

2018 Trail Coordinator's Report



In summary, a few modest steps forward on the trail building front while we continue to wait and see how Alberta Environment and Park's (AEP) Recreation Management Plan for the Livingstone Public Land Use Zone (PLUZ) works out at the implementation stage.

The main accomplishments on the ground in 2018 were:

- A short reroute on Spare Change to avoid a section of unsustainable trail out on the ski run. This was done in time to be used for the BC Enduro in June.
- A start to the proposed Pass Powderkeg- York Creek Connector which we hope will make for a decent bikeable trail between the two areas. The short section that was built is in the Recreation Lease (upper half of ski hill).
- And, not really in the realm of trail building, we managed the renovation of the Biking Skills Park in Blairmore. The Municipality provided \$11,000 to cover the cost of the contractor and additional dirt. Volunteers also did a general spruce up and some dead/hazard trees were removed. Our MP, John Barlow and UCP candidate Roger Reid paid us a visit at the Park on Ed Gregor Day.
- The picnic shelter adjacent the Skills Park now has two UROC donated tables made by Gary Carpenter and some landscaping and seeding was done to wrap up the package. Also, in the same area, a bike tool stand was installed with tools donated by **Alpenland**, Blairmore. The Municipality gravelled and graded the parking area, so the trailhead generally looks in decent shape.

In total, 500 hours of field work for 2018. This is down on 2017 and well below 2016 but is to be expected given that work has been curtailed in the PLUZ and consequently we had no major projects.

Trail traffic surveys continued at Pass Powderkeg with the addition of a trail cam to help us get an idea of the mix of user types on the trails. The Trail Usage Report 2018 Summer was updated in December to include the results from the best part of a year's trail cam observations. Besides people and their dogs, deer, moose, cougar, squirrels, ravens and a Northern Goshawk were observed ... but no bears. Ebikes were also observed but infrequently and probably represented about five or six unique users.

In December, a written "Update to Council – Non-Motorized Trails" was submitted to share our thoughts on the current development situation and mention some of the near-term prospects we have been considering.

The New Regime

During the course of 2018, two important changes have occurred that significantly impact how we plan and conduct trail work.

In May, the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills PLUZs were created by the provincial government. They come with a Land Footprint Management Plan and a Recreation Management Plan (RMP). The Livingstone PLUZ includes most Crown (public land) in the municipality that isn't in one of the provincial

parks. It is anticipated that most future trail development that the club does will be in this PLUZ. **We are now in a more planned and regulated work environment.**

UROC had representation on the Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group prior to the creation of the PLUZ and now are a member of the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Recreation Advisory Group for the implementation of the RMP. We have a seat at the table, but it remains to be seen how this will play out for mountain biking trail development (more generally, non-motorized recreational trails). With an array of industrial, agricultural, forestry and recreational groups sharing the landscape as well as ecological and watershed factors to consider, one suspects that decisions relating to trail developments will take some time.

In June we entered a **new OHS health and safety regime** for clubs performing any kind of organized work. While performing trail work on public lands presented the most pressing issue, the reality is that even something as benign as organizing a garbage sweep behind IGA needs a plan.

Our OHS Health and Safety Manual/Plan was accepted by AEP in November and we have some training courses scheduled for first aid and Chainsaw safety coming up shortly. We also bought some used VHF radios (previously used by Crowsnest Fire-Rescue) to improve communication when working outside cell range. Between UROC and Crowsnest Nordic, we will have a decent pool of qualified volunteers who can perform trail maintenance. To be clear, it is not every volunteer who is required to be certified but certain types of work - like chainsaw operation on public lands - require certification and groups require at least one first aider. Our "use of proceeds from gaming" has been amended to allow us to use casino funds for training course fees related to trail maintenance and construction.

Looking Forward to 2019

We are in the process of making applications to AEP and the Municipality for authorization to perform the following work/projects:

1. Maintenance of mountain biking trails within the Livingstone PLUZ south of Highway 3. This will also include removal of downed trees on OHV trails that are used to access the singletrack.
2. A short section of new trail (75-cents) that will allow bikers to connect to Buck-50 from the mid-hill parking area. Currently this can be done via some doubletrack but the last section up to Buck-50 is far too steep to ride. Interest has been expressed and we are responding. The new bit of trail will make a shorter loop including the lower half of Buck-50 accessible to those who do not want to ride to the top of the hill.
3. Completion of the Pass Powderkeg-York Creek Connector which will include 2 km of new singletrack as well as utilizing existing OHV trail, the Betanger Main logging road and some recently built bridges. The new sections of trail will avoid steep sections of OHV trail that are generally not bikeable in an uphill direction as well as providing a better user experience.

If we can get approval for items 2 and 3, we will look for a contractor to do the bulk of the trail tread construction. As usual, there will be minor trail maintenance items to be dealt with as they arise.

We are hoping to get an update shortly from AEP on the prospects for an Epic trail. Both Alberta Parks and Public Lands are involved since the Star-Girardi option is partly in the provincial wildland park and partly in the PLUZ. Alberta Parks conducted an environmental "assessment" for the two routes under consideration and are now initiating a feasibility study.

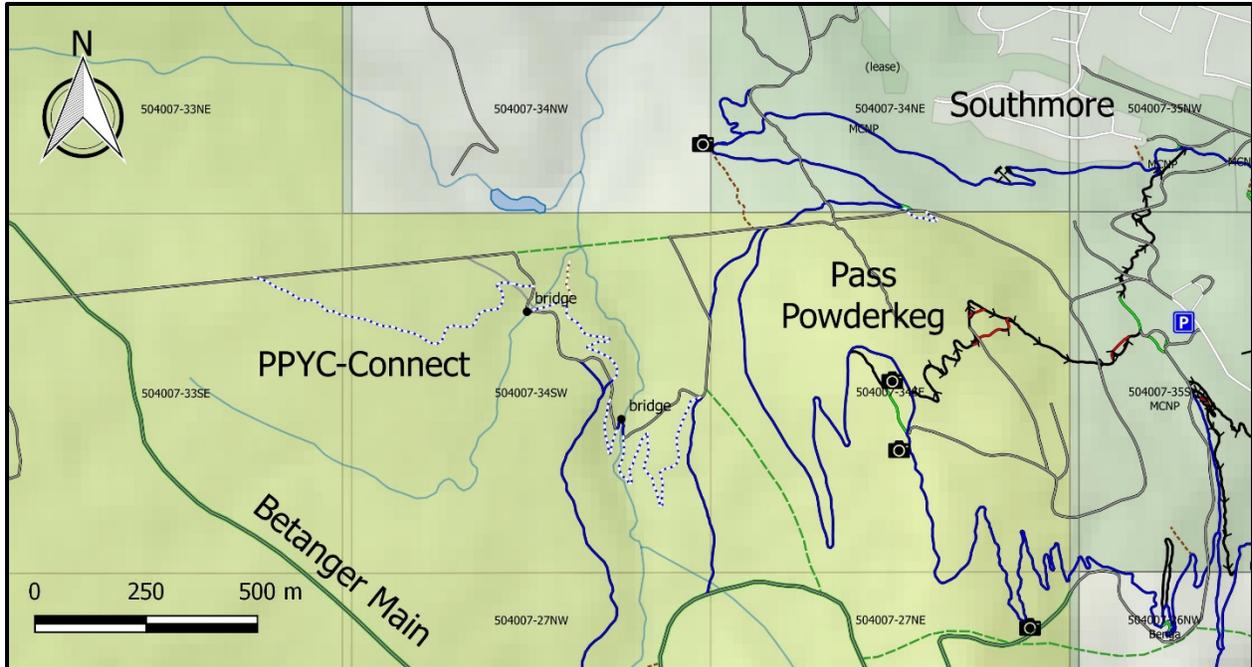


Figure 1 Pass Powderkeg-York Creek Connector (blue-white dotted)

Trail Master Plans

The IMBA Trail Solutions Master Plan has served us well but is now dated. The creation of the PLUZ and the fact that this plan relied on fairly extensive use of private property, originally owned by Devon, necessitates a fresh look at the big picture for trail development in the Pass.

We will create a new master plan in consultation with the Municipality and AEP. Whatever is proposed for the PLUZ will have to be compatible with AEP's RMP. The timing for creating this new plan is dependent on progress on implementing the RMP. UROC's master plan will be something that the club can focus on rather than the more comprehensive RMP.

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