



B.C. Mountaineering Club Newsletter



October, 2006. Vol. 84, No. 8

Fall in Cathedral Park.

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, 10 October - Entertainment will be a slide show by Rob and Jacqui O'Carrol on trekking in the Danakil Depression, Ethiopia.

Tuesday, 14 November - Entertainment will be a slide show by Peter Gumplinger on recent skitouring on the European Haute Route.



Ben Lomond above the Capilano River valley.

HONORARY PRESIDENTS

Esther and Martin Kafer

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CLUB OFFICERS

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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

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.

14: Little Ring Pk. **C3/2260 m**
Michael Fuhrmann 604-325-5357

Extended scrambling in the upper Squamish valley.

21: Mt. Edgar **D3/1980 m**
Alastair Ferries 604-263-5835
Very extended scrambling in the Chilliwack valley area on the Depot Ck. - Paleface Ck. divide.

28-29: Ben Lomond **B2-3/1654 m**
Michael Feller 604-270-4050
Hiking and scrambling above Howe Sound.

Membership

Membership fees for 2006/2007 are

now due - Membership fees for 2006-2007 are now due. If you do not pay your dues, **THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER WILL BE THE LAST ONE YOU WILL RECEIVE.** You should fill out the yellow renewal form accompanying this newsletter, indicated if you would like to receive the newsletter by email, read and sign the waiver on the reverse side, then send the form with the appropriate dues to the club.

Membership dues are -

Single	\$45	Junior	\$20
Couple	\$68	Life	\$800

New members: the club welcomes the following new members:

Book Review

A Passion for Mountains. The lives of Don and Phyllis Munday by Kathryn Bridge (Vancouver: Rocky Mountain Books, 2006)

It is 80 years this year (1926-2006) since Don and Phyllis Munday began their many serious attempts to map and climb Mount Waddington and the many mountains in the Waddington area. *Mystery Mountain* (1948), by Don Munday, summed up such a passion and vocation. It is quite fitting and apt,

Active - Nina Evans-Locke and Larry Leonard.
Associate - Melodie Antoni, Don Cann, Sarah Carten, Yvonne Chan, Ken Gallant, Werner Grzimek, Jenny Henshaw, Shauna Kappang, Sarah Lash, Russ LeRoy, Song Li, Valery Milner, Alan Moat, Jeff Nairn, Serquei Okountsev, Dave Perfitt, Christine Perreault, Alison Richter, Arthur Robson, Carolina Santacruz, Arnold Shives, Peter Steiher, Clemence Tatin-Jaleran, and Michael Tsiroulnikov.

What club members are doing:

Margaret Hanson put up a memorial plaque for **Lois Nordstrom** at the site of Lois' climbing accident at the Conroy Ck. climbing area. Lois was a club member who died there on May 14 as a result of a fall at the Crest.

therefore, that *A Passion for Mountains: The Lives of Don and Phyllis Munday* should be published on such an auspicious occasion. Don Munday has been called the dean of BC mountaineering, and Phyllis Munday has been called the grand lady of the ancient spires and ice fields. It is rather uncanny that a biography has not been written on the lives of Don and Phyllis Munday, but Kathryn Bridge, true to form, has filled the gap in a most readable, meticulous and accessible manner. Kathryn

Bridge had done her sleuth work well on a previous biography of Phyllis Munday. *Phyllis Munday: Mountaineer* (2002) was an informative teaser and primer on the life, mostly, of Phyllis Munday. There was much missing in this early biography of the life of Phyllis Munday, and the curious and keen reader could not help but yearn for more to slake the mountaineering palette. *A Passion for Mountains* offers us a full course and much more on both the life of Don and Phyllis Munday.

A Passion for the Mountains has a most alluring and appealing cover, and the photographs in this missive cannot but hold and delight the reader. Many a page tells the tale well, in a visual way, of the climbing ethos and life of Don and Phyllis Munday. The actual text fits hand in glove with the many fine photographs. Kathryn Bridge quotes amply from the writings of the Mundays, and she threads her interpretive text, judiciously, through the fabric of the photographs and primary material.

A Passion for Mountains is, chronologically, divided into eight chapters. Each chapter builds on the momentum of previous chapters. The drama is told well, as two lives meet, mingle and become one on many a mountaineering adventure and life. The title for each chapter acts as a cairn for the reader: 1) Early Years and the B.C. Mountaineering Club, 2) Wartime, 3) Recovery and Discovery, 4) Climbing on the Coast, 5) The Alpine Club of Canada, 6) Mystery Mountain Years, 7) Icefields and Mountains, and 8) Later Years. The evocative prose-poem by Phyllis, 'I think What Will Happen to Me' and 'The Legacy' winds down the final few pages of the well crafted text. The book ends with a 'List of Ascents' and 'Endnotes' for those who long to hike further down the Munday path.

There is no doubt that *A Passion for Mountains: The Lives of Don and Phyllis Munday* is a much more mature and integrated book than *Phyllis Munday: Mountaineer*. Kathryn Bridge deserves many a kudo and accolade for her hard archivist work and visually pleasing text. There are a few comments in the text that could have been fleshed out in more depth and detail, though.

First, when Don was asked to build a private cabin on Grouse Mountain, Bridge says, 'This scheme was a shock to the climbing community' (p.102).

It would have been interesting to both explore how and why this entrepreneurial decision was a shock, how Don was treated by other mountaineers for moving in this direction, and why Don/Phyllis finally left the project. Kathryn Bridge never really develops this historic conflict point in much depth.

Second, we are told that Phyllis Munday was not the first woman to receive the prestigious ACC Silver Rope award because of 'internal politics in the club' (p. 202). Polly Prescott was given the award, and Phyllis was the second to receive the Silver Rope. It would have been interesting to know what those internal politics were and why. Third, Don & Phyllis Munday were involved in both the BCMC and ACC for many years at leadership and publishing levels. Those who know the history of both clubs are aware there were plenty of friction and tension points within and between both clubs the years Don and Phyllis were active. Kathryn Bridge does a fine job of recording the many climbs Don and Phyllis did with the ACC and BCMC, but she tends to be rather reticent on the issues they surely faced as active members in both clubs. Don was never one to be silent on hot button issues, and a well rounded biography could have included such heated moments.

Fourth, there is no doubt *A Passion for Mountains* is a good descriptive biography of some of the more positive mountaineering aspects of the lives of Don and Phyllis Munday. But, a critical biography is probably needed to fill out such lives in more detail. If this is not done, it is too easy to slip into descriptive mountain hagiography. *A Passion for Mountains* has a tendency to slip in the hagiographical direction.

Fifth, both *Phyllis Munday: Mountaineer* and *A Passion for Mountains* tend to be thin on the last 40 years of the life of Phyllis Munday. Don died in 1950, and Phyllis hiked on for many a decade after him. These decades do need to be discussed in all fairness to Phyllis.

Sixth, *A Passion for Mountains* tends to be faithful to many of the activities and climbs of Don and Phyllis, but it would have helped if more inner probes were done. What was going on in the inner life of Don and Phyllis in their many years together both on and off the mountains? There is much more that could be said about their daughter, also. The inner and outer aspects of

life do need to meet and greet in any good biography.

A Passion for Mountains is a keeper and must read for anyone with an interest in the mountains of BC and Alberta. Don and Phyllis were elders and pioneers of the mountaineering clan, and *A*

Passion for Mountains makes it most clear why such elders deserve such a well written biography. Kathryn Bridge is a fine wordsmith, and may many an award go her way for telling such a compelling tale so well.

Ron Dart

NEWS

First ascent of Mt. Everest by a double amputee:

New Zealander Mark Inglis became the first double amputee to climb Mt. Everest earlier this year, in this case via the North Col. He sustained some frostbite injury to his fingers and leg stumps. In 2004 he climbed Cho Oyu as a preparation for Everest.

The B.C. government assault on provincial parks – again:

Part 1.

Confidential BC government report confirms parking meters drove away hundreds of thousands of park visitors and missed revenue targets by over 90%

According to a press release from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee in August –

“A confidential report commissioned by the BC government to review meters in parks confirms the program was unsuccessful in meeting revenue and attendance goals. The report, along with 800 pages of related documents, was released to the Wilderness Committee through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

- FOI documents reveal costs associated with the parking meter program included hundreds of thousands of dollars of annual expenses related to vandalism, maintenance, commissions and staff time. In 2003, the first year meters were in operation, revenues for the meters were just \$51,000. The BC government has repeatedly gone on record saying the meters generated almost a million dollars annually in revenues for parks.
- FOI documents show that parking meters, located in 40 popular provincial parks, were directly responsible for over 700,000 annual

lost visits to parks. The BC government previously tried to blame lower visitation on SARS, 9/11 and forest fires but the government report confirmed that 75% of the decline in visits to parks with meters was due “to the imposition of day use parking fees.”

- FOI documents reveal that future parking meter revenues may be overstated. Recently, parking meter commissions to many private Park Facility Operators (PFOs) increased from 15% to 50% of gross parking meter revenues. Government documents show “new service agreements with private and non-profit operators result in little or no revenue for the Ministry.”
- Government documents show public compliance with the parking meters is low. The purchase rate of parking tickets, defined as tickets sold as a percentage of attendance, is just 28%, reflecting both low compliance and meters that are out of commission.

“When you read this report you understand why the BC government has been sitting on it for the last 6 months,” said Gwen Barlee, policy director with the Wilderness Committee. “The report confirms what environmentalists have been saying all along: that the meters massively missed revenue targets, had low public compliance and scared away millions of park visitors since they were introduced in 2003.”

Barry Penner, the Minister of the Environment, commissioned the parking meter report in the fall of 2005. Penner promised a review of the meters in the spring of 2006 but has refused to release the report. The Wilderness Committee submitted a FOI request for the report and related documents in May 2006.

“At what point will the BC government admit that putting parking meters in parks was a mistake?” queried Barlee. “The government has ignored conservationists and the public on this issue, the question to ask is will they heed basic accounting and listen to their own consultants, or will they continue to let ideology trump common sense?” In 2002 the government’s Recreation Stewardship Panel projected net revenues from parking meters to be between \$4 and \$6 million annually. The BC government later lowered that projection to \$2 million annually. Washington State recently axed their day-use park fees after an unsuccessful trial initiated in 2003. ”

Part 2

B.C. government barges ahead with its proposals to expand commercial lodges in provincial parks

In August the B.C. government issued requests for proposals for fixed-roof accommodation facilities in 12 provincial parks –

- Mount Robson (Robson Pass) - Omineca Region
- Elk Lakes - Kootenay Region
- Wells Gray (Stevens Lake) - Cariboo Region
- Cape Scott - northern Vancouver Island
- Mount Assiniboine - Kootenay Region
- Fintry - Okanagan Region
- Silver Star (Sovereign Lake) - Okanagan Region
- Myra Bellewe - Okanagan Region
- Nancy Greene - Kootenay Region
- Maxhamish Lake - Peace Region
- Foch-Giltoeyes - Skeena Region
- Golden Ears - Lower Mainland

According to the government press release – “British Columbia is bringing in a new policy aimed at encouraging a broader range of British Columbians and tourists to enjoy our world-class parks system as we get closer to 2010,” said Penner. “Changing demographics and expectations require us to look for ways of providing park visitors with a wider range of options.”

The new BC Parks Fixed-Roof Accommodation Policy establishes a clear set of criteria that will be used to assess any proposal to build a fixed-roof accommodation structure. The policy

will ensure that any new facilities are consistent with the management plan for the park. New accommodations will be required to complement the park system, just as existing park fixed-roof accommodation facilities already do.

Park accommodation proposals will be subject to competitive bidding and evaluation, impact assessment studies, and public and First Nations consultation. Facilities and their associated operations must be appropriate to the park setting, and also be in accordance with park values and park management plans.

“Parks play a vital role in conservation, but parks are also for people. The population is getting older, and not everyone who stays in a park wants to sleep on the ground in a tent anymore. We want to provide a great parks experience to a wider range of visitors while protecting the ecological integrity of our parks over the long term,” Penner said. “We will encourage the use of green technologies to minimize the environmental footprint and to showcase made-in-B.C. technology.”

There are currently about 160 existing fixed-roof accommodation facilities in the BC Parks system, ranging from small, minimally equipped shelters, to accommodations such as Manning Park Lodge.

For additional information on the Fixed Roof Accommodation Policy, visit the Ministry of Environment website at: www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/fixed_roof/index.html

Response to this attempt to further commercialize our parks has been quite heated with the formation of a coalition of groups to oppose new resorts in parks. The Western Canada Wilderness Committee, one of the members of the coalition, criticized the B.C. Park lodge strategy as follows: in a July press release –

“The Strategy is controversial because it allows private-for-profit development within park boundaries, has proceeded without public consultation, lacks tools to limit expansion of private facilities, permits helicopter and float plan traffic and would allow foreign multinationals to develop in BC parks.

"Eighty-seven percent of BC is already open for business. The thirteen percent that is set aside for protection should be off limits to private development," said Gwen Barlee, Policy Director for the Wilderness Committee. "Private resorts and lodges should not be located within protected areas; they should be situated on the perimeters of parks where they benefit local communities while still allowing people easy access to the park."

Freedom of information documents obtained from the BC government by the Wilderness Committee show that the BC Park Lodge Strategy also includes provisions for "major resorts" within park boundaries. According to the government documents resorts of this scale typically "include pools, tennis courts, ski hills and/or golf courses." The documents also refer to "high end" facilities with up to 100 beds and staff housing.

"When you start managing protected areas for an economic bottom line you stop managing them for an ecological bottom line," commented Barlee. "What happens when guests at a resort in a park want to ride snowmobiles or ATV's in a park? This is a slippery slope towards dismantling our park system: parks were created to be protected from development not to be sold off to the highest bidder."

The management of BC parks has been a hot potato for the provincial government. A series of unpopular measures, including allowing commercial logging within park boundaries, installing parking meters, weakening the Parks Act, changing park boundaries to allow for industrial development, cutting the operating budget for parks and axing government-funded park interpretive programs has resulted in sustained criticism of the provincial government. Since 2001 visits to BC parks have dropped by over 20%."

In September the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, after reviewing lodge proposals, put out the following press release:

"The British Columbia government has fast-tracked its controversial "roofed accommodation" strategy in provincial parks by scheduling meetings with prospective park developers just 18 business days after requests for proposals (RFPs) were first posted on a government

website...The decision to meet with developers so soon after RFPs were issued has surprised many. Of equal concern is the absence of expected public consultation and the failure to address pointed environmental concerns raised by ministry of environment staff in the RFPs.

"The fact that the government is steam-rolling this shows complete contempt for public consultation," remarked Gwen Barlee, policy director with the Wilderness Committee. "What seems to be forgotten is that these are public parks being proffered up for development."

Ministry staff flagged numerous concerns in the RFPs including the harassment, disturbance and displacement of endangered species and "potentially lethal contact" between bears and humans at Cape Scott Provincial Park. Other parks face additional problems including the potential "destruction of habitat and extirpation of species." developments being inconsistent with park management plans, interface logging (logging of areas adjacent to resorts to control fire hazards), anticipated conflict with the public, and reduced public access to park beaches. The Wells Gray proposal is surprisingly frank in certain sections, referring to "high-end facilities" geared to "European tourists." Other RFPs refer to heli-hiking, exclusive fishing opportunities and ski touring available to hotel guests.

The RFPs are also notable for the costs attached to some of the proposed lodgings. "Conservative development costs" for the 80-bed development slated for Golden Ears Park range from \$5-6 million including road expansion, landscaping and interface logging costs. In the Okanagan the capital cost of a "resort" in Fintry Park, which would include a 100-bed hotel, restaurant, marina and gift shop, is pegged at \$2-5 million.

"Additional private for-profit lodges of any sort are unacceptable in our parks, but when we saw these proposals we were astounded. The BC; government is proceeding with the development of our public parks as if they were McDonald's franchises," said Barlee. "They have created a how-to guide for developers. Promised public consultation has become a sham not about *whether* resorts be allowed in parks in the first place, but about

how wide roads will be and the colour of resort awnings.”

The coalition of groups which opposes this development of parks includes the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Canada Parks and Wilderness Society-BC Chapter, World Wildlife Fund Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, Federation of BC Naturalists, EarthCare Society, Wildsight, Sierra Club of Canada-BC Chapter, Valhalla Wilderness Society, Transboundary Watershed Alliance, West Kootenay Eco Society and West Coast Environmental Law.

“Its time to put developers on notice. Should bids be accepted to develop in parks, we will take a targeted message to the marketplace against these new operations to ensure they stay out of our Class A provincial parks,” said Gwen Barlee, representative of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

“The tourism industry needs to move wisely on this issue,” states Vicky Husband – spokesperson for the coalition. “While we will oppose new resorts in parks, the Campaign for BC Parks will work with the tourism industry and those operators who are interested in building environmentally appropriate facilities outside of parks, not inside. We all strongly oppose any new hotels and resorts in parks. We know that many tourism operators agree with this. This is not good for BC, local communities, tourism, BC’s parks, or the wildlife that live there. Any threat to our world renowned parks and protected pristine wilderness will impact on our international reputation.”

“With these types of developments come parking lots, staff housing, logging for fire blocks, helicopter traffic, sewage, and electricity. Can you imagine how caribou or grizzly bears will react to daily helicopter traffic taking guests and staff to the resort? How will that affect the wilderness experience? When does a park stop being a park?” said Ellen Zimmerman of Wildsight.

“British Columbians love their parks, they want the wilderness in parks to be protected, not blighted by resorts,” says Chloe O’Loughlin of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. “What we need is a new vision for parks - where

well-managed parks result in thriving communities, healthy families and fit citizens. They are a priceless natural legacy that must be looked after for generations of British Columbians to come.”

Further information about the coalition can be obtained from Vicky Husband at 250-478-0388 or 250-920-9355.

The Federation of Mountain Clubs has resisted attempts by its members to get it to join the coalition during heated email exchanges in the summer. This appears to be mainly due to opposition from some Alpine Club of Canada members, whose Prince George and Main sections wish to build a lodge in Mt. Robson park. The FMCBC does have a policy on roofed accommodation in provincial parks agreed to by all clubs, however, which its director, Evan Loveless, has been actively pushing to government.

Evan sent the following column by David Schreck (www.strategictoughts.com) to the FMCBC email list:

“If the reason for commercializing our parks is for folks like me who are no longer up to sleeping in a pup tent, why does the request for proposals (RFP) for Fintry Provincial Park call for a 100 bed land based resort, restaurant and gift shop together with a 20-30 boat overnight and the ability to cater to weddings and executive retreats? Are we to believe that the Okanagan is so short of resorts and tourist facilities that it is necessary to commercialize our parks to meet the demand? The most likely explanation for the Campbell government’s policy was indicated by Penner in his Vancouver Sun column when he wrote: “Operators will have to pay annual fees to government for these permits. All of this revenue will stay within the BC Parks system to help fund services and programs.” Notwithstanding Penner’s assurances, it is very difficult to obtain any information on the budget and expenditures for B.C. Parks. Speaking in the Legislature during estimates debate on April 5, 2006, Penner said: “In fiscal 2006-2007 the total budget for the environmental stewardship division of the Ministry of Environment is \$69.987 million. That budget covers fish and wildlife branch, parks branch, protected areas and ecosystems - something we were just talking about a moment ago in terms of

species at risk. The budget in terms of B.C. Parks itself would be approximately \$30 million.” According to the 2002-2003 Service Plan for the Ministry of WLAP, before the Campbell cuts in February 2002, the 2001-2002 budget for environmental stewardship was \$83.545 million (plus \$2 million for the Grizzly Bear program). It looks like the funding envelope which includes parks is still 16% lower than it was in 2001. Apart from ideology, the commercialization of B.C.’s Parks appears to be an attempt to compensate for some of the Campbell cuts.

The Silver Star RFP provides for an “initial term of up to 30 years” for a “a high quality ski-in ski-out facility” which would be “capable of accommodating approximately 30-45 guests in 5-15 rooms, and should also include common areas and associated food and beverage services”. That concept is a long way from Penner’s justification of an alternative for folks who don’t want to stay in tents. That is straightforward commercialization of our parks that has nothing to do with the changing demographics that the government claims is the reason for expanding “fixed-roof accommodation”.

Like the RFP for Fintry, executive retreats and weddings are part of the suggested uses for the commercialization of both Golden Ears in the Lower Mainland and of Myra Bellevue, again competing with existing facilities in the Okanagan. That’s low end on the spending scale compared to the RFP for Maxhamish which states: “It is expected that the proposed lodge at Maxhamish Lake would cater primarily to fly-in guests wanting to fish on one of British Columbia’s most productive lakes for trophy walleye and pike.” That sounds like converting a wilderness area to a playground for well-healed U.S. tourists, not like an alternative for those who can’t handle tents. The RFP for Foch-Giltoeyes also put the lie to Penner’s column when it said that: “The anticipated market to be served by the new park facilities is that of adventure tourists.”

Penner’s Vancouver Sun column concluded by discussing the process which led to the RFPs, including meeting five times in 2004 and 2005 with a “sounding board” from various organizations. It would be interesting to hear the reaction to the government’s actual RFPs from

those who participated on the sounding board. Before alienating rights in our parks for generations to come, the Campbell government needs to slow down and listen to all British Columbians. The Campbell government drove a million visitors a year out of B.C.’s Parks through its ill advised parking fees; it should slow down before it makes an even bigger mistake.

Sandra McGuiness from Nelson added –

“There is already a plethora of lodges outside of provincial parks but in the backcountry - in my local Nelson area - the entire Valhalla and Valkyr range is sewn up with tenures for one type of lodge or another - the tenures literally bump up against each other. There is a similar situation around Golden, where every piece of Crown Land is allocated to some tenure holder. Many of these are for so called self propelled activities, eg ski touring or hiking, but often with heli access. Others are for motorized recreation - cat skiing, heli-skiing, sledding etc. These lodges are not able to fill more than 3 to 4 months per year with bookings so I am not sure that there is even demand for more lodges in parks (or otherwise). The problem, alluded to by a few people, is that backcountry cabins/lodges intensify activity because many people who wouldn’t carry a tent in, will hike in to stay in a cabin. The Kokanee cabin is a case in point, if you hike any other trail in Kokanee you can be guaranteed to be alone, but the trail to the cabin is constantly busy. So, the argument that cabins reduce impact on say heavy camping sites, just doesn’t play out in fact. Cabins tend to aggregate use into a small area.

Provincial Parks are supposed to be for protection of the environment. Already some allow (encourage) heli skiing and heli hiking, sledding and ATV’ing and even hunting is enshrined. Adding commercial lodges is a serious degradation of what BC Parks are about and should be resisted at all costs.”

Peter Gumplinger argued –

“Maybe the FMCBC should take cues from the European Alps where roofed accommodation in the mountains (outside resorts) seems to be the exclusive domain of established national, not-for-profit, Alpine and Nature Clubs and not that of private business. Why is this not an option for BC, or is it?”

How is it that all of the countries: Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and Slovenia have adopted this system? And how about the European model whereby the clubs own the cabins and lease the business of running them to custodians (individuals, not businesses) who then make a living by selling food and drinks while the accommodation fees go to the clubs. Regulations by the clubs govern what the custodian can charge for a standard meal with enough calories to keep a climber going. The custodian is also required to provide hot water for a nominal fee and to whoever would rather just use their own food-mixes instead.

I have yet to meet a Canadian friend who hasn't enjoyed this setup on trips to the Alps. Sure, in places like Switzerland a night with "full accommodation" (bunk bed in a communal room, breakfast and dinner) runs well over \$50 but you do get something for your money. And all of these services are a bit more expensive and reservations cannot be made if you are not a member of the clubs, which helps the clubs maintain and/or add membership. Helicopters/snowmobiles are only used to supply the hut, not to access it. The trails are maintained by the clubs and often also through the initiative of the custodian who hopes for improved business from day and overnight visitors alike.

I would advocate roofed accommodation following this model for areas of the park backcountry where tenting overuse has more of an environmental impact than a hut with a resident and where there is a responsible custodian who keeps yahoos in check and who also, by the way, provides a safety net for nearby climbing accidents".

Brian Wood responded – "I agree, the European hut system seems to be an excellent model for self-propelled recreationists' backcountry lodges. Some of them are even in parks, but I understand many of the European parks were established after the huts and other infrastructure were built. I think most huts have relatively easy servicing

access (not necessarily for people) using this infrastructure.

But here many of our wilderness parks are very large, with difficult access, and are thus still relatively pristine, and we have a chance to keep them that way. All regularly-used backcountry lodges, no matter how primitive, require servicing, and this can be expensive and disrupts the environment. Commercial developers can build their luxury lodges just outside the parks, and use the Crown or private land outside the park for their inevitable motorised activities. Furthermore, with good existing (?) road access they can be 3-4 season operations, and help to stimulate the economies of the gateway communities."

Peter Stange, in a letter to the BCMC editor, stated - "Montani SEMPER Liberi? - not much longer if the Liberal plan for covered accommodations in our parks is not stopped. The various non-mechanized access outdoor clubs will have to accomplish that on their own as the political "Opposition" is peacefully co-habiting the Legislature with it's Liberal master. There is no doubt in my mind that the Liberals are determined to make corporations "Guardians / Gatekeepers" of our parks, creating playgrounds for the 'privileged' class. Has it occurred to anyone that the sequence of events regarding the sale of Intrawest to a N.Y. Conglomerate is not exactly coincidental; first the Liberals bid for the Olympics, then the huge waste of tax dollars on the "road-to-nowhere" (Whistler Road), then the covered accommodation announcement, then the sale of Intrawest. Anyone for Latte on top of Wedge? – just like in Europe. Guess we don't really measure up until we repeat every "old-country" mistake, and worse. Can the Liberals be stopped from destroying what little is left?

There are many clear cuts and abandoned mines for private development, "roofed accommodation, ski runs, ATV and mountain bike activities.

Parks are lands set aside to be preserved for future generations!"

Access Notes

Sea to Sky highway construction recreation access closures – construction on Hwy 99 to Squamish and Whistler is resulting in numerous

closures and alterations to recreation access areas. Full details of all closures can be found on www.seatoskyimprovements.ca or at 1-877-472-3399.

Trip Reports

Mt. Payne, 24 June, 2006

"No Payne, no gain" Craig Spears

Perhaps the name put people off for only Craig (NSH) joined me on my Mt. Payne hike. The weather was excellent and we started from the 32 km marker on the Silver Skagit road. A 15 minute level bushwhack brought us to the base of the ridge (between two branches of a creek) that leads directly just east of north to the summit. For the first 250 m we stayed to the right of the ridge line to get past some bluffs, but once past them we stayed on the ridge, enjoying the odd short bluff and easy scrambling. At 1750 m there is a prominent steep bluff which we circumnavigated to the right (east). We ended up becoming fairly committed to the fourth gully which required some climbing. Fortunately it worked and we regained the ridge at 2100 m. From here it was a straightforward hike to the summit. On the top we watched a large BCMC party make its way up the north slopes of Silvertip to the summit. We descended by the slopes further east of the gullies and then traversed back to the ridge at 1750 m.

It took 5 ½ hrs up, 4 hrs. down.

I have now done Silvertip, Rideout, and Payne from the Silver Skagit road. I rate Rideout as the nicest (easiest bushwhack, best meadows, most fun climb [class 3-4]) and Payne the worst. Nonetheless it is a straightforward hike and scramble up a seldom climbed higher mountain in the area. If I do it again I will first try to climb the steep buttress at 1750 m. and if this is too difficult, circle around it to the left. From the summit this looked doable and more direct.

Participants: Craig Spears and Alastair Ferries (Organizer and reporter).

A stroll on the South Twin Sister, 11 June, 2006

"Yep, we're all Canadian."

I hold my breath as Mr. Interrogator snorts and scrutinizes our passports. Mike hands him his SIN card. I glare at Mike. Mr. I. examines the card with some astonishment. Mike mumbles something about having his wallet recently stolen;

I try to see the logical connection between being at the US border and having no real ID. In a rare brief moment of sympathy Mr. I. puffs up his cheeks a last time then waves us through. The Pathfinder lurches into the USA.

North Twin is always one of my frequent trips in the contiguous USA. I've climbed it three times and have always gazed across at South Twin Sister, 110 meters higher. The route to the base of both peaks is along the same lumpy logging road - infinitely better than any Canadian logging road, of course. Then a faint trail at the edge of the logging slash: N48 43' 04.2"W 122 00' 56.4" (Peter Gumplinger)

This day was a kodachrome morning in early June, with mist and nineteenth century British visibility on the peaks. It wafted about like endless curtain calls at a theater. From where we left our bikes, we thrashed through blueberry bushes and scratchy alpine fir.

Where the forest and boulder field finally spat us out, we re-grouped in a basin of hemlock and fir. Above us a soaring fin of rock. A lovely sight. Up an easy gully then a tedious walk to the summit. Greg later described the ridge walk as akin to bush-whacking over rock – "rock- whacking" – the slow progress over easy yet tiring friable rock as stutters of dust settle in one's eyes. You see? Remy strode the ridge with long legs – Sarah and Sylvia were not far behind. Though less experienced, they seemed to be learning fast. A future generation, all with a similar mindset to my own, a marrow deep exuberance that outweighs any discomfort. Remy, Dennis and I stumble up a two hundred meter path of snow that's glued to the shattered ridge like a band-aid. We wait for the others in a blank mist.

Thunder rumbles. The air is charged. An electrical storm could flick us off the ridge, But who cares? Climbing is all about risks – of course calculated ones – but doesn't everyone survive on the danger, the exhaustion, and the exuberance of surviving? Silke drags us back to reality: Sitting on a summit in a lightning storm, Silke explained, with an ice axe pointing skywards, *is just plain stupid.*

So we down climbed, ready to toss our jangling axes into the abyss if we were threatened by lightning. Then a slow descent on a snow slope that bulged in the middle like an expectant mother. Denis's boot-ski was almost disastrous as he slipped, failed to self arrest, then sped like an Olympic skeleton racer to the bottom – 300 m. He was fine. I was shaken.

6:30 pm. We lingered at the base as we witnessed a heli rescue for another party. I contemplated the natural world's indifference to human aspirations. Like James Bond women, the mountain world is as beautiful as she is dangerous. Nonetheless, we deserve at least a day now and then when we can feel thick and strong and invincible with that fine feeling of accomplishment. Standing at the base of South Twin, I'm dazzled by the crinkled creek in the basin, euphoric that it wasn't ME to have fallen, and

thrilled by new friendships. It was a short hike back to the bikes, then a giddy downhill ride. Speed on a mountain bike is a great feeling. Richard and Remy made it a race. And why not? Speed begs the wild gleam to come into the eyes. It makes you feel powerful. Powerful that I was for that moment, I found Richard nursing a head wound having flipped ass over teakettle. I sympathized, offered a band-aid, and then made a point about wearing a helmet.

11:30 pm. The light had long faded. The stars wheeled and spun in the firmament. The border guard grinned this time, and waved us a welcome back into Canada. Thank you Peter for organizing a superb day.

Participants: Remi Martin, Mike Fuhrman, Sarah Lash, Silvie Bakovic, Greg Stoltmann, Denis Richard, Silke Gumplinger, Peter Gumplinger (Organizer), and Jane Weller (Reporter).



South Twin Sister above Denis. Photo - J. Weller