

B.C. Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Mountain Lake Cabin
August 20, 2011



Photo: Paul Adam

November 2011. Vol. 89, No. 11

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.

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN MUG

Tues. 08 Nov. - Annual General Meeting and executive elections. A slideshow will follow on a winter ski trip into Garibaldi Park to the Nivalis Peak area.

Tues. 13 Dec. - John Scurlock presents on mountain aerial photography.



Coming out of the trees in the Nivalis Range (Photo: Dave Scanlon)

British Columbia Mountaineering Club

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

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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. For rentals, email info@bcmc.ca or contact Kit Griffin (604-313-7282) or Peter Gumpfinger (604-733-8264). At least 2 days notice should be given prior to the day the equipment is wanted, except for the satellite phone, which should be arranged at least 2 weeks in advance.

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.

NOTICE: 2011/12 MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE.

The new fee is \$40 per member, with \$10 more if you want a printed subscription to the Newsletter and bi-annual Mountaineer. For Senior and Junior members, the fee is \$20, with the printed subscription \$5 more. Renew online at www.bcmc.com, at the monthly social, or by mail using the membership form available on the website or included in this Newsletter.

TRIP SCHEDULE ~ Check for updates and details at www.bcmc.ca

November 2011

2	Alpine Practice: Climbing alpine rock: DePencier Bluff:B5	Serguei Okountsev	
5	Silent Hub: D3	Alastair Ferries	604-329-1637
19	Herman Saddle: B2 (3) - <i>Skiing</i>	Thomas Schroeder	

December

3	Sugarloaf Mountain: D2/3 - <i>Snowshoeing</i>	Alastair Ferries	604-329-1637
3	Paul Ridge: B2 - <i>Skiing</i>	Peter Gumplinger	
10	Mount Harvey - North Ramp C4	Don Montrichard	
14	Alpine Practice (Members Only): B5	Serguei Okountsev	

NEWS AND NOTICES

New Members

The club welcomes the following new members: Caroline Le Bouteiller, Chad Brown, Raymond Bucknell, Spring McClurg, Leigh McClurg, Zoe Nielsen, Alistair Taylor, and Jeff Wachsmann.

Snow season is fast approaching

Thanks to the keen trip organizers who have already started to post trips for the upcoming snow season. Check out the online schedule and start planning your winter and spring outings (ski, snowshoe & ice climbing trips). And please keep the trips coming! Questions on the trip organizing process? Please e-mail your climbing committee members at climbing@bcmc.ca.

VIMFF Contact/Coordinator needed (Feb 10-18, 2012)

A volunteer is also needed to be the main contact person between the BCMC and Alan Formanek, the director of the Vancouver international Mountain Film Festival (VIMFF). You would be responsible for the BCMC display at the festival, for co-ordinating BCMC member volunteers to attend the Festival, and scheduling people to staff the club's display table. To volunteer and to have help in the transition, or to get more information of what would be required, please call David Scanlon at 604-531-5025.

MEC Clubs Night for BCMC Members

Date: Tuesday November 15th

Time: 7-9 pm

Location: MEC Vancouver, 130 West Broadway

RSVP required: Please send your name to <clubnight@bcmc.ca> by November 8th

The store will be open exclusively to members, who will receive 10% off all items purchased that evening – and 5% off boats! Participants must be a member of Mountain Equipment Coop in order to make a purchase. If you are not yet a member, you may purchase a 5\$ membership that evening. All items must be in stock and

purchased on site in order to be eligible for the discount.

Articles and photos wanted for the next edition of the BC Mountaineer

Every 2 years the club publishes a glossy journal devoted to club activities during the preceding 2 years. The next journal will be published in 2012. Articles about longer or more interesting trips, mountain science, or conservation, etc., together with photos, are required. If you have any items, please submit them to Michael Feller (michael.feller@ubc.ca) by the end of 2011.

Club Library needs a new home

Michael Feller

The BCMC library is probably the best mountaineering library in B.C. It contains around 1000 books and journals and has been kindly kept in Joan Ford's house in recent years. We owe Joan much gratitude for doing this. She will soon be moving out of her house, however, so the library needs a new home. It comes with its own bookcases, so all that is required is space. It occupies 8 bookcases and one filing cabinet, although the filing cabinet can probably be discarded. The bookcases have the following widths (with the number of shelves given in brackets): 73 cm (5), 73 cm (5), 84 cm (4), 84 cm (4), 80 cm (3), 92 cm (3), 122 cm (6), 124 cm (5).

If you have space in your house for this collection and don't live too far away from Vancouver and you are willing to house the library, please contact Michael Feller at michael.feller@ubc.ca. You can see the library if you need to, by contacting Joan Ford at 604-876-4255.

Best Practices Guide for Rock Climbing Route Development - Squamish Area Provincial Parks

BC Parks, in conjunction with a climbing advisory group, is developing a Best Practices Guide for Rock Climbing Route Development for Stawamus Chief Park, Shannon Falls Park, and Murrin Park. The Climbers' Access Society of BC had representation on the climbing advisory group and is now happy to report the process has reached the public consultation stage. Please take this opportunity to provide information, express your opinion and suggest alternatives by visiting the BC Parks web page to provide your input.

October Newsletter correction

Dave Scanlon

In the trip report "Up and Down on the Duffey", the picture credits should go to Alena Dzujkova. My camera but she took all of the pictures.

The 'True' Story of the North Creek Sleeping Bag Incident

Dave Scanlon

I admit to being a part if a conspiracy to deprive you of the facts about one particular incident that happened once upon a time at the north Creek Cabin. The hush hush sleeping bag incident. Now when I talk about the sleeping bag incident I am not referring to any "wet dreams" encountered by any individuals struggling to find the north Creek Cabin and having to camp in the dead of night with only a tarp for shelter in the pounding rain. Neither am I referring to the "active" member who lost his virginity in a snow cave as it was disclosed to me while tent bound in a snow storm. For the edification of those of you without "inside" knowledge of the famous sleeping bag incident at north Creek, I now refer you to the following story.

As the insurance bloodhounds; legal beagles, have now left with their tails between their legs with nothing to show for all of their snooping around. The club is once again back to normal. It is now probably safe to reveal the facts as they stand. There having been persistant rumors last year that heli-skiers were regularly using the North Creek Cabin in violation of our non-mechanized policy we decided to do something about it. A trail

work party was organized by our honorary Australian, ostensibly to clear the North Creek trail but in reality the objective was somewhat different. The mission was to construct a low velocity sleeping bag launcher to be used as an advanced strike weapon against the primary target of the enemy. Namely the helicopter. The launcher required a large hollow log into which a sleeping bag and a fuel bottle Molotov cocktail could be installed. The secrecy of the mission was nearly compromised when the organizers wife fell off the launcher as she was cleaning the barrel and was nearly swept away by the torrent of water below. We managed to cover up the barrel cleaning incident as a domestic dispute and our secrecy remained intact.

All that remained was the mission itself. To this end a group of club members infiltrated a helicopter ski trip into the North Creek cabin posing as heli-skiers and the stage was set. Sometime around Christmas the go ahead was given and the wheels spun into motion. The poseurs weasled their way onto the first flight in. We new from previous trips that the enemy would ne landing in a clearing not far from the cabin and just outside our property line. We had positioned our launcher accordingly. All that was required was a little fine tuning for direction and the loading of the charge, a fine quality sleeping bag. The freedom fighters waited until the last flight disembarked before igniting the missile. Now it is known that helicopters are notably unstable machines but we could never have guessed upon the effect of our well placed missile upon the enemy machine. We had hoped for a disabling action which would teach the enemy heli-skiers a harsh lesson. However what transpired was more than we could have hoped for and it was quickly evident that we had a full scale insurance adjusters nightmare on our hands.

The pilot was preparing to evacuate the area when the cocktail was ignited. The charge exploded and the sleeping bag was launched at low velocity towards it's target. Approaching the helicopter as it prepared for takeoff the bag was sucked into the rotor blades by the heavy downdraft and was sucked into the rotor blades with devastating results. The rotors spun crazily after impact with the bag causing extensive damage to the transmission and virtually destroying the rotor blades. The sleeping bag expelled a puff of feathers on impact but remarkably suffered little damage. We managed to recover the sleeping bag and recover a sufficient number of feathers to duct- tape it back together, ready for sleeping or another launch. Meanwhile the bills for the helicopter overhaul, downtime and rescue continue to trickle in to the insurance company, rumored to be in the neighborhood of \$150,000.

This was an incredibly efficient operation with an excellent cost/ratio benefit. News of the sleeping bag incident at North Creek has spread far and wide through the airports of BC. It has since been confirmed that seasoned helicopter pilots quake in their flight boots at the sight of waving a sleeping bag in the air. Just the mention of a party carrying sleeping bags into an area by heli-skiers has caused the rascals to tuck in their tails and flee for dear life.

The above tale may or may not be an urban myth. To confirm or deny it, try waving around a sleeping bag near a heli-skier pilot for a reaction!

Mountain Lake Cabin: A Revisit

Paul Adam, with thanks to Paul Starr

On August 20th 2011, Paul Starr (a past president of the BCMC) and I hiked into the Mountain Lake Cabin using the Furry Creek approach. This is report is an update on the status of the trail with the intent of encouraging others to visit the area.

We both have a history with the area but it was ancient history and it didn't involve an approach from Furry Creek. Having wandered most of the local peaks over the years, we decided it was time revisit the area again.

Back in our youth, we had either used the Utopia Lake approach or the Habrich road to reach the area. Paul established a route on the south face of Ledge (with Fred Douglas) amongst other things. I came into the area initially to climb Ledge with Dick Culbert in the context of a BCMC mountaineering course.

Shortly thereafter, I returned to help build the Mountain Lake cabin (I wasn't kidding when I said ancient

history). I will always remember Joyce Davies making sure the outhouse was carefully positioned to have the best view (October 1970).

I returned to again during the following winter on a club ski trip. As I was the only one who had been to the cabin, I had to figure out its location when we got there because there was no cabin – only unbroken snow could be seen (BC Mountaineer 2009, p. 55). I guess I failed in my task because we gave up! But as we got ready to leave someone fell through an air pocket and the cabin was found! Amazingly, the party started to have faith in me again!

Since then, the Utopia Lake access has become nearly impossible and consequently unpopular. This was initially caused by a locked gate at the start of the road in Britannia, resulting in a long trek to the Mount Sheer townsite, a distance of 8 km. Later, the blowing up of Utopia Lake dam and the subsequent washout of the road above the townsite created an “interesting” creek crossing.

In recent times, the club established a trail from the Furry Creek road. This was a big improvement but a gate where the road left Highway 99 prevented easy access without making prior arrangements. Fortunately, things seem to have changed recently, with the gate being unlocked for the past two years. As well, active logging on this road ensure that the 11 km access road remains relatively traversable. We can only hope this situation persists.

The drive is straight-forward and can be done in a two-wheeled drive.

Directions:

The road starts at the top of the Furry Creek hill. Drive up the road, going right at 0.8 km, right 2.4 km, left at 5.7 km, left at 6.0 km, right at 9.2 km, and left at 10.6 km. The road continues to Cyrtina Creek at 11.2 km.

For the most part the road is in good shape with the roughest section being some hills between about 4 km and 8 km. After crossing some recent logging at about the 10 km mark, the road re- enters the woods at 10.6 km. This is good point to consider parking as there is lots of available space and road beyond is being encroached upon by trees and has a number of deep but gentle ditches (aka “water bars”). At 11.0 km there is a small parking area (3-4 cars), and at km 11.2 the road ends with parking space for one vehicle.

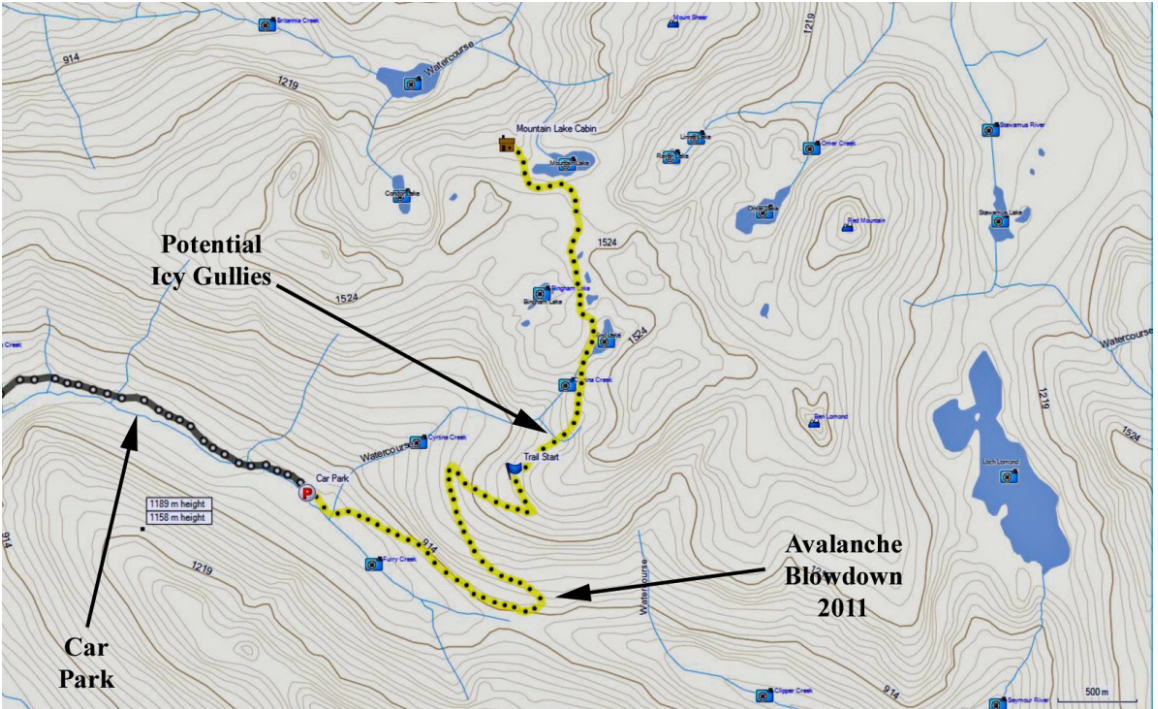
There are two options for returning to Highway 99. One is to retrace your route to the highway where a barrier forces you to head north to Britannia before being able to turn around. Or you can head down the spur at the 2.4 km mark where there is direct access to southbound Highway 99. This will save you a bit of distance and time, but the initial part of the road seems very rough. In addition, the road winds round and about. We chose the first option and figured at worst, we lost five minutes and five kilometres.

Route: (times determined by ageing pensioners)

The route starts by crossing Cyrtina Creek (770 m) and continuing up the logging road. After 1.4 km (20-30 minutes) some recent avalanche debris crosses the road. On the other side the road forks, go left and make a zig to recross the debris. The road is now somewhat brushed over, continuing up to a “zag” at 2.8 km (50 minutes). There is another zag at 3.5 km (75 minutes) followed by a zig at 3.9 km (90 minutes), where you will find an obvious start of the trail on the left of the zig (elevation: 1310 m). The distance from this point to the open alpine is about 400 m with a gain in elevation of 50 m. But this is the crux of the route because it traverses a very steep slope, crossing an number of small gullies as it sidehills to the alpine. These gullies can have avalanche debris up to mid-August (or at least they did in this exceptional snow year) and may require an ice axe and stiff-sole boots to cross. The route is easy to follow once the alpine is reached, even when the ground is covered with snow, as it follows a logical line and there are adequate cairns in exposed places.

The trail is relatively flat starting at 1310 m and ending at the cabin at 1430 m with a high point of 1520 m. It took us about 75 minutes to travel the 2.8 km from the road to the cabin.

In summary, the trip can easily be negotiated in under four hours from the car to the cabin covering a distance 6.6 km with an elevation gain of 750 m.



Map: Paul Adam

Fair warning to anyone seeking a cabin in a heavy snowpack.



**Mountain Lake Cabin
Opening Weekend
October 1970**

