



## Upcoming BCMC Social

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at the Anza Club



*Presented by: Mountain Muskox*

This presentation introduces Mountain Muskox, a community-driven organization providing professionally facilitated peer support circles for individuals affected by traumatic events in mountain environments. Inspired by the protective circle of the muskoxen, our peer circles offer a safe and supportive space for healing and connection.

As passionate mountain enthusiasts, we recognize that while these landscapes offer adventure and joy, they can also be sites of profound trauma. Mountain accidents, such as avalanches and falls, impact hundreds of people annually in Canada, with lasting emotional and psychological effects. Research shows that nearly one in four individuals involved in wilderness incidents experience PTSD symptoms, and without support, trauma can lead to long-term mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and isolation.

## Submit Your Content

[editor@bcmc.ca](mailto:editor@bcmc.ca)

**Submissions:** We want you to write for us! Any submitted news, events, trip reports, letters relevant to the BCMC will be published unless the club executive decides otherwise.

**About Submissions:** For submitted photos, high resolutions are much appreciated. 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 BCMC.

## About the BCMC Newsletter

The BCMC 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.

**Cover Photo:** Anna Bron – Watersprite Mini-Camp

# Club Updates

## Welcome New Members!

*By Greg Hamilton*

Are you a new member to the BCMC? We want to extend a warm welcome to you!

We know you are eager to get involved, and we want to make it as easy as possible for you to connect with other members and take advantage of all the BCMC has to offer. The BCMC is built on a shared passion for exploring the mountains, and we encourage everyone, regardless of experience level, to participate in upcoming activities. I truly hope you find the club as a place where you can grow, learn, have fun, and meet new exploration partners.

Below are a few tips to get you started and integrated into the BCMC community:

- Explore the BCMC website: [www.bcmc.ca](http://www.bcmc.ca). Our website is the primary way you can find information about this community including: upcoming events, trip reports, gear resources, hut rentals and a forum where you can connect with other members. Take some time to familiarize yourself with it. We are working on updating the website for phone-based users – bear with us while our volunteers sort that out.
- To register your outdoor interest (e.g. climbing, skiing, etc.), go to: <https://bcmc.ca/member.php>. Under *Manage Your Account*, click “edit email preferences”, and check all the boxes that apply.
- To look for a climbing or skiing partner, check out: [https://bcmc.ca/club\\_partner\\_list.php](https://bcmc.ca/club_partner_list.php).
- Attend a club social function: We hold a regular social function on the second Tuesday of every month at the Anza Club (#3 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver), except July and August. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and the function gets underway at 7:30 p.m. There will be a New Members Corner at each Tuesday’s social function. Therefore, come at 7:00 p.m. and meet new members and the Club’s Board of Directors.

BCMC has a swath of club logo emblazoned items available for sale. Visit the Club’s on-line store: <https://bcmcswag.myspreadshop.ca/all>. You will see samples of the Club items at the Tuesday social function.

We believe that the best way to become a part of the BCMC community is to be involved. Once you have gone through the Club’s website and still have questions about how to be involved, do not hesitate to contact us with your question.

We look forward to seeing you at the Club’s Tuesday social function, or out there on rope, foot, snowshoes, or skis.

# **Spearhead Huts Society Update**

*By Chris Ludwig*

The Spearhead Huts Society (SHS) built and operates the 38 bunk Kees and Claire Hut, close to Russet Lake within Garibaldi Provincial Park. It is the first completed hut (2021) of a proposed system of three huts along the Spearhead Traverse. The BCMC, along with the ACC Vancouver and ACC Whistler are the three founding clubs of the project, and remain active and strong supporters and contributors to the project.

I have represented the BCMC on the SHS Board of Directors since 2021, and have served as the Vice-President of the SHS for the past three years. There have been a number of recent significant improvements and initiatives that I would like to bring to attention of the BCMC membership.

## **Solar System Completion**

Installation of this system at the Kees and Claire Hut was completed in late 2024. We have already noticed a reduction in our use of propane since this system went online.

## **Water Well Project**

Permission was obtained in the summer of 2024 from BC Parks to drill for water at the Kees and Claire Hut tenure site. In early fall, we drilled to 200 feet, but had yet to find water. As a board, we decided to take the educated and financial risk to continue to drill deeper (with no guarantees). Fortunately, at 285 feet, we struck water with a preliminary flow rate of around 6 litres per minute (10 times more than our requirement).

Unfortunately, the snow and cold weather arrived before we could continue developing the well, and we will have to wait until the spring of 2025 to continue the work. If all goes 'well' (no pun intended), winter 2025 will be the last winter requiring snow melting.

## **Expanding the Flight Deck**

Plans are in the works to extend the helicopter flight deck at the Kees and Claire Hut, which BC Parks has also approved. The reason for this is to improve the safety of helicopter operations at the hut (loading and unloading propane tanks in particular). Hopefully this project will be completed in summer 2025.

## **Website and IT**

As the SHS's volunteer director responsible for Web and IT, I was heavily involved with some major projects and upgrades over the past year.

Firstly, I oversaw the SHS's implementation and transition to a new and much more advanced reservation system. My many years working with reservation softwares has taught me that any such upgrade/switch will involve a large learning curve fraught with suffering, crashes and trauma on my part, and this time was certainly no different. At the end of it all, we now have a

powerful and flexible reservation system that will accommodate the needs of a future multi-hut system, multiple employees, multiple member club discounts/advanced bookings, guided party and guide management and excellent flexible reporting.

I have also performed numerous upgrades to the SHS's website such as the creation of a detailed FAQ section, increased society transparency through the addition of publicly available meeting minutes, bylaws and policies, and the addition of attractive promotional materials for the proposed Macbeth Hut.

## **Proposed Macbeth Hut**

The hut at Mt. Macbeth will be the smallest of the three huts, given its more remote location and seasonal access. It will be situated in more technical terrain and will require much longer approaches in summer and winter than the Kees and Claire Hut. We anticipate it will house approximately 20 – 30 people.

A preliminary design by Michael Green Architecture for the Macbeth Hut has been developed and presented to the SHS. A pdf booklet showcasing the proposed design can be viewed at the following link:

<https://spearheadhuts.org/macbeth-hut-the-vision>

In addition, a virtual tour of that design can be viewed at the following link:

<https://spearheadhuts.org/macbeth-hut-animation-tour>

Further development of the Macbeth Hut design has been put on hold until our fundraising goals are complete.

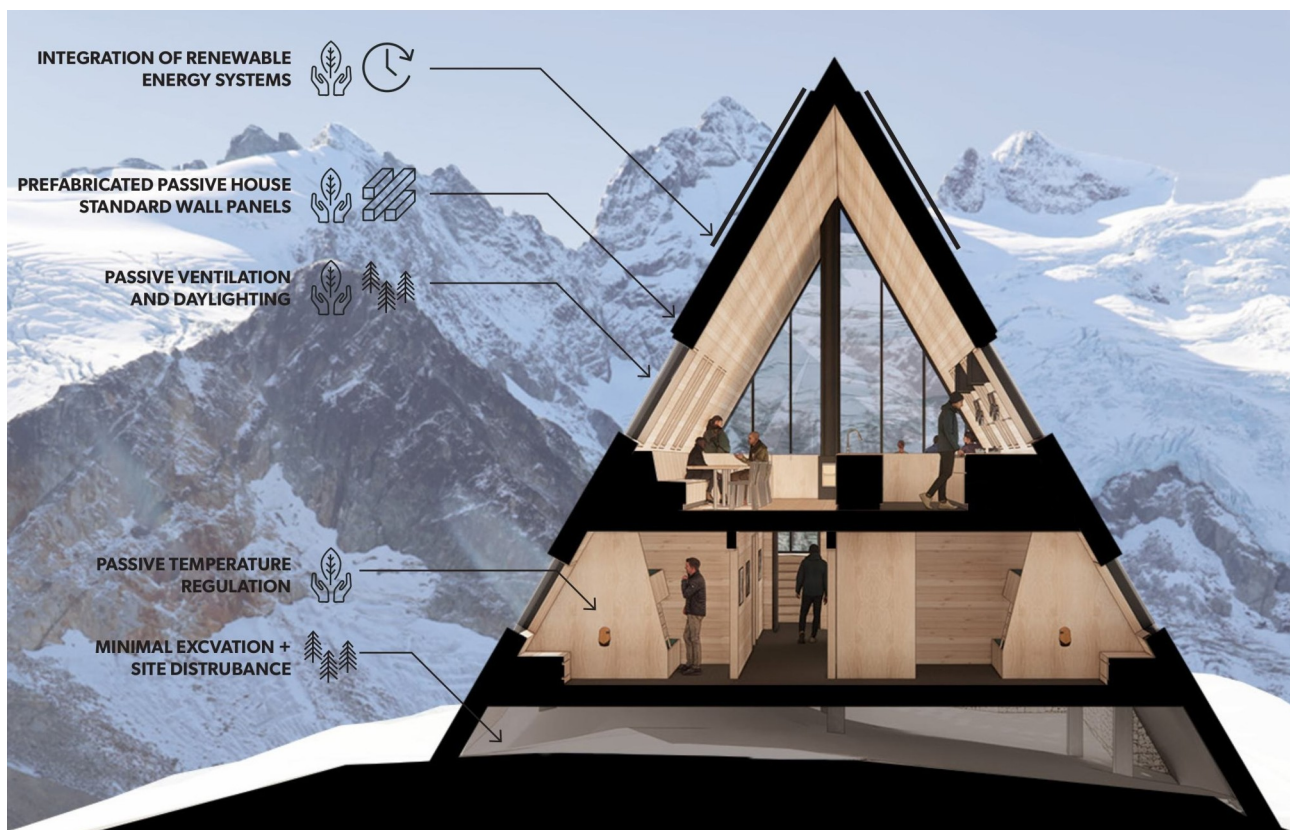


## **Fundraising for the proposed Macbeth Hut**

A few of us, including myself, were initially taken aback by the estimated 4.5 million dollar price tag for the new hut. A number of contributing factors are at play including much higher helicopter costs due to remoteness and increases to the price of fuel, increased costs for building supplies, and increased costs to hire contractors following the pandemic. We hired and have worked with a major fundraising company in 2024 and I am both surprised and delighted to report that the majority of the funds have already been raised.

If you would like to donate to the Macbeth Hut, click on the following link:

[https://give-can.keela.co/donations\\_for\\_Macbeth\\_Hut](https://give-can.keela.co/donations_for_Macbeth_Hut)



## **Spearhead Huts – Past, Present and Future**

The BCMC is an active founding member of the Spearhead Huts Society. In the early days, the two Davids (David Scanlon and David Hughes) dedicated enormous time and energy to the project and to representing the BCMC in the SHS. During the construction of the Kees and Claire Hut, numerous BCMC volunteers braved the elements to help construct the hut. Today, Marie Amante (SHS Head Custodian) and I continue to dedicate great personal time and effort to the SHS in the name of the BCMC. I would like to extend my thanks to all those great volunteers.

In 2024, the BCMC Board of Directors also made an important donation of \$5000 to the SHS.

This history and these efforts entitled BCMC Members of good standing (paid membership dues) to a 90 day advanced booking privilege (60 days for the general public), and a discounted booking rate of 50.00 per night (60.00 per night for non-members). These benefits are accessed by obtaining and using the BCMC's SHS Promo Code, which can be accessed on the BCMC website with a paid BCMC membership:

<https://bcmc.ca/spearhead.php>

Please note that when using the BCMC Spearhead Huts Promo Code, all members of your party must be active club members (paid dues).

Going forward, it is important to me that the SHS remained owned, operated and managed by the clubs and the outdoor community as a public resource and facility; that our policy, vision and operations continue to reflect that belief. These values, which I and the SHS board hold, I believe are reflected in the way we operate the current Kees and Claire Hut, including but not limited to the project's large volunteer custodian base, as well as the new reservation system I was involved in developing.

While perfection is not for this world and the future will no doubt hold unexpected challenges, I am confident that the rich heritage of the BCMC, the ACC and the Canadian west coast outdoor community will serve as a permanent guide for the future of the SHS project.

## Thanks to all VIMFF Volunteers!

*By Melissa Murray*

The BCMC has been a longtime partner with VIMFF and this year, we were honoured to present the Vertical Adventures night at the Centennial Theatre. Wayne Pattern, our Trips Director, took the stage to talk about the club. Thank you, Wayne. We'd also like to thank the volunteers that showed up on a few nights to represent the club and engage with the community. A special shout out to Andrea Tate, Kelly Hao, Cecile Poulin, Trevor Short, Jonathan Lloyd, Ian Harris, Johannes Esterle, Bill Maurer, Stacy Graham, Adrew Colgan and Anders Ourom.



## Op-Eds

### Did You Know?

*By Glenn Woodsworth*

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Fowler (later Harman) was the first female president of the BCMC. Liz joined the club in 1908 and took part in the first BCMC Camp in 1910. She was very active in the club into the early twenties.

Liz was Vice-President in 1917 and was elected an Honorary Member in 1924 or earlier for carrying a major share of club work during the war years.

Mount Fowler in the Lillooet Icefield is named for her. The first ascent party (1973) was by an all-woman BCMC party.

In this photo, Liz Fowler is on the right (without hat). Identity of the other woman is unknown.



## Trip Reports

### Zoa Circuit on Family Day – February 17<sup>th</sup>

*By Philip Gibbs*

Zoa is the ideal location for backcountry beginners, but John Baldwin marked a route that continues along the ridge toward Zopkios peak with a descent down a gully that meets up with Zopkios bowl. Greg had been curious about the route for a long time, and Boyan, Roger, and I agreed to the plan. After a short stop at the Blue Moose Coffee House in Hope, we arrived at the trailhead and started skinning around 9:15. The climb up to Zoa was straight forward and pleasant as it always is. We didn't transition at the col beyond the false summit and just continued skiing to the true summit. The visibility and conditions looked good enough to continue onto the far less travelled route.

Skiing off the peak, we should have gone due west, but instead we headed too far north. On the GPS, there is a small lake to serve as a waypoint, so we traversed a little to the left and found the lake and scooped a little past it to see the ridge. We transitioned just after the lake and made our way south along the ridge for a few hours.



*Beautiful day with a great crew*



*The slope beneath the ridge. It could be possible to ski through the trees, but it wouldn't be pleasant.*

The route on the map showed that we needed to push over one final bump to reach the ski run, but it was not a friendly looking bump. The right side is a sheer cliff, and the left side was some wind scoured snow that dropped you over another cliff. We briefly considered picking our way down in the trees immediately below us, but we (intelligently) decided that the risk of a surprise cliff was way too high. We knew there should be a good run on the other side, so we decided to push it.



*Climbing the final bump. It's a lot less scary once you're in it.*



*You can see the final bump in the midground. It looked a lot scarier in person.*

We thought that the crux was going to be navigating around some rocks to gain the ridge. Greg went first and went below the rocks with us watching from afar. After seeing him gingerly kick turn, we decided to take the high route and met up shortly to reach the top. The travel up the fin was easier than we expected, but as we reached the top, the rocks were stripped nearly bare from the wind. We took off our skis, picked our way down to the ridge (the true crux) and finally had a nice, long ski run after 6 hours and 8km of travel.



*The top of the final bump was exposed rock and dusted trees. On another day, it could possibly go clean. This was not that day.*

As we reached the valley, we needed to navigate around a boulder field. Skirting the trees to the left provided for a final 50 meters of good skiing.

We shuffled our way through the forest, staying to the right of the creek bed, eventually transitioning back to skins to navigate some creek crossing. Once we hit the ski lines coming off of Thar, we moved quickly. We crossed Falls Lake and made it back to the truck for a total time of 8 hours. It was a great day to fulfill our curiosity about a mysterious line on the map, but definitely a lot of skinning for little skiing. If you want to see a less familiar side of Zoa, check it out.

13 km, 900m day

Trip Participants: *Philip Gibbs (author), Greg Hamilton (organizer), Boyan Baynov, Roger McDonald*



*Obligatory ski picture of the last pitch*

## **A Visit to the Japanese Alps**

*By Dean Chamberland*

In August of 2024, our intrepid team of 5 BCMC adventurers made our way to the Japanese Alps. Even before we left Canada, challenges were on the literal horizon: a menacing typhoon had been lashing parts of the country, throwing a large question mark into our plans. It was also the hottest summer on record in Japan. We assessed things before leaving and then again on the ground, made some adjustments to our itinerary, and ultimately pushed through to accomplish a successful trip.

Looking back, some highlights for me include our walk to the shrine in Nagano, and the traditional lunch at the mom-and-pop soba shop. (Say that fast 3 times!) I was happy to appreciate Yury's nose for a good cultural place to visit and Cameron's clever sense of humour which always kept us on our toes! Gabriela was a quick study on how to pay respect at shrines and other cultural norms, and Susan's ability to explain the meanings of so many unfamiliar Kanji (Chinese characters in Japanese signs) was so very helpful!



*The dinner at the quaint izakaya in Hakuba was a relaxing moment before our pleasant ridge-walking on the first day of hiking. A thick ceiling of cloud cover cast doubt as well as shadows, however that ocean of clouds parted for us as we made our way to Mt Shirouma, which translates to Whitehorse!*



*High Ridge Hiking in Hakuba!*



The hut at Mount Shirouma was reached, we ate very well and took in the breathtaking sunset. Day Two started with coffee at the bakery in the 'lower' hut (2,700 meters elevation), and we then enjoyed a few hours of good weather before an onslaught of rain and wind made the rocks, chains, and ladders along the route harder than they already were. Our first taste of typhoon weather! During our pit stop at Tengu Hut to dry and regroup, I confess to having had some concerns about continuing, however everyone was sure-footed and there never came a moment when the turn-around option was needed.

We continued onward. The route to Karamatsu, via the 'Kaerazu Kiretto' (gaps in the mountain ridge), was particularly challenging. The initial descent from Tengu no Atama tested our skills, but we accomplished one of the most difficult routes in Japan under some of the harshest weather conditions. The storm and midweek timing meant we had the entire route to ourselves from start to finish—a rare treat, as we saw on the following week's trip.





*Finally on Mount Karamatsu!*

Karamatsu's Karma rewarded us, and we would all summit it again the next day, but this time with wonderful weather: we were treated the next morning to one of the most beautiful sunrises in the freshly rinsed Japanese Alps. Feeling buoyed, we made a speedy descent to the valley and our hotel, allowing time for exploring the town of Hakuba. It became a tomato kind of day, because the freshly harvested fruit was laid out on public tables and in restaurants for the taking!



Returning to Nagano brought heavy rains, but being back in civilization, it didn't matter. We even took the soaking to heart by accidentally steaming meat with beer on the yakiniku grill—an unexpected but delicious mishap!



The next day we set off to reposition ourselves in Matsumoto for the next multi-day trip. There we visited an old castle, and a few lively dining spots which charmed us before we entered the majestic Kamikochi valley. Gorgeous skies greeted us as we started the second week and Trip #2.

Though very hot, we took our time up the steep trail to Mt. Chogatake, where great food and service combined with cozy stained-glass sleeping spaces made it a comfortable place to wait out the following morning's storm. Much like the prior week, bad weather punctuated Day Two.

The weather was as bad as forecasted, with gale force winds and driving rain. We waited in the comfort of the hut a few hours for things to improve. With the morning slipping away and much ground to cover, we made an attempt to reach the next hut, about 7 hours away. Knowing that we must arrive by 5 to receive dinner was a pressing concern. Our first attempt in the harsh conditions saw us travel just 400 meters before being forced to return to the comfort of the hut. Check out the YouTube video to get a sense of the winds: click <https://shorturl.at/wiZh7> or search the phrase "Adventures in the Japanese Alps".



*Some on the Team Were Certainly Glad to Reach the Peak!*

Waiting until 10 am to start again, we persisted despite being knocked off balance frequently. Hours later, as we approached Mt. Jonen, the storm weakened, and warm winds mercifully dried us out. A hearty stew at the Jonen hut (called sanso) fueled us for the rest of what was a long day of hiking. We covered significant distance and elevation gain before arriving at the small but busy Ohtesho Hut, known for its quality cooking. Evening entertainment came in the form of a distant lightning storm, one of the best meals in my life, and some intense Jenga games.



*Day 3: A Change in Pace*

On this day, pleasant ridge path walking quickly transitioned into a series of chains, ladders, and narrow ledges. This ridge is one of the more challenging routes in the Alps, but this time we had the weather on our side and many fellow hikers along the route. With improving conditions, Mount Yari sanso was the busiest hut we encountered during our two weeks in the Alps. The



sunset was spectacular, and those targeting the summit had to carefully manage the ladders and crowds.

With Alps trip #2 nearly completed, the hike out on day four was long—about 20 km—but we were rewarded with wildlife sightings, including monkeys, and a well-earned lunch at one of the valley huts. Mmm, pizza!

As we neared the bus terminal at the trailhead, the crowds for a music festival increased, and the sunny weather turned to heavy rain. High demand for buses meant a wait, but we eventually made it back to Matsumoto on Wednesday, September 4th, for a final dinner together before heading off on our own separate adventures. We had ambitious plans and pushed through adversity to accomplish them all.

The stats are telling: Trip #1 was 29 kms on rugged alpine routes gaining 2,235m over 3 days. Trip #2 saw us travel 53 kms over 4 days, gaining 3,779m.

A huge thank you to our crew for a fun, satisfying, and unforgettable trip. It was an experience I'll always cherish!

## Join the BCMC!

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.