

# Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

le club alpin du Canada

## Canyoning Down the Spiral Road

page 14

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# Gazette

The Alpine Club of Canada

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## Contributor Profiles



### Katie Graham

Canyoning down the Spiral Road:  
First descent of Waffl Canyon (pg. 14)

Katie Graham is a cave and canyon explorer based in Calgary. She is proud of her roles discovering the deepest and second deepest caves in Canada, and pioneering canyoning routes on Yexyexescen (Mt Robson) and Mt Wilson. She is a fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, and President of the Alberta Speleological Society. An accountant by trade, Katie has switched gears from a corporate gig to spend more time on her passions.



### Gordon Hopper

Hiking Torres del Paine (pg. 24)

Gordon Hopper first started climbing in his native Scotland at age 16 and completed all 282 Munros (Scottish Mountains 3,000 feet and higher). After emigrating to Canada, he climbed many notable mountains in Banff and Kananaskis Parks. He and his wife progressed to summit numerous high-altitude mountains throughout the world including the Seven Summits except for the last 300 meters on Everest which has yet to be accomplished.



### Greg Gransden

The Misery Mountain Project (pg. 28)

Greg Gransden is a writer, director and producer based in Montreal. He has been active in television for over a decade, working for the Discovery Channel, National Geographic, History Television and others. His first outdoor adventure documentary, *Hobnails and Hemp Rope*, won best director at the Moscow International Festival of Mountaineering and Adventure Films. His short film *Adventure Us* was featured at the 2017 Banff Mountain Film Festival. He has been a member of The Alpine Club of Canada for five years.



### Lianne Caron

I can't tonight, I'm going... ONLINE (pg. 34)

Lianne Caron was born and raised in Banff, where her love for the mountains and adventure began. She spends her free time climbing, hiking and travelling. Lianne has been a member of the ACC since 2016. In September 2019, she moved to Kelowna. Wanting to be more engaged with her new community, she became involved with the ACC Okanagan section and is currently the Socials Coordinator.



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Cover photo: Greg Horne and Joe Storms walk down a rare non-technical section at Waffl Canyon.  
Photo de couverture : Greg Horne et Joe Storms descendent à pied une des rares sections non techniques de Waffl Canyon.  
Photo Katie Graham

Karen Sheehan, “Storm at Camp, Hallam Glacier ACC GMC,” acrylic on canvas, 18” x 24”.





# The difference a year makes

July 2020 seems like a long time ago now. For many of us, early COVID was a time of uncertainty and anxiety, not knowing exactly in which direction to proceed. It certainly was for the ACC.

In terms of traveling in the mountains, it seemed we had come upon a blank section of map, a river too wide to cross, an unclimbable section of rotten rock.

Last year the ACC cancelled the General Mountaineering Camp for the first time in 114 years and the Mountain Guides Ball for the first time in 30. We cancelled all hut bookings and had to rebuild our reservations system from the ground up. There were changes in everything from our staffing to our hostel to our membership. We chose to publish the summer *Gazette* online only, forgoing a printed copy.

If you're looking for any of our recent *Gazette* back issues, you can find them on the ACC website where they're downloadable for free.

Now one year later, the GMC is getting underway at Mt. Mummery (our cancelled location from last summer), trips to our huts are being enjoyed by increasingly larger parties, and the Mountain Guides Ball is tentatively slated for an in-person event in October. We thank our members for sticking with us.

The adversity of the past year has changed us, and we hope that it's made us stronger. Our members stamp through ferocious winds, deal with chopped ropes, reassess their goals in the depths of their forest bushwhacking – always as a team – and we're following their example.

We're not out of the woods yet. There will be more obstacles to deal with, more course corrections to make, more rivers to cross. But we'll push on confident in the knowledge that we were able to navigate the last one together. ~ACC

## La différence qu'une année entraîne

Le mois de juillet 2020 nous paraît aujourd'hui bien lointain. Chez beaucoup d'entre nous, les débuts de la COVID étaient un temps d'incertitude et d'angoisse, marqué par l'inconnu des événements à venir, comme ce fut le cas pour le CAC.

Pour tisser une métaphore de voyage en montagne, c'était comme se trouver dans une région inconnue de la carte, un cours d'eau trop grand à traverser, une section de roche pourrie impossible à grimper.

L'année dernière, le CAC a dû annuler son Camp général d'alpinisme pour la première fois en 114 ans, et son Bal des guides de montagne pour la première fois en 30. Toutes les réservations de refuges ont été annulées, et notre système de réservations dut être entièrement refait. Des changements s'opéraient partout, du personnel à l'hébergement en passant par nos membres. Nous avons publié notre *Gazette* de l'été seulement sur le Web, passant outre la version imprimée.

Ce choix n'a pas été sans embarras, puisque ce numéro comprend des récits magnifiques sur les défis, la beauté, mais aussi les conflits que l'aventure peut entraîner. Avec ses photos à couper le souffle, nous étions très fiers de ce numéro et nous espérons qu'un nombre grandissant de membres pourront le lire.

Si vous cherchez une ou des éditions récentes de notre Gazette, vous pourrez les télécharger sans frais sur le site Web du CAC.

Un an plus tard, le Camp général d'alpinisme est en train d'avoir lieu au mont Mummery (notre destination prévue pour l'année précédente), l'affluence de nos refuges s'agrandit, et notre Bal des guides de montagne est provisoirement prévu pour un événement en personne en octobre prochain. Nous remercions nos membres pour leur fidélité.

Les épreuves de la dernière année nous ont changés, et notre espoir est qu'elles nous ont rendus plus forts. Nous suivons ainsi l'exemple de nos membres qui affrontent des vents féroces, se débrouillent avec des cordes coupées, réévaluent leurs objectifs dans la forêt profonde qu'ils débroussaillent.

Nous ne sommes pas encore sortis du bois. Il y aura d'autres obstacles à naviguer, d'autres itinéraires à changer, d'autres rivières à traverser. Mais nous continuerons d'avancer, sachant que nous avons traversé la dernière ensemble.. ~CAC



# National Volunteer Awards

We extend our congratulations to the following devoted volunteers who were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the national and/or section levels of the club in 2020.

## Silver Rope for Leadership

For technical skills and leadership abilities over a number of years.

- Susan Twitchell, Calgary Section

## Honorary Membership

Honorary Membership is the highest recognition The Alpine Club of Canada bestows. It is presented to individuals for a strong and sustained commitment to the Canadian mountain environment and Canadian mountaineering.

- Helmut Microys, Ottawa / Toronto Sections

## Eric Brooks Leader Award

Awarded to members who have demonstrated a strong commitment to learning and applying technical and leader skills.

- Brent Hepfner, Calgary / Rocky Mountain Sections
- Marie Tison, Montréal Section
- Steve Traversari, Montréal Section

## Don Forest Service Award

For significant service to the club.

- Alex Perel, Toronto Section
- David Moon, Edmonton Section
- Jessica Ferguson, Edmonton Section
- Juergen Schmidt, Calgary Section
- Geoff Bennett, Vancouver Island Section
- Reid Madiuk, Whistler Section

## Distinguished Service Award

Presented to members who have contributed service to the club or a section over more than five years.

- Darrel Newman, Ottawa Section

Many thanks to the members of the Awards Committee: Isabelle Daigneault (Chair, Rocky Mountain Section), Paul Geddes (Vancouver and Toronto Sections), Steve Traversari (Montreal Section), Dave McCormick (Saskatchewan Section), David Foster and Bill Scott (Ottawa Section).

## 50 Years

Eiko Sakamoto, Vancouver, BC  
Evelyn Matthews, Canmore, AB  
Gil Parker, Victoria, BC  
Jeffrey Mellor, Calgary, AB  
Kathleen Douglas, Montréal-Ouest, QC  
Margaret Brogden, Haliburton, ON  
Peter Mix, Ottawa, ON  
Scott Hoffman, Washington, MO  
Simon Simonson, Kingman, AB  
Walt Davis, Calgary, AB  
Walter Latter, Kimberley, BC

## Congratulations

# Heritage Club

Every year, the ACC celebrates our members who have been with the club for 25, 35 and 50 years. We present these members an official lapel pin along with an official certificate (25 and 35 year members) or a wall plaque (50 year members).

Since 2020, 17 members reached the 25-year milestone, 12 members reached the 35-year mark and 12 became members of the 50-year Heritage Club.

# ACC Grants Awarded in 2021

The ACC maintains permanent funds from which grants are awarded annually for mountain-related projects and initiatives. For 2021 the ACC is pleased to announce the following winners of the awards.

## The Jen Higgins Grant for Young Women

A combined \$8,400 was awarded to assist:

- Brooklyn Rushton to document and raise awareness of important ecosystems at risk of open pit metallurgical coal mining in David Thompson Country.
- Katee Pederson and team will canoe the Churchill Watershed in the Canadian Shield of Northern Saskatchewan and explore the surrounding terrain for untouched traditional and top rope climbing opportunities.

## The Jim Colpitts Memorial Scholarship

This year's grant will support:

- Sidney Whiting – to help develop the skills necessary to lead mountain trips in the future.
- Julien Bergeron – to learn the necessary skills to transition his indoor skills to an outdoor environment in a safe manner.

## The ACC Environment Grant

A combined \$12,400 was awarded to:

- Anthony Clevenger – Implementing natural soundscape conservation through education and citizen science.
- Y2Y (Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative), Natalie Bourbonnais-Spear – to examine what the impact of various scenarios of activity and development within the Bow Valley would be on grizzly bear movement and habitat quality.

To learn more about ACC grants, visit [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/grants](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/grants)

## Heading out for an Adventure?

Brush up on your skills and get the right information. Shop the ACC online store for a range of outdoor guidebooks, maps and instructional handbooks. Members get a 15% discount.

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# GMC Photo Contest

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**Second place:** Mountain Hardwear sleeping bag

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**All GMC participants are eligible to enter**

Find out how to submit your images at  
[www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/GMCphoto](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/GMCphoto)

## ACC starting fresh on Facebook

Bad news: the ACC's Facebook page was hacked and we've lost access to it. Good news: we've built a new page and we're posting mountain news, job postings, trip reports, grant offerings and more right now. If you're a Facebook user, and you want to keep in touch with the ACC, you'll want to follow us at [www.facebook.com/alpineclubcan](http://www.facebook.com/alpineclubcan) today.



## 2021 Board Election

Each year, the ACC holds elections for three of nine positions on the ACC Board of Directors. In accordance with ACC bylaws, we are happy to report the results of the 2021 elections.

- Zac Robinson, Edmonton – *VP Mountain Culture (acclaimed)*
- Toby Harper-Merrett, Montréal – *VP Services (acclaimed)*
- Steve Traversari, Montréal – *VP Sections*

Zac, Toby and Steve will each serve a three-year term expiring in 2024.

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April-May '22 - Everest Summit Climbs: Nepal or Tibet, Everest Camp 3 Training Climbs, Mount Lhotse, Everest's Sister.

June-July-Aug '22 - Gasherbrum 1 and 2, K2 Summit, 8000m Training, Broad Peak, K2 Base Camp Trek, Pastore Trekking Peak (near K2). 3 time K2 Leader Dan Mazur and Sherpas!

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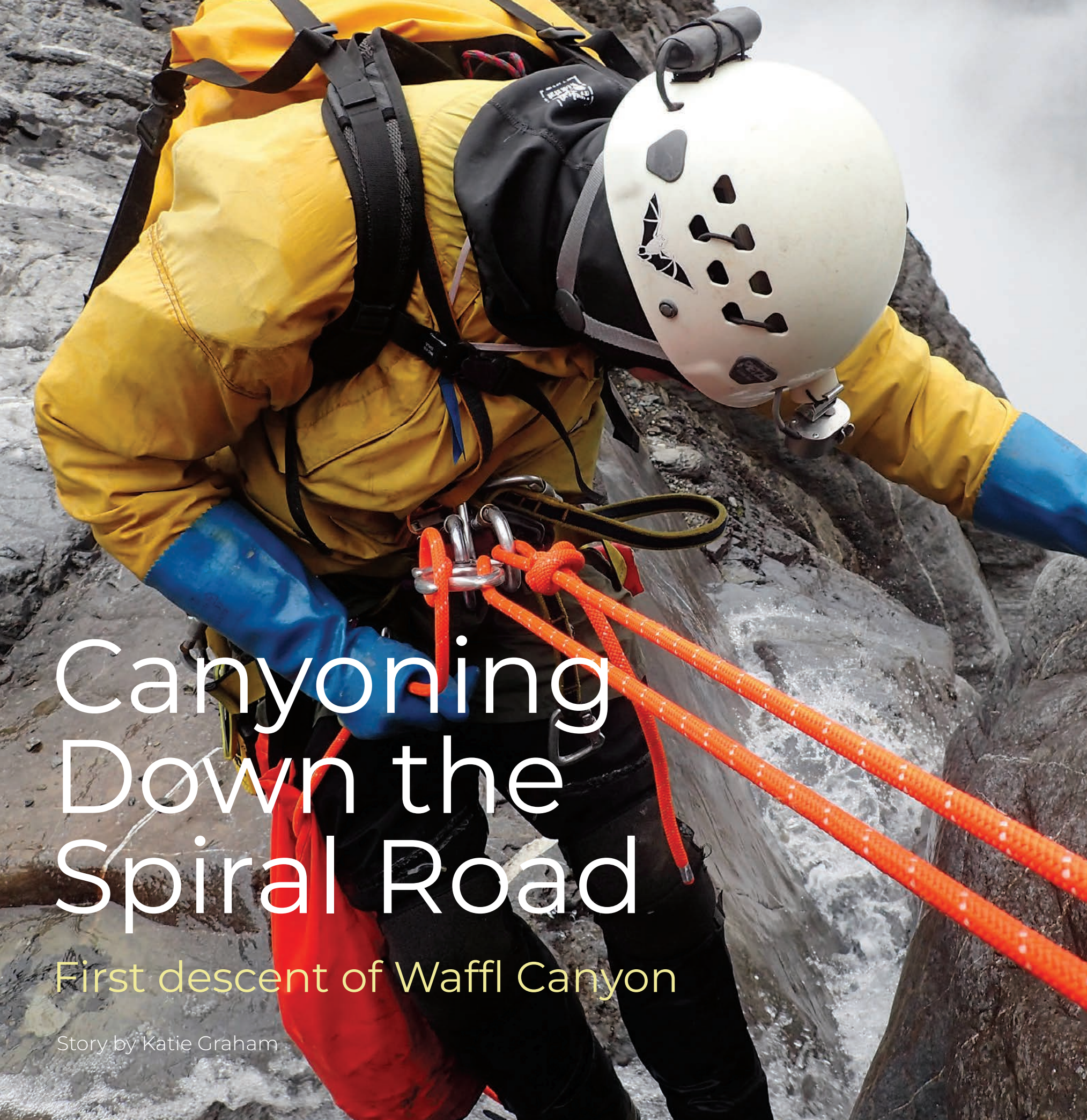
Image: Christina Martin, Canadian singer/songwriter — Dale Murray, photographer

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*Greg Horne self belays down a pitch in Waffl Canyon.  
Greg Horne s'auto assure à la descente d'une longueur de  
Waffl Canyon. Photo: Katie Graham*

*Mt. Robson is not  
so much difficult  
as dangerous. It is  
no mountain to  
trifle with.*

*Newman Waffl*

The daylight faded long ago. The light from the headlamp on my helmet illuminates my hands as I weave the wet rope through my rappel device and twist the safety lock closed. My fingers poke through my gloves where the neoprene is worn off - hours in the cold water has made them stiff and clumsy. My eyes follow the orange line down to make sure it isn't caught on any rocks. I double-check that my bag is attached to my harness before I allow the water to take control of the PVC behemoth. The bag is carried over the lip of rock and I brace for the jerk when the rope attached to me goes tight. Once the force of the water's pull is consistent, I unclip my cow's tail and begin rappelling. The rope travels through my hands as I descend into the pounding water. All I see is the curtain of water reflected back at me. The excited droplets jump off my helmet and shoulders. I'm deafened by the drum of water, I feel gravity on the rope, the push and pull of the waterfall, I keep my eyes down because the back of my head deflects the water and creates an air pocket where I can breathe.

I land in a pool on a rock shelf, the water is pushing up my thighs. A millennia of glacial meltwater has carved a tight, circular ramp. The water drives 180 degrees around the roller coaster and I relish the novelty of this playful act of nature disobeying gravity. I linger in the mid mountain tidal wave. Stepping through the spray, I emerge on the other side and the water becomes predictable again. I follow a curved chute down, landing in another pool. I climb onto a bank of rocks for a temporary reprieve from the push of the water and its cold embrace. Looking up, I am awestruck by the spectacularly clear sky; the inky backdrop of a million candles, the silhouette of the formidable Yexyex-escen (Mt Robson), and my friend descending through the waterfalls. The refraction of his light is spectacular and chaotic. Water rolls over an edge and spreads into a mass of droplets. The ricochet of the water bouncing off his shoulders makes his frame look larger, like he has an invisible shield with huge shoulder pads. He looks side to side showing off the water curtain, and then he looks down and a crystal peacock shoots up. He is looking at the gravity-defying rooster tail, and I better understand the sensation that I felt moments ago, pushing through the tidal wave's force because there is only one way to get down.

# Canyoning Down the Spiral Road

First descent of Waffl Canyon

Story by Katie Graham

>>>





*Canyoning is a growing sport in Canada. A few entrepreneurs are offering exciting sport tours for people to experience canyons in BC, Alberta and Quebec. The Canadian Canyoning Association was formed in 2020 to ensure canyoning grows as a safe sport that balances exploration, conservation, and the excitement of pounding water in beautiful locations.*

I have goosebumps; it is so beautiful, yet we are so vulnerable and insignificant, soaking wet, tired, in the dark. It will be two more hours before we collapse on a carpet of moss, delirious in the satisfaction of the first descent of Waffl Canyon.

## Yexyexésцен and Newman Waffl

Yexyexésцен is an incredible specimen with 2,829 metres of relief from the base to the summit. From the Yellowhead Highway it ascends to a height of 3,954m. The sharp rising walls and U-shaped valleys are a result of glaciers that flowed long ago. Yexyexésцен means “The Mountain of the Spiral Road” to the area’s earliest known inhabitants, the Texqakallt Nation. It describes the layered cake appearance of the mountain. Indigenous people have been living in this area since time immemorial, and due to their intimate knowledge of the land, they served an invaluable role as guides and hunters for the first European explorers.

Yexyexésцен was first summited in 1913 by W. Foster and A. McCarthy with guide Conrad Kain. It remains a highly sought-after peak because of its aesthetic and challenge. Weather and snow conditions are predictably unpredictable. Newman Waffl (1879-1930) was a respected mountaineer from New York State. On his first trip to Canada in 1929 he summited many peaks but was captivated by Mt Robson once he laid eyes on it. He returned the following year with the intention of summing the peak. Waffl set out from a high camp alone on August 5, 1930. Footprints suggest he made it most of the way up but was turned around by steep, sheer rock. He was likely swept away by an avalanche. A box of raisins, a gum wrapper and his snow glasses were found. The slope Newman Waffl was swept down is the same drainage we were descending via the canyon. Waffl was fondly remembered by friends as being very safe and making good decisions in the mountains. More can be found on Waffl in past issues of the Canadian Alpine Journal.

## Four-year descent

It took us four years to complete the Waffl Canyon project. The canyon is a 1,200m descent with 51 waterfall rappels, each of which take 15 to 45 minutes to rig. The approach on the first day involves a steep hike up 1,500 metres, carrying backpacks full of dry suits and harnesses for rappelling in the frigid water, waterproof containers with sleeping bags to camp along the way, and webbing, ropes and backup gear for the obstacles along the route.

In 2016 we began near the bottom of the canyon, and rigged it in sections. It took four trips to rig the 51 pitches.

In 2017 we attempted the full canyon. A team of Greg Horne (Jasper), Gavin Elsley (Calgary), Colin Massey (Calgary) and I did the massive approach and traverse of the mountain and set in. Unfortunately, on our third rappel our rope was severely damaged by sharp rock. We cut the rope, which was very worrisome so early on.

The next day we faced a conundrum. We were looking down into an exciting but committing section of waterfalls. The walls were very high, the canyon was narrow and the drops were long. Based on photos and maps, we expected no opportunity to escape for 300 vertical metres, which could mean rigging 15 or more rappels. It was 3:00pm, and there was threatening rain clouds blowing in from the west. We looked at each other and knew this was the wrong time to be optimistic. We made the safe choice to forego the rest of the canyon, but that didn’t mean there we would have an easy hiking path down. The west side of the mountain is dramatically steep. We used photos to landmark ledges we could descend and to note the cliffs that were taller than the ropes we had. We rappelled off numerous trees and thrashed through thick brush. At other times the foliage was sparse and parched with steep down climbing sections. Many times I searched for a branch to grab for moral support, but there was nothing.

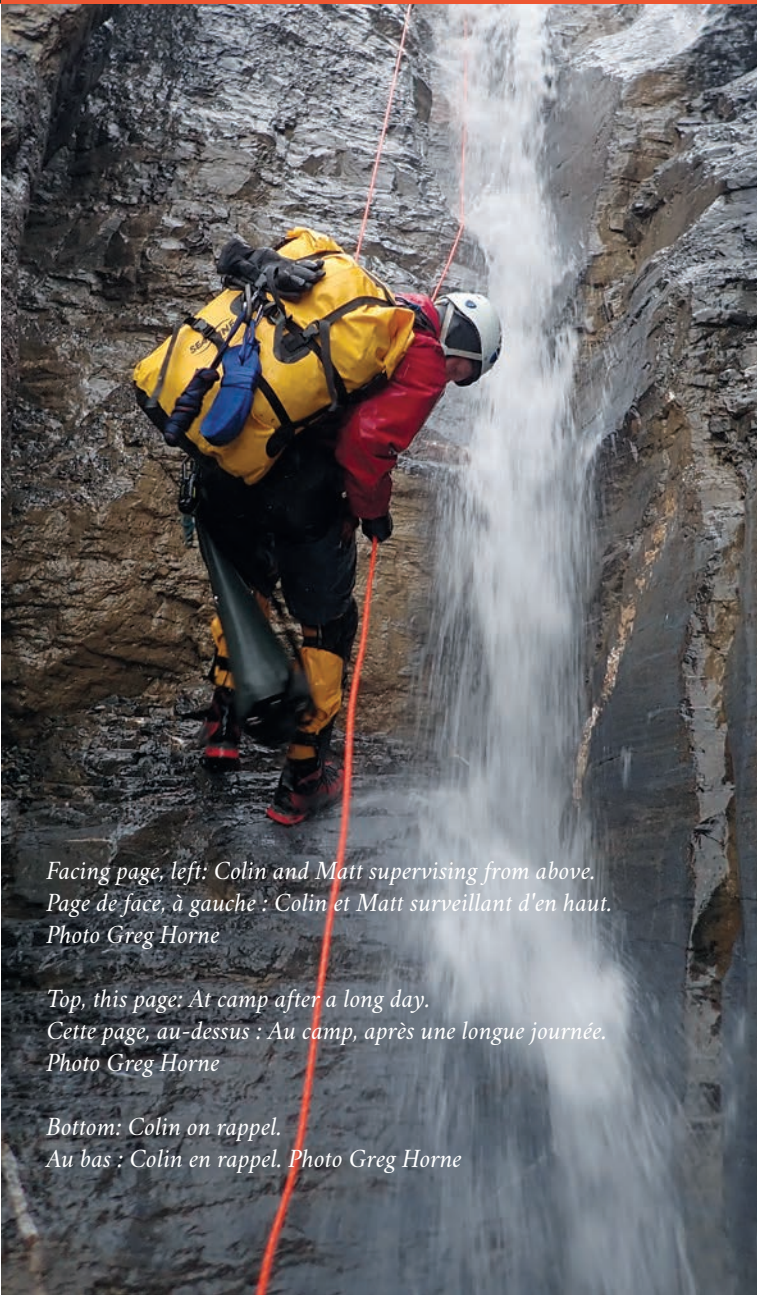
We kept going until long after dark, hoping for a water source; around midnight we gave up. We had one litre of water to share between us and we had to choose between a hot drink and oatmeal, but it was wonderful to lay down with a warm belly.

We each chose a tree and laid our sleeping bag on the high side to prevent us from rolling down the embankment. The next morning, we packed early and made fast progress in the daylight. We must have looked like quite a sight when we arrived at the Whitehorn campsite. The hike to Berg Lake is a popular hiking trail and most people make civilized plans to hike, camp and enjoy the scenery. We rolled in like a soggy band of misfits and shovelled food into our mouths as fast as possible. The 2017 trip was character building and provided great familiarization with the canyon to plan a successful trip in 2020.

## 2020 success

The final September 2020 team of five consisted of Greg Horne, Guillaume Coupier (Field), Matt Kennedy (Jasper), Colin Magee (Canmore), and myself. On the final push, we spent the first night at the forlorn Ralph Forester Hut. The second day we traversed along cliff bands and across couloirs, past the ominous Wishbone Arete, a prominent rock rib route to the summit that is complicated, treacherous and swallows lives when the weather is not in the mood to permit passage.

By the afternoon of day two we were in the canyon, descending until the early evening when we found a patch of trees and slept hard and short. On day three we organized gear and by 8:00 am we began our final day descending Waffl Canyon. We completed the descent by midnight and camped happily near Kinney Lake. ~ACC



*Facing page, left: Colin and Matt supervising from above.  
Page de face, à gauche : Colin et Matt surveillant d'en haut.  
Photo Greg Horne*

*Top, this page: At camp after a long day.  
Cette page, au-dessus : Au camp, après une longue journée.  
Photo Greg Horne*

*Bottom: Colin on rappel.  
Au bas : Colin en rappel. Photo Greg Horne*



# En canyonisme à Spiral Road

## Une première descente du canyon Waffl

Un récit de Katie Graham



*Greg Horne descendant dans les nuages.  
Greg Horne descends into the clouds. Photo Katie Graham*

La lumière du jour a disparu depuis longtemps. Celle de la lampe frontale de mon casque éclaire mes mains tandis que j'enroule la corde mouillée dans mon dispositif de rappel et ferme le verrou de sécurité. Mes doigts paraissent à travers mes gants là où le néoprène est usé : des heures d'eau froide les ont rendus raides et maladroits. Mon regard descend le long de la corde orange pour s'assurer qu'elle n'est pas coincée sur un rocher. Je m'assure à nouveau que mon sac est attaché à mon harnais avant de laisser l'eau prendre le dessus sur ce monstre en PVC : le sac est porté sur le rebord de la roche et je me prépare à la secousse quand la corde qui m'attache va se tendre. Quand la force de traction de l'eau devient constante, je déclipse ma queue de vache et commence le rappel. La corde passe entre mes mains tandis que je descends dans l'eau battante. Je ne peux voir que le rideau d'eau reflété sur moi. Les gouttes énervées rebondissent sur mon casque et mes épaules. Les battements de l'eau m'assourdissent, je sens la gravité sur la corde, la poussée et la traction de la chute d'eau, et je garde la tête baissée pour faire dévier l'eau et créer un trou d'air où respirer.

J'atterris dans un bassin sur un plateau rocheux, l'eau me remon- tant aux cuisses. Mille ans d'eau de fonte glaciaire ont sculpté une rampe étroite et circulaire. L'eau tourne à 180 degrés autour

de ce manège et je savoure de voir la nature s'amuser à défier la gravité. Je m'attarde dans la déferlante du milieu de la montagne. Traversant l'embrun, j'émerge de l'autre côté, et l'eau redevient prévisible. Suivant une rigole incurvée, j'atterris dans un autre bassin, puis escalade un banc de pierre pour prendre temporaire- ment congé de la pression et de l'étreinte froide de l'eau. La clarté magnifique du ciel me stupéfie : ces millions de bougies sur un fond noir d'encre, la silhouette du redoutable Yexyexésen (mont Robson), et la descente de mon ami à travers les chutes d'eau. La réfraction de sa lampe est spectaculaire et chaotique. L'eau roule sur un rebord et se disperse en une masse de gouttelettes. Les ricochets de l'eau qui rebondit de ses épaules le font paraître plus grand, comme s'il portait un bouclier invisible garni d'énormes épaulettes. Il regarde des deux côtés en montrant le rideau d'eau, puis vers le bas, et les embruns font surgir les couleurs d'un paon de cristal. Il observe ce motif de l'eau qui rebondit et qui semble défier la gravité, et je comprends mieux ce que j'ai ressenti en poussant à travers la force de l'eau, car il n'y a qu'une seule voie pour descendre.

J'en ai des frissons : tout cela est si beau, mais nous sommes si vulnérables, minuscules, détrempés, fatigués, dans le noir.

Deux heures doivent encore passer avant que nous puissions nous étendre sur un tapis de mousse, enivrés par cette première descente de Waffl Canyon.

### Yexyexésen et Newman Waffl

Avec 2 829 mètres de relief de la base au sommet, Yexyexésen est un spécimen remarquable. À partir de la Yellowhead Highway, il s'élève à une hauteur de 3 954 m. Ses murs aigus et ses vallées en forme de U résultent de glaciers écoulés depuis longtemps. Yexyexésen signifie « la Montagne de la Route en spirale » pour les plus anciens habitants connus de la région, la nation Texqakallt, évoquant sa res- semblance avec un gâteau à étages. Les peuples autochtones ont toujours habité la région, et leur connaissance intime du territoire en a fait des guides et des chasseurs indispensables aux premiers explorateurs européens.

Yexyexésen a été gravi une première fois en 1913 par W. Foster et A. Mc- Carthy, guidés par Conrad Kain. Le sommet demeure très prisé pour son esthétique et ses défis : on peut toujours s'attendre à ce que le climat et l'état de la neige soient imprévisibles. Lors de sa première visite au Canada en 1929, Newman Waffl (1879-1930), un alpiniste respecté de l'état de New York, gravit de nombreux sommets, mais fut fasciné pour le mont Robson dès qu'il posa les yeux dessus. Revenu l'année suivante pour gravir ce pic, Waffl est parti seul d'un camp d'altitude le 5 août 1930. Des empreintes suggèrent qu'il faillit se ren- dre au sommet, mais dut reculer devant des rochers abrupts et escarpés, avant d'être vraisemblablement emporté par une avalanche. On retrouva une boîte de raisins secs, un emballage de gomme à mâcher et ses lunettes de neige. La pente qui avait emporté Waffl était le même bassin hydrographique que nous descen- dions par le biais du canyon. Les amis de Waffl se souvenaient avec émotion de sa prudence et de ses bonnes décisions dans les montagnes : des éditions antérieures du Canadian Alpine Journal nous rensei- gnent davantage à son sujet.



*Le mont Robson n'est pas tant difficile que dangereux. Ce n'est pas une montagne avec laquelle plaisanter.*

*Newman Waffl*

*Le bloc d'accrochage le plus courant que nous employons.  
Clove hitch biner block is the most common block we use. Photo Greg Horne*





Greg prend une pause au refuge Ralph Forester.  
Greg takes a break at the Ralph Forester hut.  
Photo Katie Graham



Guillaume Coupier, Katie Graham, Colin Magee, Matt Kennedy, et Greg Horne après avoir terminé le canyon.  
Guillaume Coupier, Katie Graham, Colin Magee, Matt Kennedy, and Greg Horne after completing the canyon.  
Photo Colin Magee

## Une descente de quatre années

Il nous a fallu quatre ans pour réaliser le projet de Waffl Canyon. Le canyon représente une descente de 1 200 mètres comprenant 51 rappels en chute d'eau, prenant chacun 15 à 45 minutes à gréer. L'approche du premier jour comporte une randonnée en pente raide sur 1 500 mètres d'altitude, en transportant des sacs à dos chargés de combinaisons sèches et de harnais pour descendre en rappel sous l'eau glacée, des contenants imperméables avec des sacs de couchage pour camper en route, ainsi que des sangles, des cordes et de l'équipement d'appoint en prévision des obstacles.

En 2016, nous avons commencé près du fond du canyon, et l'avons gréé par sections. Quatre voyages ont été nécessaires pour gréer les 51 inclinaisons.

En 2017 nous avons tenté d'entreprendre le canyon entier. L'équipe formée de Greg Horne (Jasper), Gavin Elsley (Calgary), Colin Massey (Calgary) et moi-même avons fait l'approche et la traversée de la montagne pour nous installer. Hélas, dès notre troisième rappel de la pierre tranchante endommagea notre corde, qu'il fallut couper, causant beaucoup de soucis dès le début des opérations.

Le jour suivant nous présenterait un dilemme. Nous observions une descente dans une section excitante, mais exigeante de chutes d'eau. Les parois étaient très hautes, le canyon étroit et les chutes longues. D'après les photos et les cartes, nous ne pourrions y échapper pendant 300 mètres verticaux, signifiant que nous aurions peut-être à gréer 15 rappels au moins. Il était 15 h et des nuages pluvieux menaçants nous provenaient de l'ouest. Nous nous sommes consultés du regard et nous avons compris que l'heure n'était pas propice à l'optimisme. Préférant la sécurité, nous avons choisi de renoncer au reste du canyon, ce qui ne voulait pas dire que la randonnée de descente serait facile. La pente du flanc ouest de la montagne est dramatiquement raide. Nous avons pris des photos pour marquer des saillies que nous pourrions descendre et noter des falaises qui étaient plus hautes que les cordes que nous possédions. Nous avons descendu en rappel de nombreux arbres et lutté contre des broussailles épaisses. À d'autres moments, le feuillage était rare et sec avec des sections de descente à pic. Pour me soutenir moralement, j'ai souvent cherché une branche à laquelle m'accrocher, mais en vain.

Nous avons continué ainsi bien après la tombée du soir en espérant découvrir une source d'eau, mais il fallut y renoncer vers minuit. Avec seulement un litre d'eau à partager entre nous quatre, nous devons choisir un bol de gruau ou une boisson chaude, mais ce fut merveilleux de pouvoir s'étendre ensuite, l'estomac réchauffé.

Chacun a choisi un arbre pour étendre son sac de couchage du côté élevé, pour éviter d'aller rouler sur le talus. Nous avons fait nos bagages tôt le lendemain matin et progressé rapidement sous la lumière du jour. Nous devons présenter

une drôle d'allure en arrivant au camping de Whitehorn. La piste qui mène à Berg Lake est populaire chez les randonneurs civilisés qui campent, préparent leurs expéditions et savourent le paysage. Nous sommes arrivés comme une bande de brigands détrempés enfournant de la nourriture aussi vite qu'ils le peuvent. Ce voyage de 2017 avait forgé notre caractère et nous avait bien familiarisés avec le canyon pour planifier un voyage réussi en 2020.

## Le succès de 2020

L'équipe finale de septembre 2020 se composait de Greg Horne, Guillaume Coupier (Field), Matt Kennedy (Jasper), Colin Magee (Canmore) et moi-même. À la dernière poussée, nous avons passé la première nuit dans le refuge abandonné Ralph Forester Hut. Le jour suivant, nous avons traversé le long de bandes de falaises et de couloirs en passant par l'inquiétante arête Wishbone, une côte rocheuse proéminente qui mène au sommet, mais qui est déloyale et compliquée et qui emporte des vies quand la météo n'est pas d'humeur à céder le passage.

L'après-midi du second jour, nous étions à descendre dans le canyon jusqu'au début du soir, où nous avons découvert un petit groupe d'arbres où nous avons dormi profondément et peu longtemps. Au troisième jour, nous avons assemblé l'équipement pour commencer dès huit heures notre descente finale de Waffl Canyon. Nous avons terminé à minuit et campé joyeusement près du lac Kinney. ~CAC

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***Au Canada, le canyonisme est un sport qui prend de l'expansion***  
***Quelques entrepreneurs proposent des visites sportives excitantes pour faire l'expérience des canyons de Colombie-Britannique, de l'Alberta et du Québec. Formée en 2020, la Canadian Canyoning Association s'assure que le canyonisme grandit comme un sport sécuritaire qui équilibre l'exploration, la conservation et l'excitation de l'eau qui bat dans des endroits magnifiques.***



SKI WEEK

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Photo: David Preissl



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- ▶ Entering the lottery is the only method of booking ski weeks at these huts

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# Hiking Torres del Paine

Adventure at “the end of the world”

Story and photos by Gordon Hopper

*The Three Torres Towers in background, two of the Cuernos in front and one of the many lakes with the Patagonian winds blowing between gusts.  
Photo by Gordon Hopper*

After a very successful trip to Northern Patagonia in January 2018, my wife Elizabeth Tertil and I decided to explore two areas in the deep south of Chilean Patagonia. On our return from climbing Mount Vinson in Antarctica in 2008, we had a few days to spare and made a quick visit to the Torres del Paine close to el Fin del Mundo (end of the world) at the most southerly end of continental South America. We had promised ourselves that we would return for a more in depth visit and this came to fruition in February 2019.

This part of the world is known for its “hard core” climbing. There are the severe rock climbs in both the Torres in Chile and Fitzroy area in Argentina. Regular mountain climbing is a very difficult undertaking as well because of the remoteness of the area and the weather, in particular the Patagonian winds. The sailing fraternity refers to it as the roaring forties (latitude 40 degrees south) and the raging 50’s. One only has to read Steven Venables book *Island at the End of the World: a South Georgia Odyssey* to have an idea of what the weather is like in the mountains in this part of the world.

## The “O” circuit

We decided we would hike the “O” circuit around the Torres and Cuernos Mountains, a trip of 120km carrying all our kit for the six days we had planned. This is a national park and before being allowed on the circuit one has to have one’s camp sites planned, booked and paid for ahead of time online: not the easiest of tasks as the campgrounds are administered by three separate organizations, and some are fully booked months in advance.

Our first half-day was mostly in the rain around the south east edge of the mountains in undulating terrain with views of the very large Paine River to Campamento Seron. After a quiet and restful night we continued in mostly cloudy weather with a few showers, again over undulating ground but gradually climbing to Campamento Dickson. Day three was more interesting with lots of sunshine and tantalising views of ice capped mountains with

large glaciers flowing down to the lakes which were by now below us. The snow line was at 800-1000 metres. The valleys are full of Southern Beech trees (*Nothofagus Pumilio*) which grow all the way up to the tree line at about 800m where they are mere bushes. The third night was at 560m at Campamento Los Perros.

## Blown around

On day four we had to leave our campsite by 7:30am as the Patagonian winds can be ferocious while crossing the Passo John Gardner at 1180m. As luck would have it, there was not a breath of wind on the pass and I spent over an hour taking photographs and movies of the spectacular views over the Grey Glacier to the vista of glaciated peaks beyond on the edge of the Southern Patagonian Ice Cap, the second largest icefield in the world outside the polar regions. The remainder of the day we descended to the Refugio Grey with magnificent views of the Grey Glacier and Lago Grey with its numerous icebergs.

Day five, the Patagonian winds returned but were now behind us and helped us wind our way down to the relatively sheltered Refugio Lago Pahoé. Day six, we hiked through some burnt forest and lakes with the Patagonian winds blowing the spray on the lakes as high as 50 metres. On arriving at Campamento Italiano, we were greeted with fantastic views of Paine Grande and







one of its glaciers. At 2884m, it is the highest of the mountains in Torres. On the other side of the Valle del Frances was the third of the Cuernos Mountains, granite “horns” with dark sedimentary layers on top. We managed to persuade the park warden to let us camp the night there to enjoy the magnificent scenery and listen to the numerous serac falls from the glacier. Our last day on the circuit was spent walking out, including at one point being blown off my feet into a bush by the Patagonian winds. We spent the last two days camping and driving around the park taking lots of photographs of the lakes, mountains, waterfalls and wildlife and being blown around by those Patagonian winds.

## On to the Dientes Circuit

On returning to Punta Arenas, the most southerly city in Chile, we realized that we had just enough time to fulfill one more objective from our 2008 trip. This is the Dientes circuit around the Dientes (teeth) Mountains on Navarino Island south of Tierra Del Fuego Island across the Beagle Channel just north of the infamous Cape Horn. This is a more arduous circuit of 53km around these mountains. Though shorter than the Torres “O” circuit, it was more challenging and the only red tape was to sign in and out at the local police station.

*Captions:*

1. Elizabeth Tertil and the Chilean flag on the summit of Cerro Bandera with the Beagle Channel and Argentine Tierra del Fuego in the background.
2. Our tent at Paine Grande campsite with the Cuernos behind.
3. Laguna de Los Dientes with Elizabeth Tertil at shore of lake.
4. Near the summit of Cerro Bandera looking over the Beagle Channel towards Ushia in Argentine Isla Tierra del Fuego.
5. Origin of Grey Glacier on edge of Southern Patagonian Icecap from Paso John Gardner.

On arrival at the local airport, following a short flight from Punta Arenas, we found the owner of the Errante Ecolodge waiting for clients. He drove us into the town of Puerto Williams where we bought last minute supplies, registered with the police and left some of our belongings at his lodge. After lunch we set off on a five-day hike up and over Cerro Bandera (610m) with its huge Chilean flag waving across the Beagle Channel at the Argentine portion of Tierra del Fuego.



## Southern summer snow

By now it was starting to rain and we set off across the side of the mountain to Laguna el Salto where we pitched out tent. During the night the sound of the raindrops changed to that all familiar (in Calgary, anyway) sound of snow falling on our flysheet and sure enough by morning we had 15cm of snow with more falling. (February in Patagonia is equivalent to August in the Northern Hemisphere). By afternoon, it started clearing so we checked out the steep route above our camp to Paso Australia.

The next morning we packed up, scrambled to Paso Australia, contoured above Laguna del Paso to Paso de los Dientes and trekked a further 5.5km in the snow to Laguna Escondida where we found an excellent place for one tent just above the lake on a beautiful, calm, sunny afternoon. Later in the evening, low cloud crept in and enveloped us in mist. The following morning was cool, windy and snowing lightly. Somehow in our resupply trip in Puerto Williams we had been mistakenly given diesel instead of gasoline for our stove and by now it was a terrible mess of soot so we settled for a breakfast of cold salami, bread and water. At 7am we headed off over Paso Ventaron, then Paso Guerrico, along Laguna Martillo and a few other lakes to ascend our last major hurdle, Paso Virginia.

The weather was deteriorating very fast. On ascending in the mist to the pass, the wind was howling past us, fortunately from behind us, and visibility was challenging. As we neared

the rim of the coire at the pass we had to get on to our hands and knees (not the first time) to prevent us from being blown over a cliff in the mist.

Once over the pass and down a bit, we thought we would be sheltered by the cliffs from those Patagonian winds but not a chance. They chased us all the way down the avalanche strewn coire to Laguna del los Guanacos, all the way along the side of the lake until we finally reached the shelter of those beech trees. We found a place to set up our tent in the snow around 7pm amongst the trees and collapsed exhausted and shivering into our sleeping bags.

The next morning we met up with some Chilean hikers who had the route marked on their GPS and they probably saved us a couple of hours floundering around in the snow looking for buried trail markers in the terrain which was by now a mixture of open areas and thickets of beech forest. This eventually led down to a gravel road along the edge of the Beagle Channel where a local gave us a lift in the back of his pickup truck to the Errante Lodge.

We spent our final day in Chile exploring Puerto Williams and its environs, learning about its history and territorial confrontations with Argentina across the Beagle Channel.

The following day we flew back to Punta Arenas in a BAE jet painted as a Macaroni Penguin followed by the 24-hour journey back to Calgary, another very successful and enjoyable expedition. ~ACC





# The Misery Mountain Project

Hiking through difficult terrain in the Homathko Valley. Film still by Greg Gransden.

How tough could it be? A wildly ambitious group of ACC adventurers learns the hard way in an ill-fated attempt to recreate the “Mystery Mountain” expedition.

Story by Greg Gransden

It’s a beautiful day in early July. We’re sailing in a two-masted schooner up Bute Inlet, BC, a long fjord framed by rugged hills and cliffs. Our destination is the mouth of the Homathko River, deep in the coastal region. That’s where we’ll begin our trek on foot to Mt Waddington, the highest peak in the province – and climb it, if weather permits.

Mt Waddington was once considered the most difficult climb in North America. It repulsed 16 attempts before it was finally summited in 1936 by two of America’s best climbers, Fritz Wiessner and Bill House. Even today, few climbers ever attempt it. “It is an incredibly inaccessible, remote, difficult mountain awash in unpredictable weather,” is how one climbing guide describes it. Or as one author puts it: “A nightmare carved in rock.”

## Go big or go home

You would think that would be enough of a challenge for even the most ambitious climber. But not Bryan Thompson. A Toronto history buff, he dreamed of following in the footsteps of the first-ever expedition to set its sights on Waddington: the legendary husband-and-wife mountaineers Don and Phyllis Munday. In 1926, they set out into uncharted territory 350 km north of Vancouver in search of an undiscovered peak – which they nicknamed Mystery Mountain – that experts believed could not possibly exist.

Bryan’s plan is to recreate the Mundays’ journey to Mystery Mountain, now called Mt Waddington. And he would do it using vintage 1920s gear. No Gore-Tex

jackets, no modern tents, no freeze-dried lasagna. He would use homemade wooden frame packs and cotton tents, just like the Mundays did, as well as alpenstocks, hemp rope and hobnail boots. He has even brought along an antique carbide lamp – the ancestor of the flashlight. The climbing party is literally equipped with museum pieces.

There are six people on the expedition, just like the original Munday party. Ron Ireland, Joe Vanasco, Stuart Rickard, Susanna Oreskovic and Paddy McGuire. Bryan has charmed and cajoled each one of them to join the trip with the promise that they’ll be experiencing a slice of history.

And I am along for the ride as the filmmaker who will document it all.

## Trouble out of the gate

As we sail up Bute Inlet, Stuart and I set out in a dinghy to shoot some drone footage for the film. We’re getting some great aerial shots of the schooner under sail. Stuart says to me, “Why don’t we do one more shot? I’ll have the drone circle the boat.” I say ok – what have we got to lose? – and Stuart launches the drone. It plunges straight into the water and disappears from view. I’m not sure who to feel worse for – Stuart, because it’s his drone; or me, because not having drone footage significantly hurts my chances of getting the film into a decent festival.

We spend our first night in the wilderness camped out at the Homathko logging camp, a collection of rusting equipment sheds and pre-fab dormito-

ries just upstream from the mouth of the Homathko River.

## Provision decisions

We have an enormous quantity of supplies for the expedition – enough to fill the bed of a pickup truck. A lot of it is 1920s-style food. Bryan, who obtained the Mundays’

*“It is an incredibly inaccessible, remote, difficult mountain awash in unpredictable weather,” is how one climbing guide describes it. Or as one author puts it: “A nightmare carved in rock.”*

shopping lists as part of his research for the trip, wants us to eat the same diet as Don and Phyllis, for the sake of authenticity. It’s not until we disembark that the implications of this become clear.

Instead of the freeze-dried foods most expeditions carry to minimize weight, the group







*Departure on the expedition, looking fresh for the last time. Photo by Susanna Oreskovic.*

is going to be lugging hundreds of pounds of heavy 1920s-style provisions. Cans of baked beans and corned beef, 60 pounds of flour, three litres of maple syrup, a year's supply of table salt in a metal tin, a mason jar full of homemade jam, metal pots and pans and kettles, a wooden cutting board, potatoes, carrots, onions and dry sausages. All in all, it weighs in excess of 800 pounds.

## Weak straps and umbrella hats

The next day we begin our trek. The plan is to bushwhack up through the Homathko Valley, about 50 km, to the foot of the mountains. Then it's another 30 km of glacier travel to Mt Waddington. We have almost a month in which to do this, which seems like a lot of time, but actually isn't. We just don't know it yet.

We have barely left the logging camp when we face our first serious setback. One of the straps on Bryan's 1920s-style frame pack snaps under the weight. Then the same thing happens to Joe's pack. We have two broken packs and have yet to even set foot in the rainforest.

As Bryan is trying to figure out what to do, it starts raining. I had foreseen this possibility and brought along a piece of equipment that would allow me to continue filming: an umbrella that you wear like a hat, leaving your arms free. What I hadn't foreseen was (a) it's incredibly uncomfortable; (b) you can't wear it in the forest, as tree branches will rip it off, and (c) the sound of raindrops hitting it tends to drown out the voices of the people I'm trying to film.

*We have barely left the logging camp when we face our first serious setback. One of the straps on Bryan's 1920's-style frame pack snaps under the weight. Then the same thing happens to Joe's pack. We have two broken packs and have yet to even set foot in the rainforest.*

## Mud camp

We spend the night camping on an old logging road. It's raining and muddy, and water is seeping into the 1920s-style canvas tents and cotton sleeping bags. To add to the misery, everyone's getting eaten alive by mosquitoes – the tents aren't equipped with mosquito netting. This is by design. When Bryan was researching

the Mundays, the photos of the original 1926 expedition didn't seem to show mosquito nets in the tents – even though bug netting was widely available at the time. Bryan had figured that the re-enactors would just have to tough it out.

As for me, I have my own comfortable modern tent, which I retreat to for the night. I'm keenly aware of how uncomfortable everyone else is and how little sleep they're getting. I'm selfishly relieved to be dry and bug free. But I'm finding the whole situation kind of depressing, and I feel like it's not going to improve. I pull Bryan aside and tell him I'm turning back. "This really isn't fun. I think I'm just going to go home," I tell him. He pleads with me to stay another day or two and see if things improve.

The following day we set up a new campsite further down the logging road, this time with a beautiful waterfall nearby and a crystal clear stream with a pool deep enough to swim in. It's sandy, almost like a beach. The weather improves and it stops raining.

It's taken a herculean effort to move all the supplies to our new campsite. It's dawning

on Bryan that the cumbersome 1920s-style food will make our progress through the valley painfully slow, as each advance will require multiple trips to bring up supplies. That's what the Mundays did, but they had more time than we do.

Sitting around the fire, there's a debate over what we can jettison to lighten the load. The heaviest items are the cans of baked beans and corned beef. Bryan wants to leave them behind, but Joe objects that they're the only food source that won't spoil in the heat. In the end, Bryan decides to keep the cans.

## Admit defeat?

It's only the third day of the expedition, and we're facing a new setback. Two people have decided to throw in the towel. Ron has been getting increasingly ill in the past 48 hours. It looks like he has the flu, and it's too risky for him to continue. The other is Paddy. His feet have developed severe blisters from the old-style hobnail boots. His attempts to treat them – applying duct tape directly to the damaged skin – have only made things worse. He's also convinced the expedition is doomed to failure.

Paddy and Ron walk back to the logging camp that day and catch a flight out with a couple of bush pilots.

The night before we had left on the expedition, we had a visit at our Quadra Island hotel from Rob Wood, a retired British mountaineer who has climbed in the area and knows it as well as anyone. He told us flat out that we wouldn't get anywhere near Mt Waddington. "If you make it to the top of Scar Mountain" – the hill that guards the route out of the Homathko Valley and into the range – "You'll be laughing. But I doubt you'll even get that far."

At the time, I wasn't really sure what to think. Hiking through a valley... how hard could it be?

## The hard way

In the days that follow, I learn the truth of Rob's words. We've been following the old logging road through the valley. But the further we go, the less reliable it becomes. Parts of it have been washed away by the Homathko River.



*Expedition members Joe Vanasco and Stuart Rickard in front of their 1920s-style tent. Photo by Susanna Oreskovic.*





#### Captions, this page

1. Don and Phyllis Munday on summit of Mt Victoria from Alpine Club camp #5650. Courtesy of the North Vancouver Museum and Archives.
2. Sailing up Bute Inlet towards the Homathko Valley. Film still by Greg Gransden.
3. Munday-style homemade tents. Film still by Greg Gransden.
4. Rest day for the expedition. Film still by Greg Gransden.
5. Alpenstocks and hemp rope. Photo by Susanna Oreskovic.
6. Expedition leader Bryan Thompson on rough terrain. Film still by Greg Gransden.

Other sections of it simply peter out, or lead to dead ends in the hills.

Once we've left the road behind, the terrain gets really difficult. We sidehill along steep slopes littered with boulders and giant fallen trees. We bushwhack through dense undergrowth and seemingly endless swamps. We pick our way across hills littered with rotting trunks and tree fall, knowing that one false step could mean serious injury.

Then there are the bears. The valley is overrun with them; their feces is everywhere, and the knowledge that they're nearby keeps me on edge – especially when we hike through fields of wild raspberries, their seasonal food. We know we have to talk or make noise to keep them at bay. Bryan sings the entire songbook from *Les Misérables*, a musical I loathe – but I'm more afraid of the bears, so I keep asking for encores.

## Crime and Punishment

We're supposed to get through the valley in 10 days and up into the alpine, but it's

been three weeks and we aren't anywhere near the foot of the mountains.

Even worse, we have two friends waiting for us on top of Scar Mountain. Mark Hurst and Ron Rusk make up the expedition's advance party. They've helicoptered into the alpine to rendezvous with the us there, on our way to climb Mt Waddington. But we haven't shown up, because we're still struggling through the valley below. They have so much time on their hands while waiting that Mark is able to read *Crime and Punishment* cover to cover.

We communicate with them by satellite text. Every day Bryan tells them we're about a day's hike from their position. But we don't actually know where we are. We could be 5 km away, or 15 km. And our snail-like progress is creating tensions within the party. Joe starts separating himself from the group and trekking on his own, using his knowledge of orienteering to find shortcuts and game trails.

It's becoming painfully clear that Rob Wood was right: we're not going to make it to Mt Waddington. It's doubtful we'll even make it out of the valley and up above the

treeline. That presents a dilemma for me as the expedition filmmaker. I had pictured capturing the moment of triumph as we summited Mt Waddington amid awe-inspiring peaks and breathtaking views. Instead, I have hours of footage of bushwhacking through swampy rainforest. I eventually come to realize that the film that comes out of it, *The Mystery Mountain Project*, is a comedy of errors, rather than a conventional mountaineering story.

## The Munday legacy

In 1926, the Mundays didn't make it to Mt Waddington either. They ran out of food and had to hike back out of the valley half-starving. But they didn't give up.

"They kept going back for the next ten years, exploring the mountain from different sides, making these incredibly precise maps and naming the peaks and glaciers with these wonderful romantic names," says Rob Wood. "They built a legacy of exploration that in itself was a huge legacy for British Columbia and especially the mountaineering community." ~ACC



Expedition leader Bryan Thompson next to a campfire, while 1920s-style sleeping bags dry in the foreground. Photo by Susanna Oreskovic.

## Watch the film

The *Mystery Mountain Project* can be seen on Amazon Prime, Vimeo on Demand, Reelhouse and Adventure Sports TV.

Head over to the Aspects blog at [url.cafe/mysterymountain](http://url.cafe/mysterymountain) for links to the films and more background about the Munday's original expedition and the *Mystery Mountain Project*.



# I can't tonight, I'm going... ONLINE

## How the Okanagan Section used creativity to thrive during COVID

by Lianne Caron  
Socials Coordinator, ACC Okanagan

In 1996, the Okanagan Section of The Alpine Club of Canada was created to provide a meeting ground for Okanagan residents but we also have members as far away as Revelstoke, Salmon Arm and the Kootenays. You can find the section's 300+ members climbing at Skaha Bluffs and out in the surrounding mountainous areas such as the Cascades, Coast Range, Monashees, and Selkirks. The Okanagan Valley provides opportunities for a wide variety of activities but our section's core activity is backcountry skiing.

We meet monthly for socials. These events revolve around presentations, guests and whenever possible a few pints and some food. Social events always start with time to catch up and discuss section matters before the planned events begin.

### When pandemics strike

When the pandemic hit, we cancelled our remaining events before the summer break, and it took us a little while to transition to online socials. Since other activities were either cancelled or limited due to public health restrictions, the pressure was on to engage our members in another way and we ended up doing this through monthly Zoom meetings.

Our socials are often held in Kelowna, thereby restricting members from other areas of the Okanagan to participate. Going online brought us together in a new way and allowed

us to bring in guests from other parts of the province and also allowed members from across our section to meet all at once.

Our first virtual event was a catch-up to find out what we had all been up to since the pandemic hit through an evening slideshow of photos and stories from our adventures. Following that, throughout the next year or so, we've held presentations on winter trip planning, Himalayan adventures, climbing incidents and reports and our annual photo contest.

### A night of story telling

Before online presentations started, everyone on Zoom was very chatty and social; it was evident that we needed more time for socializing. This influenced the creation of A Night of Story Telling, a night dedicated specifically to sharing. Members signed up for a ten-minute slot to share a story, photos, trip report or anything creative that they could come up with. After each story, we gave space for comments and reflection. The night included inspiring messages of personal COVID-19 silver linings, a poem about a close bear encounter, photos from exploring the Stein Valley in the 1990s, a presentation on a road trip through Southern Utah and photos of past section climbing trips to whet our appetite before we are allowed to go out and play together again. This event showed us how staying in contact, sharing and discussing with each other has added value to our club as a whole. It was a wonderful way for members to get to know each other better through our shared stories and discussions.

Restrictions are now starting to ease in our province and hopefully, by autumn we can look forward to getting together in person. We have learned valuable lessons from our temporary transition online. Technology allowed us to be more inclusive and we hope to continue this trend in the future. ~ACC

*Photos are from virtual presentations made throughout the year at the Okanagan Section. Photo credits: (1) Dave Conly, (2) Sid Scull, (3) Dave Conly, (4) Sid Scull, (5) Jeff Collins*





*The Philippe Delesalle Grant helps underprivileged youths experience mountain life in the Bugaboos. Photo by Pat Morrow*

MEC

MEC has been a consistent and reliable supporter of many facets of the ACC's work year in and year out for nearly two decades.

### Over the years

Over the years MEC has supported the ACC's backcountry huts, our youth climbing programs, mountain culture, the environment, the Mountain Guides Ball and more.

Anyone who's been to the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festival for the past few years (except during COVID) will recall that MEC are our Alpine Allies and team up with us for our regular Saturday Happy Hour. This is where we celebrate our partnership and our community and invite everyone to a party where we raise money with collector edition YETI Mugs, prizes and giveaways. It's always popular and the ACC Environment Fund is always the beneficiary.

For 2021 MEC are lending enormous help to a number of ACC initiatives.

### Girls on Ice Canada

Through this program, young women from across Canada come to the Rockies each year to learn science, art, wilderness travel, leadership skills and more in a

unique, tuition-free environment. Girls On Ice is very popular and successful and financial support from MEC makes it happen.

### The Philippe Delesalle Grant

Another program that MEC is behind, and that helps youth with limited opportunities experience the outdoors, is the Delesalle Grant. With funds from this grant, underprivileged individuals from urban areas in Canada are able to attend an immersive mountaineering camp in the Bugaboos. The ACC and MEC believe in the power of mountain experiences to positively shape our future generations.

### ACC Women's Program

MEC supports the club's Women's program of climbing and skiing camps. Each year the ACC offers guided trips for women where they can learn, grow and adventure in a supportive environment.

*The ACC works closely with a number of outdoor equipment manufacturers that share our goals and that help us to fulfill our mandate. This section profiles an ACC partner, what they do for the club and what it means to our members.*

These trips are administered, guided and managed by women and are open to all female-identifying participants.

New for 2021, the club is offering, with amazing support from MEC, a Women's climbing camp exclusively for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) women. Because, as we've said before, there's a difference between claiming that everyone is welcome to come along and making people truly feel welcome on them. We believe that there are too many barriers to getting into mountain sports for participants from non-traditional groups and breaking down those barriers is one of the most powerful things we can do to start making those sports accessible to all Canadians.

From making the outdoors more accessible, to supporting our mountain culture, to bringing about real change for the alpine environment, it's not an exaggeration to say that not only the club in general, but every ACC member has benefited from our partnership with MEC.

# Winter Mountain Programs

We are back for the winter! We are excited to continue offering our professional winter programs. This year we are bringing back some classics, continuing with some regular courses and adding more.

### Avalanche

- Avalanche Skills Training 1
- Managing Avalanche Terrain
- Avalanche Skills Training 2
- Advanced Decision Making in Avalanche Terrain

### Powder Program

- Fairy Meadow Powder Camp
- Kokanee Powder Camp
- Rogers Pass Powder Camps

### Instructional Courses

- Intro to Backcountry Skiing
- Intro to Splitboarding
- Intro to Ski Mountaineering
- Women's Ski Camp

### Ice Ice Baby

- Early Season Ice with Sean Isaac
- Intro to Ice Climbing

### Traverses

- Wapta Traverse
- Bow Yoho Traverses
- Columbia Icefields Ski Mountaineering

Check out [adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca](https://adventures.alpineclubofcanada.ca) for more information on courses including dates and prices and check back in regularly as we release new camps leading up to the winter.



AST 2



Intro to Backcountry Skiing



Intro to Splitboarding





Now live

Mask Up Revy from the cover feature Resilient Revelstoke: Four Seasons of COVID-19 in a Canadian Mountain Town. Photo: Tom Poole courtesy of Tourism Revelstoke

## The State of the Mountains Report 2021

Since 2018, the State of the Mountains Report has been a tangible commitment by The Alpine Club of Canada to provide accessible, current, and accurate information about the forces that affect Canadian mountain environments. The tradition continues with the 2021 State of the Mountains Report, launched in July.

Developed in collaboration with researchers, community members, and partner organizations across the country, this annual mountain report tackles environmental and social subjects ranging from wildfires to wildflowers and everything in between. The State of the Mountains Report gives Canadians, and all readers alike, the opportunity to hear the voices of people who have spent countless hours researching the alpine environment. The contributors to the report have, in one way

or another, dedicated their lives to the alpine and have offered their first-hand experiences, expertise and photographs to tell the stories of how change in Canadian mountain environments is affecting people and ecosystems.

The following page features summaries of three articles from the 2021 State of the Mountains Report. Read these and many more by downloading the publication or reading online at [stateofthemountains.ca](https://stateofthemountains.ca).

### People

#### Coal Policy and Surface Mining in the Rockies

by Liza Piper

In May 2020, mid-pandemic and without fanfare or public consultation, Alberta's government rescinded a 40-year-old coal development policy, justifying their actions by the need to modernize "outdated" regulations. In the absence of legacy policies, it seemed surface mining (open pit) along with all its environmental impacts would be returning the eastern slopes of Alberta's Rockies. In the months that followed a broad coalition of diverse Albertans ranging from ranchers and country music performers to urban-based politicians, academics and outdoor enthusiasts pushed back, causing the government to reverse course.

Learn more about the policy and the history of surface mining in the Rockies in the 2021 State of the Mountains Report.



### Life

#### The Future of Comprehensive Alpine Guidebooks

by David P. Jones

As the delivery method for the printed word evolves from paper and ink to screens and pixels, author David P. Jones compares the often-vague route information available through online sources with the rich, curated content one can find in a comprehensive alpine guidebook. But can such a niche publication continue to make a sound business case when small independent book sellers struggle to keep their doors open, and major online retailers dictate onerous terms to boutique publishers?

Learn more about the challenges of writing and publishing guidebooks in an online world in the 2021 State of the Mountains Report.



### Physical

#### The Changing Colours of Mountain Lakes In the Twenty-First Century

by Rolf Vinebrooke

When viewed from above the lakes of the Canadian Rockies present a myriad of different hues and colours in their waters. While these countless shades of blue, green, brown and turquoise can create a stunning and picturesque mountain scene, they can also act as indicators of environmental changes related to human activities. Some stressors affecting change in lakes date back to the mid-twentieth century while others such as global warming are more recent. Shrinking glaciers, warming water and the addition of non-native fish species can all have a visible effect on mountain lakes.

You can read the full article to learn more about the science behind mountain lake ecosystems in the 2021 State of the Mountain Report.



Read the full State of the Mountains Report at [stateofthemountains.ca](https://stateofthemountains.ca)



# ADVENTURE IS CALLING

The ACC operates the largest network of backcountry huts in North America.

Rather than our family-friendly huts in alpine meadows, this season we're featuring some huts to dream of when you're feeling bold. **Member rates for these huts is just \$50/night.**

Get the inside scoop!  
Subscribe to **Hut Insider newsletter** for hut news, deals, cancellations and more. at [alpineclubofcanada.ca/newsletters](http://alpineclubofcanada.ca/newsletters)



Photo: Nicole Larson

## Castle Mountain Hut

**Sleeps:** 4 is best

**Approach:** Hike 3-4 hours from Castle Junction on the #1 Highway either via the fire lookout or Rockbound Lake. Both have exposure and require some skill with hands on rock.

**The Dream Trip:** A quick 2-nighter, with a climb of Brewer's Buttress (380m 5.7) as the objective.

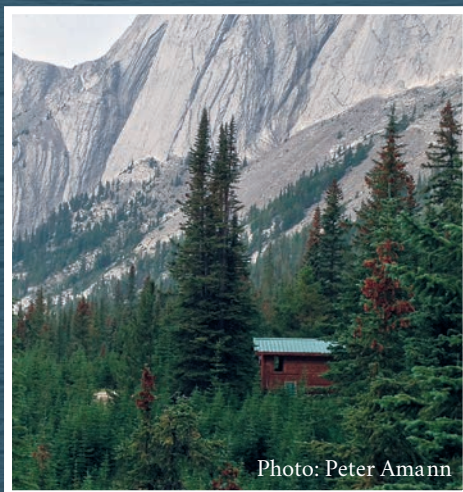


Photo: Peter Amann

## Mt. Colin Hut

**Sleeps:** 4 to 6

**Approach:** 6-8 hours hiking from Maligne Canyon near Jasper.

**The Dream Trip:** Mt. Colin is a stunning limestone fan of rock above the hut and any ascent of the mountain makes a great day. Spend a day hiking in, a day climbing and a day lying on your back looking back up at your route.

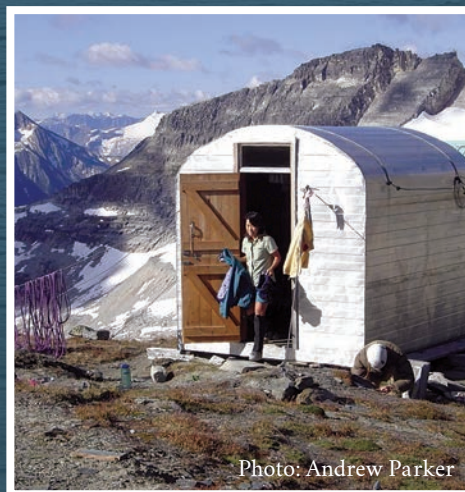


Photo: Andrew Parker

## Sapphire Col Hut

**Sleeps:** 4

**Approach:** A 4-km mountaineering route from the Asulkan Cabin in Rogers Pass.

**The Dream Trip:** Three days with a night at the Asulkan Cabin, a day to Sapphire Col and then back to Rogers Pass. Add in days for mountaineering anywhere along the way.



## Ben Ferris (Great Cairn) Hut

**Sleeps:** 6

**Approach:** Options include a big day from Fairy Meadow Hut, crossing glaciers; a massive day over the Goat Glacier; or a quick jaunt from Golden via helicopter.

**The Dream Trip:** Five days with Mt. Sir Sandford (the highest peak in the Selkirks) as the prime objective. Round out the trip by climbing Mt. Azimuth and cragging on the beautiful red rock cliffs upstream from the hut.



Photo: Jon Walsh

## Lloyd MacKay (Mt Alberta) Hut

**Sleeps:** 6, but 4 is better

**Approach:** Plan for a big day crossing the freezing Sunwapta, hiking over Wooley Shoulder and crossing a toe of glacier to get here. 6-8 hours should do it, depending on how much climbing gear you're carrying.

**The Dream Trip:** Stay at the Mt. Alberta Hut before and after climbing the Japanese Route on Mt. Alberta, one of the 50 Classics of North America. But don't expect solid rock.



## Glacier Circle Cabin

**Sleeps:** up to 10

**Approach:** A huge day of glacier travel and route finding from Rogers Pass.

**The Dream Trip:** A summer spent climbing the rarely-trod alpine routes on Fox, Topham, Macoun and Selwyn and swimming in the cold lakes.

Book today: [www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/huts](http://www.alpineclubofcanada.ca/huts)







## Unexpected Pleasures

*Creating wonderful dishes in an amazing place*

Backcountry meals are typically eaten to sustain. When you're carrying the ingredients on your back, balancing your cutting board between a couple of rocks and cooking on a single burner, you don't typically refer to it as "dining."

Shadow Lake Lodge is a bit different. The staff there are creating inspired cuisine, all prepared fresh on site.

Think: baked goods daily, pasta from scratch, afternoon tea, three course dinners with gorgeous desserts (you've earned it). Along with a wine and beer list that is more reminiscent of a fine hotel than a backcountry setting.

Do white linens, fine tableware, candles and flowers make a meal taste better? Well, yes, here somehow, they do.

Meals are served in the dining room, at the picnic tables in the sunny meadow, or on the private balcony of your cabin.

Not what you were expecting? Change your expectations. ~ACC

Shadow Lake Lodge in Banff's backcountry is hosted by The Alpine Club of Canada.



*Support the ACC's annual charity auction and win!*

# the Summit Bid

CANADA'S PREMIER AUCTION OF MOUNTAIN GEAR, ART AND EXPERIENCES.

Bidding begins October 25th and closes with the Mountain Guides Ball, October 30th.

*Stay tuned to the ACC's online channels for updates!*



Featured partners:



Keen to donate? Please contact Michaella at [summitbid@alpineclubofcanada.ca](mailto:summitbid@alpineclubofcanada.ca)



# The future of trail.

VECTIV™ technology turns energy into momentum to propel you forward. Built for speed, FLIGHT VECTIV provides propulsion with every stride and reduces impact by 10%.



Power Further  
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