The Kootenay Mountaineer

The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.

2018 Autumn Equinox

Spring Social

Our guest speaker Laura Adams grew up with the Kootenay Mountaineering Club. Her father Dave Adams, was a long-time member. Laura has become a well know professional ACMG guide.

At our spring social Laura gave a spectacular account of her experiences as a guide to a group of scientists researching the Arctic Archipelago. Laura's pictures and talk about her four expeditions captured our attention. She gave a heart warming description of the lives and people of the Arctic along with pictures. Her candid description of some of the most extreme challenges she faced was amazing. At times she had to learn on the spot as she encountered obstacles along the way. The pictures of her adventures were truly remarkable.

Laura is an awesomely caring, brave, and adventurous person. All of those present thoroughly enjoyed her presentation.

Laura donated the cost of two KMC outdoor courses for young budding outdoors people. Thanks to our spring social guest speaker for her generosity in sponsoring these two courses!

The winners of the KMC outdoor courses are:

Molly Thomson

Jenn Walsh



Backcountry comfort facility.

Photo submitted by Doug Clark

Contents

Spring Social Report 1
Trip Reports 2
- Lost Mountain 2
- Elgood/Plewman/7 Summits 3
- Ravens Trail to Bluffs 4
- White Queen 4
- Old Glory 5
- Granby River 6
- Sapphire Lakes 7
- Troup Beach 7
- Sapphire Lakes 8
- Trip reports from last season 8
  - Pend d'Oreille Loop 8
  - Evans Creek 9
  - Strawberry Pass Cabin Bike Tour 9

2018 Hiking Camps 10
- Week 1 10
- Week 2 13
- Week 3 16

Notes To The USA SW Deserts 18

Where to get topographic maps 46

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

Lost Mountain

June 4

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.

Elgood/Plewman/7 Summits Loop

June 24

By Goody Niosi

I knew it would be an interesting hike on June 24 when our leader Rick Mazzocchi started off by telling us he hadn't had quite enough sleep the night before. He didn't mention anything about partying but I, for one, chose to draw my own conclusions.

He also mentioned, merely in passing, that he'd never done quite this route before – only parts of it.

And so we did a car shuttle that Andrea sorted out because Rick didn't feel quite up to doing the math. Full disclosure: neither did most of the rest of us at this early hour of the morning.

We left a couple of vehicles at the Old Glory trailhead and set off at about 9 a.m. from Strawberry Pass. It was a beautiful day with perfect morning temperatures for the long, steady uphill along the 7 Summits Trail to Elgood.





We began having fine views on the ridge and they just kept getting better. We'd been unsure about the snow levels but they turned out to be nothing at all to speak about – a few patches on the ridge here and there – all nicely consolidated and easy to walk on.

By noon, we made it to the top of Plewman and settled down for lunch. The last time I'd been up here it had still been covered in snow except for bare rocks that



were red – covered in a living blanket of ladybugs. There were still a lot of ladybugs but they'd woken up from their somnolence and decided to fly into our ears, backpacks, sandwiches, and anywhere else they could squeeze in – and let me tell you, ladybugs can cram themselves into the most interesting places.

It was a short lunch.

We headed down Plewman and along the ridge to the Plewman Trail. From there, down and down and down to where we had parked the cars 5.5 hours previously.

Late night and all, Rick organized a superb hike. Even the car shuttle worked!



We were: Rick Mazzocchi, Krista Bourke, Brent Cairney, Robin Sheppard, Andrea Vowell, Goody Niosi, Dylan Saunders, Jill Watson, Jenny Bailie



Ravens Trail to Bluffs

July 1

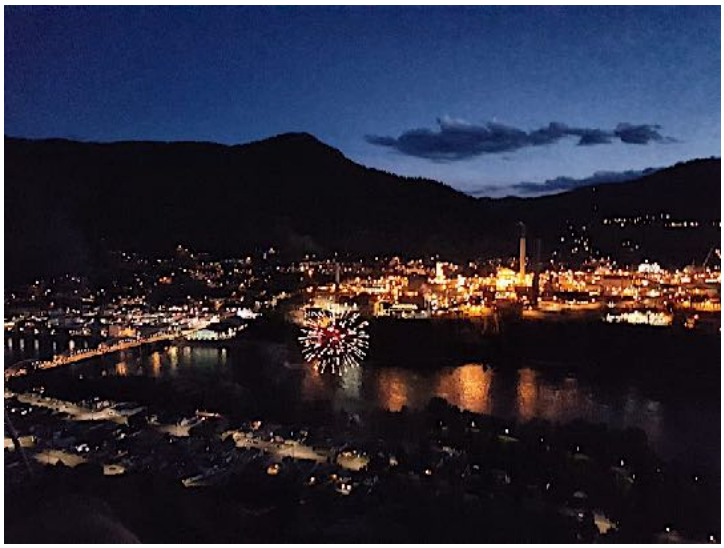
Brenda Haley



We were 9 people.

We did the Ravens trail to the Bluffs to watch the Trail fireworks over the river and watch the sun set. Left at 8:40 and the fireworks started about 9:45.

Linda Clark brought treats and Canadian flag glow sticks.



Attending were: Gayle, Reneta, Dick, Tonia, Doug, Linda, Alisan, Marianne and myself.

White Queen

By Goody Niosi

Abby Wilson planned our July 3 hike up White Queen as a leisurely, artistic affair. “Plein Air.” She said. “We’ll linger in the sun and paint or take photos – maybe just loll.”

That was Plan A. We went with Plan B instead, which involved eating lunch as quickly as possible before heading back down. Because, despite the calendar saying it was July, the fact was that we segued into Julember straight from Junuary. It was 6 degrees at the top. We wore down jackets, toques, mittens, and gloves.



Despite that, it turned out to be a pretty darn awesome hike. We headed up the ski hill from the lodge, slogging through what appeared to be a temperate version of the Everglades, and then turning on to the road.



Soon after, we veered on to the “trail.” I use the word “trail” advisedly. In truth it was more a kind of track or possibly a route or maybe just the side of the hill with rocks, grass, and the occasional patch of bare earth.

We side-hilled. A lot.



And then we continued up and up into the cloud. We bushwhacked through bushes and trees but mostly bushes. Hence “bushwhacked”, although they were whacking us a good deal more than we were giving back.

At last, after about 2 hours and 15 minutes, we arrived at the top pointing out to each other where various mountains and ridges would be if we could see them. And then, miraculously, the cloud blew away and we actually had some views! We were excited. But we were also cold so we hared back down. The sun fought

its way through for a brief few minutes before the rain poured down. We layered back up.

Weather? Who cares? We had a super day, laughed like mad and got back to the cars just before another deluge hit.

Great timing. Great day.



We were Jan Osborne, Sara Judith, Kathryn Kimmerly, Fran Steacy, Ivy Mitchell, Miriam Williams, Verne Ranni, Norm Koerber, Barb Hanlon, Andrea Vowell, Goody Niosi, Gail Curry, Cameron Carter, Abby Wilson.

Old Glory

By Goody Niosi

Andrea Vowell led a stellar trip to Old Glory on July 5. KMC members must have been done with the cold, rain, snow, and overcast skies because they turned out in droves – 17 of us!



And a great group it was. We headed up the Plewman Trail shortly after 8.30 a.m. Those of us who'd been up earlier in the season were delighted to find the blowdown completely cleared away. And so, unimpeded, we stretched out in a looooong line and plodded up – yep, it is a plod.



We paused on Unnecessary Ridge to layer up and eat snacks. And yes, we did have to layer up – the wind was still cold and the sun insisted on hiding behind a persistent cloud.

After a few minutes we headed down the ridge into the bowl and then up and up and up and – well, you know how it goes. Needless to say, layers came back off – and went back on nearer the top. It was one of those layer/de-layer days.

We got to the top about 3 hours after setting out. It was about then that the sun actually came through and things started to warm up a bit. And, after a leisurely lunch, we headed back down.





I should mention that the views were terrific all day. The wind might have been cold but it did a good job of clearing the sky. The meadows were startlingly green, making the entire hike pretty darn picturesque.

We opted to take the slightly longer route back, hiking along the 7 Summits Trail to the Old Glory Trail and then back down. Even the Old Glory Trail had been brushed out nicely.

The 7 Summits between Unnecessary Ridge and Old Glory Trail is one of the prettiest sections with rolling meadows and expansive views – in my most humble opinion, of course.

We arrived back about 6.5 hours after setting out, having gained about 1200 Metres elevation. And, glory be (pun intended) all 17 of us arrived back in good shape.



We were: Andrea Vowell, Helen Foulger, Peter Berkey, Rick Mazzocchi, Chris Chart, Birgit Chart, Kathleen Nichol, Shelly Richards, Nancy Suuban, Laurie Helyer, Don Harasyn, Cindy Shakoff, Robin Sheppard, Diane Paolini, Ken Holmes, Jill Watson, Goody Niosi, and Colleen Ross who caught up with us and joined us for part of the way.

Granby River

I co-ordinated the canoe trip on the Granby River on July 8, 2018. There were six members: Bert Port, Mary Prothro, Colleen Ross, Jim Guido, Jessica Kew and Mike Kew; and one guest: Dawn Guido. We had three tandem canoes and Bert was in his solo boat.



Conditions were perfect when we launched at 11:30 AM at the Brown Creek Bridge. Our first stop was on a convenient gravel bar for lunch shortly after noon. The water level was good with several sections definitely rating ‘class 2’ (novice). There were some log jams and sweepers to be aware of, but the group managed the entire trip without incident. Thanks go to both Bert and Mary for providing their considerable canoeing experience to us. The group was very friendly and stuck together well.



Mainly it was a fun ride through modest flowing water with periodic shoots through small drops that were greeted with hoots. Some riffles were a bit shallow and had to be lined through - and sometimes ‘bumped’ through! It was sunny and warm but a mild upstream wind and the occasional splash of cool river water stopped any risk of overheating.



We pulled out at the Hummingbird Bridge at 3 PM. We covered 11 km by road - probably add 2 or 3 more because of the twists and turns of the river. Everyone said how much they enjoyed the day and I think most would happily repeat the event in the future.



Mike Kew

Sapphire Lakes Hike

July 18

Back in the halcyon days of summer, before smokey skies and cancelled KMC hikes, a great day of hiking in Kokanee Park started in the cool early morning at Gibson Lake. We actually went up a steep bank beside the parking lot onto the original trail. This, according to one of our hikers, saved us 1.5 kms. Did she have an app for this?

After a short break at Kokanee Lake we continued on to Keen Lake and then veered off to the left to find the narrow trail up the draw, up to the notch at the top and hopefully to Sapphire Lakes. My hike up there 2 days before ended before getting there, due to time constraints. This was new territory for all of us and reassurances of "it is just over the ridge" were meet with some skepticism.

Sure enough, it was just over the ridge. Ice had just cleared off of the lake, as there was still a lot of snow on the banks. After a half hour break and lovely cool, fresh alpine air (a nice break from 38 in Nelson), we headed back down with a lovely view of the Sawtooth Ridge to the east. Even though this is one of the lesser used trails in the park there were many cairns pointing the way on the faint trail.

We got back to Gibson Lake by 4:00 PM, all a little tired after a long 18 kms of varied and moderate hiking, with everyone having really enjoyed themselves.

We were Vern Ranni, Dylan Saunders, Ivy Mitchell, Robin Sheppard, Jan Osborne, Alison Etter, Valerie Utgaren, Norm Koerber, Rick Mazzocchi, P'nina Shames, Kathryn Kimmerly, Karin Nagels, and myself, trip leader, Peter Martyn

Troup Beach

On Thursday, September 5, 2019, a group of 13 cyclists rode down to Troup Beach on a beautiful, sunny day. We were lucky that the intense smoky conditions cleared for our ride.





We had a little bit of an adventure trying to find the alternate pathway to the beach at the very end of the trail at the last bridge but decided to just go with the usual trail to the beach further up the rail trail.We ate our lunch at Troup Beach and relaxed in the sunshine. On the way back, there was a flat tire that had to be fixed and that problem was dealt with efficiently.

The leader was Louise Hammerich and the twelve others were: Sandra England, Grant Falck, Renée Marceau, Eric Marks, Marilyn Miller, Jan and Rob Osborne, Mary Prothro, Terri and Rob Richardson, Dylan Saunders and Miriam Williams.

Sapphire Lakes

Ten members dedicated a whole day to this very scenic hike within Kokanee Glacier Provincial Park. Starting at Gibson Lake we climbed beyond Kokanee Lake to Keen Lake, then took the route up Commission Creek to the Sapphire Lakes.



The lakes are spectacularly beautiful and can be viewed from a rise, allowing for a complete view of all lakes at once. The hike was over 20 kilometres long round trip with more than 2000 feet of altitude gain.



From the left: Allison Etter, Sherolyn Haakstad, Linda Monea, Kathi Robertson, Laurie Helyer, Chris Cowan, Janet Henderson, Chiara Pretto, Marilyn Miller (leader), Sheila Achilles

Reports From Last Season

Hi Tim, seems I missed the June deadline for the newsletter, sorry. Here are 3 more trips that I coordinated this Spring.

Jill Watson

Friday May 4th Pend D'Oreille Loop, bike ride.

A fleeting thought crossed my mind this year that I would give this outing a miss as a club trip, as the participant interest was dropping over the last couple of years. But, how wrong I was. By 9 am, 13 riders were busy unloading bikes and greeting each other like the old friends we are, and chatting with the newcomers. A gentleman approached us wanting to know what our group was all about, and Peter O. you would have been proud of the recruiting committee that added another member to the club!

After introductions, our group set off in orderly style, on a cool sunny morning and made our way alongside the very swollen and fast moving Columbia River. Arriving at the 7 Mile dam turnoff, we regrouped, then started the long hill climb into the Pend D'Oreille valley. With so little traffic along these roads we could ride abreast (and try to chat) with each other whilst admiring the beautiful vistas. We noticed a few Balsam Root blooms and Saskatoon blossoms as we approached the dam. With rapid snow melt the previous week the dam had 4 flood gates open with massive amounts of water shooting out into the river. Whilst we were there, along came Frank and friend on their road bikes, then they turned around and we continued up yet another hill to the unpaved old Waneta Nelway Road to Buckleys campground for our early lunch.

The picnic area is down by the water with tables and nice shade trees, a welcome spot. Of course to reach this little gem you have to drop down a very steep hill, which kind of mares ones lunch break knowing you have to climb back up! However, rested and fed, we tackled this beast with varying audible grunts and groans and started the return section of our ride. The unpaved road is rough in spots with many ups, downs and bends, and we had to dismount to walk around the big road washout from last year. Soon we were back on pavement and riding through farmland, with green fields and domestic animals grazing.

We arrived back at our vehicles by 2.30 pm, with 47klms. of riding behind us.

We were Janis Gilbert, Andrea Vowell, Sharen Henderson, Page Wasson, Kathleen Nichol, Caroline Crichton, Diane Paolini, Doug Clark, Rob Moore, Jim Falvo, Bob McQueen, Dave Watson and myself, Jill Watson.

Thank you all for a lovely day.

Wednesday May 8th Evans Creek

Sometimes you just have to trust those weather forecasters, and I switched the date for this hike to 1 day ahead. A very fortuitous move! 6 of us met at the Park and Ride, (Credit Union Junction) then drove up to Slocan City where we met Peter. After introductions we scurried across the bridge as there was a brisk wind coming down the lake and we warmed up on entering the forest. It didn't take long for the early morning mist to evaporate and it was blue skies and sunshine for the rest of the day.

The trail was in good shape, however some of the rickety old planks used for creek crossings were quite slippery as the water was running high. The greenery was lush and the flower parade was in transition. Just a week before, the Avalanche lilies were superb, alas, they were mostly now finished and the slopes were now sporting Larkspur, Spring Beauties, Calypso Orchids and Shooting Stars. We made sure to time our breaks in these areas, and with the hot day there were several. When we arrived at our destination we went up to the waterfall to see Evans Creek bursting out of the canyon as it emptied into Slocan Lake. Our lunch spot was on the beach with some shade and it was a nice area to relax.

Rested and fed, we began our return journey. As we meandered along it became obvious there was lots of ups and downs on this little early season hike. So, we treated ourselves to stops and enjoyed the views of the lake noting how much snow was still on the peaks to the north. We were back at our cars a little after 3pm, with 16 klms of hiking behind us.

Our happy little group were. Vivian Bowers, Laura Ringer, Diane Paolini, Jenny Baillie, Norm Koeber, Peter Berkey and myself, Jill Watson.

Thank you for an enjoyable day.

Friday June 8th Strawberry Pass Cabin Bike Tour.

This little journey is normally an early season ski, so to switch things up a bit, we went for a bike tour of the area instead. 6 of us met at Strawberry Pass on Highway 3B between Nancy Greene Lake and Rossland, at 9 am. After "hail hearties, well met" we rode for 1 glorious minute on smooth pavement and turned onto Crowe Rd. After a short section of steep and uneven logging road we could lift our heads and enjoy the scenery. Most of the snow was well gone on this side of the highway and the road was pleasantly undulating until our first junction where the Rec. Site sign signaled "Chimo Cabin, Steep Route" O.K. nothing to it. This secondary road is newer, rough and steep. We made our way up the first short hill, but soon we all took our turn pushing the last of the longer stretch, the sign was right. This cabin was built a couple of years ago and the setting is gorgeous. Positioned in a clearing it has a great view of Old Glory Mt. A few of our group were unfamiliar with this area so it was a pleasure to show them around.

We made our way back to Crowe Rd. via another little track, (skimming through the "lake" at the end of it) and continued for several kms. We then had to push our bikes uphill along a winter connector to a spur road, and as we regrouped we were joined by Diane who couldn't meet us at the beginning. From this out of the way spot we could ride on old spur roads making our way to connect with Cliff Rd. then more "up" to View Pt. Cabin.

We stashed our bikes nearby as the walk in was wet, muddy and un rideable, and sat outside in the sunshine for our early lunch. This is also a nice little refuge and sports a beautiful front door painted by our friend Jenny Baillie. Too soon it was time to get back on our bikes and attack the long uphill heading now in our return direction, then onto another winter track which led us to the Mosquito cabin. After another "inspection" it was downhill along more rough and muddy terrain, then a fun ride back along Crowe Rd. We made a quick detour to see the original Cookie Jar cabin, built by one of the original cabin builders eons ago, then back to our vehicles. So, this felt like a short ride, 4 hours with stops, but I think we earned our stripes.

We were: Dylan Saunders, Art Stock, Peter Berkey, Frank Fodor, Diane Paolini, Dave Watson and Jill, co ordinator.

Thank you all for a fun time.

2018 Hiking Camps

Camp One Soards Creek

By Terry Huxter

Friday night before camp excitement rises again
Even though mountains are shrouded in rain
Thankfully Saturday dawns blue and clear
But mid morning comes and no chopper we hear
Andrea on sat phone to the helicopter base
Is told Sunday is booked – no smile on HER face!
But they have a bird ready – will come right away
We were all up at camp just after midday
Pilot Heinz was a model of speedy efficiency
After apologizing frankly for the booking deficiency
There's cook tent and stores tent to set up by the lake
Dig a hole for the biffy with its new shroud to stake
We shovel snow into snow banks, coolers to stow
But our week of hot weather soon makes it go
At four, leader Andrea tells us the rules
As we sit around on 4-legged stools.
She starts by telling us she had a dream
That all the camp ladies wished to be clean.
This was a sin, she went on to explain,
Cos they boiled wash water with cook stove propane
This use of communal resources won't happen
So long as she is the hiking camp captain.
We could bask in the beauty around us if only
We weren't called for dinner of rich minestrone.



So goes the first day at Camp 1. As darkness fell we were treated to a stunning sight low in the southern sky. Mars was hanging above a distant peak glowing fiery red with an intensity greater than any of us had ever seen before.

On Sunday we were off bright and early, fanning out in various directions from camp. Unfortunately, mid afternoon an incident occurred requiring a heli evacuation of one member. Everybody at camp worked together coordinating this evac, which resulted in some of us not returning to camp till after dark. The only light hearted event of the day occurred in the evening when Ken mused about staying out overnight rather than hiking back up to camp. I whipped out my survival blanket which was a "double". The package showed a smiling couple in a silver shroud. Ken, in his own words, said "I took one look at it and set out for camp like a jack rabbit."

Monday, everyone was tired from Sunday's events and we stayed close to camp. It was a hot sunny day and several of us jumped into the icy lake below camp.



Tuesday dawned even hotter. We set off west towards the col that led into the Adams river drainage. A relatively gentle snow ramp got us up to the col for elevenses. As we were relaxing a humming bird came darting amongst us checking out the brightly colored backpacks. A lush green valley lay ahead with a fun descent, first down a deep sandy slope and then a gentle snow slope into the meadows.



A lake lay hidden around a distant rocky outcrop making a great lunch spot. Another group of us passed on climbing to the col and instead headed on round to the rocky knob north of camp for views to the south and east. Descending mid afternoon, they noticed a bug net had gone missing – an essential piece of equipment at this camp! - so they retraced their steps but no bug net was found.



Overnight it rained a little and next morning found us busy erecting the shelter tarp between the cook tent and the storage tent.

The weather seemed unsettled all day but peaks were summited, the grey rubble pile east of camp (7850') and the grey tooth southwest of camp (7350'). Both groups scuttled down quickly as thundered rolled around at lunch time. At happy hour Terry Simpson announced wine restrictions were lifted as several liters still remained. She then commented how little wine was drunk with one less hiker in the group! Eric had the unenviable task of trying to coordinate us for a group photo that evening.



Our camp had a novice cook, Leta Bak , who performed like a champion from day one. She prepared delicious tasting meals, used all leftovers in imaginative soups and omelets, had friendly smiles for everyone, and was also an accomplished artist.



When whipping cream was on the dessert menu, the bowl was passed around and the cream whippers led everyone in a song, *Streets of London* Town (Ken) *Alouette* (David B*.) Moose with the Juice* (Sara), *The Parting Glass* (Dawn), *Ilkley Moor Baht'At* (Chris/Ken) and, most appropriately on Friday, Bob, at dinner, played Willy Nelson's, *Blue Skies. *This is because Friday morning was dominated by a ferocious storm.

Straight after breakfast at three minutes to nine, the black clouds released their power. By then about half the camp was snuggled back in their tents. For Sherolyn, in the most exposed camp site, it quickly became a spread eagle across the door of her tent trying to keep herself and the tent from being blown away. One other tent was blown almost flat and suffered bent poles. A group of us at the cook tent quickly found ourselves being human anchors for the shelter tarp. The storm battered us with sleet and then hail. Fingers got wet and numb as the ground turned white. Dave T, who was sat on one edge of the tarp with his whole body out stretched and feet braced against a rock, was still getting lifted up. Finally the wind ripped out a piece of canvas with the grommet where the ridge rope was tied and the tarp collapsed on us. It continued to flap with us under it for several more minutes. Marilyn was alone in the cook tent during all this, preventing the cook stove from being knocked over by the inward billowing canvas. As the storm subsided, she and Leta boiled water for drinks and soup to warm everyone up.



The new biffy tent had lasted only 6 days before being flattened by the storm. Bob carved wooden angles to reinforce the bent poles of its roof.

There were many favorite memories from camp; how well everyone worked together pitching in to help, Friday evening dancing the Cha-Cha, Tango, Swing and Blues to Tim's sound system, bridge lessons, serious artistic development, the snow descents from the peaks and cols, eating lunch with the view of the glacier north of camp, tabouli salad, hair washing between the storm and rains on Friday, one camper "sitting in his wine", the lake colors and reflections, and the whipping cream songs.



There was lots of time to reflect on these memories as we huddled and stamped our feet to stay warm on departure day. It was 4C, sleeting and misting.



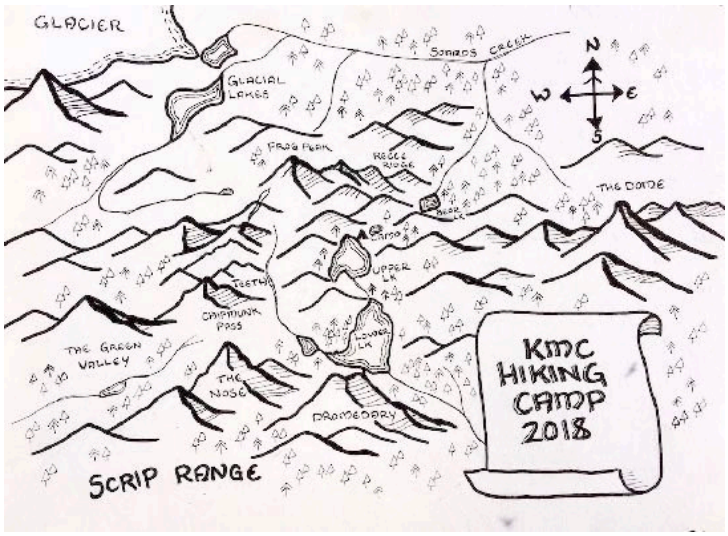
Thank you, Andrea, for leading a great camp. Bob McQueen, Terry Simpson, Leta Bak, Janice Isaac, David Brackett, Marilyn Miller, Birgit Vierheilig-Chart, Chris Chart, Miriam Williams, Liz and Terry Huxter, Dave Toews, Eric Marks, Dawn and Tim Powell, Ken Holmes, Sherolyn Haakstad, Diane Paolini, Sara Judith.





We're where, exactly?





KMC Hiking Camp 2

Camp Two got off to a soggy start as we awoke Saturday morning to cold rain and drifting mist. We assembled promptly at the loading zone for 8am and then waited as a cloud slowly rose from the valley and obscured our position. The sound of the approaching helicopter came and went since the fog had covered both the staging area and the high camp, making a landing impossible until conditions improved. Luckily the clouds shifted within the hour and we were on our way!



A red duffle bag got lost in the transfer and we never discovered whether it had fallen out of the sling load or gotten mixed into Camp One gear. As a result, Wayne spent camp sleeping on the stretcher and Betty had to make do with a mattress of layered cardboard. They were good sports about it, and any other items that



went missing during the week were blamed on the mysterious red bag.

Camp Two gets to dig lots of holes. And it's a good thing too because apparently we need lots of practice. Biffy Hole #1 went straight down onto a large rock that covered the majority of the hole and could not be budged for deeper digging. The hole was filled in. Biffy Hole #2 had greater success, but after hours of enthusiastic excavation, Hole #2 exceeded the dimensions of the toilet platform and would have sent unsuspecting KMCers plunging to a messy doom. Rocks and tree trunks were strategically inlaid into the ground to support the platform and save the day. Biffy Hole #3 was dug for Camp Three and was absolutely perfect - you're welcome.

The majority of the camp opted to tent in clusters near the dining area. The senior hikers explained that close proximity to the biffy became a necessity with age. Andrew, being one of the youngest, took our tent all the way around the lake. This choice was questioned at



first, and then later appreciated once he started referring to his sleeping bag as 'the fart sack'.

Many of us brought topo maps, but there were no names for the nearby landmarks so as the skies cleared we pointed out peaks and came up with our own names. We had "The Dome", "The Dromedary", "The Nose", "Teeth", and "Frog Peak" as well as the nearby ridge which was briefly referred to as "Boobs" before it was demoted from being a noteworthy landmark. "Bear Lake" was named after Nancy spotted a swimming

bear one morning and "Chipmunk Pass" referred to a high col where chipmunks ran up sheer cliff faces in defiance of the laws of gravity.

After Saturday, the skies cleared and warmed and the bugs emerged in full force. However, we had many days of solid hiking and adventure. The terrain was challenging with razor-edged ridges and steep approaches, but the experienced mountaineers in the group scouted out new routes and reported back their adventures during tea-time. Peter and Ric bounded off for the distant glacier lakes on Day One, while Nancy and Brian headed up to a high col (later named Chipmunk Pass) to explore the valley and ridges beyond, and Bert steadily began bagging peaks.



We began eyeing up our surroundings and using the term 'doable' to refer to potential new hikes. In theory, many things looked 'doable'. In practice, the 'doable' routes often steepened into loose talus or cliff bands or just ended up being far more adventure than you were ready to take on (notably: one bad route was briefly referred to as "Peter's brown chute" until someone said it out loud in the wrong context, yikes!). Nevertheless, we persisted and ended up filling our days with hikes and our packs with chunks of mica, garnet, and quartzite. Any time during the day, you could look up and see the silhouettes of distant KMCers atop ridges and peaks. There was nowhere discreet to pop a squat and the the call of "asssssshholllle" (and the official response of "youuuu toooo") echoed across the valley.

Every afternoon ended in a happy procession of 'tea time' (tea, coffee and cookies served at 4pm), 'happy hour' (wine rations at 5pm), then a home-cooked dinner at 6pm, followed by dessert, dishes, and making lunches. Most hikers started trudging off to bed around 8pm to escape the bugs, but on calm nights we stayed up late to burn garbage and swap limericks. Sue had brought along the Globe and Mail's giant summer crossword - a monster of a puzzle with over six hundred lines down and across to be solved. Each afternoon, the camp gathered to use our collective hive mind to figure out a few more answers.

On Tuesday, Ric held a Snow School to demonstrate the proper use of ice axes and snow travel. He insisted that the best way to learn to self-arrest was an unexpected stumble and then proceeded to gleefully push us down the slope. We all managed to stop ourselves, but had bruises as souvenirs the next day.

On Wednesday, it was announced that there was a shortage of toilet paper since a bag of six rolls had gone missing (probably in the red bag). Alternatives were proposed (paper towel, thimbleberry leaves, the giant crossword) and rationing was suggested. It was also announced that there was a possible excess of wine, but the camp quickly found a solution to that problem and no further discussion was required.



On Thursday, Ric's Snow School headed up to Chipmunk Pass, demonstrating proper technique as we kicked in steps and zig-zagged up the snowy ramp towards the col. At the top, Ric announced his plans to drop into the valley below to swim in a distant lake. It looked far. It was a long way down. No one wanted to join. So off Ric went, running and sliding down the snow until he was a distant speck jumping along the valley. We set a timer and watched his progress. After about fifteen minutes, the speck had reached the lake

and Alison dropped her binoculars to announce "he's stripping off his clothes!". Within forty minutes, Ric had climbed back up to the col - an impressive feat of energy and madness. The snow school students returned to camp, demonstrating various techniques for downhill travel (plunge stepping, boot skiing, and "butt glissading").



On the last night, we took a tally; our average age was a youthful 57.5 with the youngest at 28 and the wisest at 85. It was a fantastic week with great company, great food, and an amazing location. A huge thanks to our leader Brian who kept us organized and informed and made safety a top priority. A huge thanks also to our cook Gayle for keeping us well fed and happy! And thanks also to everyone who volunteers time and energy to make the logistics of hiking camp so successful!

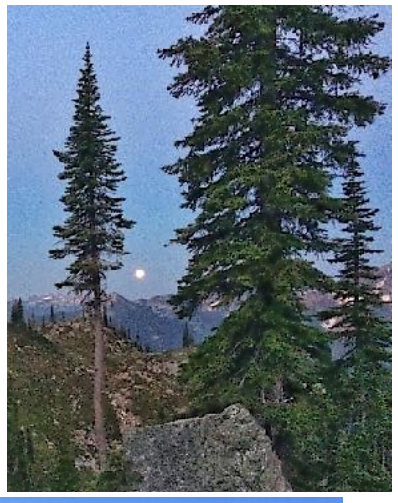
Participants:

- ★*Brian Cooles - Leader*
- ★*Gayle Buchner - Cook*
- ★*Nancy Selwood*
- ★*Tom Johnston*
- ★*Hamish Mutch*
- ★*Leon Arishenkoff*
- ★*Abby Wilson*
- ★*Andrew Woodward*
- ★*Alison Etter*
- ★*Peter Tchir*
- ★*Wayne Hohn*
- ★*Betty Hohn*
- ★*Sandra England*
- ★*Ric Baker*
- ★*Janet Henderson*
- ★*Jan Osborne*
- ★*Bert Port*
- ★*Sue Port*
- ★*Louise Hammerich*
- ★*Laurie Helyer*











Camp 3

An Otherworldly Hiking Camp

(disclaimer- this account is not intended to offend Catholics, Catholics read on at your discretion)

Little did I imagine that I was signing up for an alien abduction followed by a religious experience when I registered for camp 3 this year. I have been to a few previous hiking camps and little had prepared me for the shocks and revelations of this year's camp.

It all started quite ordinarily—meeting our camp mates in a cutblock high above Soards Creek, applying the requisite chicken wire and finding the least lumpy bit of road side for our tents in anticipation of flying into camp the following morning. The three wise men, Larry, Leo and Mike, organized the rest of us for an efficient trip in. I was assigned helicopter loading duties and so flew into camp in the last load. Nothing could have prepared me for what I witnessed on my arrival at our idyllic camp spot. Sure, there were the cook and supply tents and gear strewn about as I would have imagined them, but where were the previously-arrived camp mates I had just recently seen board the helicopter? What I saw were "beings" that superficially resembled my fellow campers- they wore the same clothes, same boots, were about the same height, shuffled about in the same manner but … these beings had no faces! Where just minutes ago there were eyes and noses and mouths, these beings had a featureless curvature. Upon closer inspection, this curvature appeared to be made up of a fine mesh. The beings also appeared to be chanting. At first it was unintelligible to me, "daboogsabad, daboogsabad, daboogsabad". What was I witnessing? Where had my camp mates gone? Had they been abducted by aliens and had the aliens thought they might like to dress up in their snazzy hiking attire? These "aliens" didn't seem to find my presence threatening and they made no threats to me, so I thought I ought to investigate further. I listened more closely to their chant, daboogsabad, da -bugs – a -bad, da-bugs-ar-bad, the bugs are bad! Aha! That was it! They were complaining about bugs! Imagine that--aliens being bothered by a few little insects! And then it struck me! Could these faceless creatures actually be my camp mates? Their voices seemed familiar and with some straining of my eyes I could make out that there were actually faces behind these masks. I called out to one of them I thought I recognized, "Mike, Mike is that you?" To which he replied, "Get a grip Tom, this is a bug hat." Well imagine my surprise and relief to realize my error. Still I can't say I enjoyed looking at my mates through a screen all week, Fran at least had the decency to bring along two so the monotony of "the look" was lessened. Unfortunately, there was little relief in the way of the chanting. So much for the alien abduction, the religious experience had a more lasting and profound effect.

Early in the week I had the pleasure of hiking with Larry, our intrepid and most unobtrusive leader. Little did I realize that I was in the presence of a "saint". His otherworldliness was revealed to me upon a mountaintop and provided me with one of those life changing epiphanies. Larry related how a spell of erectile dysfunction caused him to attain enlightenment- "a sense of saintliness" is how I believe he put it. This revelation gave me a great deal of comfort for I now feel that there may be hope for me. If Larry could become the patron saint of erectile dysfunction, what lay ahead for me or my camp mates? And then…it revealed itself or more correctly our saintliness was revealed.

P'nina - the patron saint of those who provide homes to lost animals, generously sharing her beautiful white mane with numerous bugs (it was uncanny how her hair reminded me of our dog Daisy's tail – mind you P'nina does a far better job self grooming, Daisy also likes to share her tail with other creatures and the occasional stick)

Peter Martin (PETER MARTIN!) the patron saint of cribbage, creating a shrine to the blessed game in the supply tent (Why do the tall people get to be King?!)

Leo – patron saint of route finders, guiding us to the tops of mountains, over cols and back to camp safe and sound.

Mike – patron saint of alternate route finders and bullshitters, guiding us unto interesting and challenging adventures, all the while regaling us with tales of derring-do

Cameron – patron saint of those of us with fanny packs, everything at the ready at hip height

Gail – patron saint of the tippy rock traversers, navigating the nasty talus slopes with aplomb

Jude – patron saint of word players and tempters of taste buds, getting us salivating over the prospect of dinner with her intriguing menu offerings

Peter McIver – patron saint of natty dressers, never failed to amaze me how he could appear to come to dinner in a freshly pressed outfit regardless if he had just hiked 8 hours in the same clothes

Peter Wood – patron saint of MEC rad pant wearers, the least fearsome "Wildman" imaginable, his beatific grin uplifting those around him, even if he didn't change his clothes once in the entire week

Rick – patron saint of lost soles, coming to the rescue with his MacGyver kit of tools (and shoe goo)

Fran – patron saint of the disguised, women of mystery hiding behind a wardrobe of bug hats (okay so it was only 2) and silvery pasties

Jocelyne – patron saint of those who lose hats down outhouses, yes even these unfortunates have a patron saint after her heroic efforts,

Audrey – patron saint of bee mimics, that was one mean stinger - that ice axe dangling below her abdomen

Sheila – patron saint of the fashion-conscious hiker, brightening our camp with her high viz outfits

Helen – patron saint of clean freaks, provided a shining example to us other unwashed souls, washing her clothes and bathing daily

Joan – patron saint of the understated, consistently suggesting she was going to take it easy and then undertaking an impressive tour

Maureen – patron saint of the harmonically gifted, bringing comfort to others with her lovely voice and ukulele chords

Bobbi – patron saint of the tardy and sleepy, not sure if she slept through the start of the initial camp meeting, perhaps she thought Larry had instructed us that we were to nap daily during the part of the meeting she missed – a truly regal Queen of the camp

Your humble scribe was honoured to be amongst such exalted company. Thanks again to Larry and his recalcitrant member for showing me the potential in us all.

An Adventurer's and Sometimes Peakbagger's Notes To The USA SW Deserts

Interested in winter desert hiking?

This 2018 first year retirement trip was 4 months long therein allowing for some 80 + outings in the deserts of the southwest USA. The pace of this trip allowed us to do a little “local" research, put the bucket list aside and “do as the Romans do”. These hikes were a lot of fun and greatly enhanced our understanding and appreciation of what we originally believed was “the” USA southwest desert. We have visited this area on 5 previous occasions for a month or two. Our Winter Desert Hiking article in the Kootenay Mountaineer, 2016 Winter Solstice edition, summarized the hikes on these shorter duration trips and we have not written much about those trips except for acknowledging that we enjoyed them once again.

First of all, what is a desert? Wikipedia notes that "a desert is a barren area of landscape where little precipitation occurs and consequently living conditions are hostile for plant and animal life. The lack of vegetation exposes the unprotected surface of the ground to the processes of denudation.” So, why “hike” in a barren hostile landscape?

Hiking in the desert is very different than hiking through other terrains. If you haven’t spent time in the desert, you might think, as the definition above suggests, that the desert is a barren wasteland unworthy of attention. The reality is just the opposite and one soon realizes that the desert is an impressive place of beauty and life. First and foremost is that many people think deserts are hot. That is not true, it can be freezing and snow can fall regularly in the winter.

There are in fact 4 deserts in the SW USA: the Great Basin, the Mojave, the Chihuahuan and the Sonoran. Each differ in how they have been affected by "particular" weather influencing how they have been carved by water, wind and ice erosion. The results are strikingly beautiful colourful landforms which include canyons, natural bridges, arches, spires, pinnacles, slot canyons, hoodoos, badlands and sand dunes. The desert is also not all that barren. Though relatively sparse, there is a complex and highly adapted life for one to discover.

Great Basin Desert

The Great Basin desert is a cold desert that gets lots of snow. The summers are warm, only occasionally getting over 100° F. It rains a little throughout the whole year in the Great Basin desert. Because winters are so cold, most plants are dormant (not growing) and cannot use the winter rainfall.The Grand Canyon is in the Great Basin desert. The Great Basin desert has fewer types of plants and animals than the other three North American deserts. The most common type of plants are shrubs such as sagebrush and saltbush. Animal species that are found here include the golden eagle, coyote, spadefoot toad, pronghorn antelope and the Great Basin rattlesnake.

Mojave Desert

The Mojave desert is the driest of the North American deserts. The summers are very hot and the winters are cold (it sometimes snows). Nearly all the rainfall comes in the winter. Because the winters are cold, most plants are inactive. Inactive plants do not use water. So even though there is water, plants are not able to use it. Despite the harsh climate, many species of plants and animals live there. About one-fourth of the plants are endemic to the Mojave desert. The Joshua tree (not really a tree but a yucca) is one of these plants. There are also many animals that live in this desert like the Mojave desert tortoise, tarantula, Gila monster, scorpions, bighorn sheep, hummingbirds, and kangaroo rats.

Chihuahuan Desert

The Chihuahuan desert is the largest desert in North America. It is covered with shrubs and grasses like the Great Basin desert. There are also many types of cacti, succulents, wildflowers, and short trees. The Chihuahuan desert is generally found above 3,500 feet in elevation. Because it is a high desert it does get frost. It also receives more rainfall than the other three North American deserts. Agave, yuccas and creosote are the most common plants. Other plants include prickly pear and mesquite. Some animal residents include the Swainson’s hawk, black-chinned hummingbird, javelina, ringtail cat and the western diamondback rattlesnake.

Sonoran Desert

The Sonoran desert supports the most types of plants and animals of the four North American deserts. Over 2,500 different flowering plants can be found there. Winters are mild (rarely snows) and the summers are hot. The Sonoran desert gets both winter and summer rains. Because the winters are mild, most plants do not go dormant. (when it rains in the winter, plants are able to use the moisture.) However, a number of plants do go dormant in the hottest part of the summer. Summer rains tend to be brief but very, very heavy. Most of the summer rain is lost to runoff because it cannot soak into the ground. The Sonoran desert supports many types of trees, grasses, cacti, shrubs and wildflowers. The saguaro cactus only grows in the Sonoran desert. The Gila monster, roadrunner, horned lizard, javelina, desert mule deer, giant vinegaroon and kangaroo rat are but a few of the animals that live in the desert.

A Brief Note on RV-ing or "tenting" (traveling light)?

This winter trip was from early December to early April. Temperatures ranged from 29C to -10C. We had several days of rain on 3 different occasions as well as a few skiffs of snow. On previous occasions we traveled by pickup truck and slept in its small tent size truck canopy and/or stayed in hotels for a few days or a week. On this trip we used a comfortable, but bulky 5000 lb, 25' travel trailer as a home base. We used a 150 Ford pickup to tow it with. Over the time of this trip we realized that there are several significant advantages and disadvantages to either type of accommodation. Unfortunately it seems one size does not fit all. But parking the comfortable RV travel trailer and using our 4X4 truck to go hiking gave us the maneuverability we required for this particular adventure.

RV-ing - advantages and disadvantages.

You are very comfortable in an RV. Of course, the bigger, the better! Conveniences that is. No wonder we never saw some of our campground neighbours as they were too comfortable to venture outside.

The RV resorts and many campgrounds have electricity which allows for amenities such as electric heat, fridge, microwave, AC, toaster, popcorn maker, bread machine, hot plate, wifi and sewer (nice showers). We often found that if you stay a week or a month, the savings can be substantial. There may even be a pool or hot tub and sometimes varied resort activities. Reservations can be made.

If travelling in the short daylight winter, the cozy accommodation of the RV goes a long way in comfort. In the canopy or tent it is often very early to bed for several hours of flashlight reading!

With the self-contained RV it is easy to make use of Highway Rest Stops, Trucker Stops and various store parking lots for the night while driving cross country to your destination. Another great advantage of the self contained RV is that you can boondock on Bureau of Land Management land (BLM which is much like our Canadian Crown Land) that usually dosen't have water or washrooms. There are many BLM campgrounds that can be found except in Texas where everything is private!.

A solar panel or a noisy generator to recharge your batteries is great when you are staying "off grid". And, depending on the size of your water and sewer tanks you can stay 5 or more days without the need to replenish water or dump your sewer. Small RVs and truck campers do not have significant "storage" for water and sewer to stay self-contained for very long. Staying off grid and being self-contained was often very convenient and appeared to be a very common practice. It was obvious that the huge RVs really have an advantage of over a week when it comes to this. Most RV parks and some gas stations will let you fill up with water and dump sewer in their special facilities for $5-10.

The National Parks and National Monuments are becoming increasingly helpful in finding "closeby" BLM places if need be. One suspects that the BLM is increasingly "encouraging" these sites adjacent to their National Parks and National Monuments thereby eliminating the need for expanding the National Parks and National Monuments camping facilities.

Security is very good with an RV. If you are towing a trailer or have a Motorhome and are towing a vehicle you gain a big advantage in "maneuverability" once the RV unit is parked.

Even though you are often warm and sunny in the southwest USA, you do, on occasion, have to work your way around "freezing" weather which may harm the RV's water and sewer systems. This concern kept

us out of several areas though we did return on the way back home when the weather improved. It is possible however to “winterize” for stays in these places (see our write up “ inter Sports Via RV” in the Kootenay Mountaineer 2016 Winter Solstice edition). It should be noted that the more expensive RVs do not have this issue.

The gas these RVs use can be up to 40% more than traveling more modestly. And they can on occasion require “some maneuvering” though after 4 months on the road we were pretty “adept” at packing our home around.

Canopy or tent and occasional hotel/ apartments-advantages and disadvantages

Traveling light and fast is great for shorter trips. You can often get into a lot of places and onto bumpy dirt roads, including trailhead stays. Many places are unsuitable for bigger RVs.

The travel with a small unit is easier and there are often hotels about if you need “refreshing”. The big RV resorts have “the” amenities (washrooms and showers) and they are usually happy to have you. The small units of course often have no refrigerator/freezer, shower or toilet. You are often at the mercy of the amenities that exist or often don’t exist which can be unnerving in unfamiliar territory.

You are outside a lot. This can be very pleasant at most times in the winter desert where it is not below freezing very often.

But, the long winter nights make things a bit inconvenient and if it is cold you may be in your sleeping bag at 6pm reading with a flashlight. One month okay. Four months, no.

The internet is however making week-long-stays in hotels or apartments more convenient to find. Probably a demographics evolution. There seem to be more of these long stays over the years and they are sometimes at a very good price. Finding them in the more rural areas where you want to hike is however another matter.

Which do we prefer?

It may mostly depend on the length of the trip as each mode of accommodation has advantages and disadvantages. It all depends on what you want to do and you can’t do it all. On our next lengthy trip we would prefer a 4x4 vehicle capable of towing a 17ish foot travel trailer. A motorhome would not accomplish several of the roads we drove through. Towing a 4x4 or a car behind a motorhome? Maybe.

The size of RV does matter but as long as the bed is comfortable, there is a shower, toilet, fridge and small freezer, adequate solar battery power, and adequate “boon docking” water/sewer storage capacity for 4-5 days, we will be happy! You don’t need bikes as there is lots of hiking. We did however miss the advantages of a second mode of transportation for several “traverses” we would have liked to have done.

Good luck on whatever you choose.

Now the hiking:

Notes: Unless otherwise stated, trip mileage gives roundtrip distances. Summit elevations, elevation gains and distances are approximate due to discrepancies amongst research materials.

Abbreviations:

NP = National Park
SP = State Park
BLM = Bureau of Land Management
NRA = National Recreation Area
el. gn. = Elevation Gain
mi = mile(s)

St George, Utah, Zion NP and Snow Canyon SP

Angels Landing, Zion NP, 4.8 mi, 1488’ el. gn.

Angel’s Landing is the “precarious” monolithic fin amidst Zion’s striking and colourful canyon walls. The hike begins at the Grotto Trailhead climbing gradually from the river. The trail steepens as it becomes a “stone" sidewalk called the Walter's Wiggles. The “Wiggles" is a series of 21 cliffhanging switchbacks ingenuously carved into the canyon wall in 1926. After the second series of “Wiggles” (approx 2mi) there is the junction branching to the West Rim. At this junction turn right and begin following the obvious rock spine route to the summit. The path becomes very exposed, however chains are provided to grip your way to the “comfortable" top. Most often there are at least a hundred people attempting this touristy “Pilgrim” calling. This is the park's most popular “hike” and both parking and the trail can be very crowded. A very convenient shuttle operates for most of the season alleviating the parking problem. The NP Campground

is not too far away as are several private full service campgrounds/RV Parks further west.

West Rim Trail to Zion Overlook and Great West Canyon Overlook, 7285', Zion NP, approx.14 mi, 3000' el. gn.

The West Rim Trail, is a scenic treat and another of Zion's engineering marvels of the 1930s. It is a highlight of Zion NP missed by most visitors to the park due to its remoteness, length and elevation gain. Many people are familiar with Walters Wiggles, but that is only half the story as this trail is a continuation of them. The West Rim Trail of Zion is most often done as an overnight, approximately 16 mi. traverse, requiring a car shuttle beginning at the park's western boundaries (either Lava Point, Hop Valley or Lee Pass).

However, an out and back hike from the Grotto to the high point (7285') overlooking the Great West Canyon is pretty hard to beat. The Telephone Canyon Trail (paralleling the last 2 miles to the highpoint) can be incorporated to add an upper end loop but we were highly advised by several locals that "there and back" on the main trail is the route to take both ways for the scenic delight.

The trip to the West Rim took us 3 attempts in 10 years before we finally made it in its entirety. The near record, late snow falls of 2017 created a December "window" where previously very hazardous ice and deep snow stopped us on this predominantly slick rock path.



Northgate Peaks Trail, Zion NP, approx. 4mi. 500' el. gn.

The relatively flat and short Wildcat/Northgate Peaks Trail in the Kolob Terrace section of Zion NP is definitely worth the drive. First of all, the 16 mi. Kolob Terrace Road from Virgin to the trailhead is an extremely scenic route with a variety of colorful contorted landforms and landscapes which only amplify the higher one gets to the trailhead. Yes, the road eliminates much of this hike's elevation gain to the top of the plateau and the Wildcat Trail parking lot. The Wildcat Trail begins in grassy plains dotted with ponderosa pine characteristic of this region's upper elevations. After 1mi. there is a junction with the Hop Valley Trail. Continue left. Another 100 yards (at a signpost) and the Northgate Peaks trail veers to the right, away from the Wildcat. Head south on this trail for another mile and arrive on a rocky black basalt pile of ruble overlooking the east and west Northgate Peaks.

For scrambling up the East Northgate Peak one will find a feint path on the left of the basalt pile that heads down to the trees below.The ascent is on various cairned tracks from the north side of the peak. It is not long nor difficult to ascend. One can return via another cairned track on the south west side. You can't get lost here.

The views from the summit are grand in all directions. The Guardian Angel peak is straight ahead. Great West Canyon is particularly highlighted from the summit. The nearby West Northgate Peak can be scrambled on slickrock via its NW side.

The Subway, Zion NP, approx. 9 mi, 1200' el. gn.

The Subway is a 100 yd long " tunnel" formation shaped like a" submarine sandwich". It was created by its particularly unique "water gouging" action upon the sandstone. The Subway has a slit along the entirety of its top length and the canyon walls extend upwards another approx. 700'. The Subway and its Left Fork Creek approach require a NP US$15 permit to hike. The trail is limited to 40 people per day. We never saw anyone on the day we did the route! Hiking to the Subway requires a pleasant descent into the striking and colourful canyon of Left Fork Creek. The trail is poor considering its high use, and the route involves minor route finding which unfortunately has created numerous erosive detours. Bolder hopping, lots of sand

in your shoes, minor branch whacking and several creek crossings (with usually little flow) add to the experience. The last part (300 yds) of the approach to the Subway is very moss slippery and may be very icy as well. One can -we didn't- continue beyond the Subway, but this route apparently involves 1) increasingly numerous obstacles which a rope would help to overcome, and 2) a long return. Most locals- and others with 2 vehicles- do the traverse of the route starting from the Northgate Peaks Trail.

Observation Point, Zion NP 6508', 18 mi. via East Rim Trail. 2147' el. gn.

This great trail -our park favourite- starts at the Weeping Rock. It is known for its dizzying drop offs, colourful rock sculpted scenery and Civilian Conservation Corp construction. The trail, cut out of the hillside for a considerable part of its length, zigzags its way up the steep main Zion Canyon cliffside into Echo Canyon (a deep gnawed sandstone gorge) and then onto another long section of trail cutout of a slick-rock mountainside. The last section is high on the the upper plateau's rim edge to the viewpoint. From the mesa "top" Observation Point, the canyon walls drop spectacularly to far below, giving way to great views of the main canyon's entirety and its spectacular display of reddish stone. A worthy note is that the early Mormons erected a cable system on adjacent Cable Mtn to lower logs off the forested mesa to the canyon bottom.This saved them 2 weeks of hauling that timber around and off the mesa.



Kolob Arch Trail, Zion NP (Trip of 2011) 19km 1030' el. gn.

Located in the northwest corner of Zion NP off the I-10 freeway. The massive Kolob Arch measures 287.4 '. The Kolob Arch is about three feet shorter than the world's largest arch which is Landscape Arch in Arches NP. The elegant Landscape Arch unfortunately is precariously near the end of its lifecycle and could collapse at any time. The Kolob Arch Trail begins with a 200m descent into the Timber Cr/La Verkin Creek Valley. The vegetation and red mountain scenery along this trail is most impressive considering it is valley bottom. The arch at trail's end, is tucked high above in a box canyon. Many start out very early to capture the early morning sun striking the arch which apparently significantly enhances it. The Kolob Arch Trail junctions to continue to the main Zion Canyon via the West Rim Trail.

Snow Canyon Park Overlook, 6 mi. 460' el. gn. Snow Canyon SP, N of St George, Utah.

The enchanting Snow Canyon State Park is at the intersection of the Mojave Desert, Great Basin Desert and the Colorado Plateau which give this area a unique vegetation and climate. The park is highlighted by striking Navajo red and white sandstone formations as well as petrified slick rock, lava fields, tubes and cones. The "unnamed peak" overlook forms the park's northern boundary. The trailhead is west of the park's White Rocks Amphitheatre. Begin the trek by using the White Rocks/Lava Overlook Trail to get as far west along the northern bottom slope of the mountain as you can, then bushwhack in a SW direction to the summit. Strangely, though visible from most of the park's canyon, the peak itself is not visible until you have attained the sub-summit to its east. The journey, though a steep hillside scramble, is relatively straightforward…and worth it. You won't get lost! The views south over and above the entire Snow Canyon are dramatic! Very few people get to this vantage point.





Red Mountain Trail, (North and south trailheads) Red Mountain Wilderness Area, St George Utah. Approx 10mi. 1750' el. gn.

Another Red Mountain Trail. They are all red! Aren't they? This trail route was not as easy as we expected from reading various internet descriptions when starting from the scenic south end's poorly marked trailhead. As beautiful as this approach is, we expect the community will do work on the trail as erosion from numerous "detours" up the " hillside" will unfortunately spoil the cliff's natural attractive sides which "reflect" over the community.

The Red Mountain Trail route is normally done as a north to south traverse beginning at the well marked northern trailhead (.4 mi past the Utah Highway #18 mile marker). This is just north of Snow Canyon State Park. We hiked from both trailheads and greatly preferred the "not easy" southern approach beginning at the north end of 200E in Irvins, Utah. The approaches are however very, very different in terrain, vegetation and their respective "overlook" views. We recommend doing them both if you do not have a shuttle.

We parked in the provided parking lot at the N end of 200E Irvins and began looking for the trailhead. Suspecting it was a couple hundred yards west -rather than east- we looked and saw a very faint trace of footprints ascending what appeared to be a gargantuan gravel pile culminating in another craggy petrified gravel pile high above us. Very, very steep loose gravel. Essentially a 1200' pile of loose red sandstone scree to manipulate all the way up. We were assured this was "it" as 2 local joggers confirmed the beginning with a giggle, and told us to try to be back before dark. Surprisingly, the "feint" path turned out to be easy to follow to the plateau above, especially with a few strategically placed cairns and 2 good cairn "hunters" looking for them. Once on top however there was no trail, not even a cairned route. Blowing sands had eliminated all traces of human passage. But critter passage, well, that was surprisingly fantastic with numerous and various types of paw prints everywhere!!! And then, there was the wonderful colourful scrub fragile desert vegetation of the plateau. This landscape was striking under clear blue skies. Creosote bush, narrow leaf yucca, prickly pear cactus, sand sage, black brush, scrub oak, desert willow and pine (nut) trees. Needless to say, what a wonderful place to be lost.

What to do if similar trail finding happens to you on the Red Mountain: Plan A-The Red Mtn traverse is essentially a north/south trek. Once at a highpoint, or mesa top, it becomes relatively clear which way to go, and with luck, you will come upon the trail, eventually. We only confirmed that there really was a trail somewhere up there the next day when we did the trail from the north. Any chance of finding the Overlook Trail from the south appeared useless since we couldn't find any trail to begin with. GPSers probably don't have this problem!

Hence, Plan B - With an orienting winter sun relatively high above the southern horizon, and a compass, we decided to walk roughly northeast through the beautiful terrain to where we would overlook Snow Canyon State Park and then, Plan C, head due west to hopefully pick up some vestige of trail.

The delightful view from the overlook we found was high above the community's Tuachan Centre outdoor amphitheater and Padre Canyon. The views north into Snow Canyon were great. Plan C petered out as we found no north/south trail but we were easily able to maneuver our way back to where the "trail" we came up on descended.

Padre Canyon Loop, Snow Canyon SP, approx. 8mi. 600' el. gn.

Padre Canyon was a wonderful bonus that we had not discovered on our 3 previous stays in Snow Canyon State Park. From the park's campground we walked the paved path to the Park's south entrance booth. The State Park gives you a brochure outlining its trails. Though closely paralleling the park road, the paved path gives some great sights that you don't have time to fully appreciate while driving through the park. A short distance from the booth, and to the right, is the trailhead parking.

From here the well marked/trodden trail heads southwest skirting part of the Red Mtn massif on its southeast side and then turns northerly passing alongside the Tuachan Centre on its east. The trail climbs from the Tuachan Centre in a northerly direction, and up Padre Canyon through pleasant vegetation to the pass. From the pass it is a striking

view north into, and over the canyon. The trail works its way down through and into the main canyon.

Eventually the trail meets with the park's Red Sands Trail. Turn right onto it. The Red Sands Trail, another treat, heads SW through a sandy wash and slickrock slopes, back to the campground.

Red Reef Loop Trail/Route, Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. approx 10 mi. 550' el. gn. Near Leeds a few miles north of St George.

The trailhead is in the SW corner of the campground. This is a "route finding trek" that continues past the popular Red Reef Trail. We initially hiked up the Red Reef Trail into the big slot canyon but cold deep water eventually stopped us. We then returned to the trailhead and decided to make another "rest day" since there was a storm warning out.

We will have to return and get a handle on this route. The general loop is shown on the Red Cliffs Reserve Map. There is a great campground at the trailhead.

West Canyon Road 16 mi. 600' el. gn. Snow Canyon SP (a 9mi. waterline service rd)

A short scenic relatively flat bike ride -or walk- along a water line north through Snow Canyon and up into a box canyon at the north end of the park (which is located below the Red Mountain Trail's northern observation point).

To Do But Didn't :

1) East Rim Trail traverse. Either using shuttle for a traverse or from the east trailhead through Stave Spring and out at the Weeping Wall.
2) West Rim traverse using shuttle from from Lava Pt to The Grotto.
3) Hike the Chinle Trail from the Anasazi Way Trailhead. Or do a loop to Coalpit Wash with shuttle.
4) Drive the Smithsonian Butte/Caanan Mt Scenic Backway from Coalpits Wash and Grafton south. (Possible to do a hike in there too).
5)Yellow Knolls Trail and return via the Black Gulch Trail (approx 10mi.) This trail however does have a venomous critter warning in the warmer months.
6) Hike to Gardner Peak (8500' 6mi.)
7) Signal Peak in the Pine Mountains just north of St George.
8) There are numerous mountain biking trails, bike paths and road riding loops to be had in the St George/Hurricane area.

Las Vegas - NV

Fortification Hill Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 3719'. 4 mi. 1400' el. gn.

A great hike amongst colourful basaltic lava formations and desert scrub on the east side of Lake Mead. Great views in all directions. A beautiful garden amidst volcanic rock on the mesa top! This trail easily became one of our favourites in the area. There is a short, well trodden, non exposed scramble of approximately 100yds. Otherwise this is a very good path trail. The trailhead is east on Hwy 93 past Hoover Dam. Take exit #2 onto Kingman Wash Road. It is a good car road amidst some spectacularly coloured volcanic landscape. Drive about 6 miles to the BLM washroom (another few hundred yards and you will be at the lake- a good lakeshore campsite). At the washroom, the initially discrete Fortification Hill Road goes south-east up the wash. Follow it, usually car doable, to the trailhead parking which is marked by a trailhead sign. Another 200 yds and the road is blocked.



Brownstone Canyon Loop, Gateway Canyon Loop, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area 6 mi. loop, 600'+ el. gn.

The figure 8 combination of these two trails immerses you in a spectacularly rock sculptured park. This is a well trodden route. The Brownstone Canyon descent has some minor boulder "maneuvering" down its fairly open "slot" canyon. On the way out of Gateway

Canyon you pass through the Kraft Boulders "playground" where "bouldering" is practised by the Las Vegans.

Fletcher Mountain, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, 11590'. 14 mi, 3798' el. gn.

Great mountain landscapes, views in all directions including Las Vegas, aspen, pine and bristlecone pine forests. The 3000 year old bristlecone called Raintree is located at the junction for the last 1 mi spur to the peak. There are 3 access routes for this peak: 1) 7 mi via Trail Canyon and Loop Trail from the Mount Charleston Village trailhead, 2) 7mi via Hwy 58 and Mummy Spring Trail, 3186' el. gn. 3) Fletcher Canyon Trail. We used the well trodden, pine forested, steep, significant elevation gaining Trail Canyon as a Reece to Mummy Mtn and Mt Charleston.

Bonanza Peak, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, 10397'. 8 mi. 2900' el. gn.

Steep but enjoyable hike on a great switchback trail. The last section of the trail is through a bristlecone forest. Good views occasionally through the bristlecones and great views from the summit. The remote Spring Mountains are however a long 40mi NW of Las Vegas on Hwy 95. Turn south on Cold Creek access road. This turnoff is located by 2 prisons so it's hard to miss. Drive 14 mi up the paved road to Cold Creek. Continue through village another mile to very well marked trailhead parking.

Top of The Rainbow Escarpment:

Red Rocks Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. (West of Las Vegas) 6mi. 1980' el. gain. Long reaching views are great on this ridge walk high above above the Red Rocks.

Black Mtn., 5092' 5mi. 2100' el. gn.

A very special black lava desert landscape with views north to Las Vegas for the entire hike. The summit has long views in all directions. We did this hike twice during our last stay due to its convenience and beauty.

Turtlehead Peak, 6324' Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. (West of Las Vegas) 5mi. 2000' el. gn.

An iconic hike to a fun peak in and overlooking the Red Rock Canyon.



Frenchman Mtn., 4052' Lake Mead National Recreation Area. 4.4mi. 2000' el. gn.

A short steep double-peak-grunt (on an undriveable rocky road) in a faulting eroded "tilting" geological rockscape. Adjacent to Las Vegas with great views along the way.

Hamblin Mtn. 3010' Lake Mead National Recreation Area. 7mi. 1400' el. gn

Another geological desert landscape theatre. The summit overlooks Lake Mead as well as other views in all directions. Few if anyone on this hike.



Telescope Peak, (2012) Death Valley NP. 12mi. 3200' el. gn.

A classic ridge-walk amongst sparse ancient bristlecones to a lofty 11049' summit directly above North America's lowest point at Badwater Basin. This trip is easily worth the detour when combined with other Death Valley attractions. A nice park campsite.

To Do But Didn't :

1) Charleston Pk (11912') Loop, 20mi. 5000' el. gn.
2). Mummy Mt. (11528') 10 mi return. 3820' el. gn. Spring Mtns National Rec Area. This and Charleston Peak are 35 mi NW of Las Vegas via HWY 95. Same trail for both. Usually snow/ice on the trail in winter.
3) Bridge Mtn. (7003') Red Rock Canyon NCA. Difficult vehicle access on a very rough dirt/rock road used by the "Jeep Ride" tour operators.

Mojave Desert National Preserve (south of Vegas)

Teutonia Peak 5755'. 4 mi. 700' el.gn.

A hike to a scenic rocky peak on the edge of the massive geologically significant granite Cima Dome uplift. This nearly perfect 1500' high symmetrical dome covers some 70 sq miles.

This trail also puts you amidst the densest concentration of Joshua Trees in the world! Trailhead is 5 miles south of I-5 on Kelso Cima Rd. Approved camping is possible a few hundred feet away on the north side of the road. Visit the Historic Kelso Train Station Park Headquarters in Kelso nearby.

Rings Trail Loop 1mi. 150' el. gn.

A high concentration of spectacular "Swiss cheese" landforms culminating in the short but impressive Banshee Canyon chain/ring "ladder" ascent. Located at the Hole in the Wall Information Centre which also has a great campground. 20 mi north of I-40 on the Essex and Black Canyon Rds.

Barber Peak Loop 6mi loop. +/- 600' el. gn.

A spectacular colourful landscape decorated with impressive opalite and volcanic ash landforms, barrel and cholla cacti and massive Mojave yucca. Begin with the Rings Trail up to the Banshee Canyon entrance, then turn left (NW) on the Barber Peak Trail which is part of the park's Mid Hills to Hole in the Wall Trail.

The Hole in The Wall Trail was this area's centrepiece until the 2005 Hackberry Fire wiped out much of the vegetation. This vegetation unfortunately won't grow back in its magnificent splendor for some 100 or so years. Several campsites are located at the Mid Hills to Hole In The Wall northern trailhead.









Above 3 pictures show some of the flora of the Mojave desert (cacti, magnificent old yucca trees and a lone productive juniper tree)

To Do But Didn't:

1) Carruthers Canyon. A desert deluge made driving the dirt road (with washes) to the trailhead not advisable.
2) Mitchel Caverns Natural Preserve nearby on the Essex Black Canyon Rd have also been reopened after several years of its 2011 closure due to non existent electrical requirements for a safe and well maintained attraction.
3) Fountain Mountain (6996' 5mi. 2700 el gn). Cairned scramble at Mitchell Caverns.

Laughlin, Lake Havasu, Kingman - AZ

Spirit Mountain 5639' Spirit Mountain Wilderness, Lake Mead NRA 6 mi, 2400' el. gn.

Considered a "sacred mountain" by the natives please respect the place. There is no trail here but a "cairned", steep, regularly frequented scramble on a fairly worn path. This peak is the highest in the area and offers great views in all directions including parts of the Colorado River.

Pricking oneself with a sharp cactus is more of a hazard on this route than the scramble itself. The marked but not named trailhead/route heads north from the parking area to the first saddle. The turnoff (for Christmas Tree Pass Rd) is 6 mi. west of Laughlin on Hwy 163.

Well marked signage indicates the Christmas Tree Road. A well graded car suitable dirt road to a parking area on the right side of the road, 5.5 miles up the road. If coming from Searchlight on Hwy 95 the turnoff onto Christmas Tree Pass Rd is 14 mi. from Searchlight. Drive 7.5 mi. up and over the pass. The shorter and popular Grapevine Canyon Trail on the eastern approach road nearby is also worth visiting.This road is a high 4x4 and ATV Snowbird use area.



Route up to Spirit Mountain



Summit with view on Lake Havasu

Cupcake Mountain 2878’ 4.6mi. 900’ el. gn.

A well thought out but steep BLM trail utilizing scenic ridge lines all the way to the vantage view summit. The last 1/4 mi is an easy non exposed scramble up a notch. Though an iconic Lake Havasu landmark, few people drive the long distance on a scenic rough power line service road to the trailhead to appreciate it. Trailhead is located across Parker Dam on the Metropolitan Water District Rd. This compound is the beginning of the elaborate pumping system for water to California.

From the dam it is 6mi up the paved road then another 8mi on an electrical power line service road. Though maintained, the narrow very winding hillside road requires high clearance and good tires as it is angular gravel. Patton tested his tanks here for the Sahara Desert campaign! Park at electrical tower 50-G-1 where the marked trailhead exists.

Lizard Peak 1370', 5 mi+ 1125' el. gn. Lake Havasu

Numerous trails crisscross this park but the highlight is Lizard Pk. Other names for this vantage point are Crack in the Man Trail and Picnic Table Mtn Trail. The Lizard Peak view of the striking “blue" Lake Havasu is great, and the slot canyon en route to the lakeshore at Balanced Rock provides a bonus.

Havasu is the native term for the characteristic “blue” of the water here. We approached the peak from the myriad of trails leading to its northernmost shoulder and then hiked its ridgeline S to the picnic table. It's a relatively short trip to the mountain top so you have to time lunch at the top. From the summit we worked our way down to the lake -staying out of the washes!

From the lake we followed the wash back east through the slot canyon to the parking lot. Located in Sara Park just on the southern edge of Lake Havasu. Hwy 95 mile post 177 (McCullogh Rd). Excellent trailhead facilities. A myriad of trails but you can’t get lost as everything is visibly close. Great and extremely popular scenic boon docking north and south of Lake Havasu just off the highway. Even a boon docking Host resident at times!

Hualapai Mtn 8417’ Hualapai Mountain County Park, Kingman AZ. 5.5 mi. loop 1500’+ el. gn.

A 1930s loop trail climbing through granite rock formations amongst varied forest vegetation such as chaparral, pinyon pine/oak and mixed conifer to fir/ aspen. Great views from the summit. Exit into Kingman. Follow the well placed road signs for 10 mi up to Hualapai Mountain Park. Fee entrance & there is camping at the trailhead. The Ranger will supply you with an itemized point to point map highlighting various things along the route. Trailhead is past the campsites.

Wickenburg - AZ

Vulture Peak 3663’ BLM land. 5 mi, 1300’ el. gn.

Great views amidst a wonderful Saguaro cactus landscape. A curious looking, isolated volcanic peak with a short unexposed scramble from the saddle to the north summit. Access to trailhead is via the paved Vulture Mine Road southwest of Wickenburg. Well marked trailhead. Washroom and dispersed BLM camping/boondocking at the trailhead.



Harquahala Peak Pack Trail , BLM land. 5681' 11 mi. + 3728’ el. gn.

A well maintained 1900s pack trail takes you through mesquite and Saguaro vegetation, past old mine diggings and up to the summit of Harquahala Mtn., the highest summit in SW Arizona. At the top, besides some communications towers, are the remains of the 1920’s Smithsonian Institution Observatory built to study the effects of the sun. The trail serviced this observatory. Views are great in all directions. Be forwarned that the peak is commonly accessed by Snowbirding off roaders who access the summit by the long southern service road. The rather remote pack trail is from the north.

Access is near Solome on Hwy 60 between mileposts 70 and 71. Go through gate. There is a BLM washroom

at the trailhead which is located about a mile from the Hwy. Dirt road, but car accessible. Trailhead campable.

To Do But Didn't:

1. Signal Peak, 4877', Kofa Mtns, sheer cliffs and dramatic spires. 4mi, 2050' el.gn. Cairned route. 15 mi. S of Quartzite on Hwy #95. Palm Canyon exit. 10mi of dirt road. Driving the last 2 mi are apparently "questionable" 4x4. This trek is way out and when 4x4 is mentioned, "down south" terminology can mean extreme!

Phoenix - AZ

Quartz Peak 4056', Sierra Estrella Mountains Wilderness, 7mi, 2500' el.gn.

A summit capped with an outcrop of white quartz, with great views and a dramatic landscape. Easy cairn-route-following skills for the last few hundred yards. SW of Phoenix off I-10 exit 126. Estrella Parkway (where many professional baseball teams do their winter training), Riggs Rd (through farmland) and then a long 10mi of unpaved road.There is a BLM washroom and camping at the trailhead.Though close to and above Phoenix, this trail is "way out there".

Picketpost Mountain 4378' Tonto National Forest, 4mi, 2060' el.gn.

Near Superior, AZ, east of Apache Junction. A heavy use hike with a relatively easy scramble. The trail -the first part being a part of the Arizona Trail- begins at the BLM parking lot in typical Sonoran Desert vegetation highlighted by the beautiful saguaro cactus. The "canyon" which you will be ascending is easily visible on the west side of the mountain. A few hundred yards along the trail will bring you to a signpost on the left (east) marked "summit".

This trail is well trodden until you enter the water runout canyon after which there are numerous trodden tracks confusing the 200 yards of this section of the route. Follow the cairns (sometimes 2 or 3 conflicting ones) up the narrow canyon, along ledges, and a wash. Essentially go up the creek course until you emerge onto a well trodden trail above. The final section improves with every step onto the large mesa top. Runoffs down the trail make it difficult to establish a set path.

The trailhead is located on Hwy 60 between Apache Junction and Superior at milepost 221. Turn right on FR 231. The 2 mile road to the large trailhead parking area is well marked. BLM dispersed camping is near the trailhead and frequented by camping horsemen.



On the way down from Picketpost with a lost B.C. Victorian

Peralta Trail to Fremont Saddle (3754'), Superstition Mountains, 4.4mi 1260' el.gn.

Rising east of Apache Junction in a great jumble of volcanic rock, the Superstitions have earned what geologists say is an erroneous reputation as an area rich in gold. At the center of this mistaken identity is the legend of the Lost Dutchman's Mine. The Peralta Trail with its curious rock formations and vegetation evokes that legend in no uncertain terms. The Superstition Mountains chain and its overwhelming Sonoran vegetation highlight this area east of Phoenix with a lot of trails and the relatively easily accessible and short Peralta Trail is the teaser. The Superstitions were named this because of numerous tales associated with the Lost Dutchman Goldmine. The trail gradually climbs to Fremont Saddle where one gets a close up view of the Weaver's Needle. Weaver's Needle is a solidified volcanic plug. Millions of years of erosion

and the scouring action of monstrous flash floods have given the Superstitions their somewhat tortured and rugged rock landscape. This is the most popular hike around besides the Camelback in Mesa. Avoid it on a weekend or get there early weekend.

Peralta Trail Loop, (Peralta Trail, Dutchman Trail to the Terrapin Trail, and Bluff Spring Trail back to Peralta trailhead) 12.4 + mi, 3766' highpoint. 2800’ el. gn.

The Peralta trail to the pass is one of the more heavily used trails in the state. After the pass however the hikers are very few and far between. This grand scenic loop hike around Weavers Needle from Peralta trailhead immerses you amongst the "Superstions".

The loop hike begins westward on the Peralta Trailhead to the pass overlooking Weavers Needle. After the pass and the crowds it is then down to the Dutchman Trail (6.2mi), Use the Dutchman Trail to traverse north to the Terrapin Trail (1.1mi), Terrapin Trail east through Needle Canyon to the Bluff Springs Trail (2.9mi). Then using the Bluff Springs Trail southeast back to the parking lot (2mi).



Weavers Needle

Flatiron Peak, 5057’ Siphon Draw Trail, Lost Dutchman State Park. 6.5mi. 2781’ el. gn.

A fun scramble in a draw of granite boulders, highlighted by the geologically formed Siphon Draw. Very steep and often -weekends particularly- full of “traffic” but FUN. Once at the Flatiron, make sure you leave the crowds behind and follow the small cairns to the actual awe inspiring summit. Many use this trail to traverse the Superstitions in a day long ridge walk to Superstition Peak and the Carney Springs Trailhead some 12 miles away.

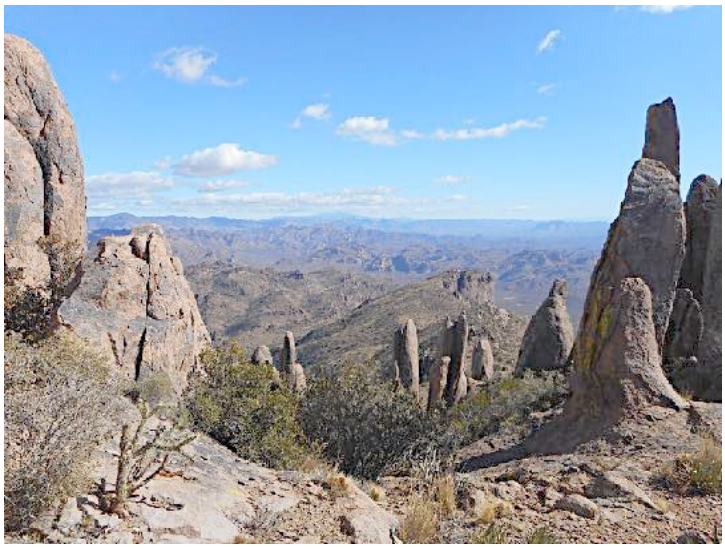


Superstition Peak, 6266’ 9mi. 2785’ el.gn.

Grand hike from the Carney Springs Trailhead (also accessible from the Peralta Trail and The Cave). One of our favourites!









Above 4 pictures show landscapes on the way to Superstition Peak

Rogers Canyon Trail. (2008) Superstition Mtns Wilderness 9mi. 1100' descent/ gn.

Rogers Canyon has some remote but very well preserved 600-year-old Salado Indian Cliff dwellings. The 9mi. back road drive into the Tonto National Forest was through spectacular mountain landscapes surrounded by cacti. The remaining 4mi. had the same great mountain desert scenery, and we got to appreciate it from a walk because the road was too rough.

Typical vegetation along the trail included prickly pear, sugar sumac, juniper, agaves, manzanita, scrub oak, ponderosa pine, Utah serviceberry, and cottonwood. It's clear to see that the Indian dwellings are constructed such that they are shaded from the summer sun yet they take good advantage of it in the winter. Below the dwellings there were nice pools of water which must have made this a perfect home.

To Do But Didn't:

There are numerous areas for hikes in and around Phoenix particularly north of the city such as:

1) Cave Creek
2) Usury Mtn Park.
3) Browns Peak7657' 8mi return. (and Amethyst Mine) in the Four Peaks Wilderness. 20 mi rough dirt road access but apparently very much worth it.

Tucson - AZ

Picacho Peak (2012) 6mi. 1500' el. gn.

Short but steep scramble to this prominent and unique shaped 3374' peak. The peak overlooks the sight of the westernmost Civil war battle and was an Apache lookout. Picacho State Park has good camping though it is often full.

Mt Lemmon 9157'

Expansive views, vegetation ranging from giant saguaro to massive pine, fir and spruce forests, and lots of connecting trails including several to the canyons below. But you can drive right to the top on the very spectacular paved 30 mile long Sky Island Road (aka Mt. Lemmon Road) with numerous pullouts to enjoy the scenery. This road, (elevation gain: 6900') is a must " to-do"with southwest riders.

The mountain itself however is kind of anti-climactic at first with this road but we picked a trail near the mountaintop ski village of Summerhaven (7840') and hiked to the summit on the Marshall Gulch and Aspen trails, walked the Summit Trail ridge for a few hundred yards to unsuccessfully try to see around the west side of the observatory, and then descended to the village via a backside (north facing) trail, making this outing an 8 mi. loop.

Romero Canyon Trail 6mi, 1000' el.gn (you can continue to Romero Pass, 6080').

Desert terrain to remote riparian areas and natural ponds amidst the Catalina escarpment, decomposed granite and gneiss, and changing vegetation zones on to the upper reaches of Mt Lemmon. (Catalina State Park Campground is at the trailhead). A car shuttle could get you to the top of Mt Lemmon for a one-way descending trip to the campground.

Wasson Peak 4687', 12 mi, 1900' el. gn.

The Hugh Norris Trail is one of our favorite SW hikes. It is a scenic ridge walk through the granite boulders and metamorphic rock formations amongst a magnificent display of thousands (largest concentration in the world) of giant saguaro, prickly pear, barrel cacti, cholla, ocotillo, mesquite and palo verde on a superbly masoned granite trail.

Several of the "sky island" mountain chains are visible from along the trail. The shorter Kings Canyon Trail will also get you to the summit from the parks visitor centre. (Gilbert Ray Campground which is surrounded by Saguaro Cactus is nearby in Tucson Mountain Park). Another favourite.



Ocotillo spiky stems turn green a couple of days after rain.



Ocotillo bloom. Palo verde tree in background.



Beautiful saguaro display

Sabino Canyon (Pusch Ridge Wilderness) Phoneline Trail 9mi (there and back or use shuttle to half the distance) 750' el. gn.

The Sabino Canyon, and particularly the southern slopes of the Push Ridge Wilderness is a very "experienced" tourist spot in Tucson. Well over a million visitors a year. Probably akin to Vancouver's Stanley Park. So much so that a tram carries people along the lower canyon road for glimpses into this scenic wonderland.

Many people use the tram (along the Depression era Civilian Conservation Corps road) to the upper end of the canyon and then hike one of the three canyon trails (Phoneline Trail, the Bear Canyon Trail or the Rattlesnake Bear Canyon), back to the visitor centre. Some backpack the 14 more miles to the Mt Lemmon summit. The very well constructed Phoneline Trail parallels the road on the mountain side several hundred feet above the road. And, on the shady side!!! It can be 30C + in Feb. Great visitor centre.

Tortolita Mountain Park 4070' (highest elevation gained), 13mi. approx. 2200' + el gn.

This unassuming but rugged range is a spectacular natural space of vistas, granite curiosities and vegetation. The trailhead is located at the Ritz Carlton Hotel entrance where a color coded trail map is provided. Just tell the guard that you are there to hike. We combined several trails to form a 13 mi loop. We circled the area in a clockwise direction on the upper reaches of the mountain park utilizing the Upper Javelina, Wild Mustang, Alamo Springs and Wild Burro Trails.

Guthrie Peak 7281’ 6.2mi, 2000’ el.gn.

An understated peak but a good trail and great views from the summit make it a worthwhile outing. The trailhead is on the Mt Lemmon Highway. Starting at the trailhead a few hundred yards before the Hitchkock Campground parking area.

Finger Rock Canyon (to Linda Vista) 5520’ 3mi, el. gn. 2980’.

This is a very narrow, scenic and rugged canyon that narrows the further one advances. The trail begins in the bajada at the north end of the city. Very nice trailhead. Bajada vegetation is typically saguaros, palo verde, ocotillos, prickly pear and cholla etc.).

The trail hangs below the eastern cliff until it reaches a saddle (shade most of the way if you have started early enough). Finger rock is high above you on the western cliffs. Once you reach the saddle Linda Vista, to the right, with its views over the city is a short distance away. From the saddle one can continue on the main trail for another 1.5 mi 2240’ el gn. to a point between Finger Rock Canyon and Pima Canyon where there is a short spur (1/2 mi 450’) to the top of Mt Kimball (6880’).

The summit is forested but if you continue north short distance to the north there are views in that direction including Biosphere 2, Picacho Peak and Mt Lemmon summit. Pima Canyon Trail is a hike in its own (14mi there and back, 4500’ el. gn) unless you have a second car at its trailhead which is located west of the Finger Rock Trailhead. Of the 2, Finger Rock canyon is considerably more interesting…and somewhat shorter.

To Do But Didn't:

1) Blacketts Ridge, Santa Catalina Mtns. 4410, 6.2 mi, 1810 el. gn. Same trailhead as Sabino Canyon. A Tucson classic with great views in all directions all along.
2) Mt Lemmon "bike to the top”. 25/30 mi., el. gn. 6900’. The Sky Island Scenic Byway to the top of Mt Lemmon is a spectacular highway and if you can do it on a bike all the better! Another Tucson challenge with numerous riders on the road shoulder everyday!!!
3) Sabino Canyon Phoneline Trail and Bear Canyon Loop.18mi?

Green Valley (south of Tucson on the freeway to Nogales)

Mt Wrightson, 9453’ Santa Rita Mountains, Coronado National Forest 12.2 mi, 4200’ el. gn.

The Old Baldy Trail beginning at the Mt Wrightson Picnic Area to Josephine Saddle, past Bellows Spring, to Baldy Saddle and onwards to the summit is the most direct. You begin in the Emory oaks, Arizona Oaks and Juniper trees of Madera Canyon. Madera Canyon is a well known birding area. Slowly you work your way up to the aspen and pine trees high above. Variations to the summit can be made using the Crest Trail or Super Loop. The summit has views in all directions for many miles as it is the highest in the area. A good area trail map is provided at the Picnic area. Madera Canyon is located west of Green Valley and is well marked from the I-19 Freeway. There is a very nice campground near the trailhead as well as BLM camping just before the Madera Canyon. Fee Area on Proctor Road.

To Do But Didn't:

1) Mt Wrightson SuperLoop, 13mi 4733’ el. Gn. Outing back or return via Old Baldy Trail or Ridge Crest trail.
2) Atascosa Lookout. 6200’, 5mi, 1500’ el.gn. S of Green valley off I-19 at the Ruby Road (to Pena Blanca lake) exit 12 (3 mi north of Nogales) 7mi to FSR 39 (campground) and then 4 mi on car accessible dirt road to trailhead. FS Trail 100 Atascosa Lookout) A well worn trail with gradual el gn to the site of an old forest lookout. Great views in all directions including Tumacacori, Baboquivari Peak, Santa Rita and Sierrita Mtns.

"Sky Islands"

The "Sky Islands” of the SE Arizona & SW New Mexico

…are isolated mountain ranges high above radically different lowlands resulting in a biogeographic unique natural habitat “island”. The following hike descriptions from the Tombstone area to the Guadalupe Mtns in Texas were mostly "Sky Islands". The 5000’ and above elevations of the Sky Islands also make them appear as islands protruding high above the vast barren desert.

The landscape is Chihuahuan Desert, meadows dotted with cactus and mesquite begin to fill with sycamore, juniper and oak trees. One of the significant unique aspects of the sky islands is this vegetation, that is, the trees and plants of higher elevations are more characteristic of northern latitudes, while the flora of the lower elevations has ties to the desert and the mountains further south.

Tombstone and Sierra Vista Area

Miller Peak 9466' Huachuca Mtns.11mi. 2885' el. gn.

The highest point in the Huachuca Mts. A great well marked reddish gravel ridge trail (the Crest Trail) beginning at Montezuma Pass amongst mountainside grasslands (Chihuahuan Desert) studded with agave and yucca. The Crest Trail is also the southern beginning of the Arizona Trail. The peak trail climbs strongly along the open hillside through various geology including some old mine shafts.

Eventually you are in a pine, fir, aspen and alligator juniper forest where a signpost directs you off the Crest Trail to the Miller Peak summit, which was the site of a fire lookout. Grand views in all directions including Mexico very close to the south, the Catalinas to the north, Mt Wrightson (and Baboquivari Pk), Carr Peak to the north, and the Dragoon and Chiricahua Mtns to the northeast. The alluvial fans are impressive to appreciate from this vantage point.

The newly constructed steel fence along the Mexican-USA border is easily in sight. The San Pedro River Valley, of Coronado fame being the 1540-42 route Coronado used with his "expeditionary force of 1500 soldiers, missionaries and native support staff (allies, slaves, servants and animal tenders)" for the search for the Seven Cities of Cibola and the first Europeon explorations of the interior SW. The route to the trailhead from HWY 92, (approx. 13 miles south of Sierra Vista) is well marked.

Turn south on Montezuma Road and drive 8mi to the visitor centre. From the visitor centre continue on the road another 3 miles to the pass where their is a large paved parking lot and washrooms.

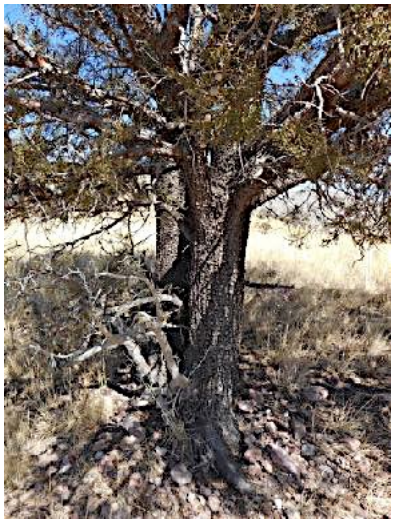
Coronado Peak (6865') and Joe's Canyon Trail (and Coronado Cave) Huachuca Mtns. 300'el. gn.

Normally this trail is done in reverse making for a 1300' el. gn. We used the Ranger led hike/shuttle to Montezuma Pass 6575' from where we walked the 0.8mi to the summit of Coronado Peak. The talk explained the Coronado Expedition as well as the indigenous peoples and the flora and fauna characteristic of the Chiricahua 4 distinct biospheres.

From the summit we then descended the 3mi down to the Visitor Centre parking lot. Though short, Coronado Peak and much of the Joe's Canyon Trail is a worthwhile destination above the Montezuma Canyon and with sweeping views of Sonora Mexico, the San Pedro River Valley and San Rafael River Valley. Many trekkers use this section of the trail to get to the Mexican border - mile 0 - and then return, therein starting the 800 mi Arizona National Scenic Trail.



Views into Mexico on the way down from Joe's Canyon Trail



Aligator Juniper

Coronado Cave.

The limestone cave dates from the shallow seas that covered this area some 250 million years ago is located by trail 3/4 of a mile and 500' above the Visitor Centre. Entry into the 600' long cave with 20' high ceilings and up to 70' wide is free. Though most of the limestone cave features, particularly stalagmites and stalactites, have been destroyed the cave is still worth the effort. Take a flashlight.

Carr Peak, 9220' Huachuca Mountains 9mi. 3346' el. gn.

There are several routes to Carr Peak. Miller Canyon Trail starts out on a very old mining road, has a fine riparian entrance, sycamore, walnut and big tooth maple trees, several mining remnants including remnants off a small townsite, some flowing water (which is rare) and a cool forest for the steep climb up to the Crest Trail.

Once out of the forest after 3 miles the upper Chihuahuan desert vegetation and views (similar to Miller Peak) improve significantly. The Carr Peak spur is well marked from the Crest Trail to the flat topped summit.The trailhead is 9mi. south of Sierra Vista on Hwy 92. Turn west on -the well marked-Miller Canyon Road to the car friendly trailhead parking lot a few miles up the canyon. The last section is very good graded dirt and well used. BLM camping is also available.

Cochise Stronghold, Dragoon Mountains. The pass is at 5970' 1060' el. gn. The trail is an easy 5 mi from east to west (Pass is at approx halfway)

One quickly understands how this became Cochise's impenetrable refuge. The extremely rugged "boulder field" hideout and heavily vegetated terrain has actually kept the trail some distance away from the centre of the Stronghold. It was a great hiding place.

The landscape vegetation is a blend of Sonoran and Chihuahuan habitats as the mountains are on the boundaries of the 2 deserts. If approaching from the east, continue another 1/2 mi over pass for best views of Rockfellow Dome (6620') and the adjacent eroded cliffs and domes. The trail is an out and back with an east 3 mi. and west 2mi. trailhead. Most people hike end to end and then back.

The eastern car friendly trailhead is on Ironwood Rd (and then FR 84 for 8 mi) off Hwy 191. The high clearance western approach is off Hwy 80, 1 mi north of Tombstone, onto Middlemarch Rd to its end which becomes FR 687 then FR 688 to the trailhead. Several BLM campsites are available off FR 687 & 688.

To Do But Didnt:

1) Red Mountain, Patagonia Mtns. 9mi. A forest fire road hike to a lookout tower amongst another interesting landscape. Take Harshaw Rd 3mi past Arizona Trailhead parking. Go to Y then right 2 mi to trailhead parking. This hike is very close to the Mexican border and be aware of illegal immigration issues.

Wilcox - AZ

Echo Canyon, Heart of Rocks, Rhyolite Canyon. **Chiricahua National Monument,** (Land of Standing Up Rocks): 9.7mi, 670' el. gn.

This is a journey amongst spectacular time weathered Rhyolite pinnacles (super heated ash) wonderland. This area was a great surprise to us even though it lightly snowed and was very foggy on our arrival. Our normal hiking pace on the sunny next day was drastically reduced because of the numerous stops we took to admire the world of extraordinary rock sculptures. There are the unbelievable pinnacles in Bryce Canyon National Park. And then there are the very different, yet equally amazing pinnacles if the Chiricahuas!

The park's shuttle allowed us the opportunity of a big loop through many different areas and with significantly less elevation gain. We started at Echo Canyon Trailhead parking and descended amongst these spectacular pinnacles and vegetation on a superbly built 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps trail. The trail meanders its way to Echo Park and a junction with the Upper Rhyolite and Hailstone Trails. The Hailstone Trail heads east up to the junction of the Ed Riggs trail and Mushroom trails.

Here we actually saw the coati, a racoon relative common to this area. On the Mushroom Trail one heads south to the Inspiration Point Trail. A worthy 1 mi. detour to a viewpoint overlooking a considerable expanse of the area was our lunch spot. Return to the main trail which is now called the Balanced Rock Trail.

After the 1000 ton, unbelievably perched Balanced Rock, there is another side trail 1.1 mi scenic loop that takes you in and close amongst some interesting "character" rocks. From the loop the trail becomes the Sarah Deming Trail which descends amongst scenery 1300' to the Visitor Centre below









Unafraid group of coatis (a racoon relative with a bear head)

Fort Bowie, Apache Spring and Pass (5110')

The 3mi return interpretive loop trail takes you to the Fort site where there is a visitor centre. The return section of the loop trail is along a noticeable fault line of sedimentary and volcanic composition.

Sugarloaf Peak 7310', 2mi return, 480' el. gn.

Sitting atop the heart of Chiricahua National Monument is 7310 foot Sugarloaf Mountain. This prominent peak, which stands in a sea of volcanic hoodoos, can be seen for miles. While not as exciting or as popular as the loop trails in the Heart Of Rocks area, this short hike provides sweeping views of the Monument and surrounding areas. The Sugarloaf Mountain Trail heads across a short ridge, and begins climbing the northern side of Sugarloaf Mountain.

Dos Cabezas and rugged Cochise Head are visible along this stretch of trail, as well as the deep, forested gorge of Bonita Canyon. At 0.2 miles, the Sugarloaf Mountain Trail passes through a short tunnel that was blasted through the cemented volcanic ash of an ancient hoodoo. Beyond the tunnel, the trail traverses a steep slope covered in angular boulders, broken off from the low cliffs above the trail.

Soon the trail rounds the mountain to the drier, southern slope. The Heart of Rocks area comes into view now, amid the manzanitas, yuccas, and plentiful beargrass. On the southern horizon, the rolling, green, 9000' summits of the Chiricahua peaks form a backdrop against the Monument's countless rock totem

poles. The mosaic pattern from 1994's Rattlesnake Fire is clearly visible among the peaks.

The trail now makes a switchback here, and plows through a row of manzanita bushes, before arriving on the northeast corner of the windswept summit. The historic one room fire lookout was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. A series of interpretive signs can be found on the southwest side of the summit, overlooking the infinite desert grasslands below.



Picture above is on Sugarloaf Peak with a view of "Cochise Head" rocks formation in the skyline.

Cochise Head 8113'. 8mi, 3171' el. gn.

Cochise Head is an iconic landmark rock formation in the Chiricahua Mountains in the southeast corner of Arizona. The name is aptly chosen as the formation looks like an Indian chief head. Much of the approach to the peak is within the Chiricahua National Monument though the actual peak lies outside the monument's borders. The entire area was burned by the Horseshoe 2 Fire in 2011. A trail which once existed is now essentially gone making the route finding hike/ bushwhack tougher than the round trip distance would indicate. Not too many get to this peak.

The trailhead is located along the National Monument's scenic highway. It is reached after 5.6 miles from the entrance to the Monument; there is a gate with a dirt road on the left hand side however you can't park there. Continue to drive up the road for another quarter of a mile when you come to a turn-off on your left hand side with enough room for 4-5 vehicles to park. Walk around the vehicle gate and follow the dirt road for a little over a mile to the King of Lead Mine; past the mine the road becomes more overgrown. After about 1.5 mi you come to a small saddle where the road flattens out and ends. Make a left turn at a cairn on this saddle. Cattle are in the area and the occasional route cairn has disappeared making going slow. Occasional flagging has helped considerably.

From the cairn hike up the grassy slope until you reach another saddle; from here you will have the first view of the peak and you can see some of the route along the hillside. There was a miners trail originally however years of neglect have taken a toll. Hike along the slopes in a north-northwesterly direction aiming for a saddle west of the peak. You will have to cross a deep and steep wash to get there and this section of the route was probably the toughest as it required a lot of side hilling and dealing with loose slopes and sometimes heavy brush. When you reach Woods Canyon saddle you will find two trail signs that survived the fire pointed to two different trails which have since disappeared.

From the saddle you lose the old established trail and begin hiking up the ridge line aiming for the northern side of the peak (going over 3 bumps on the way). Once you reach the top of the ridge line you have to climb a steep and sometimes lose slope aiming for the rock just underneath and left, of the actual Cochise Head formation. The goal is to get to the North side of the rock formation where cairns will lead the way along an intermittently appearing brushed in path. Follow this trail as it initially contours close to the rock and eventually drops down 100 feet or so and eventually leads to a saddle between the nose and the forehead. From that saddle follow an easy ramp to the summit which offers great views in all directions.



Chiefs heads!

Kennedy Peak, Galiuro Mountains Wilderness
7549', 11 mi, 3530'el. gn.

A prominent peak of the Galiuro Mtn Wilderness. It forms part of a traverse trail requiring 2 cars. From the trailhead campsite, begin walking on the rocky, well defined path as it winds through the juniper dotted grassland, climbing gently towards the mountain range ahead. After 0.8 mile you will reach a signed junction with the East Divide Trail #287 which heads left and the Horse Canyon Trail #254 which heads right. Go left on the East Divide Trail which is a bit faint at first but is marked at fairly frequent intervals with cairns. The path climbs gently to moderately and soon becomes easier to follow as pinyon pine becomes more prevalent.

The trail eventually drops into a wash and a junction with a right branching trail that heads 0.5 mile to Mud Spring. Stay straight (don't cross the wash) and continue climbing up beside the wash through a forested canyon of oak. The path soon begins climbing in earnest and after considerable effort tops out at a shoulder and junction with the Corral Canyon Trail #291 which heads straight, the East Divide Trail heads left. To reach Kennedy Peak head left along the East Divide Trail for 5 minutes until you reach a fallen Kennedy Peak trail sign and fence line.

Look to the left on the near side of the fence for a cairned trail which leads to the top of the peak. This area was burned by fire and the trail may be hard to discern. The peak which features 270 degree views of the Sulfur Springs grasslands and the Pinaleno Mountains to the east, the Santa Teresa Wilderness to the northeast and the inner Galiuro Wilderness to the west.

Road directions: West of Safford, or north of Wilcox is Bonita. From Bonita follow the Bonita-Klondyke Road. Drive north and turn right at the sign for Deer Creek onto Forest Road (FR) 253. The road becomes rougher at this point and will require a high clearance vehicle. Drive 7.1 miles on FR 253 until you reach the road to the old trailhead marked by a Coronado National Forest Sign (which now has a locked gate across it). Stay left on FR 253A and drive a short distance down the hill. Immediately after crossing a dry wash look for the large parking area/campground and trailhead on the right.

To Do But Didn't:

1) Heliograph Peak (10022') #328A, via the Arcadia National Recreation Trail #328.Starting from the Arcadia Group Campground, 12.2 mi return, 3222 el. gn (or starting from Shannon Campground, 4 mi, 1108' el gn). Grand views and a Civilian Conservation Corps 1930s, 99' high forest lookout tower and cabin that is still in use during the fire season. Heliograpg Peak was one of the many sites for the soldier manned stations that in 1886 would use mirrors, or heliographs, and mores code for messaging.

2) Chiricahua Peak 9740', 12 mi, 1282' el.gn. There are numerous trails criss-crossing the Chiricahua Wilderness. The highlight being the high country Crest Trail #270, which gives access to Chiricahua Peak. A direct access would be from the Rustler Creek Campground off of Forest Roads #42 & 42D. Camping at trailhead.

3) Dos Cabezas South Peak 8359' Easily the dominant feature on the skyline SE of Wilcox (off Hwy 186) are the twin peaks of Dos Cabezas. Though on BLM land, the best access is through private property. The Arizona Hiking Club is attempting to secure permission to use the Mascot Mine Road out of Dos Cabezas to attain the south ridge radio tower from which most approaches have been done in the past. The south peak is a scramble of sorts.

4). Aravaipa Canyon, 12.5 mi, Aravaipa means "little wells". A permit (contact Safford BLM Field Office) is required to hike in this canyon east of Mammoth AZ. Trailheads are at both ends though those with 2 vehicles do a traverse. These trailheads can also be reached from the west (if coming from Tucson/Phoenix) and east from Safford/Wilcox).

5). Silver Peak 7983', 3000' el.gn. 8mi. Cave Creek Visitor Centre. On FR 42. Take right fork at first y. NW direction on main. Former lookout site with a view over Portal AZ.

Las Cruces, New Mexico - El Paso, Texas

Dripping Springs Trail Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument.

Easy 3 mile loop trail into the canyon ending at the Hotel remains. Dripping Springs is a small life-giving mountain rivulet set in a narrow secluded canyon with towering granite walls on the western side of southern New Mexico's Organ Mountains. It overlooks the Rio Grande and the Mesilla Valley 2,000' below.

It was near this spring that Colonel Eugene Van Patten chose to build his Van Patten's Mountain Camp resort and, later, that Doctor Nathan Boyd would decide to establish a tuberculosis sanatorium. In the 1870's, the enterprising Van Patten began construction of his resort, "a two-story 14-room hotel with dining and recreational facilities," Dripping Springs attracted many notable guests, including famous lawman Pat Garrett, the fabled Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa and, possibly even the notorious Billy the Kid.

Baylor Peak 7721', 8mi, 2181' el. gn. Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument.

Use the well worn Baylor Pass Trail (east trailhead-west trailhead is off Baylor Canyon Rd) which is the only trail that traverses the Organ Mtns. Follow the trail to the pass. From pass you will find a well trodden, but very steep trail heading north, along the ridge, and to the summit of Baylor Peak. Great views including White Sands National Monument and the Capitan Mtns to the NE. Also, just below you to the east is the White Sands Missile Range (WSMR),

On this trail, Confederate Lieutenant Colonel John Robert Baylor, who, in the summer of 1861 during the American Civil War, led a Texas Mounted Volunteer regiment to victory over a numerically superior Union force outside of Las Cruces. The Union troops, under Major Isaac Lynde, were in retreat, abandoning a seemingly indefensible Fort Filmore because of the imminent threat of a Confederate assault.

As the story goes, Union soldiers made a crucial mistake as they were destroying supplies at the fort prior to their retreat. Rather than dumping perfectly good medicinal whiskey, they opted instead to replace the water in their canteens with the whiskey. Later, as they retreated towards the San Augustin Pass, the July sun and whiskey took their toll. Baylor's mounted Confederate force, outnumbered 500 to 200, moved across the pass that would later bear his name, and intercepted the Union force at San Augustin Spring. Baylor must have been in shock when the Union force, drunk and dehydrated, surrendered without a shot being fired.

There is a great campground at the trailhead!

The WSMR, located a few miles east is the "birthplace" of America's missile and space activity . The free WSMR museum includes exhibits on the Mexican American War, the local Civil War incidents, the immediate area Apache battle and missile development at the site particularly the Manhattan Project (Einstein, Fermi and Von Braun spent time here).There is a Fat Boy and V2 on exhibit, as well as numerous other. You are free to visit after a brief security check.

East trailhead: From U.S. Hwy 70, take Aguirre Springs Road south. The intersection is 1.1 mi. east of the San Augustin Pass, through which Hwy 70 runs. Stay on this road until you reach the fee area and campgrounds (approx. 6 mi). There is a small parking area available for hikers.



Alkali Flat Trail, 5mi. White Sands National Monument

With little elevation gain this is mostly a walk on firm sand dunes. Not to be done in the heat! Spectacular views of endless white gypsum dunes with few if any footprints and the far off mountains on the surrounding horizons. This trail takes you through the heart of the sands, up and over steep dunes, to the edges of the Alkali Flat. The Alkali Flat is the dry lakebed of Lake Otero, a lake that filled the bottom of the Tularosa Basin during the last ice age and covered 1,600 square miles. Trailhead is at the end of the Visitor Centre Road. Some tent camping is allowed at the dunes.



Five miles of barefoot hiking!

Ranger Peak, 5632', Franklin Mountains. 1.6mi one way. 2400' el. loss.

A $4 one-way Wyler Aerial Tramway State Park to "almost" the top of Ranger Peak. Located a short distance from downtown El Paso. A free permit is required from the Tram Visitor Centre to hike the trail. From the parking lot at 4,692', the 4 minute ride to the top travels 2,400 feet .

There is a loop trail that starts at the south side of the mountains arial platform or from the north end of the paring lot. The loop trail- and tram observation tower provide panoramic views all around including El Paso, Fort Bliss, the Rio Grande River and far into Mexico. Views to the north are the Franklin Mtn Range.

On the trail there is also a 1953 historical B-36 crash site overlook though very little remains. The Convair B-36 Peacemaker was a long range strategic bomber and was the largest American warplane ever in production. It was designed during World War II when it looked like England would fall to the Nazis and the United States would need to be able to bomb Germany from bases in the United States.

The Wyler Tramway was originally named the El Paso Aerial Tramway and was built in 1959 by Karl O. Wyler for NBC affiliate KTSM Radio to aid in the construction of a transmitter antenna and service platform. The tram was used to haul construction equipment, workers, and sections of the antenna to the summit. In 1997 the tramway was donated to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as part of Karl O. Wyler's final will. The tram was extensively renovated and opened to the public in 2001.



Ranger Peak, looking towards North Franklin Peak

North Franklin Peak, Franklin Mountains, 7192'. 7.6 mi. 2447' el. gn.

North Franklin Mountain offers great views out over the stark west Texas - New Mexico desert. North Franklin gets its reddish color from the unusually high levels of oxidized iron in the volcanic rocks coating its summit and higher slopes. For centuries, travellers have used the vegetation and wildlife in the Franklins when crossing the Paso del Norte—the gap between the Franklin Mountains and the Juarez Mountains that is now the site of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso.

Pictographs and mortar pits attest to a human presence in the mountains dating back more than 12,000 years. The trailhead is located on the west side of the Franklin Mtns State Park in the Tom Mays Unit of the park. US$5 fee required. There is a very nice US$6 campsite at the trailhead. Easiest way is to exit (exit 6) Interstate-10 onto Loop-375 and drive east about 4 miles to the gate and entrance to the park on

the left (north) side of the road. Follow this road about 1 mile, then turn right. (You may see signs to Mundy's Gap.) After a short distance, you will arrive at a parking area with a trailhead kiosk.



North Franklin Peak looking north to the Organ Mountains & the White Sands missile testing area

To Do But Didn't

1) Organ Needle, 8888', 8m, 4000' el.gn. The trail begins on the Fillmore Trail near the Dripping Springs National Monument Visitor Centre on the Dripping Springs Road (University Ave.) east of Las Cruces.The Organ Range is so named for its multitude of spire-like needles and summits, resembling organ pipes from a distance; The peak is popular for hikers and climbers for it is the highpoint of the range and the area, The standard route is a mix of use trails, bushwhacking, route finding and a short but exposed class 3/4 scramble crux just below the summit. A rope belay might be needed for the crux.

2) Baldy Peak, 8445', Organ Mountains NM. The hike up Baldy starts at Soledad Canyon but the hike continues further past the waterfall at the end of the trail. From the trailhead follow the main trail until you get to a small waterfall. Make sure to stay on the main trail. Some smaller trails head off in other directions. After you get to the waterfall either rock climb up the series of waterfalls then continue up the stream or head up the ridge to the right of the waterfalls. There is a small area you can scramble up that doesn't require rock climbing. It will take you up on a ridge a little bit above the stream. From there just climb back down to the stream. From the stream just keep heading up until you get to a large scree slope. Scramble up the scree slope until you reach the ridge. Once you reach the ridge head to your left and keep going up until you can't go higher.

   From Las Cruces, NM head east on University Ave. After a while it will turn into Dripping Springs RD. You will drive 1-2 miles past "A Mountain" then you will come upon Soledad Canyon Road. After about half a mile the road turns to dirt. Just before it turns to dirt turn left on Soledad Canyon Road again. Keep following this until it ends at a parking area. The trailhead starts at this parking lot.

3) South Franklin Peak, 6791" The Ron Coleman Trail Traverse, 3.8 mi long, is the centrepiece of the Franklins stretching between 2 canyons and along a ridgeline. It has 2 sections requiring minor bouldering. The south trailhead is at McKelligon Canyon in Franklin Mtn State Park, and ends at Smugglers Pass on the Trans-Mountain Rd (Loop-375) From the south trailhead to South Peak it is a 7mi return with 3123' el.gn. If starting from Smugglers Pass (Hwy Loop 375) the trail is 5.5 km, with 523 m el.gn. to the summit of South Peak.

4) Hillboro Peak. 10011'. 9 mi. 2211' el.gn. A hike east of Silver City and the Gila Cliff Dwellings to a very prominent vantage point over the Black Mtns and beyond. The drive to and over 8000' foot Emory Pass (with numerous camping areas and where the trailhead is located) is a treat in itself!

Guadalupe Mountains NP, Carlsbad Caverns NP

Guadalupe Peak Trail. 8,751' 8.4 mi. 3000' el.gn.

An outstanding view from the "Top of Texas". The Guadalupe Mountains were originally a marine fossil reef formed some 270 million years ago and pushed "high into the sky". Great campsite trailhead.

Bush Peak (8631'), Hunter Peak (8368')

A great 14 mi (approx) loop through various landscapes utilizing Frijole Trail, Bear Canyon Trail, Bowl Trail to Hunter Peak and the roller coaster Bush Mountain Trail. The return is via the scenic and impressively constructed Tejas Trail back to trailhead.



From Hunter Peak looking south onto Guadalupe Peak

Carlsbad Cavern, 2.5mi.

You descend 750' (with the option of an elevator ascent to the surface) via Natural Entrance down through the Big Room Loop. A stroll through subterranean chambers amidst extraordinary features. A great 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps infrastructure job amongst a natural wonder.

To Do But Didnt:

1) McKittrick Canyon Trail (various distances depending on destination),
2) Permian Reef Trail (8.4 mi, 2000' el. gn.))
3) El Capitan 8085' (& Salt Basin Overlook) 11.3 mi.
4)Roswell

Sedona & Grand Canyon-AZ

Hangover Trail 8mi. loop.(E. of Sedona)

A hike on and amidst an orange reddish sandstone moonscape -including cliffs and spires- with views west over Sedona and Oak Creek.

Bear Mountain 6444' 5mi, 1834' el. gn (W of Sedona)

Sedona is one of the premier hiking areas of Arizona and Bear Mountain in the Red Rock Wilderness offers an excellent viewpoint into. Constant all-around views of sandstone buttes, pinnacles, red, pink and white cliffs, carved canyons, and plains and mesas stretching for miles into the distance. The typical desert vegetation includes ocotillo, prickly pear and yucca. This hike is a real treat.

The Fay and Red Canyons are very impressive down below. The top of the mountain did not give a 360 degrees view. In fact the only thing visible to the north were the San Francisco peaks, one of which is the easily hikeable 12,633' Humphreys Peak (14km, 1100m el.gn).

Wilson Mountain (N of Sedona) 7123' 9 mi, 2300' el. gn (including 2 mile-return side trip to Long Canyon Overlook) 2300' el. gn.

This mountain was named after a bear hunter who was killed in the area by a grizzly bear. The trail climbs high above green and red Sedona. The summit is actually a plateau with the end being the edge of a precipice overlooking views that stretch over this red canyon country including Oak Creek Canyon, Sedona, Coffee Pot Rock, Capitol Butte, Sterling Canyon and the Verde Valley.

Boynton Canyon (2008 trip) 8km.

This is noted as one of the most scenic of the box canyons that make Arizona Red Rock Country so famous. It has developed a reputation as a site of a New Age "vortex" - a sort of energy field emanating from inner earth. And if you are not into that, the overwhelming towering buttes, crimson cliffs, and natural desert gardens that are in all directions will captivate you. The trail works its way up to a stop at the foot of gigantic cliffs on 3 sides. These cliffs are actually very close, but far below, the Bear Mtn Trail viewpoint.

Brins Mesa Loop. 5 mi. loop hike 1124' el. gn. using the Soldier Pass, Brins Mesa and Jordan trails in Sedona.

We started at the Soldier Pass Trailhead and worked our way up the wide canyon to the pass. We were surrounded by large red and white sandstone cliffs and buttes, with contrasting greenery provided by a mixture of trees (pines, oaks and juniper), bushes and cacti (manzanita, yucca and prickly pear). Soldiers Pass Arch is one of the striking rock formations that appears east of the historic trail. This trail was traveled by General George Crook during the Apache campaign in 1871-72.

At the pass were actually on open grassy Brins Mesa which we traversed for a km. From here it was back

down into a green canyon surrounded by spectacular red and white landforms. After this canyon we had one more small pass to do westward towards the vehicle. In the afternoon we visited and climbed on/or around several of the area's landforms including Cathedral Mtn, the Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte Loop.



Grand Canyon, Bright Angel Trail to Plateau Point and back. 12.3 mi, 3,216' altitude loss/gain.

A descent into the world's largest chasm to the very edge of the Inner Gorge. The Grand Canyon defies description - no words can do it justice. As we stand at the trailhead, the canyon's edge, and stare across the 10-mile wide gorge, it is hard to believe it is real, such is the scale. The Trail follows a route used for hundreds of years. The Bright Angel Fault created a natural break in the immense limestone cliffs, which was used by prehistoric Indians to reach the springs at Indian Gardens.

This is described as a very popular trail-hundreds of hikers each day- and a trail which hikers share with mule trains. We started out with one ahead of us and one behind. People were already coming out of the Canyon. There was a layer of compact snow on the trail. Pinyon-juniper forest characterizes this upper area. There are places with pictographs on the cliff walls. The trail down is characterized by an intricate system of numerous switchbacks.

Eventually you reach Indian Gardens Springs which were used in prehistoric times, and later by Havasupai Indians who farmed this area. The cottonwood trees were apparently planted during the early 1900s. Bright Angel Trail continues to the right on its way to the Colorado River and the Phantom Ranch. The Plateau Point Trail branches off north over the arid Tonto Plateau. Plateau Point is on the edge of the Tonto Plateau and has a dramatic view of the Inner Gorge. Massive buttes rise in the distance and 400m straight below is the Colorado River. The Colorado appears small below but when people come into view on the trail below it is obvious the river is very large.

From our lunch at the point it was a long climb back up to the rim. Our return to Sedona was along the south rim road. Each viewpoint captured the vastness of the canyon. After leaving the park we were in the Painted Desert. This was an area once again totally different from what we had seen before. Monument Valley beckoned far off to the east. Vermillion Cliffs NP, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and others to the north. Another day. Another trip.

Grand Canyon, South Kaibab (4.4mi) /Tonto (4.1mi) /Bright Angel (4.6mi) Trails loop 13.4mi . -3500' descent.

The Tonto Plateau provides sublime, private vistas that stretch from the deep maw of Bright Angel Canyon in the east to the fin-shaped Isis Temple hovering in the west. Use the shuttle to the South Kaibab Trailhead. Get a good look at the canyon from the viewpoint and then descend 4.4 mi. Amidst grand views (with the sun at your back) to the junction with the Tonto Trail. Here you turn left and head southwest for a traverse over the coarse sandstone and piñon scrub of the Tonto plateau. At mile 8.4, turn left onto the Bright Angel Trail and hike .3 mile to Indian Garden where you are creekside amongst cottonwoods beneath the canyon's vermillion-streaked, cathedral-like walls. From here it is a 4.7-mile, 3,000' ascent back to the rim.



Heading down on the South Kaibab Trail



Views from the Tonto Trail plateau

Grand Canyon: South Kaibab/Phantom Ranch/ Bright Angel Trails loop (from 2012 trip), (16.3mi loop)

An iconic 4360' steep descent into the canyon to the Colorado River and Phantom Ranch followed by a stair climbing grunt out and back to the rim.

To Do But Didn't

1) Humphrey's Peak,12633' 9mi, 3270 el.gn. Arizona's highest peak and a Mt St Helens type volcano, with "top of the world" views over its sister peaks Kendrick and Red Mtns, the Grand Canyon, the Painted Desert, and over the southern 8000' mesas to the the Verde /Oak Creek valleys. Very exposed to weather.
2) Kendrick Peak,10418', 9mi. 2402 el.gn. Another large San Francisco Peaks volcanic mtn with a lookout tower the summit.
3) Mt. Elden 9299'. 6mi, 2300'el.gn. A younger striking geologic event landscape compared to its bigger San Francisco Peak neighbours.
4) Hermit Trail/Boucher Trail loop in the Grand Canyon down to the Colorado River. 31km. approx. 1300 meters descent.

Monument Valley, Navajo Tribal Park, Goosenecks State Park & Lees Ferry, AZ

Wildcat Trail Loop 3.2 mi.

A pleasant hike around the iconic West Mitten butte. This is the only "unguided" hike in the Navajo Tribal Park for visitors. There are essentially no trails.

Valley of the Gods

A 17mi. dirt road driving loop amongst a valley of eerie but captivating colourful mesas, buttes and rock spires. BLM camping is allowed in an unbelievable setting all along the road. Unfortunately there are no trails in this area.

Honaker Trail (2016 trip) 8mi. 1244' (el. loss & gain).NW of Mexican Hat near Goosenecks State Park and the Valley of The Gods loop road.

A steep hike on a cliff-hanging 1894 mining trail to the San Juan River far below. The first horse on the trail fell to its death and mining proved unsuccessful but the trail takes you off the rim and puts you deep into the abyss along the river. Camping at nearby Goosenecks State Park. Make sure to drive the Moqui Dugway northward.

Spencer Trail, 4740' 7mi, 1541' el. gn.

A steep hike on a historic 1910 trail at Lees Ferry to the top of the Vermillion Cliffs. Great views in all directions including Page, Lake Powell and the Red Rock country to the north and Marble Canyon and Lees Ferry to the south. Often there are rafters beginning their 3 week long journey through the Canyon at the boat launch below.

In the early 1870's the leaders of the Mormon Church in Utah wanted to colonize Arizona, but the Grand Canyon was in the way. Here, at the mouth of the Paria River, was the only place along 500 miles of cliffs where they could build a wagon road to the river, cross on a ferry, and continue south. Explorers, Indian traders, miners, and finally tourists followed the pioneers.

The trail was built by Charles Spencer as a means to transport coal from Utah to fire boilers which ran sluices for his gold mining operation. The mining operation was unsuccessful and the mine abandoned in 1912 after only a year of operation.



View from the Spencer Trail onto Lees Ferry site



Views from Capitol Reef's Frying Pan Trail

To Do But Didn't:

1) Navajo Tribal Park 17 mi. dirt road driving loop amongst "named" mesas, buttes and rock spires. Camping is available in the Tribal Park. Several John Ford/John Wayne films, as well as many others were made amongst this picturesque landscape.

CanyonLands NP, Moab, San Rafael Swell and Capitol Reef NP, UT

This area is easily a destination in itself with numerous and varied great trails in and between all these places. Numerous write-ups on the trails are very common on the internet and in books. The camping is convenient, though it can be "full" -except for the boondocks- and varies from RV resorts, to NP campgrounds to the numerous opportunities for boon docking. A good place to begin or end your trip. Then head home.



Viewpoint from Navajo Knobs summit over Capitol Reef NP

We hope you get a chance to experience any of the places noted above.

Happy Hiking,

Eliane & Steven

Where to get topographic maps

by Peter Jordan

In the spring newsletter I wrote an article comparing different smartphone apps to use with topographic maps. This article gives some more information on topographic maps and where to get them.

Federal government 1:50,000 maps (and smaller scales)

Since the early 1900s, and until about the last 20 years, the federal government (Natural Resources Canada; ministry name has varied over the years) has produced and sold topographic maps. Since then, they have offloaded much of this responsibility to provincial governments. However, the federal 1:50,000 topographic maps are still the most useful maps for most recreational activities. The government has made the maps and underlying topographic data available to private industry, who reproduces the maps and sells them in various formats.

Note about scales: Scale is a fraction, so 1:20,000 is a "large" scale, and 1:1,000,000 is a "small" scale. Large-scale (1:20,000 or 1:50,000) are most useful for hiking; 1:250,000 is good for driving, and 1:1,000,000 is used mainly for flying.

Note about contours: The contours on 1:50,000 maps were produced by photogrammetry, using stereo air photos. In most of BC and other mountainous regions, the contour interval is (was) 100 feet. More recent editions of some maps have a metric contour interval of 40 m. These contour lines were interpolated from the older 100 ft contours, so they are less precise and there has been a loss of information. So if you have older versions of the maps with 100 ft contours, keep them!

In BC, International Travel Maps & Books in Richmond is the official distributor for the federal government maps (http://itmb.ca/topographic_maps.php). If you want flat (not folded) maps, you can order from them and they will ship the maps in a roll. In Nelson, Otter Books has a good selection of local 1:50,000 maps (folded) from ITMB, as well as various other topographic maps. Some of the ITMB maps were actually printed by the government map printer and are on the familiar high-quality, durable, somewhat waterproof paper. Other out-of-print maps are reprinted by ITMB, and the paper quality is OK, although not quite as good as the older maps.

GoTrekkers in Calgary is a company that prints and distributes maps, including good-quality, water resistant, folded, 1:50,000 maps for backcountry recreation. Valhalla Pure sells these maps.

If you search the internet for topographic maps, you will find many companies that reprint maps and sell them online. For example (just one), Yellow Maps is an American company with a Canadian branch (http://www.canmaps.com/topographic/bc/). It claims to offer free maps, but it really just gives you a preview along with lots of ads, and a list of reprinted maps which it sells at the usual prices. Its Canadian mailing address is in Kleena Kleene, so you have to wonder.

Sources of maps in digital form – federal and provincial

It's possible to download all of the federal government topographic maps for free, but this is not especially easy. (Excuse the rant ....) The federal government web sites are still in disarray, after being totally screwed up by the previous government, who was trying to privatize everything. If you try to search for maps or anything else, you'll get lots of "site not found" errors – or messages like this one: "We couldn't find that Web page. To better serve Canadians, Natural Resources Canada recently re-organized its website and archived older content. As a result, many pages have been removed and the addresses of the remaining pages have changed." (Of course, they don't give you the new addresses.)

Here is the link to download the maps. To use it, you should have some level of computer geekness, enough to understand FTP, and ZIP files.

http://ftp.geogratis.gc.ca/pub/nrcan_rncan/raster/topographic/

Select the 50k folder, then successive folders to get down to the map sheet you want – e.g. 082, F, 06. For a printable PDF, select the file whose name contains "prtpdf". It will download the map as a zip file containing several other useless files, so you need to unzip just the map.

You can download maps in several file formats, but printable PDF is the most useful for most users. The "geotiff" format can be loaded into Avenza Maps, but the file size is quite large. Maps at several scales are available on this site. The 1:250,000 maps are quite useful, but some of the map sheets are just scans of old paper maps – some quite dog-eared with fold lines. (It makes you wonder – did they lose the originals in one of their downsizings?) It's better to buy old paper maps if you can find them.

In BC, topographic maps are produced at a scale of 1:20,000 with a contour interval of 20 m. These maps are commonly called "TRIM maps" (no-one remembers what the acronym means). Generally the contours are quite accurate, but some map sheets have mistakes. Often there is a lack of contour labels, and the every-fifth-line 100 m contours are hard to distinguish. Roads (other than highways) are rather poorly shown, and are not up to date. The federal maps, although not as detailed, are generally more reliable.

The provincial 1:20,000 maps can be downloaded from the GeoBC web site:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/geographic-data-services/topographic-data/topographic-map-viewer

Open the viewer, and zoom in on the map until all the individual map tiles show. Click on the strange download icon (three little red squares) to get a little menu, then click on "map" to display the map sheet, or right-click it and select "save link as ..." to download the file.

The downloaded maps are geoPDF files – they are georeferenced, and can be loaded into Avenza Maps. Or, they can be viewed in Adobe reader. (The way to tell if a PDF file is georeferenced or not is, with newer versions of Adobe reader, open the Tools menu and select "measure". If the tools give you a location in degrees of latitude and longitude, and give a distance measurement in kilometres, then you know the map is georeferenced.)

On the Avenza Maps map store, you can download the federal 1:50,000 maps in the Toporama format for free. Many other maps from various publishers are also available at a cost. For the US, topographic maps at a scale of 1:24,000 can be downloaded for free.

If you have a newer Garmin GPS, maps based on the federal 1:50,000 maps are available on a micro-SD card. The price is about $150 for maps covering all of Canada (although for arctic regions the scale is 1:250,000). For older Garmin units, the maps were available on CDs. Backroad Mapbooks (https://www.backroadmapbooks.com/gps-maps) sells a Garmin-compatible micro-SD card for all of BC based on the 1:20,000 maps for about $150. This is the best option for detailed contour maps on your GPS, along with roads and recreation features. Both map products are sold as bundles with GPS units at many retailers, for a slight saving.

Paper map products based on BC topographic maps

Backroad Mapbooks publishes a variety of maps and mapbooks. They have an outdoor recreation map of the West Kootenays (and similar maps for other regions) at a scale of 1:170,000, on waterproof paper. It's actually a pretty good topographic map of the region, with detailed 100 m contours based on the BC data. You need good eyes, or a magnifying glass. Their maps show a lot of added recreation features such as trails

and campsites. They show logging roads and other backroads, based on the Ministry of Forests GIS data on roads – however, since the government source database is in terrible shape, the roads shown are often not very up-to-date. Also they don't distinguish between presently drivable roads, and old deactivated or overgrown roads – don't expect to be able to drive everywhere the map shows a road.

Backcountry Skiing Canada (https://backcountryskiingcanada.com) sells maps produced by Mighty Bighorn Maps, of several backcountry skiing areas including Kootenay Pass, Whitewater area, Rossland Range, and Kokanee Glacier. These are available at many local outdoor stores and bookstores. They are based on the provincial 1:20,000 contour data.

Index maps

Maps in Canada are organized by a system of map numbers called the National Topographic System (NTS), based on degrees of latitude and longitude. Each large map sheet is divided into 16 smaller map sheets (at larger scale). It's fairly logical once you get used to it. The index map for BC is available at http://ftp.maps.canada.ca/pub/nrcan_rncan/vector/index/index_pdf/NTS-SNRC_Index%205_British_Columbia_300dpi.pdf (and is reproduced on many vendors' web sites).

For the BC 1:20,000 maps, each 1°x2° 1:250,000 map sheet is divided into 100 smaller sheets, each 6' x 12'. So, for example, Nelson is on BC map sheet 82F.044, and on federal 1:50,000 map sheet 82F/6.

Below is an index for 82F, the 1:250,000 map which includes Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, and Creston. It shows the federal index in blue, and the provincial index in black. The same numbering pattern is used on all map sheets.

