CLOUDBURST

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Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

Fall/Winter 2019

CLOUDBURST

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Federation of Mountain Clubs of British Columbia

Working on your behalf

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

Dave Wharton
Valley Outdoor Association

I am sitting at my computer this evening to put my thoughts in order for this issue of Cloudburst, as the results of our federal election begin to roll in. I not only voted today but took the time to sit at the polling station and bear witness to a tradition that we should be proud of. And I was reminded that it is because we live in a democratic society that we can come together as like-minded individuals and found and sustain an organization such as the FMCBC, that has now served the interests of non-motorized backcountry recreationists for over 40 years and celebrate the fact that the FMCBC reflects the values we hold dear in our various communities.

So, what values should the FMCBC embrace and champion as we go forward? We have over the past year, on more than one occasion, been asked to give our support to organizations whose primary purpose is to pursue goals specifically related to conservation issues and issues of environmental concern. But we are primarily an advocacy organization for recreation. We have just agreed to give our support for a letter to government advocating for the complete stop to the logging of old growth forests. This action was decided after a strong majority of Board members gave their approval. It is because the FMCBC places high value on democratic principles that no one individual or sub-group can act contrary to the decisions of the majority of your elected Board.

The FMCBC constitution allows your Board to take actions specifically related to conservation issues, and states in part; "…to encourage the conservation of mountain areas and mountain environments…" However, these words and others within the constitution have been included prior to environmental and climate concerns becoming so prominent in our daily lives. I believe it reasonable to expect that we will increasingly be approached to support actions and initiatives that are designed exclusively to protect both the environment and climate, and that they may not always be consistent with those values that embrace non-motorized backcountry recreation.

Wharton on the Skyline Trail in Manning Provincial Park in mid-October. (Photo: Dianne Wharton)

I encourage all of us to reflect on which core values we should embrace going forward, in order that we remain relevant as an organization advocating for recreation, and which values we may wish to develop in our support for conservation and a sustainable environment.

Southwest BC Recreation and Conservation Committee Report

By Monika Bittel, Committee Co-Chair

The SWBC Recreation and Conservation Committee and other FMCBC members have worked on a range of issues over the past several months. The following highlights some of this work.

Mt. Seymour Provincial Park, taken on July 16, 2019. (Photo: M. Bittel)

Increased Funding for BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC

At the end of June 2019, the FMCBC made written submissions to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to increase funding for both BC Parks and Recreations Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC). For BC Parks, the FMCBC requested an increase from BC Parks' current budget of $40.48 million to $100 million, consistent with the requests made by other NGOs, such as the Elders' Council, CPAWS, BC Parks Foundation, Outdoor Recreation Council of BC and Western Canada Wilderness Committee. A substantive increase in funding is needed to:

- Increase BC Parks' management and planning capacity and ranger resources (seasonal and full-time)
- Fund replacement and repair of aging and hazardous infrastructure
- Increase park facilities, such as campsites, outhouses and trails
- To allow BC Parks to proactively facilitate and support volunteer partnership programs

With respect to RSTBC, the FMCBC requested a substantive budget increase for more regional RSTBC staff, which are inadequate to maintain and manage the trails and recreation sites within their respective districts and to respond to the numerous applications for legal authorization to build or maintain trails submitted by member clubs and other trail associations. RSTBC staff are completely dependent on volunteers to carry out maintenance of trails and infrastructure.

The FMCBC also raised RSTBC's lack of funds for access road maintenance, resulting in the loss of access to popular trails or restricting access to those with high-clearance 4WD vehicles. Examples are the Nesakwatch Forest Service Road, providing access to both the Slesse Memorial and Mt. Rexford trails; and, the Marion Creek Forest Service Road on Vancouver Island, which provides access to many popular mountain peaks and the new 5040 Peak Hut constructed by the ACC-Vancouver Island Section.

The Select Standing Committee issued their Report on the Budget 2020 Consultations in August 2019. The Report referenced the submissions made by the FMCBC and by Dave King (Caledonia Ramblers) on behalf of the Prince George Backcountry Recreation Society. The Select Standing Committee made the following recommendation for Parks and Recreation:

> *32. Increase operational funding for BC Parks and Recreation Sites and Trails BC to support staffing, monitoring and enforcement, maintenance, public safety, and recreational infrastructure and services, including promoting and supporting volunteer efforts.*

Although Dave King and the FMCBC had advocated for increased funding for RSTBC in 2018, the Select Standing Committee did not include increased

funding for RSTBC in their 2019 Budget recommendations. So, we are very pleased that increased funding for RSTBC was included in the 2020 Budget recommendations. The RSTBC representatives that we met in September 2019 were also pleased by the Select Standing Committee's recommendation and expressed their appreciation for the submissions made by the FMCBC and others.

With respect to BC Parks, the FMCBC has another opportunity to advocate for more funding for our provincial parks in late November at a meeting with Minister George Heyman (BC Parks, Environment and Climate Change). With the "Great Parks, Great People Summit" scheduled for October 15-17, 2020, the year leading up to the conference will be an opportune time to highlight the need for more funding and staffing for BC Parks.

To help the FMCBC's advocacy efforts for BC Parks, we are looking for current photos that document the state of our provincial parks — both good and bad. So, take a look at your photos from this past summer, snap some new shots while you are out on the trails this fall and winter, and send your photos and details to Stacey at stacey.santos@mountainclubs.org. Please be as specific as possible with the location of each photo. GPS coordinates are best, but not necessary. For some great examples of past photos, check out our #FundBCParks album on Facebook or view our #FundBCParks photo map.

We want photos from all parts of the province. If your club has done trail work in provincial parks over the summer, we would love to see photos of your team at work and/or the finished product. We are also interested in hearing about any deficiencies in park management that you or your club has experienced.

Peter Taylor, P. Eng. from the ACC Vancouver Section, who has designed the proposed bridge for Fitzsimmons Creek. (Photo: Jay MacArthur)

Singing Pass Trail and Access – Update

Efforts to improve public access to Garibaldi Park from Whistler via Singing Pass and overnight parking (winter and summer) are ongoing. While the Whistler/Blackcomb lift system may be a preferred option for some, particularly in winter, it is far too restrictive (i.e., lifts are not operational year-round and lift hours are limited when in operation) and costly for many park visitors. With the first Spearhead hut now open, more overnight parking is needed (winter and summer), as well as a reasonable, safe and less costly option for the public to access Singing Pass in Garibaldi Park.

Over the past several months, Jay MacArthur (ACC-Vancouver), Bryce Leigh (ACC-Whistler), and Barry Janyk have met with the various stakeholders: Whistler/Blackcomb, Resort Municipality of Whistler (Mayor J. Crompton), Innergex, Whistler Sliding Center, BC Parks and RSTBC. While overnight parking in winter remains a challenge, it appears Lot 8 will be available for overnight parking in the summer. There is tentative approval from Innergex, Whistler and the Sliding Center for a new route from Lot 8 on the north side of Fitzsimmons Creek; and, Peter Taylor, an ACC-Vancouver member and P.Eng., has designed a footbridge to cross Fitzsimmons Creek near the IPP. Also discussed is the possibility of a shuttle service to the Innergex IPP. Slow but positive progress has been made on this long-standing access issue.

Rainbow Lake Winter Non-Motorized Update

In July, Bryce Leigh (ACC-Whistler) and Monika Bittel met with the snowmobile representatives, Alistair McCrone (RSTBC) and a representative from the Resort Municipality of Whistler for an end-of-season review of the implementation this past winter of the new protocol for the 21 Mile/Rainbow Lake non-motorized area. It was acknowledged that there had been significantly better compliance by the

Snowmobiles in the 21 Mile Creek area. Specifically, the drainage and west slopes of Mt. Sproatt. (Photo: Wolf Eiler)

snowmobilers with the non-motorized boundaries, which was largely due to the concerted efforts of the snowmobile community. This summer, RSTBC continued with its implementation plan and installed a gate at the south end of the Callaghan FSR road (the highway end). The gate will be closed if compliance is not maintained. The snowmobilers reported that efforts to GPS map non-motorized areas, such as Mt. Sproatt, will also help snowmobilers comply with non-motorized boundaries. All acknowledged that the challenge will be maintaining the compliance level in subsequent winters. A solution to Hanging Lake, which is the area with the highest conflicts, is also needed. While Hanging Lake is motorized, it is also one of the prime ski touring destinations within the Rainbow Lake Sproatt area.

Upper Skagit River Watershed Update

Efforts to save the Upper Skagit River Watershed, also known as the "Donut Hole", are ongoing. For those unfamiliar with the area, the Skagit Headwaters is an unprotected area of approximately 5,800 hectares sandwiched between Manning and Skagit Provincial Parks, and includes three main drainages: Smitheram, Silverdaisy and 26 Mile Creeks.

Ken Farquharson, Tom Perry, along with NGOs in BC (CPAWS, ORC, Wilderness Committee) and various Washington state organizations continue to advocate for a firm and permanent commitment to the cessation of commercial forestry activities in the Donut Hole and definitive steps to acquire the Giant Copper claims so that these drainages can be returned to our provincial park system. While there has been no further logging in the Watershed to date, there is still no word about the status of Imperial Mines' application for a 5-year exploratory permit with respect to the Giant Copper claims. A further meeting with Minister Heyman is scheduled for the end of November 2019, which will be attended by the FMCBC. However, requests for a follow-up meeting with Minister Donaldson (Forests, Natural Resources) and a meeting with Minister Mungall (Energy, Mines) have been unsuccessful to date.

Southwest BC Trails Report

By Alex Wallace, Committee Co-Chair

The Howe Sound Crest Trail project went ahead late in the year, in the third week of September, as did the Black Mountain Plateau trail repairs. The trail crews then encountered extremely poor weather conditions, and it is unclear why they were delayed until the four months of dry summer weather were over.

Hopefully projects at higher elevations could start in mid-June and end in mid-October in future years. Similarly, we hope that the Howe Sound Crest Trail section out to St. Marks Summit will be completed in the next three to four years by using more of the summer months.

However, several hundred metres of trail were rebuilt despite the conditions, with a reroute built across the Preliminary Bump of St Marks Summit using loads of gravel that were helicoptered in, and several sections including a bog bridge (using the last of the cedar boards) were rebuilt on Black Mountain Plateau before the work shut down on October 31st after a productive six week season.

The project to rebuild the Dog Mountain trail at Mount Seymour, which is funded by Metro Vancouver (due to it being within the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve) is in the second year of a full five-year rebuild program. But again, it was delayed until mid-September, reportedly due to Metro Vancouver's concerns about acid rock runoff from the trail work. This is not a concern that trail crews had encountered before, and if anything it would be a further argument for working in dry

View across Howe Sound from the Km 29 throne on re-opened trail at Porteau

The Yew Lake viewpoint. Lesley Bohm and Anders Ourom (on the left) with BC Parks staff and a seniors hiking group who were very appreciative of the barrier-free hiking trail.

weather, not in the pouring rain.

The northern section of the Howe Sound Crest Trail at Km 29 was unexpectedly cut off by a mining closure in early June, the result of a local stonemason getting a permit to blow up basalt pillars on Kallahne Creek to use for fireplaces and barbecues. This Ministry of Mines 'Active Mining' closure order on the gravel road meant that the Howe Sound Crest Trail effectively was closed at the Porteau Road end.

The FMCBC was able to locate the old "abandoned" hiking trail in the area (built by a youth crew from the BC Corrections Porteau camp in about 1971) and with this assistance a corridor past the closed area was set up by BC Parks, in a liability agreement with the new owners of this area, Concord Pacific. The entire area was originally owned by BC Rail (i.e. the provincial government) for many years, and it was suggested in 1997 to the Director of BC Parks that when BC Rail was sold, this land could be added to Cypress Provincial Park, connecting it to Porteau Cove Provincial Park to the north—instead of Cypress "ending" at Deeks Lake.

However, it was then transferred to the Squamish Nation in a land swap, and Concord Pacific was engaged in a partnership to develop it into a new "Mountainside Community' of 1400 homes, ironically called Porteau Cove. Other than a survey crew working in the area, there was no move to start construction that we could see, but we were assured by BC Parks that access through the new town would be guaranteed for hikers. It then appears that after roughly 20 years (of no construction), Concord Pacific exercised an obscure buyout clause in their agreement with the Squamish Nation and were able to get full ownership of these extensive lands for $1 (one dollar) in 2017, with the BC Courts apparently agreeing, and the Squamish Nation deciding subsequently not to appeal the decision. Concord Pacific had argued in court that they had spent $17 million in developing the site at Porteau, although there is arguably no evidence to show this, other than some old, tattered flagging tape. The old "abandoned" hiking trail section at Km 29 is now once again in use (see photo on previous page) and is accessible from the well-maintained Porteau Road hiker parking lot at Kallanhe Creek.

2019 was the 25th Anniversary of the FMCBC project with BC Parks to rebuild the worn-out Yew Lake trail at Cypress into a barrier-free trail in 1993-94, funded mostly by UI funds from Ottawa, with some funding from MEC. A small commemoration was held at Cypress with Lesley Bohm and Anders Ourom attending as two of the people closely involved in managing the project. The trail had become completely worn out and, being in a wetland, was boggy and rooty. There was also some skepticism that using huge amounts of gravel to build a trail in a wetland would work, as some felt the gravel would ruin the wetland area, which is home to a remarkable number of plant species, some relatively rare, as well as being highly accessible. However, with the careful planning and ongoing maintenance by volunteers and the PFO at Cypress, this project has been an ongoing success, and allows seniors, wheelchair users, little kids in strollers and botany groups to enjoy this area.

Overall it has been a complete success, although people may have forgotten FMCBC's key involvement.

Be Bear Aware

By Andrew Drouin
South Okanagan Trail Alliance

Bears are hungriest in the fall—as hungry as they'll be all year—save for their state of mind upon awakening in the spring. As such, it's incredibly important to manage attractants which might cause bears to come into contact with humans for the sake of a calorie fix.

It should be common knowledge, if not common sense, to realize that if bears are allowed or encouraged to hang around areas of human habitat that this will lead to all manner of conflicts. In British Columbia, this more often than not means that bears will be euthanized by conservation officers. In the small city of Penticton in which I reside, five bears were recently destroyed due to bear attractant inaction.

During October and November, BC bears will be seeking to ingest up to twenty thousand calories every 24 hours, while foraging as much as 20 hours a day in order to put on enough weight to survive through the winter torpor, when no natural foods are available to them.

Most of us have been taught to believe that bears are hibernators, but in fact, they actually enter a state more accurately described as torpor. During this deep-sleep state, heart and breathing rates decrease, body temperatures reduce and bears do not eat or release bodily waste. Bears can sleep more than 100 days without eating, drinking or passing waste.

They are able to convert their liquid waste into protein through a urea recycling process. The urea produced by their fat metabolism is broken down and the nitrogen is reused by the bear to rebuild protein.

Bear in an apple tree (Photo: Lia McKinnon)

Given the fact that there are approximately one hundred thousand black and ten thousand grizzly bears in BC, it's no surprise that human-bear interactions are common, and even more so in the fall. Bears are both intelligent and determined, and human settlements, with their attendant scents in the wind, draw bears from significant distances in search of food.

Each year in BC, we see upwards of one thousand bears destroyed by conservation officers due to human-bear conflicts. The BC Conservation Service keeps a running tab on bear-killings by conservation officers, and others, on the Ministry's Human-Predator Conflicts Monthly Update website.

It's far from unreasonable to ask people to secure bear attractants, yet many don't seem to get the message, or are too lazy to do the right thing. This inaction will directly lead to the deaths of countless bears each and every year.

Some of the easiest things the public

can do to minimize human-bear interactions include:

- Refrain from putting garbage out until the morning of garbage collection, as opposed to the night before
- Pick fruit from trees in your yard, as well as from the ground
- Do not leave pet foods in the dish outside
- Mount birdfeeders on sturdy, smooth metal poles that cannot be climbed or knocked over, and occasionally check to see if masses of dropped seeds are apparent beneath pole mounted bird feeders
- Do not leave BBQs/grills outdoors that have not been [thoroughly] cleaned

Bears can smell all of the aforementioned attractants from surprising distances, as they sport a nasal mucosa area a hundred times larger than that of humans.

Some people think it's okay if bears eat tree fruits in their yards, perhaps because they enjoy seeing wildlife in close proximity, from the security of their homes. However, they lose sight of the fact that these same bears will also roam other neighborhood yards when they are in the area, and this isn't the kind of wildlife interactions that others look forward to.

The all-too-often end result is that neighbors call the conservation service, which attend to and euthanize the bears.

"A fed bear is a dead bear"

Bears that have located a source of quality calories aren't easily dissuaded from returning to what they see as a secure source of food, no matter how many times a conservation officer might haze or live-trap and relocate them (a rare occurrence). These animals can easily travel significant distances—the longest documented range of a male black bear is nearly 200 km.

Between April and October 2019, four hundred and seventy black bears were destroyed by the BC Conservation service, with only six trapping and relocations over that same period—with the vast majority of these deaths being directly attributed to so-called "problem bears" (it's actually "problem humans").

How can you help?

The steps outlined above will go a long way toward saving the lives of BC bears. We cannot depend on an overstretched conservation service to solve this issue. Instead, we need to educate ourselves, our friends and families.

I encourage readers to share this article far and wide. If even one bear can be saved by each of us through education, it's more than worth our time to educate our peers.

For more information, please visit WildSafe BC's Bear-Smart program website.

Eight BC communities have successfully attained official Bear Smart status: Kamloops, Squamish, Lions Bay, Whistler, Port Alberni, Naramata, New Denver and Coquitlam.

I'm set to work on seeing Penticton added to this list going forward; would you like to join me in this quest?

Wherever you are reading this, please consider fostering a movement that will see your community added to this project.

A huge thank you to local Stewardship Biologist Lia McKinnon for the photo that accompanies this article!

Fabrications and Reality on the State of BC's Forests and Climate Change

By Carole Tootill
Island Mountain Ramblers

People question the importance of forests in dealing with climate change because they do not understand the vital role of trees and plants—especially big trees—in capturing and storing carbon, cooling climate, and providing the ecology necessary for life. This makes us vulnerable to the influence of an industry that profits off exploiting this vast resource.

Herb Hammond, a Registered Professional Forester for 35 years, understands this influence: "The timber industry regrettably sees forests as logs standing vertically, which is one of those assumptions of convenience that gets forests, and all of us who depend upon them for essential services, into trouble" (Interview, Nov. 5). He explained the role of old growth forests in protecting us from worsening climate change, saying, "We do know they provide the highest quality water filtration, the best water storage and flooding retention, … and carbon retention, yet we cut them."

Dr. Jim Pojar, a forest ecologist with 25 years in the B.C. Forest Service, is concerned about ecologically damaging forestry practices and industry influence. He devotes a quarter of his latest report, Forestry and Carbon in B.C. February 2019 (PDF), to dispel seven myths, including:

- the timber industry is carbon neutral
- new growth sequesters more carbon than old
- old growth is wasted to rot or infestation if not cut
- and wood products are substantial stores of carbon storage (as if wood isn't porous!)

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FNLRORD) stands behind many of these assumptions. Pojar explains:

"The mantra goes like this. Our forests will all soon burn up, fall to beetles, or blow down anyway. So we should quickly log much more, store the carbon in long-lasting wood products and landfills, use the logging debris for biofuel, and promptly reforest to take up more carbon.[1]"

There isn't much old growth and primary intact forest left. Old growth forests cover "about five per cent of the province's total forested area."[2] Low elevation old growth forests have the big profitable trees in high demand. The recent UVIC Environmental Law Centre report says that, across the province, in high-productivity areas such as valley bottoms, less than 10 per cent of the original old growth remains and an even smaller amount is formally protected."[3] Why aren't we protecting what's left? Back to myths and assumptions of convenience…

Perhaps the most damaging and influential is that new forests sequester more carbon than old forests. Dr. Richard Hebda of the University of Victoria explains the global importance of our old-growth forests in storing and sequestering carbon in this short video. An excerpt:

"We have some of the most amazing forests on earth, and these forests—I am standing in one here in Francis King Park—store a 1000 tons per hectare of carbon. One of the most carbon-rich

Steep slope logging in the Schmidt Creek Valley on eastern Vancouver Island. There are concerns soil erosion and landslides will destroy "rubbing beaches" used by orcas at nearby Robson Bight. (Photo: Jeff Butterworth)

More steep slope logging at Schmidt Creek. (Photo: Jeff Butterworth)

forest ecosystems in the world are here in British Columbia and on Vancouver Island, and we need these forests because it is these trees that, essentially for free, remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turn it into living carbon, which then dies and becomes dead carbon on the ground. As we remove those forests, especially the old-growth forests with such huge amounts of carbon stored in them, we contribute to climate change through that activity because somewhere in the range of 25 to 30% carbon going into the atmosphere… comes from the disruption of global forests, including the forests of British Columbia... (January, 2018)"

B.C.'s temperate rainforests are among the most bio-dense on the planet, and they store massive amounts of carbon—the bigger the trees, the more carbon stored and sequestered. Logging releases massive amounts of carbon from trees and biomass under the ground. Slash burning releases huge amounts of carbon dioxide as does blasting and clearing for road building. The following excerpt from B.C. Forests Wake Up Call: Heavy Carbon Losses Hit 10 Year Mark (PDF) shows how forestry practices changed our forests from being a powerful carbon sink to a carbon emitter. If it's too much information, focus on content in **bold**:

"**B.C.'s forest functioned as a carbon sink until 2002, likely since the end of the last ice age.**

The analysis for [2003-2012] shows net B.C. forest emissions of 256 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. Net emissions from provincial forests are the result of logging (after accounting for carbon stored in wood products), wildfires, slash-burning and the reduced carbon sequestration capacity of B.C.'s forests as a result of the Mountain Pine Beetle outbreak. The 10-year net forest emissions are equivalent to four times the official annual emissions of the province (63 million tonnes in 2013).

Combined, these factors have turned B.C.'s forests from a carbon sink to a carbon source for the last 10 years. In contrast, B.C.'s forests were still a net carbon sink in the previous 10 year period, from **1993 to 2002**, in **which they absorbed 441 million tonnes of carbon dioxide**. During this period, B.C.'s forests absorbed **the equivalent of 70 percent of the cumulative official emissions of the province** (629 million tonnes of carbon dioxide).

B.C.'s forest carbon emissions are not counted as part of the official greenhouse gas emissions of the province. Instead these emissions are reported as a 'memo' item and tend to be ignored, despite their alarming growth…. While B.C.'s forest carbon loss has been made worse by the Mountain Pine Beetle outbreak and… serious wildfire years, the biggest factors remain poor forest management and destructive logging practices like clear-cutting of old-growth rainforest and slash-burning.

Emissions from logging and slash burning alone were 577 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in the period

Logging in the Cruikshank River canyon on Vancouver Island. The river feeds into Comox Lake.

2003-2012. This number is **close to B.C.'s entire official emissions during the same 10 year period** (638 million tonnes). "[4]

"Forests fix and store huge amounts of carbon, and forestry is by far the biggest source of carbon emissions in BC."[5] Forestry emissions surpass every other industry combined, but they are not accounted for. So, if CO2 from logging and slash burning are close to B.C.'s "official emissions" of approximately 64 million tonnes a year (64.5 in 2017[6]), our true emissions are double. Is any other industry given such license?

As official stats do not include wildfires, real 2017 and 2018 emissions are likely triple anything official.[7] Unsustainable logging has exacerbated wildfires: massive clear-cuts and the spraying of glyphosate and other herbicides damage the environment and dehydrate the lush ecology. Forests with thousand-year-old trees will not just grow back. Living carbon turns into carbon emissions when logged and wood products continue to release carbon. We are wiping out wolves and killing cougars to protect dying caribou herds, but we won't stop logging the old growth their very lives depend on.[8]

Five years ago, the U.N. predicted 60 years of arable land left at the rate it is being depleted: "Generating three centimeters of top soil takes 1,000 years, and if current rates of degradation continue all of the world's top soil could be gone within 60 years…."[9] Our natural ancient forests have been compacting natural fertilizer from animals, arthropods, fallen trees, and dead plants to build up incredibly rich nutrient-dense moist underground, "thousands of years of living and dying" (Hammond), and now feed tree plantations. For how much longer, nobody knows. That underground wealth is being depleted by plantations that harvest in decades – not the centuries or millennia it took original trees to grow.

Since our temperate rainforests are "globally rare ecosystems covering just one-half of one percent of the planet's landmass,"[10] logic would dictate the necessity of preserving this irreplaceable treasure for tourism, adventure, food foraging and harvesting, forest bathing, wildlife habitat, salmon runs, fresh air, temperate climate, clean water, and future generations. Our old-growth forests are priceless, yet an industry that provides a billion a year in revenue to the B.C. government—$992 million in 2017 and again in 2018, a drop in the bucket of B.C.'s $52 or $54 billion budget—is priority.[11] Although the B.C. budget will increase, forestry revenues are expected to decrease.[11] Compare this to tourism's 2017 tax revenue of $1.2 billion and the $9 billion tourism added to our GDP, five times more than the $1.8 billion of "Forestry & Logging."[12] In 2018, Forestry, along with Agriculture, Fishing and Hunting was only 2.36% of B.C.'s GDP![13]

Why are we clearcutting rare endangered forests that provide revenue options, climate benefits, and savings? The real costs of such logging—loss of

Logging around Willemar Lake, near Comox Lake.

salmon runs, floods, landslides, loss of wildlife, diminished biodiversity, polluted water supplies—are not added up. Nanaimo recently spent $73 million on a state-of-the-art water filtration system. It wasn't needed when old-growth forests flanked its privately-owned water supply, absorbed downpours, and filtered drinking water. The Comox Valley Water Treatment facility will cost at least $126 million. Taxpayers are helping traumatized Grand Forks citizenry with $50 million dollars towards infrastructure and buying-out homes at post-flood value.[14] As for the logging that, at minimum, exacerbated the flooding, it's business as usual: "British Columbia's Ministry of Forests… continues to approve high logging rates while doing little to understand their cumulative effects."[15] Please read the Narwhal's excellent March 2019 coverage of Grand Forks and elsewhere .

Furthering the case for long-overdue change in how forests are managed:

We learned that some 42 per cent of the province's forest has not been inventoried since 1990. An astonishing 30 per cent hasn't been inventoried in more than three decades since 1980. …such fundamental uncertainty about how much forest, of what type, we have standing in B.C."[16]

Since our government handed over inventory duties to Professional Reliance nearly two decades ago, we the people have no clue what we really have! What business functions without proper inventory? Compound our lack of understanding of what we have left with the lack of remaining old growth and primary intact forest (secondary forest with old growth characteristics), the need to stop clear cut logging and restore our forests as a main climate change mitigation strategy becomes clear! Yet old growth logging continues at a rate of 140,000 hectares a year, about one Stanley Park or 500 soccer fields a day![17]"

The timber industry is our biggest source of carbon emissions, a reality hidden like clear cut forests behind tree-lined roads. Our forests should be storing and sequestering the emissions our province produces. "Not only are forests the linchpin of carbon dynamics in BC, they are also the primary storehouse for the province's biodiversity, providing multiple ecosystem functions and services that underpin forest resilience and are essential for sustaining human well-being. These days critical thinking about how we manage our forests is at a premium." [18]

An engagement survey on old-growth logging is open until January 2020. Submit your thoughts and email to oldgrowthbc@gov.bc.ca for an appointment to speak with the two-person panel, who are to report to Minister Doug Donaldson at the end of April 2020. The public won't see the results until the end of next year. That is too late. Please, demand sustainable forestry now and an immediate end to clear cutting old growth and primary forest!

To understand what we are losing,

watch Suzanne Simard's How Trees Talk to Us.

And, you can watch these two short videos on natural climate solutions.

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Footnotes:

[1] Pojar, Dr. Jim. https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/7MythsSummary_jimp2019.pdf. Full report at: https://sierraclub.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Pojar-7mythsfinal-2019.pdf

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Kees & Claire Hut Now Open

By the Spearhead Huts Society

At long last, it is now possible to book nights at the brand new Kees and Claire Hut in the Whistler backcountry. This incredible, passive house design facility is going to be a tremendous asset for the South Coast mountain community and is the first link in a proposed chain of three huts throughout the world-class Spearhead Range.

Booking a trip to the hut will provide critical funding to the Spearhead Huts Society, the volunteer group that is working hard to make the vision of a hut chain a reality. Rally your crew for a powder mission this winter. By reserving now you'll ensure a visit to the hut in its inaugural year, but more importantly you'll be making a contribution to this incredibly worthwhile cause.

ABOUT THE HUT

Reservations

The Spearhead Hut Society is now accepting reservations for public use of the Kees and Claire Hut. Weekends through the winter are heavily booked but there is currently plenty of midweek availability.

Reservations can be made online at spearheadhuts.org/reservations

Prices For Staying At The Kees and Claire Hut

- $45/night – Public ($15 discount for children under 14)
- $30/night – Members of the Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Section, Alpine Club of Canada Whistler Section and the British Columbia Mountaineering Club

Hut Capacity

The Kees and Claire Hut has 38 bunks divided into 6 sleeping areas.

Equipment

Provided at Kees and Claire Hut:

- Four 2-burner propane cooktops, complete with supplies and equipment for cooking and dining, such as pots, plates, utensils, mugs, glasses, bodums and tea pots

Items to bring to Kees and Claire Hut:

- Light sleeping bag (hut has some heat)
- Foamie/Thermarest (mattresses may be provided in the future)
- Hut slippers

Water At The Hut

While a water system is planned for the future, there isn't currently water available on tap at the hut. At this time water must be collected from Russet Lake or from melting snow. Guests are asked to pitch in and obtain their own water from Russet Lake or transport snow as needed.

Wastewater disposal is provided at the hut.

Hut Facilities

- Propane generator with batteries for power storage and LED lighting
- Twelve USB ports for recharging GPS units
- Free-standing propane stove in Brett's Lounge
- Propane direct-vent heaters and a propane furnace
- Ventilation
- Three urine/solid separating toilets with waste collection to minimize environmental impact
- Engineered dispersion field for urine and greywater
- Custodian Room

More Details

Additional details about parking and access routes to the hut can be found at: spearheadhuts.org/reservations-now-open-for-kees-claire-hut

Photo: Helen Habgood

Cairn Ethics

By Mike Nash
Caledonia Ramblers

I began writing for **Cloudburst** magazine 30 years ago in the December 1989 issue with an article titled "The Ethics of Indiscriminate Cairn Building" (shown below). So it was with interest that I read an artcle and reader debate in the July 29th, 2019 issue of *Adventure Journal* (AJ) on the same theme.

Cairns are generally appropriate when used to mark routes over open ground, and for other navigation purposes such as stream crossings; but when they are built simply to mark people having visited a spot, or as someone's idea of wilderness art, many people (and, increasingly, park managers) consider them to be a form of backcountry graffiti. In Canada's national and provincial parks, for example, we have seen a proliferation of 'stone men' being built in many places, prompting at least one American visitor to wonder if this was something 'Canadian.' In Prince George, other examples include a recent teapot controversy on Teapot Mountain north of the city, as well as painted rocks and tree carvings in local parks. You can read the AJ article, "Cairn Ethics: Knock Them Down or Build Them Up" at: adventure-journal.com/2019/07/reader-poll-should-we-knock-down-rock-cairns-or-leave-them-up.

THE ETHICS OF INDISCRIMINATE CAIRN BUILDING

The symbol of a mountain summit or ridge top is traditionally a cairn. It is used to mark the highest point; perhaps also serving as the cache for a summit register, and a friendly reminder of other people in an isolated place. It can serve to mark a safe route along a ridge or through open meadows during periods of poor visibility. In Europe, the cairns may be centuries old and are very much an accepted part of the landscape. In the sub-Arctic regions of Canada, the "Inukok" met the practical needs of route finding. These 'stone men' of the tundra also helped with the psychological and spiritual needs of a people faced with harsh survival conditions daily.

In British Columbia, there are still large alpine areas which are relatively untouched. It is still easy to find places where there are yet no traces of man. When we reach a new ridge or summit, we often have the pleasure of experiencing a completely pristine environment and wondering, are we the first to have walked here?

Invariably, our next thought is....."Let's build a cairn!". Many of us will have to admit to building our share, but do we satisfy our ego by this action? Must we leave a sign of our passing? Surely a moment's reflection will show that the person who follows will not have the same opportunity to experience the place as we found it.

In a time of increasing industrial and recreational prssure on the mountains, the place which epitomizes the wilderness more than anywhere is surely the summit. If we can't leave this as we found it, without having to construct something, what chance is there for anywhere else? Is the act of cairn building as necessary today as it might have been 50 years ago? Leave the cairns on prominent well visited summits, and definitely where there is a need to identify a safe route. But, otherwise the old adage about taking nothing but photographs and leaving nothing but footprints still applies.

Although built from local materials, the cairn is an artifact whose message is clear to the next visitor. A classic example occurred during a recent week-long fly-in trip to Monkam Provincial Park, when four members of the Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club made it to the top of a nondescript peak above Lupin Lake. There was no evidence of man having been there before, especially considering the short technical pitch we had climbed. Despite objections by the author, the trip leader - whose ethics do not permit leaving orange peel in the mountains even though it will vanish in a year or two - insisted on building a cairn which might endure for centuries.

One K. McNish of Edinburgh, Scotland wrote in the August 1989 edition of the National Geographic Magazine:

"When Galen Rowell describes climbing to the top of the peak and placing a pile of stones on the summit, I can't help think that he has taken the opportunity to show his own self-importance and destroyed another's opportunity to feel the same 'untouched by man' sensation."

Perhaps it's time the Federation developed a policy regarding the proliferation of cairns on undesignated peaks and ridge tops. Some of our members are quick to call foul when they see others changing the natural environment for economic reasons. What excuse do we have for recreational purposes? Outdoor ethics can change significantly over a period of twenty years, so we should leave some choice for future generations of mountain users. Our member clubs might even consider organizing work hikes to restore such places to their natural state. We could even have a competition to see which club can restore the most sites in one season!

I invite your comments, and those of your readers

Michael Nash, Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club, Prince George

ACC/Marmot Women's Climbing Camp – 2019 Jim Haberl Hut, Tantalus Range

By Karen Jensen, Amber McMinn, and Anna Milino
ACC Vancouver Section

9 Women. 3 incredible guides. An iconic mountain hut. 6 days of adventure, epic meals, and camaraderie.

The ACC Women's Climbing Camp, sponsored by Marmot, is an annual event akin to the well-known General Mountaineering Camp (GMC). Run over one week each June, the camp's focus is to provide women the opportunity to learn, enhance their skills, and challenge themselves in climbing, mountaineering, and alpine leadership with other like-minded women, under the tutelage of ACMG guides. For our week, our guides were Kirsten Knechtel and Erica Roles, as well as Madeline Martin-Preney, who was our Camp Manager, Chef Extraordinaire, and Amateur Leader.

For the first time in its history, this annual camp left the Rockies and headed west to the Tantalus Range, part of the Coast Mountains in the Pacific Ranges of southern British Columbia. Located northwest of Squamish and known as Tsewilx to the Squamish First Nations, it covers 4600km^2. Its highest peak, Mount Tantalus, stands at 2603 metres. While accessible by foot from the Squamish River or Sigurd Trail, the preferred (and much easier) approach is by helicopter.

Our basecamp for the week was the Jim Haberl Memorial Hut—a hut designed, built, and maintained by volunteers from the Haberl family and friends, the ACC Vancouver section, and the 192nd Airfield Engineers. Unbeknownst to us, this was the trip that almost wasn't, given that the Haberl Hut was to undergo roof replacement the same month.

Rock practice (Photo: A. McMinn)

Completed in 2006, the Jim Haberl hut is perched in Serratus-Dione Col. A beautiful wood frame building with vaulted ceilings and room for 12, it offers spectacular views from every room. The hut stands as a memorial to Jim Haberl, an avid mountain guide, photographer, and writer who was killed in an avalanche on April 29, 1999 in Alaska.

We were slated to depart from Black Tusk Helicopters at 08:00 sharp on June 15th. But, as we all know, mountain weather is subject to change without warning and our flight was delayed until 10:00, giving us ample time to get to know our guides and each other. For some, this would be a re-introduction to alpine climbing and mountaineering, having put those activities on hold for years while raising children and navigating careers. What brought us together was a shared thirst for adventure and a chance to dedicate ourselves to the mountains, even if only for a brief time.

As the group trickled into the staging area, a mountain of gear and food boxes began to materialize—a significant pile that would require 3 flights to deliver. Flying in groups of four, our pilot Darren Taylor (Black Tusk Helicopters) took us on a scenic tour as part of our approach, flying over Lake Lovely Water and the Tantalus Hut, and hovering near the surrounding peaks we hoped to soon climb. With gear unloaded, it was time to dig out our 'fridge' to store the coolers and set up the first of many pots of snow for melting. Camp chores were completed early enough to allow for a 'rock refresher' at a small crag near the heli pad and some easy climbing near the hut.

Moat near Dione (Photo: A. McMinn)

Our first full day began with a staggering assortment of breakfast choices. We fueled up, then set about making pack lunches for the day. The morning was spent in 'snow school' where we practiced kick steps, self-arrests, and tying-in for glacial travel before roping up in teams of four and heading out across the snow toward the base of Dione under bluebird skies and brilliant sunshine. The crevasses were starting to open, affording us our first learning experience in route finding. As we neared the moat near the base of Dione, our weather window closed, providing a great opportunity to stop for lunch. After a welcome break, we set out for a short scramble adjacent to Little Dione to enjoy the views.

The next day would be our re-orientation to trad placement, as well as gear and natural anchors, followed by some scrambling and cragging on the ridge below the hut. This all in preparation for the next days' objective: the summit of Alpha.

Our Alpha day began with an alpine start at 04:30 for breakfast, lunch-packing, and gear organization. Setting out in teams of 3 and 4 with camp participants taking the lead, our route took us down the Serratus Glacier, between an ice fall and tricky rock step, and up a steep snow climb that skirted around crevasses to the Alpha-Serratus Col. Finally we headed up a short rock scramble on the west ridge of Alpha to the summit. The weather stayed clear and bright with short periods of cloud cover, but no hint of the whiteout conditions and wind that was experienced back at the hut. We arrived back at the hut by 18:00 tired, hungry, and incredibly proud of our accomplishment that day.

After such an epic adventure, a later start was well appreciated and we spent the morning in the col next to the hut practicing snow anchors and more self-arrests. We roped up to traverse back to the moat at the base of Dione for an afternoon of crevasse rescue, for which Madeline graciously volunteered as 'victim', going over the edge repeatedly for rescue demonstrations. By means still unknown, she yet again managed to beat the rest of us back to the hut to have a hot fire burning and appetizers set out upon our arrival.

Our final day arrived far too soon. And, in the true spirit of mountaineering, we were reminded us yet again that mountain weather is subject to change without warning. What appeared to be a clear window in the late afternoon threatened to change, so the decision was made to fly out earlier in the morning. As our final practice in group leadership, the question of the days' objective was put to us: working on navigational skills in Squamish, or a day of cragging in the Smoke Bluffs. A unanimous decision brought us to a new(er) crag in Cheakamus, Electric Avenue, where we rounded out a phenomenal week with fun sport climbing until late afternoon.

It was bittersweet to say goodbye. We had arrived mostly as strangers, with just enthusiasm and a quest for adventure binding us, but left as friends with memories that will last a lifetime, and the hope that the Women's' Climbing Camp will once again head West.

Rainbow Reprise

By Dave King, with edits and postscript by Mike Nash
Caledonia Ramblers

The Caledonia Ramblers latest week-long backpack into the Rainbow Range of South Tweedsmuir Provincial Park turned out to be a wonderful trip, with none of the fires and smoke of the past two summers. Several of the 17 participants had been in the area before, but only the trip leader, Dave King, and participant, Hilary Crowley, had previously hiked the whole route, so there was something new for nearly everyone. According to Hilary, the average age of participants was 60, and ranged from 27 to 77.

We left Prince George on August 10th, 2019 and rendezvoused later that morning in Williams Lake, before heading west for 333 kilometres on the mostly repaved highway to Anahim Lake. Beyond that, the last 40 kilometres to the Heckman Pass trailhead remain unpaved, but that section is all first-class gravel. We stopped just before Anahim Lake to camp overnight at the Fishtrap Recreation Site just past Nimpo Lake on the Dean River, while some drove into Anahim Lake for supper.

By 9:30 a.m. the next morning we had assembled in Heckman Pass and were soon on the trail to the Rainbow Range. Everyone had moderately heavy packs with a week of food plus all the clothes and gear needed for a northern mountain trip, this being no place for ultra-lightweight backpacking. The trail began in a forest that had burned some ten years earlier, then slowly climbed towards the subalpine as we all got accustomed to our packs.

After hiking eight kilometres, we reached tree line at McCauley Lake and stopped for lunch before continuing north into mostly alpine terrain towards de Macedo Lakes. There, we planned to establish camp for the first two nights. The route was fairly easy going through meadows, with very little rocky ground. Disconcertingly, and not too far from our destination for the day, we came across fresh grizzly tracks and a huge amount of bear scat at an obvious bedding site. We also got our first look at the colourful Rainbow Range.

There are several lakes near where we proposed to camp, and it took us a while to decide on a spot that had good water, shelter from wind, space for 12 tents, and set well back from the grizzly movement corridor. On a club trip led

Overlooking the Rainbow Range (Photo: Mike Nash)

by former member Doug Perkins in the 1990s, they had camped a few hundred metres away in the middle of the pass and had the alarming experience in the evening of having several grizzly bears walk right into their camp, a possibility highlighted for us by the nearby bear sign.

Our first camp turned out to be delightful, with no furry guests and a pristine creek meandering around the tents to afford individual access to water. After settling in, we climbed the ridge immediately north of the camp for an evening view of the Rainbows.

On the trail (Photo: Mike Nash)

The morning of August 12th was pleasant and we were all were up at first light. By 8 a.m. some were already heading for the high peak to the east, and soon everyone else followed. Half of the group climbed the peak, while others began a slow amble northward along the ridge. There were nice views in all directions, but especially of the Rainbow Range to the west and north. We spotted mountain goat and caribou tracks, but saw no actual animals. The alpine flowers were nice, but well past their best for the season; and we noted isolated white bark pine trees throughout our trip both above and below tree line.

After regrouping and eating lunch on the northernmost peak of the ridge, we headed back to camp, whence several diehards promptly headed up the hill south of camp that is dominated by two volcanic plugs. On an earlier trip in the 1980s we had found some obsidian there, as we did later on this trip below Mount Mackenzie. In the late afternoon, eight horses and seven riders rode past our camp, traveling from Beef Creek towards the Heckman Pass trailhead.

On August 13th (day 3) we broke camp and, shouldering already lighter packs, we headed west towards Crystal Lake.

By mid-afternoon, following a sharp rain shower, we reached the Crystal Lake Trail where we met three horses cresting the ridge ahead of us. The Park Ranger's wife and daughter and a third rider had been working on the Mackenzie Valley cabin and were heading out towards Heckman Pass.

The weather had been threatening, and soon after this encounter we were hit by a fierce electrical storm with heavy hail and rain. Heads down, and giving way to a herd instinct under nearly continuous crashes of thunder, we soldiered on to meadows half a kilometre south of Crystal Lake, where we finally held up to let the storm pass. Looking around after the storm, we decided to camp where we were as there was good water and some shelter. Then, someone spotted what we first thought was a caribou, half a kilometre back along the slope that we had crossed in the storm. It turned out to be a member of our party who, to our chagrin, no one had even realized was missing. He had hunkered down in some trees and then lost contact with the rest of the party. A good lesson for all of us.

That evening several people wandered up to Crystal Lake just in time to see it lit by a fine sunset. Although it is a designated camping area with an outhouse, Crystal Lake is quite exposed, and we were glad to be set up lower down.

August 14th saw us continue our hike southwestward around several slopes until we hit the Tweedsmuir Trail, with good views of Mount Mackenzie and its colourful spur ridge. We set up camp in an area shown on one map as 'The Terraces,' where there was plenty of sign of old horse camping. Again we stayed two nights.

We arrived at midday, and after lunch some hiked to the ridges southeast and above camp, while others explored the immediate area and/or bathed in one of the many tarns. On the ridgetop east of camp, we found an old survey marker and a nearby fire pit suggesting that the surveyors (probably in the early to mid-20th Century) had spent some time up there, likely waiting for clearing sight lines in order to tie into other survey points.

We were impressed by the large number of small lakes and ponds everywhere in the alpine meadows. We continued to see caribou tracks in many places, as well as wolf and grizzly tracks and a few goat tracks, but still nary a large animal. We did spot occasional hoary

marmots, a few ptarmigan, and two vacated nests with hatched eggs. On three previous trips to the area I didn't see much wildlife either, except for a couple of goats, a grizzly and two or three caribou. With our large numbers, this was not surprising, but the abundant sign everywhere indicated that the area is rich in wildlife.

Late in the afternoon a Park Ranger, Steven, with one companion showed up on their horses. They had been working on the cabin and were headed for Octopus Lake. They told us that the trails in this area had essentially been closed the past two years due to the forest fires and they were headed out to Heckman Pass and would be clearing deadfall with the chainsaw that they had with them. What a stroke of luck this turned out to be for us.

On August 15th (day 5) we day hiked over to Mackenzie Pass and Mount Mackenzie. It was a fine clear day with the Coast Mountains visible on the south side of the Bella Coola Valley, sharp and clear. Outward bound in the morning, we walked along the ridges west of camp, with the more ardent climbers in the party going over the top, and most going around the southerly side to the Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail[i].

On the older 1:50,000 topo maps that we were carrying, the Mackenzie Pass is incorrectly shown more than a kilometre southeast of where it actually is. The Nuxalk-Carrier Grease Trail (Alexander Mackenzie Heritage Trail) is now also part of the National Hiking Trail[ii]. Several of the old posts marking the historic trail had fallen down and we reset them. Clearly the trail has not been used in a long time, likely due to the forest fires and closures. It would be a tough route to follow today, especially in poor visibility.

Eight people scrambled to the summit of Mount Mackenzie and then hiked a kilometre or so northeast along a spectacular ridge dominated by rainbow-coloured rock and scree. The day continued clear and beautiful and they saw the red roof of the cabin in Mackenzie Valley, and at last they spotted a dozen mountain goats on a ridge southeast of Mount Mackenzie. This was the only big game seen on the entire trip.

In returning to camp both parties took an alternate path down into the valley on the north side of our earlier ridge route. It's an easier route to or from Mackenzie Pass and Mount Mackenzie from our campsite, but lacks the views that we had in the morning.
Dave King at MacKenzie Pass (Photo: Mike Nash)

On August 16th, our plan was to hike down the Tweedsmuir Trail to Octopus Lake, and then take the Octopus Trail to Young's Creek and spend our last night there. However, with another fine morning we were packed up and on the trail by 8:30 a.m. We had more nice views of the Coast Mountains as we gradually descended into the forest. The Park Ranger and his companion had cut out all the deadfall as promised, making it a relatively easy and fast route. With a good trail, lighter packs and a fit group, we arrived at Young's Creek by early afternoon, and by majority vote we agreed to hike out the last eight kilometres to the Heckman trailhead that day.

From there, we were all cast to the winds. Some drove the full 615 kilometres back to Prince George that night, while others camped at various sites along Highway 20; two stayed for work in Anahim Lake, and three braved the infamous 'Hill' down to Bella Coola.

The Rainbow Range offers a spectacularly varied setting, with relatively easy mountain hiking, well away from the crowds, and easily accessible to two-wheel drive cars. Apart from the three equine parties that we met briefly (each providing a useful information exchange), we did not see another human in six days until the last few kilometres when we met a couple from Germany who were just starting out. They likely

Day Hike to MacKenzie Pass (Photo: Mike Nash)

had the entire area to themselves. For more information and maps, see BC Parks website for South Tweedsmuir Provincial Park; and for a larger set of pictures from the trip, see caledoni-aramblers.ca/gallery/rainbow-range-tweedsmuir-park.
Group picture (Photo: Mike Nash)

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Footnote: In the steps of Sir Alexander Mackenzie

On Monday July 22, 1793, Alexander Mackenzie[iii] became the first known person to cross the North American continent north of Mexico from sea (to sea) to sea, reaching the Pacific Ocean at the Mackenzie Rock in the Dean Channel. He just missed meeting Captain Vancouver in Bella Coola by a few weeks, and he beat Lewis and Clark's mere sea to sea journey by more than 12 years.

He had passed through what is now Prince George on Wednesday, June 19, 1793, but it was a foggy morning and, remarkably, he missed the Nechako River confluence, which would have been exactly what he was looking for, namely a large river from the west. Had he seen the Nechako, it is likely that he would have proceeded west up that river and there would be no Mackenzie Pass in south Tweedsmuir today.

Instead, he proceeded south down the Fraser until, warned by natives about obstacles ahead (notably the Fraser Canyon), he turned back and proceeded some 400 kilometres overland from the Fraser River via Poncho (now Punchaw) Lake just south of present day Prince George. He was guided by natives over their ancient grease trail. Mackenzie crossed the mountain pass that now bears his name on Wednesday July 17, 1793, where shortly afterwards his party encountered a fierce hail storm similar to the one that we experienced near Crystal Lake.

It is interesting to note that we staged our trip from a campsite on the headwaters of the famous Dean River, while Mackenzie ended his journey on a defensible rock in the Dean Channel.

[i] http://www.greasetrail.com/trail

[ii] http://www.hikecanada.org

[iii] 'Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie' published in 1970 by Cambridge University Press; containing Mackenzie's original 1801 version titled 'Voyages From Montreal, On The River St. Laurence, Through The Continent Of North America, To The Frozen And Pacific Oceans.'

Group picture (Photo: Mike Nash)


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Two Trips: Sunshine Coast Trail/Tin Hat Mountain and Tonquin/Ramparts

By Ron Dart
Chilliwack Outdoor Club & ACC National

Sunshine Coast Trail/Tin Hat Mountain: May 29–31, 2019

The Chilliwack Outdoor Club (COC) has done most of the Northern, Central and Southern parts of the Sunshine Coast Trail. We had exquisite weather for May 29–31, 2019, so we caught the early Horseshoe Bay Ferry and a few hours later (another ferry ride), we were at Powell River and on an arranged boat ride up Powell Lake to Fiddlehead Landing Hut (COC had done the 2-day trek there last year).

We were out of the boat and on our trail by about 2:00 pm, and after a lengthy uphill trudge, most arrived at the well-perched Tin Hat Hut about 6:30 pm—dinner done, we took in a generous sunset.

On May 30th, most of the group (be warned—no water at Tin Hat Hut), headed south on the SCT towards Lewis Lake and Elk Lake Hut. Again splendid and not to be forgotten views of forests, glacier-ringed peaks and well-watered lakes below. The tribe was back at Tin Hat by late afternoon, plenty of photos taken from the summit of Tin Hat Mountain and dinners on the rocks to remember.

On May 31st, we were gone from Tin Hat by 5:30 am and back at Fiddlehead Landing (site of a controversial commune) by 8:30 am. The boat picked us up before noon on the 31st, a fine cruise down the lengthy Powell Lake, ferry caught 2:30 pm at Saltery Bay and back in the Fraser Valley by early evening.

Participants: Sue Abegg, Judy Pasemko, *Cindy Waslewsky, Nadine Bauman, John Laframboise, Don Field and Ron Dart (trip organizer/reporter)*

Tin Hat Hut (Photo: Judy Pasemko)

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Tonquin Valley/Ramparts: August 4–8, 2019

Those who have spent time in the Tonquin Valley (south of Jasper) live into memories never to be forgotten. The Rampart range emerges like a massive rock castle that stretches alongside Amethyst Lake and further. The trip began with an overnighter at Edith Cavell Hostel (such sights from the bountiful height). The morning of August 5th, 2019, we were on the Tonquin trail to the Ramparts. We followed Astoria Creek, the trail branching off about 7 km, one turn to Waites-Gibson Hut, the other to campsites near Amethyst Lake and Tonquin Valley Adventures cabins. Some of the trail was still muddy (a wetter, less fire-prone summer), but the trail was quite doable. We had decided to try the cabin approach (having done the ACC hut before), with horses carrying in our food (made for lighter knapsacks). The trip in was a blue-sky beauty.

On August 6th, having access to a rowboat, we rowed across Amethyst Lake, scrambled up some scree, but dark clouds and rain threatening, we headed back to the larger guest cabin. It rained most of the day, and Tonquin Valley Adventures became, for many hikers, a dry place as they did the 2–3 days Astoria-Maccarib loop, caribou aplenty in the flats. August 7th was a bounty of a blue canopy day, so it was in the boat again. We rowed up and down Amethyst and stopped, a few times, at the scan-

beaches at the base of the Ramparts. A couple of the glaciers were breaking off from the Ramparts, and the thunder of their calving and rocks-ice cascading down the mountainside made for quite an afternoon show.

On August 8th we left Tonquin Valley Adventures by about 8:00 am and arrived back at Edith Cavell Hostel by 2:00 pm. A rather large grizzly (called Old Grumpy by local guides) played cat and mouse with us as we left. This was, I think, one of the 10 best Rocky Mountain trips.

Participants: Abe/Shirley Gotze, Karin Dart, Ron Dart (trip organizer and reporter)

(Photo: Shirley Goetze)

Brazeau Loop: A grand tour of Jasper's southern ranges

By Mike Nash
Caledonia Ramblers

All photos by Mike Nash

Introduction

I have hiked and backpacked in Canada for 50 years, many times off trail and in less traveled parts of British Columbia. My hikes into the more remote places in northwestern B.C. were with small, informal groups of two to four people, while other trips such as our recent Rainbow Range hike in South Tweedsmuir[i] were with larger, organized parties. Two years ago, having reached the liberating age of a septuagenarian, I decided on an impulse to solo hike the populous Skyline Trail in Jasper National Park[ii] .

High profile trails like the Skyline can book up months in advance, but it's possible for an individual or single tent party to take advantage of cancellations at short notice if your itinerary is flexible. That flexibility is one of the benefits of retirement, and short notice means a decent chance of finding good weather. My wife was away in eastern Canada when I hiked the Skyline Trail for the first time, so the following year, in July 2018, we repeated it together.

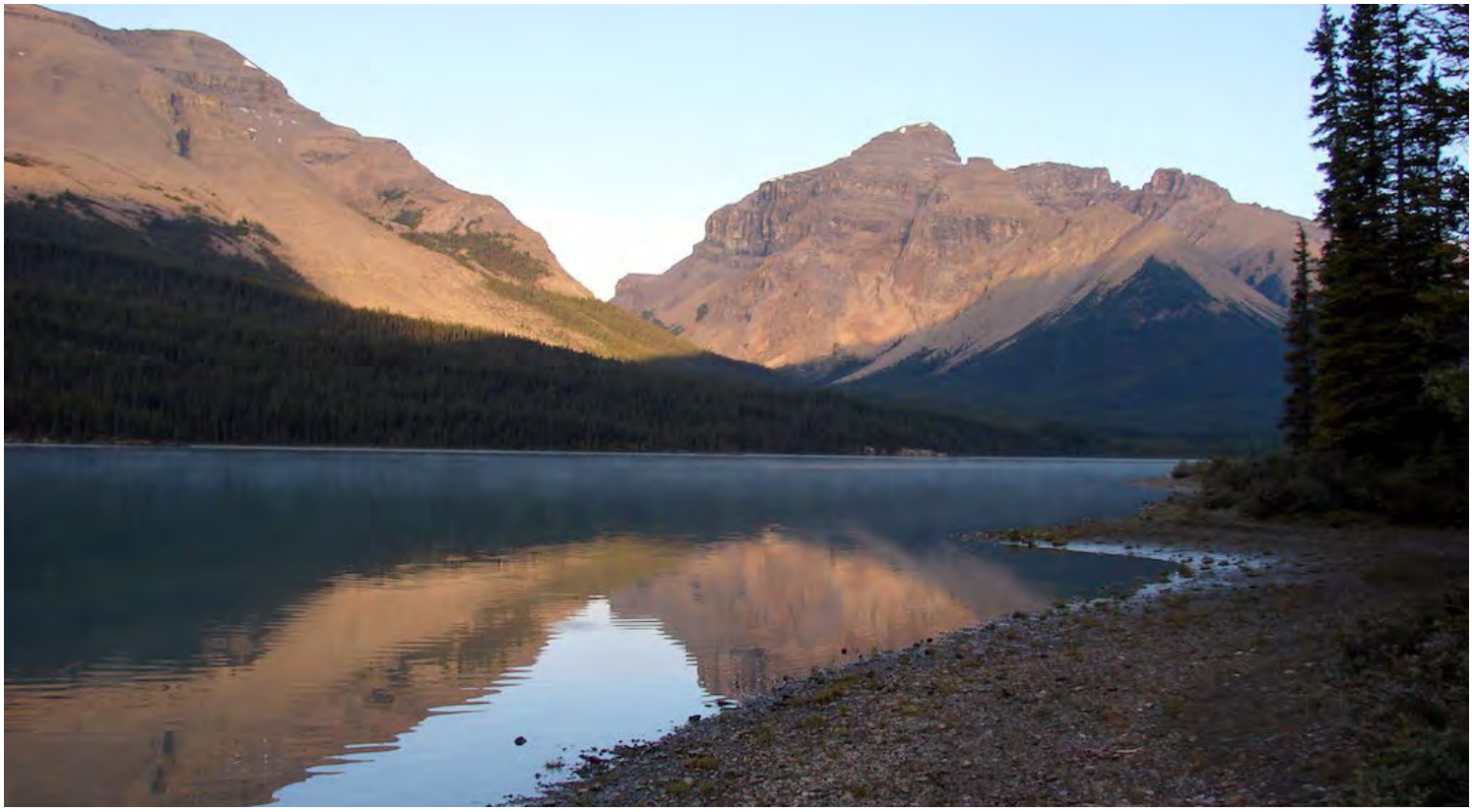
The Brazeau Loop

What to do next? Judy had arranged a road trip with her sister in July 2019, so I planned a five-day solo backpack of the 81-kilometre Brazeau Loop in southern Jasper National Park while she was away. This hike is described on the park's website as the 'grand tour of the southern ranges' and is said to be one of the best in the Canadian Rockies. Nearly twice the length of the Skyline Trail, it goes over five high mountains passes, with river valleys, subalpine forests, a large subalpine lake, and alpine meadows in between, all with interesting geology, flora and fauna.

The main access point is the Nigel Creek trailhead in Banff National Park near the midpoint of the Jasper-Banff Icefields Parkway, meaning that it is equally accessible from South and North Central BC and Alberta. And for me, one of the great things about living in B.C.'s northern capital is that we are only four hours from Canada's Rocky Mountain parks on scenic and lightly traveled highways.

First Attempt – Decision to Turn Around

The summer of 2019 began without the



Brazeau Lake with morning alpen glow

pervasive wildfire smoke of the previous two years; but the cool, wet spring meant a late start to the backcountry hiking season in the Rockies. As I prepared to leave for my hike, Parks Canada's website still showed all the Brazeau trails to be in poor condition, with wet and muddy sections. As well, looking ahead to my fourth day crossing of Jonas Shoulder and Jonas Pass (the crux of the route), the forecast was for rain and snow, which was in fact what happened.

On top of this, it rained all night and most of the day going in, so that my gear was damp before I even started the hike. I overnighted in Mount Robson Park, lingered over coffee and snacks in Jasper, and took my time driving to the trailhead in rain that was at times heavy. Consequently I got a late start at 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon on July 24th, and just two hours later I made the difficult decision to turn-around just before Nigel Pass. Knowing when to stop is a key factor in having a safe, enjoyable experience in the backcountry, but that doesn't make the decision easy.

Apart from trail conditions and weather, there were other factors bearing on my decision to turn around that afternoon: At age 73, and especially hiking solo[=], there was a non-trivial possibility (and consequence) of a slip and injury in the prevailing conditions. As well, the Brazeau Loop is known for grizzly bear encounters, which later proved to be the case for me. Added to that, my new lightweight backpack wasn't working well, with too much weight for the pack size; my right knee was bothering me; plus I had not done anything this big for several years.

As I hiked towards a go/no decision that afternoon, I mentally went through a risk assessment and concluded that I was ticking too many boxes. Backcountry accidents usually result from multiple contributing factors and small decisions. It's important to pay attention to such details, and especially to whether what you are doing still feels right. It was a hard choice to turn around after so much preparation and anticipation, but in hindsight it was the right choice for me at that particular time. Of course, that didn't stop me from second-guessing the decision all the way back to the car[iv] .

In truth, it was a finely balanced choice; if just one factor had been different, such as my backpack feeling OK, I would likely have pushed on. As it was, I had covered some new ground most of the way to Nigel Pass, and there would be fewer unknowns for a possible retry. With an uncomfortable backpack still heavy with six days of food, it was after 7:30 p.m. when I reached my car, and midnight when I got back to Prince George, having failed to find a vacant campsite enroute.

Next morning, a phone call to Parks Canada got me a partial refund, and a few days later I rebooked the Brazeau Loop for late August. In the meantime,

Judy and I joined the Caledonia Ramblers for the weeklong Rainbow Range hike, which turned out to be an enjoyable and successful trip. By late August, boosted by the psychological and physical conditioning of that comparable backpacking trip; with knowledge gleaned from my July reconnaissance, and with one of the better weather windows of the season for Jasper National Park, I was, as they say, 'good to go' for a second solo attempt.

Second Try – Not So Immutable Landscapes

Leaving the trailhead at 2 p.m. on August 25th, I hiked the first two kilometres of fire access road to 'Camp Parker' which, in the early years of the Icefields Parkway was the halfway stop in what was then a two-day drive. Descending to Nigel Creek from Camp Parker, I was immediately confused by what I saw: everything had changed since I was there in July. The footbridge over Nigel Creek was gone, and there was a tangle of freshly uprooted trees that had obviously come from somewhere else and smelled like fresh-cut lumber in a working sawmill. The trees were strewn about a wide debris field of boulders, overturned vegetation mats, and other materials. There had been no warning sign at the trailhead, nor anything on the park website the day before, suggesting that the destruction before me was quite recent.

I walked up and down the now turbid creek looking for a way to cross. Since this was only the first, and hitherto benign-looking creek-crossing of the trip, what would the rest of the route be like? I was apprehensive that I would encounter a lot more of the same, and once again I considered abandoning the trip. That would have been a mistake, because I later learned that this had been caused by a localized debris slide higher up Nigel Creek rather than a general weather event.

We often think of mountains as immutable, but apart from this new slide I saw plenty of evidence on this trip of old landslide activity in not-so-geological timeframes. I also learned that two day-hikers on the popular walk up to Nigel Pass had found themselves benighted by the debris flow. They had spent the night huddled under a tree within sight of the highway, waiting for the torrent to abate so that they could cross. This is illustrative of why day hikers need to be prepared to spend one or two unexpected nights out, even on popular and easy trails.

In the meantime, there was a single tree bridging the creek, and by extending my trekking poles to the maximum, I found that I was able to feel the creek bottom and inch across the log without getting my feet wet. I was barely half an hour into the trip, and I had already had my first adventure.

Flawed Backcountry Reservation System

I made good time after that, leaving Banff and entering Jasper National Park in the confused and rugged terrain of Nigel Pass. At this place, the Great Divide Trail[v] joins the Nigel Pass, Brazeau and South Boundary Trails, having crossed Cataract Pass from the White Goat Wilderness four kilometres east-southeast of Nigel Pass. The GDT is beginning to see more hiker traffic, with several people reportedly coming through this summer; although managing their backcountry camping permits in the national parks with a necessarily flexible itinerary must pose a challenge for through-hikers. If we are serious about developing long distance hiking trails in Canada, like those south of the border, there should be a one-stop, flexible permitting system for through-hikers in the national parks.

After a rock-hopping creek crossing at Nigel Pass, the trail first climbs through a boulder field and then quickly descends to the headwaters of the Brazeau River in a flourish of new scenery. Emerging from a rocky cascade, the nascent river meanders through a verdant meadow to pass under a narrow bridge that leads to the Boulder Creek campsite. Most hikers prefer to continue on for another three kilometres to the larger Four Point campsite, but that was already fully booked when I made my reservation.

Boulder Creek had also shown as three-quarters booked, but I had it to myself that first night. This reflects a failing of the reservation system in that every campsite I stayed in had several no-shows, meaning that people are being turned away needlessly. The same thing is happening in Mount Robson Provincial Park on the popular Berg Lake Trail, where it has become hard to get reservations while some tent sites go unused. I recognize the irony in that I had contributed to this on my first Brazeau attempt, but the backcountry reservation system needs rethinking, perhaps with trailhead and through-hiker quotas rather than fixed campsite bookings.

Boulder Creek is a pleasant, but brushy campsite, albeit a bit spooky when there alone. I arrived at about 6 p.m. and I had just got my tent set up when it began to rain. The shower only lasted for an hour, but it was enough to soak the tent and the underbrush crowding the trail, and complicate the next morning's departure. I thought about setting up my new lightweight tarp to cook supper under, but that wasn't necessary as the campsite is blessed with a large tree that shelters one end of a picnic table from the rain.

Brazeau River and Brazeau Lake

After a pleasant night under a brilliant star-filled sky, I had a leisurely start the next day. An hour later I passed the Four Point campsite at the intersection of the Brazeau River and Jonas Pass trails. If things went well, I would be returning to this camp from Jonas Pass on day 4. In the meantime I had the longest stretch of the hike in front of me that day, a total of 21 kilometres along the Brazeau River from Boulder Creek to Brazeau Lake. The trail was mostly flat and in good shape, alternating between forest and brushy meadows, and generally quite scenic. The bugs were non-existent, although I'm sure it would be a different story earlier in the season. I made good time despite my late start, arriving at the five-kilometre long, azure-coloured Brazeau Lake at 5 p.m. to find one couple camped there. They generously shared some excellent single malt Scotch with me later that evening.

There was one unusual thing about the hike along the Brazeau River. On the first afternoon I had paused to chat with an older hiker who was coming out, and who went to great lengths to explain to me how best to ford the Brazeau River. Accordingly, I spent the entire second day needlessly wondering where the ford was and how I was going to cross. I can only surmise that this individual, who otherwise seemed to know the area well, did not know that the hiker trail had been relocated entirely to the west side of Brazeau River some five years earlier, and that a ford was no longer necessary. I could only wonder what route he had taken. The Brazeau River section of the loop used to have a poor reputation with hikers who had to share the muddy trail on the east side of the river with horses.

The Brazeau Slide

After another pleasant night, I packed up my camp early on day 3 and retraced the 400-metre side trail back to the rustic bridge crossing the northwest fork of the Brazeau River, whence I began the climb around the lake that would lead me to John-John Creek and eventually to Poboktan Pass. The trail soon emerged from the forest and crossed an interesting and fairly young geological feature, the Brazeau Lake Slide. It had occurred in 1933 on a mountainside southwest of the lake, and ran two kilometres to reach into the lake. It was apparently a slow-moving debris slide, and the first park warden on the scene, Charlie Matheson, reported that the ground was still quivering. It was this quivering that formed numerous and distinctive conical mounds called mollards, which are believed to have been built by the sifting and sorting of rocks and debris. The slide was the 'largest landslide in the 20th Century' according to one guidebook, although it doesn't qualify what that was relative to.

Rustic engineered bridge over the northwest fork of the Brazeau River

Poboktan Pass looking west to Poboktan Valley

After crossing the slide and John-John Creek, the trail works its way up John-John valley until it reaches a large, remnant terminal moraine that likely marked the maximum glacial extent at the end of the Little Ice Age around 1850. John-John Creek has since forced its way through the moraine, causing me to wonder if the breach might have released a glacially dammed lake and contributed in some way to the Brazeau Lake Slide.

Poboktan Pass

After climbing around the moraine, the trail passed through the John-John campsite which was deserted at mid-day, and then climbed steeply out of the forest into the wide alpine meadow approach to Poboktan Pass. This three or four kilometre long scenic pass was the best surprise of the trip. The weather held fine, golden eagles wheeled overhead, and I very much enjoyed my slow wander through this delightful area with stops for snacks and water. I caught up with my campsite companions of the night before. They had paused to allow one of them, a professional artist from Edmonton, to make well-rendered pencil sketches of the scenery, while her partner made coffee for them both.

As the afternoon wore on, I crested the pass and began the descent down to the Poboktan Valley and the Jonas Cutoff campsite, from where I would begin my return leg of the circuit the next morning. The name Poboktan is taken from the Stoney word for owl. Enroute, I passed an old steel post and insulator that used to carry a telegraph wire over the pass. These lines were installed in the 1920s to provide emergency communication with remote warden cabins. They have long since been replaced by modern devices such as satellite phones, but remnants of the old lines can still be seen.

Jonas Cutoff

Jonas Cutoff is a popular campsite, situated at the junction of the Brazeau Loop and the Poboktan Pass trail, an alternate access originating at the Sunwapta Warden Station. Set in a ravine, this attractive campsite is the staging point for the hardest and (in good weather) the most spectacular part of the Brazeau Loop: over Jonas Shoulder and down through Jonas Pass. At 9 p.m., however, it began to rain, and this continued through the night. Rain on the tent can create a peaceful atmosphere that is conducive to sleep, but on this occasion it had the opposite effect as I contemplated the next day's crux hike.

At 5 a.m. the following morning the rain stopped. Still restless, I took advantage of the respite to pack up my gear and cook breakfast. By 7 a.m. the skies had mostly cleared, and ten minutes later I was underway. The two other tents at the site had yet to show any sign of their occupants stirring as I quietly hit the trail. I climbed alone into the

picturesque morning, with alpen glow on the ridges around me. I soon left the trees behind and climbed into my own personal alpine sunrise, pausing a few times to take photographs in the early-morning light.

Grizzlies

In the tent the night before I had been reading from the last, unfinished work of renowned First Nations author, Richard Wagamese. In it, he talked about the importance of peripheral vision while walking, especially with a tendency to look at one's feet on rough ground. He described an exercise of holding one's arms out to the side with the thumbs up, finding the spot where you can first see them in your peripheral vision, and then trying to maintain that peripheral awareness. I practiced that as I climbed up through the alpine meadows below Jonas Shoulder that morning. Sometimes the universe just speaks to you, as I was about to discover.

Suddenly, I became aware of movement above and to the right of me. Focusing on that spot I identified what appeared to be a young adult grizzly bear coming more or less directly towards me. Simultaneously, I became aware of an animal calling somewhere off to my right, but I was so focused on the bear that I only half-consciously registered the sound as an elk or some other animal to be checked out later. This is the tunnel vision effect that can occur in high-intensity, surprise, and/or survival moments; and it is why Wagamese was suggesting practicing peripheral awareness. Continuing to focus on the grizzly that was closing in on me, I decided that it needed to know for sure that I was there and that I was human. Waving my arms, I yelled "Hey!" a few times, at the same time un-holstering my bear spray and climbing sideways away from the trail.

Having done all that I could to mitigate the situation, I decided that I might as well start taking photographs, which is something I have generally avoided during prior grizzly encounters in favour of active avoidance. I also turned my attention to the continuing cries below to my right, which were now sounding like a cross between an elk bugling and the distant roar of Hollywood's 'Bart the Bear.' I quickly identified a second grizzly that appeared to be calling the first bear, and I surmised that I was dealing with a female and a three-year old cub. Unlike black bears that break up their families in the second year, grizzlies often keep their cubs for three years.

I realized that I was in a different situation than I had first supposed, especially as a second big cub now ambled into sight above the first. I was at one corner of a triangle, with two curious three-year olds 'feeling their oats' at a second vertex, and a clearly frustrated mama bear at the third. High-spirited teenagers came to mind. If I had had better peripheral awareness, I might have seen the mother sooner and I most definitely would not have waved and shouted at her cub. However, she was tolerant of my presence and continued calling to the cubs until they eventually acquiesced and ran down to join her. The maturity of the cubs, the open country, and her obvious familiarity with hikers were likely factors in her tolerance, and my favour.

I later learned that the two Edmonton backpackers came up about an hour behind me and encountered the same bears, also without incident. By then, the bears had apparently had enough of people and took off at a high rate of speed. I was impressed watching and filming[vi] the cubs during my encounter as they ran down to their mother. Don't ever think of trying to outrun an animal that can match the speed of a race horse even on uneven terrain.

Jonas Pass

The early morning adrenaline helped offset any lingering effects of sleep deprivation, and boosted me to the high point of the trip over the 2,450 m (8,038 feet) Jonas Shoulder. There, I was instantly treated to a spectacular sun-lit view of the still partly glaciated Jonas Valley. One of the delights of cresting a new mountain ridge is the whole new world that is suddenly revealed on the other side.

Descending, the path led for another 16 kilometres over Jonas Pass and down to my final camp at Four Point. Jonas Pass was so long and gradual that it was hard to discern the apex, save for a small unsigned cairn where I paused to snap a selfie. Except for the last few kilometres down to the Brazeau River, it was all wide open alpine with generally low relief and several hanging glaciers above the south side. I passed two young women hikers going the other way and I warned them about the bear, as did the Edmonton couple later; I was not sure from their expressions that they appreciated knowing. There is no overnight camping allowed in Jonas Pass and the entire Jonas section must be completed in one day. The pass is named for Chief Jonas, a Stoney elder who first told University of Toronto geologist/explorer, A. P. Coleman about the route in 1893.

The rest of my trip went without incident, and on day 5 I hiked back over Nigel Pass to the trailhead to wind up one of my most memorable backpacks ever. Hiking alone allowed me to go entirely at my own pace and to be thoroughly engaged with the country. Yet I was never completely alone, meeting

occasional hikers on the trail once or twice a day, and having company at every campsite save the first. For safety, I had left a detailed itinerary and map with my wife, and I carried a PLB with me for use in an emergency.

If You Go

The best time of year is likely mid-July to early September. For up to date information, visit Parks Canada's websites for Jasper National Park Backcountry Camping[vii] and Trail Conditions[viii].

Maps

1:50,000 Canadian Topographical Map 083C06 Sunwapta Peak. The 'Friends in High Places' version includes national park trails, but lacks the legend on the back that government topo maps typically have.

1:100,000 National Geographic Series Map 902 for Jasper South / Jasper National Park. The NG topo map is waterproof, tear-resistant, packed with additional information and, by virtue of its smaller scale and using both sides of the sheet, it covers a much larger geographic area, including the Poboktan Trail alternative access / escape route.

I took both with me, having purchased them at the Jasper Visitor Centre. While a good map isn't absolutely necessary in good weather, it definitely adds interest to the hike and would be essential for navigation in bad weather or whiteouts in the high mountain passes, or if you should get off the trail somewhere.

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[i] See'Rainbow Reprise' by Dave King, in this issue.

[ii] Skyline Hike, July 2017: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ep8WzN-eTA5E&

[iii] For a discussion on the pros and cons of hiking solo see 'How to hike grizzly country': http://www.doctorsreview.com/features/how-hike-grizzly-country/

[iv] Nigel Pass, July 2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BVpc-I3_AM

[v] The Great Divide Trail: http://www.greatdividetrail.com

[vi] The Brazeau Loop, August 2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pf-daCDoYmlc&list=PLy0NTkFnAEe2c-Ql0jjesyfu_1YVgcrQ1g&

[vii] Jasper National Park Backcountry Camping: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/jasper/activ/passez-stay/arrierepays-backcountry/sugg-sentiers_trip-ideas/Brazeau

[viii] Jasper National Park Trail Conditions: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/jasper/activ/activ-experience/sentiers-trails/etat-sentiers-trail-conditions

Jonas Pass

Member Club Grant Updates

Mountain Mentors

By Rosie Langford - Mountain Mentors Program Manager

Mountain Mentors is a mentorship program for self-identified womxn in Vancouver and the Sea to Sky Corridor. We're excited to announce that Mountain Mentors, in partnership with the FMCBC, has been chosen as a 2019 The North Face Canada Explore Fund grant recipient! Mountain Mentors is one of 7 Explore Fund grantees this year across a diverse range of organizations helping to remove barriers to get people outside. With this support, Mountain Mentors will be organizing a series of skillshares that creates accessible opportunities for self-identified womxn to hone their skills in alpine sport at all levels and empowers them to step into leadership roles in their outdoor community and beyond.

We are so grateful to be the recipients of the 2019 FMCBC Member Club Grant and are looking forward to the continued expansion and strengthening of our community through the following winter 2019/2020 events:

- Wendy Thompson Hut Trip: This is a 4-night hut trip for our mentorship pairs. Participants are given the opportunity to hone in their backcountry skills in a supportive group and with the help of two female guides!
- The North Face SkillShare Series: This is a series of single-evening and single-day events open to the broader outdoors community. These events will not only provide an opportunity to practice important skills like companion rescue, but also serve as a platform for leadership opportunities for our mentees.

This winter, we had over 220 applicants to the program. We are so appreciative for the engine of the program: our volunteers, directors, social media coordinator and program manager. And, of course, none of this would be possible without the grit and drive of the womxn we are so fortunate to have in our program.

See you out there!

(*Photo: Mountain Mentors*)

(Photo: Ellie Hand)

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.

Learn more about our clubs' projects at:
mountainclubs.org/programs/member-club-grant

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

While we don't maintain an office location that's open to the public, we do require a space for storing important items and for occasional meetings. We recently moved to Taiga Works in downtown Vancouver and we'd like to thank them for their generous contribution of office space!

We'd also like to thank MEC for generously providing office space for the past many years. We truly appreciate our longstanding relationship with MEC—and our common founders!

Mountains and the Arts: Banff and Whistler

By Ron Dart

Chilliwack Outdoor Club and ACC National

Many are the fine painters in Canada that have aptly and graphically focused on the mountains. The Whyte Museum in Banff was significantly inspired and brought into being by Peter (1905-1966) and Catharine (1906-1979) Robb Whyte in June 16, 1968. The Whyte Museum, since then, has told the tale of the emergence, growth and maturation of Banff and the Rockies, but it has also housed, consistently so, in various forums, the diverse artistic abilities of Peter and Catharine Robb Whyte (their teachers, peers and those who have followed them as interpretive painters of mountains).

I was fortunate to be in Banff for many a week in 2018 when the Whyte Museum did a special exhibition called "Artistry Revealed: Peter Whyte, Catharine Robb Whyte and Their Contemporaries"—the finely published book of the same name is a beauty worth the buying and worth both reading and meditatively painting pondering many a moment.

Those who have some interest in painting and mountains (and in trekking to places where some of the best Canadians have been inspired) should purchase copies of two books by Lisa Christensen: *A Hiker's Guide to the Rocky Mountain Art of Lawren Harris* (2000) and *The Lake O'Hara Art of J.E. H. MacDonald and Hiker's Guide* (2003). The relationship between Peter-Catharine Robb-Whyte, Lawren Harris, J.E. H. MacDonald and the Group of Seven brings together mountain rambling and high level art. Many are the secrets that the mountains hold from those who lack artistic sensibilities and the Whyte Museum has done much to reveal that which is often concealed to peak baggers.

I was fortunate this past summer to spend lingering time with the fine photographer and longtime resident of Banff, Roy Andersen. Roy was a close friend of Catharine Robb Whyte and many was the story he shared with me about Catharine. It seems a film about her life is in the offing and much awaited. The Whyte Museum also hosted, from June 16–September 2, 2019, "Peter Whyte and Catharine Robb Whyte: An Eclectic Eye for Collecting"—this exhibit, in many ways, highlighted their breadth and renaissance tendencies.

2019 signalled the 40th year since Catharine Robb Whyte died and the Audain Art Museum in Whistler hosted a follow up of sorts to the 2018 exhibit of Peter-Catharine Whyte. The name was the same and the book that told the fuller tale was sold at Audain: *Artistry Revealed: Peter Whyte, Catharine Robb Whyte and Their Contemporaries*. There is, of course, the more popular biography of Peter/Catharine Whyte, *Romance in the Rockies: The Life and Adventures of Catharine and Peter Whyte* (2003), but for those who are keen to delve and dig deeper into the weaving together of mountains and significant Canadian painters, the books mentioned above are more comprehensive. Some of the letters that passed between Peter and Catharine Robb-Whyte and Lawren Harris (housed in the Whyte Museum) reveal much about a significant phase of Canadian mountain life and the arts (where, indeed, peaks and people meet).

I might add, by way of conclusion, that from September 21, 2019 to January 19, 2020 the Audain Art Museum will be hosting a special showing entitled, Emily Carr: Fresh Seeing-French Modernism and the West Coast. It was when Emily Carr was in France from 1910–1911 that her style took a decided and more creative turn that, in some ways, birthed the Emily Carr of Canadian and West Coast myth and legend (Carr being a creative interpreter of the forests that matched Lawren Harris, Peter-Catharine's commitment to mountain life and culture). And, Lawren Harris was a faithful correspondent with Emily Carr also. It is fitting he spent many a year on the West Coast, as Harris, Carr and Peter-Catharine were bearers and ambassadors of creative and imaginative Canadian outdoor and mountain culture.

Book Review: J.B. Harkin: Father of Canadian National Parks

By E.J. (Ted) Hart

Reviewed by Ron Dart
Chilliwack Outdoor Club & ACC National

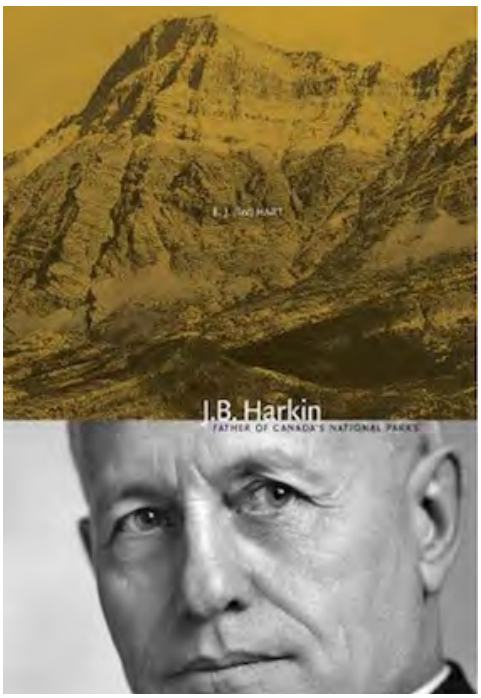
There has been in the last few decades an ongoing debate and dialogue about the differences between conservation and preservation, wilderness and wildness. There has also, inevitably so, been a perennial tension and clash about how best to challenge those who undermine minimal (much less meaningful) ecological sustainability and responsibility. What is the validity and limitation of protest and advocacy politics? Is there a legitimate place for those most committed to the environment to become politicians at provincial, federal and municipal levels? And, what role can responsible civil servants play in creating structures that limit and even halt irresponsible mining, logging, hunting and large scale damming projects?

J.B.Harkin (1875-1955) was, indeed, the father of Canada's national parks and the battles he fought for many a decade as a civil servant to create the earliest phase of the national park system has been ably and brilliantly told in the full-bodied tome by Ted Hart. Harkin waged many a consistent struggle against developers, forestry department, hunters, miners and a burgeoning tourist industry as he navigated a none too easy pathway in expanding parks in Canada. There are those who argue he pandered too much to the business side of parks, others he did not do enough for them. But, Hart's generously developed thesis walks the extra mile to place Harkin in his historic context, highlight the unsolved riddles of such a context and give the positive nod to Harkin where it is rightly due.

*J.B. Harkin: Father of Canada's National Park*s is certainly worth the read if for no other reason than Harkin has been mostly forgotten today and yet many of our national parks are, now, his fully grown and mature children. Hart tells the graphic and poignant tale of Harkin's fastidious life and work in 17 compelling and must read chapters (with a fine Introduction, also). Many are the superb photographs in the book that illuminate the text in a pleasantly balanced manner. If it had not been for Harkin's commitment to national parks as a means of living in the preservation-conservation tension, a tension that irritated those who were either too far on the business-development right or wilderness-wildness left (an unsolved and unsolvable riddle in some ways), our park system would have been much different.

Harkin was inspired by those like John Muir and yet, as a civil servant, he had to implement such a vision in a pragmatic way—much more difficult than doing the advocacy work as Sierra Club does. The sheer strength of Hart's book is the way he highlights, again and again, how Harkin threaded the needle wisely and well on many controversial issues, each chapter in the tome probing ever deeper into the political debates and personality clashes and tensions of each decade and year.

I have no doubt recommending this superb book for anyone interested in understanding the role Harkin played in the formation of Canada's national



parks and, equally so, how the issues he struggled to make sense of are as much with us today as they were with Harkin in his age and ethos.

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J.B. Harkin: Father of Canadian National Parks by E.J. (Ted) Hart; University of Alberta Press: Edmonton, AB, 2010; ISBN 9780888645128, softcover, 592 pages; $16.00

Travels in Alaska: Three immersions into Alaskan wilderness and culture

By John Muir

Reviewed by Mike Nash
Caledonia Ramblers

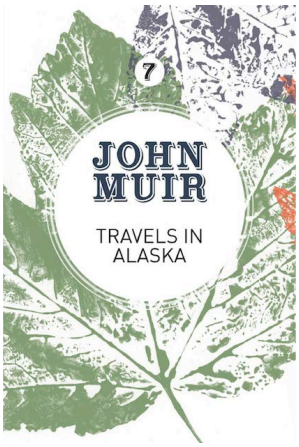
The name *John Muir* exemplifies conservation and recreation ideas of today, especially in his birth country of Scotland and his naturalized country of the U.S. to which he moved with his family at age 11. Sometimes known as the 'father of the national parks,' Muir was a prolific communicator and influencer for the preservation of forests and wild spaces; and he never forgot his Scottish roots, a country where he is also recognized. The 214 mile (344 km) John Muir Trail in California's Sierra Nevada Range, the 130 mile (245 km) John Muir Way in Scotland, and the Muir Glacier in Alaska's Glacier Bay are among present-day features named for him.

His writings invoke images as vivid as the best photographs, especially of the flora, geology and the glacial history of western North America. His immutable narratives and the era in which they were written give us a rare glimpse of the world of 140 years ago. He co-founded of one of the world's most influential conservation organizations, the Sierra Club, and was a key instigator in the establishment of the first national parks.

Muir died from the effects of influenza on Christmas Eve, 1914 at the age of 76, with pages of his nearly completed final work, *Travels in Alaska* spread around him. The book was published the following year, and has been republished many times since, often as part of a single compendium, *John Muir: The Eight Wilderness Discovery Books*. The latest reproduction of the eight-volume series comes from the UK's acclaimed publisher of mountain literature, Vertebrate Publishing, with a new introduction and foreword by Muir expert, Terry Gifford.

The compact and rich narrative in *Travels in Alaska* demands that the reader pay attention: there is little room for skimming. The book covers three journeys that Muir made to southeast Alaska in 1879, 1880 and 1890. Muir couldn't get enough of the wildness that he found there, especially newly forming landscapes that were still emerging form the last Ice Age and that he compared to California's Sierra Nevada. His proposition that glaciation had been a major factor in forming the Yosemite Valley ran counter to accepted ideas and expert opinion of the day, but Muir's ideas ultimately held sway. Throughout the book, he draws many comparisons between the glaciated valleys that he explored in the Pacific Northwest and the Yosemite Valley.

All of these journeys were undertaken before the age of air travel, and of necessity (and opportunity) they included travel through, and side trips into nineteenth century British Columbia. While in Wrangell, he made several trips up the Stikine River into BC. On the first of these, he arrived in Glenora in the afternoon, with an overnight stop planned before the steamer was to depart for Wrangell early the following morning. Despite the lateness of the day, Muir grabbed the opportunity to explore. Setting out after 3 p.m., and mindful that the summer days were getting shorter, he aimed for a peak several miles to the north that entailed a bushwhack elevation gain that he estimated to be 7,000 feet. He reluctantly agreed to take along



a keen, but unseasoned companion who "insisted that he was a strong walker, could do a mountaineer's day's work in half a day, and would not hinder me in any way."

They planned to summit by dusk and descend through the night. Mr. Young, a missionary, mostly lived up to his promise, except for a fall just below the summit. Young's slip caused him to badly dislocate both arms, one of which Muir was able to re-set after helping him down to more level ground. The other arm had to wait until they got back to the ship the next morning after an epic descent through the night. The most likely peak matching Muir's description is 1,999 m (6,558 ft) Mount Glenora, with an elevation gain of 1,848 m (6,063 ft) from the river.

The irrepressible Young was undeterred by his misadventure and, ignoring rebukes from his fellow missionaries who thought he should be devoting his time to pursuits relevant to his calling, he accompanied Muir on other adventures into the wilds of Alaska and northwest BC. Their relationship was

mutually beneficial to Young's missionary work and sense of adventure, and to Muir's exploration work; and Muir later commented that he was fortunate to have found such a compatible traveling companion.

The book is devoted to the Pacific Northwest; that is to say to that part of Alaska that is almost entirely surrounded by British Columbia. So even the chapters that aren't set in BC are relevant to us here, as evidenced for me by a circle trip that my wife and I made in 2008 via the Alaska Marine Highway in which we saw some of the country that Muir had explored: youtube.com/watch?v=c97qaM0nasw&.

With an overriding interest in glaciology, Muir many times described seeing tens, and sometimes hundreds of glaciers from single vantage points. That brought to mind an 11-day fly-in backpacking trip that I and two companions made to the headwaters of the Kusawa, Takhini and Chilkat Rivers in the extreme northwest corner of BC in August 1997. We weren't too far from where the Canadian Iceman (Kwäday Dän Ts'ìnchi, or Long Ago Person Found) was discovered two years later. It was the wildest, most remote country that I have ever experienced, and as with Muir, we observed many glaciers from numerous vantage points: youtu.be/jUGZpERlFrM.

On his second trip to Alaska in 1880, Muir relates another epic adventure when once again he set out at 3 p.m. to explore the miles-wide Taylor Bay Glacier. His account of his return across the ice, with Young's dog as his sole companion, trying to find a way back through the maze of crevasses in failing daylight, is as gripping an account of ice travel that I have ever read.

Although Glacier Bay had been visited by earlier expeditions from Bering and Vancouver onwards, Muir, Young and their native companions and crewmen, traveling by native canoe, were the first to more fully explore Glacier Bay. Muir was later able to focus the world's attention on the phenomena of glacial change that was taking place there. Indeed, the Muir Glacier today is a shadow of its former extent that Muir had experienced, and even when he returned there after just ten years in 1890, it had already retreated by a mile and shipborne tourists were arriving by the hundreds. The fitting closing chapters to his last book describe his solo sled journey on that glacier, and the remarkable auroras that kept him awake through the nights.

In Travels in Alaska, Muir describes a landscape already in rapid climatic transition more than a century ago, as well as providing revealing ethnographic narratives of the Native Americans who he traveled with and met. The book is as readable today as when it was written, and is even more relevant to a world in increasing climatic and environmental upset; added to which it is simply a good, local, mountaineering adventure yarn.

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Travels in Alaska: Three immersions into Alaskan wilderness and culture by John Muir; Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1915; Vertebrate Publishing edition, 2018, with a new introduction and foreword by Terry Gifford; ISBN 978-1-911342-16-8; softcover, 188 pages, £9.99

The End of Ice: Bearing Witness and Finding Meaning in the Path of Climate Disruption

By Dahr Jamail

Reviewed by Mike Nash - Caledonia Ramblers

This is an important but profoundly disturbing work written by a west coast mountaineer, activist and award-winning journalist. Set against the backdrop of a rescue patrol on the upper levels of Alaska's Mount Denali, the eight chapters focus on different aspects of the climate crisis that is upon us, using a range of contexts and environments around the world. The book's conclusion is the most perplexing, being a mix of hope and fatalism, drawing on ideas of palliation, teachings of Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn, and indigenous cultures' ideas of obligations versus rights. The book closes with advice to "educate yourself and then you decide," and that is my advice to prospective readers of this book.

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The End of Ice: Bearing Witness and Finding Meaning in the Path of Climate Disruption by Dahr Jamail; The New Press: New York, NY, 2019; ISBN 9781620972342, hardcover, 272 pages; $25.99

Welcome to the FMCBC

BC Whitewater - Associate Member

Founded in 2018, BC Whitewater is a non-profit society that was created to advocate for publicly accessible, free-flowing rivers throughout the province. British Columbia has world-class recreational opportunities on its rivers that are worth protecting. It is BC Whitewater's mission to improve access to BC's waterways and keep them wild. The goal of BCWW is to consolidate the voices of paddlers to have a stronger voice as stakeholders of BC's wilderness.

BC Whitewater's main initiatives include:

- The implementation of a free online guidebook for paddling in BC
- Supporting local projects for improving river access
- Representing the paddling community of BC as a stakeholder in conflicts involving river access and conservation

(Photo: Ben Ghertner)

Malkolm Boothroyd watches the plane leave at the put-in for the Kusawa River, Yukon / BC border (Photo: Nick Gottlieb)

Nouria Newman airs it out on Rogers Creek, British Columbia (Photo: Nick Gottlieb)

Prince Rupert Backcountry Society - Member Club

The Prince Rupert Backcountry Society is a nonprofit society that supports and advocates for non-motorized, outdoor recreation activities in and around Prince Rupert, BC. Check them out on Facebook!

The crew of members and volunteers before the Prince Rupert Backcountry Society's Powder Pig Jig event on Nov. 16th, 2019. This fundraiser has been happening for years, but this recent event was the first one since the re-incorporation of the

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, outreach, grant writing, advocacy and more.

Contact us for more info:

info@mountainclubs.org / 604-873-6096 or talk to your club's FMCBC Rep.

Cover Photo

This issue's cover photo, taken by Dave Markel, was taken on an early December day trip last fall in the Monashees near Caballero peak. They went out to test new equipment and get the skiing muscles back into action. A great day in the mountains.

See more: @alpinelifer

Cloudburst Cover Photo Contest

We're looking for spring/summer action shots for our next cover of Cloudburst!

Email your entries to cloudburst@mountainclubs.org by April 1st, 2020

FMCBC MEMBER CLUBS

FRASER VALLEY
Backroads Outdoor Club – facebook.com/backroadsoutdoor
Bear Mountain Trail Society – bearmountaintrailsociety.blogspot.ca
Chilliwack Outdoor Club – chilliwackoutdoorclub.com
Chilliwack Park Society – chilliwackparksociety.ca
Valley Outdoor Association – valleyoutdoor.org

SOUTHERN INTERIOR
Central Okanagan Climbing Association – facebook.com/climbcoca
Columbia Valley Climbing Association – columbiavalleyclimbing.com
Kamloops Hiking Club – kamloopshikingclub.net
Kamloops Outdoor Club –kamloopsoutdoorclub.ca
Kootenay Mountaineering Club – kootenaymountaineeringclub.ca
Penticton Outdoors Club – pentictonoutdoorsclub.ca
Skaha Bluffs Park Watch Society – skahabluffsparkwatch.com
South Okanagan Trail Alliance – southokanagantrailalliance.com
Varsity Outdoors Club Okanagan – ubcsuo.ca/varsity-outdoor-club-okanagan

SOUTHWEST MAINLAND & SEA TO SKY
Alpine Club of Canada (Vancouver Section) – accvancouver.ca
Alpine Club of Canada (Whistler Section) – accwhistler.ca
Bowen Island Trail Society – bowenislandtrailsociety.ca
Friends of Garibaldi Park
Mountain Mentors – mountainmentors.org
North Shore Hikers Society – northshorehikers.org
North Vancouver Outdoors Club – northvanoutdoorsclub.ca
SFU Outdoors Club – facebook.com/groups/1481048385508320
Vancouver Rock Climbing Group – vrcg.ca
Varsity Outdoor Club (UBC) – ubc-voc.com

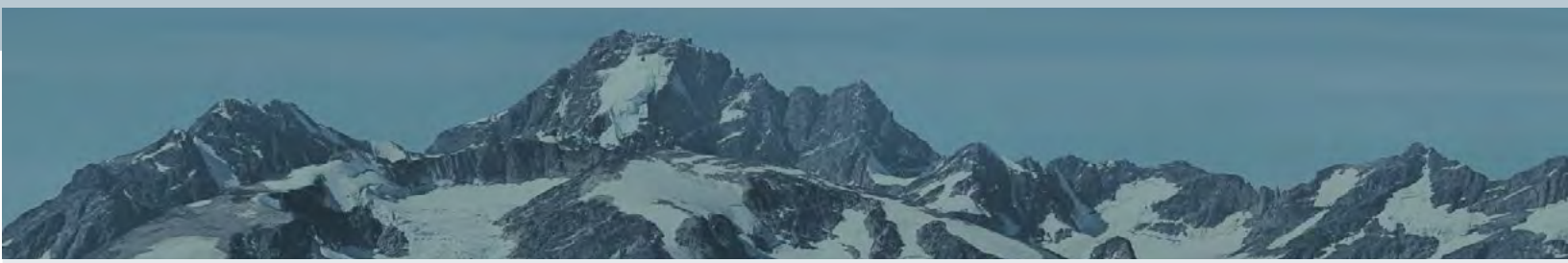
PROVINCE-WIDE CLUBS

SUNSHINE COAST - NORTH COAST
Mount Remo Backcountry Society – mtremo.ca
Powell River Parks and Wilderness Society – sunshinecoast-trail.com
Tetrahedron Outdoor Club – tetoutdoor.ca

VANCOUVER ISLAND & ISLANDS
Alberni Valley Outdoor Club – albernivalleyoutdoorclub.wordpress.com
Comox District Mountaineering Club – comoxhiking.com
Friends of Strathcona Park – friendsofstrathcona.org
Island Mountain Ramblers – islandmountainramblers.com
Outdoor Club of Victoria – ocv.ca
Quadra Island Outdoor Club – qioutdoorclub.org
Vancouver Island Trail Association – vi-trail.ca
Victoria Outdoor Club Meetup – meetup.com/Victoria-Outdoor-Club

CENTRAL & NORTHERN INTERIOR
Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society – bbss.ca
Caledonia Ramblers – caledoniaramblers.ca
Chetwynd Outdoors Society – chetoutdoors.wordpress.com
Fraser Headwaters Alliance – fraserheadwaters.org
Hickory Wing Ski Touring Club – tmrs.ca/members/hickory- wing-ski-touring-club
Prince Rupert Backcountry Society - facebook.com/Prince-Rupert-Back-country-Society-103142157816742
Ozalenka Alpine Club
Skeena Climbing Society – facebook.com/skeenaclimbingsociety

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
BC Whitewater - bcwhitewater.org
Squamish Access Society – squamishaccess.ca



Get involved. Take action.

By working with outdoor recreation organizations and 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.

There are many ways to show your support and make a difference:

- Join a member club or talk to your current club about becoming a member
- Make a donation to the FMCBC
- Volunteer your time by joining a regional committee
- Show your support by becoming an Individual or Associate Member
- Visit our website to learn about the latest issues affecting BC's backcountry and find out how to help

Learn more at: mountainclubs.org