The Kootenay Mountaineer

The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.

2018 Summer Solstice

Editor's Note: While not club information, it was my choice to include this in the newsletter. Blame me.

I hope you're enjoying the start of spring!

This June 2018 myself (privately), along with the Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative and the Ministry of Forests Lands, Natural Resource Operation and Rural Development are working together to bring a Wildfire and Climate Change Conference to Nelson, BC on June 26th and 27th, with a field trip day on the 28th.

I wanted to reach out to you to request the addition of this event to your next couple newsletters.

The Conference will share the latest scientific research and initiatives from the Kootenays and from the international arena on climate change, wildfire behavior and why this leads us toward a need to take action at a landscape scale for a more resilient ecosystem.

Target Audience: forest licensees (small woodlots to large companies), local government, emergency services, and community members. We are expecting approximately 250 attendees.

The two-day conference will be followed by one day of workshops for the forest licensees and a separate workshop for community members in order to identify barriers and opportunities to engage in wildfire risk mitigation and carbon effective forest management.

I feel this conference is so timely and I am excited to be a part of it! I have attached a poster with this email and you can view the website here.

Please feel free to call me at 250-777-3858 if you have any questions.

All my best,
Avery
The Wildfire and Climate Change Conference Planning Team
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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@kootenarymountaineeringclub.ca. Attach your full resolution photos to the email. Lots of photos, please.

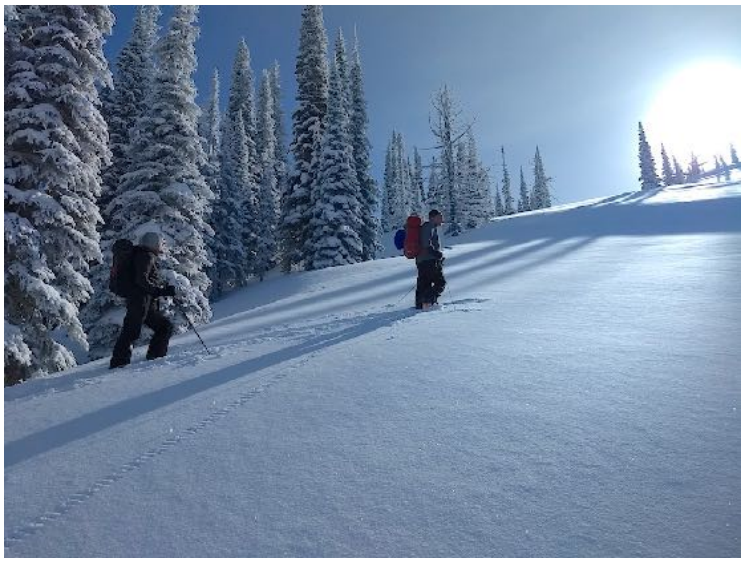
The newsletter is published four times a year at the times of the solar calendar.

Trip Reports

Mount Kirkup Ski Tour

February 24

Seven of the ten people signed up for the Mt Kirkup ski tour set off from the parking area at the Old Glory trailhead on highway 3B. The weather was cold and clear and we followed the plan to climb the slopes up the NW side of the north ridge to the summit.



The snow was variable with some new powder covering the chopped up slopes where people had skied down after using the snow-cat from the Red Mountain ski area to attain the summit. However on our climb we crossed some untracked powder slopes which we thought we would access on our descent.

We arrived at the summit (6618 ft) in clear skies and with great views. After de-skinning we skied down the east facing slope below the North ridge in great powder snow to a sunny lunch spot.



After lunch we climbed the 700 feet or so back to the summit in increasingly hazy sunshine. We then skied



down, following a downward traversing line looking for the untracked powder fields we had passed on the way up which provided good skiing.

Even the chopped up slopes we then got funnelled into provided reasonably good skiing covered by the 10 cm or so of new snow that had fallen overnight and we arrived back at the vehicles happy that we had been lucky with the ski conditions and weather making a very enjoyable trip.



We didn't see any skiers from Red Resort and Diane found out later that the snow-cat was down for maintenance that day … fortunately for us.

For those interested in statistics, Chis had tracked the trip on his gaia gps app which showed that we had climbed and descended 2741 feet; covered a distance of 4.9 miles (7.9 km); with a total trip time of 4 hours 42 minutes and a moving time of 3 hours 09 minutes

We were: Dave and Jill Watson, Diane Paolini, Frank Fodor, Chris Cowan, Terry Simpson and myself, Ken Holmes (trip coordinator and reporter).

Photographs thanks to Chris Cowan.

Kier Hut

March 23



better chance of the snow being in decent shape, and having beaten myself up a bit on the lower elevations of the Rossland Range on Saturday, forced to use skins to descend from the Sunspot cabin area.







Where is everyone?

Kootenay Pass Ski Tour

April 3

We've been "basking" in a La Nina spring, the typical regime being stormy with temperatures a bit below normal… the pattern beloved of skiers. As the weekend was setting up for another storm on Sunday/Sunday night, I decided Friday to re-advertise a recently postponed ski trip, this time with the destination of Kootenay Pass instead of the Rossland Range, thinking that the 1800 metre starting elevation would have a

I had a response from 5 people…then a couple dropped out and there were only 3 of us left so, fearing more departures and not wanting to ski alone… advertised on the list server again with no response… Where are all the back country skiers…. Well I guess it's Easter and it's short notice and they likely have family stuff, or at "the hill" for the last day, or maybe they're just fed up with winter…

Anyway, thankfully the other 2 were keen, and for the 3 of us remaining, the snow was stellar. The planets had aligned, delivering a feisty little low pressure system, for a 40 cm dump of beautiful light pow on top of the 300 plus cm base at the pass elevation. We hoofed up the south side route towards the cabins, headed up to Lightning Strike ridge, went over a few bumps and descended the slope to the south in a gladed area. 30-40 cm of pow on top of a sun crust.



Avalanche folks had warned of the risk of a storm slab sliding on said sun crust, but no slabbiness was evident… so deciding it was safe we charged down into the valley…. So much fun we had to go back up and do it all over again. Some sluffing in the steeps, but no whumping. No one around except one guy who passed us looking for a mate who'd gotten on the wrong track, and a family party of snowshoers we met on the second run.



We had all that snow to ourselves on the way down!



Our last run was from the ridge leading to the Baldy Rocks summit down the north side from the ridge west of the main summit recommended by Peter O. This turned out to be even better than the other 2 runs, with some nice open glades between the trees.

Despite Chris's forecast of sun developing mid morning, it snowed more or less continually till we were done, which was just as well, since said weather man had forgotten his sun hat.



Distance, 12 km. Ascent close to 900 M, at a moderate pace. Lots of smiles. Temperature about -5. Dry, winter type snow. Started late (near 11 AM) due to a traffic jam in the Whitewater area delaying Tia…. But enjoyed the longer afternoon sunlight. Done around 5. Nice to drive home in the spring daylight.

Participants Murray Bennet, Tia Hall, Chris Cowan (co ordinator)



Sherpa Peak

By Goody Niosi

Ben Aubin posted a snowshoe trip for April 6: Sherpa Peak: a traverse from Whitewater to Clearwater. I'd never been there but I was ready to go regardless. After all, it was a trip with "crazy Ben" – how could I resist?

Five of us gathered – shuttled some cars around – and started slogging our way up the ski hill. It wasn't long after we started that Chris and Ben started consulting and comparing their GPS routes – this, of course, instilled enormous confidence in the rest of us.



We hiked up through fog – no views at all. But then we got above the fog and below the clouds. It may not have been sunny, but the mountains around us were spectacular.



We got lucky: followed a skin trail pretty much to the top of Sherpa, along the ridge, looking down at dramatic descents. And then it was time to head for another knoll – after that the down route.

That's when we had to start breaking trail. Chris noted that the snow was "interesting" – not quite powder – not really crusty – just heavy and wet enough to stick to snowshoes. We plunged on, taking turns, arrived at the second knoll and, knowing we had plenty of time, hunkered down for a leisurely lunch.



Perhaps I should mention that our chosen lunch spot was beside a big yellow sign that indicated avalanche control could be expected until April 30 without prior warning. There was some speculation whether this was also a stab at population control.



After lunch we headed down – with Ben and Chris still consulting GPS tracks quite often. We only had to backtrack once. It had taken three hours to get to the unnamed knoll – and even though down trips are usually pretty quick on snowshoes, we forgot to take into account that our descent would be at least twice the distance as our ascent. Well, darn!

We plowed through the snow. Some of us slid on our bums; some of us tried out a new snowshoe telemarking technique that I personally thought was quite efficient. Near the end, on our last pitch, there appeared to be quite a bit of falling – and not terribly gracefully either.



We arrived back at Clearwater 6.5 hours after setting out. We'd gained about 550 metres elevation and lost twice that (or more). Total distance: 11K.

As we drove back to Whitewater to pick up the other vehicle, Ben graciously asked if there was anything that might have improved the trip.



Yes, we said.

- *It could have been catered!*
- *A helicopter halfway down would have been nice!*

We were: Ben Aubin, Chris Cowan, P'nina Shames, Laura Ringer, Goody Niosi.

Cornice Ridge and Baldy Rocks

By Goody Niosi

Disclaimer – I actually have no idea whether we were up Cornice Ridge or Wolf Ridge or… let's just say that we didn't go with Plan A. And since when is that not normal?

It was me and six guys on April 13 (Friday!) heading off to Kootenay Pass to snowshoe Wolf Ridge. We started at 9.15 from the parking lot and immediately encountered the most challenging obstacle of the day: the monster ridge of snow and ice pushed by plows up behind the outhouses.



One we'd heaved ourselves over that, we were stunned by the amount of new snow that had recently fallen. We followed a faint indentation of a track and proceeded uphill. It's always uphill of course.

We took turns breaking trail and at least two of us took a ton of photos. The trees were magnificent!



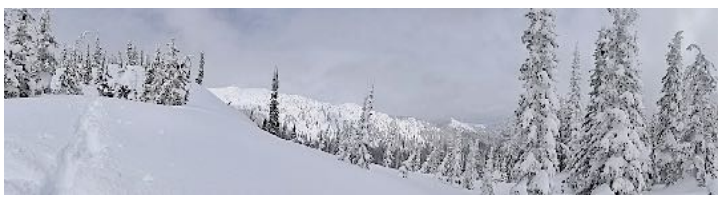


And then we got out into the open and up on the ridge, being mindful to stay to the left and avoid the cornices. The wind howled. We got as far as the repeater/weather/thingamajig station where we assessed the situation. The wind was only going to get worse and we had a long way to go. How safe was it? How wise was it?



We made a collective decision to back down for the day and cross the road to the trails on the other side.

So – we slid down and started hiking up to Lightning Ridge Cabin where we had lunch. Actually, we burst in on a group of party-going, beer-drinking, having fun people. While we were there, three other folks joined, having hauled up another massive amount of beer.



Before we could be tempted, we pulled up sticks and headed up Baldy Rocks – pretty socked in. While there may not have been distant views, the apparitions of ice and snow covered trees were marvellous.



And here comes the best part: powder and lots of it. Yeah – we had a ton of fun going down.



It was a wonderful day. Thanks to our leader, Ben Aubin who organized the entire fiasco.

Stats: about 11 kilometres, 750 metres elevation and 5.5 hours.

We were: Ben Aubin, David Cunningham, James Knoop, Rick Mazzocchi, Chris Cowan, Wayne Hohn, Goody Niosi

Trip Report – ~~Mount Roberts~~

~~Granite Mountain~~

~~Record Mountain~~

Record Ridge

You know your club trip is going to be "interesting" when your leader (Ben Aubin) starts with the disclaimer, "I didn't say I was leading the trip – I said I was organizing it."

Some of us were of the opinion that he was disorganizing it – an idea that gained traction as the day wore on.

However, some of our changes of plan could be attributed to our inauspicious start. It was April 18, we were heading to Castlegar from Nelson to snowshoe in the Red Mountain area. There was a giant mudslide. We turned around and drove down Pass Creek Road. We didn't get to the trailhead until 10 a.m.

We were determined to head up Mount Roberts regardless. Unfortunately, someone (the leader perhaps?) decided to start off on a left-hand bearing. After reaching an old mine site and much consultation of maps, we headed right. (oops!)

And so we plodded on up roads nicely flattened by sleds and cats. We eventually turned a corner and spotted Mount Roberts! Wow! A big one!



And then we left Mount Roberts behind. Oh sure – there could have been a direct line but that would have required a rather daunting descent and then an even more formidable ascent. And so we continued up the road – and up and up until, at 1 p.m. we came to the crossroads. There was the ridge that would lead to Roberts. But ahead of us was another ridge with sunshine lighting it up – Record Ridge dominated by Record Mountain. On the other hand, to the right was Granite Peak, by far the easiest one of the lot to summit at that point.

There was considerable debate about the lateness of the hour, how long it would take to do one of these – and just when it seemed the decision had been made to do the easiest – Granite – one of us suggested that Record Ridge sure did look pretty. And so great and glorious leader said, "Okay – Record Ridge or one more hour – whichever comes first."

Reneta and I needed no further urging – we hared off into the trees – the others except for Paz followed. We hated to leave her behind but her snowshoes were not working one bit and she promised to meander slowly downhill – we would catch up on the way back.

We missed her.

But we soldiered on and the real beauty of the hike opened up. Another winter wonderland – amazing trees and spectacular views. The snow was untrodden – a perfect white carpet.



We topped the ridge 40 minutes later. Reneta and I explored a little farther along the ridge and then came back to re-join the boys for lunch in the warm sun.

Shortly after 2 p.m. we headed down – the snow was near perfect for snowshoe-skiing – and it didn't take all that long to catch up with Paz.



It was another great day in the snow. Oh sure, we want spring to come, but if you want to get up a mountain, the snow was still pretty darn amazing!

Statistics: 6 hours; 860 metres elevation; 15 kilometres.

We were: Ben Aubin, Scott Wilson, Reneta Zaal, Paz Costa, Don Harasym, David Cunningham, Chris Cowan, Goody Niosi





Earth Day Cleanup

A group of 7 KMCers met at Kokanee Creek Beach to participate in the Friend's of Kootenay Lake Earth Day cleanup. We grabbed buckets, bags, rakes, gloves and spent 2 hours scouring the beach.

We were instructed to focus on styrofoam and there was plenty! Big chunks the size of wheelbarrows, small specks like grains of rice, and plenty of little chunks that were the shape and consistency of feta-cheese. Some of the more interesting finds were three mud-logged tires, a very pretty purple ribbon, and a shotgun casing. With over 100 people out for the cleanup, we ran into plenty of other KMC members pitching in along the shoreline too!



After the cleanup, we had lunch by the lake and then trekked off on a short 5km loop around the park. We wandered up to the Kokanee Canyon viewpoint and then explored sections of the old Busk property.

We were: Abby Wilson, Andrew Woodward, Scott Wilson, Lucy Lopez, Tony Holland, Page Wasson, and Dave Yole

Photo courtesy of Friends of Kootenay Lake

Mount Roberts, The Sequel

By Goody Niosi

Having missed summiting Mount Roberts a week earlier, three of us were determined to complete the task on April 26. Two others joined us and we set off under more ideal conditions.

Condition number one: no mud slide between Nelson and Castlegar.

Number two: we went up the correct ski slope instead of the long roundabout way.

Number three: Caroline was with us and if anyone knows this mountain, it's Caroline Laface.

Number four: Ben Aubin was, once again, our (dis)organizer and determined we would make it to the top.

April 26 was sunny: skies of cobalt blue and with the sun reflecting off fairly slushy snow, it was hot. Did I say hot? I mean HOT!

We hiked up the hill and got that done, then turned on the road and plodded along until we turned left and slogged along another road.



And then: hurrah! The ascent began. We carved long, lazy switchbacks until Ben clearly had a mental conversation with himself and said "To heck with that!" and started going straight up.

And then – just like that – we were there. High fives all around. We perched semi-precariously on the top, facing south (more sun) and being careful to stay off the large cornice.





Needless to say, we had spectacular views! Feeling accomplished, we headed down after lunch, snowshoe-skiing a good deal of the way (except for the road parts). There was also some bum-sliding, as was to be expected.



Just as I was thinking that this was sure to be the last snowshoe of the season, Reneta mentioned that now that we'd done Record Ridge, and we'd done Mount Roberts, wouldn't it be a good idea to do Record Mountain? After all, it was looming above us, tempting us, especially because it's more than 200 metres higher than Roberts. Shouldn't we do it?

A couple of us thought, "Yeah – we probably should."

And so we put it on the schedule.

You'd almost think that a few of us are addicted to mountains.

A few quick stats: about 15 kilometres, almost 900 metres elevation and 6 hours 20 minutes.

We were: Ben Aubin, Caroline Laface, Reneta Zaal, Val Utgaren, Goody Niosi



Mount Elgood – Plewman – Seven Summits

By Goody Niosi

The first rule of embarking on a snowshoe trip: bring snowshoes.

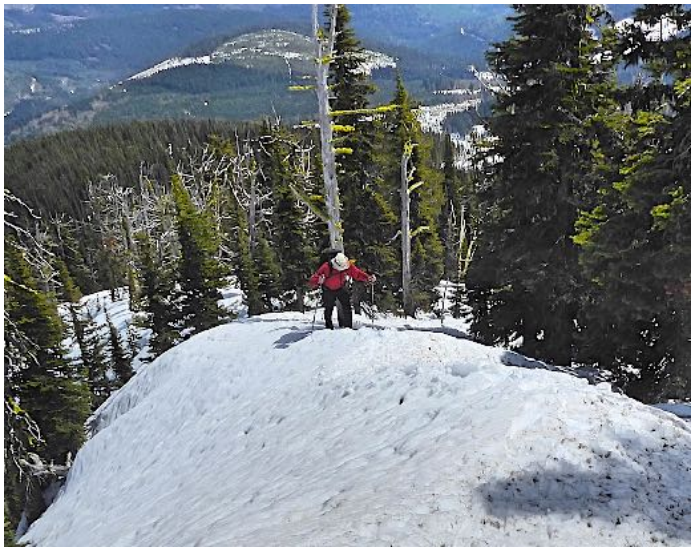
This rule came to me in a flash as I was barrelling down the highway toward Playmor Junction On May 6. As I went through my mental checklist of things I might have forgotten, (Sunscreen? Snacks? Sufficient water?) I realized my snowshoes were relaxing on my front porch. Too late to turn around. Plan B? Rick Mazzochi lives near here – yes – there's his driveway.

He was home. He had snowshoes. Whew.

This was a good thing because Plan C involved a lot of postholing.

I hopped into Don's truck at Playmor; we picked up our grand and glorious leader, Chris Cowan in Castlegar and headed off. We dropped one vehicle at Strawberry Pass and headed downhill to the trailhead for Mount Elgood. The previous year we'd done this in a bit of a snowstorm (understatement). This year the sun was shining and it took about two minutes to wilt under the heat and sun reflecting off the snow.

Peter Oostlander had provided Chris with a track that would avoid avi terrain. As it turned out, this route, unlike the previous year's, was straight up. Steep? Oh yes. We were trekking up the last bit – the steepest part – when we hear a roar. Avalanche! We rushed to our left to have a look. Yes – that slide came down pretty much right where we would have been hiking up. Whew. We made speedy tracks to the top after that – or as speedy as you can get when you're going up at an almost 90-degree angle.



The top! Achieved! Yay! Views! And – mysteriously – fresh snowshoe tracks. Ha! Chris said they must be Peter O's and his pals.

And so we followed those tracks down the ridge and then up to the top of Plewman and sure enough – there were Peter, Gene Van Dyck, and Caroline Laface, sitting on the top enjoying a leisurely lunch. We joined them, being as careful as we could be not to sit down on top of the thousands of ladybugs just coming out of hibernation.

Once we'd sated ourselves with the fabulous views we headed back, again following Peter's tracks, which were quite lovely, They, like us, opted to go back along Seven Summits. We'd originally thought of adding Lepsoe to our peaks but the hot weather made the down route a more prudent choice.







It was a great day. Chris and I ended up with "gaiter tan" which is that attractive line between gaiters and shorts. This line is even more fun than the standard hiker's tan that stops just north of hiking boots.







Quick stats: About 14K, 860 metres elevation, and 6.5 hours.

We were: Chris Cowan, Don Harasym and Goody Niosi

Robson Ramble

By Goody Niosi

There comes a time in spring when you really (really) want to get off snowshoes or skis and put on hiking boots. Clearly, judging by the crowd that turned out for Ed and Hazel's May 8 Robson Ramble, I wasn't the only one who felt that way.



Nineteen awesome KMCers showed up and set off, following Ed on a maze of trails that I'm sure only he could have negotiated with such aplomb.

For me it was especially lovely because I'd never been there. The ups and downs of the ramble took us through forests, under a power line, up over bluffs with wonderful views and through unexpectedly pretty meadows bursting with wildflowers, which Hazel deftly identified – notably Balsam Root and Desert Parsley.



About 2.5 hours after setting out we topped a high bluff with an impressive summit cairn for a picnic lunch in the sun and great views of the river and Castlegar below.





Afterwards, we ambled down, finishing the full circle trip in about 4.5 hours, gaining about 520 metres of elevation and completing about 13 kilometres.

As always, the group was awesome. I won the prize for the most ticks (1!), which Hazel kindly picked off my leg. Yes – three of us were brave enough to hike in shorts while the smarter folks tucked their pant legs inside their socks.

I think you'd be hard pressed to find a nicer shoulder season hike!

We were: Ed and Hazel Beynon, David Brackett, Helen and Rick Foulger, Tony Holland, Janice Isaac, Eric Marks, Marilyn Miller, Rick Mazzochi, Goody Niosi, Sharon Henderson, Dawn and Tim Powell, Nancy Suuban, Val Utgaren, Chris Cowan, Don Harasym, Dave Wahn.



Smallwood/Bigwood Loop

Abby Wilson

May 13

t was a beautiful sunny Sunday afternoon when a group of 12 hikers set out to explore the Smallwood/Bigwood loop. These trails are part of a mountain bike network, but early May had lots of deadfall and small snow patches so the bikes weren't out yet - great hiking! We took the short, steep Smallwood trail straight up to the top which was an exhausting climb but great training for the start of hiking season.



The scenic lookout peers over the Kootenay river valley with the Bonnington range peaks dotting the horizon. We could see Red Mountain Resort in the very far distance, and Ymir Peak at Whitewater to the Southeast. It's an incredible panorama!

We took the Bigwood trail down, climbing over and under fallen trees, and enjoying the shaded forest.

We were: Abby Wilson, Andrew Woodward, Gail Curry, Jenny Latremouille, Tony Holland, Dave Yole, Wayne Hohn, Olivia Stille, Andre Schwartz, Steven Strom, Eli Finer, Andrew Butz



Slocan Valley Rail Trail

Marilyn Miller

May 21

14 members came out on Victoria Day to enjoy the spring weather, Slocan River in spate, and cycling exercise.

The day was a perfect spring beauty. Our leader Marilyn Miller and tail gunner Dave Cunningham kept us all safe and engaged.

We cycled from Passmore, over the bridge, onto the back roads, past Winlaw and finally on to Perry's. There we took the bridge and entered the rail trail for our return cycle.

Picnic lunch beside the river contributed to the glory of the day. Our photographer Peter Berkey took many memorable shots. Here are a few…







Dylan Saunders, Nanci Suuban, Linda Bradley, Dave Cunningham, Dave Yole, Linda Clark, Peter Berkey, Art Stack, Rob Moote, Cameron Carter, Gail Curry, Page Wasson, Marilyn Miller, and the arms-waving Louise Hammerich are pictured Eric Ackerman and Liz Krebbers were also on the ride.



Morning Mountain Trails

By Goody Niosi

I learned something new on the morning of May 22: never start a hike with a large group of KMC members in a location with an outhouse at the trailhead. Perhaps I should have taken a photo of the lineup to get my point across.

That said, we did manage to get underway by 10 a.m., the intrepid Abby Wilson leading the way. She'd warned us it was going to be a hot day. That was no understatement. Happily, she made the wise choice of taking us up on the most shaded trail she could find – a green trail I believe. It turned out to be a gentle and pleasant way to gather about 600 metres of elevation before hitting the road, walking along it for a couple of minutes, and then dipping down briefly toward one of the finest viewpoints of Nelson that I've seen.



From here we could see up the lake all the way to the Goat Range. On the other side we'd already had fine views of the snow-covered Valhallas.



After lunch, we opted to take a blue trail (Placenta Descenta – who names these things?!) back down. This turned out to be an interesting choice. Apparently the mountain bikers hadn't quite got around to coming up with their chainsaws yet. We went over blowdown, around blowdown, under blowdown, and even through blowdown.



Still, it got us to yet another fine viewpoint looking in the opposite direction – this viewpoint also had a picnic table. The temptation to sit for a while was great – but tempered by the fact that is was in full sun.

We got back to the parking lot four hours and 50 minutes after setting out and covered just over 10 kilometres.

It was fine day in the usual excellent company of KMC hikers that included:

Goody Niosi, Allison Etter, Gail Curry, Cameron Carter, Vivienne Rabb, Page Wasson, Sharon Henderson, Laura Kazakoff, Verne Ranni, Esther Brown, and Abby Wilson.





Davis Creek

By Goody Niosi

The word for the day was "different."

The reason for this will become abundantly clear.

I thought is might be a bit early in the season to lead a hike to Davis Creek and the Cedar Grove but hey – the weather was fine and what's a bit of snow. Right? Apparently 11 other people thought it might be a good idea too so we set off from the trailhead at about 10 a.m. on May 25 –a gorgeous, warm, sunny day.



The first hour is a bit of a killer – about 700 metres straight up. However, kudos to the people who look after this part of the trail: it's beautifully engineered and was utterly free of blowdown. We made it to the lookout in good time. From there, I warned people, we would hit all kinds of "stuff."



The first stuff was blowdown and lots of it. This was stuff we negotiated over, under, and around. An awesome couple of people brought up the rear and did some rather great trail clearing. I believe it was Ralph (or Cameron) who packed the saw and Leo who wielded it to great effect.



Some small distance after the old hemlock grove we hit snow, which became heavier and deeper. It was nicely consolidated – no issues with postholing. On the other hand, the trail disappeared and I had to rely on gut instinct and last year's trips to guide me. I pretended to know exactly where I was going and fooled everyone because, surprise! We made it to the cedars.

We did have one last obstacle to overcome just before the grove – a wide, deep mucky swamp. Simon found an old stump to climb up on and get us across and helpfully pulled the rest of us over. Leo and a small contingent found a different route. "Was it better?" we asked.

"I wouldn't say better," Leo said. "Different."

And so, after admiring and paying homage to the grand old ladies of the forest (and they are heart-stirringly beautiful) we decided to try Leo's way back. This route involved walking along a fallen tree, bum-sliding off it, wading over tussocks sticking up out of the swamp and then heaving ourselves up through some prickly shrubs to get back to the trail.

We agree that this route was indeed "different."

Going back was much easier than coming. All we had to do now was follow our footsteps back to the lookout for lunch. Yes, I do have an excuse for straying off our path twice – I just can't think what it is.

We did have a lovely lunch at the lookout. Rousing people from sun-stupor naps to head back down was a bit of a chore. Did I hear someone call me bossy?

After a knee-crunching descent we were back at the cars – everyone accounted for. Super day for a hike and, as we all agreed, the snow made it just that tiny bit more interesting and, um - different.



We were: Leo Jansma, Connie Parisotto, Andrea Vowell, Gail Curry, Cameron Carter, Simon Lindley, Ralph Troan, Nancy Suuban, Shelley Richards, Verne Ranni, Laura Radridge, Goody Niosi.

Lost Mountain 2018

By Goody Niosi

You could tell by the size of the crowd on June 4 (15!!!) that there were a lot of KMCers who were done with waiting to get up into the alpine.



We got to the trailhead at Kootenay Pass at about 9.30 a.m. and we were ready to go. Chris explained that there were steep sections. Some of us noted afterwards that the first steep section began at the trailhead and ended 1150 metres later at the summit cairn.

But we were not complaining. It was a perfect, warm, sunny day. We headed up and strung out quickly. Leo had the foresight to bring walkie talkies because he figured we'd get spread out. He gave one to Chris and volunteered to bring up the rear. This was a genius plan. One little problem though. Shortly after setting out, Chris fell to the back and all the way up and back down, Leo and Chris pretty much hiked together. Ummmmm……

I suppose the advantage to this arrangement was that they didn't have to talk very loudly into the radios to hear each other.

Another note: Chris mentioned when we set out that we would go at a leisurely pace and have a couple of snack breaks on the way up. He wasn't counting on flies that we wanted to avoid nor on the fact that we were an unruly bunch of anarchists. So we ate one snack at a lookout – that took 30 seconds – and then pushed on at a good clip. We did the 7 hours in 6 hours and 8 minutes. Leisurely.

But back to the hike, which, for those of us who had done the bushwhack before the trail was built, was totally awesome! No prickly roses to thrash through and no logs, trees and grow-up debris to stumble over. Beautiful trail-building complete with a kiosk and signage at the parking area – impressive indeed!

We rose up (read struggled) into the alpine and contrary to our expectations, had only two tiny snow areas to negotiate

The top gave us panoramic views and a well-earned resting place for lunch. I believe the leisurely lunch actually lasted more than 10 minutes!



And then back down, although I do recall requesting a helicopter or at least an escalator at the halfway mark. Neither was forthcoming.

Despite that, we gave the hike a 10 out of 10.

We were: Jenny Bailie, Krista Bourke, Chris Cowan, Don Harasym, Leo Jansma, Kathryn Kimmerly, Cindy Kozak-Campbell, Elizabeth Krebbers, Bill McNally, Goody Niosi, Emmelie Fanjoy, Fred Thiessen, Jill Watson, Chelsea Wood, Karina Gregory.





North Fork Loop

Andrea Vowell

Five of us enjoyed the beautiful scenic valley along the Granby River.

It was a sunny morning and temperatures were pleasantly warm. It was a leisurely ride stopping at viewpoints to take it all in. We warmed up on the flat meandering road by the river, stopped for photos at Hummingbird Bridge, then enjoyed the rolling hills back to Grand Forks for lunch at the Board Room.



All in all it was a pleasant day with Doug and Linda Clark, Birgit Chart, Lesley Matthews (our tour guide) and Andrea Vowell (trip leader)

Svoboda Sunset Hike

Abby Wilson

June 12

We were hoping for a sunset, but the sky was cloudy and overcast. Still, fourteen hikers set out along the Svoboda bike trails to climb up through the forest to the scenic overlook above Nelson, BC.

It was a steady uphill pace, and although we stuck to blue and green trails we were sure that some of them would have rated as black diamonds in places other than Nelson! At last we broke into an old clearcut and enjoyed a scenic dinner on the bench.



We were: Abby Wilson, Ineke Tuit, John Kortram, Steve Potter, Karina Gregory, Fran Steacy, Laura Ringer, Shelley Birston, Phil Best, Brent and Valerie Dorman, Mark Jensen, Gundula Brill, and Vicki Hart

Height of Land and new trails on north end of Crawford Peninsula

May 7, 2018

12km, 6 hours.

We had our limit of 10 people and used 3 vehicles. The 8:10 ferry brought the group together in Crawford Bay at 9 AM. From downtown Crawford Bay we drove up the east side of the peninsula and start hiking at the trail "Hub". High clearance was needed, but with no snow or mud, we didn't need 4wd.

The trail was very pleasant with a couple of steep sections but mostly easy, through varied forest with a few nice views, and some big trees. Part way along the trail, we took a detour up to the CBC towers which had a great 300 degree view.



After lunch everyone became quiet (unusual with 10 people!) and in our silence we saw two groups of elk, about 15 elk altogether. Quite a sight as they became aware of us and charged away through the underbrush.

We also saw a slime mold (Fuligo septica) in a semi-slimy state as it was changing from the amoeboid plasmodium stage to the sponge-like aethelium. If you

haven't yet made the acquaintance of this strange critter, google "dog vomit slime mold" for an interesting read. We lost a bit of blood to mosquitoes, but not too bad.

Back at Peter's road for the vehicle shuttle (about 40 minutes) and plenty of time to catch the 5:20 PM ferry. Without the towers detour, the visitors from across the lake could have caught the 3:40 ferry. I forgot to take any pictures of the people but they were all smiling! I am including a view of the west arm from the trail, and a picture of a slime mold.



There is a new brochure showing all of the Crawford Peninsula trails which is available at the Visitor Information booth on the artisan strip in Crawford Bay. It shows quite a few options for early season hikes, and also some great mountain bike trails. You could also check out the ESTBA website (East Shore Trail and Biking Association.)

Happy trails,

Lorna Robin, trip leader

Mount Grohman

By Goody Niosi

Chris Cowan picked the perfect day for a club hike to Mount Grohman. June 17 was sunny, not too hot, blue sky, fluffy clouds and a gentle breeze – unless, of course, you were on the ridge (which we were) when the breeze turned into a gale – well, maybe just a strong wind.

The plan was for alternate routes: the "short (!)" Grohman hike or the longer loop over to Mount Kubin. Most of us opted for Kubin. And off we went. Not surprisingly, the snow started right at the trailhead – soft and easy to walk on. And there was a lot of it.

Given the snow conditions this past winter, it wasn't all that surprising to find that the tops of the ridges still had cornices clinging to them, which made the traverse interesting.

Rule number 1: don't walk on the cornice.

Rule number 2: don't fall down the other side as you try to navigate the tiny bit of ground left over.

Needless to say, those of us wearing shorts got some mighty fine scrapes to add to our "summer leg" look.

A fair number of us had never done Grohman and were suitably impressed and in awe. There aren't a lot of hikes that loft you into the alpine five minutes after setting off up the trail – and that keep you there the entire time.

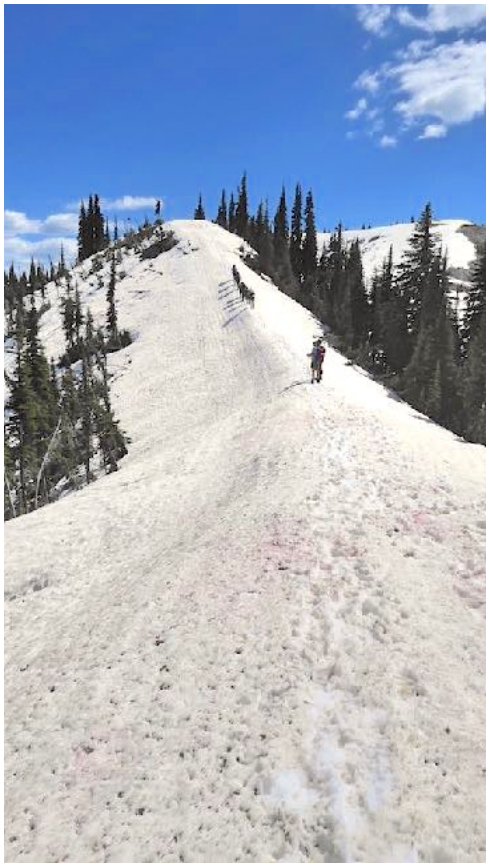


Views were so panoramic that cameras were pointed everywhere. Heck, I managed to take 71 photos in only a few hours! Just aim your camera anywhere and be assured your photo will be beautiful.



We hiked up and down several humps on the ridges and emerged on top of Grohman three hours after setting out. It was at that point that Chris suggested that due to snow conditions (lots of it) he was scrapping the idea of Kubin. No one objected.

We chilled by the summit cairn on Grohman, doing our best to avoid crushing the hundreds of ladybugs also relaxing at the top.



And then we had to go back. One is occasionally apt to forget that getting to the top is only halfway. And Grohman is one of those hikes that is uphill in both directions.

After all was said and done, we managed about 800 metres elevation over about 10K in just over 6 hours.

That stated, all was not completely said and done until Ron and Jan dug into their cooler and shared around cold bottles of beer and big bags of chips. As I recall, our grand and glorious leader was especially pleased.



We were: Tina Baldwin, Krista Bourke, Chris Cowan, Kathryn Kimmerly, Rick Mazzocchi, Goody Niosi, Jan Osborne, Ron Osborne, Andrea Vowell, Abby Wilson, Karina Gregory, Gail Curry, Cameron Carter, Carmen Proctor, Andrew Woodward.

Gray's Peak

June 16

Photos: Robin Bouchard

We arrived at the Kokanee Glacier Park parking lot at Gibson Lake and started our hike at 8:30. We did not encounter good stretches of snow until we climbed about 500 metres vertically up a bushwhack trail through thick alder and very steep brush. We had about an hour and a half of this terrain.

We reached a rocky outcrop that I would call the false headwall and then another half hour to breach the headwall and be able to see the expanse of snow that leads to Gray's peak col. This part of the trail is gruelling as it leads to increasingly steep snow and loose scree at the top.

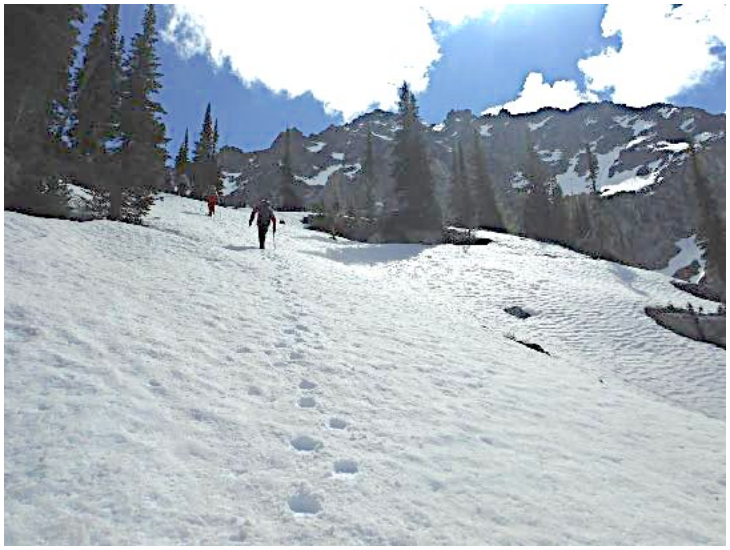
We did reach the col in three hours including breaks for the occasional feeding frenzy. This left us one hour to cross the expanse of glacier that leads to the foot of Mount Hampton Gray. Jeff Ross lead this part of the hike and he kicked excellent steps for the other six of us from the foot to the peak.

The snow was firm to hard and gave us excellent purchase on the slope to Gray's final flat rock at the peak. We peaked at almost exactly four hours from the parking lot. The weather was almost perfect with sun broken with high clouds.

We returned through slushy snow as the temperature was possibly close to 20c. It made for some good sliding and we made it back down in two and a half hours, arriving at our cars just after 3:30.























We were, Vicki Hart, Nancy Selwood, Phil Best, Jeff Ross, Don Harasym, Guest Robin Bouchard, and myself Dave St. Denis



From: Doug Clark

Subject: Battery Usage while navigating

FYI, I've attached a copy of an email from Stephen Johnson of Topo Maps (Spokane, WA) that offers tips on how to save cell battery power while navigating in the back country.

Might be a good newsletter item as a follow up to the Peter. Jordan article in the previous issue.

Doug Clark

It is important to understand what drains your battery. There are some things that drain your battery much faster than others. The big battery drains are powering the screen, GPS, and radios (cellular and WIFI).

Airplane Mode. Put your iPhone into Airplane mode while you are out. This will turn off the cellular and WIFI radios. As of iOS 9, GPS can still work when you are in Airplane mode. Toggle Airplane mode on and off is really easy. Just swipe up from the bottom of the screen and tap on the airplane icon.

Limit GPS Usage. Go into the Settings app then select Privacy->Location Services and change all services to "Never" and only leave on the few apps you want to have access to GPS. I only leave on the Camera (I want my photos to be GPS tagged) and Topo Maps+.

"While Using" Permission. Go into the Settings app then select Privacy->Location Services and change all services to "While Using" (unless you have a good reason to leave one of them as "Always"). This way apps can only use GPS if you are using the app. This gives you control over when GPS is used and when it is not used. You will see a blue bar from the app if it is using GPS and the app is not in the foreground. I also make this change for Topo Maps+. This way I know that no apps are using GPS when I don't want them to. A lot of apps will check in with a server and update their location via GPS. Putting your phone into airplane mode and changing the permission to While Using won't let apps do this.

Don't Record – Use Progress Instead. In Topo Maps+ I just check my location, I don't record trips. (I record day hikes, but not multi-day backpacking trips.) Instead of recording your trip use Progress Along Trail to save battery and still find out how far you have come and how far you have left to go.

Limit App Usage. When I am in the backcountry I only use the Camera and Topo Maps+. I use both of them a lot, but I don't use any other apps. Plan ahead for which apps you plan on using and stick with that plan i.e. don't play games 😉

Screen Brightness. Turn your screen brightness down as much as possible. I leave the screen brightness way down when I am taking photos and I turn it up a little bit when I am using Topo Maps+ for navigation. You can also easily change this by swiping up from the bottom of the screen. By default your iPhone will automatically adjust your screen brightness. This means that even if you turn it down, the iPhone will turn it back up in bright sunlight. You will want to turn this off so that you can have full control over the screen brightness and keep it lower than your iPhone will want to adjust it to. In the Settings App Select "Display & Brightness" and then turn off "Auto-Brightness".

Start With 100% Battery. Start following these tips when you leave the house, not just when you get to the trailhead. Don't waste a lot of your battery while you are driving to the trailhead.

Power Off At Night. At night power your phone all the way off. Tap and hold on the power button and then slider over the power slider.

Low Power Mode. In the Settings App select Battery and then turn on "Low Power Mode". Do this, even when my phone is at 100% battery.

I generally upgrade my iPhone every one or two years, so I don't have old batteries. As batteries get old they don't last as long. So if you have an older iPhone, your usage may vary.

Want to go even longer?

My wife bought me a GoalZero Nomad 7 solar charger for Christmas. It is awesome! Now I can use my iPhone for more than 3 days and I can take photo spheres. It weights just a little more than a book and it is about the same size as a book. Since I have the power, I now read books on iBooks, Olive Tree, or ESV (I had the privilege of working on the Olive Tree and ESV iOS apps) instead of bringing a book. So if you bring a book backpacking you can swap it out for a solar charger with very little extra weight or space in your pack.

From: Chris Cowan

Subject: "The Turn"

Tim... I think the attached would be nice for inclusion in our Tech Notes pages. "The Turn" by veteran Rossland Range back country skier Les Carter, whom I got chatting with yesterday about trying to fix my raggy ass back country skiing. A bit late for a winter newsletter, but I found it very useful and interesting and I think other skiers will too.

Les OK'd it for placing on our site in subsequent correspondence.

Chris.

---------- Forwarded message ----------

From: Les Carter

Subject: Backcounry ski turn article

Chris:

Attached is the article where I tried to describe how to make those controlled AT turns. There's a lot in it, so you will need to think about it in installments.

I discovered most of this this on my own, then realized that Lito Tajada-Flores and Paul Parker (author of "Freeheel Skiing and pupil of Lito's) agree with me (mostly).

(Not being naturally graceful, I had to analyze each small step in The Turn. My ski buddy, Steve Bryant, is a more polished skier than I am, but he's a "natural, so he has no idea how he does it, and can't offer much in the way of tips. There's probably a message here about hotshots who decide they can teach.)

Let me know if this gets to you. I seem to have lost the note you send asking about my age.

Fun!

"THE TURN"

"The turn" is intended to give you control in powder snow, and heavier snow up to your ankles. There are tricks for modifying "the turn" to handle breakable crust and deep, heavy snow, which I will mention later, but it is best not to try learning in those kinds of snow. Pick nice snow for practicing "the turn."

Much ski instruction has focused on postures – "face down hill, bend your knees, make a platform," etc., which I find tends to make for tense, stiff skiing. I am going to try to take you through the turn using fluid, interconnected motions instead. I will also suggest how your body should feel as you ski. Having used this approach for a while, I think it works better.

A lot of what I have to say here is aimed at correcting habits developed by learning to snowplow. The snowplow invites a posture that is too stiff-legged and upright, with your weight too far back, and often with one ski wandering around aimlessly. (Properly done, the snowplow is better than that, but it is easy to slip into bad habits.) You may have to actively say to yourself, "OK, now I want to snowplow," and at other times, "Oops, I am snowplowing when I don't want to."

BASICS

No matter what your sport or discipline, there are some things that absolutely must be done right or you can't advance. Whenever you get stuck, you have to go back and perfect those basics – holding the tennis racket, practicing scales, addressing the ball, sitting upright on the horse, riding your skis correctly. The basics take practice, and you are never too advanced not to need to go back and practice them.

Feel your feet. When you are skiing, you should feel like your bare (but warm) feet are sliding effortlessly through the snow, nicely balanced fore and aft, almost as though you don't have skis on. You should not feel like you are trying to lever big, awkward boards around. As you slide on a gentle hill, "scrunch" your toes in your boots. You should feel solid contact between your toes and the insoles of your boots. If your toes are trying to grab air, your weight is too much on your heels. Off your skis, try jumping into the air by taking off with your weight on your heels. Not good! It doesn't work on skis either. You want to be balanced on your feet in the same way as you would be in a boxing match, or in anticipation of catching a ball or returning a tennis volley. Feel your weight in the "sweet spot" under the fronts of your arches.

Drop your stance like a boxer: Many people trying to learn the powder turn, especially those who have a snowplow habit, ride with their legs too straight and upper body too upright, which throws your weight back and locks the tails of your skis into the snow (leading to repeated falls to the inside of the turn). Your basic posture should feel like an active, poised crouch, with your head, hands and shoulders out front hunting for

the next turn. (This reinforces what I said earlier about getting your weight centered on the skis by feeling your feet.)

Traverse with style: Your first turn begins from a traverse. When you link turns, there is a point, just as you finish one turn and begin the next, when you are again traversing for an instant. The traverse is where it all begins.

While sliding across a gentle slope: a) feel your weight on your feet, nicely centered fore and aft; b) ride in an active stance like a boxer, c) shift your weight from one foot to the other, then put your weight almost evenly on both skis, more on your downhill ski if the snow is hard, more equally on both skis if the snow is softer (it's a matter of how it feels); and d) move your uphill ski slightly ahead of the downhill ski. This last move does a couple of good things; it makes it harder to cross your tips, and it turns your body so it faces slightly downhill and makes it ready to begin a turn. (You may have to reinforce this by actively "looking" downhill with head, shoulders, and hips.)

Keep your feet comfortably close together: If your feet are too far apart when you begin your turn, your pole-plant and launch into the turn will be awkward. Strengthen your uphill leg as you get ready to turn, to bring your skis closer together and make them work as partners. (You can't do this if you are snowplowing.) In difficult snow, your skis may separate in the middle of the turn for lateral stability, but they should come closer again as you finish the turn and get ready for the next one. In powder, your skis will float and carve much better if they stay together and act like one board. Keep them just far enough apart to make it easy for the uphill or inside ski to move ahead, and for your legs to work independently when they have to.

The edges of both skis do the same thing: Traversing or turning, both "left" edges, or both "right" edges, carve together. (The snowplow is the opposite of this rule.) To get the edges of both skis doing the same thing, practice the traverse, taking great care not to let your uphill ski wander uphill and tip onto the wrong edge (your inner beginner looking for a snowplow). Then, while gently turning, look at your inside ski to make sure it is close to the outside ski, and using the same edge.

Actively study and practice the basics: Many people trying to move up a level in their skiing don't believe they are still snowplowing until they see themselves on video. Watch your skis; watch your body. Work on your mental images, and compare them to what you are doing.

THE TURN

Practice the turn while moving slowly. If you are doing it right, it will work at a walking pace. At first, practice one turn at a time, with a traverse in between. As you begin to feel the up-and-down rhythm of the turn, you can shorten the traverse until eventually it becomes just that split second when you link one turn to the next.

Begin: While traversing, drop into a slightly lower stance, and strengthen your *uphill* leg as you reach to plant your *downhill* pole. This gives a firm base for what you do next, and helps to keep you from falling into the hill. It is also the opposite of trying to sneak into a turn with a stem or snowplow; it makes the turn happen when you want it to, not when your skis get around to it.

Pole plant: The pole plant triggers the turn, and marks where it is going to happen. The right spot to plant your pole is a matter of feel and practice, depending on your speed and the size of turn you want to make. Don't worry overly about getting it perfect. Look downhill to where you expect the turn to finish. Plant your downhill pole with the participation of both hands, both shoulders and your head. Your downhill hand and arm do the work, but the rest of your body "agrees." This begins to move your weight, and your mind, in the right direction for the turn.

The "ready hand:" As soon as you have planted your pole, raise your uphill hand (the "ready hand" in German ski teaching) and shoulder strongly upwards, and project them forward in the direction of the fall-line. This lifts the weight of your torso, which lifts your legs, which makes your skis light and able to begin turning.

(The "ready hand" replaces the old direction to "unweight," which tends to cause people to try to hop into the air to get their skis turning. In most kinds of snow, hopping to begin a turn makes for stiff, awkward skiing. A good turn is fluid and easy.)

Steer your skis into the turn: While your body is light and tall (having followed your "ready hand" upwards), steer your skis into the turn with your feet. Concentrate on your toes. Thinking about your toes

will keep your weight over the "sweet spot," and make your skis pivot around their centers, rather than being levered around from their tails.

Carve: When your skis have begun to turn through the fall-line, and your weight has begun to return to Earth, sink onto your skis (into a balanced, active crouch) and feel them carve an arc in the snow. Feel the twist of your torso and hips as your upper body naturally turns downhill in response to the motion of your skis. (Feel your legs burn if the snow is heavy; holding the carving position can call for strength.)

Power your turn completion: As you carve the second half of your turn, tighten its radius by driving your inside hand and shoulder forward as you continue to steer the skis with your toes. Do the twist, either a little or a lot, as you require. This should leave you in a solid traverse position, even if momentarily, and ready to strengthen your (new) uphill, leg, plant your (new) downhill pole, and begin a new turn in the other direction.

If you have projected properly into the first half of the turn, and powered through the second half with your inside hand and upper body, your inside ski (now your uphill ski) should finish the turn slightly forward of your outside ski. This will leave you in the traverse position, ready for your next turn. Sometimes you have to make a conscious effort to advance your inside ski as you turn. (Heavy snow will drag it back.) This is important, because if your inside ski is not advanced, it is difficult to tighten your turn radius when you want to (and an inside ski too far back likes to cross over the outside ski).

Voila!

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Weight on one or both skis? In powder, both skis carry your weight evenly throughout the turn. There is an instant when you strengthen your uphill leg as you plant your pole, which might sound as though the uphill ski is being weighted more heavily, but it usually is not, at least in soft snow. The "strengthening" trick really just compensates for a natural tendency for the uphill ski to be too weakly weighted at the moment you reach downhill for the pole plant.

On very hard snow, your weight can be entirely on the outside ski. You can even move your weight strongly onto the "new" outside ski just as you plant your pole – the hard snow equivalent of the soft snow "strengthening" trick - and keep it there through the new turn. (This is what instructors call "early weight transfer." To check that you are doing it right, try lifting your inside ski completely off the snow during the turn.)

In heavy soft snow, you can weight your outside ski a bit more than the inside one, to make it carve harder and tighten your turn. This is particularly useful with super-fat skis, which will comfortably ski soft snow with more uneven weighting than traditional skis will accept.

Extra lift for heavy snow: Instead of trying to hop (the classic, and difficult, "jump turn"), simply say "Up" as you raise your "ready hand." This seems to inspire most people to project upwards just the little bit more that is needed to get the skis out of the junk.

Extra punch for crust: begin the turn as usual, but as you descend to carve, say "Stomp!" This should make you strengthen your feet and legs, and hit the snow with enough force to crunch your skis into a carving arc. It should also make you land with your weight a little lower, which is a good posture for control when things get tricky. If you are sufficiently aggressive, you will feel your skis rebound out of the "stomp" and into the air, making it easier to project into, and "stomp," the next turn. (Try that from a snowplow!)

Control in uneven, tricky snow: Concentrate on *strengthening your feet*. This requires tightening the muscles that control your feet and ankles. Often, it gives you the added contact with your skis that is needed to keep lumpy snow from pushing them all over the place.

Ski steeps with spirit: The turn works just the same on steeps as on cruiser terrain, except: a) your legs extend and retract more fully, which actually causes less leg strain and "burn;" and b) you need to steer your skis through the beginning of the turn more aggressively – which is easier because the steepness itself helps get your skis clear of the snow. Strengthening your uphill leg as you plant your pole helps to prevent leaning (and then falling) into the hill. Project your "ready hand" strongly into the turn. Timidity is not your friend on steeps. Go for it! But finish each turn into a complete traverse position (drive your inside hand through), for speed control. Going for it is not the same as running out of control.

Basics check: You should not feel the backs of your boots bumping into your calves. If you are banging the backs of your boots, your weight is too far back, and you will end up levering your skis around instead of floating them effortlessly. You should also not feel excessive pressure on your shins. Modern skis turn best when ridden perfectly c entered (and soft snow will punish you for anything else, with either a face-plant or a refusal to allow the turn). Control your skis with your feet and ankles, not just the stiffness of your boots; the stiffness of your boots is there to assist, not to replace active bones and muscles. Go back to the basics, and practice the balanced feel and active stance.

Don't practice bad habits. If you feel you are "losing it," stop, feel your feet, get centered, give yourself a mental ski lesson, then ski on slowly and lightly– a suite of turns at a time, with pauses to enjoy how the turns worked. If you were doing well, and your skiing seems to be breaking down, your muscles (and perhaps your brain) are tired. Take a break, or come back tomorrow.