

CLOUDBURST

How to stay safe in the backcountry

Plants to avoid on your treks

An inspirational trip to Nepal

The VOC takes a long traverse



FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF BC Spring/Summer 2010

FMCBC and Cloudburst Information



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

The FMCBC

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

Membership

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

Executive

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

Directors

Dave King (ACC-PG, CR), Antje Wahl (ACC-Van), Martin Smith (ACC-VI), Rob Gunn (AVOC), Brian Wood (BCMC), Dean Pollack (BOC), Ken Rodonets (CDMC), Don Hay (COC), Roy Howard (FHA), Bill Perry (IMR), Dave Grant (KMC), Travis Carter (MRBS), Eleanor Acker (NVOC), Dave Lavery (OC), Max Bitel (SFU), John Harris (VITIS), Mike Stewart (VOA), Breanne Johnson (VOC)

Committee Co-Chairs

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

Cloudburst

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Cover Photo taken by Peter Oostlander

Featuring left to right Bob Boyer, Afshin Kamalvand and Trudy Rey on a North Shore Hikers weekend trip to Sugarloaf Mountain near Pemberton in August 2007

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Articles

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

Submission Deadlines: Fall/Winter - Oct 15

Spring/Summer - April 15

Email articles to: admin.manager@mountainclubs.org

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

\$400 back page \$300 full page

\$160 ½ page \$80 ¼ page

\$40 business card

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



The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Working on your behalf

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

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

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

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

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

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

President's Report

President's Report

Brian Wood



David Robertson

Brian Wood at Eastern Garibaldi Park

It seems the FMCBC is constantly changing, or perhaps it has always been changing but I was not aware of it. Usually financial numbers, but also sometimes membership numbers, seem to be the main drivers of change. To adjust for funding cuts, we have been trying to reduce our operating costs and in this regard we have been so successful we have recovered from a financially unsustainable position to a financial surplus. The question now arises as to what we should do, if anything, with this surplus, bearing in mind it may not last! As the FMCBC is a “grass roots” organization which favours a “bottom-up” management style, the FMCBC club directors are seeking input from the member clubs. A comprehensive survey will be sent to the executive committee of each club for their input. For a true “grass-roots, approach we will likely also ask for member’s input by using a less comprehensive survey. In this way we hope to determine a future direction for the FMCBC to aid us in preparing a strategic plan. To provide a background for this survey, and to assist those who are new to the FMCBC, please review the “Cost and Benefit Review” arti-

cle by Monika Bittel of the BC Mountaineering Club on page 7 of this issue. Do not forget, we need your input to make these surveys useful.

This will be the second issue of *Cloudburst* that will **not** be automatically mailed to club members, a situation which arose as we lost a grant for printing and mailing costs, and also to respond to many members’ desires to reduce waste of resources. This is to remind you that you may still obtain, at no extra cost, a printed copy mailed to you if you request it, which is usually possible on your club’s membership application/or renewal form. All club members who supply their email addresses can receive an electronic version in which all images will be in full colour, which is not feasible with the mailed printed copy. Also, please remember that *Cloudburst* would not exist without contributions of articles from our members. So, if you would like to write about your concerns relating to backcountry recreation, or you want to report on your club’s activities or a great trip you did, please send in your article, preferably with images and see your work in print.

The fiscal year 2009/10 was the first year we used Capri Insurance Ltd to provide general liability insurance and directors’ and officers’ insurance for our member clubs who needed this service. This service had been provided for many years by another company but we were often confused as to the coverage offered. The Capri Insurance representative attended last year’s AGM and we feel now better equipped to answer members’ concerns, but there are still many aspects we are working on to improve our understanding of this coverage. Please contact us if you have questions relating to this service.

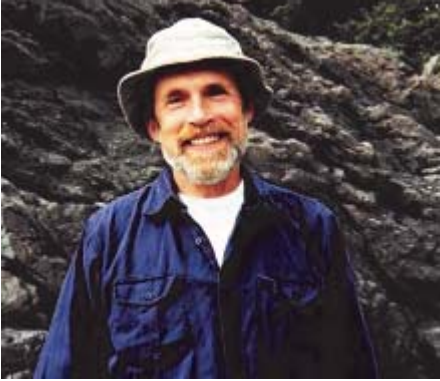
Now that the Olympics are over we intend to encourage the provincial government to return to other issues which have been put on the back burner for a few years. Together with the Outdoor Recreation Council, we will promote an increase in funding to help maintain and expand our parks infrastructure and services which have been sadly neglected for many years. Following from the meetings of the Provincial Trails Strategy, we might be seeing some action that would help maintain our resource roads, some of which facilitate access to parks as well as the backcountry, but do not hold your breath on this one. The good news is that the government has started drafting legislation to require licensing/registration of motorized off-road vehicles (MORVs) which may help to reduce the conflicts between the motorized recreationists and non-motorized (self-propelled) recreationists that arise in the backcountry. At present it is essentially impossible to control MORV trespassing into parks or unacceptable operation of these machines on Crown Land. If passed, this legislation should bring BC into line with most if not all jurisdictions in Canada and the USA.

This is a reminder to report your concerns over deterioration of park infrastructure and services, resource or access road maintenance problems, and MORV conflict problems to the “Campaigns” page of the www.bivouac.com website. Do not forget it is up to you, our members and the other folks who get out and recreate in our parks and backcountry, to help provide the evidence we need to help move the government in the right direction to help correct the sadly deteriorating condition of our Crown Land. ■

Messages from the Editors

What Are We Doing Here?

Bill Perry (Island Mountain Ramblers)



Bill Perry

I asked, in last spring's *Cloudburst* editorial, what the role of the Federation might be in these times – whether we should continue to pursue our advocacy role through negotiation or adopt a more confrontational stance. Having heard nothing in the meantime to support the latter approach, I conclude that the traditional tactic of “talk, understand and persuade” is still as relevant as it was back when the FMCBC was called the Mountain Access Committee and was the voice of wilderness conservation in the provincial Forest Land Use Liaison Committee (FLULC).

I used to read the FLULC minutes regularly and never failed to be impressed with the results the Federation obtained in these meetings between industry, government, and the environmental movement. It must not have been easy to keep one's cool in a group with such divergent points of view. I think the federation reps must have begun by refusing to demonize the adversary. Thus they were able to achieve a level of diplomacy which enabled the discussions to proceed in an atmosphere of respect and made it possible, at times, to find common ground.

Equally important was the willingness to persevere, to stay at the negotiating table; never to give up. After all these years it's still important, and we are still there. Moderation doesn't imply neutrality, and it certainly doesn't mean compromising any core values. Wilderness is a legitimate land use. As wilderness users, we know what is most important and most in need of protection. The price of keeping our wild areas wild is eternal vigilance.

Part of our mandate is to keep the Federation members – all wilderness users for that matter – aware of what is going on in negotiations, in committees, and out on the land. *Cloudburst* is a major way of doing that, and I am glad to be involved, even when it's just putting a few commas where they belong or tracking down and eliminating the odd errant apostrophe. ■

Potential New Parks

Jay MacArthur (FMCBC Past President—80s)

I heard on CBC radio in early April that the provincial government was creating some new provincial parks in the Lillooet area. That got my interest since I represented the FMCBC at the Lillooet LRMP about 10 years ago. I looked up the http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2010ENV0022-000476.htm and it turns out that the government has introduced a bill to designate quite a few more provincial parks:

- Establishing six new “Class A” parks and making additions to two existing “Class A” parks in the Lillooet region as a result of the Lillooet Land and Resource Management Plan
- Establishing a new “Class A” park in the Kamloops region as a result of the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan.
- Establishing a new conservancy in the Ure Creek area following an agreement with the Lil'wat First Nation.

Of particular interest to me is the plan to designate a Class A park in the South Chilcotin: Bill 15 will create a new South Chilcotin Mountains Park, a “Class A” park comprising 56,796 hectares from the area currently designated as Spruce Lake Protected Area. The remaining approximately 14,550 hectares are proposed for tourism and mining, but commercial logging will be prohibited.

I'm disappointed that the government is reducing the size of the protected area that was designated by Order in Council in 2001, but glad that they are confirming the protection with legislation. I urge you send an email to congratulate the government if the legislation goes through. ■

Letters and News of Interest

Local Mountain named after John Clarke

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

John Clarke, an Honorary Member of the Alpine Club of Canada and the BC Mountaineering Club has had a local mountain named after him this past March. The geographical coordinates of the peak are listed below, together with a short list of his many accomplishments and awards. He will be remembered by the many people whose lives he touched, and by naming a peak after him will ensure that his name will be known to future generations. Thanks to those who applied for a peak to be so named. His early history, explorations and philosophy are documented in Bill Noble's 1995 video "Child of the Wind", copies of which are available from the BC Mountaineering Club.

BCGNIS Query Results

Official Name: John Clark, Mount

Feature Type: Mount

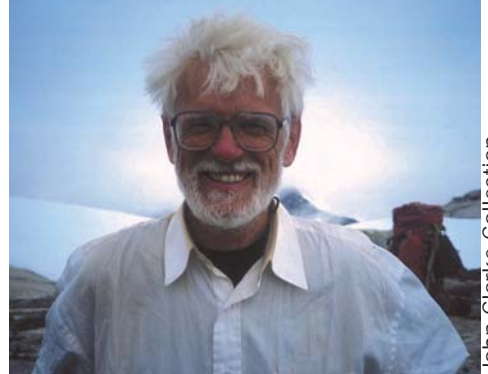
Latitude: 50°13'52"

Longitude: 123°41'30"

Position at: CENTRE

Gazetteer Map: 92J/4

Relative Location: SW of junction of Outrigger and Sims Creeks, NE of head of Princess Louisa Inlet (Queens Reach Jervis Inlet), New Westminster Land District



John Clarke Collection

John Clarke

Information excerpted from an extensive biography provided in 2007 by Glenn Woodsworth, Lisa Baile and John Baldwin; list of CAJ articles written by Clarke; list of awards and public recognition bestowed on Clarke; testimonial and endorsement letters; references to Clarke in the climbing literature, on file J.1.38

Adopted 29 March 2010 on 92J/4, as proposed by Glenn Woodsworth, Lisa Baile and John Baldwin, all associates of the BC Mountaineering Club; endorsed by Alpine Club of Canada (Vancouver Section), Squamish Nation Chief Bill Williams, outdoors education teachers and organizations, and climbing enthusiasts in the lower mainland.

Named after John Clarke (1945-2003), honorary member of the Squamish Nation, and recipient of the Order of Canada in 2002 for his extraordinary explorations in BC's Coast Mountains and his contributions and commitment to wilderness education, especially for school-children and First Nations youth. His exploratory mountaineering exploits are legendary, and the minimalist style in which they were done has had a profound and lasting effect on mountaineering in British Columbia. The Wilderness Education Program and Witness Project, both of which he was instrumental in founding, continue today and are his lasting legacy to the youth of British Columbia.

John Clarke was born in 1945 in Dublin Ireland, and came to Canada when he was 13; his family settled in the Vancouver area where he lived the rest of his life. John was 20 when he joined the BC Mountaineering Club in 1965; over the next 30 years he spent 5-6 months every year exploring the Coast Mountains between Vancouver and the Nass River. He is credited with 600 first ascents, all done in a self-reliant style with minimal reliance on air transport, and contributed numerous articles detailing his climbs in the Canadian Alpine Journal.

In 1996 John and Lisa Baile started the Wilderness Education Program, a professional program to create awareness and opportunity for students to experience BC's wilderness first hand; he led nature hikes, overnight camping trips, extended hiking trips, and gave classroom presentations, sharing his knowledge & enthusiasm for wilderness exploration with an estimated 35,000 young people in the last 7 years of his life! This mountain is near the midpoint of the Sims Creek - Princess Louisa Inlet route that John pioneered, and over the years he took many youngsters and adults over this summit on the demanding week-long crossover hike from the Squamish watershed to tidewater. The mountain overlooks the Sims valley where the Squamish Nation's Ut'sam/Witness Project is held each summer, a project started in 1997 by John Clarke, Squamish Nation Hereditary Chief Bill Williams, and photographer Nancy Bleck. This area was very close to John's heart and probably was his spiritual home.

Because of his intimate knowledge of the Squamish First Nation territory and his work to preserve it, they awarded John their highest honour: in a traditional naming ceremony in 1998 he was adopted into the Squamish Nation and was given the name Xwexwséln or 'Mountain Goat.' John Clarke died of a brain tumor in January 2003, leaving his wife Annette and their 1 year old son, Nicholas. ■

Letters and News of Interest

A Cost and Benefit Review of the FMCBC

Monika Bittel with Peter Rothermel and Brian Wood

March/April 2010



This review was triggered by concerns raised by some members questioning membership fees.

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) is a federation of approximately 20 clubs engaged in non-motorized or self-propelled backcountry recreation, including but not limited to hiking, rock climbing, mountaineering and backcountry skiing and snowshoeing. The clubs are scattered throughout BC with an annually variable total of approximately 3500 individual members. With one exception, members of each club pay an annual membership fee of \$15 to the FMCBC. The one exception is university-based clubs, such as UBC's Varsity Outdoors Club and SFU's Outdoors Club, whose members pay \$10.

After some recent financial restructuring, the membership fee now finances electronic publication and limited distribution of paper copies of the *Cloudburst* (a semi-annual newsletter), the salaries of a part-time book-keeper and a part-time administrative manager, who are the only paid employees of the FMCBC, and other office costs such as telephone, computers etc. All other FMCBC work is done by volunteers. The Mountain Equipment Cooperative (MEC) kindly provides free office space and internet connection.

The FMCBC has secured liability insurance available to member clubs at the current rate of \$6 annually per member (may rise to \$7) and directors' and officers' liability insurance at \$200 annually per club. For the benefit of member clubs, the FMCBC will be retaining a lawyer to address issues that are common to several clubs, such as liability waivers, liability insurance and youth members.

The FMCBC is recognized by government as a legitimate and reputable representative of the public, non-motorized, wilderness recreation sector. The FMCBC's advocacy work covers mountain access issues relating to resource roads and hiking trails, protection and maintenance of non-motorized trails and wilderness recreation areas, resolving conflicts or potential conflicts between incompatible user groups, promotion of non-motorized wilderness recreation, and participation in the development of land and resource management plans (LRMP's) and park management plans. Brief summaries for the many projects we are dealing with can be found on the FMCBC website, www.mountainclubs.org.

While wins or gains of the FMCBC are often few and far between, this is not a reflection of the volunteers' efforts; rather it is a reflection of what the FMCBC is up against. Without the infrastructure of the FMCBC, particularly the highly varied experience and knowledge of its membership base, and the multi-way communication facilitated by the FMCBC, many of the wins and gains would not have been accomplished. Through the efforts of the FMCBC, the non-motorized wilderness recreation sector at least has a broad-based unified voice. Without the FMCBC, member clubs would revert back to being many small groups fighting for local access and the preservation of wilderness and the ability to enjoy it.

Since the advocacy work is done by volunteers, some members question why the administrative manager and book-keeper are also not volunteers. Over the years, the FMCBC has found that its membership is best served if scarce volunteer resources are used for advocacy (in which their knowledge and passion can be best used) rather than in office work. A membership base of approximately 3500 members scattered throughout BC demands consistent and regular administration, which is not accomplished effectively and reliably with volunteers.

For the first time in several years the FMCBC finances are currently healthy as a result of reducing expenses, including the hiring of a part-time administrative manager instead of an executive director (ED). While the administrative manager has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the FMCBC office, the lack of an ED has placed a greater burden on the volunteers who carry out the advocacy work for the FMCBC. For example, meetings with government representatives and bureaucrats often occur during the day, in which case volunteers either miss the

Letters and News of Interest

meetings or have to take time off work to attend. A part-time ED would permit the FMCBC to have a greater and more consistent voice in government, but the current budget does not permit the hiring of such a person or another person who might provide some lobbying help. Some members feel an ED is essential for our lobbying capability, and alternative options in this regard are being investigated. Also, Individual clubs or the FMCBC could try raising funds by putting on a hikathon, for example, which could raise funds to help finance an ED or the club as well as publicize the club and/or the FMCBC, especially in view of the recent publicity promoting walking as a healthy exercise to reduce health care costs.

The recent recovery of the FMCBC finances has led some members to suggest a reduction in FMCBC fees in an attempt to reduce loss of members experienced by some member clubs. Is there any evidence to suggest that the FMCBC's fees are so high that they are discouraging members from joining clubs, especially when there is a relatively wide range of basic club membership fees? Surely it is what the club offers its members that encourages members to join the club.

Any thought of reducing the FMCBC's fee should be considered carefully, especially since more can and should be done to support the FMCBC volunteers and improve FMCBC services. Once fees are reduced, it might be very unpalatable to increase them when needed. The FMCBC, like many other non-profit organizations in BC, has recently lost access to provincial gaming grants which were used to fund *Cloudburst* and trail projects. As a result, the FMCBC will rely more heavily than ever on membership fees and the occasional project-specific grant received from MEC.

The FMCBC's annual membership fee contrasts with the membership fees of other recreation groups, particularly the motorized recreation sector whose members pay substantially greater club and/or federation fees. Many of the motorized recreation sector organizations are also supported financially by manufacturers and retailers of motorized off-road vehicles which, with higher membership fees, permits funding of professional lobbyists. This is one group that competes quite successfully with the non-motorized sector for our scarce and valuable wilderness resource.

Furthermore, many of FMCBC's volunteers contribute well beyond the \$15 membership fee in carrying out the advocacy work on behalf of the FMCBC and its members. They pay for their own transportation, long distance telephone calls, printing costs, AGM costs, and on occasion take time off work to attend meetings. In most cases, they do not seek reimbursement from their clubs or the FMCBC, recognizing the limited finances of the FMCBC and/or their club. Now that the FMCBC's finances are healthier, many directors feel that reimbursement of volunteers' expenses should take priority over reduction of membership fees. After all, an annual FMCBC membership fee is less than attendance at the "Best of Banff", the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival or a week's supply of Starbucks lattes.

The FMCBC is open to suggestions and is interested in hearing members' views regarding the annual membership fees or any other concerns or matters of interest to members. With our improved website and committee listservers there is now far more information available to club members than there used to be, but it seems that this information is not being accessed by the members. This lack of information about the activities of the FMCBC has been an ongoing problem and we are addressing this problem.

The FMCBC has produced a comprehensive survey document that will be circulated by the member clubs' FMCBC directors to the executive committees of the clubs for their detailed input. We are anticipating that a shortened survey will be available for all club members to complete.

In addition, members can provide their own input or feedback by contacting their club's director, or by emailing Jodi, our Administrative Manager, at admin.manager@mountainclubs.org, or even by snail mail at PO Box 19673, Vancouver, BC, V5T 4E7. ■

Recreation and Conservation



SW BC Recreation & Conservation Committee Report

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

The following are highlights of the primary areas of interest or concern in the last year or so: It is sometimes difficult to measure our success on the many issues with which we are involved, but sometimes merely delaying a perceived negative development, as opposed to stopping it completely, can be considered a victory. Sometimes the issue is raised again, and this happens quite often, and sometimes we have more success the second or third time around. The good news is that some departments of the government seem to be gradually understanding the problems associated with multi-use backcountry areas and trails, mainly motorized versus non-motorized uses, and so this encouraging enlightenment might facilitate future negotiations. The bad news is that government's budgets are still being trimmed even closer to the bone, and we fear that there will not be any funding available to implement or enforce any worthwhile government initiatives that finally might come to pass. As any educator knows, repetition is essential to get the message across, and so we keep on persevering.

1. Garibaldi at Squamish (GAS) on Brohm Ridge: This proposed all season resort (25 ski lifts, 2 golf courses and 5,739 housing units) at Brohm Ridge, adjacent to west edge of Garibaldi Provincial Park, seems to be progressing very slowly through the Environmental Assessment process. The good news is the Squamish District Council recently voted unanimously against this project, but local government opposition can be overruled as has happened elsewhere in the province. Our primary concern with GAS is its impact on Garibaldi Provincial Park, potential expansion of the resort into the Park, and displacement of the Black Tusk Snowmobile Club, which has been located on Brohm Ridge for the past 10-20 years, to another location that would conflict with non-motorized users.

2. Mt. Waddington Range: Mt. Waddington, considered to be the crown jewel of the Coast Range Mountains, falls within a very large heli-ski tenure granted to Knight Inlet Heli-sports Ltd. ("KIHS") in June 2007. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts ("MOTCA") granted a moratorium on heli-skiing in a much smaller area surrounding Mt Waddington in response to strong opposition from the recreational community. After much negotiation, in August 2009, the FMC and KIHS signed a Joint Use Agreement regarding permitted recreational activities in the Waddington Range and we are monitoring this agreement as it is complex. Briefly, the Agreement provides year round non-motorized recreation in our important area, with restricted aerial access to drop off or pick up people who are conducting multi-day, non-motorized recreational trips. Some specific areas are similarly designated in the late spring, whereas in the early spring KIHS may conduct heli-skiing and heli-snowboarding in these areas. Other motorized recreational activities (except snowmobile tours or off-road ATVing) by KIHS, may be considered and are to be negotiated later.

To minimize interference between heli-skiers and ski touring or climbing parties throughout their tenure license area, KIHS has agreed to an avoidance protocol which is best facilitated by informing the operator of the parties' backcountry plans. The key components of the avoidance protocol are: (1) an avoidance buffer of a minimum 5 km physical separation and the interposition of a ridge crest; (2) a communication protocol with known clubs and service providers to determine who and where ski touring and climbing parties will be; and (3) avoidance of parties that have not communicated in advance with KIHS but which are encountered by KIHS in their tenure license area. Ultimately, the FMC would like to see a forum of all stakeholders to develop a management plan and best-practices for this valuable world class mountaineering and ski touring area.

3. Backcountry access from ski resorts: Skiers and snowboarders are continuing to access the backcountry from ski resorts and often encounter problems. If they become lost or injured and require search and rescue services, the media usually does not distinguish between these unprepared out-of-bound skiers and prepared backcountry skiers who access the backcountry from ski resorts. The FMC and local clubs try to educate and inform the media, the government and the public about these differences in backcountry winter recreation. We need help in drafting a brochure to clarify these issues, to alert unprepared downhill skiers, and to inform them of the advantages of joining our member clubs.

4. Sea-to-Sky Recreation Corridor (Squamish to Pemberton): This popular area still occupies much of our time, see items 5 and 6 below. Even though the Backcountry Recreation Forums and resulting Land and Resource Manage-

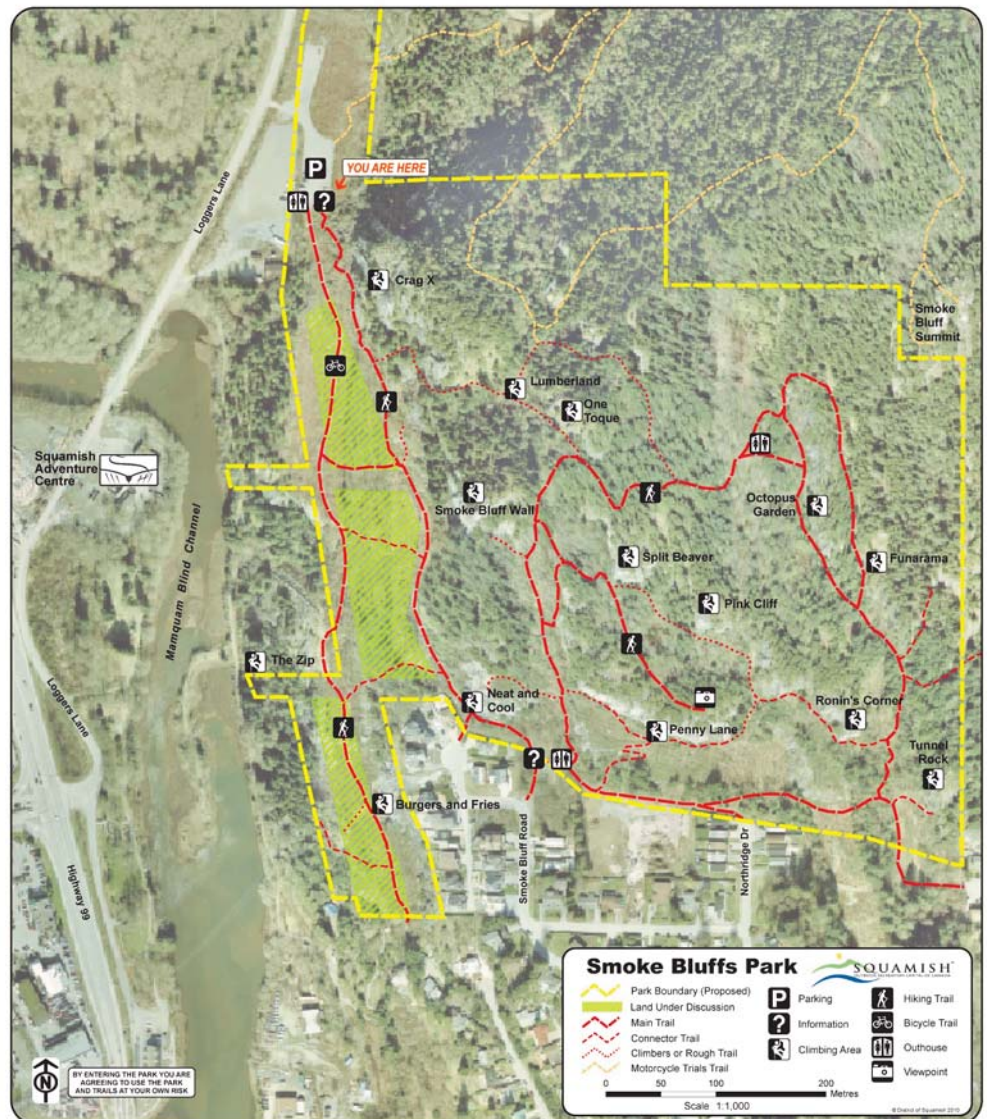
Recreation and Conservation

ment Plan (LRMP) were completed a while ago, we are still having difficulty in obtaining good maps which clearly delineate, at an appropriate scale, the complex zoning boundaries of this highly used area. Some signage showing local maps is in place, and we have plans for more signage, particularly boundary signs. Much work is still needed, so any extra help would be welcome. Eventually we hope to have access to good GIS data so that maps and brochures can be produced to show permitted activities in specific areas. This will help to get the word out, particularly to snowmobilers.

5. Callaghan Backcountry Access: In 2007, pursuant to a section 58 designation under the Forest and Range Practices Act, Callaghan Valley was closed to winter motorized recreation from November 1 to May 15 each year. The designation was made to protect recreation resources and non-motorized recreation experiences, specifically self-propelled sporting activities such as cross-country skiing, ski touring, mountaineering and snowshoeing. Eventually new rules were accepted and seem to be working reasonably well so that backcountry skiers and snowshoers can enjoy new access to Hanging Lake, Rainbow, Beverley Creek and Madeley Lake. Some trails have been cleared and have, or will soon have, improved signage funded by the National Trails Coalition using Federal Government funding and installed by FMC members.

6. 21 Mile Creek watershed: This area is designated a non-motorized recreation area in the Sea-to-Sky LRMP, but despite this the area is frequented by snowmobiles. The FMC and local clubs have tried to get government to enforce the non-motorized designation without success as there is little funding or adequate signage. The Snowmobile Infraction Database (accessed via “Campaigns” on www.bivouac.com) has been used effectively to demonstrate to government officials the safety issues created by snowmobiles, including riderless snowmobiles, and the need for enforcement of non-motorized areas. During the Olympics, parking restrictions resulted in little or no snowmobile access to this area for the first time in many years. Now that the Olympics are over, we hope to obtain a section 58 closure of the 21 Mile Creek area to allow legal enforcement, which might be helped with more signage and parking restrictions for snowmobiles.

7. Smoke Bluffs Park: The FMC continues to work with the Squamish Access Society to ensure that climbers’ access to the Smoke Bluffs is protected in perpetuity. As you may know, we have not managed to obtain a conservation covenant on the FMC lands and the District lands which comprise the climbing crags, and now the plan is to have the Smoke Bluffs formally designated a park through municipal park designation by-laws. Whether the FMC lands will be transferred to the Dis-



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tract of Squamish will depend on how secure the climbing community feels with the park designation by-law. While the FMC lands do not include the climbing crags themselves, the FMC lands do provide access to the crags, and are used for general park purposes, such as hiking trails, picnic tables, potential campsites and viewing area. Other options are also being considered in the ongoing negotiations. The accompanying map on the previous page shows the 3 parcels of the FMC lands in diagonally cross-hatched light green. The map is best viewed on the computer in full colour.

8. Run of River Projects (IPPs): There are plans for three more IPP projects in the Upper Lillooet River valley which could affect our recreational opportunities there. In particular, two projects are planned to be located in drainages which connect to backcountry cabins in North Creek and Pebble/Boulder Creek. As these projects will require access roads, there is a concern that this would expose these cabins to snowmobiles; on the other hand, the roads might improve access for back country skiers as happened with the Brandywine IPP

9. Sigurd Creek Conservancy A recently released Draft Management Plan indicates that there will be no IPPs, no cabin, and that all new or upgraded trails should be non-interfering and have no negative impact. The FMC proposes to endorse this plan.

Thank you to all members who attend the FMC Rec & Con meetings, participate on the FMC list serve, provide input, draft letters and submissions, and provide comments. Anyone interested in participating in the FMC Rec & Con Committee or anyone with any recreation and conservation concerns should contact Jodi Appleton, our Administration Manager, at: admin.manager@mountainclubs.org ■

Proposed Mountain Huts on the Spearhead Traverse near Whistler

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

A group of backcountry enthusiasts are tentatively investigating a proposal to build a “chain” of basic mountain huts (3-4 huts) along the Spearhead Traverse. According to John Baldwin’s 2009 guidebook, “Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis”, this traverse is considered to be among the 50 best backcountry ski trips in North America. Nowadays most folks use the ski lifts that provide easy access to high elevations on Blackcomb and/or Whistler Mountains, which are the termini of the horseshoe-shaped alpine traverse around Fitzsimmons Creek. Compared with 9 days taken for the first trip in 1964, which was before the ski lifts, in good spring conditions hot-shot skiers can complete this traverse in a day! This traverse is becoming increasingly popular as it is so easy to access, with some days seeing several parties starting on the route, and so even now it is well used. Doubtless, this use will increase if these huts are built, and there will likely be a corresponding increase in the number of parties encountering problems. Clearly, the huts could serve as refuges for parties in trouble as well as rescue bases for search and rescue teams, and thus could save lives that might otherwise be lost.

There are five distinct groups involved with this relatively ambitious community hut proposal which includes three local clubs namely: Alpine Club of Canada, Whistler Section; Alpine Club of Canada, Vancouver Section; the BC Mountaineering Club, and two memorial hut societies (MHS), namely the Brett Carlson MHS, and the Kees and Claire MHS. It is expected that a newly formed non-profit organization would manage the supply and maintenance of the huts, as well as a reservation system to handle the expected 12 -20 persons maximum per hut. The huts would be located along the traverse primarily for winter recreation (with modern gas-fired heating units?) but would also accommodate summer recreation. As the traverse is located within Garibaldi Provincial Park, the hut use would be limited to non-motorized or self-propelled users except that helicopters would be used for building, maintenance, shipping supplies and waste disposal. For many years, BC Parks has contemplated plans to build a string of huts along the traverse, and so this is an idea that BC Parks may endorse if the details are acceptable to them. Presently, heli-skiing is permitted in the northern portion of the traverse, but it is hoped that the expected increase in non-motorized activity in this area resulting from the huts would decrease the heli-activities considerably, which eventually may be totally eliminated.

I hope to be able to supply more details as they become available.■

Recreation and Conservation

Changes to Recreational uses of Forests in Prince George

Dave King (Caledonia Ramblers)

In January , 2009 , I was asked by the Northern Silviculture Committee (NSC) to make a presentation on changes in recreational use of forests in the Prince George Region. In this article I will share some of my findings and observations as they likely apply to all parts of BC, not just the Central Interior. The results help, in part, to explain issues of recruitment to member clubs of the FMC.

The forester who asked me to speak noted that “forest users have changed over the years and the traditional users (hunters, fishermen) must accommodate new uses.We are now seeing people using the forests who have nothing to do with the forest industry and who are wanting changes.”

In attempting to address trends and changes in recreational use of forest lands, I soon found that there is an almost total lack of good data on most recreational uses of BC forests. There is some data on hunting and fishing and park use but even that is weak if one wants to look at the changes in one region. There is virtually no data on use of recreation sites, hiking and skiing activities in the forests, snowmobiling , ATVing, berry or mushroom picking or other activities. Thus I had to depend on discussions with a variety of people with long term experience in the PG region who are active in their chosen activity.

Prior to about 1970 the dominant recreation activities carried out in Central Interior forests were unquestionably fishing and hunting. There were a few who did camp for camping's sake, berry and mushroom picking, firewood gathering, canoeing, horseback riding and birding. Hiking and backpacking was almost non-existent and it was before ATVs and snowmobiles.

Hunting

The level of participation in hunting has been decreasing since 1981. The numbers of resident hunting licences have decrease by about 55 %. (174,000 to about 80,000)

A huge part of the provincial decrease is in the numbers of deer hunters, especially in the southern third of the province. There has also been a sharp decrease in those who buy licences primarily to hunt game birds (grouse, pheasants). Severe restrictions placed on the hunting of some species like sheep and grizzly bears have contributed to less hunting of some species.

Angling

As with hunting there has been a significant decline in the numbers of people buying freshwater fishing licenses on a provincial basis. The decline is about 20 % over the past 15-20 years. Fisheries staff say many of our inland fisheries are now under utilized. Many lakes get little or no fishing.

Forest Rec Sites

There is no good data, but Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts staff say overall use of Rec. sites has not changed dramatically over the past 10 years, although it fluctuates significantly with the weather. They also noted most spring and summer visitors are there primarily to fish while in the fall most users are hunters. Both groups will engage in other activities to fill time, especially family members not engaged in fishing or hunting.

Provincial Parks

I considered provincial park use as it is not possible to fully separate recreational use of parks from surrounding forestlands managed for timber and other uses. Many of the new parks established in the first part of this decade were on areas of forest land with already well-established recreational activities.

Provincial statistics indicate a steady increase in the use of BC Parks through the 1980s and 1990s. Since 9/11, however, attendance has flattened out or declined although with large variations between years. Camping

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(including use of RVs) in front country sites (those accessible by vehicle) has held fairly steady but there has been a steady decline in backcountry users, especially of campers. As an example, 10 years ago it was necessary to book your campsite at Berg Lake in Mount Robson Park for most summer weekends but in the past 2 or 3 years only on one or two weekends have the Berg Lake sites been full. There has been a steady decline in day users.

Hiking, Backpacking, Backcountry Skiing, Snowshoeing

There is virtually no data on self-propelled activities on forest lands. Thus I had to rely largely on my own observations and impressions of others as to what has occurred.

In the Central Interior significant levels of recreational hiking, backpacking and backcountry skiing all began in the early 1970s. Significant amounts of recreational snowshoeing on forest lands only developed in the past 5 years. Many new trails were established through the 70s and 80s that facilitated hiking and backpacking. The improved access to forest lands from the spreading network of forest roads contributed significantly to the growth in these activities.

That growth slowed in the 1990s. Since 2000, there appears to have been little change in day use of forest trails. But backpacking and tenting in the backcountry has decreased (significantly) over the past 15-20 years.

Snowmobiling, ATVing

Recreational snowmobiling really began to grow in the mid 1970s with the arrival of better sleds. Locally growth in the activity was especially rapid in the 1980s as folk ventured farther into the mountains and other remote places. As with hiking and skiing, it was facilitated by the expanding network of roads open to desirable areas. In the late 1990s much improved and more powerful machines came on the market and made it possible for almost anyone to go wherever they wished if they had the skill. Activity is particularly intense close to communities. While there is no good data on participation levels, every indication is that growth in users days and number of participants continues, albeit at a slower rate than a decade ago.

I was unable to get any real sense of what the level of recreational activity is among ATV users, or whether there are any particular trends. The dealers say sales have been growing for several years. It certainly is not uncommon to see users travelling along forest roads and trails. Some ATVs are used to access fishing destinations and many more are used in hunting where that is permitted. As with snowmobiling, there is a zone of higher use around communities.



Oliver Woolgar

Photo of Max Bitel taking in the view from the peak of Goat Mountain, looking north towards the depths of Garibaldi Park last summer

Recreation and Conservation

Reasons for changes in recreational uses of forest lands:

A 2007 report titled “A Strategy for Resident Hunter Recruitment and Retention in British Columbia” provided considerable useful information. I have listed only the Prime reasons as there are others relevant to specific activities.

- changing demographics – an aging population; influx of other ethnic groups less inclined to hunt and carry out other backcountry recreational activities.
- urbanization - fewer raised in an outdoor or rural environment or working in an outdoor occupation including the forest industry
- fear factor –because of TV and other stories a fear of bears, hazards, diseases (e.g. lyme disease, giardia)
- time obligations – both parents often working, busy lives
- huge increase in alternate recreational opportunities
- costs of equipment
- fuel costs
- access issues - some areas have become inaccessible as forest roads have been neglected or deactivated. In the Central Interior it is partly related to the pine beetle outbreak but other policy and economic issues play a role.
- roads into the mountainous areas are not being plowed in winter, which has really affected where backcountry skiers can go. A few are even resorting to snowmobiles to access their favorite trailheads.
- more restrictions on access in many areas
- huge increase in fees and licensing costs for some activities
- for hunting: federal. firearms laws and hunter education requirements – time commitments and costs
- restrictions or closures on hunting of some species (grizzly bear, caribou) public perception of hunters is often negative and reinforced by many TV shows

An additional reason that has been mentioned is lack of good maps showing forest roads, the location of lakes and the access to the lakes. Recreation maps are no longer produced by forest districts, forest companies, or by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. Recreational atlases and back road map books are for sale and maps can be downloaded off the internet but they are far from up-to-date and contain many inaccuracies. One gets no information on condition or state of any road so observed.

Summary

-Recreational pursuits have become more diverse over the years. However, most recreational use of forest land has decreased over the past couple of decades. Exceptions are activities such as day hiking, snowshoeing and snowmobiling, where there have been small increases.

-demands on the landscape, whether it is the forest lands or other lands, have become far more complex.

-there are more competing interests, including recreational interests

-the public is recognizing that resource and environmental decisions we make today may determine the future health of our society and indeed the very survival of the human species.

-opportunities for effective public input into resource and land use decisions and management have been greatly reduced and, in many ways, rendered ineffective.

- it is of great concern that many smaller projects and land use developments are not going through an effective federal or provincial environmental review process open to public input.■

Trails



Trails Committee Report

Pat Harrison (Valley Outdoor Association)

Alex Wallace (BC Mountaineering Club)

The Southwest BC Trails Committee has met several times during the winter months at the residence of John Coope.

As detailed in previous *Cloudburst* newsletters, the biggest trail project that the FMC has recently been involved in entails reconstructing the Howe Sound Crest Trail from Cypress Bowl to the West Lion in Cypress Provincial Park. The first part of the Howe Sound Crest Trail has been redesigned by BC Parks for better winter access, and is built to a new lookout overlooking Howe Sound. A substantial part of the funding so far has come from a hard-won but welcome VANOC Legacy fund for Cypress, as the trail starts at the 2010 Olympic venue which is now being dismantled (and some of the gravel from this event will be used as trail material). Since the hoped-for National Trails Coalition funding for next year has not been renewed by the Federal Government (we did get \$150,000 from them in 2009 after Jodi spent many midnight hours on the onerous application process), it will be up to BC Parks and others to find new funding sources for the remainder of the HSCT; although it may be possible to do some of the trail beyond The Lions with volunteers from clubs. Alex Wallace is writing to Minister Penner to request the Provincial Government put some money into this project: hopefully matching funding as we raised \$450,000 and BC Parks has spent \$311,000 so far. With the slogan of “Super Natural BC”, and – ironically – a scenic photo of hikers on St Marks Summit plastered on tourism billboards across Vancouver during the 2010 Olympics, it seems only right the Provincial Government contribute money to allow for decent trails and signage in our Provincial Parks. On March 19th, Alex Wallace and BC Parks rangers helicoptered new signage to St. Marks Summit and Unnecessary Mountain and secured it for installation in August, then several loads of bridge materials were longlined into Strachan Meadows for assembly in summer of 2010.

Mike Stewart, Jack Bryceland, and Pat Harrison continue to meet on a regular basis with the Chilliwack Forest District and Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts representatives regarding the re-establishment of some sixty hiking trails on the official trails register for the Province. In addition, the committee is pushing to have some realistic guidelines so that logging does not impact the trails. Right now, logging operations can destroy trails and there is little protection for hiking trails. In particular, the committee is working to save the Elk Mountain/Mt. Thurston Trail so that logging does not cover up a portion of the trail and that access to the fragile alpine meadows is protected from motorized activities through restricted access. So far, government has balked at our suggestions for trail protection.



Alex Wallace

During the delivery of the Howe Sound Crest bridge and sign material we also dropped in to the Magnesia Meadows shelter to check on reports of a jammed door...

Application for a Job Opportunities Program (JOP) grant: FMC worked with BC Parks and Nature Trust of BC (North Vancouver) in applying for a Job Opportunities Program grant which would involve hiring a 6-person

Trails

crew of resource workers who would currently be on E.I. to do trail work this summer at Squamish Estuary Park, Stawamus Chief trail, Garibaldi Red Heather trail and finally on the Howe Sound Crest trail. A great deal of effort was put into this application and it was audited in advance (!), but so far we have not heard any news of whether it is a go. This is a joint federally and provincially funded program.

There is discussion that BC Parks regions are being reconfigured to align with the Ministry of Forest (MOF) regions. For example the 'Lower Mainland' area would in the future include Manning Park. The rationale given is that this would allow for MOF staff to do trail work or other maintenance in the Provincial Parks and, reciprocally, BC Parks Rangers (as

Peace Officers under the Park Act) to do enforcement and issue tickets on Crown land, i.e. in the backcountry. This is of interest as we have repeatedly been told "There is no money for enforcement...". However we have not had any confirmation in writing of the above restructuring, and of course the flaw in this otherwise creative plan is that there are so few staff left in either agency to do any reciprocal duties: for example, the three auxiliary rangers who worked on helicopter lift of materials mentioned above were given their layoff papers in March with no word of when they would work in BC again.



HSC Trail Signposts wrapped for loading.

Alex Wallace



Magnesia meadows emergency shelter in 4 m of snow, no repair today.

James Kelly—BC Parks

Current staffing on the ground in all of BC Parks (800 parks and conservation areas) consists of 6 full-time ranger employees and roughly 50 auxiliary ranger staff who are hired on for 4 to 6 months at a time; all other staff in parks are private park operator staff employees. The auxiliaries traditionally use the MOF fire fighting jobs in the summer to get by, but this has been cut back because of last summer's fire suppression costs going over budget; so from what we hear on the ground we may lose some experienced and trained ranger staff to Alberta simply because these capable and keen people cannot get steady work in BC. But Internet booking for campsites is now available

Callaghan Valley

Scott Nelson has now completed the installation of several trailhead signs for cross-country ski trails and hiking trails, plus installing hundreds of reflective markers on the hiking / snowshoe trails. After the Olympics were completed, trails to Beverly Creek and Hanging Lake were opened to skiers and hikers and the Whistler Olympic Park is now run by the Whistler Legacy Society. There are two kiosks with maps/signs to indicate where the cross-country trails are. We need more signage from the trail side to help direct cross-country skiers. Scott obtained funding from the NTC (Federal) funds and from MEC's environment "Access" grant program.

Sea to Sky Trail

The Sea to Sky Trail is now open from Whistler to Squamish. This summer, the Whistler to Pemberton section will be worked on. For further details, please check the website www.seatoskytrail.ca ■

Educational Articles

Dangerous plants to consider avoiding in hiking areas

Alex Wallace (BC Mountaineering Club)
FMCBC Trails Committee

While most BC hikers are familiar with Devils Club, and in other areas with Poison Ivy, there are a few other plants on the trail, or off it, that people may overlook. These could have unforeseen and in some cases quite nasty effects if not treated with caution.

False Hellebore, or Corn Lily [*Veratrum viride*] is very common in wet areas on the coast. It looks like a tall lily but with a spathe (modified leaf) of small green flowers rather than one large flower head. Often these are shredded or broken off by hikers (perhaps by kids) as the season progresses. When doing trail work, it is common to cut these when doing brush clearing as it often grows in conjunction with berry bushes (salmonberry or blueberry). However, many hikers, even native BC'ers, are unaware that this is a highly poisonous plant. At the one time its roots were dug up on a commercial basis to be boiled down for insecticide. Casual contact is unlikely to have an effect. It is worth considering what the effect of getting this toxic sap on your hands before lunch time might be if you are cutting and carrying stalks of this plant over several hours during trail work (as I have done recently on the Elsay Lake trail). I rather wished that I had brought gloves to wear while clearing it, because I then had to use some of my drinking water to wash my hands, and it was a long, hot day. In summer it's not always feasible to be sitting near a running creek and wash your hands before every snack or meal, but the toxins in this plant can act within one hour, and the effects can be serious and last up to 10 days. Milder symptoms include confusion, disorientation and vomiting, as the nervous system is affected. Some hikers have noted that there have been a few occasions when they have felt ill without an obvious cause during hikes, and have suggested that perhaps this plant could have been the reason. Even the flowers are toxic: it has been noted by some observers that the plant will actually kill insects that land on the flowers to pollinate it.



False Hellebore



Giant Hogweed

Alex Wallace

Giant Hogweed [*Heracleum mantegazzianum*]. This toxic plant is one which people may be unaware of as it only arrived in BC in 1974. Since then, it has spread very rapidly and now is appearing at trailheads. For example, in Lions Bay, a clump has recently established itself at Cypress at an elevation of 915 metres, which means that it is surviving under snow for six months of the year. One small (2m) plant at Lions Bay had 11,200 seeds on it, and these each have a viability of 15 years. This explains its rapid spread. However, it is not clear what causes it to go from place to place so easily. Unfortunately, it may take hold here as it has in Europe as a dangerous invasive. Originally it was brought from an area in Russia near the Caspian Sea to London and Paris as an ornamental plant around 1890. It soon had 'escaped' and by the 1960's it had estab-

lished itself widely in the UK and its ability to injure and scar people was well known. The toxin in Giant Hogweed (Furocoumarin) protects it from fungal attack, but in humans it has the unfortunate effect of killing a layer deep within the skin if exposed to ultraviolet light. This results in giant blisters, followed by dark scars that last around six years. Victims can be left sensitized to light (which obviously would affect your hiking schedule). It is particularly dangerous for children. It can cause temporary, and in some cases, reportedly, permanent blindness. [Yes, a certain resemblance to John Wyndham's "Day of the Triffids" does come to mind]. It often grows up to 3

Educational Articles

metres tall; in exceptional cases 6 metres (20ft). It is called Hogweed because pigs are immune to the toxin and can eat it, which might be one possible method of eradication. It can be confused with a BC Native plant: Cow Parsnip [*Heracleum lanatum*], however, cow parsnip grows only half as tall, and does not have the deeply divided leaves of Giant Hogweed, or the purple splotches on the stem. The BC Government has several excellent pamphlets available online about Hogweed. These are worth reading because the effect of this plant's toxins on the unwary can be serious. It goes without saying that weed-eaters should not be used on this plant. There is considerable effort being made to eradicate it, but a recent map shows it to be spreading rapidly outward from the Vancouver area. It would be unfortunate if it was to spread province-wide and form large stands on recreational land as it does in some parts of Britain. If you do inadvertently contact the sap of Giant Hogweed, remember that it only is toxic if your skin is then exposed to ultraviolet light over the next several days - and this is also one reason why its effects are variable.

Bracken Fern [*Pteridium aquilinum*]: This seemingly innocuous fern is one of the most successful plants on earth, having been around for 55 million years. It is considered by some to be the fifth most widespread weed on the planet. During that time, it has evolved toxins against grazing animals, insects, and other plants. Even when dead it releases toxins that stunt the growth of nearby plants, hence its ability to rapidly colonize areas. Its young fronds (leaves) are eaten as fiddleheads, but even this practice has been the subject of ongoing debate as to the long-term health effects. The high stomach cancer rates in Japan have been linked by some researchers to the use of young bracken fronds in traditional salads.



Bracken Fern

But how does this affect hikers? In late summer, each mature bracken frond is capable of producing and releasing 300 million spores. These tiny spores waft around in the air, and if they land in an appropriate habitat of moist and humid conditions this starts a rather intriguing reproductive process (involving tiny sperms- I won't bore you with it). While my six year old daughter and I were clearing leaning alder and other brush on an overgrown winter access trail on Hollyburn Mountain (Cypress Provincial Park) this August, we both started to have coughing fits. I recalled from horticulture lectures in my distant past that bracken spores caused lung irritation and possibly asthma, and so we moved out of the patch of bracken and stuck to the alder. Once we got home, I looked up bracken toxicity. I found that in the intervening decades since I last had occasion to read up on it, considerable research had been done on bracken. Now, all parts of it are considered toxic, but particularly the spores, which are now believed to be highly carcinogenic even during relatively short exposures. In Britain for example, Forestry Commission employees working in dense bracken must now wear protective masks. I'm not suggesting that hikers carry paper masks in their packs, but if trail work has to be done, or possibly bush bashing to an obscure destination through dense bracken is planned, then perhaps the hike leader should schedule it for early summer, before the bracken releases its billions of spores. As for trail work, yes, late summer and early fall is the prime season for that too. Perhaps avoiding clearing bracken at that time might be wise. In my case this year, I did cough for a couple of days. Hopefully I coughed all of the spores out before their tiny components restructured themselves and started swimming around - as they apparently like to do.

In summary, plants with toxins have been evolving for millions of years. Although these toxins may benefit the plant by reducing competition, grazing, disease and insect attack, they don't always do humans a lot of good if they are contacted, ingested or inhaled. The research on these plants and their toxins is still continuing. This explains why some are seen as much more dangerous now than they were just a few decades ago- although obviously the plants haven't changed. On the other hand, this research often discovers new medications based on plant-based toxins. There's quite a bit of information on the internet to help identify these three plants. For ferns in general, I would recommend the inexpensive (\$4), handy little guide "Pacific Coast Fern Finder" by Glenn Keator, which is easily carried in a backpack or pocket.■

Wilderness First Aid Is For You

Peter Rothermel (Island Mountain Ramblers)

For years I had thoughts of taking some wilderness first aid training, as my only previous first aid course had been when I was in high school, and that was so long ago that our instructor showed us the “newly developed and experimental” CPR technique, not yet to be practiced by the public. Much of first aid hasn’t changed much in the 45 or so years that have passed, but a few things have - very much so.

Of course, I always came up with the typical excuses to put it off... “Too much time commitment... Can’t afford it now... Maybe next year”... Often these courses require a week of time commitment, away from ones regular job, and cost several hundred dollars. This usually puts wilderness first aid education out of the sphere of most non-professional hikers & climbers.

Luckily for me, in the past few years, our local Vancouver Island Section of the Alpine Club of Canada has put on a couple of custom designed wilderness first aid courses for our membership and made them affordable. We chose Slipstream Wilderness First Aid (www.wildernessfirstaid.ca) to create the course that suited our needs. The course instructors are people that actually work in outdoor industry, with first aid and rescue, and have first hand experience and real knowledge in the techniques that they teach.

The first course that I attended was done over two long weekends and went for a total of four evening sessions and four full day sessions, for a total of about 50 hours instruction. Through Slipstream we could get a good group rate and, in addition, our ACC Section funded 50% of the course fee; so a 40 hour course only cost each participant \$200.

A man named Mike was our instructor. Wearing a ball cap and jeans, his casual appearance belied the knowledge he was to offer when he started teaching. He knew his stuff, and about half of this course was inside class time and the other half was outside: practical hands-on instruction... making splints, using materials found on hand, patching up injured people and moving them on makeshift stretchers.

Having been away from schooling for many decades, I was almost frozen in terror of the thought of taking a written test and much of my inner thoughts were spent dwelling on this. When we did the hands on stuff, I was happy and felt competent, but when it came to class discussion, I was lost in not being able to take notes fast enough and to listen fully at the same time. I assumed that I was falling far behind those people that filled whole note books with their scribbles.



Yukie Hayashi

Martin Hoffman (center) is the patient being worked on by Peter Rothermel (top) and Sasha Kubicek (bottom) participating in the Wilderness First Aid Course.

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On the last day, when we did our written test, I was resigned to failing it, yet felt that the hands-on experience was worth it, even though I wouldn't get a certification of passing. I was among the first to finish the written test and was pleasantly surprised when I passed with both thumbs up from Mike.

The second course was more of a refresher and ran for a single long weekend of two evening sessions and two full day sessions and cost each participant \$80, also being 50% subsidized by our ACC Section. Our instructor was a woman named Yukie, originally from Japan, who literally vibrated with energy and excitement for teaching first aid. She started off by having us all say our names; then she repeated them back, pointing to us, and continued to remember every one of our names for the whole weekend.

When it came time for our written test, I had lost my fear of tests and again finished quickly. Page one was for our refresher course, and I got 100% correct on that one. The second page was for a more advanced course and some of the material was stuff that we didn't cover and wasn't for us to complete. I filled in the second page, just for fun and was surprised when I got about 85% correct. I clinched the deal as "teachers pet" when I gave Yukie some packages of individual benzoin saturated swabs, something she had never seen before. She reciprocated by giving me a first aid book and other medical supplies... and a big hug at the end of the course!

Some things, like wound management and splinting broken bones, haven't changed much over the years, yet other types of care have, sometimes even from year to year. In CPR, for example, the ratio of breaths to chest compressions seems to change almost every year. Presently it is two breaths to thirty chest compressions. So while it is important to take a first aid course in the first place, it's also important to take a refresher from time to time.



Christian Veenstra

Our costs were kept down by our club making a deal for twenty or more participants with Slipstream and also in that our section subsidized 50% of the participants' fees. Any club or organization that can come up with a decent class size can work out their own deal with Slipstream to keep costs down. As well, courses can be customized to tailor fit a club's needs and time lines.

With Slipstream, when you sign up for a course, you are given written materials to study before the course begins. As well, they offer an "online campus" where you can access an exhaustive outline of the course all broken down into 13 modules that can be studied, with a test at the end of each subject module. This allows one to study and research the course at their leisure, long before the course begins.

So, you can put off taking a first aid course until you're ready, but I wonder if that medical emergency will wait until you are ready. Much like avalanche training, you hope that your partner has the best training and equipment, so you yourself can be rescued in time. Maybe it's time for your club or group of friends to organize a first aid course.■

A good example of why a little Wilderness First Aid training could be valuable...

Club Ramblings



Courtesy Tami Knight

Mountain Affinities

By Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

We had both
been born and breast
fed in the mountain
streams, rocks, glaciers
and high winds of the
ancient rock sentinels.
We were like frisky young
and pure mountain goats.

We roamed as children
on the alpine, the turns
in the seasons our
delight and food,
the soft blue, white and
pink forget-me-nots
our reminder.

We vowed to do this
our life journey, but
valley demands
exacted their
due and price.

She left to get
educated, felt out
of place, initially, in
the lowlands but learned to adapt.

Each trip up the mountainside
she had changed, lost
something—I sensed, smelt it.
She told me she
had met someone, a new
trail to trek.

I worried for her, but she was
strong willed. I thought the
trail she was about to take
would not suit her soul. It would
take her to places where living,
wild things would not grow, could
not be free.

30 years have passed. I saw her
a few years ago-- hardly recognized her.
She was bent, the wrinkles went
deep, her soul had been beaten.
I tried to reach out to her. She
had a hunted, haunted look, almost
caged. I suppose I looked too bushed
to be seen.

She could see me no more.
There were memories, but
buried too deep to retrieve.
Our eyes briefly met, touched,
then parted.

She died last year.
I went to her burial place,
planted some forget- me-not
by the tombstone. I hoped the
roots would reach her.

This summer a family of young
forget-me-nots were clustered by
my cabin---nothing had grown
there for more than 30 years.



Club Ramblings

Easter 2005

Nowell Senior (Caledonia Ramblers)

At the Easter weekend, Ric, Lyle and I snow-shoed to Red Mountain cabin, nestled in the McGregor Mountains near the community of Penny, British Columbia. We had been forewarned that a marten was making a nuisance of itself at the cabin. Given what had happened to us on our first trip to the cabin the year before, a measly little marten would soon know its place when we claimed the cabin.

However, when we arrived it was to discover that there was not a problem with a marten, but with martens! Having dug our way into the cabin, we then had to chase the martens out of it; they squeaked, hissed, growled and grunted at us in defiance. They had done no damage, but had been using the cabin as a backcountry outhouse.

In any event, after a cosy evening, a delightful dinner, and a drop or two of the five litres of wine Ric had carried up, I lay down and slept like the proverbial log, and thankfully oblivious to the drama going on around me. Ric and Lyle were locked in a struggle with the martens, who, in their urgent need of the washroom, spent all night trying to get into it!

Lyle adopted the role of sentinel over the martens' port of entry; Ric assumed second in command should Lyle weaken in resolve – all while I slept in ignorance and bliss. So still and quiet was I, that Lyle thought I was dead. I was a bit disappointed to learn that he never even came over to confirm this. His rationale for this was I was clearly beyond being resuscitated, and with one less of us to protect from the martens his chances for some sleep were improved.

Next day's blizzard conditions put the damper on hiking, so Ric and I built a snow shelter. While doing so, Lyle remained in the cabin preparing for the coming night's vigil by reading the 7th edition of "Strategies for the Expulsion of Marauding Mustelids (marten) from Mountain Cabins".

That night, Lyle's reading only partially paid off; he repulsed the marten from the cabin long enough for them to visit and try to repulse me from my snow shelter. They tried the old Stare-Down Strategy, which involved two sets of glittering eyeballs floating in the pitch darkness of the shelter. I'd turn my headlight on and they'd grin at me. I rattled my emergency blanket; the eyes grew brighter, and the grins bigger. When the hissing started I shook my pepper spray as a warning, but the martens snorted in derision!

I pulled the blanket over my head, and the martens tugged at my thermo pad. I wondered what next: now my thermo pad – next my underpants? At this point I confess to regressing to an earlier – much earlier stage of development: I sat up and hissed with an intensity that blew out my partial palate at my tormentors, sending them scurrying to Ric and Lyle's place.

They came back; I hissed; they left. They came... I hissed... they left... came back...

It sounds like a song doesn't it?

"She left; I missed her; she came back; we kissed; she left..." and so on.



Morning came at last. As far as we could tell, there were three or four or more marten, and they had screeched, shrieked, snarled and fought each other whenever they became bored of tormenting us.

Although Lyle would feel satisfaction from seeing these marten converted into an article of clothing, I admire their tenacious defence of their domain. Of course I can be more charitable because I only lost one night of sleep whereas Lyle lost two, and the veil of charity becomes threadbare when scraped by exhaustion! ■

Club Ramblings

Nepal 2009

Dave King (Caledonia Ramblers)



Sunset on Makalu from a ridge near our Shersong camp

Tom Carter

In October 09, for the third time in 5 years, I was off to Nepal for a trek into the Himalaya. Each of these treks has been organized by Tom Carter (ACC member who lives on Lasqueti Island) (www.moonmountainadventures.com), and each has been into a different remote area of the Himalaya.

This time the destination was the base camp for Mt Makalu (the world's 5th highest at 8463 m). Makalu is 22 km east of Everest and on the Tibetan/Chinese border. The previous trips had been to Kanchenjunga in 2005, and to Manaslu and the Nar/Phoo area in 2007. This trip, like the others, was a 30-32 day trek, living in tents and with porters, cooks and a guide.

We spent a couple of days in Kathmandu (a wonderful, lively city) making final preparations before a short flight to Tulmington (400 m ASL), the start of the trek.

Three of us were from Prince George, three from the Lower Mainland and one from Canmore. All except one of us had trekked in Nepal before and Tom about 20 times. Nima (our Sherpa guide), the two cooks and some of the porters had been with us on previous trips. While we would carry just our needs for the day (5-10 kg) our incredible porters would be carrying closer to 40 kg.

It took us 10 days of up and down, initially through small villages and farms of rice, millet and other crops, then patches of forest, before emerging into largely rock, shrubs and yak pastures at about 3700 m.

At two camps we spent 2 nights as part of our altitude acclimatization. Nepal is dominantly Hindu, but at higher elevations, Buddhism takes over. There were a few other trekking groups on the same route but some days we met none. Then it was over Shipton's Pass and 4 more days to Shersong (4600 m), which is an old campsite just down valley from the Makalu base camp. We decided not to camp any higher.

Our camp was surrounded by high peaks and many glaciers. The following day we ascended to the SE shoulder of Makalu at 5200 metres and, had it been clear, Everest and Lhotse would have been visible only 25 km to the west. Makalu towered above us, and it was hard to believe it was still almost 2 vertical miles to its summit. No one in our party had



Dave King

The trip would not have been possible without our fantastic porters who carried incredible loads

Club Ramblings

any altitude effects, although we met people in other trekking groups who were having a hard time. We did visit the base camp before returning to Shersong. As it was now into November the yak herders were moving their herds to lower elevations for the winter...the camps and huts over 3700 m were being boarded up.

We retreated back down our route to about 1700 m at Sedua, then turned west to follow a little used route initially along the Arun Khola (river), then up and down over several ridges to Lukla on the Everest base camp route. This route varied from about 600m ASL up to 3300m ASL, with enormous amounts of elevation gain and loss each day. It took about 2 weeks. A lot of the trail was rugged and steep and dominated by forest. Wherever there was a little soil it was farmed. We passed through rice paddies, fields of millet, corn, cabbages, potatoes and other crops....the people still living much as they had for decades. It was a week or more travel for the residents from any road or the airport at Lukla. We bought vegetables and meat (chickens, goat, yak) when possible to supplement what our porters carried. (Actually the heaviest item our porters had to carry was kerosene for our stoves (no other fuel is available) We had started with nearly 300 litres and an extra 5 porters from Tulmingtar just to carry it.)



Richard Hall

Our group on a ridge near Shipton's Pass on the way into Makalu (just under 4000 meters). Left to right: Chris Peppler, Lynne Peppler, Lenore Harris, Richard Hall, Cathleen Boyle, Dave King, Tom Carter and Ganu (one of our cooks)



Peter Macek

Our group in Kathmandu at the end of a 32 day trekking trip. Left to right around the table: Richard Hall, Chris Peppler, Lenore Harris, Tom Carter, Dave King, Lynne Peppler, and Cathleen Boyle.

We crossed streams on 30 m bamboo bridges and saw paper being made in traditional style from a native plant. Goods are mostly carried on someone's back and occasionally we passed a commercial porter who may have been carrying as much as 100 kg. There were many small villages...kids (all in uniforms) at 3 different schools mobbed us. In the entire 2 weeks we met only 2 foreigners and they were a fellow from Vancouver and his friend from Alberta. These two weeks were tiring but a great cultural experience.

On reaching Lukla we were back into civilization and able to have our first shower in a month. Some in the group quickly located a Starbucks! It was nice to be in a bed again and not in a tent. Then a flight back to Kathmandu for a couple more days before the flight home.

The cost for the entire trip from Vancouver and back was about \$7000 and worth every penny. If you want a great adventure, do go for a trek in Nepal and go on a trip to one of the more remote areas without hotels and tea houses. Tom is a great organizer and builds plenty of flexibility into his trips. You really get to know the cooks and porters. You share in the decision making. Most other trekking groups are on schedules with little flexibility, and that can lead to problems. If you would like more information, give me a call or contact Tom through his website.■

Club Activities Around the Province

The Great Summer Traverse - An Ideal Large Club Trip

Christian Veenstra (Varsity Outdoor Club)

I have gotten in the habit recently of leading large masses of VOCers on longish summer weekend traverses. With the risk of avalanches melted away, long days and good weather summer is a good time to get people out on the sort of large club trips which really help foster bonds within a club.

Traverses make great large club trips for a variety of reasons. They usually go somewhere new - even when from a familiar trailhead - as the extra range when you don't have to come back the way you came really allows you to cover some distance. This also means that, even though it might be quite large, your camp usually doesn't bother anybody because it's well out of the way. People with extra energy can bag a side peak, yet everybody feels like they accomplished "the goal" because everybody completes the traverse. Roped travel on glaciers is not usually a problem - just make very large rope teams (think 7 or 8) and plan a route which doesn't involve anything steep and roped up at the same time - there's always at least one fast person for every 7 to carry a rope, and if a couple people don't have the greatest self-arrest or crevasse rescue skills it shouldn't be a problem due to your sheer numbers. Some say that these large rope teams are slow and cause excessive faffing, but in my experience that's just not true. The best part of making your large club trip a traverse is that the group naturally spreads out along the route, avoiding bottlenecks at short technical difficulties (which also only need to be crossed one way), which is the primary safety problem with large groups in the mountains. And, of course, if you're going to go to the hassle of arranging a getaway car, it might as well be filled with 5 drivers, rather than 1.



Christian Veenstra

Looking over the Garibaldi Neve from the glacial dome South of the Sharkfin. Roland Burton's rope team (barely visible on the left) has made it through, while more rope teams approach from camp.

There are some difficulties with mitigating the environmental impact of large club trips, but it's a good time to get people thinking. You may not come up with a hard answer about whether, when off trail in a large group, it's better to spread out (minimizing the chances of trampling the same plant twice) or all travel in a line (such that you keep what damage is done contained) - but after the conversation people do tend to pay attention to their feet. I was also pleasantly surprised with how quickly everyone agreed to carry out their own poo, once the subject was breached. You can almost always manage to setup your camp on snow, with a little planning.

Past trips, all with close to 30 participants, have included many options in the Sea-to-Sky corridor. A "semi-alcoholic" traverse - crossing over Brandywine, camping near Fee, and exiting after climbing Cypress (only "semi" alcoholic because we didn't actually go up Brew), this was a great trip for a variety of skill levels, because both Cypress and Brandywine could be left out at the discretion of the hiker and, done early in the season with a good snowpack, involves very little scrambling. Circumnavigating Garibaldi Lake (clockwise, across the ash flats, over the Helm Glacier, across Gentian Pass, over the Guard-Deception col, around past the Table and over

Club Activities Around the Province

Mt. Price) involved two long days, but was a little easier because we didn't need to carry tents or sleeping bags (when staying in the tiny Burton Hut in Sphinx Bay with almost 30 people in summer, the idea of using a sleeping bag is farcical). Climbing Mt. Price the long way - starting on Brohm Ridge, over the Warren Outwash and through Table Meadows - also made for a good trip without much technical difficulty.

One of my favorites, though, was crossing the Garibaldi Neve late last August. I figured, given the low snowpack, that it would involve a lot of un-roped "strap on the crampons and go" travel on bare ice. Seemed like it might be the ideal time for a trip I've always wanted to try.

It turned out to be a real classic, with multiple pairs of club crampons breaking but being salvaged with the excessive application of duct-tape. On the first day we came in via Elfin, passing by the remains of the old Neve Hilton hut, and set up camp beside the high-point on Pringle Ridge, where the excessive forest-fire smoke treated us to a beautiful sunset as we sang the evening away.

The second day we realized we probably would have been much better off with a higher snowpack. The crevasses near the Shark's Fin were incredible. It was amazing to see the wild carnage that gets so well buried every winter - we were lucky to find a way across; I think it might have been the only one on the glacier which didn't involve lowering somebody down a crevasse to climb out the other side. It was Roland's rope team which finally found the way through - we'd both tried the flats without success and I'd gone to try the high route, while he went right along the very edge of the rise. Since the crevasses I'd found up there were continuous and about as wide across as a city side-street, I was glad to hear of his success over the radio.

Travel eased after the Shark's Fin; we scrambled down to the Warren Glacier, which was bare ice and mostly free of non-jumpable crevasses. It was a strange transition from that wonderland of ice and gushing water to the seemingly scorched desert of Brohm Ridge. The slog down Brohm Ridge was long and hard, with Roland (our sole 4x4 driver) making many trips ferrying the shrinking group of hikers the rest of the way down.

It accomplished two of the main goals I think large club trips should have - good fun and an opportunity to see and do things you probably otherwise wouldn't.■



Christian Veenstra

The second rope team makes their way through the mess of crevasses near the Sharkfin during a summer crossing of the Garibaldi Neve.



Christian Veenstra

A line of VOCers makes their way out along Brohm Ridge after crossing successfully behind Mt. Garibaldi.

Club Activities Around the Province

Chilliwack Outdoor Club takes Avalanche Safety Training I Plus (AST-1)

January 29-31

Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)



Ron Dart shovelling and Glenda Chu and Debbie Hallinan looking on

Jerry Unruh

Canada West Mountain School, in their brochure, states that ‘our 2.5 day AST-1 PLUS Avalanche Skills course is one of the most comprehensive AST-1 courses available’. We had eight join us from the Chilliwack Outdoor Club for the 2.5 day course. Some had taken the course before (so it was a good refresher), and for others it was the first trek into the world of avalanche awareness and safety.

Dave Bryan (also a paramedic) from Canada West Mountain School was the guide and instructor for the weekend, and Gary Sullivan kindly offered his home for the theory and film sessions. January 29th was the introductory evening, so we had a dinner at Gary’s, and Dave walked us through the goals for the weekend and pointed out new developments in avalanche awareness and safety.

We left rain drenched Chilliwack by 7am on January 30th, and headed up the Coquihalla to Falls Lake. We were well on our snowshoe and skiing way by 8:30. The snow was falling, and it fell most of the day. We moved quite slowly on the trail as Dave stopped often to explain and discuss snow conditions, signs of avalanches, wind and weather and other aspects of avalanche awareness. The destination for the day was a small plateau on the southern and upper edge of Thar. We spent much of the afternoon practicing how to use beacons, pros and cons of analogue and digital beacons and types of probes and shovels that are better and worse for rescue operations. It was a shorter day on Thar, and we were back at Gary’s in Chilliwack for a snack and more theory and a film. Most of us were home again by 7pm.

January 31st was a much longer day in the mountains. Again, we left rain soaked Chilliwack by 7am, and were well on the Falls Lake trail by 8:30. The snow continued to fall, and our destination was Falls Lake bowl. There was plenty of avalanche danger on the far side of Falls Lake, and many were the discussions on terrain evaluation, weather, wind, and conditions that created various types of avalanches. We skied and snowshoed up the side of snow packed Zoa near the col between Zoa and Yak. A snow pit was dug, and we measured and evaluated the nature of snow layers and what they mean for avalanche risk. We buried Eric up to his head in the snow, and practiced the new V-formation type of shoveling for rescue. The afternoon inched ever onwards, and dusk drew closer. We did not reach the trailhead until about 5pm—night was drawing us into its darkness. We had spent almost 9 hours on the mountain, and much was learned. We stopped at the Blue Moose for a final regrouping and reflection on the 3 days.



Jerry Unruh

Eric Starzacher buried in the snow during a rescue

Dave did an A++ job teaching the course, Christine Faulconbridge should be congratulated for all the work she put into organizing both the dinner and the course, and Gary warmly commended for his gracious hospitality. Most of us are now keen and ready for AST II. ■

Participants: Dave Bryan (Instructor), Gary Sullivan (host), Christine Faulconbridge (organizer), Peter Murphy, Jerry Unruh, Eric Starzacher, Don Hay, Debbie Hallinan, Glenda Chu and Ron Dart (reporter)

Club Updates

New Vancouver Island Hiking Book Released

Eric Burkle

VITIS Vice-President & Editorial Committee Chair

The Vancouver Islands Trails Information Society (VITIS) is proud to announce the release of their new **Hiking Trails 2 - South-Central Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands**, covering the area from Shawnigan Lake to Oceanside to the West Coast, and the Gulf Islands.

The completely revised and updated 9th edition of **Hiking Trails 2** includes over 60 feature hikes, many on new trails, suggested nearby hiking possibilities and 35 colour maps. With some 240 pages, **Hiking Trails 2** is our most comprehensive guide ever and our first full colour book, edited by Richard Blier assisted by the VITIS Editorial Committee. It is an excellent guide to some of the best hikes on Vancouver Island and will be of interest to the casual walker, novice or experienced hiker, and tourists to this area.

VITIS also publishes the popular **Hiking Trails 1 - Victoria & Vicinity** and **Hiking Trails 3 - Northern Vancouver Island**. The books have gone through 32 editions since 1972 with an estimated more than 100,000 copies sold, promoting outdoor activity, fitness and tourism. The best-selling locally-produced series continues to be the essential guide to hiking on what is considered one of the most spectacular islands in the world.

VITIS is a non-profit society with its volunteer members dedicated to providing accurate information to the public about parks and trails on Vancouver Island and to increase interest in the outdoors and hiking for 38 years.



Talon Peak, eastern Garibaldi Park

Brian Wood

Our books may be purchased directly at <http://www.hikingtrailsbooks.com/>. There are no delivery charges within B.C. The new **Hiking Trails 2** is available for \$26 plus tax.

The VITIS website will also undergo a major change in the next few weeks, another project we are currently working on. Updates to hikes featured in our books may be posted there, and FMCBC members are encouraged to send us any such updates. ■

New Club joining FMCBC

Gil Parker (Vancouver Island "Spine" Trail Association)

The Vancouver Island "Spine" Trail Association is the latest member of FMCBC. While many members of VISTA overlap with other outdoor organizations, the new club will bring about 25 new members to FMCBC.

The Vancouver Island "Spine" is a proposed trail from Victoria in the south to Cape Scott at the northern tip of the Island. The route is an inland route that passes near many communities, yet retains its wilderness

Club Updates

character, following historic routes and completed trails where they exist. Approximately 700km long, the “VI Spine” is an adventure opportunity that will provide a recreational route for residents and tourists through the beautiful back country of Vancouver Island.

As the first major kick-off event to show off the ambitious plans, the VI Spine Relay will be held in June 2010, involving groups of individuals running, hiking, cycling, mountain biking and horseback riding along parts of the proposed trail route from Cape Scott to Victoria.



Randy Church

Vancouver Island Spine Trail: Mount Stubbs over Beaufort Lake

Relay participants will use existing trails, and in between, use mountain or touring bikes. In addition to the core participants, we will be inviting school groups, community leaders, the general public, businesses, the media and politicians to hike for short sections during six Community Days, held at key towns and cities along the route.

REGISTRATION to do all or part of the Spine is now available. [Click here](#) to sign up.

MAPS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION on the VI Spine Trail and Relay are included in a presentation deck that you can view by [clicking here](#).

The Relay is being organized by Andrew Pape-Salmon:

Email: andrewpapesalmon@shaw.ca Tel: 250-592-7017.



Peter Oostlander

Above the “cornfields” at Amiskwi lodge near Golden, BC

Literature of Interest



Earle Birney: *Conrad Kain*

Review by Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

*The glow of our rocks is richer by the life of an Austrian goatherd,
Of Conrad Kain the Mountain man, of Conrad Kain the Canadian.*

There is not much doubt that Birney's *David* (1940) is the most dramatic and vivid mountaineering poem in Canadian literature. The sheer momentum, graphic rock slab images and tragic tension packed into the epic poem make it the definitive classic of mountain culture in Canada. *David and Other Poems* was published in 1942 and won the much coveted Governor General's medal that year. I remember, most clearly, hearing Birney read *David* in the 1970s—it was an experience not to miss.

Birney wrote many other poems on the mountains: *Once high upon a hill* (1930), *Daybreak on Lake Opal: High Rockies* (1946), *Takkakaw Falls* (1950), *Climbers* (1950) and *Bushed* (1951) are just a few of Birney's poetic mis-sives that evoke much about mountain life.

Conrad Kain came to Canada in 1909, and Birney was alert to such a significant moment. He realized he had to honour Kain, so forty years after Kain's arrival in Canada, Birney's poem, *Conrad Kain*, was published in December 1949 in *National Home Monthly*. The poem was published again in the *Canadian Alpine Journal* (1951, pgs. 97-100). Birney made it abundantly clear that he was informed and inspired to write the poem by *Where the Clouds Can Go* (edited by J. Monroe Thorington & published by the American Alpine Club, 1935).

Conrad Kain is a longer poem, much like *David*, but unlike the fictional *David*, *Conrad Kain* is biography turned into succinct and compact poetry. It is Birney at his alliterative and alluring best, and Kain is held high as the model and icon of the authentic Canadian mountain man.

There are 14 sections in *Conrad Kain*, and each section invites and walks the reader into Kain's chronological and maturing journey. Section I deals with early years in Austria, and Section II with Kain's short sojourn in Saskatchewan. The poem begins to pick up tempo in Sections III-V as Kain gets rooted and grounded in Banff and Canadian mountain life. Sections III-V are shorter, but Kain's transformation and flexible growth are nimbly tracked and traced. Section VI hovers like a windhover, looks down on Kain and ponders his unique character. 'Yet he learned to win the men of the West and to master their peaks By his animal patience and grace and the craft of his ancestors'. Sections VII-IX point the path forward in Kain's unfolding life: the Purcells, a reputation as a fine guide and trapper and his trek in New Zealand are duly noted. 'Conrad's name grew tall with Rockies' and 'he mocked the mountain's fame By a grand traverse of its peaks with one wiry determined female of sixty'

Sections X-XIII are reserved for Kain's ascent of Robson. Birney lingers and describes this climb in exquisite detail. Images are anchored well, and the tale is belayed in a manner that has many an affinity with *David*. I find Sections X-XIII the most convincing and hold me for many a read—it's almost a poem in itself-- 'icerobed and storm-crowned Robson' chills yet challenges--it's as if Birney is with Kain, McCarthy and Foster on their perilous climb to Robson's upper throne. Section XIV is almost anticlimactic after the nail biter of Robson. The poem winds to a reflective and wondering close. What was the point of



Karin Dart

Ron Dart with a statue of Conrad Kain at the Cascade Plaza Mall in Banff

Literature of Interest

it all? Why is Kain important? ‘He is dead and his conquests faded’. And yet! And yet! ‘The glow of our rocks is richer by the life of an Austrian goatherd, of Conrad Kain the Mountain man, of Conrad Kain the Canadian’.

It would be quite unfair and unkind to compare *David* and *Conrad Kain*. *David* is a much stronger, more dramatic and intense poem that has held the imagination of Canadians for decades. Most of us took the poem in with our mother’s milk and studied it annually when in school. There are sections in *Conrad Kain* that almost match the vivid ethos drawn forth in *David*—the sections on Robson conjure up such a heightened sense of adventure masaged by mountain skill, dedication, loyalty and courage. There is no poem, though, in Canadian literature that celebrated the life of Kain, and Birney, to his poetic credit, walked us to such a mountain vista---both he and Kain should be welcomed into the Canadian mountain hall of fame for their efforts. ■



The Ice Passage: A True Story of Ambition, Disaster and Endurance in the Arctic Wilderness

by Brian Payton; ISBN: 978-0-385-66532-2

Doubleday Canada, 2009

Review by Mike Nash, April 2010

The Ice Passage is one of a long line of treatises on the epic British Arctic naval expeditions dispatched in the search for John Franklin and/or the Northwest Passage in the 19th Century. I thought I had already devoured more than enough on the subject, but there was something fresh about this story that caught my interest. Brian Payton didn’t disappoint, with his fast-paced account of the 1850-1854 voyage of Captain Robert McClure and his crew; of four winters spent trapped in the ice in three locations, and their eventual escape. The story stands out in many respects: McClure approached the Northwest Passage from the west, and he was later credited with its ‘discovery’ made from his first overwintering in the channel between Victoria and Banks Islands. Because of this, he was awarded the prize of ten thousand pounds by the British Parliament, with half going to him and half split between his officers and crew. In the process, McClure and his men, but not their vessel, *HMS Investigator*, which they abandoned after their third winter, became the first people to transit the Northwest Passage and the first to circle the Americas. The expedition spent a lot of time studying the flora, fauna, and other natural phenomena of the western Arctic, in the process making new discoveries. The author frequently uses these as windows to present-day scientific understandings.

The adventure is set at the end of the British Arctic era, where, during half a century of relative peace in Europe, the Royal Navy found, with its Arctic endeavours, new reasons for being, and new adventures with which to make the names of men. Of a total of seven ships involved in this particular story, five, including the *Investigator*, were eventually abandoned to the ice; although one, the *Resolute*, amazingly made its own way 1200 miles out to Hudson’s Bay where it was salvaged by an American Whaler. The mystery of the Northwest Passage was solved when McClure provided the final piece of the puzzle. Around the same time, explorer John Rae was awarded the parallel ten thousand pound prize for solving the mystery of Franklin’s disappearance. (Sadly, Ken McGoogan’s fine books, *Fatal Passage—The Untold Story of John Rae*, and its sequel, *Lady Franklin’s Revenge* receive no mention in Payton’s selected bibliography.) As McClure returns to England, the Crimean War with Russia (1853-1856) is well underway, and the Royal Navy returns to its traditional occupations.

The McClure story is told from the perspectives of several people, using segments of their journals, in some cases previously unpublished. Foremost among these individuals was the only civilian member of the crew, a Moravian Brotherhood Missionary, Johann August Miertsching, who, having previously worked on the coast of Labrador, where he studied the ‘Esquimaux’ language, was assigned to the expedition as its interpreter. Initially Miertsching was an outcast to the sometimes bawdy crew, but he later became close through their shared trials of unimaginable hardship, illness and starvation, and as he tried, with only limited success to ply his other trade as a spiritual proselytizer.

Literature of Interest

Unfortunately the book lacks an index, which limits its usefulness as a reference, or even to flip back to refresh earlier sections while reading it for the first time. I would not choose to own it for this reason, but I found it well worth reading as a library book. It is nicely, but not exceptionally illustrated with pictures and overview maps, and would have benefited with some more detailed maps. Importantly, by the halfway point it meets the acid test of being hard to put down. Overall, it is an attractive, well-researched account, told by someone who relates well to his subject through having spent time in Arctic waters. ■

Mike Nash is the author of *The Mountain Knows No Expert* and *Exploring Prince George*.



Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis: A Guide to Ski Mountaineering

3^d Edition (2009)

John Baldwin

Review by Ron Dart (BC Mountaineering Club)

There are many good and needful books and booklets on basics of mountaineering that cover most of the essential facts, but rare is the book that evokes and excites the reader about taking to the mountains in an eager manner. The recent edition of *Exploring the Coast Mountain on Skis* is such a welcoming and well written tome. The hefty volume is replete with fine photos, excellent maps and readable overviews of how to get to destinations where skin can be put to ski and untaken snow paths made in silent terrain.

Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis is, obviously, for those keen to do backcountry winter skiing to places where few go or care to go. But, for those that long to take to the white towers and high ridges, to carve down fresh snow slopes, to make turns that delight the soul and body, to see sights only offered to those that work their way to such beauties, Baldwin's book is the map and mentor to have for such alluring possibilities.

Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis is divided into three sections: 1) Pacific Ranges, 2) Kitimat Ranges and 3) Boundary Ranges. The bulk of the book is focused on the Pacific Ranges, and there is no doubt that Baldwin has done his homework well. Each of the chapters in the three sections has photographs not to miss and excellent introductions to the terrain being discussed. The tours are ranked and rated for those not sure about which trek best suits their abilities, and the book opens with short chapters on 'Using the Guidebook', 'Trip Planning' and 'About the Coast Mountains'.

Exploring the Coast Mountains on Skis, in its updated and third edition, towers above all other books on the topic, and does so in a way that will hold the reader for many an inviting and challenging year. Do purchase, read and internalize this A++ keeper of a text. Backcountry skiing cannot but be enriched and enhanced because of this Coast Mountain guide and teacher. ■



Karin Dart

Photo of Ron Dart looking in the direction of Flute, Piccolo and Oboe. Flute Bowl is in the background.

Announcements



back-off gear tag



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

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Alpine Flowers of Vancouver Island

Existing plant records for our Island's alpine are quite sparse, especially for areas that are difficult to access. There is still much to be discovered about alpine plants and their distribution on Vancouver Island.

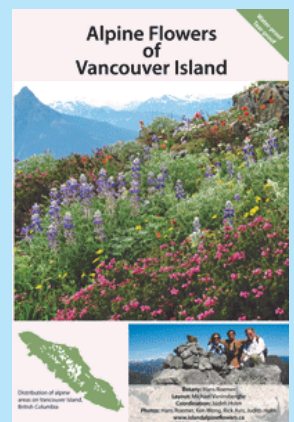
As part of a larger, continuing project to document the alpine flora, a map of the showier species is now available. It offers the potential for interested mountaineers and hikers to make new alpine plant discoveries, akin to making first ascents, and to add to the records.

To record finds, use your camera and GPS! It is easier to find a flower if you know what you are looking for and where it likes to grow. Hans Roemer, PhD, has provided the botany and many of the photos. His familiarity with the mountains and his background as ecologist allowed the succinct descriptions of the habitats and, where necessary, the distinguishing features of the plants. When you look at the alpine habitat descriptions, you can know these specifically describe Vancouver Island; when you read the names, they are the Island species.

The associated website www.islandalpineflowers.ca provides further details and enables present and future contributions beyond the scope of a pamphlet. For example, see "additional rare alpine flowers" (with photos and habitat descriptions). On the website is our email address, alpineflowersvi@gmail.com

If it is raining or windy, it's OK, the pamphlet is of similar material to waterproof maps.
If your pack is already too heavy, no worries, this strong synthetic paper is featherweight.
If you're tent bound, here is interesting reading, with relatively large photos.
If you only like views and maybe geology, beware, you may begin to see the flowers!
If you already see and know these flowers, here is a way to share them with your friends.

We hope that you will enjoy this little publication with website and will feel very welcome to participate. ~Judith Holm



Announcements

Multi-Club Trip Planned--Mount Rainier Circuit--September 2010

Brian Wood (BC Mountaineering Club)

For the last three summers I have tried to arrange week-long trips for multiple clubs of the FMC. There are several reasons for these multi-club trips, such as encouraging communication and friendships between member clubs, providing a pool of extra people which can help a trip "go" instead of being cancelled due to insufficient interest, and a "host club" providing local knowledge of an area for a "guest club". I was surprised that two of the three trips I had arranged eventually attracted only 3 and 4 participants, which was still OK, but less than I had expected. So, for the fourth year, to get the word out early I am advertising the trip in Cloudburst to see if the response is improved.

The plan for this year's trip is to complete a circuit of Mount Rainier National Park, a little south east of Tacoma in Washington State. This is a 93 mile (about 140 km) loop along the flanks of this old 14, 410 ft. (4394 m) volcano, following the National Park Service (NPS) high quality "Wonderland Trail". There is a fair amount of elevation loss and gain traversing drainages on the flanks, and the NPS says the trail can take between 10 and 14 days, although I have heard it can be done in less time. The plan is to start sometime after Labour Day (6 Sept) so as to avoid most of the crowds, reduce chances of traversing on old snow, and to improve our chances of getting our preferred dates through the bureaucratic recreation management system. For a trip of this length we expect to use one or two food/fuel caches to reduce our backpack loads, and this requires arranging drop-offs beforehand, so two or more cars will be useful.

The purpose of this circuit trip is not to climb to the summit, but if some folks would like to try for the summit I expect this could be arranged before or after the circuit itself. As Labour Day is just before the circuit trip, planning for a summit attempt after the circuit trip would probably be best. Obviously, proper mountaineering and glacier gear would be required for any summit attempt, although some time ago parties were allowed to ascend to about 10,000ft without too much extra gear.

If you are interested, preferably email me at bjwood@telus.net, or alternatively call me at (604) 222-1541.



Cloudburst Cover Photo Contest

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

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

Congratulations and thank you to Peter Oostlander whose great photo made the cover of our Spring/Summer 2010 Issue

We are looking for volunteers

Positions available on our Fundraising Committee, our Newsletter Committee, and

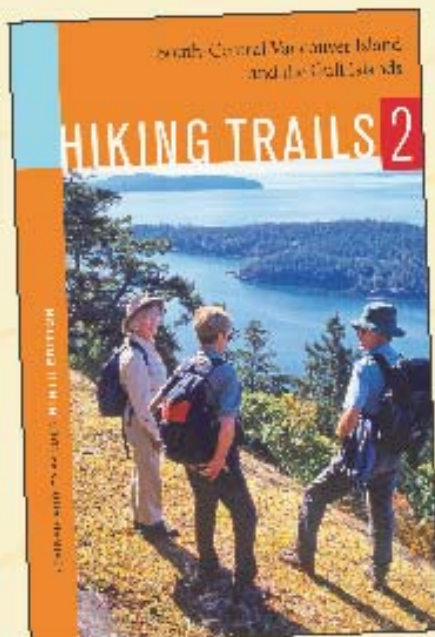
Please contact Jodi for more information

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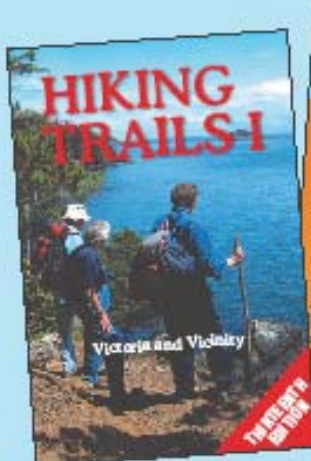
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The Vancouver Island Trails Information Society (VTIS) is a non-profit society dedicated to providing accurate information to the public about parks and trails on Vancouver Island. The society has produced unique hiking books in 32 editions since 1972. See www.hikingtrailsbooks.com for further information about VTIS.

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Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association

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Brian Wood

View looking east towards lower Lillooet Valley from Nivalis Mtn, in Eastern Garibaldi Park

Please Return Undeliverable Copies to:
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John Mclellan

Kulshan Ridge in the Mt. Baker area where Ron Dart basking in the out of doors winter cathedral on a blue bonnet day.