



# Kootenay Mountaineer

The KMC Newsletter November-December 2004 Issue 6 Next deadline: Jan.20<sup>th</sup> 2005

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## Winter Trip Coordinators and Would-Be Coordinators Unite: Saturday November 27, 2004

New this year, the KMC will be running a leadership session for winter trip coordinators and would-be coordinators (snowshoe and ski). This is an informal event, which will cover pre-trip planning, group management, and finish up with an avalanche transceiver practice session.

The session is open to everyone in the KMC. Coordinating a KMC winter trip is not a pre-requisite. For more information or to sign up contact Sandra McGuinness.

## Islands in the Sea: The Bonnington Range Cabins

The KMC has a long tradition with the four cabins (Grassy, Steed, Huckleberry and Copper) in the Bonnington Range dating back to 1963 when the KMC, then affiliated with the Alpine Club of Canada, restored the old mining hut in the basin between Cabin and Midday Peaks and named it the Huckleberry Hut after volunteers who baked huckleberry pies in the cabin. In 1985, the KMC built both Grassy and Copper Cabins, and a decade later built the Steed Hut on the east side of Siwash Mountain making possible an excellent ski (or hiking) traverse across the Bonnington Range from Bombi Summit in the south to Barrett Creek in the northeast. This traverse takes the traveller through wonderful mountain scenery of mixed forest and mountain lakes. The route passes over the summits of Siwash Mountain, and Empire, Colony and Territory Peaks. Along the way, other mountains, such as Copper Mountain, Mount Connor, and Commonwealth and Dominion Mountains can be climbed as side trips. In winter, many excellent ski descents are possible, with wonderful skiing available right out the door of each of the cabins.

However, one of the common complaints we hear from club members regarding the Bonnington Range cabins is the use of the cabins and surrounding area by motorized users (particularly snowmobiles). This year, the KMC renewed its agreement with Ministry of Forests to continue joint maintenance of the cabins, each of which is an official recreational site. Each MOF recreational site has a set of "objectives", and it is possible to have written into these objectives a designation of the particular site as non-motorized use only.

Ultimately, the aim of the KMC is to have an area around each cabin (probably circumscribed by obvious geographical boundaries such as ridges and drainages) designated a non-motorized recreational site. We anticipate there will be some challenges to be overcome as, typically, motorized users resent and oppose any attempt to restrict their access.

Any and all feedback from club members is appreciated, as, of course, is any help club members may be able to offer with this initiative.

For more information or to offer your opinion or help, contact Sandra McGuinness.

## Recreation Activity Conflicts

*A Ministry of Forest interview with Fred Thiessen.*

It is becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate a non-motorized winter recreation activity. The BC Snowmobile Fed (BCSF) is very well organized (& in part assisted by the snowmobile industry) and the motorized mentality is hard to overcome. I see snowmobiles as being a "land extensive" (they need/want a lot of land) and the non-motorized activities as being "land intensive" (don't need a lot).

How does the Province (MoF & MSRM) deal with all this? Not very well. All the legislative tools are out there to do the job. To implement them and enforce them takes a lot of internal political will, the ability to take a lot of heat in defending or enforcing a decision and staff resources. The argument you will hear the most is that recreation issues tend to be lower risk relative to other issues such as roads in watersheds, theft, etc. It's only when activity conflicts start having an economic impact (e.g. snowmobiles and heli-skiing as in the case of Wiegler vs Valemount Snowmobilers) and the complaints become political that the Province will allocate resources to sort things out.

More than anything else, Gov't agencies would prefer to work out the details and issues themselves and see self-policing within the groups. Sometimes this works, sometimes it doesn't. There are examples, where user groups have managed to sort this sort of thing out sometimes by themselves, sometimes with facilitators. Normally in these processes, the user groups need to figure out which terrain is

the most important, next important, least important then compare maps to see where the overlaps are. The negotiations then start from there.

As it currently stands, land use planning for this type of activity management lies with the Ministry of Sustainable Resources (MSRM). Forests used to deal with all this sort of stuff, but the current structure is for MSRM to do all the planning and then the line agencies such as Forests implement. They in fact are dealing with this type of planning in the East Kootenay's. In the Kootenay's, the contact for this is Steve Flett 354-6379 & or Gord McAdams 354 6911 at the MSRM office in Nelson.

Here are some observations regarding the Bonnington Range:

-Within the Arrow Boundary Forest District, the MoF has a map notation (A legal designation under the Forest and Range Practices Act which allows for land use objectives) called the Bonnington Range. There are recreation objectives for this map notation that read, "The objective is to manage the Bonnington Range recreation site for a forested, alpine/sub alpine and a separated semi primitive motorized and semi primitive, non motorized recreation experience. The natural vegetation will be conserved. In summer, opportunities for dispersed camping, mountain biking, hiking, and mountaineering are available; In winter, opportunities for ski touring from hut to hut, mountaineering and snowmobiling are available." I have underlined the word, "separated" since it put the Province in a legal perspective to create zoning. In fact the MoF could do it on its own under legislation called the Forest and Range Practices Act, Section 58. Here is the link to the legislation.

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/legsregs/frpa/frpa/frpatoc.htm>

Also, since the Rec. Site has objectives, the MoF could also create site-specific local rules for the area and post signs. This is under Recreation Regulation, Section 20(3). <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/legsregs/frpa/frparegs/forrec/frf.htm>

Note that enforcement would be difficult on both these, as is the case in the Catamount area. Technically the MoF can set some rules up there. My guess is that they wouldn't do that though unless:

\* the user groups agreed to the zoning amongst themselves

\* a planning process set the parameters

The solution in the Bonnington Range, as elsewhere, is a planning process that comes with recreation activity zoning. Not a new

concept by any means. The USFS has been doing it for over 20 years. Here in BC we have several examples of completed processes (Golden) and several that are underway.

*"No trail is long with good company"*

## VALHALLA PROVINCIAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP, SEPT. 25<sup>th</sup> SILVERTON, B.C.

I attended this all-day workshop on a recent Saturday as the KMC's representative. The purpose was to create a new masterplan for the park to replace the original one dating back to the late '80s.

The list of representatives reflects the breadth of interests: Craig Pettitt and Anne Sherrod, Valhalla Wilderness Society; Marilyn Burgoon, Western Canada Wilderness Committee and First Nations; Jeff Bustad, Chamber of Commerce; Dale Caton, Valhalla Mountain Touring; Jody Cliff, Bob Fuhrer, and Jim Gilman, kayaking, boating, etc.; Kevin Murphy, Village of New Denver; Kim Roshinsky, water taxi; Ken Gordon, Jr., horsemen; and Dan Nelson, BC Floatplane Association. Representing Water, Lands & Air Protection were Greg Chin, Roger Tierney, and consultants Dave Kaegi and Phil Whitfield.

In the morning session, we all had a chance to air our concerns and suggestions. The lakeshore sees the most use of any spot in the park. Concerns focused on noise pollution from jet boats and jet skis and on fee collection. Jim observed that winter use by snowmobilers is heavy and increasing. Jeff would like to see a cross-drainage north-to-south trail above the lakeshore (I agreed with VWS that this is not a good idea). We concurred that there should be no heli skiing in the park or commercial ventures with motorized access. You might not know that there is helicopter access to Wee Sandy Lake, which is currently zoned for a lodge. Another surprise to me is that there is horse access via Gwillim Creek. Other items of discussion were float planes on Evans Lake (no controls or monitoring), negative impact of lodges and cabins within the park, and access from the west (no data about usage and no representatives from the

Arrow Lakes communities at the workshop).

In the afternoon, we did a visioning exercise imagining what each of us would like the park to be like in 10 years. At the end of the day, we agreed on the following: manage park/Crown land interface to ensure park values; preservation of wilderness; appropriate and secure funding for park stewardship; new facilities will not negatively impact ecological and wilderness experience values; enhanced understanding and appreciation of cultural values; accessibility in keeping with wilderness preservation and experiences. In sum, the wilderness character of the park is to be maintained. We meet again on October 30<sup>th</sup> to fine tune our revised document. After the first of the year, there will be a public review period and open houses in local centers. The new Masterplan should be ready by the spring of 2005.

Kim Kratky

## Commercial Backcountry Licenses and Land & Water B.C. Comment

Land & Water B.C. is a crown corporation, charged with maximizing monetary return from government lands. It has been aggressively marketing backcountry 'opportunities' throughout B.C., and receiving applications for various operations. LWBC processes do not seem to consider existing recreational, commercial, and motorized activities, or even other government planning and management activities. 'Self-organized' backcountry recreation probably accounts for over 95% of such recreation, and makes a major contribution to the culture and economy of the Sea-to-Sky region. There is no current or reliable information on these activities. There is some but not a lot of information for motorized backcountry activities, again largely self-organized.

The Access Society believes that, before considering or granting any further licenses for commercial backcountry activities:

1. Land and Water B.C., and government agencies generally, should become better informed as to the existing and potential cultural and economic contribution of self-organized recreation on government land, and of other activities.

2. Land and Water B.C. should be required to harmonize its activities with the actions of other parts of the government.

From Access News #38

## **GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT NOT A GREEN LIGHT FOR JUMBO** by Kim Kratky

Despite the impression you may have gained from the press, the BC government's October 14th announcement that the Jumbo Glacier Resort Project has now passed the environmental assessment phase does not at all mean that the resort has been approved. In fact, the important news was announced by Minister of Sustainable Resource Management George Abbott in a press release titled "Province says ultimate Jumbo decision up to Region." Abbott's news was that the Jumbo project would require the final approval of the Regional District of East Kootenay, which would rule on a re-zoning of the resort's land base. Abbott himself said, "The final decision will be in the hands of those closest to the project. Those who will benefit most directly and who most directly understand the costs will have the final say here. The project would not be able to proceed without the approval of the East Kootenay Regional District." Abbott also promised in an interview on CBC Radio's "Almanac" that the government would not invoke the controversial Bill 75 to override a decision made at the local level.

You may have also noticed an interview with Mr. Grant Costello, Vice-President of Jumbo Glacier Resort, that appeared in The Nelson Daily News on October 15th. Costello opined that requesting a re-zoning of the resort land by the RDEK "could be an endless process" and that the JGR would likely apply to the provincial government for a special "Resort District/Municipality" status. This would allow the proponent to bypass approval by local government. For what it's worth, my opinion is that the government would not showcase the idea that locals have the final say, and then allow the proponent to avoid that step.

The next phase in the process is for the proponent to work with Land and Water BC to meet the requirements of the EAO report. Jumbo Wild's Technical Committee have the relevant portions of that report, and our scientists are carefully reviewing it to ensure the proponent complies. We are also trying to learn how this stage works. Eventually, the proponent and L & W BC will create a document for the RDEK to vote upon; this phase could take one year. Furthermore, other major hurdles are facing the proponent: the issue of mitigation of impact on grizzlies has not really been addressed; tenure conflict with RK Heli Ski has not been solved; the documented opposition to the project by the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council has not been dealt with; and the RDEK, in its current makeup, is strongly opposed to the project. There will likely be elections for RDEK directors next fall before the project approval is scheduled. Stay tuned.

### **Press Release**

### **HERITAGE ON HIGH**

## **Historic Slocan Chief Cabin to Become Interpretive Centre**

The Friends of West Kootenay Parks are overseeing the conversion of the Slocan Chief Cabin from overnight accommodation to a day-use interpretive centre at Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. Major restoration work completed this summer at the cabin by The Friends Of West Kootenay Parks Society include the difficult replacement of the original 1896 sill logs and brings the structure back to tiptop condition, spruced up and ready to serve visitors for another hundred years in its new capacity as interpretive centre. The Chief is the oldest surviving alpine hut in Western Canada, a significant heritage resource. Research and design of the interpretive framework is underway. By early next summer the cabin will contain artifacts, historic photos and interpretive signage detailing the rich and varied heritage of the Cabin and of Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park.

The interpretive team is seeking photos, information or artifacts relative to the history of the Kokanee Glacier area and the Slocan Chief Cabin. Mining era and mountaineering artifacts and photos from all eras are especially needed. Please call interpretive team members Ian Fraser (353-7425) or Cathy Grierson (359-7981) if you can be of assistance. Tax receipts will be issued for cash donations to The Friends of West Kootenay Parks Society. There is also a small budget for the purchase of appropriate artifacts.

In 1896 the Slocan Chief Cabin was constructed for the owners of the Smuggler Mine. It has been a mining and prospecting base camp for generations and housed 36 working miners in the silver boom years at the turn of the century. By 1919 the Kokanee Mountaineering Club was using it for glacier and climbing camps. Kokanee Glacier became one of British Columbia's first interior parks in 1922. In the 1960's The Slocan Chieftains and the Kootenay Mountaineering Club held several fun-filled work parties making several renovations and improvements to the Chief. The Canadian National Ski Team trained here in the 1960's and the Park has become a world class alpine ski touring destination. The cabin is a mining era survivor and has been central to the history of mining, alpine recreation and alpine ecosystem conservation in the Kootenays. The late outdoorswoman Helen Butling noted in her history of the Slocan Chief Cabin published some thirty years ago:

*"The cabin has survived an avalanche that destroyed a cabin less than a hundred yards away, a fire that blackened the land and vandalism in the thirties. It has served as a base for two mines, two mountaineering clubs and a national ski training camp. It has twice not been considered worthy of restoration, but restored it has been. May it be well cared for and stand forever."*

Thank you for your support for the creation of this unique alpine interpretive centre.

# Backcountry Boom

More so than any other region in B.C., in the Kootenays, commercial winter backcountry recreation is going through the roof...but is it too much too fast?

Standing atop 2,682-metre Mount Urd, deep in southern British Columbia's terrain- and snow-blessed Valhalla mountain range, 31-year-old guide Russ Hulbert is having trouble containing his excitement. "I've been waiting to ski this for a long time," says the one-half owner of Ice Creek Lodge, a new backcountry touring operation located at the north end of the Devil's Range. We can see the lodge itself 800 meters below, a quaint timber-frame structure tucked in sub-alpine trees. A quick pan behind reveals the unskied peaks and lonely granite walls of the Devil's Range. "It's like a dream," continues Hulbert, staring down what he's dubbed, "the Money Line," a northeast facing, 45-degree face and a soon-to-be first descent that will wrap our group to the front door of the lodge. For Hulbert and his partner Shawn West, both Slokan Valley natives who have invested thousands of hours and dollars to open Ice Creek Lodge, the dream is as real as the snow is deep.

Throughout the rugged ranges of the Kootenays, backcountry lodges seem to be accumulating much like the region's celebrated snowfall. Backcountry winter tourism-whether it involves lungs and legs, snowcats, or helicopters-is fashionable business these days. Not only does it satisfy the aspirations of business owners like Hulbert and West, it also answers the call of skiers and snowboarders from around the world. But for BC's nearly 80 commercial winter backcountry operations, a number that has doubled in the last four years, such growth is not without its growing pains.

In 1995 the BC government released its Backcountry Recreation Policy, the first legislation of its kind in the province. Tight restrictions in the policy made it difficult for new commercial backcountry operations to gain the rights to do business on Crown lands (commercial operations pay the government for exclusive rights to occupy and do business on publicly-owned Crown lands, accounting for 94% of the province's land base). During that time, the sticky business of obtaining commercial recreational use tenures kept growth in the industry slow-paced, enabling highly successful and internationally coveted cat

skiing businesses like Meadow Creek's Selkirk Wilderness and Fernie's Island Lake Lodge to enjoy a fairly non-competitive environment. Out of this climate grew strong, reputable businesses that enjoyed waiting lists up to four years long.

But with a new business-minded Liberal government came a restructured tenure process, one that takes only 140 days and rarely issues a negative reply, making it much easier to gain tenure on Crown lands. Thus, the floodgates on backcountry recreation were opened: out of 28 new backcountry lodge tenures handed out in BC in the last four years, 22 were in the Kootenays. In that same period, a combined 20 new heli and cat operations have opened throughout the province, a near doubling of operations.

"If we start issuing all kinds of new lodge tenures, which is happening, certainly the competition is going to go up, and I'm not convinced that there's the marketing savvy for the industry to grow the market as fast as the facilities will grow," explains Ross Cloutier, who chairs the Adventure Programs Department at the University College of the Caribou in Kamloops. "It's much easier to build buildings, it's much easier for the Liberals to give 40 new lodge tenures, than it is to grow the market."

For new operations like Ice Creek, the current situation is a catch-22. While they do have tenure to 25 square kilometres of epic terrain for the next 10 years, costing them between 2.5% and 5% of their annual gross revenue, they face a business climate where the clients' choices are vast and still growing. In the last two years alone there have been 21 new applications for winter commercial recreation tenures in the Kootenays. As a result, filling five months of winter reservations may prove to be as difficult as skinning through thigh-deep schmoo. "To fill the prime months of February and March is no problem," explains Hulbert. "It's December, April and even January that's going to be difficult. As more lodges come into play and they keep pushing these tenures it's going to be two months of business a year, because every skier will be able to get a prime week."

While ample choices may seem ideal from the client's perspective, the worry amongst many business owners is that what was once a boutique market, brimming with demand, may become over-saturated, leaving operators like Ice Creek struggling to keep their doors open. Two months of business is not enough to keep running, especially in light of skyrocketing insurance costs-as much as 300% in the 2002/03 season alone, a fall-out of one of the worst avalanche

seasons on record. "In the past, the industry enjoyed being exclusive," says David Nichols, marketing manager at Island Lake Lodge, which has seen a slight impact to its shoulder season due to increased competition. "Now you really need to be doing your product right."

Is there room for everyone? West and Hulbert plan to make space for themselves by capitalizing on a niche barely scratched in the backcountry lodge business-ski mountaineering. Jeff Pensiero, owner and operator of Baldface Lodge, a catskiing operation near Nelson, suggests marketing is part of the answer. "I don't want to compete with anyone else in BC. There's a huge market out there. I'm only looking for 800 people a season, so you start looking at it and there's plenty of customers for even all these new operations, we just need to get the word out a little better."

Pensiero's isn't the only voice of optimism. The combined success of the Kootenays' numerous cat, heli and backcountry lodge operations is beginning to have a significant economic impact, one direly needed as forestry and mining revenues continue to dwindle. "Diversification is the key to success right now," explains Anne Pigeon of Whitewater Winter Resort, who recently developed a marketing consortium with seven local cat operators. "It puts us on an equal playing field with resorts like Jackson Hole. With all of these operators and the diverse ski experience we have here, I think that's what going to keep this area sustainable in the future." According to the BC Helicopter and Snowcat Skiing Operators' Association, it is estimated that the snowcat and heli ski industries alone collectively account for 2,000 jobs, and 90,000 to 100,000 skier days with gross revenues exceeding \$80-100 million annually. For comparison, BC alpine resorts accounted for \$281 million in revenues during the season of 1999/2000.

But is it possible to have too much of a good thing? According to Robin Fawcett, the Kootenay region Commercial Recreation Manager at Lands and Water British Columbia Inc., the agency in charge of handing out commercial recreation tenures, "Government has given us direction to double tourism in the next 10 years. And at the present time we are basically accepting and processing applications through the system to see if we can achieve that." But when asked how many operations the region can sustain, Fawcett replies: "At the present time no carrying capacity studies have been done. If we get an application in the door it's basically up to the client to do his homework on whether the market is

saturated or not. He wouldn't be coming in the door with a proposal to do a cat ski or heli ski operation if he feels the market is too saturated. "

This push-it-through policy is disconcerting to many people in the affected communities, especially those who worry about the mounting pressures on wilderness. "Backcountry tourism the way that our government is currently embracing it is not being done in a sustainable fashion," says Kat Hartwig, a spokesperson for the East Kootenay Environmental Society, who recently attended the United Nations' summit on eco-tourism. "There are so many operators in the backcountry right now and we have no comprehensive understanding of their cumulative impact to wildlife. People need to make a living but we can't kill the thing we're trying to embrace. "

While skiing and snowboarding perfect powder in uncrowded mountains is, of course, fun, it is also a business, and part of an emerging industry poised to fill an economic void left by declines in traditional industries. Backcountry operators who make a living from the terrain and snowfall that is unique to the Kootenays know that where there is quality, there is demand, but at the same time, poor planning and overuse can lead to collapse. Without proper regulation the industry could become a victim of its own success.

As I continue to link turns in ankle deep fluff with Hulbert and West, the majesty of the Valhalla's grasping our complete attentions, it is easy to forget the challenges this burgeoning industry may face in the coming years. In spite of all the unknowns, one thing is for certain: the snow-filled storms will keep rolling in; backcountry operators will just have to hope the skiers and snowboarders continue to do the same.

*Published with permission of author Mitchell Scott, editor. The article is from the Kootenay Mountain Culture Magazine that is published twice a year. Their next issue will be out in Nov. mitch@adventurestorytelling.ca*

**Beetle Bill-** The B.C. government has introduced a bill to improve the salvage of timber attacked by the mountain pine beetle and to direct stumpage costs paid by small-scale salvagers into reforestation. Bill 65 will let Victoria designate an area of Crown land as a beetle-salvage area, allowing it to include specific requirements in a forest license sold competitively within the area. This allows the province to direct

or restrict harvesting to priority areas of beetle-killed timber. The Province, Oct.6.2004

## **Forestry Road Maintenance, Deactivation and Closures- Comment**

B.C.'s mountaineers and climbers depend on the use of forestry roads to reach many destinations. Many years ago, most such roads were locked, and access was difficult. Eventually it was established that these roads, being paid for with public money, should be publicly accessible. The exceptions are where operational concerns and safety require limitations, and when the road and operations are on private land, as on much of the east side of Vancouver Island. Maintenance of forestry roads, and their deactivation, is an ongoing concern of the mountaineering and climbing community. Recreation, such as climbing and mountaineering, has rarely had an impact on these decisions. Plans for deactivation of roads are often made before they are built, and so before there is any information on the recreation opportunities they may open up. However, it can be quite costly to maintain forestry roads. Recent government changes to forest management policies compound this situation. The Ministry of Forests is no longer even nominally responsible for managing recreation on forest lands, or well over half of B.C. Land and Water B.C. now markets commercial recreation on forest land, including tenures and licenses. Self-organized recreation, or over 95% of recreation on crown land, is neglected. There is little if any knowledge of the contribution it makes to the cultural and economy of various regions, or its potential, and so it has little effect on decisions on maintenance and deactivation of forestry roads, and other crown land management issues. Access News #38

## **Fire Hazard Closures - Summer 2004 - Comment from Access News #38**

The Access Society is concerned that widespread forest closures severely limit climbing and mountaineering in a key

season. The impacts of such closures on the economy and image of any closed region are substantial. Also, hotter, drier summers may become a trend, and if so wholesale closures may not be the most appropriate tool for risk management. B.C. is renowned for its backcountry recreation, and it would be ironic if large areas were closed for lengthy periods each year due to fire hazard and inflexible risk management strategies.

Before implementing closures, we suggest that governments and land managers:

- a) consider the impacts on recreation, e.g. climbing and mountaineering, and so the impacts on the economy and culture,
- b) consult with affected communities, both to ensure communications and to work out risk management strategies where possible,
- c) learn from experience in other jurisdictions,
- d) where geography, resources and activities allow (Squamish, Skaha, Kelowna, Cougar Canyon) try volunteer self-patrols, which have worked well,
- e) consider graduated, limited or managed closures, and
- f) remember that some climbers, e.g. those flying to alpine areas such as Waddington, or those visiting the Bugaboo Range, will largely or entirely be above treeline, pose little if any risk, and again are risk manageable.

Climbers are very aware of fire risks. Two major climbing areas (Skaha - 1994, Kelowna Crags - 2003) burnt in the last decade, the first due to arson, the second to lightning. Climbers also helped extinguish a fire at Alexis, in the Smoke Bluffs, in the 1980s, and have seen the effects of other 'small' fires around Squamish.

Commercial operators have been lobbying for exemptions from fire closures. This may make sense, depending on many factors. However, 'self-organized' recreation, such as most climbing and mountaineering, accounts for more than 95% of backcountry recreation, and makes large cultural and economic contributions to B.C. Self-organized users are as manageable as commercial users, from a risk management perspective - experience with Patrol-a-Crag in 2003 at Squamish demonstrates this. A voluntary stewardship program, organized by the Access Society, the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and retailers, kept Stawamus Chief and Murrin Provincial Parks largely open to climbing during the closures, and was remarkably effective.

"Climate change will have the effect of pushing winter sports higher and higher up mountains, concentrating impacts on ever decreasing areas... As ski resorts in lower altitudes face bankruptcy, so the pressure on highly environmentally sensitive upper-altitude areas rises, along with the pressure to build new ski lifts and other infrastructure... Ski resorts now need an average base altitude of 1300m for reliable snowfall. Global warming is going to push that to between 1500 and 1800 meters". Rolf Buerki.

Did you know it costs about \$600,000.00 to install a system and up to \$60,000.00 for each mile of snow?

## The Wild Bunch

With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, a large number of trail-wise and experienced-hardened horse guides, packers and outfitters found themselves in the Rockies, the Selkirks and the Monashee Mountains. When railway surveying and construction were completed, a number of these men stayed on to become the first generation of guides to make their living in the wake of the tourism boom generated by rail traffic. Though overshadowed by the later arrival of professional mountain guides from Switzerland, a great deal of early exploration was done by this often wild and eccentric band of cowboy wanderers. No major expedition went into the wilderness without their counsel, their equipment or their direct help. Some of the early cowboys became legends in their own right, and their names have been left on the mountains, lakes and valleys they explored. A few of them, though they preferred to travel by horse and remain in the valleys, became pioneer summiteers who gradually realized the great aesthetic potential of mountaineering and began to share it with their countrymen.

Through their efforts, a local interest in mountaineering was sparked and Canadians were, at last, able to see what others saw in

the stunning mountains that rose cold and timeless from their own backyards... These men were part of an age when the horsemen were the climber's best friends. These outfitters and guides opened routes to the high peaks making mountaineering possible in the west." From R.W.Stanford's article Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Changing Aesthetics of Mountains, Part 12: The Wild Bunch, in The Gazette of the Alpine Club of Canada. Vol. 10, #3, Winter 1995.

## The Cat Facts



If you are out hiking and see a cougar consider yourself very lucky. It is with good reason the first nations people called them the "Ghost of the Forest". Most British Columbians will never see a cougar in their lifetime. Conflict between cougars and humans is extremely rare. In the past 100 years a total of 5 people have been killed by cougar attacks in B.C. All but one of these attacks occurred on Vancouver Island. During the same period there were 29 non-fatal attacks (20) on Vancouver Island. The majority of these attacks were on children under the age of 16. Your best defense is awareness; a cougar attack is highly unlikely.

The cougar or mountain lion is at the top of the food chain. An adult male weighs between 140-200lbs, the female between 90-120lbs. The biggest cougars are found in the Kootenays and in the interior of B.C. Their primary prey is deer. It will also feed on wild sheep, elk, rabbits, beaver, raccoons, grouse, livestock, and the occasional roaming pet. Cougars are most active at dusk or dawn, but they can roam and hunt at any time of the day or night and in all seasons. During late spring and summer, 1-2 year old cougars become independent of their mothers. While attempting to find a home range, these young cats may roam widely in search of unoccupied territory. This is when cougars are most likely to conflict with humans. Below are a few tips from the B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

1. Keep children close at hand and under control.
2. Never approach a cougar.
3. Always give a cougar an avenue of escape
4. Do not run as this will trigger the chase response.
5. Pick up children off the ground immediately.
6. Stay calm. Talk to the cougar in a confident-voice.
7. Do not turn your back on a cougar, face the cougar & remain upright.
8. Do all you can to enlarge your image, pick up sticks or wave your pack.
9. Hike in groups of 2 or more. Make enough noise to prevent surprising a cougar
10. Carry a sturdy walking stick to be used as a weapon if necessary

If a cougar behaves aggressively: Arm yourself with a large stick, throw rocks, speak loudly and firmly. Convince the cougar that you are a threat, not prey. If a cougar attacks: Fight back, many people have survived a cougar attack by fighting back with anything, including rocks, sticks, bare fists, and fishing poles. \*\*\* My goal is prevent any harm to you or the cougar. \*\*\* These beautiful animals can be a rewarding and exciting experience if you are lucky enough to see one. Again common sense is the rule here. (*Vancouver hiking web*)

**Try these websites:** Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs.  
[http://www.federationofwesternoutdoorclubs.org/fwoc\\_about.html](http://www.federationofwesternoutdoorclubs.org/fwoc_about.html)

Washington Alpine Club.  
<http://www.wacweb.org/default.view>

**The Trumpeter**  
<http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/> is an environmental journal dedicated to the pursuit of understanding and wisdom as it attempts to aid in the development of an ecosophy, or, wisdom born of ecological understanding and insight. Much of the history and ideas central to Deep Ecology can be found on this site.

The climbing community has to police itself, weeding out those undesirable characters, or the enjoyment of mountaineering, as we know it today will be greatly diminished to future climbers.  
- Werner Himmelsbach, BCMC newsletter

# Melting Mountains Awareness Presentation Program

Presentations will be hosted as follows:

- November 21<sup>st</sup> in Rossland at 1 pm at the Uplander Hotel Ballroom
- November 22<sup>nd</sup> in Nelson at 7 pm at the St Saviour's Anglican Church Hall

For more information, visit their website at [www.meltingmountains.org](http://www.meltingmountains.org)

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## East Kootenay Environmental Society Wins Award

What do you get when you have 400 hard-working volunteers for the environment spread across 16,000 square miles of rich ecology supporting 60,000 people and one of the most diverse and dense populations of large mammals on the continent? The East Kootenay Environmental Society (EKES), that's what - a grass roots organization, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. EKES has branches in Fernie-Elk Valley, Kimberley/ Cranbrook, Creston, Invermere, and Golden. Each branch attends to local community issues with the Regional Council coordinating the work of committees and branches.

On June 2nd, in Victoria, EKES was honoured with the 1998 Minister's Environmental award in the non-profit organization category. Minister of Environment, the Honourable Cathy McGregor presented the award to EKES representatives John Bergenske and Ellen Zimmerman, noting that EKES has played a strong role in initiatives to maintain the long-term integrity and economic viability of local communities.

"EKES has been an effective organization by working alongside local communities and other stakeholders. EKES works with a wide range of interest groups from the region to access what can be cooperatively done to bring about necessary changes in our communities," said Bergenske. He added, "In a region that depends heavily on resource extraction, environmentalists must work closely with workers to bring alternative, sustainable solutions to community development."

At the awards ceremony, held at Government House, Victoria, Zimmerman thanked the Minister for the wise land-use decisions made in the East Kootenay region. "We accept this award on behalf of 400 hard-working, dedicated volunteers. We urge the government to keep making the right decisions, even when that is politically difficult." The Minister's Environmental awards have been in place for 16 years, honouring individuals, groups, youth, communities, media and businesses for contributions toward protecting and enhancing B.C.'s environment.

EKES has been a solution-focused group throughout its 10 year history, working alongside local and provincial governments, community groups, and other stakeholders to advocate for the environmental protection that ensures that our region continues to be one of the richest ecological areas in the world. The organization brought together people with shared interests and goals as a united front to better advocate for those interests. A monthly newsletter has been a critical element in keeping members informed of important issues and activities of the organization.

Throughout its 10 year history, EKES has made a positive contribution to the environment throughout the East Kootenays.

High profile success stories include: the newly protected Cummins River Valley, a 21,000 hectare, Rocky Mountain Rainforest; the designation of the Columbia River Wetlands and East Columbia Lake as Wildlife Management Areas, Heritage River status for the Columbia; the Creston Valley Forest Corporation which manages 15000 cubic meters of wood annually; the partnership with an environmental group from Ecuador; a winning environmental appeal against the local pulp and paper industry protecting the health of local residents; the Mountain Caribou Inventory program, the most comprehensive study on the species in North America; recycling initiatives; and educational programs for schools on mining and forestry issues.

The volunteers of EKES are the mainstay of the conservation movement in the region. The long term efforts resulted in the protection of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, the largest protected area in southern British Columbia. The volunteers of EKES are actively involved in the reclamation process for the Kimberley mine closure to ensure proper management of acid mine drainage.

The above projects are just a few of the varied environmental issues undertaken by EKES volunteers over the last few years. The conservation movement in the area became more influential after a number of small, unaffiliated groups joined together to form EKES. Having an organization 400 member strong behind them gives advocates for the environment both credibility and clout. The volunteers of EKES are very united in their views and willing to support the issues that are undertaken with time and letters to government.

Perhaps, because of the rural nature of the region of the East Kootenays, EKES volunteers have a history of cooperation rather than confrontation with many other local stakeholder groups. The representatives of the other groups are more often than not, neighbours and friends. EKES has chosen to participate in processes instigated by government around land-use and other issues. This strategy has led to many successes on behalf of the environment, especially when persistence over time continues to keep our issues before government. EKES volunteers have worked along side other environmental groups throughout BC, Canada, and North America to build alliances and provide and receive support. United as a group, affiliated with provincial and international groups, and cooperative with other local groups, EKES has been both strong and effective in advocating for environmental issues of all kinds.

**Contact: EKES, Box 8, Kimberly, V1A 2Y5, 250-4272535, fax 427-3535, [ekes@cyberlink.bc.ca](mailto:ekes@cyberlink.bc.ca)**

**Ellen Zimmerman**

## SECOND VALHALLA PARK PLANNING MEETING, SILVERTON, BC, OCTOBER 25, 2004, by Kim Kratky

For our second meeting, we fine-tuned the document that consultant Phil Whitfield created from our input at the first meeting in September. The cast of stakeholders changed a bit with a few more people representing local municipalities and the regional district.

We maintained our focus of ensuring that Valhalla Park's primary purpose is to maintain wilderness values. To that end, we moved to eliminate heli-hiking and heli-skiing, remove provisions for commercial lodges in the park, add grizzly bears to the list of animals that cannot be hunted in the park, limit helicopter access to a minimum, work with tenure holders at the park-Crown lands interface to provide adequate corridors for animal movement, carry out an inventory of species in the park, and provide for public education on the values of Valhalla. We also stressed the importance of adequate funding to maintain park infrastructure and provide for an adequate number of rangers.

One contentious issue that was not resolved centered on the Slocan Valley Chamber of Commerce's initiative to create a trail from Wragge Beach to the Evans Lake shoreline trail, essentially a cross-drainage trail from north to south.

Still, all participants were satisfied if exhausted when we finished up at 4:00. After Phil incorporates our input into the next draft Park Plan, Greg Chin of BC Parks will arrange public open houses on the plan in several local centers, including Slocan City and Nelson, in January 2005. It's important that club members attend and give input. Our document is not binding; the Minister responsible can make changes. **So if you share the wilderness values we have tried to incorporate into the Park Plan, you should make your voice heard.**

### ANDERSON SEES U.S. ABOUT-FACE ON AIR POLLUTION.

OTTAWA – Environment Minister David Anderson predicts the U.S. will join the effort to curb greenhouse gases because of a growing realization its national security is at stake. He said he expects Washington will launch a vigorous effort to parallel the Kyoto accord to cut emissions on its own terms, using access to its market to ensure compliance. Speaking at the University of Ottawa yesterday, Anderson cited a Pentagon study, leaked to a British newspaper, as evidence of changing U.S. attitudes.

The study says the scenario of catastrophic climate change is "plausible and would change U.S. national security in ways that should be considered immediately." U.S. President George W. Bush pulled Washington out of the Kyoto treaty three years ago, citing "bogus science" and the need to protect American jobs. Since then the evidence of climate change has grown stronger, and much of the research has come from the U.S.

The Pentagon study predicts abrupt climate change could bring global anarchy as countries develop nuclear capability to defend food, water and energy supplies. *Canadian Press (from The Province, Tues, Feb 24, 2004)*

"The hunter had a space blanket that reflected off our search light, which was the main reason we spotted him". Search and Rescue Technician Sgt. J.P. Cossette (Canadian Armed Forces) commenting on the daring and successful nighttime rescue of a critically injured hunter. *The Province, Sept.20, 2004.*

**\$100m Expansion for Mt. Baldy:** The group that has purchased South Okanagan ski area Mount Baldy says it will discuss with stakeholders its resort plan that includes investing \$100 million over 10 years. Winter Recreation ULC president Brent Sweezy said the plan calls for increases in skiable terrain and lift capacity from approximately 445 to 610 vertical metres and

from 242 to more than 2,000 hectares - Including access to the previously untouched summit, Northeast Bowl and Southwest Bowl. The sale includes the ski operation and assets, including all Provincial Crown leases. *The Province, May 7, 2004*

"Life" today and the future of mountain environments are very much entwined. In the past few newsletters we've run the gamut on issues related to preserving the mountains within a worldly socio-economic environment. One obviously affects the other. For some of us KMCers, it's so overwhelming no one really knows what it all means. One thing we have in common however is being in the mountains. Probably the best orientation point. So, to go any further would be akin to continually telling a vegetarian that it's good to eat vegetables, and therefore, we'll leave it at that. As Groucho Marx said: "Those are my principles, if you don't like them, I have others". Ed.

**"It's no secret, recreational ATV riding is unlocking millions of tourism dollars"**

All-Terrain Vehicle Magazine

Did you know there are currently 8 ATV manufacturers sharing a growing marketplace of about 850,000 units per year?

**"Use without abuse-how can it be attained?"** J.B. Harkin, Canada's first commissioner of National Parks

"We cannot command nature, except by obeying her." *Francis Bacon 1561-1626*



# Club Trip Reports

## The Huckleberry House: Hut Work Party September 23

### Monica Meadows, August 10/11/12

**Day 1** Arriving at the Monica meadows parking lot at 10:40, 5 of us set off on the well-established trail to the meadows. In the party were Kevin Forsyth, Mary Woodward, Gene & Josephina Van Dyck, and myself, Vicki Hart. We camped at 7400 ft. above a lake east of the main meadow.

Towering above us were the spectacular Egyptian peaks. Leaving camp at 2:00 our intention for day 1 was to explore but unintentionally we ended up on the west ridge of Aten. Mary and Joe thought it was a conspiracy. Gene and I reached the summit of Aten, 9800 ft at 4:30. Joe and Mary arrived shortly after. Stunning views of the massif, Mt. Monica.

At 7:25 we were back in camp tired and hungry after climbing a total of 4000 ft. vertical.

**Day 2** We left camp at 9:00 hiking east to the lake in the upper basin. From that point we climbed a steep gully to the col in 2 hours. Again panoramic views of the Purcell Mountains and individual glaciers. We crossed Starbird Glacier and in approximately 2 hours reached the summit of Glacier Dome, 9850 ft.

On our return trip back to the col we ascended Osiris, 9450 ft. Back in camp at 6:30 after climbing 3400 ft.

**Day 3** The group decided on a side trip to Jumbo pass. Leaving Monica meadows campsite at 8:40 Mary, Joe, Gene and myself arrived at the Jumbo trailhead at 11:00. Kevin drove to Kaslo for medical attention.

We had lunch and chatted to the steady stream of hikers. Back on the trail and home.

We all agreed this was a great trip with beautiful landscape and glaciers and stable weather.

### The Raising of the Outhouse: Copper Mtn. Hut Work Party September 21

After the August-September rains finally stopped, a hard-working crew of 10 went into the Copper Mt hut and raised the outhouse (squashed by tree fall) from the dead. We did lots of other things too, including felling some dead trees that were hanging over the cabin, bucking and stacking a lot of firewood, caulking holes and gaps in the walls, roof and floor, dismantling an unsightly fire pit, replacing broken boards on the deck, and carrying out garbage.

Dan Reibin and Lenard Loverenow from the Ministry of Forests transported all our gear in by ATV and worked very hard resurrecting the outhouse (and helping with other chores). John Golik and Doug Brown felled and bucked firewood, while Rob D'Eon replaced the deck flooring, bucked firewood, and generally helped out. Carole Page, Nell Plotnikoff, Leah Zoobkoff and David Cunningham worked hard all day carrying firewood and filling holes in the cabin. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and labour – it is greatly appreciated.

Sandra McGuinness, coordinator and wood carrier.

Just two days after our Copper hut extravaganza, Doug Brown, Maurice De St Jorre, Leah Zoobkoff, and I met up with Dan Reibin and Lenard Loverenow from MOF on the Porto Rico Rd for our final work party of the year at the Huckleberry Hut. Lenard and Dan once again transported our gear on the ATV's while Doug, Maurice, Leah and I walked the final 2 or 3 km from the Barrett Creek junction to the cabin.

If you've never been to the Huckleberry Cabin it is worth a visit – particularly in winter when there are some excellent tours and turns to be had – as it is an extremely well crafted and maintained cabin, and there is lots to do in the local area. Right now, the fall colours are coming into their prime and the valley and mountains around the cabin are looking spectacular.

We found the cabin in excellent shape with a lot of firewood already bucked under the deck, so we actually had very little to do. Leah cleaned the inside of the cabin, while Dan and Maurice worked on the side braces for the roof eaves. Lenard bucked up some more firewood and brushed out around the cabin. We stacked more firewood under the deck and Maurice rebuilt the ladder for climbing onto the roof to clear the chimney of snow in winter.

Thank you again to the willing workers: Doug Brown, Leah Zoobkoff, Maurice De St Jorre, Dan Reibin, Lenard Loverenow, and coordinator Sandra McGuinness.

### Lemon/Nilsik Creek Trail Clearing, September 25

One vehicle left South Slocan Junction at 8 am to go to the Lemon Creek Trailhead via Highway 6 and the Lemon Creek Road, while another vehicle left Nelson to via Six Mile Lakes Road. Both vehicles met at almost the same time. The official start of the trail has now been moved to near the bridge where the Lemon Creek Road crosses Lemon Creek. We turned right up the road at 16.3 km from Highway 6 (2.1 km past Six Mile Lakes Road) to go to the old trailhead. Initially the road was in good condition, but about 0.3 km from the car park, the vegetation on the road became too thick to drive any further so we parked the vehicles there at 9:30 am. We cleared the vegetation from the remainder of the road so that you can now drive to the old car park. 4WD is not necessary and probably not even high clearance, but truck tires would be best and you must not be too concerned about a few scratches from branches. We had learned that a lot of work had already been done on the Lemon Creek Trail and it was no longer the overgrown mess with many deadfalls that it had been allowed to become, so we decided to put most of our effort into improving the Nilsik Creek Trail. We cleared the trail from the old trailhead down to the main Lemon Creek Trail, losing about 25 m elevation in the process. Walking at a moderate pace for about 20 minutes brings you to the right turn to the Nilsik Creek Trail. We did some minor clearing on this portion of the trail. We tried to make the Nilsik Creek turn more obvious with a little clearing and marking with orange flagging. We continued up the Nilsik Creek trail clearing brush and cutting deadfalls up to about 25 cm diameter (we did not have a chainsaw only 2 bow saws). We continued our clearing until 3 pm before deciding to go back. Further clearing is required so another work party will probably be arranged. The perfect weather conditions made for a very pleasant day, even though we were working, not hiking.

We were Ed Beynon, Dave Cunningham, Bob Dean, Vicki Hart, Hazel Kirkwood, and coordinator Ted Ibrahim.

## Old Glory, September 26

Eight hikers left the western parking area at 9:15 to ascend the Plewman Trail. We climbed through moist shade stopping occasionally to look at the scenery and birds around us. We stopped for a snack on Unnecessary Ridge where we enjoyed the sunshine and company of 5 other hikers. We continued on to the summit after 15 minutes. Four continued on the trail route and four chose to scramble up the rock face. Views were 360 degrees with some smoke to the south. Laurie pointed out the Seven Summits Trail from this vantage point. During lunch we were joined by 2 couples, one of which was Sue & Bert Port. We descended via Unnecessary Ridge and the Hammel Creek Trail. We saw little wildlife except birds, squirrels, and a chipmunk that tried to share our lunches. We saw no bear sign. By 4:15 we reached the parking area making the whole hike, including breaks, in 7 hours.

Hikers included Ross Bates, Laurie Charlton, Don Harasym, Anja Logodi, Nancy Rennie, Leah Zoobkoff, and coordinators Pat & Al Sheppard.

## Commonwealth Mtn., October 13

This was one of those late season destinations that turned out to be a great day. Four of us met at Porto Rico Rd near Ymir. We drove up this road to where the branchment going to the Huckleberry Hut is and parked the truck. The road after this has obvious ATV traffic going to Barrett Lake, but is definitely not for vehicles. We walked the road to just after the second switchback. From here we pointed ourselves north and went straight up the hillside to one of the outcroppings high above. This route seemed to offer the least bushwhacking from observations made from an exploratory we had done a week earlier on Cabin Peak. Though very steep, and little bushwhacking, we soon found ourselves in a small basin at the foot of Commonwealth. The not too obvious summit was straight ahead. The peak provided great views in all directions including Barrett Lake and Lost Lake. This is a great vantage point for the entire Bonnington Range. After a long pleasant lunch we walked the ridge west towards Empire Peak and then straight to beautiful Barrett Lake. The cabin at the lake is in good condition. We had an easy walk back down to the truck. Total time was about 6 hours. We were Ed Beynon, Maurice de St Jorre, Eliane & Steven Miros.

# Other Trip Reports

## North to Edziza...

Notes from an 8-day backpacking trip in B.C.'s Edziza Provincial Park.

When I left home I had little idea of how far it is from here to there. Several days later, after watching it get dark at 10:30pm and making a side trip to Hyder, Alaska I began to get the picture. The reason for visiting Hyder was so that I could be "hyderized", an initiation process involving an alcoholic beverage tasting similar to kerosene.

On declining this unique (I hope) opportunity to further US/Canada relations, I was promptly voted "loser of the week" (again!).

It is approximately 1900 km to Tatogga Lake, the floatplane base, and our starting point on the Cassiar Hwy, north of Smithers.

On the **first day** we flew into Buckley Lake, leaving a little late, at 3pm. From the lake we headed east on the horse trail for about 10 minutes, until a major fork, where you go right and cross the river on a small bridge. An old and indistinct sign indicates "Eve Cone". Water is scarce at the start of the trail, so we camped 2 hours later, in the trees, at the next creek crossing.

The **second day** was the longest. After about 1 ½ hour we reached "Antler Camp", which would have been a nicer place to spend the first night, if we had flown in earlier. This would also have reduced our second day of hiking from 8 hours to a more comfortable 6 ½. Follow the trail around the left side of this campsite. We continued climbing gently uphill, passing through zones of dwarf willow, volcanic sand, and finally reaching the main plateau of open grassy meadows, and rolling ridges. Hiking through the tussocks was similar to walking in sun-cups. We camped at a small clear tributary about 10 minutes past Elwyn Creek, which was too muddy to drink from.

For the next four days, we hiked in a counter-clockwise direction around the edge of the Edziza Icecap. The trail rises and falls a few hundred feet everyday, so the hiking is easy and we progressed at a leisurely pace. Most days we made a side trip to some ridge, crater, volcanic cone or other high point such as Cartoona Peak.

We enjoyed almost constant sunshine and warm temperatures,

although wind blowing across the open plateau sometimes required us to wear our jackets. The trail is easy to follow. Where the human and horse prints peter out in the meadows there are almost always cairns in sight, and the general direction is quite obvious. We

saw lots of caribou at a distance, many sheep up close, large expanses of obsidian, and the amazing colours of the Spectrum Range. Besides the beautiful weather another big plus was the lack of insects. We had more beer than bugs, and didn't get bitten by either. Having recently experienced the rigours of Doug Brown's 9-day Extreme Survival Course in Findlay Creek (a.k.a. Climbing Camp), this was indeed a walk in the park – Edziza Park!

The only creek crossing which gave us any grief was Sezil Creek. This problem was solved, after a lot of dithering around, and hiking reluctantly uphill, to a spot closer to the glacier where the creek was more braided.

On the afternoon of the seventh day we headed down the Chakima Creek valley, to reach the tree line again at "Hunters' Camp".

On our eighth and final day we were pleased to find that the trail below our campsite had recently been brushed out, although some sections were still very muddy/boggy. No sense in trying to keep your feet dry on the last day, just plunge right in! It took about 5

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## Friends of Parks and Trails

This local group asked their membership if they would be interested in participating on trail maintenance activities for 2004. The trails were sectioned off and individuals took responsibility for The Dove Hill trail, The Brilliant Overlook trail, and The Skattebo Reach trail. They also look after other trails in and around Castlegar. Several of their members (including some KMCers) volunteer their time and energy to keep these trails maintained for others in the community. It should be noted that they also are putting considerable effort into making The Kootenay Loop Rail Bed Trail an important part of our communities.

If you would like to join this group contact Elaine Robinson at 4049 Broadwater Rd, Castlegar, B.C. V1N 4V6

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*"The ability to recognize dangerous terrain before committing to it is an imperative part of safe backcountry travel. With a group of excited skiers behind you, commitment is harder to reverse the closer you come to the objective."*

*Grant Statham & Bruce McMahon, Parks Canada.*

hours to reach Mondade Lake, where the float plane picked us up soon afterwards. We were back in Smithers later that night.

the mine below Cond Pk, then did the long traverse southeast to the Kokanee - Gray's Pk pass.

From here we started ascending the south ridge of Kokanee Pk, but soon it got narrow and pinnacly, so we traversed east onto the glacier and went up on the easy northeast side. Snow conditions were ideal on the glacier - firm snow but not many crevasses yet. We skirted the edge of the glacier just below the ridge of Cond, where there were two impressive rockfalls that had come down recently. As we climbed Cond we could see and hear billowing clouds and rainshowers in several directions, but the glacier remained in a patch of sunshine. Crossing the summit of Cond, Gray's Pk disappeared behind us and my ice axe began to buzz, so we hurried across the flat glacier to the shoulder of Esmeralda. Here the clouds caught up to us along with gusty wind and hail. We were only a short distance below the peak, so we left our ice axes behind and scrambled to the top. Descending to the Keyhole, we huddled behind the stone wall for a snack. As we descended to the trail, the bad weather passed. Below the Keyhole, we saw the debris of another large rockfall strewn across the snow just west of the route.

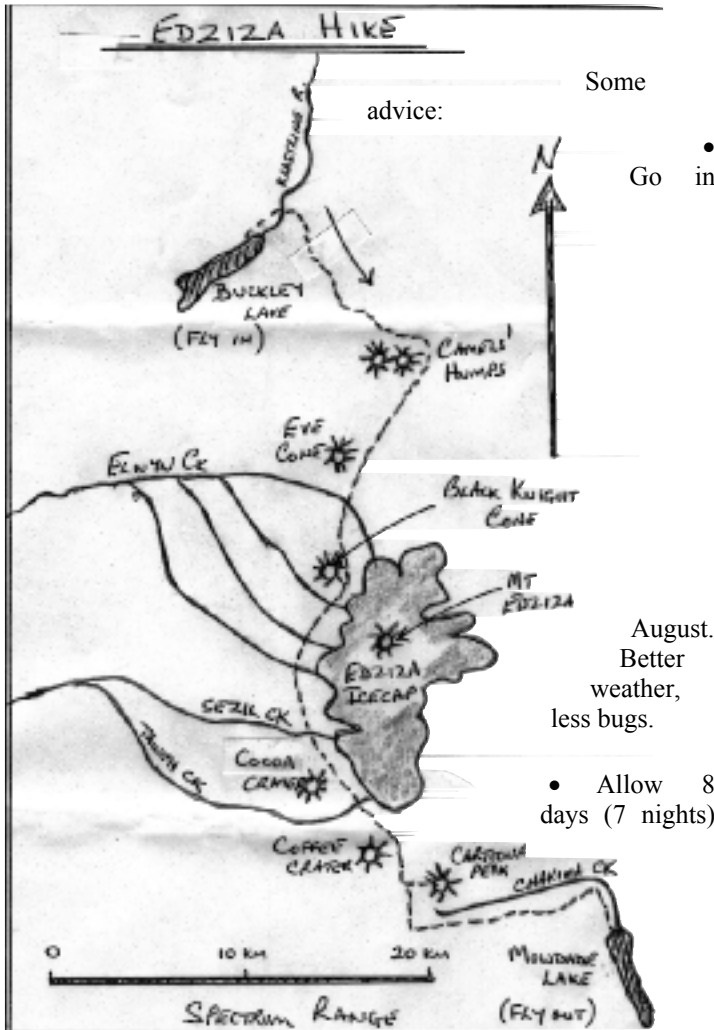
The traverse is a good day trip, although a bit long. Doing it earlier on skis, taking the shortcut up from Gibson Lake, might be a good idea. If you want to climb all three peaks on foot, the most expedient way would be to go up to the mines below Cond, then traverse east for about 0.7 km to an unusual straight gully due south of Cond Pk. This feature is a fault in the rock, which gives an easy scramble to a notch in the ridge immediately east of the summit of Cond. To reach Kokanee Pk, follow the fault on the north side down to the glacier, then go east and southeast along the top edge of the glacier just below the rock ridge.

Vicki Hart and Peter Jordan.

### Grey Wolf Mtn. and Golden Hope Pk., Sept. 6 (Maps Nakusp 82K/4 and Burton 82F/13)

As the weather this fall never allowed a long enough interval of good weather for serious climbs, I made a number of easier trips that would make excellent autumn outings. The first was a Labour Day weekend trip with Peter Tchir and Sandra MacGuinness to the Arrow Lakes side of the northern Valhallas. Although there is considerable driving, this trip is easily done in a day. Road access first. Turn left or west onto Bonanza Rd. 15.2 km. north of New Denver on Hwy 6, drive 1 km., re-set your odometer, and turn right onto the signed Shannon Creek FSR. Follow this mainline to Shannon Pass at km. 16.5 and then wend your way down Walden Creek. to km. 28 (2WD so far except for one slough at ca. km. 24). At km. 28, turn left onto the signed Branch 28 (headwaters of the take a right fork that leads to a ford of Caribou (547-384). I was able to drive through this in 2001, but this fall the flow was too high.

Starting at 9:40, we began walking the road, passing around a buttress and plodding south to the grassy upper valley east of and below Hailstorm Ridge where a bridge crosses the creek (50 min). Three years ago I drove to this point, about 3 km. from the ford (4WD HC LR with good waterbars and excellent roadbed; road has recently been brushed out). Beyond this broken bridge we continued along the old mining road to a 7000' col at 520-360 at the south end of Hailstorm Ridge. Then, we left the road, heading south and west along a ridge and over grassy alpland to the summit of Grey Wolf by 12:40 (GPSed at 2327 m., 7634'). After lounging in mild temps for 30 min. and picking out features in the black-looking Devil's Range and Mulvey, we continued west along the



for a leisurely trip. Six days (5 nights) would require a higher setting on the boogie-meter.

- Take binoculars for spotting animals and cairns.
- Take river/camp shoes for...
- Start at Buckley Lake. The government pamphlet for the park describes the hike as starting at Mondade Lake. Do not do this!!
- The float plane costs \$200.- each, for a party of four. Contact North Pacific Seaplanes, located at Tatogga Lake Resort, phone and fax 250-234-3526.
- Fly in at noon or 1pm and hike to Antler Camp that day.

Participants: Gordon Dunham, Murray Miller, Tara Travis, and Hamish Mutch (reporter).

### Kokanee Traverse, July 4

Despite the "afternoon thundershowers" forecast, Vicki and I decided it was a good time to go to Kokanee Glacier with the objective of traversing the ridge from Kokanee Peak to the Keyhole. The snow below treeline was gone, and the shortcut bushwhack straight up from Gibson Lake did not look promising. So we followed the trail to the top of the switchbacks, and climbed up to

ride and picked up a cat track (today's Forest Practices Code would never allow that) leading in 30 min. to the summit of the extremely pedestrian Golden Hope Pk. (2283 m., 7490'). During another 30 min. break, we decided to forego a trip to Tillicum Mtn. to the north. We returned to the truck as per the ascent route in 2 hrs. 10 min. for a 7-hour day. In sum, a dead easy trip with fine ridge walking. Hailstorm Pk. (which I visited in 2001) and the ridges to the north offer a similar experience with the same access.

Kim Kratky

### **Unnamed 2492 m. North of Sherman Lake, (Map Boswell 82F/7) Sept. 26**

This minor but attractive peak, featured in Janice Strong's *Mountain Footsteps*, makes another ideal fall outing. Access is via Sanca Creek FSR on the East Shore of Kootenay Lake's main arm about 46 km. south of Kootenay Bay ferry terminal. Follow the Sanca Creek mainline as for Haystack Mtn. and turn left at km. 13.7 from Hwy. 3A (signed Sherman Lakes trail). At km. 15.3 and km. 16 continue straight to reach the parking area at km. 16.4 (4WD HC LR beyond km. 13.7 because of waterbars; 1 hr. 25 min. drive up from ferry; very good signage).

Our party of Janice Isaac, Carol Potasnyk, Peter Tchir, and I started hiking at 10:15, following the clearly-signed trail. In 55 min., we reached the lower Sherman Lake at 6950'. We continued in minutes to the bigger lake where the trail ends and skirted its north side by easy bushwhacking. From near the west end, we ascended a prominent couloir of grass and rock (fairly steep but stable) giving onto u/n 2492's southwest ridge. A couloir farther east, leading to the col at 271-749, looks even easier, although the resulting scramble via the peak's east ridge may be a little more challenging than our route. From our exit spot on the ridge, we walked to the cairned summit (no record, 2 hrs. 35 min. up, GR 268-749, 8176') in 5 minutes. On return, we re-traced our ascent route, reaching the truck in 1 hr. 40 min. for a 5 hr. 20 min. day. We traveled via the 8:10 ferry from Balfour and the 5:20 from Kootenay Bay, so you can see this is not a long trip. The Sherman Lakes, surrounded by larches, are especially attractive at this season.

Kim Kratky

### **Mt. Ferrie, 2365 m. 7759' Oct. 1 (Map 82K/4 Nakusp)**

This is another of those, "I've been meaning to explore this area for 20 years," articles. Mt. Ferrie is part of the long northwest-southeast tending ridge along the north side of Summit Lake and stretching from near Box Lake to Hills. On a warm and sunny Friday, Kyle Ridge, John Eggleton and I made a day trip to this attractive spot.

First, the road access. Drive north on Highway 6 and about 8 km. north of the Summit Lake rec site, turn right or north onto the signed Wilson Lake road and re-set your odometer. Pass through the Box Lake Lumberyard, staying on the mainline and making these turns: km. 3.5, go left (signed); km. 5.3, go right; km. 6.5, go right; km. 7.5, go left; km. 8.1, go left; km. 9.7, go left (GR 544-641); and km. 10.9, turn right or south onto the unsigned Harlow Creek road. To this point, the surface is 2WD but rough and stoney. Re-set your odometer again. Continue and at km. 4.0, turn left and cross Harlow Creek (right fork might go toward Summit Pk.). At km. 7.3, bend right at a switchback. Finally, reach a landing at km.

8.6 (588-598, GPSed at 6145'). The Harlow road is excellent 2WD.

Now for the trip. Judging that Mt. Ferrie lay to the ESE and only 1600' above us, we headed east and up into the cutblock above the truck at 10:55. Clad in shorts and t-shirts, we passed into open timber, followed a watercourse, and in one hour reached a rocky basin where we lunched at the base of Ferrie's west ridge (599-595). As we snacked, we enjoyed views of the Harlow cabin, Summit Pk., and the lengthy inviting, open ridge extending for kilometers above Highway 6. After our break, we continued up easy rock and turf of the west ridge to gain Ferrie's summit at 12:55. After inspecting the cairn (no record), we sprawled in the sun for an hour, savouring some of the most spectacular West Kootenay views I have ever enjoyed. Most of the Goat Range lay before us, with Mt. Cooper directly to the east. On the west, from south to north, we could see the Valkyrs, Valhallas, the Pinnacles, Monashee Provincial Park, the Gold Range, Mt. Begbie, and way up the Columbia beyond Revelstoke. To the east and north, we spotted Loki, Willett, Templeman, and on to Moby Dick and its cohorts.

Heading down at 2:00, we re-traced our steps to the truck in 1 hr. 20 min. for a 4 hr. 25 min. day. An easy round trip from Nelson, 6:30am to 5:30 pm. A good trip for next fall would be Summit Pk., directly above Summit Lake.

Kim Kratky

### **Mt. Skelly, 2304 m. 7559' (Map Boswell 82F/7) Oct. 5**

"Scrape, scrape." What's that sound? It's me scraping the bottom of the barrel for an autumn West Kootenay peak I haven't been up yet. And so here it is, another very easy outing in the Sanca Creek drainage in the southern Purcells.

Howie Ridge and I caught the 8:10 ferry on a warm sunny Monday morning, drove south to the Sanca mainline, and followed it to km. 9, where we took the major fork right or south signed for "Wooden Shoe Lake." Re-setting the odometer, we crossed Sanca Creek at .2 km., continued straight or east at km. 1, went right or south at km. 2 (straight ahead probably leads to a valley north of Mt. Dickson, another "noble pile"), kept left at km. 3.4 (don't cross to west bank of creek), and finally ground to road end in a landing at km. 4.9 (297-683, 6250') and northwest of our goal. The last kilometer is 4WD HC LR because of sandy dips; the rest is 2WD.

Starting at 10:35, we followed an old skid road southeast and then ascended through light timber to emerge on the ridge west of our summit. An easy plod up mostly open slopes with scattered trees got us to the long, flat, cairned top in 1 hr. 25 min. During our 30 min. stay, we found no record (surprise, surprise), but did locate the brass survey marker. Some cultural features of note: the sound of logging machinery attracted our attention to the huge cutblocks in Skelly Creek to the south and southeast, and I also had my first view of the surprisingly large, sub-alpine Wooden Shoe Lake. For descent, we headed along our peak's gentle north ridge far enough to descend straight to the truck (a little more brushy than ascent) in 70 min. For all of this 3 ¼ hour day, I wore shorts, a testimony to the fine weather. Perhaps best of all, we caught the 3:40 ferry and thus were home before 5:00 pm.

Kim Kratky

### **Panther Lake, Middle Sister, Oct. 5**

The area along Sheep Creek offers several lakes and mountains relatively close and easily accessible. David Mitchell suggested that

Panther Lake and Three Sisters would be a good place for us to start. We drove up the Sheep Creek Road south of the Salmo Golf Course, a relatively good road, for some 15 kms. At 13 km is the deactivated bridge that provided road access towards Curtis Lake. At 14.5 km you cross the creek, and head east for another km to the Panther Lake parking lot. The last couple of kms require clearance. A short distance up the trail is a MoF sign-in. An excellent trail climbs through the forest for 2 km along a very nice creek. The trail into Panther Lake has been worn deep by the miners and pack animals that used this route in the early 1900's to access the Bayonne and Sunshine Mines beyond the pass. Panther Lake is a pretty site with the southern Sister rising off its southeast shore. The middle Sister is partially visible on the north of the lake (we returned off the middle Sister down rock slopes to a point just along the lake's northern shore). A very good trail follows the northern shoreline along the lake and continues to the back of the basin. There is also some flagging along this old well-trodden route. The well established but no longer used miner trail continues over and down into the valley below. From the pass one could probably scramble (with possible minor exposure) to the very close-up southern Sister. We chose to follow the ridge to the north and slowly wound our way along it, counter-clockwise to the summit of the middle peak, high above Panther Lake's northern shore. The long ridge-like northern Sister is still a good scramble away. The views of the area were great. The entire Bonnington Range was clearly visible. Even the tower on Mt Nelson was in view. The Valhallas, Kokanee and Mt Loki looked different from this perspective. The lookout on Mt McGregor was not too far off. After a leisurely lunch we worked our way straight down the rock slope to Panther Lake. We saw the quickly disappearing rear-end of one bear on our way down. It was a quick walk back to the truck.

Total time on the trail was about 6 hours. Unfortunately, the southern sister hid Wolf's Peak and the northern Sister hid Ymir Mtn., Eloise and other peaks north. I guess we'll have to go back. I think the long deactivated road walk up to Curtis Lake may provide better access to the southern Sister's south slope. If it were the middle Sister you're after, we'd recommend doing our route in reverse.

Eliane & Steven Miros

For a history of the Sheep Creek area visit <http://www.crowsnest-highway.ca/cgibin/citypage.pl?city=SALMO>

### **North Ridge FSR- Merry Creek FRS**

The early snowfall cancelled this proposed outing. The following description was done from 3 exploratory trips done earlier in the year. The route may also prove great for a 2-car backcountry ski trip. This ride is located on the Robson Ridge and connects the Merry Creek FSR with the North Ridge.FSRs.

Drive west 3 km from the Castlegar Jct-overpass on Hwy 3 to the Merry Creek FSR. It's your choice of leaving your vehicle here and pedal the next 13 Hwy km up a gradual slope on paved Hwy, or continuing by car to the North Ridge FSR. Turn right off the highway on the FSR and take the right turn, essentially paralleling the highway eastward for some distance while gaining elevation. Basically you are following the most traveled road and main road throughout. At 4 km take the right road. Soon, is another junction where you go straight ahead. At about 6 km there is another junction and you go straight. At the 7 km sign you turn left for another 300 m to the pass. From here you are looking over Syringa Creek Park towards Ladybird Mtn.

From the pass take the road to the left (going NW) down the mountainside. There is one branchment going off on the left that you ignore. At the bottom of the hill you come to a junction where you take the road going sharply to the right (now you are heading east). At the next junction you go right and soon you see a 2 km sign. The climb begins for a couple of kms continuing eastwards. At what appears to be the top of the hill there are two vantage points offering views to the north. The second one offers the nicest picnic site and best look at Mt Sentinel, Connor, Copper, Siwash Twin peaks and Grassy Mtns. The Columbia River and Robson are easily seen down below. From here it is essentially downhill all the 9 kms to the highway. A couple kms from the viewpoint (marked with a cairn) there is a technical mountain bike ride going off on the left down to the Celgar Road. Maybe a good early season hiking route as well.

We were Eliane, Francois, Jean and Steven Miros

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## **The Bonnington Range Cabins 2004**

As most KMC members know, there are four cabins in the Bonnington Range that are jointly maintained by the KMC and the Ministry of Forests. These cabins are Huckleberry, Copper, Steed, and Grassy. Although the cabins are mostly used in winter by ski tourers and snow-shoers, many people also enjoy a night out in the cabins in the fall.

A whole slew of KMC members worked hard this year and together we accomplished a great deal. We visited all four huts this summer and stocked them all with firewood as well as performing many maintenance tasks. The outhouse at Copper hut was completely rebuilt after being smashed by falling trees, and the outhouse at Steed Hut was reinforced and had the "lean" taken out of it. We also plugged holes in the roofs, walls and floors of Grassy and Copper hut, and replaced broken decking at the Copper hut. Our agreement with MOF is being updated so that the club has liability insurance with respect to cabin use. A detailed map of the Bonnington traverse (courtesy of Selkirk College) has been posted at the MOF office in Castlegar and two other copies are available for loan from the KMC library. We also have a digital copy of the map which we will put up on our KMC web page.

The MOF, and particularly Dan Reibin, the Recreation Officer, and Lenard Loverenow, deserve a lot of credit for supporting and assisting the KMC with maintenance of the cabins. They have provided supplies, transport and lots of willing labour on our work parties.

Thank you to the following people who attended our work parties: Doug Brown, David Cunningham, Rob D'Eon, Maurice De St Jorre John Golik, Carole Page, Nell Plotnikoff, Patrick Sims, Gene Van Dyck, Leah Zoobkoff.

Sandra McGuinness

# Hiking Camp Reports

## Camp One

"Good Medicine at Doctor Creek"

Dates: July 24 - July 31

Participants: V. Baumgartner, G. Buchner, R. & H. Foulger, R. & G. Hopland, L. Horvath, E. Ibrahim, C. Jorgenson, G. Kenyon, B. Maras, B. McQueen, J. Micklethwaite, R. & B. Neumar, C. Potasnyk, R. & T. Waters, J. Watson, M. Woodward.



Trolls are strange creatures, they really are. One appeared at the last evening campfire of Camp 1 this summer and scared the hell out of a bunch of normally rational hikers. This was a female troll, at least I think it was; at the end of camp it is often hard to tell. Even the familiarity of shared lives in the close quarters of an alpine camp doesn't always clarify these details entirely. Bathing, for example, under normal circumstances would offer some illumination; however submerging one's body in a lake that was recently a snowfield does tend to obscure the tell-tail indicators (no that is not a typo, take it from one who tried it, once, many years ago).

For those who think a troll is something one does to catch fish, you should know that a troll is a fabled demon – dwarf or giant – of Teutonic folklore who inhabits caves or hills. This one was definitely on the dwarfish end of the spectrum, but scary enough to render even our Teutonic leader, der Fuehrer Bob, uncharacteristically speechless.

To cut a long story mercifully short, the essence of this troll's demands was that each of the camp folks had to produce three sentences describing highlights of their camp experience. Failure to do so would result in permanent exile to these hills to spend the rest of their lives with this troll. Far be it for me to speculate on the horrors of such an existence, however the mere prospect was sufficient to ensure that all sentences were promptly delivered.

The troll's demands bore a remarkable similarity to my own more polite request earlier in the week. Having been fingered by der Fuehrer to "do the write-up", I had thought this might be a good way to encourage group participation. To this point the response had been less than overwhelming. The troll's intervention certainly helped, and, with this inspiration, together with ruthless editing that will render any attempt at individual recognition unlikely, here goes.

This will be remembered as the ridge camp. How many times was the phrase "endless ridges" mentioned? *"East, west, north, south, wherever you wander ridges abound. Endless ridges, golf course ridges, rocky ridges, jagged ridges, forested ridges, sandy ridges, goat ridges, flowered ridges: we KMCers hiked them all. This is the all time ridge walkers' paradise. The peak baggers will have to wait for another year."*

Our site was in what are essentially the foothills of the Purcells. We were camped beside a lake at 7900 feet – just about tree line. To the north, west and south we were closely bounded by ridges. To

the east, our bench stretched away 5km or so to yet another ridge. The bench and lower slopes were clothed with open, lime green larch forest – what a glorious sight it must be in the fall! These ridges are indeed a hikers' dream: rising gently, smooth and grassy from the south, dropping precipitously off their northern slopes. Perfect strolling country, wandering along alpine meadows beside craggy cliffs plunging dramatically to tree-fringed tarns; ridges that did indeed stretch on forever, or at least as far as we were inclined to walk in a day. Spurs off the ridges enclosed gentle hanging valleys, open meadows scattered with windblown trees, lonely places that, by appearance, should have been teeming with elk and deer, perhaps even the occasional foraging grizzly; but they were empty. *"Have you stood on some mighty mouthed hollow, That's filled full of hush to the brim?" (Robert Service).*

I don't know whether the 'peak-baggers' were disappointed, not being one of those driven Type A folks myself. There were some peaks of sorts not too far away: barren heaps of loose rubble, attractive only to the diehards who must get to the top of something – the challenge of it "being there" I suppose – and exposed enough to feel like they had climbed something worthwhile. Most of those accessible were bagged – "We knocked the bastard off" to quote one hiker, borrowing a phrase of Edmund Hillary's after a particularly memorable trip in 1952.

To the victors go the spoils, or at least the privilege of christening their triumphs with unlikely names like Nurse Peak and Quack Peak, in recognition of the proximity of the only officially named 'Doctor Peak' a couple of ridges over, beyond reach to all but the few gullible optimists in Camp II.

There is risk in all things worthwhile, and occasionally we are reminded of this and of our human frailty in the mountains. A momentary lapse, a slip, a wrench, a tumble, and one of our group spends the rest of the week in camp meditating upon the meaning of life, the acceptance of what is versus the frustrations of what might have been, enjoying the ministrations of friends, and as she put it: *"... marvelling in God's garden. It is not where you go, but where you are and what you do that matters"*.

What was lost in vertical metres was more than made up in horizontal kilometres. Long, meandering trails through the larch woods, up and over distant ridges to even more distant ridges, ridges that stretched away into the haze, to vantage points like Tipperary (as in: It's a long way to ...) from where our camp looked an impossible distance back. Did I mention that the sun shone every day, the breeze was light on the cheek, the flowers nodded in the meadows, birds called from the trees, and occasional gurgling brooks chuckled down through the heather? A delight; in a world of strife, a place of peace.

The Northern Lights appeared on the first night, to the awe of a few attending to late night ablutions. The rest of us spent the rest of the week sticking our heads out at all hours of the night, however the borealis was as elusive as ever. But we did see the full moon, a spectacular sight indeed, particularly for those camped beside the lake catching the reflection against the silhouetted larch and gilt-edged ridge. Also on the first evening, the magnificent sight of a bull elk catching the last rays of the setting sun across the lake, staring at this intrusion into his domain, before turning away never to be seen again all week, despite the myriad of well-beaten trails wending through the woods.



Goats were more common, frequenting the cliff edges along the ridges, retreating across impossibly narrow ledges, and gazing back to see who would dare to follow. Interesting how close one could approach these animals, calmly watching us as we stumbled towards them with one eye on the ground and one in the viewfinder, clicking away in the hope that maybe one image would capture that classic calendar pose.

Images. Twice we find nests of baby birds, mouths agape, tucked under boulders out in the high, open meadows. Trout patrolling the fringes of the lake, dimpling the smooth surface in the evening rise. Humming birds swooping, dancing and twittering, consuming frantic energy in search of tiny specks of nourishment. Evidence of the violence of nature: an old larch snag literally blown apart by recent lightning, with shards of splintered wood littering the ground fifty metres away.

“Thirteen women and seven men”, observed our resident statistician – the one with the electric toothbrush (surely grist for some future KMC AGM, I mean there oughta be a law about some things, right?). I’m not sure of the significance of that particular demographic in the context of a hiking camp. Perhaps I am at an age where such circumstances pass unnoticed, which is a bit of a worry. Or, as noted earlier, perhaps gender differences are less apparent when all are garbed in basic MEC. However, some semblances of civilization remain even in these primitive circumstances, as evidenced by one of my note providers admiring “*fellow campers confident enough to stumble in for breakfast without worrying about how they looked*”. Which suggests less confidence on the part of this observer on how she (of course) looked, or perhaps her astonishment at some of the spectacles presenting themselves for breakfast. Who knows! The frequent reference to the “*kindness, helpfulness, cheerfulness, caring, sharing, conviviality, etc.*” of our group may reflect this gender imbalance, though I am not convinced that women necessarily have the edge on such qualities.

The bugs? Of course there were bugs, there always are. This was a mosquito camp, as distinct from black fly and/or horse fly camps; no-see-ums remained unseen, but their presence was felt. Despite the high elevation – the highest to date, according to our statistician, at 2400 metres – the mosquitoes were as relentless as ever during the day. The scarcity of native wildlife no doubt accounted for their enthusiasm for tender white meat, male and female. But one soon gets used to them, and to chatting comfortably with net-veiled beings unrecognizable except for their jackets linked to faces seen earlier in the week.

And the food? One thing about KMC camp meals is the menu never changes (when will we accept the final demise of the salmon loaf?), just the order of consumption depending on the rate of thaw. And of course it always tastes good. I correct myself, there is change: the soup is an evolving and unique creation that changes as a reflection of previous meals and the impulses of the cook. Like sourdough it gains a life of its own, providing a base to tasty new additions and absorbing the less flavourful nutrients. By week’s end the borscht of Saturday has blended nicely with the chilli of Monday, the curry of Wednesday and the fruit salad of Tuesday, all glued together by the everyday accumulations of leftover porridge. Hardly a candidate for the Atkins’s diet, but certainly solid sustenance to satiate at least one of the appetites of active hikers.

“Time to go,” says the troll, “You’ve had more than your moneys worth. Fine scenery, fine company, and experiences to savour in the months and years ahead. Remember this is always here: the endless ridges, the meadows, the alpine valleys, the sense of peace and natural beauty. No matter how overwhelming the problems and strife of the world might seem, places like this will always be here. You will likely never return to this one, but you will carry it with you, and there are others that will delight you so long as you have the will, the little strength it needs, and the imagination to seek them out.”

Trolls are not such bad creatures after all.

The last words go to Luba:

*Walking in heather  
Up high  
Clouds keep me company  
I fly*

Dedicated again to our exiled friends Garth and Pat. We talked of you up there in those meadows and around the fire. Our best wishes are with you.

By Graham Kenyon, on behalf of all at Camp1

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## Camp Three

**Dates: August 7 – August 14, 2004**

As seen by gopher George the ground squirrel:

August 7<sup>th</sup> and here comes 20 more of those hikers in a helicopter. I heard that rain and fog delayed their arrival for 3 or 4 hours. After an hour and a half at the fire valley restaurant all headed for a nice hostel with all the amenities at an unused school in canal flats. The last group came in a chopper with the doors removed. We heard Hans say it was a chilly ride.

The rain is over and has cleared up for the whole week. This group sometimes burns 2 presto logs a night!

The first day they all left for the sphinx ridge and some to the boulder topped nurse peak. Slim pickings for us gophers, still only crumbs to eat. Eric the camp leader stumbled on one of my gopher holes on the way to supper and did a spectacular flip into a very wet spot by the second lake.

This whole area has acres of larch trees with deep game trails everywhere. The ridges are mostly very wide meadows at about 8800 feet or so. Third camp spotted three goats, and a goat skull. Gerry glassed a wolverine skulking around, some saw picas, a large marmot and of course our whole contingent of ground squirrels. Towards the end of the week Suzanne got smart and sealed the garbage in empty coolers. We gophers were having a blast in the garbage during the day. Still lots of food, here and there.

Sara and Pat itemized a few more wildflowers to add to the 82 kinds that camp two recorded. The bog orchid was our favorite.

This group did some different things, snow cream pie in the face, wrestling, and wine bag shooters among some of them.

By the end of the week most had climbed the Signature Peak named Nurse, none tried Doctor Peak but many bagged Patient Peak and trekked to El Grunto and the ridge to Tipperary. There was a special lake below El Grunto which was actually called lake paradise, according to some local boys who atv'd and climbed over nurse col to do some fishing in our lake.

All enjoyed the long walks on ridges, but found not a lot of challenge.

We ground squirrels were sad to see them all fly away.

They were Eric Ackerman, coordinator, Mary Baker, Felix Belczyk, Renate Belczyk, our faithful cook Suzanne Blewett, Laurie Charlton, Marg Gmoser, Don Hagen, Don Harasym, Sara Judith, Hans Korn, Gerda Lang, Gerry Larouche, Irme Mende, Mary McEwen, Pegasis McGauley, Kay Medland, Al Sheppard, Pat Sheppard, and yours truly, Elaine Martin.

# Climbing Camp Report

## KMC 2004 Climbing Camp: Horsing Around Up Granite Creek

This year's climbing camp was held at the head of Granite Creek in the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy. There were 10 participants, 6 from the KMC (Sandra McGuinness, Peter Jordan, Maurice de St. Jorre, Ken Holmes, Hamish Mutch, and Doug Brown) and 4 from the BCMC (Eva Boehringer, Will Neustaeder, John Halliday, and Jane Weller).

Camp was situated in the heart of the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy, and thus air support was not permitted, so a walk of close to 40 km was required to reach our base camp location. To minimize suffering, this year's camp was an expedition in the old style: a multi-day approach using packhorses to carry our great piles of gear.

The plan was simple: while we walked with only day packs, Mike Christensen of Findlay Creek Outfitters would supply five packhorses and two handlers to carry our stuff as far up Granite Creek as the horses could travel; from there, we would carry all our gear the final 3-4 km distance and 500 vertical feet to camp.

The first day went mostly according to plan with a good trail to follow, although it was a very hot day and our crew was feeling a bit whipped by the time we stumbled into camp after 9 hours on the trail.

The next day things were a bit more interesting. The horse trail up Granite Creek is much less used than the Findlay Creek "mainline" – it was rougher, tough to follow at times, and involved maybe a dozen creek crossings, a couple of which fell into the "dodgy" category. But with a minimum of fuss, 12:00 saw us arriving at the end of the horse trail – just in time to be checked out by an inquisitive grizzly across the creek. Despite valiant efforts to extend lunch, it came time to shoulder our massive packs, many of which were in the 60-70 pound range.

While the travel beyond the end of the horse trail wasn't too bad, even "not too bad" becomes a bit of an ordeal when one is staggering like a drunk under a huge load. After traveling around one km in an hour, Maurice lost his balance in a boulder field and fell over soundly smacking his head on some rocks. Luckily he is a

thick-headed Brit, and after Sandra expertly bandaged his head, we continued on, although a bit more carefully. Unfortunately, very soon after starting off again, Eva badly twisted an ankle. Continuing on was out of the question for Eva, so the group decided to make camp even though we were far short of our planned destination for the day.

The following day Eva and Will decided to stay put to give Eva's ankle a chance to mend while the rest of us headed off (we had FSR radios, so we could keep in contact). We found reasonable travel on the thin strip where the bush met the swamp, but after an hour or so we reached a clearing beyond which the bush apparently got much worse. Maurice, Ken, Jane, and Peter decided to make camp here, while Hamish, John, Sandra, and I moved on another km and 500 ft elevation to "high camp". As it turned out, the bush above Camp 3 on the north side of Granite Creek was indeed hideous, but eventually elk trails on the south side of the creek were discovered that greatly eased travel.

On Tuesday, those of us at high camp went on a magical mystery tour care of Mr. Hamish, My-Name-Is-Mud, Mutch. You see, it seems the East Ridge of Clutterbuck is unclimbed, and nothing excites an old Scotsman like an unclimbed route. Hamie assured us, that despite the terrifying appearance of the ridge from camp, we would find that once we gained the ridge it would be wheelchair accessible. And who were we to doubt the redoubtable Hamish Mutch? Suffice it to say we had a good look at the mountain from several directions, and while we didn't sign the summit register, we did manage to avoid the shame of a bivi without tagging the summit.

While we were bumbling around on the north, east, and south sides of Clutterbuck, Ken, Jane, and Peter took a look at the West Ridge of Clutterbuck. Peter wasn't feeling great, so waited at the Clutterbuck/Less col while Ken and Jane enjoyed a couple short pitches of low fifth class climbing on fine granite on their way to the summit of Clutterbuck.

Wednesday saw most of the group hiking into the beautiful meadows at the head of Granite Creek, with Sandra, Hamish, and I enjoying a very pleasant ridge walk to a 9300 foot peak east of camp that provided fine views of our main camp objectives.

On Thursday Sandra, John, and I joined up with Peter, Jane, and Ken on the South Ridge of Mt Findlay. Once Sandra, John and I reached Lone Cairn Lake, we could see the other three, who had come from Camp 3, contouring around the basin above the west side of the lake. We happily followed their tracks in the rapidly softening snow (here John decided to hang out in the sun and soak up the view). From the basin, easy to moderate snow led to the rock of the South Ridge.

Once on the ridge, we were treated to wonderful scrambling on broken, but very sound granite. With rock shoes on but the rope in the pack, Sandra and I found a meandering route that we rated as fourth or possibly low fifth class; the others elected to don the rope and took a more direct line they rated at 5.6. A very enjoyable ascent in a grand place.

We were the second party to summit Findlay (and the second ever ascent of the South Ridge) since our friends Paul Allen and Hamish Mutch did the first ascent of the South Ridge in 1991 – 13 years prior!

The following day Sandra, Hamish, and I met up with Will and Eva (Eva was still hobbling, but was determined to get at least one summit) and climbed Clutterbuck by the West Ridge, as Ken and Jane had three days earlier.



Our walk out was accomplished in two days (again with the help of the horses) without any dramas -- except for a nasty creek crossing and a severed black bear paw on the trail from a fresh grizzly kill.

This trip was a grand adventure into a remarkable, very seldom visited, wilderness area -- easily the largest area in BC I have seen

without a clearcut. The climbing was generally excellent on wonderful granite, our weather was spectacular with 9 consecutive sunny days; new friends completed the experience.

For the full story, complete with photos, visit the KMC Web site (<http://kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca>) and click on "Trip Reports".

## Wilderness and Remote First-Aid, (WRFA) Course Offer

This program I'm teaching is a 40 hour course. WRFA includes 6 to 8 hours of cpr instruction, as well as an emphasizing basic skills needed to handle common emergencies in the field such as sprains, fractures, burns, head/spinal injuries, heat/cold conditions, drowning, poisons, stings/bites, shock, sudden medical conditions, (I.E. diabetes, seizures, stoke etc), wound management, "pressure injures", (I.E. Hape, Hace, AMS). Being a wilderness course there is a healthy dose of improvisation with regard to making litters, splinting and other equipment. Certification for this course is good for 3 years.

The format is two weekends, (Fri night, Sat/Sun), with the first weekend indoors and the second weekend outdoors. I'm scheduling this course for Spring 2005: April 8th, (evening), 9th, & 10th, as well as April 15th, (evening), 16th & 17th. The tuition would be \$260.00 per student, (this includes \$41.50 in texts).

I think this would be an excellent course for club members as well as trip coordinators to take.

I would like to make a further offer of giving 10% of the tuition paid by KMC members back to the club.

Contact: Terry O'Gorman, Canadian Red Cross First Aid Instructor 1-250-354-4231 or email [teogo@shaw.ca](mailto:teogo@shaw.ca)

## Library News Winter Approaches:

What better time of the year than now to get started planning those winter ski (or snowshoe) tours, and the KMC library has lots of books to help. We have four guidebooks in the KMC library describing tours from as far afield as Nanaimo and the Rockies to tours in our own local mountains. Of course, if you're heading into avalanche terrain, fall is a good time to study up on how to assess snow stability and stay safe in avalanche country. We have five excellent volumes on travel in avalanche terrain and we also receive the *Avalanche News* from the Canadian Avalanche Association, which has up to date articles by Canada's leading avalanche professionals. The entire library catalogue is available on the KMC website.



We have two new climbing guidebooks in the library:

- *G. Israelson*. A climbers guide to Kinnaird Bluffs, The Lions Head and Pass Creek Cliffs
- *H. Ridge*. Skaha rockclimbs

|| **Library** || Sandra McGuinness Tel (250) 999-9999 Address: 3939 Malina Road Nelson BC V1L6X6

### The KMC 2004 Executive:

Chair	Steven Miros	999-9999
Vice	Paul Allen	999-9999
Treasurer	Elaine Martin	999-9999
Secretary	Ross Bates	999-9999
Conservation	Kim Kratky	999-9999
Newsletter	Eliane Miros	999-9999
Climbing Camp	Doug Brown	999-9999
Winter Trips	Dave Mitchell	999-9999
Summer Trips	Don Harasym	999-9999
Hiking Camps	Ron Cameron	999-9999
Mtn. School	Vacant	
Social	Jill Watson & Jan Mickelthwaite	999-9999

### Contacts:

|| **Membership Annual Dues** || Individual (19 yrs & up) \$20 Couple/Family \$25 Junior \$10

Send complete membership/waiver form to: [KMC Membership 2711 Granite Rd Nelson BC V1L 6V3](mailto:KMC_Membership_2711_Granite_Rd_Nelson_BC_V1L_6V3)

To receive information by e-mail or to give us your address/email/phone changes please contact [membership@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](mailto:membership@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)

|| **Library** || Sandra McGuinness

|| **Email update** || Contact [members-owner@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](mailto:members-owner@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)

|| **KMC President** || [president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](mailto:president@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)

|| **KMC (correspondence) address** || Box 3195 Castlegar BC V1N 3H5

|| **KMC website** || [www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)

|| **Newsletter submissions** || Eliane Miros [newsletter@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](mailto:newsletter@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca)

|| **Newsletter Editorial Policy** || We encourage all submissions of writings, cartoons, drawings, book & website reviews and trip reports. Suitability for publication is at editors' discretion. Articles and advertisements may be edited for clarity and length. Advertising must be thought to be of interest to members in regard to the outdoors, especially locally. Discretion will be used for commercial endeavors.

## Executive Notes of AGM November 12th, 2004

Held at Trapper John's  
Restaurant in Salmo with 41  
members present.



### President's Report by Steven Miros

-Thank you to the 2004 executive, particularly Kim Kratky who has done a lot of work on the proposed Jumbo Glacier Resort, and Sandra McGuinness for her work on cabins.

-Resolutions passed in accordance with the bylaws of the Society on Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> 2003 were accepted by the BC Society Act Registrar as presented on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2004, with one exception. The proposed change to by-law A7 "each resident member and each resident family member of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club 19 yrs of age or over shall have a vote at general and special meetings of the KMC" was not accepted. Instead, because of the Society's Act, only one vote per membership class is allowed by the Registrar. Therefore, bylaw A7 could only read as follows: "Each resident member and each resident family membership of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club shall have a vote at general and special meetings of the Kootenay Mountaineering Club". In essence, the one vote per family membership remains as originally in the constitution. MSC (Mary Woodward, Kay Medland) "That we return to one vote per family membership". Carried. Several other changes to the Societies Act (effective November 2, 2004) were noted but not read.

-It was noted that likeminded wilderness backcountry groups such as ours have started helping one another out. The mountaineering community may not have a lot of resources, but we do have the same backcountry concerns throughout the province and can make an impact. Keep writing those letters of concern!

-The intention of the "excessive" language being used on both the KMC application forms and the various outing forms is not to scare people but to remind them that mountaineering is a serious and risky endeavor. KMC activities require preparation in many ways. Approaching an outing without noting preparedness weakens the integrity of the club. In particular, as a club, it means supporting our coordinators and instructing or orientating the participants. We must emphasize one's suitability for outings. How we deal with the questionable instances will determine the future success of our club's outings.

**Treasurer's Report** - by Elaine Martin. **MS** that the *Reserve for Huts and Trails, and Environment* be moved to the *General Equity*. **Motion defeated.** Some discussion of the Reserve, Hiking and Climbing camp budgets followed. **MS** that the *single individual membership fee for the KMC be dropped by \$2 to \$18, and the family membership fee be increased by \$3 to \$28 for a more equitable membership fee structure.* **Motion defeated.** **MSC** that the proposed 2005 budget be accepted.

**Conservation Report** - Kim Kratky attended two meetings to draft a new management plan for Valhalla Provincial Park. Such plans are normally reviewed each 5 years. Open Houses to present the new plan will be occurring in Nelson and Slocan City and KMC members are encouraged to attend. The hallmark of the plan is preservation of wilderness values. Helicopter access has been reduced, the provision for a backcountry lodge has been removed, and hunting restrictions have been increased. Strains on the Park include snowmobile access from Bannock Burn and from the park's western boundary, and camping and partying on Slocan Lakeshore. The management plan is not binding on Government. Kim also updated the membership on the status of the proposed Jumbo Glacier Resort, which has now received a certificate from the Environmental Assessment Office. The final decision on approving the resort has been left to the Regional District of the East Kootenay. The Red Shutter Inn has applied for a new cat-skiing tenure, this time on the east side of Hwy 3b and extending north to Hwy 3, east to the Columbia River and south to near Murphy Creek. The area will encompass traditional ski touring areas on Neptune, Crowe and Mackie. **MSC** that the KMC will liaise with the Friends of the Rossland Range and express our opposition to the inclusion in the tenure area of traditional ski touring locations on Mounts Crowe, Neptune and Mackie. Mention was made that if the KMC oppose every application, our effect may be dampened.

**Hiking Camp Report** by Ron Cameron. Camps well went. One participant sustained a knee injury that later required surgery. The decision to continue the policy that unaccompanied minors are not allowed at hiking camp was upheld. The Committee functioned well and will continue next year. Mary Baker presented the hiking camp budget. Next year, the hiking camp budget will be appended to the main budget.

**Social Report** by Jan Micklethwaite. The Social Committee held two events this year, the AGM (best attendance in many years this year) and the Hiking Camp slide show. They are also helping bring the Melting Mountains presentation (a presentation on climate change) to Nelson. Jan thanked Doug Brown for taking this on in her absence. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

**Climbing Camp Report** by Doug Brown. Doug reported on a very successful KMC climbing camp in Granite Creek in the Purcell Mountains. Six KMC members and four BCMC members attended. The report is on the website.

**Website Report** by Doug Brown. Between 50 and 100 people per day visit the KMC website.

The full KMC library catalogue is on the website, as are trip coordinators' responsibilities and trip waivers. The email list is working well. If anyone has new photos they would like to see on the webpage, please send them to Doug as JPG's.

**Newsletter and Membership Reports** by Eliane Miros. There will be some changes to the membership form this year to keep it in line with new privacy legislation. Eliane was commended for her work on the Newsletter which all members enjoy.

**Cabins, Trails and Equipment Report** by Sandra McGuinness. Ted does trails. Sandra does cabins. Ted ran two successful work parties this year, one to build a new trail from the Silver King mine site to Toad Mountain, and one clearing Lemon and Nilsik Creek trails. Sandra reported on an extremely successful year on cabins including four work parties which did major work on all the cabins as well as providing firewood, the forging of a new and successful relationship with the Arrow Lakes District of the Ministry of Forests, securing a new agreement to maintain the cabins with the Ministry of Forests and obtaining free liability insurance coverage from the Ministry of Forests. Vera reported on the Ripple Ridge cabin, which has had no contract for maintenance with the Ministry of Forests since 1992. Vera reported that the cabin is heavily used and would benefit from maintenance and a reservation system and proposed that the KMC consider taking on the maintenance of the Ripple Ridge cabin. There was some discussion, but it was decided that our resources are already strained and there is no benefit to the KMC in taking on the Ripple Ridge cabin.

**Mountaineering School Report** by Sandra McGuinness. The KMC is now running climbing days/nights at the Gravity Climbing Centre in Nelson at a reduced rate for KMC members. This will continue over the winter. There is also a leadership training session on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Details are in this newsletter.

**Winter Trips Report** by David Mitchell. David is looking for more coordinators for the winter trip schedule. Please step forward and sign up to coordinate a trip. There is already one trip on the schedule to practice avalanche transceiver searches and all people who recreate in the backcountry in winter (snowshoers and skiers) are encouraged to attend. Murielle Perrin is organizing the ski week at the Kaslo Lake cabin this year. Bert Port requested that the lottery be held earlier next year.

### OLD BUSINESS

-Donations? A quick discussion on last year's motion that the KMC donate \$2,000.00 to the Friends of Kootenay Parks for the restoration and

interpretive display in the Slocan Chief Cabin. Also discussed were the a request from The Castlegar Friends of the Library for a donation of a KMC membership to the "silent auction" fund raising event for the Castlegar Public Library. Essentially raising an awareness of the KMC's existence to others in our communities while at the same time donating to a worthwhile cause. Points were made that the club supports backcountry activities, instructing and assisting in these activities, and expressing the clubs views on conservation of natural values in the mountains. -Ron Perrier gave a presentation on the summit register program and proposed amending the guidelines to allow the placement of summit registers in Provincial Parks and to expand the area of register placement outside of strictly the west Kootenays. Existing Summit register

guidelines are: (a) minimum elevation of 8500 ft/ 2590 m; (b) no peaks in parks; (c) no obvious trails to the peak; and (d) within the KMC membership area. . They were slightly modified at the Mar. 10, 1998 Executive meeting in that "worthwhile peaks" could have Cairns placed. For example, a 7500 ft. peak that is a real challenge to get to might be a "worthwhile peak". Something that is an easy day hike and frequently climbed wouldn't qualify. From the minutes of the Feb. 10, 1998 Executive meeting. The executive will reformulate the guidelines. Looking after the state of these canisters requires a procedure as well. Full register books will be archived in the KMC library.

- Vice president: Doug Brown
  - Treasurer: Mary Baker
  - Secretary: Vera Truant
  - Conservation: Kim Kratky
  - Summer trips: Martin Carver
  - Winter trips: David Mitchell
  - Website: Doug Brown
  - Mtn school: Sandra McGuinness
  - Climbing camp: Doug Brown
  - Social: Vacant
- Bobbie Maras will assume the "Membership Services".

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 pm.

## ELECTIONS – 2005 Executive

### Classifieds

**Your favourite Kokanee Glacier photo could become part of the permanent Interpretive display at the Slocan Chief.**

Information, artifacts and photos needed for the Slocan Chief Interpretation.

Things we need most are:

- historical climbing rope,
- historical wooden ice axe,
- historical pitons & crampons,
- historical (touring) skis, bindings, and boots,
- mining artifacts,
- Photos from 1930 thru 1960's,

Photos and first person accounts of the KMC and Chieftains restoration work in the 1960's.

A permission for use agreement would be signed between the owner and Friends of West Kootenay Park.

**There is a small budget for the purchase of appropriate artifacts.**

Please Contact:

Cathy Grierson (359-7981 or [cgrierson@telus.net](mailto:cgrierson@telus.net)) or Ian Fraser (353-7425 or [ifraser@netidea.com](mailto:ifraser@netidea.com)).



**We wish all our members a beautiful holiday season**

