

NEWSLETTER

BCMC

BC Mountaineering Club



FEATURED NEWS

TRIP REPORT: MT. FEE - SOUTH TOWER



Mount Fee, a captivating twin-peaked volcano in BC's Coast Mountains, has a mysterious south tower that only a handful have climbed. The author describes it as a rarely ascended peak with a challenging reputation for loose rock and a knife-edge ridge. Read more on page 8.

BCMC Mentorship Program started in the Winter 2021-22 Season with 26 mentees paired with ten mentors. Since then, the program has grown, and in the most recent Winter 2023-24 Season, we have 63 mentees paired with 18 mentors. Read more on page 5.



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES

CLUB UPDATES

BY ASHLEY SHERLOW, NEWSLETTER EDITOR

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The BCMC is maintained and improved by the generous volunteer help provided by many of our members. Consider donating some of your free time to help our club improve and find fulfillment in a community with shared interests. If you're interested in sharing your time and skills with the BCMC, please contact us with the volunteer areas that interest you, such as helping with trail work, memberships, or our monthly socials.

SHARE YOUR STORIES, COMMENTS, AND QUESTIONS

Have questions or suggestions about any of our programs?

Visit <https://bcmc.ca/contact.php> or email contact@bcmc.ca.

As always, if you have a story to share or advice to give in an upcoming newsletter, send it our way at editor@bcmc.ca or send me a message through the [BCMC website](#).



THE ROLE OF BCMC NEWSLETTER IN CONSERVATION AND ACCESS ADVOCACY - 2009-2022

BY EVELYN FELLER

Until about 2012 the BCMC was an important source of conservation and access information for members. In 2007 I wrote a review of the role of the BCMC in conservation and relied heavily on information in the previous 100 years of newsletters. This review was published in the BCMC Centennial Journal of 2009. The newsletters covered many important advocacy battles the club participated in and some great achievements such as the creation of Garibaldi Park and Stein Provincial Park. While documenting the case for protection of these areas, the newsletter detailed victories and setbacks in the protection battles as well as suggesting action and strategies members could contribute to the cause, such as writing letters to politicians, newspapers and land managers. An important more recent theme in the newsletter was the importance of protecting recreation areas for non-motorized users in the face of overwhelming competition from snowmobilers and heliskiers.

Since then the newsletter has not continued with that role; in fact the newsletter itself has only sporadically been published. This is probably due to two reasons-the dominance of digital communications such as emails, websites, Instagram and Facebook and the retirement of long time editor, Michael Feller. Other members like Alice Purdy and Brittany Zenger continued editing the newsletter but it gradually became less frequent. However, the BCMC has continued its work on access and conservation advocacy but communicated about it in different ways. For a number of years the club representatives continued as part of the Federation of Mountain Clubs (FMCBC) Recreation and Conservation Committee and made important contributions to the work of this committee, such as Paul Kubik's efforts to get a new trail established to Singing Pass. However, some club members were dissatisfied with the FMCBC for a number of reasons and the club withdrew from it, while a few BCMC members continued on with the Recreation and Conservation Committee and contributed to its work. The BCMC members who withdrew were impatient with slow progress on issues and preferred to meet with land managers themselves. One tool that was extensively used by these members was getting access to government documents via Freedom of Information requests. An example was trying to ascertain whether Whistler had made a past agreement to continue to allow access to the Singing Pass trailhead after arbitrarily blocking the trail. However, in spite of many of these FOI requests showing that there had been past access agreements, land managers and business tend to ignore these past agreements. Another strategy used by some BCMC members was to set up a website - BackcountryBC - that would be a repository of information about access and development issues and information about advocacy strategies.

THE ROLE OF BCMC NEWSLETTER (CONT.)

BY EVELYN FELLER

The BackcountryBC website has an important and very useful repository of relevant documents and maps, but its advocacy work seems to have recently dropped off. Digital communication and presentation has many strengths, particularly in using mapping techniques to quickly markup Google Maps to indicate locations of non-motorized recreation boundaries or proposed new trails or potential developments. Internet searches can quickly access information about critical wildlife habitat and other important data so responses to park management plans can have a better factual base.

Details about the work of the FMCBC Recreation and Conservation Committee can be found in the minutes of this committee as well as the FMCBC publication, 'Cloudburst'. As mentioned a number of BCMC members continue with the work of the committee and have made very significant contributions. Some of the key issues that have been dealt with since the BCMC left are:

1. The plan to remove Chapman Lake from Tetrahedron Park and raise the water levels in the lake to increase water supplies to Sechelt. After extensive meetings and lobbying, the proposal was rejected by the government on the grounds that Sechelt's growth should be better managed and water conservation strategies should be better applied.
2. The protection of the 'Donut Hole' in the Skagit-Manning Park area. This was a small area that had not been included in either park because of existing mining claims and timber resources. After extensive advocacy from many groups including the FMCBC and the City of Seattle, logging was stopped in the area and the provincial government acquired the mining leases.
3. Parking and backcountry access issues at Cypress and Seymour Provincial Parks. Here the ski resort owners were controlling access to back country areas outside their jurisdiction and really restricting parking for non-resort users. One successful outcome was a better backcountry pass system for Cypress and the right to one downhill run. However other issues still continue.
4. Park pass issues. In order to deal with the massive influx of users of parks, BC Parks started a day pass system which was very unwieldly and impractical for users. FMCBC members and others challenged the system and some of the problems of booking were removed. FMCBC members continually argue that the money spent on administering the pass system would be better spent on improving trails and campsites and allowing more dispersion of users.

THE ROLE OF BCMC NEWSLETTER (CONT.)

BY EVELYN FELLER

1. Improving winter access to key areas such as the Black Tusk Trail and the Callaghan area. The road up to the Black Tusk trail head was not being regularly plowed and there were few areas where parking was permitted. User vehicles were always in jeopardy of being towed. The FMCBC has negotiated funding for plowing contractors to enable access.
2. Commenting on BC Parks budgets. BC Parks has been starved of sufficient funds to adequately do its work of managing parks and establishing and upgrading trails and campgrounds. The lack of funds was a persistent problem even before the number of users dramatically increased. Again FMCBC members made budget submissions particularly emphasizing that only improving front country amenities was not enough and that backcountry management of trails and campsites also needed investment.
3. Commenting on numerous park management plans. FMCBC members made numerous submissions on visitor management at Joffre Park as well as on plan updates for Cathedral Park, Pinecone-Burke Park, and the Southern Garibaldi Park Amendment.

There are numerous other issues one could include but the focus of this article was more on the role of the newsletter. In the past there would have been extensive coverage of these issues in the newsletter. BCMC members that have continued to work on recreation and conservation advocacy are Jay McArthur, Brian Wood, Paul Kubik, Chris Ludwig, Bill Maurer, and Michael and Evelyn Feller. The FMCBC Recreation and Conservation Committee has continued because of the outstanding leadership and work of former BCMC member Monika Bittel.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES

BY SHASHI SHANBHAG

BCMC Mentorship Program started in the Winter 2021-22 Season with 26 mentees paired with ten mentors. Since then, the program has grown, and in the most recent Winter 2023-24 Season, we have 63 mentees paired with 18 mentors. Despite a challenging winter season, mentors have organized 95 trips. Thanks to our mentors, we could offer mentorship in backcountry skiing, split boarding, ski mountaineering, and snowshoeing this season.

For the Summer 2024 Season, we have a record number of 23 mentors and have received 142 mentee applications. The mentors reviewed all applications and have selected 63 mentees across rock climbing (trad/sport), alpine climbing, hiking and scrambling. On May 7, we had the Mentorship Meetup at the ANZA Club to kick off the season. Mentors and mentees got together to discuss their goals and plans for the season. I want to thank all BCMC members who have volunteered as mentors - your support is critical to the mentorship program. We are always looking for more mentors. So, if you have some experience in any summer or winter mountain sport, please consider becoming a mentor. You can make a huge impact on members who are new to the sport.



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES (CONT.)

BY SHASHI SHANBHAG

Here is what some of the recent mentees have to say about the program -

"I am finding the experience very valuable - it's a safe, supportive group to ski with and practice decision-making with. I love the small size and the energy that all the members (mentors and mentees alike) bring to the group. This experience has allowed me to start backcountry skiing in a way that would be very difficult without a dedicated group."

- Backcountry Skiing Mentee, Winter 2023-24 Season.

"I love how as a group, we push each other to be better, but all respect each other's limits and boundaries. We have fun together but also can express concerns/opinions without feeling embarrassed to do so. We've all become good friends and have gone on really fun and exciting adventures. I've learnt a lot, and it has just encouraged me to get out there more and pursue bigger objectives!"

- Ski Mountaineering Mentee, Winter 2023-24 Season

If you have any questions about the mentorship program, please get in touch with Shashi Shanbhag or Marie Amante:

shashiraj8@gmail.com

mariechris.amante@gmail.com

BCMC SUMMER CAMP: THE PANTHEON RANGE

ORGANIZER: IAN HARRIS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CAMPS

The BCMC Summer Camp returns in 2024, offering a unique chance to explore the remote Pantheon Range north of Mt. Waddington.

This is not your typical guided climb. This 10-day heli-accessed basecamp is for experienced, self-sufficient mountaineers who want to explore uncrowded peaks. The area a variety of challenges, from moderate scrambles to technical rock climbs and glaciers.

The Details:

Dates: July 27th - August 5th (optional extension to August 10th)

Location: Nirvana Pass, Pantheon Range (BC)

Transportation: Helicopter in/out from Bluff Lake (cost: \$850-\$1000)

Trip style: Self-guided exploration with co-camping mountaineers

Important: Previous alpine climbing experience required.

Interested? Learn more and apply on the BCMC trips page. For more information: <https://bcmc.ca//m/events/view/1708372807>



*A PHOTO TAKEN ON A
SPRING SKI TRAVERSE
OF THE PANTHEON
RANGE IN 1991 BY
CORINA ACHESON*

MOUNT FEE - SOUTH TOWER

BY FRANCIS BAILEY

MARCH 31ST, 2024

There's something about Mount Fee's twin volcanic blades that have captivated me for the past year. The tallest of the two, the south tower, was first climbed in 1963 by MCM Junior members Bob Woodsworth, Mike Wisnicki and Peter Thompson as described in the BCMC Newsletter in July 1963. It's since seen only a handful of ascents and carries a certain air of mystery about it. What information there was fostered a reputation for dangerous and loose climbing and that just added to the adventure of it.

After building up some volcanic experience on the nearby sand castles of Mount Cayley and Pyroclastic Peak, it was time to make an attempt! Well actually... two attempts! My first trip ended within hours when we discovered precarious hang fire guarding access to the summit ridge. It was a tough call to turn around after lugging our heavy packs up there and seeing a snow free ridge.

Determined to get in there while snow still reached close to the summit ridge, I managed to recruit my friends Alex and Alessandro for a second trip. A week later we found ourselves pushing our pace up Shovelnose Creek FSR. We raced against the sun and the high avalanche danger it was predicted to bring later on.



MOUNT FEE (CONT.)

BY FRANCIS BAILEY

We reached the base of Fee just in time for sunrise and set about traversing up and around a 2.5m crown mid way up the west face. As we reached the first pitch of rock it became clear that we had a quite a bit more snow to deal with than what was observed the week prior. Nonetheless, Alex set about dispatching with the mixed first pitch. A tricky set of moves on loose slabs of rock landed him just below the long knife edge ridge to the summit. I seconded up past him and posted up in a precarious au cheval position on the ridge. 200m of air fell below my dangling legs on either side. I made the ever awkward transition from crampons and boots to climbing shoes and then Alessandro, now in his own au cheval spot, put me on belay.

The ridge was covered in several inches of snow and I had no choice but to climb through it on my now slippery climbing shoes. I climbed around several broken sections of ridge and then around onto the exposed west face on snow covered slabs. Finally, I had to ascend a particularly loose gendarme before reaching a reasonable belay stance. I brought Alex and Alessandro up and then it was Alessandro's turn to take us over the finish line.

He lead one final pitch to the summit up a jumbled mess of dacite that proved to be more solid than it first appeared. We followed up shortly after and celebrated on the summit, albeit not for long. The sun had honed in on our descent slope and it was time to get down before that posed a problem. Alessandro managed to find a solid enough block to sling and we made one long 60m rappel to the snow and a second rappel down the icy constriction from the upper snow slopes. After a bit of down climbing we reached terra firma at last. All around an excellent adventure!



ROBERSTON PEAK

BY JONATHAN LLOYD

MARCH 31ST, 2024

Robertson Peak (2252m) is a remote and rarely accessed peak on the North-West corner of Harrison Lake that has only seen a small handful of successful ascents. The peak is guarded by a long 4x4 only access drive, thick alder bushwhacking, winding rivers, and a significant amount of elevation gain. Most parties approach in the spring and even fewer approach in the summer due to the heinous grade V bushwhacking.

On Saturday we left Coquitlam at noon and at 4pm we parked as high as we could on the FSR due to the snowline. The 4x4 approach was much faster up the West Harrison FSR so we decided to hike in about three hours to make the most of our remaining daylight. We only managed to get about three kilometers in due to the bushwhacking and climbing over recently fallen old growth trees. We set up camp and were on the move at 6am the next morning up to our high camp. It took about 4 hours to reach our second camp, the travel was easier than expected and quite pleasant.



ROBERTSON PEAK (CONT.)

BY JONATHAN LLOYD

Our second camp sat below Robertson's impressive north face that was decorated with heavy cornices and vertical ledges on all sides. The summit was still over a vertical kilometer above us! This sub-alpine bowl we camped in was a fantastic spot with great views and flowing water.

Since our high camp was set up by noon, we decided to ascend Tretheway Peak, a non-technical walk up peak to the east of our camp, it took about 4 hours to summit Tretheway. The only notable thing was that many recent large avalanches were scattered throughout the alpine. Jeff managed to snap an awesome photo of Oleg and I climbing up some rolling bumps (see trip report photos).

After summiting and descending Tretheway our plan was to summit Robertson Peak in the early AM (sunrise summit) to avoid any unwanted wet loose avalanches. The colder temperatures at night (about -7C) would also mean less post-holing and more purchase on the summit block. Our party set out at 1am and arrived at the summit block around 7am. The route was slow with shin deep and knee-deep post-holing throughout the ascent and route finding in the dark. The thousand meters of ascent was also hard work combined with plenty of side-hilling. The final summit block was quite absent of snow compared to previous trip reports. Our route to the summit required some tedious route-finding and careful crampon and axe placements. A few more months and this route could be a very enjoyable class III/IV scramble. The sunrise on the summit was fantastic, featuring beautiful 360 views of many alpine summits. We couldn't stay long due to the cold wind and rapidly warming solar affected snow slopes that we had to descend shortly.

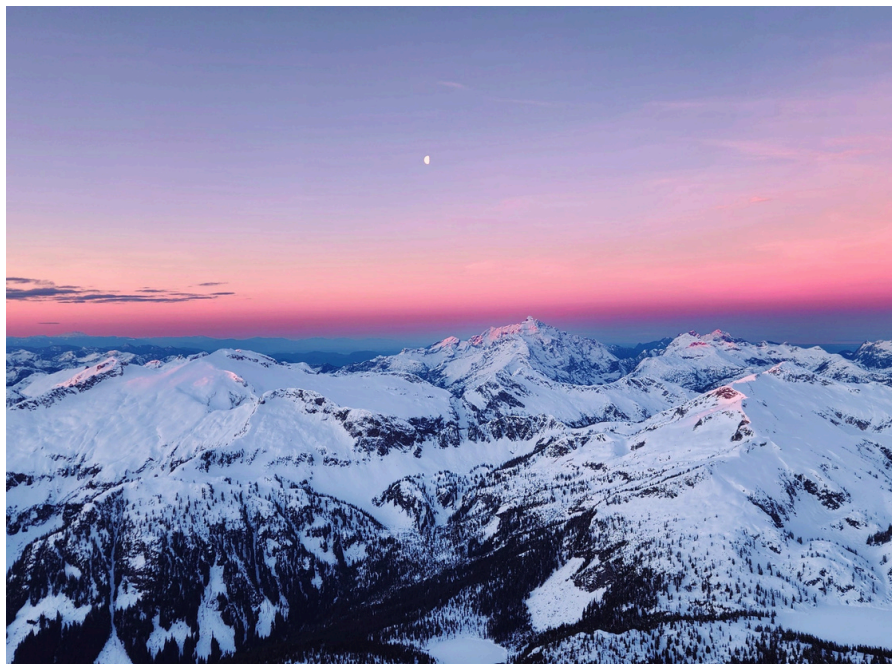
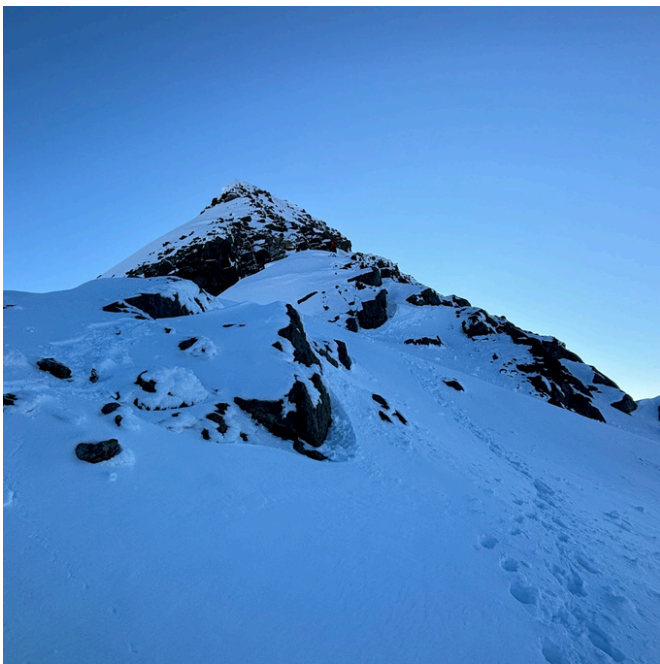


ROBERSTON PEAK (CONT.)

BY JONATHAN LLOYD

The descent was easy and within 8 hours we were back at our car. Everyone made it successfully and safely to the summit and back. I encourage any energetic parties to climb Robertson and surrounding peaks, it's a rarely accessed and overlooked destination. The opportunities in the area in the spring are endless!

Many thanks to Jeff and Oleg for driving and their great photography. If any BCMC members would like to attend my club organized trips they are welcome to join.



IN-SHUCK-CH MOUNTAIN

BY SEB GULKA

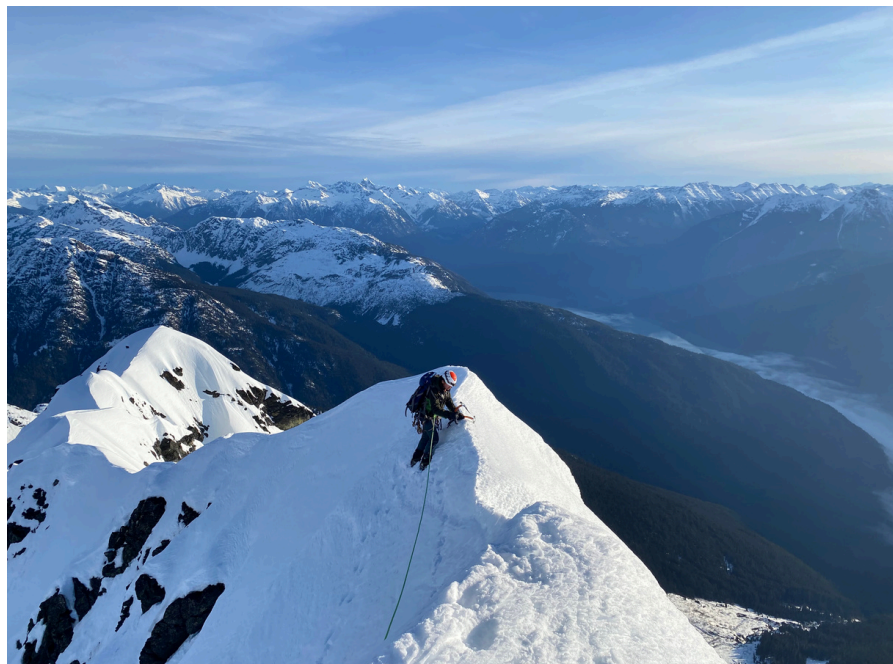
MARCH 19TH, 2024

With Thomas Morrissey. We started around 11:30pm to get a solid freeze after the warm weather. The initial FSR had some deadfall and light alder bashing and was followed by a steep forest with minor deadfall. At 1230m elevation we traversed climbers right out of the forest to gain a large slide path, which we followed to the glacier.

After seeing that the right-hand line on the west face of In-Shuck-ch looked doable with 2 possible constrictions, we went for it.

The climb itself started with easy snow followed by a short steep ice corner (first constriction). After that we made a t-slot anchor before a short mixed pitch (second constriction) which led to a moderately steep snowy slope to the summit.

The summit ridge was quite narrow, but short, and there was no significant cornice. Made 3 rappels on the way down, including one off a single nut. Used a 50m rope, but a 70m might have saved us one rappel.



IF YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER...

YOU SHOULD BE!

WHAT'S IN A BCMC MEMBERSHIP?

Get on board with the BC Mountaineering Club! For many, getting outside isn't just about the objective - along the way, you meet incredible folks who share your passion for adventure, challenge, and incredible spaces. If you aren't yet a member of the BCMC, find your community, take part in trips, and even learn new skills by joining today. Head to [the BCMC website](#) for more details and instructions to sign up.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Gain access to over 550 Club Trips and Courses per year
- Learn how to hike, climb, and ski with us
- Find hiking, skiing, or climbing partners via our Partner List
- Meet new friends with similar interests
- Save with free bookings for BCMC cabins
- Join other members for the club's monthly socials
- connect on the many website forums
- Stay current through the club's e-news and newsletters
- Become a part of the club's future

If you're interested in a membership with the BCMC, [visit our website](#) for full details and a link to sign up.