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This year has been one of the busiest I've seen in a long time. CARA has worked on many large projects this year and everyone of them have been a great success.

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We started this year off with Family Day ride, what a beautiful day to ride in the snow. Then March night ride in the moonlight, no one could ask for better weather and terrain. Our Poker Rally was a huge success in April, congrats to all the winners. Demo day in May out at the Ghost Airstrip and had lots of people come out and try many different units. This seemed to be a hit with everyone as they could try out the newest Side x Sides and ATVs. The silent auction was a big hit and we had so many wonderful donations provided by our local dealers, sponsors and many individuals.

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*CARA Sponsors*

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September was yet another big month for us with our long weekend camping at the Ghost Airstrip and the Starlight Ride 4 Smiles. The long weekend was filled with some fun hanging out in the river to cool down after some great days of riding. The potluck had some amazing food for everyone to try and of course the smoked pig. Shortly after that we had the Starlight Ride 4 Smiles and we had a great day taking these families out on the trail to show them the great outdoors.

Finally we had our last ride of the year and that was the Rebels Ride in November. We had a large turnout; it was great to see some new people and many familiar faces too.

Thank you to everyone that came out this year and made it another fantastic year.

**Upcoming Events:**

- Feb. 16: Family day ride
- March 15: Night Ride, Mclean Creek
- April 5: Poker rally
- May 15-19: May Long Weekend Ghost Air Strip





## Stewardship Days

Written by: Ken Spring



2024 stewardship was another great success with a lot of great work done to keep your trails open, safe and sustainable. Don't worry if you missed out this year, we will have more work to be done in the future!

First & most importantly, none of this great work for sustainable trails would be possible without the dedication and desire to keep you riding by our club's volunteers and partners. For our major projects we had 79 volunteers commit 534 hours. THANK-YOU!!!!

Partnership, it's a word that means a lot to our club and would also not be possible to complete our work without them. AOHVA, who supplied the grant (\$38,674.00) to help with the machine work and purchase equipment required in the back country to help support our volunteers. Canlin Energy, who supplied us with a 15 yard garbage bin we filled to the brim by the litter picking team who called themselves Trash Pandas! Home Hardware who supplied the wood with a discount to maximize the area covered. Ghost Watershed Alliance Society who supplied volunteers to assist with trash cleanup. Environment & Parks who also supplied volunteers that helped with geo-matt installation. Joe & Denise to allow us to camp and store materials on their land. Lazy J Excavation for performing the bulk of trail work on 23.8 km of difficult and technical terrain. Rocky Mountain Equipment for donating an excavator and Dannon for operating it on the connector. B8 Ventures for supplying the geo mat to maximize coverage in the area.

Great work was completed on Cabin Creek, we repaired over 300 water bars to keep water off the trail and avoid future damage. Cabin creek also got wooden mats in low lying areas to avoid trail creep and keep users on the designated trail. There were also a few bridges where approaches were starting to deteriorate, we installed geo-matts for user safety.

The connector from wp 45 to wp 49 got some repair work to the approaches to the wooden mats from last year. We installed geo-matt for future sustainability. The bridge behind the gravel pit started to get rutted out so we performed a repair to the trail on the east side of the bridge. Cow Lake trail bridges were damaged over the last year, so we repaired them for your safety today and tomorrow. The trail from hwy 40 to Lost Knife had a couple holes drained along with downed trees that were trimmed back from the trail for rider safety. We also trimmed willows back from wp 87 to wp 85 for better sight on the trail for users and cleaned out water bars to keep water off the trail.

The new trail is also now complete from wp201 to wp175. This project has been in the works for almost 3 years and now you can ride legally between Fallen Timber and South Ghost. A huge thank you to Environment & Parks who were instrumental in completing this project.

We had 79 amazing volunteers who put in over 534 hours of sweat, laughter, lifting mats and deadfall, walked miles, repaired ohvs and club equipment along with multiple truck flat tires, including getting the track back onto Tom's excavator, napped (Dave and Dan) while working like a well oiled machine with a BBQ Saturday night, refreshments and snacks throughout the weekend and PPE. THANK YOU, to all involved. This was a great 9 days of work making it one of the biggest stewardship years!!

If you are interested in donating to stewardship efforts please send an e-transfer to [Treasurer@calgaryatvriders.com](mailto:Treasurer@calgaryatvriders.com)

If you would like to become a member please visit our website <https://calgaryatvriders.com/join/>



## 2024 Volunteers hard at work





## 4th Annual Don Mckay Memorial Award

Written by Jen Devolder

Our 4th Annual Don Mckay Memorial Weekend took place August 29-September 2.

**Background:** With the passing of our second President, Don, we wanted to honor his memory and showcase his contributions to the club over the years. The Pig Roast was his favorite event; Don was all about giving back, volunteering, extending a helping hand and showcasing the club to the general public and our membership for the benefit of all OHV enthusiasts. Therefore we created an award in his name in 2021. This was given to a member that replicated Don's efforts.

- 2021 Award recipient: Brian Rosvick
- 2022 Award recipients: George Bantli & Amie Sugden
- 2023 Award recipient: Joe Nickle



This year's recipient is a strong advocate for the club. They are always helping out at events, at every Stewardship event. They have enlightened us with picnic table hauling methodology and constantly remind us to let them know if we need a hand. Heck they even call checking for Stewardship help. They have spent time helping newer riders grow their skills on trails, and on rides are willing to take others for rides. As well this is the only person who is able to give our Vice President heck about not asking for help more often, and...gets away with it. Please join me in congratulating this year's Volunteer of the year Award recipient....Greg Lance!



## Starlight Ride 4 Smiles

Written by Dan Mercier



The 4th Annual Ride for Smiles (R4S) brought joy to 23 Starlight families including 42 adults and 49 children in Ghost Country through outdoor off-road adventures, scavenger hunts, RC car racing, and interactive activities. Organized by the Calgary ATV Riders Association with support from numerous sponsors and volunteers, the event provided a unique opportunity for children with serious illnesses and their families to escape daily medical challenges and create cherished memories. Many participants, like Starlight child Bodie and CARA member Kevin Dyck, formed heartwarming bonds during the event, exemplifying its lasting impact.

The event highlighted the importance of community support, with contributions from 20 organizations. There were 35 units and 39 drivers navigating the mountainous terrain for the kids and families, and wow did these drivers dress up their machines for the kids! We had 85 ground volunteers in various roles including: Chefs, Parking, Family Ambassadors, Registration, Games activities, Photographers, Helmet fitters, Pressure Washers, Cleaners, Floats, the fixers/repair guys, Ride Coordinator, Registered Nurse, Safety Advisor, Mascots, and Fire keepers there to help make the event legendary! Activities included ATV rides on CARA-maintained trails, showcasing the natural beauty of the region while teaching kids about conservation. Interactive displays further emphasized environmental stewardship, bridging the connection between recreation and nature. The 4th annual event was organized by 6 board members from CARA and Heather from Starlight putting in lots of hours including calls to sponsor and volunteers.



Starlight Children's Foundation, celebrating over 30 years of aiding seriously ill children across Canada, uses events like R4S to bring families together and provide much-needed relief from the stress of illness. Through partnerships and creative programming, the organization continues to uplift spirits, foster hope, and create unforgettable experiences for families.

### 2024 Supporting organizations:

Ralph's Motorsports  
 Basecamp Motorsports Calgary  
 Alberta Off Highway Vehicle Association (AOHVA)  
 Red Rock Sawmills  
 Country Hills Hyundai  
 Trails 4 Tomorrow  
 Nomad Electrical Services  
 Strathmore Motor Products  
 Crowsnest Pass Quad Squad  
 Rocky ATV Club  
 Sofina Foods  
 Old Navy  
 EcoSynergy  
 Ghost Watershed Alliance Society  
 Environment & Parks  
 Pure Country Meats  
 Balzac Craft Brewing Company  
 Half Hitch Brewing Company  
 Mr. P. Potty Ltd  
 All Season Motorsports & Rental Adventures Inc.



## ***Ghost Watershed Alliance Society talk***

*By Marina Krainer*

### **Improving watershed conditions by working together on improving the trail system**

The Ghost Watershed Alliance Society, or GWAS for short, first started collaborating with CARA in 2019 when we worked together on restoring a ford on a tributary to Waiparous Creek near the gravel pit. We are very grateful for the relationships we have been able to build with CARA and its members since. For those of you, who may not know GWAS yet, let me start off by giving you a bit of background. GWAS is a Watershed Stewardship Group that was started in 2002 under Alberta's Water for Life Strategy. The Alberta Water for Life Strategy defined Watershed Stewardship Groups as important partners to help improve the condition of local watersheds through on-the ground stewardship activities, gathering data and knowledge on the watershed, raising awareness and collaborating with land-use managers. While we have been in operation for over 22 years now, GWAS is still largely volunteer-driven. Working with user groups, such as CARA, is very important to GWAS. It allows us to identify emerging issues, work together to improve trail conditions, share perspectives and opportunities to raise awareness.



streams is natural, it can become a problem when there is too much of it and when high turbidity occurs at times of the year that it historically hasn't.

The Ghost Watershed covers about half of the Ghost PLUZ, while the northern half lies within the Red Deer River watershed. The Ghost is home to some of the last remaining westslope cutthroat and bull trout populations in Southern Alberta. Once abundant, they are now only found in a few streams of the Eastern Slopes. There is of course more than one reason why this is the case. It is a story of cumulative effects that range from barriers to fish movement, competition and interbreeding with other trout species introduced by humans, to changes in water quality and flow, to name a few. Alberta Environment undertook a water quality study in the Ghost watershed in 2006. It found that sedimentation of streams was unusually high for a headwaters system such as the Ghost watershed, in fact sedimentation levels were even higher than in some agricultural areas to the east. High sediment loads were found to occur after rainfall events, especially in Waiparous Creek and its tributaries. While some sediment in



Native trout have evolved on this landscape over hundreds of years and they are a good indicator for a healthy watershed. They spawn at times of the year when it is unlikely that their eggs become smothered by excessive sediment, e.g., avoiding spring run-off. One way of improving watershed conditions is to make sure we prevent excessive amounts of sediment from entering rivers and creeks, which means applying erosion control techniques to trails and around bridges.

Bio-engineering can help us reduce the horse power water can develop while running down a slope or steep trail. GWAS has been putting on bio-engineering workshops since 2013 and we learned a lot from experts such as Dave Polster on how we can use locally harvested plant materials to stabilize soils and prevent erosion. For example, using willow and poplar stakes as well as native seeds around the abutments of bridges helps to keep the stream bank stable by binding the soil with roots and slowing down the water flow even during flood events.



There are many opportunities in the Ghost to apply bio-engineering techniques for erosion control creating a win-win situation for GWAS and CARA - improving watershed conditions through collaboratively improving the trail system. Project by project we are improving watershed health and fish habitat together, while at the same time raising awareness about why this matters to all of us in the Ghost Watershed and beyond.

## ***Communication Devices and why are they important?***

*Written by: Dan Kruse*

Many people don't know how important it is to have a GPS texting device or even a good reliable radio.

There are many different kinds of these GPS devices that can do everything from just basic messages to even making a phone call. If you have a device like this and you get into a problem or situation and are in need of help, these can help emergency services find you faster and much easier.

Two way radios aren't as affective as a GPS communication device but it's a tool that still can help people to locate you. When you leave to do any back country exploring you should inform someone of where you are going, what trail area you are in and even what radio frequency you are on, and the anticipated time you will return.



**Body Language when signalling an approaching helicopter from the ground:**



As well, the person you give this information to should also be aware of a check in time that you set. If you don't check in at the time given then they can begin to call for emergency help.

If you have a GPS device you can be reached via text/call. Many of these devices will show you the last pinged spot on the map to help narrow down a search area.

**When signalling, stay still, and remain in your signalling position**

Or you as an individual may come across another person in need of help due to them being alone or having gotten lost; someone who got injured and is now in a dire need of medical aid. You could be the person that ends up saving a life in these situations. Prepare to ride, have and plan, and be safe!



## Trails 4 Tomorrow: Margaret Lake

*Written by Vill Van Der Merwe*

I want to take the time to thank everyone who has supported Trails Tomorrow (T4T) with our Margaret Lake project! The important first phase of this project was to restrict vehicle access to the lakeshore. This is a joint effort with Calgary ATV Riders Association (CARA) with support from Ghost Watershed Alliance Society (GWAS) and Trout Unlimited. This project showed how members from a variety of user groups can come together to ensure access and sustainability of a popular destination, not only present day but for future generations. We also want to thank the Alberta Off-Highway Vehicle Association (AOHVA) for their support and funding of this project.



This project started with volunteers hauling truck loads of fence materials and cement to the lake. An excavator was then sent in to do some trail maintenance on the North portion of the trail from Marker 139. Post holes were drilled and many bags of cement were mixed. Great care was taken by volunteers to ensure that a straight and professional looking fence was installed. Once the wire was run we all looked with pride at the completed project knowing we have accomplished something that has been talked about for many years. Lynx brand fencing even wanted to know if we were looking for work!



Next, we look at planning and executing Phase Two of the project which will include reclamation, willow staking and cleanup around the lake. Phase Three will hopefully include turning the lake into a recreation site with a day use area at the lake and designated camping with outhouses only a short walk away. If you are looking for more information on this project and why this fence was put up, please refer to our project update letter and social media posts from September 16<sup>th</sup> 2024.



Thank you again to all the volunteers and supporting organizations. We look forward to continuing our joint efforts to maintain sustainable trails for everyone!



## Calgary ATV Riders Association



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[www.calgaryatvriders.com/Online\\_Store\\_and\\_Memberships](http://www.calgaryatvriders.com/Online_Store_and_Memberships)

We're on the web & Facebook

[www.calgaryatvriders.com](http://www.calgaryatvriders.com)

CARA Clothing is now available. Proceed to the web page and click on "Online Store" then "CARA Clothing Link", this will lead you to the site.



## 2025 CARA Membership

Our Club is an established and vigorous provincial leader that is a balanced and environmentally conscious de-fender of multi-use trails. Your voice must be heard to preserve our sport and places to ride.

If you access the back country and you are interested in being involved in an organization that makes a difference then come Join Us!

Please continue to support the Calgary ATV Riders by renewing your membership. Our annual memberships are only \$50 per family and cover 1 year from date of purchase. Corporate memberships are \$200. We continue to add benefits to members.

[www.calgaryatvriders.com](http://www.calgaryatvriders.com)

**Memberships are only \$50 per Family and include all riding events listed above!**

## 2025 Event & Ride Schedule

February 16: Family Day at the Ghost Pluz  
March 15: Night Ride Mclean Creek  
April 5: Poker Rally  
May 15-19: Long Weekend Camping Riding at Ghost Airstrip  
June: Kids Ride: (date & location TBD)  
June 21-22: 10th Annual Stewardship Days  
July/Aug 31-4: Long weekend Camping & Riding TBD  
Aug/Sep 28-1: Long weekend 5th annual Don McKay Memorial Pig Roast at Ghost Airstrip  
September TBD: Ride 4 Smiles  
Nov 1: The 23nd Annual Rebels Ride in Fallen Timber

## 2024/2025 Calgary ATV Riders Board of Directors

*Dan Kruse*— President (403) 650-8229

*Jen Devolder*— Vice President

*Jessica Allan*— Treasurer

*Dan Mercier*— Secretary

*Kevin Dyck* Director

*Eric Lebanc* — Director

*Dave Cress* — Director

*Ken Spring* — Director

*Tom Jepsen* — Director