



PHOTO BY BOB WALKER, Lundbreck Falls

## IT'S HUMMINGBIRD SEASON

### The University of Lethbridge Westcastle Field Station Hummingbird Experiments

By Dr. Andrew Hurly, Professor Emeritus, Biological Sciences, U of L

Look! A hummingbird hovering at the window right where the feeder hung last year. Time to make some sugar solution. Have you seen hummingbirds do something like this?

How can a hummingbird remember the location of a feeder, even



PHOTO BY ANDREW HURLY - Male Rufus Hummingbird

when that feeder isn't there? This is a question that can be answered through experiments. Susan Healy, of St Andrews University and I have studied hummingbird cognition, behaviour and ecology at the University of Lethbridge Westcastle Field Station since 1992. More than 100 students have joined us in this work.

Remembering a location involves the topics of orientation (where I am relative to known places) and navigation (what route to travel). We devised an experiment to test the idea that hummingbirds can

Continued on next page →

#### ARE YOU CURIOUS? INQUISITIVE?

Excited by changes at Castle? We have a team of great editors, an awesome graphic designer and regular contributors to assist in the details. No experience necessary as the outgoing Publisher will support the transition. We publish 3 times a year about all aspects of Castle. It's an interesting volunteer position that connects you with staff, residents and our Community.

FOR ANY QUESTIONS: Caralee Marriott - cmarriott8@gmail.com

**Looking for a Publisher for The LiftLine**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JUNE

T-Bar Pub Opens For Summer every Fri/Sat/Sunday 2  
Disc Golf opens, Free rentals at the T-Bar Pub

Firesmart Day 17  
Area & Trail Maintenance Day (meet at the T-Bar for 10am) 18

### AUGUST

Drifter Day 1, Rain or Shine! 8am start at Maintenance Shop 19  
Annual Huckleberry Festival 26

### SEPTEMBER

Drifter Day 2, Rain or Shine! 8am Start at Maintenance Shop 15  
Castle Alpine Trail Race 23

### OCTOBER

Last Day of Summer Operations T-Bar Pub 1  
CMCA AGM  
CMR AGM  
Early Bird Season Pass Sale Deadline 15

### DECEMBER

Tentative Winter Opening Day 1  
CMR Office Hours:  
8:30am - 4:30pm  
Monday - Thursday

— Continued from Page 1

indeed recall the location of a feeder that is no longer present.

We trained each hummingbird to feed 10 times from an artificial flower and then removed the flower and recorded where the bird flew on its next visit. Two video cameras and some computer software reconstructed the flight path in detail. Birds left their perch approximately 40m distant and flew to where the flower used to be. On average, their closest approach to the flower's former location was 68cm. In another version of this experiment, we used very small flowers (2x2cm) and the average approach distance was 26cm.

This is a remarkable result. I had assumed that hummingbirds use brightly coloured flowers and feeders as beacons – they see the bright colour from a distance and fly directly there to feed. Apparently, this is not the case. When the flower was not present,

the birds flew close to where they expected it to be. We don't know how precisely they remembered the location because the birds left when they didn't see the flower, but we can conclude that their precision is at least as good as 26cm!

We further tested the beacon idea by repeating the experiment but instead of removing the original large flower, we moved it approximately 1.5m. Again, the birds approached to within an average of 68cm from the original location, looked around, and then flew to the new location of the flower.

Anatomical and physiological studies demonstrate that hummingbirds have excellent visual acuity. They can certainly see our bright flowers from their perch 40m away. However, when they flew in to find the missing or moved flower, it was as if they didn't look for the bright colour until they were very close to the location. They must be using

other information to navigate to the approximate location and only then look for the visual features of the flower.

Subsequent experiments hint as to how hummingbirds remember spatial locations. They may orient using large-scale distant features such as mountain shapes on the horizon. They certainly use local landmarks, such as rocks or bushes within approximately 50cm of a learned location. Overall, it appears that hummingbirds remember the sorts of information that we would use to draw a map, but we currently do not understand whether they organize such information as actual maps in their brains.

We have several new experiments planned for 2023. However, like you, we also enjoy simply watching hummingbirds come to the feeder at the cabin window and we marvel at their interesting behaviours.

## BEAR-SAFE BIRD FEEDERS



This is a great source of information on how to put up Hummingbird feeders in bear country.

[bearsmart.com/docs/bear-proofingbirdfeeders.pdf](https://bearsmart.com/docs/bear-proofingbirdfeeders.pdf)

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## A TURD CAST AND A DREAM

By Tripp Holler



PHOTO BY ANDY COTTER

With our fishing season just around the river bend, one can't help but reminisce about fishing seasons of the past. There was the year of the 2013 floods when the fishing sucked, the year when

you finally caught the big one, and the year when you broke three fly rods in one trip.

I think back to my first season when I took up fly fishing. I bought my rod at the local fly shop (support local!) and went to the park to perfect my cast. I spent hours casting to the mari-golds trying to see how far I could send the line out. I wanted to be prepared. Ready to make that 70 foot glory cast across the Oldman and into the gentle riffle where a

trophy was eagerly waiting my presentation. I learned a valuable lesson that summer. You don't need the most expensive waders or the best gear. It's not mandatory to have the secret fly. Heck, sometimes you don't even need a rod! What I learned is that as long as we treat our fisheries with the utmost respect and spend endless hours walking the river, all you really need is a turd cast and a dream.

Happy Fishing this Summer!

## THE OFF-SEASON AT CMR – PART TWO

By Dean Parkinson, CMR General Manager

After a short hiatus once the lifts stop spinning for the season, CMR's hotel, food and beverage, and janitorial staff are back online to host a variety of events. Wedding furniture is dusted off and the site on the Yeti Trail is prepared for weddings, the pub is restocked for its opening in June, and permits, musicians and vendors are organized for Huckfest. Attention is placed on ground beautification, taking care of our green spaces and removing noxious weeds. Trails are prepared, signed and maintained for running events and hikers. Brushing programs also occur to keep our ski runs clear and is supported by our annual Drifter Days volunteer event.

As we approach June and the potential fire season, our attention also turns to monitoring the weather, fire activity, planning with local fire officials and supporting the community FireSmarting effort. High fire danger can mean restricted access to the area for both staff and tourists so we have to allow for flexibility in our event planning. This also affects CMR's ability to complete scheduled maintenance (see Part 1 in the Spring 2023 edition of the Lifeline).

From July to November, we process new applications for ski season staffing, negotiate contracts with various ski clubs and school boards, including the Livingstone Ski Academy, and with food and beverage suppliers.

By late summer we're increasingly aware that we have only 60-90 days left before the snow starts to fly so all outdoor projects need to be heading towards completion.

By the end of September, we host our annual general meeting, plan for early season race training, seasonal employee training and ensure all the components are ready for snowmaking as we ramp up operations for the start of a new ski season.

All in all, CMR is a busy place in the summer. Thanks to our team, the many volunteers, community members, our partners and suppliers who all ensure we are well prepared to meet the next season's challenges.

## 2ND ANNUAL CMCA & CMR FIRESMART DAY

### FIRESMARTING ACTION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Saturday June 17, 2023

Everyone Welcome - Rain or Shine

9:00am | Meet at T-Bar Pub for  
Coffee/Introductions/Event Safety

10:00am - 3:30pm | Fire-  
Smarting Work Time.

3:30pm - 4:30pm | Free BBQ  
& Social at the Playground near  
the Base of Huckleberry Lift.



PHOTO BY CAROLYN ARMSTRONG - Resort Home  
after the White Rock Lake Wildfire

Not only are we working to protect the community against wildfire, but also the ski hill's infrastructure.

Special thanks to the following contributors for their donation of volunteers, expertise and equipment: Firewise Forest Solutions, Emergency Services Pincher Creek, Alberta Lands and Forest Service Blairmore, MD of Pincher Creek and CMR.

If you are unable to volunteer on June 17th, please support our ongoing effort by FireSmarting your own property when it is convenient to you, and/or by making a donation to the Castle Mountain Community Association at:

[treasurercmca@gmail.com](mailto:treasurercmca@gmail.com)

## WEST CASTLE 1966 – 1975

The following excerpts are from **Kenworthy S (2014). The History of West Castle to Castle Mountain Resort 1965-2007 Pg 29.**

The Upper T-Bar's path roughly followed the run that is today known as Bandito. The loading area was positioned in the bottom of what is known by many as "Jumper's Bowl", located north of the current base of the Red Chair, and ended just above the Skyline Traverse. Today, the lift line for the upper T-bar is still visible through the trees to the south of Bandito and cement pilings from the top

station are still in place just above the entrance to Bandito off the Skyline Traverse. The clearing and leftover cement at the top of the lift #4 are now used for communication towers and patrol toboggan storage.

"Lift #4 (Upper T-Bar) was a dream for us," said David Balfour, one of the few experienced skiers in the area at the time. "We would pack lunches, go up first thing in the morning and stay up there all day, then ski down in the spring slush sunburnt at the end of the day".

## CMCA UPDATE In Summer Mode

By Julie Heinrich, President of CMCA

The ski season has wrapped up, the remaining staff have switched to their summer schedules, and the ground is turning from snow to mud to fresh green spring sprouts. Our CMCA stickers are now far and wide! We've seen some alarming changes this spring; the unveiling of a winter's worth of trash, and a huge jump in our taxes. The CMCA would love your help in working through both cases, and many others. As always, many hands make light work.

This is my last article as President as I'll be passing on the baton after our AGM, in the Fall. In my four years as president we've made some small and large improvements with lots more to come. I look forward to taking part for years into the future, working on trails, FireSmarting, events, communication and community near and far. This summer we're looking forward to all our usual work bee weekends and of course, Huckleberry Festival. As the summers at Castle get more involved, I'm brought so much joy by kids on the playground, wedding guests dressed in their best, swimmers at Pebble Beach, hikers snacking by Haig Lake, and bikers of all sorts. I'm especially looking forward to disc golf this summer, so as always I'll see you on the slope, with a new kind of tan.

# DRIFTER DAYS

By Dennis Miller

The mission for Drifter Days is to clear out deadfall on the Slopes. Your knees & legs (and friends) will thank you for removing the dangers that hide below snow on these slopes, allow you to rip up the pow this coming winter.

August 19 and September 15 - The day begins at 8am. Meet at the Maintenance Shop.

## On Hill Work Crew:

- Split into work groups based on the number of people that show up
- One or two helpers per chain-saw.
- If you don't have a chain saw, we still need your muscles for other jobs
- Brushing saws will be provided to people who are willing to operate them
- We need people to carry gas cans for the saws down the slopes

## Alternative Mountain Help:

If you are unable to work on the

slope or don't have much time, we could use help with the following:

- Truck to transport equipment and volunteers
- Driving the crew to the top of the mountain in the morning,
- Picking up the crew from Cinch Traverse at the end of the day
- Monitoring the radio during the day

## What to bring:

- Lunch & lots of water
- Hat & Work gloves
- Protective glasses & ear protection, if you have some; we'll round up some ear plugs as well.
- Good solid footwear – work boots, hiking boots, etc. We will be working in rough terrain and on steep slopes
- Suitable clothes for rough work, we recommend protective chainsaw pants for those running equipment. There are a couple of extra pairs of chaps around if needed. \*No shorts

- Radio - if you have access to a radio with a Hill channel please bring it
- Bring a friend and pass the word along that we can use all the help we can get
- Chain saw if you have one. You operate your own saw: Please make sure it is sharpened & bring the correct file to sharpen the chain, the wrench and screwdriver for the saw. \*Only bring enough gas and oil for the day, no extra

We all expect to have fun & enjoy a satisfying day of good mountain work! After the work day, we'll have a little food & re-hydration at on Miller's deck or at the T-Bar (normally plenty of Huckleberries on the slopes for snacking on, while working.

Feel free to let me know if you can attend or if you have any questions at:

Dennis Miller - [d516miller@gmail.com](mailto:d516miller@gmail.com)

See you on August 19th and September 15th.

## DUST CONTROL IN THE BASE

The Dust Control over the past 3 summers has made a noticeable difference in the amount of dust around the Resort. The MD has again quoted a charge of \$250 per 100m. The cost has been covered by volunteer donations of \$250 from willing neighbours.

E-transfer donations can be sent to [treasurercmca@gmail.com](mailto:treasurercmca@gmail.com)

A cheque to CMCA would be welcomed by any of our Board Members.

Note that the money is for Dust Control. Thanks for the Clean Air!

## REGISTER FOR ALPINE OR FREESTYLE

Fall ski registration for your kids.

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[www.westcastle.org](http://www.westcastle.org)

Castle Freestyle Ski Club:

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# CASTLE'S SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM

By Bob Walker

Our sewage treatment lagoon is working all the time and protecting the valuable microbes within the septic system is critical to our living in this Community. Protecting our sewage system from breaking down and maximizing its efficiency needs to be a priority in each of our homes.

This next list of NON-disposables should be posted somewhere handy in your house for your guests to read and renters to be aware of.

## Sinks/Toilets NON-disposables:

- Kleenex & Disposable diapers
- Coffee Grounds
- Condoms
- Varsol, Varnishes & Paints (either Latex or Oil-based)
- Feminine protection products (tampons or pads)
- Fats, Oils & Grease of any sort (keep a grease tin with a lid handy in the kitchen)
- Cigarette butts
- Hair removed from a brush or drain screen
- Dental Floss
- Plastics & Pesticides

## TIME TO CLEAN UP!

**Pincher Creek Eco Centre located at 1036 Herron Avenue accepts:**

Recyclables (cardboard, plastic, tin, paper), small appliances, furniture, yard waste & compost

**The Crowsnest/Pincher Creek Landfill accepts:**

Large appliances, household garbage, and hazardous materials.

**For a full list of their services and location go to:**

[crowsnestpincherlandfill.com](http://crowsnestpincherlandfill.com)

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# TALES FROM THE GREAT DIVIDE

By Jenny L. Feick, PhD



PHOTO BY DAVE HIGGINS - Jenny Feick surveying the Middle Kootenay Pass trail in the West Castle area in 1974 during Project: Great Divide Trails

The first time I saw the West Castle Ski Area was in July 1974 while surveying potential routes for Canada's Great Divide Trail. Our crew of six young people funded by a federal Opportunities For Youth grant spent that summer doing an inventory of all of the trails in a 2,000 sq mi (5,250 sq km) study area on either side of the Alberta/ British Columbia border between Waterton Lakes and Banff national parks. Our work led to the formation of the Great Divide Trail Association in 1976 and the establish-

ment of the Great Divide Trail outside of the national parks.

Devising and establishing a route for this wilderness long-distance trail along the crest of the Canadian Rocky Mountains demonstrated naive courage and optimism. We faced personal hardships and our trail work took place at a time before lightweight gear existed and without technological aids such as GPS, inReach, cell phones or satellite phones. In our quest to establish the GDT, we confronted threats from resource extraction industries and ATVs, bureaucratic obstacles, fluctuating political support and financial challenges. Recently, I published a compilation of the stories from individuals involved firsthand in the start and development of the GDT and the GDTA. Tales from the Great Divide, Vignettes on the Origins and Early History of Canada's

Great Divide Trail and Great Divide Trail Association (Second Edition) brings to life the memories of many of the 'originals' whose vision, idealism, dedication, and hard work over five decades made Canada's GDT a reality. Transcripts of interviews and storytelling sessions, combined with excerpts from letters and other documents and more than 300 photographs and illustrations, reveal the adventurous, heart-breaking, and hilarious moments that characterized the early history of the GDT. Copies of the book are for sale at Crockets Trading Company in Bellevue in the Crowsnest Pass. You can also order a print-on-demand copy from Amazon.ca or download the PDF from the Nature Wise Consulting website.

Map Link: [www.greatdividetrail.com/trip-%20planning-resources/maps](http://www.greatdividetrail.com/trip-%20planning-resources/maps)

## YES YOU CAN



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# 100 YEARS OF RANGE RIDERS AT CASTLE

By Bev Everts



PHOTO BY BAILEY WHIPPLE - Jenny and her Sorrel Mare in the Castle Allotment

Current Range Rider, Jenny Ogloff, grew up riding the Castle Allotment with her family and home-raised horses. When I asked Jenny what her reason for riding the range is, she replied, "It's the place, the solitude, the environment. Nothing is better in this day and age for one's heart and soul."

Along with her faithful border collie, Ranger, Jenny has been the Pincher Creek Stock Association (PCSA) Range Rider for the past four seasons in the Castle area. Jenny's responsibilities as a range rider include keeping a close eye on fencing, monitoring range and animal health, and moving cattle to various pastures throughout the summer and into early fall. If you're lucky you may spot her, her horse and dog riding along.

## 100 YEAR HISTORY OF (RECORDED) RANGE RIDERS

### 1922 - 1946

Pete LaGrandeur - winner of the 1924 Calgary Stampede All Round Cowboy and Saddle Bronc Championship

### 1947 - 1957

Judge McLaughlin - Judge would settle into Cow Camp for the grazing season and keep his string of ponies well exercised, moving the cattle from one summer grass pasture to the next. In the spring of 1957, Judge had a near fatal farming accident breaking his pelvis.

### 1957 - 1974

Art Sandford took over but eventually his hips wore out.

### 1975 - 1986

Judge McLaughlin picked up the Range Rider reins again. What a pleasure it was to ride alongside and listen to his intriguing stories of days gone by. He would often say, "No worry. Pete's on the trail of that stray and it'll be back at the corral before we are."

### 1987 - 2016

Louis Dingreville - for the next 30 years, he and his wife Laura, along with their large extended family rode the range. There was always a good cup of cowboy coffee and a warm fire to greet you at their Cow Camp.

### 2017 - 2018

Daryll Fisher - another Calgary Stampede Champion (Steer Wrestling)

### 2019 - Present

Jenny Ogloff

Recalling the past 100 years, we celebrate the history of these dedicated Range Riders. As spring bursts into summer, we eagerly look forward to another good grass season and more Castle Range Riding stories.



## WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY?

The Castle Mountain Community Association will be seeking to fill at least three vacancies on its executive for the coming year, including the treasurer's position. If you are seeking the opportunity to contribute to your community in a meaningful way send an email to [castlemountaincommunity@gmail.com](mailto:castlemountaincommunity@gmail.com)



# CASTLE'S UNIQUE GEOLOGY

By Cheryl and Gerry de Leeuw

What makes Castle so special? Other than amazing ski terrain and great people, it is the Geology!

We are surrounded by some of the oldest and most unique rocks in the Rocky Mountains. They are approximately 1.4 billion years old, deposited in Precambrian times during the Proterozoic Eon. It is unusual for Proterozoic rocks to exist let alone find ones that are Sedimentary (formed at the Earth's surface from erosion of pre-existing rocks). Most Precambrian rocks are igneous and metamorphic; formed by heat and pressure deep within our Earth. To give you some context, the Earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago, the first multi-celled organisms developed around 500 million years ago, the Rockies began to uplift 150 million years ago, which pushed our rock layers 110 kms from the west to their current position in the Westcastle Valley.

Erosion by glaciers, water and gravity has eroded kilometres of rock since the Rockies were upheaved. Advancing and retreating glaciers eroded peaks into spectacular shapes and smoothed out the low-lying valleys. Warming and cooling periods are ongoing caused by changes in solar radiation and the constantly changing tilt in the Earth's axis. We are currently in an interglacial period, the Pleistocene epoch, and have

been for the past 1.8 million years. This has included 27 periods of glaciation occurring every 65 thousand years with over a thousand metres of ice finally retreating from our valley 12,000 years ago. Don't worry, the next glaciation is not expected for another few thousand years.

The layers of rock that make up our surrounding mountains were laid down in and around a warm shallow inland sea. These different sedimentary layers, visible as bands of rock on Barnaby Ridge, Mt. Haig and Syncline Mountain, each took millions of years to accumulate, as the climate was changing, and tectonic plates were moving. We see iron-rich Argillites, which are very fine-grained rocks like shale but not as layered. They are red where the sediment was exposed to air at shorelines and the iron oxidized (rusted) or green where formed underwater with little to no oxygen. There are light to dark grey Limestones and Dolostones, which formed when the calcium of aquatic shelled organisms combined with carbon from the water and atmosphere. We also see some igneous rocks. Magma, making its way upward from the Mantle, began cooling very slowly beneath the Earth's surface where beautiful large crystals of plagioclase, quartz, and other minerals took the form of tabular

crystals. The partially crystallized magma was then pushed further and when it hit the surface the remainder cooled instantly forming a green uniform fine-grained groundmass surrounding the star-shaped crystals. This is how our gorgeous green "star rocks" formed.



PHOTO BY CHERYL DE LEEUW

We have another unique geological feature to thank for some of our famous Pow days. Castle Mountain Resort is located by the Continental Divide but there are no Front Range Mountains to the northeast of us. As we drive to Beaver Mines the only mountain pass has been eroded to a mere hill. This allows any "upslope" winter conditions to move undeterred westward and dump white fluffy snow on our fortunate ski resort. This is in contrast to Sunshine, for example, also on the Divide but with a few mountain ranges between them and the prairies.

This summer, while out exploring, take a few moments to appreciate the scale of our surroundings and all that has happened before us to make Castle so special.

# CMR BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE

By Brian McGurk

Overall a great season, and what a wrap up with the wonderful weather through Beats in the Base!

Operationally, we had a good year with our second longest ski season, second highest skier visits and, even with lower daily skier numbers, we continued to achieve our budget targets.

Our investment in snowmaking certainly paid off, with the end of December precipitation arriving as two days of rain and warm temperatures. While most areas in Alberta and Interior BC struggled with a reduced snowpack, we enjoyed good coverage and great

skiing despite only receiving about 2/3 of our normal snowfall.

During the season we managed to bring our groomer fleet back up to our normal standards, and will continue with our cat replacement program this summer. We will be reducing the load on the old winch cat by turning it into a free grooming cat and bringing in a new winch cat this Fall.

The use of the multi-purpose Yeti trail increased this winter with patrol, skiers, walkers, snowshoers and fat-bikers sharing this trail wonderfully. Thank you to everyone! We will look at improving our snow clearing for next winter to

ensure the access to the trail is not an obstacle course. We are looking forward to additional trail signage being installed in June.

Firesmart is critical to CMR. If you don't have a FireSmart plan yet, make a plan to remove combustibles, dead trees and get rid of that Christmas tree you have been hiding out back since January.

We look forward to the installation of water metres this summer. More details will be sent to residents when available.

A big thank you to all of our staff and volunteers that made 2022/2023 a success!



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## CMCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Julie Heinrich

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## THE LIFTLINE

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The background of the entire page is a scenic photograph of a mountain resort. In the upper portion, a white building with a dark roof and a light fixture is visible. The lower portion shows a vast valley with green hillsides, evergreen trees, and distant mountains under a blue sky with light clouds.

# **TBAR**

## **PUB & GRUB**

**Castle Mountain Resort's T-Bar Pub is open weekends all summer  
- from June 2 to October 1 - with thirst-quenching beverages,  
great burgers, and our famous thin crust pizza.**

### **Hours of Operation**

**Friday: 5 PM - 11 PM**

**Saturday: 11 AM - 11 PM**

**Sunday: 9 AM - 6 PM**

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