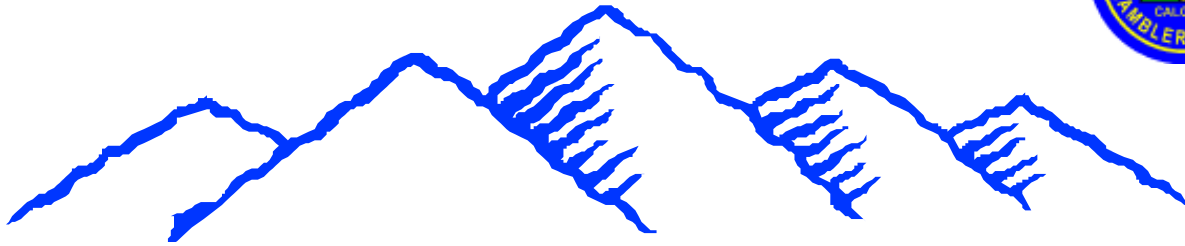


# The PackRat



September/October 2005



PHOTO CREDIT MARIA NEMETHY

*From L. to R. - Carl, Dorothy-Ann, Barb, Nancy, Arnold, Peter, with Tony Holiday, a Navajo Guide in Keet Seel on the Navajo Reserve "Navajo National Monument".*

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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...

**T**his year has presented some really "different" weather for hiking. Exceptionally wet in June and part of July, and now in August we are lucking out with warm, dry weather on the weekends and wet, cold weather during the week. Should be interesting to see what the Fall will hold for us...Indian summer I hope.

The Alberta Centennial Mountain Expedition celebration has been a great success for the Ramblers who conquered many of their peaks this year. The club was able to place the canisters for the following mountains: Mt. Allan, Mt. Richardson, Crowsnest Mtn., Mt. Baldy, Mt. Cory, Big Sister, and Oyster Peak. Bogart Mtn. is planned for this upcoming Saturday. Those who participated in the ACME activities are invited to a party in Canmore at the Old Miners Hall at 7:00 PM until they shut the place down. There will be a silent auction and a raffle, beer, wine, slide-show of climbs and pictures, some mingling and music. All around it should be a really fun night. The silent auction is to raise money for the Rocky Mountain Educational Initiative and for the ACC Hut Refurbishment.

One of the many things I observed this hiking season is the marked improvement of hikers who have taken courses. Their anxiety levels drop, and their confidence levels rise, because they have learned good

habits from professional guides. This approach to increasing one's skill set, combined with "getting out there and doing it" has yielded some very competent hikers. Keep up the good work.

Thanks to Greg Deabler and Ron Hunter for "taking care" of our web application. A special thanks to John Duerdon as being the "main man" for supporting the web (he is our new Keith).

The web plays an important role in making the club information available. Volunteers that make constructive contributions allow a club to be a success.

Enjoy the hiking season!

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***"Only those who  
risk going too far  
can possibly find out  
how far one can go."***

*T.S. Eliot*

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**Deadline  
for next PackRat  
October 28, 2005**

**Travel Stories Wanted!**

Got a great adventure to share? I am always looking for stories to feature in the Packrat. Send me your stories to [packrat@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:packrat@ramblers.ab.ca)



## Annual Dinner & Dance

The Rocky Mountain Ramblers Dinner and Dance will be held Friday, October 28, 2005 at the Calgary Winter Club. Please join us for an evening of good companionship and food, with a little exercise thrown in.

Cocktails will begin at 6:00 PM with dinner at 7:00 PM and dancing until midnight. Tickets will go on sale at the beginning of October and the cost will be similar to last year (\$35 per person). I am still working through some details.

If you wish to nominate someone for an award, please do so by October 15, 2005. The categories are listed on the nomination form. All nominations should be sent to the attention of Barb Mitchell or email [social@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:social@ramblers.ab.ca).

### 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.

## Awards Dinner & Dance Nomination Form

This form allows you to nominate members of the club in certain categories. Awards will be handed out to the winners of each category at the Club's Annual Awards Dinner and Dance on Friday, October 28, 2005. Please be thinking about these categories in the coming months. Nominations are not due until October 14.

Please complete nomination form and return to Barb Mitchell by October 15, 2005 or email [social@ramblers.ab.ca](mailto:social@ramblers.ab.ca)

- A. **Best or more creative hiking or skiing outfit (whose was it and describe outfit).**
- B. **Most improved hiker or skier.**
- C. **Most interesting thing someone said on a Ramblers trip (who said it and what they said).**
- D. **Most interesting item found in a pack (whose was it and what was it).**
- E. **Best joke told on a Ramblers trip (what was it and who said it).**
- F. **Best gossip/humour (who said it and what was it).**
- G. **Congeniality Award.**

### *A Backpacking Recipe*

#### **Turkey Tetrazini (*Makes 3 servings*)**

##### **Ingredients:**

- 3 cups water
- 3 servings dry mushroom soup mix
- 1 can turkey (5 oz)
- 1 pkg Ramen oriental noodles

##### **Directions:**

Mix water and soup mix until smooth. Add turkey and noodles. (Don't use the sauce mix from the Ramen package. You can leave that at home.) Cook 2 minutes and serve.

### Activities

Hiking, Backpacking,  
Skiing, Cycling,  
Climbing,  
Scrambling,  
Mountaineering, Education  
& Awareness  
Programs, Social  
Functions

### Meetings

Every Wednesday  
evening at 7:30 p.m.

### Mail

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

### Trip Info

282-6308 Information  
Line and at Meetings

### Website

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.

## Biffies for the Future?

by D. Reimer

Elbow Lake Campground has a new space-age biffy. A composting toilet, official name Phoenix Composting Toilet, was installed in the summer of 2004. This will be its first full season.

The toilet is experimental here due to a climate that's colder than other regions where it's being used such as B.C., Ontario, Arizona. To provide extra heat for the composting chamber and maintain optimal bacterial action the design has included a very large propane tank and black roof panels. It is hoped that it will be easier to maintain

than the old-style "barrel" toilets that have to be removed/replaced by helicopter or vehicle.

Several Ramblers checked out this modern, environmentally better facility on the return from a hike to Rae Glacier in July and all agreed that it was clean and **Odour-Free!**

Now, what about testing some of those biffies with the black vent pipes which aren't any more environmentally friendly but are Odour-Free.

K-Country normally replaces about 5 or 6 toilets annually. With around 500 scattered around the region, I think even our grand-kids will be a bit long in the tooth before all biffies are converted.



## What's Happenin' Kananaskis Trail Users

by D. Reimer

After a June 23 meeting with K Country and several weeks of hiking in K Country, here are some updates.

### Flooding

Following June's monsoons, K Country has been working very effectively to fix up our recreation facilities. They've even applied to Municipal Affairs Dept. for flood relief aid.

The various roads that were badly damaged (e.g. Powderface Trail, Gorge Creek) are the responsibility of Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation so repairs don't come out of K Country's meagre budget.

Flood damage, bad as it was, was lighter than the 1995 floods that ravaged the Highwood to Cataract region.

### Management Plans

The Peter Lougheed/Spray Valley Plan is expected to be signed off soon but without any boundary changes which require an Order-In-Council.

**Sheep/Bluerock Plan:** Public responses (including ours) are being reviewed and the plan is being put together. One of the major issues is grazing vs. recreation. The public will have a chance to comment on the plan once it is written.

### Information for the Public

Trail Conditions: Many clubs want updates more than once/week for trail information, for summer and winter both. They are also concerned that some of the info is inaccurate.

**Avalanche:** The Province has agreed to co-sponsor the Canadian Avalanche Association (others are B.C. & the Feds.) with proviso that;

- CAA provide bulletins to include K Country, David Thompson and Crowsnest.
- CAA get involved with Outreach programs especially for schools & back-country recreation groups.
- K Country will continue to have its own Avalanche Specialist on staff.

### How to Spend K Country's Increased \$

KTUA presented a list of ideas on where K Country's budget increase could be used – our "wish list". The list had been vetted by representatives from about 10 or 12 clubs.

Tops was toilets. Not enough, too smelly, locked, damaged and so on. (See also the article "Biffies for the Future?") Another item was more designated trails, especially south of the Highwood. Also, extend some facility maintenance (e.g. toilets at Highwood Junction) into the hiking shoulder seasons.

### You Can Contribute

- Report trail damage to one the Information centres; phone calls are free (dial 310-0000 first)
- Say thanks if you're pleased about something you see.



## National Trail Controversy

by D. Reimer

Doug Campbell, Canmore resident, hiker and advocate for Trailminders, expresses concern about the location of a section of the National Hiking Trail in the Banff-Canmore corridor. The 65 km Canmore segment of this Trail was finally established in 1991 except for selecting a route through the Three Sisters Mountain Village. As a group whose focus has always been the establishment of this trail, Trailminders today is most worried about this last section.

The latest proposal is to route this section between the planned new golf course and the prime low-density residences Three Sister is building.

However, Trailminders believe a better solution, more in keeping with the scenic wilderness vision for the Trail, is available.

A wild-life corridor, 450 to 650 m wide, was established on the south side of the Bow valley and lies on the south edge of the Three Sisters golf course. In addition, a 35 m wide 'buffer' zone was put between the golf course and the corridor. Doug Campbell suggests that the natural-surface walking path for the National Trail be allowed in this buffer strip.

Canmore Town Council have the authority to decide the final route. Many recreationists favour this buffer-zone path. If you are concerned about the issue, write or e-mail Canmore's mayor and tell him what you'd like to see. The **public hearing**

is set for **6:00 PM, Tuesday, September 7, 2005 in the Canmore Civic Centre**

Mayor Ron Casey  
Town of Canmore  
902 7 Ave.  
Canmore AB T1W 3K1  
e-mail: mayor@canmore.ca

Non-Canmore residents have as much right to be heard on this issue as Canmore property owners since it is, after, the “National” Trail.

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## **Trans-Canada Highway Twinning Project, Phase IIB - June 2005**

Traffic volumes are high and continue to rise annually on the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH) through Canada’s first national park. This situation impacts human safety, the flow of goods, and safe, unimpeded wildlife movement. Upgrading to a four-lane highway has been chosen as the best means to improve conditions for both people and wildlife. Twinning has occurred in stages since 1981. The most recent 10-km stage is underway east of Lake Louise. By late 2007, this additional twinning will contribute to safer travel for people and the smoother flow of goods. Highway fencing will help reduce road kill. Wildlife crossing structures and other design features will help maintain or restore vital ecological flows — be they waterways or the movement of fish and other wildlife.

### **Project Update**

- Approval of the final project plan and subsequent release of the entire \$50.0 million budget was received in May 2005. This allows 10 km of twinning with mitigations starting east of Lake Louise.

- Additionally, the project includes construction of 7.5 km highway fencing extending west of Lake Louise. Over the entire 17.5 km fenced section, eight wildlife crossings structures will be built: two 60-m wide overpasses; a 35-m wide bridge underpass (Bow River); a 20-m underpass; and four 7-m wide underpasses. A number of 1-m wide ‘dry’ culverts will also help small animals to cross the newly twinned 10-km section.

- Trees were cleared over winter to avoid disturbing migratory birds that seasonally nest along waterways. Some trees were sold to help defray the project’s costs, while stumps will be chipped and composted to create soil for recovering disturbed areas along the highway. The Siksika Nation will also use some trees for tipi poles and associated traditional ceremonies.

- Refinements to the original twinning design include a slight shift in lane alignment at a couple of curves. This adjustment prevents the need for high cuts or retaining walls and creates slightly gentler curves to improve driver safety. It also results in cost savings; improves one animal crossing; and trims a few hectares off the project’s footprint.

- Design refinements for several bridge and crossing structures

were also made. For example, the new Moraine Creek bridge will be located south of the existing TCH rather than north of it. This brings safety benefits, better accommodates the river’s natural flow, and benefits nesting harlequin ducks. Also, the new and longer Bow River bridge has been designed to fully span the river to avoid fishery impacts.

- A pedestrian underpass at the west end of Lake Louise is under consideration based on feedback from townsites residents and community council.

- Through funding from Parks Canada and partnerships with several North American Foundations and Montana’s Western Transportation Institute, DNA research is being planned at the existing crossing structures. Animal hairs snagged with sticky string and barbed wire provide the DNA. DNA profiling will help identify which individual animals within a population are contributing to gene flow, and ensure that population connectivity is maintained or restored by the crossing mitigations.

- When the TCH was built in the mid-1950s, many streams were rerouted to culverts under the highway. Current twinning will allow these streams to be restored to their original channels to regain their health and productivity. Their restored insect communities will feed fish, and birds such as dippers and harlequins in the Bow River.

### **Highway Pull-Offs & Access**

- Throughout 2005, Bow River canoe and kayak access will

remain open to paddlers at the pull-off just east of Lake Louise. After twinning, access to the put-in will remain from both lanes.

- Likewise, access to the Lake Louise Overflow Campground will be unaffected this year. After twinning, access remains from both lanes. The Mt. Temple viewpoint will be closed this year. It will reopen in 2007 with access from the westbound lane.

### Research and Monitoring

Yes, the existing wildlife crossing structures are working! Through the long-term data collected, animals continue to teach us how to build better fencing and crossing structures to meet their different lifestyle needs. This learning has gone into the current twinning project. Worldwide, other transportation engineers are also putting this learning on the ground.

Monitoring of wildlife crossings is vital to ensure they are improving the permeability of roads to animal movements, connecting habitats, and ultimately sustaining healthy populations over time. Species such as grizzly and black bears, cougars, elk, moose, and wolves are using the wildlife crossings with over 63,000 passages documented. New DNA research will shed further light on the effectiveness of the current wildlife crossings.

Unexpectedly, we've discovered that TCH monitoring serves as a unique, linear transect for monitoring wildlife populations in the park. It continues to reveal general population numbers and trends for many species

– information needed to evaluate how well we're managing for ecological integrity. With each passing year, the value of this data for conservation grows.

For more information:  
[www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/docs/routes](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/ab/banff/docs/routes)

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### New Castle "Synopsis" Points to Ecosystem in Peril Without Major Changes

CPAWS is proud to present *Selected Ecological Resources of Alberta's Castle Carbondale: A Synopsis of Current Knowledge*. After years of disagreement over the state of the health of the Castle Region of southwest Alberta, CPAWS and Shell Canada embarked on a project to synthesize the current science on key species in the Castle region. The two parties engaged Martin Jalkotzy of ARC Wildlife Services to lead a team of experts to investigate the health of region across several suites of focal species. These suites included ungulates, large carnivores, medium sized carnivores, vegetation, and fisheries.

The aim of this synopsis is to centralize in one resource an accurate assessment of the ecological health of the Castle area for the general public, recreationists, academics, industry, and decision makers in at various levels of government. Martin Jalkotzy, the document's principle author, concludes that the Castle region is a wildland of national significance because of its exceptional biodiversity

and importance to regional connectivity for wildlife.

Jalkotzy also concludes the future of the Castle's gems such as its grizzly bear, bull trout, rich vegetation populations is bleak if action is not taken. Noting the warnings of the Alberta government's own tribunals, the author describes the Castle as being managed with an outdated management plan that is incapable of addressing the cumulative human effects on the region. The author ultimately concludes that a recognition by government, recreationists, industry, and the general public of the area threats to the area will be necessary, along with legally-binding management objectives to preserve and enhance the natural values of the Castle region.

Jalkotzy concludes:

The Castle Carbondale is rich in what Worbets and Berdahl (2003) refer to as "natural

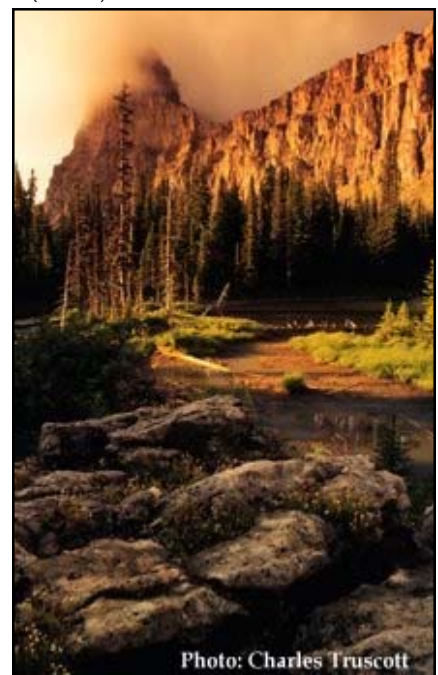


Photo: Charles Truscott  
*Sunrise over Castle Peak*

capital". Natural capital includes oil and gas and timber used in the production of goods but also includes the living ecosystems that form the basis of our quality of life and our economy, (agriculture, energy, forestry, tourism and recreation). Worbets and Berdahl (2003) make a strong case that we need to sustain and build Alberta's natural capital because it is in our long-term interest, both for a strong economy and a healthy environment. Opportunities to promote sustainable use for the



*The long-term viability of Grizzlies in southwest Alberta is threatened by unsustainable land use patterns in the Castle and loss of linkages across Hwy 3.*

Castle Carbondale are still available as we enter 2005. In particular specific, legally-binding management objectives, indicators and thresholds should be established for the Castle Carbondale. However, recognition of the scale and scope of current threats by the appropriate decision makers, industry, recreationists and general public will be required before sustainable management can be achieved.

CPAWS and several other ENGOs have called upon the Alberta Government to enact

legislated Protection of the Castle for several decades. Protection of this area remains the most viable tool for addressing the declines outlined in the Synopsis and safeguarding this treasured landscape for all Albertans.

For more information, visit: [www.cpawscalgary.org/castle/ecological-resource-report.html](http://www.cpawscalgary.org/castle/ecological-resource-report.html)

### Eating Lots of Sugar & Starch May Raise Cancer Risk



With science, consumers and the media all abuzz about the high-carb/low-fat diet craze, there's new evidence that shows women who eat lots of carbohydrates were more than twice as likely to suffer from breast cancer than those who limited them.

Researchers compared the diets of 475 women who were newly diagnosed with breast cancer with some 1,400 healthy women in Mexico City. Women filled out a lengthy food questionnaire widely used in nutritional studies and were placed in one of four categories based on the total percentage of their calories that came from carbohydrates.

Although much research has measured the effectiveness of high-carb diets in terms of

weight loss, this study was unusual in that it looked at how sugar and starch intake affects one's cancer risk. (A study performed last year noted a higher risk of breast cancer in younger women who ate lots of sweets.)

How do carbs increase one's risk of cancer? Scientists believe carbs may raise blood sugar rapidly, which creates a surge of insulin to be secreted, causing cancer cells to divide and leading to higher estrogen levels.

The women whose carb intake was highest (62 percent or more) were about 2.2 times more likely to succumb to breast cancer versus those whose intake was at 52 percent or under of their diets. In fact, the study found those who ate more fruit, vegetables and whole grains lessen their risk of breast cancer.

Some experts dispute the applicability of the results because the common carbohydrates Mexican women eat are derived from corn, including tortillas, soft drinks and bread. Nevertheless, U.S. breast cancer rates are among the highest worldwide, with some 132 cases reported for every 100,000 women. But, because the U.S. population is much older than Mexico, the risk of cancer domestically is higher.

*Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention August 2004; Vol. 13,1283-1289*