

CLOUDBURST



Sea to Sky Access Issues | Mountain: The Tie that Binds and Stretches Us | Spearhead Huts Update
Forest Fire Lookouts in British Columbia | Avalanche Safety and Snowshoeing | BC Parks Funding

Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

Spring/Summer 2018

CLOUDBURST

Published by :
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC
PO Box 19673, Vancouver, BC, V5T 4E7

In this Issue

President's Message.....	3
Recreation and Conservation.....	4
Trails Report.....	9
Mountain Matters.....	10
Club Ramblings	18
Some Good Reads	22

Executive

President: Dave Wharton | Vice President: Vacant
Secretary: Mack Skinner | Treasurer: Silvie-Marie Fortin
Past President: Scott Webster

Staff

Barry Janyk, Executive Director
Jodi Appleton, Administration Manager
Stacey Santos, Communications Coordinator

Committee Chairs

Recreation & Conservation: Brian Wood & Monika Bittel
Trails: Alex Wallace & Patrick Harrison
Outreach/Communications: Brian Wood
Risk Management: Scott Webster
Bylaws Review: Ken Orr

Cloudburst Editor: Stacey Santos

Cloudburst Production & Design: Jodi Appleton

Articles and Advertising

Distribution: 4000 digital, mail-outs 1000 print copies
Articles should not exceed 1000 words. Photos should be at least 4x6 inches at 150-300 DPI resolution. Submit photos and advertisements in PNG, TIF, EPS or JPEG format.
Submission Deadlines: October 1 & April 1.

Ad Size	Rate
Full Page (7" x 9")	\$400.00
½ Page Horizontal (7" x 4.5")	\$210.00
½ Page Vertical (3.5" x 9")	\$190.00
¼ Page (3.5"x 4.5")	\$100.00
Business Card (3.5" x 2")	\$50.00

Send articles/advertising inquiries to:
cloudburst@mountainclubs.org

Cover Photo

Photo by Dolf Vermeulen: Mt. Steele Cabin in Tetrahedron Provincial Park (see page 7 for more details)

Printed on Forest Stewardship Council products by
First Choice Books & Victoria Bindery

FMCBC is a member of the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC, Canadian Avalanche Association and Leave No Trace Canada.

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 over 6000 people from across BC. Our membership is comprised of a diverse group of non-motorized backcountry recreationists including hikers, rock climbers, mountaineers, trail runners, backpackers, backcountry skiers and snowshoers which are our core activities. Many of our members also paddle kayaks, canoes and ride mountain bikes, etc. 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

Dave Wharton, Valley Outdoor Association

The last male white rhinoceros (northern sub-species) died recently. Two females survive. To state that things look bleak for the survival of this unique animal would almost sound optimistic. With only 2 females on the planet we can write the final chapter now. And it is the same theme that we hear for its extinction, so often: poor or non-existent environmental regulation and enforcement; unsustainable land use practices; increasing human populations; and war and political violence.

I find it too easy to adopt an attitude of complacency and smugness, that we have it so very good in Canada and BC. And we do have it very good regarding our affluence and democratic freedoms: our freedom to speak up, to protest, without fear of reprisal. Hiking in Golden Ears Park yesterday with friends, the air was clean, the water drinkable, there was evidence of plentiful wildlife, and the forest was alive with new spring growth. It was very easy to convince myself that all was well in the world. And while I do not make any direct comparisons between Canada/BC and sub-Saharan Africa, all is not well here.

We have our own BC-based problems. If I think of species survival, coastal populations of orca, wild steelhead populations, and the southern population of the mountain cariboo come quickly to mind. Regarding environmental practice, Site C, pipelines and threats to both coastal and inland waterways jump to mind. Concerning land use issues, one has only to think about the redrawing of park boundaries, and the conflicts that develop between non-motorized and motorized use of our back-country resource.

One of the primary purposes of the FMCBC is to be an advocate for access to the land and an advocate for non-motorized recreational use of that land. When that advocacy is well thought out and well planned and coordinated, there will be positive spin-off benefits across a broad spectrum of environmental issues.

The role of advocacy has been formalized within the FMCBC by writing it into the Executive Director's job description last year. This, in part, has resulted in the scheduling of many meetings between elected and unelected members of all levels of government and the FMCBC's Executive Director, officers and volunteers, on topics such as "Right to Roam" legislation, provincial park funding, and park planning.

Club members volunteer their time to sit on committees that advocate for the resolution of issues of importance to the FMCBC membership. And all clubs and their members are encouraged and welcome to bring matters to the attention of the Board and Officers of the FMCBC so they can help bring them to a resolution satisfactory to the FMCBC membership.

One of the major initiatives that the FMCBC is undertaking this spring is a thorough review of the organization's Bylaws and Constitution. This is the first comprehensive review in several years, and though it would be premature for me to suggest what the results of this review will be, I can state with confidence that the FMCBC will look and "feel" different while retaining its essential core values. I am confident that we will all have an organization that is more responsive to the needs of the membership and more efficient in meeting those needs. I expect this to be a primary topic of discussion at this year's AGM, on June 9th in Victoria, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM.

I would like to thank the [Outdoor Club of Victoria](#) for taking on the responsibility for hosting this year's AGM. Thank you!!

I would also like to welcome the [Squamish Access Society](#) as our first Associate Member, and the [Columbia Valley Climbing Association](#) and the [East Kootenay Outdoor Club](#) as the latest clubs to join the FMCBC. Welcome!! ■



Dianne Wharton
En route to Iago Peak, Coquihalla area, during an overnight snowshoe trip (March 2018)

Welcome to our newest FMCBC Member Clubs

Columbia Valley Climbing Association & East Kootenay Outdoor Club

Welcome to our newest Associate Member

Squamish Access Society

Recreation and Conservation

Southwest BC Recreation and Conservation Committee Report

By Monika Bittel & Brian Wood, Committee Co-Chairs

Over the past several months, the [SWBC Recreation and Conservation Committee](#) has worked on a range of matters. The following highlights some of these issues, namely the Pinecone Burke Provincial Park planning processes and lost, impaired or restricted access issues in the North Shore and Sea to Sky Corridor.

Cypress Provincial Park – Restored early morning access through Backcountry Access Corridor (BAC)



Some of the old signage from April 2, 2017 posted in the former "Brown Bag Room" of the Black Mountain Lodge

After representatives from the FMCBC, member clubs, Friends of Cypress Provincial Park and the Dawn Patrol met with BC Parks personnel in mid-July 2017 to explain why the draft BAC protocol was unacceptable, there was silence from BC Parks and Cypress Resorts. With the 2017-2018 winter season approaching, we had a further meeting with BC Parks. At that meeting, Mel Turner (retired from BC Parks) and the FMCBC reviewed the history of the BAC and explained how the recommendations from the Williams Commission were incorporated in the Park Use Permit. This included the intent and purpose of the BAC, which was to allow park visitors to pass unimpeded through the ski resort to access and egress from the park areas outside the ski resort boundaries. After the meeting, we felt

optimistic that this matter would finally be resolved. However, when Cypress Mountain was on the verge of opening on November 10, 2017, with still no announcement from BC Parks, the FMCBC, Steven Jones from the Dawn Patrol, and Mel Turner took various initiatives to escalate the matter up the ranks of BC Parks and government. Finally, on November 9, 2017, the day before the official opening of Cypress Mountain, we received word from BC Parks that Cypress Mountain would not prevent the public from accessing the BAC before 9 am. Subsequently, BC Parks updated its website to reflect the opening of the BAC as of 7 am, instead of 9 am, and added clarifications about the BAC and the public's use of it. With significant improvements this past winter to the BAC signage and the self-registration area, and an increased ranger presence, winter visits to [Cypress Provincial Park](#) became a more enjoyable experience.

With the early morning access through the BAC resolved, there are a number of other access restrictions to resolve at both Cypress and Seymour, including the winter road closures (gates remain closed until 7 am). We also want to formalize one-time descent privileges on groomed runs for backcountry skiers to avoid having to descend the heavily used up-trails at both parks.

Pinecone Burke Provincial Park – Ongoing park management planning process

Late last year, Paul Kubik from the BCMC submitted a comprehensive proposal for the Pinecone Burke Provincial Park, with zoning recommendations and proposals for trails, routes and huts, for consideration by the Committee. Although consensus could not be reached by club representatives within the Committee, two clubs (North Shore Hikers and Valley Outdoor Association) subsequently endorsed the proposal. Other clubs remain undecided or do not endorse the proposal or aspects of it (VOC, ACC-Whistler, ACC-Vancouver).



Improved signage in the backcountry corridor (Feb. 25, 2017)

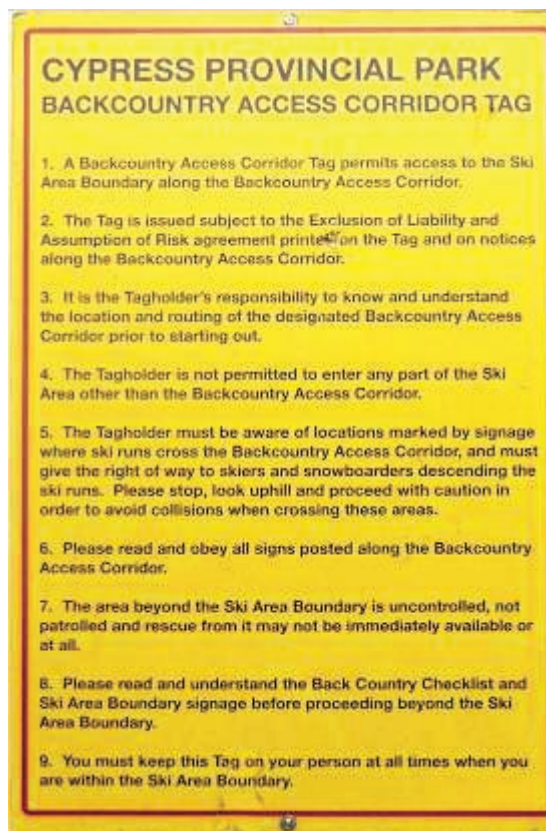


Image of the new Backcountry Access Corridor Tag sign posted in the "Self Registration Area" of the Black Mountain Lodge (November 2017)

Early in the year, BC Parks invited the FMCBC and clubs to a meeting to discuss the Pinecone Burke Provincial Park management plan. BC Parks advised that First Nations' interests are an important consideration in the development of the Pinecone Burke Management Plan and that BC Parks is working collaboratively with Katzie and Squamish First Nations and consulting other First Nations whose traditional territories overlap with the park. On January 29, 2018, the FMCBC and club representatives from ACC-Whistler, BCMC, VOA and VOC met with BC Parks, Vicki Haberl and a consultant for the Katzie First Nation to discuss the planning process; provide zoning recommendations; discuss access, trails, routes and huts; provide feedback; and ask questions. BC Parks advised that after the draft management plan is concluded, there will be an open house to give the public the opportunity to review the plan and provide comments. As this planning process has been ongoing since 2014, hopefully the Pinecone Burke Provincial Park management plan will be finalized this year.

Singing Pass Trail, Garibaldi Park – Parking and Access Proposal

Considerable efforts were made over the past several months to get the provincial government to commit to improving the Singing Pass Trail access and parking, as outlined in the Singing Pass Parking Proposal (see <http://mountainclubs.org/singing-pass-trail-access/>). The proposal was raised at meetings with BC Parks and other government representatives. The need for improved parking and access has become a priority with the construction of the first Spearhead hut and parking restrictions imposed by the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW). The parking restrictions have aggravated the access issue, particularly for overnight park visitors.

We had some optimism that the recent change in government, which appeared more willing to consider public interests over private or commercial interests, would result in forward progress on this long-standing issue. Unfortunately, it appears that optimism was misplaced. We were very disappointed with the contents of a letter dated April 11, 2018 from John Hawkings, Acting Executive Director, Integrated Resource Operations Division, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Developments. Among other things, the letter advises that Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) "is not willing to explore relocating the trailhead any further at this time, as the current access is considered safe and viable." Mr. Hawkings further advised that since the Singing Pass Trail winter parking is managed by the RMOW, the FMCBC should contact the municipality directly to discuss our request for increased parking, particularly overnight parking, which is limited.

We will regroup and consider how to address the government's response. Without some restored vehicle access to or close to the old trailhead, the round trip to Singing Pass is increased by approximately 10 kms, making day trips not feasible for most members of the public. And with limited overnight parking at RMOW, overnight visits to the Singing Pass are severely restricted, which is unacceptable.

Sea to Sky Lost and Impaired Access – Priorities

The multiple impaired access issues in the Sea-to-Sky corridor are discussed in another article in this issue of Cloudburst and won't be repeated here. Mr. Hawkings' recent letter of April 11, 2018, offers limited improvements for some of the Sea-to-Sky impaired access issues, which will benefit non-motorized recreation users. But, the improvements are not enough. The positive from the letter is that government acknowledges that the Sea-to-Sky corridor is under severe pressure and must be managed more strategically and collaboratively. Mr. Hawkings states:

"... Both ministries are acutely aware of the increasing visitation and demand for recreation opportunities in the region and the pressure being placed on the land base. Ministry staff from BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, the Conservation Service, Compliance and Enforcement Branch, Regional Operations, and other areas are collaborating to develop a more strategic approach to managing these pressures."

We will continue to work on these and other issues, with the impaired and lost access in the Sea-to-Sky corridor being our primary focus. We believe everyone, the public and the various government agencies (local, regional and provincial), must find ways to meet the demand for outdoor recreation opportunities for the Lower Mainland. There has to be much greater collaboration, strategic planning and management to address this issue, with government to taking a greater, collaborative leadership role.

As always, everyone's continued efforts, work and collaboration on all these and other matters of interest to the backcountry, non-motorized recreation community is greatly appreciated. If you are interested in any of these or other backcountry access issues, we welcome you to join and get involved. ■

Cover Photo Contest

**We're looking for winter action shots
for our next cover of Cloudburst.**

**Email your entries to us at
cloudburst@mountainclubs.org.**

**Please submit photos by
October 1st!**

BC Parks Funding

By Jay MacArthur (ACC-Vancouver Section and BCMC)

The FMCBC, along with other concerned organizations and individuals, have been working to increase government funding to BC Parks. In addition to our [#FundBCParks](#) campaign, our members have made presentations to the BC government and the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, whose report included some of our top arguments. As well, CPAWS, Nature BC, BC Spaces for Nature and other groups, including the FMCBC, have created an informal coalition to work on this issue. In the past five years, our coalition has started to make an impact. Just over a year ago, the previous government made a pledge of \$23m over 5 years to increase the number of campsites by 1,900. In addition, 10 new park rangers were hired. That seems to have been successful to some extent but much more needs to be done.

The [Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy Service Plan](#), released in February 2018, provides more details on outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities within parks and protected areas:

Performance Measure	2016/17 Baseline	2017/18 Forecast	2018/19 Target	2019/20 Target	2020/21 Target
3.4a Number of new campsites, recreation sites and trails built towards 2021/22 goal	378	726	1,405	1,876	1,991

We are still waiting for more details of the breakdown of the campgrounds:

- How many of these are backcountry?
- What parks are they being added to?

The Service Plan also provides a resource summary:

Core Business Areas	2017/18 Restated Estimates	2018/19 Estimates	2019/20 Plan	2020/21 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Environmental Protection	11,531	11,801	11,738	11,738
Environmental Sustainability	22,730	23,972	24,087	24,087
BC Parks ¹	49,386	40,478	40,738	41,160
Conservation Officer Service ²	15,476	18,207	17,741	17,741
Climate Action	16,535	15,600	13,830	13,830
Executive and Support Services	23,062	23,891	23,893	23,893
Sub-Total	138,720	133,949	132,027	132,449
Park Enhancement Fund ³	3,675	9,800	9,800	9,800
Sustainable Environment	18,935	23,635	23,635	23,635
Total	161,330	167,384	165,462	165,884
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Executive and Support ⁴	22,085	27,149	17,702	15,630
Park Enhancement Fund	400	400	400	400
Total	22,485	27,549	18,102	16,030

Notes related to BC Parks:

¹ BC Parks's Budget decreased from 2017/18 due to one-time endowment grant given to the BC Parks Foundation in 2017/18.

² Additional funding to support the hiring of 20 new conservation officers.

³ Park Enhancement Fund expenditures reflect increased revenues in the Fund and resulting opportunities for enhancement projects.

⁴ Ministry Capital Expenditures, Executive and Support Services increase relates to expansion of campsites within BC Parks.

Prior to the release of the 2018 BC Budget, the FMCBC met with "Environment" Minister George Heyman (responsible for BC Parks). During the meeting, Heyman said to not expect a significant increase for BC Parks in the 2018 budget.

To quote CPAWS-BC, one of our partners in the campaign:

"CPAWS-BC and thousands of British Columbians have called on the government to immediately increase funding for BC Parks to \$60 million, with a long-term commitment to match standards set by Alberta Parks and Parks Canada. Instead, the budget falls almost \$20 million short of that amount and promises no significant increase in funding over the next several years."

The Minister did point out that BC Parks needs strong arguments for increased funding to present to the budget committee. Reading between the lines I think that BC Parks staff members do not have the time or resources to build the business case for the budget. It could be that they are overworked or have not been given the right priorities or direction. It is hard to know as concerned citizens.

This is where the FMCBC and our members can help. Take photos of damaged outhouses, poorly maintained trails, damaged signs and people camping in the wrong places. Put them into a file with descriptions: the park name, location, information about the issue and possible solutions. Send them to fundbcparks@mountainclubs.org and we will organize them in some type of report for the government.

Please send some photos of people enjoying themselves too! ■



Karl Stevenson

Broken signage near Arnica Lake



Cover photo of Mt. Steele Cabin in Tetrahedron Provincial Park taken by Dolf Vermeulen

A calm summer's evening spent at Mt Steele cabin in Tetrahedron Provincial Park. This cabin has the highest elevation of the four available and offers stunning views over the Sunshine Coast, Vancouver, and the Tantalus Mountain Range. Despite being a growingly popular year-round destination for outdoor enthusiasts, the provincial government is considering stripping park status from some or all of Tetrahedron to allow the local regional district to tap into more drinking water. Photo taken by Dolf Vermeulen www.dolfvermeulen.com or [@dolfvermeulen](https://twitter.com/dolfvermeulen)

Sea to Sky Access Issues

By Jay MacArthur (ACC-Vancouver Section and BCMC) & Bryce Leigh (ACC-Whistler Section)

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) is very concerned that many areas in the Sea to Sky Corridor are difficult for backcountry users to access and have conflicts with snowmobile users in the winter. Listed below are the priority areas that we want to work with the Provincial Government to resolve.

About 10 years ago, we participated in a LRMP process that resulted in some non-motorized areas being "designated." However, many issues still remain since motorized users (mostly snowmobilers) don't respect the areas set up as non-motorized. This report describes some of the long-standing issues and the short-term priorities that we suggest may be the easiest to resolve:

Priority 1 - Singing Pass Trail in Garibaldi Provincial Park

Winter

Parking issues for multi-day trips need to be resolved. We think that the RMOW and Whistler Blackcomb are currently working on this issue with B.C. Parks. Parking is currently allowed in designated areas of Lot 4 adjacent to Blackcomb Way. But those spots are frequently not available and there are no clear guidelines posted.

Summer

A long-term issue. See the [FMCBC website](#) for more information. The FMCBC is working with BC Parks and other stakeholders.

Priority 2 - Mount Sproatt

Winter

Our members have experienced many conflicts with snowmobile users who continually access the non-motorized zone in the Rainbow Lake and 21 Mile Creek watersheds.

Summer

Access blocked by Canadian Wilderness Adventures at 1100 m to all vehicles except ATVs and dirt bikes.

Our members are putting a high priority on reopening the road above the North Air mine to a parking lot at 1300 m. More details are provided in the report below.

Priority 3 - Brandywine Meadows

Winter

This was a very popular area for backcountry skiing until about 30 years ago when the snowmobilers "took it over." Backcountry skiers seldom go there now.

Summer

The existing logging road is getting very rough and requires some repairs to allow for hikers to access the popular trail that was rebuilt by Recreation Sites and Trails between 2014 and 2016.

Priority 4 - Brew Lake and Brew Hut via Roe Creek FSR

Winter

The access to Brew Lake, the Brew hut, and Cypress Peak area is not enjoyable due to the large number of snowmobilers using the Roe Creek FSR.

What is the best way to maintain access here?

Maybe we can build a larger parking lot for non-motorized users.

Summer

As long as bridge over Roe Creek at 800 metres remains in place the current situation is fine.

Access to Cypress Peak is impaired due to very deep cross ditch at 900 metres at Branch 200 junction.



The view looking east across Singing Pass to Cowboy Ridge. The 3 mountains to the right of centre are Overlord, Fissile, and Whirlwind

Priority 5 - Chance Creek FSR

Winter

Winter ski access impaired due to high snowmobile use.

Action - High priority to maintain winter driving access to PMC base for ski-touring.

See comments above under Brew Lake.

Summer

Summer access to Tricouni meadows and lake limited to high clearance 4WD after creek crossing at 1040 m.

Action - Medium priority to maintain summer driving access to 1040 metres on Tricouni access road. Medium priority to improve road past 1040 m on Tricouni access road to the Tricouni Lake trailhead at 1280 m.

Priority 6 - Garibaldi Lake and Black Tusk trails via Rubble Creek

Winter

Parking is difficult in winter since only a very small area is plowed on the access road. The FMCBC has proposed that the road to the Rubble Creek parking lot be plowed in the winter to facilitate public access.

Priority 7 - Callaghan Lake Park / Callaghan Conservancy

Summer

Summer road access is challenging for any vehicle without high clearance due to water bars.

Action-medium priority. BC Parks is doing an adequate job of keeping the road driveable.

Priority 8 - Lizzie Lake Road

Summer

Road is washed out 1 km from In-SHUCK-ch Road. Action- medium priority to re-establish driving access to the Lizzie Lake trailhead.

What other areas have we missed? There are some new access issues in the upper Squamish and Ashlu/Elaho river drainages. If you know more about issues in these areas, or any areas in the Sea to Sky region, let us know! ■

By Alex Wallace, Committee Co-Chair

Grouse Regional Park: Baden-Powell Trail upgrade, BCMC Trail/Grouse Grind trailhead geotechnical engineering project starts

Following the sudden announcement of a Metro Vancouver Regional Park in the Grouse area, on land which comprises a long-term lease from GVWD, a comprehensive public process was initiated which eventually resulted in a rather sizeable report collating and analyzing this public feedback (which can be found online within the Metro Vancouver Board minutes of November 2017). This public input included many varied suggestions, from not doing any trail repair work at all, to installing a gift shop and washrooms on the Grouse Grind. However, as anticipated, the first indications of the long-awaited engineering work on the unstable area at the base of the Grind and the BCMC Trail are now visible, including clearing of two treed areas prior to excavation and construction.

One welcome trail upgrade has been the replacement of the wooden bridges on the creek that crosses the popular Baden-Powell Trail at the east boundary of the new Regional Park. Like the four other creeks in the area, this is a branch of Mackay Creek, but all five of these creeks, whether dry or running, are all labelled 'Mackay Creek' regardless of whether they are potential debris flows or currently have water in them. The above works by Metro Vancouver all came to a halt when it snowed and the ground froze, but will resume shortly.

Mount Seymour

The five-year program to upgrade the increasingly popular Dog Mountain Trail by Metro Vancouver will commence this summer, as this area west of the trailhead is actually within the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve, but is co-managed by BC Parks (and most people would see it as part of Mount Seymour Provincial Park). It's not entirely clear what will happen with regard to the long-term (twenty-year...??) project to upgrade the eroded Mount Seymour Main Trail, which is still in its early stages, as BC Parks is still awaiting further information on funding and projects from the new government in Victoria (however, regular users can always mention this project to their MLAs).

Howe Sound Crest Trail

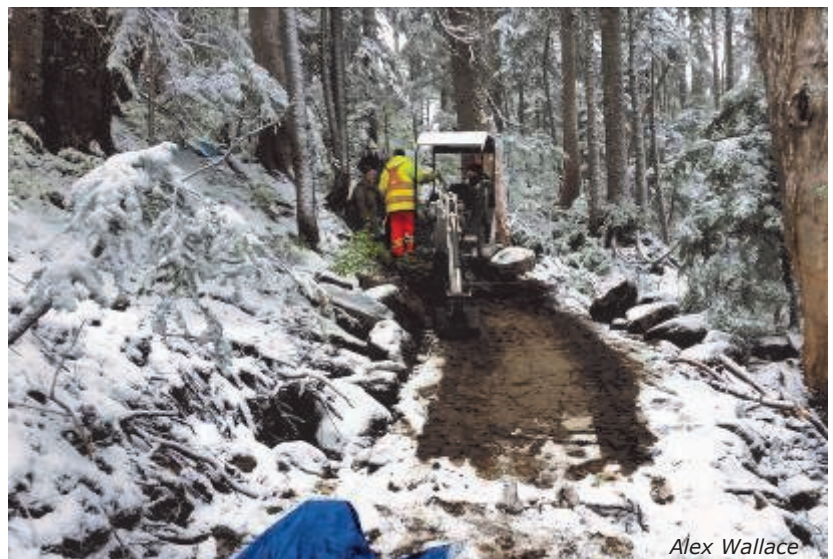
As can be seen in the photo, the Trail Crew was making good progress on rerouting to reduce the length of one of the last switchbacks (and avoid hiker traffic though the construction area) when the snow hit early at this elevation (1160m) on October 12th, and it was decided to get the machinery to a lower elevation, where some minor projects could be tackled in safety. This means that major projects which have to go to BC Bid each year, i.e. following the rules set by Victoria, can end up only having a three-month season. The Bid contract work can't be assessed until the snow melts, and then by the time the process is complete and a crew and machinery arrive on site, it can be late July. The consolidated snowpack at this elevation, which

was sitting at about 4 metres in mid-April, could therefore result in a similar short window once again this year. How this will work itself out remains to be seen, as again we are not sure what exactly the BC Parks funding situation is likely to be.

Black Mountain Plateau

As reported last fall, the multi-year proposal by Friends of Cypress (funded by a bequest from the late Halvor Lunden, the well-known local trail builder) to upgrade the very popular Baden-Powell trail on Black Mountain, ended up being postponed to 2018, as the time frame to do the scope of work, environmental assessment and hire a qualified crew could not be met before the end of the season loomed, and the snow started to fall in October. The intent is to do this work without machinery such as a mini-excavator or power wheelbarrow, which has been standard on many projects, including the busy Howe Sound Crest Trail section to St Marks Summit (i.e. where work has to stop and start repeatedly on fine days). The preliminary work, such as the environmental assessment, has now been completed by BC Parks, and the joint planning process has now determined that the several slippery rock slabs and other hazards to hikers are going to be tackled this season, with creek crossings, wetland erosion and other regular repairs to follow in later years.

The recent initiative by Victoria to hire Student Rangers has recently been raised by BC Parks as a possible way to tackle this project—and deal with the BC Bid complications of these projects, i.e. that are at elevations over 1,000m. and so have short work seasons. However, this has to be reviewed in the context of funding already committed to the project as a bequest. Hopefully the work will go ahead as soon as possible, given that this trail also is very busy in summer.



Howe Sound Trail Crew (Oct. 12, 2017)



Solitary snowshoe track on Theagill Lake, Black Mountain Winter Loop

As this trail leads to Eagle Bluff (overlooking Horseshoe Bay) this viewpoint is generally the destination of visitors, and it is one of those where the 'Instagram Effect' has been seen in recent years, where (literally) picturesque trail destinations end up being crowded and trails eroded—not to mention the additional meetings devoted to frustrating wrangles over...hiker parking. It's not entirely clear how to deal with this new and perhaps welcome increased popularity of certain hiking trails, but using a crew working without power equipment (which somewhat ironically led to concerns about 'slow progress' being raised by government) is one strategy. The other could be marking and signage of trails that have fallen into disuse, as there are areas in provincial parks which are zoned for recreation but are underutilized both in summer and winter, mostly due to the perennial funding and staffing issues.

One retired park planner has noted that the extensive Black Mountain Plateau is close to a large population base and has areas that could see an expanded trail network in summer and winter. For example, the Black Mountain Winter Loop is not actually marked as a loop, it just goes well out onto the plateau and then ends at a helpful "End of Marked Trail" sign in forested snow-covered terrain. This is one of the areas that we hope to make progress on under the new (hopefully more trail-friendly) crew in Victoria. ■

Mountain Matters

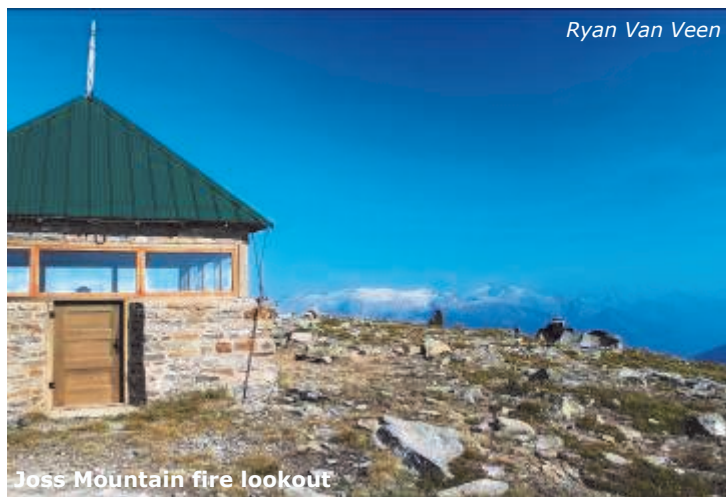
Forest Fire Lookouts in British Columbia

By Andrew Drouin, South Okanagan Trail Alliance

Abandoned, restored or otherwise interesting forest fire lookouts have long intrigued outdoor recreationalists as trail destinations, as well as for their promise of excellent panoramic vistas and vivid historical lessons.

Here in the South Okanagan, Mt. Brent hosts a fine example of a 1930s era forest fire lookout, which has continually drawn locals and tourists alike for a moderately challenging hike and look-see (location: 49° 29' 13.20" N 119° 54' 25.20" W, info/directions: bit.ly/brentlookout). Year after year, locals have pitched in to clear the route to the summit of Mt. Brent, and though I've always meant to get around to overnighing in this clean, structurally sound lookout, this has yet to transpire. I'll be sure to make 2018 the year that it does!

The BC Forest Service has been in operation for some 106 years (est. 1912) with fire lookouts operating May through September adopted soon thereafter. Initially, a lookout was a specific location on a trail that provided a good view of the countryside, and was regularly visited by fire patrolmen out in search of smoke and fires. Buildings were soon constructed at the best vistas, and the job of fire lookout-man came into being. Some of the earliest lookouts were fashioned out of



'whatever was at hand.' Structures as basic as tents located high on windswept peaks were initially pressed into action. Lookout towers were sometimes just tall trees with the branches trimmed or removed and a rickety ladder nailed to the trunk.



Liam Baker

Bickford fire lookout

Early 20th century fire patrolmen faced formidable challenges: They were on the move, oftentimes in rough terrain, promoting fire prevention to the public, enforcing fire laws and extinguishing small fires enroute. Imagine the challenging work conditions: shivering through nights in cold canvas tents or drafty shacks, in damp cotton sheets, when in sweeps a squall of wind, sleet and hail. Then, the next morning, you need to hike up and down ten miles of steep valleys, paddle and portage canoes over tangled trails or hand-pump railway speeders over miles of track—all while wearing a heavy pack upon your back.

Fire patrolmen repeated this scenario every few days, oftentimes during inclement weather, with creek crossings and potential grizzly encounters between their destinations, with no Gore-Tex, Vibram nor DEET in sight. A fire patrolman had to keep his bearings in the bush, be able to use an axe to clear trails, and set up camp, cook over an open fire and treat any injuries they might suffer along the way. The patrolmen were in contact with the fire wardens and rangers who supervised fire fighting operations, and also visited the lookouts to get updates on fire activity from the person on duty. When the fire danger was lower, the patrolmen built trails (1200 miles in 1913 alone) to fire lookouts and strung telephone wires.

Permanent lookouts were generally equipped with fire finders (alidade—an old time compass quadrant direction finder), maps and binoculars to spot fires and telephones or radios to report them. Living quarters were within the lookout or in a cabin close by. Lookouts were located at elevations as high as Greenhill Peak's 7906ft / 2410m Fording lookout.

In 1942, a standardized prefabricated lookout building came into being and simplified the task of lookout construction. Starting in the 1950s, structures were transported to their destination by helicopter rather than pack-train. Permanent lookouts were staffed all day, every day, during fire season. Today, BC fire lookouts are evidenced by as little as a jumble of rocks—representative of fallen footings—through to beautiful stone and wood edifices with double-pane windows and period furnishings. Between these extremes, fire lookout structures take on every state of repair imaginable.

Forest fire lookouts in BC once numbered approximately 320 seasonally active structures province wide, though not all were staffed nor maintained at all times. Nowadays, only 20 structures are pressed into use during the most active forest fire seasons.



Ryan Van Veen

Mara Mountain fire lookout

The balance of forest fire detection in the 21st century is via public reports, satellite, airplane and other electronic detection methods. Through these means, the BC Wildfire Service has access to data detailing lightning ground strikes within a few seconds of occurrence. This data provides staff knowledge of the location, time, polarity and amplitude of each strike. Computer models can predict where fires are most likely to start.

The goal of this article is to provide information on existing, structurally sound, decommissioned forest fire lookouts that outdoors men and women might be interested in visiting, be it day trips or overnights. However, it soon became apparent that there exist far more lookouts in the province than could possibly be described in a magazine article.

Many of the structures are in unknown states of repair (or existence) due to their often-remote locations. As such, I've elected to focus on information pertaining to a group of fire lookouts rebuilt by Rec. Sites and Trails BC, volunteers and donors as recreational infrastructure, celebrating the BC Forest Services' 2012 centenary. All of these sites can be further investigated via the web links provided below.

I've also posted additional information on a Facebook site titled BC Forest Fire Lookouts, shared this info with canadafirelookouts.weebly.com and can recommend a book titled *Fire Lookout Hikes in the Canadian Rockies* (available at MEC).

Kudos to the many volunteers, community groups, businesses, individuals and government departments who have contributed to this article. Special thanks to the Forest History Association of BC and particularly John Parminter, Volunteer Researcher, FHABC (Victoria) for his sage advice and editing.

Without further ado, here is the list of BC forest fire lookouts which RSTBC rebuilt between 2012 through 2014. I hope that many of you enjoy excellent adventures to these sites in the coming years.

Buchanan Lookout, Kaslo

(GPS: 49° 56' 16" N 116° 56' 50" W) Elevation 6270ft / 1911m

Located on Mount Buchanan in the Selkirk Mountains northeast of Kaslo, this impressive structure overlooks spectacular views of Kootenay Lake, Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park, Goat Range Provincial Park and the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy. Both the mountain and lookout were named after local pioneer lumberman George Owen Buchanan.

Directions - [Click here](#) for access instructions & updates (PDF file)

Mara Lookout, Enderby

(GPS: 50° 45' 56" N 118° 50' 34" W) Elevation 7367ft / 2245m

A full day hike in alpine/subalpine terrain, this 8.2km trail leads to a forest lookout tower and features rugged mountain bluffs,

alpine meadows, spectacular views of Mabel and Shuswap Lakes as well as the Monashee Mountains.

Directions - [Click here](#) for access instructions & updates (PDF file)

Nahatlatch Lookout, Boston Bar

(GPS: 50° 01' 18" N 121° 34' 18" W) Elevation 3950ft / 1204m

The Nahatlatch Lookout is situated within the Lillooet Range of the Coast Mountains, northwest of Boston Bar. There it overlooks the scenic Nahatlatch Valley and its unique drainage system. On a clear day, the lookout can be seen perched high on the mountain top as you approach Boston Bar on Highway #1 from the west.

Directions - [Click here](#) for access instructions & updates (PDF file)

Owen Hill Lookout, Houston

(GPS: 54° 11' 08" N 126° 52' 10" W) Elevation 3579ft / 1091m

In the summer of 2012, the Houston Hikers Society received a grant from the Ministry of Forests Centennial Fund to spearhead the Owen Hill lookout restoration. Some of their many enhancements include a large wraparound deck that provides enough room for tenting. Owen Lookout provides views of Morice Mountain and the Morice River Valley. Nearby, the Owen Flats recreation site offers camping amenities along the banks of the Morice River.

Directions - [Click here](#) for access instructions & updates (PDF file)

Thornhill Lookout, Terrace

(54° 29' 28.89" N, 128 26' 12.76" W) Elevation 4850ft / 1478m

Originally built in 1920 and completely rebuilt in 2012, this lookout represents a collaborative effort involving the Northwest Community College Trades Program, local businesses, the Wildfire Management Branch and volunteers. Panoramic views of the Skeena and Kitimat Valleys present from the alpine.

Directions - [Click here](#) for access instructions & updates

Woss Lookout, Woss

(50° 13' 45.99" N, 126° 36' 59.98" W) Elevation 2070ft / 631m

Woss Lookout is located on the summit of Lookout Mountain, a prominent hilltop visible to those approaching the community of Woss. The lookout site provides extensive views of the Nimpkish Valley, Woss Lake and the surrounding mountains of the Bonanza Range.

Directions - [Click here](#) for access instructions & updates ■

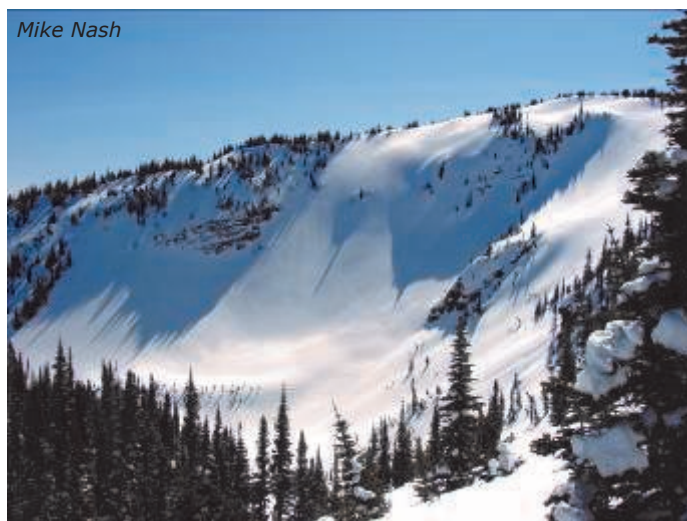
Avalanche Safety and Snowshoeing

By Mike Nash, Caledonia Ramblers

A few decades ago, hikers wishing to access mountain backcountry year round had effectively only one option for the winter months: backcountry skiing. Other means of winter mountain travel hadn't caught on yet or weren't as practical with available equipment. And since alpine and telemark skiing accounted for most of the backcountry winter travel in the 1970s and 1980s, most of the early recreational avalanche safety initiatives were directed there. Similar to other backcountry skiers of that era, I took my first avalanche training in January 1979 during my first winter in Prince George, a substantial weeklong course with an overnight field trip in the mountains.

The situation became more fluid with the advent of hinged, crampon-style snowshoes like the Sherpa brand that were developed for forestry workers and later adapted by recreationalists as being suitable for steep terrain. In the 1990s, many new brands of high-tech recreational snowshoes began to flood the outdoor equipment market, creating an inexpensive way to access the mountains year round with little extra gear or skill requirements over summer mountain hiking. Anyone could quickly learn to snowshoe, whereas mountain skiing typically took years to become proficient. Hiking clubs like the Caledonia Ramblers expanded from seasonal to year-round activities. Since then, several factors have combined to create what I believe is an emerging issue:

1. The accessibility and popularity of snowshoeing has soared, sometimes even to the point where it is possible to hike up well-trodden mountain trails in the winter wearing just hiking shoes. There was a double avalanche fatality in February 1995 at Raven Lake east of Prince George after four young people hiked in during a rapid warming spell¹.
2. Mountain weather has become more variable with climate change, and resulting snow conditions are not as predictable as they used to be in BC's interior.
3. Avalanche safety messaging is increasingly directed at snowmobiling with the advent of high-powered machines and the popularity of mountain sledding. At a recent avalanche seminar in Prince George, the focus was on snowmobiling, skiing and boarding, with no mention of snowshoeing.
4. New snowshoe trip leaders lack the years of mountain skitouring and associated avalanche experience that used to be the norm. Relatively few have taken avalanche training or acquired avalanche safety equipment solely for snowshoeing.
5. Standards of practice for avalanche safety have increased, especially for custodial² trips.



Mike Nash
Viking Ridge in Sugarbowl-Grizzly Den Provincial Park, near Prince George

Snowshoeing is inherently safer than other forms of winter mountain recreation. It is slower than skiing, boarding or sledding with less ground covered and little imperative to travel over higher risk terrain for the pleasure of sliding down snow slopes. Instead, it has become a convenient way for anyone who can hike to simply get out and enjoy the best of the winter outdoors without investing in a lot of specialized gear and training, as long as they stay away from dangerous slopes and avoid marginal conditions. Deadly avalanches can occur on almost any slope during extreme conditions, even in urban areas, but there are many places where safe snowshoe travel is practicable most of the time. An example near Prince George is the 670-metre forested climb from Highway 16 up to Viking Meadows in Sugarbowl-Grizzly Den Provincial Park. The temptation is to continue on to higher and steeper terrain, especially on a nice clear day when everyone is feeling strong.

Studies in Utah surveyed 353 winter backcountry users and found that only 13 per cent of snowshoers met minimum safe practices (carrying a transceiver and shovel and travelling with a partner) compared to 88 per cent for skiers³, and snowshoers were over seven times more likely than skiers to underestimate the avalanche danger⁴.

Our club regularly leads publicly advertised snowshoe trips, sometimes including minors, generally without requiring leaders or participants to have avalanche training or to carry shovels, transceivers and probes. Granted, most of these trips are in terrain that is safe from avalanche danger, where there is little imperative to require participants to be so equipped and which would limit attendance. Yet, despite best intentions to avoid dangerous terrain and conditions, it is all too easy to stray into borderline situations, sometimes compounded by group size,

group dynamics and leadership styles. I documented one such instance in my book *Outdoor Safety & Survival*⁵ in the reality check on page 240. The photograph invites the question: Is this a place where an outdoor club should be leading publicly advertised snowshoe trips without requiring participants to have avalanche safety gear, training and practice? Despite best intentions, stuff can happen in large and sometimes undisciplined groups. Without an agreed safety protocol, a leader is not always in a position to restrain stronger, enthusiastic participants from unnecessarily leaving a safe route and charging down a steep slope without any snow stability assessment, rescue equipment or avalanche knowhow, as happened while descending into the next valley soon after this picture was taken.

This past winter, after some internal discussion, the club made a request to the FMCBC for guidance, with the response that the FMCBC does not currently have a policy. Other FMCBC clubs must be facing a similar quandary, so perhaps it's time for the Federation to consider an avalanche safety guideline for member clubs who will be running snowshoe trips in mountain terrain in the next winter season. Certainly there is judgement involved in determining what might be considered avalanche terrain⁶ and conditions for this purpose; but where avalanches are a possibility, the guideline should call for participants to

carry, and be practiced in the use of basic avalanche safety gear, and for some members of the party to have taken an avalanche safety training⁷ AST-1 course. Ideally, at least one member of the party should have taken an AST-2 course with its more advanced decision making for travel in avalanche terrain and greater proficiency in companion rescue. ■

~~~~~

*Author's note: The opinions expressed above are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club.*

*Editor's note: Look for a follow-up article on this issue in the Fall/Winter 2018 issue of Cloudburst.*

*Websites listed in the endnotes were accessed March 30, 2018.*

<sup>1</sup> *Avalanche Accidents in Canada Volume 4 1984-1996*; report by [former FMCBC Northern Director] George Evanoff, pages 158-160.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/mtn/securiteenmontagne-mountainsafety/gardiens-custodial>

<sup>3</sup> *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 18, pages 264-270 (2007)

<sup>4</sup> *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 20, pages 269-274 (2009)

<sup>5</sup> *Outdoor Safety & Survival* by Mike Nash, Rocky Mountain Books, 2012

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/mtn/securiteenmontagne-mountainsafety/avalanche/echelle-ratings>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.avalanche.ca/training>

## Dave King Awarded NRESi Community Advancement Award

By Alan Wiensczyk, Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Institute

The Caledonia Ramblers are proud to announce that Dave King received the Community Advancement Award in Natural Resources and Conservation Practice. This award is given each year by the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Institute to a person who demonstrates a broad influence on the development of natural resources and/or the conservation of our environment, through interdisciplinary research or service to central-north BC. Dave was recognized for his many years and thousands of hours of volunteer work as a member of the Ramblers.

Dave joined the Caledonia Ramblers in 1975, was president for fifteen years (1979 to 1994), and has been a major leader, organizer, and consultant to others. Dave spearheaded construction of many new trails, led the vast majority of trail maintenance efforts, and organised numerous trips. His contributions to building the Ancient Forest Trail were extraordinary and he helped establish the new Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Park. Dave spent his career as a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Protection biologist with the provincial government working throughout central-north BC, and beyond. During Dave's career, he dedicated continuous efforts for the conservation of our region's natural resources. Importantly, Dave was a member of committees tasked with developing Land and Resource Management Plans, for which his primary focus was to support the identification and establishment of protected areas. Dave retired from the government in 2000. Literally, Dave has cleared the path for so many who followed.

Writer Mike Nash wrote in a tribute to Dave upon his retirement, "No one has had more of an influence on organized hiking in Prince George in the past thirty years than Dave King."

For researchers at UNBC and elsewhere, Dave King has been an invaluable resource. His wealth of knowledge of the area has helped researchers to verify facts and clarify details about the natural features of the area and the history of the parks. Dave embodies the NRESi motto, "Our environment is our future," and has demonstrated substantial contributions and achievements regarding the importance of conserving our environment. ■



Professor Darwyn Coxson presenting the award to Dave King



# Introducing the Backcountry BC Website

By Chris Ludwig, BC Mountaineering Club

**B**ackcountry BC is British Columbia's first open platform, grassroots, online provincial advocacy website for non-motorized backcountry recreation and conservation.

Backcountrybc.ca is a free and decentralized online space for all non-motorized backcountry users to discuss their issues and to advocate for better access, for new places to explore and for new trails and huts that everyone can enjoy.

Backcountry BC was built and is maintained by volunteers of the BC Mountaineering Club's web development team and took eight months to build. Backcountry BC enables its author/advocates to write advocacy articles, to upload and archive documents and to create powerful maps directly in the website's front end with no web design experience. The website was built to be highly expandable and can accommodate thousands of working authors and advocates across all regions of the province and a virtually limitless number of issues simultaneously.

Backcountry BC authors are free to advocate and work independently on any number of issues of their choosing, within the framework outlined in terms of use of the website. Collaboration and assistance in advocacy is also available and supported, and Backcountry BC makes its letterhead available to all of its authors/advocates with the stipulation that administration approves the final letter before it is sent and that the letter is stored and preserved in the website's document repository for future reference.

In addition to its role as a platform of advocacy, the Backcountry BC website provides numerous powerful and practical tools for the backcountry enthusiast.

## Trail Database

Backcountry BC features a custom-built trail database and GPS mapping tool. This is an ongoing project to catalogue all of the backcountry trails across BC, and to track their condition. Users can also post their trip reports with GPX, KML data, and can include and create their own image galleries and videos of their backcountry adventures. We are always looking for more volunteers to help with this exciting and ongoing project.

## Trip Planning

Backcountry BC is a one-stop shop for your backcountry trip planning. The latest mountain-specific weather, avalanche conditions and logging road conditions can all be easily accessed and viewed for free on the website. There are also multiple easy-to-use, visual-based GPX editing tools on the website. You can also download any of the GPX tracks in the trail database to your computer or GPS device for free if you have created a Backcountry BC account (also free).

## Document Repository

Backcountry BC has a powerful front-end document library that allows for the long-term preservation, cataloging, referencing, and front-end uploading of advocacy documents. It supports the storage of thousands of government documents, correspondence and maps, which can be preserved for future generations of advocates. All authors can freely upload documents to the repository and any document in the library can be easily referenced in any article (or externally) on the website.

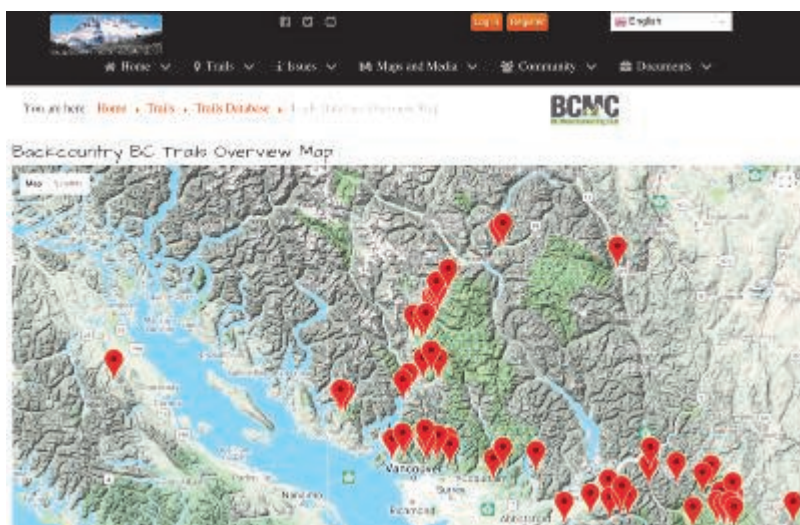
## Backcountry BC Member Area and Groups

The website features an internal "Facebook-like" members page which allows for easy internal communication between members and also supports the creation and operation of groups of a specific focus or intent. A lead advocate, for instance, can create a group specific to their issue, and have independent control over who they allow in their group. Backcountry BC's modern members area is the next generation of website social platforms which replaces the need for the older and traditional website forum.

## Closing

Join [Backcountrybc.ca](http://Backcountrybc.ca) today. Share, contribute and preserve your thoughts, opinions, knowledge and experience, and help the outdoor recreation community achieve the goals of improved access, more and improved trails, and better protection for wilderness areas.

It is time for outdoor and wilderness adventurers to come together and make a difference for the hikers, backcountry skiers, mountain bikers, snowshoers, mountaineers and climbers of today, and for all those who will follow in the future. ■



Backcountry BC Trail Database overview map (clickable). Just one of many features available on Backcountry BC.

# Update on the Spearhead Huts

## Construction of the Kees and Claire Hut at Russet Lake

By Liz Scremin, ACC-Vancouver Section

2017 was an exciting year for the Spearhead Huts Society. We were successful in building the foundations for our first hut: the Kees and Claire Hut at Russet Lake in Garibaldi Provincial Park. The hut is named in honour of Kees Brenninkmeyer and Claire Dixon. Over 30 professionals and 80 volunteers came to the site to make this possible. Now the foundations are buried under 3m of snow, and are patiently waiting for our return.

### Construction in 2018

It's 2018 and we are excited to be going back in this spring to build the actual hut on the foundations. Prefabrication of the framing is underway at the BC Passive House plant in Pemberton. To keep costs down, we are sending volunteer carpenters into the plant. Teams of skiers are heading to the site starting the Victoria Day weekend to dig the snow out of the foundation walls. The full construction camp will be established on May 28 and work will continue through to October 1. Roughly speaking, June will be framing; July, roofing, windows and doors. By August we'll move on to cladding, plus the septic system, mechanical and electrical rough-ins. In September, we hope to be installing the interior finishes and fittings.

Many volunteers will be needed again to accomplish all of this. We'll need folks with a wide range of skills: framers, carpenters, steel workers, roofers, window and door installers, plumbers, electricians, gas fitters, finish carpenters, painters, and lots of general labourers. Hopefully many FMCBC members will consider volunteering. Everyone last year had an enjoyable and positive experience. People just need to bring their sleeping bag and clothes, as we provide tents, sleeping pads, and all the food, prepared by a professional cook. The site is overseen by a site supervisor.



Laurie Block

The foundations are complete for the Kees and Claire Hut (Sept. 2017).



Liz Scremin

The Kees and Claire Hut construction camp in July 2017

The full work schedule is online now, [spearhead-huts.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-sign-up](http://spearhead-huts.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-sign-up) showing all the dates and tasks. There are two shifts per week: Monday morning to Friday morning, and Friday morning to Monday morning. Most people will fly in by helicopter from the Whistler Heliport and some will hike in over the Musical Bumps from the Roundhouse on Whistler Mountain. Whistler Blackcomb is providing complimentary gondola tickets for our volunteers.

### Fundraising

Fundraising for the hut is ongoing. Additional funds will help us complete many of the interior features and finishes that will make the hut function well. Please consider making a donation. The Spearhead Huts Society is a registered charity and all donations over \$20 are eligible for a tax receipt.



## Brett's Lounge and Barbara's Kitchen

In addition to commemorating Kees Brenninkmeyer and Claire Dixon, spaces within the hut are being named in honour of Brett Carlson and Barbara McGeough. Brett's Lounge will be a comfortable place to relax around the free-standing stove, enjoy the company of friends, and remember Brett's adventurous spirit. Barbara's Kitchen will be a core gathering place and a functional and attractive space to prepare and share meals. The kitchen is a most fitting memorial for Barbara. She was an interior designer who specialized in restaurant and hospitality spaces, a generous cook and host, and a long-time supporter of the hut project.

### Thank you to all our donors and supporters!

The Kees and Claire Hut is possible due to a founding donation of \$700,000US by the Brenninkmeyer Foundation. Generous grants have come from the Resort Municipality of Whistler, the Whistler Blackcomb Foundation and Mountain Equipment Co-op. In 2017, we also enjoyed discounts and donations from numerous construction-related companies: Airspan Helicopters, Bennett Land Surveying, C&J Reinforcing Steel, Cardinal Concrete, Coast Essential Construction, Don Stuart Architect, Equilibrium Consulting, Premier Plastics, Read Jones Christoffersen, Triton Environmental Consultants, Whistler Blackcomb and many more.

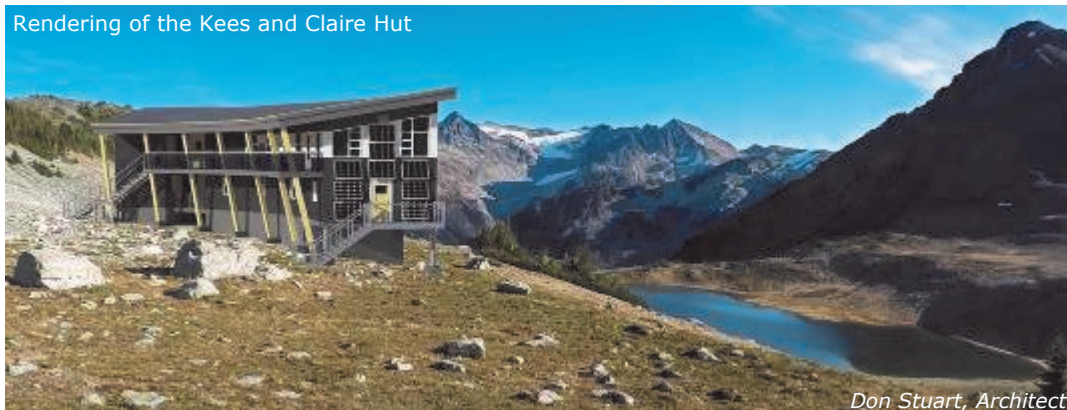
So far in 2018, we've had fabulous support from Blackcomb Helicopters, Duke Custom Kitchens, Fraserwood Industries, Innotech Windows, Kolbe Windows and Doors, Longboard, MyTiCon, Premier Plastics, Rona, Sabre Rentals, Westform Metals, Upper Canada Forest Products, the Bond Family, and many more companies and individuals.

*"A truly memorable experience, time spent with friends old and new. Hands full of blisters and a head full of memories...and thankfully the memories will outlast the blisters. Thank you for letting me be a part of this." Greg McChesney*

*"Sleep. Work. Eat. Work. Swim. Sunset. Moonrise. Fun times." Stephen McVeigh*

*"What a rewarding and enjoyable week! Came out solo, made a whack of new friends, and contributed to a truly memorable project." Scott Maguire*

Rendering of the Kees and Claire Hut



On November 26, 2017, we were pleased to announce the donation of \$1.5 million from Vancouver philanthropists, Brian Hill and Andrea Thomas Hill, towards our second hut at Mount Macbeth. Design work on this hut will begin in summer 2018. On April 10, 2018, Whistler Blackcomb announced that proceeds from all backcountry passes sold from now until the end of season on May 21 will go towards the Spearhead Huts. This is wonderful and so appreciated!

### The final result

If the weather is kind to us and we keep to schedule, the Kees and Claire Hut should be complete by year end. We'll do a walk-through with BC Parks staff and our own committee members to ensure the hut is safe and the systems are working. With luck, we hope to open to the public early in the New Year. The Kees and Claire Hut will offer comfortable backcountry accommodation and serve as a great base for hikers, climbers, skiers and snowshoers to explore the park. Watch for further announcements on how to book your stay in 2019. ■

### For a list of all our supporters:

[spearheadhuts.org/how-you-can-help/special-thanks/](https://spearheadhuts.org/how-you-can-help/special-thanks/)

### For videos and a slideshow of 2017 construction season:

[spearheadhuts.org/gallery/](https://spearheadhuts.org/gallery/)

### To see the 2018 volunteer work schedule:

[spearheadhuts.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-sign-up/](https://spearheadhuts.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer-sign-up/)

### To donate:

[spearheadhuts.org/how-you-can-help/donate/](https://spearheadhuts.org/how-you-can-help/donate/)

#### PLEASE NOTE

All skiers visiting Russet Lake this spring should watch for the four 2x4 studs that poke up through the snow and mark the four corners of the hut. It's important to NOT ski between the studs; the concrete walls could be near the surface, as the snow melts.

*The Spearhead Huts Society is a coalition of the Alpine Club of Canada - Whistler and Vancouver sections, the BC Mountaineering Club, and the Kees and Claire Memorial Hut Society.*



## Club Ramblings

### Mountain: The Tie That Binds and Stretches Us

By Colleen Chestnut, Island Mountain Ramblers



Hike in the McKenzie Range

A few weeks ago, I was sitting at my desk staring idly at my computer between tasks. Whenever my computer is inactive for a few minutes, the screen saver begins cycling through a series of about 200 photos. Most are of my adventures: travelling, ocean kayaking, hiking and mountaineering. The vast majority are of mountaineering excursions, either with my hiking club or with one or two close friends. Although I enjoy the solitude of my own thoughts and find pleasure in doing many activities alone, I prefer the company of others when I venture into the mountains.

An acquaintance of mine once suggested that, to be a “real” mountaineer, one must often go alone to the mountains. He feels that solo hiking is the purest, most aesthetic form of mountaineering and that self-reliance and independence in the outback are the hallmarks of an accomplished mountaineer. Not surprisingly, he shuns hiking groups and considers those who participate in them to be somehow weaker and less competent. In his opinion, to fully embrace this pure form of mountaineering, one must also avoid sharing one’s adventures over social media, lest the “holiness” of the experience be somehow tainted or bastardized. For him, sharing the experience too widely risks transforming it into a venture of vanity. One might be tempted to trade personal growth for the image of being tough and gnarly!

Although this philosophy has merit and I respect the level of discipline required to maintain it, I don’t ascribe to this way of thinking. When I look at the photos of my adventures, I remember vivid details of every hike and climb. I remember the struggles, frustrations, exultations and victories I shared with those who were there. I remember the jaw-dropping vistas that a small handful of us got to see.

I remember the sights that were too big and too unreal to fully capture on camera. I remember the quality of the light, the texture of the snow, the curve of the landscape and the sting of the wind. I remember the intense burning in my legs and lungs as I pushed at the edges of my physical limits. I remember the trepidation and relief when a sketchy section was overcome (and then checking my companions’ eyes for traces of the same emotions). I remember the camaraderie and conversations; the things we laughed about and the exact curse words each of us used to convey sentiments too raw for propriety. I know everyone who experienced that day with me remembers it in their own way, and it creates a secret bond that only we share.

The trip reports and photos we post afterwards are mainly for those of us who went. Almost like retelling a battle story that only the soldiers who were there fully understand. Yes, others looking at the photos or reading the stories find inspiration in our feats and are awed by the beauty of the places we visit. I know many who read of our adventures are physically unable to go to these places. I find satisfaction in knowing that the reports and photos give them a glimpse into a world they might otherwise never see. I like that I have others to share this secret world with. For me, it makes the experience so much more rich and rewarding.

A mountaineering friend, Jaime, once wrote, “Sometimes the mountains fill me with such joy and sometimes they scare the crap out of me.” She went on to eloquently share how the mountains have taught her important lessons and helped her to grow. She talked about how our perceptions (in the mountains and in life) are often a matter of perspective. We are constantly being changed and stretched by our experiences in the mountains.

I agree with these sentiments. During my treks in the mountains, particularly with friends, I find that my perceptions and perspectives are constantly challenged. I may find myself paralyzed with fear on a steep slope, only to look ahead and see a couple of friends laughing and joking nonchalantly with each other, obviously unconcerned about the terrain. I immediately remind myself to breathe deeply and put one foot in front of the other until the feeling of dread passes. At other times, I may be trudging along, carelessly lost in thought and suddenly realize someone in front of me has grown cautious and tentative. I automatically check myself and become more alert, testing every foothold.

The mountains constantly challenge me and cause me to grow. They force me to examine myself: my fears, motives, attitudes and values. My mountaineering friends, likewise, expand my perceptions and push me beyond previously established limits. Yes, sometimes I feel tough and gnarly after our adventures. Sometimes I feel small, humbled and glad to still be alive. Mostly, I feel privileged to have this close-knit band of brothers and sisters to sweat, toil and grow beside each week, and I feel thankful for the amazing playground we get as a backdrop for that. ■



Summit of Mt. Heber with Colleen, Matt and Phil

## Cheeky

By Nowell Senior, Caledonia Ramblers

*I once worked with two young people, Aaron and Angela, who were severely disabled with quadriplegia, were non-verbal and entirely dependent on others for all their needs. My young friends would seem to have every reason to be unhappy and depressed with their situation, yet were happy, and I must make a correction—I said my young friends were non-verbal but in fact had a way of showing how they felt through smiling and laughter. I took every opportunity through stories from my misadventures outdoors and some of the creatures I collected along the way to keep them laughing. I wrote the following story especially for Aaron and Angela; they never tired of hearing it and laughed so wonderfully at Cheeky's attempts to speak English that I never got tired of reading the story to them.*

I once adopted an orphaned baby magpie who grew into a beautiful looking bird, who I named Cheeky to match his comical character. We became best friends Cheeky and I; he followed me everywhere and we had wonderful times together. We also got into trouble. You see, magpies are intelligent birds and I taught Cheeky to say a few words, and these words together with his mischievous nature, led to the trouble. He did not know too many words, just a few such as, "Cheeky Boy," "Two Bags", and "Hi." When Cheeky said these words, they came out as, "Cheeboy," "Tubag," and "Hi," just as it sounds.



We used coal to warm our house but usually ran out of coal before the next delivery. Anyway, our coal was delivered every week, and Mr. Mellor, the coal-man, always called out from our backyard, "Hi-One-Bag?" and from our kitchen Granma would yell back, "Hi-One-Bag!" and Mr. Mellor dropped the coal into our cellar.

When we ran out of coal, I would take Cheeky to the railway tracks and pick up pieces of coal that had fallen from the trains. As I walked along the tracks wishing we had two bags of coal in our cellar, I'd chant "Hi-Hi-Hi-Two-Bags-Hi" each time that I bent down to pick up a piece of coal. Cheeky must have thought I was crazy, but he heard my chant of "Hi-Hi-Hi-Two-Bags-Hi" enough times to be able to croak it out as "Hi-Tubak."

One day when Granma and I were out, and Cheeky was home alone, Mr. Mellor came by with his usual, "Hi-One-Bag?" Cheeky must have squawked back, "Hi-Tu-Bak!" Mr. Mellor, being a bit deaf, and thinking it was Granma yelling to him, called out again, "Hi-Two-Bags?" Cheeky screeched back "Hi-Tu-Bak!" When Mr. Mellor came to collect his money the next day, Granma refused to pay for two bags. They began a heated argument with Granma yelling, "One Bag!" and Mr. Mellor yelling, "Two Bags!" Then Cheeky joined in screeching, "Hi-Tu-Bak!" "Hi-Tu-Bak!" "Hi-Tu-Bak!" Mr. Mellors and Granma burst out laughing and hugged each other in forgiveness.

Cheeky used to dive at our neighbour Mr. Brown, whose shiny bald head attracted Cheeky. With a loud shriek, Mr. Brown would cover his head with his arms, and run for shelter. Cheeky would then perch on Mr. Brown's washing line squawking, "Cheeboy! Cheeboy! Cheeboy!" while attacking and pulling out the pegs that held Mr. and Mrs. Brown's laundry on the washing line. At this point Mr. Brown came over and yelled at Granma and me, "That bird has to go!" He threatened to kill Cheeky if I did not do something about him terrorizing the neighbourhood.

Mr. Swindles, who lived alone next door to Mr. Brown, had helped me many times, and I asked him if he could help me to keep Cheeky, and to speak to Mr. Brown. I must have been very desperate because I knew that Mr. Swindles and Mr. Brown were not friends, but Mr. Swindles wrote a letter to Mr. Brown. I don't know all that was in that letter, but it led to Mr. Brown, Mr. Swindles and me sitting down to discuss Cheeky. Mr. Swindles' offered to supply Mr. Brown with clothes pegs that would not attract Cheeky. Mr. Brown agreed to wear a hat to cover his tempting target if Cheeky was around, and I promised to keep Cheeky indoors when I knew that Mr. Brown wanted to polish his medals and trophies in his backyard.

Later I learned that Mr. Swindles was able convince Mr. Brown how much Cheeky meant to me, and also being very knowledgeable about birds, magpies in particular, he explained that Cheeky was still young and that at some point Nature would call Cheeky back to the woodland area where he was born.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Swindles became friends, and I woke up during the night soon after our meeting and heard singing outside. As I looked out of my bedroom window, I saw Mr. Brown and Mr. Swindles walking with their arms around one another, singing their heads off! Even today, if I close my eyes, I can still see them as the lamplight threw their shadows ahead of them onto the shimmering cobblestone street; it appeared as if there were four friends making their way home that night.

So, although Cheeky did cause some trouble, he also did some good; after all he brought Mr. Brown and Mr. Swindles together as friends. However, as time went by Cheeky began to change and I thought he was sick. Mr. Swindles told me that Cheeky would feel better only when he was once again in the woods. When I took Cheeky to the woods where I had first found him, he kept following me home, but after many trips Cheeky did eventually stay in the woods and I walked home alone.

When I went to the woods in the spring I saw no sign of magpies at first, but after a while I heard the sound of swooping birds. I looked up to see a couple of magpies landing on a branch close by, and I called out, "Hi! Hi! Hi!" and one of them looked at me as if to say, "I know you!" then croaked out, "Hi! Hi! Hi!" It was Cheeky and he was not alone; he had a friend with him, and what a lovely couple they made. Cheeky would not fly down from the branch he was perched on to come closer, but I could see that he was happy. They both looked at me for a few minutes then went on with their work of finding twigs for what I realized was their first home together.

After a lifetime living far away, I recently returned to where I had first found Cheeky as a lost and lonely baby. The place was exactly as I remember it, and as the magpies squawked and swooped at me I smiled to myself and wondered if one of them had a very cheeky grandfather who once lived with me and left a lasting impression of our time together.

Although Aaron and Angela were unable to go to the places I went, and have the outdoor experiences that I had, I was fortunate in being able to take them with me to relive and share these experiences through storytelling, and Cheeky was their favourite story. ■

## 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 more about our clubs' projects at [mountainclubs.org/programs/member-club-grant/](http://mountainclubs.org/programs/member-club-grant/)

To make a donation visit the Canada Helps website: [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org)



**Thank you for your support!**





## Audain Art Museum/Whistler Museum: Mountaineering Convergence

By Ron Dart, ACC-Vancouver Section

The year 2017 signalled the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Canada since Confederation (Canada being, of course, much older than 1867 when the process of Confederation began, BC being slower to join). But, many was the celebrative event planned in Canada to highlight the next phase and stage of our journey as an emerging state. Needless to say, the mountaineering and artistic community were much involved in such a festive and retrospective mood.

The Audain Art Museum, much to their credit, hosted the *Stone and Sky: Canada's Mountain Landscape* exhibit that lasted from November 11th, 2017–February 26th, 2018. The exhibit was divided into five geographical areas in Canada where both mountains featured large and artists and photographers creatively interpreted such rock mammoths (in a variety of ways). Many of Canada's best known mountain and landscape artists such as the Group of Seven, Emily Carr, Toni Onley, Edward Burtynsky, Kenojuak Ashevak, John Hartman, Takao Tanabe, Ann Kipling, Jock MacDonald and Arnold Shives were given their respectful moment on stage (and such a visual stage it was).

I was fortunate to spend the early years of my life in Ontario and many a summer in Algonquin Park, where the Group of Seven launched a distinctive Canadian approach to applying brush to canvas. My parents are buried just a few minutes from the McMichael Art Collection in Kleinberg, Ontario, where significant paintings from the Group of Seven and Emily Carr are prominently featured. The fact that Arnold Shives had a couple of his paintings in the *Stone and Sky* exhibit, the equally important fact that Arnold has been front and centre in the west coast mountaineering community in its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of maturation (1950s-1970s) and, lastly, that the Whistler Museum is the memory of Whistler's mountaineering culture, meant that a historic moment could not be missed.

The Whistler Museum, in their Speaker Series on November 15th, 2017, did an evening with Arnold Shives and Glenn Woodsworth (Glenn very much a mountain historian) called *Crevasses & Craggs: Tales from the Coast Mountains*. Dick Culbert, Arnold Shives, Glen Woodsworth and Karl Ricker embody, in many ways, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of mountaineers (1950s–1970s) in



Katherine Kortikow

Arnold Shives, Ron Dart and Glenn Woodsworth at the Audain Art Museum

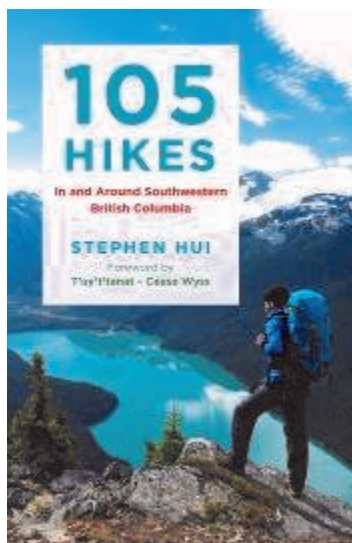
the Coastal Mountains. The playful and dialogical lecture by Glenn and Arnold (replete with graphic photographs of nail-biting climbs on rock, snow and ice) was more than worth the attendance. History was in our living midst. The Q & A session was animated and filled in many a historic detail. Gratefully so, Whistler Museum taped the *Crevasses and Craggs* presentation from elders in the mountaineering clan, an earlier one done by Karl Ricker on Neal Carter (who was part of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of BC mountaineers).

The mountaineering convergence between Audain Art Museum's *Stone and Sky: Canada's Mountain Landscapes* and Whistler Museum's *Crevasses & Craggs: Tales from the Coast Mountains* was truly a feast to dine on—multiple congratulations to both places for their initiatives and history-making events. ■

## Some Good Reads

### The story of 105 Hikes In and Around Southwestern British Columbia: All-new follow-up to 103 Hikes lands

By Stephen Hui, BC Mountaineering Club



Like many local hikers, I grew up reading *103 Hikes in Southwestern British Columbia* by Mary and David Macaree. As a teen, the fourth edition of the classic guide, which dates back to 1973, was my favourite book of any genre.

In 2008, I was thrilled to interview Jack Bryceland—who took over from the Macarees as of the fifth edition—for the *Georgia Straight* newspaper in advance of the sixth edition's release. 2018 marks 10 years since the publication of that last edition.

As a journalist (now recovering), I've long written about hiking on the side. A few years ago, I drew up plans for a local hiking guidebook. Serendipitously, Greystone Books came calling with the chance to write an all-new follow-up to *103 Hikes*, and I jumped at the opportunity.

On May 26, Greystone Books published [\*105 Hikes In and Around Southwestern British Columbia\*](#). My first edition of this guide expands upon the area covered by *103 Hikes*, featuring select trails in Washington's North Cascades and the islands of the Salish Sea on both sides of the Canada–U.S. border. I've added ratings for quality and difficulty, full-colour photographs and topographic maps, and shorter or longer options for many outings.

The book opens with a foreword by T'uy't'ananat—Cease Wyss, a Coast Salish ethnobotanist and interdisciplinary artist who is the Vancouver Public Library's 2018 indigenous storyteller in residence. Michael Coyle, a search and rescue manager with Coquitlam Search and Rescue, bylines the section on outdoor safety. Jaime Adams, founder and program coordinator of the Forest and the Femme Society (a non-profit outdoor-recreation program for marginalized women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside), contributes the section on backcountry ethics. The maps are designed by Steve Chapman of Canadian Map Makers.

On June 2, Mountain Equipment Co-operative (MEC) hosted a *105 Hikes* book signing at its Vancouver store (130 West Broadway), in the territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

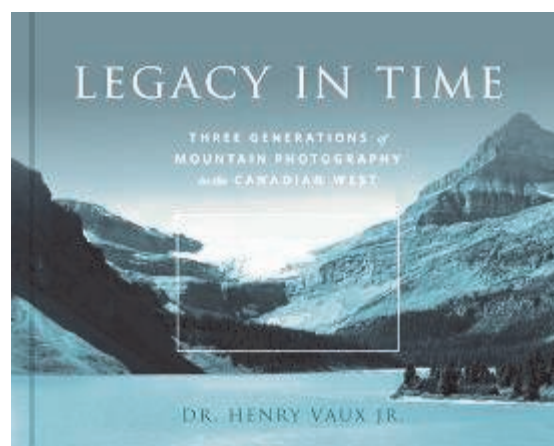
A portion of the revenue from sales of *105 Hikes* will benefit the B.C. Mountaineering Club (BCMC). I look forward to seeing my fellow hikers put the book to good use, and I welcome your feedback and suggestions for future editions. ■

*The story of 105 Hikes In and Around Southwestern British Columbia* by Stephen Hui; Greystone Books, May 2018; ISBN 9781771642866; 5.5 x 8.5 inches; 256 pages; softcover; \$24.95.

### Legacy in Time: Three Generations of Mountain Photography in the Canadian West

By Dr. Henry Vaux Jr.

Reviewed by Ron Dart, ACC-Vancouver Section



*Between 1887 and 2013, the period considered in this volume, glaciers were the single natural feature of the landscape that changed the most, visually.*

~Henry Vaux Jr., p. 25.

*Legacy in Time* is a fit and fine companion to the much earlier *Legacy in Ice: The Vaux Family and the Canadian Alps* (1983) and the more scientific *Our Vanishing Glaciers: The Snows of Yesteryear and the Future Climate of the Mountain West* (2017). *Legacy in Time* tells the committed tale of three generations of the Vaux family and how their initial photography (and the generations that followed) has tracked the receding glaciers in the Canadian West.

There are 82 figures (or photographs) in this splendid hard-cover beauty of a book that, significantly so, cover the diminishing and retreating of glaciers in the Selkirks and Rockies but, also, lights down on such bounties as mountains, waterfalls, lakes and people. The time period covered gives a small corrective of sorts to the popular notion that glaciers have only been disappearing in the last few decades as a result of global warming. The time period covered spans more than a century (1887–



2013). Vaux Jr. though does make it clear that the last few centuries have seen an accelerated melting and withdrawal of glaciers in the Canadian West and the poignant photographs in the book make such a stunning reality abundantly obvious.

The "Introduction" to *Legacy in Time* covers, in a general yet informative way, the three generations of the Vaux family and their contributions to Canadian West photography—their recordings by multiple images of a significant period of time in the Rockies and Selkirks have enriched our understanding of Canadian West history. I have spent some pleasurable time at Illecillewaet, Peyto, Yoho and Bow Glaciers and the black and white photos are startling in terms of the diminishing and dimming of these glaciers from photos taken from 1898-2007. The other glaciers photographed are Bonney, Biddle, Fay, Crowfoot and Dawson Glaciers and they tell the same worrisome tales.

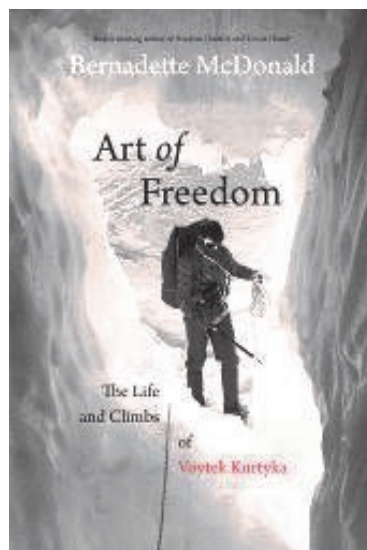
The sections in *Legacy in Time* that include mountains, waterfalls, lakes and people are well worth the meditative look also, but the centrepiece photographs of this finely crafted book are glaciers. The combination, therefore, of the three generations of the Vaux family (American Quakers), their interest and commitment to glaciers, the Canadian West and photography make *Legacy in Time* a must read/see keeper for anyone interested in Canadian mountain culture, history, landscape and geography. It is a rare thing, indeed, when a family spans three generations of photographic history in an area (the first generation of the Vaux family the most consistent and ample), but *Legacy in Time* does highlight via a wide range of photographs by the Vaux family the tragic drama of our dying glaciers. The book is a must-purchase to witness such an obvious reality, as well as the varied reasons for it and what might be done about it. ■

*Legacy in Time: Three Generations of Mountain Photography in the Canadian West* by Dr. Henry Vaux Jr.; Rocky Mountain Books, Oct 2014; ISBN 9781771600606; 11 × 8.75 inches; 128 pages; hardcover; \$30.00.

## Art of Freedom: The Life and Climbs of Voytek Kurtyka

By Bernadette McDonald  
Reviewed by Mike Nash,  
*Caledonia Ramblers*

*Art of Freedom* was published in Canada by Rocky Mountain Books and in the UK by Vertebrate Publishing. It is the latest work by Bernadette McDonald, who, in 2006, stepped back from two decades of pioneering leadership with the Banff Mountain Festivals to become an award-winning literary success in her own right. Her 2011 book, *Freedom Climbers*, won the top mountain literature awards in Canada, the UK and the US and set the stage for her latest biography of one of Poland's leading alpinists.



Voytek Kurtyka is one of a rare breed of climbers for whom the route rather than the summit was key. His visionary approach centred on small teams of like-minded individuals using alpine rather than expeditionary styles. Kurtyka preferred the term 'unleashed' rather than 'alpine' as it

freed him from the ties of siege tactics. He resisted awards and public appearances, maintaining that while climbing can produce physical and mental wellbeing and wisdom, accolades can lead to vanity. He exemplified this with his unwillingness to accept the Piolets D'Or Lifetime Achievement Award. But after refusing it for three years in a row, he was told that he would be awarded the prize in the spring of 2016 whether he was there to accept it or not. It is a measure of the respect earned by McDonald that Kurtyka agreed to her writing his biography and framing it with the award and his reluctant acceptance.

Kurtyka partnered with many prominent climbers during his career, foremost among whom was Alex MacIntyre. *One Day As A Tiger: Alex MacIntyre and the Birth of Light and Fast Alpinism* by John Porter (Vertebrate Publishing, 2014) captures the essence of MacIntyre's life and the style of small-group, informal high altitude climbing that he and Kurtyka embraced in the 1970s. Sadly, MacIntyre died in the Himalayas at the young age of 28 after being struck by falling rock on Annapurna. The first half of *Art of Freedom* has several stories about MacIntyre and it was fascinating to read the differing perspectives of him as portrayed by Porter and Kurtyka.

Kurtyka also partnered with Sandy Allan, Doug Scott and other top British climbers, and made several unsuccessful attempts with them on the Mazeno Ridge on Nanga Parbat. This was eventually achieved by Sandy Allan and Rick Allen, earning them a Piolet d'Or in 2013. Sandy Allan's *In Some Lost Place: The first ascent of Nanga Parbat's Mazeno Ridge* (Vertebrate Publishing, 2015) describes this epic adventure. There are interesting parallels between that January 2018 climb and Kurtyka's and Robert Schauer's 1985 traverse of Gasherbrum IV in that both teams spent several days descending from high altitude without water to drink and with attendant hallucinations.

Throughout his long climbing career, Kurtyka developed an innate sense of danger that he took careful heed of, turning back from climbs that he had worked hard to put in place even as his companions continued on. This led him to part ways with a number of partners over the years who had seemed willing to ignore warning signs as they pushed on to force successful outcomes.

In *Art of Freedom*, Bernadette McDonald succeeds in getting inside the complex character of Voytek Kurtyka in a book that slowly takes hold of the reader and makes it hard to put down. I agree with Steve House's assessment, repro-

duced on the cover, that this is “an absolute gem of a book.” The book is beautifully illustrated and well edited (above the norm), and deservedly won three major awards in 2017: The Banff Mountain Book Award for Mountain Literature, the Boardman Tasker Prize for Mountain Literature, and the History/Biography Award from the National Outdoor Book Awards. ■

*Art of Freedom: The Life and Climbs of Voytek Kurtyka* by Bernadette McDonald; Rocky Mountain Books, 2017; ISBN 9781771602129; 6 x 9 inches; 328 pages; hardcover; \$32.00.

## Field Notes for the Alpine Tundra

By Elena Johnson

*Reviewed by Bill Perry,  
Island Mountain Ramblers*

In July and August 2008, Elena Johnson was the writer in residence at an ecology research station in the Yukon Territories’ Ruby Range. She accompanied a team of University of Alberta biologists conducting research for the Kluane Alpine Ecosystem Project. The result of this unusual residency is a collection of poignant and memorable poems, interspersed with charts, lists, diagrams and drawings. The first poem sets the scene:

“... Curtains of mosses, curtains of rain.  
On the ridgetop,  
A sheep’s horn—  
a hook that parts the clouds.”

This book is part of a very small genre: poetry mixed with research field work—but a familiar mix for anyone who has dabbled in both of these. Then add the fact that this work takes place in the wilderness, above treeline, in terrain very familiar to the alpine hiker and mountaineer. In that way, it reminds me of Dick Culbert’s *Coast Mountain Trilogy*—poems written, at least in part, while he was a member of a boundary survey crew.

Elena Johnson brings the scene to life by describing the simple routines of camp life. “A cluster of tents / on the creek beds of June ... From inside the cook tent always rain or not-rain.” And yet “the afternoon could be a vestibule of sun or snow.” At night, “The wind keeps the ropes / that tie shelters to stones.”

The people—the members of the research crew—appear as interlopers, an ephemeral presence on the vast landscape. “Three small figures hike slowly upstream ... they seem to move

noiselessly ... the creek lilts over the stone.” Finally, they “hunch / at day’s end, over a kitchen table / that is a series of planks.”

Other main players in the drama are time, the weather and the land. “The mist slows. / Up on the western ridgetop / a slight whisper of motion / like the sssshhhh / of breeze through tree-tops / in this place where there are no trees.” She tries to keep track of the days: “I scratch lines on a rock ... I count suppers ...” and realizes that “The weather can’t be counted. The moss, the mist, the hours.”

I think that anyone who has worked outdoors in fields such as geology or biology, and has a flair for the artistic, will relate to this book. Sometimes I look back at that part of my own life as a collection of forestry field notes with poetry or song lyrics scribbled on the back of the odd survey card.

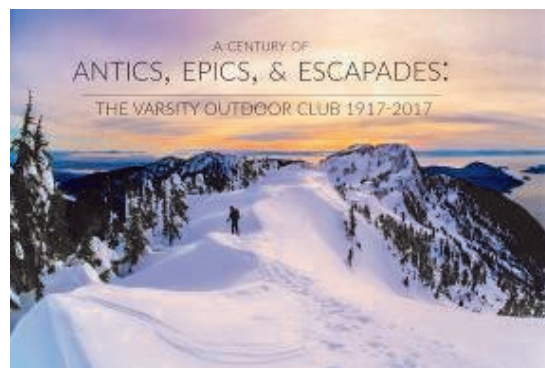
This small book doesn’t take long to read, but the images may last quite a while, as “Each landscape leaves its mark -- / a scratch on the heart, faint / as a pole-scar on talus.” ■

*Field Notes for the Alpine Tundra* by Elena Johnson; Gaspereau Press Limited, Printers and Publishers, 2015; ISBN 9781554471454; 8 X 5 inches; 44 pages; paperback; \$17.95

## A Century of Antics, Epics, & Escapades: The Varsity Outdoor Club 1917-2017

Published by the UBC Varsity Outdoor Club

*Review by Ron Dart, ACC-Vancouver Section*



Those who have studied at the University of British Columbia (at undergraduate or graduate levels) and who have had some interest in mountaineering (at whatever level) will have joined and done a variety of trips and treks (of various levels of challenge and competence) with the Varsity Outdoor Club, one of the oldest mountaineering clubs on the west coast (the Alpine Club of Canada and British Columbia Mountaineering Clubs yet older). The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary tale of the Varsity Outdoor Club from 1917–2017 is aptly, graphically and generously told and recounted in the finely packaged and printed *A Century of Antics, Epics, & Escapades: The Varsity Outdoor Club 1917-2017*.



Each of the chapters in this must-read beauty cannot but hold the curious reader. "A History Older than Ours" (First Nations history) introduces this bounty of a book, the meticulous "Timeline" offers an aerial overview of the history, and the chapters that follow delve deeper into the unfolding drama: 1) 1917-1939: Maps: VOC Areas & Traverses Over Time, 2) 1940s: Decades of Garibaldi Park, 3) 1950s: Decades of Loganeering, 4) 1960s: Building and Socializing, 5) 1970s: Conservation and Advocacy in the VOC, 6) 1980s: Women in the VOC, 7) 1990s: Huts and Selection of Traverses since the 2000s & Climbing Pilgrimages, 8) 2000s: VOC Portrait and Marriage Proposals, 9) 2010s and 10) Beyond 2017. Each of the chapters are told in an evocative and compelling manner, and for those even minimally interested in the west coast and west coast mountaineering many a detail is told in a most readable and accessible manner. The multiple photographs in this timely hardbound classic of a telling are more than worth many a lingering and meditative gaze. The roll call of those who have provided wise leadership over the decades, challenging trips and tragic endings are all packed into this compact text.

The fact the Varsity Outdoor Club has played such a pivotal role in pioneering first ascents, building new trails and huts and founding Mountain Equipment Co-Op (MEC), and continued with their creative antics, epics and escapades (updated for each decade), does need to be duly noted. The black and white photos (reflecting an earlier era) and many coloured photos complement the text in a balanced and well crafted manner. The diverse yet short biographies of many VOC myths, legends and leaders over the decades are succinctly summed up on various pages with companion photographs.

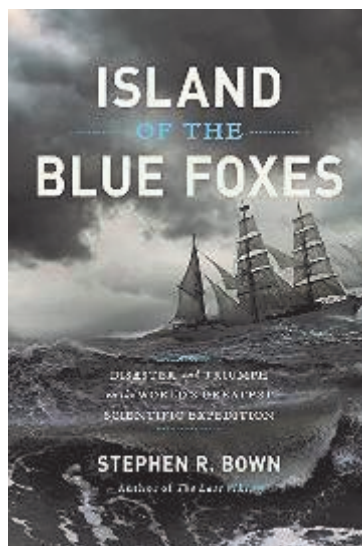
There can be no doubt that *Antics, Epics, & Escapades* is a purchase imperative for those interested in west coast history, UBC mountaineering exploits (more daring and demanding the further afield), and the mountaineering support structure (MEC, huts, trails maintenance and political advocacy for wilderness and wildness). Varsity Outdoor Club has been front and centre both in UBC and beyond in initiating, maturing and sustaining mountain culture and the way VOC has done this is superbly told in *A Century of Antics, Epics, & Escapades: The Varsity Outdoor Club 1917-2017*. Elliott Skierszkan deserves an A++ grade for guiding the mountain tale from beginning to end and keeping the team well roped on the lengthy journey. ■

*A Century of Antics, Epics, & Escapades: The Varsity Outdoor Club 1917-2017* by the UBC Varsity Outdoor Club, 2017; ISBN 9781775043003; 9 x 6 inches; 252 pages; hardcover; \$50.00.

## Island of the Blue Foxes

By Stephen R. Brown

*Recommended by Mike Nash, Caledonia Ramblers*



The book presents a great slice of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Russian history and is a remarkable adventure and survival story, with Georg Steller (think Steller's Jay and other new species named for him) playing a key role in the latter despite his appallingly bad interpersonal skills displayed on the outward voyage. Add those opposing aspects of his complex character to his brilliance and perseverance in adversity as a naturalist, and you have a fascinating picture of the man. He, more than Bering or any of the other key players, comes through as the centre of this interesting work.

*Island of the Blue Foxes* should appeal to a wide range of FMCBC members, including mountaineers, geographers, sailors, naturalists, and anyone who enjoys a good real-life adventure story. ■

*Island of the Blue Foxes: Disaster and Triumph on the World's Greatest Scientific Expedition* by Stephen R. Brown; Douglas & McIntyre, October 2017; ISBN 9781771621618; 6 x 9 inches; 288 pages; hardcover; \$34.95.

## Get Involved

### Volunteer with the FMCBC!

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

We are looking for individuals with skills and/or experience in many different areas including fundraising, risk management, grant writing and more.

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

The convergence of affordable, high-quality digital technology and the accessibility of online media in the last 15 years has led to a plethora of instantly available grassroots knowledge and ideas about the outdoors. If you wish to research a popular mountain trail, for example, you will likely find several in-depth videos online. Here are a few of my current favourite podcasts and YouTube channels:

**The Alpinist Podcast:** This offshoot of *Alpinist Magazine* features first-rate interviews such as one with Bernadette McDonald at the 2017 Banff Book Festival.

**Outside Podcast:** An eclectic mix from *Outside Magazine*. For example, the March 6, 2018 edition features an excellent interview with accomplished author and one-time PCT hiker, Cheryl Strayed; and check out Outside's survival series.

**Sintax77:** My current favourite, an articulate, rounded and on-point hiking, backpacking and camping series from Appalachia and farther afield.



**Far North Bushcraft & Survival**: Colourful Alaskan couple Lonnie and Connie provide insights into outdoor living in Alaska (and by extension, British Columbia). Check out their homemade energy bar recipe, for example. You won't be disappointed.

To access any of the above, just search for the title online and you'll get there. Podcasts can typically be accessed both from their own websites and through feeds such as iTunes. And if you have any outdoor favourites to recommend, why not submit them to the next issue of *Cloudburst* or the FMCBC's monthly e-news? ■



# FMCBC Member Clubs

## CENTRAL & NORTHERN INTERIOR

Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society  
Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club  
Fraser Headwaters Alliance  
Hickory Wing Ski Touring Club  
Ozalenka Alpine Club  
Skeena Climbing Society

## FRASER VALLEY

Backroads Outdoor Club  
Bear Mountain Trail Society  
Chilliwack Outdoor Club  
Chilliwack Park Society  
Valley Outdoor Association

## SOUTHWEST MAINLAND & SEA TO SKY

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

## SOUTHERN INTERIOR

Central Okanagan Climbing Society  
Columbia Valley Climbing Association  
East Kootenay Outdoor Club  
Kamloops Hiking Club  
Kootenay Mountaineering Club  
Penticton Outdoors Club  
Skaha Bluffs Park Watch Society  
South Okanagan Trail Alliance  
Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan

## SUNSHINE COAST - NORTH COAST

Mount Remo Backcountry Society  
Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society  
Tetrahedron Outdoor Club

## VANCOUVER ISLAND & ISLANDS

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



Please return undeliverable copies to  
Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

P.O. Box 19673  
Vancouver, BC V5T 4E7

Publications Mail Agreement: #41309018

Mailing list changes? Call 604-873-6096 or email us at [fmcbc@mountainclubs.org](mailto:fmcbc@mountainclubs.org)

View of Rosseau Ridge from the summit of Big Interior



Colleen Chestnut

## 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 6000 individuals from non-motorized outdoor recreation clubs across BC.  
Here's how you can get involved:

- Join one of our member clubs (listed on this page)
- Encourage your club to join the FMCBC (\$10 per member)
- Join as an individual (\$25 per year)
- Make a tax deductible donation to help us build and upgrade BC trails
- Sign up for our newsletters

Learn more at [www.mountainclubs.org](http://www.mountainclubs.org)