



# TRAIL RIDERS of the Canadian Rockies

Box 8646 Canmore, Canmore, Alberta T1W 0B9 • Phone: 1-844-560-5522 • Email: admin@trail-rides.ca

## TRCR Newsletter

November 2019

# 2019 Rides of a Lifetime

Riding Cascade Valley in Banff National Park. Page 3 to 10

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2018 Townsend Photo Contest - First Place - Category "Horses and People", Waterton National Park

# Editors' Message

The horses at Banff Trail Riders are enjoying a well-deserved break. This year, they indulged ninety-three TRCR riders throughout the summer. The majestic Cascade Valley, an iconic area of Banff's backcountry, served as a backdrop to world-class riding complete with fantastic guides, wranglers, cooks and horses. The ride to Clearwater Circle was equally magical. While we had more rain than usual, and some days were a tad cold (some of us woke up to white frost), we all got to bask in the sunshine at some point. Besides, what would backcountry riding be if we can't rough it a little?

The Newsletter includes stories of our Emcees and the riders sharing their summer's experiences as well as some jaw-dropping pictures. Reading them is always a treat. It is also proof that Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies' offers "Rides of a Lifetime."

We are also proud to showcase last year's winning photos of our Townsend Photo Contest. Twelve photos each worth 2000 words. This contest showcases the amazing talents of our riders, and we thank them for sharing breathtaking sights with our membership.

TRCR is already signing up riders for next year. The Cascade Valley ride is back by popular demand. Added to it is the Halfway Lodge ride up 8100 feet to Allenby Pass. Perched high on your horse this is an experience few will ever get to experience. Check the details below, sign up and start dreaming about it.

Thank you to all who took the time to write about their experience. Your contribution is what makes TRCR what it is - a vibrant and exceptional trail rider family.

**Renée Delorme**, Creative Editor, **Rebecca Horne**, Editor and writer, **Rick Godderis**, Newsletter Advisor



Waterton National Park, 2018, "Scenic Views, 1st place, Judy Fleetham

## President's Message

On behalf of the board for Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies, I would like to thank you for your support during the past year. Whether you are a returning member, or new to us this season, you are part of a legacy that is nearly 100 years old!

On November 7, 1885, the last spike was driven by the Canadian Pacific Railway to unite western and eastern Canada through a coast to coast national railway. As travel flourished across the country, Canadian Pacific built marquee hotels such as the Banff Springs and Chateau Lake Louise.

Also in 1885, the newly formed country of Canada, now only eighteen years old, opened the first national park in Banff, Alberta. Visitors travelled from all over North America to Banff to experience the grandeur of the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

As excitement grew among Banff visitors, their need to explore the backcountry of the rugged wilderness became evident. Canadian Pacific Railway with a group of visionaries realized this demand and created Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies to explore this new frontier.

### Thanks to you this past season was a huge success!

It was made possible by our small group of volunteers and the exceptional team at Banff Trail Riders, our outfitter.

The surveys that riders completed this season highlighted their excellent service, knowledge and support. Thank you Banff Trail Riders!

2020 promises to be another amazing riding season. Back in the heart of Banff National Park, the beautiful Cascade Valley awaits our riders. High mountain passes and sweeping valleys are sure to take your breath away. Demand for this next season is high. We are already 50% sold out. Join our ride for the 2020 season, there's no better gift than the gift of time.

Preparations are underway for our 100 Year Anniversary in 2023. We welcome input from our members on how they would like to celebrate this milestone. We also invite your energy and ideas on how to carry this legacy of trail riding in the Canadian Rockies forward.

If you have any historical materials or memorabilia that you would like to loan to TRCR as part of this Waterton celebration, we would greatly appreciate it .

We look forward to seeing you in 2020.

Sincerely,

**Gary Sandbeck**  
**President, Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies**



National Park, 2018, In camp, 1st Place, Victoria Laidler

# STORIES OF A LIFETIME

## Not Just Another Lunch On The Trail

Cascade Valley, June 28th to July 3rd



Our guides, Erica and Dustin, Barbequing steaks on the trail. Cascade Valley, Banff National Park, 2019, Renée Delorme

Eating in the backcountry with Trail Riders is a first class epicurean experience. First, you must ride your horse for a few hours through amazing vistas. As soon as you hear faint gurglings in our stomachs, we break for lunch, usually along a river, a lake or in a meadow. On one such break we took great pleasure watching our guides indulge us with fine cuts of AAA steaks cooked over a woodfire BBQ that they brought along for the occasion, packed in on a mule. The steaks came complete with all the fixings you would expect; potato salad, green salad, cold and hot drink and dessert.

The wild flavours and the company of our fellow riders were delightful. And that was just lunch. Breakfasts and dinners were whole other affairs.

Yep! Don't expect to lose too much weight on those rides.

**Renée Delorme, Emcee, 2019**

# What a great ride!

Cascade Valley, July 12 to 17



Ready and Eager to Start the Ride, 2019, Cascade Valley, Banff National Park, 2019, Alexa Wilson

Trail Ride #6 had all the elements of a successful trip: great horses and guides, good food, magnificent mountain scenery, decent weather, dry tents, and, most importantly, wonderful riding participants.

We didn't have perfect weather, but it wasn't blistering hot like in 2017, nor did we get absolutely soaked by rain like last year. We all appreciated the long slickers provided by the outfitters that could be whipped out whenever some rain appeared. Only one day was chilly, dulling the magnificent Sawback Lake scenery. But the troops rallied, and we made it to home base without incident!

As with most adventures, it was the people who really 'made' our trip. Our riders ranged in age from 13 to over 70, from very experienced horse people to beginner riders, and from retirees to full-time workers to pre-postsecondary students. We flew in from Eastern Canada (Toronto area), Western Canada (Nanaimo and Westminister), the U.S.A. (California, Arizona, and Kentucky) and even Canberra, Australia. And within moments, we were sharing horse stories, songs, experiences, knowledge, enthusiasm, and skills that were enjoyed by all. Even some taekwondo demonstrations, ukulele tunes, haiku and cowboy poetry, ghost stories, and groundhog tracks were thrown in! Lots of laughter and pretty early bedtimes were the norms! Amazingly, this group of riders also

completed a knitting project ..... Our cook was having trouble finding enough time to knit. Our resident night-owl, Laura, decided to organize a knitting frenzy to help her. As a result, the scarf was completed before the end of the ride. Just a supergroup of people!

Thank you to everyone for making Ride #6 such a wonderful trip: The Banff Trail Ride Outfitters, our trail guides and pack mule handlers, our cooks, and all our participants. A special thank you to our trustworthy, surefooted horses (... maybe not so much Homer! LOL) for keeping us safe!

**Alexa Wilson, 2019**



Cascade Valley, 2019, Mert Brown

## What a Ball, Riding and Dancing

Cascade Valley, September 2nd to 7th.

Day one, the outfitters had chosen excellent horses to match each guest and after a few stirrup adjustments, we set off on our adventure.

It was a wet summer in southern Alberta and in the mountains. Because of all the rain, the trail along Elk pass from the trailhead to Stoney was very muddy until lunch stop. There, to everyone's delight, Erica and Dustin made a fire and cooked delicious steak, accompanied by potato salad and coleslaw.

We were blessed with warm, dry weather during our week. Mornings were quite cool though, sometimes even frosty, but the cooks had the stove blazing and the coffee ready in the cook tent every morning.

The accommodations at both Stoney and Flints' camps were great; large canvas tents with covered verandas, good washing areas, clean outhouses and best of all, hot showers available at any time. To top it off, everyone agreed that the gourmet meals were outstanding!

**"The one word that best describes our ride... "Glorious!"**

The scenery from Stoney and day rides from Flints was spectacular. The lunch stop between Stoney and Flints at the elk corral below the Palliser Range was awe-inspiring. With good weather and good horses, we were able to ride to Sawback Lake and up to almost 8,000ft at North Fork Pass.

After the day's rides, we were happy to sit around the campfire sharing the day's adventures before dinner.

Then there was skit night, our last night at Stoney's. I reminded the riders about skit night whenever I get the chance. The day before that, Vern asked me if I thought anyone would like to square dance. Well, I was ecstatic to say the least, since this is a long tradition with the TRCR so, an emphatic YES! We didn't have music but Vern was a skilled caller. He recruited 4 who had some experience and 4 who didn't. Dancers and spectators alike all had a ball!

Kudos to the riders whose goal was to have the best vacation ever and to Banff Trail Rides for a wonderful week!

**Judy Fleetham, Emcee, 2019**



Cascade Valley, 2019, Mert Brown

# Jaw-dropping Views

Cascade Valley, September 2nd to 7th.



Cascade Valley, Banff National Park, 2019, Earthoot O

The ride started Monday, September 2nd, and everyone was ready to go! After the horses were selected by our wranglers, we started up the trail to Elk Pass. Even though the trail was muddy, we had a good time. We had a delicious lunch on the trail and then continued north, on a sunny and warm day. The horses were great. The ride to Stony Creek camp and Flints Park follows old fire roads that are not used anymore. **While the views from those roads are great, the scenery is jaw-dropping once you leave those roads.**

The wranglers and staff looked after us well. The camps were authentic and all the cooks were the best. The biggest kitchen tent was at Flint's, and wood stoves in the kitchen tent kept us warm in the evening. And we even had hot showers.

The next day took us to North Fork Pass with excellent views of the mountains that impress you with the size of this park. Another ride took us to Block mountain and some stunning meadows. We had lunch there. After lunch, our



guests went swimming in the refreshing, clear creek! We got pictures, and they were good sports in daring into the cold water. Then the trip home was another great day. We had good weather each and every day and overall it looks like we won the lotto when it comes to weather. On behalf of the club, thank you all for coming out on ride 5 and the 96th Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies trail ride!

Next year will be our 97th year!

Tune in to our website and come Ride the Rockies with us again!

**Allen Achtymichuk**  
**Vice president TRCR**

## **The Best week of my life**

Cascade Valley, July 5-10



Lunch break along Stoney Creek, 2019, Renée Delorme

My Ride from Norquay (Cascade), Stony Camp, Flint Peaks Camp to Minnewanka Lake.

The best week of my life was this summer with The Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies: an outstanding organization with whom to enjoy the Canadian Rockies on horseback. One of

my guests said, "what a wonderful address if you ever lose your luggage..."

Yes, it is a beautiful address! And a great club and a great holiday, and the best week of my life, an all-inclusive horseback riding trip with exceptional new friends and staff and horses.

The fourth of July 2019 was probably the coldest fourth of July I have ever experienced. I lived near Calgary, Alberta, for 30 years. I don't remember ever needing a winter jacket on the fourth of July. Winter!? What!?! It was cold and rainy and cloudy and miserable. Did I say Cold?

And I am riding in the Rocky Mountains!?

I was lucky enough to be emcee or Master of Ceremonies for the second ride of the TRCR for 2019!

What an honour! I would have ridden in the snow for a chance to be in Banff, the most beautiful place in the world. In the past, I have ridden for a day with TRCR in Waterton. I did full trips at Clearwater river, Kananaskis provincial park, Johnston Creek, and even the ultimate Mount Assiniboine.

This is my fifth trip, and I can say that we had the best outfitters in Alberta. This year the guests, the staff, the horses and mules made this trip the most incredible to date.

From the 1923 start of the TRCR with CP Hotels, TRCR has distinguished itself as a 5-star holiday. How do I know this? I was in the business myself for a few years. At our ranch, I also taught riding as an NCCP certified Riding Coach. It

was hard work. And even though I was the boss, I worked in the cold and got hypothermic at least once. This time around, it was different. What an honour and a privilege to ride in Banff, and be catered and looked after like a guest at an all inclusive resort.

Twelve riders and I were guests with the Banff Trail Riders At Warner Stables. On the eve of our 6-day ride, I came early for the reception at the stable. I met my guests and asked them "Do you have enough warm clothes?"

I also asked them, "Is your sleeping bag warm enough for our frigid Alberta summer? After all, we are in the Canadian Rockies, and mountain weather can be surprisingly cold and wet."

The group before us had nearly frozen the week before. They had been surprised by how cold it was, and so I was forewarned. We had beer and wine at the reception to meet and greet everyone. We celebrated the fourth of July with sparklers and with the guests singing America the Beautiful. It was cold and rainy, but the anticipation of eager riders couldn't be dampened by mere rain.

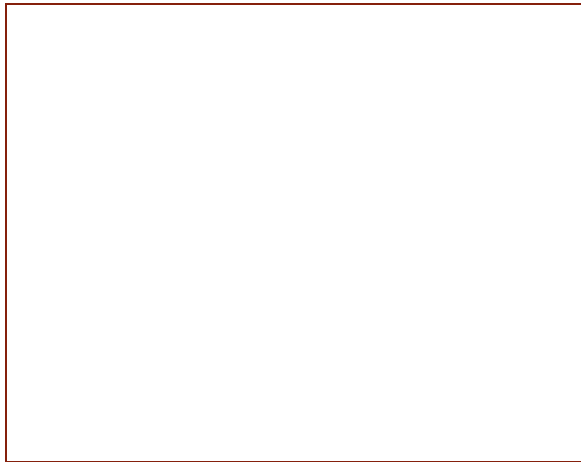
Outfitted with saddlebags and slickers and as much clothing as we could squeeze into, we set out in the cold and rain early Friday morning.

The trail was wild and bushy, twisty turny, and up and down. The wildflowers and scenery were incredible. When we arrived at the camp, one of the ladies admitted she had a broken foot. The wranglers couldn't believe it! If they

had known, they never would have let her join the rest of us! Again we were lucky – the exceptional wranglers Erica and Dustin agreed we could stick to the broader trails for the sake of our injured rider. "No worries," they said after they recovered from the shock.

No Worries!

What an Epiphany. Maybe I have read too many Zane Grey novels. We were nowhere near civilization, we could have been eaten by bears or cougars or washed away in a flood, maybe toasted in a forest fire and they said, "No Worries!."



I relaxed and really started to enjoy our trip. We were in good hands. Our cooks Tanya, Hope and Grace, provided 5 star 4-course meals and hot water bottles every cold night! And mule skinnners Maitland and Jimmy were amazing.

What a team! How incredible to see the mule train trucking on by. Friendly entertaining staff, great sturdy horses, tasty food, like steak and burgers at lunch. To top it all off, our guests were lots of fun. They came from all over the United States of America... Well, actually, Oregon, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri and Florida. The rest of our ride was fantastic. The weather warmed up, and we dried out and got to know each other. The guitar wasn't in camp, so I didn't sing as much as I would have liked, but we had games and songs, stories and long talks for evening entertainment. We even had pets! Baby Richardson ground squirrels in camp, baby grouse on the trail, and we saw two elks away up on a mountainside.

This was the best week of my life so far. In 58 years, I have never enjoyed such camaraderie. Such good riding! Such a great holiday! The trails were not muddy or ugly in the bad weather, the river crossings were fair and exciting and safe, the scenery, world-class. It is Banff, after all!

The shared experience with adventurous, caring, laughter-filled riders and one super tough heroine with a broken foot who toughed it out! made this the Best week of my life.

**Rebecca Horne, Emcee, 2019**

# THE TOWNSEND PHOTO CONTEST

You don't have to be an expert to win!



Waterton National Park, 2018, "On the Trail", 2nd place, Josh Barrus

**Email a maximum of three photos per category**

Flora & Fauna - In Camp - Scenic Views - On the Trail - People and Horses

2019 Riders are invited to submit their best photos by March 31st 2020  
Email them at [admin@trail-rides.ca](mailto:admin@trail-rides.ca)

## **How it all started**

In 1923 Reginald Townsend (1890-1977) was one of the TRCR original founders and professionally was Editor of America Country Life Magazine. In the early years he was the official photographer for the TRCR.

In 1929 he donated our annual amateur photo competition Trophy inscribed: **"Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies COUNTRY LIFE TROPHY for the best nature photograph taken on the Annual Official Trail Ride"**

## **What it is today**

Every year we invite all our riders to submit photos to the competition to win the contest which means having your name inscribed on the Trophy. And your photo will be featured on the coveted front cover of our annual Calendar for the following year.

The winner of each Category receive a framed plaque and their photos will appear as a Winner in the TRCR calendar.

## **What makes a winning photo**

Our judges are volunteers from the *Calgary Camera Club* with Head Judge Graeme Kershaw.

The *WOW factor* is what makes a picture stand out. It may be in part technique, but is usually due to having a new or unusual subject or an old subject presented in a different way. Generally speaking, technique is learned and planned.

Photos should epitomize riding with Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies: horses, riders, staff, camp, activities, campfires, mountain scenery, etc.

All entries become the property of the TRCR for use in our calendar, postcards, albums or advertising.

**Photos are judged based on technical merits and their WOW factor. They also should be:**

Sharp and in focus  
Have a proper exposure, and  
Have a good composition



Waterton National Park, Floral and Fauna, 2018, Judy Fleetham



Waterton National Park, 2018, "People and Horses, 2nd place, Susanna Grob

## 2020 RIDES OFFERINGS

In 2020, the 97th annual ride of the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies (TRCR) will explore the trails in the [Cascade Valley](#), [Stoney Creek](#), and at [Halfway Lodge](#) in [Banff National Park](#) in Alberta, Canada. Riders come from around the world and you will meet people from all walks of life who share your joy of the wilderness. Riders bring their own personal gear. We supply all the horses, western tack, great meals, and accommodations.

Our biggest source of new riders has always been *Personal Referrals*.  
Share your ride of a lifetime with friends, family, coworkers.

1. June 21 to 26 6 Days Halfway Lodge 8
2. June 21 to 24 4 Days Stoney Creek 12
3. June 26 to July 1 6 Days Cascade Valley 12
4. July 3 to 8 6 Days Cascade Valley 12
5. July 12 to 15 4 Days Stoney Creek 12
6. July 17 to 22 6 Days Cascade Valley 12
7. August 2 to 5 4 Days Stoney Creek 12
8. August 9 to 14 6 Days Halfway Lodge 8
9. Aug 30 to Sept 2 4 Days Stoney Creek 12

**Refer a Friend and** get a \$100 discount towards this year's ride for each "new" rider you refer **What a deal!**

[Register Now](#)

# Join Us



Waterton National Park, 2018, Scenic Views, 2nd Place by Judy Fleetham

## For The Ride of a Lifetime



You can reach us at 1-844-560-5522

Email: [admin@trail-rides.ca](mailto:admin@trail-rides.ca)

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

