

reaching out to their Calgary neighbours – not to cope with a flood but to try to reduce the odds of 2013's event repeating itself.

Ghost Valley residents met throughout the spring to share their concerns about land uses in the valley. The meetings were framed as “neighbours coming together to support one another.” Through community meetings, Ghost Valley residents were able to identify areas of shared concern and some possibilities for action.

In early June, one hundred and thirty-nine people with roots in the Ghost River valley delivered a letter to Calgary's Mayor Naheed Nenshi, highlighting the importance of the Ghost River watershed to Calgarians' lives. In the winter, the Ghost River may supply as much as 20 percent of the Bow River's flow to Calgary. In the 2013 flood, nearly one-third of the water flowing into the Bow came from the Ghost River.

Their message to the mayor was clear: “The Ghost River plays a vital role in the wellbeing of Calgarians, so please collaborate with us to protect the health of our shared watershed. Join us in exploring ways to preserve and strengthen the important ecological functions of the Ghost River watershed.”

The letter highlights two threats to the Ghost River watershed's ecological capacity:

1. inadequate management of OHVs and random camping;
2. clear-cut logging in close proximity to the Ghost River and its tributaries.

And these two threats are interrelated: road-building required to harvest timber from the valley further reduces the water-absorbing capacity of the region while increasing OHV access.

Reading the group's letter, it's clear they've seized on a win-win proposal. Protecting the Ghost watershed will help preserve the landscape Ghost Valley residents love while offering Calgarians the secure and safe supply of water they've enjoyed historically. And being neighbours, why not work together to achieve these mutual goals?

AWA hopes Calgary's mayor accepts their invitation and joins the residents of the Ghost Valley for collaborative actions pro-

tecting this beautiful and life-sustaining watershed.

- Ian Urquhart

## **Reaching Out in the Ghost – It's What Good Neighbours Do**

Anyone familiar with last year's floods will remember how neighbours helped one another deal with the devastation visited on peoples' lives in southern Alberta. One year later, residents in the Ghost River valley are