

B.C. Mountaineering Club Newsletter



Little Ring Middle Fore Consol. Dome

Oct. 2010. Vol. 33, No. 3

The Five Fingers from summit of Meslillooet Mtn., Sept. 2001. The Thumb is hidden behind the Middle Finger. See article in this issue. Photo: Paul Kubik

EVENING SOCIAL MEETINGS

Evening socials are held in the ANZA club, upstairs room (corner of 8th Ave. and Ontario St., Vancouver) from 7:30 pm. Cookies, tea and coffee are provided.

Tues. 12 Oct. - To be announced - please check the website: www.bcmmc.ca

Tues. 9th Nov. - Annual General Meeting with entertainment to follow.



Mt. Overlord 2625m on Spearhead Traverse
Photo: David Hughes

British Columbia Mountaineering Club

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SATELLITE PHONE:	PETER GUMPLINGER	604-733-8264
LIBRARY:	JOAN FORD	604-876-4255

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 (604-736-8462) or Peter Gumplinger (604-733-8264), 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 August). 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. 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: editor@bcmc.ca

Members may upload articles, photos etc. for the editor at: <http://bcmc.ca/members/EditorUpload.asp>

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. 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 ~ Check for updates at www.bcmc.ca

October

2	Rock Climbing	Saturday Squamish Rock Climbing	A5	Stanislav Liarsky	604-983-4476
2	Hiking	Overlord Mountain	C2	Craig Speirs	604-925-3675
2	Hiking	Helm Cr / Black Tusk / Rubble Ck cross-over	B/C2	Brian Ellis	604-734-3737
2-3	Instructional Program	Rappelling Practice (members only)	A5	Justin Bennett	604-813-4666
2-3	Hiking	Grant's Pond Peak	B2	Karl Ricker	604-938-1107
9	Hiking	Capilano Mtn.	C2	Philip Kubik	604-266-5873
9-10	Instructional Program	Introductory Wilderness First Aid Course (20 hours) Members only	A1	Sabine Decamp	778-846-7735
16	Rock Climbing	Saturday Squamish Rock Climbing	A5	Waldemar Jonsson	604 780 0296
16	Hiking	Peak(s) at the head of Downton Ck	D3	Alastair Ferries	604-329-1637
16-17	Instructional Program	Rescue Basics Practice (members only)	A5	Justin Bennett	604-813-4666
23-24	Hiking	Madeley Lake	B2	Michael Feller	604-270-4050
30-31	Instructional Program	Outdoor Leadership Skills course	A2	BCMC Programs & Camps	

NEWS AND NOTICES

New Members

The club welcomes the following new members: Yvonne Lamers, Colleen Rostek, Jason Wiech, Caroline Embling, Timothy Pirie, Laura Morrison, Erik del Pino, Barbara del Pino, Tamara Bodnar, Barry Smith, Michele Cohen, Tim Blair, Rob Starr, Esther Berube, Ryan Conroy, Marcelo Glaubach, Ian Christie, Ken Chui.

BCMC Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held Nov. 9th, 7:30 pm at the ANZA club. A new executive will be elected and several positions are open for the coming year. These are: climbing, membership (2), socials (programs), camps and programs, editor (journal), and vice president.

Now is a great time to join the executive and help run your club. Executive meetings (followed by goodies) are held monthly on the first Tuesday of the month, except July and August. Give this some thought. We hope you will join us and bring your ideas to keep our club vibrant.

Please contact the nominating chair, Todd Ponzini, at 604.640.3195 or tponzini@deloitte.ca.

Serious Issue with Liability Insurance

As you may know, the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC buys liability insurance to protect member clubs and individual members from claims arising from accidents on club trips. The current policy contains some restrictions that could make it difficult or impossible to collect from the insurance company in the event of a claim. We are still trying to understand the issues and are working with the FMCBC to make changes to the policy or find another insurance company. Until we do that, we believe that members should assume that the insurance will provide limited to no coverage in the event of a claim.

None of us on the executive are insurance experts. We would welcome help from any member who works in the insurance industry or is knowledgeable about insurance law. If you are able to help, please contact Dan Carey or Brian Wood.

VIMFF Volunteer Needed

BCMC has been a proud supporter of the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival at the Centennial Theatre in North Vancouver for many years. We have a display table in the lobby and we present the Macaree Award (\$500) for the best Mountain Culture Film. The next VIMFF will be Feb. 11th – 19th.

After many years of making arrangements and coordinating with festival director Alan Formanek, Dave Scanlon is stepping down. Please consider filling this volunteer position. It requires organizing for the display table and finding volunteers to be there each evening. Table volunteers get a free ticket for the evening. Dave is the one to answer your questions: 604.572.5051 or david.hiker@gmail.com.

Callaghan Valley Winter Backcountry Survey

The Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC (FMCBC) is conducting a survey on backcountry skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing in the Callaghan Valley. Please complete this survey if you have skied, snowboarded or snowshoed in the Callaghan Valley in the past, or plan to do so in the 2010-2011 winter season. The survey takes less than 15 minutes.

The survey results will help the FMCBC and the Alpine Club of Canada (Whistler Section) in their negotiations for continued backcountry access at the Whistler Olympic Park.

You can find the survey at: www.surveymonkey.com/s/callaghan2010

HUTS, HUTS AND MORE HUTS

Spearhead Traverse Hut System Proposed for Garibaldi Park

Spearhead Hut System – Initial Concept Plan Approved by BC Parks

Jason Faulkner, Spearhead Hut Committee, 29 August 2010

The Spearhead Hut Committee (SHC) has formally submitted a conceptual plan to BC Parks for the construction of a hut system along the Spearhead Traverse (the Spearhead and Fitzsimmons ranges), the spectacular mountain ranges that connect Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains. This proposal comes from a working group comprised of representatives from the Alpine Club of Canada Whistler Section (ACCW), The Alpine Club of Canada Vancouver Section (ACCV), the Alpine Club of Canada National, The British Columbia Mountaineering Club (BCMC), memorial groups (the Kees and Claire Memorial Hut Society and the Brett Carlson Memorial

Group) and other interested parties. This coalition of support represents a broad base of non-motorized backcountry user groups, committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship. The Spearhead Hut Committee (The Committee) is the organizing and advocacy group that will design and build this system of huts.

The Whistler Section of the Alpine Club of Canada will operate and maintain the hut system, for the benefit of mountain enthusiasts who wish to experience this dramatic area of Garibaldi Provincial Park. The vision of a hut system for this area was first contemplated and proposed in the mid-1960's by the BCMC.

When completed, the hut system will be comprised of number a huts, spread at intervals along the 40 km circuit. The huts will provide summer and winter shelter with overnight accommodation, heat, water, toilets and self-serve cooking facilities. The hut system will allow winter and summer backcountry travelers to experience this remarkable environment relatively unencumbered by equipment and heavy packs. Establishment of the hut system will also mitigate and control the current random user/uncontrolled camping impacts that are occurring throughout this area. The huts will also broaden the potential user base of the Spearhead range to include both younger and older people, and those with less experience than would currently be able to experience and enjoy this region of the park in the summer and winter seasons.

The Spearhead Range is unparalleled in North America in its combination of length, quality of terrain, accessibility and position within the alpine wilderness of Garibaldi Park. Skiers and backcountry travelers from around the world have begun to discover this opportunity. The proposed hut system would support what is undoubtedly one of the most sought after backcountry trips in North America, and would likely be considered one of the great alpine hut tours in the world. It is anticipated that this would be a legacy project as BC Parks celebrates it's 100th anniversary in 2011.

For more information contact: The Spearhead Hut Committee, Jayson Faulkner – 604 902 0080

Update on the Proposed Spearhead Hut System

David Hughes, 20 September 2010

Late last summer, the BCMC was asked to join a group to investigate the practicality of building and operating a series of backcountry huts on the Spearhead Traverse in Garibaldi Park. This group is called the Spearhead Hut Committee (SHC) and it is comprised of the following members:

A Whistler group that has come together under the Whistler Section of the Alpine Club
The BCMC
The Vancouver Section of the Alpine Club
The Kees and Claire Memorial Hut Society (for Cornelius 'Kees' Brenninkmeyer and Claire Dixon)
The Brent Carlson Memorial Group

The SHC subsequently reached an agreement to prepare a concept plan, to investigate possible hut locations and to search out funding sources for several huts to be located in the high alpine on the traverse from Blackcomb Mountain to Whistler Mountain.

The SHC submitted a Concept Plan to BC Parks in June and Park officials have now reviewed the Concept Plan and given their initial approval. The Garibaldi Park Master Plan includes a provision for a hut system on the Spearhead Traverse and Park officials have been interested in a Spearhead huts idea for a long time. As a result of discussions and meetings with Park officials SHC Chair, Jayson Faulkner, has prepared the attached announcement.

Why BCMC has agreed to investigate the concept

The BCMC and its members are leaders in the backcountry skiing in the British Columbia. The BCMC was a major player in getting the Garibaldi Park established as a Provincial Park. The Club built the Russet Lake

and Wedgemount cabins in Garibaldi Park and the Russet Lake cabin is one of the potential hut locations of the Spearhead Hut System. The Russet Lake cabin may be either expanded or replaced as a result of the expanded hut system.

The BCMC has supported huts to help our members and the general public gain access to and use of the backcountry. The Club has actively participated in forums to help preserve territory for non-motorized use and the Club has been a leader in helping to protect important and environmentally sensitive areas. Huts have helped to concentrate use to appropriate locations that can adequately handle wastewater, protect alpine landscapes and deal with other concerns.

Why the Spearhead

The Spearhead Traverse is a very popular backcountry ski area. Area visitor numbers in the late winter and spring are now estimated to be in the thousands. Summer hiking usage is also increasing significantly with the recent trail building by Whistler Blackcomb. The BCMC needs to be involved with the Spearhead program if it is to continue an active role with the backcountry skiing community.

The Spearhead proposal is not a commercial venture. The huts, which are likely to hold 20 – 30 people, will be operated and maintained by the Whistler Alpine Club. During busy periods there will most likely be hut custodians. Members of the founding committee clubs/groups will be offered a large discount on any overnight fees. The huts will have proper water and wastewater systems and they will have heat. The huts will also help to provide emergency shelter as this above treeline high alpine route is subject to severe weather conditions.

The financing of the huts will be largely come from donations and fundraising events. The SHC is starting a fundraising program and initial interest is encouraging. Any significant financial contributions from the BCMC will need to be clarified and put to the membership for approval.

The Spearhead Hut System may more than likely be owned by a separate society or a formal agreement will be arranged between the SHC members to collectively own all the huts. It is anticipated that the founding clubs will not own any specific huts.

Other BCMC initiatives

The BCMC is considering building a hut at Watersprite Lake next to the southwest corner of Garibaldi Park. This would be strictly a BCMC project and this hut and any other BCMC club proposals are completely independent of the Spearhead huts and need not be dependent or influenced by the development of the Spearhead Hut Traverse System.

If you have any questions, comments or if you would like to be involved, please contact me.

David Hughes, BCMC Committee Member

Club Huts And Cabins

The following piece was submitted to the editor for publication by Werner Grzimek. It is followed by another piece by Dave Scanlon, with input from various executive members, which correct Werner's figures where necessary.

What Do Members Want: Huts On The Spearhead, At Water Sprite Lake Or Our Own Hut-Club House In/Around Squamish? *by Werner Grzimek*

In our last News Letter there was an interesting article by Brian Wood about future hut building options for the BCMC.

Wouldn't it be interesting to hear more from our members, what they think about future hut building?
After all it is one of the biggest expense for our club - 30 000 dollars a pop or more.

1. Our existing back country huts are not used already

Past experience demonstrates that back country huts in unknown, unpopular areas are a consistent failure for the club. Some of our back country huts see not a single BCMC club trip for years in a row! That looks to many club members like tens of thousands of dollars in club money wasted. Nobody wants a fourth hut like these.

2. Is there lacking member support for a hut at Water Sprite Lake?

On club and private trips I asked participants about the proposed hut at Water Sprite Lake and I did not get much positive response about it. Again - this seems to be another unknown, unpopular area and the interest seems to be low. I don't know of any club trip that went there in the past one or two seasons. That is not a motivating sign! So...are we in the process of building back country hut number four that won't be used for \$ 30 000?

3. A professional alternative approach – ask for members input first!

Would it not be a better quality procedure to

- a) First ask members what their ideas and wishes are (call it market research) - then
- b) Based on member's input make a plan - and then
- c) Let members vote on that plan?

What should not happen is that only a finalized plan -without member input- is put to a vote by members and at that time everybody feels kind of obliged to rubber stamp/accept the proposal because so much work already went into it. The outcome of our three unused huts speaks for itself – around \$ 60 000 (?) spent but members don't care and don't use it.

Maybe our hut committee could organize some brainstorming sessions/hearings during our socials, and ask for member ideas/evaluations via our paper News Letter, E-News Letter, Forum and Web Blog and after the initial brainstorming make a formalized member survey about what ideas they like via our web page. This could be done together with our member survey that is planned by our executive for this fall anyhow.

It would be interesting to hear from our hut committee how many member-nights per year we currently have in our three existing huts ... about maintenance costs per hut and what the estimated member nights (usage) per year in our Water Sprite Hut could be.

4. An existing/updated idea: Let us build our own clubhouse/hut around Squamish that may pay for itself.

If Water Sprite seems to have not enough support, what do members think about a hut on the Spearhead Traverse (a popular destination) or our own car-accessible clubhouse/hut near Squamish?

-Within 15 to 60 minutes drive you can ski the back country and ski down hill, ice climb in Whistler-Pemberton during winter and rock climb, hike, scramble, mountain bike, kayak, swim in the river during summer. Something all club members will use (not only skiers) and this year-round in Canada's Out Door Capital!?

-Our past president Anders Ourom was already promoting our own clubhouse in our Newsletter back in Dec 2001, p7, 8.

-Whenever I made this suggestion to other club members on my club trips they were very enthusiastic and supportive of this idea – already talking about sitting around the fire place ...glass in hand.. telling adventurous stories to each other. Imagine what this will do to the social live within our club? We get to know each other much better from our 'over nighters' in our Squamish club house!

-When other rock climbers or skiers have to trod home on Saturday evening the BCMC-ers will retire to their own club house. Imagine how this will heighten our profile in the climbing community.

- It will result in more members and thus additional member fees – together with an optional \$10 fee per night we can get additional revenue for all maintenance. 300 member nights x \$10 = \$3000/year at a 5% occupancy rate or 6 occupancy nights per week. It might even become a welcome income source for the club.

-How do these (analytically) estimated figures compare with a hut at Water Sprite which is mainly for skiers and multi day trippers in winter only?

-The Club had its own club house in the past up on Mount Grouse...just read how much fun members had up there in our 'BC Mountaineer 2009' - P. 381

If they could do it than – we can do it now – think big!

It probably won't be easy – but as long as we have not tried it we can't say it will not work. If we spent about \$30-50 000 on our 100 year birthday celebration alone, why can't we build a car accessible hut in /around Squamish?

Let us see what members think. More and better ideas are welcome! wernergr@shaw.ca

Comments on Werner's Letter by *Dave Scanlon, President.*

Werner has passionately introduced the idea that club members may like to have a clubhouse in the Squamish area. However, some of the points he makes are not accurate and require correction.

Cost of huts construction and their use

The most recently built hut was the North Creek cabin, which cost the club approximately \$19,000 in total. The other huts cost less.

About 16 (known) persons per year, on average, make use of the North Creek cabin, which, admittedly, is underuse. In 2007, there were three trail-clearing trips there and a winter ski camp; in 2008 a new trail was established to avoid a creek-crossing; two recent summer camps have been held there (14 participants in 2008), and a work trip to North Creek is planned for the Thanksgiving weekend.

The Mountain Lake cabin, on the other hand, sees well over 100 (known) users per year; this cabin was recently upgraded. The Plummer Hut is used by at least 20 (known) users per year. A club trip to the Plummer Hut in 2004 upgraded the facility for the first time in decades for the cost of \$1400.

The club has a policy that non-members pay a small user fee to assist with upkeep costs, but, unfortunately, few users choose to support this.

The club currently has a ten-year tenure at Watersprite Lake, during which we may build a cabin. A committee is working on this; announcements have been made periodically at the socials. No costs can be incurred without membership approval. Club members have made many trips to the area in both summer and winter, several of these to assess suitability as a cabin site. Club members had agreed in principle to construct a hut as a centennial project. The originally desired site, Battleship Lakes, was not approved by authorities; Watersprite Lake was later identified as suitable. It has been a long process and several club members have put in a lot of effort over the years.

The Centennial Celebrations

It is important to clarify that the club actually turned a small profit from the sold-out banquet on Grouse Mountain. The Centennial Journal cost the club about \$8700 from its literary fund, over and above the bi-annual journal budget. The centennial video cost the club approximately \$9000, half of the full cost; the other \$9000 was covered by donations. Exact figures may be acquired from the treasurer.

A clubhouse in Squamish?

A great idea! If Werner and others who support the idea would like to research some information on potential sites and other key issues then present this to the executive, the executive would be happy to consider it. This is how the other huts were built – from initiatives by club members who brought their ideas and plans to the executive for consideration.

COAST MOUNTAIN NAMES

Part 4. The Coquitlam-Pitt Divide by Glenn Woodsworth

From the summits of Mt. Seymour, you can look east across Eagle Peak and Ridge to the summits on the Coquitlam-Pitt divide. Although close to Vancouver, these peaks are tough to reach and they see few ascents. Coquitlam Mountain takes its name from the Coquitlam River, “Coquitlam” is a corruption of *Kwikwetl'm*, the Halkomelem name for the river, meaning “stinking of something” or “smell, fish slime.” (Names in **bold** are official names; those in **bold italics** are unofficial, alternate, or obsolete.)

Coquitlam Mountain was climbed by the Mundays in 1918, but the more interesting peaks farther north weren't explored for some years. In 1924 Tom Fyles and five other BCMC members explored the compact group of sharp rock peaks, now called the Five Fingers, east of the head of Coquitlam. They climbed one peak, probably what's now called the Forefinger, and suggested that,

... as the peaks so far had no names they might be called the **Memorial Group**; and the peaks named after the members of our own club who lost their lives in the Great War. It is suggested that the highest point reached be called **Mt. Carr** after Frank Carr who was on the club's executive for several years.

This suggestion didn't stick, though, and with the naming of a Mount Carr in Garibaldi Park, people lost interest in the idea. Yet another interesting but now little-used name for the Five Finger group came into use in the 1920s or 1930s: **The Rhino**. This name comes from “... its profile as seen from the mountains of North Vancouver, the Little Finger serving as the horn and the Middle Finger and Thumb as the head, and the Forefinger and Ring Finger as the ears.” I remember that some older members of the BCMC still used this name in the early 1960s, and you can see the horn, head, and ears in Paul Kubik's photo on the front cover.

From 1938 to 1940, the Five Fingers saw more visitors than they were to see for the next fifty. In 1938, Les Harrison and Rod Pilkington approached the Five Fingers from Indian Arm(!) and climbed the highest peak, termed **Memorial Peak** by them and now called the Middle Finger. They returned in 1939 via Widgeon Lake and climbed some peaks farther south on the ridge towards Coquitlam Mountain. **Obelisk Peak** was named for its shape, but it doesn't seem particularly obelisk-shaped to me. Harrison, a geologist, thought that flat-topped **Peneplain Peak** might be a remnant of an uplifted and eroded peneplain. A peneplain is a somewhat controversial term for a plain formed by erosion over a great period of time. Peneplain Peak probably isn't a peneplain. And between Obelisk and Peneplain they climbed the steep **Shark's Fin Peak**, now generally called **Sharkfin Peak**. It's a good descriptive name: the small tower does resemble a shark fin when seen

from Mount Seymour. Another descriptive Harrison-Pilkington name, and my favourite, is **The Canopener**, or **Canopener Peak**. This may be another name for Sharkfin, but I think Canopener is probably the long, sharp ridge immediately north of Sharkfin.

Bill Mathews, another geologist, and Gus Fraser were the next to visit the region, in May 1940. Mathews wrote:

In recent years, after the appearance of the group from Mts. Meslilloet and Bonnycastle, the name **Five Fingers** has been proposed.... The peaks are arranged in a line extending from the **Forefinger** at the southwestern end to the **Little Finger** at the northeastern end and with the **Thumb** as in the left hand opposing the **Middle Finger** and joined to it by a high ridge.

They approached from **Pitt Lake**, which takes its name from **Pitt River**. Pitt River was named sometime before 1827 for William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806), British Prime Minister.

Mathews and Fraser bushwhacked up **Desperation Creek**, so named by them because of the horrific travel they encountered in the creek. The next day, though, “we came within view of a lake of such beauty that we felt all our earlier efforts and discomforts amply repaid. We therefore immediately called it Consolation lake.” Consolation Lake was officially approved as **Consolation Lakes**, because there are several lakes nearby. But Victoria disallowed Desperation Creek and instead named named it **DeBeck Creek**, origin unknown to me. Mathews and Fraser also named spreading **Consolation Dome** that rises above the lakes.

Later in 1940, surveyor A.J. Campbell climbed the Middle Finger and Penepplain while surveying in the region. He also climbed and named **Mount Lou**, a small summit southwest of the Forefinger that had been climbed by Harrison and Pilkington in 1938, and probably also by the 1924 Fyles party. This name was unknown until 2008 when Justin Brown and a friend approached the area from Widgeon Lake and found the 1938 and 1940 records, unprotected inside the cairn - a remarkable survival. **Widgeon Lake**, **Widgeon Creek**, and **Widgeon Peak** take their names from **Widgeon Slough**, named sometime before 1914 for the American Widgeon, a duck that is common in the area.

The next mountaineering party to visit the region was in 1965, when BCMC members Jack Bryceland, Tony Ellis, and Bob Woodsworth made a quick visit via DeBeck Creek. They picked off the last good first ascent, the Ring Finger, and dubbed the small, sharp pinnacle on the northeast side of the Middle Finger **The Fingernail**.

In the next article, I'll discuss mountain names in an area that sees far more traffic than the Five Fingers: the Chehalis Lake area.

TRIP REPORTS

The Wet-Ass Bike-Hike September 18, 2010

It was supposed to be only showers. But a pounding rain submersed us in a layer of water that ran down our clothing and filled our boots so that our toes wiggled around like a school of minnows in an aquarium bowl.

We were biking down the trail towards Seymour Dam. No one else was around except for a lone jogger, her face pinched from exposure to pain and duty. Our motivations for undertaking this insanity were probably the same- get some exercise and seek some challenge. Our goal was to reach the summit cairn of Coliseum Mountain. Neil and Stephanie had never been there before. I had been there a few times but badly needed to burn off some blubber accumulated while recovering from a dirt-bike injury.

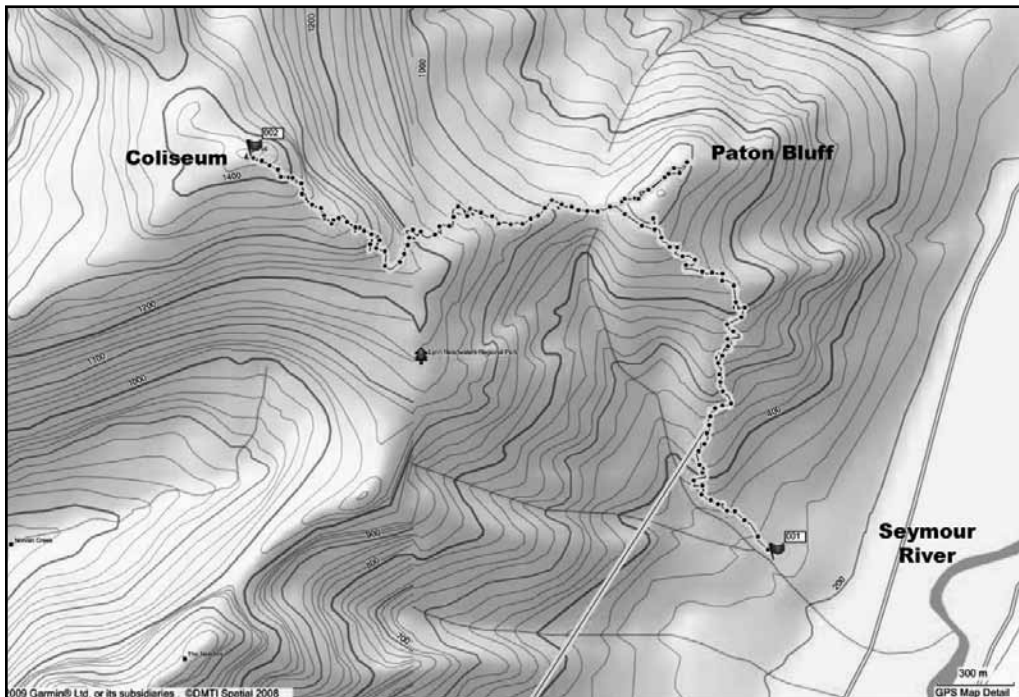
After 9 km of plowing through water with our bikes we reached the dirt road that leads to the trailhead. A sign at the start of this road a sign contains the appropriate words "Parking Lot". At the end of the road are some large boulders – the trail starts to the right of these boulders. We parked our bikes behind some foliage and started sloshing our way up the steep trail that first leads to Paton Bluff and then continues on up to the col between the North Needle and Coliseum.

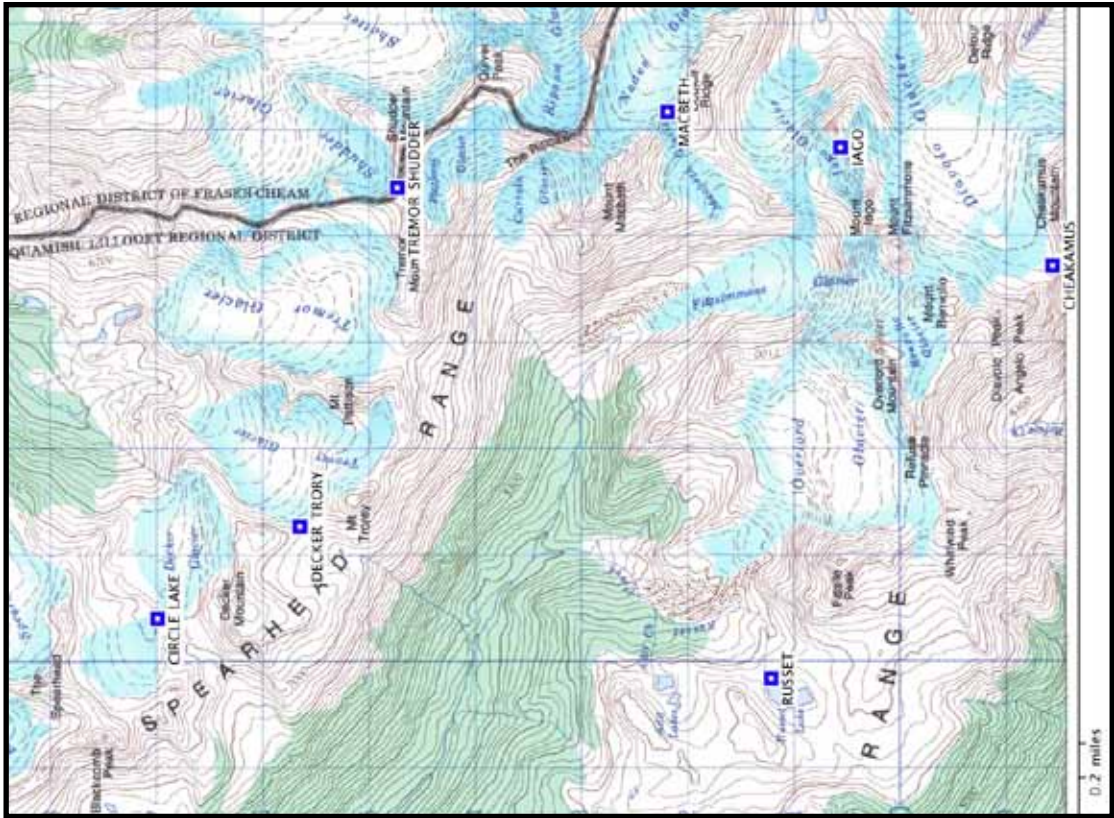
The advantage of the steep trail is that it keeps you warm even if you are soaked to the nether regions. After about an hour we reached Paton Bluffs area, and then continued on until we reached a fork in the trail, with the fork on the right going uphill and the left fork going steeply downhill. So it seemed reasonable to take the right fork. But this circled back to the top of Paton Bluffs, a fact confirmed when I took a gander down through the clouds and saw a piece of the Seymour Dam.

After getting our geography straightened out we back-tracked, dropped down the steep left fork that we should have taken previously, and squished our way up to the Needle-Coliseum col. There we caught a glimpse of another group rapidly disappearing up the trail to Coliseum. We followed them but never saw them again. They were swallowed by the clouds and were probably heading over to Burwell. We spent a few minutes at the Coliseum cairn inhaling some food. The usual Whiskey jack mafia that one has to feed on the top of Coliseum had deserted this area, probably heading over to Burwell expecting richer booty from the other, larger group.

On the way back we ran into a guy (his accent was from Oz) and a dog, with a bear-bell on its collar, just below the summit. So it seems that we weren't the only crazies wandering around on a rainy Saturday.

We slithered back down the slope to our bikes and cycled to the car park and hence to home and a hot bath. Thanks to Neil Beattie and Stephanie Li for being such great hiking companions, and to Neil for organizing this trip. (Gordon Esplin, scribe)





Spearhead Traverse: This map shows initial possibilities for hut locations. The Spearhead Hut Committee is also looking at sites at the south end of Mt. Pattison and in the col immediately south-east of Mt. Pattison (toward Mt. Tremor).

The SHC is seeking comments from club members on these and other locations and is encouraging members to get out and explore the winter and summer routes. Contact David Hughes with comments.

BCMC MEMBERSHIP SURVEY ~ This is your opportunity to be heard!

The BCMC executive is inviting feedback from members on membership fees, multi-year memberships, newsletter and E-news. Depending on members' feedback and survey results, the executive will explore the feasibility of early bird discounts, multi-year memberships and a discount or surcharge depending on a member's election to receive the newsletter in paper or electronic format. The executive is also inviting members to offer suggestions, ideas, comments or feedback on how to improve the Club or how the executive can better serve the members. The survey will be open until **November 30th, 2010**. The BCMC Membership survey can be completed electronically at <http://bcmc.ca/survey>

We encourage you to complete the survey electronically if possible so the executive doesn't have to recopy your responses electronically. A paper copy of the survey will be mailed separately, however, for members unable to complete an electronic copy. We value every member's opinion and want every members' input.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation.