



B.C. Mountaineering Club Newsletter



Uto Pk. and Mt. Sir Donald, Glacier National Park.

August - Sept., 2006. Vol. 84, No. 7

EVENING SOCIAL MEETINGS

Evening socials are usually held in the ANZA club, upstairs room (corner of 8th Ave. and Ontario, Vancouver) starting at 7:30 p.m. Cookies, tea, and coffee are provided.

Tuesday, 8 August - Barbeque at Jericho Beach park, at the foot of Trimble, starting at 6pm. Barbeque, chips, snacks, and condiments will be provided. BYO food to barbeque.

Tuesday, 13 September - Entertainment will be a slide show by Jack Bryceland et al. on recent trips to the Mt. Edziza area in NW B.C.



Paul Morton climbing Pelion. Photo - M. Dell.

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

Esther and Martin Kafer

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CLUB OFFICERS

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VICE-PRESIDENT -	MONIKA BITTEL	604-983-3097
SECRETARY -	ALICE PURDEY	604-293-2951
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EMAIL ADDRESS: info@bcmc.ca

INTERNET SITE: www.bcmc.ca

CLUB EQUIPMENT FOR HIRE

Avalanche transceivers - First day - \$5 per day for members, \$7 for non-members then \$3 per subsequent day .

Snow shovels - \$3 per day.

Avalanche probes - \$3 per day.

VHF radios - \$8 per day, \$40 per week

Satellite phone - \$60 per week or \$10 per day plus \$300 refundable deposit, all payable in advance, then \$2 per minute use.

If the phone is returned damaged, the renter will be responsible for repair costs. If the phone is lost or damaged beyond repair, the renter will be responsible for reimbursing the club the \$2000 cost of the phone. Trip organizers should request a deposit from trip participants to cover this cost.

First priority for equipment rental is club camps and trips.

Equipment is rented from Kit Griffin at 604-736-8462, who should be contacted at least 2 days prior to the day the equipment is wanted, except for the satellite phone, which should be arranged at least 2 weeks prior to the day it is wanted.

The **BC MOUNTAINEERING CLUB NEWSLETTER** is an official publication of the B.C. Mountaineering Club and is published 10 times per year (every month except July and September). All material within this newsletter is copyright © British Columbia Mountaineering Club.

Submissions - of any written, drawn, or photographic material relevant to the B.C. Mountaineering Club are welcome. If possible, submissions should be sent to the editor by email or on a diskette. Please note that images should be at least 60 pixels/cm (150 pixels/inch) for successful printing. Images with a lesser resolution will probably not be printed. Deadline for submissions is the first Tuesday of the month preceding the publication month.

Send submissions to Michael Feller (ph. 604-270-4050, email - feller@interchg.ubc.ca).

Editorial policy - All submitted written material relevant to the B.C. Mountaineering Club will be published unless the club executive decides otherwise. Submitted material may be edited for clarity or brevity, or for consistency with club policies.

Opinions and comments expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the B.C. Mountaineering Club.

Scheduled trips

Participation on club trips is open to any person with adequate skills and experience, subject to the approval of the trip organizer. All non-member participants must sign a disclosure and waiver form relieving the club and all other participants on the trip from any liability. A trip organizer is not a certified guide. The function of the organizer is to organize the trip, ensure that it gets underway, know the access to the area, and know a route or routes on the climb.

It is expected that each person on a club trip has the necessary skills, experience, fitness, and equipment. The organizer may specify certain equipment mandatory for participation in a trip. Any person who attempts to participate in a club trip without such mandatory equipment, may be requested to withdraw from the trip. Each person on a club trip is responsible for his or her own safety and for checking the equipment used. Please be considerate and call the trip organizer more than 1 day prior to the trip.

If you are given a ride, please remember to pay the driver your portion of the car costs. If you decide not to go on a trip for which you have previously registered, please be courteous and inform the trip organizer.

Trip Schedule

August

- 5-7: Mt. Rainier** **C3-4/4392 m**
Emanuele Porra 604-533-7723
Mountaineering on Washington's highest volcano, ascending via the Kautz Glacier route.
- 5-7: Mountain Lake Family Camp** **B2**
Peter Oostlander 604-451-4585
Long weekend for families, above Howe Sound, based at the club cabin.
- 5-7: Petlushkwohap Mtn.** **C3/2939 m**
Greg Stoltmann 604-926-6496
Scrambling on the Stein-Kwoiek divide NW of Lytton. Joint trip with the NSH.
- 8-9: Castle Towers Mtn.** **C3-4/2676 m**
Martin Cook 604-733-5452
Mountaineering above Garibaldi lake in Garibaldi park
- 12: Tomyhoi Pk.** **B3/2266 m**
Will Neustaedter 604-523-1344
Hiking and scrambling near the BC - Washington border.
- 12-13: Mamquam Mtn.** **C3/2588 m**
Stanislav Liarsky 604-983-4476
Mountaineering in southern Garibaldi park.
- 12-13: Joffre Pk.** **C4-5/2721 m**
David Hughes 604-980-6484
Mountaineering with a lot of rock south of the Duffey Lake road.
- 14: Golden Ears** **C2/1716 m**
Kevin Swanson 604-943-4364
Extended hiking in the lower Fraser valley.
- 18-20: Skaha rock climbing** **A5**
Jack Pals 604-937-4718
Rock climbing with the rattlesnakes in the sunny Okanagan.
- 19: West Lion** **B3/1654 m**
Scott Tebbutt 604-221-9332
Hiking and scrambling above Howe Sound.
- 19-20: Snowspider Mtn.** **C3/2494 m**
Murray Lashmar 604-221-4183
Scrambling east of Lillooet Lake.
- 19-20: Devil's Tongue** **C3/2453 m**
Alastair Ferries 604-263-5835
Extended hiking and scrambling in the Skagit valley near the Washington border.
- 21: Williams Pk.** **C3/2123 m**
Kevin Swanson 604-943-4364

- Extended hiking and scrambling in the Chilliwack valley.
- 26-27: Foley Pk.** **C3/2293 m**
David Stange 604-434-2951
Hiking and scrambling in the Lucky Four Group of the Chilliwack valley, approaching via Williamson Lake.
- 27: Mt. Conybeare** **D3/1840 m**
Alastair Ferries 604-263-5835
Extended hiking and scrambling between Sedgwick and the Tantalus R. above Howe Sound.

September

- 2-4: Chehalis area** **C4-5**
Jos van der Burg 604-463-7582
Rock climbing west of Harrison Lake.
- 2-4: Organizer's choice** **C4-5**
Margaret Hanson 604-341-5961
Scrambling or mountaineering somewhere. Contact the organizer for further details.
- 2-4: Copper Ck. area** **B-C2**
Greg Stoltmann 604-926-6496
Hiking in the Lillooet area. Joint trip with the NSH.
- 4: Markhor-Needle Pk.** **B3-4/2090 m**
Marcus Dell 604-274-9511
Far from an 8000 m peak, but a scrambling rock traverse in the Coquihalla area.
- 7: Tricouni Pk.** **B2-3/2122 m**
Kevin Swanson 604-943-4364
Scrambling on the Squamish-Cheakamus divide.
- 9: Whitworth Pk.** **B3/2286 m**
Jos van der Burg 604-463-7582
Scrambling in the Skagit valley near Maselpanik Ck.
- 9-10: Mt. Rexford** **B3-4/2329 m**
Denis Lalonde 1-604-793-9675
Rock climbing in the Chilliwack valley area.
- 9-10: Mt. Spickard** **C3/2737 m**
Francis St. Pierre 604-224-0502
Extended mountaineering in the Chilliwack valley area east of Chilliwack Lake.
- 9-10: Mt. Seymour area** **C2/1508 m**
Peter Gumpfinger 604-733-8264
Peak hopping by hiking and scrambling over

Mt. Seymour, Runner Pk., Mt. Elsay, and Mt. Bishop. Lots of points.

16: Golden Ears **C2/1716 m**
Peter Oostlander 604-451-4585
Extended hiking in the Lower Fraser valley.

16: Crown Mtn. and The Camel **B5/1504 m**
Neil Beattie 604-669-7847
Hiking and rock climbing near Grouse Mtn. on Vancouver's North Shore.

23: Mt. Habrich **C5/1792 m**
Todd Ponzini 604-340-9653
Rock climbing above Howe Sound.

23-24: Howe Sound area **B-C3/1788 m**
Hiking and scrambling up Mt. Brunswick, Hat Mtn. and Mt. Hanover, above Howe Sound.
Another opportunity for lots of points.

24: Canadian Border Pk. **D4/2255 m**
Alastair Ferries 604-263-5835
Rock climbing in the Chilliwack valley area.
30-Sep 1: Zakwoski Mtn. **B2/2043 m**
Karl Ricker 1-604-938-1107
Hiking and scrambling through golden alpine larches in Karl's traditional Coquihalla area trip.

October

1: Williams Pk. **C3/2123 m**
Evelyn Feller 604-270-4050
Extended hiking and scrambling in the Chilliwack valley.
7: Mt. McGuire **B2/2008 m**
Emanuele Porra 604-533-7723
Hiking and scrambling in the Chilliwack valley.

BCMC Summer Camps

North Creek Cabin Summer Camp, Aug. 26-Sep. 4

This will be a climbing and hiking camp for club members only, with a range of activities from casual alpine strolls to establishing new multi-pitch routes on the local, as yet untouched, rock. Objectives include Mts. Sampson, Delilah, Sessel, Hemonius, Blockhead and Sugus. This is also a work camp

and participants are expected to contribute some of their time to maintenance projects. Fees of \$350 cover helicopter in and out. For further information, contact David Scanlon at 604-572-5051 or Peter Woodsworth at 604-254-7076.

Membership

What club members are doing

The club wishes to congratulate **Marcus Dell** on

his recent ascent of Broad Peak, one of the Karakoram's 8000 m peaks.

In memoriam – Lois Nordstrom

BCMC member Lois Nordstrom passed away as the result of a climbing accident at the Chek climbing area north of Squamish on Sunday, May 14. A funeral service held for Lois in her childhood home town of Mission on May 23 was attended by members of the local climbing and mountaineering community. Lois had been a club member for over 10 years and was an avid mountaineer, rock climber, ice climber and hiker. She participated in club events as much as her work schedule allowed and frequently attended the monthly meetings and slideshows. Along with climbing many peaks in southwestern BC, Lois made two attempts on

the East Ridge of Logan and one on Denali. In addition to being a climber, Lois supported efforts to preserve wilderness areas, volunteered for St. John Ambulance and supported the Wildlife Rescue Association of BC. She was also a devoted mother to her son Jasen, whom she raised on her own as a single mother. Lois will be greatly missed by Jasen, her brother Ward and Jasen's partner Michelle. She will also be greatly missed by her many climbing partners, who remember her for her willingness to go anywhere and try anything, her quiet, unassuming manner and her sense of humour. Margaret Hanson

BCMC Centennial - 100 years of the BCMC

It's coming. Perhaps sooner than you think. The centennial planning process started 3 years ago and is growing still. The video is a work in progress, just ask Martin and Brian. Funding is coming along slowly. Ever so slowly but they are seeing results. The calendar. Great isn't it? If you are a new member and haven't seen one yet, next year's should be out in September. I for one am so looking forward to seeing it. Great work all.

The cabin!! We still don't have a permit! AND there is no end in sight. This government was to have lessened red tape. You sure could have fooled this person as it has taken {{{9}}} months just for them to decide which ministry we have to deal with. We've 21 members volunteering a week's holiday each to help build it when called upon.

We are so ready that all of the materials have been figured out and priced and even weighed. Costs have been estimated. Two meetings of the builders have been held.

Much much work has been done on the archives and a special centennial edition of the club journal will be printed for next year. This edition will have transcripts and pictures from 100 years of our club. There is to be a two month archival display with the City of North Vancouver in their museum next September and October.

There has to be a BCMC reunion banquet of course! The official date is October 28 next year. A Sunday. Perfect! Time and place to be determined and being worked on as we speak.

Trips. We are a hiking / climbing club. This is for all you trip leaders for next year. Put your thinking caps on and lets get as many trips as we can with a historical aspect. For example, Todd Ponzini is planning a reenactment of the first ascent of Mt. Garibaldi with the equipment and clothing of the time.

Does anyone have any old hobnailed boots around? A trip may be happening to Mount Fairweather, B.C.'s highest peak, 50 years after the club's first ascent of it. Let's use our imagination everyone and come up with a great schedule for your centennial year. Remember. This is " your " club!!

There is a contest to come up with a centennial patch. Some general guidelines – about 10 cm in diameter simple/ easy to see/club colors, green white, brown/some way of depicting our 100 years. And..there will be a prize given to the winner. This should be fun. Lets see what can be done with this! There will also be the usual momento's. T-shirts. Maybe caps-key chains-fridge magnets. Any and all ideas welcome.

Lets not forget the banner and flag. Ravil has one on his endeavors, and Marcus Dell has one on his trip to Broad peak. They look great don't they!

Lisa Baile - John Baldwin - Glen Woodsworth - Drew Lathem are working on naming a mountain [range] after John Clarke. They have been working with Annette, John's wife, and family on this project and hope to make an announcement on this next year – our centennial year.

Members are contacting local radio, TV, newspapers. Any and all club exposure will be very welcome and used. As many government agencies as can be found are being contacted for grants, funding, ideas, awards.

So then, what did I forget. Probably something. Anyway. This is a bit of an update on centennial committee stuff. Wanna help? Can always use new ideas.

Thanks to all the helpers on the centennial committee for your dedication. This a once in a lifetime chance to take part in some thing this special.

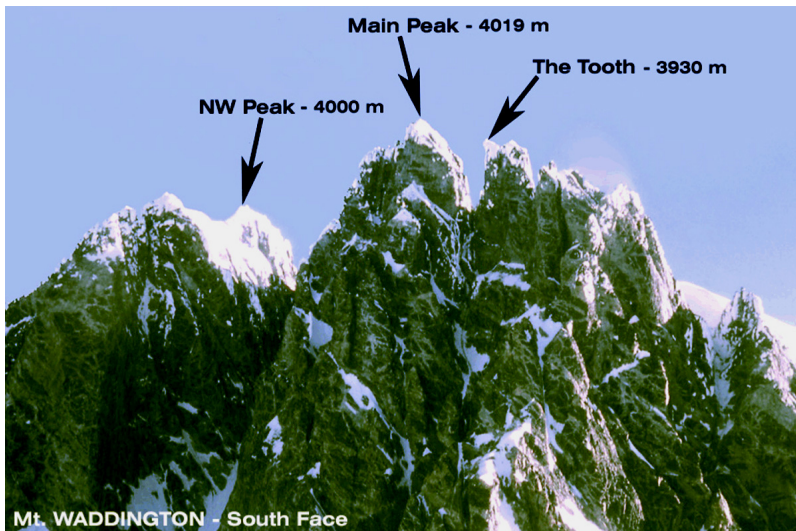
David Scanlon

Letter to the Editor

Mt. Waddington correction –

In the 2006 June/July Newsletter (P. 10) a story by Ron Dart referred to various ascents of Mt. Waddington and erroneously mentioned Esther Kafer as the first woman to climb [the main peak of] Mt. Waddington - Esther was the second woman, but the first Canadian. The first woman to climb Mt. Waddington was Virginia Mohling. Virginia

was a member of the 1960 American climbing party that followed a few weeks after the ill-fated Vancouver foursome of John Owen, Elfrida Pigou, Joan Stirling and Derrick Boddy, who perished in the tragic accident on the icefall of Bravo glacier. Our ascent of the main peak was in July 1962 with the legendary Paul Binkert on one rope with Esther and Jim Craig with me on the 2nd rope.



It is of interest to note that the first ascents by women of both the other two peaks of Mt. Waddington were by members of the BCMC: The NW peak in 1928 by Phyllis Munday, this was also the first ascent of that peak, and “The Tooth” or 3rd peak by Heidi Springer (now Riess) in 1968.
Martin Kafer

South side of Mt. Waddington from the air. Photo - M. Kafer

Trail Clearing

There was a mention recently that there hadn't been any trail clearing trips on the schedule for quite a while. As I'm the cabin and trails guy I had to pause for a moment, and then realized that this was right. This made me think, and I even felt guilty for a moment – only for a moment though. There have been many trail clearing trips these past years, probably more cabins than trail activities - Plummer hut, Mountain lake Hut (lots), and North Creek cabin. There is also a marked route up to the Battleship Lakes area where the club hopes to build another cabin.

One thing that club members could do would be to take some loppers on their trips. That old adage of many hands make light work of any job is very true. If everyone did just a bit, it would be so easy. It also doesn't just have to be the executive to have trail clearing trips. Any club member could put one on the schedule. I'd encourage people to do so, giving a little bit back to the club and all others who use the trails.

David Scanlon

Book Review - “Mountains of the Mind”

How Desolate and Forbidding Heights were Transformed into Experiences of Indomitable Spirit

Robert Macfarlane (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003)

O the mind, mind has mountains

Gerard Manley Hopkins

From death in valleys preserve me, O Lord

Robert Macfarlane

Have men and women, throughout the long stretches of human history, taken to the mountains the way we do in our time and ethos? Have white

crowned peaks, rock diadems and spear spires always drawn the curious, energetic, skilled and interested? Have mountains always been a place of allure, delight, charm and attraction? Or, is the passion for the mountains and outdoor hiking, climbing, and glacier traverses more a product of the last few centuries? If this is the case, why is it? And, deeper yet, what are the reasons (complicated and diverse though they might be) that women and men take to the mountains, challenging rock rims and high perched peaks? *Mountains of the Mind* attempts, in a variety of ways, to answer these questions. Such abiding

questions, though, are not merely answered from the safe confines of the academic and library chair. Robert Macfarlane, to his credit, attempts to scale the peaks of such answers from a variety of routes. Macfarlane is Scottish, a climber and international in experience and interest. He has taken to many peaks, and his answers to the questions raised above emerge both from within himself and the multiple voices from those who have taken to the peaks in the past. *Mountains of the Mind* is as much about the internal ascents, hard places, difficult routes, worrisome crevasses, long trails, fears and insecurities that dog one and all as it is about the external and hard realities of real mountains and packed snow places.

Mountains of the Mind is divided into 9 compact and enticing chapters: 1) Possession, 2) The Great Stone Book, 3) The Pursuit of Fear, 4) Glaciers and Ice: The Streams of Time, 5) Altitude: The Summit and the View, 6) Walking off the Map, 7) A New Heaven and a New Earth, 8) Everest and 9) The Snow Hare. Each of these compelling chapters, story told well, draws the reader more and more into the world of mountain lore and legend and the reasons why many turn to such places.

Macfarlane is never shy about telling his tale and trips to the high regions, his conscious and subconscious reasons for turning to such alluring and evocative places and what other mountains have taught him about such a journey. *Mountains of the Mind* is also about cultural shifts that began in the 17th-18th centuries in the west, and how such cultural shifts have converted still and silent rocks into places of peak bagging and spiritual pilgrimages.

Macfarlane, to some degree, follows the earlier thesis of Marjorie Hope Nicolson's *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (1959), in tracking and tracing the interest in mountaineering to the 17th-18th centuries. Many of the literary clues that Nicolson has provided in her classic work were followed by Macfarlane in *Mountains of the Mind*. Both Nicolson and Macfarlane are aware that mountains have played a substantive role in classical cultures, but the general and widespread fascination with mountains and the environment that holds and draws many today is a new phenomenon. It is this broader interest in the mountains (and what it means for new cultural ways of seeing and being) that interests Nicolson and Macfarlane. The

difference between these two, though, is that Nicolson in *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* studied this shift from an academic, historic and literary perspective, whereas Macfarlane is interested in these areas, but he is equally interested from the perspective of the mountaineer, also.

The final 2 chapters in *Mountains of the Mind* draw this fine book together in a suggestive way. Macfarlane ponders, in chapter 8 (Everest) why George Mallory was drawn so irresistibly and fatally to Everest. Each of the three trips is discussed in some detail, and Macfarlane amply illustrates that he has read most of Mallory's letters and journals well. Why would Mallory leave his wife and three young children for some barren rocks and hard ice and snow peaks? What was the fatal attraction? What was the draw and history of those who had gone before Mallory that prepared this young Galahad to give his life to an unforgiving and ancient slab of frigid and frozen white at the very crest of the world? 'Everest' is a fine chapter. Macfarlane probes and probes the mind of Mallory, and, by doing so, the minds of all those who turn to the peaks to discover the reasons for the drive to such isolated and barren places.

Why did this become both an addiction and tragic attraction for Mallory? Why did he need to be the first to stand on the peak of Everest, and what were the more important things he sacrificed in the process? Macfarlane attempts to answer these sorts of questions in the penultimate chapter in *Mountains of the Mind*. It is these inner mountains of the mind, in the end, that are the most interesting to traverse, and Macfarlane, roped well, does take to such heights, the dead Mallory his guide.

The final chapter, 'The Snow Hare', is the most illusive and compelling. Macfarlane, on the peaks of a whiteout summit, meets a snow hare. Needless to say, such a meeting has all sorts of mythic meanings. Macfarlane allows the reader to unpack the metaphor from such an occurrence. It reminds me of the time I was sitting on a mountainside, and 2 white deer momentarily appeared, approached me, then disappeared. Such moments are quite magical, and rare is the experience.

If some concerns might be raised about this book, and there are some to be pondered, the primary one might be the way Macfarlane, like Nicolson before him, has tended to see the substantial shift in the way we see mountains in

the 17th and 18th centuries. Both Nicolson and Macfarlane offer a fleeting nod to the Classical western tradition (albeit in a spotty and questionable way), but neither delve into the deeper and older attitudes towards the mountains in both the western and eastern traditions. This much older line and lineage can be corrected by a read of *Sacred Mountains of the World* (1990), by Edwin Bernbaum. *Sacred Mountains of the World* is a stunning visual tour with an insightful text as a hiking companion. In short, the larger cultural shifts in the way we see

mountains that Nicolson and Macfarlane linger so long at do need to be checked and corrected by the more compelling, older and convincing work of Bernbaum in *Sacred Mountains of the World*.

Mountains of the Mind is a must read, and for those of us who are Canadians and belong to the Alpine Club of Canada, there are some interesting comments from Mallory about Edward Wheeler and the 1921 attempt to climb Everest.

Ron Dart

News

B.C. government tries to avoid protecting species at risk

According to a recent press release from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

“The recent announcement by the British Columbia government to list 45 species at risk under the heavily criticized Forest and Range Practices Act was condemned by the Wilderness Committee as a cynical attempt to avoid federal requirements to protect BC’s growing list of species at risk.

“This listing process is simply meant to sidestep federal obligations to protect endangered species in British Columbia,” said Gwen Barlee, policy director with the Western Canada Wilderness Committee. “BC is doing everything they can to give the appearance they are taking action when in actuality they are letting species at risk fall between the cracks.”-

Unlike most provinces in Canada, British Columbia has no endangered species legislation. There are 1,367 species listed at risk provincially according to the provincial government’s BC Conservation Data Centre.

In 1996 British Columbia signed the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk, committing to a national approach to protect endangered species in Canada. Since that time the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) was also introduced, requiring provinces to meet federal standards to protect species at risk. Under SARA, if provincial governments do not take adequate measures to protect species at risk that are on provincial soil, the federal government can step in.

The decision by the BC government to list 45 species at risk under the province’s Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) is considered inadequate by many conservationists familiar with the legislation because FRPA incorporates a series of provisions which create hurdles to environmental protection. One of the key criticisms of FRPA relates to the fact that a minister is restricted from protecting environmental values, such as endangered species, if the action “unduly reduce(s) the supply of timber from British Columbia’s forests” for logging companies.

Critics of the Act point out that wildlife such as the critically endangered Northern spotted owl are already on the list of species at risk under FRPA but continue to receive inadequate protection. In British Columbia the largest logger of spotted owl habitat is the BC government’s own BC Timber Sales Program.

“The fact that the BC government listed endangered species under this weak legislation does not mean that they are protected,” said Barlee. “Listing and protection are two different things. Once again the BC government is letting politics trump science. If they were serious about protecting endangered species in BC they would introduce effective endangered species legislation.”

For more information call Gwen Barlee at 604-683-8220 (work) or 604-202-0322 (cell)

For information on the legislative requirements needed to protect BC’s endangered wildlife visit: www.environmentalleadership.org/safeguardingbcwildlife/

Behind Independent Power Projects

Independent Power Projects and applications for them have been appearing with increasing regularity. Recent experience in the Squamish area has shown that they are not all benign and environmentally friendly. They can lead to substantial alterations to access greatly facilitating motorized access, as at Miller Ck. for example. They disrupt stream ecosystems and can result in major loss of forest and wilderness values (Lost Valley Ck., for example), disruption of travel (while they are under construction), and loss of whitewater kayaking opportunities.

An article by Murray Dobbin in the March, 2006 edition of the Georgia Straight, circulating by email, further describes some of the problems with IPPs as follows, highlighting IPP's in SW B.C.:

“There is a nasty political battle going in the Squamish-Lillooet region. It pits local citizens, kayakers, environmentalists, and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) against some extremely powerful forces. The dispute revolves around a plan to build a “run-of-the-river” hydroelectric facility on the Ashlu River, just north of Squamish.

The 49-megawatt Ashlu River power proposal gives some insight into much larger forces at play. The entire North American electricity industry is being restructured to serve the U.S. market, and the people in the Squamish district are caught in the middle. The fight should set off alarm bells for all British Columbians concerned about the blatant giveaway of B.C.'s water resource and the increasing privatization of electricity generation. Why? Because there have been 469 applications for run-of-the-river water licences across B.C.

SFU adjunct professor John Calvert, a BC Citizens for Public Power representative on BC Hydro's 2005 integrated electricity planning committee, told the Georgia Straight that for a corporation, a B.C. water licence costs little more than lunch money. “These sites may generate millions or tens of millions of revenue annually,” Calvert said. “Yet the water-licence fee for the largest-capacity run-of-the-river project—one that generates more than 20 megawatts—is capped at \$10,000. Smaller facilities of less than 20 megawatts pay \$5,000.” These power projects usually involve diverting part of a river to a generating facility, and then

returning water to the streambed. Unlike large hydroelectric dams, run-of-the-river projects do not involve flooding areas to create large reservoirs. The province charges licence holders separately for the water actually used, based on the amount of

energy generated. “But the charge is not based on the price of that energy,” Calvert explained. “For smaller projects, the rate is \$1.086 per megawatt-hour. Larger projects pay \$5.069 per megawatt-hour—regardless of the price” of energy.

The Gordon Campbell Liberals support the creation of a continental energy market, and they're using BC Hydro (already broken up to facilitate energy exports) as a vehicle to help accomplish this. The Independent Power Producers Association of BC represents private-power developers who have been handed a virtual monopoly on the creation of new electricity in B.C. through the provincial government's 2002 energy plan. IPPBC members stand to make billions over the next couple of decades selling power—not just to BC Hydro and to the province, but to American buyers who may pay more for it. BC Hydro is already paying almost \$450 million a year in energy purchases from the private sector.

The Squamish battle represents the last line of defence of a rational approach to managing public water rights and electricity markets. The community believes that the area's pristine beauty has enormous potential as a tourist area. The SLRD board of directors is standing up against the Campbell government and the Ledcor Group, a huge transnational corporation and Canada's second-largest construction company.

Ledcor, which donated \$5,000 to the B.C. Liberals in 2005 before last year's election, has seven other water licences or applications in the Ashlu drainage area. And while the dispute to date seems to be at a standoff, overshadowing it is the provincial government's “hammer”: the Significant Projects Streamlining Act. The act gives Victoria the power to overrule any municipal authority or regional district on any issue it deems of “significant” importance to the province.

Ledcor's proposal has cleared all provincial regulatory hurdles. However, it requires rezoning from the regional district, and that is where the fight is centred. The district has said no—so far. But it's not just this one project. The opposition points

out that it's the impact of so many projects that makes them unacceptable.

Stuart Smith is spokesperson on the issue for the Squamish Whitewater Paddlers kayak club, and has been deeply involved in local land-use planning. "You have to look at the cumulative impact of seven or eight projects just in this area," Smith told the Straight. "You have to add up the number of kilometres of streams that are diverted, the pipes diverting the water, all sorts of access roads and power lines crisscrossing the valley, and the substations that will have to be built."

Smith said that the Ashlu River project would divert 40 to 50 percent of the flow of the river through a seven-kilometre pipe to the generating facility. This would leave an area of the river between the intake and return pipes with a significantly reduced water flow. The implications for recreational use are obvious, especially when one considers that Ledcor can increase the water taken in the future without further reviews.

Smith noted that this has already happened with two existing projects. "The Furry Creek plant went from 6.2 megawatts to 10 with no consultation, and Culliton Creek went from 4.5 megawatts to 12 megawatts with no review," he said.

Yet for B.C. as a whole, the implications of these projects go beyond local environment and tourist-development concerns to the core of the B.C. Liberal government's kowtowing to corporate interests. Calvert, an energy specialist in the previous NDP government's Crown-corporations secretariat, claimed that the Campbell Liberals are handing over one of the province's most valuable resources. And at the same time, he added, they are undermining B.C.'s future energy security by opening the door to private energy exports to the U.S., regardless of the province's future electricity needs.

"It's really quite outrageous, given how valuable this water resource is, that we get almost nothing for it," Calvert said. "Down the road we will pay a huge price, because these power companies will eventually be able to sell to the highest bidder—in other words, into the U.S. market."

The private investors who get in early on these deals can make millions after putting up almost no money of their own. This is because most projects are effectively funded by the public through long-term energy-purchase agreements with BC Hydro.

"I think many of the local investors will flip the ownership of the most lucrative sites, capitalizing

on their enormous financial windfall by selling them to energy multinationals," Calvert predicted. How did this corporate giveaway come to pass? Governments of all stripes have messed with BC Hydro's mandate, but the election of the pro-business Liberal government of Gordon Campbell brought bigger changes. "If one looks at the policy decisions that have been made, it seems clear that the government is moving incrementally to privatize the electricity system," Calvert said.

Campbell first privatized most of the nongenerating services, handing them over to the transnational Accenture. The rest of BC Hydro he "restructured"—away from being a Crown corporation producing cheap, reliable power for B.C. into a purchaser of private energy at market prices. The newly spun-off BC Transmission Corporation is transforming the grid into a "common carrier" to enable private energy interests to ship electricity to the highest (read U.S.) bidder. Higher prices for B.C. energy are seen as vital to providing the incentive for more private power investment in the province. If you thought we already had a reliable investor—BC Hydro itself—you would be right. But allowing a Crown corporation to become even more successful went against the grain for the Campbell Liberals. So they added a twist to the restructuring to guarantee that any new electricity generation would be done by private companies. The energy plan, in effect, barred BC Hydro—one of the most efficient power companies in the world—from generating any new power.

If Campbell is eager to punish the jewel of B.C.'s Crown corporations, he is even more eager to reward private investors. The money is so easy, it's hard to know where to start. But a useful comparison might be with the oil-and-gas companies. At least they actually have to look for those energy resources. Not so the private power producers. In 1983 (and again in 2000 and 2002), the provincial government funded major studies of small hydro sites across the province, listing the locations, the amount of energy that could likely be produced, and various other critical data. All this is available for free to applicants. All they have to do is show up at a government office, pick a location, and apply for a water licence. These permits are given out on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Calvert pointed out that as the price of energy increases, the percentage return to government will

decrease with the run-of-the-river projects. At \$55 per megawatt-hour, B.C. citizens get about two percent of the revenue. But if energy prices increase to \$100 per megawatt-hour (quite possible in the future), the public does not get a dime more and the percentage return drops to one percent. With oil and gas, on the other hand, there is a royalty rate applied to the selling price, so as prices go up, so does government revenue.

The legislation specifies that the normal term of a new water licence is 40 years. However, Calvert said that the existing licence holder can apply for the extension before the initial term has expired. He said this can transform the 40-year period into “what is, in effect, a permanent entitlement”.

The B.C. Liberal government has placed no effective restrictions on foreign ownership of water licences. Any investor can pay \$351.51 to register as a B.C. company, regardless of their nationality, and is thus qualified to acquire a water licence. That brings NAFTA into the picture. Any attempt to moderate these projects’ windfall profits in the future could cause a U.S. or Mexican power producer to launch a challenge under NAFTA’s investment provisions, which prohibit “unequal” treatment of foreign investors.

The easy-money game plays out something like this. Developers, putting up virtually no capital except what’s necessary to pay for the licence and a few other expenses, obtain a water licence and keep bidding on energy-purchase agreements from BC Hydro. (About 40 of these have been signed since 2002.) Until they win a bid, they put their project on hold. When they do win a bid, they have in hand a 15- to 40-year contract to sell energy to BC Hydro. Then they go to their banker and present him with this long-term, guaranteed cash flow—a virtual shoo-in for a loan. And because BC Hydro is effectively backing the loan through the purchase agreement, the interest rate is very low. When the loan is paid down, the company owns the asset. The public, which has financed the arrangement, gets no assets, no protection from future price increases, and no guarantee that the energy will not be exported.

Who are these companies? One of them is Eaton Hydro. It boasts that its team has “over 100 years of energy and electricity experience”. What is interesting is where that experience came from. Dan Eaton is a financier, but his list of partners reads

like a description of BC Hydro’s former executive suite. Don Swodoba is a partner. The company says: “Don has held senior positions at BC Hydro, including Senior Vice President Power Supply, VP Production and VP Operations.” Jim Gemmell hails from BC Hydro, too. Two other board members were also BC Hydro executives.

Run-of-the-river power generation is just part of the privatization of power production in B.C., but it reveals a feature common to the whole scheme: a rush to develop these for-profit projects with almost no oversight, and little public input. Gwen Barlee of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee expressed alarm at the process. “At the moment, there are hundreds of proposals across B.C. to access our rivers and streams for run-of-the-river hydro projects with no analysis of the cumulative impacts,” Barlee told the Straight. “Each one is approached as a ‘one off’. This gold-rush mentality ignores important questions relating to overall environmental impact.”

There are few legal options available to those who want these projects stopped or even slowed down. The only public-hearing process available is at the local level regarding rezoning, and even there the province holds the trump card if it chooses to play it. The NDP’s environment critic, Shane Simpson, admitted that at the moment the best strategy is simply making the public aware of this situation.

“We need to remove the shackles placed on BC Hydro with respect to renewable-energy projects,” Simpson told the Straight. “BC Hydro should be allowed to fully compete in the process, which would mean more scrutiny, more public input, and better management of a public resource.”

Right now, the critics are focusing on the Ashlu decision, which could influence how the B.C. government proceeds. In January 2005, the SLRD voted 8-1 to deny Ledcor’s rezoning application, but the company resubmitted a very similar proposal this past January. The SLRD, under enormous pressure from the province, deferred the decision, unleashing an intense campaign of threats and promises to get the rezoning approved.

Tom Rankin, a Squamish resident and a vocal critic of the project, told the Straight: “There are under-the-radar threats against the SLRD, such as: the province will remove the zoning authority; the province will give the Ashlu area to the Squamish Nation; the Squamish nation saying it

will make life difficult for the SLRD—a threat heard several times at public hearings, and again at the January 2006 SLRD meeting.”

Squamish Chief Gibby Jacob is a key Ledcor ally. “The order of the day now is consultation and accommodation, and the [revenue-sharing] agreement with the company is very satisfactory to the Squamish Nation,” Jacob told the Straight. He said that the band has the option of purchasing the project outright at the end of Ledcor’s 40-year contract with BC Hydro.

The province’s pressure tactics even included an offer to put on hold the granting of new water licences in return for the region granting the rezoning. The offer was made in a letter to the regional district from Greg Reimer, deputy minister of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. It reads, in part: “the Ministry is prepared to make a recommendation to Government that water reserves be placed on 10 of the 12 streams identified as a high priority for analysis by the SLRD Board....[but] Should the re-zoning not be approved, our recommendation regarding the water reserves will not proceed.” Nothing in the letter suggests the other licences won’t eventually be approved—only that there will be a “comprehensive review process”.

For its part, Ledcor has mounted a public-relations blitz, hiring a local firm, Cascadia Consulting, to lobby for the deal. Stuart Smith claimed that Cascadia is calling local kayakers. And, of course, the province has the ultimate weapon that it can use at any time. The Significant Projects Streamlining Act allows Victoria to nullify any local government decision if it deems a project important enough to the province.”

Commercial Recreation operators block public access to the mountains

Comment by M. Feller

This summer the Kootenay Mountaineering Club (KMC) were unable to run a summer camp in an

area for which a commercial backcountry recreation tenure was held. The commercial operator did not want the KMC camp in the area they might use so the operator managed to convince local helicopter operators not to fly in the KMC. Follow up by the KMC and FMCBC resulted in Brad Harrison, the president of the Backcountry Lodges Association of BC apologizing for the “miscommunication” (there are blue men on the moon, too!) that resulted in helicopter service being denied to the KMC. Harrison also stated, in a letter to the KMC in June, that -

“To prevent future access issues, avoid conflict between KMC camps and BCLABC member operations, and to ensure local knowledge is consulted before camp locations are chosen, I request that in the future the KMC contact the BCLABC prior to finalizing camp location within tenure areas of BCLABC members. This will allow the KMC and the relevant BCLABC member(s) to work together to ensure successful KMC camps that minimize impacts on BCLABC member operations and the alpine environment. Suggestions and requests made to the KMC by BCLABC members would of course be legally non-binding.”

It would appear that commercial operators now believe they can control and dictate public access onto crown land, despite the fact that the Land Act clearly states that operators cannot restrict public access. Given that commercial backcountry recreation tenures cover most mountain areas outside parks in the southern half of BC, this is a major concern. Meanwhile BC’s government, which created this mess in the first place, continues to dole out backcountry tenures apparently oblivious to the havoc they are causing.

Trip Reports

Mt. Tszil, 8 April 2006 – Mass of Humanity Sinks Peak

Reuters: April 8, 2006. The BCMC reports that comparative GPS readings from a previous trip indicate that Mt. Tszil has sunk by 4.3 m. A BCMC

spokesman who has declined to be named, has attributed this phenomenon to the size of group (20 people) on and around the summit on that particular day. He/she has speculated further that if the trend of larger and larger groups in the

mountains continues it could cause flattening of some of the western mountain ranges.

Participants: Ove Albinson, Etienne Berthier, Bruce Cassiels, Fleur Courveux, Evelyn Feller, Mike Feller, Dave Henwood, Ehleen Hinze, Graham Horne, Miranda Huron, Leone Knaus, Philip Kubik, Esther Lehmann, Dawn Mehain, Andrey Pavlov, Ivan Robin, Ilse Rupners, Ed Smith, Christina Williams, Erich Hinze (Organizer and reporter).

Eldorado Peak, 22-23 April, 2006

Early Saturday morning 9 BCMC (7 regular and 2 temporary) members met up at the, closed, ranger station in Marblemount, Washington, and then headed off to the trailhead. We were a little later than expected getting away from the ranger station as we had to wait for Greg's group. Apparently his windshield fell out on the highway and he had to duct tape it in place. Greg is the only other person I know who carries bright red duct tape. This was a ski trip although one of the 'temporary' members, Klaus, from Switzerland, had a snowboard and snowshoes.

Eldorado is such a popular summer climb that apparently the river crossing is kept 'wild' to keep inexperienced people from heading into this area. I don't think any two people made exactly the same crossing. The trail made the Grouse Grind look like a picnic. Over trees, under trees with the damn skis catching everything in sight. However, this was old growth forest and quite spectacular in its own right. Finally at about 700 m we find skiable snow. Skins on and away we went trying to catch up to Jane. The ski up was fine as it was a pleasant sunny day. Perhaps a little on the warm side given we were carting our overnight packs. The higher we went though the better the views got.

Balancing between going too far with heavy packs and the approach route left for the following day. Peter called a halt around 5 pm at 1300 m. The views were outstanding as was the entertainment (Greg doing fakie on Klaus's snowboard and demonstrating the use of one pole for turning).

A reasonable start at 7:45am saw us up and over the ridge behind our campsite and starting the slog up and onto Eldorado Glacier. Very lovely, but steeply contoured (i.e. climbing with skis on pack), terrain with great snow coverage. Many of the peaks in this area have fabulous names. For example: Mount Formidable, Forbidden Peak and everyone's favorite – Mount Torment.

By the time I reached the ski drop-off point everyone had vanished. Tracks led along a steep slope and then disappeared through a hole punched in the cornice. As I observed this I briefly wondered if I should fight or give in to the lemming-like desire to follow the tracks through the cornice, then Ramsay's head appeared 3 m above and told me this was the summit. Quickly joining the group we had lunch and took advantage of the terrific photo ops.

The ski back to camp was quite spectacular and provided a wide variety of challenging runs.

After breaking camp there was some terrific skiing and some lousy skiing as the snow quickly turned to porridge. However, it was all better than walking! As you see this was quite an amazing area. They call it the 'American Alps' and it's not really any further from Vancouver than the Duffey Lake Road. Cheers!

Participants: Peter (organizer) & Silke Gumplinger, Ramsay Dyer, Jane Weller, Greg Stoltmann, Klaus (from Switzerland), Dave (from New Zealand), Martin Cook, and Bob Woodhouse (Reporter)

Elk Mountain, 3 May, 2006

The day was most alluring, and the promise of clear peak vistas could not be ignored. There are days, regardless of the many responsibilities of life, when the demands must be bid adieu to and the mountains taken to with much keenness and hunger. Arnold Shives and I left Abbotsford by about noon, we drove through the sprawling community of Ryder Lake, then up to the Elk Mountain trailhead. We wound our way through the dense and thick wooded forest for about 1 ½ hours, then took our first long rest at the rock outcropping. Snow was mostly gone from the lower trail, although there were remnants of the ice stream that often clings tenaciously to the path. From our rock perch, Robie Reid and Judge Howay stood tall and stately, white clothed to the north, and Baker's presence to the south could not be missed. A curious and hungry whiskey jack was ever near us, sitting on nearby rocks and on the toes of our boots.

We soon rose and continued our hike to the ridge of Elk-Thurston. There was still some snow, but the path was obvious and could not be missed. We soon reached the flag flapping roof of Elk, and we headed up to Thurston. Needless to say, the higher the hike the more seen. Arnold and I

soon found a dry patch on the path, and we settled down to delight in the sheer beauty of the place. We could not miss knife sharp Slesse, snow packed Tomyhoi, the American-Canadian border peaks (Arnold and Glenn Woodsworth had a done a first ascent of Canadian border peak a few decades ago) and ever evocative Rexford. Arnold soon settled by the trail to do sketches and take photographs. I just lay back on my knapsack and soaked in the scenery. The experience reminded me of my years in the High Alps in Switzerland. The breeze was gentle but refreshing, the warmth from day star most kind and gracious and the panoramic view most enticing. I have been up Elk-Thurston four times this year, thus far, and this was, by far, the finest of days.

The trip down was done with some regret. It was hard to leave such a beauty behind and return to the hurly burly of valley life yet once again, but by about 6:30 we were in Abbotsford, and the delight of the day behind us.

Ron Dart (Reporter)

Mount McGuire, 30 May, 2006

-from death in valleys preserve me, O Lord
Robert Macfarlane *Mountains of the Mind* (p.9)

It promised to be a beauty of a day—not the sort of blue canopy delight to be indoors, in the city or the valleys. Seven of us (Wells, Astrid, Phil, Noel, Ray, Frank, Ron) met at the Cheam Centre in Sardis at 9 am. We were soon on our expectant way, and it did not take us long to reach the logging road a smile before Slesse Creek. It's a 13 km drive up the logging road to the trailhead by the old cabin, but we halted at 11 km because of the snow. The rest of the day was in the snowfield up to McGuire.

We began the hike by 10:30, followed the snow-packed logging road past the cabin ever up to where the road came to an end. Then, we slipped through a copse of trees (the tarn just beginning to thaw round the edges) that opened up to us the steeper ascent to McGuire Ridge. The higher we hiked up the snowfield, the better the views of Slesse, Border Peaks, Baker and the Cheam Massif. We took turns kicking toe holds in the hard snow as we wound our way to McGuire's alluring peak. We reached the exposed arête above the snow line about 1 pm. We dined on the scenery that surrounded us

in all directions. Deep valleys were beneath us, and towering diadems of white in all directions were around us. The sky was a deep blue, and there was not even a hint of a cloud. We then, ice axes to steady us, did the final 100 m arête to the rock exposed summit of McGuire. The wind was stiff and steady, unrelenting and firm, but we hovered on the summit for many a lingering moment. A lake, just below us, was still frozen tight, and spring thaw was still a few weeks away from this upland body of water. We had bagged our peak by about 1:30, and from such a place, the horseshoe range of Cheam, Slesse, Border peaks, Shuksan and Baker could be clearly seen. Photos of the white rock rims were taken aplenty.

We edged our way down the arête, had lunch by a sheltered rock area, basked in the sun and scenery, then, alas, it was time to descend. Needless to say, the descent down the snowfield was done in much haste. Axes acted as steering wheels and brakes as one and all hastened down the steep slope. We gazed back, with some regret, as we observed where we had been but moments before. The day was almost done, and it had been a beauty and charmer. It took just over an hour to reach the trucks from the peak of McGuire, the quick ski and bum slides down making the trip down a fast one. It was 4 pm, and just a matter of the drive down to the Chilliwack Valley to finish the day. The deed was soon done, and the fine day on McGuire but a well stored memory.

Ron Dart (Reporter)

Wedge Mtn. via the North Arête, May, 2006

After the sudden realization that we didn't have any plans for the perfect sunny weekend, I checked the BCMC trip schedule and contacted Stas about his planned Wedge Mtn. trip. After warning him about our inexperience and his assurance, we decided to give it a try.

We met on Saturday at Park Royal in North Vancouver at 8am and then drove to the church parking lot to meet Neil and Dave who decided to join at the last minute. At 10:30am we were at the Wedgemount lake trailhead. We were ready to roll at 11am.

The trail was in much worse shape than I remembered from September 2003. The bridge over the first creek was broken and there were many trees and deadfall on the trail. Maybe it had

something to do with the fact that it was only May – the beginning of the season. We hit the snow at about 1000m elevation, but continued without snowshoes to about 1500m, when the snow started to be slushy. Neil had some stomach problems that slowed him down, but at 3:30pm we all arrived at the lake at ~1900m. The cabin was surprisingly empty. The original plan was to camp at the col at 2600m, but we decided that, having the cabin at our disposal, crossing the glacier late in the afternoon with full packs was not worth the extra hour or two of sleep in the morning. So we dropped the tents and occupied the cabin, although Stas preferred the solitude of his tent.

After having dinner and boiling water for the next day we went to sleep at about 9pm. Alarm clocks were set at 4am. Neil didn't get much sleep and still didn't feel good in the morning, so he decided to pack up and head down. The rest of us set off at 5:15am.

We crossed the frozen lake and took the ramp under Parkhurst to get to the glacier. We stashed snowshoes at the end of a flat section, assuming they might be handy later in the afternoon. Then we went towards the crevassed section, crossed to the left and gained the arête at about 2600m. Once on the arête, the way to the Wedge ridge looked pretty daunting, at least for me and Eva.

However, the snow was good and Stas was doing a great job making steps, so we were fine continuing roped between Stas and Dave. In about an hour we were on the ridge. Many thanks to Stas for leading all the way – we had an easy task just following his steps. The last part was very exposed, I doubted whether we'd be able to self-arrest on such a slope, so I better not try... We got to the ridge at ~2800m around 10:15am. Just when we got there, a helicopter appeared right from behind the summit, but we didn't get a lift down. We had a break, snack and went for a short walk to the summit. Great 360 degree views, with a huge sea of mountains below us! From the summit we could see our tracks along the arête and what was below (some rocks and then void). Stas quickly found a place to stash a summit log container and we descended along the ridge.

The going was surprisingly quick, we lost about 600m elevation in less than 45 minutes, including time spent scoping the route. There was good snow all the way down, so we just walked/ran down the snow. We enjoyed some butt-sliding down to the

Wedge-Parkhurst col, climbed back up about 100m and were back at the snowshoes 2 hrs after we left the summit. It was hot and sunny; we were running low on water, so we just stopped for a short snack break. The snow was already getting slushy, so we happily put on the snowshoes and plodded down the glacier towards the cabin. Approaching the lake, we could see the north rim turning blue, but the ice was still firm and safe to cross. With the last bits of energy that remained we got to the hut at 2pm, just to find sauna temperatures inside.

Dave boiled some water for all of us for the descent, we quickly packed, then left the cabin at 3:40pm. The steep part before the lake was so slushy that we started cruising on snowshoes. Snowshoes off, boot-stepping down. We quickly lost elevation, about 600m in the first hour. Then the going got slower, with the mix of snow and bare ground, but we were still progressing at a swift pace, stopping just to cool down steaming knees. After we crossed the broken bridge, about 10 minutes from the car, Eva slipped and screamed. She had twisted her ankle. Not good. It was the first "serious" injury we had sustained in over three years of hiking around Vancouver. I put her backpack on my chest and we rushed to the car, with a promise to come back for her soon. It required some dexterity to navigate with a backpack in front of my eyes, but we were down quickly and Dave and I went back to pick up Eva. Luckily she was able to carefully walk down with her poles and we soon met her. Too bad that the snow level ended about 200m higher, as snow could have been handy cooling down her ankle. After that we had an uneventful drive back to North Van, where Neil, still not feeling good, met us at the parking lot and dropped Dave and us in Vancouver. When we got home Eva's ankle was pretty swollen, but it soon got better and hopefully she'll be back on trails again. It was a great last minute trip, with experienced guys who were happy to share their knowledge. We learned a lot and most importantly enjoyed the trip. The trail to Wedgemount Lake sure adds to the difficulty of the trip, but the alpine area around the lake is beautiful .

Participants: Eva Martinak, Neil White, Dave Herwood, Stanislav Liarsky (Organizer), and Vlad Martinak (Reporter)



Above - On the summit ridge of Wedge Mtn. Photo - V. Martinak.

Below - Wedge Mtn. with the N Arête on the right. Photo - V. Martinak.

