

BCMC 2023 Annual Report of President and Directors Glenn Woodsworth and other directors (where credited)

This was a tough year personally for a few of the directors, including me. But it was a good year for the BCMC, particularly following the COVID years of 2020 and 2021.

This club is 100% run by volunteers. Most of the work that makes the club successful is done by the elected directors and unelected volunteers (most of them not named in this report). A grateful “thank you” to all of you. Many of the chief activities of the club are summarized below:

The club finances are in good shape (see financial report tabled by Bill Maurer in this PDF), largely because of income from membership dues and from the Watersprite Lake cabin. I note that the Watersprite Lake rec site does bring in income, but it does not go to the BCMC.

The club had a total of 625 trips last year. That’s nearly two a day! Backcountry skiing was by far the most popular activity, followed by rock climbing in all its variants. Hiking outranks classical mountaineering and scrambling. Ice climbing hardly registers, but we are not in the best climate for ice.

The Mentorship Program, started and run by Shashi, is to me one of the best and most innovative programs that the club offers. For inexperienced people, it is tough to get experience and informal training; this program helps fill this gap. I strongly believe that meetup groups are not the answer. A major challenge is that there are always too many mentee applicants and not enough mentors. If you have some experience and want to become a mentor, talk to Shashi. I know from personal experience that teaching and passing on your knowledge to others is the best way to improve your own skills.

Membership is about 1360, a number that reflects a gradual and sustainable growth in the last couple of years. We have an active social media presence (thanks, Hanna Byström) with 1044 members on the club Facebook page.

The four BCMC-owned cabins are in good shape, but of course need ongoing maintenance (firewood, propane, outhouses, access trails, etc.). Bookings for Watersprite Lake cabin outnumber the combined bookings for the other cabins, and tent site rentals at the Watersprite Lake rec site outnumber them all. The Watersprite Lake area may have reached the saturation point for visitors, and this is something we must be aware of in the future.

This year we signed a lease with the District of West Vancouver for the Norm Deacon Cabin on Hollyburn. We have had the cabin inspected by a qualified home inspector; the main problems are with the stove, the lack of railings outside stairs to the upper floor, and the lack of railings on the balcony. We are currently working on the necessary insurance. When it is in place, we gain occupancy of the cabin and can begin work on the repairs and an outhouse. The initiation and successful completion of this project is due

entirely to the persistent work of Dave Scanlon over the last four years. Without his work we wouldn't have this cabin.

There is much else that the club does and offers to the mountain community. Some of this is covered in separate reports below, but I will mention just a few things). We have an active social program (thanks, Kathleen, Melissa, and the speakers). The club continues to support VIMFF (thanks, Dave), the Spearhead Huts Society (thanks, Chris), and be involved in the ongoing discussions regarding the Smoke Bluffs rock climbing area at Squamish (thanks, Philip and Dave). The club continues to be active in trail clearing and building (thanks, Paul, Chris, Brian, and all the volunteers). Thanks to Kathleen, Melissa, and Katrina we have a new club logo that is now on a new line of apparel, coffee cups, etc.

Glenn Woodsworth

Trips (statistics by Wayne Pattern)

Trips remain the heart of the BCMC activities, and we think that we have the most varied and interesting trip schedule of any group in southwestern B.C., certainly the one with the most trips.

Trip Statistics, 2021-2023

Year	2023	2022	2021
Backcountry Skiing	152	148	108
Downhill Skiing	11	8	5
Snowshoeing	21	16	8
Hiking	83	79	77
Mountaineering	12	11	13
Scrambling	44	31	23
Mountain Running	4	5	3
Backpacking Trip	7	20	7
Rock Climbing	79	85	59
Indoor Climbing	66	64	14
Ice and Mixed Climbing	9	6	5
Guided Instruction , practice	86	76	68
Trail Clearing & Hut Building	11	15	14
Other	40	47	42
Totals	625	611	446

Other types of trips include biking, trail running, conditioning, socials, expeditions, and miscellaneous. It is clear that backcountry skiing is by far the most popular type of trip (thank you, trip leaders!), with rock climbing (trad, sport, indoor) being second.

The club also runs the Organizer Challenge, in which small cash awards are given to those club members who have organized and led 6 or more club trips in the year. This year we awarded 12 such awards.

Mentorship Program (Shashi Shanbhag)

The primary objective of the mentorship program is to provide BCMC members access and opportunity to learn and practice skills in a safe and trusting environment. Mentorship is not a replacement for formal guiding or training, and mentors are not certified mountain guides.

The Mentorship Program is free for all BCMC members. For the 2022-23 year (winter 2022-23 and summer 2023) we had:

- Total mentee applications: 223, selected: 98
- Total mentors: 31
- Total number of mentorship trips: 161

Mentor criteria

- Current BCMC member
- Has appropriate and adequate technical skills and abilities
- Can commit to at least one mentorship session per month for the season
- Is willing to share expertise and open to learning from the mentorship experience
- Can provide honest and constructive feedback to the mentee
- Owns required gear for the chosen mountain sport
- Each mountain sport might have a secondary set of criteria specific to the discipline, e.g. AST-1 certification.

Mentor incentives

- BCMC Pro Discount Program for a year after completing the program
- Up to 50% reimbursement (maximum of \$200) on any guided instructional course that you take within a year of completing the mentorship program. (\$1595 distributed to mentors since start of program).

Mentee Criteria

- Active BCMC Member
- Can commit to at least one mentorship session per month for the duration of the season
- Has identified at least one developmental goal for the season
- Is open to receiving constructive feedback and willing to learn from the mentorship experience
- Can take ownership of scheduling meetings with the mentor
- Owns or can rent required gear for the chosen mountain sport

- Each mountain sport might have a secondary set of criteria specific to the discipline, e.g. AST-1 certification, minimum of intermediate off-piste ski ability

Mentee(s)-Mentor Pairing Process, a two-step process

- **Step 1:** Mentors Review applications (blind selection) and shortlist Mentees for the meetup at The Anza Club based on goals, skills, fitness, experience and personal preferences.
- **Step 2:** Mentees and Mentors meet in person at The Anza Club. Some Mentors organize an outdoor trip for the group. Mentors and Mentees finalize their group after their group in person.

Cabins

The excellent booking software built by Chris Ludwig and operated by Anne Blossom and Melissa Murray shows the following bookings for our various BCMC cabins. Many were for one night; others were for multiple nights.

Watersprite Lake: 103 bookings (entire cabin)

Mountain Lake: 21 bookings (individual beds)

North Creek: 5 bookings (individual beds)

Plummer Hut: 2 bookings but others have used the cabin.

And BCMC manages the Watersprite Lake Rec Site for Rec Sites and Trails B.C. This was our second year managing this site.

Watersprite Lake Rec Site: 675 (individual tent sites).

Membership

As of November, club membership is” **1357** broken down as follows:

Voting members

788 paid members

48 not paying (Life, honorary, mainly)

Non-voting members

5 Youth (paying members)

497 paid, but less than 1 year in club, so non-voting

19 Guest (trial, non-paying)

We note with sadness the deaths of the following club members during the past year:

Werner Himmelsbach

Jay MacArthur

Nikita Marwah

Hanna McGiverin

Howard Rode

We note the election to Honorary Membership for long and extraordinary service to the BCMC and the mountain community:

Chris Ludwig

Ed Zenger

Summer Camp report (by Greg Hamilton)

The BCMC Family-Friendly Summer Camp recently wrapped up on July 30th. This year's summer camp was at Cathedral Lakes Provincial Park. There were a total of 16 participants, including three families. Ages ranged from 11 to 60. Over the course of the week, participants hiked over 220 kilometers of distance with over 13,000 m of cumulative elevation gain. Participants summited 5 different peaks with a combined total of 33 person-summits. Members swam, scrambled, hiked, painted, photographed, sewed, scrabbled, dined and laughed, a lot.

Participants arrived at the park via Cathedral Lakes Lodge shuttle service, which allowed a quasi car camping experience at 2000 m. There are 5 main lakes and club members swam in at least 4 of them. Weather was generally outstanding, with one cold and windy day (with a high of 11C at camp, with near freezing conditions on the rim trail) and one afternoon of thunderstorms. Wildlife: goats, pikas, marmots, squirrels, chipmunks, birds, and fish.

Socials Report (by Kathleen Cheng)

Tuesday Social Events: We had a successful year of presentations at the ANZA Club that covered excursions from almost every continent, ranging from Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa, to the Dolomites in Europe, the Himalayas in Asia, Aconcagua in South America, and Baffin Island in North America. The Club greatly appreciates the presenters for sharing their adventures with our members. Many thanks to Melissa Murray and others for help in organizing these events.

Summer Get Together Event in August

The annual Get Together was held in August at Trout Lake. Desserts and fruits were served.

Given the prevailing religious attitudes of the original guides of the Chamonix valley, there was a long-standing tradition (since 1821) that local priests would bless the equipment before guides attempted Mont Blanc. The ceremony remains part of the annual Fete des Guides in Chamonix each year in August.

(Rabbi) Philip Gibbs, BCMC Board Director, a duly ordained member of the clergy, led a blessing of equipment (mainly ice axes) at the Get Together. While the ritual was shorter and simpler than those of our 18th century predecessors, it gave us an important moment to reflect on our accomplishments from the past year, goals for next year, and the many uncontrollable factors we face when we go into the mountains.

Past President's Report (by Chris Ludwig)

2023 has been an enjoyable year for me serving as the BCMC's bureaucrat. Despite being afflicted with some of the most painful health conditions known to the middle age, including two prolonged episodes of kidney stones, several gallstone attacks, and a raging case of gout, modern medical science has won the day and I now feel 10 years younger. Plus, I am now the proud new father of a large and healthy kidney stone that I named "Little Lord Callcius."

On a serious note, my year's activities have been to solve and support BCMC administrative requirements and challenges, to manage and maintain the club's IT requirements, and to train and support our volunteers in the use of those systems. These include the club's cabin booking software, the BCMC Website, the Watersprite Rec Site booking system, the Backcountry BC website, the BC Mountain Foundation website, and our new equipment rental software.

The equipment rental program is one we still need a volunteer(s) to lead.

I am also the IT volunteer responsible for maintaining the Pemberton Wildlife Association's Tenquille Lake Recreation Site and Cabin booking software, as well as the Spearhead Huts Society's website and booking software.

I continue to serve as the BCMC's representative on the Spearhead Huts Society as their vice-president, and am involved in the governance, policy and operations of the huts, which includes preparations for the construction of the new Macbeth Hut. I am currently in the process of upgrading the Spearhead Hut Society's booking system to a more modern and powerful system, and have been tasked with taking the lead on modernizing their policies, constitution and bylaws.

I continue to perform an advocacy role for the club through Backcountry BC, and spend a great deal of time posting and moderating content on the Backcountry BC and Watersprite Lake Trail and Road conditions Facebook pages. There are and will always be plenty of new backcountry recreation and conservation issues to inform and discuss with the outdoor community and the club.

My plans for 2023/2024 will amongst many things, include the rather daunting task of updating most if not all of the BCMC IT systems from Joomla 3.x to Joomla 5.x. I look forward to continuing to support and to assist the club in its administrative, computing and web needs in 2024 as past president.

Publications

Newsletter editor Ashley Sherlow produced two good, substantial issues of the Newsletter, and there is the possibility that she can get another out before Christmas. A Centennial issue of the *Mountaineer* journal has not yet been completed; the fault lies with the President.

Francis Bailey has now digitized all the old *Mountaineer* journals back to the first issue in 1976. These are all in PDF format and are searchable. Most have not yet been posted on the website but they will be in the next few weeks. Francis has also digitized most of the newsletters that are not yet on the web. This project should be completed by next spring.

Advocacy (by Paul Kubik)

The principal accomplishment in the last year was the restoration of public access year round to Blackcomb Glacier Park. As most are aware, Whistler Blackcomb was restricting uphill access through the park. It was also denying access to the public traveling on snowshoes. The BCMC led the effort to advocate for unrestricted public access to the park. The minister of environment, the Honourable George Heyman, agreed. At a meeting with me in June, he affirmed the public right to travel uphill or downhill through the park all year, including the winter season. BC Parks is developing an avalanche control procedure together with the resort developer that will be communicated to the public in time for the 2023-2024 winter season. The intent is to keep closures due to avalanche control to a minimum. I suspect that an uphill route from the bottom to the top at East Col will also be identified. Access to the park is via the Blackcomb Bench climb and North Route. These latter routes are in the resort tenure area, however agreement has been reached with the province that these two routes are open to the public all winter and at all times. Altogether, we have negotiated free, public access to the Spearhead Range 365 days/year and in all weather and avalanche conditions. We also have helped to establish the South Route through the Blackcomb tenure area although it is only open for uphill travel on skis early in the day.

Although not part of my advocacy position, I have also been managing the volunteers partnership agreement with BC Parks for Manning Park. As a result of our work, Fat Dog trail has been cleared of brush and a footbridge rebuilt. We also opened up the Similkameen Trail to Castle Creek.

As part of advocacy, the club has submitted a proposal to BC Parks to create a backcountry ski and snowshoe trail up to Blackwall Peak that would avoid the pay-for-use groomed trail up the road. We are also advocating for improvements to the Poland Lake trail as the resort has unilaterally stated that backcountry skiers and snowshoers can no longer park at the alpine skiing parking area.