



United Riders of Crowsnest

Trail Report 2023

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Summary

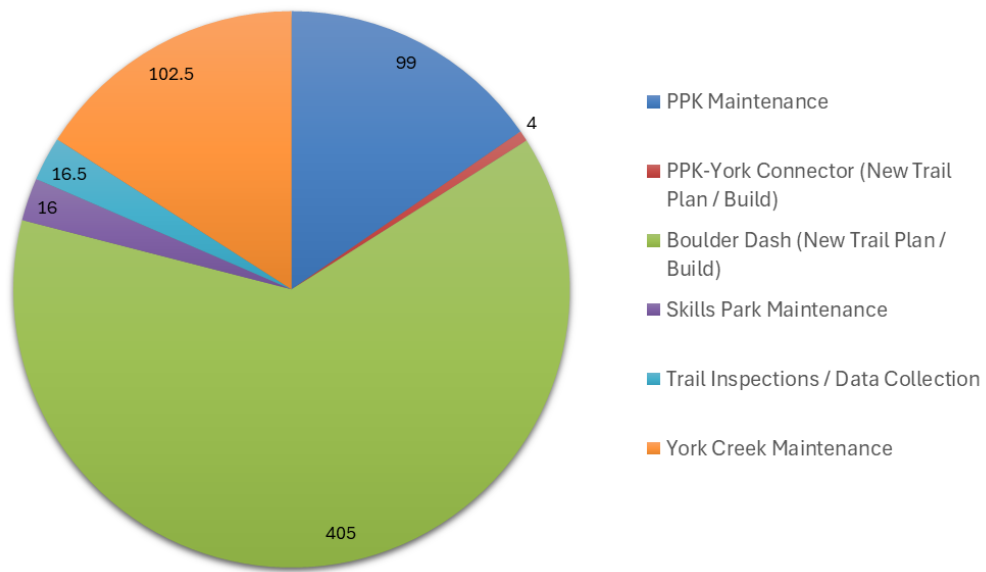
The 2023 bike season was another successful year in many ways. UROC was able to maintain trails, install signage, build the new Boulder Dash trail, improve and expand the skills park, and provide mountain bikers with a variety of social opportunities. Several large events utilized our trail systems again this year, including Sinister 7, Sole Survivor Trail Race, TransRockies SingleTrack 6, and Crowsnest 100. This year also saw the return of a UROC enduro race, the Bee's Knees Enduro, and we were able to organize a series of Friday Night Races in partnership with Pass Powderkeg.

Through the 2023 bike season, UROC employed a full-time trail coordinator, Amanda Goodhue, as well as a part-time trail crew member, Jacinthe Fontaine. The addition of a part-time trail crew position this summer was incredibly valuable, and allowed more work to be completed throughout the season. It also greatly increased efficiency and safety compared to having just one full-time employee out working.

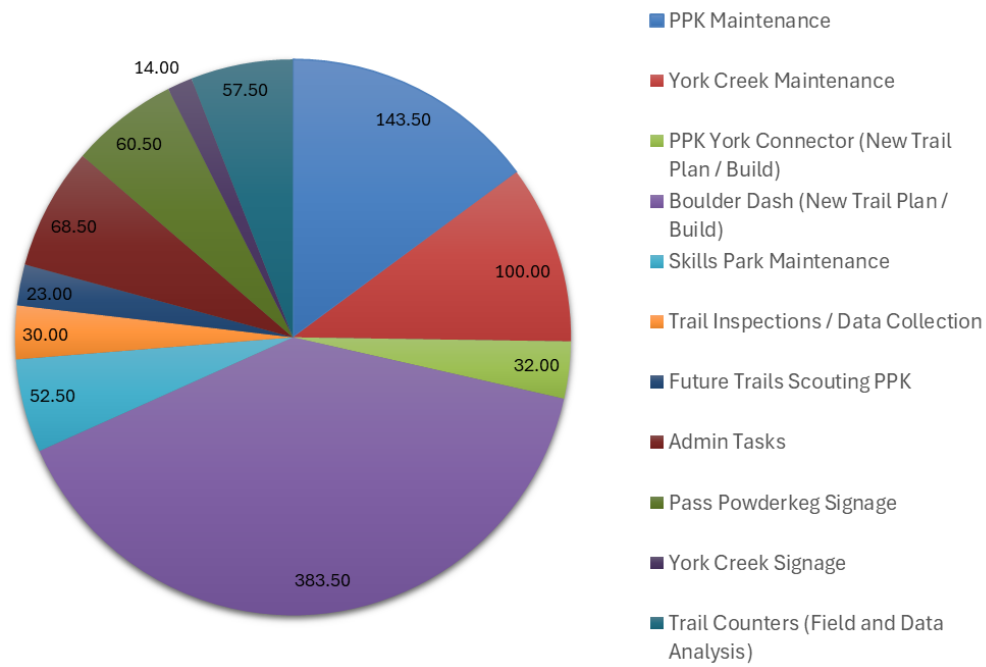
Volunteer trail work was also a huge part of our success this summer. We had volunteers work on trail maintenance tasks in both the York Creek and Pass Powderkeg trail networks, as well as put in massive amounts of work to construct the new Boulder Dash trail.

This document will highlight a few of the main projects that were accomplished throughout the 2023 season. In terms of total volunteer work that went into trails this year, there were 643 hours contributed to field work. It's worth noting that at this point, we don't track non-field hours that go into planning and keeping things running behind the scenes – there are many more hours of volunteer work that happen there! UROC staff worked 966 hours this season. In total, that's over 1600 hours of work that went into the Crowsnest Pass mountain bike trail networks. The graphs on the following page offer a breakdown of where work hours were spent for both volunteers and UROC staff.

Volunteer Hours 2023



Staff Hours 2023



Trail Management Plan

UROC has been working with Alberta Forestry and Parks to establish a Trail Management Plan for the past three years. UROC volunteers, along with Forestry and Parks staff, put extensive work into this plan over the years, and we reached a milestone this year with the Trail Management Plan being finalized and signed off. The Trail Management Plan is a comprehensive document that has a few main objectives:

- Catalogue Recognized Trails for potential future designation.
- Identify prospective locations for Proposed Trail development.
- Consider desired user experiences, recreation setting, regional opportunities and land use constraints when identifying trail management objectives for Recognized Trails and Proposed Trail opportunities.
- Recognize strategies to avoid, minimize or mitigate environmental, cultural and historic resources sensitivities and potential conflicts among recreational users and other land users.

UROC was able to get this Trail Management Plan signed off at the end of September 2023, which makes us the first mountain bike club in Alberta to have completed this process. It is hoped that we will make our Trail Management Plan available to anyone who is interested in it. We look forward to working with Forestry and Parks on the next steps within the process, which include establishing a Trail Agreement and considering becoming a Trail Manager.

Maintenance Projects

Trail maintenance projects were completed in both the York Creek and Pass Powderkeg trail networks throughout the summer season as needed. These projects were completed by volunteers and UROC staff. In total, 445 field hours were put into trail maintenance across both trail networks in 2023. The Pass Powderkeg trail network saw 242.5 of these hours, and the York Creek trail network got 202.5 hours of maintenance work.

Trail maintenance tasks across both trail networks included cutting downed trees, trimming overgrown branches / trail brushing, trail raking, trail tread repairs, trail feature repairs (berms, jumps, etc.), fixing and clearing drainages, and replacing or repairing wood features.

Signage

York Creek

A large project to add signage to the York Creek trail network was nearly completed in the summer of 2022. This summer, a few additional signs were added. York Creek signage primarily received maintenance work, as we replaced a few damaged and missing posts.



Pass Powderkeg

This summer, the signage at Pass Powderkeg got many additions and updates. With the addition of the Nothing to Luge and Electric Monkey trails at the end of 2022, all maps within the trail network needed updating. Two new kiosks were installed at the Pass Powderkeg day lodge parking lot. We also moved one of the kiosks from the far west end of the skills park to the main parking lot beside the washrooms at the base of the ski hill to provide a more accessible map for trail users. All three of these kiosks got a new, updated map installed, as well as wildlife info and ride smart signage.

In addition to updated maps at trail junctions throughout the network, arrows with trail rating colours and trail name signs were also added and / or moved around at many junctions. These changes and additions will make it easier for trail users to find the trail they're looking for, and it will ensure they are aware of the trail difficulty of each trail within the network. There was an issue with the quality of the signs received for this project, and they quickly started peeling off the backing. These will be replaced by supplier free of charge and re-installed early 2024.

Permanent signage was also installed on the Nothing to Luge and Electric Monkey trails to replace the temporary signs installed at the end of 2022 when the trails were opened.



New Trail Construction – Boulder Dash (mp05.23)

Planning

The planning process for this trail started in the summer of 2022. The corridor for the proposed trail was flagged out by the fall of 2022, and the process to obtain permission to build the trail happened through the winter and early spring of 2023. With support from Alberta Forestry and Parks through the planning and approval process, we were able to obtain a Temporary Field Authorization (TFA) to start building in June 2023.

This trail was designed as a flow trail with an intermediate trail rating. The objective of the trail was to provide riders with additional intermediate riding in the York Creek area with a flow trail style, which is something that did not yet exist in that trail network. The trail connects well with other popular trails in the area, and allows riders to create a variety of loops and longer rides. The trail was planned in an existing cut-block where mellow slope angles and rolling terrain were conducive to this style of flow trail.

Construction

Construction on the Boulder Dash trail started in June 2023. We approached the project in two phases, with the first phase going from the top of School of Rock down to the Back Door crossing, and the second phase going from the Back Door crossing down to York Creek Road. Phase one was 1 km of trail, and phase 2 was 800 m, making the overall trail length once fully constructed 1.8 km. Phase one was completed and opened in August, and phase two was completed and opened at the end of September.

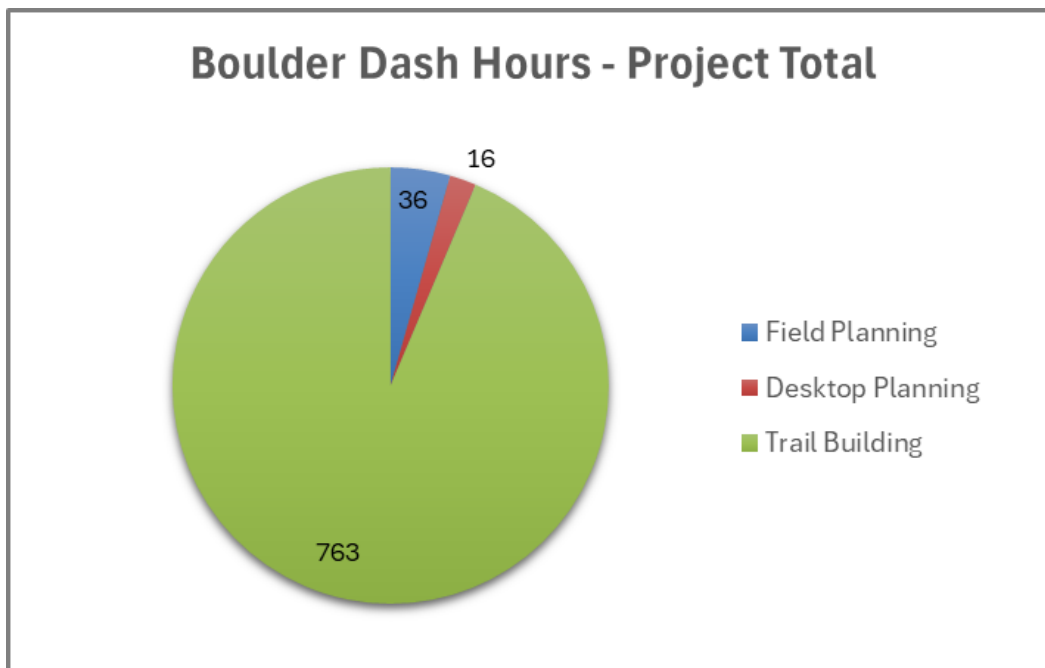
The Boulder Dash trail was designed and constructed by UROC volunteers and staff. This trail was machine built with a massive amount of donated time and machinery from Marten Devlieger. The trail

was built with a mini excavator and hand finished behind the machine. UROC volunteers came out for numerous trail days throughout the summer to work on hand finishing the trail.

This trail was fully constructed within an existing cut-block, which greatly reduced the labour needed for corridor clearing prior to commencing construction.

Boulder Dash was completed and opened fully to riders by the end of the 2023 bike season, but we still plan to make a few changes to it early in 2024 to improve trail features and flow. The trail also saw some significant damage from cattle traffic late in the fall, and ongoing repairs will be needed to get it back in ideal shape for bike season.

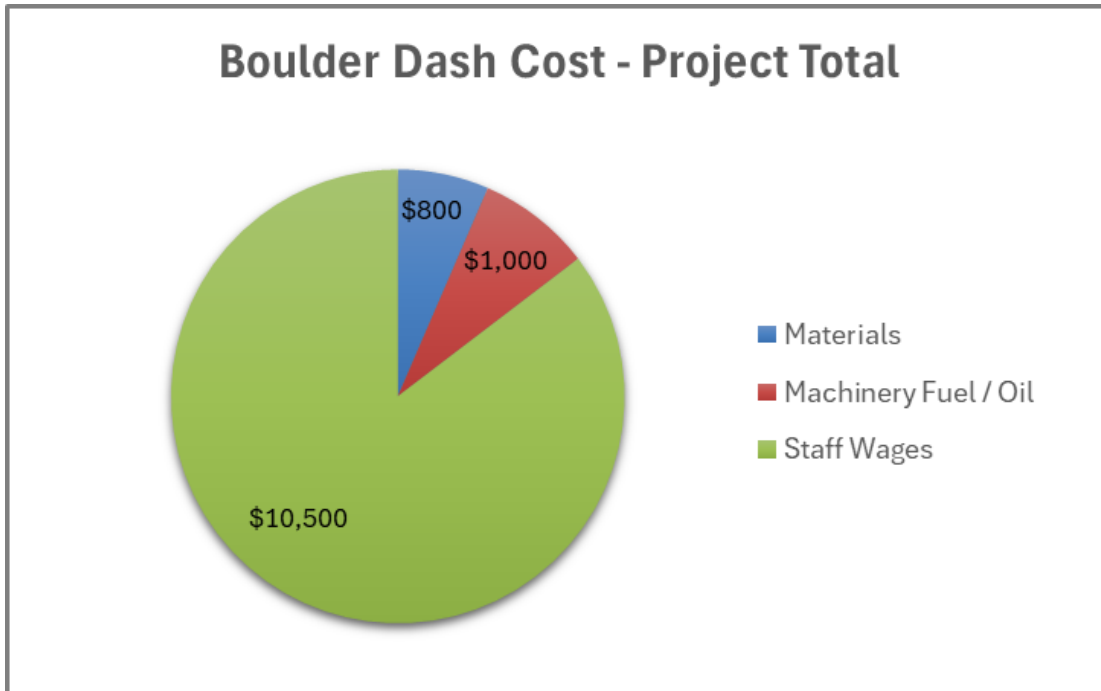
The Boulder Dash project overall took 815 hours of work from UROC volunteers and staff. A breakdown of hours spent on planning and building phases of the project is shown below.



Cost

The Boulder Dash trail was an opportunity for UROC volunteers and staff to put their skills and knowledge into practice to design and build a new trail. Constructing this trail with volunteers and UROC staff also meant that this trail cost significantly less than it would have if it had been contracted out to a trail building company.

The total cost of this project came to \$12,300. If this project had been contracted out, the cost would be estimated at over \$50,000. A trail project such as this one that can be reasonably planned and built by UROC volunteers and staff allows for more efficient use of funds, and it also allows funds to be kept for future projects where hiring a contractor would be beneficial. A breakdown of project costs for Boulder Dash is shown below.



Skills Park

During the summer of 2022, UROC identified maintenance work that was needed to improve the user experience at the skills park at Pass Powderkeg. The assessment of this facility also determined that there was also an opportunity to expand the skills park into the open area at the west end of the park. With feedback from users about a desire to have a drop zone area, UROC started looking into options to expand the current skills park to include a drop zone at the west end.

Plans for skills park maintenance work and expansion were brought to the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass towards the end of the 2022 season, and UROC was able to secure funding from the Municipality to complete maintenance work and drop zone expansion at the skills park for the 2023 season. The overall cost for skills park maintenance work and expansion was \$24,000.

UROC contracted Starr Trail Solutions to complete skills park maintenance work and drop zone construction during the 2023 season. This work took place early September 2023, with the new drop zone and re-vamped skills park opening back up later in the month. Maintenance work on the skills park included an inspection of all wood features, along with repairs and replacement as needed. All jump lines in the park also received dirt work to tune the lips back up, and the large jump line at the upper end of the park got reworked and widened out slightly. A new drop zone was constructed at the west end of the skills park, which now includes a progression of wood and rock drops, as well as a new catch-berm at the bottom to bring riders back into the park.

Through the winter, UROC will be working to design and purchase updated signage for the skills park, to be installed early 2024.

Trail Traffic

UROC has been maintaining and collecting data from trail counters at the Pass Powderkeg trail network since 2014. With the addition of new trail counters on Nothing to Luge and Electric Monkey this year, we now have 8 trail counter locations at Pass Powderkeg.

Detailed information about trail traffic can be found in the 2023 Trail Traffic Report. Trail counters will continue to be maintained and data collected through the winter season, however, some counters have been removed for the winter. The same five counters will be maintained and collected this winter as previous winters.

Future Considerations

With mountain bike trails continuing to see high levels of traffic in both the York Creek and Pass Powderkeg trail networks, ongoing maintenance and trail inspections will be critical for both trail sustainability and user experience. A combination of volunteer work and UROC staff is needed to keep up with maintenance in these trail networks. Additional staff would be beneficial to continue with trail maintenance projects, and volunteer trail days will continue to be planned for the 2024 summer.

Additional tool storage is currently being considered for UROC tools and materials. UROC is working with Pass Powderkeg to obtain permission to install a tool shed near the day lodge parking lot to provide more efficient and spacious tool storage. Current tool storage is not adequate for daily trail operations, and a building will allow for better organization and maintenance of tools.

As UROC expands staffing levels for a trail crew during the mountain bike season, transportation for staff will start needing to be considered. It may continue to be reasonable to have staff use personal vehicles to access trail work areas daily, however, reliance on personal vehicles may not always be attractive to staff if driving on rough roads is required daily. As staff numbers potentially get expanded, transportation options for accessing trail work will need to be explored.