

CLOUDBURST



Spot Messenger Pros & Cons | Rock Climbing with VOCO | Managing BC's Resource Roads
Niut Range & Zig Zag Ridge Trips | New Hiking Option for Golden Ears Park | Sigurd Trail Work

Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

Fall/Winter 2015

CLOUDBURST

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Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Working on your behalf

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) is a democratic, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting and maintaining access to quality non-motorized backcountry recreation in British Columbia's mountains and wilderness areas. As our name indicates we are a federation of outdoor clubs with a membership of approximately 5000 people from 34 clubs across BC. Our membership is comprised of a diverse group of non-motorized backcountry recreationists including hikers, rock climbers, mountaineers, trail runners, kayakers, mountain bikers, backcountry skiers and snowshoers. As an organization, we believe that the enjoyment of these pursuits in an unspoiled environment is a vital component to the quality of life for British Columbians and by acting under the policy of "talk, understand and persuade" we advocate for these interests.

Membership in the FMCBC is open to any club or individual who supports our vision, mission and purpose as outlined below and includes benefits such as a subscription to our semi-annual newsletter *Cloudburst*, monthly updates through our FMCBC E-News, and access to Third-Party Liability insurance. In addition, member clubs are eligible to apply for project funding through our Member Club Grant Program which supports trail building and upgrading initiatives.

FMCBC's **vision** is that British Columbia's backcountry is shared amongst all recreational users in a way that self-propelled users have reasonable access to an enjoyable experience.

FMCBC's **mission** is to advocate for safe, self-propelled activities (such as hiking, mountaineering, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, trail running and other backcountry activities) and the protection of BC's backcountry for current and future generations to experience.

FMCBC's **purpose** is:

- To represent clubs and the public interested in non-motorized backcountry recreation in BC, and to advise and take action on their behalf in matters which may impact their backcountry recreation experiences.
- To make recommendations to government and non-government organizations regarding the protection of and access to BC's backcountry and trails.
- To encourage self-propelled backcountry recreation, and to promote low-impact and safe practices.
- To promote the development and maintenance of a system of trails in BC.
- To promote the sound management and preservation of BC's backcountry recreation resources.

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

- Participating in provincial land use decision processes
- Working to positively change 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 improved access to existing recreational resources
- Supporting the building, maintaining and protecting of hiking and mountain access trails
- Promoting non-motorized and self-propelled recreation activities in BC's mountains and wilderness
- Educating its member and the public on mountain and backcountry safety issues and working with member clubs to address risk management issues
- Promoting membership within our member clubs
- Negotiating with insurance brokers to provide extensive liability insurance coverage for our members clubs

At the core of FMCBC's projects, issues and successes are the countless hours donated by dedicated volunteers from our member clubs across the province. Without these volunteers the FMCBC would not exist and we appreciate all those who have volunteered in the past or are current volunteers. We encourage others to join us to help us reach our vision. ■

Vice President's Message

Dave Wharton, Valley Outdoor Association

First I would like to take this opportunity to say hello to all of you that I have met or know, as well as those I haven't. I hope that you've had a satisfying, happy, and productive summer, and that the hot and dry conditions didn't impact your trips and outdoor activities too much.

A very successful AGM was held this past May, hosted by the [Comox District Mountaineering Club](#). They did an excellent job! Included were a well-attended meet-and-greet, the annual meeting (again, well attended, and with good debate and well-thought-out opinions from around the table), a great meal and social evening at a local waterfront pub, plus hikes and a kayak trip for those not taking part in the meeting. It was a pleasure to attend.

One of the topics of discussion was the formation of regional committees. The purpose of these committees is to more evenly reflect that we are a province-wide organization, and to give knowledgeable individuals across the province a forum to raise and discuss issues and concerns particular to their region. Meetings are already regularly being held in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island and we held our first Southern Interior Regional Meeting in Kelowna in October. I attended the meeting in Kelowna and plan to start a similar committee in the Fraser Valley.

Dianne Wharton



FMCBC Vice President, Dave Wharton

Cover Photo by Matthew Lettington

A wintery day on the summit of Mount Clifton in the Beaufort Range. We didn't yet know that 2014 would be the year Winter Never Was.



We're looking for summer shots for our next Cloudburst cover. Email your entries to us at cloudburst@mountainclubs.org. Please submit photos by April 1, 2016.

I would like to thank Andrew Drouin for putting his name forward and being chosen by the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) to fill one of five seats allotted to ORC on the recently established Provincial Trails Advisory Board (PTAB). Because of the FMCBC's membership in ORC, the FMCBC now has an important role to play as the PTAB moves forward. The provincial government is making it clear that it will be dealing primarily, if not exclusively, with ORC members with respect to trail's issues.

And to all FMCBC members, be safe in the backcountry. The fall months are a great time to get out... and let's hope for a decent winter this year! ■

THANK YOU!

**We would like to thank
the following people for
their service as
FMCBC Directors:**

Al Jenkins (FOGP)
Jeff van Santen (VOCO)
Ben Heemskerk (BBSS)
Eric Burkle (OCV)
Sam Waddington (COC)

**We would like to
welcome our newest
FMCBC Directors:**

Kieran Campbell (MRBS)
Jerry Monahan (POC)
Elie Bowles (POC)
Lina Gomez (VOCO)
Matthew Mazurek (BBSS)
Robin Dunbar (OCV)
Ken Orr (COC)
Brian Wood (FOGP)

Southwest BC Recreation & Conservation Report

By Brian Wood & Monika Bittel, Committee Co-Chairs

Tricouni Mountain, Cloudburst Mountain, Cypress Mountain and Roe Creek Area

In the 2009 [Sea-to-Sky Land and Resource Management Plan](#) (LRMP), the large recreation area in the vicinity of Cloudburst Mountain, Tricouni Mountain, Cypress Mountain and Roe Creek was designated “unresolved” because the stakeholders (public and commercial motorized and non-motorized recreation users) were unable to arrive at a mutually acceptable zoning agreement within the allotted time. Over the years, several initiatives by the stakeholders to resolve the zoning were unsuccessful and the area remained “unresolved.” Zoning of the area, however, has been occurring through individual tenure and access applications.

In May 2015, the FMCBC raised the “unresolved” designation again with the province. By letter dated June 11, 2015, Craig Sutherland, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources, Coast Area, said in an email dated January 24, 2012, that the province had advised recreation stakeholders, including the FMCBC, that “the recreation zoning in the area would be designated as multiple use” and that the province would accept new Crown land recreation tenure applications within this zone as per the standard Crown land authorization application, referral and review processes. The Deputy Minister further stated that the province had not accepted the Squamish Nation’s zoning proposal because “applying non-motorized zoning across all identified cultural sites would block all possible motorized recreation access routes through the Tricouni Lakes Buffer zones and would leave no other options for the motorized commercial and non-commercial user groups to access Crown lands beyond these areas”.

The province remained open to exploring alternative options for the Tricouni Lakes Buffer zone but by default, the designation would remain “multiple use,” except for any areas already zoned for other uses. While the FMCBC and member clubs will continue to express concern about proposed tenure applications to ensure the non-motorized sector’s interests will be considered in the decision-making process, the province’s “multiple use” designation by default and its piecemeal consideration of alternate uses means that the area is in essence designated for motorized recreation. The SWBC Rec & Con Committee is considering our response to the letter.

Draft Ski Area Policy for BC Parks

Decades ago, the downhill and Nordic ski areas located in the three provincial parks of Cypress, Mt. Seymour, and Manning were transferred from the province to private operators. This transfer has resulted in many problems for BC Parks, the public and the private operators.

In 2014, BC Parks published an [“Intentions Paper”](#) regarding commercial ski operations within provincial parks and provided an opportunity for public input. In early 2015, BC Parks published a [DRAFT Ski Area Policy](#) for BC Parks. The public had until April 21, 2015 to provide comments. The FMCBC, as well as the Friends of Cypress Provincial Park and BC Nature, submitted written comments.

On June 11, 2015, a meeting was held at BC Parks to discuss the concerns of the FMCBC, Friends of Cypress, BC Nature, Outdoor Recreation Council and Hike BC. The concerns included the lack of

clear conditions for renewal of a Park Permit, adequate protection of the parks’ natural environments, year-round public access and year-round public recreation opportunities in each of the provincial parks.

Given the serious concerns with the Draft Policy, the representatives requested an opportunity to review the revised draft of the Ski Area Policy. However, in late September, the Assistant Deputy Minister, Jim Standen, advised there would be no further opportunities to review or to discuss the draft policy. The final policy will be circulated and posted on the FMCBC website when finalized and published by BC Parks.

Garibaldi at Squamish

Garibaldi at Squamish has made a number of significant changes to their [resort proposal](#), including the following:

- Water for the resort will now be supplied by groundwater wells within the Paradise Valley area and there will be one snowmaking reservoir and dam, thereby removing seven proposed water storage reservoirs and related infrastructure including dams.
- The two proposed 18-hole golf courses, one in and around the Cat Lake area, and the second located south of Brohm Lake, have been removed.
- Access from Highway 99 to the resort will be re-aligned to avoid the Cat Lake area, the areas bordering Alice Lake Provincial Park and the Cheekye River.
- The northern and northwestern boundaries of the Project Area, which previously aligned with the borders of Garibaldi Provincial Park, will now follow the mountain development area with a 25-50m buffer between the resort boundaries and the Garibaldi Provincial Park boundary.

On September 23, 2015, FMCBC and member club representatives met with GAS officials to review the revised resort proposal, the sufficiency of the 25-50m buffer, potential future incursions into Garibaldi Provincial Park as has occurred at both Blackcomb and Whistler, the resort’s impact on the Park even without intrusion into the park and year-round access and parking within the resort for public users of Garibaldi Provincial Park. While no commitments were made by the GAS proponents, it was agreed by all attendees that future meetings would be beneficial.

Singing Pass Access route for Garibaldi Park

The FMCBC hoped that progress on the first Spearhead hut at Russet Lake would increase pressure to re-establish safe and easy access to the old Singing Pass Trail (SPT). That optimism has quickly faded. At present the SPT is difficult and, in some conditions, dangerous due to the major geological “slump” near the beginning of the trail, on the south side of Fitzsimmons Creek. Alternative routes have been explored, including an existing 2WD road on the north side of the Fitzsimmons Creek, which provides access to the intake area of the Innergex Run-of-River Project on Fitzsimmons Creek. BC Parks has committed to building a parking lot near the intake, a footbridge across Fitzsimmons Creek, and a short section of trail to connect to the SPT above the slump. Whistler Blackcomb however remains reluctant to be part of the solution.

At a recent site meeting in July 2015 which was attended by representatives from the FMCBC, ACC-Whistler and other organizations, the representatives were told that a meeting between Whistler Blackcomb, the Sliding Centre and other stakeholders had been held the previous week and they determined that the only option was to park in lot 8 and to walk up the IPP road. It was suggested that a new trail could be built to make the walk more pleasant but the road itself was too dangerous to drive. However, a comparison of the grade and turns of the IPP road to those of the Duffy Lake road and other logging access roads shows that the IPP road is gentler. The FMCBC and others are considering their next steps, including a public campaign, because lack of a safe and easy access trail to Singing Pass and the Russet Lake hut is no longer acceptable.

Pinecone Burke Provincial Park

Although Pinecone Burke was designated a Provincial Park following the Protected Area Strategy Process of the 1990s, the park remains relatively unknown. On June 12, 2015, the FMCBC organized a [presentation](#) at UBC to help publicize the park. Justin Brown gave a beautiful slideshow of the more remote areas of the park. The slideshow was well received by about 75 attendees. Although access is challenging, the park offers beautiful, remote wilderness terrain close to Metro Vancouver. The attendees included two BC Parks representatives, the publishers of a new guidebook and a new map of Burke Mountain. ■

Southwest BC Trails Committee Report

By Alex Wallace & Patrick Harrison, Committee Co-Chairs

The new bridge over Gold Creek at Golden Ears Provincial Park is now completed, and there has also been considerable trail upgrading following the Golden Ears Park Management planning process, including the closing off numerous 'bogus' side trails which were a frustrating and potentially dangerous problem for hikers. This is good news.

The Trails Committee wrote to Tori Meeks of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (Mountain Resorts Branch) on behalf of the groups currently working on the Fitzsimmons Creek/Singing Pass access issue in order to restart the stalled planning process, as it is now more than 12 years since the Flute Summit/Fitzsimmons Creek land swap between BC Parks and Whistler-Blackcomb. There then was a site visit in July 2015 attended by numerous stakeholders, including several club members. However, despite the number of different suggestions put forward, it still appears to be a difficult issue with no resolution in sight. We had discussed for several years how a bridge could be funded and built, but it now seems putting in a bridge would be the easiest part of a solution. It therefore looks like a public campaign is going to be needed to make any progress on this particular access issue.

Work on the Howe Sound Crest Trail continued at a steady pace this year, however BC Parks had funding for only two months of work by their trail crew in a season that would have been perfect for trail construction and upgrading. The Trails Committee was approached to apply for Canada 150 funds, and with Jodi Appleton's tireless help we were successful. The grant will cover \$150,000 of the Howe Sound Crest Project, with BC Parks providing the matching funds for a total of \$300,000. There still are some budget and scheduling issues to be worked out, however this funding will hopefully complete the upgraded and rebuilt trail to St Marks Summit and beyond. Past that point the project becomes more of upgrading a wilderness trail, rather than laboriously rebuilding it.

The section currently being worked on is quite hazardous for the average hiker, due to numerous large boulders and exposed tree roots, particularly in wet or icy conditions. This is also the most difficult section to rebuild, given that it's located on a slope amid old growth forest, making progress relatively slow — we are looking forward to completing it. Not only are the environmental aspects of the work which are challenging, but the constant flow of hikers back and forth past running machinery is awkward and po-



Alex Wallace

Another couple months work put in on the Howe Sound Crest Trail

tentially hazardous. We also put up some signage explaining the trail project and the arrangement with a contractor and BC Parks as land manager. There were two cases of hikers on the trail breaking their ankles and having to be long-lined out of the St. Marks Summit area over this summer — both injured on the section nearer the summit that has not been improved. This perhaps makes the case for rebuilding this increasingly popular high-elevation trail (possibly one of the busiest in BC).

The trail crew working on the Howe Sound project was then transferred to Mount Seymour, where they have started a major rebuild of the Mount Seymour main trail, which is not only worn out by heavy use, but also intersects a newly widened ski run at several points. This project is likely to take some years, particularly as the state of erosion on this trail means that loads of soil and gravel have to be brought in to rebuild and reroute of the trail. The anticipated, and overdue, Park Management Planning process for Mount Seymour appears to have been put on the back burner while the BC Parks Ski Area Policy is hammered out — another onerous task for committee volunteers. ■

New Hiking Option in Golden Ears Park

By Dave Wharton, Valley Outdoor Association

For a number of years now, there has been a hope within the Maple Ridge area outdoor community to have a bridge constructed over Gold Creek to link East and West Canyon Trails and create a loop hike. I am happy to report that this is now a reality. A very substantial bridge is now in place at the time of writing, with very minor work still required on the east side. Many thanks are due to local volunteers in the park, particularly the Ridge-Meadows Outdoor Club (unfortunately not an FMCBC member club), BC Parks and their contractors. Along with the bridge, significant trail upgrading and construction has been completed on the hike described below.

West Canyon/East Canyon Loop, with Alder Flats and Golden Ears Viewpoint Option

- Start: West Canyon Trailhead
- From the trailhead, hike 3.5 kms along a well-graded trail to where the trail climbs a short distance before dropping down to Gold Creek Lookout near the 4 km mark.
- Continue on the trail about 1km to a well-marked junction, then take the trail to your left, heading uphill towards Alder Flats back-country camp, just past 5.5 km. There is much new metal boardwalk and bridging of minor creeks along this section.
- Continue past Alder Flats on the well-marked trail for another kilometre until you reach a spectacular view of Edge and Golden Ears Peaks. This is always a worthwhile destination, presenting a different experience depending on the weather, and in late winter and early spring, a great place to safely watch the avalanches cascading off the surrounding peaks.
- Return to the junction mentioned in bullet 3 and turn left, downhill towards East Canyon Trail. At the bottom of the hill do not ford the side creek — continue straight ahead to cross the new Gold Creek Bridge.
- Once over the bridge you are on the East Canyon Trail. Turn left for a short .5 km side trip to Hiker's Beach for more great views of the peaks. Note that Hiker's and Viewpoint Beach are the one and the same — there is some confusion with signage.
- Return on the East Canyon Trail — an old access road — for 4.5 kms to the East Canyon parking lot.
- Walk through the parking lot and onto the park road to cross the bridge.
- Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn right, uphill on the trail signed West Canyon. You are now about a kilometre from your vehicle.
- Continue until you see the large green water tank that you will have noticed earlier and turn left down the wide trail to complete the hike.



New bridge over Gold Creek links East and West Canyon Trails



Dave Wharton

This hike is good most of the year except in heavy snow years, and of course can be shortened by not going to Alder Flats. ■

Trails in BC need your help!

British Columbia boasts thousands of kilometres of recreational trails traversing diverse and beautiful landscapes. In many areas of the province, these trails are funded and cared for by local communities, First Nations and trail associations, however, this support is often inconsistent and unreliable. What BC needs is a sustainable province-wide funding model befitting of a world-class trail network.

The Provincial Trails Advisory Body (PTAB) is currently working to refine and implement the [Trails Strategy for British Columbia](#), which includes the establishment of a reliable and diverse funding model to support BC's trails. Andrew Drouin, who was nominated by the FMCBC and appointed to a three-year term with the PTAB last spring, is now seeking input on potential funding sources and models.

This is an important issue for the FMCBC and an unparalleled opportunity for the non-motorized community to help shape the future of our trails in BC and ensure they receive the funding they need to remain viable.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Andrew Drouin at andrewdrouin@gmail.com.

You can learn more about the PTAB by visiting the Resources section of the FMCBC website.

Mountain Matters

Spot Messenger: Backcountry Essential or Expensive Annoyance?

By Alex Wallace, North Shore Hikers

Although groups like North Shore Rescue have recently recommended, in the face of an ever-increasing workload of rescues and disappearances, that people carry a satellite communications device like the Spot Messenger as one of the Ten Essentials, the usefulness of these devices—and their cost—remains contested. It could be said that the Spot Messenger is the Vegemite of these devices (you either love it or hate it) and I admit to being someone who initially viewed it as a quaint gadget or gimmick. However, after one such discussion with the Trails Committee, I set out to test a Spot 2 over a two-year period by using it as a GPS device for trail upgrade and planning purposes, and found that it does have some real benefits — as well as a few potential drawbacks. I am reporting my 'in the field' findings on the Spot 2, which is now out of production (replaced by the Spot 3, of course) so I am not promoting a particular manufacturer — in fact my experience may actually put some people off.

Despite the small size, the Spot Messenger actually uses two satellite systems: GPS to determine the user's location, — on the planet, except some parts of Antarctica — and a Satellite phone system to relay this information to a ground station — your home computer as an email, your partner's smartphone, or your local Search and Rescue as an SOS if the sender is injured or lost.

For this reason it does take a significantly longer time to transmit a message than, for example, an automotive GPS takes to get a location fix and tell you where to turn off a highway. An up-to-date automotive GPS takes less than a second to re-establish a location, when leaving a tunnel for example. The Spot instead has to first get a GPS fix (which may take a few minutes) depending on whether you are out on a ridge, or in a small clearing — and then it has to find a commercial (Satellite Phone) satellite to transmit the coded info out again, meaning that in total it can take up to five minutes (or even longer) to complete these two transactions successfully.

There is no screen to tell you where you are, and although you get a green "Message Sent" light when your message has been uploaded, there's absolutely no way to tell if your 'I'm OK, but I'm late' signal, or your more important 'Rescue, SOS' message has actually been received by your partner, or the GEOS Rescue network: it's a one-way satellite messaging system. Of course this and the slow transmission time in some locations can be disconcerting. On the other hand, if you have a disabling knee or ankle injury, you are by definition going to be staying in one location for quite a while.

One documented example from recent years is a BC Parks auxiliary ranger who went backcountry skiing in BC's Interior with his partner, intending to be out skiing in perfect conditions for several days, but ended up breaking his ankle on the first day. They sent off an SOS via their Spot 2, but had no way to know if it had resulted in Search and Rescue being alerted: so his partner set off back to their truck, intending to drive to wherever she

could get a cell signal and call 911. She found that by the time she had arrived back at the trailhead, the local search and rescue folks were there, unloading their snowmobiles. This is an example of the device working as it should, but of course it's a lot easier to get a GPS signal when you are out on open ridges on snow, than in a closed canopy forest or a patch of thick second-growth alder. My response to this dilemma is that I would rather have the Spot 2 along in my pack even if I am in forested locations as it gives a better chance of rescue if something goes wrong than if I had only a cell phone (or box of matches, signaling mirror, etc.) in that same situation.



With regard to this, the battery draw of a cell phone increases as the signal is lost, and the phone's firmware automatically cranks up its own transmitting power, particularly where there's "No Service," hence the comment by some rescued hikers that they left home with a fully charged phone but it mysteriously ended up with a dead battery when they needed to use it and the sun was going down. This is actually a battery-saving feature, as your phone turns its power levels down when it detects a good signal, i.e. in the city. The Spot 2 uses lithium batteries, and for my purposes I always switch it off right after taking fixes or sending messages, so that after two or three years I still have not had to replace them. I do carry spares, as the lithium batteries are lightweight (one ounce) and they perform well in low temperatures. The Spot 2, which resembles an orange hockey puck, is also completely waterproof and can be dropped on a rocky trail with no ill effects — again, in contrast to most smartphones.

Cost

Although these devices cost as little as \$150, and a mail-in rebate often brings this down to less than \$100, the annual subscription of around \$110 does cause some people concern (or mild shock!). It's also seldom posted on store shelves as it should be (without a subscription, the device is useless). I opt to pay the extra \$10/month for the Rescue Insurance, and my family considers the price a bargain if it allows them to know where I am hiking and also check in from any point on the trail if I am late. Other satellite devices have two-way messaging, but they are more expensive, and usually have a rechargeable battery soldered in (which can cost \$300 to replace) so the total of all costs over multiple years have to be considered in comparing these devices.

Waypoints

One of the features offered (for a small additional annual fee, of course) is GPS tracking. However, once again, I would see this as

being a bit of a stretch for this device. It means that the user has to dangle the device off their backpack — possibly using the protective foam case — and leave it on, sending a stream of data. Although this may well provide useful waypoint information, it would depend on tree cover and other factors. To my mind, this practice also runs the risk of invoking Murphy's Law — that whatever can go wrong will go wrong, and at the worst possible time — in that an injured hiker could find the Spot device disappeared from a clip or case while bushwhacking or crossing a creek, or that the batteries have run down from constant use of the GPS function over several hours or days. I personally always stick with using it intermittently for specific location data and messages, and keep it turned off until needed, as the main rationale for having one along in your pack is to have a rugged device for emergency use in potentially life-threatening circumstances.

Cancellation

It may seem odd that you have to follow particular procedures to cancel your Spot subscription (renewal is automatic) but there is an obvious safety (and liability) reason: you don't want to be out in a near-inaccessible backcountry location, injured, and then

remember that your Spot subscription expired the previous Easter or Christmas. I've found that even when I forgot to send Spot my new credit card info after it expired, they still managed to bill me and keep my account going, albeit with a slightly incorrect expiry date. In fact, in order to cancel, you have to send Spot a formal cancellation email within the 30 days after your renewal date. Some people find this annoying, as in some ways it resembles a health club contract, as you can be billed each and every year until you make the effort (or remember) to cancel.

In summary, the Spot 2 and similar devices can be useful, but are no substitute for good preparation, or hiking with a group. Many recent rescues involved people hiking alone, and in one case this fall, the hiker sent messages for the first four days of a twelve day solo trip in notoriously rough terrain near Pitt Lake and was not heard from again, despite a rescue effort. So one other solution is to join a club and hike with other people. However, at roughly \$10/month, a Spot Messenger can be an expensive backcountry communications and rescue device within most people's budget, even if it has known limitations. ■

Managing B.C.'s Resource Roads

Leadership is needed from the provincial government to maintain these valuable assets
By Virginia Rasch (East Kootenay Outdoor Club)

I was sitting in the back seat of a 2002 Mazda Tribute driving up the Mause Creek forestry road on July 11th to hike in to Tanglefoot Lake. There were 18 of us hikers in four vehicles. This road is also the access for the Fisher Peak trail, one of the most popular and difficult hikes in the East Kootenay region.

We had come to the most rugged part of the road—a deep ditch scattered with rocky outcrops. We were just about to get out of it when a horridly loud noise indicated trouble.

The upshot is that two of our hikers jerry-rigged the car's displaced muffler so that we could continue to drive.

Even though our muffler was damaged, we were able to continue the trip and enjoy the mountain views on the hike to Tanglefoot Lake.

A question looms

Given that British Columbia has over 600,000 kilometres of resource roads—which many of us outdoor enthusiasts depend upon—who is maintaining these roads?

According to the report *Access Management and Resource Roads: 2015 Update*, released in April by the BC Forest Practices Board, over half of the province's resource roads are not being maintained by anyone.

The responsibility for these roads is fragmented amongst a host of government agencies, and the administration of those responsibilities is under numerous different pieces of legislation.

As a result, the condition of resource roads is highly variable and sometimes poor, as my introductory anecdote illustrates.

"It is extremely difficult for the public and other users of resource roads to have any reliable idea of where roads



Photo courtesy of the BC Forest Practices Board

A team of forestry workers walks along one of BC's many resource roads. Lacking a coordinated and comprehensive management plan, many resource roads across the province have fallen into disrepair and even been deactivated completely.

are and whether they are accessible or safe for travel,” said Tim Ryan, board chair of the Forest Practices Board.

The vast majority of resource roads (estimates range from 75 per cent to 90 per cent) were built by the forest industry. The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR) currently manages about 40,000 kilometres of forestry roads.

About one third are maintained by the forest industry under road use permits. However, where an industrial licensee maintains a road, there can be no expectation that access or maintenance will continue to be provided. Another third is maintained by government, primarily to provide access to rural residents and high-value recreation sites. FLNR maintains almost all of the remainder as wilderness road.

There has been a recent uptick in the use of resource roads by the public, particularly for recreational purposes, in southern BC. This includes campers, hikers, bikers, ATVers, snowmobilers, fishers and hunters, among others who want the provincial government to increase road maintenance or to take on the maintenance of roads no longer being used (and thus maintained) by the forest industry.

The FLNR Engineering Branch is currently revising its policy to guide decisions on forest service roads. But FLNR has advised the Forest Practices Board that current budgets are sufficient to satisfy only about one-third of the demand.

Deactivated versus wilderness roads

According to the report, “Often those involved in backcountry recreation see little or no distinction among the many types of gravel roads that they travel on. The entire road system is seen either as the playground itself (e.g., for those in the four-wheel drive community) or as access to the playground for those with ORVs or those interested in non-motorized recreation.”

If no industrial user is willing to maintain the road, and the natural resource district is unable to due to costs or safety concerns, the only option under the Forest and Range Practices Act is to deactivate the road, which means that a road is no longer being used for its intended purposes.

There are two categories of deactivated roads: seasonal (or temporary) and permanent.

Deactivation is meant to leave roads in a state that requires no maintenance. The work includes stabilizing the road prism and removing any bridges or culverts over streams. Often a barricade prevents motor vehicle access.

Board auditors reported that deactivation is occurring less frequently and that most roads are being maintained as wilderness roads.

Maintenance of wilderness roads can be highly variable. A wilderness road must be maintained “only to the extent necessary to ensure there is no material adverse effect on a forest resource.” There is no requirement that the road be safe for users, including the public.

FMCBC's Member Club Grant Program

In 2012, the FMCBC began a [grant program](#) to support projects initiated by our member clubs. All donations to the FMCBC now go directly into this fund providing a great way for organizations and individuals to give back to our trails and the outdoor recreation community.

FMCBC grant funds have been used to upgrade trails, install bridges, improve huts, purchase tools and run community events. Learn about one of our recent grant funded projects on **page 23** of this issue.

To make a donation visit the Canada Helps website:

www.canadahelps.org



Thank you for your support!



Such roads may not be graded nor cleared of snow. They may have water bars and cross ditches installed, or bridges may no longer be safe for use. The travelling public will often be notified with a sign that a road is a wilderness road.

A few solutions

Another question looms: Should the public expect continued road access to remote recreational sites? As another example, access to over 70 BC. parks is provided by over 3,500 kilometres of roads that are maintained by an industrial licensee (mostly forestry ones).

Because resource roads have both positive and negative impacts (such as on water quality and wildlife), in theory, management decisions about resource roads should be made in the context of broader land use decisions.

At a minimum, the public should be informed of changes to resource roads. The lack of notification about changes in resource roads—such as in the maintenance status or deactivation of existing roads—is indeed a “pervasive problem.”

The most desirable solution to the multitude of resource road issues—besides more money allotted to their maintenance—would be a single comprehensive piece of legislation. However, the Natural Resource Roads Act has been stalled since 2011.

The board is encouraged by a provincial government initiative called the Natural Resource Permitting Project; its aim is to integrate natural resource activities and approvals. However, the project’s results will not be fully realized until 2020. ■

Club Trips and Activities

Niut Range Report

By Hilary Crowley,
Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club

Thirteen [Caledonia Ramblers](#) enjoyed another week-long trip under the leadership of Dave King this August. Our destination was the Niut Range, which is situated in the Chilcotin above and to the west of Tatlayoko Lake. The Niut Range is east of the coast range and is not granite but we found most of the rock quite solid and stable.

We drove from Prince George to Williams Lake, then west 175 km through Alexis Creek to Tatla Lake, then south another 30 km on a good gravel road to Tatlayoko. We camped our first night at the forestry campsite at Tatlayoko Lake. This is a 22 km long lake framed by mountains, with the Niut Range on the west shore and the Potato Range to the east. It is a favourite haunt for windsurfers. In fact in the Tsihqot'in language Tatlayoko means "lake of the big winds."

Our group was mostly senior (average age 57), and we hired horses from the Skinner Ranch to pack some of our gear the 8 km up to the alpine. This is a good trail and steady uphill through Douglas fir then pine forest. After the trail breaks out into the meadow, there is an ill-defined trail across a meadow and then a short hike down to the guide's cabin, situated by a small creek. We decided to camp there for the night. Some hikers were so excited to have their gear packed up by horses that they over-estimated their provisions and struggled somewhat to contain their gear over the 4 km climb the following day, when we backpacked to our base camp.

This was the first of our annual trips where we stayed at base camp for the whole week, which was quite a luxury and eliminated the need for hiking with heavy packs, apart from the aforementioned 4 km. We camped at the edge of tree-line at 6500 ft. The landscape was very rocky interspersed by dozens of



Hilary Crowley

Niut Mountain, a rocky double summit at the northeast corner of the Niut Range.

pristine alpine lakes. Although the guide at Skinner Ranch warned us to watch out for abundant grizzlies, we actually never saw any bears and only two piles of scat. The only game we saw was one buck deer and several families of ptarmigan. Apparently grizzlies do use this route during the salmon runs as they travel between the Chilko and Homathko Rivers following the salmon.

Niut Mountain is a dominant feature with glaciers on 2 aspects of it. Centred on the ridge above our camp was a forest service transmitter tower, which we hiked up to and then further up a snowy ridge to higher peaks from where we were able to see Mt Waddington. We climbed several ridges, each of which offered expansive views of various coloured lakes from aquamarine to milky blue. The most spectacular was a crater lake, very deep, clear and green. Descents mostly involved steep scree runs, which were fun but also involved negotiating some steep large and loose rocks. The highest point we reached was 9100 ft.

We thoroughly explored the area around where we camped, hiking all the ridges and scaling many of the surrounding peaks. Part of the group did a more extensive hike one day while the rest of us hiked the valley bottom to recuperate from a particularly strenuous climb the previous day. This was a pretty route along lakeshore and through sub-alpine forest of mostly lodgepole and whitebark pine. The adventurous group was ecstatic about the route they chose to Bear Lake and declared that they had discovered a whole new area where you could easily do another four days of hiking. For future trips, it may be a good idea to make two base camps and just suck it up for the one day steep climb with heavy pack over rocky terrain.



Hilary Crowley

Doug McMan, outfitter for Skinner Ranch leading pack trail



Photo of Maggie Thornhill, Bob Nelson, Judy McGregor, Dave King, and Hilary McGregor taken close to camp, below the ridge.

One of our group was a young student from China. At just 23, she brought down our average age considerably! She had never camped before but was a strong hiker and demonstrated great courage as she climbed the peaks with the best of them. Her chili noodles and seaweed soups certainly spiced up our culinary fare. It had been a very hot and dry summer so we didn't have any campfires. The nights were clear and one hardy member of the group slept outside his tent so he could observe the spectacular Perseids meteor shower.

We were blessed with sunny weather but had frost a couple of nights. On the last day, we got caught in a thunder and lightning storm which also carried significant hail. One of our group members felt the electricity when he was high on the ridge. That night it rained but cleared up in time for us to pack up dry tents. Just as we set off, it started to rain again but we were mostly descending so could wear our rain gear without over-heating. By the time we reached the guide's cabin the rain had quit, and we had a dry three hour hike back down to our vehicles.

We all agreed it was a most enjoyable hike although very rocky. The northeast slopes offer plateaus and broader valleys whereas the southwest part of the range is steeper and narrower. The whole Niut Range covers 3600 square kilometres. The maximum any of us travelled during our week was 80 km, which means there is so much more to explore – another time. ■

Mountain Magic: 2015 NSH Summer Camp in Banff National Park

HI Castle Mountain Wilderness Hostel July 26 to August 2, 2015

By Sheila Bard and Bill Myrtle, North Shore Hikers

Camp was an unqualified success — the proof being everyone's reluctance to leave, sad to say good bye to new friends.

The Rocky Mountains are glorious and they are ours. All the campers share a love of the mountains. We love the beauty, the magic and the peacefulness of the alpine. It is the sharing that creates this mysterious mountain feeling. We are reminded of our small place amongst the majesty of these peaks and glaciers.

There is also the accomplishment of summiting, and along the way the effort of plodding and puffing up the steeper climbs, and of course the enjoyment of the sights, sounds and scents at every step.

The first three days we experienced lots of mountain weather. There were cold winds off the high glaciers and lakes, rain, snow and hail. Some campers enjoyed Banff's Hot Springs. Later in the week the weather was fine and sunny with great long views.



Rockbound Lake

Club Trips and Activities

Sheila Bard



A herd of mountain sheep

On the way to Cory Pass with Maurice we were rewarded with a herd of Mountain Sheep. We didn't see elk there but we did see the poplar trees with their bark eaten off at Elk height. Apparently they do this in the winter when food is scarce. Some campers did see an elk near Highway 1A, and Pete spotted a juvenile black bear from the sitting room windows of our hostel.

Dorm life was like the best boarding school. Think Hogwarts from Harry Potter. There too it was all about magic. For us, it was mountain magic. We looked forward to the fun of our evening meetings so we could share in everyone else's experiences and plan the next day's adventure. The only problem was we couldn't do them all.

The hikes were graded B, B/C and C but there was a generous and true effort to include everyone and to encourage anyone to move a little further from their comfort zone and experience more difficult hikes and scrambles.

The B hikes included: the Plain of 6 Glaciers Circuit, Eiffel Lake and Wenkchemna Pass, Saddleback and Fairview Mountain, the Stanley Glacier, Lake Annette and Paradise Valley, and Sentinel Pass. Each was reported to be special from touching the Stanley Glacier to the views from Sentinel Pass.

There were B/C hikes to Bourgeau Lake and Harvey Pass, Floe Lake, Cory and Edith Passes, Healy Pass and the Monarch Ramparts, Sherbrooke Lake and the Niles Meadows, and Traverse Mt. St. Piran. The sea of flowers in the Healy Pass meadows and the views from the pass above the Niles Meadows were reported to be especially memorable.

The C hikes included scrambles to Eiffel Peak, Vermilion Peak, Mt. Cory, Mt. Whympers, Sheol Mt. and Castle Mt. Fresh snow on the ground and a few falling flakes on the summit of Eiffel Peak added a special ambience. The views from atop Mt. Cory under perfectly clear skies were exceptional — including Castle

Mt., Mt. Temple, Mt. Assiniboine, Mt. Rundle and Banff. Mt. Whympers provided some interesting scrambling including the shoulder width chimney used to descend.

My opportunity to push the boundaries came with Andrzej's suggestion to hike to Castle Mountain. It seemed particularly inviting since we had a clear view of Castle from our hostel and the trailhead was within walking distance. The trail led first to Tower Lake then up to Rockbound Lake, which the book describes as a perfect glacial tarn with a limestone underlay which also paves Horseshoe Valley.

We climbed above Rockbound and stopped there where Andrzej studied the valley and the slopes of Castle and determined that we should be able to climb the scree slope to the ridge on Castle. We crossed the limestone which has been carved by frost action. It seemed as though we had stumbled upon an ancient Roman ruin.

We made our way up the scree slope. From this vantage point we could see the Bow Valley. We then scrambled to the bench above where there was a great view but it was narrow and no trail continued. We were both happy. Our elevation was only 20 meters lower than the official Castle Peak.

Camp was successful because of the skillful planning and choice of hikes by Bill. The hardest thing was choosing between so many good hikes. Cristina runs a great meeting and knows how to make decisions. Donna has years of experience on the trails and holds it all together with her warmth and charm.

The final ingredient that made this year's camp a joy was the sense of humour and fun displayed especially by Mack, Sam, Angelo and Pete with Majid as the straight man.

Did we just get lucky with the quirky mix of good people? Yes but I think it is more than that. I think it might have been the magic of the mountains. ■



Sheila Bard

Fireweed in glorious colour on Heidi's Floe Lake hike

Kananaskis-Waterton: Edge of Eden

July 25-August 1

By [Ron Dart](#), Alpine Club of Canada - Vancouver Section

Kananaskis Country is a large and expansive mountainous area not visited as much as Jasper, Banff or Waterton, but with plenty to see from high rock ridges to mountain cols to hanging lakes. We began our trip on the evening of Saturday, July 25th, when 12 of us met at the Kananaskis (formerly Ribbon Creek) hostel and made a tentative plan for the week ("tentative" because the weather in the area is rarely predictable).

July 26th began bright and blue, inviting and a cirque trek for the day before us. When we reached Highwood Pass (the highest paved road in Canada at almost 7300 ft), we were informed that Ptarmigan Cirque was closed (as were other fine trails due to multiple bear sightings).

We decided to do Rummel Lake (such an exquisite charmer) and windy Rummel Pass (where we had lunch high above the Alpine on a rocky shelter). The mountain flowers spoiled us and many a fine photo was taken by tarns and bouquet meadows. The rain started falling by the time we returned to Rummel Lake, so it was a hasty exit to the hostel for dinner. Ruthie Oltmann — the den mother at Ribbon Creek Hostel throughout most of the 1970s — joined us for a few hours in the evening to share with us plenty of good Kananaskis history.

On July 27th, the rain decided to soak soil, rocks, streams, lakes and forests. A few of us took to Elbow Lake and the trail to Rae Glacier while others did visits to Banff and Canmore. All of us met at The Grizzly Paw Brewing Company in Canmore for a tasty lunch and fun afternoon. Happily, the clouds parted and blue sky returned by late afternoon and we were able to take a leisurely walk by the hostel after dinner joined by a bear family.

July 28th was the longer trek day up Centennial Trail to the roof of Mt. Allan (the highest maintained trail in Canada at over 9200 feet). A bear crossed the road as we were about to begin our hike, but onwards we went. The trailhead begins near the hostel, and after an hour of hiking through the forest, generous views of the valley below revealed their beauty to us. The higher we trekked, the more we became surrounded by mountains and fresh snow peaks in all directions. The Centennial Trail to the summit of Mt. Allan is nearly a 4,500 ft. gain, but the journey along a high ridge, past Olympic Summit, round the gargoyle and goblin rock cemetery, ever upwards to the final saddle and peak made for a long day. A few touched the crown of Allan and others waited at the lower col — certainly sights worth the seeing and photos worth the taking.



Author Ron Dart (pictured to the right) ascending a high ridge with a "towering mass of a mountain" as the backdrop in Kananaskis National Park.



Trip participants crossing a high ledge on their way into a rock opening in Waterton National Park.

The long Mt. Allan day on the 28th meant a rest of sorts was in order on the 29th. We left our 4-day home at Kananaskis Hostel and headed southward to Waterton National Park. The drive takes 3-4 hours but the delight at day's end is more than worth the few hours in transit. We set up tents at Waterton Springs Campground (on the outskirts of the park), booked boat trips in Waterton for the Crypt Lake trek the following day, then returned to our campsites for dinner. The evening was a keeper. We went to the Russell family residence at Hawk's Nest perched on a butte overlooking Waterton. The Russell family have been at the forefront of mountain and conservation life in Alberta and beyond the last half-century. John Russell and Valerie Haig-Brown (of the equally important BC Haig-Brown family) charmed us with many a tale for a couple of hours — so much to tell, so little time. Saskatoon berry gorging behind us and a full day ahead of us, we left Hawk's Nest with many well-fed memories of Russell/Haig-Brown lore and legend.

Club Trips and Activities

(Charlie Russell being one of the leading Grizzly Bear experts in the world — see *Edge of Eden: Living with Grizzlies*).

We took to Crypt Lake on July 30th with a packed boat across the lake, but the crowd soon dispersed. The trek to Crypt, initially, goes through a dense forest, then the expansive views emerge — waterfalls aplenty, canyons abounding and the pathway leading to the inevitable ledge walk, ladder climb, rock cave, and a precipitous cliff. The final section of trail ends at Crypt Lake — such a spacious cathedral of rocks and snow still abundant. The Crypt Lake trek is one of the top 10 treks in the Rockies, so the the journey there and back again was worth the effort.

The Carthew-Alderson trip on July 31st was the real mountain delight — much less travelled and, in many ways, a pleasanter trip than Crypt. We caught the 8 a.m. 12-seater bus to Cameron Lake, then it was up through the forest for an hour. Summit Lake reached, we headed upwards to Carthew summit — such generous sights to see from the peak of hanging lakes, glaciers, alpine flowers and rock giants. After photos on the perch of Carthew, we began the ridge walk down to Carthew Lakes (upper and

lower). We were fortunate on the descent to see a large family of goats (a few, horns locked in combat on a nearby snowfield — some excellent photos taken of a rare event seen close-up).

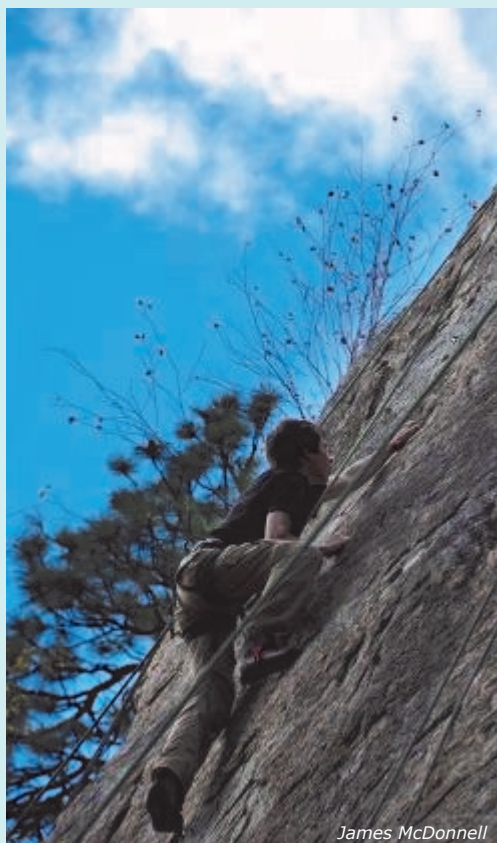
The journey downwards round Carthew Lakes (with lunch beside lower Carthew) took us past Alderson Lake, then it was another 7 kilometres through the forest back to Waterton townsite — another splendid blue sky day in the alpine.

We had a fine group dinner as a trek finale of sorts at a lovely restaurant overlooking Upper Waterton Lake. Then it was back to our campsite for farewells, each of us going in different directions come August 1st — some lingering at Waterton for a few days, others back to the Fraser Valley. We trekked almost 75 kilometres and ascended almost 15,000 feet (half way to Everest's white crowned summit) on our Kananaskis-Waterton trip — a good calorie burner, indeed. ■

Participants: Lucy Stad, Judy Pasemko, Carolyn Hrynyk, Lisa Siddons, Elly Morgan, Cathy Quinlan, Margaret Tranah, Robbin Yager, Sue Witt, Harry Waldron, John Mclellan, Ron Dart (trip organizer and reporter)

Introduction to Rock Climbing: Outdoor Adventures with the Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan

By Brad Roach, Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan



James McDonnell

A novice climber learns the ropes at VOCO's Intro to Rock Climbing weekend.

Students took to the rock walls the last weekend in September at the [Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan's \(VOCO\)](#) Introduction to Rock Climbing event. The club wrangled over 170 UBCO students and traveled to the famous Skaha Rock Bluffs in Penticton where beginner, intermediate and advanced climbers tackled numerous cliff routes of varying difficulty. The veteran climbers shared their knowledge with beginners teaching key skills for climbing. They made sure that everything was done in a safe and controlled manner but most importantly, ensured that everyone got to test their mettle on the rock.

After a lot of top-notch climbing from all of the participants, the trip took a break with everyone traveling from the bluffs to the Lost Moose campground. VOCO had booked the entire campground for the event so it was bound to be a good old fashioned bush party. En route, some members took a big leap into Skaha lake while others simply grabbed some camping supplies for the big evening. Reconvening at the Lost Moose, everyone set up camp and began cooking their finest cuisine for a lovely dinner before the festivities began.



James McDonnell

Experienced climbers shared their knowledge with beginners.

Once darkness fell, the party really got going. A large bonfire raged furiously, circled by UBCO students. Three trucks were parked close to the fire and using a generator, lights and amplifiers, a band set up for a big performance. Soon the crowd was dancing to live music by the fire. Good cheer was easy to find in the Lost Moose campground that night. Some managed to last into the morning light while others gradually drifted off to their tents where they managed to get a bit of rest for Sunday.

The morning treated some better than others, but gradually everyone rose from their slumber, ate breakfast and helped clean the garbage from the evening's festivities. The bold returned to the Skaha Bluffs to further hone their craft of rock climbing while most returned to Kelowna for rest, study and recovery. The trip was a success with no incidents, lots of good fun and plenty of great memories to last into the school year. The executive of VOCO would like to thank everyone who came on the trip and we look forward to experiencing more great outdoor adventures as the school year progresses. ■

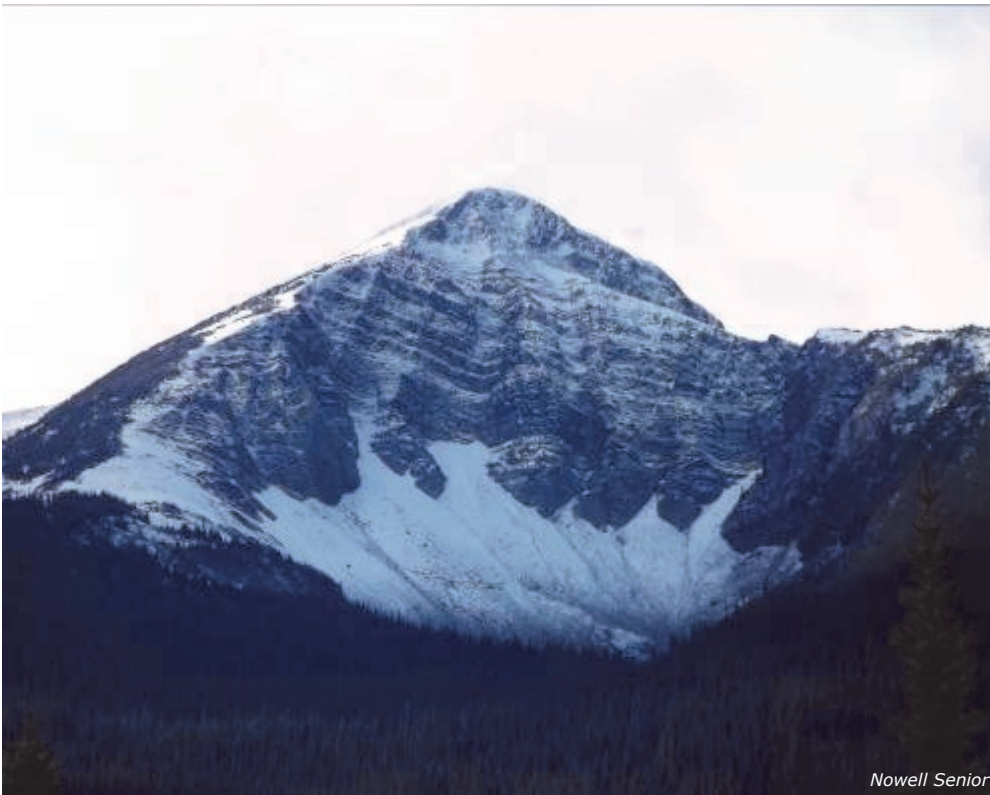


James McDonnell

A group shot of just some of the 170 UBCO students that took part in VOCO's Intro to Rock Climbing weekend.

Avoiding the Alders: A Trip Report on the Zig Zag Ridge

By Nowell Senior, Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club



Nowell Senior

Zig Zag Ridge in October

Zig Zag Ridge is a 7000-foot summit in the Crescent Spur area that Lyle, Ric, Mitch, Darryl and I have been exploring a route up to for the last couple of years.

Two weeks ago, Darryl and I went out once again to Zig Zag. I find that very often these trips are refreshingly educational, and this one was no exception. I have to tell you that my faith in Darryl's navigational skills was confirmed, and that I was surprised to learn that he possesses a second language, and a religious side – both of which he expressed with colour and zeal appropriate to the various circumstances we encountered along the way.

We began on an old logging road, which according to Darryl's map ought to have continued northwest for about 5 kilometres, but instead ended abruptly at an impenetrable tangle of alder which we decided was the last thing we wanted to get mixed up in. Instead, we wound our way up to the east end of Zig Zag Ridge by another route.

Club Trips and Activities

Rather than return to the vehicle by retracing our snowshoe tracks, we tried another route down and across the slope burned by the LaSalle Lakes forest fire a couple of years ago. With about five kilometres to go, we lost the firefighter's trail we'd hoped would lead us to the vehicle. By this time, we had been hiking for six hours – little did we know that this final five kilometres would take another six hours of slogging.

Darryl knew we had to hold our elevation to hit the road we had began on, but the terrain made it almost impossible to do. There were hundreds of large trees lying down that we climbed over, squeezed under, or staggered around. After what felt like an interminable amount of time, we finally left these fallen trees behind, only to be met by a virtual blockade of devil's club and new growth so dense we had to shoulder our way through it. Darryl's confidence as to our whereabouts never faltered, but it was while inching our way through this jungle in the dark that

Darryl's command of another language became apparent. Although it was a language composed entirely of single-syllable phrases, it described the situation and terrain we were in almost – but not quite poetically.

However, Darryl's poetic phases tapered off as we reached a band alders. It wasn't that these alders let us through any easier than the rest of the forest; it was that we suspected these might be indicating that we were on an old logging road. At last we came across the now star-lit tracks we had made 12 hours earlier – at the very spot where we had decided to avoid going into the impenetrable tangle of alders that we now emerged from. At the sight of these tracks, Darryl revealed his religious side by yelling "Manna from heaven!" and dropping to his knees in supplication.

This seems like a nice note to end on, so thanks for listening and goodnight to you all. ■



Friends of Garibaldi Park Society: Progress Report

By Al Jenkins, Friends of Garibaldi Park Society

Over the past three hiking seasons, major changes have occurred at the Black Tusk area of Garibaldi Park. BC Parks has contributed capital funds allowing significant improvements to be made each year.

A contract mini-excavator and crew have rebuilt large sections of trail from the Rubble Creek parking lot right up into the meadows. This has included some difficult sections of boardwalk at Taylor cabin, a new trail bridge at Taylor Creek Campground, major trail improvements through old growth forest, and foundation and roof repair to the old Taylor Ranger cabin. Many thanks to BC Parks for helping provide better environmental care and safety for the 20,000 plus users visiting this unique pristine area each year.

Two work parties were scheduled this past summer/autumn. The first in September was cancelled due to no participation – probably caused by forecasted wet weather and weekday timing. However the second one,

held October 2-4, proved very successful with seven volunteer participants and two BC Parks Rangers. Accomplishments this year include a reconstructed bridge near Black Tusk Junction, trail ditching maintenance, toilet painting, and sign upgrading.

FOGPS would like to thank BC Parks and all the park rangers who have guided and hosted our work parties, and provided such a welcome opportunity to enjoy the mountains. It is our hope these "parties" will continue to support Garibaldi Park.

I would also like to thank all the volunteers who have so generously given their skills and valuable time to come out and help. We have had many good times through all kinds of weather. Special thanks to all the people who lent their skills and expertise to the society over the years, whether it was in the form of web hosting, news media, consultations or a host of other special requests.

It has been a pleasure to be associated with Brian Wood and Jodi Appleton at the FMCBC and their pursuit of self-propelled recreation access. Their guidance along with that of the Southwest BC Recreation and Conservation Committee, has provided an unparalleled process other organizations could learn from.



Lindsey Gosnell

Oct 2-4, 2015 Work party participants: Terry, Kendra, Al, Alex, Sara, Brent, Paula, and Miquel



Al Jenkins

Major trail work creates safer hiking



Al Jenkins

Refurbished Taylor Cabin

On a more personal note, I would like to thank Kirsten, Jason, Brian and Jodi, and everyone who helped initiate and contribute to the ongoing operation of the FOGPS. I now feel it is time for new energy to take over as FOGPS President so I will pass this responsibility on to our Directors.

Thanks everyone for all your support.

- Al Jenkins

Outgoing president, Friends of Garibaldi Park Society

Additional comments from Interim President, Brian Wood:

At the FOGPS' November 5th meeting, Al formally resigned as President and I was elected as "interim" President for the Society to continue to carry out its mandate. I take this opportunity to thank Al for his vision to single-handedly establish the Society and for serving as president for the past four years.

In this position, with the help of a handful of directors and volunteers, he worked hard to publicize the sorry state of the trails in Garibaldi Provincial Park, which he knows intimately from his years of work there as a park ranger and area supervisor. Over the last four summers the society organized several work parties of volunteers who, under the supervision of rangers, worked on trails, bridges, signage and campground facilities. There is still much work to be done.

I realize that many folks feel strongly that volunteers should not have to work on provincial park infrastructure as we are paying for such work in our taxes. However, the budget of BC Parks has been cut back many times over the last decade or so, and it is obvious that this infrastructure work would not have been done without our volunteers.

Recently, BC Parks has provided funding for trail maintenance by supplying a mini-excavator for ditching and lumber for board walks and bridges. One could suggest that the energetic work

and results of the FOGPS volunteers over these few years had triggered an unexpected increase in funding — an argument for continuing to volunteer in parks. As a side issue, publicly funded parks in many countries, including the USA, use volunteers for many varied tasks from trail work to hosts in camping areas.

So, the FOGPS will continue with trail work as before, but because actual trail work can occur only when the trails are free of snow, I propose that the FOGPS forms a committee to support other pressing concerns related to the park, such as assisting in planning for infrastructure maintenance and advocating for the park in partnership with the FMCBC and other like-minded organizations.

This advocacy work could include working with other government agencies as well as BC Parks to include improving access to the park. This type of planning or advocacy work may appeal to folks who would like to help the park but who disagree with performing actual physical work in the parks on a volunteer basis.

If you're interested in helping the FOGPS work on trails and/or supporting the park in other roles, please visit our [website](#) and/or contact us at info.fogps@gmail.com. ■

Prince George Heritage Walk

By [Mike Nash](#), Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club

This year, the City of Prince George not only hosted the Canada Winter Games but also celebrated its 100th birthday. As part of the civic celebration, the [Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club](#) hosted a guided heritage walk in the city on Sunday July 12, 2015.

After weeks of hot dry weather, the rain at the start of the heritage walk was welcomed by all who took part. Meeting at the Kiwanis Bowl bandstand in the newly renamed Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park (previously Fort George Park) provided a large, open but sheltered space in which to get the paperwork formalities out of the way and to dispense commemorative water bottles and anniversary pins.

Two hikes were offered, a long hike of ten kilometres through South Fort George and back along the Gunn Trail, and a shorter walk that focused on the Hudson's Bay Wetland and South Fort George and extended to look at historic planning proposals in the downtown. In total, there were 42 people on the two hikes, plus Mayor Lyn Hall, City Councillor Murry Krause, and former City Councillor and Freeman of the City Shirley Gratton. Both walks were timed to arrive back at the park in time to watch the finish of the resurrected and once famous 'Northern Canoe Race' from Isle Pierre on the Nechako River to Fort George on the Fraser River.

After pausing at the Alexander Mackenzie monument next to the bandstand, we first headed over to the ceremonial entrance to the Lheidli T'enneh cemetery, where Councillor Murry Krause

Club Trips and Activities

Travis Stringer



Hudson Bay Wetland Project

spoke about the recent renaming of the park, and Laura Ryser spoke about the legacy of late local historian Kent Sedgwick, whose book about the Lheidli T'enneh cemetery has just been published posthumously. As we arrived at the cemetery, there was a Lheidli T'enneh elder sitting inside who spoke about what the cemetery meant to him and his family.

Moving onward as one large group, we headed next to the Hudson's Bay Wetland where we met Clive Keen from the Prince George Naturalists Club who spoke about the Wetland Project. We then moved on to the first viewing platform, where Anne Hogan, who has been heading up much of the work on the project for the Prince George Naturalists Club, spoke further about it. Moving on to Paddlewheel Park, Laura Ryser and I spoke briefly about the history of South Fort George and the 'three Georges.' As well, a participant in the long hike, Lheidli T'enneh elder Duncan Gouchie took the opportunity to welcome us to the traditional territory and to speak about Prince George's heritage from a First Nation's perspective and what the cemetery meant to him also. We were fortunate to have two Lheidli T'enneh elders participate and speak in this heritage event, adding significantly to the day.

At this point the two groups separated and went their respective ways. The smaller group walked to downtown where they explored how our climate and weather has influenced (or not influenced) historic planning. This included a discussion of the layout of the townsite, the Miracle Plan, the Centrum Plan, the canopy system from the 1970s, the Cadillac-Fairview Project, and various downtown revitalization proposals – all of which have had varying success with climate-responsive design. Their last stop was the Terry Fox statue which commemorated his participation in the Prince George "Boston Marathon" as a practice leading up to his historic run. They arrived back at Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park at 11 a.m., just in time to watch the first canoe arrive. [Paragraph provided by Laura Ryser].

The larger group worked its way alongside the Fraser River, pausing to view some heritage places such as the site of the BX

paddle wheeler landing, and one of the oldest standing structures remaining in the city. We rendezvoused with a 'Guardian Angels' crew right on schedule for the crossing of Queensway at the Simon Fraser Highway Bridge monument. An added surprise was that one of the two ladies who provided the traffic control for us proudly pointed out her name on the large bronze plaque listing BC bridge and highway workers alongside the names of the Prime Minister and Premier of the day. Naturally, we asked her and her co-worker to join us for a group photograph.

After crossing the bridge and looking at Justin Rusel's artwork embossed in the bridge concrete commemorating Simon Fraser meeting the First Nations, we started on the nearly four kilometre traverse of the Gunn Trail atop the Fraser River cutbanks, pausing to talk a little about the trail's history and to admire the proximate view of the city, which might be likened to Stanley Park's forestland overlooking downtown Vancouver. The Gunn Trail was named for renowned railway surveyor, Luther Collins Gunn and was built by former FMCBC Director, the late George Evanoff, who is commemorated on a bronze BC Rivers Day plaque at the north end of the trail in LC Gunn Park. We arrived back at Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park on schedule at 12:30 p.m. in time to see the lively and festive end of the Northern Canoe Race. The welcome rain that fell at the start of the hike tapered off quickly and most of the four-hour walk hike was done under dry and sometimes sunny skies.

Counting the people who spoke along the way, we had a grand total of 50 people participating. Special thanks to those who helped organize, run, and/or speak in the event, including Nowell Senior, Dave King, Laura Ryser, Carolyn Ibis, Travis Stringer, Doug Hofstede, Kathleen Angelski, Mayor Lyn Hall, Councillor Murry Krause, Lheidli T'enneh Elder Duncan Gouchie, and Prince George Naturalist Club members Clive Keen and Anne Hogan. Thanks also to other club members who provided support and informal prompts along the way to help keep things running smoothly and safely. It was a wonderful team effort and one that we should do again someday! ■



Mike Nash

George Evanoff plaque, LC Gunn Park, Prince George

Outreach Can Be Fun!

By Patrick Harrison, Hike BC



Author Pat Harrison representing the FMCBC and Hike BC at Pools Day in Manning Park in July.

To celebrate Trails Day on June 6, I was invited by the Metro Vancouver Regional District's parks division to participate in the opening of the Perimeter Trail in Campbell Valley Regional Park. Part of the Perimeter Trail has been designated as the National Hiking Trail (Hike BC). While at this event, I handed out FMCBC literature as well as NHT literature and T-Shirts. At other tents, families could collect stamps and fill their passports if they hiked the whole distance. It was a great opportunity to engage the public.

In July, I participated in [Pools Day at Manning Provincial Park](#), along with the BC Backcountry Horsemen and BC Parks. We set up our tents at Lightning Lakes where we interacted with several hundred people who were visiting the park that weekend. Again, it was an opportunity to spread the word about the FMCBC, Hike BC, and the National Hiking Trail. While the temperatures were scorching in the Lower Mainland, the temperature at Lightning Lakes was perfect.



In September, Alanna Mahr and Pat Harrison represented the FMCBC at Sea to Sky Gondola's Hike Fest event.

One way to do outreach for the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC is to participate in the activities that various levels of government and private industry put on throughout the summer for people using the outdoors. This summer, I represented the FMCBC and [Hike BC](#) at four locations for four different events. All four events were positive experiences.

In May, several members of the Federation of Mountain Clubs and Hike BC participated in the [Share the Trails](#) conference in Richmond that is hosted annually by the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC and the BC Backcountry Horsemen. The main speaker at this event was Eagle Walz of the Powell River Parks and Wilderness Association. He and his fellow PRPWAers have built a (mostly) single track trail primarily for hikers called the Sunshine Coast Trail. Along the way they have built 14 backcountry huts for visitors to use. The trail is 180 km long and runs from Lund, BC to Saltery Bay. Hike BC is delighted that this 180 km is part of the National Hiking Trail of Canada (est. 1971).



The FMCBC's new display, pictured here at Hike Fest in Squamish in September.

Some time ago, I committed to participating in [HikeFest](#) with Alanna Mahr, the FMCBC's Communications and Administrative Assistant. The event was held at the top of Squamish's [Sea to Sky Gondola](#), and I had no idea what I was in for. In addition to getting a ride up the gondola, I also had the opportunity to hike one of the shorter trails at the top. Alanna and I interacted with many visitors who came to HikeFest and were enjoying the scenery at the Plaza at the Visitor Centre at the top. Many people were unaware of the role that the FMCBC plays in protecting the backcountry for self-propelled enthusiasts, and again, we were able to inform them about the FMCBC and Hike BC.

I look forward to participating in more of these public forums and getting the word out about the FMCBC and Hike BC/National Hiking Trail. ■

Some Good Reads

Death on Denali: Climbing Disasters on Mount McKinley

Narrated Jeffrey T. Babcock
Reviewed by [Ron Dart](#),
ACC - Vancouver Section

*I saw the mountains where the
unchanging sunrise lay.*

- C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*

Death on Denali is a fit and fine companion to Jeffrey Babcock's charmer and suspense-packed non-fiction novel, *Should I Not Return* (2012). In fact, the finely-tuned and wisely orchestrated telling of the various Denali expeditions in *Death on Denali* (running time 106 minutes) invites many a viewing as mountaineering tales unfold from multiple angles.

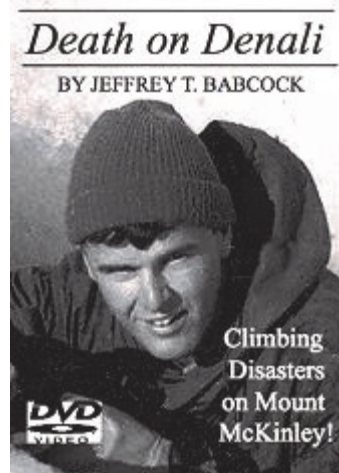
There are many layers to ponder in this DVD. Mountaineering history buffs (with an interest in the many attempts to summit Denali) are offered a generous and informed aerial overview of the many attempts in the early decades of the 20th century by the dishonest Dr. Cook, the Sourdough Expedition, Brown, Stuck and the formidable Bradford Washburn to summit Denali (some more successful than others). The DVD is worth watching if for no other reason than the early attempts (some more tragic than others) to stand on the South Peak of Denali have their own magnetic attraction.

For those with an abiding interest in understanding why 7 of the 12 on the Wilcox climb died on Denali in July 1967, Jeffrey Babcock, to his meticulous credit, points the way to must-read books to get a fix and feel for different interpretive approaches to the 1967 disaster: Snyder (1973), Wilcox (1981), Tabor (2007), Babcock (2012), Hall (2014), and even Sheldon's *Wager in the Wind*.

In fact, Jeffrey was on the 1967 Denali climb, not as a member of the Wilcox team, but he did participate in the search and rescue attempt (sadly there were none to rescue). *Death on Denali* has plenty of graphic photos of both the sheer beauty and cathedral like magnificence of Denali, but also the remnants and remains of those who perished — sights not for the faint of heart.

Death on Denali integrates two successful summit climbs that Jeffrey has made to the roof of McKinley in 1967 and 1977. The 1977 expedition (led by Jeffrey) had its own nail-biter of a conclusion when, groping in whiteout conditions, Jeffrey managed to find an abandoned igloo high on Denali's flanks in which the team could take shelter from a flailing storm.

There is also a more reflective and philosophical tone in the DVD, pointing and hinting towards a deeper spiritual aspect to mountaineering. There are literal and spiritual mountains, there are literal and spiritual treks and climbs — none can avoid the



latter pilgrimage through life. Some of the final reflections, including poignant and evocative insights from a sister of one of the deceased climbers are tender and deep.

There are many reasons that *Death on Denali* is a must-see and purchase: the visual mountain feast of Denali from different angles, bunched up glaciers and deep gorged crevasses, ant-like climbers and the surrounding mountains, plus some tidbits of Alaskan history that make this a generous entrée to mountaineering lore and legend.

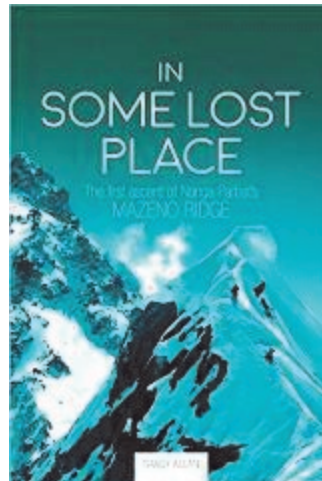
There is no doubt that *Should I Not Return* and *Death on Denali* are hand in glove fits — they belong together and the one without the other is like a right without a left arm, a left without a right leg — in short, much is missing and unbalanced when only one or the other is read, watched and pondered. The creative genius and tale-telling beauty of these mountaineering classics should be in the library of anyone minimally concerned with the often complicated yet tantalizing world of mountaineering culture of which Denali has many secrets revealed and yet to be revealed. ■

In Some Lost Place: The first ascent of Nanga Parbat's Mazeno Ridge

By Sandy Allan

Published by Vertebrate Publishing, 2015

Reviewed by [Mike Nash](#), *Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club*



In the last issue of *Cloudburst*, I suggested that if one was to read just one mountaineering book this year, it should be John Porter's 'One Day As A Tiger: Alex MacIntyre and the Birth of Light and Fast Alpinism.' Deservedly, that book won both and Mountaineering History Award and the Grand Prize at the 2014 Banff Mountain Book Festival. Now, I have to qualify that recommendation with another superb book from the same source, Vertebrate Publishing of Sheffield, England.

In Some Lost Place by Scottish climber and certified mountain guide Sandy Allan is one of the best mountaineering books that I have ever read. It is the account of the 2012 first ascent of the world's ninth highest and notorious mountain, Nanga Parbat, via the exposed and committing Mazeno Ridge. The achievement earned Sandy Allan and his partner, Rick Allen, a coveted Piolet d'Or award 2013.

In Some Lost Place is also a model of how to write a mountaineering book. It is a beautifully-written, well-organized, edgy account of an audacious achievement by a well-matched team, with little of the interpersonal drama that so often accompanies such endeavors. Nobody died or was seriously hurt, and the two eventual summiters—both no longer young—had just the right

balance of experience and fitness to pull off one of the world's remaining high-mountain challenges. Allan's narrative of their final and seemingly impossible descent is as gripping as anything I've read.

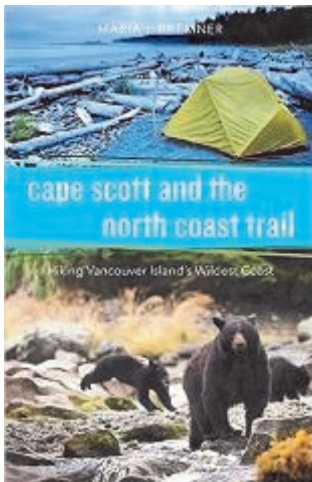
With just 200 pages of text, plus 32 colour pages comprising 67 plates and route information, all clearly annotated, and an index (all too often missing these days), this hardcover book lacks nothing. It was hard for me to see why it would not win some top mountain book prizes this year, and indeed it has been selected as a finalist for the 2015 Boardman Tasker Award. I understand from Vertebrate Publishing that the book was also submitted to the 2015 Banff Mountain Book Festival, yet despite my prediction (always a dangerous thing to do) to the editors of Cloudburst that it was another potential Banff Grand Prize winner for Vertebrate, I was surprised to see that it had not even been selected as a category finalist. Both the climbing achievement and the book were so well done that I'm still scratching my head over this, especially as Sandy Allan and Rick Allen were the subjects of a 'Voices of Adventure' interview conversation with Geoff Powder at last year's festival and described as the 'climb of the century.' Check out this book and see what you think. This is my pick of the year and perhaps of the decade. Highly recommended! ■

Cape Scott and the North Coast Trail: Hiking Vancouver Island's Wildest Coast

By Maria I. Bremner

Published by Harbour Publishing, 2015

*Reviewed by Matthew Lettington,
Island Mountain Ramblers*



Cape Scott Provincial Park is a treasure unlike any other wilderness park on Vancouver Island. Visiting it is more than just a walk in the park past giant cedars and along expansive beaches, it's a walk through Vancouver Island's history. In every nook the park hides the story of multiple settlement attempts and the secrets of a military radar installation dating back to WWII. But how do you find the many secrets the park holds?

Until recently, park users only had Parks BC content, small sections in a few books, and trip reports to

rely on for information. Last year Maria Bremner published what is sure to be the definitive guide for the park. It includes all the details needed to plan a trip and make the most of your stay in the park. To say a book is a perfect tool for planning a trip is a serious statement to make, but I feel that this book comes close. Weighing in at under a pound, the book makes a possible travel companion, and its rounded corners and plasticized paper cover give it durability. It contains detailed trip information including logistical information like traveling to and from the park, sugges-

tions for the number of days you should spend, equipment lists, information about flora and fauna, and most importantly information regarding man's history in the park. The abundance of information is easy read and well organized, and with more than 100 colour photographs and maps it's a feast for the eyes.

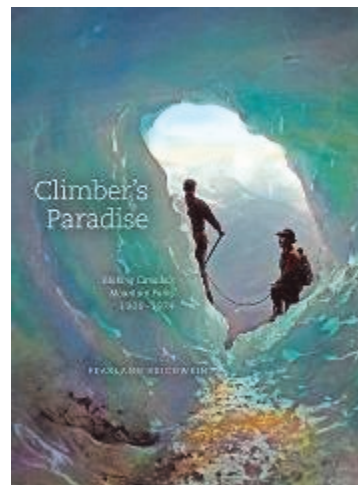
Cape Scott is my favourite park on the island — I've hiked to the lighthouse and back nine times. I know the park well, the ins and outs of the side trail and most of the well-documented history of the park. However, this book had content that was useful to me. It revealed more of the parks secrets. I guess I'm planning my tenth trip now! ■

Climber's Paradise: Making Canada's Mountain Parks, 1906-1974

By Pearl Ann Reichwein

University of Alberta Press, 2014

Reviewed by Ron Dart, ACC - Vancouver Section



There has long been a need for a finely-crafted book on the relationship between the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) and Canada's mountain parks — Climber's Paradise tells the tale in an exquisite manner and, in doing so, reveals much about the complexities of Canada's mountaineering history and ethos.

The symbiotic relationship between the ACC, Canada's mountain parks and, not to be neglected, the country's politics and political parties, has never been probed and ex-

plored to the extent that Climber's Paradise achieves. This account is replete with fine photographs and short biographies of some of the main actors in Canada's mountaineering history. In an insightful and evocative manner, each chapter walks the curious reader down and up all sorts of pathways and ridge walks alongside the who's who of Canadian alpine life. The various and varied tensions that the ACC faced at different transitions in Canadian history are unpacked and clarified in a nuanced and detailed manner. Those who are keen on hard facts are delivered plenty of the goods; those who tend to be taken by diverse reads of controversial moments in Canadian alpine life are ushered into the thick of the fray.

Many of the side bars in Climber's Paradise are biographical primers on significant Canadian mountaineers and activists, which provide much needed information and delightful tidbits about the internal workings, tensions and issues facing the ACC and Canada's mountain parks — not to be missed.

Climber's Paradise wisely and judiciously unpacks the ongoing story of the ACC, Canadian mountain parks and politics in eight chapters that cover the terrain in a historic manner: 1) Imagining

Some Good Reads

Canada's Mountain Parks, 2) Canada's Alpine Club, 3) Mountaineering Camp in the Tented Town, 4) Advocacy for Canada's Hetch Hetchy, 5) Conservation, Sport Tactics, and War Measures 6) Limitless Playgrounds? 7) Belonging to Mountain Landscapes, and the timely and insightful Epilogue. The appendices, footnotes and extensive bibliography make this hefty tome a book not to miss in the Canadian mountaineering archival and library collection — it definitely outdoes and surpasses previous work in the field.

My main regret after putting down this historic keeper is that the tale was brought to a close in 1974. So much has happened of worth and note with the Alpine Club of Canada, Parks Canada and the fragile relationship between political parties and Parks Canada since 1974 that more of the controversial tale needs to be told.

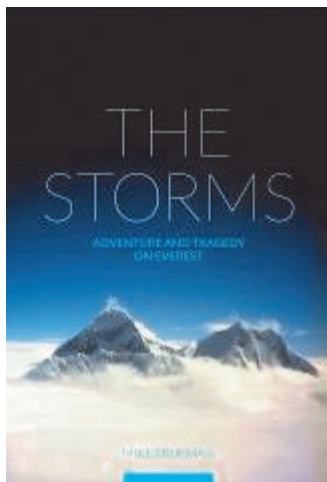
Reichwein has certainly emerged, in the last decade plus, as one of the primary keepers of the distinctive Canadian mountaineering tradition, and Climber's Paradise confirms yet again why this is the indubitable case. Do purchase, read and digest this A+ masterpiece of the unique Canadian mountaineering tradition told from a wise and balanced perspective. ■

The Storms: Adventure and tragedy on Everest

By Mike Trueman

Published by Baton Wicks, 2015

Reviewed by [Mike Nash](#), Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club



The Storms is a memoir by British mountaineer and Himalayan expedition veteran Mike Trueman, written mostly around events occurring on Mount Everest in the late 1990s. Trueman, a former British army officer with the Gurkhas, a graduate of the Royal Military College in Sandhurst, former helicopter pilot with the Army Air Corps, former commander of the Army Mountain Training Centre in Germany, and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, has organized and led wide-ranging international expeditions, as well as holding

governmental, aid agency and private sector positions around the world. He was at Camp 2 on Everest during the tragic events of May 10-11 1996 when an unprecedented eight climbers lost their lives in a sudden storm that hit the summit ridge. A Nepalese language speaker with both a climbing and military background, Trueman descended to base camp to help coordinate rescue efforts.

The book opens with stage-setting accounts of Trueman's life starting with his being caught in another infamous storm (at sea) in August 1979 that took several boats and fifteen lives. Trueman

had enrolled as a 'boy soldier' in the British army at age 16, and the first three chapters mostly comprise anecdotes from his time in the military before coming to the book's main theme. Arriving at Everest base camp on the Nepalese side in April 1996, the author first provides a portrait of life there and the dramas unfolding in the early stages of the various expeditions.

Higher on the mountain, Trueman meets the indomitable Swede, Göran Kropp, who was attempting an unassisted ascent of Everest, having traveled by bicycle from sea level in Sweden. Kropp reappears later in the book, providing a connection for me as I spent two days in November 1999 hosting him in Prince George during a book tour. Kropp was a charismatic, larger-than-life yet down-to-earth person who made a lasting impression on people he met during his stay here, and it was a shock to hear of his death in September 2002 on a rock climb in nearby Washington State.

In his own book Kropp unflatteringly mistakes Trueman for someone else, resulting in a legal settlement; but Trueman doesn't dwell on this beyond setting the record straight and he gives credit to Kropp's mountaineering exploits. In a similar vein, he recognizes the heroic actions of another prominent and controversial figure, Anatoli Boukreev on that fateful day in May 1996 as Boukreev makes repeated attempts to rescue stranded climbers in the height of the storm. I heard Boukreev speak in Banff in the fall of 1997, shortly before the American Alpine Club bestowed on him its highest award for valour for his role in rescuing climbers in the 1996 disaster. A few weeks later, on Christmas Day 1997, Boukreev was killed on a winter ascent of Annapurna. In the Storms, Trueman tracks the fates of these and other 1996 Everest veterans who were to die within a few short years, noting that their deaths were not too surprising given their high risk lifestyles.

I was skeptical on starting this book about the need for another retelling of the 1996 events on Everest, but Trueman's book is important in several respects: 1) It is an account by a knowledgeable observer giving a new and impartial appraisal of events 2) it is a memoir of a man who has led an extraordinary life of adventure and world travel 3) Everest has seen unprecedented avalanche and earthquake-related tragedies in the last two years making it timely for a fresh retrospective on incidents that marked the beginning of this era of commercial high-altitude mountaineering; and 4) it is also timely with the release this fall of the big budget movie, Everest, also set in 1996.

Trueman devotes the last part of his chronicle to return trips to Everest, culminating in his personal summit in 1999 and a later visit in 2001. As a clear authority in the field, he uses the closing chapters to discuss emerging issues of commercial high altitude mountaineering.

The Storms could have benefited from an index, plus for me the book struggled a bit between being a personal memoir and a narrative of the 1996 Everest disaster and its aftermath. Overall, I found Trueman's work to be a worthwhile and engaging read that presents a unique perspective told by a consummate and dispassionate professional. Recommended. ■

Member Club Grant News

The Sigurd Trail Work Week

By Paul Kubik, BC Mountaineering Club

I would like to thank the Federation of Mountain Clubs for its financial support through the [Member Club Grant](#) of the one week BCMC work party in August. I was joined by veteran trail builders Peter Malacarne and Doug Lonsbrough, who I would also like to thank for their commitment. It is noteworthy when someone is willing to spend a week of their vacation time on a project that ultimately benefits so many other individuals.

We set up at Moraine Camp below the north face of Ossa Mountain on the glacial outwash plain. We used the same site as last October's camp, which was funded by the BCMC. The site for the large canvas 10x12 tent was reused and the outhouse facility we installed last year is still intact and usable.

Our primary objective was to clear a route for one kilometre through the west side of the moraine to Ossa Camp — the informal, rocky campsite at a group of three small lakes on the way to the west ridge of Ossa Mountain. Rather than use the shortest distance path that has evolved over the years, we relocated a significant portion of the route to avoid a massive rock fall and swampy, wet ground. The new route is somewhat counterintuitive because it jogs 150 meters downstream to avoid the chief difficulties. The new route was cleared and rejoins the existing route a short distance below the lakes where the upper camp lies.



Paul Kubik

BCMC volunteer trail builders Peter Malacarne, Paul Kubik and Doug Lonsbrough at the start of the new trail segment from Moraine Camp to Ossa Camp.



Paul Kubik

Doug Lonsbrough drilling the rock to set a trail marker.

Our secondary objective was to scout a route down into Sigurd headwaters. This objective was also met. The route roughly follows the 1,230 meter contour along a heathered bench west of the moraine. The Ossa Camp trail branches off from the bench route about a third of the way along. The end of the bench is approximately one kilometre west of Moraine Camp. At its end, the route drops steeply down a vegetated gully for a vertical distance of 75 meters. The gully can mostly be hiked without the assistance of hands. At this time of year the gully was dry. We stopped flagging at the bottom of the gully. Having spent numerous bushwhacks examining possible routes from Moraine Camp into the headwaters, I firmly believe the 1,230 meter contour and the 75 meter gully is the best option for accessing the headwaters of Sigurd Creek.

From a wildlife and environmental impact point of view, what we call Moraine Camp is clearly the least harmful campsite option on the Ossa approach. We observed no large animal scat in the camp area. Wildlife would have difficulty traversing the enormous piles of boulders east and

west of the camp. Below camp is a huge slide alder swath; Above it is steep rock and glacier. A glacial stream emanates from the toe of the lower ice field only 200 meters away. A prevailing wind off the glacier offers respite from annoying bugs which can be horrendous at times. The flat outwash plain provides for a lot of low impact tent sites and there is an established toilet facility.

Ossa Camp has the greater potential to impact wildlife because there is more vegetation and the presence of a large blueberry crop nearby. It links to Sigurd headwaters by the 1,230 meter contour route I described or other bush routes so is easily accessible to wildlife. The lake water sources at the camp are questionable for potable water. There is no permanently flowing stream, outhouse facility or tent sites. The camp's only advantage is that it is closer to the west ridge of Ossa. However, this advantage is lessened now that there is a decent footpath through the moraine. I estimate it is only 20-30 minutes from Moraine Camp to Ossa Camp with a light pack. A reasonable party could easily camp at Moraine Camp and still make short work of the west ridge climb. It would also save carrying a heavy overnight pack the final 300 meters up to the higher camp.

The BCMC would like to continue to extend the trail into the Sigurd headwaters and eventually Sigurd Lake. Two viable routes have been identified for reaching Sigurd Lake. I have requested approval of the work from BC Parks. It is my understanding it is awaiting a field visit by park staff to acquaint themselves with the proposed work and an examination of the impacts. The trail extension under proposal is envisioned in the master plan for the Esté-tiwil/Sigurd Creek Conservancy. It will be a truly outstanding trail that will expand the appeal to the broader hiking community and continue to appeal to mountain climbers and backcountry skiers. ■

FMCBC Member Clubs

CENTRAL INTERIOR

Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society
Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club
Fraser Headwaters Alliance
Ozalenka Alpine Club

NORTH COAST

Mount Remo Backcountry Society

METRO VANCOUVER

Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver
Alpine Club of Canada – Whistler
BC Mountaineering Club
Friends of Garibaldi Park
Hike BC
North Shore Hikers
North Vancouver Outdoors Club
Outsetters Club of Vancouver
SFU Outdoor Club
Valley Outdoor Association
Vancouver Rock Climbing Group
Varsity Outdoor Club UBC

FRASER VALLEY

Backroads Outdoor Club
Chilliwack Outdoor Club

SOUTHERN INTERIOR

Kamloops Hiking Club
Kootenay Mountaineering Club
Penticton Outdoors Club
South Okanagan Trail Alliance
Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan

VANCOUVER ISLAND AND ISLANDS

Alberni Valley Outdoor Club
Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver Island
Comox District Mountaineering Club
Friends of Strathcona Park
Island Mountain Ramblers
Outdoor Club of Victoria
Quadra Island Outdoor Club
Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association
Vancouver Island Trails Information Society
Victoria Outdoor Club Meetup

Volunteer with the FMCBC!

Help us protect the backcountry for non-motorized users by volunteering a little or a lot—every bit helps.

We are looking for individuals with skills and/or experience in many different areas including social media, communications, grant writing and more.

Contact us for more info (info@mountainclubs.org or 604-873-6096) or talk to your club's FMCBC Director.

A beautiful winter day in the Lake Dubois Provincial Protected Area



Doug Smith

Help us advocate—Join the FMCBC!

By working with outdoor recreation organizations, industry and government agencies, the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC protects and maintains access for quality non-motorized backcountry recreation in British Columbia's mountains and wilderness areas.

We represent 5000 individuals from 34 non-motorized outdoor recreation clubs across BC. Here's how you can get involved:

Join one of our member clubs (listed on this page)
Encourage your club to join the FMCBC (\$10 per member)
Join as an individual (\$25 per year)

Make a tax deductible donation to help us build and upgrade BC trails
Sign up for our newsletters

Learn more at www.mountainclubs.org