



## RAVENS BLUFFS – NOV. 2

Settling for a local moderate hike in between rain filled days, proved to be a good choice. Nineteen hikers showed up! The promised sun lit up the revived forest, that had transformed in the past few weeks from shriveled foliage and bone-dry dusty trails to moist colorful leaves and a strong scent of earth.

The plan was to park at the Inch Creek Hatchery as we usually did, but that is no longer possible. There were “No Trespassing!” signs there and heavy machines busy excavating. So we drove back to Hawkins Pickle Road, and crossed over the CPR tracks, parking at the Norrish Creek bridge.



Sheri & Joan were our guides on this hike. I'd done it several times before, but this mountain was very familiar to them. They met on it and formed a group called “Hiker Babes”, that hike it almost weekly. We set out just before 10:00am, immediately crossing the busy CPR tracks, right by the bright graffiti painted bridge. It wasn't long before Sheri branched left off the main trail that followed alongside Norrish Creek. The ground and leaves sparkled from a coating of frost. Round stones lined the trail that led us to the nudist beach (a bit too chilly for that). Turquoise letters on a log read,

“Welcome Naturalists”. A campsite with a fire pit surrounded by benches beside a sandy beach and an iron sign that read, “Winston's Beach”, laid claim to the “Naturalists” territory. A Dipper bird curtsied to us from a stone in the river as we passed by.



From there a detour trail angled upwards, and away from the higher trail along the edge of the bank above the creek. The atmospheric rivers one year prior had caused a large section of the bank to slide away, leaving sections of the trail too close to an overhang. Soon the trail reconnected with the main trail. Then the steep ascent began till the T-junction, where we turned left, crossing over a log tree bridge, and soon arriving at the tiny cabin built on the edge of a bluff.

Wulf Pilang, who is now 81 years old, built most of these trails and about 5-6 secluded shelter-huts, including the Dewdney Grind hut, which was built in memory of Ben Von Hardenburg who died in a helicopter crash in 2003. His older brother, who I met there, is also a helicopter pilot and he



supplied Wulf with the materials for the cabin. Wulf continues to work on building cabins, having just completed one farther north.



About 15 minutes after leaving the cabin, we arrived at the paragliders' launch where we regrouped and had lunch. A broad bluff offered expansive views to the southwest, of the west end of Sumas Mt, the Fraser Valley with Matsqui Flats in the distance and even the Mission bridge to the right. From there we parted ways with 7 hikers, who opted to do the loop to the left, which brought them back to the creek. The rest of us backtracked and stayed straight (left) at the T-junction.



This led us to the two south-facing viewpoints where we could see all of Sumas Mt with the Fraser River at its base, and Deroche to the left. Mt. Baker stayed hidden behind cloud, but Slesse & Tomyhoi stood out on the snowy horizon. A new bench decorated the first of the two viewpoints. Sheri had helped carry wood and build the bench in memory of her friend, Wanda who passed away this year.

By 2:00pm we were back at the parking area, surprised to see the other group arriving within minutes of us. Six of us headed over to the Historic Dewdney Pub where we had some delicious clam chowder soup. Oh, and we found a geocache on the hike, but I won't tell you where.

Stats: 8 km / 605m gain / 471m high point

Participants: Joan A (guest), Carol A, Jerry B, Helen C (guest), David G, Johnny G, Darlene G, Sheri K, Chris L, Mary R, Len, Miriam & Richard S (guest), Ling S, Dave S, Dave S, Cathy Y, Case & **Joce T**

## ELK MT. – Nov. 2



Great day hiking Elk Mountain with Dave B, John M, Maurice D and Iraj. 10km. 800 meter. My temple short distance away from noise and hustle bustle of city.



by **Iraj F**

## VEDDER MT. RIDGE TRAIL - NOV. 16

What a day to climb a mountain, a comfortable temperature and a 'blue bird' sky. It doesn't get much better!!!! In all 10 club members (Liz L., Wayne H., Irene H., Simon H., Johnny G., Lori Y., Allan S., Mark S., Iraj F., & Paul L. met me at the MB lower parking area where car-pooling was arranged for the 3.5 km drive up to the parking area on Parmenter Rd at the start of Tower Rd. The .7km section of Tower Rd. to the trail head was very icy in some areas, driving up would have been challenging even with a 4X4, better to be walked.



## SNOWCAMP MT. - Nov. 19

We had a group of five, including great trailbreakers to get us past the end of the track left by a prior group. We made it to our destination; Snowcamp with a 9 am start & 6 pm back to the car with about an hour and a bit hiking back with headlamps. Initially booted up first 2 km before putting on the snowshoes and leaving them on for the rest of the day out and back.



Until one reaches the summit area this route is very much a walk through the forest, but with brilliant beams of sunlight streaming through the forest canopy accentuating the glossy green of the mossy forest floor. It was a spectacular sight. We encountered numerous blowdowns across the trail, small stuff easy to get over or around.



At the 3km point we stopped at the Yarrow Lookout with the Village and the Vedder Canal directly below. Continuing on and upward we crossed the boardwalk over the swampy tarn, up and over the rock walls with the aid of the fixed chain and rope railings and onto the summit. The view up the Chilliwack River Valley and the full length of the Cheam Range to the east and to Mt. Baker to the south were stunning. Interesting we met four other hikers along the trail. They were all COC members.



As I said earlier, it doesn't get any better! By **Gary Baker**



There was a most interesting temperature range; air inversion. Started out with  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  (9 am), rising to  $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$  within an hour and half by the west side of the skyline ridge trail. Our first break was at the T-junction, got up to  $+10^{\circ}\text{C}$ .; was near zero at Snowcamp summit, and by time we returned it had dropped to  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$ .



By **Karl V**



## KELLY MT – NOV. 27



It was an awesome day to Kelly Peak today, with a group total of 13 to start (9:00 am), and 11 making it to the summit for lunch (11:30 am). We got back to the car 1:30 p.m. Many thanks to the lead people breaking trail. There was about 30 cm powder overnight in the parking area, and higher up.



We had snow flurries, and some sun too. Got pretty cold at -10 at the lookout so we did not linger much after lunch, and then headed back. It was much more pleasant in the protective shelter of the forest.



Thank you all everyone to making this a fulfilling snow fun event.

By **Karl V**

## COC TRAIL MAINTENANCE - NOVEMBER

The fire risk and several high wind events over the last few months has resulted in a build-up of significant blow downs on most trails in our area. COC members carried out deadfall removal on sections of the Trans Canada Trail in the Chilliwack River valley as follows.

Tamihi Section, 2.5 km extending along the river west of Tamihi Campground. A huge cottonwood trunk across the trail was skillfully cut by Jim S and Ross Y to allow trail access. There were also numerous small trees down across the trail which were removed by other members of the crew.



Tolmie Section, 5.8 km which extends from the Tamihi Campground east to Anderson Creek by Allison Pool. Numerous clusters of large cottonwood and fir trees across the trail were removed.





The east half of the Thurston Section, 2 km from the Thurston campground to Borden Creek was a pleasant hike and included removal of minor blowdowns across the trail.

The Fishermen's section, 2 km of trail from Borden Creek to Slesse Creek bridge was inspected and cleared of minor blowdowns. In addition, the section of trail by the Fish Hatchery where Chilliwack Lake Road and the trail below were damaged by a mud slide in November 2021 was inspected. The repairs of the trail and road have been completed by the contractor and this section of the TCT is now open. Several trees were removed from the trail.



In addition, several days were spent laying out the new access route to the trailhead which will be required because of proposed logging operations closing the existing access from Tower Road.



In addition, on 2 Nov, Jim A and Patrick R completed an inspection of the TCT from Brodie on the Coquihalla to Brookmere where significant damage to bridges, rail bed washouts and deadfall were noted. On 13 Nov, they also conducted a bush wack inspection of a potential bypass route at Juliet on the Coquihalla.

The Vedder Mountain Ridge Trail 4.8 km, numerous small snags and trees across the trail were removed, two by-pass routes were cleared to improve safe access and the northwest viewing area at the summit was also cleared.







There will be lots of work next year to open the TCT requiring realignment with the Trans Mountain Pipeline route, Ministry of Transportation new bridge construction and sections of erosion of the KVR rail corridor and bridges.

The trail work this month was

carried out on 7 days and thankfully 22 club members participated on at least one trail maintenance activity. Many hands make light work - Jim A, Patrick R, Jim S, Gary A, Gary B, Ross Y, Sue A, Don F, John L, Heinz & Em B, Tim Y, David B, Christine C, Susan R, Stelian A, Paul L, Leora P, Lori Y, Annette W, Kelly H, Johnny G. Well Done!

By **Jim A**

### VEDDER MOUNTAIN RIDGE TRAIL MAINTENANCE WORK DAY - NOV. 21



What a crazy start to the day. At first I had little info on how many folks (only 2 confirmed) were planning to get involved as the reply links to me were not functioning properly; thanks to Tim I now know why. So, I found myself waiting at the 'original' meet up location wondering how many people were coming. Jim A. called asking if I knew where Johnny G. might be (I had no idea). Jim told me that Tim Y., Ross Y. and Sue A. were with him at the Dog Park. Suddenly it looked that we would be a group of 6. Things were looking up, as I considered a work party of 5-8, in most situations, ideal to move quickly and to keep everyone involved and busy all of the time. Suddenly Johnny appeared (he had been up in the new upper MB parking area) followed within a minute or two by Jim with a full car.



Jim then took the lead in his trusty, go anywhere, RAVA 4. Johnny joined me and we followed them up the the Tower Rd. turn off. The first section of Tower Rd. is not car, vehicle friendly so I stopped to gear down into 4X4 Low. That is when we noticed Jim backing down from the first boulder strewn, steep section of the road up to the trail head parking area. He did this reverse/forward dance several times as his passengers stood b. They had disembarked to give the car more ground clearance. It worked, he cleared the boulders, everyone climbed aboard and up the road they went. In 4WD Low I just slowly climbed over the boulders and followed them up. It was my hope that we would clear all the blow downs on the trail and build two short bypasses around sections of the trail that I considered were a safety or terrain concern. We all accomplished this and considerably more. Along the length of the trail, we removed several dozen snags (standing dead trees) next to the trail, cleared tree limbs to enhance the view angles at the 'North Lookout' and removed over hanging branches to improve the seating area at the 'South Lookout'.

What a day, we accomplished way more than I had even considered. Overall, this trail is in the best shape it has been many years. A big thanks folks!

By **Gary B** & photos by **Kelly Hawe**



## RUTHIE OLTMANN (1937-2022): MOUNTAIN VOCATION



Some in the Chilliwack Outdoor Club might remember, with some fondness, the August 2013 trip we did into Mount Assiniboine. We had 30 in the group (rather large) and it was a full trip with multiple treks in the area. Marilyn Cram and Karl Ricker were with us (one of the last full trips with Marilyn). I arranged the trip with Ruthie Oltmann (we booked all the compact wooden huts), but on November 13 2022 Ruthie crossed the river on the next stage of her journey.

Ruthie very much lived a mountain vocation and she was one of the finest historians and chroniclers of mountain life and culture. I spent many lovely moments with Ruthie and Karin and I visited her at the Hawthorne Assisted Living Community in August this year after some treks in the Louise-Icefields area.



Ruthie gave me some of her 1<sup>st</sup> edition books on cross country skiing in the Kananaskis (the 1<sup>st</sup> of its genre), her biography of Lizzie Rummel a must read, her autobiography,

*Ruthie's Trails: A Lifetime of Adventure*, a beauty not to miss and her books on the Kananaskis, including *My Valley: The Kananaskis* worthy of many a read. Ruthie began her hostel custodian life in 1970 at Spray River Hostel (near Banff), but she was the custodian for many years at Ribbon Creek Hostel (where COC stayed on another trip) in the Kananaskis on our way to Waterton. Ruthie was, for a period of time, The Regional Supervisor of Information Services for Kananaskis Country, and her initial book on the Kananaskis, *The Valley of Rumours...the Kananaskis* (1976) a bounty not to miss.

Ruthie had a fondness for the Skoki area (where she had worked with Lizzie Rummel) and when we were with her in August, we asked her if she had a lingering wish. She asked if we could arrange for her to return to Skoki for a visit, a helicopter trip the only way given her deteriorating health. I checked out the possibility of indulging such a wish for next summer, and the Skoki team were willing to support such a request, but the work needed to get Park support to helicopter her in involved much bureaucratic red tape. We talked much about her years of mountain life and a spacious window in the Care Home where she could look westward to the mountains, sunset alpine glows a metaphor for her autumn season.



The "Epilogue" in Ruthie's autobiography ends with a refrain so near and dear to her: "Don't Fence Me In"---her mountain vocation was about spaciousness and not being fenced in---may such a journey ever continue.

PS. I have enclosed 3 photos of the COC Mt. Assiniboine trip, Ruthie featured in each and all of them.

montani semper liberi  
by **Ron Dart**

Masthead by Karl V of Mt. Kelly

# CLUB INFORMATION

## Notice to Trip Participants

It is understood that risk is inherent to some degree in all outdoor activities. Please ensure that you understand the risks involved and are prepared to accept them. As a participant, you are responsible for your own safety and equipment at all times. Trip organizers are not professional guides—they are simply club members who have volunteered their time for your enjoyment.

Inform the trip organizer of any medical conditions that he or she should be aware of in an emergency, for example: diabetes, asthma, and bee sting reactions. Ensure that your previous experience, ability and fitness level are adequate for the trip. Be sure that your equipment and clothing are adequate for the trip. Stay with the group. Wait for other group members frequently and at all route junctions. Tell the trip organizer if you must turn back. **Be safe and enjoy!**

## Required Equipment

Trip organizers will be pleased to answer any questions regarding the required equipment for any outing. For more information, it is recommended that you visit one of the many websites that provide such information. Some recommended sites are: [www.valhallapure.com](http://www.valhallapure.com) (club sponsor), [www.backpacker.com](http://www.backpacker.com) and [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca).

**Safety first, last, and always!** It is the responsibility of trip participants to be equipped appropriately. Plan for the **worst!**

## The Ten Essentials

Before you hit any trail, no matter how easy, no matter how short, no matter how close to home, make sure your backpack is loaded with the ten essentials. When in the backcountry you are responsible for your own safety, and any one of these ten items may help to save your life. Carry them all and know how to use them.

1. Map
2. Compass
3. Extra clothing
4. Sunglasses and sunscreen
5. Headlamp/flashlight
6. First-aid supplies
7. Fire starter
8. Matches
9. Knife
10. Extra food and water

## Equipment for Club Members' Use

2	Shovels	2	ice axes
2	pairs of crampons	2	avalanche probes
2	avalanche transceivers		
2	pairs of snowshoes		
contact Cal Francis to use: <a href="mailto:calfrancis@gmail.com">calfrancis@gmail.com</a>			

**Note:** All equipment must be returned in the same condition as borrowed or repaired appropriately. The equipment is being examined to determine its state of repair and will be reviewed by the Board of Directors as to what should be retained, scrapped or sold.

## Hike Grading System

Duration (hrs.)		Elevation Gain (m)		Difficulty	
A	0-4	1	10-500	a	Easy
B	4-7	2	500-1000	b	Moderate
C	7-10	3	1000-1500	c	Difficult
D	10+	4	1500+	d	Advanced

## CLUB CONTACTS

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Club Trip Email:		<a href="mailto:chilliwackoutdoorclub@googlegroups.com">chilliwackoutdoorclub@googlegroups.com</a>
For trips and announcements to be forwarded to all		
Note: also you can post in members: Facebook: Chilliwack Outdoor Club Group		
Librarian:	Ingrid Fisher	<a href="mailto:ingyfis@gmail.com">ingyfis@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter Pub:	Jocelyn Timmermans	<a href="mailto:jocelyntimmermans@hotmail.com">jocelyntimmermans@hotmail.com</a>
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