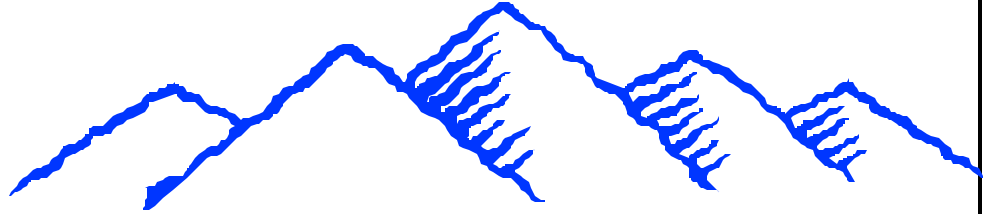


Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association

# The PackRat



July/August 2005



*Perito Moreno Glacier, Patagonia*

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The Packrat is published six times a year by the Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association. We welcome comments, articles, and ideas from our members and, if content is deemed suitable, will be used as space permits.

Email submissions to the newsletter editor at [packrat@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:packrat@ramblers.ab.ca) or forward contributions to RMRA, c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council, 1111 Memorial Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 3E4.

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## President's Report...

**S**afety is a word that can be defined many different ways. It could describe equipment, define route selection, or used in conjunction with the number of participants on a trip.

Recently, there have been deaths in the mountains, but as a club, we take preventative measures to avoid how these deaths came about.

Three women joggers in Canmore were in the benchlands area of Lady MacDonald when a bear attacked. Two went for help and one went up a tree. The woman left in the tree was killed by the bear. Our club insists that we have a minimum number on a trip for safety reasons. The more participants, the greater the safety margin when it comes to a bear encounter. The safety in numbers is only effective if the group is together.

A young lady, 24 years old, was killed in an avalanche on Mt Logan. Our club encourages its members to be prepared with good avalanche information before heading into the mountains. We have a lot of experienced members who can be consulted when planning a trip. Safety comes from avoiding the avalanche in the first place.

On our club trips, communication during the trip is extremely important. External

factors like hot/cold weather, and duration of the trip, can adversely affect participants on the trip. Anxiety can build, tempers flare and communication can break down. The group must work safely together regardless of these conditions. For safety reasons, the group must stay together, and work together, to complete the trip. Safety is something we all must learn and practice.

The Wednesday night meeting format continues to change and evolve. We recently used a Wednesday night to hold a wilderness first aid course. The cost of the course was reduced because the Ramblers supplied the hall. We are mixing up the meeting formats and the members are encouraged to provide feedback about the Wednesday night formats.

We are participating in the Alberta Centennial Mountain Expedition celebration and now have the T-shirts and the canisters for the mountain tops. The trips are Mt. Allan, Mt. Richardson, Crowsnest Mt., Mt. Baldy and Mt. Cory and have been on the calendar for a while. Each Coordinator will hand out the T-shirts. If you signed up for more than one trip, you still only get one T-shirt.

Enjoy the summer in a safe manner!

## Patagonia Dreamin'

by Ron M.

In the middle of March, Micheline and I put our skis away and took a marathon flight to Buenos Aires. It was actually four flights over a period of about 48 hours with virtually no sleep. It is not surprising that I hardly remember the next two days in the city.

We joined our tour group (Tucan) and flew down to Ushuaia on the Beagle Channel in Tierra del Fuego. I was soon able to boast to have drunk beer at the most northern and at the most southern breweries in the world! After a boat trip to see seals and a variety of birds, we went on an interesting hike along the shore. My mind was back with Charles Darwin as he sailed along the Channel taking detailed notes on the wildlife.

We now started our glorified bus trip on the 'Tucan' bus, specially built to be comfortable for long days on dirt roads. Before long we were out of the mountains and crossing the Magellan Straits by ferry to reach Punta Arenas where we caught the tail end of the penguin migration.

Here we entered the region called Patagonia which covers the southern areas of Chile and Argentina. It is made up mostly of the pampas which consists of vast areas of barren rock and sandy desert with only a sparse covering of

coarse grass and stunted bushes. Somehow, sheep are raised here on huge ranches, covering hundreds of square kilometers. We also saw condors and guanacos which are an endangered relative of llamas.

The big attractions of Patagonia are not the pampas but the fantastic granite mountains of the southern Andes Mountains that I had read and dreamed about as a teenager. I arrived in the Torres del Paine National Park



*The Torres del Paine*

in a state of great excitement. We stayed in a semi-permanent campsite in the Park where the local guides fed and wined us ready for the next day's hike. We gazed up at the granite towers as the clouds tantalised us by shifting around the peaks.

We could not see the famous Torres del Paine from the

camp so it was with great anticipation that we started up the trail to the refuge below the Towers. After about two hours, the top of the Towers suddenly came into view above the trees, there were no clouds! After another hour through the trees, the trail went steeply up a rock field and at the top the most magnificent vista opened up. Three tall white granite pillars at least 1200 m high rose out of a steep, snowy, scree slope above a glacial lake which was below us. There were only a few wisps of cloud in an area renowned for its bad weather.

I was thinking of the incredible hardships suffered during the early ascents.

A day later we had a visit to the Moreno Glacier which ends spectacularly in an 80 m ice cliff dropping into a lake. Another day's drive brought us to Mount Fitzroy National Park where there are more inspiring granite mountains. Once again, the weather was perfect as we hiked for six hours beneath Mt. Fitzroy to a fixed camp just below the Torres Glacier.

We set off from camp before sunrise and were rewarded by a view of the sun lighting up the pink granite pillars of Cerro Torres and other nearby towers. Photo time! The route led to a rope stretched across the outlet river of the glacial lake. We all put on harnesses, clipped into the rope and pulled ourselves across. The uphill section at

### Activities

Hiking, Backpacking,  
Skiing, Cycling,  
Climbing,  
Scrambling,  
Mountaineering, Educa-  
tion & Awareness  
Programs, Social  
Functions

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### Meetings

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Every Wednesday  
evening at 7:30 p.m.

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### Mail

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Rocky Mountain Ramblers  
Association  
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor  
Council (CAOC)  
1111 Memorial Dr NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 3E4

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### Trip Info

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282-6308 Information  
Line and at Meetings

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### Website

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The Packrat is available on  
the RMRA website at  
**[www.ramblers.ab.ca](http://www.ramblers.ab.ca)**. If  
we have your email ad-  
dress, you will be auto-  
matically notified that an  
electronic copy of the  
Packrat is on the website.

the end was a challenge. The trail continued to climb steeply over a cliff before descending onto the glacier where crampons were put on. This was a new experience for most of the group but the glacier was fairly flat with small crevasses. You might know I was the one who tripped and battered my knees on the hard ice!

Some of us practiced ice-climbing on wall of a serac before heading back over the cliff and the tyrolian traverse. After a brief stop at the camp, we continued back to our hotel. In fact I staggered back completely exhausted after a hard 12-hour day.

The best of the Patagonian mountains were now behind us and a few long bus rides took us into resort areas of Chile. One last 12-hour drive and we were in Santiago where we were able to spend a few days resting before the next part of our adventure... (*more in the next issue*).

## Action Alert on Wildlife Corridors

*Oppose a trail in the Three Sisters corridor as unsafe!*

**C**ontact Canmore Council and let them know that while you support a natural walking trail on the Three Sisters property, you oppose the placement of a trail within or adjacent to the Primary Three Sisters wildlife corridor, as you have for the

past 3 years.

A trail in this area goes against the recommendations of the 2002 Golder Report, compromises the corridor's functionality for wildlife, and endangers human safety.

Canmore Councillors can be reached at:

**[mayor@canmore.ca](mailto:mayor@canmore.ca)**  
**[bbaille@canmore.ca](mailto:bbaille@canmore.ca)**  
**[jborrowman@canmore.ca](mailto:jborrowman@canmore.ca)**  
**[cdootjes@canmore.ca](mailto:cdootjes@canmore.ca)**  
**[agareau@canmore.ca](mailto:agareau@canmore.ca)**  
**[mheenan@canmore.ca](mailto:mheenan@canmore.ca)**  
**[mwestern@canmore.ca](mailto:mwestern@canmore.ca)**

A trail in the wildlife corridor is not safe for people or wildlife.

Once again, Three Sisters Mountain Resort (TSMV) is bringing a plan before Council this week which proposes placing a natural walking trail within the effective width of the south Canmore wildlife corridor.

And this is in spite of the fact that a walking trail in or adjacent to a wildlife corridor endangers human safety and compromises corridor functionality.

A functional corridor: is a legal requirement of the developer; has the full support of science; is Town policy; reflects 13 years of publicly expressed concern in hearings, open houses and petitions; and represents a financial investment by all Canadians.

It is the responsibility of TSMV to provide **both** a functional wildlife corridor and a

natural walking trail in a safe area away from the corridor, as recommended by the 2002 Golder Report (page 44).

It is time that this regionally and nationally important corridor is made safe for people and safe for animals. The reality is that: People are not safe in wildlife corridors and wildlife are not safe outside the corridors. Yet while one arm of the Province prohibits human use of wildlife corridors for safety reasons, the other arm is facilitating development and failing in its responsibility to apply its own scientific standards, i.e., the Bow Corridor Ecosystem Advisory Group (BCEAG) standards. A trail in the effective width of the corridor is not safe for people and is not scientifically functional for wildlife.

Functional and safe corridors are a legal requirement of the developer. In 1992 the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) legally required Three Sisters to provide wildlife corridors which would move wildlife safely through the Bow Valley, and recommended that scientific standards for corridors be developed. The 1998 BCEAG standards are the result. The NRCB has informed the developer that it expects “more recent scientific thought” to be applied to these corridors (April 6, 2004).

Functional and safe corridors are required by the science, but have not been used consistently for political and commercial reasons. Although the BCEAG standards were developed out

of the NRCB Decision, and were a joint enterprise of the Town of Canmore, the MD of Bighorn, the Province and Banff National Park, they have only been applied to 25% of the Three Sisters corridor at the Wind Valley end.

Functional and safe corridors are Town policy, with the BCEAG standards adopted in the 1998 Municipal Development Plan, but they have never been applied by the Town. Now is the time for the Town to apply BCEAG or equivalent standards to the South Canmore wildlife corridor.

Functional corridors and a safe walking trail away from the corridor and below the golf course are the developer’s responsibility. The Golder 2002 recommendations are a compromise of the BCEAG standards, which would have required a wider corridor for animal and human safety. For this narrower corridor to be functional, Golder 2002 requires that the effective width of the corridor (including the 35-metre buffer area) be protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement, with the walking trail provided by TSMV directly below the golf course. It is the developer’s responsibility to provide **both** a functional corridor **and** a safely positioned walking trail.

Functional and safe corridors have been actively sought by the public from both Canmore Council and the Province for 13 years in public hearings, open houses and petitions. At every public hearing or open house, a

large majority of Canmore citizens have repeatedly and consistently called for safe and functional corridors, with the application of either the BCEAG standards or **all** of the sequence of land uses recommended by Golder 2002 as necessary for corridor functionality. The public and independent scientists have also repeatedly called for a full assessment of the corridor in the Stewart Creek Area by an independent biologist hired by the town to make it as functional as possible, especially given that the Province approved the Stewart Creek Golf Course immediately before the NRCB was established.

Functional and safe corridors on the TSMV lands represent a financial investment by all Canadians who have contributed their tax dollars to two wildlife crossing structures at either end of the 13 km TSMV wildlife corridor. The first crossing structure is at the Rundle Forebay, outside the Nordic Centre Provincial Park, and the second structure is over the Trans Canada Highway at Dead Man’s Flats, east of Canmore. This gift will be in vain if any of this corridor is not functional.

For the safety of the people of Canmore and to honour the legal, scientific and public commitments of the past 13 years, we ask Canmore council to keep any trail out of the corridor buffer and to amend Bylaw 23 (‘04) for the resort area and Bylaw 24 (‘04) for the

Stewart Creek area to conform to conform to these commitments. The natural walking trail should be placed below the golf course as recommended by the 2002 Golder Report.

Please direct the Town Administration to respect the majority of public will and apply the science of wildlife corridors by bringing forward to Council only those development proposals which meet these scientific, legal and public requirements. Proposals from the developer which fail to meet these criteria should be sent back to the developer rather than brought forward by administration.

*Comments by Dave Poulton,  
CPAWS*

**dpoulton@cpawscalgary.org**

## PACKRAT ADVERTISING RATES

The Club offers advertising space in **PackRat** and the following rates apply:

Quarter Page	\$10
Half Page	\$20
Full Page	\$40

Payment **MUST** be received prior to publication.

**DEADLINE  
for next PACKRAT  
AUGUST 26, 2005**

## Tips to Ponder

Here are a few tips on how to deal with the burdens of life:

- Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.
- If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
- The second mouse gets the cheese.
- When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
- Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
- You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- Some mistakes are too much fun to only make once.
- Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.
- We could learn a lot from

crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors but they all have to live in the same box.

- A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
- Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.

## Schedule of Events

### Annual Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, July 16, 2005

9 AM - noon

Lakeview Community Hall  
6110 34 Street SW

Please bring along a lawn chair, plate, cutlery and drinking vessel and dress Western.

**RSVP by July 6** to Barbara 254-2276 or fill in the survey on the website.

### Kananaskis Bus Trip

Sunday, July 24th

Sign up for the Buller-Guinn traverse starting at Buller Creek Day Use Area and bus pick-up at Galatea.

Possible alternatives include hiking via North Buller Pass, the side peak above Guinn Pass or for those who like deadfall, the Rummel Pass - Lost Lake route.

For more info, check **www.ramblers.ab.ca**, call the info line 282-6308 or attend our Wednesday night meeting.