



The Kootenay Mountaineer

A Kootenay newsletter for people with year-round outdoor pursuits.

September 2016 Equinox

President's Message – Fall 2016 Newsletter

Summer 2016 has ended as wetter, cooler and less smoky than summer 2015 – thank goodness. The mountaineering courses were filled and the club's hiking, scrambling and climbing trips saw more members than ever participate. Hiking camp was full and fun was had by all. Executive is satisfied with the results and pleased to see new and old members step up to volunteer as trip leaders. Please continue to do so when Winter Trip Director, Phil Best, comes calling next month to fill out the winter trip schedule.

The club was able to contribute to the purchase of the Kinnaird Bluffs to help ensure its future as a recreation area for climbing. We also funded the building of the Lepsoe Basin Cabin in the Rossland range. It is heavily utilized by KMC members and we feel it will allow families to have an enjoyable outdoors experience, encourage young people to join the KMC and entice more to venture further into the back country.

A different type of Fall Social is to be held in 2016. Kudos to Entertainment Director Laurie Helyer for trying something new for club entertainment. So, bring your curiosity for culture, along with tasty snacks 6:30 PM, Friday October 14th to the Kootenay Art Gallery.

There are always some challenges facing the club and 2017 is no different. The four Bonnington Huts have had a long and happy life but are showing signs of age. Exec has asked VP, Sandra Fuller, to take on the task of examining options for the future of the huts and of the KMC's involvement in their management. She will be seeking members' input over the year.

Doug Clark
President,
Kootenay Mountaineering Club

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Article submission guidelines:

The newsletters is published 4 times a year, roughly in line with the solar seasons.

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. Attach your *full resolution photos* to the email. Lots of photos, please.

Mt. Loki

The Mount Loki hike was quite different from last year's outing. The weather was very changeable with upwelling air from the lake that produced snow at the peak and gusting rain on the way down. Otherwise the weather was pleasant though cooler at the top.

We started out from Nelson aiming for the 6:30 ferry as usual and after an hour and ten minute drive started our hike at 8:20. Time to Portman Notch 1.5 hours , 1 hour to bottom of ridge and 1.5 hour to summit. After a few short rests we started up the ridge, a couple of our group, perhaps wisely, stopped earlier but an intrepid six of us persisted to the top arriving at 12:20 exactly four hours from the start. After a quick lunch at the top in blustery snow we came down. We were hampered with slippery rock conditions both up and down but we carefully negotiated all obstacles, at times using a five point downward crawl. I'll have to leave it to the imagination what the fifth point of contact would be.

We met our waiting members and ended at the cars at 3:45 and easily made the 5:20 ferry.

Distance: Return - 9.73 miles or 15.65 km

Moving time 5:34

Total time 7:25

Elevation gain: 4416 ft or 1346 metres

5254 ft to 9042 ft. or 1601 metres to 2756 metres

We were, Leo Jansma , Tim Clinton , Nancy Selwood , Elizabeth Krebbers, Kelly Toole , Rose Shine , Megan Lazaruk, Dave Brackett and Dave St Denis

Mt Dundee

June 22

17 of us met at the very civilized hour of 10ish in front of the hotel in bustling Ymir city. Only in the Kootenays can you get that many hikers together coming from Grand Forks to Creston in the middle of the week! We drove up in a small platoon of cars up cemetery road, which changes its name to Oscar creek road and drove to km 6.3 at 1520m where we parked.

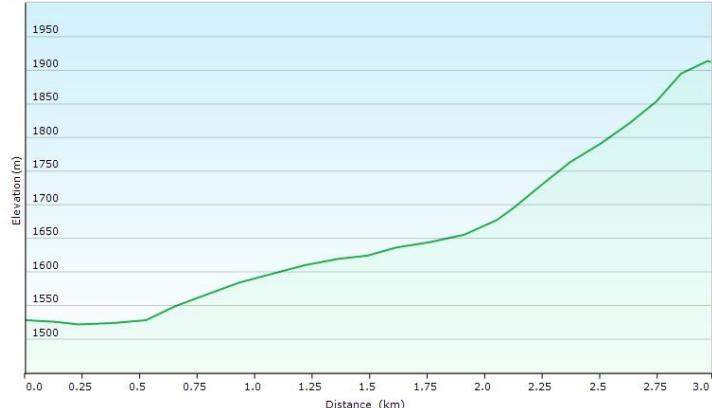
We marshaled the troops together and started walking in a northerly direction on a decommissioned road with a gigantic waterbar at the start. This first part of the hike on a wide road is great for getting to know your fellow hikers. After 2 1/2km, it was time to attend to the serious business of the final 200m ascent to the summit through an old cutblock.

We arrived at the lightly treed summit just before lunch time and Rick Thomas took this photo of us with the mountains of the Darkwoods conservancy behind us.



Rick is in the photo at extreme left operating the camera on a tripod with a remote connection from his mobile phone. Amazing.

Here is a graph of the hike downloaded from my GPS:



Thank you for the great group spirit! It was a pleasure organizing and leading this hike.

Participants: Ross Bates, Chris Cowan, Ray McDicken, Eliane Miros, Steven Miros, Richard Thomas, Andrea Vowell, Judy Brown, Lesley Clint, Jan Osborne, Carol Potasnyk, Sess Sakamoto, Miriam Williams, Jill Watson, Val Utgaren, Julie Hampton, Peter Oostlander (organizer and reporter)

July 1 Cycle

On July 1, six members cycled from Passmore, up the back road to Perry Siding, and returned down the Slocan River railtrail. A decadent adventure with a snack picnic at Winlaw Nature Park with a swim in the river, and a coffee break at Sleep Is For Sissies.



Kirsten Apel, Pnina Shames, Mary Prothro, Peter Martyn, Marilyn Miller (leader) and Dave Cunningham

Mt Plewman

July 13

Fourteen members and 3 non members met at Strawberry Pass, carpooled to near Sunspot Cabin and hiked to the summit of Mt Plewman. There was some snow on the trail on Mt Elgood and on Mt Plewman. A storm threatened as we were finishing lunch so everyone quickly packed up and headed down the trail again. There was some thunder and a few drops of rain but not the heavy downpour that Castlegar and Trail received.



We were Betty Brouse, Sandra England, Sherolyn Haakstad, Don Harasym, Ken Kirkland, Anja Logodi, Kathleen Nichol, Craig Sandvig, Barb Saunders, Clint Saunders, Pnina Shames, Caroline Shimek, Al Sheppard, Pat Sheppard, Valerie Utgaren, and coordinators Hazel and Ed Beynon.

The Dying Days of the Duncan FSR, Part 1 - Sugarplum Lakes and Squab Peak

Dan R

With the upper Duncan FSR scheduled for deactivation, Douglas Noblet and I settled on two trips to utilize the access while it lasted. The first was into the Sugarplum Lakes basin. We parked at Hume Ck and hiked up the ridge from there. The views up and down the Duncan and across to the Battle Range were phenomenal.

A recent burn eased the travel and we were at the lakes in 6.5hrs including breaks, with only a few minutes of bushwhacking, though having gained 1300m to our camp. To round out the day, we went for a few dips and hiked up to Pirouette Col just north of Sugarplum Spire and peered across the Hatteras glaciers and before returning to camp. 12hr day, all in.



The Pirouette Pinnacles



*Scrambling above the Hume Creek.
Photo Douglas*

On Day 2, we crossed into the basin to the southeast and scrambled up a spur ridge that took us onto the ridge that heads southeast from Squab and Hatteras. A Class 3 scramble took us up to the main ridge between the two peaks. From there, the long Class 4 scramble up Hatteras looked quite loose and surpassed our

appetites, so we settled on Squab, an easy 10 minutes the other direction.

We hung out on top for a few hours and placed a summit register before continuing the traverse northeast to the Sugarplum-Squab col. From what beta we had, we expected a notch to be the crux but a very awkward exposed diagonal ledge proved to be by far the trickiest part of the trip instead. A rappel station had been set up nearby, but with Douglas' coaching I was able to get down, despite my big pack.



Camp above one of the Sugarplum Lakes. Nemo Group in the background.

After dropping packs at camp, we circled down and around the big lake below us (second lowest of the Sugarplum Lakes). On the 3rd day, we had a straightforward hike out and were back at the car in 4 hours.

Not bad for what we believe to be the first even approach to the Hatteras Group on foot from the Duncan watershed! I was able to dig up mention of at least a dozen trips to the area over the years, starting in the 50s and including a KMC Climbing Camp in '94. Not labelled on the topo maps are the Pirouette Pinnacles and Arabesque Pinnacles, of which there are seven each. I would think a trip that included scrambling the pinnacles would've been just as worthy an option as our trip up Squab.

Thanks to Earle Whipple, Roger Wallis, and Hamish Mutch for helping me with the history. A much longer account, including more history, is on Bivouac.com.

Mt. Lasca

On Saturday, August 6 we left town for the Harrop Ferry and the Harrop Creek logging road. Access to the parking lot is via a forest road in good condition. We started up the Lasca Creek trail and made good progress, gaining Mill Lake (good fishing here) in about an hour and a half. Several of the bridges along the trail have given up being bridges and should be replaced by the community forest at some point.

After a brief rest at the picnic table - noting the garbage and the old pot with a bullet hole through the bottom of it (how useful!) - we circumnavigated the lake following a ribbon line that Evan and I placed in a couple of years back. The blue ribbon will lead you through the forest to gunsight pass. Once at the pass we headed west, following the game trail, staying on the skyline ridge, above the lake. From here we followed the terrain and lost elevation down to yet another pass. Keeping on the ridge, we continued west using the northern perimeter of the 2003 burn as a route to the ridge just north of Mt Lasca. The rate of travel here is excellent, with very few obstacles, as the burn completely volatized most of the organic matter on the ground. It has been 13 years since the burn, with only the lower elevations trending toward natural reforestation.

The upper reaches of the bowl are covered in a variety of sedges and grasses, including bear grass. The dead



Pirouette Col and believe it or not, the least dramatic side of Sugarplum Spire.

forest stands silent, like an army of ENTS (Lord of the



Rings), standing to attention, frozen in time.

Due to rain, the top of the mountain was not gained, but we claimed the lesser summit - Mt Less-ca, only 40m shorter than Mt Lasca. For those peak baggers, you would need another hour to make it to the top. Alternatively, an approach from the south ridge would be another option with minimal exposure.

We returned the same way we came, stopped at the campsite to collect the trash, and returned to the trucks by 4:45pm. Thanks to all who came along. Our group had a good rate of travel and functioned well as a team.

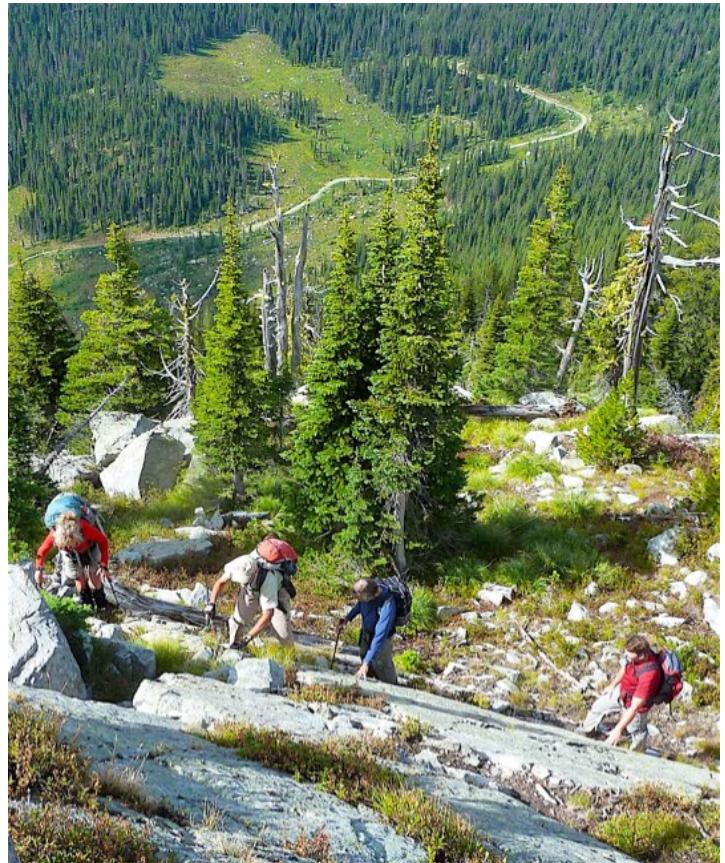


We were: Karina Gregory (non-member), Sharisse and Andre Kyle, Evan McKenzie, Peter Jordan, and Curt Nixon, trip coordinator

Mount Siwash

Monday September 5

13 of us assembled in Castlegar for what has become an annual Labour Day hike along the Mt Siwash Horseshoe, a ridge with 7 little peaks nicknamed "Ogopogo" by Valerie. We went in a counterclockwise direction this year for a change. A gentle ridge above a small cutblock makes for an easy way up through the forest, and a similar gentle ridge on the way down avoids the boulder field we used to use for the way up.



The slabs above made for a little excitement picking the right cracks to ascend, but most agreed this is better on the ascent than on descent.



The views above the trees were splendid since the chilly fall air was crystal clear below the cloud deck. Said cloud deck delivered a 5 minute shower of graupel which pasted us by the time we got to the middle of the hike – stinging the ears of the hatless ones, or those with only a ball cap.



The shower made the rocks a little treacherous for a few minutes but fortunately the sun came out and dried things up quickly. We enjoyed a bug free lunch in a sheltered spot from the wind, and then another pause up on the summit in the sun for a breather and to look around and see how many landmarks we could pick out.

Part of downtown Castlegar is visible. The Rossland range, The Norns range summits, The Valhallas looking menacing with an ominous black cloud overhead, then east to the Ymir peak area, and south trying to pick out the peaks east of Salmo.

Onward to one more high peak, picking our way carefully along the top of the ridge (mostly) diverting once or twice to easier ground. Lots of merry banter despite having to watch our step most of the time.

Finally back to the cars safely, save one or two scratches & bruises, by 4.30 PM for the one hour drive along the FSR back to the Bombi, where we are once again reminded that in the Koots, getting to the

trailhead is sometimes half the fun. Many thanks to Sheila for doing “tailgunner” and making life much easier for the CD on this off trail hike.



Participants: Ross Bates, Murray Bennet & daughter Chelsea, Llewellyn Matthews, Val Utgaren, Helen & Rick Foulger, Peter Jordan, P'nina Shames, Jill Watson, Sheila Sinkie, Irme Mende, Chris Cowan (co-ordinator)

News Item

Kinnaird Bluffs Donation

On April 13, 2016, Doug Clark, KMC President, presented Vince Hempsall of the Association of West Kootenay Rock Climbers (TAWKROC) a \$1,000 cheque on behalf of the club towards purchase of the 17 acre parcel of land known as the Kinnaird Bluffs. KMC had agreed to match contributions made by individual KMC members towards the acquisition of the long standing rock climbing area. Thanks to generous donations from individuals and organizations, TAWKROC has been able to purchase the property. It intends to eventually transfer the land title to the City of Castlegar, who will designate its uses as parkland and, of course, rock climbing.



Rock Transition Course

The KMC re-entered the climbing aspect of mountaineering by facilitating a 2 day climbing course conducted by Summit Mountain Guides at Kinnaird Bluffs June 18th and at Slocan City Bluffs July 1st.

The stated goals of the course are:

- gear review
- basic knots, belay systems and belay commands
- climbing, rappelling and lowering
- basic top roping anchor skills
- lead belaying skills
- lead and multi-pitch climbing

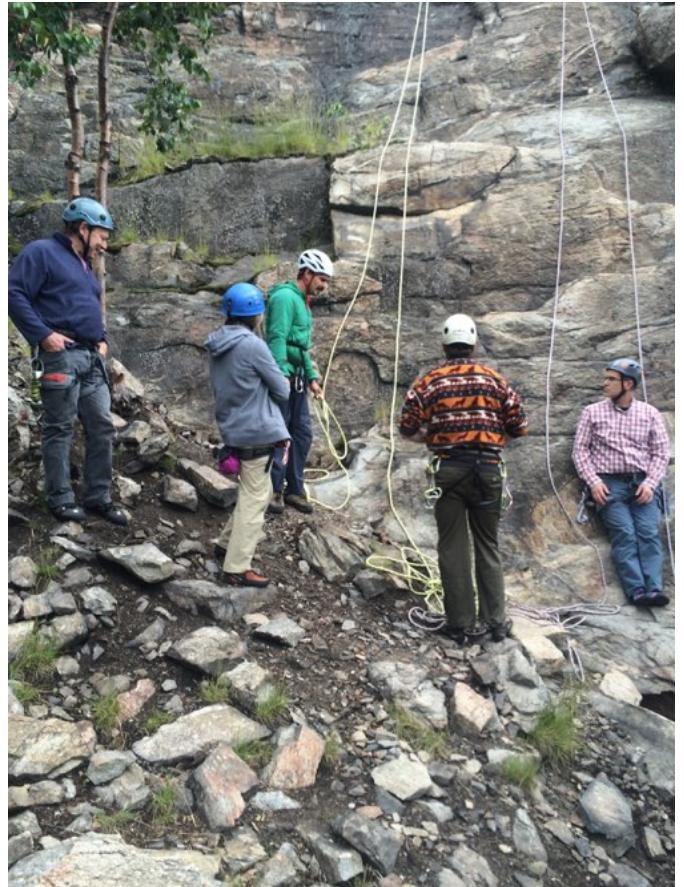
The first four activities were well covered, while the last two were touched on. Six KMC members attended the course, instructed competently by Jeremy Birse. Several KMC'ers, who were on the waiting list, are attending a follow-up course to be offered by SMG. All participants felt the course was well done and that they felt comfortable using the skills taught by Jeremy. Of course, the lessons learned will have to be practised in order not to be forgotten.



Falling a danger tree (NOT part of the course)



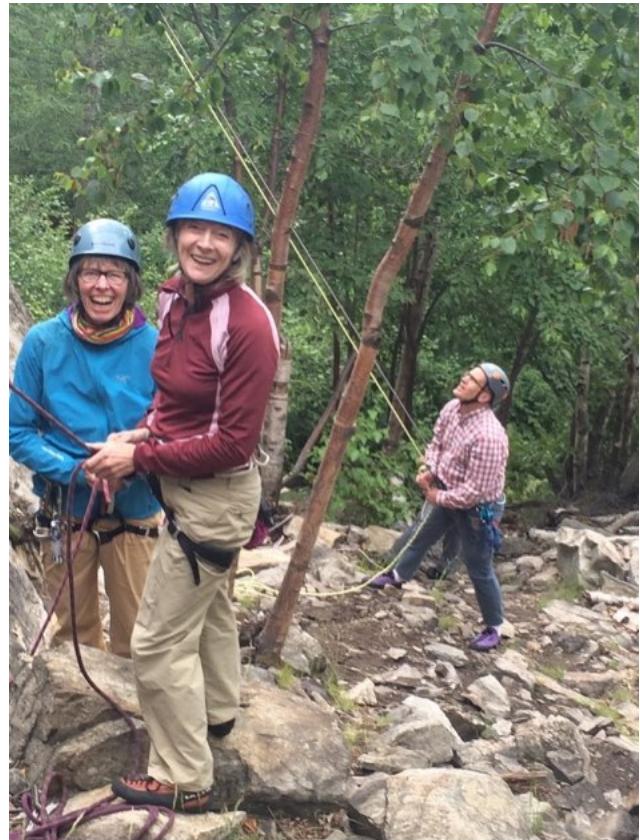
SMG instructor Jeremy Birse



Ready....set.....



Go....



This is fun!



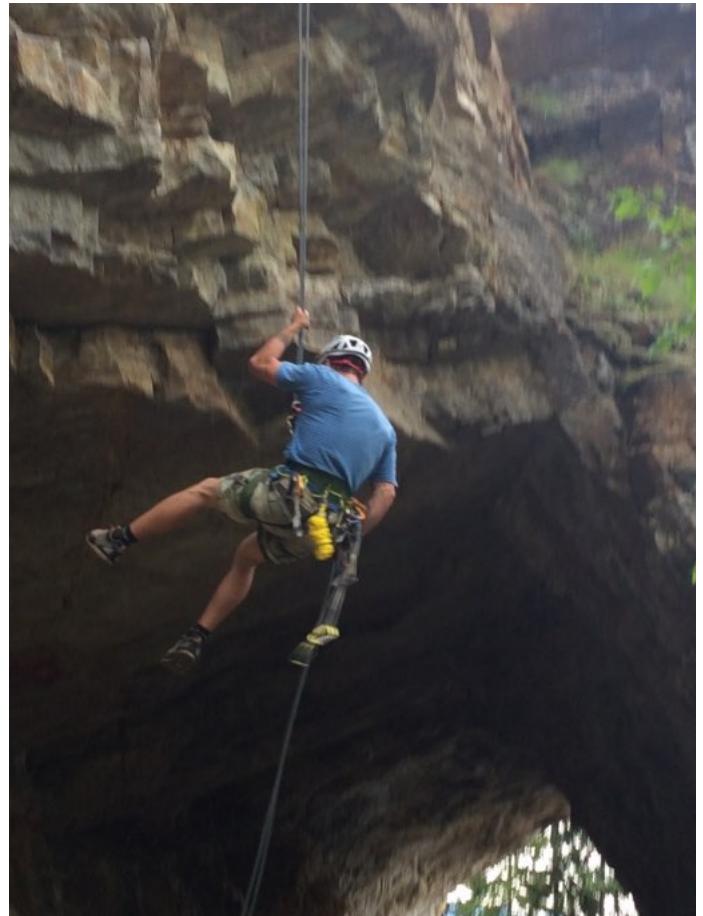
Score!!



Steady on belay



Photo 8 – Coming down is fun, too



and that's a wrap(pel)



Give the leash a twist, before you clip in.

2016 Hiking Camps in Wolverine Pass

Hiking Camp One

"I've never headed off to hiking camp in weather this bad," said my driving companion as the windshield wipers struggled to keep pace with the downpour. Camp 1 had a weatherman (Chris Cowan) and lots of weather. It rained steadily while we set up camp. All week long the sunny periods alternated with squalls, dramatic black clouds and tarp-ripping winds. The cold made us question whether this was really the middle of July. Finally on the last day it dawned sunny and the resident weatherman promised it would stay dry. He backtracked when the first drops started to fall. Dan's tent leaked the first night, and thereafter was draped with unsightly tarps, reducing neighborhood property values.

Hiking

A beautiful location with lovely trail and ridge-walking, but short on accessible big things for the peak baggers.



Tumbling Glacier, image Ken Holmes

The Rockwall trail within Kootenay National Park extends northwest and southeast from Wolverine Pass, and hikers ventured in both directions – towards Helmet Falls and Numa Pass. But the off-piste ridge walking was the real draw, with gentle ascents and stunning views. There were also remnant glaciers to explore, rocks with amazing striped patterns and colours, and flower meadows. (Camp 2 probably had a better flower show; we were a bit early.)

Dan thought he was having a heart attack while ascending one ridge (Cynthia took his pulse and confirmed he wasn't) which was thereafter called

Heart-Attack Bump (Dan protesting that 'bump' made it sound pathetic). He received extra wine at dinner to boost his blood flow.

Mountaineering opportunities were few, but a trio led by Ken climbed Drysdale peak, which towered over camp on the northwest side. That involved descending the trail back down the valley southwest to the next draw, and ascending a route on snow and crummy rock to the summit at 9617 ft/2932 m. Relatively straightforward, but best done with just a small group due to the likelihood of kicking down loose rock.

The next day a merry band tried accessing the Rockwall ridge via another draw further (350m) down the trail. The failed attempt seemed to involve much bushwhacking, scrambling up and down rotten rock, and murderous grumblings aimed at the Golden outdoor store employee who had assured them it was a viable route.

Jude the Obscure

Jude appeared each evening in a white chef's tunic to announce the dinner menu. But before we could eat, we had to solve her diabolical puzzles. Like these :

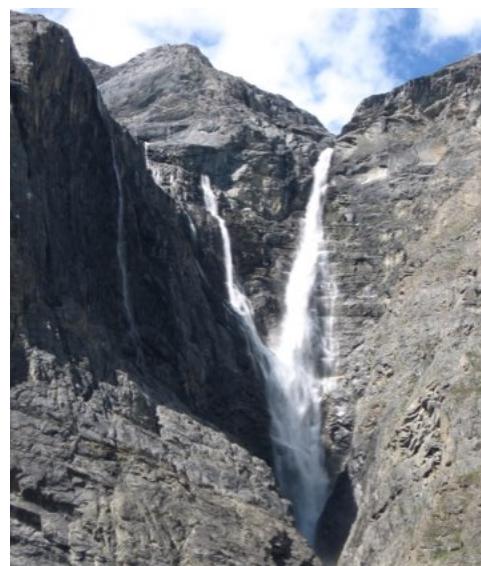
cut
rest

— ship

— 2 3
No No No

(answers at the end):

Having pitched her tent near the cooking and supply tents, she engaged in nighttime shoving matches through her tent wall with over-chummy ground squirrels. The rodents were also in her bad books for munching holes in the blankets covering the coolers, absconding with soft padding for their nests.



Helmet Falls, image Ken Holmes

Charm offensive

Our camp location, mere metres from the park boundary (there was really no other choice), invited controversy and occasional irate comments from passing backpackers. To soothe any bad feelings, we started offering tea and cookies to visitors. The wardens who came to check us out were treated with particular hospitality, and stayed for a friendly conversation.

Still, in case we needed to amp up the PR counter-offensive, Ken came up with some ideas:

1. Post a sign along Rockwall Trail at the turn-off to Wolverine Pass that would read: "Wolverine Pass closed due to Grizzly activity."
2. Or a sign at camp reading, "High-Elevation Heart-Monitoring Institute"
3. Or post a person at the turn-off to warn visitors: "Don't go there. Some idiots have set up a camp just the other side and spoiled the view. We're going to report them."

We also thought it would be a good idea to contribute some money to park trail maintenance.

Also, we regretfully abandoned the idea of borrowing the ladders hanging on the warden's cabin to construct a hiking shortcut across Tumbling Creek.

Camp shenanigans



image Ken Holmes

Tai chi, massages, burning cardboard in the fireplace, watching the Bugaboos turn pink from the ridge just above camp, looking up mystery yellow flowers in the flower book, hauling water ... we were a wild group, rarely hitting the sack before 8 pm. The last evening we caroused with a swing dance demo from Janice and

Eric to Chris's rendition of "Froggie went a Courting," accompanied by back-up singers and Bobbie's percussion track. We worked diligently to finish up the wine (Camp leader Glenn looked around at one point and said, "I think it's a good thing we don't usually double wine rations.")

Then we decided to undertake a tent tour, which might just become an annual tradition. We moved from tent to tent, listening to the owners extol their virtues ("Note the sturdy #10 zippers") and vices ("This is a 20-year-old Canadian Tire Outbound ... heavy and it leaks ... but location, location, location!"). No mercy was shown to the few campers who had already retired for the night, as Rita unabashedly unzipped vestibules and poked her head inside.

Flying out ... almost

We were ready to fly by 8:00 a.m., following Ken's crisp, no-nonsense helicopter procedures. But no helicopter came, nor did we have any means of direct communication with the heli-base (mucho grumbling). We donned more and more clothing as the cold wind picked up. Considered hiking out. Played word games in the supply tent. Ate the remainder of our lunches. Finally, sometime after noon, the chopper arrived, and we were out of there.



image Marilyn Miller

A great week with a very congenial group, good leaders, and knockout scenery. Thanks, everyone.

Camp participants: Glenn Cameron - Leader, Jude Stralak - cook, Vivien Bowers - newsletter report, Bob McQueen - paint sketches , Sue Port, Rick Mazzocchi, Dave Toews, Ken & Rita Holmes, Chris Cowan, Bobbie Maras, Cindy Campbell-Kozak , Dan Popadynetz, Sheila Sinkie, Emilee Fanjoy, Eric Marks, Janice Isaac, Jan Osborne, Helen Folger, Andrea Vowell

Puzzle answers: “a cut above the rest”; “spaceship”; “no-one knows”

*Editor's Note: There are many more photos at photos.google.com
The following paintings of Mt. Gray and Tumbling Glacier are by Bob
McQueen*



Camp 2

Leader: Rob Richardson; cook: Jenny Ballie; rabble: Ross Bates, Leon Arishenkoff, Louise Hammerich, Hamish Mutch, Mary Prothro, Ted Ibrahim, Marilyn Miller, Ric Baker, Liz and Terry Huxter, Brad Howard, Al and Pat Sheppard, Ed and Hazel Benyon, Betty and Wayn Hohn, Carl Jorgensen., scribe.

Photos by Rob Richardson

On Friday evening, a few people spent the evening enjoying the fleshpots of the metropolis of Golden and had a last hot shower, while the more earnest hikers camped partway up the logging road, getting into the zone of roughing it.

Saturday morning found us all together under cloudy skies, complete with punctually-arrived chopper, staring up at the pass which seemed totally fogged in. We had no way of communicating with camp 1 to ask about the conditions. After waiting a couple of hours, camp 1 had the brilliant idea of texting to the helicopter base that the weather was fine, and our pilot was informed by radio. We learned after that camp 1 had been sitting waiting in decent weather, wondering why we didn't show up, and speculating that the chopper was broken. All in all, a good lesson on the importance of planning for alternative ways of communication.



Once arrived, we scurried about for campsites. Some went to the lower meadows, some to the flood plain, one to the mountain. After just enough time to set up our tents, it began to rain heavily and at length. Most of us ended up comfortably seated under the large white tarp stretched (brilliant!) between the cook tent and the supply tent.

Sometime during our tea-drinking and philosophizing, it was discovered that we had brought only 16 rolls of toilet paper. Certain camp members, (female) expressed alarm. Leon reported that the camp list stipulated 16

rolls. Oh, well, said someone hopefully, we probably all have a roll hidden in our tent. Another quipped: 2 squares to clean, 2 to polish.



On Sunday, the first day, a large group went for a ridge walk to ease into things and get a good look at the area. Views included the Wall extending off Mount Drysdale opposite us, the Bugaboos farther west, the Tumbling Glacier to our south, and far to the southeast, what might have been Mount Assiniboine. Plus, of course, peaks and glaciers in all directions.

That evening we celebrated Betty and Wayn's 40th wedding anniversary. A lovely carrot cake was iced and then decorated with an erect carrot and two circular carrot slices artfully placed below. Betty was pleased.

Today's crisis: we couldn't find the biffy liners. On top of the toilet paper scare. You can see what is really important.

Our camp was only a few metres from the Kootenay Park boundary. Less than 100 metres from camp, just where we collected our water, was the Great Divide Trail, an unofficial trail, maintained by volunteers, which runs 1200 km from Waterton Lakes National Park to Kakwa Lake Provincial Park in the north, almost at the latitude of Prince George. Every day we saw a dozen or so hikers, ranging from pre-teens to mature adults, going north or south. A few had dogs with their own packs. Some were out for just a few days, going from one valley to the next. But a few planned to spend up to 29 days, resupplying about once a week, and do the entire trail. We spoke to Canadians, Americans, French, Ukrainians. We admired their project but didn't envy their packs. One guy had seen our camp and asked me, how did you get all that gear there, did you use horses? No, we carried it all, I replied...in 7 chopper loads.



Monday Ric and Terry skirted around the base of Mount Drysdale and found a chute that led to the peak. The rock was rotten, and apparently slippery, as they had to descend later in the rain. At the top, they were directly over our camp, and had great views in all directions.

Tuesday we had show and tell after supper. Liz showed us a collapsible solar light, adequate, it turned out, for late-night bridge in the supply tent. Pat had a solar light that could also charge electronic devices. Ric demonstrated his ultraviolet water purifier: faster, easier, and lighter than a pump and filter. Louise, however, stole the show with her high-tech, low-impact, zero-emission tent-cleaning apparatus: a miniature dust-pan and brush (hot pink, naturally) from dollar store.

Marilyn, who claimed pyromaniacal tendencies, appointed herself in charge of camp fires and put a lot of effort into getting things to burn. Good thing, since the fire logs were a great disappointment. They required a lot of paper and cardboard, and then just smoldered. Fortunately, we didn't actually need a fire to survive.

When Marilyn wasn't making fires, she was games master, promoting bridge in the supply tent and crosswords everywhere, even on the mountain.

Energetic individual.

Our cook, Jenny, starting before 6 and finishing late after supper, kept us well fuelled. Meals were always great, always on time, prepared by an unflappable chef. She always wore a skirt, which made the rest of us feel like wimps on cool mornings and evenings.

She contributed greatly to the success of the camp.

Friday the dynamic duo, Terry and Ric, attempted to climb Mount Grey on the south side of our pass, but were frustrated by hours of bushwhacking while trying to find a viable route. Nevertheless, we congratulated them on a noble effort.

That evening, our last, we celebrated Ed's 77th birthday. He will probably spend a few more birthdays at hiking camp, to judge by his preferred method of descending steep grassy slopes: find a round rock at the top, start it rolling, and then race it to the bottom. His wife Hazel, self-describing as 'pushing 81', stays right behind him, sometimes running down the steepest bits to keep up: 'it's the best way'. So discouraging for ordinary mortals...or inspiring, depending on your point of view.

Later, Ric entertained us with stories of Ric's renos, a hilarious account of house renovation mishaps. Several others then offered equally sad histories, until we decided this was too much reality.

And it was discovered on Friday evening that there was still toilet paper left. Apparently the rolls were larger, or our needs were smaller...whatever. Crisis averted.

Saturday, we had good weather for leaving, thus ending another great hiking camp.





Photo Larry Doell

Some say that Kootenay Mountaineers are crazy
And so do I
And so do I

We love to ramble over mountain ridges
The alpine high
The alpine high

We come in 4 wheel drives and helicopters
To leave our mark next to the park
And stay for seven happy glorious days
Of scrambling scree and glacier glee

Puff and pant we're nearly to the top
Grunt and groan when are we going to stop
Our legs are getting pretty sore
But we'll be back by happy hour

Raise your mug and cheer
And we'll be back another year

Sung to the tune of "Feniculi Fenicula"
By Sandra England with the help of Peter Martyn
and Dave St Denis



Helicopter staging



After evening thunderstorm



View to the west



The Rockwall



Yummy dessert



Trilobites were found



There is always time for more bridge while awaiting the helicopter

Message from the Membership Director

Our membership numbers continue to increase year-on-year. The main benefit of membership is the year-round trip options lead by our members. A big thank you to all of you who share your time and love of the area by leading trips. It is much appreciated and there have been great options with this year's Summer Schedule. The inclusion of rock climbing trips, has brought back rock climbing into the schedule so it is great to have this as another option. I hope everyone had a chance to get out and join one of the trips. Besides trips, your membership also enables you to participate in the popular hiking camps and winter ski trips. Of course, we all love to get a deal on gear so having discounts at local gear shops is an added bonus to membership. There are also social events, newsletters during the year and the Bonnington Range Cabins to rent.

There are a lot of benefits of membership but are we missing anything? With so many members, let me know if there is anything you would like me to bring to the Executive or develop. Particularly, if any of the new members feel like we need to provide more for those new to the club, I'd love to hear your ideas.

Keep your eyes open for the membership renewal email that will be sent out in December or January. Fall is one of my favorite times of the year to get out in the mountains so I hope to see you on a Fall trip or at the upcoming AGM.

Contact me at:

membership@kootenaymountaineeringclub.ca

Outdoor Recreation Council news - recreational access to public land

Peter Jordan, Conservation Director

Over the last year, the Outdoor Recreation Council (ORC) has worked on a project to improve public recreational access to private land. This is mainly a Vancouver Island issue, where there are large private tree farms dating back to the railway land grant era. But it's also sometimes an issue in the Kootenays, where many of our trails are old mining trails, some of which cross privately-owned land or mineral claims.

ORC and the UVic Environmental Law Centre recently prepared an interesting paper on this issue, which can be found here:

[http://www.orcbc.ca/documents/
EnhancingPublicAccess_PrivateOwnedWildLands.pdf](http://www.orcbc.ca/documents/EnhancingPublicAccess_PrivateOwnedWildLands.pdf)

Blue Grouse Basin

July 17

The Enterprise Creek road which accesses the west side of Kokanee Glacier Park has been closed since 2008, by a washout at 5 km. However the road beyond is in good shape for bicycling. However the two park trails, Blue Grouse Basin and Tanal Lake, have not been maintained since then, so are in poor condition. I did a recce trip on the road by bicycle earlier in July, and found that KMC members Peter Wood and Peter McIver had hiked in to Blue Grouse Basin earlier, and had left a note on the signpost at the start of the trail giving useful information on trail conditions.



Photo: Doug Clark

On July 17 we hiked into Blue Grouse Basin. It is still a worthwhile hike despite rough going on the trail, as it is a beautiful alpine area. The 7.5 km approach on the road took a bit over an

hour. On the trail, there were many wind-fallen trees, which we tried to clean up a bit by cutting off the branches. The trail crosses several huge avalanche tracks, and it was hard to find in places, although the bush is not too bad. Once into the subalpine area the trail is in good shape. We continued into the meadows in the upper part of the basin, but didn't have time to go up any of the peaks. On the way down, the bike ride down the road took only 20 minutes.

We were: Doug Clark, Ross Bates, Linda Morin, and Peter Jordan.

Whitewater Glacier

Sept 4

On the Sunday of the Labour Day weekend, a group of 11 KMCers hiked up the Whitewater Canyon trail to the lake below the glacier. We were joined by two visitors from California who we ran into at Retallack. The weather outlook was marginal, and there had been some fresh snow up high. However we were lucky and didn't get rained on.

Above the campsite, climbing into the alpine plateau between Mt Brennan and Whitewater Mtn, the skies partly cleared, and we had

good views of the surrounding peaks, and could even see the MacBeth Glacier and waterfall in the far distance.



Continuing on to the lake below the glacier, we were in snow up to ankle-deep, so we didn't continue on to the col.

Most of us took shelter behind the giant green boulder while a brief snow squall came through, and a few

hardy people made their way up to the glacier.

On the way down we watched a grizzly bear in the

distance, high up on the slopes of Mt Brennan.

We were: Pnina Shames, Helen Foulger, Michael Pinard, Etienne Pinard, Anne St-Laurent, Wayne Hohn, Barb Hanlon, Lisa Henderson, Rick Thomas, Leo Jansma, and Peter Jordan



The Dying Days of the Duncan FSR, Part 2: Mazinaw Mountain and Feather Spire

After coming back down from our Sugarplum Lakes trip, we spent 4 hours figuring out how we'd get across the Duncan River. This ended up involving a rope gun and Douglas swimming across the river naked, but we (mostly Douglas) eventually had a pretty satisfactory rope system set up.



Hauling the packs across the Duncan River

The next day we used the system to get across the river and walked through huge old-growth (think 3-4 people to reach around a tree) and up through easy forest for a while.



Old growth for easy travel

We'd scouted the route from the distance and were able to thread the needle well, finding our way into and across the big burn easily enough without hitting much bush. We'd been following the main ridge to the north of the Nemo Creek basin, but then we went up boulder fields across a smaller drainage and over the east ridge of Mount Nemo through vegetation. More slopes and boulders and moraines and eventually we were at the Nemo Glacier in about 8.5 hours, though that included waiting out several different downpours.



Looking across the Nemo Glacier at Mazinaw Mountain (L) and Feather Spire ®

I'd hoped we'd be the first people to walk into the Nemo Group since the pioneering trip into there in 1959, but we found a cairn and notepad at camp that had been left by Ben Parsons and Rory Lauzon in Revelstoke that informed us of their 2012 trip. I later contacted Ben and got the full story. Their 4-day trip including falling a tree across the Duncan and then following the ridges south of the Nemo Creek basin to the same camp. They didn't have too much luck with summits due to rotten snow but they did get up onto some ridges. Their exit route back down was similar to our route up. After some research, I'm fairly comfortable saying that our trip was the only other foot-access trip into the Nemo Group in almost 60 years, though as of the deadline for the newsletter I haven't heard back from all inquiries, so don't quote me on that. Still, Alpine Helicopters in Golden estimates 1-2 groups that fly in each year, so either way, most opt for the sure bet.

On our big middle day, we crossed the glacier to the col north of Feather Spire to get a look up Houston Creek, but on arrival, decided that Feather Spire itself looked worth a go. 'Selkirks South' describes it as 5.2, but it seemed no more than a hard Class 3, with minor exposure and loose rock.



Looking up at Feather Spire from the col

After that, we dropped down to the glacier and ascended the 50-55 degree snow slopes/glacier north of Mazinaw Mountain and then kept to the north ridge to the summit at 2991m. The vistas included distant views of the Valhallas to the south and the Columbia Icefield to the north, as well as Assiniboine to the east and the Monashees to the west.



Looking towards Nautilus Mountain from Mazinaw's summit

The trip back down the steep snow slopes was difficult for me. Douglas glissaded the whole thing, but I strapped my crampons back on and went down mostly facing into the slope. Much self-coaching, many repetitive motions, and half an hour later I had caught up to Douglas. This was about an 11hr day, though over 3 hrs were spent on the summits.

Our exit day went well enough, taking only 5 hours, but it included us getting off track and bushwhacking a fair bit more than on the ascent.

Our original goal for the trip was Nautilus Mountain, but we were thrilled to even make it across the river and on reaching Mazinaw's summit, decided the terrain between us and Nautilus would be long and quite possibly tough. Still, the complementary vistas of Feather Spire and Mazinaw afforded some of the best views I've had the pleasure of experiencing.

Dan R

Almost Wolfe's Peak

September 10

Six of us departed the parking lot at the summit of Kootenay Pass headed north for Wolfe's Peak. Our route was mapped out to be long, undulating and a different route than the one I'd done before from the bottom of the east side of the pass.



Gaining the Cornice ridge was uneventful and an easy climb on the trail. We had a couple grouse beside the trail stay still long enough so that we could take there picture, a nice change from their regular noisy take off. Once on the ridge we picked our route down to where the ridge intersected the hydro and gas lines. There were lots of huckleberry's along the way.



We were able to easily stay on the ridge moving in a northerly direction. Stopping at a high point on the ridge to discuss our next moves Vicki aka Eagle Eye Hart spotted a bear in the rocks below where we wanted to go. The bear was big enough and close enough to our route that we decided it was time for lunch while we watched the bear from a distance. While we were having our lunch Eagle Eye Hart spotted a second bear that was bigger, closer and right on the ridge we wanted to climb. Unfortunately, with two big bears on the ridge we needed to climb this

necessitated us turning around early and abandoning our summit of Wolfe Peak.

On the way in we identified an easier ridge line to try to climb back up to Cornice ridge. Even though we lost a little elevation on the logging road to get down to the bottom of the ridge. All agreed the west middle ridge coming off the back of Cornice ridge is the better way to go. Sorry I hope I didn't say ridge to many times.

Here's the stats for our trip today;

6.65 miles or 10.7 km

Ascent 3294' or 1004 meters

Descent 3263' or 994 meters (can never figure out why these two don't match)

Max Elevation 7016' or 2138 meters

Looking at Google earth and plotting the ridge walk we had about 2.3 km to go to get to the Wolfe Peak summit. Turning around was the right decision given our bear (x2) friends between us and the summit. The trip from the Kootenay Pass summit is doable although it is long and undulating. I would re-rate the trip a D3.



We were, Brenda Haley, Cindy Kozak-Campbell, Abby Wilson, Vicki Hart, Sharman Naicker and Dan Derby (trip leader)

Thanks for sharing a great day in the mountains.