

## **Letter from the President:**

**December 20, 2013**



Dear Fellow Riders:

At this time of year we always celebrate the good news of birth and renewal. We your trail ride Board of Directors are pleased to announce a “re-birth” of our club.

I’m very pleased to announce that after a couple of months of negotiations we have signed a contract with Warner Guiding and Outfitting Limited. Ron Warner was our outfitter for 35 consecutive years and we are very pleased to announce that we have re-established a very good relationship with him and his company. Warner Guiding will be our outfitter for the summer of 2014 with both of us having the intention of continuing this relationship. Discussions are already underway for staffing positions for our rides at “Scotch camp” along the Red Deer River. This is very good news!

Secondly, I’m pleased to inform you that after several months of diligent work by your Board of Directors our plans for 2014 are coming together very nicely. Our website is now “live” and you are welcome and strongly encouraged to read the information for 2014 and register as soon as possible for what is going to be I believe the best rides we have ever had. Please note that we have several large marketing programs taking place in mid-January with the hopes and expectations of having our rides completely sold. Again, register soon!

Two weeks ago I had a ninety minute meeting with the Superintendent of Banff National Park and two of his management staff. It was a very cordial meeting and we both had a very good opportunity to explain each other’s position. Suffice to say that some issues with Parks Canada are not going to change, and therefore our organization must adapt in order to continue to survive. On a positive note I was given all kinds of assurances of Parks support and desire to see the T.R.C.R. and horse use continue in Banff Park, but at the same time the environment and wildlife is a priority over commercial and nonprofit organized excursions such as ourselves. In the next month I will be coordinating a meeting between myself our V.P. Gary Sandbeck, our new board member Rod Wallace, and Rick Smith General Manager of the Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch. Rod is a retired Park Warden who brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding about the backcountry and Parks Canada to us and he has already been an incredible asset to the club. I very much look forward to working with him and Gary to solve these ongoing issues of where we are going to have camps over the next 10 to 15 years. (this issue is more complicated than it sounds....)

Although our relationship with Parks Canada has never been better that does not mean for one minute and we should stop putting pressure on them and the various politicians. Further to my last letter to you in "The Bulletin," I respectfully request that if you have not written your letters to the various politicians and bureaucrats as of yet, that you consider that a project to do over the Christmas break. We must continue to have our voices heard. Please support us in our ongoing efforts to continue to make sure that the T.R.C.R. survives another 100 years.

Parks Canada has allowed us to have twenty-seven guests per ride this summer and I am at the moment trying to increase that to thirty. I know there are some members that would like to see smaller rides, but unless we significantly increase the price, that is simply not possible. Our margins are fairly slim over what the outfitter charges us and we do have high costs to keep the club operating. In addition we also will be having ten rides this summer, not eight. If T.R.C.R. were a commercial business and not a non-profit society operated by volunteers, as it is, our price to you would be considerably higher.

Judy Fletham our Bulletin Editor and I hope that you enjoyed reading the recent fall edition of the T.R.C.R. Bulletin. We have started writing the next one which we hope have to you in February. Please send us your stories, pictures, comments, feedback, and photographs! In the next issue there will be details about how to enter our annual Townsend Trophy competition. We will be adding a special area on our website where we will be posting all the entries. Stay tuned for more details!

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the trails this summer. As always your feedback is important; please email me at any time.

Blessings and Happy Trails,

Stuart R. Watkins  
President, T.R.C.R.