



# **The Kootenay Mountaineer**

*The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.*

April 30, 2012

## **KMC Library**

The KMC library is now domiciled at Doug Clark's residence in Castlegar. You may [email Doug](mailto:dsc49@hotmail.com) (dsc49@hotmail.com) to arrange borrowing any of the collection. There is a list of the collection available at the link

[http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/library\\_holdings.pdf](http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/library_holdings.pdf)

## **Message from the Editor**

As a reminder to all those receiving the newsletter electronically, the current membership list as always available at <http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/Membership%20List/KMC%20members%20April%204%20-%202012.pdf>. The current trip schedule is available at <http://www.kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/Trip%20Schedules/KMC%202012%20Trip%20Schedule%20April%20to%20November.pdf>.

## **Trip Reports**

### **First Ascent of Nasokwen Mountain: Into The Forbidden Forest**

I have a hate-hate relationship with Silverton Creek. It's mutual, too. I've thrashed my way up the bush in that drainage more time than I care to remember. It is thick, it is wet (always), it is slippery, it is pointy, spiky and generally unpleasant. I swear, not love nor money could make me go back. But I've said that before. Several times. Like after climbing Titei. And after climbing Blacktail. And after climbing Long ...

And finally, after not climbing Nasokwen. Which brings us to this story. In June of 2010, Sandra convinced me I was being a girly-man and the bush just wasn't that bad (fool me once, shame on you, fool me 3 times ...) and that going up Nasokwen was a great idea. So it was, Sandra McGuinness, Jen Kyler, Micha Forestell, and I banged the truck up the remains of the Silverton Creek FSR, put on our Kevlar clothing, strapped on protective e'yewear, ducked our heads, and entered into The Forbidden Forest. Several days later we emerged, bloodied and bruised, into the sub-alpine

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### **Article submission guidelines:**

Plain text is great. No need for PDF or Microsoft Word files. Simply cut and paste your text into an email to

[newsletter@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca](mailto:newsletter@kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca).

Attach your full resolution photos to the email.

Lots of photos, please.

Submission deadline for the next issue is  
June 16, 2012

in the impressive cirque on the north side of Titei. We easily crossed over the crest of Wilfred Ridge, and gazed, downcast, at the turreted and corniced ridge running east to Nasokwen. We had more chance of spying a Bowtruckle than traversing that ridge in soft early-summer snow conditions. A short jaunt down the nearby SE-trending ridge triggered a class 2 wet slide, which we took as a reasonably unambiguous sign that continuing would be foolhardy. We begrudgingly accepted that would be facing the Hippogriffs on the way home without a summit to embolden us. Home we went. Never again would I risk life and limb in that ghastly forest.



Well, I hate not making the summit. I really hate it. Especially when there are no recorded ascents. Surely the bush wasn't as bad as I remember it? If we went a little later in the year, the snow would be better ...

Fast forward to July 1, 2011. Sandra is out with a sprained ankle, so it is Jen, Vicki Hart, and I who again tackle the beasts of The Forbidden Forest with only ice axes for defence. Guess what? It was wet and nasty, and I whined the whole way. This time it only took us a day and a half to clear the bush and escape into the Titei cirque, Vicki and I coughing up bits of lung trying to keep up to the Eveready Bunny. Our route was the same as last time: from the lake at 863-240 (6750'), we climbed east up moderate snow to the ridge connecting Long Mountain to Wilfred Ridge (around 869-246, 7600'), then easy scrambling south to the west ridge of Nasokwen. This time, snow conditions cooperated, and we easily descended moderate snow down the south ridge and then northeast down a snow gully into the basin on the south side of Nasokwen. From there, it was a straightforward grind up the south slopes of Nasokwen to the top. It is double-summitted, with the east peak slightly more sporting than the west – we climbed both to make sure. It being Canada Day, Vicki had brought a Canadian flag, and we patriotically took

pictures our ourselves adorned with our nation's emblem.

No recorded ascents, no cairn on top, and Kratky-san knows of no ascents: that's good enough for me, I'm claiming the FA.

One more time through the dastardly bush, this time softened by the euphoria of our conquest, and we were back at the truck. I will never go up Silverton Creek again. I will never go up Silverton Creek again. I will never ...

Nasokwen Mountain from Silverton Creek, via south slopes, 1 July 2011. Class 2-3, 10:40 truck-to-truck (not including the axe

fight with a Bowtruckle)

Jennifer Kyler, Vicki Hart, Doug Brown

### **Whitewater Snowshoe December 2, 2011**

There was lots of interest for this trip with sixteen in attendance. On the day before Whitewater opened for



the season, we lucked out by being blessed with a beautiful day. In the morning, we did a loop on the Silver King Side and had lunch at the top of the Canadian Belle ski run.

In the afternoon, some of the group wanted more and did another loop on the Summit Side. Participants: Rick Mazzocchi, Louise Hammerich, Marilyn Miller, Diane Paolini, Connie Parisotto, Ed Beynon, Hazel



Beynon, Kathleen Nichol, Bess Schuurman, Ted Ibrahim, Rob Richardson, Terri Richardson, Diane White, Shirley Turner, Don Adams and Coordinator, Don Harasym.

### **Turkey Burner Trip To Mt. Plewman**

And then there were 4.....no 6, or is it 7 ?

I didn't have to advertise the traditional Boxing Day "Turkey Burner" trip to Mt Plewman on the members e-mail as it was fully signed up with 8 people weeks beforehand. However on Christmas Day one by one, four people dropped out, but two people also signed up and then another unexpectedly turned up at the meeting point.

So.... seven of us set out on a fine, sunny Boxing Day morning for Mt Plewman. I had pondered for days whether to change the venue or cancel the trip because the snow-pack in the Rossland Range was one of the lowest I'd seen for the time of year in 35 years. I had spent a couple of days cutting the brush and alder on the old road a couple of weeks before the trip and even the stubble was not covered.

As we climbed into the basin my concerns were confirmed, with shallow snow and rocks showing through. The snow was also wind hammered and in places it was so hard it was tough to get a ski edge to bite. We climbed up to the east ridge and then to the subsidiary east peak where we had lunch and the traditional cherry brandy chocolates, whilst we debated various options on where to ski. Should we drop in the north side, ski the south side or just go for a walk? None of them seemed attractive.

Anyway, we started skiing down the south slopes and after the first few turns in the wind affected snow we were amazingly and surprisingly skiing great old powder in open glades without hitting a rock. The run in great snow and sunshine was so enjoyable that we put our skins back on and climbed up for a second run. Even the deadfall just before hitting the Old Glory trail wasn't too bad. It turned out to be a really great day. Doug was also rewarded with seeing two lynx sitting by the roadside about a quarter of a mile down the road from the parking lot as he drove off home.

We were: Joel White; Joel Ratcliffe; Doug Clarke; Paul Allen; Delia Roberts; Fred Thiessen and myself, Ken Holmes.



### **Ripple Ridge Cabin Snowshoe January 16, 2012**

Five gathered at Kootenay Pass on a snowy day. A nice, easy winter walk. Skiers had made a well packed route which we probably could have navigated easily with boots only. The cabin was in use but the occupants must have been out doing a few turns when we arrived. They did, however, leave a warm cabin for us to enjoy for our lunch. Participants: Harry Davidson, Don Adams, Al Sheppard, Pat Sheppard and Coordinator, Don Harasym.

### **Utterly Depraved Series 1: Cabin Midday Peak, Sunday Jan 29, 2012**

Participants: Elena Cigala-Fulgosi; Daniela Gadotti; Doug Clark, and yours truly, Bill McNally.

Well, the trip was hardly depraved. Having forgotten my pocket version of the Satyricon, Daniela challenged our group to come up with the most depraved story we could think of. As we sat in Huckleberry Cabin aka the Love Shack, an embarrassed silence descended on the group, which was strong evidence that the group was utterly depraved, but unwilling to tell of their more prurient adventures. And so, alas, it ended.

In any case, skiing was great. We were able to drive 3 km up the road, and followed along from there. A couple of snowmobilers passed us prior to making it to the cabin, and we followed their tracks to the top of Cabin Peak. By the time we got to the top, the visibility had deteriorated and we skied off the summit over wind packed slab for a couple of hundred meters.

We then went over the lip of ridge to the south skiing through the trees and then along the drainage that passes within about a 100 m of the cabin. The snow

conditions higher up were perfect, with the snow became heavier as we descended.

We did a second lap of roughly the same route, but didn't go as high up the ridge. The skiing was a bit tighter through the trees and the snow was not as good as slightly higher up.

We then returned down the road, which was somewhat uneven thanks to the skidoo tracks. We then practices our avalanche rescue by digging my truck out of the snow, and returned home.

### **Mt. Kirkup Ski Trip, February 4th 2012**

The Columbia valley and Rossland were in cloud, but soon after leaving Rossland this cleared to blue skies and sunshine. We climbed the 2200 ft. or so from the Old Glory trailhead on Highway 3B to the summit of Mt Kirkup where we were rewarded with great views in every direction. Many rocks were exposed near the summit, indicative of a low snow year as they are usually covered at this time of year. After a few turns down the south-east slopes we left the rocks behind and had a good run down, in powder snow, for a 1000 ft. or so. After lunch we skinned back up to the summit and had an enjoyable run in good snow down the north side back to the cars. A great day! We were: Peter Oostlander, Terry Huxter, Daniela Gadotti, Ron Groome, Adam Derosa (my grandson) and myself, Ken Holmes

### **Circumnavigation of Mt. Crowe. Trip report for Feb. 5, 2012**

A blue bird and warm day and birthday trip for Vicki, 8 of us left the Nancy Greene summit parking area at 09:30. We climbed up the south face to the Wolf's Den cabin, a quick break, then over the ridge into the Northeast facing bowl where skiing was good but, as always, too short. Skinned up to the saddle between Crowe and Neptune, then some more good skiing down the west drainage to the Bear Hollow cabin for lunch. A tight fit for 8 in the cabin. After lunch we climbed out in a south westerly direction stopping to ski a new clear-cut (twice), this slope did settle (woomph) but was mellow, anchored and terraced enough to be safe. Continued up and west to ski an old clear-cut above the Viewpoint cabin. Running a bit short of time we then hiked around to the Mosquito cabin, down and back to the vehicles by 16:30 with the sun just setting. All good.



We were Doug Clark (token Exec.), Bob McQueen, Dave Grant, Chuck Macklon, Ross Bates, Vicki Hart (a year younger) and guides Dave and Jill Watson.

### **Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series III: Craigtown Peak, February 5, 2012**

This tour was clearly miscalled as none of the participants seemed to be suffering, in fact, there were big smiles most of the day, so, unless I can somehow work out how to cajole people into suffering, the series may have to be renamed.

In any case, taking advantage of some winter logging, we drove up Stewart Creek FSR for about 4.5 km to an elevation of about 1300 metres and GR80598 (roughly). This is right where a plowed spur road crosses a bridge to the south side of Stewart Creek. A 15 to 20 minute skin up the main Stewart Creek FSR brought us to another spur road and bridge across Stewart Creek. We took this spur road, crossed Stewart Creek and then skinned up through a cutblock heading generally south to reach a broad saddle at GR795588 (about 1560 m). Contrary to the principles of suffering a rest stop was taken in the sun and Graham told us all about how to "ask the universe" for whatever we might need, after which, theoretically, we could kick back and relax as our wishes are fulfilled. I have been trying this for the last few days but thus far, the universe has not obliged. Perhaps I'm doing it wrong.

Asking the universe, however, did not seem to be getting us to the top of Craigtown Peak, so, eschewing New Age principles for Old Age hard work, we broke a



trail up the east side to the summit. Sitting on top surrounded by wonderful views of the Bonnington and Nelson Ranges in warm sunshine again belied the entire idea of any suffering.



There is a 450 metre north facing avalanche path running straight from the summit of Craigtown Peak down into the headwaters of Craigtown Creek, which we descended trying our best to find some quality suffering. The tinkling of surface hoar as we skied down through deep powder and surface facets strangely did not evoke any suffering.

Still searching for the elusive goal of the tour we broke trail up the north ridge of Craigtown Peak to about 1850 metres where a nice chute promised a good run down the NE side of the peak into the headwaters of Stewart Creek. A little bit of suffering ensued here as the terrain was a bit steep for building an optimal up-track, but, a second delightful descent seemed again to banish all misery.

In the bottom of Stewart Creek we skinned back up to gain the road again, which lies on the north side of Stewart Creek about 80 vertical metres up from the creek itself, and then quickly schussed out the road.

Thanks to my companions in misery for the day, Ken Roy, Jocelyne Martin, Annie Taiatini, Tom Braumandl, Graham Jamin and coordinator Sandra McGuinness.

## **Unnecessary Ridge Snowshoe February 8, 2012**

Overcast and rather gloomy best described the day. And we had the task of navigating through some fairly heavy brush. Although the climb was somewhat challenging for a couple in attendance, we did manage to get up to the ridge only to find that it was pretty much completely fogged in with no views of Old Glory or much else. Thirteen participants: Kathleen Nichol, Ed Beynon, Hazel Beynon, Al Sheppard, Pat Sheppard, Gayle Buchner, Chris Hatch, Sandra England, Barry Mclean, Marilyn Pearson, Helen Foulger, Don Adams and Coordinator, Don Harasym.

## **Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series IV: Skiing the Slide Paths of Mount Stanley, February 12, 2012**

Winter logging up Deer Creek - accessible from Deer Park FSR on Lower Arrow

Lake - enabled us to drive to about 5,100 feet near the confluence of two forks of Deer Creek (GR300868, 82F12). On previous explorations, we'd gone up the main west fork of Deer Creek and skied some runs in the basin on the south side of Mount Stanley. But that fork of the creek accesses mainly south or west facing terrain, and, after a big spell of heat and little snow, we needed north or east facing terrain to get good conditions.

This time, our attention was drawn to two peaks of roughly equal height (7,300 feet) NW of Mount Stanley, that looked to offer some long north facing descents down large avalanche paths. From the end of the logging, we crossed the west branch of Deer Creek and almost immediately found ourselves in the north fork of this branch. We followed this north, staying in the creek bed, to about 6,300 feet where the creek kicks to the east and pretty much disappears. Here, we crossed a huge and tantalizing (if only it weren't due west) slide path that runs down from the northern outlier of Mount Stanley and skied up easy terrain to gain the eastern most summit of the two small peaks at 7,300 feet (GR305891).

Our first run was a NE line down a big avalanche path to about 6,500 feet. Below this elevation, the terrain kicks you into two separate slide paths, both of which





have enough of a westerly or southerly component to have less desirable snow quality. Being all about quality, we pulled the plug at 6,500 feet and skinned back up to a col at GR307895. A steep entry led into a NW facing avalanche path that took us from 7,000 feet all the way down to 5,600 feet where we stopped for lunch.

Skinning back up the line we had skied was not a good option, so we broke trail up to another col to the west of the two little peaks at GR295891 (6,750 feet). This was such a delicious looking true north slope that we felt compelled to ski it, so we did - and it was delicious. Back up our uptrack, we continued breaking trail heading east to the western most summit of the two small peaks (GR301891) where we were, interestingly, due north of our starting point.

All descents off these two peaks are south facing, but, luckily, the top half of the descent was pretty decent skiing as 15 cm of new snow covered a firm, but not breakable, layer. Lower down, new snow amounts predictably decreased as did ski quality. Pretty soon we reached our uptrack which we followed out, the creek bed providing some exciting skiing, and were pleased to make it back to the truck without having to skin up. We'd covered about 11 km of terrain, racked up 5,000 feet of elevation and had skied four different aspects and bowls. Not a bad day out.

Participants, Doug Brown and Sandra McGuinness (coordinator).

### **White Queen Snowshoe February 15, 2012**

We would have been hard-pressed to pick a better day for this outing. Lots of sun, temperature just below zero, almost no wind and good, stable snow conditions helped make the trip a success. Using a ski route, the four of us did the ascent in just over two hours. With 360 degree views at the top, we warmed ourselves in the sun and then finished off the trip with an easy down using the same route as the ascent. Participants: Leah Zoobkoff, Kathleen Nichol, Barry McLean and Coordinator, Don Harasym



### **Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series V: Barrett Creek to Hall Creek via Lost Lake Ridge, March 3, 2012**

Weather is a great metaphor for life - sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, and there's nothing much you can do about it but carry an umbrella. ~Terri Guillemets.

Or, given the difficulty of ski touring whilst carrying an umbrella (perhaps one mounted on a ski helmet?), a good waterproof jacket can substitute. Leaving Nelson at 7 am, we left one vehicle at Hall Creek, and drove south on Hwy 6 for another five kilometres to Barrett Creek FSR. Hlookoff is road building up the Lost Lake spur, so we drove up Barrett Creek for three

kilometres to the Lost Lake junction, then turned north and drove a further 600 metres to about 1170 metres where a new logging road has been pushed in to the east. We parked at the first switchback and started skiing.

It was hot work skiing up the Lost Lake Road in the near zero temperatures, but the persistent and accumulating snow fall meant we had to keep our waterproofs on. It took us about 1.5 hours to gain the crest of Lost Lake Ridge at about 1700 metres, where we paused to reassess our destination. Our original plan had been to ski up to about 2040 metres then ski a north facing run down into a valley, climb back out, and continue down Keno Creek. But, the rapidly deteriorating weather and stability gave us some pause. We decided to push on for a bit and see if we could find a reasonable (i.e. not too hazardous) descent off the north side. At about 1850 metres, we got a view of our planned descent and we all decided it was too steep and treeless for the current conditions. After some discussion, we decided to descend the ridge a little heading east until we could find a safe location to drop off the north side.

A safe route actually presented itself after a dozen or so turns down the ridge, and we skied through trees down into the valley that holds Keno Creek. We had some nice turns in the valley through large cedar trees - I keep wondering when this valley will be logged - and eventually skied down to about 1200 metres where we crossed Keno Creek and found the old logging road on the east side.

Once on the logging road it was a quick, although increasingly wet ski out with the snow getting more and more "coastal" as we lost elevation.

Thanks to my companions on this trip for coming out on a such a wild, wet and windy day.

Participants, Fred Thiessen, Roland Perrin, Dave and Jill Watson, Doug Brown and Sandra McGuinness (coordinator).



## **Simply Suffering Ski Tour Series VI: Mount Lasca After 30 Years, March 24, 2012**

Mount Lasca, while only 20 km in a straight line from Nelson, still seems a distant place, probably owing to the lack of nearby roads and the overgrown nature of the one long hiking trail that leads anywhere close (Mill Lake trail). Doug and I had last skied up Mount Lasca in the spring of 2005 when we skied from Whitewater Ski Resort to Proctor in April and tagged Lasca and Irvine along the way. Mount Lasca is not a peak I thought I would ever visit again.

But, winter logging (spring logging now) up newly built roads in Harrop Creek made a day trip to Mount Lasca seem possible. The weekend before, Doug, Roland and myself had toured along the Harrop-Narrows Divide from Harrop Low Road, so we had some familiarity with the area. Despite that, I almost led us up the wrong drainage as I'd forgotten we had been in a tributary of Harrop Creek and not the main Harrop Creek. Luckily, we had Fred, the human GPS, along to get the terrain straightened out in my head.

Harrop Low Road ends in a clearcut about 50 to 80 metres above the main Harrop Creek, but we found a skid road that led us down to where we could easily start skiing and cross the eastern most tributary of Harrop Creek and get into the main Harrop Creek drainage. Skiing up this drainage was easy as there was good snow coverage, and we plugged along for an hour or so to about 1700 metres, where we had a late breakfast stop - the day having started early.

After snacking, I broke trail and somehow managed to get us into much steeper terrain than necessary, and also somewhat off route to the east by getting suckered

up the wrong fork of upper Harrop Creek. GPS-man Fred, came to the rescue again, and we got back on course and were soon skiing through a small pass almost due south of Mill Lake (GR988842, NAD83). Doug and I had skied through this pass seven years ago on our traverse. Mill Lake eventually



emerged as a snow covered puddle in thick forest below us, what must surely be a dismal sight in summer after hoofing it up the long trail from Harrop.

Once through the pass, we contoured to the west heading for the north ridge of Mount Lasca. This had been my original plan for the ascent even though the north ridge itself looked more difficult (at least in winter) than the long easy southeast ridge. I had been somewhat concerned about skinning up the steep north slope that leads to the southeast ridge, particularly as a big cornice hangs over the top of this slope and temperatures were forecast to be warm.

But, plans change. The forecast hot sunny day had not materialized. It was in fact feeling a bit chilly for late March, and, the north ridge, what little we could see of it through the trees, looked as if it would require boot-packing (tedious and slow). From our current vantage point, we could see a reasonable route up the north slopes to the southeast ridge which we knew would enable us to ski quickly to the summit.

Being a democratic group, we took a vote and all in favor said "aye" and was unanimous. With skins off, we were easily able to coast right across the valley between us and Mount Lasca to an elevation of about 2000 metres. We had a quick early lunch, and then Doug broke a very safe trail up to the southeast ridge, where I took over and broke trail to the summit.

Views from the top were beautiful, particularly looking to the southwest where dark blue clouds cast a glow on Mount Ymir. It was just a bit windy on top, so we skied down 10 or 20 metres from the summit to a (relatively) sunny spot for another lunch break.

After lunch, it was easy and relatively quick to retrace our route, back down the ridge, down the north slope (some nice turns), contouring into the pass, and, schussing out down the creek.

Some important trip details are:

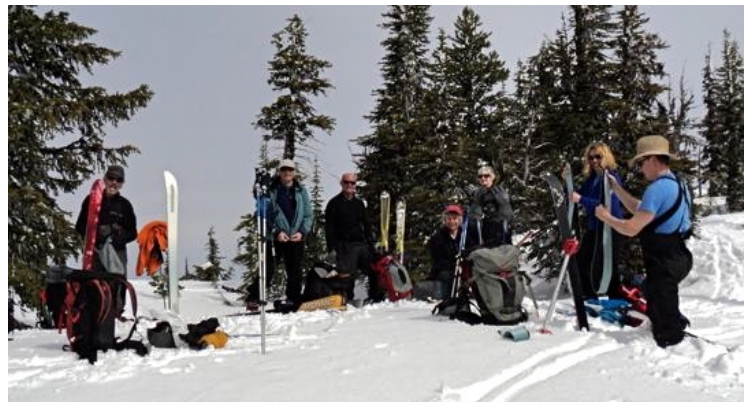
- If you wake up to Radio Australia, you know it is an alpine start;
- We skied about 18 km and 1300 metres of elevation gain;
- Fred is as accurate as a GPS but does not require battery changes. Bring along some goodies however, to keep him powered up;
- Six out of six, or 100% of skiers will vote for the guaranteed route to the top as opposed to the adventurous, but potentially unsuccessful route.

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- Bert, whose age I cannot divulge without his permission, is not human. I suspect he is a representative of a superior alien life form, possibly studying our habits with an eye to invading the earth. When that time comes, we weak humans will be quickly over-powered;
- Bring along one youngster to keep the average age of the trip down and stop the pensioners from going too fast;
- Fred was last in this area 30 years ago. He recommends visiting the area once each century. He is due back sometime in the 22nd century. Contact him directly if you want to sign up for this trip.

Participants: Bert Port, Jen Kyler, Doug Brown, Roland Perrin, and, coordinator, Sandra McGuinness.

### Lepso/Elwood



Our original plan was a Plewman (north drainage) traverse to Lepso. Unfortunately with higher than desired avalanche conditions, we changed this to a Lepso, Elgood loop route with a bit of exploring. Since most of the group had skied up the Seven





Summit Trail numerous times, we made it a point to avoid that trail where possible. So our trip up soon got off the trail and headed through the trees most of the way to the Sunspot cabin. We then set a new track up the north ridge, past Berry Ridge Cabin and to the top of Lepso. Prior to the Seven Summit Trail, this used to be the normal route to the top. Deskinned here and skied a short way to the south above the Elgood drainage. Skinned up to the next bump to the south for some good views of Plewman, and Old Glory, and of course a lunch and socializing break. The snow by now was getting a bit heavier from the warm temperatures, and sun. From here, we did some more exploring on the west side of the ridge down to where Roy had seen an old hunting camp. We didn't find the camp, but had some fun turns through the trees and small openings. The group skinned back up to the Lepso summit again, then skied down to the Seven Summit trail to get out into the north Lepso basin. More off track exploring down to the Flying Mile via the forrest. Our group was: Ken Holmes, Jill Watson, Diane Paolini, Thom Volpatti, Matty "Digger" Walton, Corinne Knox, Doug Clark, Keith Houghton, Roy Hopland, and Bob McQueen coordinator.

### **And Then There Were Three:** **2012 KMC Bonnington Traverse**

My annual KMC traverse of the Bonnington Range was plagued by cancellations this year. Initially, I had a full contingent of six people with almost as many on the wait list, but, after the inevitable cancellations, which surpassed even normal standards this year, we were reduced to a party of three. The last

cancellation came in only a couple of days before we were to start the traverse, consequently trip details were not sorted out until the last moment as I rearranged car shuttles, group gear and food groups for what felt like the twentieth time.

Our first day had the best weather of the four, and it was hot work skinning up to the Grassy Hut in the sun. I had inadvertently left my puff jacket behind in our vehicle after Doug dropped us off, something I didn't discover until we had covered almost 6.5 km, so had an extra 11 km ski that day to retrieve this vital piece of equipment.

By the time I got to the cabin, the lads had dug out the outhouse, built a fire, melted snow for water and even had dinner on the stove. The cabin was warm and cozy and required very little wood to heat thanks to Graham and Jude Jamin's awesome work last season.

Next day was blustery with light snow showers and mixed conditions. We had very fast travel conditions



as the wet snow of the previous few days froze solidly into an ice sheet. Even skinning up Grassy Mountain, normally an easy jaunt, had moments of desperation as our skis skidded off the crust. Ski-crampons,

something I've never taken on the Bonnington traverse before, would have been an asset.

We followed the normal route over to the Steed Cabin which went quickly with no trail to break, and, by 12.30 pm, we were on the ridge overlooking the basin containing the cabin. The firm conditions allowed us to cruise all the way to the cabin in one long traverse.

More digging was needed to dig out the wood, the deck, and build stairs down to the cabin. Despite much searching we could find no trace of the outhouse which may have collapsed over the winter. The Steed Cabin, frequented as it is by snowmobilers, was showing more wear and tear than any of the other cabins. Some rocket scientist had put turpentine into the white gas only Coleman Stove - a large sign saying "White Gas ONLY Arsehole" needs to be erected in a prominent location - and the corner of the cabin was full of crushed empty beer cans. We cleaned the place up and Bob cleaned out the stove and got it operational again.

After a cup of tea, we climbed Siwash Mountain via the ridge directly north of the cabin. I recollect skiing much of this route on previous trips, but on this day it was too icy to skin up without ski-crampons so we had to bootpack almost all the way. Thinking we would be able to ski, we carried our skis up, mostly for nothing, although Jonas did manage to ski one section on the way back. It was socked in at the summit and snowing, so we didn't stay long.

The wind blew all night and our third day was overcast and a bit blustery. We made quick time to the long ridge that extends east of Siwash Mountain.

Switchbacking up any slope was impossible as we couldn't get an edge in to the ice, so we put our highest heel lifts up and skinned straight up everything.

We had good views skiing along the ridge, first heading east, then turning to the north, although I found the ski down a bit desperate in parts. From the bottom of the ridge, Jonas set a great traverse line all the way down to Erie Creek, which, for the first time for me, we managed to do without skins. Such is skiing on ice.

Skinning up to the Copper Mountain Cabin went quickly, and, we arrived around 12.30 pm. I was using my altimeter to find the right elevation for the cabin, but it turned out to be over 100 metres off, so we ended up skinning up too high and having to descend. I consider it a personal failure to use the GPS, but the lads didn't want to wander around all afternoon, so we

turned my GPS on, got a bearing to the cabin, and then skied down to quickly find it.

After more digging, we skied up Copper Mountain in blustery winds. It actually felt quite cold on top, so, again, we didn't stay long, but skied back down to the cabin to warm up. Graham and Jude have also done a marvelous job on the Copper Cabin with new bunks, a new cupboard, and all the cracks in the cabin chinked. Again, we needed very little wood to heat the cabin and passed the night playing a cutthroat game of Crib.

Monday's weather forecast called for a system to move in, but I was still hopeful we might be able to complete day four of the trip (the crux) - the high ridge traverse from Copper Mountain to Empire Peak - before the system moved in. Initially, things looked good. We got away at 7.30 am in relatively promising weather. But, by 8.30 am we were battling our way up frozen wind-rolls in a howling blizzard near Empire Peak.

After some discussion, we decided that the weather, combined with the icy conditions were not favorable to continuing and we would ski out one of the two escape routes that are possible from Copper Mountain Hut.

I've had to bail off the Bonnington Traverse at almost exactly this point twice in the past (this time makes three) and usually take Snowwater FSR as there is no avalanche hazard on that route. But, this time, we had no fear of avalanches, our greatest fear was losing an edge and sliding inexorably down icy slopes.

Consequently, we decided to exit via Copper Mountain FSR (49 Creek).

This exit requires a traverse across the steep SE face of Copper Mountain to gain the pass between Red and Copper Mountains. We sent Jonas ahead again to lay down a bit of a track - the conditions were so icy that only a bit of a track was possible - for Bob and I to follow, as we were in white-out conditions. Jonas did an awesome job, and waited for me, the slowest member of the group, every so often. We were unable to hold our elevation so ended up perhaps 50 vertical metres below the road, but Jonas again went ahead and kicked some steps it being too icy to skin up.

Finally, on the road, I managed to lose it again when it took a turn towards Hall Creek that I wasn't expecting. However, after a bit more faffing around with the GPS and studying the map, we worked out where to go and were at last heading downhill on Copper Mountain FSR. As we descended the snow got wetter and wetter,



until we were skiing in rain, and feeling pretty wet and drippy ourselves.

We were able to ski to about 900 metres on the road - a couple of open creeks necessitated removing our skis - where the road is plowed to someones residence. From here, we walked down the road and out to my house, popping out in my backyard and surprising Doug who wasn't expecting errant skiers to walk out of the woods.

Many thanks to the other skiers on this trip, Bob McQueen and Jonas Furger for being such great companions over the four days.

### **Lion's Head Loop Hike-April 15**

Many people are keen to get out and do some hiking this time of year. Twenty-five of them were on the Lion's Head Loop hike. Thanks to Cindy Kozak-Campbell we have the photo below showing all the attendees except Cindy. Thanks also to Cindy and Dan Derby for taking the rear position and keeping the stragglers moving. With their help no one was lost. Ed Beynon



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## **HIKING IN NEW ZEALAND**

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*Ron Perrier*

I spent 4 months in New Zealand this past winter. My main activity was hiking and I did all nine Great Walks and many day hikes. NZ is a wonderful place to travel with an excellent hosteling system and it's a great place to hike. The DOC (Department of Conservation) maintains over 900 huts and at least 55 tramps (overnight backpacking trips) along with many day hikes. Their web site, [doc.govt.nz](http://doc.govt.nz) is easy to navigate and everything can be organized online. Hut

backpacking means no tent, sleeping pad, or stove (this varies with some tramps) but bring along good ear plugs for the snorers and large bunk rooms. When camping the huts are completely off limits so there is no haven from rain or the sandflies.

I used the bus system to travel and thus had to hitchhike to many day hikes. A car definitely will increase the number of sights you can see. A car left at remote trail heads is a target for vandals and foreigners driving on the left hand side are involved in a disproportionate number of accidents. Several great walks are not loops and returning to your car often means backtracking. I mailed my excess traveling gear along to my next hostel 3 times for very cheap rates avoiding long return drives.

After landing in Auckland, I took the ferry through the Hauraki Gulf to Coromandel Town. The Coromandel Coast Walk is a three hour one way trek along very pretty coast. The best way is to drive to the north end at Fletcher Bay, camp or stay in the hostel and then hike

the trail down and back to make a great day. One of the icons of NZ, also on the Coromandel Peninsula is Cathedral cove, best at low tide. Near Thames, in Coromandel Forest Park is the Pinnacles, a 7 1/2 km one way trip to the height of land in the centre of the peninsula with panoramic views. Do this as a day hike instead of staying in the massive 80 bunk Pinnacles Hut.

The Great Walks are theoretically the nine best tramps in the country. They have better trails, signage and bridges, theoretically the nicest scenery, and nicer huts, but heaps more people. Some die hards refuse

to go near them because of the crowds and there are lots of other hikes. Most kiwis avoid them as they don't like the fees. My goal was to do all nine. Three are in the north island, the Tongariro Northern Circuit, Lake Waikaremoana, and the Whanganui Journey (actually a river trip).

Tongariro National Park is a World Heritage site, has a fantastic volcanic landscape and contains the Tongariro Crossing, the most popular day hike in NZ with up to 1000 hikers per day in peak season. The Tongariro Northern Circuit is a 3 or 4 day, 50 km tramp that goes

around Mt Ngauruhoe - Mt Doom of Lord of the Rings. Instead of starting at Whakapappa Village, I, like most trampers, skipped the first uninteresting 9 km and like all doing the Crossing, started at Mangatepopo Rd. Shuttles to the beginning and end are widely available from all the surrounding towns. This alpine tramp passes unique craters and volcanic formations, emerald green lakes and has an optional 3 hour climb of Ngauruhoe. Weather can be severe and snow, wind and cold are common. The available huts are day 1 - Ketetahi or Oturere Huts, day 2 - Waihohonu Hut and day 3 exit at Whakapappa Village.

The Whanganui Journey is a river trip not a walk but is still one of the great walks. The beginning is SW of Tongariro and explores a section of the 329 km long Whanganui River, the longest navigable river in NZ. Most trips end at Pipiki. The 5 day trip over 148 km starts at Taumarunui, the 4 day trip over 125 km starts at Ohinepane and the 3 day 88 km trip starts at Whakahoro (this is what I did). The scenic canyon has a thick podocarp forest and ferns and an easy hike to The Bridge to Nowhere. This was my and my swiss companions first time in a canoe and the class 2 rapids produced lots of excitement. There are many outfitters who rent single kayaks or canoes complete with systems to keep everything dry (I used Yeti Tours and was happy). After doing 2 great walks, I was now on a mission.

The only other great walk on the north island is the 42 km Lake Waikaremoana tramp. This lake is almost the only lake in the north island not of volcanic origin and its multiple bays are the result of a landslide blocking 5 creeks. This is not a loop hike so a shuttle must be arranged and one can start at either end. I took 3 days and with a choice of 5 huts, be sure to spend at least one night at the Panekiri Hut high on the ridge 532 m above the lake. This walk goes through a magnificent mature beech forest dripping with moss.

There are many day hikes in the north island. At Cape Reinga, hike to the most northerly point of NZ or do a 5 hour trek to Cape Maria van Dieman, the western most point in NZ. Stay at the excellent Kahoe Farms Hostel (superb pizza) and hike on a private trek on the farm to kauri dams or to Duke's Nose. The short hikes to the large kauri trees in Waipoua Kauri Forest are a must. Around Whangarei are short hikes to Abby Caves and AH Reed Kauri Forest. At the end of my holiday on a 10 day kayaking trip, I hiked the length of

Motukawanui Island in the Cavelli's and around Moturua Island in the Bay of Islands. I spent 5 days in Auckland at the very end and cycled through many marinas (Auckland has more boats per person than anywhere else), to St Heliers beach and over to Devonport. I spent most of one day doing the coast to coast walk that traverses Auckland from south to north. There are great views from One Tree Hill and Mount Eden. The highlight hike and the most difficult on the north island was the 1600m climb of Mt Taranaki (Mt Fugi in Last of the Samurai), a perfect volcanic cone. Views of the entire area were spectacular.

The 51 km Abel Tasman is one of the most popular great walks. Every permutation and combination of water taxi, kayaking and day hiking is possible in this over commercialized park. This is the only tramp I camped on so carried a tent, sleeping pad and stove. Avoiding the crowded huts and some camping areas for isolated beach camping was worth it. This was basically a walk in the woods with occasional hiking on a beach. We swam every day in the cold ocean. On the first two days one passes hundreds of day hikers. Recommended beaches for camping are Te Pukatea Bay, Tonga Quarry, Awaroa Bay, and Mutton Cove (the last possible camp to do Separation Point and catch the shuttle at the Wainui car park at 11:20 am).

In the one day off between the Abel Tasman and the Heaphy, I hitchhiked to Farewell Spit and did a tremendous 3 hour hike out along the spit, across the dunes to Fossil Point and then along the cliffs to Wharariki Beach. This hike was at the limit of flip flops. I also mailed my tent and sleeping pad to my cousin in Auckland as I planned on staying in huts from now on. The sandflies were getting progressively worse and I was looking forward to carrying less weight. Sandflies are actually a small black fly similar to, but smaller, than the small black fly we get in the alpine. They don't bite when you are moving but can be merciless with a predilection for your feet and ankles.

The 82 km Heaphy Track crosses the mountains ending on a spectacular walk along the ocean. Taking 4 days, I stayed in the Perry Saddle Hut (climbed Mt Perry for sunrise and great views of Farewell Spit and Taranaki), James McKay Hut (can see 20 km down to the ocean from the hut) and Heaphy Hut. Many added a fifth day by staying in the Saxon hut between Perry and McKay. The last 17 km along the wild west coast just inside a



mature nikau palm forest was one of the highlights of NZ.

Karamea is a worthwhile place to stay in order to make a trip out to Honeycomb Caves with their moa bones and hike to the two large limestone bridges. Continuing down the west coast, a long day walk is the 27 km Inland Pack Tramp near Punakaiki. It goes up the scenic Pororari River and descends the spectacular Dilemma Gorge and Fox River arriving back at the highway 12 km north of Punakaiki. There is a hut 19 km into the hike. Going on a guided hike (or helicopter or plane ride) up either the Franz Josef or Fox Glaciers is a must for most travelers (one I easily avoided). Instead I climbed Mt Fox, a grueling 8 hour day to views (rarely available through the clouds) of the Fox Glacier. This hike is recommended only for masochists. South of Fox is the scenic Copland Track, a 17 km climb to Welcome Flat where there is a hut and hot springs. Most stay 2 nights day hiking up to the Douglas Rock Hut in the middle day.

Arthurs Pass is between Greymouth on the west coast and Christchurch on the east coast in the southern alps. Avoid the train trip as it is expensive and has identical views as the bus. After a short day hike to Devils Punchbowl, Avalanche Peak at Arthurs Pass is a must. With panoramic alpine views very reminiscent of the West Kootenay and a flock of keas (only alpine parrot in the world) to keep you amused, this is the premier day hike on the south island. In Christchurch, a great hike is the climb of Cavendish Mt with stunning views and great hikes along its length. Then walk down the other side to Lyttelton (try to time it for the wonderful Saturday morning market). I then went back over the mountain to Sumner and its fantastic beaches. This was a very long day in flip flops. Many people recommended going to Banks Peninsula with the French town of Akaroa and the private 35 km Banks Peninsula Tract.

I was lucky to obtain my permits for the Milford tract by going online daily for months hoping for a cancellation in the right time period. The Milford books out usually in July and is the only one that must be planned long in advance. With that one booked, I made my bookings on the other premier walks in the south island, the Routeburn and the Kepler. Queenstown, the adventure capital of NZ (with many ways to separate you from your money) is the access point for the Routeburn and I mailed my travel pack on

to the hostel in Te Anau so that I would not have to backtrack. This 3 day, 32.1 km tramp is popular as it leaves the trees for the alpine for one whole day (most walks in this country are in trees and can get tedious). The Routeburn Falls Hut (no camping allowed) has tremendous views and is right below a series of falls and gorges with great swimming. On the second day, I was hiking before sun rise, in the cool, to get over Harris Saddle and climb Conical Hill, with its panoramic views down to Harris Lake, the Hollyford Valley, Darran Mountains and the Tasman Sea. The third day, from Lake Mackenzie (nice swimming) to the divide, passes the 80m Earland Falls and climbs Key Summit. Instead of finishing at the Divide, many people continue on and do the Greenstone and Caples track right after the Routeburn.

I was then in Te Anau five different times as it is the base for most adventures in Fiordland. I went on an overnight cruise to Doubtful Sound, a multiarmed 47 km long fiord southwest of Te Anau that was very nice. The 60.1 km Kepler track is a loop that begins in Te Anau itself. Many skip the walk from town to the control gates and the 4 kilometres along the lake by taking the \$25 water taxi across Lake Te Anau to Brod Bay. The first hut, Luxmore, has enormous views of Lake Te Anau and beyond. The second day follows an exposed ridge with top of the world views all day ending in a knee crunching descent. The walk out on the third day is in trees with many trampers bypassing the Moturau Hut and catching the shuttle at Rainbow Reach, 11 km from the control gates.

The 53.5 km Milford Track has been billed as the greatest walk in the world. I wouldn't go that far but it is nice and has the continuously best scenery of any great walk. Camping is not allowed and all 40 people move together each day. People book this in July so most were older, more likely to be kiwi or american, less experienced and this was their only tramp. It is expensive with total fees of \$270 to cover the bus trip from Te Anau to Te Anau Downs, the boat trip to the end of Lake Te Anau, \$45/night for 3 huts and the boat ride at the end from Sandfly Point to Milford Sound. The first day includes the bus and boat ride and it is only an hours walk to the Clinton Hut. The second day follows the Clinton River (clear green water with fish and eels) through a sheer walled valley, a few permanent waterfalls, and hundreds of dry watercourses hinting at what this place must be like in

rain. Rocky glacier scoured granite knobs and peaks often had small clinging glaciers. Day 3 is the alpine day over MacKinnon Pass. After big views around to the surrounding peaks and down to our days destination, the trail descends beside a mountain creek with multiple waterfalls and pools. A must is the 1 hour detour to the huge 580 m high Sutherland Falls, the highest waterfall in NZ. The last day follows the river and passes several very pretty waterfalls before catching the boat. I finished the day with another NZ icon, a Milford Sound cruise. The drive back to Te Anau passes through some of the most stunning mountain scenery in the world.

With 8 down and one to go, I was keen to get on with it. The day after finishing the Milford, I took the bus to Invercargill and Bluff and then the ferry to Stewart Island. After a quick lunch I started day one of the 3 day, 36 km Rakiura Track. Its first and last days are the same as the 8-10 day Northwest Circuit where virtually everyone sees real kiwis (nobody else in NZ has ever seen a kiwi). Day one follows the nice coast with many pretty beaches. Day 2 crosses the peninsula on heaps of boardwalk and stairs. After another walk in the woods on the last day, I caught the afternoon ferry back to Bluff. Then it was through the Catlins and up the east coast of the south island stopping in Dunedin (Tunnel beach is nice), Oamaru, and Kaikoura to see all the wildlife before heading home.

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## **Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC - Annual Report by Brian Wood**

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*This article originally appeared in the December 2011 BCMC newsletter and with the permission of the author is reprinted here with a few minor changes to make it more relevant to the KMC.*

### **Insurance**

For the financial year 2011-12 the FMCBC signed on to a new Commercial General Liability (CGL) Insurance policy, which was obtained through a new insurance broker, Integro Insurance Brokers. The FMCBC maintained the same Director and Officers (D&O) policy as the previous year. With the assistance of Integro, some initial concerns with respect to the current liability policy were addressed, however some concerns remain. Currently, we do NOT have coverage for club-sanctioned trips in the USA.

Insurance is complex and it is not easy to simplify our specific coverage and the procedures that should be

followed to maintain that coverage; however, the FMCBC Insurance Committee is working on producing a document that will clarify coverage, risk management and procedures. In the meantime the following risk management items require particular attention:

### **a) Waivers.**

Every participant on a club-sanctioned trip must have a signed waiver on file. This is taken care of when renewing the annual club membership on-line or via the mailed in paper renewal. However, for non-members (aka "guests") that join a club sanctioned trip, a waiver needs to be signed and handed in to the trip organizer at the start of the trip. The trip organizer should return these guest waivers, along with the completed Trip Registration List to the Winter or Summer trip Director. The Trip Registration List should list all trip participants and identify whether the participant is a member or a guest.

### **b) Guests**

A guest is required to sign a current waiver and identify himself or herself as a non-member. The insurance company requires that an additional \$6 per guest be paid to provide coverage for the guest's participation on that club trip and all future trips to the end of the policy period (April 30, 2012). To avoid requiring trip organizers having to collect \$6 from a guest, the club will keep a record of all guests on club trips and submit the guest fees as a lump sum before the end of the policy period. This is why all waivers and Trip Registration Lists must be returned to the Winter or Summer trip Director as specified above.

February 2012 update:

The FMCBC has recently negotiated through our broker at Integro to reduce the guest fee to better reflect the risk posed by non-member guests on club sanctioned trips. Based on numbers provided by the clubs last fall the FMCBC calculated that 8% of trip participants for our clubs are guests and suggested changing the guest fee from a \$6 per guest charge to a premium based on 8% of our membership. Our insurer has agreed to this which means a reduction from a possible \$4100 charge for 2011-2012 (based on estimated numbers provided by clubs) to a much lower \$1100 premium for all guests.

With this change, there is no longer a need for clubs to collect a \$6 fee from guests, but the \$1100 premium will need to be covered and the committee is discussing



how best to handle this for 2011-2012. For 2012-2013 the guest premium will be covered by a \$.50 increase in dues from \$6/member to \$6.50/member. The committee will be having a meeting with our broker from Integro to discuss our policy for 2012-2013 and how we can incorporate US Coverage for clubs who are seeking this coverage.

#### **c) Liquor Liability Exclusion:**

The CGL insurance policy has a liquor liability exclusion clause, which means that if bodily injury or property damage arises out of the selling, serving or offering of alcohol by the Named Insured or anyone falling under the category "Who is an Insured" (i.e., FMCBC, KMC, other member clubs which have opted for the insurance, trip organizer and participants of a club-sanctioned event), that bodily injury or property damage will not be covered under the policy. This exclusion is meant to deal with what is more commonly referred to as "Host Liquor Liability": a host (person or entity) that provides alcohol to someone can be found liable for that person's actions, if those actions cause injury or property damage. The CGL insurance policy excludes coverage for such liability.

#### **d) Incident Reporting Forms** (For reporting "accidents")

If someone gets hurt on or as a result of a club-sanctioned trip (i.e., a non-participant may be injured by a participant on a club trip), the insurance company requires that details of the incident be reported to it by submitting an Incident Reporting Form. Accordingly, any time someone is injured while on or as a result of a club-sanctioned trip, the trip organizer should report the incident to the Winter or Summer Trip Director, who will ensure that the required information is obtained from the trip organizer and trip participants. Consultation with Integro will determine whether the incident needs to be reported to the insurance company, if there is any doubt.

#### **e) Risk Management Plan**

A good waiver is just one element, although an integral element, of a risk management plan but there are others. For example, for certain activities (i.e., glacier travel, backcountry skiing, rock climbing, ice climbing) there is a list of recommended safety equipment that every participant should have to participate on a trip. For backcountry skiing for example, at a minimum, every participant should have an avalanche transceiver,

shovel and probe. Safety programs and skill development courses, such as refresher skills courses are all part of a good risk management plan. Efforts are being made by the FMCBC to create a guide for clubs to develop their own risk management plans for the various activities offered by the club. This is in addition to the development of a universal waiver form for use by clubs participating in the FMCBC insurance program.

Any club member who has experience in the insurance industry, or is interested in learning more about our insurance coverage, is welcome to join the FMC Insurance Committee as we are all trying to learn as much as we can about this complex and ever changing subject.

#### **Strategic Plan**

As some of you might already know, after many months of work, the FMC's Strategic Plan was officially completed and approved last September, and the final version can be found at our website: <http://www.mountainclubs.org>. The website now reflects our new Vision, Mission and Values (as amended in the Strategic Plan) which we hope are more focussed and clearer than the older statements. In the revised "About us" section of the website, our current officers and directors are listed, as well as the directors and members who have volunteered for our committees. While we would not change the plan without good reason, it is a living document which is a guide for our future policy direction for the next three years, and should not be restrictive. The plan is quite ambitious and will require more help from volunteers, and so if you are interested in volunteering to help on a committee, please contact Jodi or the Chair of the appropriate committee. Please note while previous experience is helpful, it is not required as we are looking for those persons who want to help support the FMC in promoting the interests of non-motorized or self-propelled backcountry recreation. We have already started to implement some of the non-contentious items in the plan to help us keep to our implementation timetable which some folks feel is quite "tight". It is added that we have several new directors who are considerably younger than some of the previous directors, and we hope this will encourage new and younger members to take an active role in the FMC. Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) Community Partnership

As some of you know, our Strategic Plan is a direct result of working with the MEC so that the FMC can improve its ability to represent the interests of the non-motorized or self-propelled back country recreation community. Our committee will be meeting with the MEC very shortly to enable them to monitor our progress and to give us their input.

### **FMC Dues**

The amount of the fee or dues that member clubs pay to the Federation for each paying club member, that is the nominal \$15 per person per year, has been questioned for some time, particularly by those clubs who feel that the addition of the FMC dues to their club's membership fees discourages members from joining their club. Some clubs have requested that the \$15 per person per year is reduced to, for example, \$10 per year. As we are about to implement some of the changes recited in the Strategic Plan, we feel we cannot decrease the dues at this time, at least not until we have a better idea of what our operating budget will be. As a compromise, in view of our present budget surplus, at the last AGM the Directors agreed to give to each club a one-time refund or rebate of FMC fees in the amount of \$5 per person for whom the \$15 was paid in the year 2010/11. As a point of interest I understand that the FMC dues per person were \$10 per year many years ago, but that was when we received relatively large Government operating grants which have since been discontinued.