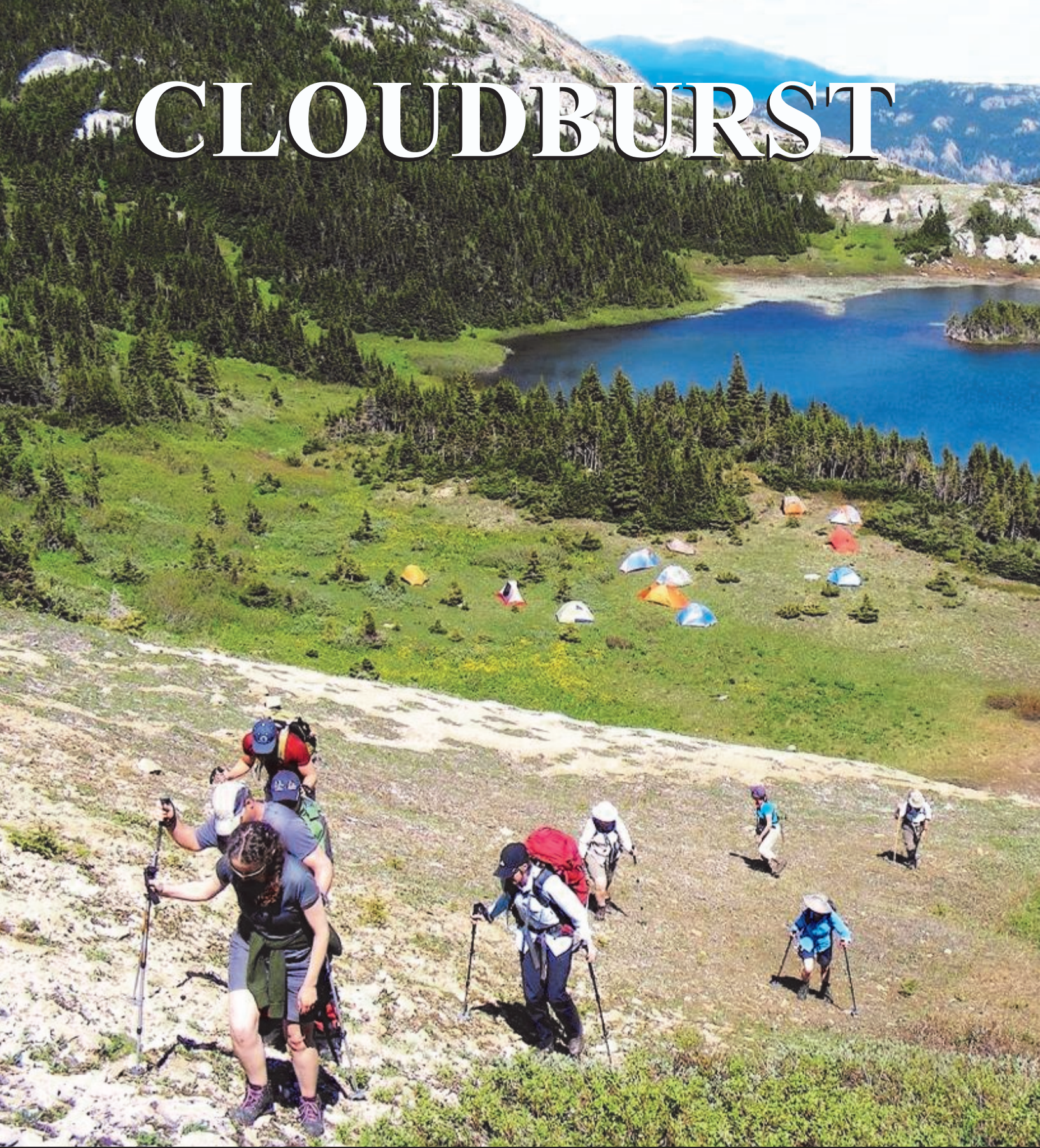


CLOUDBURST



Taking Issue with the GAS Four Season Resort Proposal | Parks and their Commercial Ski Areas
Collaborative Trail Design Through Section 56 & 57 Land Use Agreements | Using iMap BC

Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

Spring/Summer 2016

CLOUDBURST

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Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Working on your behalf

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

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

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

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

FMCBC's **purpose** is:

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

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

- Participating in provincial land use decision processes
- Working to positively change government agency policies so that self-propelled outdoor recreation opportunities are recognized and protected
- Representing wilderness as a legitimate land use and a resource of identifiable value to society
- Advocating for new parks and wilderness resources, and working to maintain the integrity of existing parks and wilderness resources
- Advocating for improved access to existing recreational resources
- Supporting the building, maintaining and protecting of hiking and mountain access trails
- Promoting non-motorized and self-propelled recreation activities in BC's mountains and wilderness
- Educating its member and the public on mountain and backcountry safety issues and working with member clubs to address risk management issues
- Promoting membership within our member clubs
- Negotiating with insurance brokers to provide extensive liability insurance coverage for our members clubs

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

President's Message

Bob St. John



Bob St. John at Frenchman's Cap in the Monashees

The FMCBC is fortunate to have so many smart people working and volunteering on issues that affect our membership. We look at all aspects, consider opposing views, and try to come up with reasoned solutions that all sides could live with. We write respectful letters to those who we feel would be fair-minded, to those we feel owe us at least a similarly reasoned reply. Sometimes we are successful, but most often we are not.

I think our reasoned approach works when the person or persons we are dealing with have the leeway to make reasoned decisions. We may not be successful in getting what we want, but at least we can be satisfied we were given fair consideration.

The problem with this approach is that too often the person or persons we are dealing with may *not* have the leeway to make reasoned decisions. They are employed by the biggest and most powerful organization in the province—our government. When an edict comes down from above, the

person or persons we are dealing with must follow the edict, lest they lose their job, abandon their pension, or relinquish their promotion.

Is our government a thoughtful, reasoned organization? I believe many government employees would like to think so. They did win the last several elections, so they must be doing something right. Perhaps there is a good reason for underfunding parks, despite government data to the contrary. Perhaps we just don't know the rationale behind that policy. There may be good reasons why we seem to be shut out of meetings that count, and are instead given the results afterwards. I suspect the justification there is that we don't have much economic muscle; we're swinging in Little League while our opponents are batting in the Major League.

We're the David up against two Goliaths—government and big business. They seem to get along just fine, while we sometimes don't seem to exist. We can accept that and hope for the best, or we can work to come up with other strategies, examine what kinds of slingshots we may have, and use them if necessary.

We will be discussing this at our AGM in May. Please give it some thought. ■

WELCOME

Welcome to our newest FMCBC Member Clubs:

Chilliwack Park Society
Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society
Skaha Bluffs Park Watch Society

Welcome to our newest FMCBC Directors:

Roxanna Froese (CPS) Jeremy Markel (KHC)
Sandra Fuller (KMC) Eagle Walz (PR-PAWS)
Rolf Rybak (SBPWS) Viire Daniels (VOA)
Mackenzie Coombe (VOCO)

THANK-YOU

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

Doug Smith (KHC)
Doug Clark (KMC)
Lina Gomez (VOCO)

Recreation and Conservation

Taking Issue with Garibaldi at Squamish's Four Season Resort Proposal

By Brian Wood, BC Mountaineering Club



Herb Vesely

Construction of a ski resort on Brohm Ridge on the west edge of Garibaldi Provincial Park was originally proposed and started more than forty years ago and abandoned shortly thereafter, the construction remnants of which still remain. Since then, various proponents have proposed new resorts, usually with very mixed reviews and much local controversy.

After an initial proposal in the 1990s was reduced to sidestep some criticisms, the present proponent, Garibaldi at Squamish (GAS), is now proposing a \$3 billion dollar four season resort, as opposed to a mere ski resort. On 29 January 2016, the Government issued an Environmental Assessment Certificate with 40 conditions to be fulfilled, meaning much more planning is required and work will not be starting any time soon. The owners of this proposal, which include members of the Aquilini and Gagliardi families, state that they will work with all interested parties to reduce the long standing opposition to this project.

This ambitious project, which is estimated to take 20 years to complete, includes a large condominium development which many say is the main reason for the proposal because the bigger the resort facilities, the more cheap land is granted for the condominiums. Many reports and opinions support expectations that the poor skiing terrain, the relatively low elevation of the resort, and the historical records of the local weather will result in this project failing as a ski area like the previous project. For example, the base elevation of GAS is only 650 metres, which is 250 metres lower than any resort on the North Shore and even those local resorts are infamous for having poor snow conditions. According to a 1974 ski area consultant's report, poor terrain, often poor visibility and insufficient snow pack all make this a poor site for a ski resort, and since then the weather has only gotten—and will continue to get—worse due to climate change.

The proponents feel that expanding from three to four seasons will increase recreation activities to include mountain biking which will overcome any problems associated with skiing. Unfortunately, if the project actually gets started and then fails, you can be sure the landscape will be littered with abandoned structures just like the previous attempt. I suppose it might paint too negative a picture if the government insisted on the company posting a financial bond adequate for remediation of the site if the project is finally abandoned.

Ever since the GAS resort was proposed in the 1990s, together with many other opponents to this project, the FMCBC has repeatedly informed the Provincial Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) of its many concerns relating to this proposal. These concerns cover a wide range of issues such as problems relating to access to Garibaldi Park and the nearby backcountry area for our members and the general public. We have also expressed concern about wildlife disturbances, particularly goat and deer, loss of old-growth forest and important ecosystems, and demands on water and its disposal. On September 25, 2015 some FMCBC members had met face-to-face with some representatives of the proponents, when they finally had a chance to personally explain some of their concerns which are summarized below.

- 1) The maps of the outer and upper limits of the resort development and the ski runs themselves have a 50 metre "buffer zone" from the Garibaldi Park boundary, which was increased from the 25 metre buffer zone of earlier proposals. This 25 metre increase is negligible (some might call it tokenism) when considering the distance skiers (and snowmobilers) are prepared to go to access new snow terrain. The boundary will be essentially impossible to police against out-of-bounds skiers (or trespassing snowmobilers) and so I hope that there will be sufficient rescue teams in place to deal with inevitable lost persons.

2) The abandoned 1970's Brohm Ridge project left behind a building which has served as a clubhouse for the Black Tusk Snowmobile Club (BTSC) for many decades. As most non-motorized recreationists try to avoid motorized recreationists, this area has effectively become a motorized recreation zone, meaning it's been abandoned by most backcountry skiers and snowshoers. If the GAS project proceeds as planned, the snowmobilers who currently use the old building will be displaced to another area and there are very few, if any, areas in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor which these displaced snowmobilers could use without interfering with the experiences of backcountry skiers.

This displacement of the BTSC is an unintended consequence of the GAS project and has always concerned the FMCBC, though it seemed to have been ignored by the EAO and other stakeholders. Recently the displaced snowmobilers have been directed by GAS to an area that is currently designated by the Sea-to-Sky Land Resource Management Plan as a non-motorized area, although this area is currently being used by snowmobilers as there is no enforcement of the non-motorized zoning. GAS was informed of the sectoral/zoning distinctions between motorized and non-motorized recreationists, and was requested to direct motorized users to areas designated for them by the LRMP. The FMCBC has always tried to protect opportunities for non-motorized outdoor recreation in the Sea-to-Sky area but we have lost terrain in this crowded region.

3) We are also suspicious that if (and that is a big "if") the resort is actually successful as a ski area they will want to expand into Garibaldi Park, just like Whistler and Blackcomb ski resorts did years ago. We have seen many times how easy it is to adjust park boundaries for commercial reasons, so we feel that the GAS resort could be just the "thin end of the wedge" for yet another attack on Garibaldi Park which would likely result in attempts to install downhill skiing facilities within the present park terrain.

4) At the September 2015 meeting, when challenged that "ski hills don't make money, the real estate surrounding them does," it was admitted that in exchange for building the ski facilities, GAS will be able to obtain real estate "at a nominal price." There are no real estate dimensions on GAS's maps so we do not know the extent of the actual buildings, but I am sure the area eventually will be maximized for condominiums.

We made GAS aware of the above concerns, chiefly of the numerous frustrations the FMCBC and member clubs have experienced in the past such as not being consulted, not being listened to, no enforcement of motorized activity (especially the snowmobilers) etc. GAS suggested it could be possible to have a covenant or easement up against the Park, requiring FMCBC's consent to encroach. This suggestion indicates their possible future expansion plans, and in any event we have no faith whatsoever in covenants or easements for any type of resort restriction so I would say that suggestion is a non-starter.

GAS says there won't be any snowmobile or helicopter use around the ski area as it would be as annoying to hotel guests, but these could be empty promises as the crowds at Whistler Blackcomb seem to tolerate all types of motorized activities. When asked why they would succeed where numerous previous developers had failed, the response seemed to be that GAS does very thorough planning and has "deep pockets." We pointed out that we are arguing for the general public's benefit (specifically for the public's right to the quiet enjoyment of their parks) as well as our own members' benefit, because the FMCBC, as a large and well-established organization, has more and better opportunities to voice these concerns than the general public.

In summary, we oppose the GAS resort development because of very serious further threats to Garibaldi Park and its ecological integrity, inevitable increase in trespassers into Garibaldi Park and displacement of snowmobilers from Brohm Ridge to other areas resulting in loss of peaceful areas and opportunities to enjoy non-motorized backcountry activities. ■



The moon rising over Spearhead Traverse, spring 2013.

Jay MacArthur

History of Vehicle Access to the Spearhead Region of Garibaldi Park

By Rupert Merer, ACC-Whistler

A number of histories of Whistler and Whistler Blackcomb have been published this year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the opening of Whistler Mountain for skiing. Whistler is a tourist town which is naturally always trying to sell itself, so these histories have been overwhelmingly positive, about the mountain, the place, the pioneers, the Olympic bids and the skiing. They mention that the first bid for the winter Olympics was submitted when there was only a gravel road to the ski hill, but perhaps this tells us more about how small scale the winter Olympics were in the late 1960s than anything else.

However, in all of these brief histories there doesn't seem to be a single mention of Garibaldi Provincial Park, even though almost all of the good skiing on both mountains is on land that was transferred from the Park. Even in 1965 most of the skiable lifts were wholly or partly in the park.

Garibaldi Park was created in 1927. The BCMC played a lead role in persuading the Government to establish the park. They wrote to the Minister in 1915 and persuaded the Alpine Club to do the same in 1917. There were already mines in the Fitzsimmons Valley at that time. We have a 1928 map of Fitzsimmons Creek which shows a pack trail from Alta Lake to 'Avalanche Pass,' later renamed Singing Pass. The trail seems to follow the route of the current IPP access road on the north side of the creek, and it crossed to the south side of the creek at a point close to the new intake. The pack trail provided access to a number of mine workings in the valley.

In the early 1960s or late 1950s, the Fitzsimmons valley was logged right up to the park boundary, and logging roads were built on both sides of the creek. The logging roads and clearcuts can be seen clearly in some of the early Blackcomb ski maps of 1980 to 1982. Dick Culbert's climbing guide from the early 1960s stated that there were roads on each side of the creek to the park boundary. The road on the south side of Fitzsimmons Creek was used by hikers to access a parking lot about five kilometers above Whistler's main day lots. From there Singing Pass is about seven kilometers and Russet Lake another three so that a hiker could explore beyond Russet Lake on a day trip. The logging road on the north side of the creek was also used by hikers but there was no permanent bridge over the creek.

Whistler Mountain originally started operations on the south side of the mountain because there were a number of mining claims on the north flank. The original Park boundary was about halfway up the Red Chair, and the Blue chair, the T-bars and the Roundhouse were built on Park land. Presumably Whistler (or Garibaldi Lift Company as it then was) negotiated the transfer of Park land before 1965 when they started constructing the lifts, but official topographical maps of the province printed in 1967 do not show boundary changes.

Blackcomb opened for skiing in December 1980. On this mountain the original park boundary ran north-south about one third of the way up the Solar Coaster Chair (known as Chair 4 at the time). Without changes to the park boundary Blackcomb would have been a tiny resort, almost all below 1600 metres.

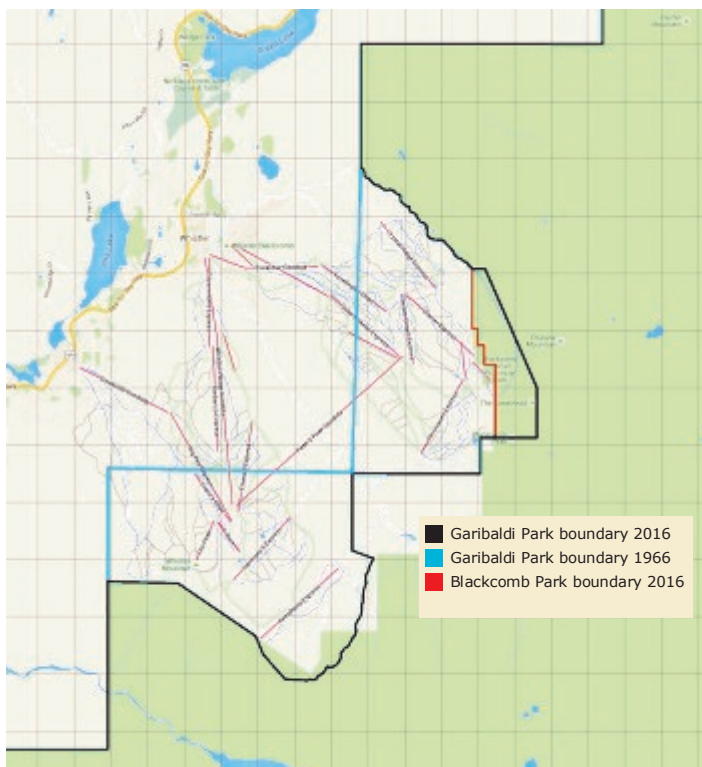
Between 1966 and 1990 the Park boundary was gradually pushed back on both mountains. It is hard to find any record of these changes, perhaps because negotiations with both mountains were conducted in secrecy. Providing confirmation of this the original Master Development Agreement for Whistler had a clause requiring that the entire contents of the agreement should be confidential. This agreement, dated 1982, showed that by then the Park boundary had been pushed south by about two kilometres to include Whistler Peak. Sometime between 1982 and 1990 the boundary was pushed back to the southeast to include most of the ridge from Whistler Peak to Flute Mountain. In about 2003, the boundary was adjusted—behind closed doors—to provide more space to WB on the summit of Piccolo Mountain. Unremarkable mountainside somewhere in the Fitzsimmons valley was traded for prime alpine land on top of the ridge. It was an added insult to make this transaction appear to be a fair trade.

The park boundary was also changed a number of times on Blackcomb—originally in the late 1970s to allow the initial development of the resort and then again between 1980 and 1990 the boundary was moved to encompass the Seventh heaven area, and once more in 1989 and 1990 to include the Crystal Ridge area and then Blackcomb Glacier. The latter park was formed because the Government decided to legislate the boundary of Garibaldi Park, and Blackcomb Glacier Recreation Area was removed for the future use of skiers.

The result of all of the transfers is that the majority of Whistler Blackcomb's skiing takes place on land that was part of Garibaldi Provincial Park before 1966. Without the transfers Blackcomb would be limited to the Excelsior and Wizard chairs, low on the mountain. Whistler would not have the Peak, Harmony, Symphony, Big Red or Emerald chairs or the Roundhouse. The total transfer areas are about 1,450 Ha to Whistler and 1,650 Ha to Blackcomb.

But the boundary adjustments generally had public support as the 1988 and 1989 public meetings demonstrated. The mountain clubs also supported them without reservations, as a letter from BCMC to the Minister of Recreation and Conservation, in July 1968, shows. However, BCMC was concerned that the development of skiing in the Fitzsimmons valley should "ensure preservation of existing access routes into the park (e.g. the Fitzsimmons Creek trail to Singing Pass)." The Minister responded by saying that "We can assure you that no Park Use Permit will be issued to the above company without due consideration being given to the effect that it will have on public access within Garibaldi Park".

They didn't give such consideration. We have never seen a PUP but when the BC Government signed a Master Development Agreement with Whistler the references to summer vehicle access were contradictory. The agreement seemed to contemplate hiker and vehicle access in summer but isn't specific. The access road on the North of Fitzsimmons creek was shown on one of the attached drawings as a ROW but another drawing shows it as a hiking trail. The old parking lot is shown clearly on the main drawing of the resort area.



This map, submitted by Paul Kubik (BCMC), shows the Whistler-Blackcomb park deletions in the context of the current Garibaldi Provincial Park boundary.

But all was well for hikers until 1991 when the Fitzsimmons slump or slide occurred. The slump closed the access road below the parking lot, and later Whistler built a gate across the bottom of it.

Was the gate legal? Probably not, because the 1982 MDA required Whistler to provide road access to all parking lots. Whistler then developed the bike park across the access road and took firm ownership of it. The rest of the Fitzsimmons valley was subsequently locked up by the IPP development and the Olympic sliding centre.

The options remaining for hikers seeking to enter that Singing Pass area of the park are now:

To ride the Whistler gondola, at a cost, and hike over the Musical bumps. However, the limited operating hours of the gondola in summer means that a hiker cannot start hiking before 10:30 a.m. and must be back at the gondola by 5 p.m. This is impractical for most hikers.

Hike from the village parking lots to Singing Pass and Russet Lake. This distance to the latter is almost 15 kilometres. It is shown on all guidebooks as a 'green' trail and visitors are often horrified when they come to the slump and find a section of trail which is far harder than other 'black' trails in the valley (and getting more difficult). It is surprising that given the concern for safety shown by WB, Whistler municipality and the Ministry of Forests, nobody seems concerned about this hazard.

The distance means that few hikers use this option, and those that do use Russet Lake as a destination, rather than a base for

exploring the park. The first 12 kilometres from the village have few interesting views and one hiker was heard to say "wake me up when we get there."

In 2014, BC Parks issued their Management plan amendment for the Spearhead area, which stated as one of its main objectives: "The following strategies have been identified as high priorities for implementation: Work with adjacent land managers to establish a new vehicle-accessible trailhead on the north side of Fitzsimmons Creek to provide summer access to the Singing Pass Trail."

This confirmed the objective of their 1990 Master plan that "trailhead access for Singing Pass will be upgraded and secured" and that "These objectives are reflected in the general access strategy which bring vehicle access close to park boundaries and then provides low-impact trail access to the park's more popular features and to wilderness access points."

After the issue of the BC Parks amendment FMCBC met WB, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural resources, Sliding centre management, Innergex and BC Parks, it was evident that the Corporate (WB) and Government agencies had already met and developed a policy, and this was presented to the FMCBC as a "fait accompli." The FMCBC was told that the sliding centre road was too steep, too busy, unsafe and the curves too sharp for public use.

The FMCBC responded some time later, pointing out that the sliding centre road does not compare with many European or US tourist roads in steepness or the sharpness of its curves. Even the Duffey Lake road is steeper and has sharper curves. The sliding centre road has little traffic. On safety, the FMCBC noted that commercial ATV trips use the road (which contravenes the Blackcomb CRA) and the only requirement for renting an ATV is a valid driver's license from anywhere. On ATV trips children hang onto the driver without a seat belt, and on one occasion a child was seen sitting in front of the tour leader, who held him with one hand and drove with the other.

Most serious BC hikers drive access roads that are steep, overgrown and narrow, with water bars, rocks and ruts and sharp blind bends. They are an order of magnitude more difficult than the sliding centre road.

After the FMCBC responded with these comments our invitation to another meeting was withdrawn.

FMCBC members recognize that Whistler Blackcomb has provided huge benefits to the province, in recreation and tourism. However most of their revenue has been generated on public land transferred from Garibaldi Park and from the development of the bike park across the old hiking access road. So while WB has been so successful and profitable operating on public land, an unexpected consequence of the Fitzsimmons slump and the Olympics is that public access to the park has been severely restricted, as BCMC feared back in 1968.

The FMCBC thinks that in return for the benefits received from operating on public lands, WB has an obligation to restore public summer vehicle access to a point close to the old parking lot. And the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural resources should honour the pledge made by his predecessor in 1968. Lastly, the disposition of public park land should be a public matter and not carried out in secret by government and corporations. ■

BC Parks and their Commercial Ski Areas

By Brian Wood, BC Mountaineering Club

In the last few issues of Cloudburst we have tried to keep our members informed of the increasing problems relating to parking and backcountry access within three popular BC parks in southwest BC which have commercial ski areas within them. These parks include Vancouver's North Shore ski areas, Cypress and Mt. Seymour, as well as Manning Park.

The ski facilities in these parks were sold to private operators in 1984 under long-term Park Use Permits (PUP), while the land itself remained owned by BC Parks. Shortly after privatization, the Cypress operator imposed restrictions on public access to the backcountry through some portions of the park which caused a large public protest, and in 1995 the Williams Commission was established to try to solve the problems specific to Cypress. Over the following years generally similar problems arose at Mt. Seymour as well as at Cypress, and these problems have become much more pronounced with the increasing winter use of the local parks, but in general such severe problems do not seem to arise at Manning ski areas.

Many of the present problems perceived by the local operators relate to parking because the cars of backcountry skiers and snowshoers (who do not use ski lifts) occupy convenient parking spaces before the paying customers arrive, thus inconveniencing paying customers while not contributing to ski resort revenue. Additionally, to access the backcountry, the non-paying backcountry users often cross portions of the Controlled Recreation Areas (CRA) of the resorts and this raises liability concerns with the ski area operators. The backcountry users see these problems as restrictions on where they can park their cars and how they can come and go through the CRA to access the backcountry. While these concerns might seem to be relatively minor to some folks, they have resulted in a major policy shift in BC Parks that contain private ski areas, and this will result in major effects on the public's use of the parks in the future as summarized below.

After several meetings with commercial stakeholders and members of the public, on May 15, 2014, BC Parks issued a five page BC Parks Ski Resort Intentions Paper regarding management of ski areas within parks, and provided 45 days for the public to respond to the paper. After receiving public comment and meeting with the ski area operators and some public stakeholder groups, on March 6, 2015 BC Parks published a 14-page Draft Ski Resorts Policy with only 30 days (later extended to 45 days) for public input.

The public stakeholders did not find the draft policy acceptable and were then granted another meeting with two BC Parks representatives, but the public stakeholders' recommendations were not accepted. Some public stakeholders suggested that the Province adopt the federal government's policy relating to ski resorts in National Parks (to save re-inventing the wheel) but this suggestion was not accepted by BC Parks.

We tried unsuccessfully to get another meeting to discuss this draft, but after negligible changes the final 15-page BC Parks Ski Resort Policy was approved on October 30, 2015. As we predicted, conflicts have continued because the Policy provides

"certainty" for the ski operations but no certainty for protection of the park's natural environment or public access to the park backcountry. Now, with ever-increasing use of the backcountry within the parks and BC Parks' budget for maintaining parks remaining at completely inadequate levels, conflicts are likely to increase. The two documents and the related public input can be found at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/permits/consultation/ski-resort-policy.html>.

As stated on the BC Parks website, the final policy was developed with input from the public, stakeholder groups, the ski resort operators, the Canada West Ski Area Association, and the Mountain Resorts Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. This policy does not stand alone in guiding decisions on ski resort operations, but will be considered in the context of:

- *Park Act*, the legislation that governs provincial parks;
- designations of each of the parks where the ski resort are located, as these reflect intentions for each park;
- Park Management Plan documents that were developed as policy for general management of each park in its entirety; and
- park use permits issued to the ski resort operators and the rights and obligations in these documents.

The policy is specific to the working relationship between the Province and the ski resort operators, the management of the permits, coordination of the permits with other park decisions, and administrative steps required for decisions on the permits. It can be seen that the public has to study the four separate documents listed above to try to obtain a minimal understanding of the rules governing what happens in a CRA of a particular park.

Clearly, as current versions of some of these documents are not easily available to the public, there are many unknowns when dealing with any operational problems within a CRA, or even outside the CRA. In my opinion, the present situation in CRA's is less understandable now than it was before the new Policy as there are many opportunities for obfuscation due to the difficulty of determining priorities and relative importance of the related documents. This situation is far too complex for a short article such as this, but I feel the public should be made aware of some possible future difficulties.

The most active public stakeholder groups working with BC Parks on these documents included the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC), Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), the Friends of Cypress Provincial Park (FCPP), BC Nature, Hike BC and the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC). While the input from the public stakeholders was recorded, they feel the final approved Policy does not reflect many, if any, of their concerns but instead appears to be more concerned about the financial viability of the ski operators.

We, the public stakeholders, all agree that the ecological integrity of these parks and free public access to them must not be sacrificed to ski area commercial viability. In other words, the

public's desire for minimal access restrictions and minimal disturbance of its enjoyment of these parks' natural environments should not be secondary to the operators' need for sustainable profits.

The Park Act says that Class A parks are "dedicated to the preservation of their natural environments for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the public." Studies, such as the Park Legacy Project of the 1990s, have shown that these stated aspects are strongly supported by the public, and yet they are not clearly discernible in the recently approved Ski Resort Policy.

Unfortunately, the Policy states in part that "Nothing prevents the issuance of a park use permit for an activity related to resort or tourism development if, in the minister's opinion, the activity and the development are consistent with or complementary to the recreational values of the park involved." In addition to this vague statement, there are many operating parameters with which we disagree, and some of these are briefly discussed as follows.

We strongly disagree with a PUP contract length of 60 years because many things can change in that period of time, particularly as the original contract, which was 50 years with an option to renew, now requires renegotiating due to many unforeseen changes. In Canadian national parks the renewable lease period is 42 years, so it is difficult to understand why the lease term in a provincial park should be almost 50% more than in a national park.

The discussion paper states "Creating a Ski Resort Development Plan (SRDP) will provide an opportunity for resort operators to identify appropriate activities for year round use within the resort area." We feel this anticipates changes in climate which will likely affect winter operations and their financial viability, which in turn will cause the operators to consider year round activities with related infrastructure to maintain financial viability. We strongly believe that any change in activities that were not addressed in the original Park Management Plan must be subjected to an Impact Assessment and an updated Park Management Plan with full public involvement prior to a decision being made on the proposed changes, i.e. before any proposed changes become a "fait accompli." In any event, we believe there must be NO expansion of the Permit Area within the provincial park to accommodate these changes, and there must be clear rules for environmental remediation for commercial areas used for any activity after the season for that activity has ended.

In 2.3, the draft policy states, "Planning for capacity and managing visitation to parks, including Ski Resort areas, is part of the work that BC Parks does with each Permittee and for each



Alanna Mahr

The Cypress Mountain Nordic Area, pictured on a busy Family Day weekend when the parking lots had reached capacity. On days like these, ski area operators effectively control the easiest access to these parks, giving preferential treatment to paying visitors.

park individually and is not within the scope of this policy." As the CRA's of the North Shore ski areas are adjacent the main access roads and the parking lots, the Permittees, i.e. the ski area operators, in essence control the easiest access to these parks. This "managing visitation" is particularly significant when the ski resorts reach capacity during the Christmas/New Year holiday season and on other popular weekends having good conditions. Particularly in these profitable circumstances both ski areas operators differentiate between paying and non-paying visitors and exercise control of parking in favour the paying visitors.

This differentiation annoys and distresses non-paying visitors as they are forced to walk extra distances to access the areas of the parks outside the CRA's, which is particularly impractical and inconvenient for visitors accompanying young children who want an easily accessible and free child-friendly snow play area. We have all seen the demand for access to parkland increase within the last decade or so, and so this differentiated parking problem will likely get worse in the future as many discussions on this vexing subject have not produced any workable solutions to date. The questions of park capacity and visitor management are very complex, and the policy states that, if necessary, the Park Management Plan will set any limits for visitation to a specific park, and so again we feel early meaningful and

transparent public consultation is key to helping solve these issues which are to be handled on a case-by-case basis. In our opinion, decreasing park land to increase parking areas is not a viable option, and instead more trails to access the back country could alleviate some of the problems.

With respect to any proposed changes in the Resort Development Plans or Permits, we are particularly concerned that the current funding and staffing model of BC Parks does not provide sufficient staff nor permit sufficient time for park personnel to investigate properly any change in a Plan or Permit proposed by the park operators. We also fear there will not be sufficient funding or timing to provide adequate public consultation for any proposed changes in these areas. The Policy states which types of changes to plans require approval by BC Parks without any public input and we feel this is totally unacceptable as some of these changes could have a major impact on the park. Also, some Park Management Plans cannot anticipate radical changes to park uses in the future and thus some parks, especially those with very old or no plans, are more vulnerable to changes than others.

Consequently, for lack of resources, we fear that BC Parks will be unable to negotiate with the operators from a position of strength, and will likely have to appease the operators who will have the financial arguments on their side. In the past, where a licensee's negotiations with BC Parks related to occupying or increasing a licensed area within a park, any impasse has often resulted in a "land swap" which historically has resulted in an unsatisfactory outcome for the public. We will have to continue to monitor the situation as this policy seems to leave more things unstated than stated, and those aspects that are stated seem to be biased in the operator's favour.

As you can see from the above, this is a complex matter with many distinct and separate problems and this short article does not attempt to provide a detailed analysis or solutions to these problems. However, we feel many of the current problems arise from lack of transparency relating to the operator's proposals, BC Parks' counter-proposals (if any!), the public input deadlines to these proposals being too short, and the fact that BC Parks is usually the intermediary between the concerned public stakeholders and the ski area operators. Aside from having open and recorded meetings between all three interested parties (which I feel is unlikely), proposal transparency and input deadlines periods could be improved immensely if the following suggestions were adopted, at least in part.

My first suggestion is that all Park Use Permits (PUP), Ski Resort Development Plans (SRDP) and any license requirements must be posted on the BC Parks website so that the public is aware of all current operating rules within the individual park's CRA's. These documents would probably need to be amended to respect some confidential financial matters. We assume that many of these complicated documents vary considerably between different parks, are not up-to-date, and are not currently publicly available in electronic format. As there are several complex documents involved, there is much room for contradictions between the documents and the public is likely to be confused

without lawyers to interpret the situation, however, it is preferable to our current circumstance.

My second suggestion is that as soon as an operator submits any proposal to BC Parks for any changes to any permit, these proposed changes are immediately published on the BC Parks website and the stakeholders are notified by email of this posting and of the deadline for response. It would also help the public to understand the operator's position if the operator's reasons for any changes were clearly explained. In this way the public is in the loop from the very beginning of any proposed changes, hopefully understands the operator's position, and the public's response deadline is maximized. In my opinion, so that it is clear that my suggestions above are not merely options for the operators and BC Parks, they should be mandated promptly in an amendment to the new policy.

Some jaded commentators would say the above suggestions are overly optimistic, but even if only some are adopted it may save time and reduce public frustration with the process. However, to silence the cynics, perhaps something is already in the works as this article goes to print. On March 23, 2016, some of us received a notice from David Ranson, the Executive Director of the Visitor Experience and Business Development Branch of BC Parks. Among other things, this notice announces a new policy advertising park use permit applications and decisions and this can be found at: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/permits/consultation/public-notifications-policy.html>

The FMCBC will continue to monitor this complex situation and work with other public stakeholder groups to try to resolve the current problems. If you would like to make a contribution to this process, please get in touch with the FMCBC SW BC Recreation and Conservation Committee through our website contact form at www.mountainclubs.org. ■

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or talk to your club's
FMCBC Director.

FMCBC Member Club Grants: 2015 Year in Review

By Alanna Mahr, FMCBC Communications Coordinator



Participants of this summer's Climb and Conquer Project hiking near Squamish.

It was another great year for trail work and outdoor events in B.C., with FMCBC Member Club Grants funding everything from youth summer camps to power tools to wooden planks and steel doors. Since 2012, the FMCBC has been funnelling all donations it receives to these club-initiated projects—in 2015, that amounted to some \$8,200 dispersed to seven different clubs around the province.

Among them was the Vancouver Rock Climbing Group's Climb and Conquer Project, a registered charity founded in 2011 by VRCG climbers to support youth from disadvantaged backgrounds build healthy self-esteem and leadership skills through rock climbing and mentorship. Each summer, the organizers of Climb and Conquer organize a one-week summer camp for what's been called a "mega fun explosion" of climbing, hiking and camping in Squamish, BC. "For most of them, it's their first time ever camping, sleeping in a tent, rock climbing, picking blackberries from the field, swimming in the ocean, and night hiking," said C&C trip leader Joseph Wong. To learn more about the Climb and Conquer Project or make a donation to this year's summer camp visit their website: <https://vrcg.ca/climb-and-conquer/>

Not far from the C&C summer camp, a work party from the BCMC was hard at work in Tantalus Provincial Park constructing a new section of the Sigurd Creek Trail. The team of three spent a week in August working on the new trail, which now extends to Ossa Camp, near the west ridge of Ossa Mountain, traversing level, dry ground. The trail crew of three was blessed with warm, sunny days, and a cool wind off the glacier while they worked. They spent the majority of their time clearing the route to Ossa Camp using pry bars, bush cutters and a chain saw, but they also scouted a route west to Sigurd Lake, which they may return to clear this summer.

The VOC was also hard at work this summer making upgrades to their Brian Wadlington Hut (commonly referred to as Phelix Hut) near Pemberton. The Member Club Grant they received went towards purchasing a brand new, fluorescent orange steel door, which one of their members (Koby) strapped to his back and carried as he hiked the 2-3 hours to reach the hut. Once they were there, the door installation went quite smoothly, save for a few miscalculations when it came to measuring and cutting the aluminum doorstep. This led to some improvisation with a drill that "wasn't exactly up for the job" and "a few little friends finding their way into the hut" before they were able to get the sweep securely in place, according to VOC member Cassandra Elphinstone. If you want to go check out Felix Hut's new door for yourself, the hut is open to all non-motorized users for a \$10 per person per night fee. No reservations are taken, but the VOC operates a hut registration system to coordinate use.



VOC Member, Koby, single-handedly hiked the new steel door to the Phelix Hut (seen across the lake) for installation



The Ancient Forest Trail near Prince George is now longer and wider thanks to the financial support of an FMCBC Member Grant and the tireless work of hundreds of volunteers.

And finally, the work hasn't stopped for builders and volunteers of the Ancient Forest Trail Boardwalk near Prince George, an evolving project which has been supported by FMCBC Member Club Grants for the past three years. Since opening to rave reviews in 2013, the wheelchair-accessible boardwalk has been both extended (by more than a kilometre) and widened (to allow visitors to pass freely and safely while enjoying the forest). In 2015, the boardwalk was extended by an impressive 575 metres, meaning the main loops of the trail are now fully planked. "The feedback we get is so positive," said Nowell Senior of the Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club. "People are just in awe of the place, and equally in awe of the volunteer work that's being done. They just shake their heads when they see how much material is being carried by volunteers day after day." This past March, the BC government announced that the Ancient Forest will be made an 11,190 hectare Class A provincial park—a major step towards designating the area a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The recipients of our 2016 Member Club Grants will be announced at the FMCBC's AGM in Vancouver this May and posted to our website shortly thereafter. If your club is interested in applying for next year's Member Club Grants, applications will open April 1, 2017. Talk to your club's FMCBC director or representative or send us an email for more information. ■

Mountain Matters

Collaborative Trail Design Through Section 56 & 57 Land Use Agreements

By Andrew Drouin, South Okanagan Trails Alliance

Greetings from the sunny Okanagan, where, after our mandatory three months of winter overcast, we are lookin' at the brighter side of the year ahead!

It's trail-building, maintenance and signage time again, but unless you happen to be a land baron, spring means working with land owners and managers. This most important but often-ignored step makes the difference between a trail that builders can be proud of creating and sharing and one that upsets proprietors and foils trail development in that area going forward.

Collaborative trail design comes in many forms; permission on private property, partnership agreements with Crown or park lands, Section 56 and 57 agreements, cooperative agreements with NGOs, or if you're lucky, your own the land acquisition.

This article deals with Section 56 and Section 57 land use agreements with the Crown, as Crown land makes up the vast majority of the province of British Columbia, and as such, is most likely where you'll be looking to bury a shovel. It also touches on Partnership Agreements through the Crown and BC Parks.

Here in the Okanagan, we've forged some of the earliest and most successful Crown land agreements in the Valley. While the paperwork involved in "doing it right" with regard to respecting titleholders may appear daunting at first, you'll soon learn that you've experienced more difficult paperwork in grade school.

Your greatest successes come from the basics; be prepared to meet and treat land managers in a respectful manner, be honest in your statements and reasonable in your expectations; the payoff are huge—not only for you and your friends, but the community as a whole.

I have a number of years of experience working through the ins and outs of these processes, having initiated the partnership agreements between the Crown and BC Parks for both the local bike club and the South Okanagan Trail Alliance. It is my hope

that those readers who are keen to create new, or reopen old trails in the province, but feel wary that the legal aspects of the process are overwhelming, will come away with a different perspective.

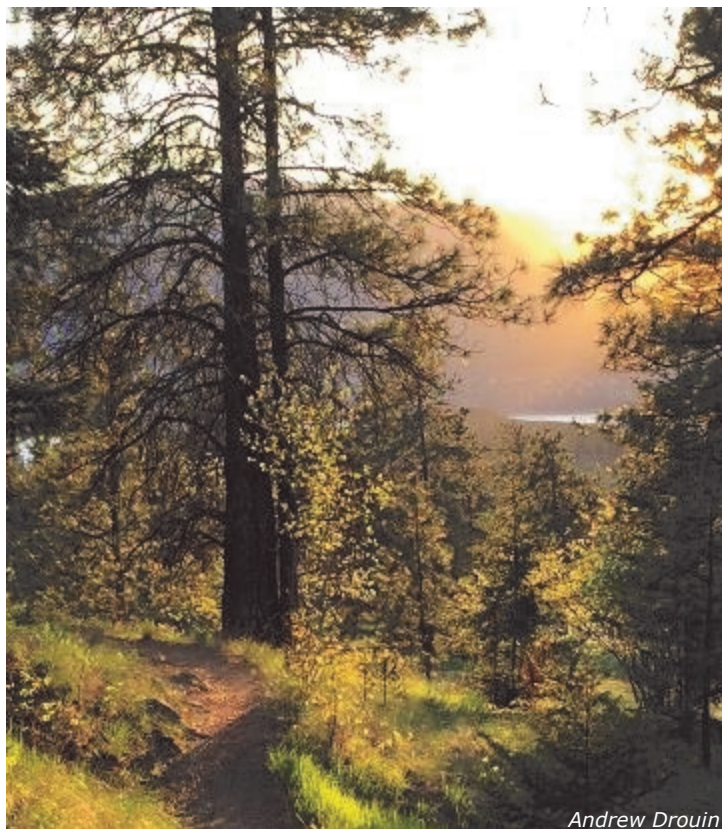
First off, what is a Section 56 and a Section 57, what is a Partnership Agreement, and why do we need to bother with these processes?

A Section 57 is a Permission to Build, issued by a local Recreation Sites and Trails BC officer, and applies to an individual or group who desires to construct a new recreation trail or facility such as a pit toilet on Crown land. A Section 56, despite the numerical inversion, establishes the trail formally, sees it added to a gazetted government database and is signed into existence by the deputy assistant minister of British Columbia. A Partnership Agreement, such as that held by the Trail Alliance on the Upper Carmi area, as well as Skaha, White Lake and the South Okanagan Grasslands Provincial Parks, is a slightly different legal land agreement.

In the case of Carmi, the area was already designated as a multi-use recreation zone, and our Partnership agreement is quite wide ranging. Each fall we sit down with Recreation Sites and Trails staff (in the case of Carmi) or BC Parks rangers (in the case of the parks) and discuss

which trail additions or modifications we'd like to affect the following spring. New trails or modifications to existing trails are described, GPS tracks forwarded to their office, and an on-site hike-through conducted with appropriate land management representatives.

Unless we've somehow overlooked something glaringly obvious, such as a lambing ground, spawning stream or other important environmentally sensitive area, negotiations to conduct the work run smoothly. In fact, in all of my dealings with the Crown to date, I honestly cannot say that I've ever been disappointed with their reaction to a proposal. During the fall session, we also submit a basic checklist which reports the condition of the



The sun setting over Penticton, as seen from Kirby's Trail on Mount Campbell last summer.

Andrew Drouin

trails which we build and maintain, along with the status of any technical trail features that we've constructed.

We must respect the fact that Crown land is actually everyone's land, not just ours to do with as we please, simply "because we want to." We need to recognize that Crown land is someone's responsibility, one or more of our (government) employees to be precise. Their job is, among other things, to manage land for our and future generations. As such, we need to respect them and their job. As with most things in life, "do unto others..."

I hope that this brief article has shed some light on the very worthwhile process of working with land managers. If you have any questions or would like some information on where to turn in order to get in touch with your local Recreation Sites and Trails or BC Park managers, please don't hesitate to contact me via our website; www.SouthOkanaganTrailAlliance.com ■

Using iMap BC

By Doug Smith, Kamloops Hiking Club



iMap BC is an online app that allows users to access thousands of data sets within a mapping environment. Using iMap, we can:

- Add map layers that match our interests
- Add our own map data
- Produce maps that can be printed and shared

The app can be used on a computer or a tablet by going to iMap BC. There are Reference and Help files available on the same page as PDFs. I found these very helpful, but the interface is quite intuitive. Here's the process:

- Launch the App
- Zoom in on the map area you want to work with
- Click on the Map Layers to use either a terrain basemap or a road basemap
- Use the icon toolbar to move around, determine coordinates, or set waypoints
- Add map layers by clicking on the Maps and Data Sources tab
- When you've finished, click on the Reports and Printing tab to download, print, or share

There are some very useful map layers that clubs can take advantage of. The library has thousands of data map layers to choose from and it takes a bit of time to sort out the ones you may want to use. Some of the ones I use most are:

- **Integrated Cadastral Fabric** – a quick and easy way to find out the exact locations of sections of Crown lands, private lands, leased lands, Park lands and Protected Areas, and special status areas. We can get coordinates for the boundaries, we can change the opacity of the layer to see the boundaries in relationship to roads, map features, contours, and so on.
- **Contour Lines** – a nice feature to use in conjunction with other layers, especially since printed topographical maps tend to have older data.
- **Points and Linear features** – mines, dams, fence lines, hydrography, etc.
- **Forestry Recreation Sites and Trails**
- **Avalanche Exposure Zones**
- **Geology and Soils**
- **Ortho Photos**
- **Fish, Wildlife and Plant Species**

The resource can also be used to create data-connected maps. We can import data from Web Map Services (WMS). We can upload shape files or CSV files and we can markup the map on the screen. I have also created data in Google Earth (waypoints, tracks, etc.) or in other GPS-friendly programs, and then I converted those files into CSV files or Esri shape files and have then imported them into iMap. From there we can add data layers to create a map for your own use or for sharing with your members.

For clubs, there are a number of ways that iMap BC could be of use, and no doubt users will find ways that are most useful to them. Here are some of the ways Kamloops Hiking Club uses the app:

- To determine the boundaries of private lands and public lands.
- To determine access opportunities and challenges on grazing lease lands and on grazing licensed lands.
- To discover active and pending cut blocks and forest road status.
- To plan routes through areas that have no trails.
- To screen areas for potential issues before planning a trip.
- To produce maps for our trips.

We can leave providing professional maps to the cartographers and GIS technicians but we can check for useful information for our own uses and to share with others by using iMap. ■

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Mountain Matters

Chic Scott: Mountain Phoenix

By Ron Dart, ACC - Vancouver Section

He [mountain guide] should be courteous to all, and always give special attention to the weakest member in the party.

~ Conrad Kain

Dougal Haston and Hans Gmoser were completely different men but similar in that they both had great charisma and were driven to succeed. They became friends at different times in my life and for different reasons but were both very supportive of my dreams. Interestingly enough I became a successful writer which was also the goal (cut short) of Dougal Haston. In the end Hans and I also shared a great love of history and the old stories. All three of us shared a passion for climbing, skiing and the mountains that was bigger than anything else in our lives. All three of us devoted our lives to the mountains. And in the end I think that all three of us left our mark on the sport.

~ Chic Scott

By email to Ron Dart
December 20, 2015

I was quite fortunate to spend the afternoon with Chic Scott at his home in Banff on a blue canopy day in the fall of 2015. We covered, in our leisurely time together, the rich and varied mountain life that he has lived. Chic has also been most gracious and kind in responding to the many emails I have sent his way. Gratefully so, Chic is finishing his autobiography, and, when done, this Canadian mountain legend will reveal a forthright, vulnerable and challenging tale worth many a read. It will be an autobiography of Canadian mountaineering in all its complex historic fullness. Chic has been at the centre of much and from the centre much will be told.

The life of Chic has been a series of frustrating, painful and difficult disappointments and, Phoenix-like, multiple resurrections from the ashes with a greater commitment to mountaineering and mountain literary life. Chic was one of the first Canadians, in 1967, to do the high level ski traverse from Jasper to Lake Louise (300 kilometres in 21 days) and in 1973, he did the high level ski traverse from Rogers Pass to the Bugaboos (130 kilometres in 15 days).

Such successes and pioneering traverses would seem to position Chic well to pass the guides exam. But, in 1970, Chic left the exam without finishing and again in 1975, he left for a vexed reason. The seeming failures of 1970 and 1975 would have brought to an end a mountaineering vocation for a lesser person. But the mountain phoenix would not disappear in ashes. The fact that Chic failed the 1993 ski guide exam would have been a blow to many, but, yet again, a bird-like resurrec-



Renowned Canadian alpinist Chic Scott (left) pictured with the author at his home in Banff in the fall of 2015.

tion appeared from the disappointed death of sorts. Many have been the mountains (inner and outer) that Chic has had to climb.

Chic had worked for the much respected Scottish mountaineer, Dougal Haston (probably one of the most accomplished and innovative climbers of his time), at the International School of Mountaineering (ISM) in Leysin Switzerland (where they initially met at the infamous Club Vagabond) in 1968 and the summers of '71, '72, '73 and '74. I was, at the time, living close to Leysin, in the high alpine village of Villars. Chic was quite involved with the Clint Eastwood film, *Eiger Sanction*, which was filmed in 1974 and released in 1975. Haston was killed in a ski avalanche above Leysin in 1977, and one of Chic's mountain mentors and models was gone. It is significant to note that Chic was quoted amply in the biography by Jeff Connor of Haston, Dougal Haston: *The Philosophy of Risk* (2002). Dougal Haston, like Chic, was a climber and thoughtful writer about mountain life and culture.

The high points of working with Dougal Haston and the *Eiger Sanction* must be set against, yet again, a couple of serious mental breakdowns that Chic experienced in the 1970s—these are called "Madness I" and "Madness II" in his autobiography. Again, though, Chic, Phoenix-like, resurrected from the painful experiences to do more mountaineering and pen many a fine mountaineering book—the list of Chic's publications on his website are voluminous—he is certainly the finest Canadian chronicler of both mountaineering history and ski treks worth the doing on the high spine of the Canadian Rockies.

Chic launched his publishing career with *The History of the Calgary Mountain Club: Its Members and Their Activities, 1960-1986* (1988). Only 150 copies were printed and they are now collector's items. *Alpinism* (1988) was next on the publishing line. There could be no doubt that Chic was emerging in the late 1980s as a Canadian mountaineering author of some worth and note. *Ski Trails in the Canadian Rockies* (1992) was the next to leave the publishing tarmac—there were, also, a voluminous number of articles being published by Chic in the 1980s-1990s. The publication of Chic's classic *Pushing the Limits: The*

Story of Canadian Mountaineering (2000), Powder Pioneers: Ski Stories from the Canadian Rockies and Columbia Mountains (2005) and the biography of Hans Gmoser, Deep Powder and Steep Rock: The Life of Mountain Guide Hans Gmoser (2009), clearly placed Chic as the leading writer on both Canadian mountaineering in the Rockies and Canada.

If Dougal Haston was, in some ways, a generous guide for Chic, Hans Gmoser was equally important in Chic's often turbulent and painful mountaineering journey. The fact that Hans Gmoser, in 2003, offered to fund Chic \$5000.00 a year for ten years (no strings attached) to keep up with his research/writing/publishing speaks volumes for Gmoser's respect for Chic (and says a few things about Gmoser few know about). It is also significant that Hans Gmoser said of his heli-skiing empire (and recorded in Chic's biography of Gmoser): "If I had it all to do again, I wouldn't do it. I feel like Dr. Faust".

Chic has become the official teller of the Canadian mountaineering tradition. His many books, articles and booklets on both

leading mountaineers and ski trails worth doing in the high alpine are delights to read and maps for challenging traverses. There is much more to be said about Chic (and we talked about many things). There can be no doubt, though, that Chic embodies in his life and writings, more than most, the significance of the first generation of pioneering Canadian mountaineers who have combined the European-Canadian contexts and written well about it. But it is Chic's Phoenix-like ability to emerge from the ashes in a positive and creative way that makes him the pre-eminent Canadian mountain phoenix—a model and a mentor for others at many significant levels.

As our afternoon conversation came to a close, Chic mentioned the respect he has for Jean Vanier (who works with many on the margins of society and the way Vanier questions "the tyranny of the strong" mentality). This led Chic to mention Conrad Kain's notion of guiding in which "special attention" should be given "to the weakest member in the party." Much can be learned from Kain, Vanier and indeed Chic Scott. ■

Club Trips and Activities

Why Not Romania?

By Cristina Jacob, North Shore Hikers

Last fall I took nine Canadian hikers to Romania. I hired a guide to look after lodging, meals and hiking itineraries and I enjoyed being the go-to person by using my 40-year Canadian identity and my Romanian heritage—I immigrated to Canada in my twenties.

It was wonderful. From our bed and breakfast base camp, we hiked to the nearby Carpathian Alps on sunny days; on rainy days, we visited the touristy spots, including Dracula's castle in Bran, the former king's summer castle in Sinaia, the Cantemir family residence in Busteni, the Black Church in Brasov, and the Ialomicioara Church in a natural cave in the mountains. Our guide selected the itinerary and I couldn't have agreed more with his choices. While none of the aforementioned destinations are UNESCO sites, they all deserve a visit:

- Dracula's castle is on the road that used to delineate the boundaries between the two Independent Romanian provinces and Transylvania, a Romanian province part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Dracula was not there when we visited, but according to my local knowledge, he has never been there!

- The Hohenzollern Kings' (a German branch of the European monarchies that reigned in Romania until 1947) summer castle in Sinaia was the first European castle to be electrified. It has all the features of a royal residence, but with a much smaller footprint, making it great for a short and interesting tour. During the communist era it was appropriated by the top party leaders for their own private use.

- Cantemir family residence, which has been only recently opened to the public, in a beautiful location and of an elegant architecture, is still devoid of any furnishing since it has been pillaged for years by the



Cristina Jacob

The author visiting the Orthodox church built at the entrance to Romania's Ialomicioara Cave last summer.

Club Trips and Activities



Cristina Jacob

Hiking the Fagaras Range, the highest mountains of Romania's Southern Carpathians.

communist party members who "nationalized" it to their benefit. It is now promoted and marketed as an Arts Centre. We were there during a delightful Salvador Dali exhibition of prints and book illustrations.

-The Black Church in Brasov is a beautiful Catholic cathedral that exemplifies the religious rituals of the city, with an emphasis on the many trades and occupations of the citizens—a mixture of Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans.

-Ialomicioara Church in the mountain cave has one of the best pictorial descriptions of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. As I grew up with very little exposure to church teachings, I thoroughly enjoyed the fascinating murals.

The eight days together as a group passed quickly and in the end we all scattered to different Romanian destinations:

- One couple rented a car and did a grand tour of Romania, including Sighisoara, an inhabited medieval city, birth place of Count Dracula, the wooden churches of Maramures, and the painted Churches of Moldova, all UNESCO sites. Their plan was to stay several nights in one of the northern villages and immerse themselves in the local culture and traditions, with the help of delicious food and tasty wines.

- Another couple decided to hire a guide with a van and cover the country more efficiently, by reaching as far as the Danube Delta, another UNESCO site. They also went cycling in the flat plains of the country in search of great wines.

- I, knowing my way around, was dropped off at Bilea Lac after traveling on the famous mountain road called TransFagarasan, and did some ridge hiking in the Fagaras Mountains, my favourite mountain range in Romania.

If you go, try to hit some of the spots we did, and if a guided trip is your way to travel, I highly recommend Adventure Transylvania. They have a great website and are prompt and efficient in dealing with questions and getting the right information to you. Our hiking/sightseeing package, which included transportation, accommodations, all meals with wine, and the services of a guide, worked out to be about 100 Euros/day/person. Money well spent.

Some of the Canadian hikers that hiked with me in Romania last September were also lured there by a month-long classical music festival. The festival is called "George Enescu" and takes place every two years, in the fall. The next one will be in 2017. I highly recommend it! Check their website for previous years' programs and you will be amazed by the caliber of the musicians who perform and compete during the festival. It is the largest of its kind in Europe and is a showcase of who's who in the world of classical music. Our guide was very helpful in obtaining advance tickets for us for some very popular, high-demand performances.

If you are more adventurous, and do not like guided tours, fly to Bucharest or to any other major Romanian city and then travel by train, like I did in the solo portion of my trip. If you travel in September or October, there are plenty of available B&Bs to choose from \$20-40/ night. Communicating in English is absolutely no problem, especially if you are addressing the younger crowd. A good opener in any conversation is "Buna Ziua" (think Spanish!) which means "good day" and a good closing is "La Revedere" which means "good-bye" (think Italian!).

This piece of travel writing closes with a bit of trivia: Romanian is a Romance language and no, they do not speak Russian in Romania.

"Adio" for now (think French or Spanish!) ■

Cover Photo Contest

We're looking for winter shots for our next cover of Cloudburst. Email your entries to us at cloudburst@mountainclubs.org
Please submit photos by October 15th.

Sunshine Coast Trail

Northern Section, June 11 - 15

By Ron Dart, ACC - Vancouver Section

The Sunshine Coast Trail (SCT) is the longest (180 kilometre) hut-to-hut system (12 shelters) in Canada. The communal vision for the lengthy trek began in 1992, and by 2000, the hut and trail system were completed. The Chilliwack Outdoor Club had not yet done the SCT, so from June 11-15, 2015, five of us decided to do the northern section (north of Lund) to Powell River (a 50 kilometre leg stretch of sorts).

We left the Lower Mainland the morning of June 11, caught the ferries at Horseshoe Bay and Earl's Cove and motored northwards up highway 101 (one of the longest highways in the world). We stopped at the recently opened Base Camp restaurant in Powell River for a nourishing and tasty lunch, and then it was up to Lund (the northern terminus of #101). We meandered about the charming town site by the ocean for a few hours, did a dinner at the historic Lund Hotel, and then it was to the rather quaint and hobbitish Magical Dome for the night (friends of mine have been running the Buckminster Fuller beauty for more than twenty years).

It was an early wake-up call on the 12th, a sumptuous breakfast at Nancy's Bakery, and a Zodiac ride across metre-high waves to the Sarah Point area where the northern section of SCT begins. We could not land at Sarah Point due to the turbulence of the water, so Christine from Terra-Centric Coastal Adventures dropped us off at a quieter and more protected cove and beach, where we heaved our bags off the Zodiac and headed to the SCT trailhead on a much neglected and overgrown spur line road.

The 16 kilometre trek to Manzanita Bluffs Hut goes through old growth moss covered forests, water from Salish and Okeover Inlet on both sides to, high on the Bluffs, the hut overlooking Vancouver Island, Savary Island and Copeland Islands (which we had passed on the Inside Passage that morning). The sun

was turning to the West as we settled into the hut by late afternoon, a pleasurable breeze blowing, and we had Manzanita Hut to ourselves for the night—quite a rare beauty.

June 13 was a longer hiking day (18 kilometres) and by days' end our legs were tight and weary, backs bone sore and Rieveley's Pond Hut a welcome haven for the night. Again, we finished the trekking for the day by mid-late afternoon (we were on the trail, often, for seven or eight hours a day). The frogs at Rieveley's pond sounded like an orchestra of didgeridoos—quite a musical fest at night. We even had a band of young Swiss students join us (they tented, we were in the loft) for the night—they were poorly prepared for the trip but enjoying themselves immensely.

We were gone June 14 by about 7:00 am (up quite early, to bed quite early) and made our 16-kilometre way by lovely little streams, foaming brooks, quaint and cascading waterfalls, large lakes and up-down Scout Mountain (overlooking Powell River), where friends of mine picked us up at the Shingle Mill Pub and Restaurant. The drive back to Lund went quicker, needless to say, than our three-day, 50-kilometre hike north of Lund to Powell River. We had a splendid dinner at the Boardwalk Restaurant in Lund (after showers at the Magical Dome) as the sun turned westward and descended the blue canopy. We spent the final night at the Magical Dome (certainly a place to stay if an overnighter in Lund is on the agenda).

We caught the early ferry from Saltery Bay and Langdale and were back in the Fraser Valley by early afternoon on June 15, a fine trek behind us and future trips to the SCT yet before us. ■

Participants: Lori Bodkin, Judy Pasemko, Nancy, Cathy Colbeck & Ron Dart (trip leader and reporter)



Ron Dart

The author relaxing after a long day on the trail outside one of the Sunshine Coast Trail's 13 huts.



Ron Dart

The "hobbitish" Magical Dome where the group spent their first night in Lund, BC.

Club Trips and Activities

Mount Terry Fox and Mount Murray

Two great hikes taken by the Caledonia Ramblers

By Dave King, Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club



Dave King

The Ramblers at treeline on Mount Terry Fox last September. The view is of the Robson Valley, looking towards the Premier Range.

Mount Terry Fox was named in honour of Terry Fox soon after he passed away in 1981. It is in the mountains north of Valemount and near the junction of Hwy 16 and Hwy 5. When on the summit, Mount Robson is just across the upper Fraser to the north and other peaks stretch off into the distance in all directions. It is a fantastic hike and highly recommended but only for the very fit. It is a full 6,000 ft vertical to the summit (8,667 ft) from the parking lot (5-6 hrs). If one also goes to the Terry Fox monument which is on a separate ridge 1.5 kilometres away from the summit that adds another 1,500 ft of vertical, making for a very long day! It is rarely done as an overnight as there is a lack of water on the trail up the mountain.

The Caledonia Ramblers have been leading trips up Terry Fox since the mountain was dedicated. I personally have been up 15-20 times. The trail is well marked to treeline at about 6,500 ft but thereafter is a poorly marked route. In good weather the route above treeline is not an issue but in poor weather is a real challenge. None of the trail is difficult with no scrambles or serious exposures, but the elevation gained and then lost coming back down creates issues for many. Very sore knees and hips, as well as blisters are common. One also needs to carry plenty of water, as there are no streams and in dry weather there may be no snow to refill water bottles.

The Terry Fox Foundation sponsored a special hike up the mountain last Labour Day weekend in honour of Terry Fox's passing 34 years ago. I was asked to lead. About 70 set out with 40 making it to the summit including about 15 members of the Fox family. Above 7,500 ft the route was buried in 1-1.5 ft of snow, making it impossible to go to Terry Fox's monument. Next Labour Day the Foundation is planning a similar event. All are welcomed to take part. Hopefully the weather will allow a visit to the monument. ■



Dave King

A group of Caledonia Ramblers hiking the Pine Pass in Pine Le Moray Provincial Park north of Prince George last June.

The Mount Murray trail ascends into the alpine to a small picturesque lake where there is a great camping spot. From the lake one can ascend Mount Murray or venture north and east on other ridges. With a little luck one may see caribou, elk, grizzly bear and other critters, and, in season, a great variety of flowers.

The trail was located and constructed by the Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club in 1981-82. The club has maintained the trail ever since even though the range was incorporated in 1990 into the new Pine Le Moray Provincial Park. This park is in the Pine Pass about 200 kilometres north of Prince George on Highway 97. The Powder King Ski hill is across the valley about 12 kilometres from the trailhead.

The first kilometre of the trail ascends a relatively steep hillside, then ascends through a pine and spruce forest at a more moderate grade to treeline at about 5,500 ft. It then traverses a southerly slope to the lake and campsite. Certainly the trail can be a day trip and one has the time to reach the summit of Mount Murray. However, overnight trips are recommended so that one has the time to enjoy more of the ridges and scenery. The trail is not recommended for winter use as there are avalanche hazards and the range is subject to frequent winter storms. If one wishes more information than that, please contact the Caledonia Ramblers. ■



Dave King's photo of the small lake at the end of the Murray Mountain Trail is featured on the cover of this issue of Cloudburst

Ice Beasts

By Joseph Wong, Vancouver Rock Climbing Group

For the past few years at the Vancouver Rock Climbing Group, I've wanted to create a mentorship program to develop the next generation of community leaders in the climbing world, the kind of people who have the ambition not just to climb hard and often, but who also use climbing to create community, support others, create happiness and benefit the world. I have put significant time and effort into the camps and training sessions I have run over the years, both inside and outside of the club, and towards the end of the summer of 2015, I was starting to think it might be time for me to move on and let someone else lead. My work was getting increasingly demanding, and with rocketing stress, I decided to quit, and maybe take up table tennis instead to become more aligned with my Chinese roots.

But I couldn't find someone to take my place and I didn't want to abruptly stop all the charity projects. Instead, I decided to start a new project and give one more push. I visualized a year-long mentorship project where I carefully selected a small crew of individuals with significant past volunteering experience within or outside of climbing, as well as significant ambition and concrete plans to be mentors within or outside of climbing. Truthfully, I didn't really care if their ambitions were climbing related or not. I think the most important element is the charity spirit. When you have something that others don't, it's like winning a lottery and you should share it with someone: a gift of charity.

I decided to call it ROCKSTAR BEASTS OPERATIONS because to me, sounding epic is always important. It started with rock and ice climbing training in December 2015 and eventually led to an expedition trip to the Bugaboos this August. In December, we started training with a five-weekend series of ice climbing. I have ambitious goals for the group and want them to be able to lead ice climbing trips and teach ice climbing to others at the end of the training (obviously taking into account safety and giving people the freedom to do only what they are confident to do).

This past January 30th weekend (the fourth weekend in the series), I decided to take part of the group to do a multi-pitch, while the rest of the group went go top-roping at Marble Canyon near Lillooet. After four hours of driving, arriving at our motel on Friday at around 11 p.m., I learned some members of our group couldn't make it and so we only had 10 people. I instantly thought, "Maybe I can take everyone to multi-pitch" (a it's always in the back of my mind to bring everyone in the project to do multi-pitch at least once). After some stressful impromptu logistics planning, I came up with a plan of three rope teams to make it work.

We set our eyes on Synchronicity 300m WI4, the longest multi-pitch in the Duffy Lake area. Three rope teams for 10 people. Throughout the night, I was dreaming vividly about how the day would play out. 6 a.m. came quickly and I had a hard time waking up as always. We arrived at the start of the approach, which started with a hike down the snow slope, across the river, and up an icy gully to the base of the water fall systems. To cross the river, we use a cable car to cross it with much team work (people pulling you across). This was a very special moment for me, when I realized that this was not just a bunch of people climbing. It's a crew where stronger members support weaker members.

After the river crossing, we needed to hike around 300m this slippery scree slope covered with snow and ice. Then we reached the base of the waterfall and started climbing (around 5 pitches of full rope length).



Joseph Wong

Rampage leader Jean-Marc Savoie guiding two novice climbers at the third pitch.

I paired up Stan and Tim for the first rope team and they did incredibly well leading their first multi-pitch (it was their fourth weekend ice climbing). I was super happy for them. The second rope team had my friend Jean-Marc Savoie as rampage leader. Jean is a seasoned ice climber and super nice guy and offered his help to guide our two novice rampage beast members.

Everything went really well and we were able to get five pitches in by 4 p.m. At that point, we decided to rappel down. On one hand it felt like a bummer that we couldn't complete the whole thing. But I remembered a Chinese fable where it teaches people to be content, enjoy the experience/process rather than always focusing on the goal and fixating on perfection. Ten people rappelling took a lot of time. Soon, we were rappelling in the dark with some sketchy anchors and free hanging rappelling. One should always avoid the bush at all cost especially if it's a small one.

In a good year, this particular waterfall (Synchronicity) has ice from bottom to the top. This year, it's dry with many rocky sections. So it meant many sticky rappels. I kept thinking about pizza to motivate myself. I told the other two parties to descend before us and meet us at the motel. But they refused and I'm so impressed by them and their team work spirit. I haven't really seen that kind of dedication before, or at least not often.

At around 9 p.m., we finished around five rappels and we were at the base. Normally I would have just down climbed the icy slope in 30 minutes, but for safety, I set up double ropes (120m) to lower down some weaker members the slope. It was lengthy

process. And soon, I realized my pizza plan wasn't gonna work anymore. I was exhausted and not looking forward to the final stretch to get us back to the parking lot. At the same time, I told myself "It's okay. I have been in this situation many, many times. It sucks but there's nothing I can do and I just need to endure it."

I told the other parties to leave first and meet us in the motel. At around 11 p.m., after setting up four rappels, I finally transported my party of five into the base of the river. I was toasted at that point. And guess what I saw. The other members were at the base waiting for us with food! At that moment, I couldn't believe it. I thought they would be gone! They were setting up the river crossing system and helped out the weaker members to cross.

After the river crossing, we hiked up the final snow slope back to the highway, getting back to our car at 12:30 a.m. — a 17.5 hour day. It has taken me a long time to write this but I really wanted to share this unique moment. I have done many, many long (and even much longer) days in the mountains. But it was my first time to have a team of 10, totally exhausted people, but with such a team spirit and support for one another. It's really a lottery-winning moment to witness this. Originally I thought it'd be just another fun suffering-fest type day. I have always been the one taking care of everybody but this time people actually took care of me and they took care of each other amazingly. I came to witness a community where members were supporting each other with their strength. It's a privilege to be able to be part of this team and community. RAMPAGE & BE EPIC. ■

Club Ramblings

Heart Warming

By Nowell Senior, Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club

One of the many benefits I've had as a Rambler are the warm and lasting friendships I've enjoyed. These friendships are sometimes tested; things happen on trips and you might say things can get a little heated. Anyway here is a little story of a first trip to Red Mountain cabin where friendship went through one of these tests.

A couple of friends and I had never been to the Red Mountain cabin before, and at the time we were planning on going it was a sturdy log cabin with a flat roof and built during the 1950s by local residents of the community of Penny. The cabin would be completely buried under the deep snow of the winters in the McGregor Mountain Range of Central British Columbia, located between the spine of the Rocky Mountains and the Fraser River.

We obtained a GPS location for the cabin and a sketch showing where to find the shovel needed to dig your way into the cabin, and where the pieces for the chimney were stored. I had only recently purchased a GPS unit, and didn't realize that as we headed up the trail to the cabin that my GPS was set to the wrong datum or setting for the area we were going into, and would only be capable of taking us within 300 metres of the cabin, but I didn't know this until weeks later.

So during that winter of 2004, Mitch, Ric and I crossed the Fraser River on the ice-bridge at Penny, caught a ride to the Post Office, and headed up the trail from there.

Everything went smoothly for 10km with flagging to guide us. However, with about one-and-a-half kilometres remaining to reach the cabin, the flagging ended. With no visible trail to follow, and snow getting deeper, it became more difficult to find our way. After we struggled for an hour, the GPS indicated that we were 300 metres from the cabin. Being so close, I thought we could leave the spine of the ridge, angle down and take a sort of short-cut to the cabin. We reached Red Mountain Creek at the bottom of a gully, but found no cabin and according to the GPS were still 300 metres away from it.

Once again, I insisted, "300 metres more," but now, up the creek. This time, Ric marked and counted off each metre with every stride he broke the trail with - he didn't believe what I said anymore, and who could blame him! He brought us to a halt at the 300th metre at which point we had snow-shoed for nine hours. Exhaustion and darkness were closing in on us. I was disoriented with fatigue, and couldn't make sense of what the map and GPS were telling me.

Just when I was beginning to feel absolutely lost and helpless, Mitch encouraged me to take a break, have a snack, relax and regroup. It worked; I got my bearings and confidently pointed back to the ridge we had come down earlier, and up we went. The snow at this point seemed intent on finishing us off, for even with snowshoes we sank to our (now rather tender) loins, and couldn't lift our legs high enough to clear the surface. We pushed our way up with our knees, zigzagging, weary and worried, until finally we saw a large, shadowy mound of snow barely visible in the twilight. It was the cabin.

It took us an hour to dig into the cabin, shovel the roof and locate the chimney pieces which I installed rather insecurely into position on the roof. We settled in to what felt like the Ritz—a roaring fire, hot tea, wine and fresh beef stew while buried in the snow made things seem somehow extra cozy. It was especially comforting to have escaped having to spend what could have been a most uncomfortable night in the snow without proper preparation for doing so.

As we sat and sipped our wine and swapped stories around the stove, the wind howled and the snow blew, and I resolved never to go into the mountains again in winter unless ready and able to build a snow shelter. But really, the most extraordinary good luck had led us to the cabin—the GPS could not have taken us there. If we had been 5 metres either side of the cabin as we slogged back up to the ridge we would have missed it and been in serious trouble.

The next morning at 6:30, I got up and went outside. I gazed in awe at the splendid wilderness so still and quiet before me, and my soul was soothed. Something caused me to look over my

shoulder, and my soothed soul fled—the roof of the cabin was in flames! Isn't it strange what runs through your mind in emergency situations; I'm thinking "Fire!"; I'm thinking "Water?" and I know intuitively it's at my fingertips; water that is, but panic had me momentarily frozen until it dawned on me that there's 15 feet of snow for as far as you can see, and snow is water, right? So I jumped onto the roof and started flinging snow onto the fire.

As I fought the fire, another thought occurred to me: why has this cabin waited until I arrived before venturing into the realms of spontaneous combustion? Then something else dawned on me: I should share my discovery with my companions still sleeping inside the burning cabin. However, finding words appropriate to fit the situation are sometimes elusive, and the best words often come to me long after the opportunity for using them has passed by, but this time I had a sort of epiphany: just one word will do the job—"Fire!"

I heard Mitch and Ric stirring, preparing for the first stage of fire-fighting; waking up! Then, into the second stage, which in this case involved squirting water at the flames licking the log walls inside the cabin.

In short: we put the fire out, wrote a warning to future cabin users, double and triple checked for smouldering logs and stray sparks, drank up, locked-up, and went home.

But I can't end with such a brusque dismissal. For a couple of days we were in a beautiful winter wilderness, and although I got myself and my companions lost, exhausted, frozen and almost burnt alive, Mitch and Ric still love me, and want to continue going out with me. What more could a Rambler wish for? It is truly... well, it is heart-warming, isn't it? ■



Nowell Senior

The summer after the fire, the author and some work mates returned to that cabin to replace the damaged flat roof with a new alpine roof, plus install a new stove and fixed chimney. Of the experience, he writes:

"In the early summer, the slopes in these pictures are so rich with an abundance of alpine lilies that a large number of grizzly bears congregate to enjoy a much deserved meal after fasting through the long winter. As many as 23 different grizzly bears have been observed on those slopes in a single day; this is why Red Mountain also goes by the name First Nations people gave it: Grizzly Bear Mountain."

After we had finished our

work of renovating the cabin, the crew left for home and I stayed behind to enjoy some solitude. I had a bottle of wine that I'd carried up the mountain a week earlier, and didn't want to leave behind, so decided to have a bit of a celebration with the memories of our earlier trip and the fire and all. Once the wine was gone and shadows were lengthening, I decide to go home but with the lingering awareness that I was surrounded by grizzly bears that would probably appreciate some fresh meat to go with their alpine salad!

However, the wine worked well in giving me false courage, and an urge to sing my repertoire of favourite songs – both of which served me well in keeping the bears at bay as I staggered down the mountain and arrived at Penny in one piece!"



Nowell Senior

Some Good Reads

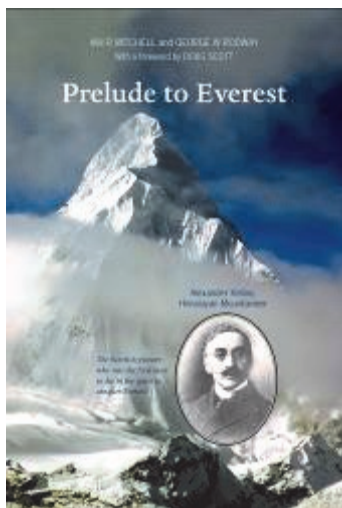
Prelude to Everest: Alexander Kellas, Himalayan Mountaineer

By Ian R. Mitchell and George W. Rodway

Published by Luath Press, 2016

Reviewed by [Mike Nash](#),

Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club



Co-authored by Scottish writer Ian R. Mitchell and high altitude medicine specialist George W. Rodway, "Prelude to Everest: Alexander Kellas, Himalayan Mountaineer" was published as a trade paperback in 2014, three years after its original hardcover edition. It is the story of a man who, in the early part of the 20th century was widely regarded as the foremost mountaineer in the world and yet by 1950 was all but forgotten, even in his home town of Aberdeen. Kellas did not fit the norm for an explorer/scientist of his time,

and his name was eclipsed by people and events that he helped to inspire and pave the way for.

After discovering the local Cairngorm Mountains at the age of 17, he spent much of his spare time in the ensuing decade exploring the peaks of Scotland and England. It wasn't until 1899, at the comparatively late age of 31, that he began climbing in Europe, where for the next several years he achieved a sound, if not spectacular reputation for alpine ascents. Then, in 1907, at the mature age of 39, he made his first foray into the high ranges of India and Sikkim. He learned fast, achieving his '*annus mirabilis*' in 1911 when he made several first ascents of Himalayan peaks over 20,000 feet, including Pauhunri, which at 23,375 feet (7,125 m) was the highest summit (not the highest elevation) yet climbed. Kellas' world summit record, which he unwittingly held for nearly 20 years was not recognized in his lifetime (as Trisul, climbed by Longstaff in 1907 was thought to be higher than Pauhunri) but these peaks were later resurveyed as 23,359 and 23,375 feet respectively.

Kellas' penchant was for small, lightweight expeditions and he worked predominantly with indigenous people, notably Sherpas. He found that they had natural high altitude adaptation, and he augmented this by providing them with mountaineering training and suitable kit. Prior to Kellas, most expeditions to the region had used other local porters who were physiologically less well adapted, and who were ill-trained and poorly-equipped for working at altitude. Kellas was also decades ahead of his time in favouring local Nepali and Tibetan names for the mountains. He was a private man who didn't write self-aggrandizing accounts of his adventures, and who also struggled with a mental illness disability for most of his life. Because of these factors, he

didn't fit easily into the social mountaineering scene of the day, and according to his biographers, he sometimes appeared to be living in his own parallel universe. However, he wasn't without ambition, as evidenced by his record-breaking attempts, and there was another side to Alec Kellas...

Early in his career he assisted Professor William Ramsay at University College London (UCL) in the discovery of the inert gases argon, helium and neon that were to become hugely important in the 20th century. For this he received a mention in Ramsay's Nobel Prize acceptance speech. Dr. Kellas then parlayed science into his passion—mountaineering—to become the leading high-altitude research physiologist of his day. He prepared the way for the eventual ascent of Everest using supplemental oxygen, and he predicted the essential details of Messner and Habeler's 1978 ascent without such aid. He was a mountaineer and a researcher to the end, overwintering and exploring in the Himalayas in 1920-21 just prior to joining the 1921 reconnaissance of Everest. There, he was slated to conduct further research preparatory to the first summit attempt in 1922. However, on the approach hike he became ill and died of dysentery, likely as a result of poorly prepared food. He was 53.

Not wanting others to see his distress, he had insisted that they all be out in front of him, and he died alone. The sanitized report in the official account said that he died of heart failure. The four Sherpas who he had personally trained for the expedition were especially affected at his burial, and there are suggestions that Kellas' personal relationships with the Sherpas with whom he climbed were the closest of his life. Similarly moved was George Mallory with whom Kellas had made a big impression on day one. Kellas' final claim to fame was to become the first person to die attempting the world's highest mountain. According to the authors, there are two big mysteries of Mount Everest: What happened to Mallory and Irvine, and "why did a man who was so highly regarded by his contemporaries as Alexander Kellas, and whose death as seen by his peers was a serious blow to subsequent plans to climb the mountain, all but disappear from the subsequent narrative of Everest?"

Because of his ground-breaking work and reputation in high altitude physiology, Alexander Kellas began to reappear in the historic record through the research and writings of contemporary high altitude physiologists John West in the 1980s, Michael Ward in 2003, and co-author of this book, George Rodway in 2005 and 2008. Coincidentally, Aberdeen-born writer Ian Mitchell had begun researching and writing about Kellas from a Scottish heritage and mountaineering perspective in 2003, prompted by the 50th anniversary of Everest's first ascent. Both authors had prior experience with collaborative writing, and between them they brought the Scottish, mountaineering and physiology elements together to produce this fresh historical work. Kellas has also appeared in recent mountaineering history epics such as '*Fallen Giants*' (Yale University Press, 2008) where he is variously described as the "incomparable," "ubiquitous" and "inexhaustible." Smithsonian's "Mountaineers: Great Tales of Bravery and Conquest" (2011) devotes a full chapter to him.

"Prelude to Everest" has an academic style with comprehensive end sections, yet it is an accessible and fun read. I had some quibbles with typos that could have been cleared up in a second edition, and an index that I found to be on the light side, but these were minor distractions. An underpinning of the book is the Appendix which contains Kellas' last work: "A Consideration of the Possibility of Ascending Mount Everest." This important paper was Kellas' ticket to the 1921 expedition and was written and deposited with the Alpine Club in London in March 1920 just before he departed the shores of the UK for the last time.

The book opens with a foreword by Doug Scott who reminds us that Kellas was one of the great pioneers of Himalayan climbing, and a short introduction by the authors. There are six maps in the body of the book and a further two maps in Kellas' Appendix. The book also turned up some delightful surprises: I didn't know that Queen Victoria was an avid hill walker/mountaineer and had written a bestselling book about her adventures, 'Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands' (1868). The reader might also be enticed by the early chapters to spend time exploring the hills of Scotland.

This is a book of significant historical mountaineering interest, and while Canadian content is necessarily slight, Arnold Mumm, Norman Collie, and ACC co-founder A.O. Wheeler do make appearances. Collie, in particular was both a fellow mountaineer and a colleague of Kellas working with William Ramsay at UCL.■

Above All Things

By Tanis Rideout 2012

Published by McClelland & Stewart, 2012

*Reviewed by Bill Perry,
Island Mountain Ramblers*



Fact is sometimes stranger than fiction, yet some works of fiction can make us feel more involved with the main characters than mere fact or documentary. This is truly the case in *Above All Things*, Tanis Rideout's captivating account of George Leigh Mallory and his part in the Mount Everest expeditions of the early 1920s.

Real Person Fiction (RPF) is often associated with mythological figures such as King Arthur or Robin Hood. More recently, these works have involved pop culture icons such

as film stars and musicians. The story of Mallory and Everest fits comfortably into this genre, since mountaineers and explorers were the rock stars of that generation, and Mallory's friends even nicknamed him "Galahad."

The book manages to be a love story, an adventure novel and a tragedy. The author also generates quite a bit of suspense, which is surprising since we all know how the story ends. In a flash-back, Mallory and his wife, Ruth, are shown in the delirious happiness and magnetic attraction of their first encounter. Later, we see them each struggling in different ways with the problems of the long separations caused by the Everest trips and George's travels to other countries for fund-raising.

For most of the novel, the story shifts back and forth between two narratives: one following George on the 1924 expedition to Everest and the other depicting Ruth's life in Cambridge during the long months of his absence. Ruth's story is more compelling than I could have imagined, and made more so by being told in the first person.

In addition to looking after three children and a staff of servants, she had to contend with the press and the intrusive and almost morbid fascination of a public that hung on every word of each report on the famous explorers and climbers. It was understandable that she might "lose it" on occasion. For example: walking by a river, she overhears a conversation: a woman saying, "George Mallory ... imagine what it would be like to be married to a man like that ... It's all so romantic. How glorious it would be if they succeeded. Think what it would mean." And Ruth's response: "I am walking toward them. 'What would it mean?' I am standing close to them now. 'What could it possibly mean?' I say more clearly now, because I really want to know. I need to. What it could mean? To this woman. To anyone. Whether someone they have never met climbs some damned mountain." (Pages 130-131)

Meanwhile, George was having a difficult conversation with expedition leader Teddy Norton at camp IV on the north ridge of Mount Everest. George is asking Teddy for one more try for the summit.

"I can do this ... I have to do this."

"That won't cut it, George. You want to risk your life? Sandy's? I need more."

"Because I can do it ... You know that and I know that. Let me do it and we'll all go home heroes. All of us."

"I'm asking you not to go, George... don't do this."

"I have to" ...

"You and Sandy then," Teddy eventually said. "One more chance. ...Three days, George ... and we are all on our way back to base camp." (Pages 260-261)

It was two days later that George Mallory and Sandy Irvine left camp VI for the summit of Mount Everest and climbed into history, myth and a mystery that has lasted almost 92 years. I find Tanis Rideout's speculation as to the events which followed to be as probable as any I have read. After all, who among us has not, at least once, continued to climb later than a chosen turnaround time, lured on and on by a summit which seems so tantalizingly close?

This book is a page-turner and hard to put down, yet should really be read more slowly in order to savour the writing style

Some Good Reads

and pace of this extraordinary first novel. The only missing item I would have found convenient to have included in the book was a map, sketch or photo of the Northeast Ridge of Everest, showing the climbing route and camps of the 1924 expedition. However, this is probably not a serious oversight nowadays, since these are readily available on the internet. ■

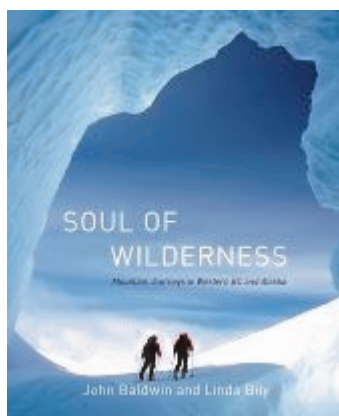
Soul of Wilderness: Mountain Journeys in Western BC and Alaska

By John Baldwin and Linda Bily

Published by Harbour Publishing, 2015

Reviewed by [Ron Dart](#),

ACC - Vancouver Section



There has been an unfortunate yet understandable tendency within Canadian mountaineering literature and photography to front stage the Rockies and subordinate BC's Coastal Mountains to secondary status. There has also been the tendency to valorize rock jocks, first ascents (on ever more difficult and trying routes and pitches) and minimize a more artistic and contemplative yet equally competent approach to

mountaineering. The sheer breakthrough beauty of *Soul of Wilderness* is that "mountain journeys in western BC and Alaska" are front staged and the "soul of the wilderness" rather than a simple literal approach to the mountains is the core of this burnished gold book—truly artists, mountaineers, contemplatives and photographers wed and knitted together in this A+ keeper of a mountaineering classic.

This wordsmith of a text and exquisite photographs evoke and draw the curious and keen reader into both the form and soul of the mountains. John and Linda should be heartily congratulated for a pure diamond of a book that, simply put, has no competitors and would be hard to surpass—it is truly the west coast mountaineering book of 2015 to purchase, read and inwardly and meditatively digest. The expansive photographs, for the most part, cover treks on glaciers, high alpine traverses and fine sloping snowfields. There are a few photographs that span the mountain seasons, but most of the visual delights in *Soul of Wilderness* have been on ski trips in western BC and Alaska.

There are 10 chapters in this must-buy book: 1) Footsteps in the Wilderness, 2) Wilderness at our Doorstep, 3) Where the Ridges Run Wild, 4) Whales and Icefields, 5) Gentle Wilderness, 6) Ski Wild, 7) Thirty Years on Ice, 8) Both Sides of the Stikine, 9) Touch the Wild and 10) Soul of Wilderness. There is often a graphic and, at times, subtle transition from urban to rural to wilderness to a wildness ethos—John and Linda have tracked

the trail well and made it abundantly clear why wilderness and wildness are essential for a sane and centred soul. The soul of the wilderness is, in essence, oxygen for the human soul: without such oxygen, our souls shrink, wither and, eventually, die.

The BC mountaineering community has a rich line and lineage. Dick Culbert took mountaineering to new levels in his creative years. John Clarke told yet a fuller tale. John Baldwin and Linda Bily very much stand on the solid and innovative shoulders of Dick Culbert and John Clarke and *Soul of Wilderness: Mountain Journeys in Western BC and Alaska* amply illustrates why this is the indisputable case. ■

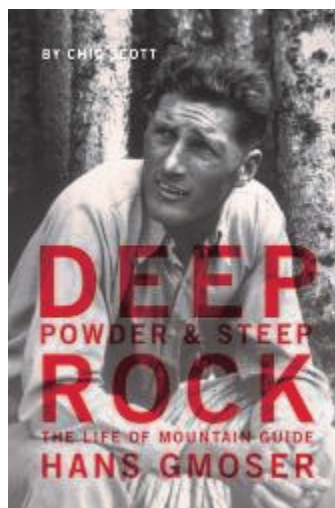
Deep Powder & Steep Rock: The Life of Mountain Guide Hans Gmoser

By Chic Scott

Published by Assiniboine, 2009

Reviewed by [Mike Nash](#),

Caledonia Ramblers



First published in hard cover by Assiniboine Publishing and reviewed by Ron Dart in the Fall/Winter 2009 *Cloudburst*, the new Rocky Mountain Books edition of *Deep Powder & Steep Rock* is a well-crafted and lavishly illustrated book that is a nice read and an essential piece of Canadian mountaineering history. With 346 pages, good end sections, hundreds of black & white photographs, plus 32 colour pages, it is remarkable value at \$25. Biographer and mountaineer, Chic Scott, has done credit to his subject, embedding

Gmoser's story in the historic detail that Scott excels at.

Many think of Hans Gmoser as the 'father of heliskiing,' but as *Deep Powder & Steep Rock* makes clear, he was much more than that, with significant climbs and hard expeditions to his credit. In 1958, he guided the third ascent of Mount Alberta; in 1959 he led the second ascent of the East Ridge of Mount Logan involving hundreds of kilometres of self-propelled access, staged from the Alaska Highway; and in 1963 he led a near-deadly first ascent of Denali's Wickersham Wall, described in the book as "probably the highest snow and ice wall in the world." Gmoser pushed hard, with dissensions not uncommon in the hard-core groups that he led, but he usually patched things up by the end of each trip and invariably enjoyed good loyalty from most of his associates.

Trailblazers and entrepreneurs like Gmoser seldom get things done without some controversy, and one area where he was criticized by some mountaineers was his contribution to the

FMCBC's Member Club Grant Program

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

FMCBC grant funds have been used to upgrade trails, install bridges, improve huts, purchase tools and run community events. Learn about our recent grant funded projects on **page 11** of this issue.

To make a donation visit the Canada Helps website:
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Thank you for your support!



commercialization of the backcountry. He justifies it, as in his reply to Fred Beckey on pages 275-277, but not always convincingly. He appears conflicted within himself, and in hindsight he might have thought twice before opening the heliski Pandora's Box, but having done so he pressed on to do it as well as he could. Gmoser was in the right place at the right time with his interest in mountain ski touring converging with the advent of jet helicopters, and we are perhaps fortunate that it was he and not others who pioneered heliskiing and helihiking in British Columbia.

A founding member of the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, Gmoser is described on the book's cover as "the most influential mountaineer in Canada in the last fifty years," just as his hero and fellow Austrian Conrad Kain had been in the first half of the 20th Century. Just 20 years after he arrived in Canada as a penniless immigrant from post-war Austria, Gmoser guided then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau on a climb of Bugaboo Spire. Despite Gmoser's conservative political views, he and Trudeau respected each other and appeared to get on well. Later, in his heliski business, he hosted prominent clients from around the world, including European royalty. He received many honours later in his life, including the Order of Canada.

I enjoyed a beer with Gmoser 25 years ago after a focus group meeting in Richmond at the end of the BC government's Commercial Backcountry Recreation Policy process where I was representing the FMCBC. Gmoser didn't join us until after lunch as he had been heliskiing on the other side of the province during the morning. I remember his commanding presence in the meeting room, and his friendly and unassuming manner in the pub afterwards—traits that come through in the book.

The book has an unusual format in that instead of many chapters it is divided into five sections, each covering a major phase of Gmoser's life: *Hard Years in Austria*; *A Mountain Guide in Canada*; *The Great Communicator*; *Heli-skiing Takes Off*; and *Elder Statesman*. As a communicator, Gmoser made many feature-length dramatic films of backcountry skiing and expeditionary climbs for more than a decade. He toured and personally narrated these films all over North America at events that, for many, were the social highlight of the year, much as the "Best of Banff" tour is today.

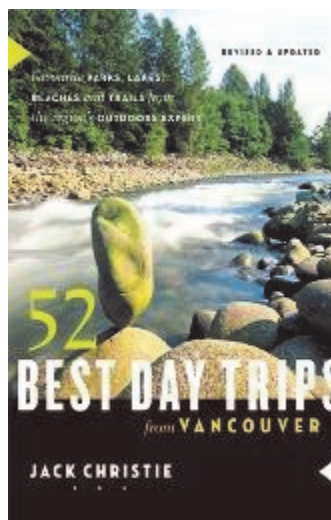
A quote from a Gmoser article in the 1961 Canadian Alpine Journal should resonate for anyone who has skied the deep powder in BC's backcountry: "A man should have wings to carry him where his dreams go but sometimes a pair of skis makes a good substitute." A fitting epitaph. ■

52 Best Day Trips from Vancouver [4th Edition]

By Jack Christie

Published by Greystone Books, 2015

*Reviewed by Dave Wharton,
Valley Outdoor Association*



That this is the 4th edition of this popular book testifies to its ongoing relevance in a world increasingly dominated by online guides. While this book may have, at times, little to offer for those who have called Greater Vancouver home for a good part of their lives or for those who are committed to particular outdoor pursuits with no interest in expanding their horizons, this book will have considerable appeal to many other user groups.

This book will be particularly valuable to those who are new to the area and who are looking for a general guide to what

the region has to offer for the non-motorized outdoor recreational user. This guide will also have value for any looking to become involved in outdoor recreation, but not yet sure which

Some Good Reads

sport will appeal most to them. A third group for whom I feel this book will be useful is those with young families, who though they may know the region well, may not know what is available for families with young children.

Although I did find some errors within the book, I can say with confidence that at the time of publication I found the book to have a high degree of accuracy. When reviewing sections that I was particularly familiar with, I could find only two examples of errors that were not time sensitive, and both related to distances along trails. That being said, neither trail is a rugged wilderness route. The errors I refer to would not impact safety.

I did like the references to public transit that are given when a destination is reachable by that option, with appropriate contact numbers and web sites. Also included is contact information for other agencies so potential visitors can access up-to-date open-

ing and closing times and other more detailed information to suit their interests.

One point to bear in mind, when using this book: take note of given distances at the beginning of each section. This book covers a large area, with several destinations well over 100 kilometres from Vancouver, and one over 200 kms. These distances are not always over high speed highways, and the time spent getting to the destination may not allow much time to engage in any of the recommended activities. Travelling from different parts of Greater Vancouver could also add significantly to both time and distance.

This guide is a book about non-motorized activities, and for those who wish to see and do more than view the world through a car or bus window, the \$20 investment will be well worth it. ■

Southern Chilcotin Mountains Guidebook

By Tim and Claudia O'Hearn

Published by Trail Ventures BC, 2015

Reviewed by [Ron Dart](#),

ACC - Vancouver Section

As you sit on the hillside, or lie prone under the trees of the forest, or sprawl wet-legged by a mountain stream, the great door, that does not look like a door, opens.

~ Stephen Graham
The Gentle Art of Tramping

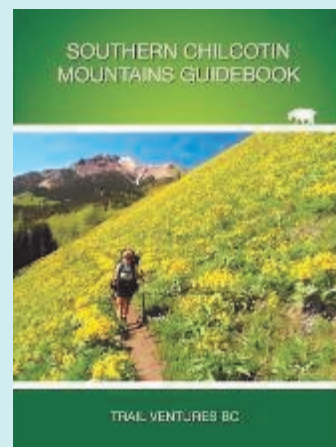
There has been a significant need for a finely crafted trekking book on the Southern Chilcotin Mountain area, and to the credit of Tim/Claudia O'Hearn, they have deftly done the deed and done it well and wisely. *Southern Chilcotin Mountains Guidebook* is a must read for those keen on rambling in parts of BC where few tend to go. The guide book does make the Chilcotin area accessible and most attractive.

The informed and insightful guide deals with South Chilcotin Mountain Provincial Park (just northwest of Gold Bridge and Bralorne). There is a fine "Introduction" (Part I) to the compact book followed by some needful "Area Information" (Part II) and "Access and Activities" (Part III). A careful and lingering read of Parts I-III are important primers for the rest of the book.

The core and centre of the book is, of course, all the pointers and suggestions made when taking to the trails and off-piste meanders in the South Chilcotin Mountain area. "Trail Descriptions" (Part IV) makes for a delight of a read and a definite teaser for those interested in taking to terrain not yet visited in their hiking and in the mountains explorations. Each pathway is explained well, fine photos illuminate the trail descriptions and the trail circuit, distance, elevation and time are ably highlighted. In short, this is a comprehensive book worth the having for new possibilities. The book is brought to a close with a fine section on "Safety, Impact & Trip Preparation" (Part V).

Southern Chilcotin Mountains Guidebook is also a hand-in-glove fit with the waterproof/tear proof *Southern Chilcotin Mountains Trail Map-GPS Based* that includes Spruce Lake Protected Area, Big Creek Provincial Park and Mud Lakes Area. Again, the authors have outdone themselves and shone much needed light on these important trekking areas in BC that few include in their hiking bucket lists—generous kudos to all the meticulous research done and presented so well.

The Southern Chilcotin Mountain region (north of Whistler-Pemberton) has been in need of a book to invite those interested in the ways and means of visiting such an idyllic setting—*Southern Chilcotin Mountains Guidebook* and *Southern Chilcotin Mountains Trail Map-GPS Based* by Tim/Claudia O'Hearn make it abundantly clear why this part of BC is a place to visit. ■



Garibaldi Park 2020: Plans to Halt Development, Restore Access and Open Park Master Plan

By Brian Wood, BC Mountaineering Club

A group of volunteer non-motorized backcountry recreationists has created a new organization and website that aims to open the Master Plan of Garibaldi Park by 2020, stop the Garibaldi at Squamish Resort Proposal and restore access to the historic Singing Pass Trail. Their overall vision for a new master plan for the park is one that fits more closely with the wishes of the general public who use the park—not just prospective resort patrons.

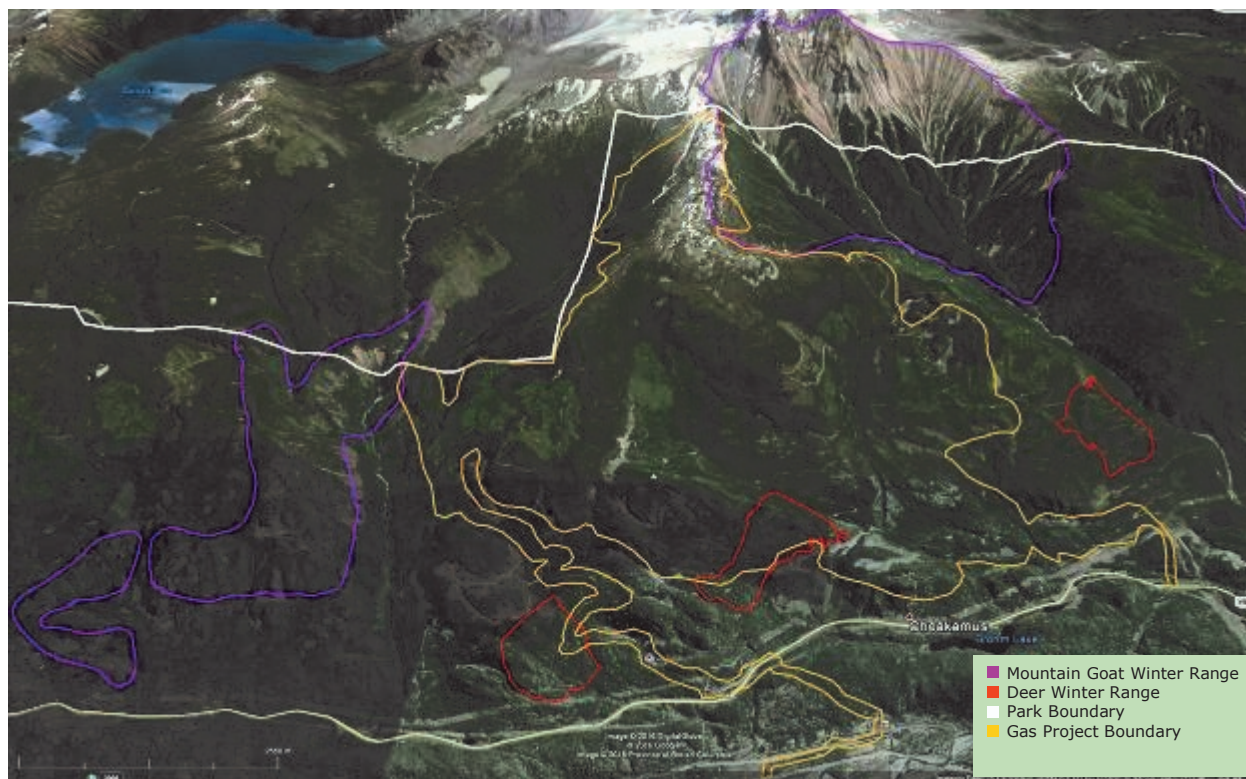
Over the years, this group has noticed a large shift from the original vision set out for Garibaldi Park during its creation as established by its civilian founders in 1915, 1917, and in 1955. The provincial government and BC Parks have deviated from this vision extensively in order to suit the needs and agenda of commercial interests, which have considerably degraded the ecological integrity of the park and the experiences of park users. The current emphasis on commercial interests has led to more than 32 square kilometres of the park being lost forever. Garibaldi Park 2020 believes that more of Garibaldi Park is certain to be lost if the Garibaldi at Squamish Resort is to be built.

The term of the 1990 Master Plan expired in 1995 and some small management amendments have been made since then, including extending the term of heli-skiing in the Spearhead Range to satisfy Whistler Blackcomb (despite a majority of the public opposing the extension), and so a major revision is long overdue to accommodate new appropriate activities and interests. Garibaldi Park 2020 believes this new master plan should reflect a return to the traditional vision and values of the park founders—one of non-motorized recreation and trail construction.

If you visit this group's website at www.garibaldipark2020.com you will find extensive and detailed information covering a wide range of topics, including century-old historical items and impressive maps that show many areas of conflict with the original vision. This website offers a wealth of information that has never been so easily available, and represents hundreds, if not thousands of volunteer hours researching documents and building the extensive website. GaribaldiPark2020.com also features detailed maps of the Garibaldi at Squamish Proposal and its associated wildlife conflict maps. If you are aware of any pertinent information that you feel should be on the website, please contact the site administrators.

If the Master Plan is opened and subjected to a proper open public discussion to receive planning input, this group hopes the integrity of the park can be restored and protected from the numerous perceived future threats. They also hope that the number and quality of hiking trails in the park can be greatly increased and improved, which was one of the primary hopes and vision of the park founders.

This group also wants to change the long-standing attitude of governments (of all stripes) that a park is a land and natural resources bank for plundering as it, or the commercial interests influencing it, sees fit. Whether or not there will be any changes to the sad state of Garibaldi Park depends on you, the public, and how you respond to the information found on this website—so start reading and thinking about it! You can also help by signing their online petition, and getting involved in the online discussions about the future of the park and the proposed new master plan in their online forums. ■



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South Okanagan Trail Alliance
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Vancouver Island Trails Information Society
Victoria Outdoor Club Meet-up



Brian Wood

Help us advocate—Join the FMCBC!

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

We represent over 5000 individuals from 37 non-motorized outdoor recreation clubs across BC. Here's how you can get involved:

**Join one of our member clubs (listed on this page)
Encourage your club to join the FMCBC (\$10 per member)
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