



December 31, 2020 – Dawn at Black Mountain

Dear Friends of Black Mountain,

While most people agree that 2020 is a year best forgotten, we thought that it would nonetheless be useful to summarize last year's highlights for FOBM and for the Park, and to initiate a reflection on the future of FOBM in both the short and medium term.

2020 in review

1. **New Board – Covid - Pause**

Following Ian Pooley's research appointment at UBCO in late 2019 and his departure from the Board, FOBM started the year with a new slate of Directors. As this new Board was considering the various activity options for 2020, and in particular the impact of an anticipated major funding contribution to RDCO for Park infrastructure, the Covid pandemic hit, and all activities were suspended.

2. **"Online" Annual General Meeting**

To ensure that all legal and fiduciary obligations were properly met, the Board modified the format of the Annual General Meeting for the year ended December 31, 2019, and carried it electronically by email in March. All Members were included in the correspondence and received the Minutes of the previous AGM, a short report on the year 2019 and the Financial Statements. Votes were tabulated from email responses. Subsequent to the meeting, the annual report and list of New Directors were submitted to the BC Societies. The CRA annual filing was completed in June.

3. **Project Activities**

At its February Meeting, the Board had decided to limit the year's activities to those that were in direct continuation of the previous year's projects. As a result, the following projects took place:

- **Bluebird Monitoring.** Under Carol's leadership the Bluebird program monitoring activities continued in 2020, from cleaning, fixing, and relocating some boxes to regular checking and reporting of any nests, eggs and offspring. Carol duly documented the findings in reports that can be found on the website.
- **Trail Clearing.** At the request of RDCO, FOBM gathered 10 volunteers, who contributed 95 person hours over a period of 4 days to clear rocks along 3 kms of the newly-built paths to allow RDCO mowers to clear the paths of weeds.

- **Hikes in the Park.** Only one organized hike took place in early May with a small group from the Kelowna Newcomers Club. Because of Covid rules, no other activity was organized
- **Weed clearing.** In late-August/September RDCO organized a pilot “weed pulling” project at the southwest entrance to the Park. A number of FOBM volunteers participated.
- **Interpretive signage.** Carol has worked with RDCO to provide information about the grassland ecosystems for signage along the trails. RDCO has not yet completed this work.
- **Advocacy.** In 2020 FOBM focussed its efforts on advocating for the banning of horses on the newly built FOBM-sponsored trails, namely the “Ephemeral Pond loop” and the “Coyote Trail”. RDCO finally agreed and signs have been posted restricting horses from these 2 trails and from the new “Hoodoo” trail located in the same lower grassland area.
- **Park Benches.** Using funds left over from the previous year’s trail fundraising, the Board purchased two benches to be installed by RDCO, at sites selected by FOBM: one overlooking the ephemeral ponds, and one along the Coyote Trail overlooking the grassland and with a view of the lake and the city. Platforms for these benches were set up by RDCO in December.
- **Communications and Membership drive.** It had been the Board’s hope that 2020 would offer the opportunity to capitalize on the Park’s imminent opening and to develop a communication campaign with a view to recruiting new Members. Covid made this impossible, and the only activity in this area has been the maintenance of the website.
- **Awards.** In May FOBM recognized Ian Pooley’s vision and dedication to FOBM at a small ceremony at the base of “the big fir tree”, where he was given a commemorative plaque. In July FOBM was recognized as a finalist in the 2019 Civic and Community Awards of the City of Kelowna in the category “Champion for the Environment”.

4. RDCO Activities

With the Swainson entrance closed during the summer and fall for water main work, RDCO has carried out relatively little work in the Park this year. Early in the Spring their contractor completed the Coyote trail, then the Hoodoo trail was staked. Following the trail-clearing work by FOBM Volunteers, the new RDCO mower was used once, but was subsequently judged to be a fire hazard and the trails were left to be invaded by weeds. Some signage at the Swainson, Tower ranch and Joe Rich accesses to the Park were erected, announcing the Park’s “partial opening” and advertising the recent Grant award from Canada and BC. Late in the fall RDCO installed the two bases for the FOBM benches. It also installed a trail map at the start of the Ephemeral and Coyote trails. Of course the big news from RDCO in 2020 has been the award of a major Canada-BC grant, which together with the RDCO contribution will provide \$965,000 for Park infrastructure, including formal entrances and parking lots at Swainson and Joe Rich, as well as building new connecting and summit trails.

5. Other news

2020 also saw the purchase the “Pyman land” by the Sandher fruit grower family. As a result, the Pyman road is now closed and no longer available to access the Park. On the plus side, this means that cattle can no longer enter the Park from that direction. In fact, only a few cattle entered the Park late in the season from the northeast corner, where a long stretch of fence has been removed in the past two years.

6. AGM for the 2020 year

As the Covid restrictions appear to be with us for some time, The Board is planning to hold the Annual General Meeting via the online “Zoom” Platform on March 23 at 6:30PM. Our guest speaker this year will be Murray Kopp, Director Park Services.

Details will be communicated in advance on how to connect to the Zoom Meeting.

Friends of Black Mountain Board of Directors:

President	Jean-Claude Gavrel
Secretary	Carol Millar
Treasurer	Glen Wood
Director	Connie McColl
Director	Don Wilson