



Kootenay Mountaineer

The KMC Newsletter May/June 2005 Issue 3 Next deadline: July 10th

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LODGE DEALS ERODE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BC PARKS AND CROWN LAND

Feb 22, 2005 **PRESS RELEASE**

Government documents leaked by the Public Service Employees for the Environment (PSE) reveal a well-developed plan to turn BC Parks into investment parks for wealthy Japanese, US, and European investors. The plan is called the BC Parks Lodge Strategy, and it is part of a larger program called the BC Resort Strategy that includes much larger developments outside park boundaries.

A lodge could contain up to 80 beds and would have all the amenities of home. "A lodge of any size inside park boundaries will impact park ecosystems," says Anne Sherrod Chairperson of the Valhalla Wilderness Society. However, the size contemplated for these lodges represents a shocking amount of damage to ecosystems and natural values of parks. Wildlife will disappear and water will not be safe from sewage. Ten parks have already been identified for these developments. "For 90 years the BC taxpayers have been contributing their taxes to keep BC parks free of this kind of development. A park is a park because it has been withdrawn from the rest of the land base that is available to private interests to make money. Parks were dedicated to preserving landscapes unaltered by human development. When parks are subjected to buying and selling of leases in land and big construction projects,

what's the difference between that and what Land and Water BC (LWBC) is doing on Crown land everywhere else in the province? This project would literally dissolve our park system."

Sherrod said the tourism industry does not need lodges in parks. "Land and Water BC is selling and leasing Crown land for recreational development as fast it can," she says. "This is about wealthy investors grabbing access to prime public land to make huge profits. They are actually going to ruin the front country natural zones and backcountry wilderness that make people want to come here." Private investors don't have to buy the land to gain control of it. A lease of parkland is quite enough to give them powerful legal rights to protect and expand the profitability of their businesses at the expense of wildlife, ecosystems and non-commercial recreationists. This is why the Banff area is losing its grizzly bears, wolves and other sensitive wildlife species. The leaked documents show that, for the last year, a few handpicked vested interests and environmental groups, known as the "Lodge Strategy Advisory Group" have been privy to the project. The public at large has been kept in the dark. The participants, which included a number of lodge owners, the Wilderness Tourism Association, the BC Wildlife Federation, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and the BC Federation of Naturalists, were told that they could not prevent the lodge strategy, but only give advice on how to do it. The environmental movement at large discovered this only when the Public Service Employees for the Environment released the material. "Sixty environmental groups, mostly in BC, have signed onto a Declaration on the Principles of Parks," says Sherrod. "The principles declare that parks belong to the public and should not be commercialized or privatized; that they are for ecosystem protection, not money making," says Sherrod. "This is what our original *Park Act* was all about and this is what the public en masse said to the Recreation Stewardship Panel." Valhalla Wilderness Society. Box 329, New Denver, British Columbia, Canada V0G

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NEW CAT-SKIING TENURE REINFORCES NEED TO PROTECT OLD GLORY ALPINE AREA

March 30, 2005. Land & Water BC has offered to approve 7,782 hectares of the Rossland Range for a commercial cat-skiing tenure. The original tenure request was for 18,067 hectares and included all of Mounts Crowe, Neptune and Mackie. While all details of the tenure offer are not yet known, LWBC did remove from the offer the area on Mount Crowe traditionally used for cross-country skiing, including the area where huts / cabins are located. Traditional users such as skiers and snowmobilers will not be excluded from use of the area.

This new tenure offer emphasizes the need for continuing to work toward protection of the Old Glory Alpine area, which has been under threat from at least two attempts to obtain tenure for commercial cat-skiing.

The 'Friends of the Rossland Range' is now a registered non-profit society and is continuing to work for protected, non-motorized status for the popular Old Glory Alpine area, an area of about 5,000 hectares. This is only about 10% of the Rossland Range, most of which is otherwise open to, or designated for, motorized activity.

This land, at the north end of the former Nancy Greene Recreation Area lost protected status in 1995. While the Province has indicated general support for re-establishing protection, land use reviews in the West Kootenay area have been repeatedly delayed and a planned local Rossland area review has not yet begun.

KMC members can show their support for protection of the Old Glory area for non-mechanized recreation by becoming members of the Friends of the Rossland Range. The more members the Society has, the greater the 'voice' when lobbying

politicians and Government departments. For more information, details, membership and more, visit: www.rosslandrange.org. Or contact: Ken Holmes 362-xxxx, xxxx@shaw.ca

Silver Basin Development: Grey or Green?

Developer/promoter Bill Sproule of Spouler Enterprises is quoted in a press release by Byran Ralph on Nov, 27 2003 that, "It's green and it's renewable! "This development includes 100 kilometers of snowmobile trails on alpine and sub-alpine ridges, 7000 acres of ski area, mountain bike trails and a gondola that will rise from a hotel complex on Nelson's lakeshore to 200 acres of resort property, simulating a "European-style ski area."

First: One kilometer of snowmobile track in an industrial park is not remotely green. Snowmobiles pollute at least 10 times more than the average car. That's a thousand percent increase. That means 100 snowmobiles per day bombing around in the alpine is the same as 1000 cars. Let's say there are 200 days of snowmobiling. That would give us 200,000 cars worth of pollution over one winter, where we previously had an area producing no pollution or disturbing no wildlife.

Second: The gas/oil mixture that goes in these machines is non-renewable. The only concept renewable is dishonest spin and the stunned culpability of local, provincial, federal politicians and bureaucrats. You can feel the collective satisfaction of corporate bankers, lawyers and real-estate interests as they watch the golden thread of greed stitch another patch against the air we breathe.

Should the people of Nelson and area choose to believe 200,000 cars worth of pollution is green? Well, they will inhale the particulate matter they deserve. Their children will weaken and further corrupt basic goodness.

Developers tend to get loosey-goosey with adjectives when describing their European style resorts. As a 16-year retailer in the beautiful Queen City, I have found most of the European tourists are here because it is not Europe. Simple black and white economics tells you if you have something that many want and few possess; you charge more for it. Wilderness integrity with air and water that is not past repairing for us and seven generations to come is our spiritual and economic capital. Tom Prior, Nelson, BC.

Wildsight

With the growing importance of the Columbia and Southern Rocky Mountains as a keystone to conservation in western North America, the East Kootenay Environmental Society has become *Wildsight*. Our new *Wildsight* identity will help us better communicate our vision to a national and global audience, and make the protection of biodiversity in our region an important value for people around the world. For more information, please visit www.wildsight.ca. You can also try http://www.wildsight.ca/columbia_headwaters/dthl.htm

Nelson Search and Rescue (NSAR)

NSAR met with the KMC to discuss search and rescue operations, as they exist locally. It is extremely important that the KMC have an awareness of the call out procedures required to mobilize NSAR.

NSAR has 43 members. Several different SAR units cover the KMC's traditional territory. There is a mutual aid process among these units.

SAR responds under the authority of the Provincial Emergency Program, which means that certain requirements must be met before they can be mobilized. SAR is dispatched by ambulance services after calling 911 or the BC Ambulance 1-800 number -Satellite phone requests on 911 will go to Ottawa. The 911 and 1-800#- will go through the preferred dispatch in Kamloops. After dialing 911 a person is met with a question of Fire, Police or Ambulance. A rescue would entail that one request the Ambulance and proceed with the appropriate dispatcher.

The RCMP specifically deals with search for missing persons. The Coroner's office, usually assisted by the RCMP, will be called if a death is involved. The RCMP have access to their Kelowna based helicopter. This has in the past caused some delays in response that can be critical in certain situations. When responding to a rescue SAR needs to be tasked by BC Ambulance and in a search the RCMP tasks them. If you know which SAR should be called, you should mention that as well. The rescue calls seem to be causing some problems at the dispatch level. SAR's groups have come a long way over a short period of time but they need to be called in a timely fashion with as much accurate information as possible in order to respond efficiently. It is very important that the procedure for call out is followed, that you are requesting SAR, and that the request

makes note of the difficulty and hazardousness of reaching the site. A "life and death" scenario accentuates the call. Specifically insist that it is a technical-wilderness rescue while at the same time keeping in mind that the person receiving the call may be somewhat unfamiliar with what such a rescue might encompass. They may be also unfamiliar with the area. Provide as many details as possible, GPS coordinates are great. Note that a helicopter "will" be necessary

Other SAR Notes:

-The first rule of rescuers is to never endanger the rescuer!

-If you're capable, it's always best to rescue yourself.

-Helicopters can be privately contracted to do retrievals however expect costs over \$1500. The pilot will not help. He will only fly the helicopter. Liability issues come into play.

-People are welcome to come out and watch NSAR practice exercises. Contact NSAR pager 352-8469.

Visit their website at nelsonsar.com
Compiled with the assistance of Joe Vingo of Nelson Search and Rescue.

Priorities for Environmental Leadership

A dozen of British Columbia's leading environmental groups (see list below) have joined forces in an initiative called Priorities for Environmental Leadership. Key environmental issues, all ripe for solutions today, have been put forward to decision makers and to the public. They include: One clear law to protect the habitat of B.C.'s 1,300 endangered species and investing in BC parks at the same level as Parks Canada so that BC parks are well managed now and for future generations. We are in the midst of public education, outreach and media campaigns to focus attention on these environmental priorities. For more information visit www.environmentalleadership.org.

Priorities for Environmental Leadership is an initiative of: Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, CPAWS, Forest Ethics, Georgia Strait Alliance, Greenpeace, Living Oceans, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter, Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Wildcanada.net, Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, West Coast Environmental Law, Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

WEBSITES worth a peek.

- Maps.google.com. And also try:
<http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/intro.aspx?lang=En#>

The Mountain Project "It's comforting to know that the mountains will remain there long after this generation is gone, that those who died will somehow be remembered" *Neil Grainger* Ottawa began naming natural features - mountains, lakes and streams - for fallen servicemen in the mid-1960's. Grainger Peak was named after Frank Grainger who died in a training accident in Northern Ireland on Oct. 16, 1943. The Mountain Project had its start on Victoria Day 1976 when his Neil Grainger stood on top of Grainger Peak for his first time and paid tribute to his brother Frank. "It came to me that this was such a fabulous thing, that maybe we should climb all the mountains that were named for the local guys".

There are 67 other war heroes from around Chilliwack-Hope-Agassiz commemorated by having mountains named after them. Most of them now have a small wooden cross on the summit. From 1984 to 1987 Grainger organized a trip to each of these geographical features in Southwest B.C. named for a fallen serviceman. Neil actually made it to 20 of these summits. Led by Grainger, many B.C. mountaineers became involved in the effort

Neil Grainger's comments on his climb to Grainger Peak -it was his third attempt before he finally reached the summit- "It was a moment I'll never forget," he says, "If a guy has to have a monument, a mountain is one hell of a monument". Neil is 77 years old now and it's unlikely that he will ever climb his brother's mountain again. But he's somehow certain that the wooden cross he placed on its

summit is still there. *From an article by Glenda Luymes in The Province, May 8, 2005.*

Responsible Tourism Development?

"...I'm well aware that there are a lot of insensitive developers out there who are entirely motivated by profit margins. They'd turn all our parks into golf courses, ski resorts and high-density time-share condos if they could get away with it. But that's not to say that there can't be responsible tourism development in areas adjacent to parks that may offer greater public access that won't damage the ecosystems. Such development, done properly, can enhance the park experience for the many members of the public who are not hardy backcountry hikers..."

Enhancing the enjoyment of the many can help preserve the wilderness experience for the few by increasing overall public support for parks. Ultimately, increasing the economic value of pristine landscapes results in a higher profile for parks on the political radar, too. Politicians who see value and public support are inclined to weight decisions regarding parks toward their own self-interest." *Stephen Hume in The Vancouver Sun, July 24, 2004*

Identification of mosses and lichens

The trail from Slocan to Evans Creek is a popular hike in the spring when access to the mountaintops is not so easy. On the last two occasions that I went on that route, I didn't go all the way to Evans Creek because I found other interesting things to do on the way. There is a profusion of mosses and lichens of many sorts, and so from time to time I would stop and get out a

magnifier, and sometimes a field guide to plants, to have a close look at this interesting environment. After all, lichens play an important role in the conversion of rock to soil, and it is amazing how much life can flourish on a piece of rock.

Much of the trail is in the forest, but at times it emerges on to rocky bluffs with a noticeably different ecosystem, with different species of plants altogether, such as reindeer lichen, death camas and Rocky Mountain juniper.

My identification skills of mosses and lichens are limited to two or three species of each, and even those are not 100% certain. So this would be an interesting trip to take with an expert botanist, preferably a bryologist or lichenologist. I would probably learn a lot from such an experience.

At one point, I came across a pine tree close to the shore. Its needles were in bundles of two, identifying it as *Pinus contortus*. There seem to be two varieties of this species: the crooked Shore Pine found at the coast, and the straight Lodgepole Pine found in the BC interior. This specimen definitely had the appearance of a Shore Pine, and was too contorted for making lodgepoles, yet it was far from the normal Shore Pine coastal habitat. So the question is: is it a Shore Pine that has migrated to an inland lake, or a Lodgepole Pine that has adapted to a shore habitat? What is a forester's opinion?

Norman Thyer

"If an area deserves to be preserved or restored, its status should be argued on the grounds of its beauty or ecological role. Its "naturalness" can't prove the point." Trudy Glover, from her article, "Its a Natural Conundrum", in The Vancouver Sun, Feb. 19, 2005

The deadline for submissions to **The Purcell Suite: Upholding the Wild** has been extended to June 15, 2005.

This anthology will delve into experiences in the Purcell Range (see call for submissions in previous KMC newsletter). I still have some room for adventure and climbing stories with a personal touch - and I'm happy to help previously unpublished writers polish their

pieces. Pieces should be 2,000 to 5,000 words.

Interested? You can contact me, K.Linda Kivi, at 354-xxxx or xxxx@canada.com

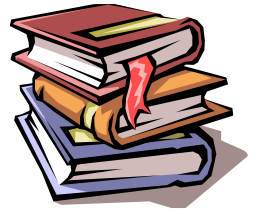
Thank you to those of you who have already responded. The rest of you, get writing! The purpose of this anthology is to draw attention to the special wilderness of the region and keep it out of the hands of people like Oberto Oberti of Jumbo Glacier Resorts Inc.

"It all begins in your backyard. The change from a human centered view of nature to one of sharing space with wild things can only come from the grassroots. Does the small effort individuals put forward amount to much? The answer is yes!" *Author unknown.*

Library News:

Two Avalanche Articles by Local Guide

The KMC has a subscription to the *Avalanche News*, a quarterly publication of the Canadian Avalanche Association. I wish more people (any people really) would take these journals out of the library to read as they always contain some excellent research articles. Two recent volumes (Issues 70 and 72) include articles by local ACMG certified ski guide, Laura Adams. The first (Issue 70) reports a survey of avalanche professionals (mostly ski guides and avalanche educators) on the core knowledge and skills for sound avalanche decision making (among other things); while the second (Issue 72) explores risk in the context of avalanche decision making.



New in the library since the last newsletter:

1. "Hiking the Cariboo Goldfields." One of the popular and well presented Rocky Mountain Books guidebook series, this one covering the Cariboo area of northern BC.
2. "Hiking Trails III: Central and Northern Vancouver Island and Quadra Island." This guidebook covers everything from short trails to extended backpacking and peak bagging trips in Northern Vancouver Island.

We regret to announce that Bob Hawes passed away on April 10th 2005. He was a KMC member for many years. When outdoors, Bob loved to be active in hiking, skiing, kayaking, bicycling and prospecting. He was born in Nelson, grew up in Ainsworth, was educated in Kaslo and lived in Creston.

Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Long Distance Hiking, And More!

Part 1. A Book Review

Hiking Canada's Great Divide Trail, Dustin Lynx (256 Pages)

Rocky Mountain Books, 2000

Another excellent guide from Rocky Mountain Books.

Starting in the south at Waterton, and ending at the Kakwa Lake Trailhead, 200km NW of Jasper, this 1200km (750miles) trail follows the Continental Divide, crossing it 30 plus times as it passes through five national parks, seven provincial parks, and four wilderness areas.

The guide is split into 33 segments, which vary in length from 80km to a mere 15km.

In the introduction, long-time KMC member Philippe Delesalle is credited with making the first formal proposal for the Great Divide Trail (GDT) in 1967. Unfortunately this proposal fell on deaf ears, as Parks Canada were fearful that the GDT would lead to overuse of existing backcountry trails in the parks. So much simpler for the bureaucrats if the public can be restricted to Banff and Lake Louise. Today, 38 years and numerous studies after Philippe's proposal, the GDT is still an "unofficial" route, lacking government support or funding. Perhaps this book will re-kindle interest in the trail. To twist a popular saying, "If you come, they will build it". Let's hope so. The author completed the GDT as a "through-hike" in 1996, taking about 10 weeks. His recommended pace is 20 km per day, which would get you there in a mere 60 days, as long as you didn't take any wimpy rest days. For the rest of us, who are less driven, there is an appendix which lists 8 selected day-hikes, 7 overnight hikes and 5 weekend hikes. Serendipitously 5 of these day-hikes are located on the southern portion of the trail, between Waterton and Crownsnest Pass, making them readily accessible. Two of the longer hikes, the Floe Lake-Rockwall trail, and the Skyline trail near Jasper are already deservedly popular with KMC members. However, since they are within the parks system, it is necessary to reserve campsites well in advance, which can be tricky. Well worth the hassle, these are both "must-do" hikes. Hopefully the rest of the list are of equal quality.

In summary, everything about this guide is great – The layout, trail descriptions, maps, distance charts, and general information are all excellent, with lots and lots of great b & w photos, showing lots and lots of enticing country. So, if you're ready for a change from your usual hiking routine, buy this book and go for a day or two, go for a week, or go for broke!

Part 2. Books for the beach

A number of years ago I thought that it might be fun to hike some, most or possibly all of one of the two great western routes, the 2,600 mile Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) or the 2,800 mile Continental Divide Trail (CDT), both of which start or end at the Canadian and Mexican borders. That was my motivation for reading the five books described below. I enjoyed them all, but the specifics of each now blend and blur. There is an obvious sameness to each story – Hike, eat, sleep, then repeat 150 or more times, as required. Inspiring stories, all.

The High Adventure of Eric Ryback, by E. Ryback

In 1970, and only 18 years old, Eric became the first person to hike the entire PCT, in an amazing time of 132 days.

The Ultimate Journey, by E. Ryback

Two years later Eric and his brother Tim set out to hike the CDT. Ten weeks along they make a desperate crossing of the Great Divide Basin in Wyoming, and Tim has had enough. Eric continues alone, and completes the hike in an impressive 129 days. The remarkable times for both hikes led to some “did he or didn’t he” speculation...

The Great Divide, by S. Pern

The best of the bunch. 166 days on the CDT, while smoking 10 cigarettes a day, described with typically understated British humour. Take this one to hiking (or climbing) camp, and irritate your friends by reading it out loud.

Six Moon Trails, by T. Mashburn

Six months (obviously) on the PCT. Tom has serious doubts along the way, but perseveres.

High Summer, by C. Townsend

Initially following Canada’s GDT, as described by Dustin Lynx above, Chris reaches the end at Kakwa Lake, and then presses on for another 50 days, and who knows how many more miles to reach the Liard River. Reading about this hike was almost as tough as the hike itself.

Part 3. Meet Ray Jardine

(Summarized from an interview with Eric Perlman, published in Rock and Ice magazine)

Ray wears more hats than an Easter parade. Engineer, inventor, entrepreneur, author, climber, sailor, kayaker, hiker, visionary, the list goes on. Highlights from his c.v. include:

- pioneered the climbing technique of “hangdogging”
- Established “Phoenix”, the first 5.13 climb in N.America
- Invented “Friends”, the camming devices which revolutionized climbing world-wide
- Spent 3 years sailing around the world
- Kayaked 3000 miles from near Vancouver to the Bering Sea, via Skagway Alaska, portaging his collapsible kayak and gear for 100 miles over the Chilcoot Trail to the Yukon River
- Hiked the Appalachian Trail (2,100 miles), the Continental Divide Trail (2,800 miles), and has now done the Pacific Crest Trail (2,600 miles) three times
- Founded the American Long Distance Hiker’s Association

For his sailing, kayaking and hiking adventures he has been accompanied by his partner Jenny. Last time out they completed the PCT in 97 days, averaging almost 30 miles (45 km) every day! The keys to his impressive achievements are intensive training and the confidence to envision and undertake such huge projects.

So, where is all of this leading us? Ray has now written three books based on his hiking experiences. Although I have not seen any of them (or read them, obviously!), they must be amazing reads:

- The PCT Hiker’s Handbook
- The CDT Pocket Planner
- Beyond Backpacking

Ray and Jenny, we salute you!

Part 4. A Personal Anecdote

My own experience of long distance hiking is very limited, but I did try it once. I set out from Waterton in late September, prior to 9/11, intending to hike the first 250 miles of the CDT. After about 6 km I crossed into the US at Boundary Bay, the official start of both the GDT and the CDT, depending upon whether you’re heading north or south. I continued down the lake to the US Ranger Station at Goat Haunt. This was now closed for the season, so I was unable to obtain any hiking/camping permits. Unconcerned, I continued blithely on my way. Silly me! Several days later I encountered the Ranger From Hell, who asked to see my permits. He was in a bad mood because he was on “potty-patrol”, closing up the backcountry biffies for the winter, a task which he claimed someone else should be doing. He was most upset that I had not reported to US customs and Immigration at Goat Haunt, (“Closed”, I said) or obtained any backcountry permits. (“Closed”, I said again, but with a smirking feeling). His first reaction was to order me to walk back to Canada. I protested as vigorously as I dared, having just spent several days walking down from there. His second solution was worse. He would arrest me, radio for a helicopter and have me flown out at my expense. I protested again, but meekly this time. Finally he said that he would let me go if I could pay him a \$125 fine on the spot. To my amazement he accepted my Visa card – Don’t leave home without it! This would make a great commercial – out in the middle of nowhere, cowering hiker offers Visa card to threatening Ranger, the sun peeks out, a deer appears, drums roll...

The next night it snowed a foot and a half, totally buoying the trail. I bailed to the nearest road, and eventually hitch-hiked back to Waterton. They had the snowploughs out, and it was still only September. I haven’t tried again.

Reference: The Hiker’s Guide to Montana’s Continental Divide, by T. Brooks & S. Jones.

Hamish Mutch

Club Trip Reports

Yellow Pine Trail, April 3

Eleven hikers came to enjoy the Yellow Pine Trail. The weather was cool but we had no precipitation. Birds were singing but no flowers were out yet. The return trip to the cars was along the lakeside trail.

We were C&H Hatch, B Johnson, T Pugh, J Watson, K&S Watson, M&W Webster, E Beynon and H Kirkwood coordinators.

Robson Ramble, April 10

Twenty hikers enjoyed a hike on trails and through the forests behind Robson. The weather was magnificent and many didn't want to leave the sunshine on the Lion's Head to return to their vehicles. Only a few wood ticks were captured. We saw very tame ruffed grouse 3 times and 3 white-tailed deer.

We were R Bates, E Brown, B Dean, J Golik, D Harasym, V Hart, C&H Hatch, R Lidstrom, C Page, N Plotnikoff, C Potasnyk, A&P Sheppard, S&K Watson, P West, and M Woodward. H Kirkwood and E Beynon, coordinators.

Going Down to Climb a Peak: Camels Hump

Originally, I had some epically long day trip posted on the KMC trip schedule for

Sunday April 10, but continuously unsettled weather and slow travel conditions in mushy snow, led me to change the destination, with a consequent down-grade in the duration and intensity of the trip, to a modest (easy really) day trip up the Camels Hump just east of Stagleap Provincial Park. The Camels Hump isn't actually the high point on the ridge that runs northeast from Cornice Ridge, inexplicably, it is actually the lowest point on the ridge and, beyond the Camels Hump, the ridge drops down, relatively steeply, to Summit Creek. This protuberance on the end of the ridge, however, does resemble a Camels Hump from some locations.

Despite the ease and shortness of our expedition only two people ventured out – Maurice De St Jorre and Peter Tchir. We left Bridal Lake at 8.30 am and contoured north around the very end of Cornice Ridge to the spacious flat valley east of Cornice Ridge. An ascending traverse took us speedily up to the pass to the southwest of the Camels Hump and from there we quickly gained the top of "The Camel" (as the highpoint of the ridge is becoming known locally). Getting off the north end of the Camel was a tad steep, so we boot-packed down a few steps before skiing down about 500 feet. Here, the ridge narrowed and bumped up and down a bit. We persevered with skis until the very last down and up which we boot-packed, arriving on the "summit" of the Camels Hump at 10.30 am.

It seemed too short a day to retrace our route so we ambled our way along Cornice Ridge, stopping for lunch on the highest point. Beyond here, the wind was strong and unpleasant so we quickly skied over the top of the final bump on the ridge, and, despite earlier reports of C- skiing had a rather pleasant run down

sun softened snow to Bridal Lake arriving at 1.30 pm – with plenty of afternoon left for Peter to either get stuck into (a) his marking, or (b) the repair of his ravaged yard after digging up both a sewer and a water line. Whether or not he did either of these things, or simply repaired to the new Osso Negro cafe to slurp up Nelson's locally roasted coffee is unknown.

Coordinator: Sandra McGuinness

Sentinel Slog, April 24

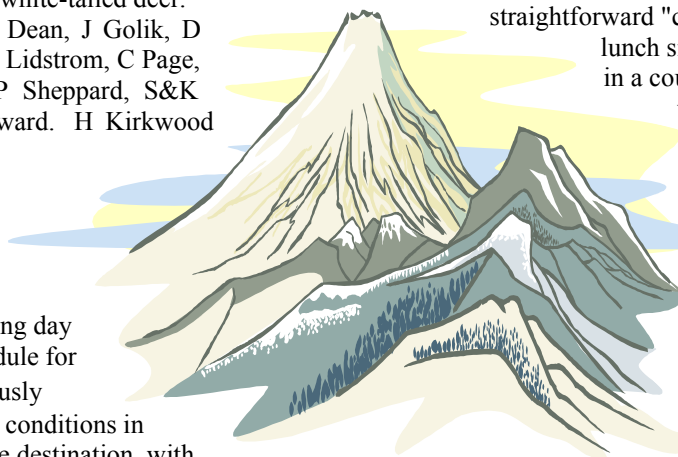
The scheduled hike for this day was Mt. Gladstone. After checking out the area a couple days before I thought that the early March snowfalls combined with the recent warm snap would be akin to walking in a large slurpee. Hence the destination change- Sentinel. We met at the turnoff to Peter Verigin's Tomb at 10am. This trail gets better every day. Blooming mock oranges were all over the Mountainside as were numerous other flowers. It's great to see that everyone in this group does not hike with the KMC in order to get in shape. Rather they get in shape to hike with the KMC. It was relatively

straightforward "calving" and we briskly reached our lunch site where the trail meets the old road, in a couple of hours. With an earlier start we would have made for south peak, in slushy snow, but everyone was happy to enjoy lunch on a small promontory overlooking Castlegar, Mt. Mackie-Mt.Crowe, Mt Faith-Mt Gladstone and the Noms area. On the return it must have been at least 25°C and it was good to see so many shorts. The descent took an hour and a half.

We were C Chandler, D Grant, D Harasym, B Johnson, R Lidstone, J Micklethwaite, F Moret, A & P Sheppard, and S Miros coordinator.

Lunch hour on this outing had an interesting look into Charlie's "Bear Canister". A bear-proof 6-7 liter container that carried 8 days of food. These "canisters" are legally required in some parks of the U.S. Each plastic canister weighs less than 3 pounds, fits in a full-sized backpack, and is capable of surviving a marauding bear. Personally, I'd feel more comfortable with more food, but Charlie, seemed confident it would suffice. He did however expect a considerable weight loss during his 3-month trip on the Pacific Crest Trail.

The discussion continued to Robin's note of the "Irish Kettle", Kelly Kettle, or Volcano Stove to cook the water for the planned hot dinners. The Web reveals that is a light, rapid, safe and sure-fire way to boil water. The Kelly Kettle was/is used by Irish fishermen for the past 100 years and will boil water in 3 to 5 minutes depending on the fuel. Made from aluminum it is essentially a double-walled chimney with the water contained in the chimney wall. Once the kettle is filled with water, simply start a very small fire in the base, set the kettle on the base and drop additional fuel (twigs, leaves, grass, paper, etc.) down the chimney. The large internal surface area of the chimney heats the water very quickly.



Gold Range Ski Mountaineering Camp, April 21 to 25
(maps Revelstoke 82L/16 and Gates Creek 82L/9, 1:50 000 scale)

For this third year of small, early-season camps (2003, Mt. Tyrrell; 2004, Campbell Creek), Paul Allen and I thought we would try something different—go earlier in the season and make ascents on skis.

After eliminating the Four Squatters because of helicopter costs, we settled on the northern Gold Range, in the Monashees south of Revelstoke and north of the Shelter Bay ferry stage. Selkirk Mountain Helicopters of Revelstoke gave us a very good rate for a party of six, and so at 11:30 on **Thursday, April 21st**, Paul, Pete Holton, Steve Horvath, Bert Port, Fred Thiessen, and I assembled at the Blanket Creek gravel pit, some 15 min. drive north of Shelter Bay, for the short flight up North Cranberry Creek to “Armstrong Lake.” This is just west of the col between the headwaters of North Cranberry and Lindmark creeks. We camped on snow on the east shore of the frozen lake at 1710 m. (5600', 139-209) near open running water of an inlet creek. After building a cooking area, setting up tents, and making an exploratory foray the first day, we were ready for a **Friday trip to Blanket Mtn.** to the north of camp.

Leaving at 6:50 on a warm, sunny day (like all the rest at this camp), we skinned up a snowy basin to pass through a 2560 m. (8400', 127-224) col between Armstrong Pk. and the south ridge of Blanket. Here, Steve and Pete decided on a ski day, while Fred, Bert, Paul, and I continued to the summit of Blanket. To accomplish this, we descended to the base of Blanket's rocky north ridge at 2520 m. and then skinned up a steep track on the north-facing Blanket Glacier leading to the flat-topped summit (2809 m., 9216') in about 4.5 hours from camp for the fast team. This ascent was made completely on skis. Paul and I, lagging behind, then skied down and followed F and B's tracks to Armstrong Peak (2650 m., 8694'), a very easy ski up from the glacier, by 3:00 pm. Here, we met the pair and skied back to camp with them by 3:40.

Saturday, April 23rd, we turned our eyes to the prize of the area, the shapely **Cranberry Mtn. (2873 m., 9426')**, some 5 km. south of camp. Relying on information from Dave Smith, who ascended this peak in the first Gold Range ski traverse in 1979 with Don Vockerath, Bobby Sawyer, and Tim Auger, we again left camp at 6:50, traveling via the pass east of camp (143-214) and then ascending a steep dome to gain Cranberry's north ridge, a wide, undulating expanse with spectacular views. Reaching the base of the mountain itself in just under 4 hours, we left the skis and bootpacked the final 200 m. of the reasonably steep north ridge (almost all snow) to the summit by 11:35. After all had descended to the skis via a slight variant on the east, Fred, Bert, and I ventured off for more peak bagging, intent on Cranberry's 2820 m. west outlier. Again, we used skis and bootpacking to ascend the north ridge of this summit (9250', 143-173) by 1:20. During our brief stay on top, Fred spied an attractive snow peak some 3 km. to the SW and began making his inevitable calculations of time required to reach it from camp. As it looked far away, I remained non-committal. After finding no cairn on the summit, we descended our ascent route, using our 7 mm cord for the only time at this camp to negotiate a tricky snow wall just below the summit. We returned to camp by 3:20 for an 8.5 hour day, skiing down on nasty, crusted snow at first, followed by soft snow and slush lower down. As we devoured

Pete's delectable meal of Tasty Bites “Bombay Potatoes” with rice and sausage, I decided maybe I would go with F and B to the peak we had seen earlier that day.

Sunday, April 24th, after another, clear, mild, star-studded night, Fred, Bert, and I got away at 6:55 for an attempt on the u/n 2540 southwest of Cranberry, which we thought might be unclimbed. We used the same approach as on Saturday to gain the upper glacial basin on Cranberry's north side. Bothered by my allergies and plodding along hundreds of meters behind the other two, I grumbled to myself, “Who wants to climb a crappy little unnamed 2540 m. peak, anyway?” After a miraculously-refreshing snack break at the three-hour point, I continued at a much faster pace while reflecting, “Wow! A first ascent. Another adventure with Fred and Bert. I might even get my first 10-hour day of the year.” By 10:35, we reached a 2740 m. col (9000', 147-171) between Cranberry and unnamed 2820 (very good ski access from both north and south). Here, we de-skinned and skied down and SW past CMH heli-stakes to a pleasant pass at 2220 m. (7300', 128-158) at the base of our peak's east snow ridge. After dumping the skis and lurching, we ascended on foot the 320 m. (ca. 1000') of the east ridge in some 45 min., Fred kicking steps, or in some cases trenching through the snow. We traversed north of a sub-peak and kicked up the final 40 m. from the north to reach this most pleasant summit (ca. 8330', 122-157) by 12:50 in 5 hrs. 50 min. from camp, just about on time by Fred's reckoning. While Bert and I surveyed the impressively jagged terrain to the south and east around the headwaters of Vanwyk Creek (getting to Gates Pk. farther south would be challenging), Fred dug into the snow, looking for a cairn. He unearthed a flat rock (an ominous sign), turned it over, and read this inscription written in indelible marker: “Mt. Britney Spear.” As the legend said “Spear” and not “Spears,” I could only conclude that Britney's other spear was the eastern sub-peak. After the obligatory 10 min. on the summit, we descended via our ascent route, trying in vain to kick off an avalanche to clear the route. The snow remained stable, and we reached our skis in 30 min. to prepare for the long 500 m. or 1700' slog back to the col west of Cranberry. However, the firm snow, good weather, and sublime scenery made this 1 hr. 45 min. shuffle easily endurable. Leaving the 2740 m. pass about 3:30, we skied down to camp by 5:20, for a 10 hr. 25 min. day. Very pleasant, and it didn't even qualify for a “low grade ordeal,” although we did cover some 13 km. and gain 6100'. While we were away, Steve and Pete had made an ascent of Blanket by the usual route and enjoyed some excellent skiing on both north and south aspects.

On Monday, April 25th, we decided a trip to the unnamed 2688 m. survey station peak NE of Cranberry couldn't be done before our helicopter was to arrive at 4:00 pm. There were few takers, anyway.

Instead, we phoned for the pilot to pick us up at noon. He did, we caught the 1:00 pm ferry, and the West Kootenay residents among us arrived home before supper. Overall, a superb trip. We highly recommend Selkirk Mountain Helicopters and pilots Chris and Ben.

References: “The Gold Range Traverse,” in *Summits and Icefields: Columbia Mountains*, by Chic Scott, pp. 100-103; and “On Skis in the Gold Range,” by Dave Smith, in *The Kootenay Karabiner*, Spring 1981. Kim Kratky

Other Trip Reports

Maligne Range Ski Traverse

Preamble: Strange to think of us heading back to the Rockies for a ski traverse, and, driving into Calgary three days before the start of the trip we begin to have serious misgivings about our trip choice, when, driving over Vermillion Pass, a relatively high snow area and the highest point on the road through the Mountain Parks, there is no more than a foot of snow at 1700 metres.

April 16, Day 1, Trailhead to Signal Campground

Nevertheless, after a dizzy, busy, social whirl in Calgary, Saturday morning finds us driving west to meet Old Goat Rick Collier at Lagans in Lake Louise. Despite his strongly leftward leaning slant and anti-establishment bumper stickers, Rick blows past us on the highway driving at about 120 km/hr through a 70 km zone, while we, obedient citizens that we are, continue on at a sedate and law-abiding pace. In Lake Louise, we harangue him on the virtue of driving just 10 km/hr slower, which, according to the environmentalists, drastically reduces greenhouse gas emissions while increasing fuel economy.

At Poboktan Creek trailhead, Doug and I hastily stuff last minute items into our packs, leave our truck for the shuttle at the end of the trip and squeeze into Collier's Nissan pickup which he rockets along the road at speeds far exceeding the posted limit all the while conducting a monologue on so-called "victimless" crime. Despite all our hurrying we are still over an hour late meeting up with Robin, Betsy and Tom at the Maligne Canyon Hostel. Luckily, however, they had been entertained (?enlightened) by the house parent of the hostel who apparently is quite adept at conducting his own monologues on everything from Federal politics to wolf tracking in the mountain parks.

Of course, few can compete with Robin Tivy, the master of monologues, whose diatribes would have you believe that the advent of plastic ski boots is responsible for everything from the war in Iraq to the moral decay of the Western world. So, with the Old Goat and Mr. Bivouac engaged in a dueling diatribe worthy of a Presidential debate, the rest of us strap our skis to our packs preparatory to leaving.

The superintendent (apparently) of Jasper National Park had told Rick the day before that this was the perfect time to ski the Skyline trail as the snow was good and packed. Unfortunately, it wasn't good and packed where the trail begins at 1160 metres just south of Maligne Canyon, in fact, the snow was just plain gone. However, within a kilometre or two we did actually encounter some packed icy stuff that bore enough of a resemblance to snow to encourage us to put our skis on. This part of the Skyline Trail is just plain drudgery, the trail is an old fire road which switchbacks its way up to about 2100 metres north of Signal Mountain, views are virtually nil, the forest the usual scraggly, scrappy mix of spindly pines that grow here in this dry northern Rockies climate, and, of course, your pack is at its heaviest and you at your least fit.

It took us four hours to reach the designated campground at treeline just below Signal Mountain, and, as it was now 5 pm, windy and snowing lightly, we decided to stop for the night. Tents were quickly set up and the Coast Range types, who I had always thought far harder than their Rockies

counterparts, disappeared inside to cook in their respective vestibules, while we less stalwart skiers from the Interior and Rockies cooked outside.

April 17, Day 2, Signal Campground to Amber Mountain

Next morning was reasonably clear with only moderate (for the Rockies) winds. Rick wanted to ski up Signal Mountain and somehow in our ascent of this minor peak (true to Bivouac style we went up the higher but unnamed 2312 metre top) we managed to first take a wrong turn, and second, spend an inordinate amount of time getting to the top. Views from the top, however, were spectacular with all the peaks of the Trident Range and the Alberta/BC divide laid out.

Some three hours after leaving camp we had miraculously managed to cover only about three kilometres and stopped for lunch on a dry patch of meadow north of Mount Tekarra. Although we were technically skiing the route, the snowpack in this part of the Maligne Range is miniscule and we spent most of our time trying to link together narrow stretches of snow to avoid taking our skis off. After lunch, we followed the general direction of the summer trail, contouring past the east side of Mount Tekarra and skiing across Tekarra Lake, which was completely clean of snow and would be faster crossed on ice skates. Travelling generally southeast we decided to cross the pass between Centre and Amber Mountains and rejoin the summer route south of Amber Mountain as it appeared that the normal summer route along the ridge and over Amber Mountain would involve a considerable amount of walking. Around 4.30 pm we decided to pack it in for the day and set up camp just south of the Centre-Amber pass. Once again, the Coast Rangers dived straight into their tents while I sat outside for three hours cooking dinner, making drinks and melting snow for water.

April 18, Day 3, Amber Mountain to Little Shovel Pass

Our third day was sunny and relatively calm, a weather pattern that held for the rest of our trip. Contouring on the summer trail past two unnamed bumps to the Notch we had to walk as the entire slope was clear of snow. The usual cornice stretched across the Notch, but was passable on the north side. We had lunch at Curator Lake and Doug, Kumo and I contoured around to Big Shovel Pass, linking more narrow snow patches and carrying our skis for a short stretch, but arriving about 15 minutes ahead of the other four who opted to follow the down and up route of the summer trail. Looking south from Big Shovel Pass the snowpack was noticeably deeper. Some strange quirk of geography obviously causes more snow to fall here and from this point on we had reasonable snow depths. We scooted across the Snowbowl at the head of Jeffery Creek, contoured around the north side of Mount Aberhart and made camp in the last stand of trees west of Little Shovel Pass. After dinner I skied up to Little Shovel Pass hoping to catch a glimpse of Maligne Lake but the pass is narrow and the long north stretching arm of the Bald Hills blocked the view.

April 19, Day 4, Little Shovel Pass to Pass #1

An unpleasant ski up a steep slope with faceted snow sliding off a crust took us up to a col above Hardisty Creek. Mount Hardisty, to the south, dominates the view with the long open meadows of Evelyn Pass to the east. We descended in a long contour into Evelyn Pass and, under a baking sun, plugged our

way through the pass until noon, the official lunch hour on this trip. Robin rigged up a sunshade with his jacket, apparently a trick he has learned from Coastal guru Steve Grant, and, resumed his ongoing ramble on the horrors of plastic boots and shaped skis, as opposed to the delights of leather boots and Kazama Mountain Highs. Delirious with sun exposure, Doug and I passed out on our packs and let the conversation wash over us. Presently, the conversation drifted onto snow blindness, a topic that would become more relevant next day.

After lunch we descended on mushy snow into the headwaters of Evelyn Creek, and, travelling southeast, a long but gentle 240 metre climb over an unnamed pass dropped us into a marshy area below the first of the six passes on the Six Pass route. A little digging revealed open water and we stopped for the night in this pleasant valley.

April 20, Day 5 , Pass #1 to Pass #4

Next morning the dog's eyes were puffed up and weeping. Fearing snow-blindness, we cast through our belongings for something to shield them from the intense glare of the sun off the snow. The only thing we could find was a pair of Doug's underpants (fortuitously still clean); however, after duct-taping them to the dog's head, he promptly wandered off and fell into the kitchen hole - perhaps not the best solution. Luckily, Betsy had a pair of spare sunglasses which we managed to duct tape to the dog's head, and, although he spent the rest of the day pretending to rub up against people affectionately when in reality he was just trying to get the glasses off, his eyes were considerably less puffy and weepy the next morning. Before lunch we passed over passes #1 and #2, both offer easy ascents and descents, and, at the regulation noon, we stopped for lunch in a meadow below pass #3. The ski up to pass #3 was easy but hot with the sun at its apex, a contouring descent put us below pass #4, and another easy ski up, this time cooled by a pleasant breeze, took us over the final pass of the day and down to camp in the meadows below.

April 21, Day 6 , Pass #4 to Poligne Creek

From camp, Elusive Pass, 7 km away at the head of the valley to the southeast seems well named. Skiing up we all settled into our own pace and climbing method, those of us who shun contaminating our skis with wax, used skins the whole way, while the traditionalists (no prizes for guessing who that was on this trip) used wax as far as possible. In just over two hours, the first of us crested the pass, where, relaxing all the rules, we got approval for an early lunch. There is a cornice on the south side of the pass but it is easily passed by skiing up the ridge for about 40 vertical metres. Methods of descent down the slope on the other side varying from skiing to step kicking to butt-sliding. The final pass on the route, Maligne Pass, is actually down hill from Elusive Pass and we easily slid our way into the broad open pass.

As we slid below 2200 metres we began to experience what every Rocky Mountain ski-tourer dreads at this time of year – the isothermic snowpack. Every so often someone would go down, straight down to the bottom of the snowpack. Being second, third or even sixth in line was no guarantee that you wouldn't be the one to go down. The most annoying circumstance is when one ski goes down but not the other, inevitably, this will tip you over into the snowpack, where upon your entire body will sink. Major extrications with removal of pack and skis are then required. So, our previously speedy

progress slowed and we crawled our way to the official Poligne Creek campsite at around 2000 metres for a short break.

Continuing on, things just got worse and worse, we sank more and more often, and deeper and deeper. Our forward progress slowed to a rate somewhere around 0.3 to 0.5 km per hour. Eventually, when we were all feeling quite exhausted, we stopped and made camp where the summer trail descended to the creek. Major trenches were excavated between the various tents and to handy trees for night-time pees.

April 22, Day 7 , Poligne Creek to Trailhead

Next day we got up early at 6.00 am, packed up without the usual banter and were off by 7.45 am. Luckily, temperatures were dropping enough overnight to still freeze the snowpack up, and by staying on the packed trail we were able to ski out to the road with minimal wallowing in 2.5 hours. Chatting with a warden at the trailhead, I found out that overnight temperatures at the telemetry station on Parkers Ridge were not dropping below zero – signalling the end of ski touring in the Rockies for another season.

Participants: Doug Brown, Sandra McGuinness, Kumo, Rick Collier, Tom Tiedje, Betsy Waddington, Robin Tivy

“A-B” Hikes and a Casual “C”!!!

Last year several KMCers were **very** successful in providing club members with A and B rated hikes. Everyone who went on these outings appreciated them. The KMC could do more to provide such hiking opportunities. Many members sat at home eagerly awaiting such postings. We are, therefore, encouraging our members to volunteer to coordinate A and B level hikes and to choose destinations and dates. Do not worry about having the hike on the day of another scheduled outing. It posed no problems last year and as we said, these outings proved very successful. Depending on the number of volunteers that come forward, we should be able to set more A and B hiking days for the hiking season. Even if they are short notice and put on the email update system.

We would also like to encourage more outings of any kind in that beautiful fall weather that us “Kootenayians” are so proud of. There will be another newsletter in July and one in September, which leaves lots of days available for the Autumn hiking season.

Remember, the usual day of having trips on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesday is not written in stone. You are encouraged to coordinate hikes on any day.

One final note. Any club trip must pass through the Summer Trips Chairperson, Martin Carver. Other trips, not sanctioned by Martin, are considered non-club trips.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter.

Contact Martin at 354-xxxx or xxxx@netidea.com

IS FASTER BETTER? THE PHILOSOPHY OF FASTER

Do you prefer quality, or quantity? While I respect the Olympic motto 'Certius, Altius, Fortius - faster, higher, stronger - sometimes I prefer slower, lower, and weaker. When some people arrive at the end of a walk, they consider themselves winners. They have conquered something. When I finish a walk I don't think of it as winning or passing a test. When I finish riding a wild roller coaster I don't think I won or passed a test - I just think, "Wow. That was FUN!" I don't go hiking to accomplish the activity of hiking. I have no particular love for the sport of hiking. I am not proud (or ashamed) to be a hiker. Hiking is a means to the end for me, not the end itself.

Sometimes the backcountry is a living hell. Of course, attitude plays a big part in that. Rain, cold, hunger, sleepless nights, and other things bother me very little. I'm all Zen about it. Bugs, on the other hand make me insane... I still don't understand why God saw fit to make mosquitoes, and it's the first question on my list if I ever get to ask him (or her). Backpacking isn't fun for me. It never has been, and it probably never will be. Dragging any pack of any weight across endless miles for 'fun' is, in my opinion, a sick abuse of the word. I have made peace with my pack, but I'm not in love with it either. The REWARDS of backpacking however are fun. Sleeping out doors, standing under waterfalls, watching the stars, breathing fresh air, dancing in the rain, and thousands of other little things ARE fun. Some of the things that other people hate are, to me, fun. I like camp food, for example.

Everyone has different views on what 'doing well' on the trail means. Some people think that 'doing well' is covering as much ground as possible - I don't share that mindset. For example, if I visit a museum and spend as much time as I like and see as many of the exhibits as I care to, I consider that I did well. Someone else may run through the museum, lay eyes on every single exhibit for three seconds, get out of there in an hour, and consider that they did well. I'm not going to judge them and say, "Well they didn't REALLY visit the museum.", but I might ask them what their favourite part was... I have had various people comment that they aren't really hiking faster. Carrying a light load just lets them hike longer hours. They don't have to stop by 2:00, because they aren't tired so they can keep going. Well, I don't stop at 2:00 because I'm tired. I stop because I want to.

There is another difference between the two philosophies, and it's something that's quite subtle. Some of us are driven, and some of us are pulled. I am the pulled variety. After so many trails and so many miles, I have never thought of myself as a 'through hiker', I consider myself a wanderer. Some people feel the need to 'test' themselves, and I can respect that. Just don't think that going further, higher, or faster makes you better than someone else, or some kind of hero.

There is a fine line, I think, between those men and women who meet challenges presented to them by time, circumstance, or misfortune - the outcome of which have real and meaningful importance - and those challenges that are drawn arbitrarily and met by those desiring to, but that have little meaning beyond the task itself. That is not to say that such endeavours are without merit. The climbers climb because the mountain is there, and I tip my hat to them as I walk the valley far below. Neither one of us is greater of lesser than the other. We are both meeting our own set

of challenges in our own way. Firefighters, law enforcement personnel, doctors, engineers, and other people who make a real difference in our lives and the lives of our fellow men, however, meet no arbitrary challenge, but rather respond to a call that often holds a desperate struggle for life itself.

This line, however, is fine and I think that both fall into a subset of people described by Mr. Roosevelt:

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by the dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy course; who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

I assume that everyone reading this belongs to that group, and as a group we appreciate as well the words of Mr. Napoleon Hill: "Cherish your visions and your dreams as they are the children of your soul; the blueprints of your ultimate achievements." He fails to note however, that the children that will grow and thrive are the ones that we feed. Also, the end result of these 'blueprints' leads us to surmount obstacles, and obstacles are necessary for success. Victory comes only after many struggles and countless defeats - but each struggle, each defeat, sharpens your skills and strengths, your courage and your endurance, your ability and your confidence and thus each obstacle is a friend that forces you to either improve or to quit. Each metaphorical mountain in our path is an opportunity to move forward; turn away from them, avoid them, and you throw away your future. These metaphoric mountains contain the power to push a man to the brink of his destiny and show him the path to his improvement, and at times to his salvation. Robert Louis Stevenson noted this when he wrote, "When a torrent sweeps a man against a boulder, you must expect him to scream, and you need not be surprised if the scream is sometimes a theory." This is the call, and the response, of men and women who are driven to succeed and never surrender.

I also see the wisdom, however, in Sir Lubbock's belief that "Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky is by no means a waste of time. "Which is the call, and the response, of those of us who are pulled out of their slumber to act as sacred witnesses of an often indescribable majesty".

These two philosophies, two religions if you will, are not at odds. Those who reach for greater heights are not held back by those who prefer the beach, and those who remain in their caves are pitied by both sects.

So, no, to me, faster is NOT better. You surmount the obstacles either way. Of course, it's up to you if the obstacles make you miserable - but that's a topic for another time.

This essay is from [SHANE STEINKAMP'S BACKPACKING BASE CAMP](#) website. We gratefully acknowledge Shane for his permission to print it in our newsletter. It has been edited and condensed for our newsletter.

Wilderness: A Western Concept Alien to Arctic Cultures

By David R. Klein

The concept of wilderness in Western culture has its roots in Judeo-Christian fundamentalism. Europeans brought with them to North America this concept, as they set out to tame the wilderness of the western frontier. It was only after the wave of settlement had reached the Pacific coast that the desire to protect samples of wilderness was born. Humans now controlled the land and viewed themselves as separate from nature. This view of nature is embodied in the United States Wilderness Act of 1964. Indigenous peoples, however, whose cultures have evolved within wild lands based on hunting and gathering, are at home in these lands. Their life-styles and very existence have been dependent upon a sustained harvest of resources from the land without altering nature. Indigenous peoples are at the top of trophic relationships within arctic ecosystems and view themselves as a part of nature. Although conservation of nature in the Arctic is today a common goal of both the indigenous cultures and elements of Western culture, increased understanding of culturally based differences in perceptions of nature is necessary if mutually acceptable conservation efforts are to succeed.

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE ARCTIC are gaining deserved legal authority and responsibility for administration of their homelands-homelands that only recently are viewed as such in Western society. Wilderness advocates are now turning their eyes northward and are beginning to perceive the as yet unrealized potential for wilderness opportunities in the Arctic. If the Arctic is to serve the growing interests of wilderness seekers from the south, those interests must be compatible with the interests and the well being of the residents of the Arctic. This is particularly relevant in view of the current, and presumably continuing, future trend in world politics toward recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples relating to the lands they occupy and their desire to protect values they cherish in their cultures. But how differently do people who live south of the Arctic and indigenous people of the Arctic view the concept of wilderness? Aldo Leopold in the book *Sand County Almanac* (1949) described wilderness as:

“the raw material out of which man has hammered the artifact called civilization.... To the laborer in the sweat of his labor, the raw stuff on his anvil is an adversary to be conquered. So was wilderness an adversary to the pioneer. But to the laborer in repose, able for a moment to cast a philosophical eye on his world, that same raw stuff is something to be loved and cherished, because it gives definition and meaning to his life.” (p. 188)

These few perceptively chosen words by Leopold encompass two important aspects of the evolution of the wilderness concept in Western society: first, the human striving to transform nature, and second, the more recent nostalgic and aesthetic valuation of wilderness by an affluent society no longer in direct contact with nature. This pattern, perhaps not surprisingly, parallels the historical shift in Western society from its land-based origin to the technological industrial dominance of this century.

Western civilization has its roots in the city-states bordering the Mediterranean Sea, where separation of the urban dweller from nature was considered a desirable outcome of civilization. Wilderness became antithetical to the development of Western society. Wilderness was an obstacle to human dominance over nature but, as humans increasingly became separated from the natural environment, familiarity with it was lost. Thus, wilderness,

which had nurtured humans throughout their evolution into the Stone Age, was now abandoned by civilized man and was relegated to the realm of the unknown, engendering the fear and foreboding that humans so typically ascribe to the unknown.

The emerging new religions in the Mediterranean basin focused on the urban dweller and provided reinforcement for the belief that wilderness was threatening to human society, harbouring the spirits of pagan animism as well as demons and devils of the new religions. Religious ideology underwent a transformation from the nature-based spirit world of hunter-gatherer societies to the abstract single, human, and male all-powerful God of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Jerry Mander (1978) stresses that between 3000 and 2000 B.C., Hebrews won a political victory by renouncing worship of graven images, which were the symbolism of nature-based religions, while substituting their new anthropocentric religion that flourished in the expanding western civilization.

Much later, the industrial revolution brought about acceleration in the rate of human exploitation of the earth's environment, fostered by the Reformation and the emergence of fundamental Protestantism. Max Weber (1930) ascribed the rapid development of industrialization and the associated growth of capitalism to the Protestant ideology that viewed the earth as a storehouse of resources explicitly available for human exploitation. Protestantism also provided a work ethic that supported, and was supported by, the rapid rise of capitalism. Human populations were exploding at the expense of wilderness.

Nonetheless, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the dominant view of wilderness in the West was shifting from the fundamentalist Judeo-Christian negative image of darkness and the home of evil and threatening elements to a more positive view that melded the rural pastoral landscape with undisturbed nature. An appreciation for wild nature was evolving, particularly in North America, where development of the land by European immigrants had occurred in proximity to wilderness, as the frontier was pushed westward across the continent.

Appreciation of wild nature had become the central theme among an emerging cadre of American writers, including Charles Carleton, Henry David Thoreau and John Muir. Thus, the wilderness movement was born in North America as a satellite to the growing conservation movement that had been instrumental in bringing about the establishment of the world's first national parks.

For many, the culmination of the wilderness movement in the United States was the recognition by the U.S. Congress of the values of wilderness and the importance of wilderness preservation through passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 (U.S. Congress, 1964). This act-designated federal lands, primarily within existing federal reserve lands (national parks, national forests, and national wildlife refuges), as wilderness and offered protection to assure its continued "community of life ...untrammelled by man."

Official recognition of wilderness values by the U.S. Congress was largely a consequence of the strong educational and lobbying activity of the environmental movement through citizens' advocacy organizations, primarily the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, and the National Audubon Society. At the time, the Wilderness Act was branded by outspoken opponents, perhaps validly, as elitist legislation, serving the interests of a wealthy minority of the United States population. Subsequently, however, areas designated as wilderness throughout the United States under the Act have experienced rapidly increasing visitation, dominated by young people, often with only moderate or meagre levels of income. Nevertheless, only a minority of the American public actually visits wilderness areas.

For most people in Western society today, wilderness is a concept, the reality of which they have not personally experienced. The image of wilderness in the minds of many urban Americans, however weak it may be, is derived almost totally from television (the average American adult spends 4 hours per day in front of the TV screen). The proportion of TV time in support of wilderness preservation in the United States is probably a fraction of 1% (and most of that is on public TV which is watched by less than 5% of the TV viewing public). Contrast this with about 20% of commercial TV time in the United States devoted to advertising products that either directly or indirectly result in loss of the natural environment or damage to it through pollution, deforestation, land lost to development, over harvest of marine resources, and scarification of the land through extraction of non-renewable resources.

Even when the effort is made through TV, it is not possible to represent the depth, smells, and feel of wilderness through the electronic media. Television lacks the potential to convey complexity to the viewer. The electronic media is flat, affecting only the visual and auditory senses in a filtered, superficial manner. It cannot convey the nuances of life or the complexity of ecosystem relationships. Those who have not experienced nature by being in it, a part of it, cannot understand the beauty and richness of nature solely from the television screen. The aura of living systems does not lend itself to any abstract form of communication. It must be experienced *in situ* (Mander,1978).

There is no simple solution to the conundrum of perceived reality of the natural environment as depicted by TV. TV has captivated the minds of a majority of Western society. But TV, even in the unlikely event that the program time and motivation were to become available, is technologically incapable of conveying an understanding, an appreciation, and a reverential respect for wilderness values. If television is able in rare instances to engender support for wilderness protection through programming, it is only through the viewing public's willingness to accept the voice of electronic media as authority. Unfortunately, the voice for wilderness that comes from television is minuscule in contrast to

the dominant materialistic, consumer-oriented, resource exploitive voice that occupies the majority of prime time TV.

I do not intend these comments as merely an attack against television, but rather to emphasize the almost totally ineffective role that television plays in conveying the concept and reality of wilderness to the viewing public. Nevertheless, TV plays an effective role in shaping the views of the public, however distorted from reality they may be.

It is ironic that Western society, with its materialistic, technological preoccupation, its present economy that is clearly unsustainable through its dependence on massive worldwide exploitation of non-renewable resources, and its dissociation from nature, has also been the source of political activism to provide protection for remaining areas of the world' s wilderness. The wilderness preservation movement has its roots in America, fostered by the biocentric writings of John Muir and Aldo Leopold, and more recently supported by advocates of deep ecology (Devall and Sessions, 1985). The concept of humans as part of nature, which has remained an integral component of non-Western cultures, is viewed as a threat to the environment by many Western wilderness advocates (Guha,1989). The act of offering legal protection for wilderness that is far removed from our everyday lives provides salve for our conscience, perhaps in recognition that we have lacked the will to initiate the major governmental and economic restructuring necessary if we are to move toward sustainability of Western society.

But what is the meaning of wilderness in the Arctic? Is wilderness a concept alien to arctic cultures? Cultures have evolved within the constraints imposed by the environments where they occurred. Indigenous people that have lived compatibly with nature have done so by necessity. Those that exceeded the bounds of their environmental constraints died out, and there are numerous examples whose artifacts left upon the landscape have provided fertile fields for archaeologists. Cultures have waxed and waned in relation to resource abundance, sustainability, and level of exploitation. When cultures persisted and human populations remained stable, it was usually because the level of technology available for exploitation of resources did not permit overexploitation of resources. When new technology became available, either through innovation, or by adoption from other cultures, increased exploitation of resources became possible. Human populations then expanded until either a new level of capability of resource exploitation was reached within the sustainability of the resources or overexploitation occurred and the human population declined, often to extinction, and taking with it the associated culture.

When advances in technology have led to increased human density, social interaction flourished and time became available for activities in addition to those essential for subsistence. Artistic skills developed and spirituality became more complex, often incorporating feedback from resource limitation. If the food base was diverse, overexploitation of one resource did not necessarily lead to the demise of the human population. It is apparent that, given that the time was available, awareness of the need to regulate future use of the overexploited resource may have developed. Constraints may have become incorporated into the culture as taboos, moral injunctions, or religious sanctions. Cultures characterized by stability over long periods of time were logically those that did not overexploit, that were relatively free from

influences of other cultures via technology exchange, competition for similar resources, warfare, and introduction of disease.

Cultures undergoing rapid change, albeit from the introduction of new technologies and ideologies, exploitation of newly available resources, domination and absorption of minority cultures, occupation of new lands, or population explosion, are likely to lose those constraints against resource overexploitation that had evolved with the cultures. This occurs because cultural attributes that yield long-term social benefits are lost in cultures undergoing rapid social change with associated population growth. Under such conditions all aspects of culture, including value systems, become flexible and subject to change. Cultures in isolation with stable or even declining population growth are resistant to change. Witness the stability of the Norse culture in Iceland during its isolation throughout the Little Ice Age. The written Icelandic language and agrarian-based culture remained intact, even though the sustainability of the land for livestock and crops declined to submarginal levels as a consequence of the cooling climate, widespread overgrazing, and soil erosion.

A similar pattern appears to have preceded the demise of the Norse settlements in Greenland (Fredskild, 1988). The Norse in Greenland were apparently so inflexibly tied to an agrarian economy and culture that they failed to transfer their dependence from the land, which could no longer support them, to the more abundantly available resources from the sea that became the sustenance for the Inuit who ultimately moved southward to replace them.

The Western concept of wilderness often includes homelands of indigenous peoples. The Gwich'in people, Athabaskan Indians living close to the northern limit of forests in north-western Canada and adjacent Alaska, have a saying that "to understand our way you must stop for a moment and feel the rhythm of the land. For we are part of it" (S. James, pers. comm. 1993). Before contact with Western culture the Gwich'in knew of the caribou only in fall and winter, when they were present in their homeland. When the caribou left their wintering grounds in spring migration north to the calving grounds, they left the land of the Gwich'in. The calving grounds were in the land of the Inuit, the people who lived at the edge of the sea. The Caribou Cree of the northern coniferous forests of central Canada have had a similar relation to caribou (Ingstad, 1993). They knew that the caribou were in the north and absent from their lands in summer, to return again in fall and winter, but not always. Wintering areas varied from year to year as well as the migration routes followed. They spoke of the caribou as mystical and often unpredictable creatures, even though their culture had evolved largely in relation to caribou, their existence was dependent upon them, and they had intricate knowledge of the winter ecology of caribou. Nevertheless, they had a saying that "no one knows the way of the winds and the caribou" (Munsterheim, 1953:97).

In a sense, the calving grounds of the caribou might be viewed as an analogue, in these caribou hunting cultures, to the Western concept of wilderness -a land beyond the realm of the known homeland. Similar areas might include those areas of the Arctic that could not support indigenous people, areas without harvestable resources and therefore of no utilitarian value, such as the tops of high mountains, ice caps, and expanses of the sea beyond safe exploitation. Such areas, although not visited except perhaps by shaman seeking powers from the spirit world, were, nevertheless,

usually endowed with spiritual entities or power. They commanded respect even though seldom or never visited. But if such lands can be considered wilderness by indigenous cultures of the Arctic, the concept is far removed from the wilderness of Western culture, which has values that can for most people be personally appreciated and exploited only through visitation, a place of retreat and restoration of self and soul.

In indigenous cultures, the land is the source of being and is understood as such. In urban, industrialized, and monetarily-based cultures, the individual has lost direct contact with the land and has no real appreciation for the relationship of culture to the land via the commodities consumed that are products of the land (e.g., food, clothing, materials to construct homes, and paper that brings the printed word). Wilderness in the Western concept, when in the homeland of indigenous peoples, is valued by indigenous cultures for its productivity. In Western urban society, however, wilderness is valued not for its productivity but rather for its lack of productivity for humanist consumption. A great disparity obviously exists between the Western view of arctic wilderness and the indigenous view of arctic homeland.

Is a marriage of the Western concept of wilderness with indigenous peoples' views of the land possible? Can protection of natural areas in the Arctic serve thirsts of Western society, while respecting and protecting the interests of indigenous peoples within their arctic homeland? Because surviving cultures are not static, and both Western and arctic indigenous cultures are undergoing rapid change, the targets that are the focus of legal action to protect wilderness in the Arctic are moving targets. It is not surprising that a divergence of views on measures for land protection exists within both cultures.

Western culture is an amalgam of cultures (largely, but not exclusively, European) that has and is undergoing rapid change. This accelerated change is the product of the industrial/technological revolution. Unlike most of the cultures that it has absorbed and that had evolved over millennia of relative stability, Western culture is now a culture in transition, fuelled by the rapid increase in human population density and exploitation of largely non-renewable resources that are far removed from their consumers. It is a culture with little likelihood for adoption of timely self-imposed constraints on its manner of resource exploitation that could lead to population and cultural sustainability.

Wilderness, as a concept, is also undergoing change in Western society. In the three decades since the passage of the Wilderness Act in the United States, there has been a rapid growth in wilderness visitors (users) in areas designated as wilderness. The wilderness experience, as defined by the Wilderness Act, should provide opportunities for solitude. Now, however, the experience must be shared with an increasing number of users in most designated wilderness areas. A consequence is that the wilderness character of these areas is being lost, but it is the concept that is being eroded, whereas the land remains largely unaltered. Jay Hansford Vest (1987) has pointed out the difficulty that federal agencies have encountered in attempting to manage wilderness areas to serve the aesthetic and poetic ideals encompassed in the Wilderness Act through objective management technology. The Wilderness Act is an attempt by legal mandate to designate and protect the naturalness of areas to serve the concept of wilderness. Naturalness and the solitude that can be experienced in wilderness

are lost to the wilderness seeker if numerous other humans are encountered. Because concepts are in the human mind and not in the land itself, merely designating areas as wilderness could not assure that they would continue to fit the definition. Now, when I wish a wilderness experience, I increasingly select de facto wilderness which remains less visited by wilderness seekers than those areas designated as wilderness, and advertised as such by the eco-tourism industry and government agencies responsible for administering them.

It is obvious that the association of wilderness with solitude is being eroded in Western society. The wilderness concept has changed during the history of Western civilization and it would be naive to assume that further evolution of the concept will not occur. However, the concept remains a Western one and the change that it is undergoing is driven by pressures increasing human population and urbanization. Designation of wilderness areas in the homeland of indigenous peoples of the Arctic by governments and pressures based outside of the Arctic is an ethnocentric act that reflects ignorance of, and insensitivity to, the cultures, interests, and concerns of arctic peoples.

Although wilderness designation may protect the fish, wildlife, and other resources that are essential to the subsistence economy of arctic peoples, this benefit to arctic peoples is usually incidental to the primary intent of the designation and reflects a Western cultural bias. Similar results can be achieved, without invoking or reflecting cultural dominance, through intercultural negotiation leading to land use classifications designed to maintain the productivity of the land and waters for sustained harvest of resources by indigenous peoples, while offering opportunities for visitors from the south to experience the pristine nature that usually characterizes such environments.

It is encouraging to note such a trend in Canada, where several new parks and other protected areas in the Arctic are the product of

joint negotiations and efforts of cross-cultural groups. Visitors from the south should be fully aware when visiting the Arctic that they are usually guests in the homelands of cultures other than their own. Gaining understanding of these cultures offers the potential to enhance rewards from their visit. Conversely, most Westerners, since the first arctic explorers and whalers, have entered the Arctic assuming or claiming possession of the land and resources for themselves or their own countries, without consideration for the endemic cultures and peoples of the Arctic. The recent trend by arctic countries to recognize claims of arctic peoples to lands and resources is an encouraging sign that the historical perception held by Westerners of the Arctic and its peoples is being revised.

It is only through mutual understanding and respect between cultures that there can be a marriage of interests to assure the long-term protection of natural areas in the Arctic. Alternatively, failure of peoples from diverse cultures to understand one another and to respect their differences inevitably leads to increasing polarization and alienation when contact between cultures occurs. Witness the opposition originating in southern urban centres to the harvest of marine mammals by arctic peoples, and the subsequent boycott of sealskins in Western markets.

The future offers promise for the protection of nature in the Arctic, but it can be accomplished with assurance of lasting benefits to the peoples of the Arctic and to Western society only through increased mutual understanding and communication. Westerners must learn to find wilderness gratification when visiting homelands of the Inuit, Sami, Evenki, and other arctic peoples without their specific designation as wilderness. We must continue to support protection of the arctic environment and the sustainability and productivity of the biological systems it encompasses. But its protection should be negotiated within the terms and conditions of the residents of the Arctic rather than by imposing cultural concepts that are alien to arctic cultures.

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