The Kootenay Mountaineer

The newsletter for people with year-round pursuits.

2019 Summer Solstice

Message from the Editor

Evolution of the Kootenay Mountaineer Logo

An enormous amount of time and effort was recently spent by Anita Gillmore organizing and scanning old Kootenay Mountaineer newsletters. On the https://www.kootenaymountaineeringclub.ca/club-info/publications/newsletters.html website page you can now find the January/February newsletter issues from 1973 through 2001.

The newsletters were collected by my father, Norman Thyer, a long-time KMCer and regular newsletter contributor. When helping my mother downsize last year, I found copies of newsletters that were not online and thought they might be of interest to KMC members, as I have enjoyed reminiscing while reading some of them. Unfortunately there some missing issues. There is a memorium write-up here. My mother stayed a member of KMC until just a few years ago.









Anita also sent in “The Old Goats of the KMC”. Does anyone know the source of the poetry?

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Article submission guidelines:

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

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

Leave No Trace

By Goody Niosi

In some circles I've become known as being a bit "finicky" – to use a polite term. I've been known to pick up other people's banana peels and apple cores when I'm out on the trail. I have also taken down and carried out masses of flagging tape. I have gathered up dog kibble left on the trail.

I also go to a lot of trouble to go the end of a switchback and avoid even well-trodden "shortcuts."

And still, I think I could do a lot better with following the 7 Leave No Trace (LNT) Principles.

- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts (be careful with fire).
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.



Peter Oostlander suggested another principle we, as KMCers, can add: car pooling. I couldn't agree more! The more people we can shoehorn into one vehicle, the smaller a carbon footprint we leave – and that becomes more important every day.

But I think it's important to note that LNT is not a set of rules to follow. It's not about being a bad person or doing things wrong. LNT is an attitude. It's about loving and respecting nature. It's about wanting to leave our beautiful surroundings as we found them so that others can enjoy them just as we did. It's about having so much respect for our wild places that we want to pass through them softly – with great care.

As KMC members, I believe these principles are especially important. We are a club of hike-minded people; as such, I believe we should set an example for others. Sometimes, the small things can have a big and lasting effect.

I've hiked the trail to Joffre Lakes and my heart has wept to see what humans have done to this magnificent place. All over the world, we are impacting nature, often in horrible ways. Here in the Kootenays, we are fortunate that the access to some of our most beautiful trails is challenging. But the people are coming – more every year. I want each of us to do our part to keep the wilderness wild.

Sure, apple cores and egg shells are organic. But do you really want to come across them as you're hiking? They are also wildlife attractants. Pack it in and pack it out is probably the easiest LNT principle to follow.

Staying on the trail is also easy. Carrying out your toilet paper? Maybe not so simple. But you can use recycled paper and bury it with your poop, right?

At any rate, I don't have nearly as good a handle on LNT as some wonderful sites that go into great detail.

You can check out https://www.leavenotrace.ca/ principles

Or, my favourite site because it also tells you why – and I'm big on knowing why I do something. https://happiestoutdoors.ca/how-to-leave-no-trace/

So now, when you see me on the trail picking up discarded orange rind, you'll know why and hopefully you won't think I'm quite so madly OCD.



Trip Reports

Explore Your Trail

Wednesday, April 17 was the perfect spring day for a hike. Mixed sun and cloud and temperatures in the 10-15 degree range were enjoyed for the entire five hour hike.

Starting a the south end of the Columbia Trail, at the top of the water tower hill above upper Sunningdale, we strolled along Sandpit Road for ten or fifteen minutes until it starts to head down to Billy Creek. At that point we headed up the mountain on an ATV track (road), where we first caught sight of the Falls on Billy Creek, high above us. Shortly we came to a trail that lead us off the road and down in the general direction of Billy Creek. At first the trail was a moderately easy hike, but then as we began to hear Billy Creek rumbling down the mountain in front of us, we turned up and tested our fitness as we climbed the trail toward Billy Creek Falls. When we neared the Falls, we took the short connecting trail to it and stopped for a rest and a photo opportunity.



Then we carried on up the mountain, sometimes scambling over short rock slides and sometimes hugging huge rock outcroppings, until we came to a forested area that we passed through to reach the ridge which took us down and up and across the mountainside to the "Upper Sunningdale Flag". We paused for a second photo opportunity at the flag and checked the "Upper Sunningdale Flag" log books (which are stored in a piece of 4" ABS pipe with a cap). The log books were so wet that we didn't bother trying to sign them, the ticks were rumored to be in abundance at this site, and it wasn't noon yet. So we carried on. Down along the ridge we hiked, to a place where a short connecting trail took us off the ridge and on to the Rusty Chainsaw Trail. Rather than taking the easy way out and followng the Rusty Chainsaw Trail to the nearby Bluffs Trail, we hiked the long way around and found out how the Rusty Chainsaw Trail got its' name. We took a photo to prove it and then carried on. By this time it was after twelve noon, so we found a place in a clearing with nice views of the valley below and with the sun shining on us we stopped for lunch. Then we continued on along the Rusty Chainsaw to the point where it forks off the Bluffs Trail and we followed the Bluffs Trail (the easy way), past the trail leading to the 2nd and 3rd Swamps, and on to the Sunningdale Overlook where the Sunningdale Trail forks off the Bluffs Trail. We took the Sunningdale Trail down the mountainside to the point where it switches back to cross the sandhill overlooking the Upper Sunningdale Park. At that point we went straight through the switchback and carried on along an old trail that hugs the mountainside. Shortly we came to a fork in the trail that we took down and in the general direction of the top of the water tower hill. This trail was well defined and well flagged (and in some places well worn by dirt bikers) and it was pretty much a downhill stroll on a sandy trail. It took us right back to the top of the water tower hill where our vehicles were waiting for us.

We shared the Rusty Chainsaw, Bluffs, and Sunningdale trails with six or seven mountain bikers, a couple of hikers, and a trail runner with his dog.

Our leader was a "tick magnet" as he picked up more than his share of hitchhikers. But everyone was watchful of the others and we dealt with more than a few ticks both on the trails and at the end of the hike.



Participants: Glenn Wallace (Leader), Eric Ackerman, Jenny Baillie, Justin LaFrance, Diane Paolini, Connie Parisotto, Debbie Wallace, Lawrence Wallace, Jill Watson, Ron Zahn

Riondel

Ten members and two non-members toured the Bluebell mine area and walked the four kilometer trail between Riondel and Tam O'Shanter Creek. The wood stave pipeline was built in 1905 by the Canadian Metal Company to transport water from the creek to the mine to generate power to operate the mine's mill and pumps at Bluebell Bay.



The wood cribbing at the pipeline intake dam was visible with the low water in the creek. The remains of an old cabin near the intake in the canyon is where charges of dynamite were ignited to communicate with workers at the water storage dam on Plaid Lake, 6 kilometers upstream.

During periods of low water, the flood gates at the Plaid Lake dam were opened to increase the water flow to the mine via this pipeline.The rock work, wood cribbing and support cables along the pipeline is an excellent example of early mine engineering.



Participants included: Heather Myers, Sara Judith, Ursula Brigl, Mark Jensen, Leon Arishenkoff, Dave Yole, Ingrid Russell, Barb Hanlon, Joanne Emily, Amy Veale, Gundula Brigl and Terry Turner (trip leader)

Mount Sentinel

By Goody Niosi

Leon Arishenkoff could not have picked a finer day to tackle Mount Sentinel above Castlegar than Friday April 12.

The sky was blue, the air was clear, the grass was green, the early spring flowers were in full bloom and everyone was rarin' to go.

I'd never been up Mount Sentinel although god knows I'd tried, driving in vain up and down Terrace Road last year searching for the trailhead. Happily, Leon knew where it was and now, so do I and the secret is out.

Our group of 16 plunged over the edge of the ditch, up the other side, trudged briefly along an access road and very quickly hit the trail proper.



It was full-on spring. The views were brilliant the entire way. The trail was precipitous and continued to be relentlessly steep pretty much the entire way up. Some areas had mild exposure but no one seemed to have any issues. We hit viewpoint after viewpoint for photo-op after photo-op.



Doug Clark and Chris Cowan parted ways with us at our snack stop – they had snowshoes strapped to their packs and head lamps inside those packs, set for a much longer trip than the rest of us had in mind.

We continued up until we arrived at a glorious viewpoint just shy of the snow line. This is where a small group decided to call it a day. The rest of us chose to soldier on. About five minutes after continuing

along the ridge we were post holing pretty deeply. Those of us without gaiters got wet feet. Happily, no one complained (much).



We eventually hit the road, went up another few minutes and arrived at our destination: a super viewpoint with big sun-warmed rocks. This is where we had lunch and a brief rest before heading back down. Officially, we had gained 822 metres. We caught up with our other group on the way down. I should point out that we went down with due care. Did I mention steep?

The hike took five hours from start to finish. More than one of us declared this to be our new favourite Castlegar trek. Leon had mentioned earlier that he rarely sees anyone on this trail. I suspect that's about to change.

We were Goody Niosi, Sheila Sinkie, Kathleen Godwin, Jill Watson, Jenny Bailie, Diane Paolini, Connie Parisotto, P'nina Shames, Ralph Troan, Justin La France, Doug Clark, Chris Cowan, Jim Guido, Ted Ibrahim, Phil Best and Leon Arishenkoff.





Svoboda Trails

By Goody Niosi

Near the top of Upper Log Jam (I think), plowing through wet snow, our glorious leader, Robin, said, "The next three minutes may not be a lot of fun."

I noted that this implied that the rest of the hike had been fun to this point.

Not for the first time that on that memorable morning of April 7, Robin turned and gave me a look.

Although, truth be told, never has not having fun been so much fun. Hey – it was a KMC hike – so it's fun, right?

Robin started off with a list of 24 participants for the trails up Svoboda. It rained during the night. It was raining when people woke up. Five of us showed up at the parking lot above Nelson. And that's how to weed out the tough from the really tough.



I should also mention that it was cold. But what really deserves a tip of the hat is that Robin and Shannon had done this "shoulder-season" hike the day before – a recce trip – and had found the least painful way for us to get to the top lookout. They personally had absorbed all the pain, post holing and wet feet the day before.

I was thrilled to be out because I had never done these trails. A new experience! Yay!

New views to enjoy – of clouds, fog and mist. We trudged up on Frog Jam and then a road and then Log Jam and it rained and there were puddles and a bit of ice here and there and wet snow. At the top we opted for a fast snack – no lolling on benches and soaking up the sun.



And then, on the way down, it happened. There was a glimmer of sun, a few shadows on the ground – a patch of blue sky and – yes! Sun! And we even had views!

Very exciting!

There were some complaints related to starting later in the day so that we would have had sun all day. There was a certain amount of whining about wetness. But since the unofficial KMC rule is that what happens on the trail stays on the trail, I won't name names. (Actually, I'm pleading the fifth here).

Thank goodness Robin works with kids. She's heard it all before and knows how to ignore it gracefully and with a great deal of aplomb.

And yes, we had a terrific time.



We were Robin Sheppard, Goody Niosi, Kathleen Nichol, Shannon May, Shelley Birston

Mt. Elgood, Plewman and Lepsoe

By Goody Niosi

By late April, it seemed that most stalwart KMCers had packed their snowshoes away. But not us. Oh no! When Chris Cowan announced a snowshoe up Mount Elgood, Plewman and Lepsoe on April 28, we (meaning I) put our snow baskets back on, dug out our snowshoes, searched out our ice axes and signed up for the adventure.

Yes, there were only three of us but such a triumvirate (or was it a tripod? Or a triplex? Or triplets?)



The first feature of the morning: nice hard snow so no arduous trail breaking at any point. Better yet, it wasnt sticky! The second feature: such a sky! We had sun and clouds rain and snow in the distance, the occasional flurry higher up and big cumulus clouds. It was, in other words, a beauty of a day.

We set off for Elgood first. It started off as a nice traverse through a pretty forest and then came the steep part: the push for the top. This is why we had brought ice axes. After much huffing and puffing we got there! Hurrah! And now we could see the beautiful long ridge leading up to Plewman as well as towering Old Glory poking up his head. And the clouds kept rolling.



After a snack, we pushed on and made Plewman for lunch feeling like we were sitting on top of the world.

After that we re-traced our steps, staying well clear of the gorgeous big cornices and struggled up Lepsoe. Yes struggled. Going uphill after lunch sucks just a tiny bit. I recall some creative whining. Are we there yet? (was that me?)



But then the good part: downhill. We chose the north ridge because its the fastest and the snow was good. As Chris (great and glorious leader) said, he wouldn't want to do it in sticky snow. We got down pretty darn fast and then it was just a walk in the park through the old cedars to Strawberry Pass where we had left our second vehicle.

It was as good a snowshoe day as weve had this winter and we ended the day with plans for another one. Yes, I know, rumour has it that its spring. But still there is, after all, still snow In them thar hills.

We were Chris Cowan, Scott Wilson and Goody Niosi.



Mount Sentinel #2

By Goody Niosi

Editor's Note:

Goody expounds exuberantly about the flowers. But she did that in more than one report, so I've collected her flower pictures into their own report because I have no idea of which picture goes with which description.



At least 11 of the 14 people who set out to hike up Mount Sentinel on May 4 appeared to understand that it was, indeed, a hike. Three of us (I am not naming names - Scott, James and I) knew better. One look at all the camas, scorpion weed, balsamroot, shooting stars etc. etc. and we knew this was a flower walk designed to distract photographers and slow down the entire group.

At first we felt the tiniest bit guilty. That lasted about 10 seconds. Then the squealing began: ohmygosh!!! Look at that field of blue! Did you see the colour on that flower? Oh my! That is the biggest balsamroot Ive ever seen!

And so it went for almost three hours to the top where we had lunch. Amazingly, the hiking group did not chastise us; in fact, they waited patiently at various spots for us to catch up.

Heres the best thing about hiking through fields of amazing flowers - we barely noticed the steepness of the grade. And it is very steep.



It should also be noted that May 4 was the warmest day of the year so far and the first day that a goodly contingent of us were brave enough to break out our shorts. Ticks be damned!

It was my third time up the mountain this

season and by far the most delightful one (see ravings about flowers above). Mount Sentinel deserves to be madly popular. We were all enthralled by the views that are pretty well constant from start to finish.

Abby, as always, did a brilliant job of leading/ organizing. I put it down to her experience with Girl Guides, although I suspect we were a more unruly mob.

At any rate, after a delightful lunch, perched high up with views all around, we packed up and headed down. Depending on comfort with gravity, the descent is either fast and fun or OMG - this is nuts!



But we all made it down and gave the hike the highest rating. Some of us then went home to drool over our flower photos.



We were Abby Wilson, Scott Wilson, Dylan Saunders, Julian Belli-Bivar, Sara Judith, Ross Bates, James Knoop, Genevieve Beals, Scott Matson, Ian Main, Vivian Lenardon, Goody Niosi, Abigail Steel, Katie McEwen.

Lightning Strike

By Goody Niosi

Just when we thought we could pack away our snowshoes for good, Chris Cowan announced yet another irresistible trip, this time to Lightning Strike at Kootenay Pass.

A good contingent of stalwart KMCers said, Sure. Why not? and at about 9.30 a.m. on May 1 we set off. Chris had suggested bringing crampons and ice axes. Most of duly brought them although some of us (me!) chose to leave them in the trunk of the car.



We set off up the road and deked right very quickly after starting, opting to take the less well-known Lightning Ridge route with the idea of coming back on Ripple Ridge. I insisted that this route had a gentle uphill angle. I was not counting on the fact that all traces of skin tracks had long since vanished and we willy-nilly started heading straight uphill.

I should mention that a bit of whining halfway up might have been permissible but Jan started long before that. In fact, I believe she threatened tears while we were still putting our snowshoes on. And somewhere along the line there was a fairly noisy “Are we there yet?” At that point, sadly, we had not even reached the first false summit.

Chris had opted for crampons the entire way. The rest of us were in snowshoes and this served us well when we hit the Hilary Step. We more or less bum-slid down or eased ourselves down sideways. Chris, emboldened by crampons and an ice-axe chose to find a different way down. For a while we lost sight of him and then there he was: coming down backwards, digging in his ice-axe and being very much the mountaineer negotiating K2.



After a fair amount of huffing and puffing we made it up the ridge to the summit where we had fabulous views and a good chow-down on lunch.



It was here that Ron and Jan decided theyd had enough of snowshoes and changed into crampons: new crampons crampons they had not previously worn. There was some discussion about what to do with the long pieces of tape and how to secure the devices. This, I thought. Is not going to end well.

So back on the road (so to speak) heading to Ripple Ridge. But then, after a nice downhill, we came to the first pesky uphill that would allow us to stay on the ridge. Well, I said, we could go down on this nice easy slope here. Sure, Chris (great and glorious leader) said. I was, of course, not taking into account (again) the lack of any sort of skin track.



So we merrily went down. And I should note here that there was more than one wee stop for crampon adjustments - but I wont name names.

Well, it seems that the downhill was so easy and so much fun that we went just a tad too far. And being the big person that I am, I will admit right now that it was all my fault. (not really it was the fault of lack of skin tracks). So we had to go back up again and we got to the pass handily thanks to great and glorious leaders GPS.



Then there was a bit more adjustment of crampons (again not naming names) and we got back to the parking lot.

Yes we had a fabulous day. Of course we did! Wonderful, slightly daft people adventuring in a glorious place.



We were Chris Cowan, Leon Arishenkoff, Cecilia Hobson, Phil Best, Jan Osborne, Ron Osborne, Goody Niosi

Butter Trails

By Goody Niosi

We had a terrific group – 14 of us – for our hike up the Butter trails just north of New Denver.

I got lucky with the weather on May 11 – either that or it was the fact that our personal weatherman (Chris Cowan) was with us; I believe he is our guarantee of sunshine. Or am I simply deluded?

We set off up the trail at about 9.30 a.m. It didn't take long for people to notice that the trail was rather fine. In fact – raked and swept. I explained that whenever I organize a KMC hike, I send my personal trail fairies out the night before to perfectly groom the trail so that we have excellent conditions.

For some reason, no one bought it. They preferred to believe that the mountain bikers had been out in recent days cleaning up.

Although the Butter trail is a favourite with local mountain bikers, it's a multi-use trail and makes for a great hike. Elevation gain is about 800 metres but it's rarely steep and traverses pretty woods.

Halfway up we had to walk on the road for about 10 minutes. This is a favourite bear hangout as evidenced by a ton of scat. I suspect we enjoyed great safety in numbers.

After a brief snack stop at the lookout with gorgeous views over the lake and the Valhallas we soldiered on to the top for lunch. We soaked up the sun and took our time – especially one group which shall go unnamed (Krista, Carmen and Denise) who brought a skin of grape juice (fermented) and lots of containers of treats – a buffet if you will.

I am going to hire them along with my trail sweeping fairies for my next trip. Catered hiking!

We got back to the vehicles 6.4 hours after setting out – a super day!



We were: Kathryn Kimmerly, Ralph Troan, Jenny Latremouille, Alison Etter, Denise Rush, Krista Bourke, Carmen Norberg-Proctor, Norm Koerber, Chris Cowan, Leon Arishenkoff, Gundula Brigl, James Knoop, Gabriel Bouvet, Goody Niosi.

Bigwood/Smallwood

By Goody Niosi

Marilyn Miller picked a perfect day to lead a big group (16!) up and down the Bigwood/Smallwood trails on May 19. The previous week had been cool and showery. We were blessed with sunshine and temperatures just right for grunting uphill.



We gathered at 10 a.m. and set out at about 10.15 up the Bigwood trail to the viewpoint. To our delight we had three brand new KMC members with us. Depending on who we were, we were either determined not to scare them away or we were set upon scandalizing them thoroughly. Marilyn insisted we keep them entertained so I told my lamest joke at the very start, which elicited the expected number of groans and eye-rolls.

We also explained to the newbies that given there were 16 of us and that KMC allows a 10% attrition rate, we could lose 1.6 people. We would however, do our best not to ditch them until they had been on at least a few more official hikes.



We reached the viewpoint about 1 hour and 15 minutes after setting out and spent a good half-hour lolling in the sunshine, enjoying the views, chowing down on sandwiches and snacks and generally lapping up the day.

When we were finally done, we headed down Smallwood along the ridge. When we arrived at the road, we began the last section of the day: about 5K along a road. “A road!” I said. “Noooo!”

I proceeded to whine and complain loudly. Sadly, my whinging about the road had no effect whatsoever; it seems everyone else was having a lovely time chatting and ambling back to the cars. So I sucked it up and joined in the conversation and there we were – back at the cars in no time.

Lovely day – wonderful group – and beautifully organized. And the newbies? Well, darn, they seemed to be pretty unanimous about coming back for more.

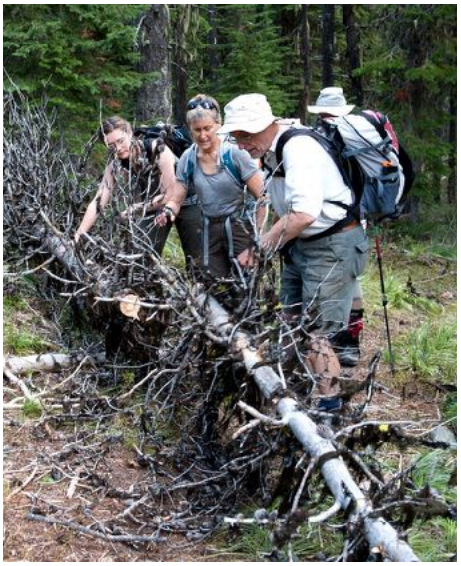


We were: Eric Marks, Alison Etter, Goody Niosi, Brent Dorman, Val Dorman, Incke Tuit, Hazel Beynon, Ed Beynon, Kelly Campbell, Andrea Vowell, Kathleen Nichol, Nancy Suuban, Janet Stephens, Louise Hammerich, Sandra England, Marilyn Miller.

Trail Clearing on Lost Mountain



This trip was originally scheduled for later on in June, but spring has advanced fairly quickly, with the snow melting a bit ahead of average. We got reports of quite a bit of deadfall on the trail, so why not get it done. Also I was keen to try out the 2 long and big toothed folding saws recently purchased for the club. Perhaps the relatively short notice was the reason only 5 people signed up for this event. A couple of folks sent their regrets, unable to join us due to injury or other commitments.



Anyways whatever was lacking in volume was made up for in terms of enthusiasm, except perhaps for the trip leader, who didn’t show up in Salmo at the appointed time of 8 AM, or so the email had said. Leader’s phone rang in Castlegar at 10 after 8.. “Where are you?”…”At home”… OMG… I don’t even schedule for 8 AM in the winter short days… why the heck did I do that? So people ended up with most having a bit more coffee and 45 mins late heading up the trail, also 45 minutes later into what was a pretty warm day. At least the early part of the trail is mostly shaded.

We didn’t find too much in the way of deadfall till a km or two in, when the new saws began to prove their worth, with quite a few clumps of blowdown we had to

take care of. The saws were so impressive there was some competition about who was gonna get to use them.

I think we should maybe purchase one or two more. Peter Tchir chomped on the blowdown like a grizzly tearing up a stump for ants; there were plenty more to chomp on as we leap frogged past each other to discover yet another cache of blowdown obstacles. I think we were about 45 mins behind the usual time of reaching the half way point, and the section between the halfway view bench and where the trail levels off and heads northwest in the alpine forest proved the toughest, with a couple of patches that proved too difficult to deal with using hand tools, but easy workarounds were made with just a little cutting.



Once into the little alpine trees, there was no more work to do except hoofing ourselves up the hill, a not insignificant task given the 1100 total elevation gain of this hike. I always seem to be reminded of this just as we get out of the trees and see the summit still a bit away! The snow patches near and above treeline provided welcome relief from heat and thirst, but not much in the way of boot skiing this year. Once again we're reminded that this hike needs a good supply of H2O on summer days, and my 2.5 litres was not sufficient, being augmented with a good supply of slush.



We had a nice long break at the summit in sunny conditions with a gentle breeze. Peter, being the 'local' present, was a good resource naming all the landmarks big and small, that we could see. First ascent and good hike for Jessie, a newbie in Nelson, as well as Abigail, newly resident in Rossland.



On the way back it's surprisingly easy to follow the summit ridge too far to the right…so maybe next time we'll put in a few more downward diamonds marking the descent ridge, in case of anyone getting up there in cloud without navigation gear.

We finished off some more cutting on the upper sections that we had left pending "enough energy" on the descent. We didn't have much to do after a break (and a little more wood tick paranoia…there were more of these beasties than I've seen here before) at the half way viewpoint and ended up back at the cars around 5 PM, very happy with a job well done and a great hike. Thanks to Phil & Vicki for the excellent photo mementos.

Thanks everyone who participated and those who wanted to help but couldn't make it. You'll get another opportunity!



We were Jessie Booker, Abigail Steel, Peter Tchir, Vicki Hart, Phil Best, Chris Cowan.

Chris. (Trails Director)

Mount Plewman Traverse

By Goody Niosi



If you had to pick a day for a good, longish hike, you couldn't have asked for a better one than Friday June 14. Temperatures hovered in the high twenties but that included a pleasant breeze, which not only kept us comfortable but also discouraged flying insects. And that might explain why there were 14 of us with not a single last-minute cancellation.

We managed to meet at the Strawberry Pass trailhead on time and then figure out the extremely complicated mathematics of shuttling cars to the Plewman trailhead and leaving enough down there to get us back.

I'm proud to say we did it – and that handled the toughest part of the day.



Walking through the old growth forest was quite wonderful. We stopped for a snack shortly after catching our first views of beautiful snow-dappled Old Glory and then continued on to Mount Plewman. This is where the snow began and we pulled on our gaiters. And yes, I felt pretty darn chuffed that I'd thought to mention bringing them. I am not usually known for such brilliant foresight.

At the top, we relaxed for a fair bit, munching on lunch while enjoying stunning views and good company. And then we headed downhill. It was here that the fun began. Once we reached the bottom of the Plewman Ridge, we headed up and over the next ridge and down to another saddle. I'm sure all these small ridges have names but I don't know them. At any rate, there was another snow-covered ridge to climb before reaching the Plewman trail.

"Well," I said, eyeing yet another uphill – "We could go up or we could just bushwhack down here and meet up with the trail below us." There was not a single dissenting voice to the idea so off we went, plunging (or gingerly stepping) down and down. We were spread all over the hill like a bunch of cats defying being herded. And pretty darn soon a couple of yells rose up, "Trail!"



And so we found the trail and barrelled on down, stepping through snow again and over a bit of deadfall here and there before making it to the trailhead where, excitingly, there were enough cars to take everyone back to Strawberry Pass.

Another great day hiking with a wonderful, adventure-loving KMC group.



We were: Kathryn Kimmerly, Tom Kessler, Linda Allis, Scott Wilson, Jill Watson, Mike Kew, Norm Koerber, Tom Johnston, Al Sheppard, Pat Sheppard, Jenny Baillie, Phil Best, Sandra England, Goody Niosi

Mel Dianna

4 members did this trip! I forgot to take a picture. :(

It was a beautiful Easter morning full of glacier lilies, spring beauties, and sunshine! Four of us met up to run laps at the Mel Deanna - a great route for trail running with lots of little up and downs, interesting features, and soft footing along the forest floor. We agreed to stick together at a moderate pace and just see how many laps around the ponds we felt like. Doug had already set the bar very high by running all the way up the highway from Castlegar to meet us at the trailhead! So no one was looking to break any speed records - we did a couple easy laps and then called it a day. It was a great outing!

We were: Scott Wilson, Doug Clark, Linda Bradley, and Abby Wilson

East Kootenay Mountain Biking

Four KMC members met up with trip leaders Jocelyne Martin and Tom Braumandl on May long weekend to explore mountain biking options in the East Kootenays. Tom and Jocelyne have recently moved from Nelson to Jocelyne's family home at Wasa Lake, which was our headquarters for the weekend.



Photo of Jocelyne's and Tom's lovely lake front on Wasa Lake. The lake level is low until the Kootenay River level rises.

Saturday's rides saw us break into two groups. One group biked the Mayook trail, which is a 30 km section of the Great Trail, between Cranbrook and Wardner. The second group biked the more technical trails in the Cranbrook Community Forest. The day was cloudy and cool with a threat of rain always looming but never materializing. Both groups agreed their respective rides were fun and challenging. The Community Forest trails are numerous, safe and diverse from beginner to advanced levels.

Saturday evening, we enjoyed a pot luck dinner at Jocelyne's and Tom's place on Wasa Lake. The food and drink were excellent and the conversation interesting, including trying to guess which Kimberley junior ski racer in a 50 year old photo was Jocelyne. Nobody picked the right little girl.

Sunday, we headed up the highway to Fairmont and spent the day biking trails on the opposite side of Columbia Lake from the highway. Tom, whose knowledge of flora is amazing, educated us on the variety of plants and trees that we passed along the way. One of the exciting parts of the day was where the trail traveled through a series of a dozen kettles (glacial carved potholes). This trail section is called 'Whoops'. The kettles are about 15 metres across and 10 metres deep. If you are brave enough to 'let her rip', a series of 'whoopees' will be reflexively exclaimed as you wheel down the steep slope into the kettle and tear up the equally steep slope of the other side. Big smiles all around.



On the trail. Left to right: Page Wasson, Rob Moote, Linda Clark, Tom Braumandl, Doug Clark

(photo by Jocelyne)

Thanks to Jocelyne and Tom for opening their home, surrounding countryside and trails to us. It left us wanting to return to explore more of the East side of the Kootenays.

(Trip Reporter: Doug Clark)

Trail Building – White Queen Summer Route

By Goody Niosi



Thanks to the dreams, hard work, careful planning and sheer madness of Chris Cowan, KMC members will soon have a summer route up White Queen from the cross-country parking lot.

Yep – Chris had been talking about it for a while and On June 18, five of us set out to find/create/stomp out and flag a route for the trail builders. We armed ourselves with flagging tape in neon pink, a bunch of loppers and other bits of gear.

I had the foresight to carry Band-Aids and other first aid paraphernalia.

We walked up the logging road – four tall guys with long legs – and me. I bravely volunteered to flag. We stuck to the road until we were near the old mine. (with many complaints from various quarters – what? Was that me swearing not-so-under-my-breath about a road?) At that point, Chris, Peter and Dave consulted a selection of maps and GPS tools.





We headed up into the bush. There were alders. There were rhododendrons. There were unnamed prickly bushes. There was blowdown. There were short evergreens with prickly needles.

Peter wore long pants. The rest of us were idiots.

We finally made it up to what is now officially called "Goody's Meadow" – just below Chris' Lookout. Was there a discussion here about which route to take? Possibly. A compromise: we had a snack at Chris' Lookout and then came down to flag the trail through Goody's Meadow, which, I have to humbly admit, was by far the better route.

Pretty soon we were scrambling up rock. "Hey," Chris said. "Hikers don't mind if they have to use their hands now and then!"

This is where long legs came in handy. I found another route that did not involve a rapid evolution to the status of mountain goat.

We were fairly near the top when we ran out of flagging tape. Three rolls – gone. Well, I did have a smidge and used it with extreme care until we didn't need it any longer – which was just at the last boost to the summit.

And there we were: four hours and 15 minutes later. Whew!





Even on snowshoes and breaking trail it usually takes no more than three hours. And no sooner had we settled down on a non-snowy patch of rock and grass than up the other side comes Guy Woods, tramping up on his own. Clearly, there were more than 5 mad bushwhackers out on a sunny day when they could have been lounging on a patio with a cool Lucky.

It was on our way down that we began rating the trip on the new bushwhack scale. Dave insisted it was a mere BW0.5. I pointed out that my knee was bleeding, therefore making it a category BW4. Chris insisted that this rating required at least three decent injuries. I promptly acquired two more. BW4 it was.

And so back down and as we went, we decided it was a pretty darn good route – with sufficient scope for the trail builders to be creative.

As a final note, I'd like to say that once the trail is built, it really will be worthwhile. White Queen is almost as pretty in the summer as it is in the winter. Meanwhile, if you love bushwhacking and its accompanying excuses for creative cursing, feel free to check out our flagged route.





We were: Chris Cowan, Dave St. Dennis, Peter Tchir, Phil Best, Goody Niosi.















Goody's Flowers

















The Old Goats of the K.M.C

We love the mountains, the forests, the rushing streams,
The granite grey and bare, the alpine meadows fair.
We love the Selkirks, the Purcells, the Monashees,
And so we joined the K.M.C.
We're in the club now, we go on trips now,
We go to hiking camps in places fresh.
We go to rock school, we go to slide shows,
We work to save the wilderness.

Trips rated B2 or Vinqoif A1 we like,
The Sunday dawn we greet, at South Slocan we meet,
We drive up logging roads rutted for miles and miles
And full of hope we start to hike.
We use our ice axe, we swing our ski poles,
For greater speed we wear our high tech boots
But though we struggle we never catch up
The nimble K.M.C. Old Goats.

They look for trips designated X24,
They may have been before, but there're new routes to score,
More heights to scale, bush to whack, glacial streams to cross
And so they're always game for more.
They straddle bergschrunds, cross mighty snow fields,
Rappel clown Dag's north face with slings and ropes.
They skip through rock slides, glissade down ice calls;
Those nimble K.M.C. Old Goats.