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FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF BC

Fall/Winter 2009

FMCBC and Cloudburst Information



The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FMCBC) is a non-profit organization representing the interests of non-motorized hikers and climbers, and outdoor clubs throughout British Columbia.

The FMCBC

- 1) addresses mountain access, recreation, and conservation issues
- 2) coordinates, builds, and maintains hiking and mountain access trails throughout B.C. through its member clubs
- 3) promotes outdoor education and safety

Membership

Membership in the FMCBC is open to any individual or club interested in non-motorized outdoor activities, and access, recreational, and conservation concerns. Please contact the FMCBC office to receive a list of clubs that belong to the FMCBC (See back cover). Membership is \$15 per annum per membership when a member of a FMCBC Club and \$25 per annum for individual members.

Executive

President: Brian Wood (BCMC)
Vice President: Peter Rothermel (IMR)
Treasurer: Martin Smith (ACC-VI)
Secretary: Pat Harrison (VOA),

Directors

Brian Wood (BCMC), Rob Gunn (AVOC), Dave King (ACC-PG, CR), Antje Wahl (ACC-Van), John Young (ACC-VI), Jack Bryceland (COC), Dean Pollack (BOC), Ken Rodonets (CDMC), Roy Howard (FHA), Bill Perry (IMR), Dave Grant (KMC), Matt Gunn (NSH), Travis Carter (MRBS), Eleanor Acker (NVOC), Mike Stewart (VOA), Emily Ackroyd (VOC), John Harris (VITIS), Paul Chatterton (Ind.)

Committee Co-Chairs

Recreation and Conservation: Sandra Nichol, Antje Wahl
Trails: Pat Harrison, Alex Wallace

Staff

Administrative Manager: Jodi Appleton
Bookkeeper: Kathy Flood

For More Information on the FMCBC:

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Cover Photo taken by Nick Matwyuk

Featuring Geoffrey Martin and Artem Bylinski climbing up Alpha Mountain in the Tantalus Range with Tantalus in the background.



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Editors: Bill Perry and Jay MacArthur
Production: Jodi Appleton

Articles

We welcome articles which inform our readers about mountain access, recreation, and conservation issues or activities in B.C. Articles should not exceed 1,000 words. Photos should be approximately 4x6 inch photos with 150—300 DPI resolution. With submitted articles please include the author. With submitted photos please include location, names of people in the photo and the name of the photographer.

Submission Deadlines: Fall/Winter - Oct 15
Spring/Summer - April 15

Email articles to: admin.manager@mountainclubs.org

Advertising: The FMCBC invites advertising or classified advertising that would be useful to our members. Rates:

\$400 back page \$300 full page
\$160 ½ page \$80 ¼ page
\$40 business card

We would like to thank Mountain Equipment Co-op for supporting FMCBC through their generous contribution of office space from which to base our administration.



The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Working on your behalf

The Federation of Mountain Clubs (FMCBC) is a democratic, grassroots organization dedicated to the conservation of and access to British Columbia's wilderness and mountain areas. As our name indicates we are a federation of outdoor clubs and our membership is about 3500 from about 20 clubs around the province. Our membership is comprised of a diverse group of non-motorized or self-propelled mountain recreation users including hikers, climbers, mountaineers, skiers, snowshoers, kayakers, canoeists and mountain bikers who all share an interest in the protection and preservation of the mountain/wilderness environment. The FMCBC also has several individual members who are not affiliated with the club, but share our mission and accomplishments. Membership is open to any club or individual that supports our mission. In addition to the work that FMCBC does on their behalf, membership benefits include a subscription to the FMCBC newsletter *Cloudburst* and access to an inexpensive Third-Party Liability insurance program for club members, and Directors and Officers liability insurance for your club organizers.

The FMCBC mandate is "to foster and promote the non-motorized activities of the membership and the general public through leadership, advocacy and education". The FMCBC recognizes hikers, mountaineers and ski-tourers etc. to be a traditional user group and represents their rights province-wide to freely access and enjoy a quality experience in the mountains and forests of British Columbia. Our members believe that the enjoyment of these pursuits in an unspoiled environment is a vital component to the quality of life in British Columbia.

The FMCBC fulfills its mandate with a comprehensive approach to mountain recreation and conservation by:

- Participating in provincial land use decision processes.
- Working to positively change (and in some cases enhance) government agency policies so that self-propelled outdoor recreation opportunities are recognized and protected.
- Representing wilderness as a legitimate land use and a resource of identifiable value to society.
- Advocating for new parks and wilderness resources, and working to maintain the integrity of existing parks and wilderness resources.
- Advocating for continued access to existing recreational resources.
- Building, maintaining and protecting hiking and mountain access trails.
- Promoting hiking, rock climbing, mountaineering, ski touring and other self-propelled mountain activities.
- Educating the public on conservation issues, related to outdoor recreation.
- Educating its member and the public on mountain and backcountry safety and working with member clubs to address risk management issues.
- Encouraging new membership in our member clubs

Acting under the policy of "talk, understand and persuade", rather than "confront and force", the FMCBC advocates for the interests of its member groups. Much of this work is done through our two main committees: Trails Committee, and the Recreation and Conservation Committee. With the exception of the Administrative Manager who helps with production of our *Cloudburst* newsletter, development, and general administrative duties work on these programs is done by volunteers.

The FMCBC was founded in 1971, based on a predecessor organization called the Mountain Access Committee. Since this time the FMCBC has had many success stories working on behalf of our members and the public at large. If you visit our website (www.mountainclubs.org) you can view a list of some of our successes and accomplishments we have had through the years categorized by geographical region. Some highlights include the popular Adopt-a-Trail program and the resolution of several land use issues through participation in various planning processes.

We continue to work towards success on new issues and projects. Much of our work these days tends to be access related where we are competing with other users of the land base or in some cases a lack of investment in existing infrastructure. At the core of these projects, issues and successes (and often the grinding work that goes unnoticed) is the countless hours of time from dedicated volunteers from across the province. Without these volunteers the FMCBC would not exist and we are always looking for new volunteers—no experience required. Through our committees, club advocates and general membership we have much to hope for on the trail ahead.■

President's Report

President's Report—October 2009

Brian Wood



Peter Wood

Brian during Cathedral Park Traverse

This summer, thanks to much effort from Jodi, our Administrative Manager, and some volunteers, the FMCBC was successful in obtaining \$150,000 from the Federal Government Economic Stimulation Package for recreational trails. With matching funds from VANOC, this is being used to upgrade a portion of the Howe Sound Crest Trail which is badly in need of maintenance. We also obtained a smaller amount of funding for a backcountry access trail in the Callaghan Valley near the Olympic ski facilities.

Unfortunately we were not able to obtain any “Gaming” funds this year, and we understand that this program will shortly be phased out due to government cut-backs in the current economic climate. In the recent past we had sometimes been successful in obtaining gaming funds which were used primarily for printing and mailing this newsletter, “Cloudburst”, about twice a year. So, until we obtain additional outside funding, we are relying upon our membership dues to pay the costs of Cloudburst, which is a large item in our budget. To reduce our costs, and to satisfy a growing desire on the part of our membership to save paper, printing and mailing costs, we are requesting that those members who wish to have a paper copy of Cloudburst mailed to them to clearly indicate this option when they pay their membership fees to their primary outdoor club. All members have access to an electronic version of Cloudburst, but without a **specific** request to receive a paper copy, no paper copy will be mailed.

Many of our member clubs report a steady decline in their membership numbers over the last few years, which in turn will affect the overall membership numbers of the FMCBC. The effectiveness of most organizations is based on their size, and thus it would be helpful if the FMCBC could:

- a) increase the number of its member clubs, and
- b) help our member clubs retain their existing members and attract new members.

We welcome your comments on how the FMCBC can help our member clubs with both of these issues. ■

Message from the Editors

Jay MacArthur—FMCBC Past President (80s), Cloudburst Editor

Reading Brian Wood's remarks about club membership, I'm reminded of how I got involved in climbing. Thanks to FMCBC volunteers from the Alpine Club and BCMC I was able to take a climbing course when I was 16. This safe start to my climbing addiction started me on my path to volunteering in the VOC, ACC, FMCBC and other groups.

I suggest the best way to attract more members to clubs and the FMCBC is to volunteer to lead a trip or help on a course offered by your club. Volunteering will make you feel younger and be very much appreciated! ■

Jodi Appleton—Administrative Manager, Cloudburst Production

Thank you for all the great articles for this issue! Your contributions make Cloudburst an informative and inspirational publication for our members and the general public across the province. Please keep us in mind during your winter adventures this season and send in some stories and photos to document where our members are spending their time this winter. We would love to hear from you!

And if you have ideas of articles you'd like to contribute or see included in our new Educational Articles section let us know and we can find some experts on the topics. Those of you who are receiving Cloudburst via email, we hope that it reads well, you enjoy the colour photos and that you utilize the various links to more information. And if any links do not work, please be sure to send us an email! ■

Letters and News of Interest



News from the FMCBC

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

This article appeared in the BCMC newsletter and has been edited for Cloudburst

The FMCBC has been busy over the summer period, and below are some of our activities working on behalf of non-motorized or self-propelled outdoor recreation.

As mentioned in my President's Report we obtained \$150,000 for upgrading the Howe Sound Crest Trail, an old, scenically spectacular local trail which has deteriorated considerably. We also obtained \$1900 for winter signage for a new trail in the Callaghan Valley to help with changes arising from the Olympics. We should be thankful for our Administrative Manager, Jodi Appleton, and volunteers Alex Wallace (Trails Committee), Antje Wahl (Recreation and Conservation Committee) and Scott Nelson (Trails Committee) who slaved over paperwork to jump through the hoops in a very tight time-frame to obtain these grants.

After many person hours spread over several years, the FMCBC and Knight Inlet Heli-sports have agreed upon a Joint User Agreement (JUA) for managing motorized activities in the Mount Waddington Region, the gem in the crown of BC Coast Mountain wilderness. We offer our thanks to those hard working Recreation & Conservation Committee members who made this happen, particularly our R&C Chair, Monika Bittel.

As mentioned in my earlier report, we were not able to obtain any BC Government "gaming" grant funds this year thus we have lost access to funds which were previously used to publish and mail the FMCBC newsletter, "Cloudburst". To reduce printing and mailing expenses for future Cloudburst issues, we are encouraging members of all clubs to access the Cloudburst on line and to forsake receiving a mailed paper copy.

So, to access outside funding, the FMCBC must look elsewhere. Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) has indicated an interest in discussing long term, or "core", funding to support self-propelled backcountry recreation, and so I feel we should pursue this avenue. I am now looking for one volunteer, preferably living in the lower mainland area, to help me in negotiations with MEC sometime in this fall. Is anyone interested in joining me? Along with several other committees, the FMCBC Fund Raising Committee will become active again after the summer recess to investigate other funding sources. All the FMCBC committees could use more volunteers to help deal with important issues which impact self-propelled back country recreation. No previous committee experience is required - just enthusiasm and a willingness to help. This is a chance for club members to become more involved with the FMCBC and to improve their particular skills and advance our interests. For more information about the FMCBC, please see our website at: www.mountainclubs.org.

Another item of bad news is that the negotiations between the FMCBC and the District of Squamish (DOS) relating to the transfer of the FMCBC's lands into the proposed Smoke Bluffs Park have stalled again. There was a change of personnel in the DOS Council, and it seems that we are almost back to square one. Monika and members of the Squamish Access Society and other interested organizations have been involved with this complex issue for several years.

As the winter is approaching, and club members will be out there enjoying the snow, please do not forget to submit all relevant details, photographs etc. of any incidents relating to back country conflict with motorized recreationists, e.g. snowmobiles, heli-skiers etc. to BCMC member, Robin Tivy, at his website, www.bivouac.com. ■

Letters and News of Interest

NEW LAND FOR PROVINCIAL PARKS AND CONSERVANCIES

Reprinted with permission from the Ministry of Environment
Information Bulletin: September 24, 2009

VICTORIA – The British Columbia government introduced legislation to establish one new “Class A” provincial park and one new ecological reserve, as well as to make additions to seven existing provincial parks, Environment Minister Barry Penner announced today.

Bill 10, the Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act, 2009, will also enact nine new conservancies covering more than 111,000 hectares that were established by Order in Council in December 2008. Adding these areas to the act will give them full legislative protection.

These nine conservancies are a result of the Haida Gwaii land-use agreement with the Haida Nation. These new conservancies on Haida Gwaii recognize the importance of these areas to the people of the Haida Nation by ensuring that they will be able to use the resources in these areas to sustain their communities and their cultural connections to the land. The conservancies also enhance the protection of the environment and the opportunities for sustainable recreational uses, such as wildlife viewing, for all British Columbians and people from around the world.

The creation of these conservancies builds on the implementation of land-use decisions for the Central and North Coast that the Premier announced in February 2006.

This legislation also adds private land acquired by the government to improve park values to a number of Class “A” provincial parks including:

- Seven hectares to Alice Lake Park near Squamish.

- Approximately one hectare to improve the access to Cape Scott Park at the northern tip of Vancouver Island.

- 48 hectares to Gordon Bay Park on Vancouver Island.

- One-sixth of a hectare to Mt. Seymour Park on the north shore of Vancouver.

- 16.6 hectares to Naikoon Park on Haida Gwaii.

- 38.5 hectares to Squitty Bay Park on Lasqueti Island.

- 53.3 hectares to Enderby Cliffs Park in the North Okanagan.

Bill 10 contains an amendment to the Protected Areas of British Columbia Act that will add the description for a new park, Skaha Bluffs, in response to a recommendation made as part of the Okanagan-Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan.

At an initial size of 179 hectares, Skaha Bluffs Park will protect a popular climbing area and important wildlife habitat. The Ministry of Environment, in partnership with a number of groups including The Land Conservancy of BC, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Mountain Equipment Co-op, has purchased an additional 304 hectares beside the park that will be added in the future.

The legislation will also add one existing Class “A” provincial park in the North Okanagan, Truman Dagnus Lockheed Park, to the schedules of the Protected Areas of British Columbia Act. Until now, that park has been established by an Order in Council. Placing the description for this park in the act will give it increased protection.

Det san Ecological Reserve is also being created by this Bill. Det san, which means “Juniper” in the language of the Wet’suwet’en people, is in the Skeena Region in northwest B.C.

Bill 10 also contains a name change to one existing park. The name of Brooks Peninsula Park is being

Letters and News of Interest

If the legislature passes Bill 10, since 2001 the B.C. government will have established 58 new parks, 143 conservancies, two ecological reserves and nine protected areas, and expanded approximately 60 parks and six ecological reserves, protecting more than 1.9 million hectares of additional land.

Today, more than 14 per cent (or 13.5 million hectares) of British Columbia is protected – more than any other province in Canada.

To make the BC Parks system even better, the B.C. government has invested approximately \$107 million over the past five years to improve park infrastructure and acquire additional parkland.

For more information about the amendments, please visit: <http://www.leg.bc.ca/legislation/index.htm>. ■

Red Mountain

Vivien Loughheed (Caledonia Ramblers)

Red or Grizzly Bear Mountain, located in Penny, on the rail line between Prince George and Jasper, is the setting of a series of popular books by Jack Boudreau. Born in 1933, Jack grew up on a farm at its base and his brother lives there still.

Red is natural habitat for grizzly and mountain caribou and a great attraction to outdoor enthusiasts in both summer and winter. The caribou have earned protection status and the herd is currently stable. Grizzlies still congregate in huge numbers (20 to 25 seen in some souvenir photos), at the top of the mountain each autumn to graze. What gourmet meal attracts these individualists and allows them to tolerate each other has been looked at by a few biologists.



Vivien Loughheed

Ruts in the trail made by quads and trail bikes

I took my first hike on the mountain about three years ago. Then it was off limits to motorized vehicles (signs posted) except for those doing cabin or trail maintenance. On my way up, I met two quads carrying seven people, three of them children, and a ton of chain saws. They informed me they were clearing trail.

As I continued up, I could see huge ruts in the trail, made by both quads and trail bikes. I took photos. Sensitive areas where water needed to be ditched were mush. A section of the ancient inland cedar forest had been driven through exposing roots. Eventually affected trees will die. I saw no evidence of any trail clearing.

Back in Prince George, I contacted Wayne Giles, then president of the Prince George Backcountry Recreation Society. Wayne is a guy who believes that people should put their money where their mouths are, so to speak. He instantly got me involved as the society's "Trail Maintenance Coordinator." I would now be fighting for the protection of Red.

At the time the PGBRS was working toward a three-way agreement with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the

Letters and News of Interest

Arts and the Penny Community Historical Association for the management of the mountain, but settling conflicts took more time than any trail clearing. However, progress was made. The PGBRS rebuilt a historical cabin on the mountain, cut winter wood, kept the cabin supplied and maintained much of the trail. The PCHA's president, Bill Benedict, was permitted to take his quad onto the mountain six times a year to also do maintenance to the cabin and trail.

"After seeing my photos, he was appalled by the damage... That was in August 2007."

However, the condition of the trail indicated to me that the deal was being broken. My photos too indicated much more motorized traffic than the agreement provided. If Benedict was going up only six times a year, from where was the extra traffic coming? I went to work on a new agreement.

Gary Westfall from MOTSA agreed that the arrangement needed to be improved. Bruce Doerksen of the Ministry of Forests said that there were no laws prohibiting ATVs and that hiking boots could inflict the same damage as quads. Jerry Smith, enforcement officer, told me that he couldn't sit on the mountain all the time watching quad infractions. After the phone had welded to my ear, I got a meeting with Mikel

Leclerc, Recreation officer for MTCA. After seeing my photos, he was appalled by the damage done to the trail on Red. That was in August 2007.

Since then, PGBRS has met numerous times with Leclerc and Benedict, trying to reach a better agreement. One of the stumbling blocks was that there are two trails that connect, four kilometers up the mountain. The newer trail, used mostly by motorized vehicles and built by Benedict, starts at the Penny post office. The other trail, used since the 1930s, starts on private land owned by the Boudreau family and goes through their land for about 1.5 km before reaching Crown land and, 3.5 km later, the Penny Post Office trail.

Hikers and skiers use the historical trail because it is shorter and straighter and there is secure parking. The Boudreaus do not allow motorized vehicles to pass through their land. Benedict, with support from the Ministry, has objected to the use of the historical trail. Benedict also wanted more frequent motorized access to the mountain for trail maintenance and recreation.

Negotiations over the trail have long been protracted and confused by the non-issue of whether hikers and skiers should use the historical trail. For some reason, the Ministry seems to think that the PGBRS should recommend that the historical trail be abandoned. The PGBRS has promised to show both trails on its website, but that doesn't satisfy the Ministry. No one knows why it wants to mess with a property owner's right to decide who can and cannot cross private land. It may be that the Ministry is unduly influenced by Benedict who maybe angry at the Boudreaus for some reason.



Vivien Loughheed

More quad and trail bike damage to the trail

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During this summer, under a job opportunities program grant, about \$90,000 was spent on the trail. From the Penny post office to the 6 km point the trail was widened and parts were graveled. Above the 6 km point four gates were installed to prevent motorized vehicles from going beyond. The only reason the gates would be unlocked would be so maintenance could be undertaken, and that would only happen when one of Leclerc's ministry staff was present.

Recently, Leclerc informed the PGBRS that there would be no more negotiations, that the trail from the post office to the junction of the two trails would be used for motorized vehicles and hikers alike and that it would be very safe for the two groups to share the same trail. He said there would be no limits on motorized vehicles for the lower trail. He admitted that areas needing ditching were not repaired and that some of the gates were not in the best position to stop motorized vehicles.

Widening a trail and neglecting to ditch wet areas means that erosion will continue in those areas until more government money is available for workers or volunteers, carrying equipment in their packs, do the work themselves. This may happen but it will happen slowly because of the third problem with the new arrangement. Trying to coordinate with government to open the gates and allow a quad through to carry equipment will be extremely difficult considering the Ministry's limited budget.

Since last week, a post set in the ground at the side of the first gate, intended to prevent vehicles from going around the gate, was removed. This is not a good sign of things to come.

For the PGBRS, a total of 10 years of fighting has resulted in a decision that allows for unlimited machine access below the halfway point. In addition, as with the old arrangement, there's no way of preventing machines from going to the alpine. The Ministry has lost an opportunity to encourage the frugal use of gasoline and to protect important wildlife habitat. Penny will see more tourists gunning it up and down their streets. ■



Vivien Loughheed

Kyla Bach enjoying the view from Red

Recreation and Conservation



BC Parks Funding

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

In 2011 BC Parks will be celebrating its centenary. Yes, our first provincial park, Strathcona Provincial Park, was established in 1911, and the BC provincial park system is now the second largest park system in Canada, the National Park system being the largest. Unfortunately, over the last 10-15 years, funding for the BC Parks has been drastically reduced so that there are now far fewer staff and services than there used to be. As a result of these cutbacks, recreational infrastructure and facilities such as trails, bridges, buildings, visitor programs, etc are suffering from severe neglect. Similar neglect to recreational facilities is also occurring in Forest Service recreation sites. If the government continues to abandon our exceptional park system, Beautiful BC with its once “world class natural heritage” will be a thing of the past, or at least our wilderness will be far less accessible.

The Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORC) recently wrote a letter to the Premier and other ministers: “to urge the government to ensure that the Olympic legacies include an adequately maintained BC Parks system, including infrastructure and services”. The Government’s reply was not encouraging, and so ORC now wants to document specific examples of park neglect, and to bring these examples to the Government’s attention when we have sufficient numbers of examples to make a worthwhile report. This means that those folks who visit the parks and backcountry should make notes of the place and date, and preferably take photographs and make notes of examples of neglect or deterioration of recreational facilities and services.

You can report examples of these types of problems with BC Parks, BC Forest Service Recreational sites and trails, access roads and backcountry trails by going to the BC website: www.bivouac.com. From the home page, click on:- “#3.Campaigns”, then go to “Trails.- 1. Road and Trail Fixup-Proposal Database” and review some of the early reports posted so far. Preferably, these reports should be in sufficient detail to enable a reasonable understanding of the extent of the problem. Reports can be posted by anyone, including non-members of Bivouac, by following the instructions to set up a free account. You click “Log in” on the Campaigns menu page, and follow instructions to log in on a free membership. If you have problems, you can click “Contact Us” on the home page and email Robin Tivy. So go for it, report what you see, and help to improve our park system and recreational areas! ■

Mt. Arrowsmith, A Dream Come True

Peter Rothermel (Island Mountain Ramblers)

For nearly a century there has been public interest in making Mt Arrowsmith a protected park, yet governments have all been slow to respond.

My own involvement in trying to get Mt Arrowsmith park status was born in 1996, out of outrage over a ski developer, in a public park, wanting to restrict public access to the, now defunct, ski area on the north slopes of Mt Cokely, a subsidiary peak within the Arrowsmith Massif.

While not on Mt Arrowsmith proper, the ski operation was in a regional park of about 600 hectares and is known as the Mt Arrowsmith Regional Ski Park. Working with a grass roots group, the Public Access Resolution Committee (PARC), to keep unfettered public access into the ski park, people would often ask, “If the summit of Arrowsmith isn’t in the park, what is its status?” and then ask “Why isn’t it a park?” Questions I couldn’t answer, at the time, but ones I wanted answered for myself.

The area known as Block 1380, which encompasses the peaks of Mt Arrowsmith and Mt Cokely, was Crown Forest Reserve, and in researching its past I would come to learn of its rich and long history. In getting to know this

Recreation and Conservation

mountain better, I would come to climb its many aspects and routes and in every season, with a number of friends. I would spend so much time on its slopes that I would come to refer to it as “my mountain”, not so much as me claiming ownership, but maybe more so of the mountain having an ownership over me.

Looking for help, I targeted about a dozen clubs and organizations for their support. Along the way, I made many friends and joined a few organizations, including the Alpine Club of Canada and eventually would become a Director for the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC.

With over thirty five letters of clubs and society’s support, we first went to the Regional District of Nanaimo, looking for help to obtain Provincial Park status, with me giving very nervous presentations and their Board of Directors voting in favour. The RDN took our request to the Province, but were denied due to “lack of funding”. The Province suggested we try for Regional Park status and intimated that we would get support from them.

In these early days of the campaign, before computers and e-mail use was common, we relied on faxing, photocopying, long distance phoning and “snail mail”. The costs were high and with encouragement from, our then Section President, Claire Ebendinger, I applied for a grant from the National ACC and received monetary help that was greatly needed to defray costs.

After several years of letter writing and much work by the RDN parks staff, Jeff Ainge and David Speed, we were just hitting “brick walls” and not getting letters returned from the Province. Our efforts were starting to stagnate a bit.



Peter Rothermel

A dreamy view of Arrowsmith, "West Ridge"

Then, in 2004, ACC member Don Cameron and I teamed up with a committee of advisors from various Island clubs, including Sandy Briggs, Martin Hofmann, Judy & Harold Carlson, Harriet Rueggeberg, Cedric Zala and Evan Loveless. With Don’s excellent power point presentation skills, he gave presentations to The Regional District of Nanaimo Board of Directors and the Alberni/Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors and we met with several area MLA’s, Leonard Krog, Scott Fraser and Ron Cantelon. To further public interest and with Don’s skills, we created a web site (www.mountarrowsmith.org). We also designed and printed a colour brochure, with financial help from Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC and distributed it wherever we could. I led trips up Arrowsmith’s easier summer routes, taking area MLA Scott Fraser, RDN Chair Joe Stanhope and Qualicum Beach Mayor Tuenis Westbroke, among other political persons and a bevy of reporters, in order to get news coverage and public awareness. As well, I developed a four part slide show with Arrowsmith’s History, flora & fauna, physical aspects and recreation values represented and brought it to numerous clubs & societies.

Every year we seemed to be slowly getting closer to our goal of obtaining some kind of protected park status. With two new RDN Parks Staff, Tom Osborne and Wendy Marshal, and all of the RDN Parks & Trails Committee, we had a good group pulling for us. Once again we sought Provincial Park Status and went through the motions to the point of having Senior Staff from the Ministry of Environment recommend that we get Provincial Park Status, with the RDN taking on the management and the area clubs being the trail stewards. We went as far as to do a Land Evaluation Acquisition Framework (LEAF) evaluation, which is one of the last steps in gaining

Recreation and Conservation

BC Provincial Park Status. Ministry Staff recommended a Provincial Park, managed (paid for) by the RDN and stewarded by Island clubs. In other words the Province would not have born any costs, but could reap huge kudos. When it reached the Minister of Environment, for some unfathomable reason he rejected the proposal.

With the help of RDN Chair Joe Stanhope and Qualicum Mayor Tuenis Westbroke in convincing the Minister of Environment to support us regionally, we finally got Minister of Environment, Barry Penner and Minister of Community Services, Ida Chong, to act as sponsoring Ministries and had our foot in the door. After arriving at a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hupacasath First Nation, we were awarded Nominal Rent Tenure of a dollar for thirty years, from the Province for the new Mt. Arrowsmith Massif Regional Park. At the RDN Board of Directors meeting, November 25, 2008, the vote was unanimous and the new park was declared. Our Section Chair, Cedric Zala, gave a thank you speech and I showed a short slide show of Arrowsmith's beauty. I donated to the RDN Chair a toonie, enough to cover the rent tenure for sixty years.



Joan Michel

Chief Cavasant speaking while Peter Rothermel watches on.

The new park is about 1,300 hectares in size and will take in the summits of Mt Arrowsmith, Mt Cokely, and the South Summit (unofficial name). As well, it will encompass the high mountain lakes of Fishtail, Hidden, Jewel and Lost (last two unofficial names). It will protect several popular trails, including the Judges Route, Saddle Route and the Upper Rosseau Trail.

Mt Arrowsmith is the apex of a United Nations Biosphere Reserve, encompassing the Little Qualicum and Englishman Rivers' watersheds and is now on the world stage. Several research groups have studies underway on the massif.

From the peak of Arrowsmith, down to Cameron Lake and following the Little Qualicum River to the Straits of Georgia, much of this area is either Provincial or Regional Park lands, with several small gaps. An eventual goal is to see one continuous wildlife & recreational corridor, of protected parkland, from the summit of Mt Arrowsmith to the mouth of the Little Qualicum River... An alpine to tidewater protected park.

The new Mt Arrowsmith Park culminates over a decade of work by the Alpine Club of Canada and the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC, lobbying for protected park status for the Arrowsmith Massif. It will be managed by the RDN, in cooperation with the Hupacasath First Nation, the Federation of Mountain Clubs and the Alpine Club of Canada.



Joan Michel

Dignitaries watching while Peter cuts cedar bark ribbon

On September 18, 2009 the park opening ceremony was held on the slopes of the mountain, with over 150 people in attendance. The Hupacasath First Nations sang a blessing song and then gave me the great honour of being the person to cut the cedar bark ribbon.

It wasn't a "battle won", as headlined in one local newspaper article, but was rather like most typical mountain climbs, a very long uphill slog, with a bit of scrambling here & there and a great summit for the finish... A dream come true. ■

Trails



NATIONAL HIKING TRAIL UPDATE

Pat Harrison (Valley Outdoor Association)
Co-Chair, FMCBC Trails Committee
President, Hike BC

Hike BC continues to promote a 'footpath' across British Columbia as part of the National Hiking Trail. The trail is now being proposed to start at the Peace Arch Park at the boundary with the United States and will continue through Surrey and Delta to the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal. Pat Harrison, Director, is now part of the Surrey Recreation and Trails advisory committee. From the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal, one can ride the Ferry to Vancouver Island and link up with the Vancouver Island Spine Trail, which is being coordinated by Gil Parker, another Hike BC director. Gil has put much energy into finding and negotiating a trail up the spine of Vancouver Island to Port Hardy. From there, one will take a Ferry to Bella Coola and link up with the Grease Trail (Alexander MacKenzie Heritage Trail). Roy Howard, a Hike BC Director from Dunster, BC, has had several work crews out working on the Goat River trail. Hike BC held its AGM in Prince George in June this year. Goals are to have charitable status by the end of this year and to produce a brochure. Hike BC has now started receiving donations and will be applying for trail grants in the near future. ■

Howe Sound Crest Trail Upgrade Report

Alex Wallace (BC Mountaineering Club)
FMCBC Trails Committee

The Howe Sound Crest trail upgrade has been several years in the planning and preparation stage, but the delays had a silver lining as this summer with the project still not started we were able to apply for federal trails funding through the National Trails Coalition and Outdoor Recreation Council, with assistance from Jeremy McCall. Despite a tight timeline and stringent criteria, Jodi Appleton helped the FMCBC Trails Committee put together a successful application and this has added \$150,000 to the \$300,000 in Cypress Legacy Funding provided for this trail project by VANOC. This was the second largest NTC grant awarded in BC for non-motorized projects. As a result, the contract for the first section of the trail in Cypress Bowl went to bid in August and by early October significant progress had been made. This included blasting out 20 tonnes of a rock outcrop sitting just above an eroded section of the trail: this would have remained a serious and unpredictable hazard for hikers had it had been left in place - with water running under it.



Work commences on the Howe Sound Crest Trail

Alex Wallace

The late start date meant that by the end of the 2009 construction season the contractor was working with three crews under difficult conditions. When the NTC representatives, Terry Norman and Terje Vold, visited the site on September 29th they experienced wet snow and heavy rain. Work will continue in 2010 and by next summer signage will be up and a new trail information kiosk will be constructed in a central location by the new daylodge. It is hoped that this will put an end to the confused state of the trailheads under the present 2010 construction zone conditions. In the meantime, the 2010 Olympics [all Snowboard, Ski Cross and Freestyle events] and attendant security measures will close Cypress for part of the winter. Later on, when the Olympic Circus has left town, the new Howe Sound /Bowen Island Lookout should be accessible for snowshoers and skiers, as the final alignment to it has now been brushed out. ■

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Summit Registers Peter Rothermel (Island Mountain Ramblers)

FMCBC Vice President

Summit registers are often a mystery. Where do they come from? And where do they go when they are full or damaged, or when they simply disappear?

I have been placing and maintaining summit registers on Vancouver Island mountains for over a decade and in that time I have placed, repaired or added books to over fifty Island peaks. Over that time I have discovered a few things that work and some that do not.

Often one will find the thin black tubes with damaged or missing end caps and wet register books. Many of these were placed in the 1960s, 70s and 80s by Island clubs, including the Alpine Club, the Comox & District Mountaineering Club, the Alberni Valley Outdoor Club and the Island Mountain Ramblers.

More recently, in the Beaufort Range, Forbidden Plateau and Mt Albert Edward areas, you may come across summit registers left by Ken Rodonets, of the CDMC. They are of 4 inch diameter PVC tubing, with a plastic screw-top jar fitted inside. A kind of double tube register - large and heavy, yet effective.

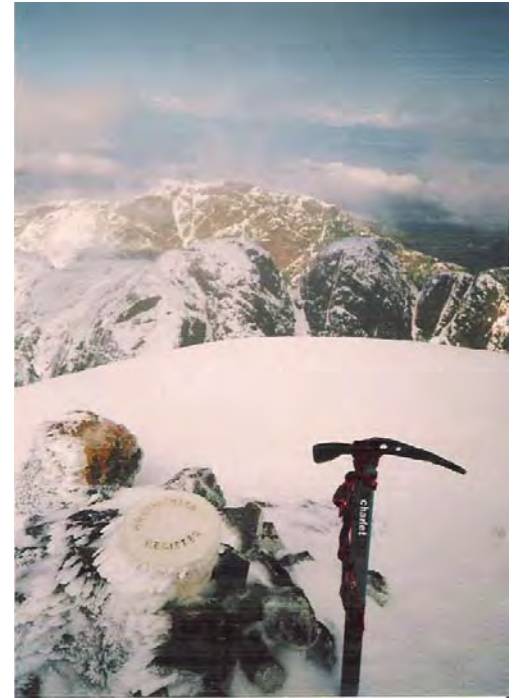
West of Port Alberni, on many obscure peaks, you may find registers made by Rudy Brugger, of the AVOC, beautifully hand crafted registers made of copper. To fix the problem of condensation, Rudy leaves the bottom open and puts in a screen recessed about a half an inch in from the bottom. These are also heavy and likely expensive to produce.

My registers are made of white PVC plastic tubing, with the bottom cap glued on. The top opening cap is painted red, with the ACC logo on it. I find white tubing condenses (with moisture) less inside, than black tubing. Shallow grooves cut in the cylinder sides allow air to be displaced, when pushing or pulling the cap on & off. Inside I put a waterproof book and several pencils. As well, I add a plastic coated information card on the White Tailed Ptarmigan Research. I use waterproof, "Rite in the Rain", spiral bound books. Friends of mine in forestry recommend "Duksbak" books as being more durable, but I find the covers too stiff to roll into a tube and my books are mostly protected from the weather. Pencils are better than pens, because in very cold winter temperatures, ink freezes and in very warm weather it can dry up. On the cover of my books I write the mountain's name, elevation and "Alpine Club of Canada". On the first page I write, "If register tube is damaged, or if book is full, please contact the Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club of Canada", and further, "Please replace register tube with the red cap end up."

I make three different sizes of tubes, depending on how much traffic a summit will likely get. For summits such as Tzela Peak or Mt Rosseau, that might only see an ascent every couple of years, I place a 3 inch diameter tube that is 5 inches long, holding a 3 1/4 inch by 5 inch waterproof book. For peaks that get a moderate amount of traffic, such as Elkhorn Mountain or Mount Moriarty, I place a 3 inch diameter tube that is 7 inches long and holds a 4 1/2 inch by 7 inch book.

For mountains that see a lot of traffic, such as the Golden Hinde or Comox Glacier summit, I make 4 inch diameter tubes, that are 11 inches long and that will hold a full sized book of 8 1/2 by 11 inches.

As well I usually have a few thin waterproof books of 3 inch by 4 1/2 inch, in heavy duty zip lock bags in my



Icy Summit Register

Peter Rothermel

Educational Articles

pack... Just in case I tag some obscure, minor, peak and would like to leave a record.

Lastly, I make a special summit register for Mt Arrowsmith. This peak is arguably the most popular, non-commercial, year round mountain destination on all of Vancouver Island and can likely record as many as 1,000 signatures a year (2009 estimates). The tube is 1/2 inch thick walled PVC pipe, 8 inches in diameter by 12 inches long, with heavy end caps and weighs about 25 pounds. It needs to be strong to resist the hard probes of ice axes in winter. Even then, I have replaced the tube three times, due to damage. I may recruit Rudy to help me make a 100 pound copper tube someday. The book in the Arrowsmith register fills fast and I usually put up a new, 8 1/2 X 11 inch, blank book every year or two. So as to not disappoint readers of the register,

I have a rotation of books that sees two books in the summit tube at all times. When a book is full, it stays in the tube with the new blank book that is added. The earlier full book, previous to the newest full book, is removed, so that there is always a new book with room to sign in and a recent, older, full book, to read of past summit comments from the last year or so.

My register tubes, books and contents cost about \$25 per register, in materials. Of course the Arrowsmith tube is more costly at about \$100 for a total replacement, including two books. I have never applied for a grant for the cost of registers, mostly due to the fact that I have never fully understood how to go about applying for a grant, after the fact of moneys spent. I estimate that my summit register project has cost in excess of \$1,500, since I first started, yet that is money past spent and “water under the bridge”, as far as grant applications are concerned. When I first started replacing summit registers, I had no idea of the depth to which this project would take me. Still, while funding would be appreciated, lack of it will not hinder me from continuing. I rather look at it as a cheap admission price to climb a mountain.

So, what happens to old registers? Often, I have summited a mountain, that had reportedly held a register a year or two previous to my trip, and have found nothing, or sometimes just shards of tubes on the summit. Where do these registers disappear to? It could be that lightning strikes a peak and obliterates the register. It could be someone finding a damaged register or book is removing it for preservation and does not know where to send it, or it may even be someone taking the register as a souvenir. At least one missing register was attributed to a bear. It might have had something to do with the tube being an old peanut butter jar, with some slight scent left over, even though well cleaned out.

My policy on damaged register tubes is to simply replace them, since I always have one in my pack on peak bagging trips. Regarding full books... If they are in good shape, I add them to my new register tube. If they are badly damaged or waterlogged, I usually remove them and either bring them home to be dried out, to be later returned to the summit they came from, or I send them to the Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club's Archivist, Judith Holm, who takes care of a growing collection of summit logs.



Klitsa Tube

Peter Rothermel

Presently, I have a summit register book that was waterlogged and brought down from the summit of the Golden Hinde and given to me. It is in my freezer, in suspended animation, until I can get to it and dry it out. Because it holds so much history, it will be photocopied and then be double bagged and returned to the Golden Hinde summit and placed into the newer register tube, which is large enough to hold it and the new book as well... maybe in 2010.

Summit registers can also act as an informal census of how much traffic a mountain sees. For example, the Arrowsmith register over about a ten year period showed an exponential increase of signatures from 162 in 1993, to over 700 in 2002. While this may not be an accurate assessment of total visits to the mountain and does not take into account those numbers hiking on other areas on the massif, or the people that reached the summit yet did not sign, or the fact that the register can be inaccessible for up to four months of the year due to snowpack; it does show a representation of the increasing popularity of this mountain.

What can you do, regarding summit registers? First of all, you can contact your local clubs and find out what the local policy is on placing, maintaining and archiving registers. If you have an old register in your possession, the best and most central place to send them for collection is your local area Section of the Alpine Club of Canada. This organization has the resources and experience to better deal with historical records than any other mountaineering club.

If you want to place a register on a Vancouver Island peak, that you are planning to climb, you can contact me at prother@telus.net and I can supply you with a tube and book... especially if you invite me to tag along. ■

Out-of-Bounds Skiing is not really Backcountry Skiing (and how to tell the difference!)

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

Each year the media reports incidents of downhill skiers leaving the controlled area of ski resorts to ski “out-of-bounds” in the untracked terrain surrounding the resort boundary. Sometimes these skiers find their way back to the resort or nearby road, but sometimes they become lost. If their loss is reported, search and rescue (S&R) teams are called out, and sometimes the skiers are found alive and sometimes not. These incidents put S&R teams at risk, cause a great deal of stress to the skier(s), families and friends, and often result in large financial costs. These incidents seem to be increasing in spite of the knowledge that the perpetrators could lose their skiing privileges at that resort, and in some jurisdictions they may be billed for S&R costs. In BC there have been suggestions for billing for S&R costs and also “banning” such incidents, although achieving the latter could be a challenge.

The media and some politicians often refer to out-of-bounds skiers as “backcountry skiers”, but I feel this is a misleading term and I will try to clarify the differences using stereotypes for maximum effect. When skiing at a resort most skiers are unequipped for backcountry skiing, and many do not have the experience to assess terrain for safe travel to reduce avalanche risk. Some skiers ski out-of-bounds by themselves,



Brian Wood

Heinz Berger near Freshfields in Western Rockies

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and think that carrying a shovel and avalanche beacon is being adequately prepared for the backcountry. They should try finding themselves and then digging themselves out of an avalanche! Other out-of-bounds skiers might go as a group, and may even carry avalanche probes as well as beacons and shovels, but through ignorance they might carry their avalanche beacons in their packs, perhaps have never practiced beacon searches, and are probably ill-equipped for an emergency. In contrast, backcountry skiers use specialized backcountry ski gear that is different from downhill/resort ski gear, and hopefully they are carrying emergency gear, and have wilderness travel

skills relating to avalanche awareness, basic survival and first aid. While some backcountry skiers use their backcountry ski gear at resorts, downhill ski gear is totally inadequate for most backcountry travel as outlined below.

The biggest differences between downhill/resort ski gear and backcountry ski gear arise primarily from the angle of the snow slope, and secondarily from the highly variable skiing terrain conditions. Resort skiers expect to ski nearly always downhill with occasional level or slightly uphill sections, and are traveling light in a controlled area where most hazards are clearly visible. On the other hand, backcountry skiers know they will have to ski on level ground and sometimes steeply uphill while carrying a backpack, and expect to ski downhill in highly variable conditions with many hidden hazards. Regular downhill ski gear is not a practical option for extended backcountry travel because the base of the ski is designed to slide easily on snow, whether the skier is going up downhill or uphill. In addition, conventional downhill ski bindings lock the ski boot heels to the skis until the skis are released manually, or until they are automatically released in a fall to reduce risk of injury. As most resort skiers soon discover, it is challenging to walk even a short distance using downhill ski gear when the heel is locked to the ski and the skis can slide backwards. And taking off one's skis



Brian Wood

Near Freshfields in the Western Rockies. Brian Ellis and Margaret Ellis in foreground

will not necessarily help. Anyone who has tried walking in deep fresh snow on the level or uphill using only regular boots on their feet soon realizes that snowshoes are a smart idea and not just a primitive antique from a bygone age.

Backcountry travel problems are reduced considerably by using proper ski gear which has been steadily improved over the last two decades. For many backcountry winter travelers, modern backcountry ski gear is an agreeable alternative to even modern snowshoes as it provides an effective mode of travel once skiing skills have been mastered. When using backcountry ski bindings the heel can be freed from the locked position to enable the boot to pivot sufficiently about the toe to facilitate walking in an almost normal gait. In addition, "climbing skins" (lengths of short pile fabric material) are easily attached to the base of the skis to permit the skier to climb uphill, sometimes at a surprisingly steep angle without sliding backwards. Owning backcountry ski gear and relying on good downhill skiing ability coupled with good physical fitness does not guarantee that someone is a competent backcountry skier, but it is a good start and with suitable training and experience they can become safe backcountry skiers. This brings me to one of the most important aspects of backcountry skiing, which is how to gain winter travel experience the safe and easy way, not the unsafe and difficult way as there may not be a second chance to gain proper experience.

Ski touring training and avalanche awareness courses are available from professional mountain guides, and these courses are usually extend over several days. It should be added that while these courses cost a few hundred dollars, this cost is much less than equipping oneself with a complete new set of backcountry travel gear. However,

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due to the relatively short duration of these courses, there may not be sufficient time for the student to experience a wide variety of terrain and/or conditions. Having completed the course, perhaps in ideal conditions, some students may feel they are adequately trained and experienced to tackle challenging trips by themselves, but they could still get into difficulties when they run into bad conditions which they had not encountered during the course. Joining an outdoor club which organizes ski touring trips is an excellent way to extend winter travel experience, usually in a friendly and helpful group. Some clubs organize very basic, low cost volunteer-run instructional programs designed to assist beginners in acquiring basic backcountry travel experience with experienced members who can help beginners reduce risks from backcountry hazards. Before attempting to organize their own trips, skiers new to the sport must build upon their basic skills by participating in many club trips so they can experience the wide range of terrain and weather conditions that are encountered in the backcountry.

I can still remember my own early experiences and my surprise at the wide range of winter and spring conditions encountered in the high country. Most skiers soon learn to appreciate (and eventually learn to set) a packed, well-angled uphill ski track, and learn that being the first of a group and breaking trail in fresh deep snow can be very tiring. When travelling in a heavy fresh deep snow, one soon learns that a small party breaking trail usually travels much slower than a large party in similar conditions, and this knowledge helps to avoid potential “epics” and searches for late returning parties. There are many advantages to learning backcountry travel skills with a group of like-minded companions who are usually willing to share their knowledge with a fellow enthusiast, and this can be a very enjoyable and useful experience.

If you would like to learn more about backcountry skiing by joining a club, check the **back** page of this newsletter to see if there is a suitable outdoor club near to you, and contact them for information about their club. ■

The Canadian Alpine Tradition: Swiss Guides and Conrad Kain

Ron Dart (Alpine Club of Canada—Vancouver)

The Swiss Guides Festival was held in Golden in 1999 for five months (June-October) that celebrated, in a variety of ways, 100 years (1899-1999) of Swiss Guides in Canada. There remains to this day just off the highway in Golden a fine and expansive mural of the Swiss Guides. Golden is perfectly poised between Rogers Pass and Lake Louise where the Guides did most of their early work. The CPR built Swiss chalets in Golden for the Guides, and these chalets still stand and are in use today. It is 110 years this year since the Swiss Guides began in Canada---good reason for more celebration. I was curious to do more sleuthing on the topic, though.

It is also 100 years this year (1909-2009) since Conrad Kain came to Canada from Austria. There is no doubt that Kain was one of the finest of the 1st generation of mountaineers and guides in Canada. He did many of the first ascents, and was well known as a sure footed and judicious guide. The Alpine community decided to celebrate the life and writings of Kain in July (11-12) - the Kain Cairn in Wilmer was completed, a play on Kain's life was written and acted forth, a photo exhibit in Invermere was hosted by the Museum, the newest edition of Kain's autobiography, *Where the Clouds Can Go*, was republished and a painting by Pat Bavin, 'Local Ascent, Conrad Kain' was auctioned off. The Conrad Kain Centennial Society (CKCS) have been quite busy (www.conradkain.com) and continue to be so.

I was quite interested in the fact that it was both 110 years since the Swiss Guide tradition began in Canada, and 100 years since Kain came to Canada. My wife (Karin) and I decided to do a pilgrimage of sorts to the sites of these mountain shrines in July this year: Golden and Wilmer.

Our first destination took us to Golden where the CPR built a few Swiss Chalets in 1912, hoping to entice the Swiss Guides to bring families to Canada. The “Edelweiss Chalets” still stand, and we were most fortunate to get a personal and informed tour through one of them that is now a Heritage Site. We were equally delighted to be taken on the tour by Jean Feuz-Vaughan (a daughter of one of the Guides). Walter Feuz bought all the property

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that the chalets stand on in 1959, so the Feuz family now owns the property and chalets. The tour took us through the chalet that Jean grew up in, and she recounted many a lively tale of her early years with extended family and friends that were front and centre of early mountain guiding in Canada. Jean even kindly offered to allow my wife and I to spend a few days and nights in the chalet---most gracious of her. She also gave us plenty of the large posters that were printed in Golden to celebrate that 100th anniversary of the Swiss Guides in 1999. They are very much collectors items these days.



Ron Dart in front of Swiss Guides Mural in Golden

The 1999 Swiss Guides Festival in Golden was important also for the fact that a rather large mural was painted on the Swiss Guides. The mural is in the small downtown area of Golden, but it is more than worth the effort to drive to the mural and gaze upon the beauty that so captures a moment of Canadian mountaineering history.



Ron Dart (right) and host Jean Feuz-Vaughn

The drive south from Golden down the spacious Columbia Valley took us to Kain country. Kain was the 1st guide to be hired by the Alpine Club of Canada (unlike the Swiss Guides who were hired by the CPR) in 1909, and the ACC Kain Hut in the Bugaboos is well worth the visit. Conrad Kain led many of the early American mountaineers up challenging peaks, but his home for many a decade was in Wilmer/BC. Kain managed to purchase his small home in Wilmer for the simple reason that Albert MacCarthy (a rather wealthy and well known mountaineer) had bought property in the small hamlet of about 500. Kain had led MacCarthy in his novice years to satisfying summits, and MacCarthy was most indebted to Kain for doing so. MacCarthy eventually was a pioneer in the ascent of Mount Logan.

The fact that it is 100 years since Kain came to Canada meant that something had to be done. The Swiss Guides have been given their due, but what about the Austrians? Kain was an Austrian. I contacted Pat Morrow (who lives in Wilmer), and he suggested that Karin/I meet with Hermann Mauthner (an Austrian) who has done porter and sherpa's work to celebrate Kain's life. Karin/I visited Hermann/Ursel Mauthner at their home in Wilmer, and they were most kind to us. We chatted about Kain for many an hour, and Hermann filled us in on all

the Kain events planned in 2009 and beyond by the Conrad Kain Centennial Society. We wound up our time together at the Kain Cairn, and Hermann told us where all the rocks had come from to make the Cairn (peaks Kain had climbed in Canada, Austria and New Zealand). I spent the remainder of the day in Invermere at the Museum where the Kain exhibit will be until the autumn. The curator was most generous with her time—she copied many a photo for me.

The origins of the Canadian Alpine Tradition are deeply indebted to the Swiss Guides and the Austrian, Conrad Kain. It is 110 years since the Swiss tradition took formal rooting in the soil of Canada, and 100 years since Kain took climbing in the Bugaboos and beyond to new heights. May we truly celebrate such mountaineering icons. ■

Club Ramblings



Courtesy Tama Knight

MacKenzie Range Memories

Bill Perry (Island Mountain Ramblers)

Almost forty years ago Mike and I stood at the base of a slender pinnacle of rock. It was one of a group of six rock towers all in a row, in a part of the MacKenzie Range visible from the Tofino highway and from Barclay Sound. We had been here together once before in difficult weather and settled for a lesser goal. Now the haze hid the summit, but the sun was melting through as we roped up. The rock was solid; the climbing exquisite. We alternated leads twice, then stood on top as the sky cleared.

In the bowl to the north the shadows of five spires lay on the snow. Ours was in the middle, the jewel of the group. The thin, delicate line of the shadow seemed slightly curved, like the blade of a sabre.

“Let’s call it Shadowblade.”

One of us must have written a report, but today I can’t find it. All that remains is this song I wrote a few months after the climb.

SHADOWBLADE by Bill Perry

A song written recalling the first ascent of Shadowblade Pinnacle by Bill Perry and Mike Walsh in Summer of 1972



Shadowblade

Bill Perry

(1)

Shadowblade Shadowblade
Around your peak the mist gods played
Camped below on rock and snow
Amongst the clouds our plans were made
Shadowblade
The next day upon your crags we strayed

(2)

Three rope leads were all we’d need
To reach your lofty summit spire
All around a mist-enshrouded
Sun-suffused and golden fire
Shadowblade
Your wild enchanting game we played



(3)

We won the race, noon saw us place
A cairn upon your summit prow
A yodel yell, a free rappell
We soon were back upon on the snow
Shadowblade
We returned to camp in full glissade

Shadowblade
One day upon your crags we strayed
Shadowblade
Your wild enchanting game
We played

Club Ramblings

The Mountains Will Still Be There Next Year

John Young (Alpine Club of Canada—Vancouver Island)

July 2nd dawned clear as we crunched our way across the crisp snow up towards Elk River Pass in Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island. We then traversed the scree/snow slope south of Rambler Peak as the sun broke the horizon, heading for the “Spiral Staircase” route. We debated about which was the “prominent Lower East Gully” referred to by Philip Stone in *Island Alpine*, before deciding that it must be the intimidating south-facing gully. Mort and Warren both suggested that we ‘give it a go,’ and as I was the leader, I swallowed my fears and cramponed up towards the nearly vertical looking slope. I told myself that slopes always look steeper from a distance, and when we reached it I was relieved to find I was right. Probably about 40 degrees, and the snow was hard and the gully reached up towards the sky.

Initially, I could kick steps, albeit not terribly deep, and plunge my axe into the hard snow with one hand; however, after a while I could hardly dent the surface with my big boots, and had to hold the ax in the horizontal position, trying to drive the pick into the crust. Ryan and Josh were not too far behind me. I wasn’t worried about Ryan. He’d been up Denali and had plastic mountaineering boots and a robust axe, the right equipment for these conditions. I was more worried about Josh, though, as I wasn’t too sure about his experience in these conditions. We coached him along, though, and he did great. Warren and Linda and Mort were further down, and Mort was short-roping Linda, and the three of them were progressing steadily.

The snow softened again in the top third of the gully, and I removed my crampons when I came to a rocky section. The others ducked down behind an overhang as I made my way to the Rambler Glacier. We grouped up in the full sunshine, snacked, took some photos, and headed up towards the main summit.

The upper gully was snow-covered for the lower portion, and then was bare, with lots of loose rock. Mort and Warren were slightly ahead of me, and when they came to the first steep rock, they pulled out one of the ropes,

and Warren belayed as Mort climbed up. I didn’t think it looked too difficult, so I soloed it, a bit to the right of where Mort went. The others all seemed grateful for the belay, though, so it looked like the right decision. Lucky thing we camped at the pass, I thought, as using a rope on the way up is really going to slow us down. I knew of other groups who had only used a rope to rappel.

Without any incidents, we reached the top of the gully and reached the final summit tower by 12:30. We relaxed on the small summit for an hour, basking in the sunshine and marvelling at the views of Strathcona Park and beyond.

We finally tore ourselves away and headed down. We rappelled down the upper gully and nobody got hit by any of the loose rocks that frequently cascaded down. We crossed the glacier again, and when we came to the big lower gully, “the Spiral Staircase” route, we found that the snow had softened significantly, too much, in some cases, as it was a sodden mass. I started off plunge-stepping, but soon lost my nerve and down-climbed, trying to kick good steps in the snow. About half-way down Warren and Mort decided to set up a rappel on three pitons with our two 30-metre ropes. I continued downclimbing, and after what seemed like an eternity Ryan and Josh caught up to me.



John Young

Mort Allingham and Warren Baker descending the Spiral Staircase on Rambler Peak, July 2

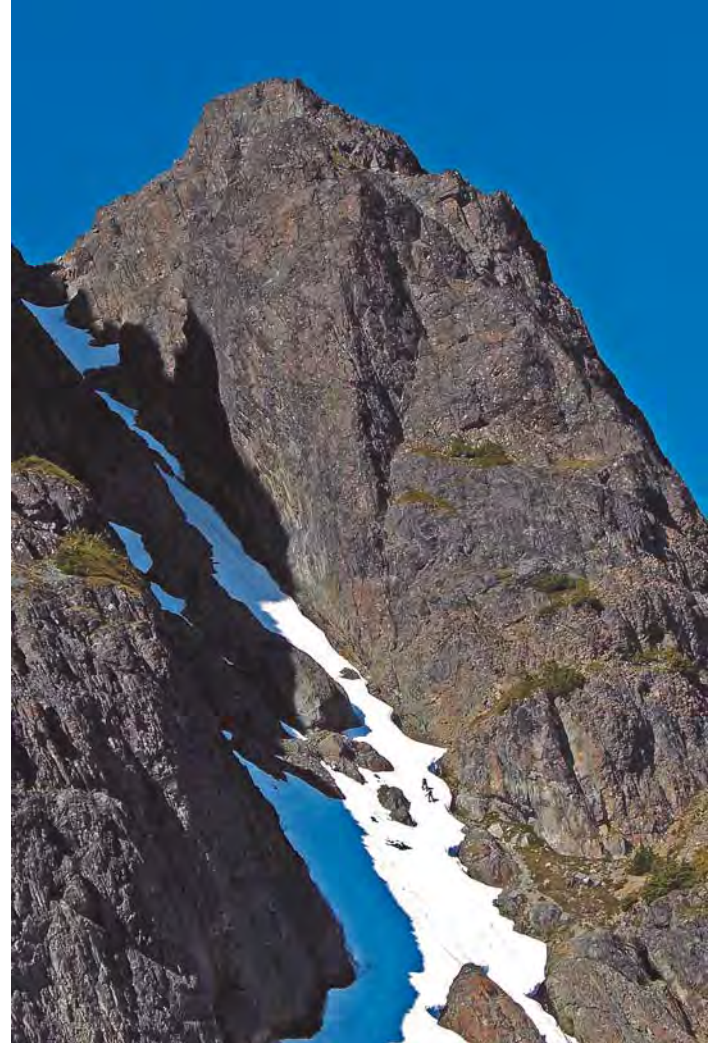
Club Ramblings

It seemed to be taking forever to get down, and I finally asked Ryan if he would take over the lead. It seemed much easier with him kicking the steps! It was taking Mort and Warren a long time, though, and when Linda joined us she told us that one of the ropes had jammed when they tried to pull them, and Mort had had to climb back up to retrieve it. (Turns out one of the labels on the end of the rope had snagged in a crack!) By then we were out on the slope below the gully, and awed at the sight of Mort and Warren downclimbing, with our steps extending way up the gully. We stumbled back into camp about 6:30, just as the sun was disappearing behind Slocomb Peak. A long day!

The next day, we had a relaxed start, but still reached the top of Slocomb by about 11. A most enjoyable hike, with a nice scramble to the top. We wandered around for a while, admiring the views of Colonel Foster, Landslide Lake, and the other mountains down the valley, and returned to camp just after two. We lounged in the sun before heading to bed early, as the next day we planned to try and make El Piveto.

Why El Piveto? Well, if you're into "ticking lists," El Piveto is on the list of Island six-thousand footers, along with 40 or 50 others, depending on whose list you are going by. We had eyed it from Rambler, though, and it looked like a fairly ambitious undertaking, even from where we were camped. I myself was feeling fatigued, after having just come back from an injury, and really doubted if I'd be up to it.

Anyway, we started off early again, but this time the snow had not frozen overnight, so no crampons were needed until we reached the slope at the top of the pass. We traversed around Rambler, and down to the narrow pass leading to Cervus Mountain. We then had a bushy, round-about hike up Cervus, and finally reached it four and a half hours after starting. And El Piveto, although now much closer, still looked about four hours return from where we were. I thought I could probably do it, but knowing that injuries tend to happen when one is tired, and since it was the group's consensus, we called Cervus our summit for the day.



John Young

Mort Allingham and Warren Baker descending the Spiral Staircase on Rambler Peak, Strathcona Park

When we reached camp about four, exhausted, I was really glad we hadn't gone for El Piveto. It'll still be there next year, I thought. Still, all in all, another great trip in the mountains of Vancouver Island! ■

El Piveto

Tom Carter (Island Mountain Ramblers)

I became intrigued with the idea of climbing El Piveto while climbing the better known mountains lining Vancouver Island's Elk River Valley. It was the name and the lengthy approach that attracted me. One must first climb up to the the Elk River Pass, further up over Rambler Peak's shoulder, then plunge to the col between Rambler and Cervus Peak. (The photo was taken on this descent with the Golden Hinde and the Behinde sailing above the

Club Ramblings

smoke from the Wolfe valley fire). After a bush and scramble struggle to the summit of Cervus, we were finally looking at the now smoke obscured face of El Piveto.

A visitor from Ireland, Simon Bolger, perhaps wisely decided to pass on the "third" mountain. Peter Rothermel and I were determined to "rub our noses in it". We thrashed our way down to the col then began the difficult job of finding a route up through the smoke. Fortunately there was only one route. At the summit, one of the Island's greatest views was invisible. Approaching the cairn, we were stopped in our tracks; the cairn was enveloped by a cloud of yellow jackets! Extracting the register was an act of extreme delicacy. As expected, there were few entries.

Through the haze we could vaguely see two snowfields, one on Cervus, the other on Rambler. We only had two mountains left to climb! At the top of Cervus we were addled with mossies and exhaustion. At the Rambler pass we were close to crawling. Finally stumbling into camp it was all we could do to collapse in our tents. An hour later, over sips of Peter's Bushmills, we pondered the wisdom of referring to this jaunt, as one of our life-time objectives! If you are attracted to madness, heavenly or hellish, this route is highly recommended. ■

Over The Hill: A Trip to Bella Coola

Nowell Senior – Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club

I thought I'd take a break from hiking and take a drive, so - after 42 years of wanting to go to Belle Coola, but fearing The Hill that takes you there – I decided on impulse to drive there anyway. I planned on being away 5 days: a day to reach Bella Coola, three days looking around – and one day to get back home.

I knew that the road called The Hill just hung from the mountain, but thought that it would have been widened and have guardrails on it since it was built in 1953. Anahim residents had reassured me The Hill into the Bella Coola Valley was now a "major highway". The smile on the faces of those telling me this made me a bit nervous, so, just as a double check I had a look at the road map I'd brought along. The legend on the map shows 3 different types of roads: a dark solid line is a major highway; a black line of dots and dashes is a minor highway and a red line of dots and dashes is a secondary road.

There is in fact a 4th type of road on this map, but the legend does not acknowledge it, and this is the section of road shown on the map as The Hill with a line of black dots. My nervousness turned to suspicion, but I kept my own counsel on this because my wife Rita was so excited about this trip that I just couldn't let my irrational fears of exposed ledges called "major highways" make me give up without at least seeing The Hill for myself.

By the time I was seeing The Hill for myself, I was on it and committed to either going down it, or falling off it. Although I crept along at a walking pace, my whole body was rigid with stress, my sweaty hands slid on the wheel, and my glasses taunted me by fogging up at the worst possible moment.

Rita took the initiative at this point, and even though she doesn't know how to drive, she knows how to loosen me up at stressful moments. On this occasion she began by saying – as the jaws of death opened in the valley below, that this would not be a good time to have an argument. This didn't work as well as Rita intended because I simply couldn't say a word. She waited a respectable period before going to the next strategy of getting me to relax – she just matter of factly said that when I drove too close to the edge of the cliff, she just closed her eyes and felt more relaxed right away; she said maybe I should try it. I almost told her that I had tried it, but it didn't work for me. I didn't say this because it would have caused too dramatic a drop in stress that would almost certainly have led to us laughing ourselves to death on The Hill.

Anyway, we made it to Bella Coola, and although told by other travellers that The Hill was quicker and easier to drive up than down – I knew that I had driven it one way for the first and last time in my life. I went directly to

Club Ramblings

B.C. Ferries, and although the anticipated one day to return home by The Hill became 4 days of hopping on and off ferries and driving in and out of forest fires – it was preferable to risking what was left of my sanity to The Hill.

On the last leg of our return home leaving Williams Lake, as we drove past the turn-off to Highway 20 and Bella Coola, I gripped the steering wheel a little tighter and just for a moment – closed my eyes. ■

AUTUMN

Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

Leaves brown and brittle,
decaying yellow and
gaunt tree trunks,
memory of a season now
passed.

I sat with her as we
parked,
now not able to leave
car
in the parking lot
that
overlooked her
glacier
thick
mountain.

We had climbed the
2 day peak
many times when
she
was younger,
full with
spring/summer
in her soul.

Now, autumn
it is,
day star has
turned
to the
western rim,
hunter's
moon is about to
rise,
calling her to
the other side of the mountain.

Conrad and the Goat

Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

White goat gained thin ledge,
pressed thick thighs upwards
to precarious
perch.

It was our day to take to the
peaks,
Conrad and I, he the goat,
I
the eager kid on this
granite slab.

The white haired monarch
inched,
eased ever
upwards,
position
gained, stable for a
second.

We were far from
safe boulder
field and alpine flowers
below.
A thin pitch straight up,
anchor now in
place.

Thinnest of ledges
tried, attained, lone
guardian chanced
yet looser
rocks.

Conrad belayed me
to an exposed,
unwelcoming
overhang.

Heart beat too fast,
fears had to be
faced—a deeper
place to yet
go.

Goat had taken a
bad
route, instincts betrayed
the elder, a hard choice
to make.

We stopped, I unsure about
going yet
higher
on austere unforgiving
citadel of ages past.

It was a long jump,
goat hesitated, legs
quivered, tightened,
sprang, sad was the
missed ledge, sadder still
the blood stained, body
mangled mass.

I
thought these
mountain mentors
could not
err.

Conrad turned to me,
said
we should belay down.
And so we did.

Club Activities Around the Province

Limestone Lakes

Mike Nash (Caledonia Ramblers)

Participants: Bruce Blashill, Warren Cumming (climber), Lyle Dale (climber), Charlene Gilroy (climber), Dave King (trip leader), Judy Lett, Mike Nash, Bob Nelson, Darryl Polyk (assistant trip leader; climber), Uta Schuler, Nowell Senior, Dave Snadden (lead climber), Moira Snadden (climber), Larry Steele.



Mike Nash

Icefield on Bulley Glacier Peak northeast of Limestone lakes.

In August 2009, a party of fourteen hikers and climbers helicoptered from Muller Creek, a tributary of the upper Herrick Creek northeast of Prince George to a glacial tarn in the Northern Rockies, east of Monkman Provincial Park. The trip, organized by the Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club, took place at the height of a hot, dry summer.

Because of helicopter landing restrictions, our first destination was outside Monkman Park and we set up our first camp next to a spectacular glacial tarn below the unofficially-named 2,661 m Bulley Glacier Peak. A waterfall from the icefield above provided a stunning headwall backdrop to our circle of tents. We planned to spend three nights at this site before hiking and bushwhacking into Monkman Park to the beautiful Limestone Lakes that were our main objective.

First, though, we had allotted two full days to exploring the snow and icefields between Bulley Glacier Peak and the officially-named Mount Bulley, both featured in Charles Helm's popular guide book, *Exploring Tumbler Ridge* (May 2008.) Day-2 went well and both the technical and non-technical parties reached various points on the ridge between the peaks. On day-3, the climbing group planned to leave camp early and attempt Bulley Glacier Peak. Instead, they were able to sleep in as the hot dry summer came to an abrupt end with five centimetres of rain overnight and another two during the day.

Despite the rain, we all managed to do some easy trips, but by early evening everyone was a little hypothermic and ready to turn in to tents whose waterproofing had been severely tested by twenty hours of serious rain. After another damp night, day-4 dawned clear, and after packing up the camp we began the 500 metre climb to the pass south of our landing place. After fording the creek and some steep but easy bushwhacking, we arrived at a spectacular pass that was our gateway to Limestone Lakes. From there, the going got tougher with side-hill bushwhacking, alternating between grizzly bear trails, small clearings, and dense bush. Unable to make it all the way to Limestone Lakes in one push, we stopped at



Mike Nash

Approaching the westernmost of the three Limestone Lakes and switching to the south shore.

a windy pass immediately below Weaver Peak, whose face loomed vertically above our provisional camp. This north face of Weaver was capped by a thick ice face and by a waterfall that dissipated into mist before it was half-way down the wall. A later search of the *Canadian Alpine Journal* (now available on DVD) revealed no recorded

Club Activities Around the Province

ascent of Weaver Peak. The only reference was a passing mention by Kevin Sharman in his article about an ascent of Bulley Glacier Peak ('The Highest Mountain'; 2006 *Canadian Alpine Journal*; pages 97-98.)

The next day saw us move camp again, and the eventual descent to the easternmost Limestone Lake required more steep side hill bushwhacking that severely tested some members of the party. But team spirit, sharing weight around, and the steady hand of leader, Dave King saw us through to a beautiful campsite at the west end of the westernmost Limestone Lake. Dave was carrying a large, white toilet seat strapped to the back of his pack for the temporary camp latrines, and a refrain for the day was "follow that toilet seat" as the familiar object kept disappearing into thick bush.

Drizzly weather on day-6 limited opportunities for big peaks, but everyone managed side trips to one of the lesser peaks, ridges, or to the interesting sump a kilometer or so west of the lakes where the outflow disappears under-



Mike Nash

Morning frost at camp-3 on western Limestone Lake.

sighting that augmented the two mountain goats we had seen above our first camp — a nanny and kid. Soon afterwards, we negotiated a steep side hill to cross a scenic pass between the main Spakwaniko valley and a tributary drainage. The 2,040 m peak southwest of the pass looked inviting to the climbers in the group and they dropped their packs and made a rapid and likely first ascent, building a cairn and informally naming it *Polygamy Peak*. (Don't ask!)

Our final camp was established beside another beautiful glacial tarn where, buoyed with a good weather report received via satellite phone, we eagerly anticipated the choice of two nice peaks on the south side of Limestone Lakes to cap off our last full day. Alas, we were again roused in the early hours by rain beating on the tents, and we emerged the next morning to dense fog and intermittent drizzle. Contrary to expectations that it would soon lift, this lamentable condition lasted all day with the main topic of conversation being whether to stay or go. Since the exit day entailed a long bushwhack through the Muller valley, we opted to wait for the chance of drier weather and an early start. Although we again woke to fog on day-9, it had stopped raining and the long march out was something of an anticlimax after the severity of the earlier bushwhacking.

Despite the variable weather, area forests sure needed rain and it didn't stop us from enjoying a wonderful part of B.C.'s mountain backcountry. Soon after we returned to Prince George, the hot dry summer resumed in earnest but with the fire danger reduced – a nice end to a near perfect summer in north central B.C.!

About the author: Mike Nash is the author of *Exploring Prince George - A Guide to North Central B.C. Outdoors* (Rocky Mountain Books, 2007); *Outdoor Safety and Survival in British Columbia's Backcountry* (2007); and *The Mountain Knows No Expert: George Evanoff, Outdoorsman and Contemporary Hero* (Dundurn, 2009).

If you go: The area can be reached via the McGregor, Pass Lake, Logan, and Herrick forest service roads east of Prince George, followed by some hard but rewarding bushwhacking up Muller Creek! ■

Club Activities Around the Province

Varsity Outdoors Club Trip to Castle Towers

August 14-16th 2009

Party: Sam Mason, Nick Matwyuk, Todd MacKenzie, and Darcy Corbin

Trip Report by Sam Mason

Pictures by Nick Matwyuk

As of Thursday night our plan was to evaluate the weather in Whistler on Friday night and either camp somewhere along the start of our route (good weather) or leave Vancouver Saturday morning (bad weather). The idea was first floated to save us from having to get up early on Saturday, but after some thought we figured, hey, why not knock off 600m of elevation on Friday night and camp at Helm Creek while we're at it?

Friday morning things were looking good; the forecast in Whistler had improved. Early Friday afternoon we found out that Nick was off work earlier than expected. After a few rushed phone calls our timeline was moved up, and eventually we were leaving UBC at 3:45. We made the trailhead by 6:00, were on the trail shortly thereafter, and made it to the un-crowded Helm Creek campsite in 2 hours, easily before dark and never having to hike by headlamp.

Saturday morning we were greeted by low clouds and fog which obscured all of the surrounding mountains. Early on Saturday we saw two other parties. One said that they were also planning on climbing Castle Towers, but we passed them and never saw them again. Other than that we had the whole route to ourselves.

Following the Matt Gunn's Scrambles route, we made for Gentian Ridge. With visibility poor and route finding difficult, some of our decisions may have been less than well informed. We wound up doing some serious bushwhacking uphill before finally gaining the ridge; we were pretty sure that's not what Matt Gunn had in mind. Once on the ridge we skirted a few small snowfields before descending to the head of Helm Glacier and finally into Gentian Pass.



Nick Matwyuk

Todd MacKenzie and Darcy Corbin in their tent on Polemonium Ridge in Garibaldi Provincial Park



Nick Matwyuk

Todd MacKenzie on Polemonium Ridge in Garibaldi Provincial Park

It was only 12:00, despite our bushwhacking. We assessed our options over lunch. It was still very foggy, so a summit attempt today was unlikely. But it would be silly to stop here. With all kinds of time on our hands we opted to carry our full packs up onto Polemonium Ridge. If things improved, maybe we could still summit today. Otherwise we'd camp high up and summit on Sunday. We still weren't able to see the mountain we were about to climb, so we had to trust that it was still there.

Club Activities Around the Province

Things didn't improve. When we reached the peak of Polemonium Ridge the fog was so dense that we couldn't even see *the way down* to the Polemonium Ridge-Castle Towers col, let alone the route through it.

Previous knowledge and backcountry internet access told us that Sunday was supposed to be a sunny day, so we opted to

set up camp on the peak of Polemonium Ridge (which, conveniently, has some nice flat spots for tents), despite the fact that it was only 2:30. We briefly considered trying to camp further along the route, given our surplus of time, but we reasoned that there wasn't much point in attempting the col with heavy packs and that we were far less likely to find a flat spot to sleep on further along. From time to time the fog parted for brief moments to tease us with (finally) views of the summit and of the valley to the north, but Mt. Garibaldi, Garibaldi Lake, and the Tusk remained hidden. When the clouds broke at around 9:30 we got a glimpse of some of the views we'd been missing all day. The winds never picked up too much and our campsite proved very comfortable.

Sunday morning we hopped out of our sleeping bags at 5:00 to find frozen condensation on the tent and amazing views in every direction. After a quick, chilly breakfast we began our ascent. The Polemonium Ridge-Castle Towers col proved to be the trickiest part of the route, with steep loose slopes but little exposure. I was glad to have a helmet on. Once past this we worked our way up the massive boulder field that is Castle Towers Mountain towards the West Summit. Having no technical climbing gear we stopped at the West Summit, where we took advantage of the photo op.

We pried open the summit register with some difficulty and found that on the 9th somebody did this as a day trip. After spending our time at the top we retraced our route back to our campsite. The boulder field proved even more unpleasant on the way down, thanks partly to not-yet-thawed frost on many of the rocks. We broke camp and began our descent, finally enjoying the views that we'd been denied on Saturday.



Sam Mason on Gentian Ridge looking towards Castle Towers



Timed Photo of (L-R) Todd Mackenzie, Nick Matwyuk, Sam Mason, and Darcy Corbin heading down from Polemonium Ridge in Garibaldi Provincial Park

Nick Matwyuk

Once we had a proper view of Gentian Ridge the extent of our route finding folly on Saturday became clear. We had contoured when we should have climbed and climbed when we should have contoured. We took a much more sensible route back. The rest of the hike down was nondescript; near Helm Creek we ran into one solo-er who was also aiming for Castle Towers. Back at the car by 7:00, a stop in Squamish for some greasy food and beer, and then back to the city in good time. All in all - a fantastic trip. ■

Club Activities Around the Province

Chilliwack Outdoor Club: Little Yoho Valley/Yoho National Park - July 18-26

Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

The Chilliwack Outdoor Club often does a variety of mountaineering trips each year, and one of the trips done in the summer of 2009 was the Little Yoho Valley. We had 21 join us this year, and this meant we had the Stanley Mitchell Hut to ourselves for the week.

Most of the group arrived in the Little Yoho Valley on July 18th-short treks were taken to foam thick Takakaw Falls. The night was spent at Whiskey Jack Hostel. The short trek to Stanley Mitchell Hut began early on the 19th, and the group was well settled into the Hut by early afternoon. The weather was a charmer and remained so for the week.

We were up early and did Mt. Kerr (9394 ft.) on the 20th. The trudge up the rocks and cross a solid packed snow field meant ropes had to be used for safety. The summit of Kerr has a 10 ft. cairn that can be seen from the valley below. The day ended with a trek to ice thawing Kiwetinok Lake—there are some superb glissade slopes off Kerr, and we delighted in the hasty descent.



Ron Dart on the glacier route to Isolated Peak and Mt. McArthur



John Mclellan

Peter Murphy & Ron Dart (climbing Pollinger - President and Vice President in the background)

We took to Isolated Peak (9334 ft) on the 21st. This trip was across a glacier with many a crevasse beginning to open wider and wider. Ropes, crampons and ice axes were imperatives. The glacier was left behind in the final ascent to Isolated Peak, and boot and rock met in an upward scramble. The views from Isolated Peak were real beauties.

Mount Pollinger (9240 ft) was our destination for July 22nd. This was not much more than a pleasant ramble up rocks and a short but steep snow ascent to the ridge that pointed the way to Pollinger.

Our real goal for the week was the President (10,297 ft), so on July 23rd we would not be denied. The climb up the glacier to the col, cross a thin snow bridge and finally to the summit did not disappoint one and all. The final pitch to the col (between the President and Vice President) had some challenging moments, and an intermediate Yamnuska mountaineering program had had some worried moments rounding the bergshroud to the col a few days before us. The time from Hut to peak took us 5 hours.

The fact we had done a peak a day since arriving at Stanley Mitchell Hut meant a mountaineering Sabbath of sorts was in the offing. There were no peaks to bag on July 24th, so most in the group sauntered and rambled about on the lower yet still

John Mclellan

Club Activities Around the Province

scenic trails. Many a fine photo was taken of flowers, rocks, ice and trees. Little Yoho Valley is a paradise of sorts.

We turned to the summits again on July 25th. Mount McArthur (9892 ft) was our much longed for destination for the day. Much snow had melted on the glacier since we had been in the area for our Isolated Peak trip earlier in the week. Day star kept the day hot and bright, and the sky an alluring blue. Crampons had to hold firm and steady as we crossed melting ice and cracks in the glacier. There were some steep patches near the summit of McArthur, but one and all dined on the roof.

The heat of the previous few weeks meant that much was dry as dry tinder in the area. We were all surprised on the evening of the 25th when we were told a growing fire was nearing us, and we might be forced to evacuate. A helicopter landed in the meadow by Stanley Mitchell Hut, and firefighters jumped out of the chopper. Water was picked up by a nearby stream, and was dropped on the advancing blaze.



John Mclellan

Ron Dart (looking from the summit of Isolated Peak to Mt. Des Poilus & Glacier des Poilus--Yoho National Park)

We were fortunate that the fire retreated, but on the morning of July 26th all in the Chilliwack Outdoor Club were well on their way down the mountainside to the trailhead by 6:00 am-- the scent of burnt embers was in the air. It was a week not to forget---full of fine weather, challenging climbs, good friends and tasty food-- many kudos to Frank Wawrychuk for organizing the week and leading the climbs. ■

Club Updates

Fall/Winter 2009 BCMC Report

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

While some of the FMCBC member clubs have been reporting a steady decline in membership over the last decade, I am pleased to report that the membership of the BC Mountaineering Club has shown a fluctuating but steady rise from about 300 in 1986 to about 500 in 2009. Since 1994, total membership has fluctuated between slightly over 400 to over 550 members, but of course this growth could decline in the future. To obtain the number of actual “paying” members (which reflects our membership revenue) deduct about 80 from these numbers, thus allowing for honorary members and life members.



Most of us feel this steady growth in membership is due to promoting the club to the general public and to the benefits the club has to offer members. Our main promotion is typically to provide free-to-the-public social meetings with talks, slide show entertainment and refreshments ten times per year, a monthly newsletter, and also sponsoring the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival (VIMFF), as explained later. For the last few years our website, www.bcmc.ca has been constantly updated and must be a major component in our membership maintenance. The benefits of joining the club arise from the efforts of the many volunteers who help with the regular trips and the programs the club organizes, and who serve on our various committees. After all, a trip

Club Updates

schedule with a wide variety of trips throughout the year is one of the most important benefits of joining the club for most active members. Our members help to organize trips, and our more experienced members provide very basic winter and summer backcountry travel instructional programs for existing and new members. To reduce the tendency of some people to join the club for one year only to take advantage of these programs, we now require new members to join the club for two years if they register for our longer programs which are spread over several weekends. We also ask program participants to volunteer to help the club, so that hopefully the new members quickly become active in volunteering roles. These instructional programs are a good way of introducing new, usually younger, inexperienced folks to the club, and young folks have enthusiasm and also new ideas which we older folks should heed.

One of our concerns is that the average age of club members seems to be getting older, especially those on committees, and we have always needed new and preferably younger people to join committees. For example, Michael Feller our “young at heart” editor fresh from completing the mammoth task of compiling our Centennial Journal, has served the club for nearly three decades during which time he produced ten monthly newsletters per year and our biennial Journal. Recently the newsletter job was passed onto another longstanding executive member, mainly because it seems so difficult to find new and young volunteers for certain positions.

The BCMC recently joined the FMCBC's liability insurance program. Coincidentally, this summer the Club had two accidents which highlighted the importance of having trip organizers and participants skilled and experienced in mountaineering, wilderness first aid and emergency response. In this instance, the leadership and organization shown by the trip organizer and the support from the trip participants were exemplary. The two accidents reinforced for the Club the value of risk management practices which go beyond waivers and liability insurance. Club training programs, activities and trips which allow members to develop experience and skills in mountaineering, wilderness first aid and emergency response, are essential. The Club met the insurer's waiver requirements and incident reporting protocol in a timely manner with the assistance of Clayton Prince from Capri Insurance Services Ltd. The leadership and organization demonstrated by the trip organizer and the co-operation from the trip participants were appreciated by the Club executive and everyone involved.

In the last century, the Club built 10 backcountry cabins, and those that remain operational are free for members to use. However, for over two decades the club had not built a cabin, and then a new cabin was proposed as one of our Centennial projects for 2007. For four years our dedicated Cabin and Trails Chair, David Scanlon, tried to obtain permission to build one, and kept agile by jumping through many bureaucratic hoops. After having complied with all the Governments requirements, we were finally prevented from building by the local aboriginal band, even though we had kept the band informed of our plans from day one. Starting again, at a different site, after only about 10 months, David was successful in obtaining permission from all relevant parties to build a cabin. So, practice makes perfect! Assuming we receive agreement in a forthcoming vote involving the whole club membership, we hope to commence construction next spring/summer. This will require a cash commitment from the club's bank account, and a time commitment from dedicated volunteers.

Similarly to previous years, in January 2010 the BCMC will be sponsoring the “British Columbia, Canada Evening” at the VIMFF, and for that evening the club provides free refreshments and our club's name is prominently displayed. As in the past we also provide funds for the Macaree award, which goes to the best film in the mountain culture category. This award is named after David and Mary Macaree, two BCMC honorary members who joined the club in 1964 and wrote the very successful local guidebook “103 Hikes in Southwestern British Columbia”. This was first published in 1973 jointly by the BCMC and the Seattle Mountaineers, and has been very successful. From the first edition the Macarees donated the book's royalties to the club which have been used to help the club publish several other guidebooks. Interestingly, their guidebook is the only guidebook that the BCMC has helped to publish that has generated significant revenue for the club. In 2008 the Sixth Edition was published with Jack Bryceland listed as the author with the Macarees. David died in 1998 and Mary died in 2008 so their names live on in the VIMFF award as well as being linked to their well known guidebook. It should also be noted

Club Updates

that royalties from the guidebook were also used to help fund the building of our last cabin in North Creek in 1986, and, if needed, the royalty funds will probably help finance the proposed new cabin. ■

Ideas for Promoting the FMCBC and Member Clubs.

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

One idea might be facilitated by viewing the Outdoor Clubs Directory at the Mountain Equipment Co-op website, ie. www.mec.ca. The directory lists 123 clubs in BC, some of which are already FMCBC member clubs, and some of which might be interested in joining the FMCBC if they were aware of us. This would provide many benefits, particularly from a political standpoint where greater membership numbers tend to support greater credibility. We can try to inform non-member clubs of the advantages of joining the FMCBC, such as our liability insurance and our facilitation of communication and negotiation between our member clubs, industry, government agencies, and the public. We have a MS Powerpoint presentation which outlines the FMCBC's mandate and activities which can be shown at meetings of non-member clubs to introduce them to the FMCBC. This presentation could also be shown at meetings of existing members clubs to help answer the all-too-common query: "What does the FMCBC do for me?" This is a chance for your club members to become more involved with the FMCBC while practicing their public speaking skills, so please let us know if you would like to help us!



Sample of Poster

Another idea could be facilitated by the FMCBC which can help to raise the profiles of FMCBC member clubs to encourage new members to join these clubs in at least two ways. One way is to distribute more printed copies of Cloudburst to the public. In the past we have usually had "excess" paper copies of Cloudburst remaining after mailing them to members, and these excess copies were distributed to outdoor goods stores, community centres, libraries, learning institutions etc. At the AGM we decided to reduce the numbers of paper copies mailed to members, and instead to distribute more copies to the public. All issues of the Cloudburst have a list of member clubs with their website addresses and this could help boost club membership. The second way to raise the profiles of member clubs is to display the new FMCBC publicity poster in outdoor goods stores etc., preferably with the free copies of Cloudburst. This poster briefly introduces the FMCBC and lists all our member clubs and their website addresses in their specific region in the province, so that people can see that there is an outdoor club in their particular region. We are planning to send an electronic version of this poster to all directors, who can then have an appropriate number of copies printed locally, which would save on mailing costs. The poster could be printed and displayed in areas where Cloudburst is displayed. ■

Literature of Interest



The B.C. Mountaineer: 100 Years of mountaineering 1907-2007

Editor: Michael Feller

Review by Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

The British Columbia Mountaineering Club celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2007 (1907-2007). Eyes were eager and minds poised to read the tale and drama of a century of BCMC life. Most were accustomed to the fine and predictable publication of *The B.C. Mountaineer* every couple of years. The wait was longer for the anniversary tome, but the wait was rewarded by a splendid book that is already a collector's item.

Literature of Interest

Michael Feller and other able and gifted assistants have done a superb job of bringing a variety of mountaineering essays together to tell the fascinating history of BCMC. The large book, replete with A++ essays and excellent photographs from different decades, is divided into fourteen sections: 1) The B.C. Mountaineering Club: Beginnings, 2) The South Coast Mountains, 3) Mountains North of Vancouver, 4) Vancouver Island, 5) Poetry and Songs, 6) The Central Coast Mountains, 7) The Northern Coast Mountains, 8) The Cascade Mountains, 9) Thinker and Philosopher, 10) The Columbia Mountains, 11) The Rocky Mountains, 12) The North, 13) Outside Canada and Alaska and 14) Perspectives on the BC Mountaineering Club.

There is little doubt that *The B.C. Mountaineer: 100 Years of mountaineering 1907-2007* is a well rounded, relatively comprehensive and balanced presentation of climbing events and the more political and reflective aspects of mountaineering. Most of the photographs in the large and weighty volume are real keepers and visual delights that will inspire and encourage one and all to take to the rock guardians of old, frigid glaciers and white towers. The history of BCMC and mountaineering in BC is generously covered, but the many trips by BCMC members that have turned to challenging peaks outside Canada are also touched on. Those who slowly take the time to read and reread *The B.C. Mountaineer* cannot but be taken by all that members from BCMC have done between 1907-2007. Those in the future will have reason to look back on the initial century of BCMC life as a golden and energetic phase of the club's life.

The section in which a great deal of attention was focused on was 'The Central Coast Mountains'. It is in this glacier thick region that the reigning peak of BC is located: Mt. Waddington. There are nine articles on Mt. Waddington that begin with Don Munday's 'Mystery Mountain' and conclude with Brian Gavin's 'Mt. Waddington-a dream fulfilled'. Feller and team were right to linger longer on Mt. Waddington and the Central Coast Mountains than on other specific mountains and ranges. There is so much about this alluring and spacious fortress that holds mind, body and imagination. It is, in a sense, the Himalayas of BC. Many a hope fulfilled and tragic experience has been lived through in this demanding and unforgiving mountain citadel and cathedral.

The shorter sections on 'Poetry and Songs', 'Thinker and Philosopher' and 'Perspectives on BC Mountaineering' are thoughtfully placed in the broader text of *The B.C. Mountaineer*. It might have enriched the book if these sections were longer. The front cover is framed well. The climber nearing the summit, ice axe in the snow, knapsack on back, cinched into rope, barren rock patches and ice/snow beneath and towering rock ridges behind tells the tale well that most know in their blood and bones.

The B.C. Mountaineer: 100 Years of mountaineering 1907-2007 is a tome that each and all who are interested in mountaineering in BC should have.

Many a time this book will call forth a read and each read will enrich the understanding of how BCMC has lived, moved and had their mountaineering being in BC and beyond from 1907-2007. Much gratefulness should be offered to those that put in countless hours to make this historic document a keeper for generations to come. ■



Deep Powder and Steep Rock: The Life of Mountain Guide Hans Gmoser

By Chic Scott

Banff: Assiniboine Publishing Limited, 2009

Review by Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

There is no doubt that Hans Gmoser (1932-2006) was one of the foremost pioneers of the 2nd generation of mountaineers in Canada. The age of the Swiss Guides and Conrad Kain was waning in the 1950s, and the season of Gmoser and friends had begun to wax with much creativity and energy.

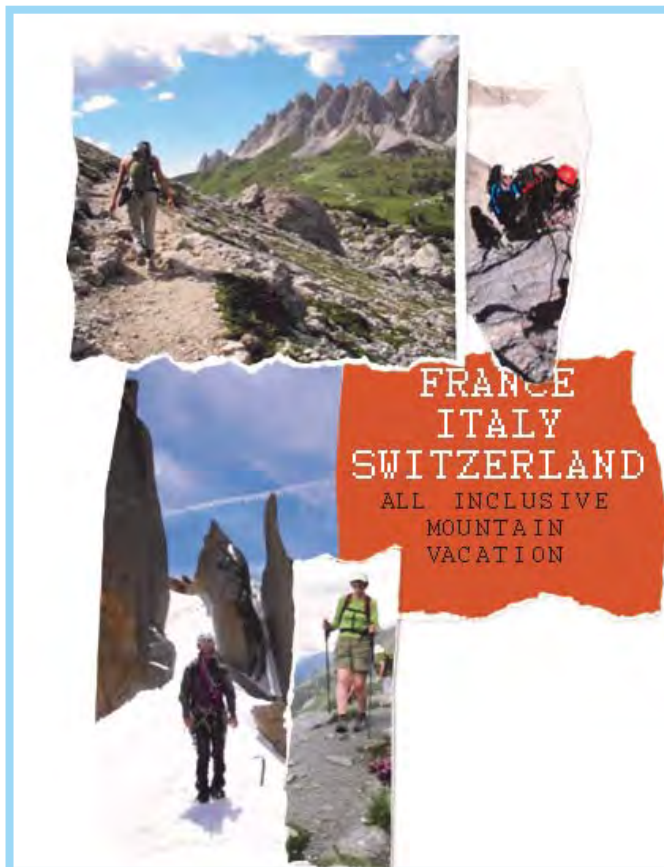
Literature of Interest

Deep Powder and Steep Rock tells the tale well of Gmoser's early years in Austria, his move to Canada in the 1950s, his challenging climbs at Yamnuska and Logan-Denali, his being there at the formative years of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides-Heli-skiing and his latter years as an elder statesman of Canadian mountaineering. The book is not a simple hagiographical rags to riches story, though. Scott had the integrity in the biography to make it clear that there were troubling aspects to Gmoser's drivenness, also. There were tragedies and deaths that had to be dealt with as the Heli-skiing industry became a bumper crop. Scott did not flinch, to his credit, in mentioning Gmoser's right of centre political leanings and the troubles in his marriage as work came to trump marital responsibilities. The sheer momentum of the biography does carry the reader through a life that, midst many a challenge, rose to the occasion and accomplished much. Gmoser was offered the Order of Canada in 1987 for his innovations in the Canadian mountaineering community.

Deep Powder and Steep Rock is divided into six sections: 1) Just Another Day, 2) Hard Years in Austria, 3) A Mountain Guide in Canada, 4) The Great Communicator, 5) Heli-Skiing Takes Off, and 6) Elder Statesman. The photographs in the tome are well worth the visual journey-- Gmoser's life and the mountains he so loved are depicted well in the aptly chosen photos for the biography. The DVD that comes with the hard cover is a fine tribute to Gmoser's artistic sense and the way he could dramatically sell mountain tourism to a new and emerging affluent generation.

It is quite appropriate that Scott wrote the biography of Gmoser (he knew him well and is one of the best Canadian mountaineer historians). The book is a keeper and must read for those interested in the mountaineering tribe in Canada as the clan emerged from its infancy to its maturer years.■

Announcements



JOIN US, YOUR HOSTS ANDREW LANGSFORD,
UIAGM MOUNTAIN GUIDE AND THERESA
CALOW, BACKCOUNTRY LODGE CHEF FOR AN
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<http://www.atlantismountainguides.ca/>

Announcements

The Vancouver Island Trails Information Society (VITIS) has printed and revised 3 books describing trails on Vancouver Island since 1972. Book I includes Victoria and Vicinity, Book II includes South-central Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, and Book 3 covers Northern Vancouver Island. Book I (13th Edition), edited by Richard Blier, was last revised in 2007 and Book 3 (10th Edition) was recently revised by Gil Parker in 2008. Book II (8th edition) was last revised in 2000 and a revised edition is actively being worked on by Richard Blier. The revised 9th edition should be available early in 2010. Books should be available in most bookstores and outdoor stores on Vancouver Island and also can be purchased on their website: <http://www.hikingtrailsbooks.com/>

Trekking Morocco's Saghro Massif

November 29 - December 10, 2009
Detailed Itinerary and all information can be viewed at
<http://www.moroccoexplored.com/Saghro2.pdf>

Contact Robbin Yager
by Tel: 604 393 3715, or email
info@moroccoexplored.com

Profits from this trekking adventure will be contributed to Morocco Explored's March 2010 Desert Cleanup Campaign for eliminating plastic bags in Morocco's desert regions.

Cloudburst Cover Photo Contest

We are always in search of
backcountry or historical mountaineering
photos for our covers.

If you have a photo that you think
would make a great cover please email it to us at
admin.manager@mountainclubs.org
with the subject line:
Cloudburst Photo Contest

Congratulations and thank you to Nick Matwyuk
whose great photo made the cover of our
Fall/Winter 2009 Issue



back-off gear tag



Mountain Equipment Co-op is happy
to provide office space for FMCBC.

LEAVE
PREPARED



slings | nuts | quickdraws | harnesses | ropes

130 West Broadway, Vancouver | 1341 Main Street, North Vancouver | mec.ca

Member Clubs

CENTRAL COAST

Mount Remo Backcountry Society

<http://www.mtremo.ca/>

CENTRAL INTERIOR

Alpine Club of Canada – Prince George Section

<http://vts.bc.ca/ACC-PG/>

Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club

<http://web.unbc.ca/~ramblers/>

Fraser Headwaters Alliance

<http://www.fraserheadwaters.org/>

FRASER VALLEY

Backroads Outdoor Club

<http://backroadsoutdoor.ca/>

Chilliwack Outdoor Club

<http://www.chilliwackoutdoorclub.com/>

SOUTHERN INTERIOR

Kootenay Mountaineering Club

<http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/>



John Mclellan

John Mclellan, Judy Pasemko, Helen Turner, Ron Dart (summit of Mt. McArthur)

METRO VANCOUVER

Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver Section

<http://www.accvancouver.ca/>

BC Mountaineering Club

<http://bcmc.ca/index.asp>

North Shore Hikers

<http://www.northshorehikers.org/>

North Vancouver Outdoors Club

<http://www.northvanoutdoorsclub.ca/>

Outsetters Club of Vancouver

<http://www.outsetters.org/>

SFU Outdoor Club

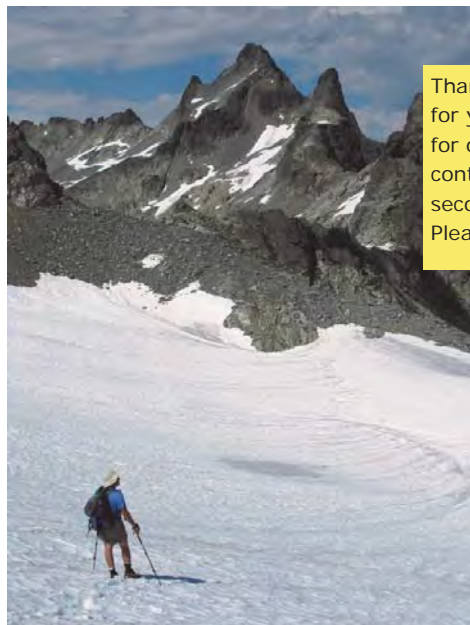
<http://www.sfuoutdoors.ca/>

Valley Outdoor Association

<http://www.valleyoutdoor.org/>

Varsity Outdoor Club – Vancouver (UBC)

<http://www.ubc-voc.com/>



Liz Scremin

Thank you, Liz Scremin for your photo entry for our cover photo contest that earned second place this time. Please submit again!

Manrico Scremin rambling in the alpine near Mount Tricouni

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Alberni Valley Outdoor Club

<http://www.mountainclubs.org/AVOC.htm>

Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver Island Section

<http://www.accvi.ca/>

Comox District Mountaineering Club

<http://www.comoxhiking.com>

Island Mountain Ramblers

<http://sites.google.com/site/islandmountainramblers/>

Vancouver Island Trails Information Society

<http://www.hikingtrailsbooks.com/>



Judy Lett

Camp at Limestone Lake