

PATHFINDER

Spring 2025



A NEWSLETTER FROM THE GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL ASSOCIATION



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Cover Photo: Lake Magog in Section C
by Jeff Libbey

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Letter from Kate

Dear Friends and Volunteers,

This winter has been an exciting one, and I'm already looking forward to the adventures that summer will bring.

Some truly amazing things have happened recently. I was honoured to be invited to speak at the Italian Tourism Conference, fully funded by the Italian Alpine Club. I had the opportunity to present to an audience of over 200 people—only six of whom had even heard of the Great Divide Trail! It was a powerful reminder of how important it is to raise awareness for this incredible trail.

I was also thrilled to be invited by the Continental Divide Trail Coalition (CDTC) to present and represent the Great Divide Trail at Trail Days in Silver City, NM. In addition, I was invited to speak again at their Dark Sky Gathering in Pie Town, NM—another fully funded international opportunity generously supported by the CDTC. These events were filled with meaningful connections, engaging conversations with thru-hikers, and valuable learning experiences, especially from CDTC's inspiring Executive Director, Teresa Martinez.

Closer to home, I had the privilege of attending the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta's Tourism Advocacy Summit in Edmonton as a panel speaker. It was a fantastic opportunity to advocate for outdoor recreation and highlight the Great Divide Trail as a significant asset for Canada—something to be proud of, and worth protecting.

Looking ahead to summer, I'm excited to announce that Brodie Bauer will be returning as our Field Crew Coordinator for another season! In addition, we've been fortunate to receive funding to hire an Operations Coordinator on a one-year contract. We're currently looking to fill that role, which will support our day-to-day operations, build capacity, and help ensure everything runs smoothly. These staffing additions are intended to strengthen and support the incredible volunteer work being done, and to help us continue operating in a sustainable way.

Last but not least, I'm thrilled to share that we're building a new partnership with Wildsight's Youth Climate Corps program. This initiative engages young people ages 18–30 in meaningful environmental work, and we're excited to welcome a group of them on one of our trail trips this summer. It's an inspiring step toward involving the next generation in the conservation and stewardship of the Great Divide Trail.

As always, I'm deeply humbled by the commitment of GDTA's volunteers. I'm incredibly grateful for the time, effort, and heart each of you brings to this community—it truly is remarkable.

With deep appreciation,
Kate

Kate Hamilton is the Executive Director of the Great Divide Trail Association

Great Divide Trail Film Festival

May 8, 2025

6:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Globe Cinema

617 8 Ave SW, Calgary, Alberta

[More info here](#)

This event is a GDTA Fundraiser, featuring guest speaker Eddie Petryshen, Conservation Specialist at [Wildsight](#), who will speak about the importance of preserving our wild spaces. There will also be a silent auction. Come support the GDT!

Shortlisted films include:

Traversing the Divide

By Matt King. Duration 15 minutes.

Matt King narrates his GDT adventure to a backdrop of stunning scenery.

Northover Ridge

By Rezanoff. Duration 15 minutes.

The filmmaker traverses Northover Ridge, a popular GDT alternate in this stunning short film.

Slice of Heaven

By Clare Tavener-Smith. Duration 6 minutes.

Last year's film festival winner is back with another upbeat film that will make you want to lace up your hiking shoes.

Seeking Solitude Together

By Antonio Galvan. Duration 15 minutes.

Explore wild and remote Section G with these charismatic film makers.

Divide on Fire

By Mark Mitchell. Duration 15 minutes.

This poignant film captures the emotions from a fire affected hike.

The Weight Inside

By Kristy Dixon. Duration 14 minutes.

Kristy Dixon takes us on an enthusiastic journey through sections A and B.



A New Wall Map

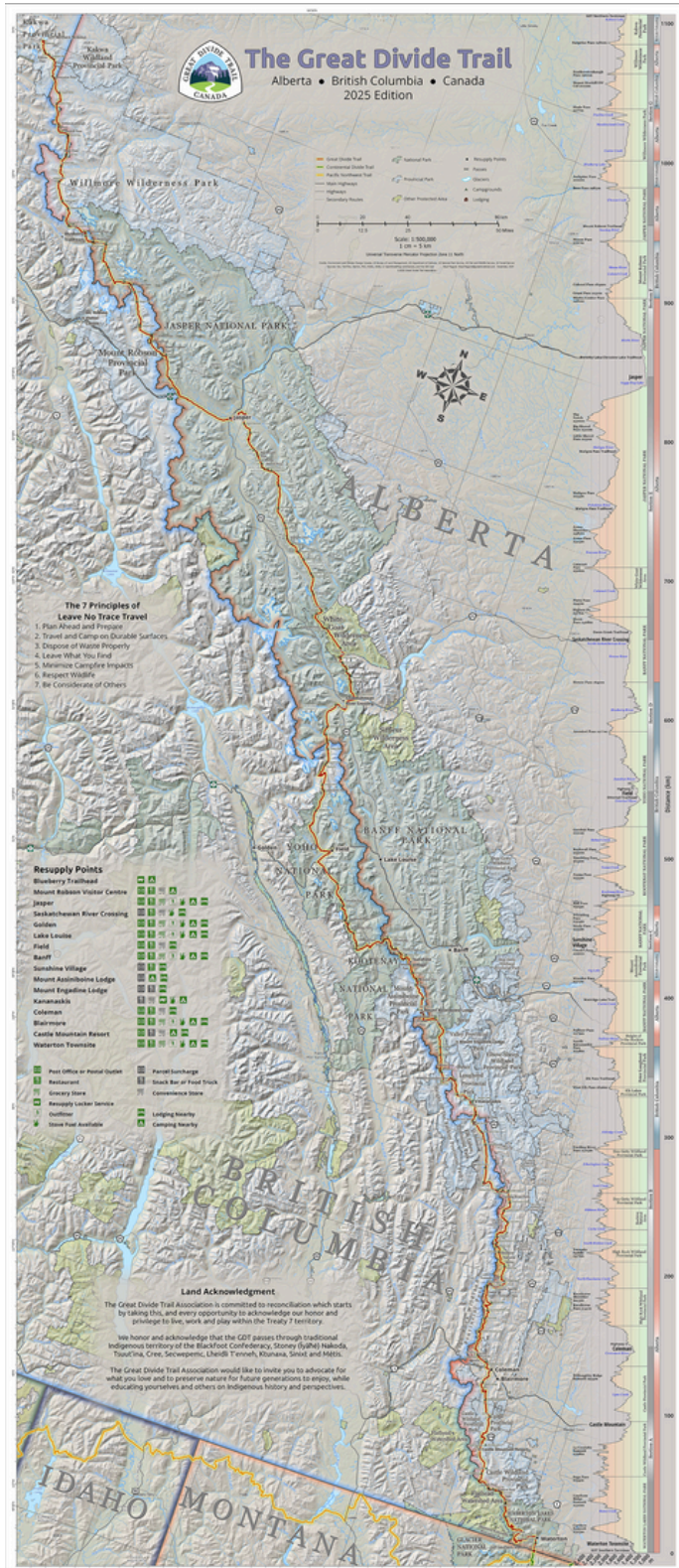
of the Great Divide Trail

By Brad Maguire (aka Blue Magi)

Call it serendipity. The day before I started my thru-hike of the Great Divide Trail, I happened to meet Eloise Robbins and Steve Harvey from the Great Divide Trail Association at the Waterton Lakes Visitor Centre. Thru-hikers have a particular appearance (even when clean), and it was clear that Fun Size and Shake’nBake fit the bill.

As we crossed paths repeatedly over the next few weeks, Steve and I got to know each other better, and at some point, I foolishly let Steve know that I was a semi-retired Professor of Geography who specialized in Cartography and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Without losing a beat, Steve replied, “I’d like to see a nice map of the trail.” Well, call me hooked! For years, I had been itching to produce a high-quality map using the tools that I had taught, and this was an excellent opportunity to keep my skills honed, have some fun, and give something back to the GDTA.

Once off the trail, Steve and I tossed a few emails back and forth about what he was looking for, and we agreed on the need for a wall map that would show the overall trail route. This would inspire current and future hikers of the GDT and provide a general reference to the route and key features of the trail. We realized that an attractive map could serve as both a reference and a promotional item that GDT hikers could show their friends and family.



The map was modelled on the National Geographic maps that were produced for the Pacific Crest, Continental Divide, and Appalachian Trails by the National Geographic Society. Building from these, we adjusted the colours, text, and features to produce something that was more appropriate for the GDTA. The National Geographic maps were produced using the cartographic tools found in the ArcGIS Pro software, and since I had access to that software through my teaching, I was able to produce a map of similar quality and appearance.

Other than the actual route of the trail, all the material necessary for the map was publicly available, although it needed to be cleaned up and made to look good. Because the GDT begins at the Canada-US border in Waterton Lakes National Park, parts of the map dip into the United States, so I had two parallel sets of data. The datasets weren't completely compatible, so the American data needed to be "massaged" somewhat to make it appear more like the Canadian data used just across the border. The final map used 27 separate layers of data, highlighting the trails, terrain, provinces, water features, parks, campgrounds, and resupply points needed.

With such a long trail, it is difficult to be an expert and stay up to date on all of its aspects. Realizing this, I decided to lean heavily on the collective experience that is found within the GDTA membership. To manage this, I decided to send out two drafts of the map for comments. Ten enthusiastic individuals provided detailed and supportive critical commentary that helped shape the map into its final form. In general, we had a shared vision of the final form of the map, but in a few cases, I had to choose between competing ideas for what the map should include. Once the design was settled, a final draft went out to ensure that there were no errors, and in mid-December 2024, the final map was delivered for printing.

The level of enthusiasm and support for the final map was heartwarming. The map is now being printed and is also being forged into banners and promotional items for the GDTA. Soon, copies will be available for purchase on the GDTA website.

That early start has continued to develop. Now that we have our data in ArcGIS Pro, the mapping team is currently working on developing AMIGA, the Assembly, Maintenance, and Interchange tool for GDT Administration, which will help manage the trail and all the activities that go toward supporting and improving it. Once all the GDTA data has been loaded into the GIS, we will be able to continue collecting and producing data, preparing reports, and creating online maps for the entire network of GDT trails, including the main route, alternates, and access routes.

The mapping team is always looking for help, so if you have GIS, programming and/or cartographic experience, come join us!

Two lucky GDTA members won wall maps as part of our February Membership drive. Your next chance to get your hands on a map is at the Film Festival silent auction on May 8th at the Globe Cinema in Calgary. Maps will be available to purchase in the future, so keep an eye on our social media!

THE 2ND ANNUAL

GEARTRADE

GARAGE SALE



MAY 10TH
2025

IN SUPPORT OF THE GDT



**6 FISHER CRESENT,
OKOTOKS, ALBERTA**

Are you overwhelmed with camping gear you no longer use, or are you eager to upgrade your outdoor equipment without burning a hole in your pocket? Look no further! Join us at the Geartrade Gear Sale on May 10th, 2025, from 10 AM to 3 PM – a Garage Sale event where the camping community comes together to buy, sell, and trade their high-quality gear!



Photo by Yoav Shlezinger

GDTA Committee Updates

What is the first thing that pops into your mind when you think about building and maintaining the GDT? For most, it's a handful of dirty volunteers, shovels and rogue-hoes in hand, scraping away the top soil; or maybe it's someone decked out in safety gear carefully sawing away at some blowdowns across the trail?

You wouldn't be wrong. Every year, the GDTA organizes dozens of trail maintenance trips, and solicits help from over a hundred volunteers to do exactly that.

But did you know that there are over seventy people volunteering tirelessly behind the scenes as well? Our seven committees work all year round (maybe less so during hiking season) to keep hikers hiking and the Association running.

Here's a little bit of what they've been up to since last September.

Ensuring Financial Capacity

EFC ensures the longevity of the organization through securing robust, diverse revenue streams to support and expand our capacity for operations.

- Submitted application for Alberta Public Land Trails Grant
- Make it Monthly Campaign work
- Bear Vault to match new sign ups!
- Facilitating annual budget cycle - establishing core staffing and operations cost projections & associated funding plan/goals

Outreach, Engagements and Education

Outreach builds awareness of the GDT and GDTA.

- Hosted pre-trail webinar series
- Nearing 700 members, an all time high
- Hosted info sessions in McBride and Prince George
- Creating new GDTA swag for trail building and retail merch
- Planning the GDTA Film Festival and hosting a screening of "Wildflowers" in March
- Assisting with Gear Trade Garage Sale, CDT Trail Days, National Geographic event, and Calgary Marathon
- Searching for more assistance in Social Media and Events!



Photo by Leah Harman

Organizational Excellence

Organizational Excellence ensures that the GDTA has applicable policies, procedures, and strategic plans in place to grow and protect the organization.

- Lots of work to revisit and revise organizational policies
- New Media and Volunteer policies being drafted
- Updating the New Board Member Orientation package

Safety and Environment

The Safety and Environment Committee assists the GDTA in ensuring a robust culture of safety and environmental protection.

- Reviewing the Environmental policy
- Updating the safety manuals in advance of the 2025 trail maintenance season
- Coordinating and Hosting the Trip Leader Safety Training
- Looking for more volunteers!

Trail Protection and Advocacy

TPA pursues formal recognition and protection of the GDT.

- Participated in the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta's Tourism Advocacy Summit
- Helping with the planning and permissions required for the Blaeberry River crossing
- Progressing the GDTA's planning towards our Truth and Reconciliation priority in our Strategic Plan

IT Security and Solutions

The IT Security and Solutions Committee (ITC) is responsible for guiding the GDTA toward transparent, sustainable, and responsive IT solutions, and to offer technical advice and assistance to the Board and other committees.

- NEW! The IT committee now includes a Maps / GIS component
- New Poster Wall Map – will be available for preorder later in spring
- Working on GIS platform to better capture and organize trail information
- Continuing to facilitate the GDTA's adoption of our new Microsoft 365 ecosystem, acquired for free via Microsoft's non-profit organization offering!
- Lots and lots of work being done behind the scenes to improve and refresh the website

Trail Building and Maintenance

TBMC ensures an outstanding wilderness experience for current and future users that is consistent with the conservation and preservation of the scenic and wilderness value of the Rocky Mountains of Canada.

- Identify places on the trail where there are critical problems that need to be fixed so thru-hikers do not need to exit the GDT and find a way different around. Develop a plan and organize the field work to fix these problems.
- Identify places where trail maintenance is needed in the next few years. Prioritize maintenance needs and develop work trips to fix the issues.
- Recruit volunteer leaders for each work trip (18 work trips, 3 scouting trips, trail inspections of the GDT planned for 2025), plus volunteers with special skills (eg, chainsaw certification, first aid certification, etc.), and volunteers that will be mentored to become future trip leaders.
- Recruit trail maintenance volunteers for each trip (more than 100 volunteers are needed during 2025), share background info with these volunteers to ensure they know where to meet and what they will be doing during their work trip, and manage issues that arise before / during / and after the trips.
- Organize (and buy if necessary), tools, equipment, and materials needed for the work trips. Ensure equipment and supplies are transported to the staging area at the start of each trip, and returned (plus fixed when necessary) at the end of the trips.
- Support discussions with land managers about where trail maintenance is needed, and contribute to grant applications.

You could say that it takes a trail family to build a trail... And we'd really love your help! Visit our [volunteer page](#) for more information and to sign up!

Photo by Mike Hopkins





FISHING

On the Divide

By Warren Cookson

Photo by Amelia Cunningham

I live in the Calgary region. I can be on the water fishing a blue-ribbon river for large trout in 45 minutes, but most weekends you can find me crashing through the bush or climbing up to alpine lakes in search of under pressured (and often undersized) cutthroat trout to catch on dryflies.

I flyfish. I love picking through spiderwebs on my way to the river looking for what bugs are flying around. Watching the water for likely holding spots and waiting to see a rise. Then you find one sipping bugs off the film. You plan your cast. You get into position and send out a perfect loop, your fly landing delicately 12 inches in front of the fish. Drift is drag free. It sees the fly. It looks at the fly. Rises. Success! Meanwhile the person down the river throwing a spoon with an ultralite Ugly Stick has caught 3 fish. To each their own.

If you are planning on hiking the Great Divide Trail and happen to enjoy fishing, there are plenty of opportunities to wet a line. You will hike through multiple watersheds and pass by numerous lakes. Many of these waters can support aquatic life and will give you the opportunity to catch some great fish if you can pull your eyes away from the scenery. The fish can be skittish having seen significant fishing pressure or they can be ultra aggressive and will chase down a bit of belly button lint on a hook.

To fish on your GDT hike you will need something to fish with that doesn't take up a lot of space in your pack and doesn't weigh you down. For me this means:

- A 4 or a 5 weight fly rod with a floating line
- A couple of spare leaders
- Tippet – 3X is my go-to but I will carry a roll of 5X too
- Forceps
- Nippers
- Split shot or tungsten putty
- An indicator
- Floatant
- Safety glasses for low light situations (no one wants to lose an eye because the wind caught your fly)

For flies, I keep it simple and limit myself to one small gear bag, that always contains:

- Caddis imitations
- Mayfly imitations
- Stimulators
- A foam stonefly or grasshopper pattern
- Ants
- Beetles
- Small leach patterns
- A small weighted streamer or 2
- A small assortment of nymphs
- Some worms (no judgement here)

To fish legally, you will need the proper license for the area you are in and abide by that region's regulations. National Parks licenses can only be purchased in person from National Park Visitor Centers. Rules change by region and from water to water so be sure to know the rules and know where you are before putting a hook in the water. It is a good idea to have the regulations saved in you phone along with a digital copy of your licenses.

[Information for Banff, Yoho and Kootney](#)

[Information for Jasper](#)

[Information for British Columbia](#)

[Information for Alberta](#)

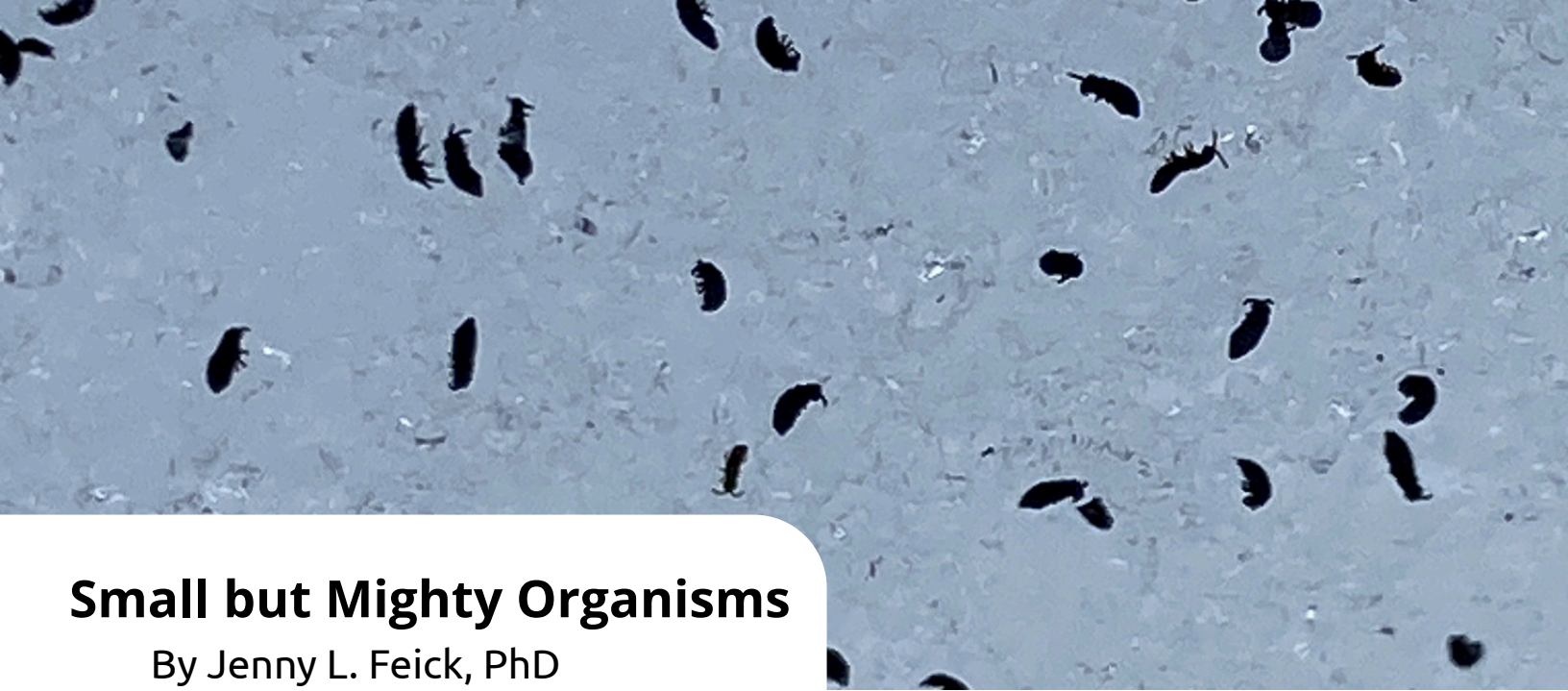
Sportfishing is a great pastime and, if done responsibly, it can be done with minimal impact to the fish populations.

Please make sure your hooks are barbless. This not only helps reduces the impact of being caught on the fish, but makes it easier to remove the hook from you when you inevitably catch yourself (it happens to us all at some point).

Bring fish in as quick as possible and when you do get them in your wet hands or net handle them as little as possible and keep them in the water. Do not drag the fish up onto shore to remove the hook. Instead, cradle them under their belly in the water. If the fish is feisty put them so they are on their backs and they will quiet down. Never hold a trout by their mouth.

Replace any treble hooks with single hooks.

Before releasing a fish make sure they have rested. If they are acting lethargic, gently move them in the water or place them in the current while holding them. As the water flows through their gills, they should wake up and swim off on their own.



Small but Mighty Organisms

By Jenny L. Feick, PhD

Snow fleas recycle nutrients.

Often when we hike the GDT, the spectacular alpine scenery, extensive coniferous forests, large mammals, and showy wildflowers absorb our attention. However, numerous tiny organisms also live in the vicinity of the Great Divide and certain species can have big effects. Here are three examples hikers on the GDT could see in the spring/early summer; an animal called the snow flea, a fungi known as snow mold, and a species of green algae that creates watermelon snow.

Snow Fleas

Springtails are fascinating ancient arthropods that have lived on Earth for 400 million years. Although nicknamed snow fleas, these miniscule critters are no cousins to the insects called fleas, which evolved a mere 200 million years ago. The only similarity the springtail and the flea have is size; they are both 1-2 mm long. Unlike a flea, a springtail isn't a parasite. Instead, springtails are detritivores. They consume dead organic matter in the soil, which aids decomposition and nutrient cycling. A springtail doesn't jump like a flea, which uses its legs. Rather, it has a furcula, a tail-like appendage that catapults it nearly 100 times the length of its tiny body.

Not only are springtails numerous, but their role in nature is extremely important. They live in the soil where the air spaces between the dirt particles are big enough to accommodate them. Here they feed on decaying plant matter (leaf litter, fungi, algae, etc.) and other microorganisms. By eating and breaking down plant detritus, they recycle nutrients, returning them to the soil, and making them available to plants and other organisms. Their activities also help aerate the soil, contributing to the formation of humus, which is essential for healthy soil structure and fertility. Springtails can also help distribute fungal spores, which are important for plant health and nutrient cycling. Once snow fleas sense the snow is thawing, they migrate up from their mud-bound sub-niveal (under the snow) home to feed on algae and fungi in and on top of the snow.

Snow fleas can live on snow, where they periodically appear in dense colonies. Their cells contain a glycine-rich antifreeze protein that helps them withstand bitterly cold temperatures. They need moist conditions for survival, but can live without food for years by recycling their own wastes or going dormant.

Springtails come in a variety of different colours—purple, red, and green springtails exist, although in the vicinity of the GDT the ones you will most likely see in dense colonies on the snow surface are either black or yellow. That's another good reason to not eat yellow (or black) snow!

Snow Mould

Snow mould afflicts conifers in the upper Subalpine Forest Zone and at treeline that grow in areas of high, long-lasting snow packs. It is also called Brown felt blight. The fungi develop beneath the snow and produce thick, gray, felt-like mats of mycelium that smother needles, branches, and twigs. As snow melts, the mycelium turns gray to black, and fungal growth ceases. The blight spreads when healthy needles come into contact with infected litter or spores under snow.

One species of snow mould affects only pines; while another affects Englemann spruce, sub-alpine fir and balsam fir. The species that affects pine (*Neopeckia coulteri*) can penetrate living needles, while the other one (*Herpotrichia juniperi*) enters needles and twigs only after they are already dead. A different species can cause larch needle blight in the seedlings and saplings of the three species of larch that grow near the GDT.

Snow mould does not pose a threat to mature trees but it can prevent seedlings and saplings from persisting in high alpine areas. It thus helps to maintain treeline. With climate change, snow-packs may not be as deep or last as long, which could reduce the amount of snow mould. This could result in treeline extending further up the mountainsides, reducing the extent of alpine tundra.



Golden snow fleas migrate on top of the snow where they form active colonies.

Watermelon Snow

Chlamydomonas nivalis is the scientific name for the species of green algae that creates the so-called watermelon snow, patches of snow with a pink or red hue. The alga looks green under a microscope but develops the pink or red color as a protective barrier, almost like a sunscreen against the sun's ultraviolet rays.

In the alpine, snow algae blooms support rich communities, including viruses, bacteria, fungi, ciliates, small metazoans, and other microscopic organisms (i.e., protists). In turn, snow algae get eaten by rotifers, tardigrades, springtails, chytrid fungi, and ciliates, forming the framework for a complex food web on the snow.

While watermelon snow might sound and look tempting to consume to a hiker, it's best not to eat it as it can cause digestive issues.

Climate change threatens alpine snow algae microbiomes as glaciers and permanent snowfields disappear. Snow algae blooms actually amplify the rate of snow loss. The dark red colour causes the snow to absorb the sun's heat and thus melt faster.

To find out more about nature near the GDT, tune into the GDTA's YouTube Channel and watch the ["Nature of the Great Divide" series](#).

Watermelon snow affects how fast snow melts.



Winter-Spring GDT Event Round-up

The GDT has had a busy off-season with a full calendar of events both on and offline. How many did you manage to attend? Don't forget about our upcoming events as well- the [GDT Film Festival](#) is on May 8th, with the [Gear Trade Garage Sale](#) on May 10th.

Webinars: Our always popular trip planning webinars are now available on our [YouTube channel](#). These are essential viewing for anyone planning a trip on the GDT this year.

Wildflowers: On March 6th, the GDTA and Banded Peak Brewing hosted a special screening of this film exploring the life of Mary Schaffer Warren.

Prince George: Doug Borthwick and Paul Jollymore made the trek up to Prince George and McBride in March as members of the Outreach, and Trail Protection and Advocacy Committees to put on presentations to groups of enthusiastic hikers. These events were hosted by the University of Northern B.C. and the Fraser Headwaters Alliance and provided an overview of the GDT along with personal accounts of their journeys, gear, and provisioning recommendations.

Of special interest were the forays into the wilderness areas north of Kakwa where a number of adventurous hikers have explored routes that lead to Monkman Provincial Park located near Tumbler Ridge.

These committees continue to work hard to promote the GDT and establish lasting relationships with gateway communities that are beneficial to trail users and the association.

CDT Trail Days: GDTA Executive Director Kate Hamilton was invited to present at the CDT Trail Days in Silver City, New Mexico. See the next page for some of the trivia questions she asked as part of her presentation and see if you would have known enough about the CDT/GDT to win prizes!



GDT or CDT Trivia

1. Does the CDT or GDT cross through more national parks?
2. Which trail sees more thru-hikers?
3. Which trail crosses a rare triple divide?
4. On which trail are you likely to see a grizzly bear?
5. Which was founded first- the CDTC or the GDTA?
6. Which trail passes through more states or provinces?

Answers on the next page



1. The GDT: The GDT crosses through five: Waterton Lakes, Banff, Kootenay, Yoho and Jasper, while the CDT only traverses three: Rocky Mountain National Park, Yellowstone and Glacier.
2. The CDT: 150-400 hikers attempt the full trail each year, compared to 50-150 thruhikers on the GDT.
3. The CDT: Triple Divide Peak in Glacier National Park, where water flows to the Pacific, Atlantic, and Hudson's Bay. However, Snow Dome, where water flows to the Pacific, Arctic and Hudson's Bay, is not far away from the GDT.
4. Both! Glacier National Park on the CDT has the highest concentration of grizzlies in the lower 48 states in the US, and the entire GDT is bear country.
5. The GDTA was founded in 1975, while the CDTC was officially founded in 2012. Both trails existed in some capacity before the founding of their organizations, and many volunteers worked on both trails before the organizations were created.
6. The CDT passes through five states, while the GDT only passes through Alberta and BC.

A person with short grey hair, wearing a pink tank top and grey shorts, is sitting on a large, flat rock on a pebbly beach. They are facing away from the camera, looking out at a large body of water. In the background, a steep, rocky cliff rises from the water's edge, covered in dense green forest. The sky is overcast and grey. The water is a deep blue-grey color with some ripples. In the foreground, there is a pebbly beach and some driftwood logs lying on the shore.

Last Man Standing

By Jackie Bourgaize

Dear Mason,

It was a punch in the gut. I felt abandoned.

The injury to your Achilles hadn't healed sufficiently. You ignored our maps spread on my coffee table. You weren't coming with me!

One by one our original party of 6 had atrophied to one—me. I was the last man standing.

At 68, my days were numbered and time waits for no one. The Great Divide Trail (GDT) would still be there next year, but would I? I had two weeks to think about it.

But how could I walk away from a year of planning and training? I didn't wait two weeks. I decided right then to do the trip on my own. Immediately an intense fear gripped my chest that surpassed the terror I had felt once before—on the knife-edge of Lady MacDonald.

My husband, Dale, looked up from his phone and said, 'I just ordered you a Garmin inReach.'

I wouldn't say I've always been training for the day I could hike the GDT. Self-propelled travel is just how I roll. Not extreme stuff mind you: unless you count the years I spent speed rollerskating 8 times a week; unless you count year-round cycling to work; unless you count the all-day Wednesday Walks With Yuki, my son's dog, for the past 6 years.

And every couple of weeks, rain or shine, summer or winter, me, Dale; you and your wife Renée; and maybe her brother, Greg would go on a hike or backpack.

Last year you got your eye on the GDT Barnaby Ridge Alternate (Red Rock to Southforks). Knees and jobs were issues with the others so it had ended up just me and you on the ridge that August in 2020.

So stunning was our Barnaby trip that we vowed to get our spouses out in 2021. We'd scale it back a bit. We'd hit the standard route of Section A. Vacation days were locked down. We ramped up our hiking.

Then Dale's number came up for a new knee. Dale was out. Renée got too busy to get away.

A traverse from Lake of the Horns and over to Carnarvon Lake proved too intense for Greg. The heat hit him hard and his legs seized up. We all realized that lengthy days on the GDT were impossible for Greg and Amanda.

It was down to me and you—again Mason.

During our 6-year friendship, it became apparent that we have compatible ways of dealing with the outdoors. We rise about the same time. We manage similar levels of difficulty. We don't stop to snack or rest very often. We don't indulge negativity.

But unlike me, you are 20 years younger and a foot taller. Plus you are an outstanding photographer. You started creating video

stories of our hikes. Also during this time, I designed and manufactured the Unightie, a sleeping garment for backpacking. Your visuals became the core of my Unightie website and advertisements. And now our biggest adventure so far would be lamely captured on my iPhone—if I remembered to take it out at all!

As you got ready to return home that night, you made a point of telling me something that meant the world to me. What you said is that you had total confidence in me to complete Section A of the GDT solo.

I wasn't concerned about my strength and ability. Although I am only 5 feet tall and 98 pounds, I had backpacked up to 9 days, climbed peaks, and forded rivers.

I wasn't worried about gear. I'd been finetuning gear for decades. If I couldn't find exactly what I needed, I modified it. Or, in the case of the Unightie, built it from scratch. Also I am a gear tester with Backpacker magazine and fortunately, the day before I was to leave on the GDT, I received a Thermarest Parsec 0C sleeping bag for me to test; 22g lighter than my Zpacks -12C and I was counting every gram.

I was also prepared for the intense scrutiny required to analyze quantities, calories, and longevity of food. I was confident with my Katadyn .6L filter and two 600ml Smart bottles.

What did freak me out was wayfinding. Wayfinding on my own! No one to discuss options with. No one to boost morale or put

on the brakes. No one to rotate the map when I held it upside down.

Aug 3 Waterton to monument and back

Dear Mason,

Dale emailed our friends that the launch went off without a hitch. Got on the shoreline trail about 0915 and hiked the 7km down to tag the boundary marker. Met my new trail family. Although of the Edmontonians, Ken was peeling off at Castle, and Ian planned to take the Barnaby Alternate.

Back at the town campground, I survived my first night with running engines, lights, banging, thumping, and crying babies.

The highlight of that Day 1 leg-stretcher was the conveyor toilet and the multi-colour pebble beach at Boundary Bay.

Aug 4 Waterton to Akamina Creek

Dear Mason,

On his 6-week old titanium knee, Dale hiked in with me as far as Alderson Lake at an average speed of 4.2kph. The trail was very bushy so I got in the habit of bear-calling often. I practice 'bear avoidance' and call in threes so the bear has a chance to triangulate my position: the bear hears the first, he listens to determine my general location, and then homes in on my third call.

It felt pretty weird to walk away from Dale at Alderson Lake. I stopped to gather water

at the brilliant flower-rimmed, gabion-walled Carthew Lakes. My nose started to bleed. I got that under control and climbed the presiding summit. I didn't see another soul until a couple of dozen started trickling down from Cameron Lake where they had been dropped off by a shuttle. Several wondered why I was grunting UP hill, others could not believe the compact size of my pack, and one thought I was joking when I said my destination was Coleman. Then I was alone again.

Near the bottom of the endless switchbacks into Cameron Lake, a tall softish dude, totally sun-protected, with the biggest Hyperlite pack I had ever seen, alerted me to a deer in the bush. I glanced over; I never did see the deer; I was on a mission.

It was a cooker, and because of the 2017 fire, very exposed. I put on my kids' Tilley knock-off. Up ahead I recognized the Hyperlite dude and we plodded up to the campground together. His name was Scott.

Using InReach I sent a preset message to Dale at 4:17pm to say I'd arrived at Akamina Creek. It had been an 8-hour day.

You, Dale, and I had been to this campsite before in 2016 but back then it had been heavily wooded. Now there were only charred and silver trunks. The winding tent site access paths were a fine clay-coloured powder; it got into everything! Due to the fire plus the dryness and intense heat of this day, the campground looked totally apocalyptic.

Nevertheless, when Ian and Ken strode into camp with their smiles, stories, and photo of a Pine Marten, my gravel tent pad near the spanky concrete-based toilet started to feel like home. I regarded the 4" tall long-needle pines and thought, 'It'll be an extraordinary campground when it grows up!'

There was a fire ban in effect so I nestled my little Pocket Rocket inside the fire ring to cut the breeze and save fuel. Under flashes of dry lighting and non-productive thunder, all we talked about was gear! I started to notice some tender areas on my feet.

Aug 5 Akamina to Twin Lakes campground

Dear Mason,

I had this brilliant Instagram idea and used my tea bag to scrub my tiny frying pan. Then I remembered I had designated tea bags 'double-use' to save weight. I needed it for this breakfast! I gave it a swish in the creek and used it for tea anyway.

I began to leave the top part of my boots undone to relieve the pressure on an abrasion above the tongue. I had also developed a swelling behind my left ankle; I wasn't sure if it was an irritated bug bite or tendonitis but it hurt like a mofo. Both heels had blisters.

To play it safe I had vowed to stick to the Standard Route, but those darn Edmonton boys convinced me to do the Rowe Alternate which climbs steeply and directly

up a cutline to the west end of Rowe Mountain and then follows the ridgeline.

Scott and I peeled off to the left on to the ridge, while the boys popped over to the summit of Rowe. From the gusty open ridge, I watched their tiny silhouettes playing around at the top.

As I was ascending one of the many 'bumps' on the ridge, Ken and Ian started shrieking from behind. I turned to see a blondish black bear with a tiny black cub at her heels. She had stood up to analyze Ken and Ian's scents and was 'chuffing' in agitation.

Because I practice bear avoidance, I saw few animals on the GDT. However, that doesn't mean they were far away.

A few years ago I watched a couple of dads and their boys hike in along the narrow lakeshore of Jasper's Geraldine while a grizzly walked out on the same path! The boys were whistling and chatting and never encountered the bear at all. Animals will avoid you if they know where you are.

This bear held back from the crest until the boys had scampered by and then went back to grazing. Textbook!

As Mount Festubert's three rock bands came into view, I recalled my mountain-scrambling brother Ted saying, 'You don't know what the rock is like until your nose is against it.' Up close I found many sturdy cracks that a hand could slip into but equally as many rocks that came free as I stared dumbly at them in my hand. Three points of contact. I'm ok. Every tiny ledge

was dusted with scree that had to be swept off with my toe before my boot tread was secure. I upclimbed a little too far to the left and had to down climb to get on a better track. It was every man for himself.

The boys were humbled by the Rowe Alternate. Ian even changed his mind about taking the Barnaby Alternate. I had seen a horse trail egress on my map. We decided to call it a day 4km shy of the ridge end and bailed at South Kootenay Pass taking the 1.7km switchbacks down to the main trail. I hobbled the 2km into Twin Lakes. The four newly edged and mulched pads were occupied so I set up in a clearing on the way to the toilet. I just had time to jot down a map note that said 'filter, hydrate, poo, wash, eat, and message' before the warm darkness closed in. It was a 12-hour day!

Aug 6 Twin Lakes to Jutland

Dear Mason,

I took advantage of the scorcher of a day and did some laundry before breakfast. Scott lamented that he was slower than the rest of us because, 'I have ultralight gear but my problem is that I bring ALL of it!' A couple of us were very grateful that he brought a whole roll of Leukotape and felt it was our duty to relieve him of a few inches to help our blisters.

Scott headed up to Sage Pass into the Castle Wildlands early. The other boys slept in.

From here the trail was familiar to me because of our Barnaby trip, but this year was hotter and drier. The wildflowers were

sparse and dull. Gone were the long-antennae white-spotted sawyer pine beetles. No blue Azures flitted in the black coals to keep warm. Whole sections of bush looked like it had been sprayed with Wipe-out. And the stately Tamaracks were not as lush. Consequently, navigation was practically a cake walk due to less foliage plus the increase in hikers trudging through as the GDT gained popularity.

There is a meadow below Peak 2434 where the trail strangely disappears. I recognized it at once, and I heard your voice in my head, 'Just walk straight through.' I did and picked up a well-worn trail on the right. The 'curious crest-top canyon' held old, grungy snow as opposed to the pristine basins we had delighted in.

The now obvious route passed down and around the toe of the 'boulder field' taking me into Font Creek.

Somethings were the same as last year! When Jutland wasn't windy, it was buggy. Thank goodness I thought to presoak my fake Tilley in bug dope.

In due course all my 'trail family' showed up. Knowing we had to summit La Coulotte the next morning, Ken announced that the five of them were going to take off around 5am. I said I would hang back. I believe I am more efficient in the daylight and I have a routine that works well for me: My body starts to stir shortly before 6am. In my Unightie, I gather my trowel, toilet paper, soap, hankie, and towel, and head out for my morning refresh. The Unightie makes it easy to wash my hair and my underparts. In the evening, I cleanse my face, pits, arms, and legs, slip

into my Unightie, and go to bed pretty clean.

Aug 7 Jutland to A28

Dear Mason,

My routine with which you are so familiar did not let me down. As I made my way over for my morning bath, I waved to the others as they were about to leave.

The only modification I made to my routine this particular morning was that I did not fry anything. I had my usual Nuuns tablet dissolved in hot water, a couple of dry-cured pepperoni sticks, my tea, and a tai chi bar that my friend Paula makes for me.

Although I was last man standing, I felt like there were several that were helping me along the way. Paula and my friend Donna have no multi-day backpacking experience, but both are thoughtful and caring individuals who tend to do the exact right thing at the exact right time. When faced with an arduous summit, I indulged in one of Paula's sweet, nutritious, ooey gooey tai chi bars.

So too on a dry uphill, low on water, I'd unwrap a Werthers that Donna had pressed into my hand before my trip.

I made use of my brother Ted's practical witticisms like, 'if you are not cold for the first 15 minutes, you are dressed too warm!'

The only one I ignored was you Mason, saying 'take a picture, take a picture!' It was

always on my mind. But there was work to do!

And the last thing you had texted me eased my mind whenever I came to a tough spot or decision—'I am sure you are fully prepared. Easy peasy!'

I left camp a half hour after the boys to gain La Coulotte Ridge, climb and descend two peaks, stagger through some dense krummholz, summit La Coulotte, ascend and descend a couple more peaks before leaving the ridge to meet Dale at waypoint A28 for resupply

Another was helping me on my journey. Crossing over from Jutland to Scarpe, the ridge gets a little confusing. The trail is indistinct, and I was truly grateful to see a marker planted up ahead by the GDT Association. As I walked by, I blew it a kiss.

As you know Mason, what makes this part harder is that water is nonexistent on this segment. I filled my two Smartbottles and my filter reservoir for a total of 1800ml – that's 4lb! At elevation, plodding along at 1kph, all I wanted to do was dump the water and make a break for it. Logic prevails. I didn't want to die on that hill.

Once in a while, far ahead, I would spot the foursome or the little white dot that was Scott. It's not a race though. I kept a comfortable pace and paused to set up short videos. From the ridge, I could clearly see my sweeping descent path into the valley.

When my relentless traverse descended sharply to the exit saddle, I stopped to take a decent break. Took off my pack. Messaged Dale. Ate some dried fruit. And downed the last of my water.

From here it is an incredibly steep, old, rocky Off Highway Vehicle road. I explored where the track had once gone right over the saddle into BC.

Down in the valley, the path closed in with dense vegetation. After a 'Hey Bear' I thought I heard something. I called 'Yo Bear' and was answered with a 'Yuki Come!' It was Dale responding with our usual call pattern!

Along with his sleeping bag and mattress Dale had brought in some treats: I got to wash my hair with baby shampoo and have real milk in my tea. He brought in Sambuca and fresh vegetables to enhance our freeze-dried meal! As we nestled into my once-lonely Stratospire Li Tarp Tent, we heard a familiar tick, tick, tick. Soon it was a downpour but we were giggling because we were dry and cozy.

All night the rain never let up.

Aug 8 A28 to Lynx Creek

Dear Mason,

We got a short break in the rain, packed up, and walked into Castle Mountain ski Resort.

Dale had a special lunch in the car—Shawarma wraps and baklava from Jimmy's A&A. I was in heaven.

After lunch, I switched back into mission mode, zipped up my rain envelope and headed into the bush. The trails became quite complex. Decisions are tough when you are solo because you have no new input. No one to bounce ideas off. No one taller to see over that bush! You only have what you know and the materials you studied and took (maps, GPS, weather report, self-analysis).

I studied my maps and GPS for several minutes. Then headed straight up another mountain ridge—in the rain.

I arrived at my pre-chosen random area to camp about 3:30pm. It was too early to turn in. I walked on. I was neither hungry nor tired. I changed my mind a half dozen times about where to camp. I continued to walk. I saw no one. It was pouring rain. Everything of mine was soaked except my sleeping bag, my Unightie, my food, and a base layer.

As I leaned over a tiny stream to gather water, a big drop of blood splashed on the rocks. I had another nosebleed. Animals smelling blood crossed my mind. I got it stopped and rinsed my hankie thoroughly. As the rain poured down my face, I would constantly taste blood!

That settled it. I would press on to an actual campground, Lynx Creek about 8km further. It would have flat sites, toilets, and hopefully bear protection.

I'd hiked almost 30km. Lynx Creek was clearly designed for campers and tent trailers. There was a rig complete with canopy and lounge chairs, but I never saw a soul. There were no bear lockers or bear hangs that I could find. The whole area appeared to be fenced, but I didn't want to take any chances. I got out my bear hang kit and steadied myself for the toss. I felt you Mason, an ex-baseball pro watching me. Then I performed my sweetest bear hang ever!

As I hauled up my food bag, my mind kept saying 'take a photo of the perfect bear hang' but my rain-soaked body just kept performing the tasks necessary to achieve a comfortable rest for the night. I listed. I prioritized. I executed.

1. Hang food
2. Visit the toilet
3. Pitch tent fly and stash everything under it
4. Lay out cooking gear protecting stove from moisture
5. Retrieve food, rehydrate in my RePack, eat, and have tea
6. Rehang food
7. Install mesh tent body and lay out wet mattress
8. Go for last pee
9. Carefully remove and wring out wet outer pants, jacket, gloves, boots and socks
10. Blow up mattress and lay out sleeping bag on the dry part
11. Change to Unightie and stuff pillow with damp puffy
12. Remove blister bandages and dry feet
13. Review maps and write notes

14. Night night

Aug 9 Lynx Creek to Coleman

Dear Mason,

I carefully reapplied fresh bandages to my feet, laced up my sodden boots, and left Lynx Creek. I watched a beautiful herd of free-range Black Angus in a verdant pasture. The grass was brilliant from the rain. Should have taken a picture!

A young bull, two cows, and a calf came toward me on the gravel road. It seemed like a stand-off. They squished themselves off to the other side as far as they could go. I realized they were dreadfully afraid of me. Suddenly the young bull wheeled around and led the others into the bush. I let out my breath.

The rain eased some but my sodden pack felt very heavy. I plodded up the beautiful Willoughby Ridge, paralleling the true Great Divide. The peaks were topped with rain clouds, their skirts surrounded by mist. I took a lame video for you.

Would I succumb to exhaustion and random camp, keeping my schedule? Or would I push on to Coleman, arrive a day early, and hopefully get an extra night at the inn. I looked down at my feet. They kept moving. I carried hiking poles to construct my tent and deal with creek fords. But I'd never hiked with poles. I figured there must be something to it. So I learned on the fly. I adjusted the length to accommodate the dominant angle of the terrain. I double-poled up short hills, working them in

tandem, my palms pressing down on top of the grips to lurch me forward. On flatter sections, I asymmetrically planted every second stride; I was travelling so fast. My nephew Mike came to mind. He told me to 'step out Auntie Jackie'. I lengthened my stride. I was flying down the trail.

I entered my second planned random camping zone. The 'road' had a lot of debris on the sides, very wet, and never flat. There were a couple of spots down by Haven Bridge but it was even wetter with dew. I flew by. It was too early to stop.


I really don't know how I kept walking. I staggered right into the Coleman motel office. Yes, the room was available. Yes, it had a bath tub. I got my poles stuck in the doorway. I fell over the threshold. I lurched up the catwalk to the second floor. Still I did not stop. I turned on the bath. I started laying out my gear. Forest debris was everywhere. I'd have to apologize. I got in the bath. That's when I hit the wall. The soles of my aching feet were on fire. My heels were smarting. My legs could hardly hold me up. I ran the bath hotter. I reconstituted my last meal, fried up some meat chips, and went to bed. The open wound on the top of my foot stuck painfully to the sheets. It would take over a week to scab over.

Next day, Dale brought my brother Ted and his wife Brenda to pick me up! I was totally ready to enjoy some company.



Trail Community Spotlight: **Banff**

This recurring feature highlights the communities along the trail that support hikers. Our last edition featured Jasper. While Banff is not directly on the GDT, it is easily accessed from Sunshine Meadows at GDT km 434.7. Banff is a popular tourist town with visitors travelling from around the world to explore the townsite and surroundings. Accommodation can be expensive so advance booking is highly recommended. Bus service between Banff and Calgary is excellent, making it a convenient place to start or end a section hike, and there are also good public transport connections to Canmore.



GDT Access: Easiest access is by taking a gondola and then shuttle from Sunshine Meadows at km 434.7. Hikers can also take a long (20+km) side trail from Citadel pass or hitchhike from other locations.

Lodging Options: Banff has many campgrounds, hostels and hotels, although the cheapest options book up quickly.

Dining Options: Banff has some of the most diverse food options along the trail, with everything from fast food to fine dining available. To escape the crowds, try the Maclab Bistro at the Banff Centre for an excellent patio view.

Resupply Options: Two supermarkets (Nesters and IGA) and a dollar store (hidden in the basement of the Cascade Shops) make resupply a breeze. Banff also has multiple gear shops if you need to replace anything. GDTA members receive a 10% discount at Banff Smartwool.



The Birth of the **GREAT DIVIDE TRAIL ASSOCIATION**

by Jenny L. Feick, PhD

Dave Higgins at South Kananaskis Pass in September 1975

This excerpt from pages 106-109 of “Chapter Four: Early History of the Great Divide Trail Association” in the book *Tales from the Great Divide, Vignettes on the Origins and Early History of the Great Divide Trail and the Great Divide Trail Association*, reveals the GDTA’s conception as an idea, and its development into a federal not-for-profit society 50 years ago. The conversation took place during a storytelling session on September 4, 2018 involving Jenny Feick, Dave Higgins, Mary Jane Kreisel (née Cox), Wayne Marshall, Lani Smith, and Cliff White, some of the individuals involved in the establishment of the GDTA. To find out how to get a copy of *Tales from the Great Divide*, [click here](#).”

Tales about the Origin and Early History of the GDTA

MARY JANE: “So, we’re up to the fall of ‘74. What happened in 1975?”

JENNY: “That’s when we actually put the Great Divide Trail Association together.”

DAVE: “I think **that** began with another public meeting.”

JENNY: “It did. Our first AGM.” [see Sept. 2/76 letter on page 125]

DAVE: “To get people interested in forming a group to move forward with the project.”

LANI: “Brian Prior’s kitchen [or] dining room table?”

JENNY: “But we had a meeting where we got Brian Prior.”

DAVE: "We had a public meeting at the University [of Calgary] again, I believe, for anybody interested in actually forming an association."

JENNY: "To actually make the [Great Divide] Trail and maintain it."

DAVE: "To start actual construction, if you like, or establishment on the ground of the actual [Great Divide] Trail. So, that started in probably the spring of 1975."

JENNY: "I think we worked all through that winter."

DAVE: (Nodding in agreement) "We worked all through the winter."

LANI: "I remember going to [Brian] Prior's house that fall."

MARY JANE: "In '74 or '75?"

LANI: "Through the winter of '74/'75."

DAVE: "There were some of us, like Jenny and myself were probably good examples, we were here in Calgary, and we got quite motivated. There was such a lot of momentum that had built up with the project in '74 that we really wanted to see some actual trail established and marked and designated as such. So, that's what the vehicle was – to form the Great Divide Trail Association and do whatever we could to start, to get permission and all that, everything that we would need to actually start building it. 'Establishment' is probably a better word because quite a bit of what we were going to do was already there. It just needed to be sort of fixed up to the proper trail standard and marked in some way." (see Project: Great Divide Trails Accomplishments on pages 93-94)

MARY JANE: "I think that was well into '75, though."

JENNY: "I agree."

MARY JANE: "I left to go east at the end of '75. So, I was out of the picture, and I don't recall, I think that the Great Divide Trail Association formed..."

JENNY: "It was 1975. It was definitely 1975." [1]

CLIFF: "That's when you restored your first trail was in '75, that summer?"

DAVE: "No, '76."

CLIFF: "There was a summer you missed where you weren't on the ground, then?"

DAVE: "We actually **did** a lot of hiking."

JENNY: "Yes, we led trips."

DAVE: "Jenny and I led a lot of exploratory trips. We went to Tornado Pass; we went into the Highwood; we went into the Kananaskis."

CLIFF: (Chuckling) "I remember Jenny actually coming up to me one day, and she was pissed off because she went to those places. (Turning to Jenny) You realized that I actually had a good idea of where those trails might go. And I had poached a lot of the great spots [in 1974]. And you had to go back [to them] the following summer. And you thought, 'Wait a minute; how come **we** didn't get allocated [that area with those scenic trails] **that** week?' Because I wanted to get out there! Anyway, you had a pretty good summer [in 1975] going to all those places and figuring out where they were."

DAVE: "Places like Coral Pass? **You** were welcome to **that**."

[1] While the group of people who became the GDTA came together in 1975 and submitted their application to become a not-for-profit corporation, Industry Canada did not incorporate the GDTA until April 26, 1976.

MARY JANE: "Going back to after the thing [Project: Great Divide Trails] was finished, I remember Dave and I having quite a controversy about what would be the next step. And I think it was the three of us talking (indicating Dave, Jenny and herself). I remember I felt very strongly that we should have gone into the idea of publishing the proposed Great Divide Trail and really pushing that element. And you guys pushed very, very strongly for the [Great Divide Trail] Association and the building of the Great Divide Trail. I remember that. I remember there was a controversy between us, and it was interesting."

JENNY: "We had to do both. I think that was the thing. We needed an association to carry the idea forward and produce publications. That's when we started to come up with this (holding up the GDTA policy paper that she brought), because **this** is a proposal that you could take to the B.C. government, to the Alberta government, to the federal government. It lays out the vision. It lays out the trail standards. And it's guidance; it's promotion; it's the vision."

MARY JANE: (Looking at Jenny and Dave) "To be honest, the tried and true from the east, **that** was the vision that **you** brought. Because it had worked in the east, the Bruce Trail and those [other] long-distance trails. [2] So, basically, you were taking that type of model and moving it into this one [area]."

JENNY: "But your dad helped us, because he was a lawyer, and he was the person who helped us with the application process to become a society. We made a conscious decision that it shouldn't be an Alberta society or a B.C. society; it had to be federally incorporated under the federal Societies Act [3], because we were going to be operating in both provinces. So, that was a very conscious decision, and your dad helped us with that."

MARY JANE: "I'm not saying that I walked away from the argument. Eventually, **that** vision prevailed. But I remember that quite distinctly. (Turning to Cliff) And it's interesting that **your** vision that would say, to me, that [your] thesis [4] said, 'If you highlight certain areas and join those highlighted areas with trail, that **that** might be one way of getting support for a [Great Divide] Trail.'"

CLIFF: "If you read my thesis, **that** was the talk of the [United] States in those days, 'Okay, these great [long-distance] trails have this aura about them. If you are trying to maximize what I call recreational days or enjoyable recreational days, what you should really do is focus on getting some of these highlights together.' That was the spin I put on my thesis. It was, 'Okay, let's get these core areas going and link them up later on.'"[5]

JENNY: "It was practical. It's what most people want to do. Most people have time..."

[2] In addition to being familiar with the Bruce Trail and its association, Dave Higgins and I knew of the Ganaraska Trail Association and were on the first Board of Directors for the Grand Valley Trail Association. Chris Hart also made major contributions to the routing and completion of the GVT in southern Ontario (see his bio in Appendix B). We also knew about the AT.

[3] In 1975, federal not for profit organizations were incorporated under what was then called Part II of the Canada Corporations Act.

[4] A scan of the front cover is in Figure 135, page 127. Appendix C contains a bibliographic entry for White 1977.

[5] "The provisional route located by the Project incorporates many trails with high recreational value plus creates numerous options for short and long trips. However, managers of the Great Divide Trails System must not become blinded by the aura of the long-distance trail concept and should cautiously develop portions of the Trail on a priority basis – as dictated by recreational value ratings." (White 1977, page 91)

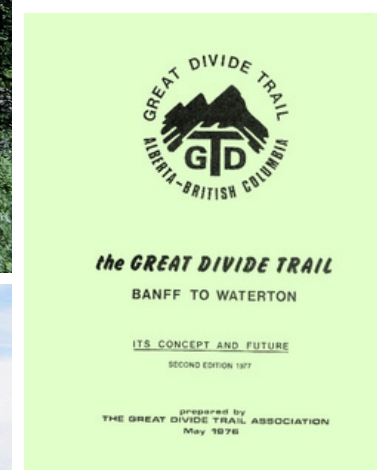
LANI: "To go for a weekend."

JENNY: "Yes, for a weekend."

MARY JANE: "I also recall the idea, too, of trying to get some kind of designation at that point, too [in the mid-1970s]. That's one of the things that I thought, that if we had the route and pushed the route as opposed to building parts of it [the GDT], that there might be elements of possibly getting the protection." [6]

DAVE: "The route is a grand vision, right? And it's more captivating than saying, 'I want to build a trail in this area.'"

[6] The Winter 1977 edition of the GDTA newsletter reports that the Alberta government's East Slopes Interdepartmental Planning Committee was reviewing a recreational corridor plan which, if approved, would make the GDT corridor feasible as it would be classified as a legislated Landscape Protection Zone, restricted to hikers and horses with limitations on development (see GDTA Winter 1977b in Appendix C).



Top: Hike in July 1975 to Tornado Pass to promote the GDT concept.

Center: Front cover of the Great Divide Trail Banff to Waterton, Its Concept and Future, the "GDTA Policy Paper"

Bottom: Jenny Feick on the summit of Crowsnest Mountain in 1975.

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We are proud to be funded by these companies, organizations, and government agencies. Their generous support provides funds to build and maintain the GDT; feed, train and equip our volunteers; protect the trail; and make all our work possible. Each contribution sustains our efforts to build and preserve the Great Divide Trail.

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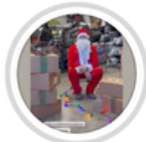
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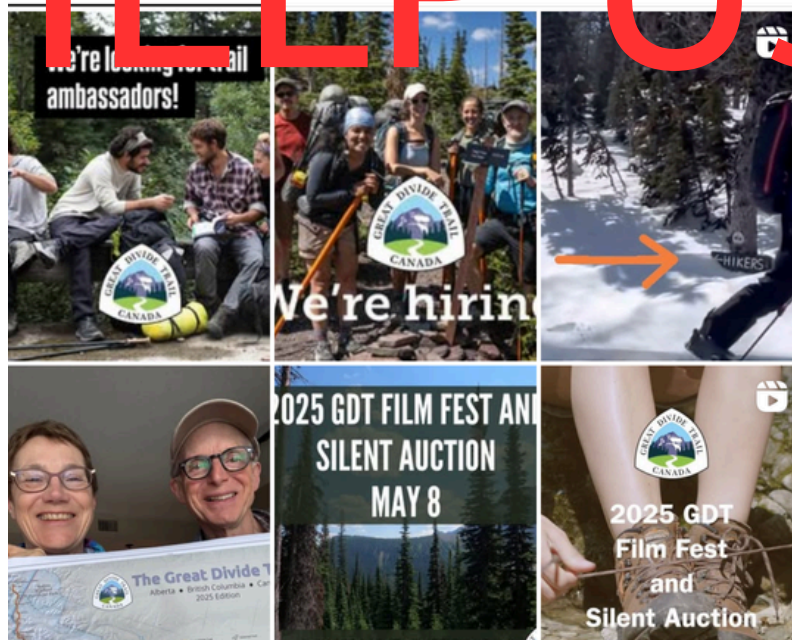


GDT'ers



3.20

HELP US



Are you a communications whizz? Did this entire newsletter make you want to get out a red pen? Is the layout of this page like nails on a chalkboard? The GDTA desperately needs people to help us share our message. We especially need people to help with our social media for just a few hours a month.

Please reach out to volunteer@greatdividetrail.com if you can help!

If you would like to write for Pathfinder, please send editor@greatdividetrail.com a message!

Want to help the Great Divide Trail?

Become a Member

Joining the GDTA is one of the most important things you can do to protect the trail. Membership numbers help in negotiations with land managers and allow us to advocate for the trail. Did you know you can become a lifetime member for only \$100?

Join a Committee

Committees form the backbone of the GDTA and are a great way to volunteer your time. There's a full list of committees on our website, and with everything from trailbuilding to outreach to IT, there's sure to be something that interests you.

Join a Trail Building Trip

Trail building and maintenance is essential for hikers to be able to access the divide safely. However, these trips are also **fun!** Volunteers can participate in everything from bridge building to flagging trail and scouting new routes. Trips are announced in the spring- make sure you're signed up to our email list to find out about next year's trips.

Donate

Your donation is essential to help us maintain, promote, and protect the Great Divide Trail and preserve its wilderness experience for generations to come. You can also donate in honour of a loved one: a perfect gift for the hiker in your life.