

Good morning Chairman and panel attendees. I typically greet people with a great big, “Hello, my friends” on social media and in my virtual tours, but today is serious and represents the potential future for Crowsnest Pass and the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies. I moved to Crowsnest the summer of 2014 to work for Alberta Environment and Parks, leading their south portion of the Backcountry Trails Flood Rehabilitation Program where our team reconstructed backcountry trails and riparian areas. Prior to moving to the mountains, I worked in oil and gas, both in the oil sands and in conventional gas completing reclamation and remediation projects as a Professional Agrologist. I would spend my spare time, travelling to the mountains and even tourguided for a ski and snowboard company taking people to the mountains in both Canada and the US. The mountains are special to me and hold a place for recreation, healing, and sustainability for now and the future. Crowsnest Pass is very much a part of this. In March 2018, after winning a provincial growing rural tourism award, I started my own business called Uplift Adventures. I now hold several titles including an environmental scientist, professional guide with two highly recognized organizations, and an entrepreneur. I am also a board member with the Crowsnest Conservation Society and am here today to provide the perspective of outdoor recreation and how it is growing in the community of Crowsnest Pass.

I started my own business for many reasons, and one of those reasons was that I saw an opportunity to grow a sustainable economic driver in a community that I love. I want to be able to provide employment and quality jobs for residents within my community. I have started this grassroots business in a community where I was the first professional guide with the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides and knew that I could be instrumental in growing a professional career for myself and others in guiding. Depending on the level of guiding and experience, a guide will make between \$175 to \$600/day and will often make tips on top of this.

While I have only been in business briefly, I currently employ one person (me), contract three guides and instructors, and have several business partners. To express how this industry is growing, even during the pandemic and being shutdown for 3 months, my business grew by 125% over the spring and summer. I believe in this area and what it has to offer for its nature-based and adventure-based tourism. And I am not alone as there are several businesses who have started up ventures in this area and provide employment in this community for a growing industry.

While I cannot speak on the opinions of other groups and business owners, I will simply speak on what is currently occurring in our community regarding outdoor recreation. I acknowledge that Kari and John briefly spoke on this yesterday, but as someone who is so deeply integrated in this industry, I will provide more perspective.

Here are some examples of what is going on in our community:

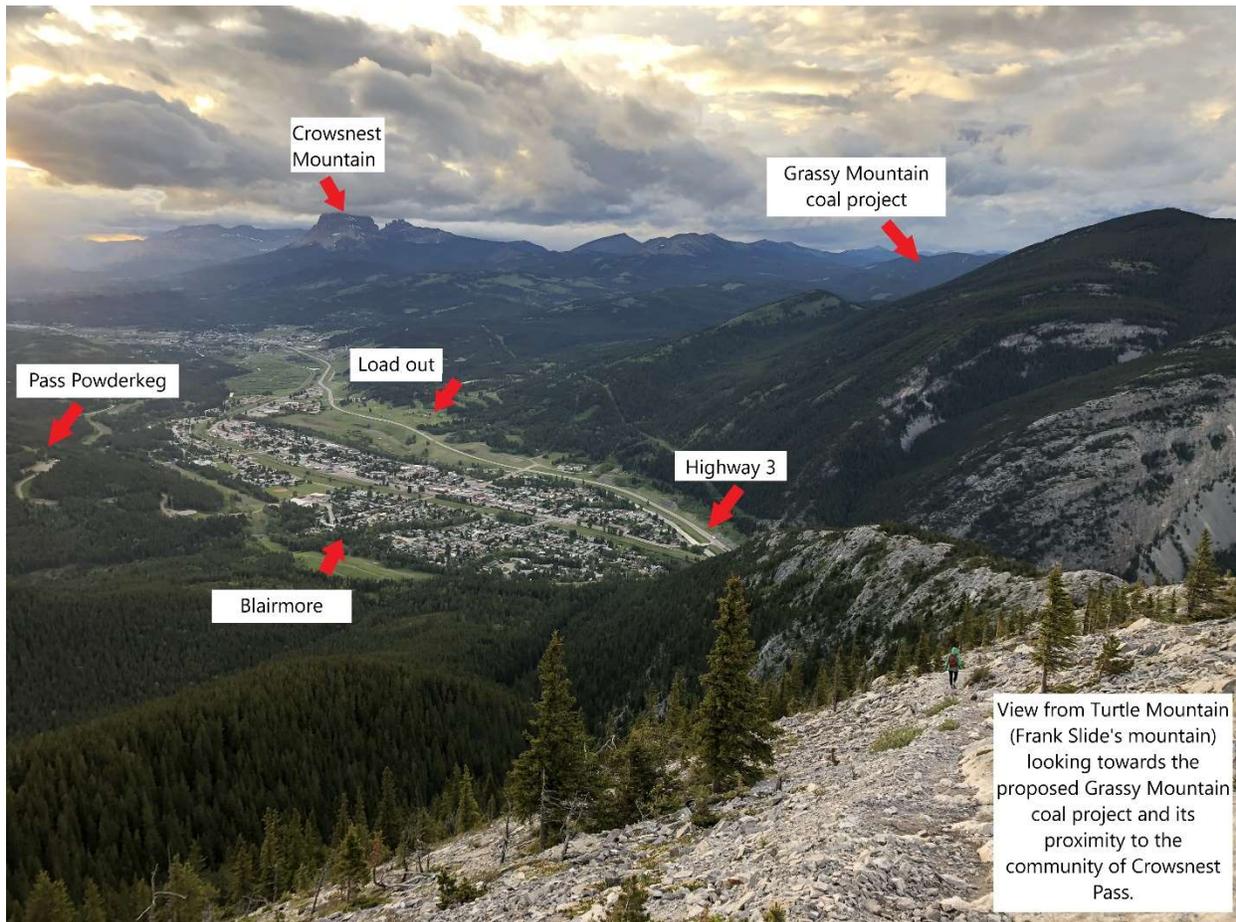
**Mountain Biking.** The United Riders of Crowsnest Pass, a local mountain bike club surfaced around 10 years ago and has built world-recognized, sustainable mountain bike trails. The momentum for mountain biking in Crowsnest Pass has increased substantially over the last 5 years, and in 2020 their trail counters showed a 100% increase on their mountain bike trails.

To add value behind the economic driver of mountain biking, there are currently three local businesses through retail, mechanics, coaching and tours that exists in Crowsnest Pass. Events have surfaced as a result of these trails, which bring tourists to town. In 2019, four mountain bike races came to Crowsnest Pass that attract people from across Canada.

**Trail running** has contributed significantly to the economics of Crowsnest Pass and to the mountain culture in this area. A big driver for this community of runners stems from the largest ultra-marathon in Canada. This race is a 162km ultra-marathon, which intertwines throughout the backcountry around Crowsnest. While this isn't the only race this company directs, the company is based in Crowsnest Pass and provides full-time employment for staff and several seasonal jobs locally. The race brings racers and their race supporters such as friends and family to this community. On the weekend of the race, it is almost always impossible to find a room at any local hotel or bnb. These events attract more people to this community, and some of them buy homes afterwards either as full-time or part-time residents. Myself included as I ran the race in 2012, and then moved here in 2014.

To add value behind the economic driver of trail running, there are currently two local businesses through retail and distribution that exists in Crowsnest Pass. Events and businesses have surfaced as a result, including a race that is the only North American stop on the SkyRace Series. Three main races that attract visitors and then some smaller races, but foster this culture in town.

**Hiking and Backpacking** is growing popularity in the region.



This is a picture taken from the top of one of the most popular hikes in Crowsnest Pass: Turtle Mountain, which is the mountain that slid in 1903 to create the Frank Slide. Across you can see Crowsnest Mountain, another popular hike/easy scramble that outdoor enthusiast feel compelled to

summit. In the photo, we also see Blairmore and Coleman in the distance, and Pass Powderkeg is just on the edge. From the two most popular summits in the area, we will see this open-pit coal mine.

In 2019, the local hiking club had to start capping the number of people who came on trips to manage the size of local participants. The Great Divide Trail, a long-distance hiking trail from Waterton to north of Jasper, has recently rerouted the section north of Crowsnest Pass into Alberta along the High Rock Range to be further away from the coal mines in BC. In 2020, the Great Divide Trail saw around a 225% increase of thru-hikers using their trail.

To add value behind the economic driver of hiking, there are currently at least two local businesses providing guiding and outdoor education, such as Wilderness First Aid and Avalanche Safety Training that exists in Crowsnest Pass.

**Kid's Camps.** There are a few outdoor kid's camps in the region with the Crowsnest Pass Bible Camp being the main camp located within the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass. They have two locations in the area and have hosted several youth and kids over the decades. I believe that their busiest day in 2019 was 178 kids in the backcountry on one day. They have thousands of kids at the bible camp on a regular year. They often utilize the public land in the area.

Crowsnest Pass has world-class **fly-fishing**. The regulation for fly-fishing has become very strict in BC, and Fernie guides will come to Alberta to fly-fish (not to mention that the fish in BC are declining and largely due to coal mining). Fly-fishing guides come down from Calgary to fish, and we have several local fly-fishing guides and two local fly shops who provide added economic drivers to this area.

Other activities that I want to include and are a part of outdoor recreation and tourism are:

1. Bouldering on the Frank Slide, which now has over 2000 problems. The slide is now one of the biggest single bouldering areas in Canada, with problems of all grades and styles. There is talk about a guide book being released shortly about these problems. The Southern Alberta/Rockies Bouldering Club hosts an annual 'Tour de Frank – Bouldering Festival'.
2. Crowsnest Pass has world-class caves. This hasn't become super popular, likely to do with the technical skills needed to access several caves. Historically, caving tours have been offered through businesses located outside of Crowsnest Pass and next year tours will start up again in partnership with local businesses.
3. Ski and snowboarding. A brief description on our local ski hill, Pass Powderkeg. This is a small ski hill that is managed by our municipality. It offers skiing and snowboarding, even at night time. The local ski hill also is a major trail network for mountain bike trails. From the ski hill, we look directly across the highway to see the proposed Grassy Mountain Mine. In addition, backcountry ski touring and snowboarding is also growing in the area.
4. Paddling is more popular in the spring when the rivers and creeks are higher. A local club does exist in the area that provides summer camps and hosts a kayaking festival called 3 Rivers Rendezvous.
5. Nordic skiing is incredible in the area and a local club exists.
6. Climbing is also growing in popularity as I notice more routes being set in the region. We also have a local distributor company in the area that distributes climbing gear throughout Canada.

7. And of course, there is golfing, which we have already heard how they received a new clubhouse and the golf course was moved around to make room for Riversdale's load out. The golf course does not encompass the entirety of outdoor recreation in Crowsnest Pass.

As our global trends change again, I strongly believe that we will see a shift in people working remotely and more people moving to places for a lifestyle. I suspect that by having an open-pit mine this close to town, it will impact the way people feel about moving to a mountain-town for its lifestyle and/or visiting a community for its adventure and nature-based activities. It is also difficult to say whether or not these businesses and clubs (with volunteers) will even stay in Crowsnest Pass once the mine is in operation, or if they will leave this community. I have heard several times that people do not plan to stay once the mine opens up or if several mines open up.

Outdoor recreation is a big part of tourism in Crowsnest Pass, and tourism does not revolve around hotels and restaurants (which we actually have quite a few of). People must have something to do in order to visit an area, like a quality ski hill, a race, great trails, or events and courses. The EIA and its socio-economic section lacks consultation with the local tourism and outdoor recreation community. It appears that the consultant who prepared the report left a gap regarding what is going on in this community. A cost benefit analysis should include the assessment on the outdoor recreation, lifestyle and tourism prior to the mine approval.

As a visitor and outdoor recreationalist to mountain communities, I do not visit or recreate at a mountain town with an active open-pit mine that is visible from its our town. Not to mention, several open pit coal mines. Next slide please. And when large scale open-pit mines come into an area, one of the first things they do is limit access.



As I hear others speak about this community declining in population and this must mean it is a dying community, I see it differently. I see it as a community that is transforming as people remove the stigma of Crowsnest Pass as being a coal mining town and seeing it for being a part of the Canadian Rockies. We

are seeing more entrepreneurs and people being creative to build an economy, and if we give people the support and encouragement to this, this will only grow.

As we saw in the past, the Crowsnest Pass struggled after the last coal mine closed down. I don't want to see this happen again because people are eager to make a quick, but short-lived economic boost.

I will finish with a letter that Fredrick Godsal wrote in 1893, prior to the first coal mines to exist in Crowsnest Pass. Quote.

"The Crows Nest Pass and Waterton Lakes have been for years a common resort for the surrounding neighbourhood for camping and holiday making and there being but few such places in the country, I think they should be reserved forever for the use of the public, otherwise a comparatively small number of settlers can control and spoil these public resorts. Every day that it is delayed increases the probability of friction between the Government and settlers that may build in these spots...."