

## Great Partnerships – Ruthie Oltmann, Golden Eagles and Alberta Parks

Saturday September 16 saw the celebration of three great partnerships at Hay Meadow out in Kananaskis Country. Firstly, a memorial bench was unveiled to honor well-known and beloved Exshaw resident Ruthie Oltmann with the following dedication: “Ruthie Oltmann – Kananaskis historian, author of Mountain Stories – Passionate about Hiking, Ski Touring, Mountain Adventures.... and Kananaskis Country – Honoring Those Who Are Passionate About the Golden Eagle Migration”. Ms. Oltmann and many of her Bow Valley hiking companions were in attendance, together with two Alberta Parks officials: Don Carruthers Den Hoed, East Kananaskis Area Manager, and Jennell Rempel, Community & Partner Relations.



Also present were many members and supporters of the Rocky Mountain Eagle Research Foundation (RMERF) whose members have been observing the fall and spring migration of Golden Eagles and other raptors for the past 26 years from a site at Hay Meadow. The RMERF had developed an information and education project jointly with Alberta Parks. Ms. Oltmann who has admired the dedication of these eagle “counters” over the years and thought it to be very fitting to locate an illustrated information kiosk and two interpretive signs in the vicinity of the bench. While the signage were funded and installed by the RMERF, the facilities will be owned and managed by Alberta Parks in this partnership with a citizen science organization. Mr. Den Hoed and Ms. Rempel did the unveiling of the new signage in witnessed by a crowd of at least 50 who enjoyed the beautiful fall weather on this special afternoon. As a good omen some nine Golden Eagles were observed up high in the skies on their annual fall migration south. The RMERF’s fall count will commence officially on Wednesday September 20 at Hay Meadow, and everyone is welcome to come out, admire the new bench and signage and also look out for migrating raptors.

