



## Upcoming BCMC Social



### **AGM + Avalanche Awareness**

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

We will start this month's BCMC social with the Annual General Meeting, run and presented by the BCMC executive team. BCMC members are encouraged to participate in this important event and we need a minimum of 25 participants to reach quorum. Your attendance makes a real difference!

The AGM will run from 7:30PM to 8:00PM. After which Brent Hiller of the Canada West Mountain School will be making a presentation on Avalanche Awareness. This is a great opportunity to catch up on the latest teachings from the Canadian Avalanche Association. Brent will be speaking on:

- Updates to the CAA's recommended terrain evaluation process
- New insights on group dynamics when touring or snowshoeing in avalanche terrain.

This is a fantastic opportunity to kick off the season informed and inspired. Don't miss it!

## 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:** Alex Barker looking up at one of the many massive trees that span the slopes up to Mount Judge Howay. Photo by Francis Bailey

# Club Updates

## Annual General Meeting

As you have seen earlier in the newsletter, the BCMC's Annual General Meeting will take place November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Anza Club. The meeting will have the following agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Determine that there is quorum
3. Adopt rules of order
4. Approve the agenda
5. Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 BCMC AGM (Available on the Club Business page of the BCMC website)
6. Consideration of the report of the Board on its activities since the last AGM
7. Presentation on the financial statements for the previous 2024 financial year
8. Business arising out the financial statements, the auditor's report, the report of the Board, and any matter about which notice has been given in the notice of the meeting
9. Elect directors
10. Adjournment

A reminder that we will need a minimum of 25 members in order to reach quorum and that your participation is both encouraged and appreciated!

## Volunteers for the BCMC Board of Directors

With the upcoming AGM, this is your chance to join the executive team with the BCMC. We are a 100% volunteer, non-profit group.

If this sounds interesting to you, please go to the [BCMC 2025 Board of Directors Nomination Form](#) and fill out whichever positions you would like to participate in. Some positions with a \* already have a volunteer or have somebody interested, but feel free to apply for anything that you like. All positions are up for election at the AGM.

Please note that all BCMC Board Candidates are required to have been paid club members for a minimum of one year and to have paid their dues.

If you want to know what's involved or have general questions about the positions, please don't hesitate to email the Board of Directors at [exec@bcmc.ca](mailto:exec@bcmc.ca) and we can chat. We particularly need help with Secretary, Trips, Socials, Camps, and more.

A second form will be coming soon for those who wish to volunteer for something but don't want to be on the board.

## Norm Deacon Cabin Update

The Norm Deacon Cabin went through its official inspection and has passed all requirements except for a few small modifications including to the flooring around the wood fire stove. A metal piece will be installed around the wood stove to prevent sparks from reaching the linoleum. Once this modification is complete, the cabin will be good to go until the next inspection 10 years from now.

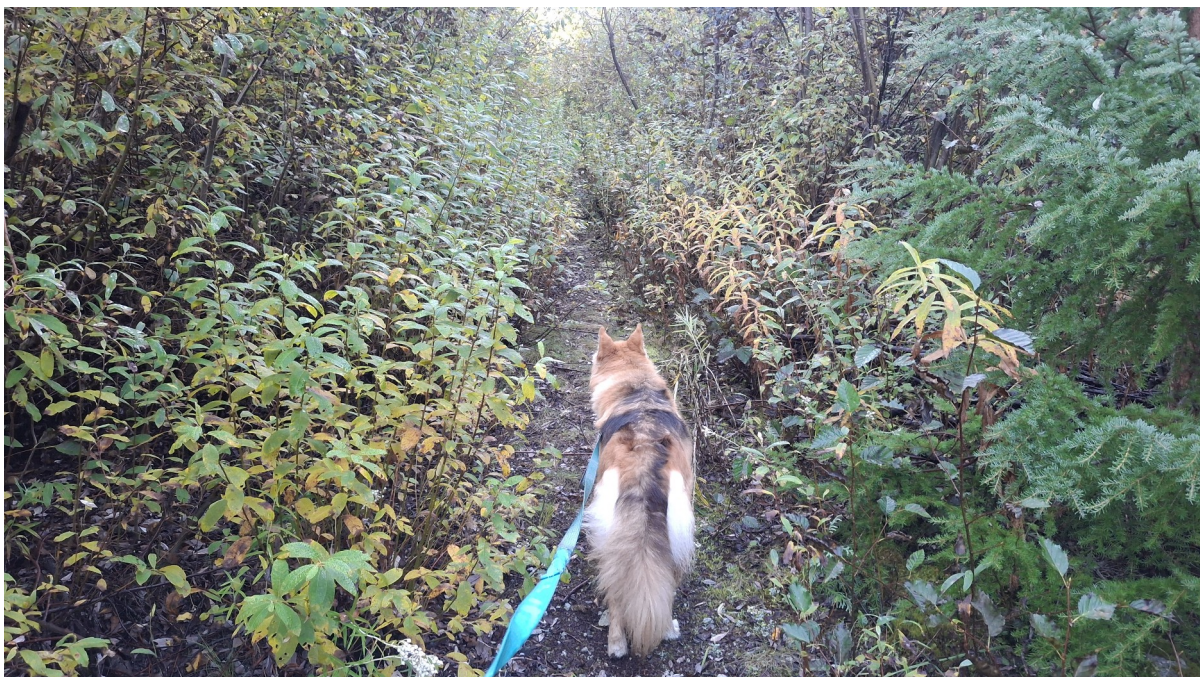
As part of the process of bringing the cabin up to the required standards, many features had to be updated including: porch stairs, railing, basement door frame and landing, new chimney on the roof, new stove pipe, new propane lights, new outhouse and many other fixes along the way.

Many thanks to Ian Hopper, Einar Hanson, Cory Tuddenham, Bruce Cassels, Emanuel Porra, David Robertson for driving their vehicles up that wild steep road to the cabin on so many occasions and an especially big thank you to David Scanlon for bringing this all together.



## Trail Work Update

With the recent snowfall it appears that trail work is likely wrapped up for the season. The BCMC wants to extend a huge thank you to all members who participated in trail maintenance this year. The battle against alder is a never ending one, but with the hard work of volunteer members, we can help tame the tide and keep trails open to all. Here's a few photos from Brian Sheffield and crew's recent work around the Watersprite area.



*One year of growth on the demon ridge trail*

## From the Community

### Coastal Backpacking

*By Stephen Hobbs*

For those that hike year-round, there is an optimum spring window for coastal backpacking. It overlaps with the May ski touring and precedes the July-September alpine trekking. These spring beach routes can start off the non-snow season. They satisfy the desire to do something substantial when the skiing is ending and the snowline has still not receded upslope enough for boots only activities.

There are many worthy one-week'ish routes. All offer wild coastal scenery, spectacular shoreline walking and exceptional camping.

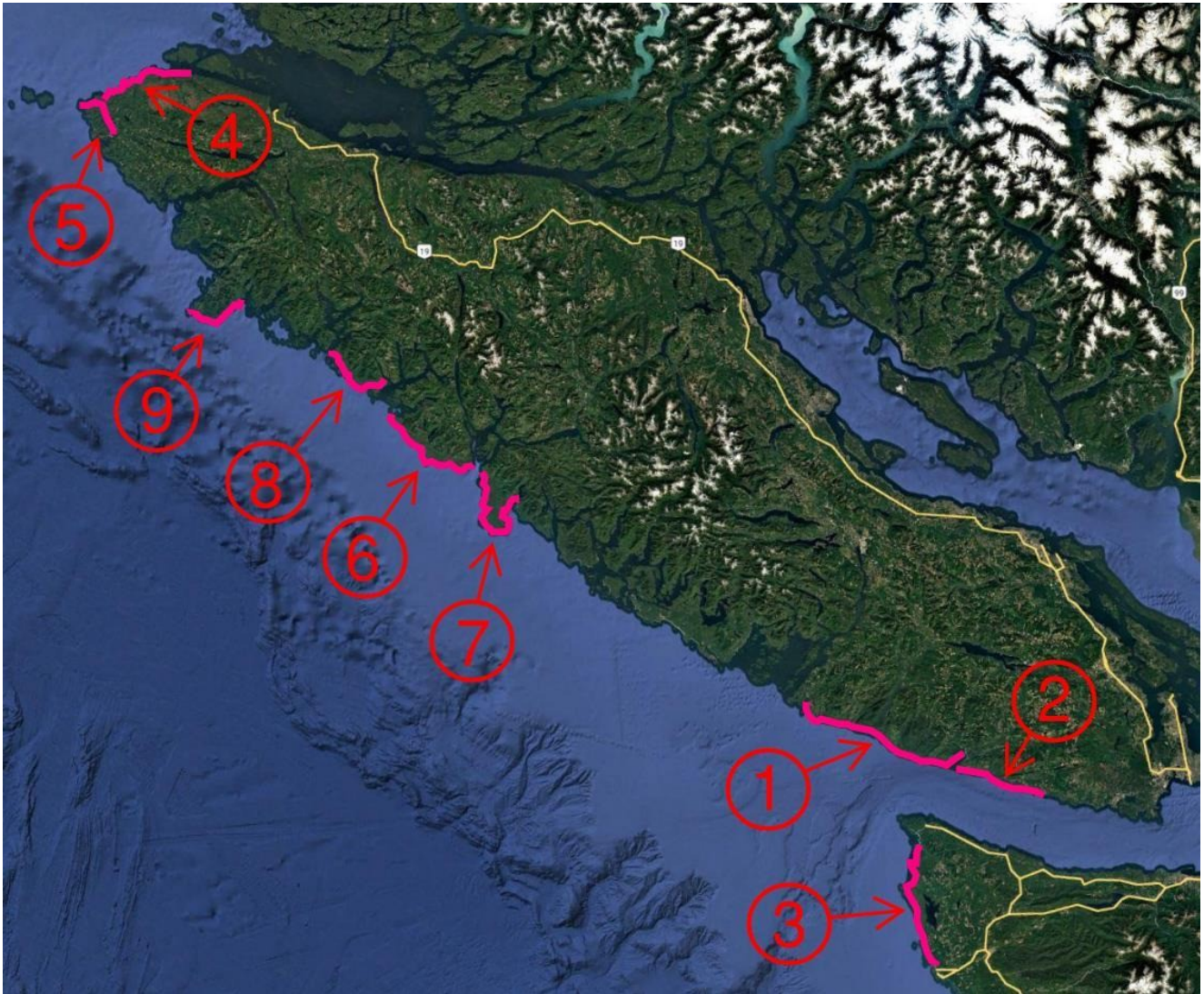




The well-known ones are served by van shuttles at each end:

1. West Coast Trail 75 km – 5 to 9 days between Pachena B. and Gordon R
2. Juan de Fuca Trail 41 km – 3 to 5 days between Renfrew and Jordan R
3. Olympic Beaches 45 km – 3 to 5 days between Shi Shi B. and La Push
4. North Coast Trail and 58 km – 4 to 7 days between Shushartie B & San Jo TH
5. Cape Scott Trail 50 km – 4 to 6 days San Jo TH to Cape Scott return

Add at least half a day of travel before and after. The first three require reservations. Most can also be done in segments. Completing quickly is generally not a target. As enjoying the beaches and camping are primary. Less experienced back packers will find these challenging, particularly with a pack weighing more than say 30 pounds.



The less well-known beach routes are:

1. Nootka Island 35 km – 3 to 4 days between Louie B. and Friendly C.
2. Hesquiat 45 km – 3 to 5 days between Escalante and Cougar A's
3. Tatchu and 32 km – 3 to 4 days between Port Elisa and Rugged Pt
4. Brooks Peninsula 40 km – 3 to 5 days Columbia C. to Cape Cook return

These lesser-known routes are along the middle of Vancouver Island's west coast. They can be accessed via water taxi. Or, more preferably by float plane. Nootka Air out of Gold River serves them and are very experienced with supporting the logistics of backpacking groups.

All generally require coordination with tide levels to cross some of the constraining headlands. Selecting a week with lower tides in the mid-day is preferred.

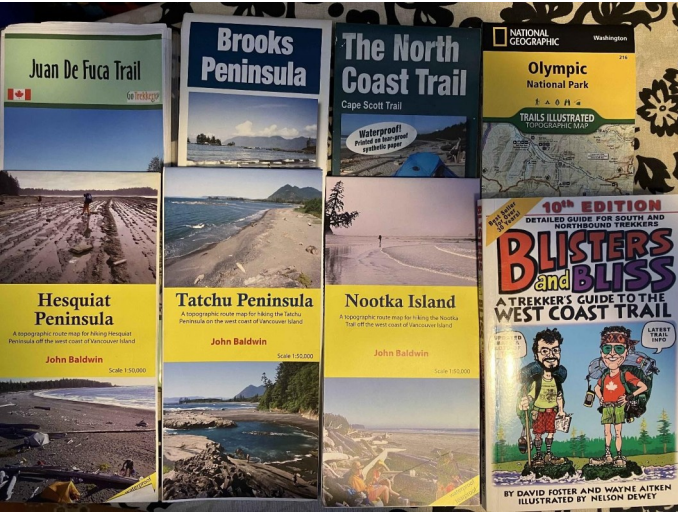


As a backup most tight locations have an overland bear trail. Literally the route that the bears and the wolves take to follow their feeding circuits at any tide level. As such head room is often limited to tunnels through salal. Many are only slightly better than dense bush-whacking on steep terrain. There are a lot of ropes that have been added over the years for ascending and descending headland trails. Generally, the beach ends of these "trails" are marked with colourful crab fishermen floats hung in the adjacent trees.



There are trail specific maps available at hiking stores, that identify the constraints and logistics. John Baldwin has developed several of these. Other maps are available from the parks.

If you do all of these, you will have 9 years of spring excursions to work through. Clearly, they can also be done in the summer or fall, but that is when the alpine opens up.



## Trip Reports

*The editor is in need of more trip reports for future newsletters! Have an old trip you never got around to writing? We want to see it! Submit your reports to [editor@bcmc.ca](mailto:editor@bcmc.ca).*

### Mount Judge Howay

*By Francis Bailey*

Mount Judge Howay is considered by many to be the siren call of the Stave River valley. The sharp and aesthetic twin summits of the Judge dwarf their surroundings and they can be seen from far flung ranges on a clear day. These peaks attracted mountaineers and adventurers from its earliest days going back as far as the early 1910's. That's when a prominent mountaineer by the name of Tom Fyles, set his eyes on the Judge. Tom hailed from the BCMC and was an intrepid explorer of the era making first ascents on many notable summits including: Mount Cayley, The Table, The Black Tusk (true summit), Mount Meager, Mount Job and more. He and his brother made their first reconnaissance trip in 1917, taking a train that used to operate up to the power plant at Stave Falls. From this jump off point they were able to borrow a canoe and paddle up the lake to try and get their first glimpse of what was then called "Snow Peaks". Unfortunately, due to weather, they returned home empty handed. Tom would make another trip to scope the area out before finally making the first ascent in 1921 along with Harold O'Connor and Eric Fuller.

Much has changed since that first ascent, but the Judge still remains a logistical challenge and an adventure to reach. A logging road now snakes it's way up the Stave River valley, but it's disconnected from any other road system. In order to reach it, most elect to canoe up Stave Lake and then bike or hike up the road. More recently, some parties have bushwhacked down from Kenyon Lake to reach the Stave FSR, but then the road must be travelled on foot as the terrain is too steep to bring bikes. The Stave itself can still be challenging to ford and climbers need to time the water levels if they wish to make a crossing. Generally, early spring and fall offer the easiest crossings. Once you're across the river a flagged trail might guide you through the bluffs up to a hanging water platform before one final bad section of bushwhacking lands you out of the trees and into the massive gullies of Judge Howay's eastern aspect. The difficulties from this point are dependent on snow conditions, but generally ease off until the summit. Finally, a seasonal snow bridge offers the only 4th class route up to the summit. If the bridge is out, parties will need to come prepared with a light rack and rope to climb the steeper alternatives.

Now when Alex and Trevor invited me to climb the Judge for the first weekend of October, I knew little of what I've just told you. I had seen a few ascents over the years and only read them with a passing curiosity. The Barkers had approached me about climbing the Judge earlier in the year too, but the window never came. Finally in October, after a week of rain and snow, a high pressure system swooped in with a 4 day reprieve. Our window arrived for the Sunday and Monday and we all carved some time off work to make it happen. Normally, we wouldn't have been able to ford the Stave with the recent rain run off, but we had the good fortune of gaining access to a canoe from our ferry ride to the Stave. I can't offer much about how we would reach the crossing for the Judge except to say that we were able to take a boat, followed by fast travel down the road with a canoe in tow.

On the first day of our ascent, the clouds hung low above Stave Lake and only the lower sections of long running wet slabs and forests were visible below. We made great time across the lake and before long we were 3 in a canoe preparing to cross the river. The crossing was short and uneventful and we quickly stashed the canoe and started up the trail. Initially we bushwhacked a bit too far up the slopes before course correcting to a flagged trail. We had heard of parties missing the flags and bushwhacking for hours to reach the famous water platform. In modern times the trail has become easier to follow and we knew if we could keep with the flags we'd have a straightforward approach.

The trail wound steeply up through the forest and slithered between bluffs and across dirt steps clinging to seeping slabs of rock. Thanks to the flagging, we avoided any real difficulties and reached the water platform without much event by 10:30am. We took a brief break and then pressed on through a more open forest before reaching a snarled section of deadfall demarcated by slide alder and bush to our left. That bushy section marked the final bad part of the approach to the gullies and many parties had reported BW4+. Again, we stuck with the flags and save for the completely soaked underbrush, it was actually much easier than expected. I think even if we didn't have a trail to follow, it wouldn't have been worse than BW3. Grainger by comparison was much worse.

Eventually we reached a section of slabs marking the last of the bush to the more open gullies. We could see an easy route across the rock, but it was covered in a slick slime and there simply wasn't any safe way to cross. We had to bushwhack up and around the slabs and then used a hand line to get down a short bluff and then we were virtually home free to the gullies.

An hour was spent searching around for a suitable camp site, but there were few and eventually we resorted to just building our own tent platforms into the hill. This worked nicely and within 30 minutes or so we had two tidy tent sites to set up on. Clouds continued to linger low in the valley, but we'd occasionally get breaks towards the summits. Any lapse in the cloud break would have has craning high to see if we could spot snow, but we never got a full view



of the summit. From camp the true summit was still towering another 1,500m above us. We would just have to find out in person how much snow, if any, awaited us.

All of us settled in around 8PM and awoke to the distinct pattering of rain on the tents just an hour later. It let on for another hour more before finally subsiding. This wasn't in the forecast and there's just no way it was helping our cause high on the summit. We all wondered if that last bout of rain might be our undoing.

7am rolled around as light crested into the valley and we hopped out to survey the surroundings. There were no obvious changes from last night's rain and we quickly got to packing. We left camp around 8am and the first crux of the day was getting around some wet 4th class slabs. A bypass had been identified through the bush on the left and so we had a breakfast of krummholz, branches and brambles. After dispatching with the band of bush, we entered a slick boulder field and made our way across where at the end a dry band of rock allowed us to enter the upper slabs and talus fields.



For roughly 600m of elevation, we had easy slab hopping and hiking until we reached the lower snow field. We swapped into crampons, booted across and then packed them away to hike up loose moraine and slabs. The terrain eventually narrowed into a feature known as the "hourglass"; a natural constriction in the gully. Here we hit our first true sighting of snow, a full 3-400m below the summit. Not a great sign, but we climbed up through the snowy and iced over gully, breaking off the verglas where we could until we reached a small glacier patch that no longer connected with the uppermost glacier.

Initially we trended left up a small channel, but the moves to exit involved some committing 4th class moves on iced rock in crampons. Do-able on the way up, but challenging to down climb. The mood was morose, our chances of reaching the

summit were looking more and more unlikely. I, above all, thought there was almost zero chance and nearly suggested we just turn back. Thankfully, Alex and Trevor held onto some hope and we

gave up on the left most channel and headed right where some 3rd class ice and rock got us up to the upper snow field.

We now had a proper view of the standard route and it was out. Snow plastered the wall and there was neither sufficient snow to boot up nor enough rock exposed to simply climb. It was in mixed condition, something we weren't prepared to do. However, our sails did not deflate in that moment. To the left, a promising left hand ridge line offered a strong potential for less snow. Trevor suggested we head straight there first, so we booted across the glacier and wrapped around to the south side of the summit block. There under the radiating warmth of the sun a line revealed itself! The bulk of the rock was snow free, save for the ledges and the climbing didn't look all too hard. We all agreed to give it a shot.

I placed my climbing shoes on along with everyone else and we ditched some heavy gear to start climbing up. The rock was gritty, with wonderful edges and the climbing was all around immaculate. Alex lead a nice line climber's left through easy terrain and then up to just below the ridge where we trended right across and exposed traverse and on to the ridge crest. We climbed a little ways further up snow slabs and ramps where the terrain steepened just below the ridge again. Here we opted to setup our first belay; an awkward affair.

Trevor took the first lead and the initial move involved stepping up a high angle snow covered slab. His feet blew out twice, but eventually he found firm foot holds and pressed up into a chimney. The chimney itself didn't look all that easy, but Trevor found easy face climbing out left and around and proclaimed that he was just below the summit. He setup an anchor and then both Alex and I seconded up. It looked like a few more low 5th

moves to the top, so I offered to lead up next and if the terrain was harder than it looked I could belay everyone up.





I pulled up through some low 5th loose blocks and then crested onto the ridge once more. There was the summit directly above me with nothing more than some 2nd or 3rd class moves to reach it. I pushed on and setup an anchor. Alex soloed up while I belayed Trevor and then we all stood on the summit together. There was a big sense of joy and relief that we had found a way up! I can't recall a time that I've been that close to getting shut down from the summit and still making it.



We collected endless photos at the top. The Judge is perfectly situated to cast an eye at every interesting peak on the horizon. I spotted countless future objectives and we all spent time discussing one idea or the other for the coming years. Finally, it was time to get down. We set up two clean rappels down our climbing line and reached our stashed gear hassle free. From there it was a tedious, but manageable down climb through the iced up gully. Once we hit the lower sections the snow subsided and we had an easy descent down to our last bushwhack.

Here we took a slight variation and even found some old flagging. Near the base we diverted back over to our original ascent line and were soon ejected out onto the open rock below. Our tents and a warm meal waited for us patiently.

On the next morning we packed everything up for 8am and returned along the flagged trail. We found the descent bushwhack to be not all bad and we actually reached the Stave River in roughly 2 hours. Our crossing on canoe was as easy it gets and there we rested on the shores while the sun reached into the valley and warmed us up. We hung out for a couple of hours until our ride showed up and then we were home bound. A great trip with a solid dose of luck to get to the top!

## Larkya Peak

Congratulations Kyndra Moeller for her recent ascent of Larkya Peak on October 16<sup>th</sup>! Larkya Peak (6249 m) is a somewhat lesser climbed peak in the Manaslu region of Nepal that's a great intro to Himalayan mountaineering without the crowds of the more popular intro peaks in the Everest region. Kyndra and her guides, Mingma Sherpa and Pemba Gurung, were the only team on the mountain at the time. They were blessed with clear skies and very little wind, and summited happily just after sunrise on Oct 16. This was her first 6000 m peak!



## 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.