



## 2017 Trail Coordinators Report

2017 has been a year for upgrades and maintenance rather than new trail construction. New trail construction on crown land has been on hold while Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) moves forward on the proposed Livingstone Public Land Use Zone (PLUZ).

The Pass Powderkeg Buck-50 trail received a fair amount of attention in the early season with new boardwalks and some general clean up after the Firesmart activity. It is probable that some additional work will be required on Buck-50 as we get a better measure of the effects of the spring snowmelt.

The Rumhead trail upgrades and maintenance later in the year included a new bridge, creation of some nicely bermed switchbacks and reshaping of the trail tread to eliminate most of the rutting. We were assisted by a Junior Forest Ranger crew and a party from the Livingstone Ski Academy. This trail is in good shape and it would be great if we could use it for the 2018 Enduro race. Because of the high elevation and drifting over the start of this trail it may not be snow-free in time.

Our proposed connector trail from Pass Powderkeg to the York Creek area was put on hold in early 2017 and again in early 2018 pending the outcome of PLUZ planning.

Some terrain surveys have been done for a future Epic trail running into the north end of the Castle Wildland Provincial Park, for a possible trail network above Frank-Bellevue and a buildout south of Pass Powderkeg. Progress on these prospects is contingent on the recreational trail planning being done by AEP.

Trail traffic surveys (Pass Powderkeg) are ongoing and show a continued increase in summer traffic on the cross-country style of trails; not so with the flow/freestyle/downhill trails (Berma-Grin and Spare Change). Winter traffic is significantly up this winter as a result of increased snow shoe use – the more the trails are packed by snow shoes users, the more walkers and runners also use the trails. Fat biking is challenging and will remain so until trail grooming is implemented. Dog walkers are the largest single user group on the lower trails.

### Volunteer trailwork (hours)

Trail upgrades and maintenance, Pass Powderkeg trails	349
Trail upgrades and maintenance, York Creek area trails	256
Picnic shelter for trailhead and skills park, Pass Powderkeg	136
Future trail developments: terrain surveys	61
Trail traffic survey, Pass Powderkeg	43
Other	9
Total	854

Future – looks like another year for upgrades and maintenance. The priority will be to reroute a short section of Spare Change. A portion of this trail in the 2015 cutblock was unsustainable – too steep and very poor soil – and was decommissioned last October.

## **Recreational Trail Planning**

### **AEP – Crown Land, Crowsnest Region**

In May, UROC was invited to participate as a member of the **Southwest Alberta Recreation Advisory Group**. This group consisted of a cross section of stakeholders, user groups, local governments and First Nations. The group provided feedback and comments to AEP with respect to the creation of two new PLUZ – the Livingstone and Porcupine Hills (approximately 1,800 km<sup>2</sup> in total cf. MCNP 380 km<sup>2</sup>). UROC represented the mountain biking community and it is reasonable to suppose that in part, the invitation was a result of our good working relation with the AEP staff and track record of responsible trail development.

We attended five meetings where AEP staff presented the department's direction for recreation management including vision, outcomes and objectives. The focus from our perspective was recreational trail planning. Widespread and virtually unregulated OHV use was a concern for many stakeholders. The expectation is that the trails available for summer motorized use will be significantly reduced. Partnership and stewardship activities will be encouraged i.e. AEP is looking for solid user groups to help develop and maintain recreational infrastructure (trails, in our case). The nature-based tourism potential is of strong interest to the provincial government, particularly in and around Crowsnest Pass.

The creation of these new PLUZ will change the way in which recreation is managed for those areas. In particular, it will provide UROC with the opportunity to participate in trail development and for AEP to regulate access and provide protection for new and designated singletrack trails. AEP are keen to work with us as partners.

### **Alberta Parks - Castle Provincial Parks**

In August, UROC received an invitation from Alberta Parks to meet and discuss trail strategy for Castle Parks. The purpose of the trail strategy meeting was to seek input from interested stakeholder groups regarding the development/formalization of non-motorized trails in the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park.

In the figure below, two Epic routes are illustrated (solid red lines). The preferred, northernmost option is entirely within the Municipality (Star and Girardi Creek basins) with about a half also in the Wildland Provincial Park. The remainder of the trail would be in the proposed Livingstone PLUZ. This option provides relatively straightforward linkage to existing trails and infrastructure in Crowsnest Pass and consequently would be more accessible both to residents and visitors.

Parks are enthusiastic about the Epic and keen to work with UROC to progress the concept. The preferred option represents about 25 to 30 km of new, singletrack trail and given the remoteness, would likely cost in the \$0.5 to \$1.0 million range – probably nearer the upper end given that it would be managed by Parks.

UROC will shortly be meeting with Parks to get an update and discuss opportunities for partnering to make this happen. This could be a major riding attraction for the area.

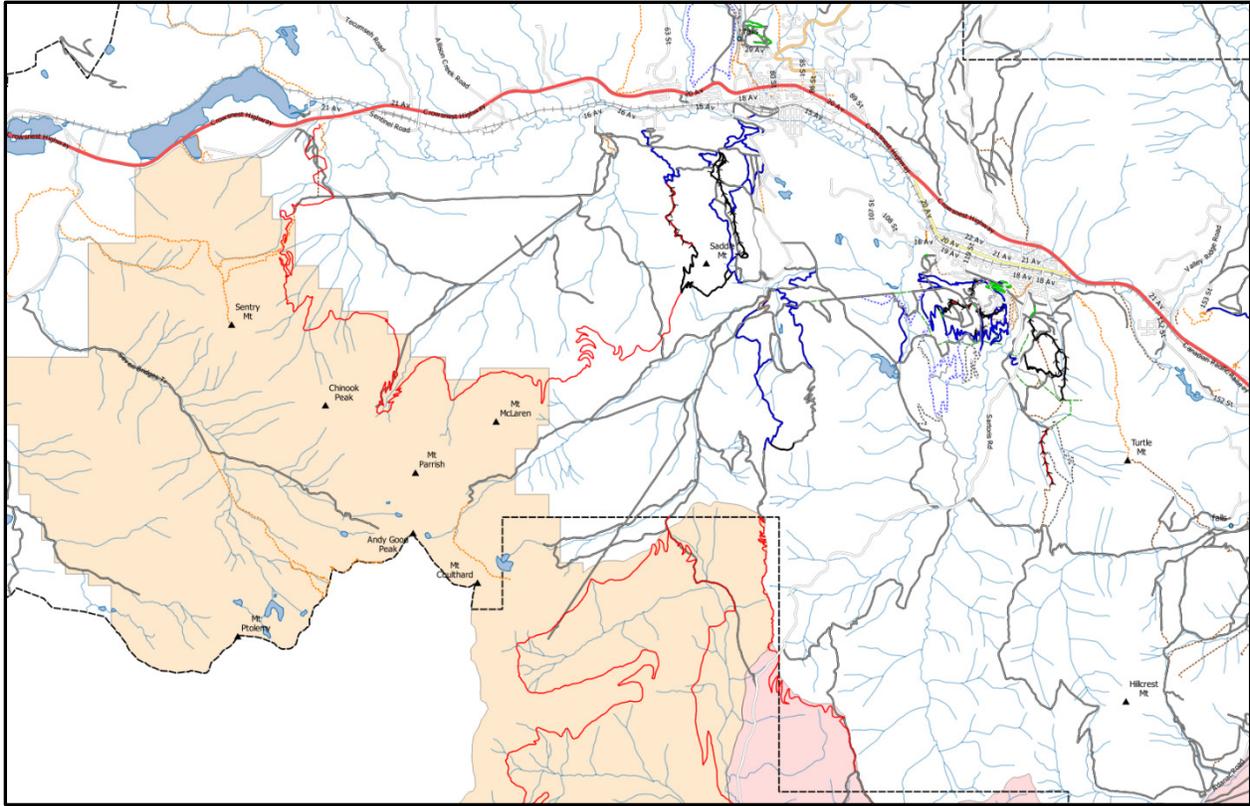


Figure 1 Epic Trails Concept

### **The Municipality of Crowsnest Pass**

The Municipality is keen to make better use of the recreational opportunities offered by the trails at Pass Powderkeg and are very supportive of UROC's efforts.

In late September, UROC members participated in a test to evaluate the feasibility of using the ProTow MTB lift accessory to tow mountain bikers up the Pass Powderkeg ski hill. The ride was challenging to say the least (only one volunteer for the upper tow). In practice, the ProTow is used with a highly prepared track – not the rutted and bumpy line used by our test pilots. PP ski operation has decided not to pursue this lift accessory. Ultimately, the ski operation would like to be able to offer a lift-assisted biking service. A lot more downhill oriented trails would be required to generate repeat business.

The Municipality has promoted snow shoe use and other trail-based activities that can support day lodge services.

In 2017, the Municipality contributed \$3,000 towards trail maintenance and upgrades. In 2018, we will receive a further \$3,000 for maintenance/upgrades as well as a one-time grant of \$12,000 for UROC to project manage a bike skills park renovation. The skills park funding is for hiring a contractor, materials and incidentals – the project management is provided to the community at no cost.

### **IMBA Canada**

We have applied to IMBA Canada for a trail building school to be held this summer in the Pass. It remains to be seen whether this application will be successful.