



Rocky Mountain Wilderness Society

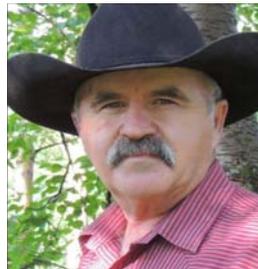


Spring 2013

Annual Newsletter

Message from the President – Ken Groat

This is the very first newsletter of the RMWS and I have to say it is very exciting to be involved with this new organization! The possibilities allow you as a member to participate in developing the culture at the onset with no baggage or inherited problems.



Our Society will operate under the mission vision and goals set at our inaugural meeting with a strong commitment to transparency. We are advocates for the mountain region in this great Province we live in and have no boundaries. One of our goals is to make the back country travel safer and more enjoyable for all users. This can be done by clearing trails and mapping them along with installing trail signs. We also plan to have a GPS map on our website indicating which trails we have mapped, cleaned and signed. In the year of 2012 we can take credit for clearing the Big Berland trail starting at the staging area all the way to the Indian trail on the North Fork.

In the upcoming season it has been determined through verbal and written requests from members, that priority be given to the following locations described in our 2013 trail clearing plans.



Working with the individuals that make up the board is a rare opportunity in itself. With the diverse expertise in different fields and the vast knowledge and history that comes with them makes decisions so easy to put into place.



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- In mid June with a crew organized by Curtis Hallock of Grande Cache, AB to clear the Cow Lick Creek area and Hayden Ridge to the Sulphur River.

- From July 2nd to 15th, Lyle Moberly and gang will clean from Big Graves back to Hayden Ridge and if time allows work will be done on the trail to Little Graves, both these areas are in the Willmore Wilderness.

- In mid August the Bighorn Backcountry project southwest of Rocky Mt House, AB led by Dennis Quintilio and Cliff Henderson will clear blowdown sections on the packhorse/walking trail into 40 Mile Cabin that starts at Cutoff Creek Staging area.

- A Membership trip is planned for sometime in early September with staging at the horse camp located at the Hay River, near Rock Lake. There are numerous trails in the area that require some cleanup, details to follow through email to members.

There will also be a reconnaissance survey done by Ken South and Dave Wildman looking into the Jackson Creek trail to see what work needs to be done. They will GPS the complete trail and also make recommendations for the sections to be scheduled for clearing during the 2014 summer season.

We realize our Society is only as strong as our membership and our relationship with our key

stakeholders. We operate on donations and fund raising. If this past 6 months is any indication of what our future will be, I have a very good feeling! We can boast over 75 members and we had a very successful fundraiser in November last year that grossed over \$46,000.00. The membership inquiries are still quite strong from all corners of the province and membership numbers are growing.

Last August on a bright clear day we attained our goal when we cut the last blow-down off the trail at the junction of the North Berland trail and the Indian trail. As we rode back to camp everyone had a big smile on their face as we rode along enjoying the view not ducking under willows and limbs. After completing a project like this I felt a great deal of satisfaction knowing we had done a hell of a job and it was done for the enjoyment of everyone that will travel this trail for years to come. Hope to see you on the trail somewhere.



My best regards to the newly established Rocky Mountain Wilderness Society. Your Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles align with those of Alberta Parks. Your early success in establishing a distinguished board and membership. I along with other Alberta Parks Staff look forward to collaborating together in preserving the conservation values of the Willmore Wilderness and the Rocky Mountain Ecosystems for future generations to enjoy.

Sincerely; Andy Van Imschoot, Regional Director of Tourism, Parks and Recreation, West Central Region.

The idea of wilderness needs no defense, it only needs defenders.
Edward Abbey



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Willmore Horse Trip – by Jim McClelland

In the winter and spring of 2011 while battling cold and snow our thoughts turned to summer horse trip plans, when my sons Brett and Cam mentioned that while they had been on many short trips they had never been on a long traveling trip. Bryan Allan and I have been friends since grade school in Edmonton and took our first horse trip in about 1972 and since then have traveled most of the Willmore Park. We are both getting older and will soon need the youngsters to take us, so it was an easy decision to do a long trip with the boys. We decided to go the last 2 weeks in August. We took my 4 horses (Dancer, Cisco, JB and Flyer). Bryan's 2 horses (Cola and Keeper) and borrowed my neighbour's 2 horses (Kate and Ginny). Kate and Ginny had never been in the bush before and had mainly been ridden in a ring. They were in for a lot of hard lessons. Flyer was in his late 20's and on his last legs but he did really well considering. He died January 2012 having lived a full life.

Day 1 – Since a lot of our cooking gear was in our trapline cabin on the Little Berland River we decided to head there on day 1. This was a short 3 hour trip and we arrived early afternoon and full of excitement for our upcoming adventure. We studied maps and showed the boys our proposed route. It was decided that I would be the cook, Bryan the guide and Brett and Cam would be the wranglers. After several instruction sessions with Bryan they began to call him coach. For supper I had brought a prime rib roast and wanted to try out the new propane oven I had recently purchased. It worked perfectly and we all enjoyed a few cocktails and fine wine.

Day 2 – We decided to spend the day in camp and organize our equipment. In the morning we rode up to Star Lake and in the afternoon organized our packs. Earlier that morning I noticed that Ginny had a loose shoe. I pulled it off and in the process of trying to straighten it I wacked my hand instead of the shoe with the hammer. I found it necessary to consume an extra



portion of pain killer before supper. Thank God for medicinal rum. I still have the scar. What a way to start. I really should put my brain in gear before my hammer. It would have been nice to have 1 more horse but we didn't so the horses were a little overloaded for a while. We had roast chicken for supper so the new oven has proved its worth.

Day 3 - We packed up and headed for Moon Creek. The trail over Scotch Pass needs a lot of work as there is a lot of blow down. It soon became apparent how green Kate and Ginny were. They balked at stepping over logs across the trail and even had trouble walking on a narrow trail. I was riding Kate and while going across a steep side hill she just stepped off the downhill side of the trail and fell down the hill. Clumsy bitch I muttered as I bailed off trying not to fall under her. I made it with no damage done although it was a close call. Cam actually was taking a picture at the time and you can see me just starting to bail off. We had lunch at the pass but saw no sheep. Scotch pass (our name originating from a bottle of scotch consumed there on our 1973 trip) ranks up there as one of my favorite spots and one of the prettiest. We camped at Felix Plante's old hunting camp on Moon Creek. There is a rock nailed to a tree commemorating a hunting trip in 1949 with Felix guiding 2 American hunters, their names and the date are scratched on the rock. My wife Annette and I with Brett and Cam when they were much younger have camped here on several other occasions when we would fly camp from our



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main camp on the Little Berland River. Bryan and I have also camped here several times while sheep hunting so this camp has a lot of memories.



Scotch Pass – Kate and Ginny

Day 4 - We packed up and headed for the South Berland. We went up Crescent creek and over Skull pass (our name). This trail also needs a lot of work. We definitely will be suggesting to the Rocky Mountain Wilderness Society that they send up one of their fabulous trail clearing crews to this area. When we hit a tributary of Pope Creek we decided that instead of heading over the next pass to Jakes camp on the South Berland we would follow down Pope Creek until it reached the South Berland and we camped there. So far on this trip the weather had been really nice, quite warm really, with no rain. The grass was very good here and we pushed the horses up behind camp. This is such a nice sunny camp and we decided we would stay here tomorrow.

Day 5 - A beautiful sunny day and we did camp chores, had baths and generally relaxed while enjoying this little slice of heaven. I set up the reflector oven and made bran muffin mix in a cake pan. It turned out really well. It is amazing what can be done with a simple reflector oven. Cam went upstream on Pope Creek for a bath and some fishing. No luck in the fishing department but he smelled better. Bryan and Brett waded the South Berland River and checked out a meadow on the other side for future

reference. JB decided he wanted to do some roaming and taking the other horses with him so we decided to only let one half of the horses feed at a time and this seemed to fix the problem.



Skull Pass

Day 6 - We headed up stream on the South Berland and then headed west over Persimmon Pass which actually is the Indian trail. It seems every time I go over this pass it is hot and muggy and today was no exception. The trail to the North Berland River was good. The North Berland valley had a lot more water than I remembered caused by several large beaver dams, etc. This could be a good place to fish if there are any however time did not permit. We arrived at the first camp heading towards Jackknife pass but there were several guys in camp who said they were hunting but I do not think too seriously as it was pretty early to be back in camp. An outfitter had left them there and would be back to pick them up in a week or so. We headed upstream and came to the next camp where the Forest Service had just built a cabin and we traveled upstream a little further looking for a better camp but there was no suitable place to camp, so we headed back to this camp. This is the camp Annette and I camped at many years ago when we traveled through this area.

Day 7 - It was another bright sunny day and we headed up and over Jackknife pass. This is definitely one of the most majestic passes to be found anywhere. At the top of the pass is a huge high valley surrounded by peaks. This is one pass that the Willmore traveler should not miss. Cam the geology student pointed out one rock face which resembled a huge arch and explained



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Persimmon Pass -Indian Trail to North Berland

how this exemplified the upthrust and folding when the Rockies were formed. We had lunch of leftover pancakes and cheese in the pass and then down to the Sulphur River. We crossed the Sulphur and past Little Graves which had just been reconstructed as documented by the film Long Road Home in which the RMWS president and many others made a ride from Grande Cache to Jasper to commemorate the ouster of the natives from Jasper Park. The grave is that of a young native girl who died there many years ago. The complete history is available in many publications on this area. We traveled on to Blue Grouse camp however it was occupied so we headed upstream on the West Sulphur River looking for another camp shown on our map but we did not find it. I do not think we went far enough. We headed back to the Forestry cabin but there was no good spot to camp near there. It was getting late and we were tired so we went down close to the river and made our own camp on some good grass. There was not much protection from the weather so we hoped it wouldn't blow too much. It takes a lot of work to clear a tent site and clean up spots to tie the horses but soon it was done and supper was on. A couple shots of the demon rum and our good spirits were restored.



South Berland Camp

Day 8 - It was another beautiful day so we decided to stay there and go to Brewster's wall as none of us had ever been there. There is a really nice camp at the head of the valley with a beautiful lake that Ken Groat swears has big fish however we did not see any and



Brewster's Wall

did not bring any fishing gear. Cam the adventure seeker decided he had to go for a swim so he stripped down to his shorts and blasted out into the lake and dove in. He then set the world 50 yard freestyle speed record



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heading back to shore. He continued to profess that riding home with wet shorts was worth it.



The Quick Dip

When we got back to camp Brett and Cam decided to go fishing and as we were near the confluence of the South and West Sulphur Rivers. Bryan and I were lounging in camp when Brett came charging into camp with 2 nice fish. One has to wait a long time for Brett to say 2 spontaneous words but there was no stopping him now, he was excited and we heard a blow by blow of each catch at least 3 times. We finally got him to slow down enough to ask him where Cam was and discovered he had stayed to try to match Brett's success. Cam finally showed up empty handed and proceeded to tell us what a jerk Brett was for catching all the fish and scaring the rest away. That night we had fish and steak and listened to the famous fisherman tell us yet again about his conquest. This morning before we headed to Brewster's wall a fellow rode past our camp coming from Hardscrabble Pass. He had a riding horse and another with a saddle on which he had a riding saddle pannier outfit and a nice ram tied on top. He told us that he had traveled alone and had

hobbled his horses in a meadow and headed up the mountain near the pass. He intended to be gone only 1 day however after spotting the sheep, climbing after it and shooting it he was turned around and a long way from his camp. He made his way back by GPS but by the time he got back he had been gone 3 days. Fortunately his horses were still there and none the worse for their wait. I considered him a pretty brave tough fellow and the way his horses were loaded they were tough as well if not brave.



Jackknife Pass

Day 9 - It was raining as we broke camp and headed for Rock Creek. We took the high trail which had had some clearing work done on it and it is a very good shortcut to Rock Creek. Unfortunately we were fogged in so we could not see the views which I am sure were fabulous. We camped at mile 52 camp and the sun came out and it was a fine evening after a wet cold ride. This camp is well used and is in good shape with lots of grass and a nice creek running through camp. We would have liked to stay here another day however food was running low so we must leave tomorrow.

Day 10 - It was another sunny day as we headed to Carson Creek via Eagles Nest pass and the Wild Hay River. We were surprised that there were no other campers at Eagles Nest camp since it was the start of Sheep hunting season and it is a very popular picturesque



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spot. Near where Carson Creek enters the Wild Hay we met Ed Reigner and Bob Barker heading towards Blue Grouse with a hunter. We had a short conversation until



Eagles Nest Pass

our pack horses started to fight so we each headed on our way. Ed Reigner is a long time and famous guide and outfitter and Bob Barker is a retired Jasper Park warden who patrolled the Park when wardens were real wardens and he has spent a long time patrolling the back country. Both men are legends in their own right. Ed later advised that they had a successful hunt which was a given when Ed is your guide. We continued up Carson creek to a camp we had used a couple of years ago. It is a tight valley with lots of grass and water and we spotted a band of ewes in the pass before turning in for the night.

Day 11 - We packed up and headed up to Broken Ass Pass (named by Tom Vinson Sr) and as we were heading down to Moon Creek there was a ewe on the trail and we got within 10 yards of her when she decided we weren't that friendly and disappeared. When we got to Felix's camp it was only about 2 pm so we had lunch and headed to the cabin on the Little Berland River. We arrived at the cabin and had the ham we had left for just such an occasion. Nice to have a bed and a solid roof over our heads.



Broken Ass Pass

Day 12 - We cleaned up around the cabin cut some firewood for the trapping season and then packed up to head home. We were not ready to go home but we were out of food except for spaghetti. What a great trip with fabulous weather. As we left the mountains we turned back and stared wistfully at the mountains and the planning for our next trip began. We consider ourselves blessed to be able to travel in this pristine area and vow to do everything in our power to help preserve it and keep it safe and available for others to enjoy as we do.

Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit.
Edward Abbey



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Riding into the Sunset - by Brian Bildson

There's an excitement in the air whenever the outfit is getting ready to ride. The horses know something's up, and stand by the rail as we gather the gear together and start the load-up. With a minimum of fuss they all take their place in the trailer, a tribute to all the groundwork Deana has done with them over the years.

It's August 20th and we're on the road heading to a rendezvous with the very first Rocky Mountain Wilderness Society trail clearing crew. Our outfit consists of our Board members and their family members, plus some hard working RMWS members.

Our goal was to clear a portion of trail in the Willmore Wilderness. We were starting from the Berland River staging area, heading up to the Adams Creek trail junction, and then onwards along the Sunset Trail up to Sunset Meadows, where we already had a camp set up. From our Sunset Meadows camp we hoped to clear trail down along the North Berland trail to the junction of the Indian Trail /Jack-Knife pass.

When Deana and I hit the trail-head at Berland River we met up with Board member Jim McClelland and family, wife Annette and sons Cam and Brett. I almost felt sorry for Jim's sons, as I knew we would be working them like rented mules. Along as trail guide and wrangler was fellow Willmore trapper Bryan Allan, who proved to be of great assistance. We were fortunate to also have the Compass Media team, consisting of Andrew Manske and Virginia Moore, along to film our adventure.

After the usual scramble to get rolling we hit the wide-open trail. It was an uneventful but beautiful seven-hour ride into the camp. The trail was clear and open all the way to the Adams Creek junction but from there on the effects of the heavy rains we'd been having became apparent. Many of the creek crossings had been washed out and needed rerouting.



Josie and Brian



Andrew Manske and Virginia Moore

Luckily for us part of our crew, Lyle and Denise Moberly, Alfred Wanyandie, and Ken and Shelli Groat, had already packed into camp and rerouted around the bad spots. There were a couple lengthy portages around bad sections of the trail and I was impressed by the advance crews survey job, as the trail was quite passable. Still it felt awful good to swing out (fall out in my case) of the saddles when we hit camp.



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Pack Crew heading in

And what a camp! Tents strung tightly, nestled amongst the pines. High on a ridge looking out onto miles and miles of meadows, currently holding the 30+ horses we had brought to the valley. And just to add some excitement a family of wolves feeding on a moose that they had pulled down half a kilometer from camp. What more could a bushman ask for? It felt like paradise to me.

Bed felt good after an evening of setting up our own tents and stowing our gear. Denise and her daughter, a young but very capable helper Josie, had put on a great chicken supper. I really came to respect the abilities of Denise in the camp. I've never seen a better-run kitchen or consistently fantastic cooking.

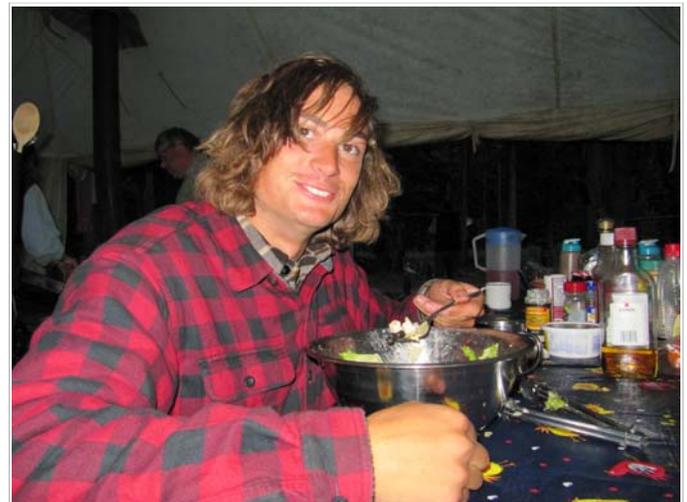
The next morning after the obligatory huge breakfast and a few gallons of coffee we hit the trail and headed towards the North Berland trail. It was ugly going, wet spots with lots of willows, washed-out creek crossings, overgrown trail on the dry land, you know... the usual fare.

We divided up into three work crews and started working, each crew leap-frogging past the other crews as a section was completed. Ken Groat was running saw on our crew and quickly demonstrated himself to be a master of the willows. His straight down style of cutting sure minimizes thrown chains. With one sawyer and

three helpers on each team we made slow but steady progress. We had already made a Board decision that any trails we cleared would be a minimum of 8-10' wide and cleared right to the ground.



Denise Moberly doing what she loves!



Cam McClelland doing what he loves!

By doing it right the first time we hope the trails will remain clear for five years or more. Of course we'll always have to deal with washed out crossings and wind-fell trees, that's nature.



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The results were amazing. We ended up with sight-lines of several hundred yards along the creek-sides, which is always appreciated in grizzly country. The next week was spent slowly but surely working our way towards the junction of the Indian Trail. This junction was taking on somewhat mythical proportions with some of the work crew, as the trail bosses Lyle and Ken kept reassuring us we were close...so close. And sure enough one day we were!

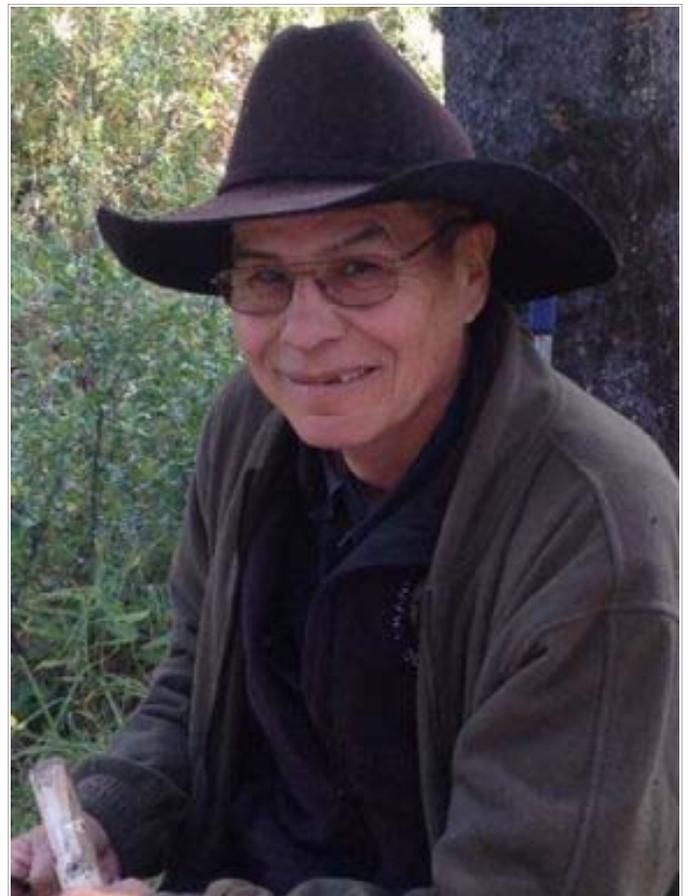
And can you believe that on the day we finally made it to our destination, and had just turned around to head home, when a five-person-party rode in. Their first comment to us was "We don't know who you folks are, but we love you!" To say they appreciated riding in on a freshly cleared and well-marked trail was an understatement. Their gratitude gave us all a big uplift, as it's nice to be appreciated. It felt good to get that ugly long section of trail opened up. We hope riders and hikers will take advantage of our work and use the trail more. A little cleanup work by all users every year will keep that trail alive for generations. We're proud to be part of the effort.



Bryan Allan running saw on North Berland Trail



Smokin' tipi at Sunset Meadows



Alfred Wanyandie talking about the old ways



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The remainder of the week was spent clearing out another trail to porcupine licks and some other smaller connector trails around camp. It wasn't all work...there were many memories made and stories shared. Some of the things that have stayed with me are:

- Wolves howling during the night
- Rain pounding down on my tipi while I hunker down in my sleeping bag
- Crackle of wood in my tipi stove as rain and hail hammers us
- The smell of gourmet meals as we rolled in every night, tired but refreshed
- The feel of a hot shower as it washes sawdust and dirt from your body
- The glow of the moon on the horses as they graze out in the broad meadows
- The ice on the water pail on a couple mornings
- The infectious laughter of six-year-old Josie, a camp favorite of all
- The stories Alfred told of old days and old ways - - -
- Learning about the night cries of a flying squirrel from Alfred (sounds like cow elk)
- The colors captured on the mountain slopes as the sun bade us goodnight
- The waters of the different creeks, each with it's own tone, one chalky white
- The fellowship of doing something for free with others, just because you care.

By any measure our first trip was a rousing success. It'll be a tough act to follow but I have a feeling there are more great things to come from the RMWS and I invite you to get involved.

Please check out our video of the trip at:

<http://www.rmws.ca/videos>



A beautiful evening at Sunset Meadows



Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man.
Stewart Udall



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Cooks Corner – by Denise Moberly

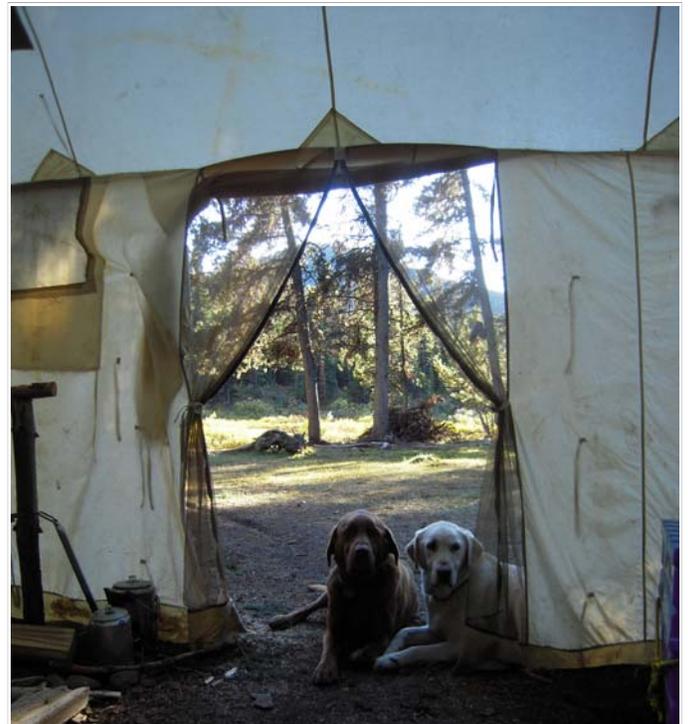
I have been so fortunate to enjoy my childhood and now my adult time out in the Rocky Mountains. I am very thankful that I get to share this beautiful country with my daughter, like my mother shared with me. I volunteered last year to be the camp cook for the RMWS's first trail clearing expedition. It was a great experience, we made some new friends and got caught up with friends that I have had since I was a child. I am really looking forward to joining this summers expeditions. It sure is nice to feed a good hungry crew at the end of the day. I have learned a lot of things from some very great cooks over the years and I have also learned some things the hard way!! I would like to share this recipe that a great cook shared with me. It always gets compliments and is truly very simple. It was handed down to me by Delores Woods, a true gourmet cook. I am not sure of what the real name is, but in my book it is called Delores Cake.

Delores Cake

4 cups of mini marshmallows
1 white cake mix
1 can of wild berry pie filling

Put the marshmallows in the bottom of your cake pan, prepare the cake mix as directed and pour over the marshmallows, then spoon the pie filling on top of the cake mix. Bake at 350 F until it is brown and firm. Now if you are baking in the wood cookstove make sure to keep it covered with tin foil and watch it carefully.

Good food ends with good talk.
Geoffrey Neighbor



Bri and Tate....Something sure smells good!



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Family Camp out

To show our appreciation to our members: We are hosting a family camping weekend at the Gregg River Cabin Recreational Area on June 14, 15th and 16th.

To see more information and directions to the group campground please check out the website below:
<http://www.westfraser.com/responsibility/recreation/frma/campgrounds/gregg-cabin-recreation-area>

Events Scheduled:

- GPS Course
- Chainsaw Course
- Horse Packing Demonstration
- AGM/Budget Review

- Saturday Night Steak Dinner
BYOB, Plates and Silverware.

A detailed schedule to be emailed out to members.

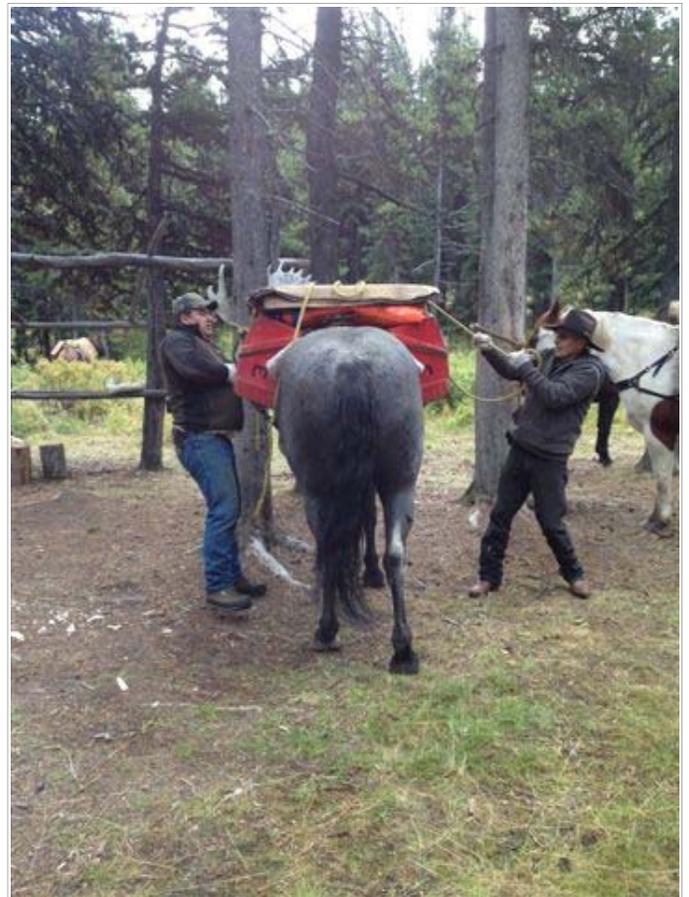
Cost for the whole weekend is \$20.00 per member, this includes all courses, camping and Saturday night dinner. Kids get in for free!
It's never too late to become a member or invite your friends, just go to <http://www.rmws.ca/membership> and join the fun in June!

Please send RSVP by June 7th to admin@rmws.ca or call Denise at 780 827 6507.

Campers: Nature's way of feeding mosquitoes. Author Unknown



Gregg River Cabin



Lyle Moberly and Alfred Wanyandie packing Blue



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Notice of Annual General Meeting

Date: June 15, 2013 @ 10:00 am

Location: Gregg River Cabin Campsite

Please take notice that the first annual general meeting will take place on June 15, 2013 at 10.00 am. The meeting will be held at the Gregg River Cabin Group campsite. All members are encouraged to attend. Please note pursuant to the existing bylaws there will not be any election of directors this year however elections will be held next year. Any members wishing copies of the bylaws should contact Jim McClelland - Secretary at 780 865 2222 or jmcclelland@jmmlaw.ca

Our Board of Directors

President – Ken Groat
Vice President – Pat Long
Secretary/Treasurer - Jim McClelland
Traditions Director – Lyle Moberly
Business Representative – Brian Bildson
Director - Cliff Henderson
Director – Dennis Quintillio

More information at:

www.rmws.ca
www.rockymountainwildernesssociety.ca
www.rockymountainwildernesssociety.com

Please help spread the word and *like* us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/RMWSociety>

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780 827 6507



Sitka Columbine at Blue Grouse

We would love to share your stories, insights and pictures in future newsletters! Email info@rmws.ca or call Shelli at 780 865 1103.

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is Success. Henry Ford



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This is your page! Send your photos, quotes and comments and we will publish them here. Email info@rmws.ca

From the Field – Members Page



Sheep Falls



Cote Creek



Caribou



What a beautiful place...to be with friends
Dobby the House Elf



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Grave Site at Sunset Meadows – 16 yr old daughter of Washy Joe Angas, died in 1901



Lupins on Moose Pasture Trail

What I like about photographs is that they capture a moment that's gone forever, impossible to reproduce. Karl Lagerfeld



Photo submitted by Monty Groat – Big Berland Trail



Sow Bear at Sulphur Gates



Sunset at Gregg River