



CLOUDBURST

Spring 1983.

the newsletter of the

FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN CLUBS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

P.O. BOX 33768 · STATION D · VANCOUVER, B.C. · V6J 4L6

representing hiking, climbing and conservation groups

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FEDERATION ACTIVITIES

BASIC AVALANCHE COURSE

A growing number of back country skiers is in need of courses in avalanche awareness. To help meet this need, the F.M.C.B.C. has this year, started to give short avalanche courses with the object to make trip leaders, organizers, and other persons involved in winter recreation more knowledgeable about winter mountain travel. The course is being run on a low budget basis as possible to keep the course fees low.

Topics covered include: snowpack formation, avalanche formation, stability evaluation, terrain evaluation, avalanche safety, avalanche rescue, snow pits and stability tests, and avalanche transceiver (pieps) practice. The course is two days long with the first day consisting mainly of lecture sessions, while the second day is held in the field. Emphasis is placed on the practical aspects of avalanche knowledge.

The tentative criteria for instructors has been: 1) Presently active in ski mountaineering, 2) snow and avalanche knowledge, and 3) ability to teach. The instructors for the F.M.C.B.C. avalanche courses this year have been Frank Baumann, Mike Suggett, Doug Herchmer, Peter Jordan and Graham Underhill. To maintain and add to the instructor base, Peter Schaerer, of the Canadian Avalanche Association, has offered to give a one or two day instructor seminar workshop early next winter. Suitable persons interested in attending and upgrading their skills to instruct courses in their areas should contact the F.M.C.B.C., preferably before June, if they would like the F.M.C.B.C. to apply for government funding to cover their travel expenses.

Persons from outside the Vancouver region desiring avalanche courses can contact the F.M.C.B.C. for names of possible instructors in their area. If no qualified instructors are available, the F.M.C.B.C. might be able to provide one. Financial assistance may be available for courses, so clubs are encouraged to inform the F.M.C.B.C. if they wish a course, preferably before June so the amount can be included in the F.M.C.B.C. grant application to the Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Fund.

Vancouver Island Avalanche Course - February 26th and 27th.

This is a basic avalanche course for winter recreationalists. The course will consist of a first day reviewing theory and a second day in the field. Those interested should be confident skiers and must bring their own pieps. The course will be limited to a minimum number of participants of 15 and a maximum of 20. At present, very few people have signed up or showed interest, which could mean cancellation of the course.

For information, contact: Neil Foster, 338-6120
Scott Larsen, 334-4532

MOUNTAIN FEST:

The F.M.C.B.C. will be holding a "Mountain Fest" on MAY 27 - 29, 1983 in Vancouver at the Robson Square Media Centre.

The purpose of the Mountain Fest is to promote interest and participation in non-mechanized, mountain-oriented, outdoor activities. We will be advertising the Fest publicity, and will seek attendance from members of hiking and cross-country skiing, and similar clubs.

This note is to ask all member clubs of F.M.C.B.C. to give their fullest possible support to make Mountain Fest a success. Please consider the following specific requests.

- (1) Please begin to inform all your members about the Mountain Fest through your Newsletter, at meetings, and club trips, etc.
- (2) We will need people in Vancouver to work on various committees. Please try to find us 2 or 3 people from your club, if in Vancouver, who will be willing to work. Give us the names as soon as possible.
- (3) Please consider whether your club would like a display booth during the Fest. There will be no charge to member clubs for display booths.

Please inform our Coordinator, Ken Woodsworth, 228-9841, what you can do.

SPRING '83: BASIC MOUNTAINEERING COURSE

The F.M.C.B.C. will be again offering its Basic Mountaineering Course this Spring. The course will consist of one evening lecture per week with one or two days of the weekend for practical instruction. The topics covered will include basic rock climbing, snow and glacier travel, mountaineering equipment and mountain safety. Participants should have hiking and backpacking experience. The course is very heavily weighted towards out of doors instruction since one cannot properly teach mountaineering in a classroom.

The duration of the course will be about 5 to 6 weeks. The exact dates and the cost have not yet been finalized, although the cost will likely be around \$100. The instructors will be from the local mountaineering clubs and are donating their time to teach the course.

For registration and further information, Contact
Ken Woodsworth, Federation Coordinator.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

TRAILS

The main issue of the Trails Committee is determining the difficulty of trails and developing a grading system. Clubs are encouraged to adopt trails for maintenance and to return all used trail cards. The Vancouver Public Library has an index box for most of the Lower Mainland Trails. This index contains all the previous trail condition cards, which have been kept to provide an up-to-date compendium of trail conditions.

The Committee is also applying for a Government Grant for more trail markers. The trail markers, which have now been standardized throughout the province, are an orange 2 x 2 inch card.

The Outdoor Recreation Council has sponsored various E.B.A.P. (Employment Bridging Assistance Programs) trail building crews in the Lower Mainland.

TRAIL WATCH

When we think of the mountain environment, we think of mountain activities such as climbing, hiking, wilderness skiing, canoeing, and all these activities are open to those with a sense of adventure and who are in good health. However, the mountain experience should not be restricted to those who can get there under their own steam. There are many handicapped people, be it physically or mentally, who have an equal right to the wilderness experience, but finding trails suitable for a wheelchair or a physically or mentally handicapped person who tires easily, is difficult. For instance, the trail through the rain forest on Vancouver Island is excellent, very well built, but is just too narrow for a wheelchair and a pedestrian to pass. Some sections fall steeply, using steps which, with a little more planning, could have been replaced by looping ramps. This could have been a really successful trail for all to enjoy.

We'd like to hear from you about trails in your area which either are available for wheelchair use or which could be with minor adjustments.

Trail Watch needs some details and information from member clubs, particularly those remote from Vancouver, on the state and alterations to trails in your area.

PARK AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

VALHALLAS

B.C. CABINET SECRETLY DECIDES TO ALLOW LOGGING AND MINING IN THE VALHALLAS

We have reason to believe that the B.C. Cabinet has decided to allow logging within the proposed Valhalla Park. We have confirmed this through five different sources within the higher echelons of the Provincial Government. This week, the local sawmill reiterated their "compromise" offer which curiously matches the Government's multi-use plan.

The "Compromise" would allow logging of virtually all of the merchantable timber within the proposed Valhalla Park. Most of this timber is located on the slopes visible from the east side of Slocan Lake and within the Nemo Watershed. This Government Plan ignores the findings of the Government's own \$300,000 Slocan Valley Planning Study and the recommendation of the Central Kootenay Regional District to create a 50,000 hectare Valhalla Park.

We expect that the Government's announcement will claim that "A Valhalla Park has been created", but it will only be another mountain top park; inaccessible and mostly invisible to most people. The unusual opportunity to create a lakefront through forest to mountain top park would thus be forfeited forever, and the Parks Ministry's documented need for just such a representation in the park system irretrievably lost.

As you know, it was your support that convinced the Government to conduct an exhaustive 2-year planning study and the facts came out overwhelmingly in support of a large 50,000 hectare park covering most of the west side of Slocan Lake. Local and Regional Governments strongly endorsed this option. Consider that this Planning Study concluded that wilderness preservation and logging could not be integrated in the Valhallas. In fact, the experts concluded that logging of the limited volume of timber would seriously impact the significant visual features and recreation values, create only 14 woodworker jobs, and seriously impair a tourism industry around a Valhalla Park, which could provide up to 229 jobs, draw 16 million dollars of investment, and earn 3.4 million dollars annually.

We ask you, if there is no hope for creating a Valhalla Park where there are virtually no resource conflicts and where independent economic analyses clearly support tourism use rather than resource extraction, what hope is there within the province for creating any new parks?

The Government's intent to ignore the recommendations of its own study makes a farce of its much ballyhooed public involvement planning process throughout the province, and is a wanton waste of \$300,000 in taxpayer's dollars as well as an unconscionable abuse of the public trust. Only you and all those persons concerned in such matters can stop the government's action by demanding that the Cabinet create a Class A Valhalla Park as specifically recommended by the Regional District of Central Kootenay. If you agree, you should write or telegram:

Stephen Rogers,
Minister of Environment,
Chairman, Environment Land Use Committee,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, B.C.

A telegram nightletter setting forth your position can be sent for about \$7.00. This is for 35 words and is delivered. Phone toll-free 112-800-663-3696. PLEASE ACT NOW.

Funds are urgently needed for us to continue with our efforts.

FOCUS: The Stikine

In each Newsletter, an area will be chosen for special attention.

BEFORE THE WHITE MAN, INDIAN TRIBES HUNTED, FISHED IN THE STIKINE AREA.

The evidence shows the Stikine area has been occupied for 10,000 years. Long before the Europeans came, nomadic Tahltan Indians used it for summer fishing and winter hunting.

They also traded in prehistoric tools made from obsidian from nearby Mount Edziza, a volcano whose eruptions over the past 2,000 years have been recorded in Tahltan legend.

Tlingit Indians came up from the coast, as far as present day Telegraph Creek, for the fishing and also for berry picking, say B.C. Hydro consultants carrying out a social and economic study of the area.

The study is part of preparations for a Hydro application to build five dams on the Stikine and its main tributary, the Iskut, flooding the canyons and other terrain behind them.

Stikine Canyon Dam - Located in the Grand Canyon of the Stikine, 25 km downstream from Highway 37. The associated powerhouse would have a capacity of 915 megawatts; the reservoir behind it would be 103 km long and an average 1.25 km wide.

Tanzilla Dam - Some 50 km upstream from Telegraph Creek and also within the Grand Canyon. It would be linked by tunnel to a second 915 MW powerhouse 7 km away.

Iskut Canyon Dam and 780 MW Powerhouse - On the Iskut, about 80 km upstream from its junction with the Stikine and at the confluence of Forrest Ker Creek. A V-shaped reservoir would stretch about 12 km along Forrest Kerr and more than 50 km along the Iskut.

More Creek Dam and 155 MW Powerhouse - On More Creek, just before it joins the Iskut 45 km above the Iskut Canyon site. A 30 km long reservoir would cover 4,100 hectares.

Forest Kerr Creek - A small earthfill dam to divert the upper waters of this river into More Creek reservoir, increasing flows there by 42 per cent. No generation is planned.

In a section on the history of the area, the study says that after the Indians, who are still there, came Russians exploring and trading for furs. That was in the 1770's.

Their report tells the following story of the area, from then until today:

"In the 1830's, the Hudson Bay Company explored the Stikine from its mouth in what is now the Alaska Panhandle to its source 600 kilometres inland. At the end of the decade, the company built a post on Dease Lake.

A little more than 20 years later, gold was found on the Stikine, and in 1862, there were 650 miners there. As the miners moved up to Cassiar, scene of another strike, Laketown was built on Dease Lake. At one time, it had a population of 8,000, 12 stores, 3 hotels, 6 saloons, Police and Government Offices.

In 1866, Telegraph Creek was a construction centre on the route of a proposed 21,000 kilometre telegraph line from Europe across the Bering Straits to Alaska and then south to California.

The line was abandoned, but Telegraph Creek was a centre again at the turn of the century, during construction of telegraph lines linking B.C. and the Yukon. Those lines are no longer used.

Meanwhile, gold continued to draw people through the area. The Stikine was one way to the Klondike, and during the summer months, as many as 17 paddlewheelers operated on the river, from Wrangell on the coast to the head of navigation at Telegraph Creek.

The river boat service lasted until 1916.

From the 1920's on, guiding and outfitting have been an important local industry with the Spatsizi country of the Upper Stikine becoming world famous.

In 1972/73, Highway 37 was completed, connecting Stewart with the Alaska Highway. Then it was pushed all the way through to Highway 16 at Kitwanga, between Terrace and Smithers.

A rail line was started from Fort St. James to Dease Lake, but abandoned in 1977.

Communities there now are Dease Lake, with more than 130 families; Iskut with a population estimated at 300, two-thirds of whom are Indians living on reserves; Telegraph Creek, also with a population of 300 which is nearly two-thirds reserve Indians, and Bob Quinn Lake, a Highways Department Base for Government employees and their families."

The above information is an extract from an article on the Stikine, which appeared in the Vancouver Sun on January 5th, and was reproduced with the permission of Jes Odom, the Author.

We would like to produce a focus report in each issue for some endangered area. It would be great to hear from individuals of member clubs who have historical, geological and cultural information on some of today's endangered areas. Please write to us. We need lots of goodies for the Newsletter.

FEDERATION AGM REVIEW

The A.G.M. of the Federation was held in Vancouver on 27th November, 1982. Members of the following clubs were in attendance:

- Alpine Club of Canada
- North Shore Hikers
- Sierra Club
- Varsity Outdoor Club
- British Columbia Mountaineering Club
- Caledonia Ramblers
- Comox District Mountaineering Club
- Valley Outdoor Association,

plus observers from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

The following reports were made:

- Trails Committee
- Forest Land Use Liaison Committee
- Treasurer
- Safety and Education Committee
- Communications Committee
- President,
- Coordinator
- Caledonia Ramblers
- Varsity Outdoor Club
- Alpine Club of Canada (Vancouver Island Section).

Other items discussed included:

- Cascade Wilderness Award of Merit to the Okanagan/Similkameen Parks Society
- Mountain Fest, 1983
- Chilka Lake Park Proposal
- Environmental Management Handbook
- Helicopters in Provincial Parks.

Details of all of the above topics can be read in the full minutes which have been circulated to member clubs, so contact a member of your Executive, after reading, and send your comments to the Newsletter Editor.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS APPLICATIONS

The F.M.C.B.C. obtains government funding through the Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Fund for several of its activities, particularly Safety and Leadership projects. Clubs are encouraged to apply for grants through the F.M.C.B.C. For the 1982/83 year, the F.M.C.B.C. received \$13,700 (although the year before, it was only \$5,100).

Grants are available "financially assist the development and implementation of provincially significant sport, recreation and fitness programs ... which increase the access to and participation of British Columbians in sport and recreation activities ... and improve the level of expertise of the instructors, coaches, officials administrators, and volunteer leaders of ... such ... Programmes."

Past experience with the grant applications has shown that the most successful projects are those with a safety orientation, and especially projects which are directed towards organizers and leaders (such as club trip leaders, or course conductors). To illustrate the point, in the past year, F.M.C.B.C. has received almost all and sometimes more money than it applied for in projects related to leadership development.

Clubs are encouraged to apply for grants through the F.M.C.B.C. For more specific advice on the grants, contact Ken Woodsworth. The F.M.C.B.C. has to submit its application to the Government in June, so early contact with Ken is suggested.

OTHER NEWS

Mountain Environment Conservation Handbook (formerly known as the Environmental Management Handbook). Ken Woodsworth has produced the third draft which is being sent to member clubs for comments.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

We hope this section will be much bigger in the next issue which will be on the 30th April, 1983. Please let us have lots of letters by 15th April. Comments, ideas, and so forth.

Geoff and Terry.