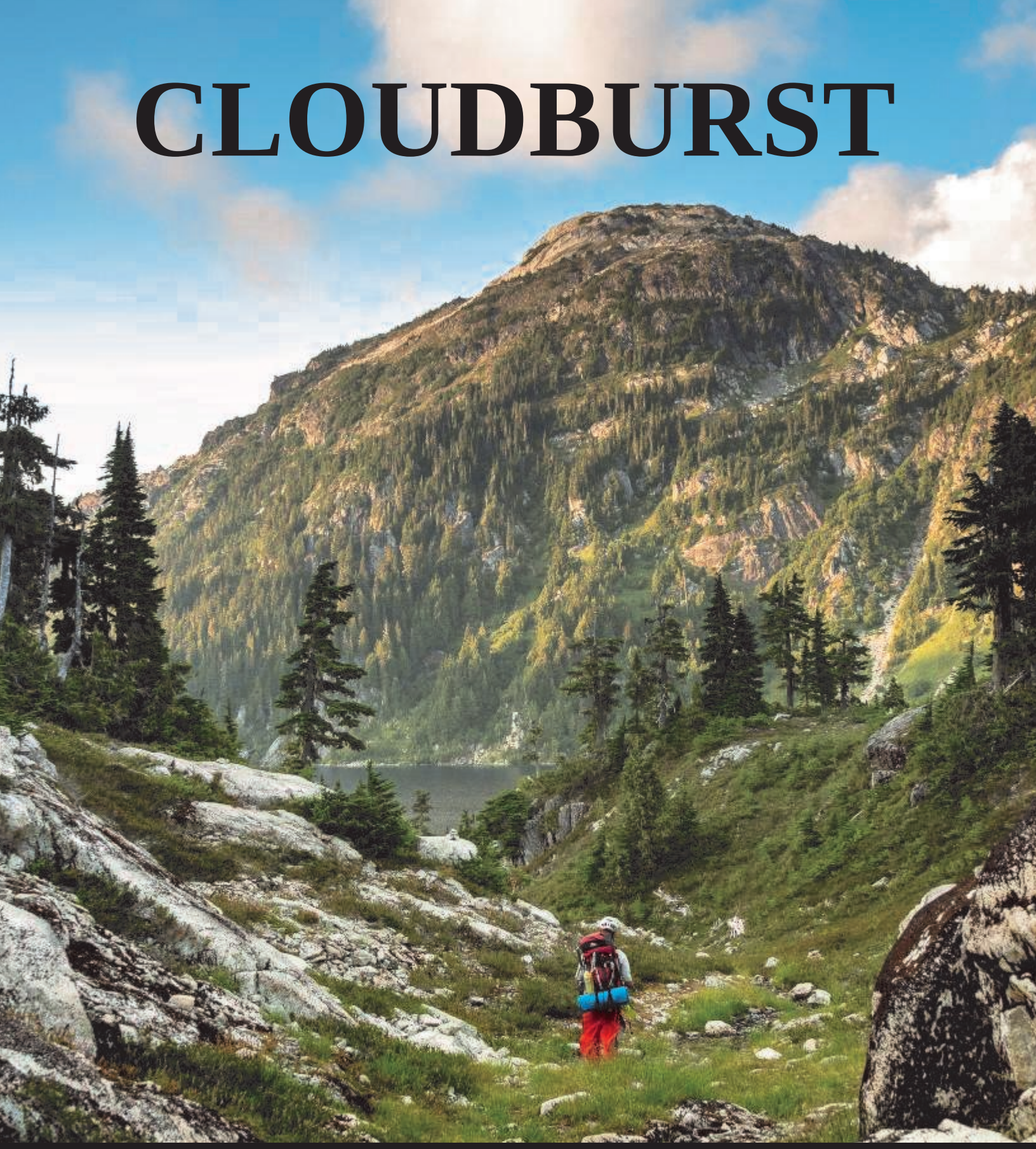
CLOUDBURST



Remembering Don and Sylvia Apps | The North Powell Divide | Harrison Hut Gets a New Outhouse
Navigating the Backcountry by Handheld GPS and Smartphones | Messner Mountain Museums

Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Accessing the backcountry one step at a time

Spring/Summer 2015

CLOUDBURST

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

In this Issue

President's Message and FMCBC News..... 3
Member Club Grant News 5
Recreation & Conservation. 6
Mountain Matters 8
Club Trips and Activities 12
Club Ramblings 17
Some Good Reads 20

Executive
President: Bob St. John (CDMC)
Vice President: Dave Wharton (VOA)
Secretary: Mack Skinner (NSH)
Treasurer: Silvie-Marie Fortin (IMR & ACC-VI)
Past President: Scott Webster (VOC-UBC)

Directors
Judy Carlson (AVOC), Bryce Leigh (ACC-WH), Robie MacDonald (ACC-VI), Mark Huscroft (BBSS), Ben Singleton-Polster & Brian Wood (BCMC), Dean Pollack (BOC), Pam Munroe (CDMC), Sam Waddington & Ken Orr (COC), Dave King (CR), Roy Howard (FHA), Al Jenkins (FOGP), Bob St. John (FoSP), Patrick Harrison (HBC), Sherry Durnford (IMR), Doug Smith (KHC), Doug Clark (KMC), Travis Carter (MRBS), Mack Skinner & Cristina Jacob (NSH), Geraldine Meade (NVOC), Glen Stanley (OAC), Dianne Comens (OC), Eric Burkle (OCV), Valerie Van Veen (QIOC), Andrew Drouin (SOTA), Alex Shepard (SFU), Gil Parker (VISTA), Neil Burroughs (VITIS), Dave Wharton (VOA), Else Bosman (VOC-UBC), Jeff van Santen (VOCO), Chelsea Richardson (VOC-MU), Joseph Wong (VRCG)

Staff
Jodi Appleton, Executive Director
Alanna Mahr, Communications and Administrative Assistant

Committee Chairs
Provincial Advocacy: Patrick Harrison
SW BC Recreation & Conservation: Brian Wood & Monika Bittel
SW BC Trails: Alex Wallace & Patrick Harrison
Outreach/Communications: Samantha Harrigan & Brian Wood
Insurance: Scott Webster

Cloudburst Editors: Bill Perry, Brian Wood, Alanna Mahr

Cloudburst Production & Design: Jodi Appleton

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

Articles and Advertising
Articles should not exceed 1000 words. Photos should be at least 4x6 inches at 150-300 DPI resolution. Submit photos and advertisements in PNG, TIF, EPS or JPEG format.
Submission Deadlines: October 15 & April 15.
Email articles and advertising inquiries to:
Jodi Appleton at cloudburst@mountainclubs.org

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

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

Cover Photo
by Matthew Lettington See page 7
for the story behind the photo

Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC

Working on your behalf

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

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

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

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

FMCBC's **purpose** is:

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

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

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

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

President's Message

Bob St. John, Comox District Mountaineering Club

Where did winter go, or did anyone in FMCBC land have a good winter? In our neighborhood Mt Washington had a wash-out season, and as I write this the snowpack is essentially gone. Often on Forbidden Plateau we will have several meters of snow remaining well into late spring. Carol and I spent January in Canmore in search of winter, and while we did get in some excellent ski trips, their snowpack too was extraordinarily thin and somewhat unstable. As our editor demands a photo, I include one of a snowy Denali summit as a memory of times past when winter seemed more reliable.

Bob on the Summit of Denali, Alaska, May-2004

Well, enough of winter... time to think of spring and summer. Our upcoming AGM in May (22-24) is looking in fine shape. Thanks to the volunteers of the Comox District Mountaineering Club for organizing what will be a stellar event! Saturday evening AGM attendees will be treated to guest speaker Philip Stone, a photographer, author, and mountaineer, who will give a presentation on the Future of Parks in BC. Philip has written several popular hiking and climbing guide-books for Vancouver Island, and is the current chair of the Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee.

On the AGM agenda will undoubtedly be the almost never-ending saga of the online waiver. At first glance, this would seem to be a simple straight-forward task... and it would be if online waivers had been tested in court, especially here in BC... which they haven't. An online waiver has to satisfy the requirements deemed necessary by those in the legal and insurance professions as well as being a convenient document to fill out by our members. It has not been an easy task to satisfy both demands, but I am optimistic the guidelines we have fleshed out are good ones. What remains to be done is a demonstration of an online waiver system which follows those guidelines. This will be done in time for the AGM. Thanks to all who have put in so much time on this rather tedious project, especially Scott Webster, Monika Bittel, Mack Skinner, and Jodi Appleton.

In the last six months we have filled some important employee and volunteer positions. Jodi Appleton has been promoted to Executive Director, Alanna Mahr has been hired as our new Communications and Administrative Assistant, Silvie-Marie Fortin is our new Treasurer, and Andrew Drouin is our representative on the new Provincial Trails Advisory Body. Congratulations to you all! ■

FMCBC News

Jodi Appleton, Executive Director

Andrew Appleton

Visiting Pender Island

We've just wrapped up a successful year here at the FMCBC. It was a big year for me personally, as we uprooted our little family and moved to Victoria last July. The move has been successful and since I've been on the Island I've had a good chance to connect with many of our member clubs here. We've started holding Island Delegates meetings again that bring together directors from clubs on the Island to discuss some of the specific access issues they are facing. As a provincial organization, increasing our presence in regions outside of Metro Vancouver is very important and I am pleased that we've started to achieve that this year on the Island. I hope to work on ways to better connect with other regions of the province over the next couple years — a few road trips might be in order.

In December, the FMCBC Board made a couple important decisions that I think will improve our ability to grow the FMCBC's membership, advocacy efforts and public profile over the upcoming years. Their first decision was to change my title from Program and Administration Manager to Executive Director. Having someone in this position is important for a non-profit organization as the role is better understood and carries more weight than a program or administration role when talking to external agencies and stakeholders. I will still be working under the direction of our Board, but as Executive Director, I will be in a better position to work on meeting the goals and objectives set out in our Strategic Plan and will have more authority to speak on behalf of the FMCBC.

The second decision, which is actually tied to the first, was to hire an additional part-time staff person to handle our communications, thereby freeing me up to dedicate more time towards advocacy and member services. After posting the job in February and receiving 40 applications for the position, I'm happy to welcome Alanna Mahr into the role of Communications and Adminis-

trative Assistant for the FMCBC. Alanna joined us in April, just in time to assist with Cloudburst and our AGM preparations. With Alanna taking on the communications tasks, I will be freed up to take on the various advocacy projects that have been sitting on my desk for many, many months. As a team, I think we are going to do a great job promoting the FMCBC and hope to get more clubs and volunteers involved this year.

In other news, the FMCBC was successful in our application to the National Trails Coalition last August for funding to repair 13 trails in the Chilliwack River Valley. Jack Bryceland drafted the application and Sam Waddington and I are now managing the project which will start this spring/summer. The trails named on the grant application and which the funding will go towards repairing are: Baby Munday, Elk-Thurston, Ford Mountain, Ling Lake, Mount Cheam, Mount Rexford, Mount McGuire, Pierce Lake, Slesse Mountain, Slesse Memorial, Vedder Mountain, Williams Ridge, and Williamson Lake.

Andrew Drouin (FMCBC Director for the South Okanagan Trail Alliance) has been selected to sit on the newly-formed Provincial Trails Advisory Body (PTAB) which is responsible for implementing the Provincial Trails Strategy. In order to support Andrew, and to increase the FMCBC's advocacy efforts, Patrick Harrison and I are working on reviving the FMCBC's Provincial Advocacy Committee. This committee works on researching, recording and promoting the FMCBC's position on a variety of topics that affect non-motorized recreation province-wide. This is the committee which worked with Wolfgang Haider and Steven Kux on the two research reports that the FMCBC commissioned from SFU. We're looking for members for this committee so contact me if you're interested in getting involved.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the work of our dedicated volunteers and especially our committee chairs and executive committee members for their ongoing commitment and support of the FMCBC's work. Thank you to Brian Wood, Patrick Harrison, Monika Bittel, Alex Wallace, Samantha Harrigan, Scott Webster, Mack Skinner, Dave Wharton, Silvie-Marie Fortin and Bob St. John for running meetings, drafting letters, reviewing financials, offering feedback, reading through difficult insurance and policy documents, and bringing matters of importance to the attention of the FMCBC. I've recently joined the board of the Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association and have a better understanding of just what it takes to volunteer your time on top of work and family responsibilities. Thank you for your commitment, effort and especially your time. ■

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 social media, communications, grant writing and more.

Contact us for more info
or talk to your club's FMCBC Director.

IN MEMORY

Stephanie Grothe, Neil Mackenzie and Elena Cernicka

On behalf of our Board and members, our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends of Stephanie Grothe, Neil Charles Mackenzie and Elena Cernicka who lost their lives in the tragic ice climbing accident near Pemberton on Sunday, January 11th. As our president, Bob St. John said in his letter of condolences to the Varsity Outdoor Club on the loss of their friends, "We all know that accidents happen doing what we love to do, yet it is still a shock when it does happen to friends we know." This sentiment was felt by many of us here at the FMCBC and we feel for those at the VOC who were friends of these three climbers and who must have been shocked and saddened when they heard the news.

~~~
~~~

Member Club Grant News

The Harrison Hut gets a new outhouse

By Roland Burt, UBC Varsity Outdoor Club

The original outhouse at the Harrison Hut was built 30 years ago and it needed replacing. It was built among huge glacier boulders, and there was no soil suitable for digging a pit. It had been repeatedly invaded by marmots, a.k.a. "shit beavers," which dug around in the poop and used toilet paper, scattering it around. It was time for a replacement.

The FMCBC offers a Member Club Grant Fund each year. We applied for money to build the outhouse, and they very kindly supplied us with the $1,270 to do it. The outhouse was going to happen!

Nobody in the Club had any experience with building outhouses, so I offered to build it. We had three important decisions to make, and they were decided as follows:

First, one group wanted to build the outhouse very tall so that it would stick out of the snow, despite there being no reasonable unmechanized way to get to the outhouse in the winter, and we didn't expect a lot of helicopter traffic. I didn't think that this was a very good idea because a tall outhouse, such as the one we built at our Phelix Hut, is extremely heavy and difficult to move — and you do have to move it once the pit becomes full. It's more expensive to build, heavier to transport, and heavier to fly in. So the one we built is only around 9 1/2 ft high. We did not have a specific place to build it, but we wanted it close enough to the hut that people would use it, where it would not drain into any streams, and where there would be ground suitable for digging a pit. It remains to be seen what the snow accumulation is like at our site.

Second, we investigated the "move the poop, not the outhouse" solution to the problem of what to do once it becomes full. We found something called a "luggable loo," which consists of a plastic toilet seat which can be attached to a standard 20 litre plastic pail. Some arithmetic suggested that a pail might hold around 100 person/days before the pail needed to be emptied, and the pails when full are light enough to be carried several hundred metres from the hut and dumped among the trees. Some discussion about diverting urine ensued and we concluded that our female members would prefer to not pee beside the outhouse, even though the alternative would mean hauling buckets of pee unnecessarily. We were undecided which way to go when it came time to build the outhouse so I prefabbed two options: (A) the so-called traditional "long drop," which requires digging a pit below the outhouse, and when the pit becomes full, the outhouse must be moved, and (B) the "luggable" alternative, where the outhouse need never be moved, but we might have several full buckets of poop standing around waiting for somebody to empty them. We tried the luggable apparatus and we found it very quickly attracted perfectly terrifying flies and thereafter no one would go near it. Plus, the seats weren't very comfortable. The hut is not maintained on a regular basis and random people, not knowing any better, are likely to dump the pails into the drinking water stream. Finally, Jeff Mottershed offered to dig us a "25 year hole," so we went for the traditional option.

Third, we were undecided about whether to paint the outhouse pink. The gable on the Phelix outhouse is pink because that was the only colour I had available at the time, and it seems satisfactory. But we were afraid that the FMCBC would be outraged by a pink outhouse and we figured they deserved a bit of respect as they were footing the bill. Anyway, I couldn't find industrial strength mis-tint in pink, so we got grey, and the results don't look too shabby. Just to frustrate the shit beaver, we wrapped a 36-inch sheet of aluminum around the bottom of the outhouse, which should stop all but the tallest shit beavers from eating it.

The outhouse was prefabbed and painted in my back yard in Vancouver. Transporting it to Pemberton (and beyond), looked expensive until Piotr, who planned to drive his jeep up to Pemberton to attend Ignacio's wedding, kindly offered to drive up with the prefabbed outhouse strapped to his roof. The helicopter pilot suggested that we could save the ferrying charges if we were willing to have it flown in whenever it was convenient for him, but apparently it was never convenient for him, so we split the ferry charges among ourselves, flying in the Barr Creek Bridge, the hut reno supplies and the outhouse, on several trips. ■

——This article was first published in the Varsity Outdoor Club's 2014/15 Club Journal

Rueben Schulz

Volunteers showing off the spiffy new outhouse they built for VOC's Harrison Hut last summer using Member Club grant funds

Southwest BC Recreation & Conservation Report

By Brian Wood & Monika Bittel (Committee Co-Chairs and members of the BC Mountaineering Club)

Brew Hut, Tricouni Mountain, Cloudburst Mountain, Cypress Mountain and Roe Creek Area

Under the 2009 Sea-to-Sky Land and Resource Management Plan, the recreation zoning of the large area in the vicinity of Tricouni Mountain, Cloudburst Mountain, Cypress Peak and Roe Creek has been designated "unresolved" because the stakeholders (public and commercial motorized and non-motorized recreation users) were unable to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement within the allotted time. The Varsity Outdoor Club (VOC) is one of the stakeholders because their popular Brew Hut is located in this area, near Tricouni and Cypress Mountains. Since 2009, despite several initiatives by the stakeholders to resolve the zoning, the area remains "unresolved". Nevertheless, zoning of the area is, in effect, occurring through individual tenure and access management applications. For example, in November 2012 a "Snowmobile Access Management Trail" was put in place along the Roe Creek Forest Service Road, in spite of overwhelming opposition from the non-motorized backcountry ski touring community. Currently, Powder Mountain Cat skiing has an application to extend their tenure in this "unresolved" area. It is imperative that the zoning of this "unresolved" area under the LRMP be resolved prior to approval of any further tenure applications, access management plans, or land use designations. There are very few areas outside parks within the Sea-to-Sky Corridor where non-motorized recreational users can enjoy a peaceful and safe experience and this area is one of those exceptional areas.

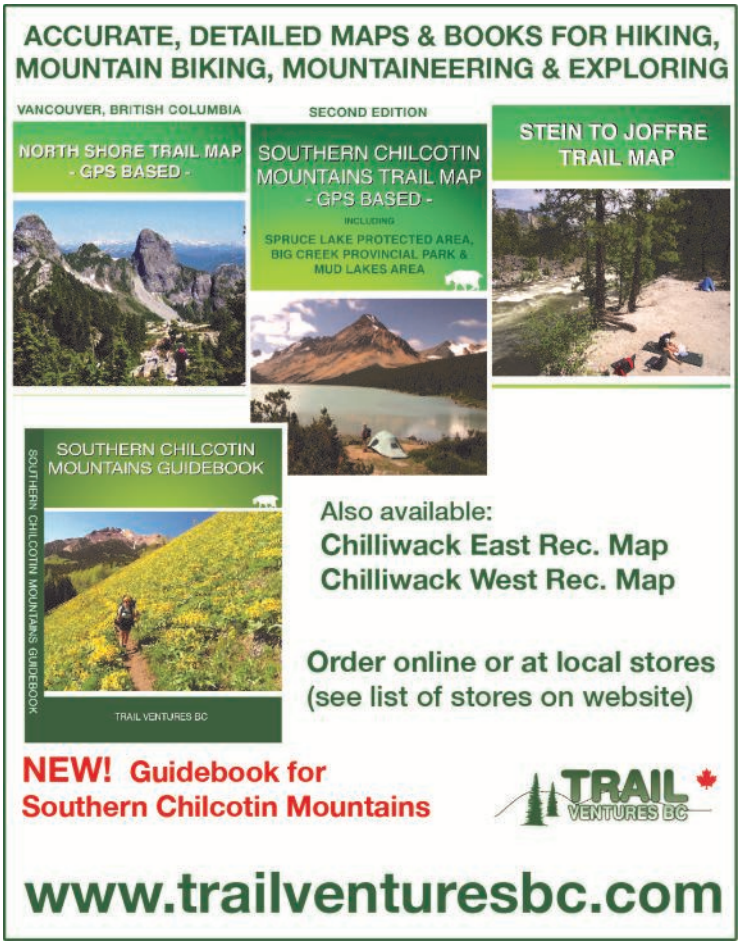
The Spearhead Hut Project and Singing Pass Access route for Garibaldi Park

After responding to questions about the Park Use Permit and dealing with safety concerns, the Spearhead Hut project team is awaiting authorization from BC Parks to move forward to the next phase. When this is obtained, and once there is sufficient funding for the first hut near Russet Lake, work on the foundations can start. On a related matter, the FMCBC is hoping that progress on the first hut, close to Singing Pass, will increase pressure to provide safe and easy access to the old Singing Pass Trail (SPT). At present, the SPT is difficult and, in some conditions, dangerous to access due to the major geological "slump" near the beginning of the SPT, on the south side of Fitzsimmons Creek. This slump is outside Garibaldi Park and the trail is presently accessed through or adjacent to the Whistler Blackcomb ski area, which for many years has been reluctant to address the access problem, despite numerous attempts to resolve it. Our Committee has been investigating alternative routes to access the SPT. We have suggested using an existing 2WD road on the north side of Fitzsimmons Creek, which provides access to the intake area of the Energex Run-of-River Project on the creek. BC Parks has committed to building a parking lot near the intake, a foot-bridge across Fitzsimmons Creek, and a short section of trail to connect to the SPT above the slump. We understand that several government agencies (BC Parks, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC), and the Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations) also support this plan. The FMCBC now has to convince those organizations, which are against the idea or reluctant to support it, that it makes good business sense to regain access to the SPT, as there will be a large increase in usage of the SPT once the new Russet Lake hut is finished.

Draft Ski Area Policy for BC Parks

Decades ago the downhill and Nordic ski areas located in the three provincial parks of Cypress, Mt. Seymour, and Manning were transferred from original government ownership to private operators. This transfer resulted in many problems for BC Parks, the public and the private operators. As a result, BC Parks published an "Intentions Paper" in 2014, which provided an opportunity for public input. Since then, BC Parks has met with the resort operators and has now published a draft policy. Both the Ski Resort Policy Intentions Paper and Draft Ski Resort Policy can be viewed on the BC Parks website.

The extended deadline for comments on the draft policy expired on 21 April 2015. The Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) has asked BC Parks to arrange a meeting with stakeholders — especially those who responded to the Intentions Paper. ORC feels that aspects related to the Park Use permits and the Park Act merit further explanation. The FMCBC submitted comments on the draft policy in a letter which can be viewed on our website. Other organizations such as the Friends of Cypress Provincial Park and BC Nature also submitted letters to BC Parks. Please keep posted on this important issue.



Provincial Trails Advisory Body
As specified in the Provincial Trails Strategy (PTS), a Provincial Trails Advisory Body (PTAB) has now been formed to advise and monitor implementation of the 22 point trails strategy plan. The following members of the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) Provincial Group Members have been appointed to the PTAB by members of the ORC Executive Board of Directors.

Three year appointments:
- Andrew Drouin, nominated by Federation of Mountain Clubs. Member of S. Okanagan Trail Alliance and Penticton & Area Cycling Association. Resident of Penticton.
- Tyler Kraushar, nominated by BC Snowmobile Federation. Member of Powder Mountain and Pemberton Snowmobile Clubs. Resident of Pemberton.
- Orville Smith, nominated by Horse Council of BC. Member of Horse Council. Resident of Prince George.

Two year appointments:
- Nick Heath, nominated by Sea Kayak Association of BC and BC Marine Trail Network Association. He is a member of both and a resident of Coquitlam.
- Robert Holland, nominated by ATVBC. Member of Revelstoke ATV Club. Resident of Revelstoke.

The above appointees will represent the public outdoor recreation sector in conjunction with the following:
- Evan Loveless, Wilderness Tourism Association
- David Oliver, BC Wildlife Federation

The following provincial and local government agency representatives will also serve on the PTAB:
- Tennessee Trent, RSTBC, Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations
- Kirby Villeneuve, BC Parks, Ministry of Environment
- Alan Callander, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- A representative to be appointed, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
- Brian Farquhar, BC Parks & Recreation Association.

The PTAB will be co-chaired by John Hawkings, newly appointed Director of RSTBC and Jeremy McCall of ORC. Trails users, stakeholders and communities are eager to see the benefits of the Trails Strategy and the leadership this group will bring to trail planning, development and management in BC.

Share the Trails Workshop
The Horse Council of BC and ORC co-organized this year's Share the Trails Workshop in Richmond, BC. Hugh Prichard, Paul Kamon and Eagle Walz described their experiences exploring the recreational amenities available in their local community (the Sunshine Coast) and showed how trails can connect these amenities to develop community and form partner-ships with like-minded organizations. In addition, John Hawkings, the newly-appointed Director of Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, reported on the progress of the recently established Provincial Trails Advisory Body and described the background to the BC Government's recent policy changes regarding British Columbia's rail trails.

Cover Photo Contest

We're looking for winter shots for our next cover of Cloudburst. Email your entries to us at cloudburst@mountainclubs.org
Please submit photos by October 15, 2015.

Pinecone Burke Park Management Plan
This park was designated following the Protected Area Strategy Process of the 1990s. BC Parks has now moved to Phase 4 of the Park Management Planning Process and is seeking more public input. However, we feel the public is not engaged with this process because the park has only a few popular, easily accessible areas, and wilder areas are essentially unknown to many hikers. A hiking trail guidebook called Burke and Widgeon A Hiker's Guide has been published recently and is available from Lyle Litzenberger. Also, a new map of the park showing hiking trails will be published shortly and will be available to purchase from Canadian Map Makers' online store.

To help publicize this park and assist the planning process, the FMCBC is hosting a public slideshow of the park, especially its more remote and unknown scenic areas. This will help BC Parks let the public know what is available in this relatively wild and trackless park. The Pinecone Burke slideshow presentation by Justin Brown will be held on Friday, June 12th at 7:00pm in room A101 of the Buchanan Building at UBC (1866 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC). Admission is by donation.■

Cover Photo

Between Two Lakes and Two Peaks

Photo by Matthew Lettington
Island Mountain Ramblers

It was a beautiful long weekend in August. Ryan Bartlett and I did a three day journey from Nystar Mine to the summit of the Golden Hinde. This shot is take between Carter Lake and Schjelderup Lake. The early evening brought with it a magical light that bathed the distant hills of Phillips Ridge in its ethereal light. I rounded a corner, trailing behind the long-legged Barts and saw this view. I was quick to draw out my behemoth of a camera (Nikon D800 with 28-300mm, about 5 pounds) and snap this moment.

Click here for a full trip report and more photos.

Where in the world is...

By Andrew Drouin, South Okanagan Trail Alliance

Becoming disoriented or lost while enjoying the great outdoors is the last thing that most folks are keen to experience. Lucky for us, we live in a day and age where nearly every square meter of the planet is mapped and navigable via GPS satellite-based transceivers. Multiple overhead satellites cooperatively allow hand-held receivers/transceivers to locate and graphically present their position anywhere on the planet.

While hardcore outdoor enthusiasts often favour the tactile pleasure of navigating by paper map and compass, this experience requires that one learn jargon and become familiar with concepts like magnetic declination, map datum (in its many variables), topographical contour lines and intervals, taking and transferring bearings, and more.

While I respect those who competently wield a map and compass, I also realize that modern life is full of commitments and distractions, and the odds that many individuals will find the time and enthusiasm to enroll in an outdoor orienteering course are slim. As such, navigation via GPS technology, be it a stand-alone GPS device or smartphone, looks to be the future for front and back-country navigation for the general public.

Many of us orienteer via GPS every day, but don't give the process much thought. Consider how often you locate an address on your smartphone using Google, Bing or Yahoo Maps. This custom is easily extrapolated to front and back-country travel.

Several GPS satellite networks exist overhead, including American, Russian and European Union arrays. Canadians use the U.S. system, which is incredibly accurate and reliable. Gone are the days when receiving a clear GPS signal meant standing outside, in a clearing away from trees or physical obstructions. Today's sensitive GPS receivers lock onto GPS satellite signals with tenacity. I was recently at a Search & Rescue meeting where late-model Garmin receivers were being showcased. The Model 64st units tracked our position to within 4m accuracy — while we were inside a cinder-block meeting room!

My frame of reference is based on many years of front and back-country trail exploration. I produce an annually-updated trail guidebook covering several hundred square kilometers of the south-central Okanagan Valley, and employ GPS technology in recording/mapping trails for this project. In doing so, I have employed numerous hand-held GPS devices from Garmin and Magellan, as well as three different iPhone devices from Apple Corp. I've frequently compared the recorded tracks from these devices, and find that there exists a completely random difference of two to three meters between technology platforms.

When navigating, I carry both a smartphone and classic hand-held GPS receiver, employing the hand-held unit as a backup device and the iPhone as my main interface. I do this mainly because I prefer the bright, high-resolution screen of the iPhone to any hand-held GPS device that I've seen to date. I also enjoy the fact that the $2 iPhone GPS app that I use (MotionX-GPS) allows me to select between numerous background maps in moments. Smartphones do so while providing additional hardware and software options, all presented in a familiar user-friendly interface.

Both GPS recording platforms have their pros and cons:

Positive aspects of stand-alone handheld GPS units - Batteries are easily swappable - Small, rugged, weatherproof - (Slightly) more sensitive to satellite signals than Smartphone based GPS devices	**Negative aspects of stand-alone handheld GPS units** - Sport relatively small, low-resolution screens - Drain the small AA batteries quite quickly - Many disallow long track titles/waypoints, entry of which is not QWERTY-based - Require learning a new operating system interface - Can be expensive for decent screen-size/resolution (which still ends up being small)
Positive aspects of smartphone devices - Large, high-resolution screens - Multi-function; i.e. phone/computer/GPS/high-resolution camera - Many are rugged, weatherproof, or can be made so with cases (Otterbox/Lifeproof) - Users are already familiar with their smartphone operating system/interface - Free, so to speak, as 75% of adult Canadians own a smartphone	**Negative aspects of smartphone devices** - Batteries are often not swappable (external rechargers required for multi-day treks) - Relatively easily broken when not in cases (ruggedized cases highly recommended) - [Slightly] less sensitive to satellite signals than classic hand-held GPS devices, especially those with external antennas

If you choose to go with a classic hand-held GPS unit, I suggest that you spend the extra money and pick up something in the three to four hundred dollar range. This will afford you access to devices with fairly decent screens, which none of the lower-cost models provide. I'd further suggest that you consider the purchase of map-editing software from your device manufacturer, which allows you to edit/examine/manipulate the data files recorded during your outdoor adventures once you've returned home. If you simply wish to view but not edit the recorded track, the free Google Earth application software interfaces with most GPS devices sold in North America.

I've found that the best way to really get to know an area is to go out and record a track, then come home, interface your GPS unit with a computer and download the track to it. You can then examine its path overlaid on a 2D map using a program like Garmin's Mapsource, or in full 3D via Google Earth.

You'll find yourself musing over the route and its junctions — knowledge that you can employ and build on during subsequent outings. A good tip is to always set your device to record your track while adventuring outdoors. Though this consumes additional power, positional recording intervals can be set to conserve battery life. This technique provides one with an electronic trail of crumbs to follow back to their origin should one become disoriented. I generally carry a waterproof backup GPS, turned on and recording when I venture into new terrain. The odds of smartphone and classic GPS both failing simultaneously are infinitesimally small.

In the tens of thousands of hours that I've wandered the mountains and plains, I've only experienced one type of GPS failure, where the power button on the edge of my device became depressed (and therefore turned off) by another item stored near it in my backpack. Lesson learned: store your GPS carefully and always bring along extra batteries. When you purchase batteries, consider rechargeable ones. I've tried a great many manufacturers' rechargeable batteries, and can recommend Panasonic, Sanyo Eneloop and Eneloop Pro batteries. Always carry spare power in some form.

Should you choose to employ a smartphone as your main source of GPS technology, I suggest that you invest in a ruggedized case, with or without a built-in backup battery (such as a Morphie Juicepack or Morphie PowerStation). A classic, hand-held GPS device as a backup is strongly recommended in case you somehow lose or break your smartphone.

I've also found that pressing retired smartphones into service as a GPS/multifunction device works well. A smartphone, set in a ruggedized case, makes for a perfect "enhanced" GPS. Reset it to default factory settings (which wipes/reloads the operating system and speeds up the device's response time); install available updates, along with a few apps such as plant and wildlife identification software, a first-aid and back-country survival app, and some GPS software; and you have an excellent outdoor navigation tool. This also allows you to save your regular smartphone battery for communications.

Nearly every late-model smartphone, sans SIM Card and data plan, will still receive GPS signals and present them on pre-cached maps. They will also connect to Wi-Fi signals that are within a kilometer or less (to pre-cache the base-maps before heading out).

If your adventure is taking you off the grid for days or weeks at a time, even the best battery packs may not be powerful enough. In that case, you'll need something like the top-rated SolarMonkey Adventurer (Google it) in order to feed the hunger that modern electronics have for power.

If any FMCBC members in the Okanagan would like to see a demonstration of classic GPS and iPhone-based technology in action, don't hesitate to contact with me at your convenience.
www.southokanagantrailalliance.com ■

Want to stay up to date on the latest FMCBC news? Sign up for our monthly newsletter

Reinhold Messner and the Messner Mountain Museum (MMM)

By Ron Dart, ACC-Vancouver Section

> Messner is not only the greatest high-altitude mountaineer the world has ever known; he is probably the best it will ever know. *Time*

Reinhold Messner is considered by many to be one of the most significant mountaineers of the 20th century (if not the crowned prince of modern mountaineers). He is also one of the most published mountaineers of the 20th century — almost 50 books in print and three movies made on his controversial life: The Dark Glow of the Mountains (1984), Nanga Parhat (2010) and Messner (2012)

I have been rather fortunate, in the last few months, to be in touch with Reinhold Messner by email—his recent book, "Reinhold Messner: My Life at the Limits" (2014), is an engaging, interview-style autobiography, that spans the decades when Messner was at top form and summiting the most demanding peaks in the world — few can claim the top of the world climbs that Messner has done in his life: 3000 climbs, 100 first ascents and the first to climb all of the world's 8000 metre peaks. Messner is 70 this year, and since leaving politics with the Green Party (he was with the European Parliament from 1999-2004), he has committed himself to building the Messner Mountain Museum (MMM) in the South Tyrolean region of Northern Italy — yet another peak to climb and topped it he has. The MMM (which is, in reality, six museums) brings together the best and finest of global mountain culture. Messner has a flair for doing things on an epic scale, and the MMM is of such grandiose proportions.

The MMMs, as mentioned above, are located in six areas. Each of the museums tends to focus on different aspects of mountain life

and culture and all of them are exquisitely poised on expansive mountain terrain. The Sigmundskron Castle near Bozen is a fine entry point; the encounter between mountains and humans is brought to the fore. The journey to museum #2 at Ortles takes the mountain keener from the spacious mountain ethos of Sigmundskron Castle to the rock thick world of ice, snow and underworld mountain existence — quite a stark and graphic contrast between museums #1 and #2, yet both are part of mountain culture. Needless to say, mountain culture and life is replete with communities, clothes, paintings, relics, artifacts and much else. Such is museum #3 in the clouds in the Dolomites — plenty of paintings that highlight the romantic ethos with its turn to the mountains contra the madding crowd of the city and urban life. Juval Castle (where Messner lives) is museum #4 and is packed full with art collections with a certain nod to Tibet. The fifth museum is at Bruneck Castle and mountain peoples from Asia, Africa, South America and Europe are represented. The sixth Museum is focused on traditional alpinism (which Messner has a fondness for). There can be no doubt that the MMM is on a scale that few can match — takes about a week at a moderate pace to visit and thoroughly enjoy all the ambience and beauty of the six museums. When the week is done, be sure to add another week to ramble, scramble and do climbs in the alpine cathedrals of the South Tyrol.

I asked Reinhold Messner which books he has had published have been the most meaningful and which have sold the best: "Everest and My Life at the Limit" topped the list. I also was interested (midst many other things) what he thought of the movies made of his life — his answer was most pithy and almost Zen-like: "Films are films and life is life" — so little said yet so much said. For those who are keen to learn more about Messner in a most readable and accessible manner, "Reinhold Messner: My Life at the Limit" is a superb entry level book. I asked Messner if there was anything left out in the book he wished was included — his answer, "Nothing missing".

For those who are keen, in our global village, to get a real sense and feel for mountaineering culture (past and present) from an international and cosmopolitan perspective, the MMM is the finest, fittest and most compelling. The sights seen from such heights both charm and educate the soul, mind and imagination. Trips to the six MMMs should be on the bucket list of all mountaineering aficionados — a visit with Messner a delight of a way to wind up the vistas and visit. ■

FMCBC's Member Club Grant Program

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

FMCBC grant funds have been used to upgrade trails, install bridges, improve huts, purchase tools and run community events. This year we're happy to announce that we have received two larger sized donations which will be a great boost to our program for 2015.

To learn more about the Member Club Grant Program visit our website.

To make a donation online search for FMCBC on the Canada Helps website.

Thank you for your support!

CanadaHelps.org

From conflict to world leader in forest practices:

What is the opportunity for BC's other natural resource sectors?

By Mike Nash, Caledonia Ramblers

British Columbia's Forest Practices Board (FPB) is 20 years old. It was created in December 1994 to provide independent oversight of forest and range practices in BC and to help ensure compliance with legislation. In 1999, BC's Supreme Court (and later the Supreme Court of Canada) upheld the Board's right to comment on the soundness of forest practices beyond just looking at compliance, thus affirming the Board's essence as a public watchdog. In 2004, the results-based Forest and Range Practices Act replaced the prescriptive Forest Practices Code, and the FPB's oversight role took on added significance as onus shifted to reliance on industry's resource professionals. In 2005, the FPB's role expanded again under a new Wildfire Act in the wake of the epic 2003 wildfire season.

Underpinning the FPB is its audit program, through which the Board scrutinizes practice compliance by hundreds of forest and range licensees as well as auditing government's enforcement of its own legislation. Audits necessarily follow a tight methodology and the audit program also helps establish the Board's credibility with licensees, public, government, and other resource agencies. As a consequence, the FPB has occasionally been invited to bring its expertise to areas not normally part of its mandate, for example the Nisga'a Treaty implementation and outside-perspective work for BC's Oil and Gas Commission such as the Board's 2011 report, '*An Audit of the OGC's Framework for Compliance and Enforcement*.'

A key role of the FPB is to address public concerns through dialogue, mediation, and if necessary, through formal complaint investigations. The Board has published over 200 complaint reports and has responded to hundreds of issues through this process. It is worthwhile for anyone with a concern about forest or range practices to pick up the phone and have a conversation; even if it doesn't lead to a formal complaint, it is grist for the mill and will likely surface in other aspects of the Board's work.

A strategic part of the FPB's work is investigating and reporting on issues of emerging public interest. For example, the Board's 2011 report, '*Cumulative Effects: From Assessment Towards Management*,' was influential in bringing cumulative effects to the government's agenda. Through its special reports, the Board has made hundreds of recommendations to improve practices, policy and legislation, many of which have been implemented by licensees and government.

Finally, the FPB can participate in appeals to BC's Forest Appeals Commission to represent matters of public interest.

For two decades the FPB has, within the limits of its enabling legislation, done an effective job as a watchdog. It has no regulatory authority beyond requiring licensees and agencies to comply with audits, and to some this gives the FPB the appearance of having no teeth. But this has really been a strength of the Board in that it has helped it to stay at arm's length from government control and has empowered its real sphere of influence: communicating directly with the public. Every report that the Board has ever published is available on its multi-platform website[i] and nothing is vetoed by government. Another important strength is the respect earned through the expertise of its staff. And lastly, panels made up of board members oversee finalization of key FPB reports and have the option to add *board commentaries*, through which the Board can stretch its mandate in ways that can be helpful to shaping public policy.

The FPB operates with a full-time board chair and seven part-time board members who bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to the table. Reporting to the Board is the executive director, who has a staff of professionals in such fields as forestry, ecology, engineering, audit, law, planning, communications, and information technology, supplemented as needed by outside consultants. Continuous improvement and technological innovation has helped the Board stay on top of its game, but it's fair to say that the FPB is approaching a watershed in both capacity and mandate. So what's next?

BC's legendary forest conflicts of the 1980s and 90s are behind us, and today BC is a world-leader in sustainable forest management and environmentally certified forest products. There are still significant forestry concerns, as a scan through Board reports of the last five years will attest; but today's main resource issues turn on oil, gas, mining, and energy, with their cumulative environmental impacts and related transportation and transmission footprints. First Nations rights, ecosystem services, ecological integrity, recreation and tourism are also of paramount interest in this most diverse of Canadian provinces.

It is time to capitalize on the unique history and potential that is BC's Forest Practices Board: for a relatively small incremental cost, the FPB's expertise could be leveraged to create a *Natural Resource Practices Board* to serve as a watchdog for the wider natural resource sector. At least one major NGO, the *BC Wildlife Federation*, thinks so[ii] and has lobbied to that effect in the aftermath of the environmental disaster at the Mount Polley mine. I think it's fair to say that the forest industry has found the work of the FPB helpful in maintaining its social license and market standing with little added cost to the bottom line or to the public purse. It's likely, therefore, that other resource sectors and the resource owners (public) would similarly benefit from a *Natural Resource Practices Board*. ■

~~~

Mike Nash is an author, past contributor to Cloudburst magazine, and a former board member with BC's Forest Practices Board (2008-2014).

This article first appeared as a guest editorial in the spring 2015 issue of BC Nature magazine.

[i] The FPB's recently revamped, award-winning website: http://www.bcfpb.ca/

[ii] Vancouver Sun Op Ed by BCWF President George Wilson, September 2, 2014: http://www.vancouversun.com/Opinion+needs+natural+resource+practices+board/10168587/story.html accessed on February 26, 2015.
~~~

The North Powell Divide September 3 – 13, 2014

By Tony Knight, BC Mountaineering Club and ACC-Vancouver Section

The Powell Divide is an area of interconnecting ridges running roughly north-south in the area northeast of Powell River. Click here to view a map. It was one of the first traverses pioneered by John Clarke in the Coast Mountains and features some of the most massive, cleanest granite that can be found anywhere. It makes for fantastic hiking and scrambling with a minimum of technical difficulty.

Our early plans to hike the Powell Divide first developed several years ago. In 2013, we had the opportunity to join a BCMC trip to the South Powell Divide; however, the weather didn't cooperate and the trip was scrubbed. Instead we did a short 3-day visit into the Emma Lake area, staying at the well-maintained Emma Lake cabin for a couple of nights. There we had our first exposure to the huge clean granite slabs, ramps and cirques, all sculpted during the past glacier age. At a high point we gazed northward along the Divide and we knew we had to come back to explore more.

So in 2014, friends of ours, Manrico and Liz, began making plans again to visit the area. This time the plan would be a two-week trip. We would start at the north end, get dropped in by helicopter, and then follow the North Powell Divide to Emma Lake and down to the Eldred valley. Two food caches would be used to ease our loads. We gathered together eight keen folks, all of us in our "middle-ages". We planned to make the trip at a "moderate pace" with "no terror," or so we thought.

We met together at the Powell River airport to get the first group into the helicopter. The rest of the group would drive up the logging roads to near Goat B Branch, the spur that leads to Emma Lake. The first group took off in good weather but soon ran into a wall of cloud and was forced to turn around. No terror, just disappointment. The weather deteriorated, forcing us to wait.

Finally, three days later, the skies cleared; everything was good to go, so we set off. We decided to shorten the trip by getting dropped in near Berkshire Mountain, three days into our original plan. The flight in was bluebird. The aerial view gave us a chance to scope out some of the more cruxy parts of the trip, including the descent down steep bluffs on the South side of Mt. Alfred.

By noon we had everyone into the starting place, a lovely cirque lake around 1,470m elevation, below Mt. Berkshire. We started off by making a half-day recce up onto the ridge and northward to check out Berkshire Peak. We set off with light day packs, knowing that we would be making the haul again with our big overnight packs in the morning. Scrambling up towards the ridge crest, we soon found ourselves scattered and wandering across the fantastic landscape of clean granodiorite slabs, punctuated with everything from angular to pillow-shaped stone.

We made our way towards the peak of Berkshire, an easy scramble up to a rounded top of the ridge. There we found a small film canister summit register. In it, the first entry read,

> "August 19 '84 Hiking from Toba Inlet to Eldred R or Freda if weather improves. I'd like to hear about your trip. My current address is in the membership list book in Mountain Equipment Coop in Van BC. Member No. 28-1. Cheers, John Clarke."

We marveled; just over 30 years ago John was first here.

The next entry was dated Aug 5, 2006, from Shirley Rempel, Nancy Henderson, Helen Habgood and Don Cann. This was Helen's second visit to the area. We know others have traversed the Powell Divide, but the numbers remain few. We made our way down more grand slabs of sloping granite and back to camp, stopping for a refreshing dip in the lake, the first of many on this trip. Dinner was prepared and we soon retired to our tents for the first night in the Coast Range.

The next morning we awoke to clear skies. It was the first of a rhythm that would soon become familiar; coffee, breakfast, pack, and then set off on the journey to new ground. We followed the route back up onto the ridge, then set our course southward on the Powell Divide with the ridge topography to steer us. The

Tony Knight

Tony Knight

scrambling occasionally became steeper as we made our way up and over crests and dips along the ridge. We stopped frequently for snack breaks at scenic spots or small tarns along the way. It had been a dry summer and a low snow year the previous winter, so we had been concerned about water. But it turned out that tarns were abundant and it was easy to find water along the way.

The first day we made our way from near Berkshire peak, along the ridges, and then up a small glacier on the northwest side of Pillbox Peak. We only brought two 30 m ropes and basic gear for glacier travel. The glacier was very benign and we easily walked up it in crampons or micro-spikes. This was followed with a short steep scramble on the rock and then back onto the ridge. Along the way we saw our first wildlife, a small baby ptarmigan, mottled brown with flecks of white.

By afternoon, we had homed into a lovely camp site on the west shoulder of Pillbox, complete with granite tarns and benches on which to tent. It had an unobstructed view to the west to enjoy a pink crimson sunset. This was probably one of the most aesthetic camp spots of the whole trip.

The next morning dawned clear and we set off once again. The route descended slabs to the south of the camp below Pillbox Peak. We knew from previous descriptions that there was a cliff coming up on the route that would likely require one rappel. We scrambled down the slabs and into the krummholz. Soon we found a spot marked by old flagging tape and old rappel slings. It was a short rappel, just 20 metres or so, easily done with our two 30m ropes. With everyone down, we continued on and up the granite slabs below Pillbox peak again to gain the ridge south of Pillbox. At the ridge top we gazed southward to get our first good look at Mount Alfred, which would be our route in a few days.

Continuing along the ridge, we came to one steep step. Out came the rope again as we sent one person up and then brought the rest safely up on belay. Past that spot, the travelling became easy again on almost sidewalk smooth granite. The north sides of many of the features on the Divide are clean granite, devoid of any vegetation. On the warmer south-facing aspects, there is more vegetation – mosses, heather and sometimes small trees that came in handy as veggie-belays on the way down. Route-finding was sometimes tricky in spots where it was bluffy and any south-facing benches were crammed with small trees. That evening, we made our way to our first food cache and enjoyed a few much-deserved goodies, then dinner with another orange-to-mauve sunset.

The next morning, we faced a choice in routes to go up or around Mount Barkshack. We either had to bypass a headwall and climb steep slabs to gain the peak or bypass it entirely with a long descent and detour around the west side. Helen referred back to her old notes which indicated it was possible to bypass the headwall and gain the ridge, so we set off towards the headwall, then skirting right, began to re-ascend to the ridge. This was the steepest most challenging scrambling so far. Working up through massive inclined corner features and a maze of ramps, the scrambling became steeper and steeper. Finally, just below the ridge, the rope came out on a short exposed section. We regained the ridge once again to follow easy snow slopes to the top of Mount Barkshack.

On top of Barkshack, we found a summit register with another entry from John Clarke, but sadly, the paper had been wet and the message was unreadable. However, another entry from Helen and friends in 2006 was still legible. It read, "We're marching along in the sun but the weather threatens." For us, we had been blessed now with four days of bluebird weather and no sign of

Club Trips and Activities

change. The warm, sunny days on the peaks invited us to linger, snacking and resting and just absorbing the fantastic 360 -degree views of the Coast Mountains. But we had to continue on, again following the Powell Divide ridge, down steep heather and krummholtz, to flatter ground. We made our way to a bouldery camp spot with a tarn and water source.

Tony Knight

The next day was one of our more "hiking" type days, with a minimum amount of terror. We descended into a drainage and lush meadows south of Barkshack peak. A phat marmot whistled loudly in alarm and protest. We also saw large piles of bear deposits, but thankfully, none of the depositors were present to greet us. The route continued southward up and over Ironface Mountain, which despite the name, was quite green and vegetated right to the very top. From the top we now had a good view of the icefall coming from the west side of Mt. Alfred, our objective for tomorrow.

We continued down through heather meadows from Ironface to find a flat camp spot, which we designated "Three-Tarn Camp." There was one tarn for drinking and cooking water, one tarn for swimming and one spare for anything else. The sunset that evening was even more orange and golden than previous, but some clouds to the west suggested a change might be coming.

The morning dawned mostly clear and sunny, and we bushbashed through some steep forest to near the toe of the icefall on the west side of Mt. Alfred. It was obvious that the icefall itself was impassible, with massive teetering seracs. The only possibility was to climb steep scrabbly heather ledges beside a waterfall. From afar, it all looked quite intimidating. We approached closer and chose the best line, scrambling up some loose and chossy rock. Here the rock quality had deteriorated greatly from the granite we previously enjoyed.

Eventually, the terrain eased back, and we soon found ourselves at the northwest side of the Alfred glacier. Skirting towards the east we found a route onto the glacier and roped up as the crevasses were abundant. It was now midday and the clouds were beginning to tower over us. The top of Mt. Alfred was lost in the cloud. At this point, we decided the best thing to do was to find a way off the south end of the glacier and set up camp. We had hoped to climb Alfred, but the unsettled weather scrubbed our plan to go to the top. Instead we scrambled off the glacier on the south side of Mt. Alfred and found some tenting sites on ledges. We called this "The Balcony," as it was an airy perch with precipitous drops of 300-400 m below our tent spots. And there were no railings.

We woke the next morning to a sunny alpine scene of tents on ledges and solid deck of cloud below. Our challenge today was to make our way down over 600 m of steep ledges below camp and contour "skier's right" to the shoulder and col below. By the time we packed up, the clouds had risen to engulf us. Descending any steep route that you haven't come up can be tricky. Now it would be even trickier, with variable visibility.

Tony Knight

We started down the ledges. It seemed they kept pulling us down and left, but we knew we had to go right towards the shoulder and col. At one point, we were forced to make a rappel. We didn't know if there would be many more in store. For a while it seemed endless, scrambling up and down steep ledges only to find dead ends. It took most of the morning, but fortunately the visibility remained fair and we eventually made it off the steep ledges and onto the shoulder and easier ground. We were very much relieved and had an extended lunch. The rest of the afternoon, we bushwhacked down into the forest, and then up some steep bluffs, and found ourselves back again on the cleaner slabby granite, ascending to

our second food cache at a col above Boulder Lake. There we found the cache intact and we enjoyed more treats. We set up camp on the slabs and watched as the clouds cleared off Mt. Alfred.

The following day we decided to take a rest day to relax, explore a bit of the ridge that extended out towards "Crater Lakes" and eat down some of the food we had stashed. It was a cool, windy day but a fresh wind from the northwest helped clear the cloud and stress of the previous day.

We were now on the final stage of the trip, following the route from Boulder Lake, via Burh, Basing and "The Fist" towards Emma Lake. On the way, we stopped at many tarns for a dip or to refill water bottles. One tarn, which we dubbed the "Zen Tarn," looked almost like it was designed by a landscape architect with an angular modernist theme. We continued along the ridges, and now the travelling was becoming mellower, with mostly easy scrambling and hiking. Camp that night was a spot on the ridge with views both to the west for sunset and to the east for sunrise.

The second to last day, we continued on towards Emma Lake, going up and over "The Fist", which presented one last tricky bit of down-climbing. Our last camp was on the east shoulder of Crossroads peak, at a spot we called "East view Camp". Far to the southeast, we could see the Tantalus Range through the haze. Another large tarn provided all our water needs.

Our last day dawned once again clear. Except for the slight disturbance over Mt. Alfred, we had been blessed with good weather on this trip. We packed up and headed up and over Crossroads Peak, the last high point for the trip. There we could see Emma Lake and pick out the hut near the west edge of the lake. We started the long descent to the Eldred valley below. Gradually the vegetation overtook the granite boulders. The blueberries were ripe and good. Soon we were on the well-beaten trail down from Emma Lake to the valley below, which descends 800 m through the forest and eventually onto the upper reaches of "Goat B Branch". We had arranged to get picked up there by George Ferriera, who runs a 4x4 adventure company out of Powell River. To our delight, George was there as planned, complete with cold beer.

Overall, this is a fantastic area to visit. We walked about 55 km or so — most but not all of the North Divide. One can spend from just a couple of days at Emma Lake to several weeks exploring the Divide. Access by Forest Service road is good as far as Emma Lake. Adventuring further north means either flying in or making a much more strenuous approach from the valleys. ■

Click here to view more pictures

Participants: Manrico Scremin, Liz Scremin, Patrick Lloyd, Linda Lloyd, Helen Habgood, Anna Milino, Margaret Hanson, Tony Knight

The Land before Time: Marble Meadows

By Darrell Joan Tomkins, Comox District Mountaineering Club

A backpacking trip to the Marble Meadows plateau is an unforgettable journey into a landscape of marble formations, sinkholes and fossil beds from over 300 million years ago, when limestone was deposited and then thrust up and embedded in layers of granite and basalt. Certainly four or five days are ideal to explore the lakes, meadows and mountains in the area, although some objectives such as Mount McBride, Morrison Spire and Marble Peak can be reached directly at a less leisurely pace.

Our party of four (Linda Hamilton, Lorne Lanyon, Karl Stevenson, Darrell Tomkins) went for the ambling rather than the scrambling and gave ourselves five days. It required some coordination to bring canoes and gear to Auger Point on Buttle Lake in Strathcona Provincial Park and then paddle across to

Darrell Joan Tomkins

Alpine Lakes

Darrell Joan Tomkins

Evening Light on Marble Peak

the Phillips Creek Marine Campground. It was 4:40 p.m. when we got there, and several motor boaters had already set up their sites, complete with a bug-free dining tent! Happily, we found an unoccupied campsite by the bubbling Phillips Creek, and we set up our three lightweight tents and cooked dinner on our backpacking stoves.

The next morning, we started early for a long day up the switchback trail (9.2 km, 1490 m elevation gain), stopping for viewpoints, marble formations and sinkholes, to Marble Meadows, with four lovely alpine lakes. We set up camp just above Globe Flower Lake and enjoyed the late afternoon light on Marble Peak.

We woke to moisture in the tents from the humidity in the meadow between the lakes, so we packed up early and headed up the trail past Marblerock Lake, Wheaton Lake and the Wheaton Hut, built in 1970 (5.4 km, 351 m gain). From there we had an excellent view of the limestone landscapes, Morrison Spire and Mount McBride. We continued to a hidden waterfall where we made our camp for the next two nights. From this camp, we could have chosen to scramble up Mount McBride or head off to Morrison spire, but, as I said, we were ambling.

We spent the whole next day exploring the karst formations and the crinoid and brachiopod fossils on a hike up and down and up again to the Limestone Cap (9.0 km, 636 m up). This feature is amazing: a plain of ancient limestone cut into a jigsaw puzzle of blocks. A similar feature can be seen across the Wolf River, where the Golden Hinde rises to the highest elevation on Vancouver Island (2200 m).

The following day we decided to return to the meadows (6.7 km), with a side-trip up Marble Peak. The Peak was a bit more than some of us anticipated, and part way up the view of the alpine lakes from almost 1700 m was good enough for me! We camped near Marsh Marigold Lake, a bit higher than our first soggy night.

In the morning, we explored around the lake to a small unnamed lake and then proceeded back down from the meadows through the yellow cedar forest, which gave way to Douglas fir, pine and Douglas maple.

Scent of sun-dried pine
Lichens, mosses baked on rocks
Breathe the searing heat

When we got back to the canoes it was blowing quite hard, so Karl and I tested the waters with an unloaded canoe. We decided to wait a couple of hours for it to subside a bit, but the crossing was still exciting! We were all welcomed back by the beer we had stashed near the cars. ■

Darrell Joan Tomkins

Limestone Cap

Club Ramblings

Seeing Stars

By Nowell Senior, Caledonia Ramblers

Ric and I began our Caribou Meadows-Raven Lake trip at 4 a.m. on December 20, 2004, arriving at the Viking Trailhead at 5:30 a.m. and reaching the Meadows at 8 a.m. As we left the Meadows behind, the terrain became tougher; concealed branches and roots grabbed our snowshoes, hidden cavities swallowed our legs, and the natural obstacle course forced us to zigzag up, down, and across snow-filled gullies to find an easier route.

We found a creek I was sure would lead us to Kenneth Creek and subsequently to Raven Lake Trailhead. What a dreamer! The snow conditions along this creek and gully were enough to make a grown man cry. I snagged my snow-shoe on a log beneath the snow; I fell and dangled on my back with my head at the edge of the fast-running creek. My pack was sliding and pulling me into the water and putting pressure on my trapped foot and leg; I released my pack and adopted an attitude of composed dignity while waiting for Ric to finish laughing and come to my rescue.

At this point we had covered 7km in 8 hours: not even halfway to Raven Lake. We climbed out of the gully and after an hour of searching, found a place to camp. It took a further 4 hours to clear a pad in the snow, get the tent up, find wood, light a fire, and to cook and eat supper. At 6:30 p.m. we climbed into our tent and didn't venture out until 8 a.m. the next day. During the night, 6 inches of fresh snow settled upon us.

On this, the shortest day of the year, Ric and I chose prudence over pride, and headed back toward the familiar Viking and Caribou Meadows area. This return trip was as demanding as the previous day, and darkness descended upon us soon after we reached the Viking trail. Ric, who for two days had broken trail for a total of sixteen-hours, was as usual ahead of me when suddenly he appeared to do a forward somersault, landing with a sickening crash face first on an icy patch of trail; alarmed, I called out to Ric, and was relieved but puzzled by his response emanating from the wintry silence of the shadowy forest. Perhaps fatigue had affected my hearing, but I was sure that I heard Ric calling out for someone to make love to him – and I was the only one around. It's true he used only two words, but with what passion he expressed them! Perhaps this was the result of the intimacy of sharing a small tent for thirteen-and-a-half hours. Or maybe it was the beautiful array of stars Ric saw when his head hit the trail that put him in a romantic mood.

Anyway, this mood quickly passed, and with Ric damaged, but indomitable and determined as ever, we tip-toed ever so much more slowly down the interminably long dark trail. At last we were welcomed by the sight of my poor old beat-up car waiting patiently for us under a blanket of snow. Then back home to a long hot bath, a couple of beers, and some time to reflect upon the follies and foibles of those tiny sparks of life called human beings - time also to appreciate the beautiful wilderness treasure on our doorstep to wander around in.

I think about that long winter's night under a canopy of snow; snow so soft and still, yet snow which would become a part of that rushing torrent of a creek that almost got its icy clutches on me - but didn't… thank-you Ric.

Whenever I pass that spot on the Viking Trail where Ric fell, saw stars and called out to me – this line from a song runs through my mind, "It's Now or Never, Come Hold Me Tight, Kiss Me My Darling, Be Mine Tonight"

Good-night Ric.

Adieu, with a hand-shake in thought. ■

We are pleased to welcome the
Penticton Outdoors Club
as our newest
FMCBC Member Club

Thank you for your support!

We would also like to welcome our new Treasurer:

Silvie-Marie Fortin

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

Eric Burkle (VITIS)
Emilie Gibeau (UBC-VOC)
Geoff Phillips (MRBS)
Travis Carter (MRBS)

We would like to welcome our newest FMCBC Directors:

Jay MacArthur (ACC-Vancouver)
Rob Szpak (ACC-Vancouver)
Neil Burroughs (VITIS)
Else Bosman (UBC-VOC)

Thank you for volunteering your time with us!

FMCBC

Remembering Don and Sylvia Apps

William Wright, Comox District Mountaineering Club

Don and Sylvia Apps together spent more than 30 years exploring the backcountry of Vancouver Island and beyond. They were a modest, unassuming couple who would have retreated from the undertaking of an article such as this.

Mt. Apps, in the Beaufort Range south of the Vancouver Island village of Cumberland, is named for George Apps, Don's father. George made a significant contribution to the Comox Valley community of Cumberland in education and as a town alderman. While many think that the mountain is named for Don, who was the mountain man of the family, maybe someday, much like Mt. Allan Brooks (renamed for both father and son), this too will come to pass. If the debate had been going on in the presence of Don, he would have been the first to let it be known of his father's contributions and deserved honour without ever once acknowledging what he (and Sylvia) has meant to Vancouver Island's mountaineering family.

Don and Sylvia Approaching the Golden Hinde circa 1970

Don and Sylvia remind me a little bit of other great outdoor couples such as Don and Phyllis Munday or Miles and Beryl Smeeton, all quietly going about that which they loved and never fully realizing how amazing the lives they were living truly were. Although Don and Sylvia never rose to the great heights of those other couples, nor were they as widely recognized, this does not lessen the impact that they had as pathfinders and trail blazers in the backcountry of Vancouver Island.

Syd Watts, who became a legend in Vancouver Island mountaineering circles, would eventually become dissatisfied with all the off-Island trips being led by the Vancouver Island section of the Alpine Club of Canada and in 1958, he organized the Island Mountain Ramblers. Soon after, he would be joined on many of his Island trips by a young Don Apps. They were not only kindred mountain souls but also, coincidentally, kindred mechanics.

Following on the heels of this friendship, Don would meet Otto Winnig in 1962, which led to a lifelong camaraderie amongst these mountain men. Syd, Don and Otto were part of a 1965 party that would not only record the third ascent of Victoria Peak, Vancouver Island's third highest peak, but also be noted as the first recorded ascent with women participating. Interestingly, Frank Stapley, who recorded the first ascent, was related to Don by marriage.

Although Don already had a best friend, Pride, his giant St. Bernard dog, who would often be found on Don's mountain outings, Otto would also be given a spot in their backcountry quarters.

In 1964, Don and Otto decided it a most excellent idea to go north — not in July, but in December! Don had a small Bronco II into which they loaded a full-size Bombardier Skidoo, its skis draped over the back end and then, a small rented travel trailer coupled to the rear hitch — completely on the edge if you can picture the two young lads ready to embark! So, off they went, making it as far as Alaska and having a grand adventure along the way.

Around this time, Don and Otto tackled Elkhorn Mountain, the Island's second highest pinnacle and although a snowstorm forced the party to abandon their summit bid, it was on this trip that Don's character was exemplified. Temperatures dropped while they were high on the mountain and with only a thin plastic sheet to lie on, Otto became hypothermic. Don realized his buddy was in trouble and immediately turned his foam pad sideways to help Otto retain body heat. The generous act allowed for a safe homeward journey and for future climbs on another day.

Don and Otto loved the Beaufort Range and it is fitting that Mt. Apps lies here. Don, on one such memorable excursion to Mt. Joan, at the southern end of the range near Mt. Apps, was driving a beast of a backcountry access vehicle, a cross between a Jeep and a "Road Warrior." When the vehicle's fuel pump would sputter, Don, demonstrating his mechanical aptitude, would signal the navigator, ball-peen hammer in hand, to give the pump a whack and on they would go.

In the late 1960s a star-crossed series of events would occur. First, a young lass, Sylvia Doer, was on a trek to the Cape Scott lighthouse on the northern end of Vancouver Island (Sylvia had grown up at a lighthouse which her family had operated). Secondly, it just so happened that Don was on this trip as well and Sylvia did not escape his attention! Thirdly, Otto realized shortly thereafter that his role as best friend had reached maturity and he would now be relegated to that of best man.

Not only did Don and Sylvia become lifelong partners as husband and wife but they would also maintain a never-ending bond with the outdoors, even after the arrival of their 3 sons in the 1970s.

Sylvia, by now an Apps in 1971, would be Don's protégé at the IMR climbing camp on the bluffs above Pipers Lagoon, located north of Departure Bay in Nanaimo. Sylvia became a trip leader with the IMR and later that year would lead an outing to Marble

Meadows, which would become a favourite destination for the growing Apps family.

During this period, Don and Sylvia were living in Victoria, but because they were spending so much time in Strathcona Park they both gave up excellent careers to move to the Comox Valley and follow their dreams. They also became more involved with the Comox District Mountaineering Club (CDMC), now that they were living here.

Don and Sylvia were not necessarily staunch environmentalists, but they certainly loved the wilderness and when their backyard was threatened in the mid-1980s, Don offered up a small smattering of support. While transporting miners to work on the Westmin Mines bus, he would pass by Park protestors opposing the proposed Cream Silver Mine and rap off a couple of supportive toots on the horn.

The Grand Hurrah to Mt. Edziza circa 2000

The young couple constantly immersed their boys in the outdoors and it was with fondness that their children shared many of the memories in this article. Don is remembered by his sons as a man who so loved the mountains that he wanted to make them available to any who would dare. On one particular occasion, Don gathered at the trip meeting place as a participant for the planned trip. The trip leader was in the process of barring a new participant from the trip for what he considered to be less than adequate footwear. Don took the new participant aside and said, "Come on, we'll go do our own trip." Don's intent was not to be judgmental and he always carried the spirit of inclusivity on his shirt sleeve!

More than anything else, Don and Sylvia were known for their trail-building tenacity. They were invariably a part of most, if not all, club trail building efforts and work parties. Don almost single handedly built the Upper Myra Falls Trail and was a driving force on the Arnica Lake Trail that would become a main arterial access for mountaineering parties to the Golden Hinde, the Island's highest peak.

The Apps Family on Mt Apps circa 1985

Another undertaking that Don and Sylvia enthusiastically embraced was the CDMC millennium campground project on the shores of Lake Helen Mackenzie. Digging the boulder out of the ground, which stands in the middle of the campground and cradles the club plaque, was for many an hour Don's pet achievement.

The last few years of Don's life were spent handicapped and with limited eyesight but before his ability to walk in the hills was stolen from him, Don and Sylvia were able to make one last grand hurrah to Mt Edziza, near the Alaskan panhandle in Northwestern BC.

In the fall of 2000, Don and Sylvia were awarded with lifetime memberships in the Island Mountain Ramblers.

After the turn of the century, Don participated on his last CDMC trip to the Carey Lakes Ridge. About this same time, he also led a trip up Mt Becher, with failing eyesight. Now, when I say led, I use this term loosely, as someone else was actually in the lead and because of Don's knowledge, he was backseat leading. The day wasn't particularly brilliant and the inclement conditions had shut down any possible views causing a new participant to utter, "What's the point?" Don turned and remarked, "For the view, of course!"

Don is commemorated with the Don Apps Trail in Seal Bay Park, very near to where he and Sylvia lived. Don built much of the Don Apps Trail himself, with help from Sylvia and their good friend, Murray McLeod. An amazing side note to this project is that Don continued to work on this trail while legally blind.

Don left us in 2011 after a prolonged illness and Sylvia tragically disappeared while on a mountain trip near Castlecrag Mountain during the summer of 2014. An exhaustive search by Search and Rescue organizations from all over BC and many local volunteers failed to find an answer to this inexplicable mystery. ■

Acknowledgements:

Photos provided by the Apps family

Rob Apps / Family
Andy Apps / Family
Otto Winnig / CDMC
Karl Stevenson / CDMC
Ken Rodonets / CDMC - IMR
Tim Penney / CDMC
Matthew Lettington / IMR
Lindsay Elms / ACCVI - IMR
William Wright / CDMC

Some Good Reads

One Day as a Tiger: Alex MacIntyre and the birth of light and fast alpinism

By John Porter, 2014
Published by Vertebrate Publishing in the UK
Review by Mike Nash, Caledonia Ramblers

If you read just one mountaineering book this year, make it this one. Winner of the Grand Prize and the Mountaineering History Award at the 2014 Banff Mountain Book Festival, John Porter's One Day As A Tiger: Alex MacIntyre and the Birth of Light and Fast Alpinism is an engrossing tale that captures both the essence of MacIntyre's life and the style of small-group, informal high altitude climbing that became increasingly popular in the 1970s. Sadly, MacIntyre died in the Himalayas at the age of 28, and the book's title is taken from the proverb inscribed on his memorial stone at Annapurna base camp: "Better to live one day as a tiger than to live for a thousand years as a sheep."

This book is more than a biography of Alex MacIntyre; it is also a memoir of John Porter, as the author was an eminent mountaineer in his own right and a close personal friend of MacIntyre and his family. Porter struggled to take himself out of the story in accord with conventional biographical style, but says that proved impossible "because the intensity of our times and climbs together was best described in my own voice." American writer David Roberts reassured Porter that "it's both a chronicle and a memoir," and Porter discusses this and other aspects of writing the book in a Banff Centre interview.

The author, an American who claimed British citizenship through his father to avoid the Vietnam draft, was a student at Leeds University in the UK when he met MacIntyre. Eight years MacIntyre's senior, Porter was already doing serious climbs while MacIntyre was just starting out. Leeds University had one of the top mountaineering clubs in Britain and MacIntyre had passed up the opportunity to go to Cambridge in favour of Leeds for this reason.

Porter engages the reader in his opening chapters with a glimpse of the Anglo-Polish climbing expedition to Afghanistan in 1977 as a teaser for what's to come. He briefly introduces MacIntyre's fatal climb on the south face of Annapurna in 1982, before delving back into 1970s people and trends in mountaineering. The book at first seems scattered, but this is an artifact of its multi-level complexity as Porter weaves the many threads of 1970s British mountaineering into a rich tapestry that is foundational for the rest of the book.

The early chapters explore MacIntyre's familial background, and discuss the freewheeling antics of the Leeds University Climbing Club (LUCC) members, documenting some of MacIntyre's early climbing endeavors as well as Porter and MacIntyre's first serious and near-death adventure together at Chamonix. Porter, by then, had returned to Leeds after a hiatus in New Hampshire in the U.S., and had completed a few local climbs with MacIntyre. Alex MacIntyre didn't immediately make a strong impression on other LUCC climbers, but he was attentive and focused on learning. He made mistakes but seldom repeated them, and he was constantly learning new lessons like "competition at altitude is a killer" and how not to worry about falling behind as long as he is comfortable with his own pace — a good metaphor for life. Similarly when MacIntyre switched to law — ostensibly as an easy way to make money to support his climbing — his approach in legal work to carefully consider all angles before deciding on a course of action extended into his climbing. He could see the big picture and enjoyed arguing all sides of an issue, sometimes to the annoyance of his companions.

1975 was MacIntyre's truly exceptional season in the Alps, and once back in the UK he branched out to spend more time climbing in Scotland, where he began to connect with big name climbers of the day. In 1976, he solved "the last great problem" on the Grande Jorasses in the Alps, which he described in his article, "Cold Comfort," which was widely read at the time and which is reprinted in this book. Alex MacIntyre had earned his climbing apprenticeship.

In 1977, he was invited by the author to participate in an Anglo-Polish expedition to Afghanistan, and at this point Porter's book becomes hard to put down. The narrative and photographic portraits of Russia and Afghanistan — two years before Russia's 1979 invasion that started much of the geopolitical tension that continues to this day — are alone worth the read. Border politics, tribal life, and nomadic people long since gone are well portrayed. Porter's account of their three-man ascent of Koh-i-Bandaka over seven days is exhilarating. With no way back and an apparently impenetrable summit cornice at the crux, Alex comes up from behind, where he has been content to be for six days, with a smile and the words "My turn guys." No less engaging is the account, after their descent to a tribal village, of being on put trial for their lives after breaking a local taboo. MacIntyre and Polish climber Voytek Kurtyka sleep indifferently in their tent while Porter confers with a mullah for their lives. MacIntyre did have one big fear in the mountains, that of rockfall. It is a theme that recurs throughout the book and is one that he prevaricated on at the start of this climb. Perhaps he had a premonition of his eventual fate, but his concern in this instance was well placed as the rockfall in the early stages were so severe that all later described it as the most dangerous climb of their lives.

The following year brought nearly the same team together for an 11-day Polish-British climb of the south face of Changabang in India's Nanda Devi Sanctuary, complete with eleventh-hour political intrigue that nearly scuttled their plans in the aftermath of the CIA's failed attempt to plant a nuclear-powered listening device there a few years earlier. The book continues with MacIn-

tyre's ever-enthralling climbs in South America and the Himalayas during the last four years of his life, including a reprint of "Broken English," an account of his Dhaulagiri climb with his Polish friends in 1980. These stories inexorably lead to Shisha Pangma with Doug Scott in early 1982 and to his final climb on Annapurna's south face in the autumn of that year. Reunited with Porter after a two-year big-climb hiatus, the author relives the growing strain in their climbing relationship, and he is present at the mountain when MacIntyre is killed by a single falling stone.

In between adventures, the book delves into MacIntyre's changing personal relationships, his growing and forward-looking impact politically and professionally on the British mountaineering scene, and his increasingly intense ambition and focus to become "one of the world's all-time great mountaineers." According to Porter, "success for Alex put him into an upward spiral, both in terms of his ambition and his ego." Yet according to Voytek Kurtyka, when Alex was in the mountains he had no ego: "He was always the unseen member of the team until required and then he would pull out something exceptional." Porter closes the book with a philosophical musing about mountaineering and its risks, comparing premonitions that sometimes accompany tragic events with free will, character, fate and "a completely fashioned will."

There is a crossover between John Porter's book and Bernadette McDonald's Freedom Climbers that similarly won the Grand Prize at Banff in 2011. Both Alex MacIntyre and his biographer John Porter appear in McDonald's book because of their strong connections to the Polish climbers. McDonald calls Porter's book "a meticulously researched history of a generation of climbers so fuelled by ambition and adrenalin that they came close to climbing themselves into extinction." The last few words are Porter's.

Despite the unfortunate lack of an index, the book is thoughtful, informative, well-written and edited, engaging, and I highly recommend it.

Grand Prize Winner at the 2014 Banff Mountain Book Festival, One Day as a Tiger: Alex MacIntyre and the birth of light and fast alpinism by John Porter was published by Vertebrate Publishing in the UK in September 2014; hardcover with 248 pages plus 48 colour pages. ■

Conrad Kain: Letters from a Wandering Mountain Guide, 1906-1933

Edited with an Introduction by
Zac Robinson
The University of Alberta Press, 2014
Review by Ron Dart, ACC-Vancouver Section

> In these letters we see Conrad Kain the great guide and mountaineer as Conrad Kain the human being.
>
> ~Chic Scott

There are moments in the mountains when the vast cathedral of rock and silent sentinels are enveloped by low-lying clouds and little can be seen — when the clouds lift, the full beauty is revealed. Who could have guessed that the many misplaced letters of, probably, the finest first generation Canadian mountaineer were hidden and concealed by the low-lying clouds of WWII and dead friends? The combined work of Zac Robinson, Chic Scott, Maria-John Koch, Gerhard Pistor and Don Bourdon have, gratefully so, revealed to us the rich and varied, internal and external, life of Conrad Kain.

The fine "Foreword" by Chic Scott, "Epilogue" by John Bourdon and nuanced translations by Maria and John Koch blend wisely and well with Zac Robinson's insightful "Introduction," historic annotations and meticulous editing — this, in short, is a must have book for those interested in Conrad Kain, first generation Canadian mountaineering and Canadian mountain culture.

Conrad Kain: Letters from a Wandering Mountain Guide, 1906-1933 has a splendid assortment of maps and photographs, but the prize jewel of the book are the many letters (142) written by Conrad Kain, initially, to Amelie and Flora Malek, then, mostly, to Amelie Malek. The letters are chronologically divided into four seasons of Kain's life: 1) A Young Guide in Europe, 1906-1909, 2) Your Friend in the Western Woods, 1909-1912, 3) The Wanderer, 1912-1916 and 4) With Greetings, from Wilmer, 1920-1933. The letters to Amelie are touching and tender, informative and insightful, historic and charming. It is impossible, when reading the many letters, not to miss the obvious affection Conrad Kain had for Amelie Malek. Many is the letter in which the vulnerable and soul-searching Kain both reports the events of his life but also confesses to Amelie his deepest and dearest thoughts and feelings — the sheer honesty makes Kain most attractive. I have read the letters many times, and with each read, I learn more about Kain's multifaceted life.

The Introduction by Robinson is worth many a reread — facts and needed historic details fill in the context of Kain's and Malek's lives. The Epilogue by Bourdon, "The Kain-Malek Correspondence: Provenance, 1934-2005," tells the tale of how the Kain-Malek correspondence emerged and, in many ways, became the source material for the book. The Robinson and Bourdon contributions are like exquisite book ends within which the evocative letters make for the literary centre piece.

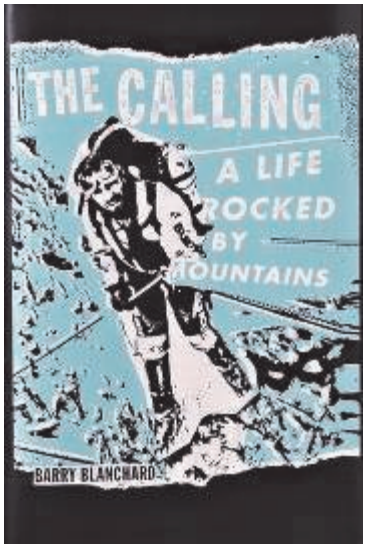
There is a fuller story (letters from Emelie-Flora Malek and mountain-guiding friendship with Dr. Eric Pistor) yet to be told that is only hinted at in the this book. Hopefully, in time, the greater tale will be published, and, in the publishing, much more will be learned about Conrad Kain, who has still much to tell us from beyond the clouds where he has gone. ■

Ron beside a photo of Kain at Kain hut in the Bugaboos

Some Good Reads

The Calling: A Life Rocked by Mountains

By Barry Blanchard, 2014
Published by Patagonia
Review by Mike Nash, Caledonia Ramblers



It's not easy to craft an autobiography that appeals to a wide audience, but Canadian alpinist and mountain guide Barry Blanchard does it well in his recent memoir, The Calling.

Blanchard grabs the reader from page one with an intense and sustained three-chapter account of his 1988 attempt on Nanga Parbat's Rupal Face in the Pakistan Himalayas. Retreating in the face of impossible weather and an avalanche that nearly swept the team off the mountain, a miscommunication in the height of a storm causes Blanchard and his companions to lose both of their ropes down the mountain. A possible death sentence is averted when they recover an abandoned gear bag they had bypassed on the ascent that had been left by four Japanese climbers who had disappeared on the mountain four years earlier. Inside they find two new ropes that are even their sponsor's brand.

After this breathless start, the reader is ready for a slower pace as Blanchard takes the reader back to his origins as an underprivileged Metis kid growing up in Calgary, saved from a possible delinquent life by a growing interest in the mountains. A chance encounter as an unaccompanied nine year old traveling on a bus from Medicine Hat to Calgary plants a seed as the woman sitting next to him reads aloud from Heinrich Harrer's "The White Spider, the story of the first ascent of the north face of the Eiger."

Blanchard rebuilds the pace with short, exciting accounts of his early climbs in the Rockies, followed by the French Alps and Yosemite, gearing up and traveling on a shoestring budget. Just past the book's halfway point and before the stream of consciousness storytelling has a chance to get stale, the reader is hit with another blockbuster account of Blanchard and Kevin Doyle's week-long life and death ascent of Denali via the difficult Cassin Ridge in the teeth of a storm. Reaching the summit in near zero visibility, they were the first in two weeks to do so by any route.

To produce a popular book like this, it's necessary to have both the stories to tell and the skill to do so. The storytelling formula isn't a mystery, you just have to start writing and do it often. (Newsletter magazines like Cloudburst are a great way to start). Barry Blanchard developed an easy and highly descriptive style, and this book had its origins in an article of the same title that he wrote for Alpinist Magazine in 2006 and republished in October 2014 to mark the book's release. Some of Blanchard's adjectives had this reviewer reaching for a dictionary, and I often found myself pausing to more fully appreciate his varied descriptions. Complementing its expressive text, the book has many quality in-line B&W photographs as well as two colour sections, giving an artistic element to the work. The raw dialogues, while possibly not for everyone, seem to work better in a personal climbing chronicle like this, where the author owns the style, than in a prestigious journal shared with other contributors. I found a few minor typos, and the book would have benefited from the addition of an index as there are many references to people and climbs of significance to Canadian mountaineering history. The book ends with a glossary of climbing terms that makes it accessible to a wider range of readers.

After the Cassin Ridge, Blanchard returns to the Canadian Rockies to make the first ascent of the Andromeda Strain followed by an ascent of the north face of Mount Alberta. This is followed by his first venture to the Himalayas, by now as a seasoned and respected alpinist. In his account of Rakaposhi (1984) I found a name from my past bringing back memories of partying in Toronto in 1969 as newly arrived immigrants from the UK.

Inevitably, Blanchard moves on to Everest, where, having been awarded a spot in the first summit team, he graciously relinquishes it to Sharon Wood, allowing her the opportunity to become the first North American woman to summit. Back in Canada, his lifestyle catches up when, in 1986 he loses two guided clients to an avalanche, and two years later one of his closest friends, David Cheesmond is killed on Mount Logan. This precipitates a dark period in his life that extends into the early 1990s. In his 1988 posthumous "Letter to a Friend," he speaks of the trap that mountaineers can find themselves in: "I do know we've been guilty of ignoring our mortality. We laughed off the 'close ones.'"

Blanchard winds down the book with accounts of his first ascents of The Wild Thing on Mount Chephren, the north face of Howse Peak, and first winter ascent of the north face of Mount Edith Cavell. He alludes to his forthcoming Rupal Face expedition described in the opening chapters, and his proposed return to Everest, but he never gets back there in the text and leaves the reader with a bit of an anti-climactic ending but also with a sense, present throughout the book, of his very strong feelings for his climbing partners.

A finalist in the Mountain & Wilderness Literature (Non-Fiction) category at the 2014 Banff Mountain Book Festival, "The Calling: a Life Rocked by Mountains" by Barry Blanchard was published by Patagonia in October 2014. Hardcover with 440 pages, including 32 full colour pages and even a music playlist, The Calling is portrayed by the publisher as "A portrait of the power of mountains to lift us physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually" and a reminder of the days "when rock-climbing was dangerous and sex was safe!" ■

~~~ Mike Nash is the author of Outdoor Safety & Survival (Rocky Mountain Books, 2012), The Mountain Knows No Expert (Dundurn, 2009), and Exploring Prince George (Rocky Mountain Books, 2004, 2007).

A North Shore Hiker during summer camp in Kananaskis Country

FMCBC Member Clubs

CENTRAL INTERIOR
Bulkley Backcountry Ski Society
Caledonia Ramblers Hiking Club
Fraser Headwaters Alliance
Ozalenka Alpine Club

NORTH COAST
Mount Remo Backcountry Society

METRO VANCOUVER
Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver
Alpine Club of Canada – Whistler
BC Mountaineering Club
Friends of Garibaldi Park
Hike BC
North Shore Hikers
North Vancouver Outdoors Club
Outsetters Club of Vancouver
SFU Outdoor Club
Valley Outdoor Association
Vancouver Rock Climbing Group
Varsity Outdoor Club UBC

FRASER VALLEY
Backroads Outdoor Club
Chilliwack Outdoor Club

SOUTHERN INTERIOR
Kamloops Hiking Club
Kootenay Mountaineering Club
Penticton Outdoors Club
South Okanagan Trail Alliance
Varsity Outdoor Club Okanagan

VANCOUVER ISLAND AND ISLANDS
Alberni Valley Outdoor Club
Alpine Club of Canada – Vancouver Island
Comox District Mountaineering Club
Friends of Strathcona Park
Island Mountain Ramblers
Outdoor Club of Victoria
Quadra Island Outdoor Club
Vancouver Island Spine Trail Association
Vancouver Island Trails Information Society
Victoria Outdoor Club Meetup

The FMCBC invites you to an evening presentation of

PINECONE BURKE PROVINCIAL PARK: A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY WITH JUSTIN BROWN

Two local backcountry enthusiasts spent 17 days traversing and exploring the remote reaches of Pinecone Burke Provincial Park. Join mountaineer and photographer Justin Brown and partner Ian Koch as they lead you on a visual and descriptive virtual tour through one of B.C.'s youngest and least explored Provincial Parks. Guidebook author Lyle Litzenberger and representatives from BC Parks and Canadian MapMakers will also be in attendance, so come early to ask questions, learn from their expertise, and pick up some great swag!

Friday, June 12, 2015
doors open at 7:00 p.m., presentation begins at 7:30 p.m.
UBC's Buchanan Building, room A101
Admission by donation

www.mountainclubs.org

FMCBC

Help us advocate—Join the FMCBC!

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

We represent 5000 individuals from 34 non-motorized outdoor recreation clubs across BC. Here's how you can get involved:

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

Learn more at www.mountainclubs.org