down the frozen river through a small canyon and over open

meadows to a point where we felt we could cut up over a shoulder into Four Point Creek. Up to this point travel was relatively good on wind packed snow, but in the protected snow of the forest the going got harder. We crested the shoulder at treeline and contoured into Four Point Creek below Jonas Pass where we made camp near treeline. (stats: 12 km, 330 m gain, 200 m loss, 11 hrs, overcast, snowing)

Day 10: A sunny but colder day as we skied up the very scenic environs of Jonas Pass. From here to Maligne Lake we would follow an almost continuous wall of peaks on our left (west side). Most of these peaks are unnamed. This day and day 11 were one of the highlights of the trip. After a long stretch through the pass we cut up to Jonas Shoulder at a notch about 1 km south of where the summer trail crosses the Shoulder (cornices). From here it was a nice ski down to a camp site above treeline near Poboktan Pass. (stats: 14 km, 300 m gain, 180 m loss, 10 hrs, sunny: lo -19, hi -10)

Day 11: Another sunny clear day. We left our camp intact, and skied up to just below a 3000 meter summit (GR 905062) overlooking Brazeau Lake. We walked the last 200 vertical meters or so on snow and scree. Here we had a commanding 360 degree vista of the peaks of the Grand Brazeau. Alistair pointed out the routes of several backpacks taken in past years. After a suitably long time lounging on the summit we descended to camp. (stats: 8 km, 800 m gain, 800 m loss, 8 hrs, sunny: lo -16, hi -5)

Day 12: Easy skiing down Poboktan Creek until treeline, then very hard trail breaking. Our goal of making Waterfalls Cabin seemed too optimistic, but with perseverance we reached the cabin at nightfall. Thankfully wardens had visited the cabin on snowmobiles, and it was one of the very few times snowmobile tracks were appreciated. We camped near the cabin, and used the porch for cooking. (stats: 10 km, 360 m loss, 11.5 hrs, overcast, snowing, hi -3)

Day 13: Made good time on the snowmobile trail to our cache at Poboktan campground. Here we re-stocked our packs, but left some extra provisions to be picked up after the trip. The trail up to Maligne pass had been broken, but the steep trail and now heavy packs made for arduous travel. We camped at treeline before the pass. (stats: 15 km, 350 m gain, 200 m loss, 9.5 hrs, mainly sunny: lo -10, hi -1)

Day 14: Travel this day and day 15 on the Six Pass Route was relatively good with much of the route above treeline with wind-hardened snow.

We also utilized broken trail left by two parties we met traveling south along the route. The weather for both days was cloudy and blustery, with a fine snow constantly falling. We made it over Maligne Pass, Elusive Pass, and camped between Passes 4 and 3. (stats: 13 km, 300 m gain, 520 m loss, 9.5 hrs, cloudy: lo -10, hi -5)

Day 15: Continued over Passes 3, 2, and 1 to a camp in the valley south of the Bald Hills. We had a choice of accessing the Skyline Trail via the Bald Hills or via Evelyn Creek. We chose the Bald Hills route thinking higher elevations would yield better snow. This was an unfortunate choice. (stats: 14 km, 750 m gain, 800 m loss, 9.5 hrs, cloudy, snowing)

Day 16: We had hoped to reach Little Shovel Pass this day, but it took many hours of thrashing in bottomless snow to reach treeline on the Bald Hills. We camped at the Bald Hills Lookout, far short of our destination. We later found out there was a broken trail in Evelyn Creek. (stats: 7 km, 550 m gain, 230 m loss, 9 hrs, cloudy, snowing, lo -6, hi -3)

Day 17: A fun, fast ski down the Bald Hills Fire Road and the Evelyn Creek Loop Trail (skier-set) to Evelyn Creek. Here we picked up a good broken trail leading up to Little Shovel Pass. At treeline the trail was hard to follow and trail breaking again slowed us down. We camped near Snowbowl campground north of the pass. There was lots of evidence of skiers telemarking and touring in the bowl. This would be an excellent area for a future winter camp, perhaps staying at the nearby Shangri-la Ski Cabin. On a dark note Alistair was taking Tylenol 3's for a new pain that developed on the side opposite to his rib injury. (stats: 12 km, 450 m gain, 500 m loss, 6.5 hrs, mixed sun and cloud, snowing, lo -6, hi -3)

Day 18: This day was a long one on high exposed sections of the Skyline Trail. All day the weather threatened with dark storm clouds just west of us. Fortunately they stayed there and we had enough visibility to see the peaks around us. The route took us across Snowbowl to Big Shovel Pass, down to Curator Lake, up over the Notch, along a windswept ridge past twin peaks, then down a bowl east of Amber Mountain and up over a pass and down to Centre and Tekarra Lakes. The Notch proved to be somewhat worrisome with its huge overhanging cornice and steep threatening slopes. Arnold did a fine job of route finding over the critical section. We camped at a somewhat exposed site at Tekarra Lake. The wind picked up considerably during the night and lasted into the

next morning. (stats: 18 km, 630 m gain, 650 m loss, 11 hrs, mixed sun and cloud, blustery, snowing)

Day 19: A relatively easy day with some trail breaking up to treeline above Tekarra Lake and then easy contouring around Signal Mountain to the Fire Road. The run down the Fire Road was superb with 8 inches of fresh snow on hard packed base. The 8 km and 3000 foot elevation loss was done in 65 minutes. We arrived at Arnold's van at 1:30 PM and got rooms at the Athabasca Hotel in Jasper. It seemed surrealistic to actually have a hot shower after weeks of not washing, to actually sit down in a chair for dinner, to actually not eat pasta for dinner, to actually.... well, you get the point. It seemed civilization was a dream state and I could wake up in a tent at any time. (stats: 14 km, 150 m gain, 1040 m loss, 4 hrs, cloudy)

Day 20: Drive to Poboktan Creek, ski up to retrieve the cache, drive to Lake Louise for dinner, drive home to Calgary. (stats: 16 km, 240 m gain, 240 m loss, 3 hrs)

Some comments on what was learned:

1. The full traverse can be done in 20 days, but the snowpack has to be solid. Participants would have to be able to ski with 55 pound packs for 10 hours per day, with few long stops.
2. Short rotations on trail breaking worked well in preventing exhaustion, and gave everyone a short break after each rotation.
3. Having food and water handy without stopping to take off a pack to get it worked well. Continuous snacking and drinking worked better than long lunch breaks.
4. A short pack off break every 2 hours or so is necessary.
5. Vapour barrier liners kept down bags dry from insensible perspiration. Overbags kept down bags dry from condensation in the tent.
6. Thermarests start to freeze internally over time from water vapour in your breath.
7. On longer trips you eat more as the days go by.
8. You can never drink too much water. Dehydration is always a problem.
9. Temperatures below -10 are preferable to temperatures above -10. Warm weather with snow can get your clothes, boots and tent wet.

Finally I would like to thank Alistair, Gail, Arnold and Kaare for being great companions on what was sometimes a trying journey.

SUBJECT: Proposed Mount Sparrowhawk Heli-Cat Operation and Spray Resort

Dear Premier Klein,

We are writing you on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association, a Calgary based outdoor club with 290 members, to express our concerns and opposition regarding the proposed developments in the Spray Valley.

This area is currently an outstanding location to experience a near-wilderness mountain environment in a location that is reasonably proximate to Calgary. The members of our club enjoy the opportunity to undertake outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing and hiking with minimal disturbance from the noise of motorized conveyances. This situation enhances the opportunities to appreciate and encounter wildlife that are a declining part of the city dwellers experience, such as moose and grizzly bear that have been sighted by our club members in this area. This obviously strikes a chord with Albertans when the surveys your government has undertaken indicate that over 80% would prefer to see no further development in Kananaskis.

The Spray Resort proposes to change this by bringing in over 600,000 visitor-days of activity into the area annually. The presence of essential staff at the resort, outside service personnel who would have to regularly attend to the infrastructure maintenance, and persons providing daily supply movements would add to this activity figure significantly. Furthermore, the Heli-Cat operation on Mount Sparrowhawk proposes an incremental 16,000 skier-days partaking in a particularly noisy activity. The end result will apparently be a replication of the urban experience along the Smith Dorrien / Spray trail, where on a busy day one could join 6,000 downhill ski commuters going to and from the ski hill. In summer, the increased traffic from resort guests and daily visitors will similarly detract from any wilderness experience.

With the prospect of that vision in mind, the Rocky Mountain Ramblers do not want to see these developments receive approval. They would detract from the current hiking areas on Tent Ridge, to Watridge Lake and on Mount Sparrowhawk. Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in winter would be subject to the background clamor of helicopters continuously clattering up Mount Sparrowhawk. The area is already under significant usage growth as Calgary's population has rapidly expanded, it does not need further development to be a fine recreation area. We are sure you will hear from conservation groups regarding these projects' detrimental effects on wildlife and the area's ecology, which provide much of the Spray Lake Valley's attraction.

We strongly urge that the projects not proceed and the area remain in its undeveloped state.

Yours sincerely,

The Executive of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers.

February 8, 2000

RE: Genesis proposal for the Spray Valley

**The Honourable Ralph Klein
307 Legislative Building
1080-97th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B7**

Dear Premier Ralph Klein,

Genesis Land Corporation proposes to develop a heli-skiing operation and four-season resort in the Spray Valley, one of the last accessible and wild valleys in the Canadian Rockies. This proposal threatens an area that provides essential habitat for grizzly bears and wolves and affordable recreation opportunities for Albertans. As one of the overwhelming majority of Albertans (87 per cent according to the latest poll) who feels that Kananaskis Country already has enough development, I believe this fragile wilderness should be spared from further development.

Premier Klein, the future of the Spray Valley is the responsibility of your government. Please act immediately to stop this development, including compensation to the developer if absolutely necessary, and protect this wonderful area as a designated Wildland Park. The Spray is surrounded by some of the grandest parks and protected areas in Canada, and deserves your protection.

Sincerely yours,

Name:

Street Address:

Town/Province:

Postal Code:

**cc: Ms. Annette Trimbec
Mr. Gary Mar
Ms. Janis Tarchuk
Ms. Debby Carlson
Dr. Raj Pannu**