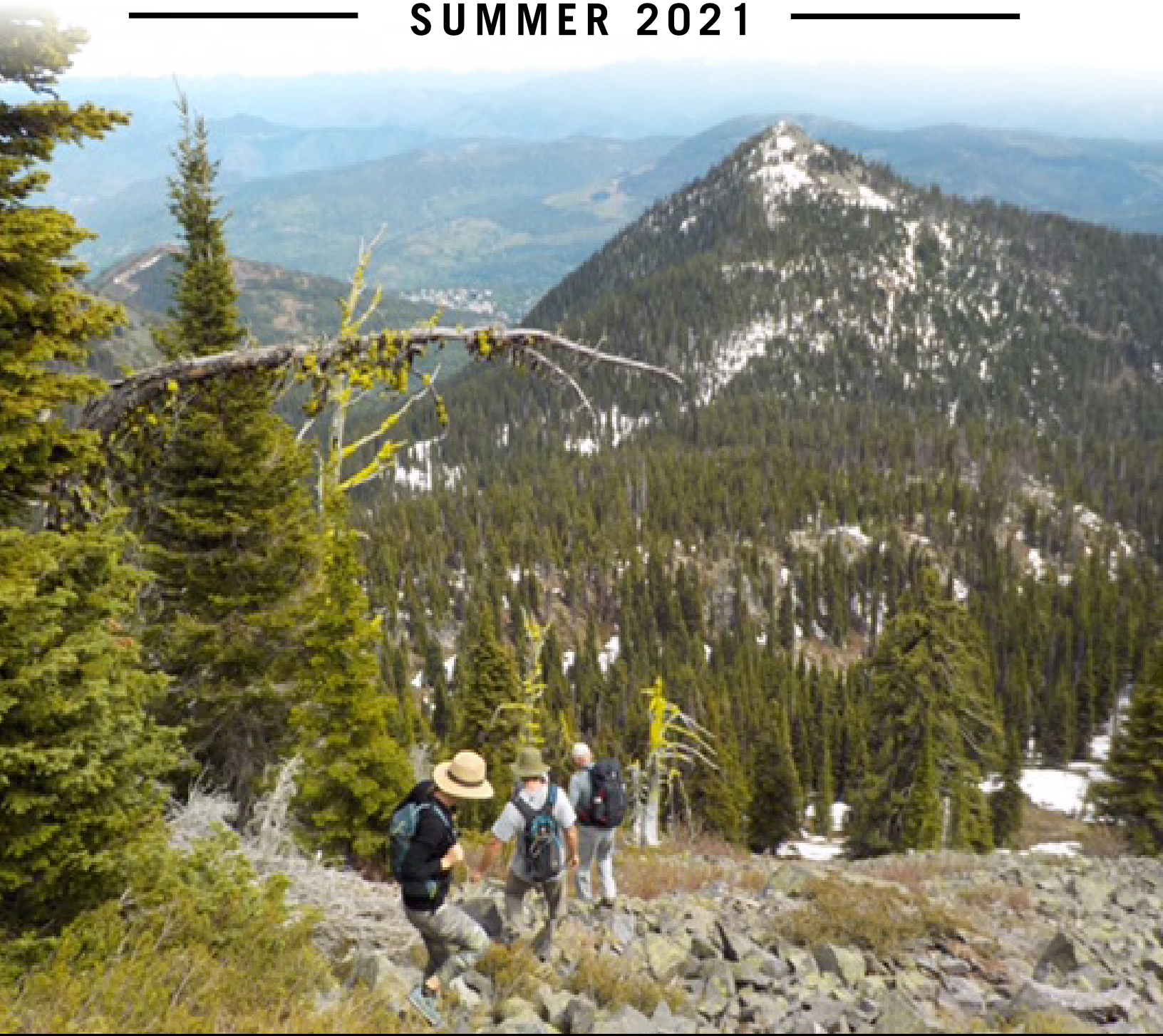
CLOUDBURST

SUMMER 2021



The Fed News | BC Parks Spending | Trail Watch Plans
Bowron Lakes Adventure | Keeping Active During Covid

Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

FMCBC

CLOUDBURST

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

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Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia (FMCBC) is a province-wide umbrella organization dedicated to protecting and maintaining access to BC's backcountry.

Since 1972, we have represented the interests of outdoor clubs from every corner of the province and have provided a united voice on issues related to non-motorized backcountry recreation.

Our membership is comprised of a diverse group of thousands of non-motorized backcountry recreationists including hikers, rock climbers, mountaineers, mountain bikers, trail runners, kayakers, backcountry skiers and snowshoers.

As an organization, we believe the enjoyment of these pursuits in an unspoiled environment is a vital component of the quality of life for British Columbians, and by acting under the policy of "talk, understand and persuade" we advocate for these interests.

President's Message

Liz Bicknell, Acting President

These boots are meant for walking...and they did! Mount Braden, Sooke Hills Mountain Range. (Photo: Liz Bicknell)

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of Cloudburst. As restrictions lift and the season shifts to our warm and sunny months, FMCBC members and Directors alike are lacing up hiking boots, filling water bottles and eagerly anticipating getting back into the great outdoors.

We are trying a new format, less copy and less advertising. We're also going to move to a seasonal timeline for Cloudburst and publish it 4 times a year. Let us know what you think —we like to hear from our members.

A wise person once said that change is always constant. Well, we at the FMCBC are no exception. For the past 4 years FMCBC has run deficits which could not be sustained and, as Directors, we have a fiduciary responsibility to the Federation and its members to ensure FMCBC remains in the black.

The difficult decision to temporarily eliminate the Executive Director position was made to start the process of getting our financial house in order and the FMCBC finances back on track. This was not an easy decision but was a necessary one in order to fulfil our responsibilities as Directors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard on everyone but especially hard on member clubs who are reporting a substantial drop in membership which impacts budgets, including FMCBC's budget.

We hope that this is, again, a temporary situation from which we will all recover as the Covid 19 restrictions are lifted, carefully. As changes occurred within the ranks of the FMCBC, the board thought it would be worthwhile to take this opportunity to reach out to our members and ask them for their input in terms of what they see as the priorities and strategic direction of the federation. There is a survey on our website, and I would encourage you to take the time to complete it. You can expect to hear more from us over the summer as we engage with our members and respective clubs to build a 3-year road map for the organization.

I'm sure many of you are wondering about a date for our next AGM. I hope to be able to hold this meeting in person in either Squamish or Vancouver between October and November.

I would like to welcome our new Admin and Communications Manager Tori Escallier. This will be Tori's first Cloudburst – feel free to send her feedback as well as images and written work for our Fall, Winter and Spring issues throughout the year.

On behalf of the FMCBC Board of Directors, I wish you an adventurous summer exploring BC's rugged backcountry one step at a time.

Member Fee Update

By Sherry Durnford & Paula McGahon, FMCBC Directors

Hasn't it been an interesting year! Despite recent challenges, we're finally getting back to being able to hold club hikes and events. Like many of you, we have faced financial challenges this year as our membership numbers dropped significantly. Additionally, our insurance costs have increased, and FMCBC Directors identified needed improvements in our insurance deductible planning.

Saltspring Island. (Photo: Cristina Jacob)

Membership Dues and Billing Schedule

The Board is committed to not raising member dues or insurance costs this year as we recognize the strain that all our clubs have been under. In order to offset this year's financial hardships, we are focused on streamlining our operations.

A primary goal has been to simplify member billings to save administrative costs and to make payments easier for clubs. This year, instead of billing 75% of member dues and 100% of insurance dues in June, then the remaining 25% of member dues in September, we are billing for full member and insurance dues for the year in June. This saves you having to write 2 cheques or e-transfers and is much clearer. The only exception is if clubs' memberships jump or drop by more that 10% by September (this is particularly relevant for clubs that have a summer or fall intake of memberships), we will send out an amending invoice to reflect the change.

The dues remain the same this year as last — $8 per member for FMCBC membership and $12 per each individual or family member for insurance costs.

Insurance Cost Details

The FMCBC provides insurance coverage to 46 member clubs. We charge member clubs $12.00 per member. The $12.00 is a combination of the cost of the insurance and a "management" fee to cover the FMCBC administration costs. The cost of insurance per member in the 21/22 year is $10.20 per person.

In order to keep our insurance premium costs in check, we have reduced the Directors and Officers Liability insurance to a maximum of $1 million from the previous $2 million. We have an information package on the website that explains more fully our insurance coverage that we have arranged.

The insurance deductible for claims arising in Canada is $2,000 per claim. The insurance

deductible for successful claims arising outside of Canada is $10,000 per claim. There have been no successful claims since two minor claims in 2014. This is a reminder that, to have the deductible covered for your club, it is important that you have liability waivers signed by all club activity participants. If you need to get more information about liability waivers, please don't hesitate to reach out by email to admin.manager@mountainclubs.org. This is an extremely important aspect of our insurance coverage.

New Policy – Deductible Reserve Fund

How an insurance deductible is allocated after a successful claim is the key difference in the new approach to insurance. In the past our policy was to "charge back" the cost to the member club. Many of our clubs have less than 20 members; the possibility of absorbing an insurance deductible is onerous. It might result in the club closing down. If a club is dissolved there is a possibility that the club directors would be responsible for the full deductible.

At our recent General Meeting the members approved a change in the "Charge back" policy. As of 2021, the Federation of Mountain clubs of BC will set aside a portion of the insurance management fee and place it in a "Insurance Policy Deductible" reserve. The reserve will be funded by $5,000 each year and will be capped at $20,000. We believe this method of paying for a claim is a more responsible approach. It will spread the cost of a claim over all 46 member clubs and removes the possibility that the member club directors will be responsible to paying an insurance deductible.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at admin.manager@mountainclubs.org.

All the best for a great summer of hiking, climbing, and other activities!

Victoria and Warden Peaks from the White River section of the Vancouver Island Trail. (Photo: Terry Lewis)

2021 Member Grant Recipients

FMCBC Grant Committee

The FMCBC grant fund is used to fund projects for member clubs. This year was a lean one and while it was not possible to fund all the grant applications, FMCBC is proud to have granted funds for the following projects:

Kamloops Outdoor Club To improve the signage on the Mt Morrisey backcountry ski trails
Fraser Headwaters Alliance To contribute to the purchase and installation of two toilets on the Goat River Trail
Ozalenka Alpine Club To assist with the purchase of solar lighting for the Cabin at Eagle Valley
Vancouver Climbers Association To contribute to the cost of hardware needed for the creation of new sport climbing routes
UBC Varsity Outdoor Club For new door handles on the Brew and Harrison Huts

Best wishes to all the applicants. We appreciate your hard work and dedication on these projects, which also benefit the outdoor community at large.

Want to know more about our Member Club Grants?

In 2012, the FMCBC began a grant program to support projects initiated by our member clubs. Unless specified otherwise, all donations to the FMCBC 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.

To make a donation, visit the Canda Helps website: canadahelps.org/charities/fmcbc

SWBC Recreation & Conservation Committee Report

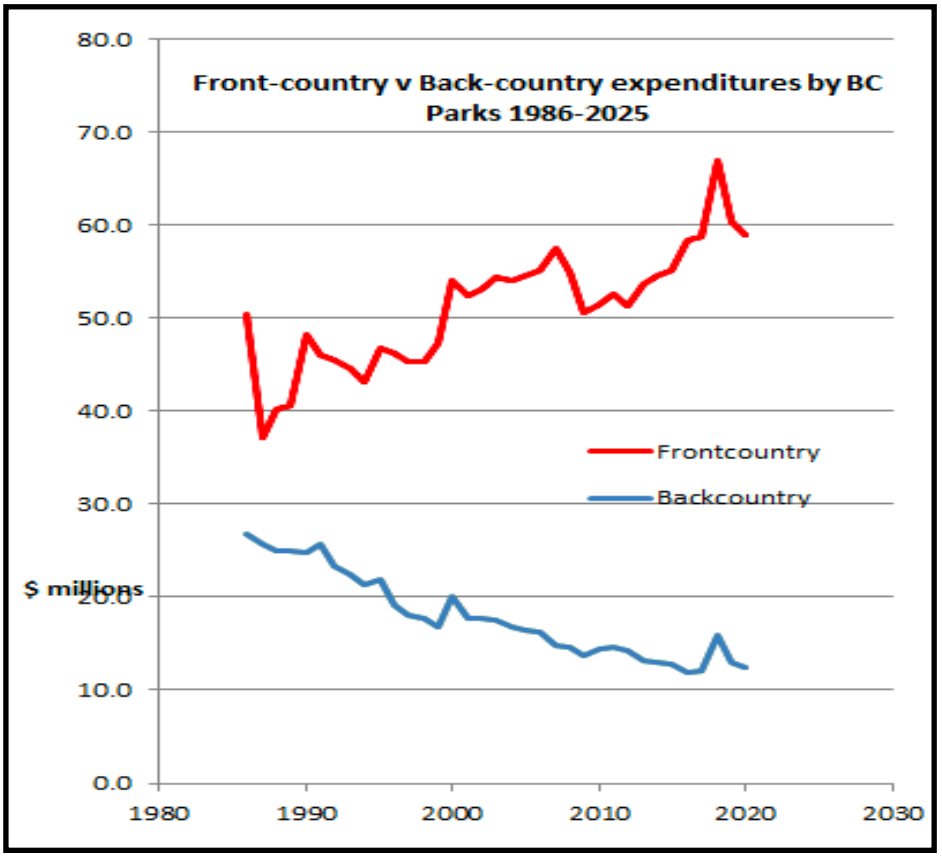
By Monika Bittel, Chair

BC Parks Funding Allocations

In April 2021, the BC government announced new funding of about $84M for BC Parks, spread over three years ($24.5M, $29.4M and $30M in 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively). While we welcome the historic funding boost, we are disappointed to learn that a substantial portion, some 45%, will be allocated towards providing up to 300 full-service campsites. In contrast, about 11%, or $9M total over three years, will be allocated towards "preserving the park experience". This includes enhancing trails, improving accessibility for people who use wheelchairs, strollers or have other accessibility challenges and high priority maintenance projects. In our view, the substantial funding allocation to full-service RV campsites will serve a very small percentage of park users and do little to address the demands for day-use picnic sites, trails, and affordable camping experiences for BC residents and visitors.

The proposed allocation will simply perpetuate the imbalance in funding between 'front-country' contractors and capital investments (i.e., campsites, showers, running water, access roads, etc.) and backcountry expenditures (i.e., rangers, trails and backcountry camping). The latter have dropped sharply since about 1986, while the front-country expenditures continue to rise. The curve shown here was prepared by Rupert Merer (ACC-Whistler), who has analyzed BC Parks' expenditures over the past 35 years, shows the comparative spending on front-country versus backcountry. Please see Rupert Merer's article in this issue of Cloudburst (pg. 8) for his analysis.

BC Parks' proposed allocations are particularly frustrating when BC Parks is again implementing free day-use passes due to high visitor numbers in five provincial parks: Garibaldi, Golden Ears, Mount Robson, Stawamus Chief and Joffre Lakes Parks. BC Parks' explanation for piloting the day-use pass for a second year is that "**some of our most popular parks regularly experience high visitor volumes, resulting in crowded trails and facilities, packed parking lots, impacts to park environments and wildlife**, local community concerns, and safety issues." In our view, for most of the affected parks,



the issue is lack of sufficient parking for both day-use visitors and overnight campers.

The day-use pass pilot will do nothing to resolve crowded trails and facilities, caused by chronic underfunding of BC Parks for more than 20 years, which left BC Parks understaffed and under-resourced to respond to BC's significant population growth between 1980 and 2020, particularly in southwest BC (well-over one million population growth alone in Metro Vancouver). In addition, we have lost access to many traditional trails and recreation areas due to deactivation, deterioration or gating of resource and forest service roads; wildlife closures; and, in southwest BC, upgrades to the Sea-to-Sky Highway, which eliminated parking at several trailheads and brought parking prohibitions along the highway. As a result, people have no choice but to go to provincial parks.

Restricting access to popular provincial parks simply shifts the problem to unmanaged Crown land, overwhelmed recreation sites and trails managed by Recreation Sites and Trails BC and volunteers, and regional and municipal parks. While Crown land and recreation sites and trails outside of provincial parks are not within BC Parks' mandate, they are within the provincial government's mandate. Without a whole-government approach, the overcrowding of BC's popular provincial parks will not be resolved.

We will continue to advocate for a more balanced allocation of the new funding, engage constructively and collaboratively with BC Parks and government to identify high priority backcountry trail and infrastructure projects and ensure accountability and transparency in how BC Parks uses the additional funds.

Hikers descend the west face of Roberts into the saddle and begin the ascent of Record, Kootenays. (Photo: Mike Kew)

A Brief Review of BC Parks Spending: Late 1980s to present

By Rupert Merer
ACC - Whistler

Summary
This review covers 30 years of BC Parks' operations and shows that there has been a huge reduction in the operating budget and staff numbers during that time. Using constant 2020 dollars, Parks' operating expenditures dropped by over 60% from the late 1980s to 2017 and although there was a modest one -time increase in 2018, the provincial budget shows spending declining again to 2022. No report has been issued for 2019, and almost no financial data is available for many years.

The spending reduction is 74% per capita for BC's population. The area managed by Parks has increased by 250 % so per hectare the reduction of spending is over 90%.

Staff numbers have dropped by at least 70% since the early 1980s, so staff per hectare has fallen by over 90%. There were reports that there were fewer than ten full time rangers in the province in 2017.
But it is misleading to review Park's operating expenses alone. While they have drastically cut personnel and operating expenses, Parks have invested heavily in camping and day use infrastructure and raised camping revenue by 275% (in constant dollars). Contractors ('Park operators) have been hired to manage vehicle accessible campsites and day use facilities, which are defined in this review as the "Front-country". The Park Operators have been reimbursed by allowing them to retain most campsite revenues and through additional subsidies from Parks.

The overall result is that annual investment in Parks' front-country has continued to rise while expenditure on the backcountry has fallen sharply. Depending on how the cost of Parks' staff is allocated, front-country expenditures are now 4 to 6 times higher than those of the backcountry and less accessible parks.

BC Parks has become a campsite and day use operation, paying little attention to the backcountry and to the many less accessible parks.

1. Introduction

The review analyses BC Parks' data from late 1980s to present. This range was chosen because there are no BC Parks annual reports available between 2002 and 2006, and very limited financial data was provided in the 1990s. The late 1980s also provides a convenient starting point for any comparison because the use of outside contractors (Park Operators) started at that time.

2. Constant dollar comparisons

This review is based entirely on inflation corrected numbers using published Canadian CPI indices. All costs are in $2020.

Financial data available
BC Parks' financial reporting has not been consistent. From the 1980s until 1994 Parks reported only two cost categories: 'Operating cost' and 'Capital'. We assume that these 'operating costs' included personnel costs, miscellaneous goods and services, amortization and any subsidy provided to Park Operators. From 1995 to 2007 there is no Parks data available on the web, but since 2007 BC Parks have reported the following cost categories:

a) Salaries benefits and travel
b) Miscellaneous goods and services,
c) Amortization. This has only been reported since 2006 but Park's reports provide no indication of what it covers.
Having reviewed the BC Government financial guidelines, we assume that it covers depreciation of computer equipment, vehicle and camping facilities.
d) Subsidies paid to Park Operators to keep them whole.
e) Camping revenue retained by Park operators. This is a cost because Parks pays the Park Oper-

ators out of camping revenue.
f) Capital costs; comprised generally of camping and day use improvements such as toilets and showers, water systems, roads, and trails. They included repairs to the Myra Canyon trestle bridge. This report assumes that 95% of capital expenditure has been on front-country facilities- see comments in paragraph 5, below.
g) Capital cost of land acquisition (or sometimes the assessed value of such land acquisitions where some of the land has been donated or sold at a discount).

This review focusses mainly on the sum of Items (a) and (b), which represents personnel costs, and are referred to as 'Operating cost' in this review. Item (g) is ignored.

The report compares front-country and backcountry expenses because front-country expenditures have increased rapidly in the last 30 years, while backcountry expenditures have fallen even faster.

4. Operating costs

Operating costs and staffing levels have dropped enormously in the last 30 years as shown in **Table 1**.

Operating cost (which largely represents personnel costs) fell by over 60% during a time when the BC population increased by 66%, and the land under Park's control more than doubled. Staff numbers dropped by 70% from the early 1980s to the present.

5. Capital costs

While operating costs and staff numbers have fallen year by year, Parks capital spending, ignoring land acquisition, has increased substantially. Almost all of this capital investment has gone to front country facilities related to camping and day use, and this has allowed Parks to increase camping fees. As a result the fees retained by Park operators have increased rapidly. This is shown in **Fig 2.**

Park's reports from 2009 to 2015 provided details on capital spending. The cost categories were; campground and day use, toilets & showers, water and sewage, roads and trails/picnic shelters/viewing platform and historic buildings.'Roads and trails' represented 10% - 14% of capital spend in the 6-year period. Given the relative cost of roads and trails it is reasonable to assume that trails did not represent more than 5% of annual capital spend and consequently almost all capital expenditures have been on 'front-country' assets.

6. Front-country versus backcountry

Based on the foregoing it is possible to make an approximate comparison of Parks annual expenditures on the Backcountry, including less accessible parks versus those on the Front-country. This is shown in **Table 2**. The analysis depends on assessing how the operating costs should be divided, and Park's annual reports give little guidance on this issue. But the 2010 and 2011 reports suggested that the cost of

Table 1

Reduction in Operating costs 1987/90 to 2017 (all in $2020)

Gross reduction in expenditure	61%
Reduction per capita BC population	74%
Reduction per hectare managed	90%

Table 2. Parks' expenditures on backcountry and front country

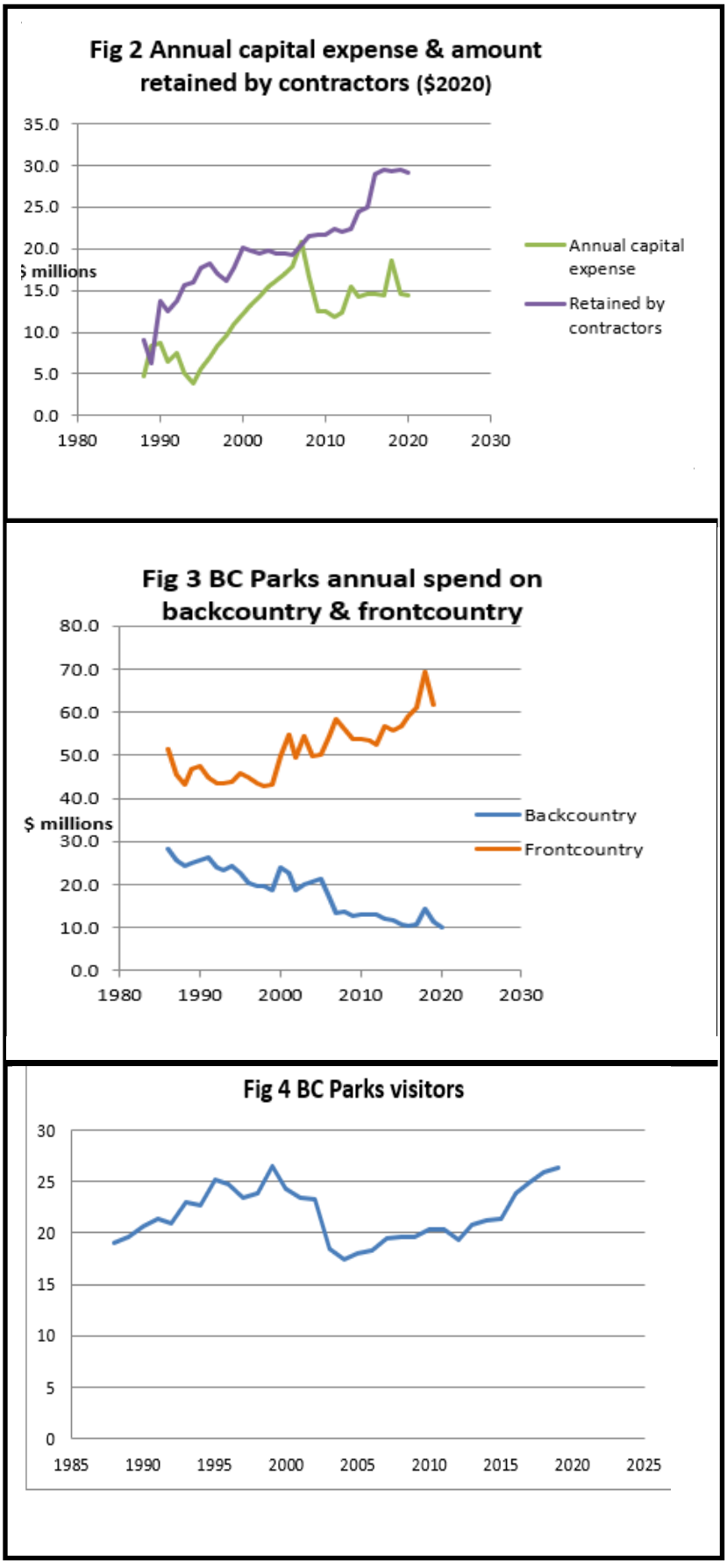
$ millions per year ($2020)	Backcountry	Front-country
Operating cost (note 1)	12-14	6- 8
Amortization (note 1)	1	6
Capital (note 2)	1	17
Contractor camping fees & deficit payments	0	29
TOTAL	14-16	58-60

Note 1. These values are an estimate based on limited firm data.

rangers was approximately 25% of total operating costs at that time. On this basis it is assumed that up to half of the operating cost should be assigned to backcountry operations, while the other half, covering management, finance and general support staff, should be divided between back and front country in proportion to their annual cost.

7. Visitors

BC Parks annual reports always emphasize visitor attendance and satisfaction. Although 2019 appears to have established a record for attendance, Fig 3 shows that visitor numbers have not increased greatly over the last 30 years and Fig 4 shows that they have dropped on a provincial per capita basis.



Trails Update

By Jay MacArthur
FMCBC Trails Committee Chair (Acting)
ACC Vancouver Section

Trails Website Proposed
We are working on a proposal to launch a new trails information site linked to the FMCBC website for our members and public.

Most of our members hike and use various trail information sources including guidebooks, government websites and various trail websites - however, none of these really provide all the information that our members require. An FMCBC trail website would also provide a means to
collect usage data and priorities for trail maintenance.The trails site would provide a good way to promote the FMCBC and ask for donations.

The idea is not to try to match trails websites such as All Trails or Gaia GPS. The priority would be to work on better trail descriptions and to keep track of trail maintenance needs.

We need help from an experienced web designer who has knowledge in linking databases to WordPress. Please contact Jay MacArthur (jay-mac@telus.net) if you are interested in helping.

If you are hiking this summer and see a trail that needs some work please take a photo and send it to the FMCBC with some information about:
Location: x km up (name of trail)
GPS location: If possible…
Description of issue
Contact name
email

Clearing trail on the Alexander Mackenzie Heritage trail south of PG. (Photo: Dave King)

Trail Audits in 2021
Some members in the FMCBC were trained how to do a trail audit in 2020. Thanks to Mel Turner from better funding in BC Parks backWe who gave us some insight on how BC Parks used to do trail audits. We were able to create reports on a few trails in the Lower Mainland and Sea to Sky area for BC Parks. This helped us in our lobbying efforts for better funding in BC Parks backcountry areas. If you are interested in attending a seminar on how to collect information, please contact Jay MacArthur (jaymac@telus.net).

Trails Committee

We are trying to get the FMCBC Trails Committee re-started. A preliminary meeting was held this spring to share information. If you are interested in being added to our mailing list, please contact Tori Escallier our admin manager (admin.manager@mountainclubs.org).

Black Tusk Meadows in Garibaldi Provincial Park. Photo: (Taryn Eyton)

Friends of Garibaldi Park Launch Trail Watch Program

By Taryn Eyton
Friends of Garibadi Park Society

After a few years of dormancy, the Friends of Garibaldi Park Society is pleased to once again be performing trail maintenance in Garibaldi Provincial Park. While we still hope to run large-scale projects with BC Parks Rangers, this year we are focusing on launching our Trail Watch Program. This allows small groups of volunteers (2-6 people) to hike one of Garibaldi Park's many trails along with a Team Captain. Along the way, the Trail Watch groups will do small maintenance projects such as cutting brush or clearing blocked culverts. They will monitor trail conditions to alert BC Parks to major maintenance issues or damage.

For more information, or to sign up to volunteer, please visit our website: https://friendsofgaribaldipark.org/trail-maintenance/

Sometimes You Forget the Pots: An unplanned day among the smoky wilds of Bowron Lakes

By Robin Jane Roff, photos by Robin Jane Roff
BC Mountaineering Club

The day breaks grey and muted. My mind instinctively turns to rain and for a moment I cringe and slink deeper into the warmth and comfort of my sleeping bag. I had not really expected rain this season. No, not rain. The tent walls are dry except for a light misting of condensation; the birds are singing, and I can hear the sounds of the first eager paddlers pulling out of campsites. Not rain, smoke. It is 2018 and British Columbia is experiencing the worst forest fire season in recorded history. For months almost the entire province, and most of the Western seaboard, has been blanketed in a thick, toxic haze. The smoke will eventually reach as far as Ireland and by the time the Fall rains arrive 1.35 million hectares will have gone up in the conflagration.

The night before, I had watched the sunset from the passenger window as the van bumped its way down the long dirt road leading to Bowron Lake Provincial Park where I had agreed to help my friend John guide a group of 4 on a 6-day paddle across the Park's namesake canoe circuit. The sun – burning preternaturally red in the Western sky – melted into the light from a nearby burn. Anxiety grew in the pit of my stomach. This trip already promised trials and tribulations without the added consideration of trying to outrun a charging wildfire.

At the best of times I'm an introvert. When stressed, tired or mentally preoccupied, I have a tendency to transform into a full-blown hermit. My preference has always been to be alone or with a small group of close friends or family and this pattern has followed me into the backcountry. Spending 8 days travelling and paddling with 4 complete strangers was nothing short of terrifying. But the lure of a week in the Cariboo wilderness was too good to pass up. And so here I was lying flat on my back listening to the early morning rhythms.

John and I discuss the day ahead. It is a deceptively easy route. Eleven kilometers with two portages to a campsite halfway up Indianpoint Lake. We figure we'll be setting up the tents by mid-afternoon - plenty of time to review logistics for camp management after that. Everything else has been planned to a tee – the campsites booked months in advance, the gear cataloged, sorted and organized, enough food has been bought and packed carefully away to feed a small army. We even have a bucket of extra waders should any of the group forget their wellies.

We check in with Dick and Sandy Philips, owners of Bear River Mercantile, the area's outfitter store and local museum – and on who's front lawn we had pitched our tents. Over a breakfast of eggs, sausage, cereal, and hot black coffee they relay the latest: officials were saying that the nearest burn will likely be contained within a few days, but there will be no letup in the smoke. We are advised to prepare for emergency evacuation and make a contingency plan. No worries, just a little more planning. With that, we recheck the extra batteries for the

satellite phones, leave our itinerary with Dick and Sandy and start the short drive to the trailhead.

Over Hill and Dale

The Bowron Circuit is unusual in that rather than seeing trippers launch off into some awaiting body of water, would-be paddlers must portage their loaded canoes 2.4 kilometers before reaching the first put-in at Kibbee Lake. With a properly weighted canoe cart, this would not be too onerous a task, except that years of underfunding of the park system and overuse by eager tourists (like us) have left the trails rooted, rutted and miserably muddy in wet weather. BC Parks has instituted a 60 lb cargo limit to try to reduce the impacts. Anything above that has to be carried by backpack over the rough terrain. John and I have over 150 pounds of gear in our boat, so most of our load is strapped to our backs. It is a grueling way to start any journey but first-day excitement carries us through and we reach Kibbee anxious to get our feet wet in the first of the Circuit's dozen lakes.

Over the course of the morning the smoke has thickened. Everything is tinged with an orange haze that obscures the rounded hills of the Cariboo Mountains ahead of us. It feels like dusk at 11am. The water is glass calm as we slip the fully loaded boats through the marshy inlet and out into the small northern lake. Few birds sing, but we catch sight of a kingfisher darting among the bushes and low trees at the shoreline. It is the first of dozens that we will see over the next week, and will be joined by countless loons, bald eagles, ospreys and mergansers. Every single one reminds me that wilderness is not yet totally lost, at least not in this protected space.

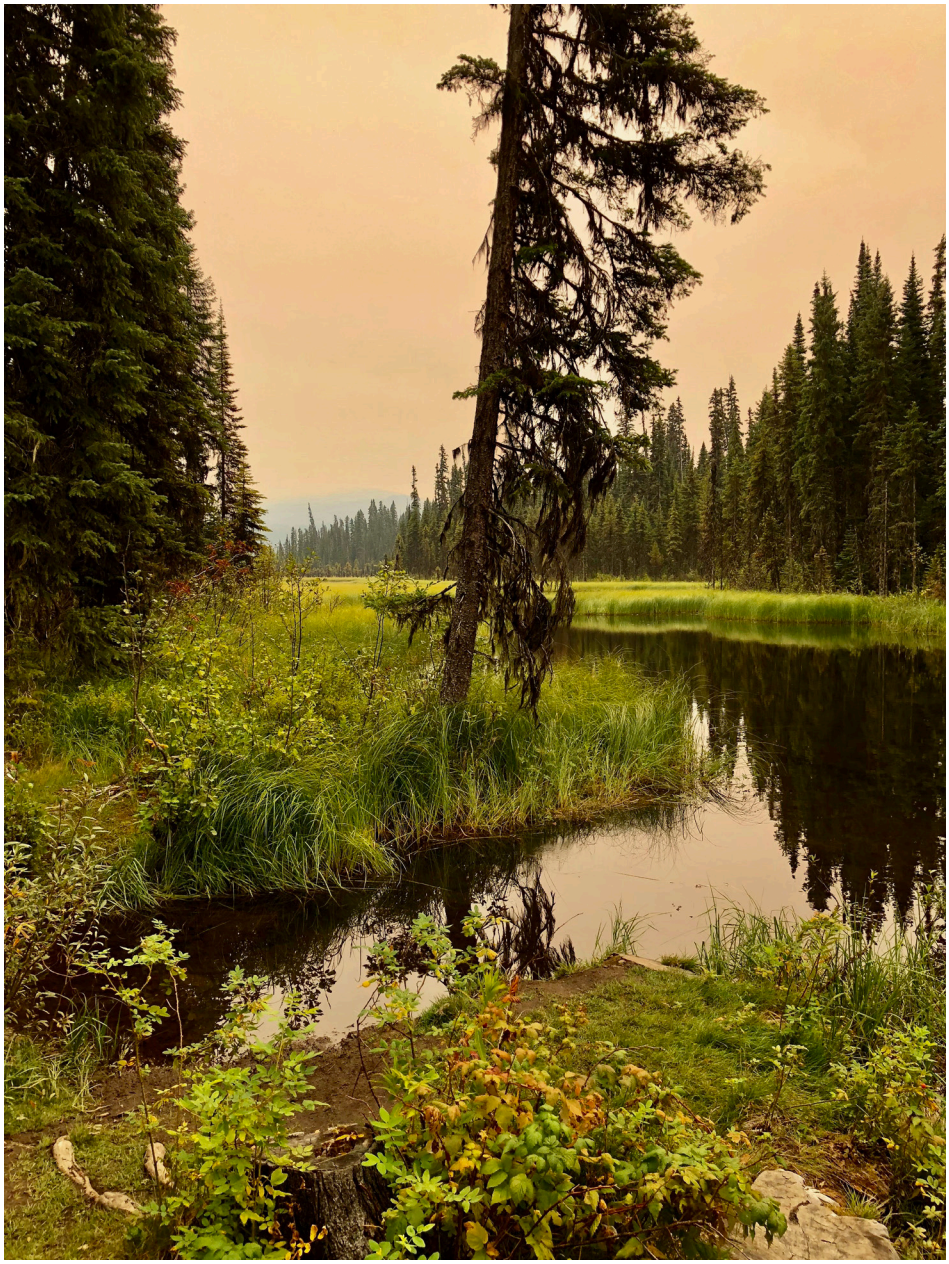
The route from Kibbee Lake to Indianpoint Lake is shorter than the first tromp, roughly 2 kilometers, rising over a small, but substantial knoll. To put it mildly, the trail is rough. It would become known by our little group simply as #2 and would be the standard by which all other difficulties over the next 5 days would be judged. Starting on sand, it rises sharply in an uneven mixture of roots, rocks, deep ruts and the occasional puddle on its way to becoming a small pond. Nowhere is the footbed flat and we strain to keep the canoes upright as the cart-wheels dip in and over obstacles. We are brought to sudden, jolting halts every few paces, which we must follow by heaving the full weight of our bodies forward to get our load over whatever prominence has stopped our motion.

John and I reach the portage's apex and settle our boat next to a weathered canoe rack left over from a time before carts became ubiquitous. It's a reminder of the area's rich history, first as a fecund hunting and fishing ground for the local First Nations and later as a place of trap-lines, cabins and recreational opportunity for non-native settlers. Having little in the way of mineral stores, the area around Bowron Lake escaped the ravages that met the hillsides of nearby Barkerville, the center of the Cariboo region's 1860s gold boom. The place did, however, have its own set of struggles. By the early 20th century sport hunting was quickly replacing mining as the centrepiece of the area's economy and wilderness guides, like Frank Kibbee, came to fame shepherding would-be big game hunters through the quadrangle of lakes. Pressure on the local populations of grizzly and black bears, moose, beaver, otter and marten (as well as a range of feathered beasts) became so

great that by the early 1920s conservationists began calling for the creation of a provincial game reserve in the area. In sharp contrast to the modern notions of environmentalism, the aim was to create a refuge where commercially important wildlife could breed unhindered and so ensure a constant supply of resources outside the boundaries of the protected zone. And so, in 1925 the Bowron Lake Game Reserve was created to protect the land that lay on the inside of the outer banks of the chain of lakes turning the area into a nursery for game large and small. It was subsequently expanded outside of the lakes in 1961 and granted Class A park status.

Portage #2 is no better on the descent. Steep drops now join the gaggle of cruel obstacles in a seemingly ceaseless effort to wrench our muscles, try our patience and wreak havoc on our shins and hips.

Little is said when we reach our campsite midway up Indianpoint Lake. Moving slowly we haul tents, tarps, stoves, tables, chairs, propane tanks and various personal items to their respective homes for the night. The amount of gear is somewhat appalling to my ultralight sensibilities - though after a few days in the bush I would come to appreciate the small luxuries of cooking over a proper kitchen and eating with something other than a spork.



“Have you seen the pots?” John asks quietly, tapping me on the shoulder.

“Pots? No. Maybe they are in one of the bags.”

“No, they’re too big for bags. They were in the van. Did you unload them?”

“Not that I remember. Are you sure?”

John looks at me, crestfallen. The pots aren’t there. Three large, restaurant sized stainless steel pots – not something we can MacGyver for another 5 days with even a small group.

“S*&t.” I think to myself, “Did we forget them in Vancouver?” The thought guts me and I can see John asking himself the same question. But, with a resolve born of decades guiding, he turns to the assembled quartet and flashes a big goofy smile. “Well folks, looks like it’s antipasti tonight. Robin and I just need to head back to the van to pick up the pots. It’s no problem; just an unplanned jaunt. You all know what you’re doing out here, right?” Flash of brilliant white teeth. Twinkle in the eye.

I’m already loading our

canoe with a first aid kit, a sat phoneand whatever else we might need should we get stuck out late into the night. It's already 5pm; it took us 6 hours of meandering paddling to get here. We now have to repeat the journey twice. It promises to be an interesting evening.

A quarter of an hour later we set off with a significantly lighter boat. In the stern John doubles his stroke using the emergency kayak paddle, while I grit my teeth to keep up. We are flying down the lake. The smoke-filled sky has reduced our view to a few hundred meters and we quickly lose sight of the campsite where we left our brood with heaping mounds of gourmet cheese, charcuterie and crackers that would put the best gourmand to shame. They are all experienced trippers and we know they will weather an evening alone better than a week with dry and cold food.

"So, do you really think they're in the van?" I venture gingerly after a while.

"They're in the van." John says dryly. "They're in the van." I know him well enough not to press, but I do anyway.

"And if they aren't?"

"They're in the van." I feel his strokes increase.

#2 Redux

We have to do it, there's no escaping. We reach the end of Indianpoint Lake and jump out of the boat to start the slog back over #2. The going is exponentially easier without gear but dragging and lifting the rig the wrong way up the portage is taxing. I won't feel it until later that night – for the moment I am moving on adrenaline.

Suddenly John stops and drops the front of the canoe. "Shhhhh." He hisses at me to quiet the near continuous prattle emitting from my excited mind. He points ahead at a distant blurr. No, not distant, not a blurr. Thirty feed ahead of us a lynx sits passively staring down the trail as calmly as if it was the local tabby. The grey fur ripples as it flexes first its right legs then its left. I can just make out the tuffs of fur on its ears. I'm transfixed. After what feels like an eternity the animal stands and, with a graceful swagger, walks sedately down the path, turning every few paces to look casually over its shoulder as we lumber on.

Our efforts at stealth are betrayed by the racket produced by every bump and jostle of the canoe. The cat is unfazed. Perhaps it has never left the protective confines of the park and is unaware of the threat humans can pose. More troubling, maybe it knows us too well and has become habituated. The thought crosses my mind and I silently pray for the former, otherwise it may not last through the season. We've established more than geographic lines for wildlife, but a psychological one as well. We follow the lynx for a quarter of an hour, always 20 to 30 paces behind, moving in synchrony up the trail. At the crest of the climb, it pauses long enough to let us lessen the gap by half. Then, with a flick of its tail the cat leaps silently up the 6-foot bank and melts into the foliage the way only wild animals can. We are alone once again. I let out the breath we did not know I was holding.

Wild spaces often feel hollow these days as areas that once held wildlife are overrun by human hoards seeking "like-worthy" images for their Instagram feeds. In my lifetime – which is microscopic in the grand sweep of time – places where I could walk for days without seeing a single other person now have car parks overflowing to the point of hazard. Here in the Bowron, nature appears to be escaping the worst of the onslaught. A movement started nearly one hundred years ago to protect this nursery of the Cariboo has given at least some respite to wildlife. It is not nirvana though. The Park faces pressures from inside and out as more and more visitors clamber to secure camping spots or permits to complete the circuit. At the same time, cuts in government funding have hollowed out the staffing necessary to maintain infrastructure and ensure visitors comply with regulations. Along its boundaries the park is squeezed by the ever-present threats of resource extraction, unauthorized motorized use (particularly in the winter) and poaching that push inward on that invisible line.

John and I cannot stop to marvel at the experience too long and we surge down the portage with greater urgency. Down, down, down we go with the canoe bumping into

our shins and making hamburger of our hips as we throw our body weight against the hull to stop it from careening wildly into the trees. The first tendrils of dusk are already creeping across the sky when we reach the far side of Kibbee Lake and, abandoning the boat, half-hobble, half-run down the last section of trail to rescue our forgotten cargo.

By the time we arrive back at the water, the smoke has eclipsed any remaining rays of sunlight and the shorelines have melted into smudges of navy blue. The water lays still under the thick soup of sky. The pots rattle in the bottom of the near empty canoe as we sweat up and over #2 for the final time. I scan the darkness for pin-prick eyes with a mixture of hope and fear. But the cat has not returned. That moment had passed, and we remain alone with the joyful clanging of stainless steel on fiberglass to carry us back across the water in the pitch of night.

We are exhausted as the boat slides up the bank with a gentle hiss. In the course of 10 hours we have traveled 35 kilometers, lugged the canoe up and down 465m and salvaged the culinary future of this trip. Without the strength to fuss or speak, we perch on the side of the bear box and gorged on the leftover brie and salami. I don't taste a thing - my mind is too full of the wonder of this place.

Adventures rarely go as planned – even adventures bought and paid for in advance. We set off into wild spaces in part to escape the routines and predictability of urban life; to shake off the planning and see what happens when we do. Along the way gear breaks, trails disappear and, sometimes, if you're lucky, you forget the pots and are forced to experience something uniquely yours. For John and I, our mishap led to a powerful and intimate encounter with this wild space and drove home the remarkable nature of this place. It pushed us to our physical edge but paid dividends to our spirits. I hope that everyone reading this someday gets to forget their own pots in a beautiful place like the Bowron.

Keeping Active During Covid Times 2020/2021: North Shore Hikers Experience

By Cristina Jacob
North Shore Hikers

We, the North Shore Hikers, managed to keep our club open during the pandemic. Strict rules, posted on our website, and dedicated leaders made all the difference. While rules have been changed a few times to keep pace with ever changing provincial guidelines and restrictions, our club activity parameters were basically: 6 participants or less, a strict Covid questionnaire and protocol, no guests, and no carpooling unless from the same bubble.

We had tens and tens of midweek and weekend outings. We experienced a large surge in our cycling activities and an amazing increase in the number of trip reports posted on our website. I guess we all felt the need to share our experiences with an expanded group. So, here I am sharing a selection of our club's trip reports with the Federation family. Keep reading.....

Cycling Ladner loop - April 2022

The gale force winds were the story of the day. Who knew the Ladner dike winds could blow 360 degrees simultaneously! Which ever way we rode, we had a bloody headwind or worse, a strong side wind to keep us sober. I rode in my lowest gear and could barely make head way. What was billed as an easy flat bike ride, ended up to the hardest bike ride of our lives! Pure adrenaline in an unrelenting fight with Mother Nature!

Luckily, today's six club members had good sense of humour, so much so, when it was suggested to have our lunch in a viewless, sort-of -windless (not really) muddy dike ditch, no one hesitated.

Some members even tried to have fun with the wind and created a sail to see how far they could travel without pedalling.

We probably saw 100,000 (plus or minus) snow geese on their migration from the Arctic, a beaver swimming in a farm ditch (no doubt, escaping from the wind), two miniature horses pulling carriages, riding horses, cows, "baby" blue herons and seagulls flying nowhere fast as the wind was too strong (somehow I could relate to their plight).

When we all got back to Deas Island, we made quick goodbyes, and desperately dashed into our wind safe cars. Phew!

We biked 43 km in 4 hours and 20 mins.

Galiano Island - January 2021

Four people showed up Saturday morning, January 30th for a B hike to Mt. Galiano loop. We started at 10 AM and finished at 3:30 PM. We had great views at the Bluffs and great views on Mt. Galiano. We saw tear drop lilies in bloom and some pink blossom trees in bloom. Trails were in great shape and look forward to doing the trip again in April when more flowers will be out. Thanks to those that came on the hike. It is a good trip to do in the winter months.

Unnecessary Mountain - December 2020

Three North Shore hikers met at 8:30 in the Cypress Downhill area to snowshoe along the Howe Sound Crest Trail to Unnecessary Mtn. All three of us managed to avoid paying the new $10 parking fee, one by parking in Lot 3b (the only free one) and the other two by parking on the adjacent roadsides and getting lucky.

The day started out overcast and remained so all morning. At St. Marks Lookout there were no views to be had. But we stopped anyway so Alastair could have the first of his three (or was it four?) lunches. It was at this point that we put on our snowshoes as the snow was getting deeper and softer and the footprints were running out.

It's amazing how gazillions of people go to St. Marks every

single day but hardly a soul goes beyond, in winter anyway. On this day we encountered exactly two hikers. These two young men had no snowshoes, no poles and from what we could see no microspikes. Their plan was to do a traverse from Cypress to Lions Bay, leaving a trail of very deep post-holes all the way. Since I haven't seen anything in the news they must have made it.

Somewhere along the way it started to clear up. But before that we had some pretty impressive sights of blue sky above us and a sea of clouds below us. Finally the fog below us went away too and we started seeing the rewards of our work. That is if one hikes for the views. Or to reach peaks for that matter. I myself have never subscribed to that school of thought.

But reach a peak we did. Some discussion ensued regarding the bump we were standing on and Alastair did some subsequent research that is worth transcribing here:

According to Bivouac.com there has been a lot of confusion around the naming of the bumps around Unnecessary Mtn. The original Unnecessary Mtn was the one that I climbed (1543m) today and that we could all see. The original trail up to the Lions went over it (there is an 100m drop on the north side) which is why it was named Unnecessary. However the bump to the south that we all climbed is higher- 1548m so some have argued that as the high point it should receive the name. And some have argued that since there is a small bump 1490m 300m to its south that we went over, there should be three Unnecessarys – north, middle and south. Bivouac decided that there should be two – Unnecessary South (the highest point which we all climbed); and Unnecessary North (which we could all see 400m to the north and which I climbed).

After Alastair's third lunch on top of Unnecessary South the group made a plan to split up. I, not wanting to descend in the dark, preferred to call it a day and turn back accompanied by Joanne. Alastair proceeded to Unnecessary North and returned in the dark under a full moon, which I understand was blissful.

Joanne and I reached our cars at 5:00 as the last rays of daylight were disappearing, exactly as planned. Strava says we hiked 17.16 km and gained 1,120 in elevation. It was a most excellent adventure in the glorious mountains of Vancouver's north shore.

Mount Elsay loop - September 2020

Four of us met at the Mount Seymour Downhill Ski parking lot at 7:30 a.m. and started up Mount Seymour Trail. After 2.2 km of hiking we turned right at the junction east of Tim Jones Peak where there is a signpost marking the beginning of the Elsay Lake Trail. One hiker turned back at this point as per plan and 3 of us continued on. Stephen Hui's 105 Hikes describes this as a strenuous 10 hour hike so we proceeded at a leisurely pace in order not to expend our available energy reserves too soon. Although the trail was well marked with flagging and rock cairns there were many opportunities to go off route on animal tracks and trails going to other remote peaks. Luckily we had Northshorehikers' veteran route finder par excellence (thanks Bengul) so we were never lost.

After we thought we couldn't stand the sight of another boulder-strewn gully we finally found (after a few false starts) the junction marking the trail to the Mount Elsay Summit. One of the highlights of the hike was supposed to be the amazing 360 views from the top. Unfortunately, low-lying morning mist on that day hid most of the views. Instead of returning the way we came, we took the Mount Elsay Trail back to the junction east of Pump Peak. This route may not have been marked by as many boulder-strewn gullies as the way in, but there was other excitement ("rugged, slippery, and wickedly steep" as per Hui's guidebook). By this time the morning mist had burned off and we could see far into the distance. We were able to imagine the amazing views that would have been had from the summit. We concluded that another attempt on a bluebird day would be in order. We reached our cars at around 6:00. Trip Stats: total time 10:36 hours; moving time: 8 hours; distance 14.75 km; total ascent: 1,138 m.

Post Note: I always thought when guidebooks give "elevation gain" it meant cumulative gain. Now I know it does not. 105 Hikes gives 500 m as the elevation gain for this hike, which seems an irrelevant and useless stat for assessing the measure of hike.

Welcome to the FMCBC

iwo

indigenous women outdoors

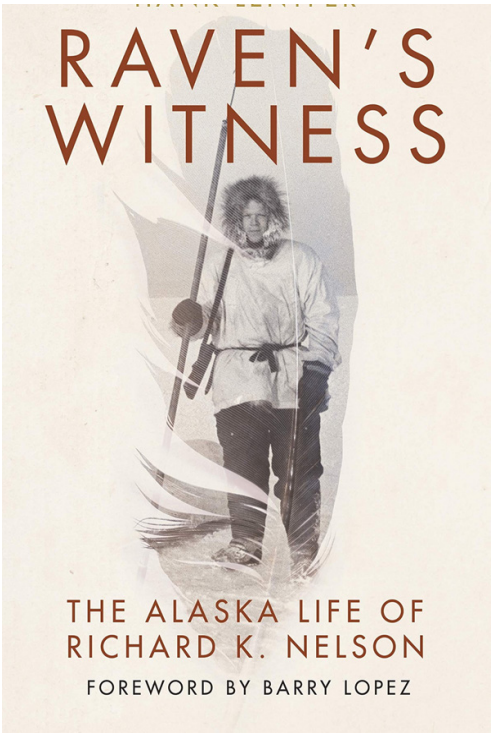
IWO's mission is to hold space for Indigenous women to come together and feel safe on the land. They want Indigenous women* to be leaders in the outdoor industry and to be confident in sharing their knowledge and connection of the land with the greater public. Through guidance and mentorship, participants can choose to start getting their own training and certifications to feel safe out on the land, as well as lead other groups and women to get outside.

We welcome Indigenous Women Outdoors, and look forward to working together to support outdoor leadership and experiences for Indigenous Women.

Visit IWO at https://www.indigenouswomenoutdoors.ca

Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson

By Hank Lentfer; Foreword by Barry Lopez



Reviewed by Mike Nash
Caledonia Ramblers

Writing a biography about a personal friend, as Hank Lentfer has done for Richard Nelson, has special challenges. After listening to Richard Nelson's stories over a number of years, Lentfer pressed him to write them down before they disappeared with him. "I'll never do it. I'm done writing," Nelson replied, to which Lentfer responded "I'm not, let me do it." These simple, and likely spontaneous words led to years of research, interviews, writing, reviews and editing. The result was well worth it: Raven's Witness not only introduces Richard Nelson to those of us who had not heard of him, but more importantly it lays bare the philosophies that he embraced, that will likely be important for the future of humanity.

Born in Wisconsin in 1941, Richard developed an early interest in nature, spending his free time outdoors studying every manner of life that he could find in the ponds and ditches around his home. His parents encouraged his obsession, allowing him to fill his room with crates, boxes and tanks, which eventually expanded to fill the garage and forced his parents to park in the driveway. His academic achievements in English, math and speech, however, amounted to a string of D's by the seventh grade. As he neared the end of his high school years, his written English had deteriorated even further to become his worst grades, with three D's and an F in a writing course. This, from an individual who would go on to become a PhD Anthropologist and a best-selling author and media commentator. Unaware of his private interests and journaling, Richard's high school career counselor recommended that he enlist in the army in order to "create structure in his life."

Instead, Richard enrolled at the University of Wisconsin, where he was initially under academic probation and the threat of expulsion. Yet, he was still unable to muster the required interest in English, math and philosophy. That is, until he was allowed to enrol in a senior natural history course, in which he scored the highest grade in the class. At last, under the influence of teachers and mentors who could see his potential, he applied himself with an essay titled 'The Forgotten Prairie." Not only did this earn him his first A in English since elementary school, but the essay found its way to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior who saw its potential to support the creation of a Prairie National Park.

In 1964, right after receiving his Bachelor of Science degree, Richard Nelson was offered, and took an assignment in a remote village on the northwest coast of Alaska, a State where he would spend much of his life working in what he called 'participatory anthropology.'

He learned early on to become a good listener to the various Alaskan indigenous
people that he found himself among, and several times he expressed the thought that they should be sending teachers into the outside world, not vice versa. Unlike many of his academic peers, he felt that it was necessary not just to watch, record and compare, but to participate. Only by actually doing a task could it be properly understood in context. When invited to create a TV series on the Koyukon Indians of North Central Alaska, he insisted that the people themselves create and control almost every aspect of the production. The eventual series of five half-hour films, narrated by Barry Lopez, were produced in 1987 and are freely available on YouTube under the umbrella title 'Make Prayers to the Raven.'

After a number of successful books, Richard Nelson turned to radio, where he hosted a half-hour show for ten years called 'Encounters.' In each episode he got close to some aspect of the Alaskan Wild, where he related his experiences in an intense stream-of-consciousness narrative, as fluent as the best sports reporter but with much more to say. Some of these episodes are still available as podcasts, with ITunes releasing one each week nearly two years after Nelson's death. You can find some of these podcasts and other material on the Encounters North website at: https://www.encountersnorth.org/.

The book began a little slowly for me, but as I progressed it became increasingly engaging, leading to an appreciation of why it had won the Grand Prize at the 2020 Banff Mountain Book Festival. I especially appreciated being introduced to the many written, audio and visual works that are Richard Nelson's legacy. The world can only benefit from his learnings and teachings, and on that account I recommend this book.

Published by Mountaineers Books, July 2020
2020 Banff Mountain Book Award Winner - Grand Prize
2020 Banff Mountain Book Award Winner - Mountain Literature

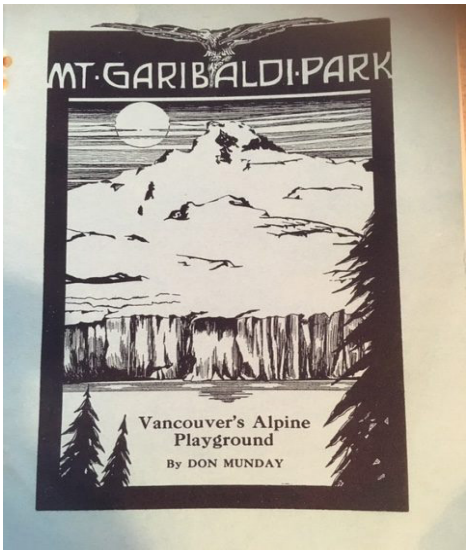
Coastal Mountain Mountaineering Literature:The birthing years

By Ron Dart
Chilliwack Outdoor \club, Alpine Club of Canada

Mt. Garibaldi Park: Vancouver's Alpine Playground
Don Munday: 1922

In The Western Mountains: Early Mountaineering in British Columbia
Susan Leslie: 1980

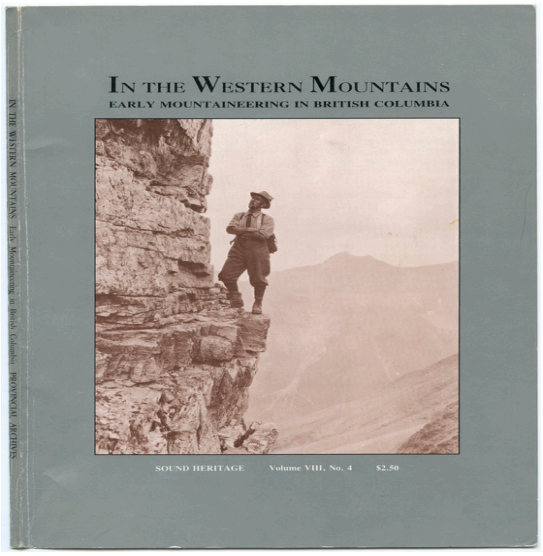
I was going through my library of mountaineering literature the other day and two books stepped out to greet me from a more dusty part of the book shelves. I had forgotten I still had such beauties in my collection.



Don Munday, and his wife Phyllis Munday, are best known as first generation west coast pioneers in mountaineering, but Don was also a fine writer. Many were the more popular and scholarly articles he had published on the history and geography of mountains, but Don's missive, published in 1922, Mt. Garibaldi Park: Vancouver's Alpine Playground, is a literary and visual bounty not to miss---a collector's item I would think (almost 100 years since it was first published). Don dedicated the booklet "to the truest lover of the mountains I know—My Wife". The pamphlet, and the many black and white photos included in the booklet, was published shortly after Garibaldi became a park and, in many ways, it was one of the first trail maps in BC for exploring and enjoying the newly born park. The multiple photos and potential destinations (many a good glacier trip worth the making) are described in intricate depth and detail. There is a breadth in this 50 page overview that many can still learn from. The larger fold out map of Garibaldi Lake and environs is a delight to sit and ponder. There is a grateful nod, by way of conclusion, to both BCMC and ACC-Vancouver section, Don and Phyllis active at different times with both groups.

I was fortunate for a few years to work with Susan Leslie at University of the Fraser Valley (she taught in the English department). In The Western Mountains, by Susan, is a hasty but insightful overview of mountaineering in Canada and the western mountains. The short eight sections in 75 pages cover much terrain. "The Alps of North

America", "A Field for an Alpine Club", "Mountaineering at the Coast" and "Mystery Mountain" are tasty morsels of chapters that whet the appetite for more. Many women are brought to the fore as innovative climbing partners with men and Susan covers, in a finely textured manner, some of the trips taken by groups in the Coastal Mountains (and the legends and leaders of such challenging trips for those times). Needless to say, Don and Phyllis Munday are significant actors on such an expansive stage. Susan, like Don before her, has many a dramatic black and white photo not to miss, each picture a journey into the origins of mountaineering in the western mountains - the dramatic photo on the front cover and varied maps illuminating treks taken. The interviews done by Susan (included in this Heritage Series book) bring to light many of the women and men (and their memories) that are now mostly forgotten—kudos to Susan for her sleuth work in the 1970s to bring into being such a well wrought and historically pictured missive, a beauty worth the reading.



COVER PHOTO

Cover Photo by Mike Kew (Kootenay Mountaineering Club) - a recent hike up Mount Roberts and Record Mountain.

"We climbed the east slope of Mount Roberts (near Rossland), which is the sharp, prominent peak in the background. We then traversed the saddle between that mountain and Record Mountain. This photo was taken on the steep easterly scree field descending from Record Mountain in the Rossland Range."

Cloudburst Cover Photo Contest

We're looking for Fall action shots for our next cover of Cloudburst!
Email your entries to cloudburst@mountainclubs.org by September 1, 2021

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