The Kootenay Mountaineer

A Kootenay newsletter for people with year-round outdoor pursuits.

Spring Equinox

Words from the Editor

It's a good thing that most of the 14 trips included a professional photographer to help illustrate trips that had no description or participant list submitted. My thanks to Phil Best and Rob Richardson for letting me pillage their websites for colourful content. They email out links to their trip pictures right after the trip. They are well worth the visit.

The *Kokanee Ski Week* and *Hiking in Hawaii* reports do a good job of restoring the balance between pictures and interesting text.

Snowshoes were very much in the front and centre this winter given the lacklustre snow conditions.

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Article submission guidelines:

Plain text is great. No need for PDF or Microsoft Word files. Simply cut and paste your text into an email to newsletter@kootenarymountaineering.bc.ca. Attach your full resolution photos to the email. Lots of photos, please..

Poison! – Beware!

Warning from Muriel Walton

An article in a November 2014 issue of The London Telegraph prompted me to write a warning about the Aconitum.

The piece began "A gardener collapsed and died after apparently handling a highly poisonous plant on the estate of a wealthy businessman, a coroner has heard." Nathan Greenway, age 33 became ill after handling the toxic plant aconitum, also known as devil's helmet, or monkshood, while working in the grounds. Poisoning from the monkshood can occur if it is handled without gloves or ingested. The roots are particularly toxic. Some call this plant wolf's bane, because it was once used to kill wolves.

In the Southern Interior of B.C. we have two Aconitum, Aconitum columbianum and Aconitum delphiniifolium.

Aconitum Columbianum

commonly called Columbian Monkshood

Is a perennial in the buttercup family, from ½ to 2 meters tall. Its several sturdy hollow stems rise from tuberous roots. Don't pick the pretty deep blue to purple flowers (occasionally white or yellowish) with an upper sepal looking like a monkshood that is higher than wide. You will see it in moist meadows and deciduous forests, often along streams.



Aconitum delphiniifolium

Mountain or Larkspurleaf Monkshood

Is often found high in our mountains and through the Rockies. Like most alpine plants it is dwarfed to about 10 cm.



All parts of these plants are highly poisonous. Folklore tells us that aconitin from its tubers was used to make "flying ointment" used by witches to smear themselves in order to take flight. It causes heart fibrillation. The word Aconitum derives from the Greek word for "without a struggle", which describes these deadly poisonous plants.

50 Summits Update

The December issue of the Kootenay Mountaineer listed the 2014 KMC 10, 25 and 50 summiteers. They are joined by the following members:

50 Summits:

Gene Van Dyck

10 Summits:

Anne Lavergne
Terry Turner
Ric Baker
Doug Clark
Thom Volpatti
Henry Hutter
Rob Richardson

The 50 summit challenge is continuing in 2015. The club has a limited number of summit badges left and we like to use them up. Count your summits for this

year and add them to last year's and claim your 10, 25 or 50 summit badge!

We also have a very small number of 50th anniversary badges left, so if you have not received yours please let me know and we'll get one out to you. First-come, first-served!





October 19, 2014: Gene Van Dyck receives his 50th summit badge from Peter Oostlander on Mt Conner

Summits of Henry & Elisabeth

sent to Peter Oostlander

Hello Peter,

I am Elisabeth, Henry's hiking partner. Henry forwarded your correspondence to me. Of course we will give permission to post it on your Facebook and in your newsletter. We only ask you to print both our names with it: Elisabeth von Ah and Henry Hutter.

Currently I am busy putting a photo-text book about our 2014 hikes together. Not quite easy for me, a non native English writer. Once it is done and if you are interested we could arrange for you to have a look at it.

What a great KMC idea about the peaks in 2014 and good to hear that the club keeps the project open in 2015. It's a great motivation to get people out.



With my best wishes for 2015 for you and your family and KMC's activities as well.

Elisabeth



Trip Reports

KMC Recce

Peter Oostlander, 2014-12-03

…of unnamed ridge with views of the Rossland range.



This hike will be on the Spring schedule!

Snowshoe to Gordon Kier Cabin

2015-01-04

Photo: Phil Best



Chris Cowan, Eliane & Steve Miros, Leon Arishenkoff, Phil Best, Tim Clinton, Dave Cunningham, Sandra England, Don Harasym, Darwin Horning & daughter, Brad Howard, Sara Judith, Carole Masse, Kathleen & Alex Nichol, Diane White, Peter Oostlander & Ingrid Enns

Mt. Beattie Snowshoe

2015-01-10

Photos: Rob Richardson and Phil Best

A total of 29 participants enjoyed a wonderful day in the mountains – going up one side of Beattie and coming down the other.

It was the first anniversary of Al Sinke's passing and his spirit was with us. Thanks to the trail breakers and the joviality of all in the slip sliding/occasional falling on the descent.



Participants: Steve and Eliane Miros, Rob and Terri Richardson, Ed and Hazel Beynon, Jim and Sharon McDonald (guests), Mary Colladel and Greg Osadchuk, Ben Aubin, Phil Best, David Cunningham, Don Harasym, P'nina Shames, Sheila Sinke, Ann Jensen (guest) Helen Foulger, Laurie Hilyer, Janice Isaac, Marilyn Miller, Eric Marks, Garry Beaudry, Bruce Milner, Carol Masse, Chris Cowan, Brandon Hughes, Ray Neumar, and organizer Leon Arishenkoff.





Mt. Lepsoe Snowshoe

2015-01-14

Photos: Rob Richardson







White Queen Ski

2015-01-21

Photos: Nick Chomey

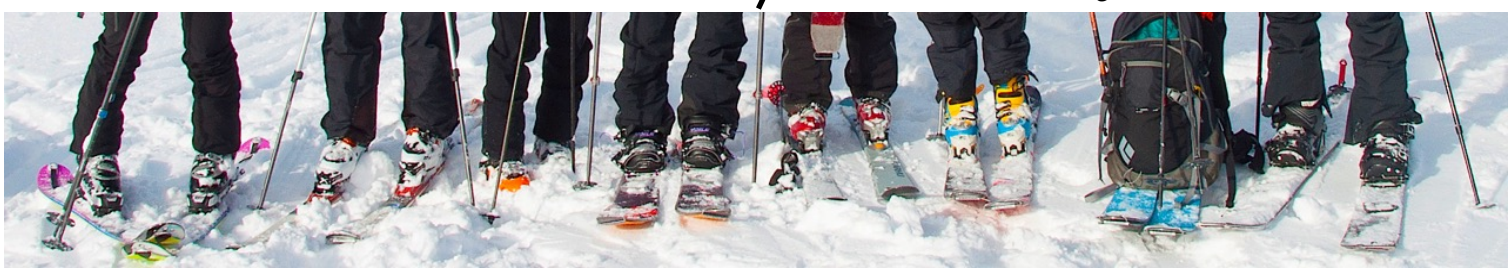




Editor's note:

Who else remembers long and skinny wooden skis, leather boots, gaiters, and knickers?

Modern gear is awesome!



Mt. Heather

2015-01-24

Photos: Phil Best







Participants: Eric Ackerman & Elizabeth Krebbers, Mary Baker, Phil Best, Doug & Linda Clark, Mary Collodel and Greg Osadchuk, Elizabeth Cunningham and Doug Jamieson, Bob Dean, Helen and Rick Foulger, Sandra Fuller, Angie Germaine, Janis Gilbert, Robert Gordon, Chris and Helen Hatch, Brandon Hughes, Holli Kosof, Bobbi Maras, Rick Mazzochi, Alex & Kathleen Nichol, Dennis Nursey, Joan Posivy, Mary Prothro, P'nina Shames, Cindy Shlakoff, Laura Sheppard, Sheila Sinke, Robin Stoll, Dave & Sandy St Denis, Shelley Richards, Rob Richardson, Kathie Robertson, Deb & Glenn Wallace as well as guests: Mike Kosof, Janice Lutes, Heather Lyon and Anna Thyer. Organiser Leon Arishenkoff, with great thanks to the owner of the property for granting permission to explore the various trails.



Slocan Valley Mystery Tour

billed as "Decadent Adventure #2"

2015-01-25

Photos: Phil Best. Porch Photo: Rob Richardson

A great day and surprisingly, lots of snow for a low elevation outing. A total of 45 participants showed up and there were enough delectable treats to feed 45 more.





Snowshoe to Porky Pine and Grizzly Cabins

2015-01-28

Photos: Rob Richardson, Hazel Benyon

Initially we planned the usual trip to Grizz and Porky Pine cabins. Up from the weather station, down to the swamp, across the swamp to Grizzly and then plod up the Flying Mile to Porky Pine. Fortunately Leon suggested that we stay high and then go down to Grizzly cabin without going through the swamp. From that came the idea to stay high right across to near Porky Pine cabin.



We ate our lunch at noon on a pleasant sunny cliff overlooking Mitchener Ck. valley, then continued side hilling over to the top of the Flying Mile. From there it was a short distance into the Porky Pine cabin where we lit a fire in the stove so that Eric could cook his lunch sandwich. When the stove heated up there was a terrible stink - someone had painted the stove! Most of us quickly left the cabin. We went back to the vehicles via Grizzly cabin then up to intersect our track made earlier in the day.





We were Eric Ackerman, Leon Arishenkoff, Gary Beaudry, Sandra Fuller, Janis Gilbert, Brandon Hughes, Kathleen Nichol, Rob Richardson, Cindy Shlakoff, and leaders Hazel and Ed Beynon.

Igloo Cabin

2015-02-05

Photos: Phil Best







Mt. Plewman

2015-02-16

Photos: Rob Richardson









Not So Secret Cabin

2015-02-20

Photos: Rob Richardson







White Queen - Snowshoe and Icer Hike

Photos: Rob Richardson

On ***Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2015***, a group of 15 snow lovers summited White Queen in the Whitewater ski area. The day was brilliant and sunny. Some of us took snowshoes just in case we found some terrain in which we could use them.

A well packed trail made the ascent fairly easy, and confirmed that this wonderful hike is popular, although we saw no one else the whole day. From the summit, we had terrific views of both Mt Beatties, the Five Mile drainage, the Ymir Bowl, plus the more distant surrounding mountains.



As the day progressed, the snow softened, and folks shredded their layers and donned their snow shoes, although icers proved to be the better footwear for the conditions. The weather was perfect, with bright sun, little wind, and a perfectly blue sky. We entertained the idea of summiting one of the Beatties before hitting the vehicles, but as we got closer to the bottom, and a cold beer was calling, the idea of a second summit diminished.

Our elevation gain was approximately 2000 feet and our ascent took about 2 hours.



Our jolly group included Sandra Fuller, Don Harasym, Jan Osborne, Chris Cowan, Wayne Hohn, Frank Fodor, Janis Gilbert, Helen Foulger, Kathleen Nichol, Rob Richardson, Peter Martyn, Anne Laverne, Brandon Hughes, Ben Aubin, and P'nina Shames

Unnecessary Ridge

2015-02-27

Photos: Rob Richardson







Skiing Paddy Peak & Texas Peak

2015-03-07/08

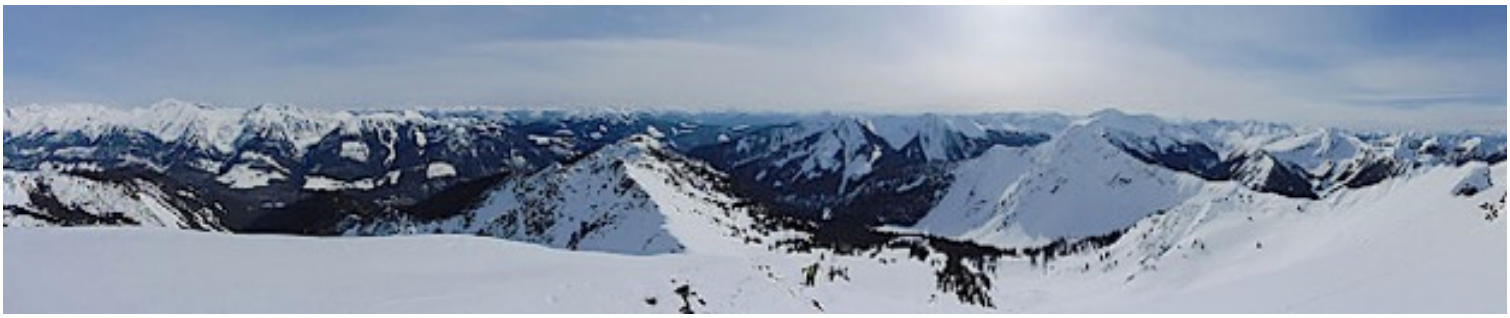
Photos: Nadine Ebner

Editor's note: Nadine posted her report of a two day trip on the "Trip Reports" section of the Discussion Forums area of the web site. The link to read it is:

http://kootenaymountaineering.bc.ca/town-square/forums/topic/skiing-paddy-peak-texas-peak/

She also has a link to her Flickr scrapbook of the trip.

The image below is labeled as from Texas Peak.



Kokanee Ski Week

Terry Huxler

February 7/14, 2015

As I drove the Blueberry Paulson pass from Grand Forks to Nelson the night of Feb 6, rain was cascading down even at the 1500m summit. My truck was being pulled around by wide swathes of water flowing across the road. What, I wondered, did the coming week of skiing hold for the 15 of us heading up to the Kokanee Cabin? Good snowfalls this winter have been infrequent and mild temperatures have made for poor ski conditions. Some major ice crusts have formed and been buried.

Saturday morning at the heliport was solid grey with rolling clouds of vapor and various intensities of rain. The pilot said he would get us in! Two small windows in the clouds made the first two flights relatively quick. On the third trip the pilot had to fly up and back down two drainages, and only on the third was he able to sneak through to the cabin. One passenger, Paul, took the opportunity to take a nap through this unique experience. Before the last four of us boarded the fourth flight the insides of the chopper windows were sponged down to remove the condensation. The pilot guided the chopper just above tree height up 6 Mile Creek through pouring rain, mist and fog. The trees below were outlined by rings of bare earth at their bases as the rain washed away what little snow there still was on the lower valley slopes. We slipped into the headwaters of Lemon Creek and now there was at least snow on the trees and pillows of snow below, but still grey mirk around and above us, and still pounding rain streaming off the cockpit. Finally we skimmed up Enterprise Creek and hopped over the pass to the cabin. We unloaded our food in cardboard boxes softened to near breaking point, and tramped to the Cabin in what felt like normal snow.

There was enough time left in the day to practice transceiver use in the beacon basin and get acquainted with heavy powder (the ultimate oxymoron according to Sue). A quick run on Generator, (just north of the cabin), was fun to ski - at least it was not crust, breakable crust or cement.

Dinner featured a tasty curry, (care of Chris and Birgit), and for dessert pumpkin pie and bumbleberry crumble along with lashings of ice cream that was threatening to melt if it was not all eaten. After dinner Sue rose to pose the question of the week. "What is the definition of optimism? Buying new skis and boots at age 75, wearing them out and buying new skis and boots again at 82!" Guess who she is referring to.

The Saturday night low temperature was -1 C and during the daytime on Sunday and all the other days of

our stay, positive temperatures were recorded at the Cabin. Incredibly, since Jan 01, daytime positive temperatures were recorded for the 7th, 14th, and 23rd thru 27th . The good news was that the pouring rain for the last two days in the valley translated into 110 cm of snow at the cabin. The bad news - it was a dense wet slab sitting on a crust formed since Jan 21st.

Undeterred, we split into two cheerful groups. Those headed for the slopes above the Old Slocan Chief Cabin dug two pits and confirmed what we already knew. The snow was really unstable. There was a 30cm clean sheer from the last 12 hours of storm snow and a messy release at 100 cm on the old crust. As Ross broke trail going up the ridge the 5 skiers heard a noise like a thunder clap. The snow under their skis dropped 4cm and cracks ran out into the bowls on either side of the ridge. Only the steeper west side let go (30 degree slope). The crack propagated 300 m and the avalanche ran about 150 m. Fortunately, no one was involved.



Ten others went to Beaujolais with its relatively safer slope angles and their snow pits showed an easy release at 15 cm but very little tendency to slide at the 1 m depth even with the obvious rotten crystal layer buried there. We enjoyed 3 or 4 runs in mainly thick dense snow, wet, but relatively easy to turn. Everyone was back at the cabin by 3pm enjoying extended “appies”. Steve and Laurie put the dense wet snow to the best use yet on the trip, bringing in a big bowl of it and serving margarita slushes all round.

Monday set the tone for Tuesday and Wednesday as well. Dawn overcast: visibility variable with swirling mist: wind, alternately driving snow pellets, graupel or light rain into our faces.

Tuesday (-1 C to +3 C) demonstrated the triumph of experience over youth. The OWGs, (original wise guys), Ken and Burt, and those sensible enough to follow them, left for an undisclosed secret powder stash, while the young upstarts headed for Lemon Pass and beyond (little did they know). Visibility improved in the morning (except in Lemon Pass) . All the joys of snow after days at zero degrees revealed themselves. Snow packed around the heel bindings to give icy heel lifts whether you needed them or not, poles doubled in weight as the baskets supported sticky pillars of wet snow and snow stuck to the tops of the skis. Meanwhile, midday found the OWGs enjoying 10cm of powder on a safe wind hammered base just below the Pyramid. Their elevation was enough to keep the powder powdery, and they were even enjoying sunny intervals.

Back to the second group on the lake at the top of Griffin Creek: They had difficulty seeing Lemon Pass or the col between Nansen and Giegerich. The corniced lip of the pass looked intimidating so a tour towards the col was started. This had to be aborted 30mins. Later in gently moving fog close to whiteout conditions. On the trip down, we chose the ridge line between Outlook and Griffin Creeks. This involved a traverse over rolling wind driven snow. In the flat light the first wind lip was nicely marked by the lead skier (the author) face planted in the snow at the bottom. A second trip up Griffin tempted three of us to again try for the Nansen Giegerich col, now bathed in a misty orange light as the sun was getting low in the west. About 200m from the col, we could see a lot of avalanche debris from the Nansen side lying across the usual approach and the col itself was corniced. Then the mist thickened and we decided to head for home.

Wednesday (-0.2 C to +2 C) I learned a lot more on how to navigate in near whiteout conditions, using map, compass and GPS. Thank you Llewellyn and Peter for getting us out of Glory Basin. By now, some of our group were breaking out their X-C gear and enjoying runs around Kaslo Lake and out to Kokanee Lake.



Friday was our warmest day. Overnight, the temp. stayed at +0.7 C and by Friday evening was +3.2 C. A blue sky motivated most of us to go out and enjoy the saturated snow and dripping trees to the top of Beaujolais or further towards Kokanee Pass for Simple Pleasures. Wolverine tracks were found close to the pass. Five of us continued to the summit of John Carter but by midday visibility at that 2600 m altitude was very limited. The descent to Glory Basin and down Commission Creek reworked already tired muscles and we got no glimpse of the peaks around us.

This was the first winter with 15 skiers/week. The larger number gives the cabin a cozier feeling. The meals over the week seem to confirm that everyone in the KMC is an excellent cook. A big 'thank you' to Graham for stepping forward as organizer for this trip.

After a cold night (-2 C) Thursday dawned with a clear blue sky. Hopes were lifted that we would find higher fluffier slopes. Giegerich was summited and also John Carter and the Giant's Kneecap, by three separate groups, and everyone reported knee deep powder and other exaggerations. But the skiing was good. The 750 m descent from the Kneecap to Helen Deane Lake only hit the saturated wet snow of yesterday for the last 40 m above the lake.

The evening was memorable first for the chocolate bread pudding dessert served up by Brian and Elena, and second for the film show presented by Kevin Giles. Kevin has been the custodian of the Cabin since it was built in 2002. He is a wealth of knowledge about the park and the characters who have made it what it is today. His passion for the area is one of the things that make staying at the Cabin such a special experience for everyone.



We were Graham Jamin, Brian Webster, Elena Cigali, Sue and Burt Port, Llewellyn Matthews, Paul Allen, Peter Jordan, Birgit and Chris Chart, Ken Holmes, Ross Bates, Laurie Helyer, Steve Knight and Terry Huxter.

Hiking In Hawaii?

Hawaii, "The fresh, floral air energizes you. The warm, tranquil waters refresh you. The breathtaking, natural beauty renews you. Look around. There's no place on earth like Hawaii". That may be a tourism pitch but once you get off the beaten path or onto a secluded beach, it's fairly true except possibly for the air energizing you at the sweltering lower trail elevations. First of all, we must apologize as the pictures do not do justice to the land we saw. Secondly, the ocean water often seemed warmer than the 24-30C air. The trails were often steep and the thought of running back to the beach for a wonderful swim was … well, what can one say except, "those KMCers". We would like to share some of the good hiking that we took advantage of during our November "avoiding the cold" holiday.

Mauna Kea 13796' , November 2014, (6mi, 4600' elev. gain)

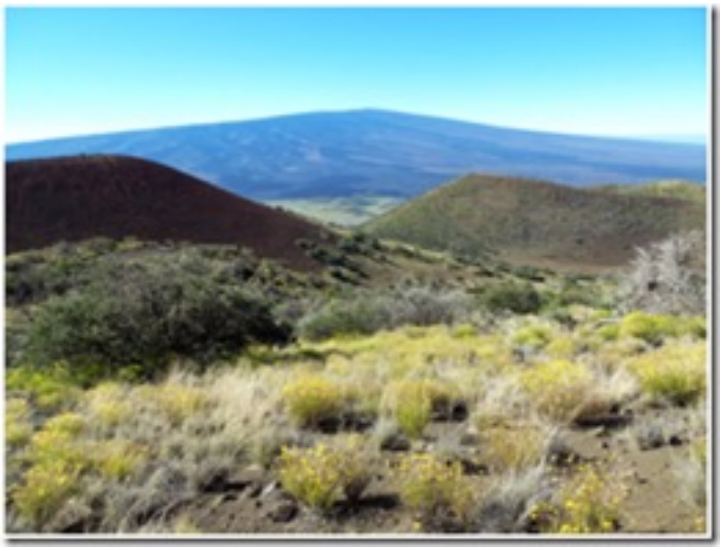
Though some might find it "unusual" to hike in Hawaii, we found numerous opportunities on the 4 islands we have visited. Several good websites document the trails and our primary problem was often the access roads which rental cars or gates forbid. On one particular Oahu trailhead you required Hawaiian ID to get through the posh subdivision gate. The others were accommodating. Regardless, the hiking was unforgettable and following are our highlights. FYI, ma uka means "toward the mountain", ma kai means "toward the sea".

Our first hike was the 6 mile trail to the top of Mauna Kea on the Big Island. Although immediately enamoured with the tropical 27C temperatures and warm Pacific waters we thought that we had better pull ourselves away and head to the top of the tallest mountain on earth. Mauna Kea means "White Mountain" in Hawaiian, and although we were prepared for the "white", we really didn't know what to expect from the possible altitude sickness considering that the outing takes you from sea level to nearly 14,000 feet in a day.

From the beach sea level hotel we drove Hawaii Rte 200 (Saddle Road or aka, the Daniel K. Inouye Hwy)) to Milepost 28. Hwy 200 crosses the island's centre from Kona to Hilo, so whether you approach the "Saddle" between Mauna Kea or Mauna Loa, you will get there from this highway. It's a short drive up the Summit Access Road to the car park at the 9200ft Onizuka Visitor Information Station where the trailhead is located. Ellison Onizuka was the Hawaiian astronaut who died on the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. There was no problem getting to the Visitor Centre by rental car and in fact one could drive the dirt road to the summit with most rental vehicles or a mountain bike.

The ranger at the Station reiterated that the fairly steep trail to the summit combined with the thin dehydrating air had a high probability of inducing altitude sickness. This meant frequent rest and water breaks. This, our first stop since leaving sea level' consisted of visiting the Station, learning about some of the flora and fauna (goats), grabbing a free hiking map and consulting with the ranger about the latest weather and trail conditions. The Station opens at 8am.





From the Onizuka Visitor Station we walked a short distance up the Observatory access road to the Kilohana picnic area where we then veered left and began following signs up the Mauna Kea summit trail. Its official Hawaiian name is the Humu'ula Trail. The trail is well signed for the first mile and then becomes marked with red poles and reflectors every 500 ft. in case of inclement conditions.

The Humu'ula Trail begins in a remarkable tree line landscape of thinly twisted mamane. Shortly thereafter you are in alpine flower (California poppy's) and shrub lands followed by lava scree, with the odd stub of brush or flower protruding. The lava terrain evolves into a moonscape studded with cinder cones. The views of the island and not too far off Mauna Loa (Long Mountain) are grand for most of the trail unless of course you are high above the clouds. Then it's just the amazing geological landscape and blue sky that intrigue you.

Strangely, part of the trail goes through the basalt flows and glacial till of the Mauna Kea Ice Age Natural Area Reserve. Apparently a Pleistocene glacier once moved down this slope, carrying earth and stones that carved the grooves visible in the rocks. Basalt was quarried in these environs by the Hawaiians to make tools and weapons used throughout the islands.



Eventually the observatories come into view. A short 10 min. detour near the end of the trail leads to the 10 foot deep Lake Waiau. The trails end on the paved summit caldera road (road mile marker 7). Follow the paved road to the switchbacks above. This road circles the observatory lines summit in a counter clockwise direction. Pu'u Wekiu, Mauna Kea's true summit, is another 1½ mile of walk. To reach it, continue up the road up to the 8-mile marker, veer right to the obvious "summit" and look for a 'trail' (opposite the University of Hawaii Telescope Observatory. This 200 yd trail descends steeply east, crosses a saddle and then scrambles up to the summit.

With its high altitude, dry environment, and stable airflow, Mauna Kea's summit is one of the best sites in the world for astronomical observation, and one of the most controversial, considering its native cultural significance? Pu'u Wekiu, is one of the Hawaiian Islands most sacred places and only the highest ranking tribal chiefs were allowed to visit. Thousands of people, including tours, drive up the mountain for the sunrise but this requires a 3 am sea level departure.

The views of several islands are great, the volcanic landscape is awesome, and one gains an appreciation for the size of the adjoining Mauna Loa, the world's most massive volcano. We had a long lunch alone on the summit and then continued the circular caldera road wherein we were given the opportunity to join a private tour of one the summit observatories. This unexpected and interesting detour offset our schedule thereby enabling us to descend the road via recommended "hiker aloha." The first vehicle that came along (A Jeep driven by a lone German chef tourist) picked us up and we avoided a late afternoon torrential high elevation storm. The road is 2 miles longer than the trail but faster and easier, especially in a Jeep! We made it back to the beach for a late evening warm and relaxing swim.

Mauna Loa 13,679'

The most-visited attraction in the State of Hawaii is the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Three million visitors per year stop to visit Kilauea, the world's most active volcano. The park offers unique hiking and camping opportunities. Mauna Loa, "long mountain" is in this park, though by car, a very, very (100mi) long ways away. There is a 10.3 km trail to the summit and Moku'aweaweo Caldera. Another hut to hut trail does connect the Kilauea area to the summit.

We would recommend that you visit the Kilauea area of the park first for ranger orientation. The park map provides adequate hiking information (including details of the cabin hike to the summit from this part of the park).There are several great long walks and drives here including the trail around and through the Kilauea Iki Crater.





Visiting this area of the park requires a National Park pass. The Hawaiian Volcano Observatory is best visited after sundown to appreciate the volcano's "glow" (with a few hundred others).

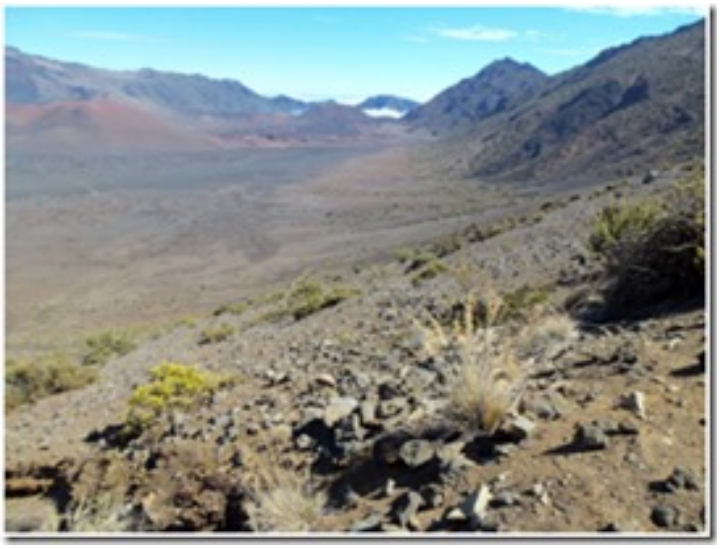
We had planned to hike Mauna Loa but the inclement weather, cloud encroached summit, recent snow and our low clearance "flashy' shiny red Chevy Camaro SS ("boy toy") rental car that was given to us by mistake (and something that Steven had always wanted to drive), made the sunny warm water and beaches preferable (which Eliane definitely preferred considering the circumstances). The following are directions if you plan to visit the summit Caldera which hopefully we will get to the next time. A "normal" rental car would have no difficulty navigating the road. From Highway 200 and a short distance east of the Mauna Kea access road, turn onto Mauna Loa Observatory Road; drive the narrow, winding, but roughly paved 11.5 miles through lava field terrain to the Mauna Loa Weather Observatory (1150ft) and park in the small trailhead parking lot from where the trail to the summit is well marked.

The Mauna Loa Trail begins at the North Pit (end) of the Mauna Loa Road where it intersects the Cabin and Summit trails. The Observatory Trail begins at the Mauna Loa Weather Observatory on the north slope of Mauna Loa and ends at North Pit where it intersects the Cabin and Summit trails. Good Luck and tell us about it if you make it.

Pu'u'ula'ula Summit, 10023', Halamau'u Trail, Haleakala' National Park, Maui

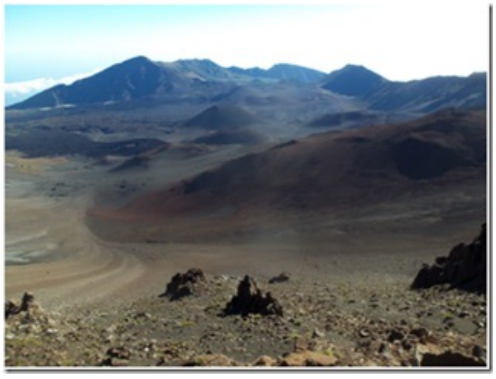
This was our second visit to this area. The directions to Haleakala National Park and its trailheads are very easy to find. A National Park pass is required for entry into the park. Our first exposure to these volcanic landscapes had us hiking a combination of trails including the Sliding Sands Trail. This makes for a 14 mile circle walk amongst dramatic crater landscape and scenery and flora to the Kapalaoa cabin. One never forgets the endemic 'ahinahina', or Silversword, which blossoms once and then dies, after up to 50 years of growth.





The 11 mile Halemau'u Trail is a very popular downhill one way "hiker aloha" trail. "Everyone" leaves their car at the well-marked Halemau'u trailhead 3.5 mile up from the Entrance Visitor Centre. There is a "Hiker Pickup" pullover made for this purpose and we caught out first car again. Almost nobody hikes the trail in the "other" direction but we must admit to seeing some backpackers traversing the park and exiting through the Kapapo Gap Trail. This is most often a "cabin using" approximately 23 mile hike culminating in a 10000ft descent of Haleakala Volcano's eastern slopes. The car logistics of making this a one day outing would be difficult unless you have 2 cars and an extra day for the long slow Hana Highway WHERE YOU WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THE OTHER CAR.

The Halemau'u Trail begins at the 9740ft Haleakala Visitor Centre and quickly descends eastward along the Sliding Sands Trail to the crater bottom. The Visitor Centre view actually provides the best view and orientation of the crater and its trails. One can confirm it with the ranger as well. Once upon the crater floor the Halemau'u Trail is well marked heading north. There are several small detours including the Halali'I and Silversword loops which, though adding distance, are well worth it. After all, it is downhill, isn't it?





The trail continues and it eventually enters the slightly different and contorted volcanic landscapes of the Ko'olau Gap. It was here where the lava broke through the crater's walls and flowed down the northern mountainside. Vegetation covering increases and eventually you arrive at the Holua campsite which is located beneath the crater's western headwall.

From the cabin/campsite it is another 2 miles to the crater wall exit portion of the trail and another long 1.5 mile and steep 1000ft slog to the rim above. Who said it was all downhill? This was a great piece of intricate switchbacking trailwork with views all the way. The carpark is another mile along. Though only 11 miles it sure seemed like it was an awful lot longer and we don't know why. Maybe the excitement or elevation or both. We should note that this is probably the ultimate Sunrise viewing area of the Hawaiian Islands.

We drove back up the 6mile stretch of highway and higher to the Pu'u'ula'ula Summit and Viewpoint for a much needed rest and an overall appreciation of the scenery including Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea some 80 miles away.

Maui doesn't have that much in the way of hiking. We found out that the enticing North Maui Mountains are off limits, believe us we tried. Information was scant but after all it is jungle. Apparently somebody allows one group of hikers in a "guided" hike once a year by lottery and special permission to visit. We can recommend Wailae Ridge north of Kahului and the windmill Lahaina Pali Trail (south approach is best).









Mount Ka'ala Trail, 4,025', Oahu

The surprising island was Oahu and from our base in Waikiki, once home to Hawaii's royalty, we had a lot of fun, adventure and finally, "jungle" hiking! You know, those heavy foliated, unbelievably vertical, jagged mountains you see in the movies. This is it! BUT, and that's a big but, we had originally wanted to reach the summit ridge line of these ranges and follow them, particularly the impressionable Ko'olau Pali (Cliffs). Reality is that this is not that easy, and "Jungle hiking," in Oahu means head for the several highly distinct peaks of the mountains AND don't expect a ridge walk. The ridge usually isn't and if it does exist, is often only a few inches wide. Once we adapted to this we found numerous places to go. Not that we went to them all.

Oahu's highest mountain, Mt. Kaala is located in the Waianae Mountain range. Characteristic of all the jagged peaks you see on the island, it is not the rocky

volcanic landscapes of Maui or the Big Island. Oahu is Giant Hapu'u ferns (15' high), macadamia trees, forests of strawberry guava and giant Ohia trees, coffee bushes, wild orchids, guava, mango and native Hawaiian roses. Higher elevation rainforests are crawling with vines. Dense cliffs are covering a wealth of impenetrable foliage.





Getting to Mt Ka'ala was not difficult by way of rental car. It is an easy to navigate, except in Rush Hour, forty minute, drive from Honolulu, along H1 and then Oceanside Hwy93 to Waiane and the western slopes of the unbelievably beautiful Waiane Range. This drive is undoubtedly just as spectacular as the hike itself and the most difficult part of HWY 93 is not to turn left onto one the many beckoning beaches or not to continue north to highway's end and the pleasant Kaena Point Trail.

The Waianae Valley is a beautiful place, surrounded by jagged green ridges. In Wainae turn right onto the Waianae Valley Road. Follow this road until you come to a cul-de-sac (almost road's end) from where you go left and up along a dirt road. You will come to a yellow gate and there is a parking on the left. A hiker sign-in post is there as well. Park your car and walk the cemented road uphill through the Waianae Kai Forest Reserve past the 2 water stations. A short distance past the second station the actual trail begins. There is a major junction after awhile. The trail that descends to the left is the route (The right path ends in a treacherously slippery and exposed scramble to what probably would have been the top. Well beyond our taste).





The trail continues very steeply uphill. After a considerable amount of time the steepness increases to the point of pulling yourself up with mosses, roots, branches and vines. Eventually you get to the ridge, a telephone pole and a path to the right. When you first reach the ridge line by some electrical cables you see the first panoramic view. Soon there is fencing protecting the trail walker from the exposed edges.The

ridge becomes a narrow spine, less than 2ft wide at places. Furthering the danger is the damp slippery red muddy ground. The trail sides are not solid material but actually thick built up foliage. The views all around however are wonderful and GREEN.

Eventually the spine dips a short distance to a point where you have to scramble over large exposed boulders. There are ropes and cables to assist but it is precarious. It was here where we met two young men on their way down. Their advice was to turn back as conditions were even more slippery above and rains were approaching. After a lunch admiring the scenery we turned around and worked our way back to the nearest sandy beach and warm water. The summit itself has an army radar installation on top. Total elevation gain: 3,500' 8 mile round-trip.

OTHER HIKING: The Koolauu Range ridges running in northwest direction of Waikiki offer numerous hiking opportunities in dramatic and rugged terrain. Oahu's i Kai's Range, north of Waikiki, has 3 good ridge hikes which we found, Hawaii Loa Ridge is the hardest, the others being Wiliwilinui and Kuliouou. The hardest part of these peak experiences however is accessing the trailhead, and having enough time to do more when you really should be swimming and snorkelling.

Nearby Diamond Head, Koko Head and the open ridge heading west to Pu'u O Kona from the Makapuu Lighthouse were great. Their length and close proximity allowed us to hit various beaches in the early afternoon. There were several other areas and hikes that we left for the next time and/or improved access.







All in all, what a place!

Check out https://hawaiitrails.ehawaii.gov/home.php

A hui hou "Until (we) meet again",

Eliane & Steven







