

The Alpine Club of Canada Gazette

Le club alpin du Canada

2025 is
**International
Year of Glaciers'
Preservation**

Let's celebrate glaciers

Section Stories

As told by ACC members
across Canada



Vol. 41 | 2025

CASEY ELLIOT — ON SUNSPOT DIHEDRAL 5.11B



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The Alpine Club of Canada
Box 8040, Canmore, AB
Canada T1W 2T8
Phone: (403) 678-3200
info@alpineclubofcanada.ca
www.alpineclubofcanada.ca

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Design & Production

Tamasin Langton



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The Alpine Club of Canada recognizes all of our outstanding corporate partners who support our club in so many ways. Without the support of these companies, the ACC could not run the programs we do or have the success we've had. We thank them sincerely for their support.



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2025
International
Year of Glaciers'
Preservation

*Tom Curran, Cassandra Elphinstone, Zoe Neudorf and
Lucas Braun enjoy dinner during their Jen Higgins
Grant-funded ski traverse on the Monarch Icefields.
Read more on page 26. Photo by Declan Taylor.*

#For the Love of Glaciers

The ACC recognizes the UN International Year of Glaciers' Preservation

2025 marks the United Nations' pivotal International Year of Glaciers' Preservation—a global initiative to raise awareness about the critical state of the world's glaciers. To amplify this crucial message, the ACC's website now has a collection of comprehensive resources, compelling narratives, scientific insights, and educational materials on offer to anyone who wants to learn more

about the state of our glaciers. We also created the social media hashtag #ForTheLoveOfGlaciers, to capture the attention of new audiences, encourage people to reminisce, and to share their happy moments on glaciers. This hub will serve as a dynamic, evolving resource for members, outdoor enthusiasts, environmental advocates, and anyone passionate about understanding and protecting these magnificent ice formations.



Visit the Hub at:
[alpineclubofcanada.ca](https://alpineclubofcanada.ca/un-international-year-of-glacier-preservation)
[/un-international-year-of-glacier-preservation](https://alpineclubofcanada.ca/un-international-year-of-glacier-preservation)



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On the cover: One of the awe-inspiring photos from the Yukon Section's 10-day ski mountaineering trip in Kluane National Park. Read the story on page 38.

Photo by Éliel Bureau-Lafontaine.

Right: Hikers enjoying the expansive views around Hallam Glacier at the 2018 GMC.

Photo by Paul Zizka.



You don't just join...



Freezing moments in time

This issue of the ACC Gazette is the second for the magazine in the current format, featuring contributed stories from our sections across the country, and we're excited to be able to publish another amazing collection.

Individually, these submissions are personal, describing a project or an outing or a moment. They show the many ways that we love and share the mountains. Collectively, they showcase the incredible depth and richness of our club across seasons, activities, and geography.

2025 is the UN International Year of Glaciers' Preservation and we asked our sections to, if possible, contribute stories that were related in some way to glaciers. As a result, this issue looks pretty white; most of the stories take place in winter and in half of them glaciers are central to the narrative.

We wanted this issue to celebrate glaciers and affirm their importance to us. And, as Mary Sanseverino says in Repeat Photography at Campbell Icefield (Vancouver Island, page 32), we are in a unique position to bring to the world the stories that these glaciers tell.

As you would expect, rocks, ice, snow, summits, trails high and low, and a little bit of travel to cool, mysterious places also feature in our club's activities and stories.

Along with our section stories, we're pleased to include news about the 2026 GMC, our fall Summit Shaker party, and a new hut at Mt. Robson. And as we do every year, we're celebrating the recipients of the ACC's volunteer awards and showcasing the winners of ACC grants.

We send out huge thanks to our members who contributed their writing and photography, and to the many, many more who volunteer every day to make our club what it is. — ACC

Mot du rédacteur en chef

Figer des moments dans le temps

Cette édition de la Gazette du CAC est la seconde, dans son format actuel, à présenter des récits rédigés par nos sections à travers le pays, et nous nous réjouissons de pouvoir en publier un nouvel ensemble passionnant.

Prises une à une, ces contributions offrent la description personnelle d'un projet, d'une sortie, ou d'un moment particulier. Elles expriment nos myriades de façons d'aimer et de partager les montagnes. Prises ensemble, elles témoignent de la profondeur et la richesse extraordinaires de notre club au fil des saisons, par ses activités et sa géographie.

2025 est l'Année Internationale de la Préservation des Glaciers des Nations unies, et nous avons demandé à nos sections de partager, si possible, des récits abordant d'une façon ou d'une autre les glaciers. Par conséquent, la blancheur semble dominer cette édition, où la plupart des récits se déroulent en hiver et où les glaciers sont au cœur de la moitié des articles.

Nous voulions que cette édition célèbre les glaciers et en souligne l'importance à notre égard. Et comme l'avance Mary Sanseverino dans son article sur la photographie répétée au champ de glace Campbell (Repeat Photography at Campbell Icefield ; Vancouver Island, page 32), nous sommes dans une situation unique pour faire connaître au monde les histoires que racontent ces glaciers.

Sans surprise, la pierre, la glace, la neige, les sommets, les sentiers de bas en haut, et un brin de voyages parmi des lieux sympas et mystérieux font également partie des activités et des récits de notre club.

En plus des récits de nos sections, nous partageons quelques actualités sur notre 'General Mountaineering Camp (GMC)' de 2026, notre fête annuelle le Summit Shaker, et notre nouveau refuge dans le parc provincial du mont Robson. Et comme chaque année, nous célébrons les lauréats des prix des bénévoles et soulignons les gagnants des bourses du CAC.

Un grand merci à nos membres qui ont participé à l'écriture et à la photographie de cette édition, et à nos très nombreux bénévoles qui contribuent chaque jour à la vie de notre club. — CAC

...You belong.

We are always on the lookout for great stories and photography. Represent your section in the next Gazette!

Nous sommes toujours à la recherche de belles histoires et de photos inspirantes. Représentez votre section dans la prochaine *Gazette* !

✉ gazette@alpineclubofcanada.ca



SATURDAY / MT. NORQUAY
OCTOBER 25 @ CASCADE LODGE

SUMMIT SHAKER

SEND BY DAY /
SHAKE BY NIGHT



You're Invited!

Join The Alpine Club of Canada and the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides for an unforgettable evening celebrating our community, our shared mountain culture, and the landscapes we cherish. This year's Summit Shaker steps away from the tradition of a formal Patron to spotlight something bigger than any one person - glaciers!

Tickets include:

- A hearty dinner fit for a mountaineer
- One complimentary drink ticket
- Fireside chats, presentations & games
- DJ & dancing under the stars
- Door prizes and auction goodies
- Drink tastings from Wildlife Distillery
- A limited edition Summit Shaker neck gaiter and sticker

Get your tickets here:



Learn more at:
alpineclubofcanada.ca/summit-shaker-2025

the Summit Bid

Place your bids on Canada's best mountain gear, art and experiences!

Support the environment, and land yourself some fresh goodies thanks to our generous donors and partners.

Bidding opens the week of October 20th, and winners will be announced on October 24th.

Hosted by:



ALPINE CLUB
OF CANADA
CLUB ALPIN
DU CANADA

ACMG⁺

This year, the ACC's portion of the proceeds will be directed to our Environment Fund, furthering many initiatives, including the club's Environment Grant.



Check out the auction items and place your bids on the Summit Bid website at alpineclubofcanada.ca/summit-bid-2025 beginning on October 20th.

Call for Nominations: Alpine Club of Canada Board of Directors Election 2026

The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) is seeking nominations for three positions on our Board of Directors for the upcoming 2026 election. Each year, three of the nine positions on the Board are elected for three-year terms.

This is an excellent opportunity to deepen your involvement with the ACC and contribute to the strategic direction of the club. We are looking for qualified individuals who are passionate about the ACC's mission and eager to make a difference.

— *Alpine Club of Canada Nomination Committee*

How to apply:

Interested members should review the application requirements on the ACC website and complete the online application process by **October 31, 2025**.

Get involved, make a difference, and help shape the future of The Alpine Club of Canada!



Learn more at:

alpineclubofcanada.ca

[/call-for-candidates-acc-board-of-directors-election-2026](https://alpineclubofcanada.ca/call-for-candidates-acc-board-of-directors-election-2026)

Appel à candidatures au conseil d'administration du Club alpin du Canada de 2026

Le Club alpin du Canada (CAC) recherche des candidatures pour trois postes au sein de son conseil d'administration pour la prochaine élection de 2026. Chaque année, trois des neuf postes du conseil sont élus pour des périodes de trois ans.

Il s'agit d'une excellente occasion d'approfondir votre implication dans le CAC et de participer à sa direction stratégique. Nous sommes en quête de personnes compétentes, passionnées par la mission du CAC et désireuses de faire une différence.

— *Le conseil d'administration du Club alpin du Canada*

Comment s'inscrire :

Les membres intéressés doivent prendre connaissance des conditions de candidature sur le site Web du CAC et avoir complété leur inscription en ligne **le 31 octobre 2025**.

Impliquez-vous, changez les choses et aidez à former l'avenir du Club alpin du Canada!

BANFF CENTRE

MOUNTAIN FILM AND BOOK FESTIVAL



Join us November 1 – 9 to celebrate our 50th Anniversary!
Featuring films, speakers, adventurers, exhibitions,
festival marketplace, and so much more!

NOV 4 – 5, 2025

Fire and Ice Symposium The Stories We Tell

Special Anniversary Event.
A public symposium exploring
the role of storytelling to create
positive impact and action,
through the lens of changing
ice and wildfire.

\$190 | TWO DAY PASS

NOV 1 – 9, 2025

Festival Tickets On sale Aug 7

Find out more
and get tickets at:



Find us at the **FIRE & ICE** MOUNTAIN SYMPOSIUM

Since 1976, the Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival has been an industry leader in the celebration of Mountain Culture. In honour of the festival's 50th anniversary, and in partnership with the UN International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, BMFF is hosting the *Fire and Ice Symposium: Stories We Tell*.

The symposium will focus on two areas of environmental change that are significant and relevant to the Bow Valley – **changing ice, and wildfire**. Scientists, educators, filmmakers, authors, and photographers will gather to share their projects and the mediums they use to communicate their compelling stories. Attendees will learn about the landscapes they love, be inspired by the work being done towards a better future, and leave with an optimism and drive to make a positive impact.

The *Fire and Ice Symposium* is supported by The Alpine Club of Canada, and Banff and Lake Louise Tourism.

Register and learn more at:
banffcentre.ca/film-fest



We've got you covered!

The ACC partners with TuGo® to bring you travel insurance that covers the mountain activities you love, providing tailored advice more insurance companies can't.

Travelling more than twice in a year?

Ask about our Multi-Trip Annual plans.

alpineclubofcanada.ca/insurance



Shop like a pro with ExpertVoice

New
Perk!

Members of the ACC are recognized as experts in the outdoor community and can now receive exclusive discounts on outdoor brands such as Mammut, Black Diamond, Garmin, Smith, Outdoor Research, Mountain Hardwear, and more!

Sign-up is simple:

- Go to expertvoice.com and hit "Join Now."
- Create an account by entering your details.
- On the "Qualify" page, select "Non-Profit and Professional Members."
- Search for "The Alpine Club of Canada."
- Upload your ACC Card (found in the welcome email that was sent when you purchased or renewed your membership).

Up to 50% off



Thanks to our partnership with The North Face Canada, all members are eligible for 50% off apparel and 40% off TNF gear. Spend up to \$2,000, twice a year!

Sign up for your pro deal at:

thenorthfacepro.com/pro



Celebrating our people

Season to season, day-in, day-out, for over a century, our volunteers run the sections, write articles, lead trips, look after the environment and demonstrate their commitment to the club. Is someone in your section going above and beyond? Nominate them for an award by December 31, 2025.

Nominate a volunteer:

alpineclubofcanada.ca/volunteer-awards



Programmed for Adventure



ADVENTURES

FOR EVERY SEASON

Learn new skills, explore the mountains, and make unforgettable memories with new friends.

We believe that mountaineering, in all its forms, helps to uplift the human spirit and connect individuals deeply with their mountain environments, encouraging them to protect these important ecosystems. For these reasons, the ACC runs outdoor camps and skills courses

with the aim to grow and develop Canada's mountaineering community, make it accessible to everyone, and to promote considerate, responsible, and safe practices amongst its members.



FOR EVERYONE

We're always keen to hear ideas for new camps and courses, and to support our members in making their mountain ambitions a reality. If you are looking for support in bringing a summer or winter adventure to life, ACC Adventures has the resources, knowledge, and commitment to support you.



To see all of our current available adventures, scan the QR code or visit: alpineclubofcanada.ca/adventures

Upcoming Adventures

- + Rogers Pass Powder: Wheeler
- + Rogers Pass Powder: Asulkan
- + Intro to Mountaineering
- + Intro to Sport
- + Intro to Trad
- + Dogtooth Trek
- ...and more

2026 GMC ANNOUNCED:



TRIDENT



This is truly an alpine explorer's paradise.

Every year, since 1906, the General Mountaineering Camp finds a new home in a remote, exciting corner of western Canada's mountains. For 2026, we are excited to announce that the camp will be visiting the unique and beautiful alpine wilderness surrounding the Trident Range in the northern Selkirks of British Columbia.

Set at 2,400 metres, the camp opens the door to a rugged world of glaciers, serrated spires, steep snow slopes, and impressive peaks. This remote setting is a true playground for intrepid explorers — offering endless opportunities for glacier travel, fourth-class scrambling, short technical climbs, and alpine adventure.

Mountaineering objectives include: Trident Mountain (3,136 m), Poseidon Peak (2,814 m), Garnet Peak (2,788 m), Pluto Peak (2,831 m), Halia Mountain (2,778 m), Neptune Peak (3,201 m), Cronus Peak (3,076 m), Escarpment Peak (3,121 m) and more.

You can see the area for yourself by plugging in '51.8894444, -118.1372222' into the search bar of Google Earth.

The Trident Group is located on the Traditional Lands of the Sinixt, Syilx, Secwepemc, Stoney, Ktunaxa, and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

The GMC is about camping, hiking and climbing, but it's also about photography, art, stargazing, swimming in frigid alpine lakes, eating great food and sharing the mountains with friends old and new.



Find out more and register online, scan the QR code or visit alpineclubofcanada.ca/general-mountaineering-camp
Or call: 403-678-3200 ext. 213



*Mountaineering doesn't have to be serious.
Photo by Alex Mac.*



Camping under the stars in comfort. Photo by Mary Sanseverino.



*The 2024 GMC
camp in Remillard.
Photo by Alex Mac.*

What's up at the huts?

Renewable power, comfort upgrades and a brand new hut



The ACC stewards more than 30 backcountry huts - the largest network in North America. It is no wonder that they attract the largest number of new members to the club. Whether you're looking for a family-friendly retreat in alpine meadows, a backcountry powder paradise, or remote climbers' refuge; our hut network allows anyone to explore more. They do, however, require persistent maintenance, and we endeavour to make improvements and sustainable upgrades wherever we can.

Complete 2025 upgrades

- **Shadow Lake Lodge** has become a self-catered facility with a commercial-grade kitchen. The cabins have new furnaces and lodge is benefiting from a new water management system.
- **Bell Cabin (Canmore Alpine Hostel)** has a new hot water system, in-floor heating in the kitchen, and three upgraded private bedrooms with brand-new bunk beds.
- **Canmore Alpine Hostel** has been safeguarded from wildfire with a new sprinkler system, and the water well has been upgraded to replace the ageing infrastructure. Owners of electric vehicles can now charge up via three Flo EV Chargers (19.2kW). The lounge has cosy new furniture, and the club's national office has had a much-needed renovation.

- **Fryatt Creek Hut** has been spruced up with fresh wood stain.

- **Woodbury Hut** has had its roof replaced.

Scheduled for 2025

- **Castle Mountain Cabin** (the new structure) will be open in fall, 2025.
- **Wates-Gibson Hut** will be getting FireSmart treatment, a kitchen refresh, new mattresses, and greywater system.
- **Asulkan Cabin** is also scheduled to have a kitchen refresh and structural repairs.
- **Fairy Meadow Hut** will receive a battery bank to decrease the use of the generator.
- **Great Cairn Hut** will be receiving a new woodstove and a new roof.
- **Illecillewaet Hut** will be getting a new front deck and stain treatment.

How to Hut!

Whether you're a first-time hut user or a seasoned hut-dweller, our "Hut How-To" video series is a must-watch! While our staff visit our huts when possible, our huts are user-maintained. Learn how to use our stoves, maintain the outhouses, deal with grey water, and more. Our resources also contain packing lists, hut etiquette, and FAQs.

See alpineclubofcanada.ca/hut-resources

Group bookings

Book your wedding or other special event at any one of our lodgings. The Canmore Alpine Hostel offers stunning indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as private and dorm-style rooms, all with easy road access. Choose to adventure in comfort by journeying to Shadow Lake Lodge. For a rustic experience, privately book one of our huts. To plan your group booking, email:

groups@alpineclubofcanada.ca



View the 2025 HUT GUIDE

Your hut options at-a-glance

alpineclubofcanada.ca/hut-resources

Member benefits

ACC members can reserve huts up to 180 days in advance, and ACC sections can reserve huts up to **one year in advance** (for entire-hut bookings). If you'd like to plan such a trip, contact your local section.

alpineclubofcanada.ca/membership-benefits

New hut alert



Thanks to our generous donors, the Robson Pass (Byron Caldwell) Hut is scheduled to open Summer 2026.

This hut means a lot to two families in particular: The Caldwell family, and the Gmosers. Both Byron Caldwell (who summited Mt. Robson at the 1988 GMC), and Robson Gmoser (named after Mt. Robson), tragically died in mountain accidents. To honour their memory, their families' donations will make the Robson Pass Hut a reality for generations to enjoy.

A safe, warm shelter welcoming adventurers in all seasons

Facilities include:

- Bunks for up to 12 people.
- Propane heating and cooking.
- Electric lighting, ventilation and device charging powered by renewable solar energy.

Access

- 24 km hike from the Berg Lake trailhead via well-maintained trails with several campgrounds en route. You can bike as far as Kinney Lake Campground (13.4 km).
- Optional helicopter access in both summer and winter.



Byron Caldwell and Scott Sarjeant on the summit of Mt. Resplendent with Mt. Robson in the background, 1988. Photo provided by Scott Sarjeant.



Be a Part of History!

The ACC still needs your support to help build Robson Pass Hut. **Scan the QR code** to make a difference today!



SHADOW LAKE LODGE

ADVENTURE IN COMFORT



Whether it's a family adventure or a romantic getaway, reconnect with each other at Shadow Lake Lodge.



Paul Zizka



Paul Zizka

Spectacular in any season



Paul Zizka

An unforgettable backcountry experience - no matter when you book.

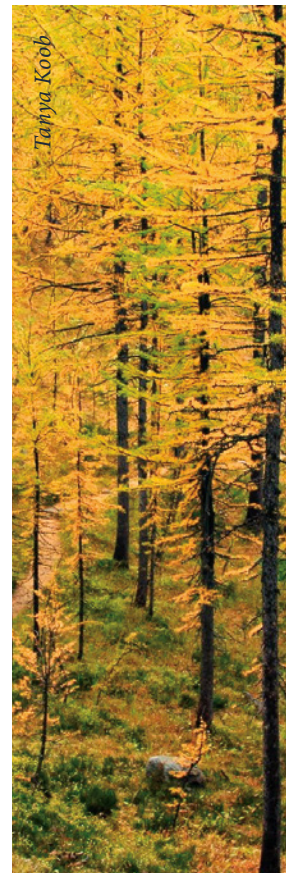
Shadow Lake Lodge is a 14 km hike, ski, or snowshoe from the trailhead. Nestled deep within Banff National Park, guests enjoy heated private cabins and a licensed general store where they can purchase wine, beer, and other snacks.

Now a self-catered facility

Guests have access to the commercial-grade kitchen with gas stove and oven, fridge, running hot and cold water, and plenty of counter space for multiple groups. All cooking and eating utensils are provided.

Exclusive group bookings

Shadow Lake Lodge is open to exclusive group bookings! Email groups@alpineclubofcanada.ca to organise your event.



Tanya Koob

Book your stay at **shadowlakelodge.com**



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2025 ACC AWARDS

HERITAGE AWARDS



Every year, the ACC celebrates 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 (for 25- and 35-year members) or a wall plaque (for 50-year members).

Since 2024, 38 members have reached the 25-year milestone, 22 members have reached the 35-year mark, and 3 have become members of the 50-year Heritage Club!

**CONGRATULATIONS
AND THANKS TO
OUR NEW HERITAGE
CLUB MEMBERS
LISTED BELOW.**

50 YEARS

Raylene Frechette

Ken Hewitt

David Paterson

35 YEARS

Paul Bechard

Jeff Dolinsky

Joan Knowles

Valerie Sullivan

Masten Brolsma

Jeff Gair

Darrel Newman

Julie Timmins

Carolyn Cousins

Richard Higgins

Brian Pinch

Nancy Townshend

David Cousins

Christine Higgins

Rod Plasman

Bruce Veidt

Howard Dawson

Judith Kashul

Andrew Riggs

John Webb

Valerie Kerr

Diane Schon

25 YEARS

Kathy Banks

Monica Durigon

Pierre Mousset-Jones

Keith Sanford

Alexandre Beaupré

Tom Fransham

Julie Muller

Rick Thiessen

George Borchert

Brian Gilchrist

Jonathan Newman

Eric Vezeau

David Chick

Jay Honeyman

Gunnar Olovsson

Harold Waters

Sheldon Clare

Terri Hunter

Sarah Peebles

Alexandra Welsh

Jennifer Cordeiro

Paul Kapnoudhis

David Potkins

David Williams

Robert Cruickshank

David Lee

Charles Price

Karen Williams

Anita Doherty

Karson Leigh

Matt Reynolds

Robert Withey

Daniel Dufresne

Tracy McKay

Michael Ross

Kevin Witzke

Linda Moore

LeRoy Russ

2025 ACC GRANT RECIPIENTS

With contributions from many generous donors, The Alpine Club of Canada has established funds to support mountaineering-related projects and initiatives. Support is provided in the form of annual cash grants and scholarships to individuals and groups who are judged as best meeting the selection criteria. Each year the ACC awards over \$15,000 through the grants listed below.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS TO OUR GRANT RECIPIENTS.

ACC ENVIRONMENT GRANT

The purpose of the grant is to provide support that contributes to the protection and preservation of mountain and climbing environments, including the preservation of alpine flora and fauna in their natural habitat.

Cathy Ryan

High Elevation Monitoring Project: \$3,000

The startling loss of glaciers is one of the most conspicuous consequences of climate change. The loss of glacial teal lakes has also been observed and could significantly affect some of the most iconic mountain landscapes in Canada (e.g. Lake Louise, Moraine Lake, and Peyto Lake). This project seeks to understand the source(s) and pathways of the 'glacial flour' responsible for the iconic turquoise of alpine lakes and how fast glacial lakes will lose their colour.

Claire Wright

Understanding Jasper's landscape ecology before and after the 2024 Wildfire Complex: \$1,000

Using the vast photographic collection of repeat photography collected by the Mountain Legacy Project (MLP), comprehensive landcover maps have been created of the upper Athabasca valley for 1915 and 2024. In July 2024, Jasper National Park experienced its largest wildfire in over a century, burning 32,722 ha. This grant will fund a 2025 expedition to re-photograph now-burned areas, to aid in creating comprehensive landcover maps of the wildfire area for 1915, 1999, 2024 (pre-fire), and 2025 (post-fire). Ultimately, the research will inform parks management, post-restoration, and preventative strategies for other land managers facing similar threats.

Catrin Brown

2025 Bioblitz at 5040 Peak: \$1,730

Data collection through the Bioblitz iNaturalist project begun last year will continue. This expanding database will be able to support research projects such as the identification of endemic species, the impact of climate on species health and distribution, and the impact of increased human traffic in the area.

Elizabeth Arich

100 Glaciers Folio: \$1,500

The goal of the project is to create a layperson-accessible print folio describing and contextualizing glacier change in the Arctic and alpine areas of Canada, accompanied by an interleaved imagination piece to help place the reader. The 100 Glaciers Folio is envisioned to encourage the Know-Love-Protect construct.

Matthew Beedle

Kathlyn Glacier Thickness Observations and Community Monitoring: \$4,081.97

The objectives of this project are to determine the thickness of the Kathlyn Glacier and bed topography; involve youth in community glacier monitoring projects to develop their understanding of the importance of glaciers in the ecosystem; and, improve modeling of the fate of Kathlyn Glacier in the 21st century to better inform climate-change-related decisions.



JIM COLPITTS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The financial costs of learning, developing and certifying mountaineering skills can be substantial, particularly for young people. Through the Jim Colpitts Memorial Scholarship, we aim to help out with those financial costs.

Ben Soneff

Avalanche Operations Level 2: \$800

This six-day assessment course develops avalanche forecasting skills through evaluating conditions, identifying hazards, and creating daily forecasts. This course will help 22-year-old Ben to progress his guiding certifications while he is still in school and to get into his desired apprentice ski guide program when out of school. His long-term goal is to become a certified ski guide.

Hersh Bharth

Wilderness First Aid Responder Course: \$500

Hersh is a 21-year-old apprentice hiking guide aspiring to guide at a higher level. This four-day course by Rocky Mountain Adventure Medicine will refresh intermediate first aid knowledge and cover extended care and response in the backcountry, giving Hersh the tools to aid people in need and advance his career.

KARL NAGY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship was established in 2001 to assist aspiring guides and volunteer leaders with skills development.

Nick Nelson

GMC Spot: \$2,995

Nick currently works as a certified indoor and outdoor climbing instructor. He combines over a decade of climbing experience with a strong commitment to mentorship, safety, and stewardship, having volunteered for crag cleanups and as a custodian at the Kees and Claire Hut. Nick is actively developing his backcountry skiing ability, risk management, and avalanche assessment skills. He aims to become a certified rock and ski guide within five years and is currently preparing for the ACMG Apprentice Rock Guide program in 2026. Attending a GMC will offer him invaluable practical experience and add further legitimacy to job applications.

Receive financial support for your mountain projects and initiatives!

Apply by January 31st 2026
alpineclubofcanada.ca/grants



*Shira Biner climbing on Baffin island in 2023.
Photo by James Klemmensen.*

JEN HIGGINS GRANT FOR YOUNG WOMEN

This grant promotes creative and energetic alpine-related outdoor pursuits by young women. These projects should demonstrate initiative, creativity, energy, and resourcefulness with an emphasis on self-propelled wilderness travel, and should provide value and interest to the community.

Cassandra Elphinstone

The Monarch Ha-Iltzuk Traverse: \$3,000

The Monarch Icefield, the Ha-Iltzuk, and the series of peaks bridging them, offer one of the longest and most remote high-alpine ski traverses in the Coast Range. Cassandra Elphinstone, Jacob Grossbard, Declan Taylor, and Zoe Neudorf plan to ski 200 km from Bella Coola to the head of Knight Inlet, spending 30 days on the icefields skiing, climbing, and offering themselves up to the experience of travelling through the wildest mountains in the Pacific Ranges.

Shira Biner

Redefining Limits on Baffin Island: Raising the bar for fem/them climbing expeditions in the Canadian Arctic: \$5,000

A fully female+ team of five will travel to Baffin Island with the goal of putting up all-female first ascents in the Canadian Arctic, climbing the peaks towering above Arviqtujuq Kangiqtua (Eglinton Fjord). After climbing for three weeks, they will travel to Ayr Lake, packraft the Kogalu River, and then journey the remaining kilometres back to Clyde River. The 250+ km journey, made by an entirely fem/them team will raise the bar for female+ alpinism in the Arctic in North America.



JOHN LAUCLAN MEMORIAL AWARD

*The John Lauchlan Memorial Award is a cash and mentorship award designed to assist Canadian climbers through the support of worthy expeditions and mountainous adventures. The award exists to perpetuate the bold and adventurous spirit which John Lauchlan exemplified in his climbing exploits. More information is available at JohnLauchlanAward.com. The ACC assists with the award administration. **Annual deadline to apply: January 31.***

Drew Leiterman

Yoda Wall: \$3,000

Drew Leiterman, Ryan Croppo, and Kevin Martin aim to achieve the first ascent of a 1,300 m unclimbed granite peak that they have named "Yoda Wall." This endeavor will spotlight the rugged beauty of this remote region while respecting and acknowledging the stewardship of the Klahoose Nation. Along with recording their climb of Yoda Wall through photography and videography, the team will conduct ecological surveys to gather insights into the region's biodiversity and share their findings to raise awareness about the unique features and conservation needs of the area.

Ethan Berman

Hidden Pillar Project : \$5,000

Ethan Berman, Maarten van Haeren, and Sebastien Pelletti were awarded \$5,000 for a return expedition to the Southeast Pillar of Ultar Sar (7,388 m) in the Karakoram. After having to turn around due to dangerous snow conditions in 2024, the team completed the 3,100-metre mixed route in alpine style in June this year. The Southeast Pillar was considered to be one of the last great mountaineering problems in the Karakoram.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The ACC Volunteer Awards recognize those members who have made significant contributions in furthering the aims and goals of the club and Canadian mountaineering in general. This year, please join us in recognizing the outstanding volunteers mentioned below.



**SKILLED, DEDICATED,
GIVING, AND TIRELESS.
WITHOUT OUR
VOLUNTEERS, THERE IS
SIMPLY NO ACC.**

ERIC BROOKS LEADER AWARD

Members who have demonstrated a strong, consistent commitment to learn and apply technical and leadership skills in mountaineering or ski mountaineering on club or section-organized activities for a minimum of 1-5 years.

Ron Rusk – Calgary
Simon Trudel – Calgary
Brendan Clark – Edmonton
Kathleen Lane – Squamish

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Awarded to members who have contributed outstanding service to the club or a section over a period exceeding five years:

- On a committee/project of the club or a section
- Providing leadership for a large undertaking or contributing towards the activities of the club or a section
- Been awarded the Don Forest Service Award prior to consideration for this award

David Cormie – Manitoba

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Honorary Membership is the highest recognition we offer for contributions to Canadian mountaineering and includes an ACC Life Membership. It is presented to individuals with a strong and sustained commitment to the Canadian mountain environment and Canadian mountaineering.

Roger Laurilla

DON FOREST SERVICE AWARD

Recipients of the Don Forest Service Award have contributed significant service to the club or a section over a minimum period of one to five years, such as:

- Joining a committee/project of the club or a section
- Contributing to a large ACC undertaking
- Furthering the activities of the club or a section

Katherine Morianos – Calgary
Keith Sanford – Calgary
Bryce Schroers – Columbia Mountains & Saskatchewan
Michele Eickholt – Edmonton
Jarett Stastny – Edmonton
Martin Schwangler – Edmonton
Christine Mazur – Manitoba
David Dannenbaum – Montreal
Emma Glorioso-Deraiche – Montreal
Paul Robitaille – Montreal
Andy McQuilkin – Okanagan
Sonia Szombathy – Okanagan
Dave Cross – Okanagan
Cindy Doyle – Outaouais
Francois Bessette – Outaouais
Erica Veenstra – Saint Boniface
Howard Hemingson – Saskatchewan
Robert Leblanc – Toronto
Garth Stewart – Vancouver Island
Todd Powell – Vancouver
David Thompson – Vancouver
John Serjeantson – Yukon
Trevor Willson

A.O. WHEELER LEGACY AWARD

The highest honour given by the ACC to its members. It is awarded for outstanding and varied contributions to The Alpine Club of Canada over many years. This award includes Life Membership in the ACC.

Paul Geddes – Vancouver & Toronto



YETI *BUILT FOR THE WILD.*

Ambassador Christina Lusti
and skier Guillaume Pierrel
Aoraki, Mt. Cook, New Zealand

Supporting the protection of wild places across Canada since 1978.

Our animal-proof bins and food storage solutions help protect wildlife by keeping them wild, while ensuring the backcountry is litter-free.

Snap a pic with any one of our bins to join the fan club and enter into a monthly draw to win prizes.



Waterton National Park, Alberta, 2025.



Snap a pic, join the club!
haulall.com/fanclub

By Members, For Members

From Vancouver Island and the Yukon all the way to Newfoundland and Labrador, ACC members are united in their passion for the outdoors. Each of our 25 sections is teeming with generous volunteers and inspired adventurers - organizing the outings, trips, and expeditions that make for the brilliant stories in the following pages.

As our climate changes, so do our adventures. As glaciers become dearer to us, we will continue to enjoy, honour, and research them. It seems appropriate, then, that we kick off our section stories with a fascinating look at how some of these landscapes have changed over the past 100 years.

We hope you enjoy all the chapters that make up our club's story and that you are inspired to honour the special places in which you recreate. — ACC





Vancouver Island

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WHEELER & CAMPBELL REPEAT PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE CAMPBELL ICEFIELD

Story by Mary Sanseverino

On July 18, 1918, surveyors Arthur Oliver Wheeler and Alan John Campbell, along with assistant Lee Grant Cameron rose early and ventured up the northern arm of what would later be called the Campbell Glacier and Icefield. Their goal was a high point midway along the western ridge above the ice. This, along with another point on the southeast of the icefield, afforded them exceptional views of the entire area. The black and white inset photos presented in this article capture a sense of what it must have been like for them.

The First World War still raged in Europe but Wheeler and Campbell, working with a reduced and inexperienced crew, were here to map the official inter-provincial boundary between BC and Alberta. Using a combination of traditional survey methods (measuring horizontal and vertical angles between specific points) and photography, their goal was to create topographic maps of the border.

It was an exciting moment when, on September 7th, 2024, I, along with a team of climbers from the Vancouver Island Section, was able to stand where Wheeler, Campbell, and Cameron stood 106 years ago and repeat their images.

Looking at the historic/modern photo pairs here I think you'll agree that much has remained the same. But even more has changed in the intervening years, especially with respect to climate-driven ice loss.

Mountain photography has been a passion of mine for many decades. I'm always looking for ways to let the photographs speak. So, I encourage you to spend some time with the images in this essay, perhaps reflecting on the dynamics behind the changes so evident in these images.

I struggle with the climate change contradiction that long distance driving, staging via helicopter, and air travel presents. But at the same time, I feel we mountaineers are in a unique position to bring the stories these glaciers tell to the world. At the very least, perhaps our words and images can help people better understand what is at stake in our rapidly warming world.

The team on the Dome Ridge scramble.
Photo by Mary Sanseverino.

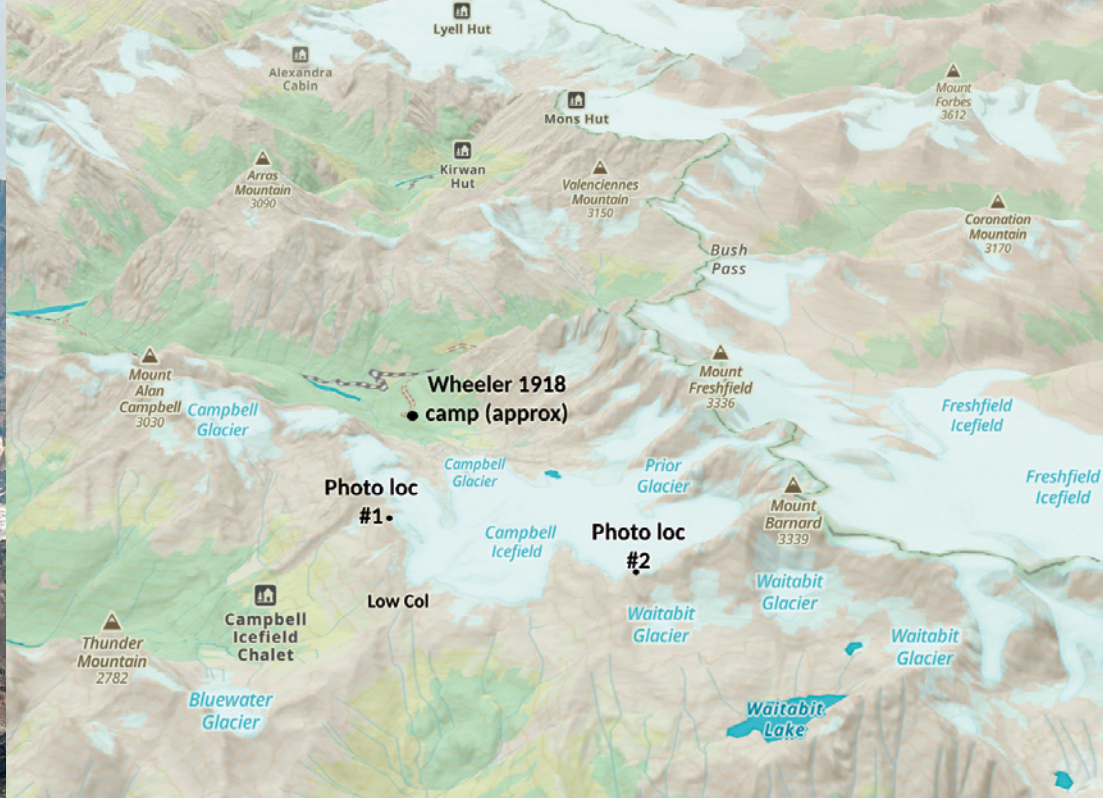


PHOTO STATION #1 September 7th 2024

The access to both repeat photo locations – aka the ‘photo stations’ – is via the Low Col. Starting out just before 7:00 am, I along with Yvonne Blum, Eva Gnech, Sylvia Moser, Sandy Stewart, Rachel Treloar, and Mike Whitney made our way over the col and then headed northward along the ridge to our left.

Diamond Peak is the local name of the high point we were making for. Photo location #1 was on top. The way up was straightforward with some interesting route finding, especially over the last 150 metres (thank you Sylvia!) to gain the summit itself.

We were, however, a bit more pressed to find a workable route off the mountain. We didn’t want to retrace our steps (the tarn in the bowl below was calling), so we picked our way down the southeast face of Diamond Peak. There were a handful of difficult Class 4 scrambling moves, but with everyone working together we made it without incident – although I may have uttered some distinctly un-mountaineer-like phrases at a few of the crappier rubble-on-slab passages. The tarn was especially refreshing that day! >>>

Photo by Mary Sanseverino.



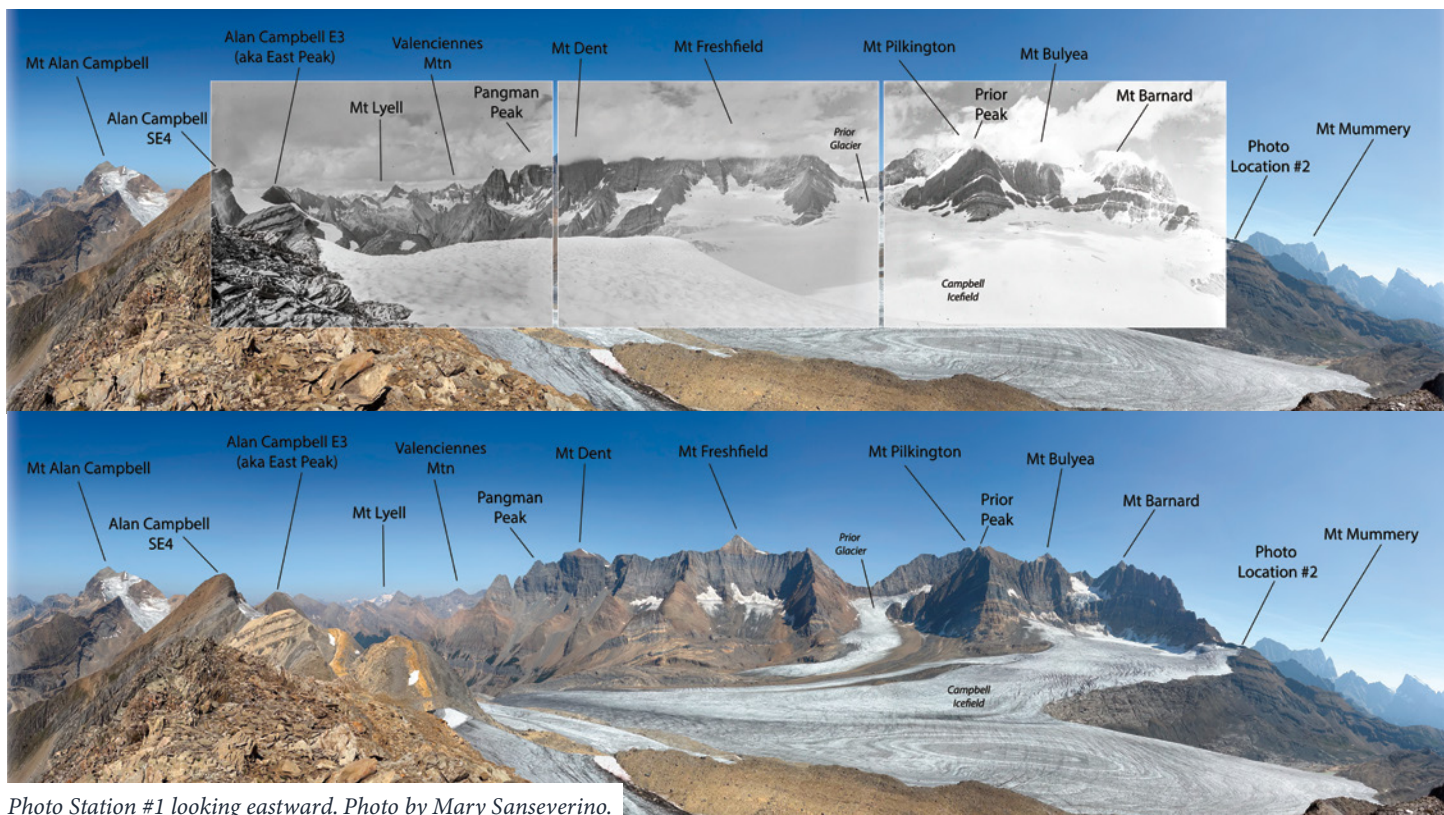


Photo Station #1 looking eastward. Photo by Mary Sanseverino.

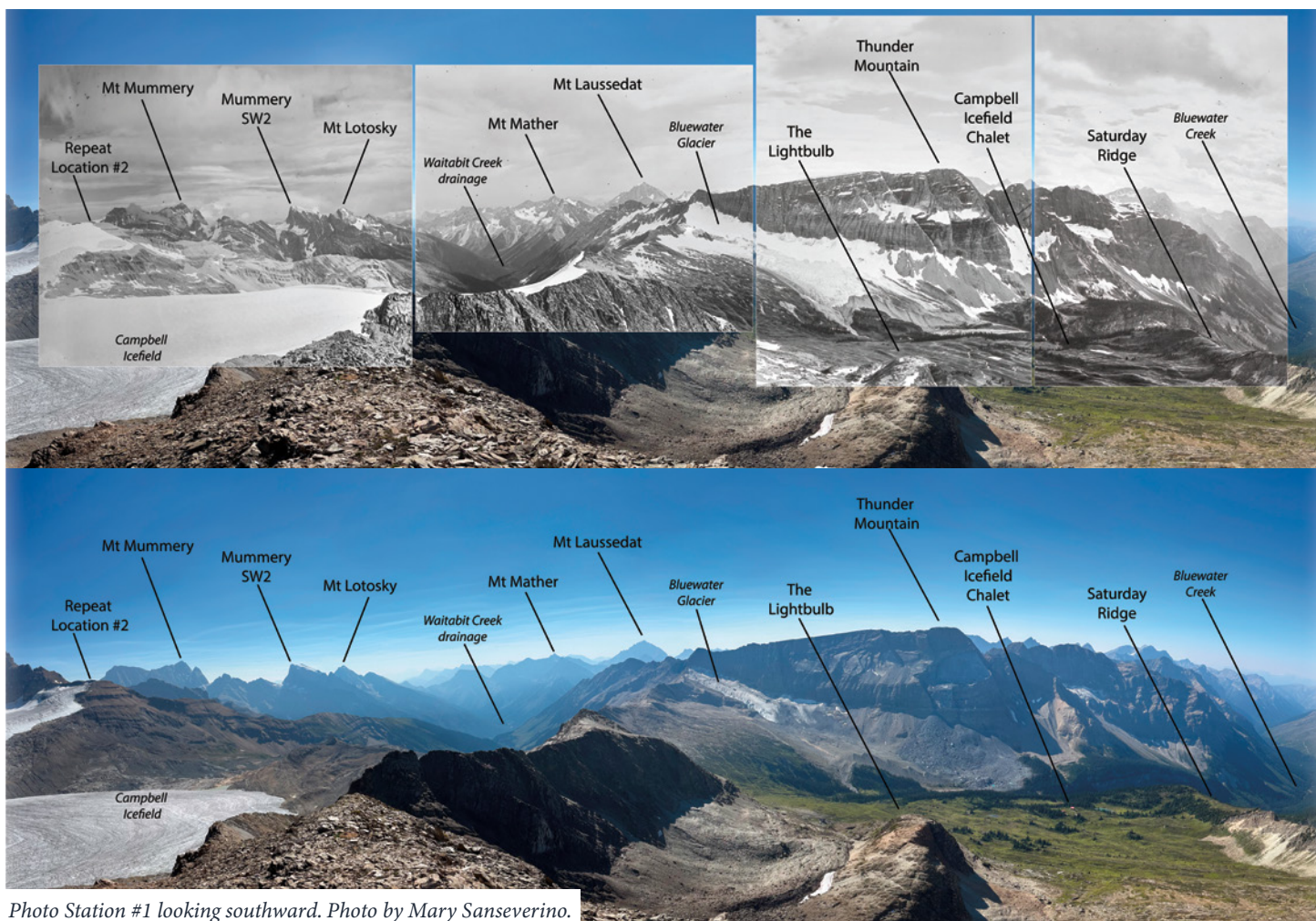


Photo Station #1 looking southward. Photo by Mary Sanseverino.



It was easy to find the remnants of Wheeler's 1918 cairn on the summit and from that vantage point not difficult to line up and repeat the photos. **The geology was very much the same, but the glacial differences were astounding.** The images say it all – much more effectively than I can.

PHOTO STATION #2 September 10th 2024

On Sept 10th a dozen of us started off for a day of exploration on the Campbell Icefield. Using the Low Col we accessed the moraine below the southwest lobe of the icefield. Another 1918 photo station was within striking distance on the lower portion of a shoulder below Mt. Barnard and several of our party were keen to try and get more repeat photos. While I did a low-level traverse of the icefield, others tried to find their way up high enough to get workable repeats.

In the end, Sandy Stewart and Sylvia Moser ended up gaining the top of the shoulder via an ever-steepening ice ramp. With only a quick look at the photos to guide him, Sandy stationed himself on the highest point available and took a series of images much as Campbell and company would have. The location was not quite the same, but the image comparisons still tell a deeply compelling story. >>>

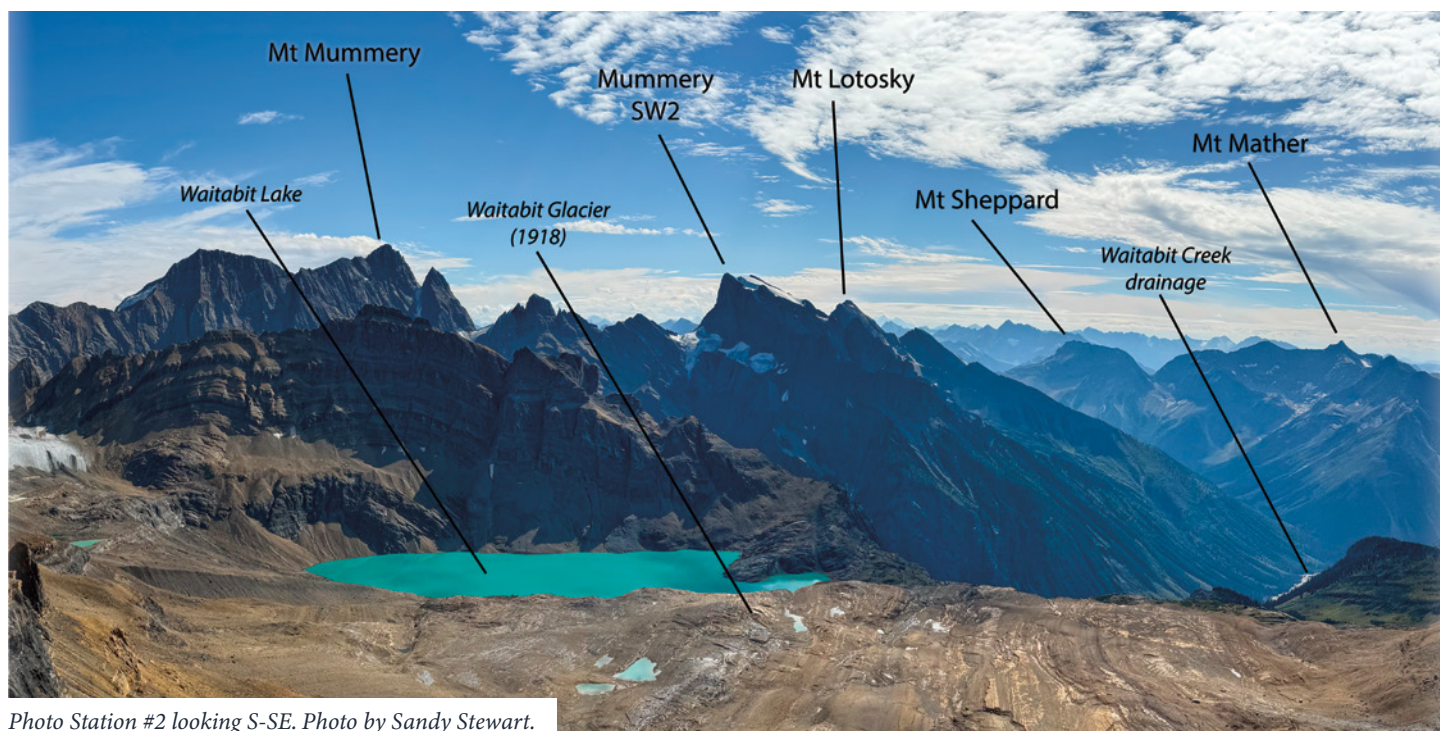
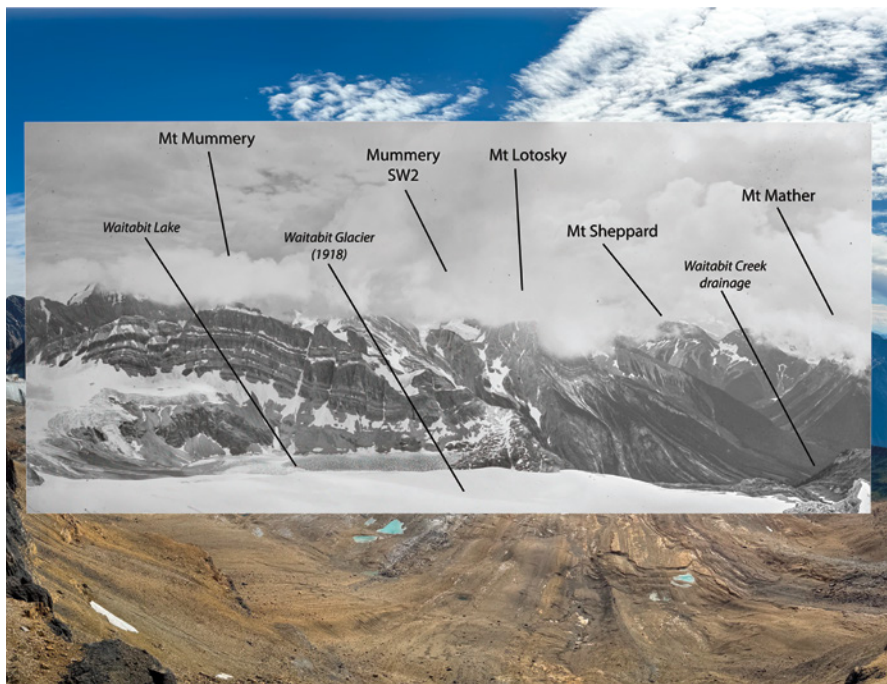


Photo Station #2 looking S-SE. Photo by Sandy Stewart.

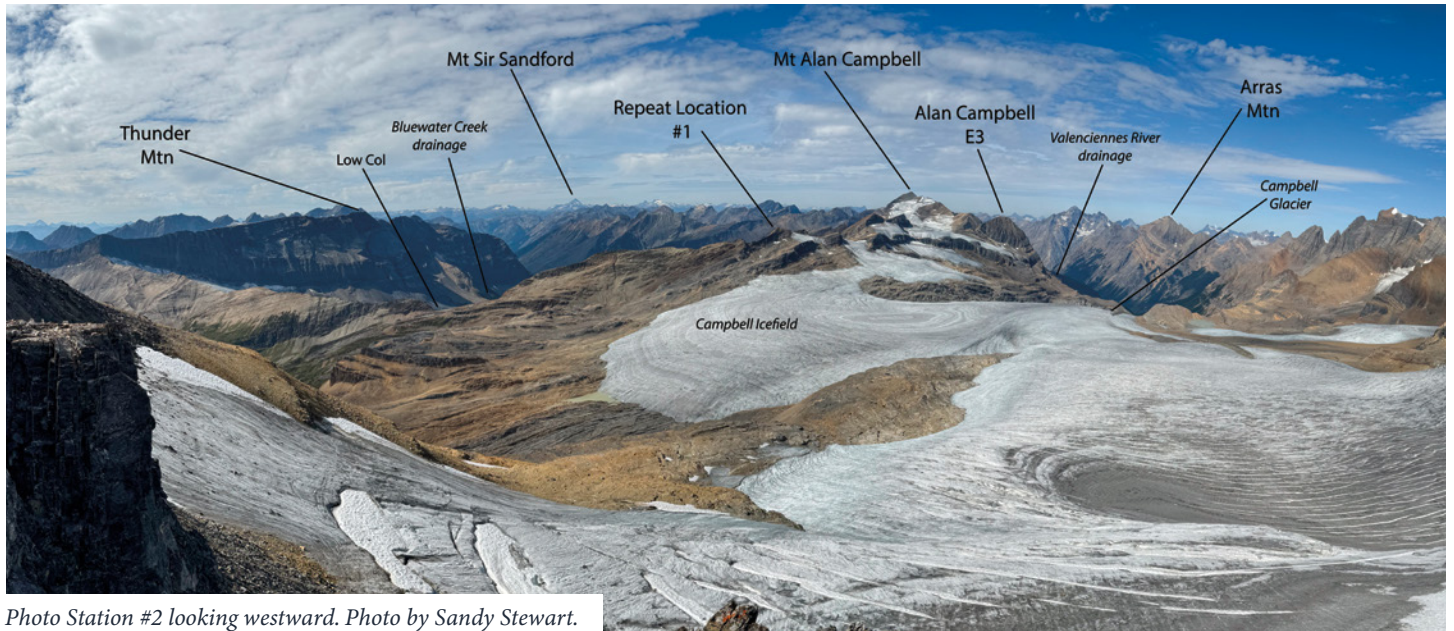
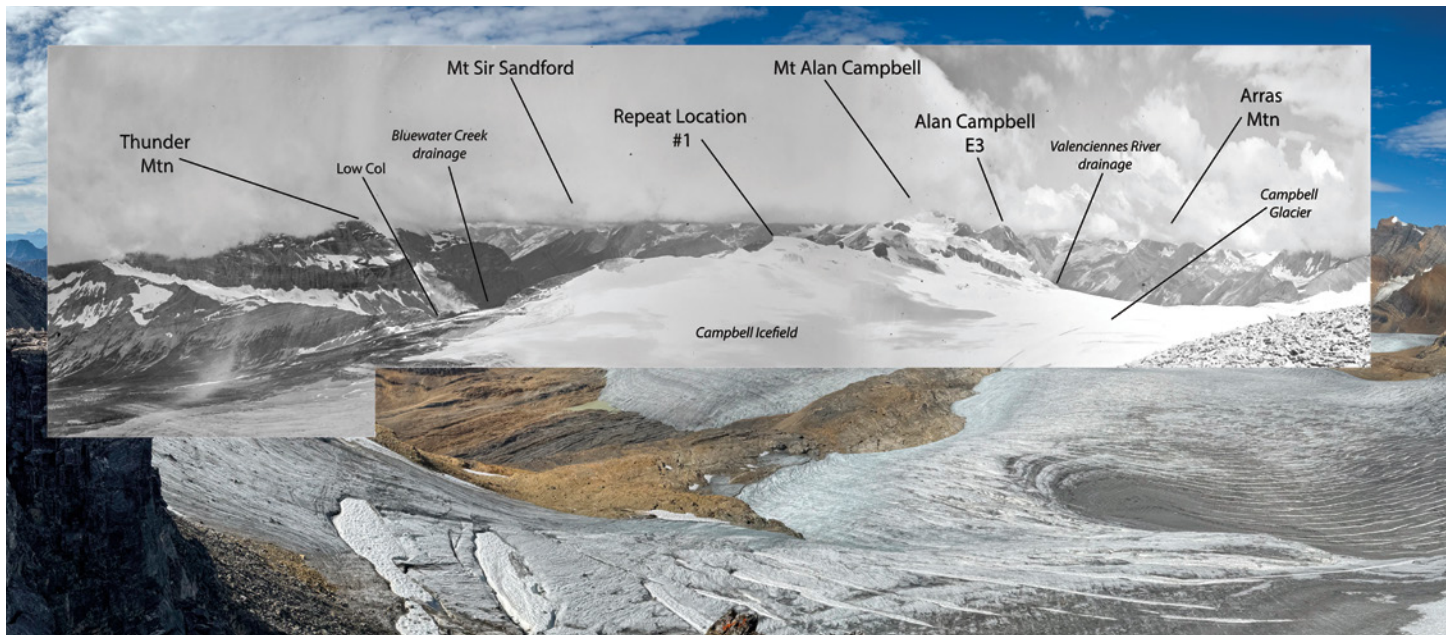


Photo Station #2 looking westward. Photo by Sandy Stewart.

Meanwhile, back in 1918, it was late July and Campbell was in charge of the field crew. Wheeler had left to attend the ACC's General Mountaineering Camp in Paradise Valley near Lake Louise. Fun fact: Wheeler always made it a contract condition that he be allowed to leave field work so he could attend the GMC.

Looking southeast, the historic/modern images from this vantage point show Waitabit Glacier (what remains in 2024) and Lake. They form part of the Waitabit Creek drainage,

which joins the Columbia River at a shallow angle just outside of Donald, BC. It's called Waitabit because back before the Mica Dam tamed the mighty Columbia River, canoe travellers used to pause here, adjust their loads, and check their craft before travelling on downstream around the turbulent Big Bend [2]. Just another example of how interconnected our alpine environments can be with the lower elevations. The idea that a snowflake can fall up high in a place like the Campbell Icefield and end up in the Pacific Ocean never ceases to amaze me.

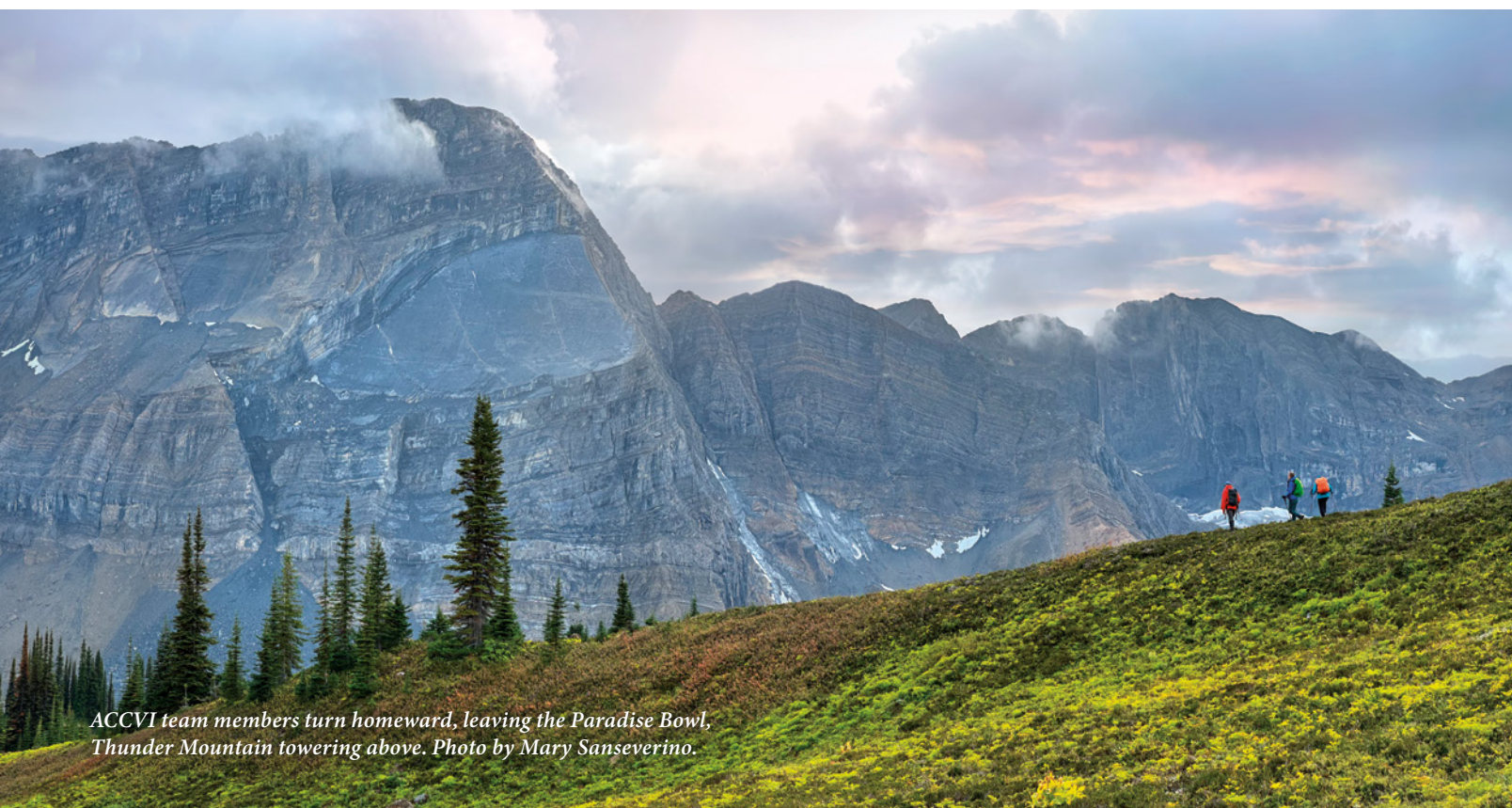
Thank you to all of the Campbell Icefield ACCVI team: Yvonne Blum, Laura Darling, Judy Delogne, Carol Doering, Eva Gnech, Mike Hubbard, Colleen Kasting, Sylvia Moser, Doug Scatcherd, Sandy Stewart, Rachel Treloar, and Mike Whitney – without your enthusiasm for engaging with repeat photography these images would not have been made.

Thank you to Library and Archives Canada / Bibliothèque et Archives Canada and the Mountain Legacy Project [3] at the University of Victoria for access to and use of the historic photographs. They provide a rich resource for anyone interested in exploring the Canadian mountain west. — ACC

[1] J. Sherwood, *Surveying the 120th Meridian and the Great Divide: The Alberta-BC Boundary Survey, 1918-1924*, 1st ed. Halfmoon Bay, BC, Canada: Caitlin Press, 2019, pp. 28-30.

[2] W. L. Putnam, G. W. Boles, and R. W. Laurilla, *Place Names of the Canadian Alps*, 1st ed. Revelstoke, BC, Canada: Footprint, 1990, p. 351.

[3] *The Mountain Legacy Project Explorer*. School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria.



ACCVI team members turn homeward, leaving the Paradise Bowl, Thunder Mountain towering above. Photo by Mary Sanseverino.



The Mountain Legacy Project explores changes in Canada's mountain landscapes through the world's largest collection of systematic high-resolution historic mountain photographs (over 120,000) and a vast and growing collection of repeat images (over 8,000 photo pairs).

Learn more about their research and how they turn photos into real-world solutions for understanding climate change, ecological processes, and strategies for ecological restoration at: mountainlegacy.ca.

INTO THE WHITE: LIVING IN THE CLOUDS

Story by Megan Cramb



On a beautiful, sunny day in May, at the reasonable hour of 6:00 am, our group of six members from the Yukon Section set off from Whitehorse with all our gear and food for a 10-day ski mountaineering trip in Kluane National Park. We were a little tired from packing and prepping, but we were ready and excited for the adventure ahead.

We were heading for the Eclipse Glacier, a spot nestled between Donjek Mountain (3,560 m) and Mt. Badham (3,670 m), 250 kilometres west of Whitehorse. The exquisite greatness of Mount Logan dominated the view from our basecamp at 3,000 metres.

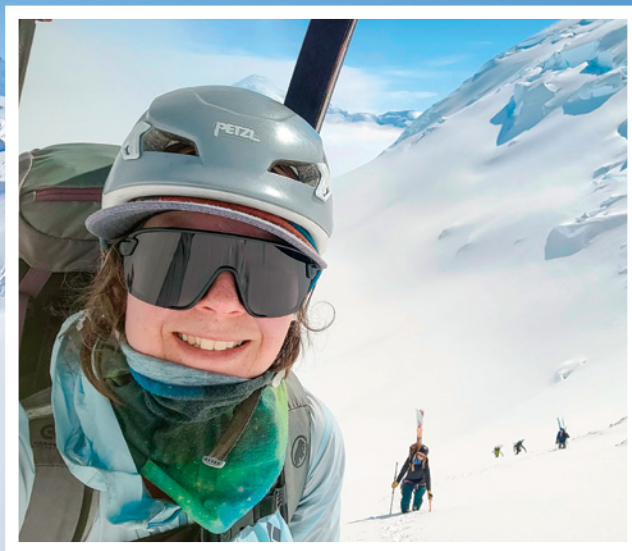
The name for the whole of the park came from the name given to Kluane Lake by the Southern Tutchone First Nation, “Łù’àn Mān” meaning “big fish lake”. Not a lot of big fish up high on the glaciers, but there you have it. The Southern Tutchone refer to the area of the park as Ä́sía Keyi: Grandfather’s Land, meaning “the bears” in this case: the land belongs to the bears.

What was it like to fly into a basecamp at 3,000 metres, in the middle of a vast and seemingly infinite icefield, more than

100 km away from the nearest humans, you ask? Well, it was incredible. We had perfect weather and excellent visibility on the flight in. If you’ve never been up there before, it might be hard to imagine it: vast glaciers that stretch on for what seems like forever. Steep north faces cracked up and deformed beyond belief. Crevasses galore, big and small, sometimes in surprising locations - a reminder of caution for our team.

Glacial recession has been on our minds and has been a theme of discussions during the UN Year of Glaciers’ Preservation, but nothing brings home how important they are like living on one for 10 days. Glaciers are natural freshwater reservoirs; they regulate the flow of water seasonally and as they recede, or disappear entirely, there is a host of downstream ecological concerns. From a purely recreational standpoint, the more a glacier recedes, and the crevasses change, the more difficult navigation can become.

And sometimes it’s the opposite. If you’re more familiar with travelling in Canada’s southern mountains you might be surprised to find, as I was, that there is still crevasse danger on the ridges in these mountains. While walking on ridges,



Banner image: Walking along the crevassed ridge of Mt. Badham, with the north face of Mt. Logan (5,959 m) in the background. Photo by Éliel Bureau-Lafontaine.

This page, top-left: This tent vestibule became the communal hangout and cooking area. Photo by Megan Cramb.

Top-right: Using rocks and cliffs to navigate on a stormy day. Photo by Éliel Bureau-Lafontaine.

Bottom-right: Megan Cramb takes a selfie as the team bootpack up to the east ridge of Mt. Badham.

we needed to continue to be conscious of crevasse-fall hazards; something that is much less of a concern in ranges where the glaciers reaching to ridgetops is far less common.

Our first couple of days were spent setting up and fortifying our camp against the weather, and practising (and teaching) glacier skills. We took our skis for a walk to a nearby low angle slope where we dug a snow pit to learn about the snowpack. As we were the first people in this area of the park since last summer, there wasn't much information to go on. Lo and behold, we found a persistent weak layer (PWL), which is very unusual to the region! (See MIN report at avalanche.ca for more information)

The next few days were spent travelling to other slopes, gaining confidence in the snowpack, and skiing some really neat lines. Some days we had clouds rolling in on us midday, forcing

us to ski & walk home in a whiteout. Another day was full whiteout, where we stayed "home" and practised navigation skills in our communal basecamp tent, played ukelele and harmonica, and did some sketching. On better weather days we crossed bergschrunds (roped up), bootpacked up steep slopes (with crampons on), and walked along ridges (roped up and with crampons on), looking down to immense views on the other side.

The food was delicious! The beauty of having a basecamp style setup is that we could bring fresh(ly frozen) food! Being on a glacier is like living in a walk-in freezer, things just had to be in a convenient shape for fitting into pots. Overall, it was an incredible trip; the Kluane Icefields did not disappoint, and the Yukon Section will surely be going back again soon! — ACC



AN EAGLE'S EYE VIEW OF THE VANCOUVER SECTION

Story by Paul Geddes

ACC Vancouver is one of the largest and most active sections in the club with over 1,200 members in our community who have access to courses and trips, backcountry huts, and an extensive social calendar.

One of the big attractions of the South Coast is the variety of our local terrain and the options that gives to ACC-V members for world-class hiking, mountaineering, rock climbing and backcountry skiing. It's common for members to hike up Grouse Mountain before work or ski on Cypress Mountain after work. Volunteer trip coordinators and mentors organize car-pooling trips to nearby weekend locations.

Our section volunteer course instructors have introduced hundreds of members to rock climbing, ski touring, glacier travel and mountaineering. Other volunteers organize summer evening climbing sessions at Squamish or gym climbing in the city. The early season Basic Mountaineering Course always has a waiting list. Also popular are our ACMG-led AST-1 avalanche safety courses, a practical prerequisite for being in the Coast backcountry.

Access and environment issues are important to our section and ACC-V is a founding member of the Federation of Mountain Clubs of BC. Through the umbrella of the FMCBC, we work together with other outdoor clubs in the province to improve backcountry

access for public non-motorized users and to resolve land use issues. One FMCBC initiative that is very important locally is protecting rock climbing at the Smoke Bluffs near Squamish.

Not everything is about being outdoors. ACC-V has a social director who organizes our monthly socials, where there is a buzz in the air with loud chatter and laughter! People are talking about their latest and planned adventures, and an interesting presentation fills out the evening. At our annual general meeting each November, members are encouraged to join our executive team for even more section fun!

Mountain culture is an important part of our section's annual calendar, including running the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour screenings in Vancouver. The screening is our section's major fundraiser and allows us to fund our various projects. We also support the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival.

The voice of our section for almost a century has been the section newsletter, *Avalanche Echoes*. First published in 1927, it has been the channel to announce our climbing schedule and post trip reports for our members. Printing ceased in 2014 in favour of a monthly digital newsletter, and we are in the process of digitizing past issues for a historical record of our activities.

Also worth noting during the UN Year of Glaciers' Preservation is the importance of the Sea to Sky region in the measurement of glacial retreat. ACC Honorary Member Karl Ricker has documented recession on the Wedgemount Glacier in Garibaldi Park every year for the past 50 years and his work can be found online and in the 2024 Canadian Alpine Journal.

The Vancouver Section operates two backcountry huts and is a major stakeholder in a third. The Tantalus Hut at Lake Lovely Water west of Squamish was built by the section in 1961. Today we work with BC Parks, Indigenous Leaders and local helicopter companies to manage this beautiful location.

The Jim Haberl Hut, higher in the Tantalus range, was built with the help of dozens of volunteers in 2005 and 2006. Originally built as a summer base for the excellent mountaineering in the area, it has recently become popular for spring ski mountaineering as well.



A dedicated crew of section members makes up our Huts Committee that manages the reservations, annual maintenance, and capital projects.

Along with the Whistler Section, ACC-V contributes to the board of the Kees and Claire Hut on the Spearhead Traverse, helping to ensure the ongoing operation of Canada's largest and most modern non-profit backcountry hut.

The purpose of the Vancouver Section remains to safely mentor new members, to run trips, and engage our members with an active social schedule. Through our membership, events and huts, we bring the South Coast Mountain outdoor community together. — ACC

Facing page: Returning to Jim Haberl Hut. Photo by Stefan Feldmann.

This page, top: The smiling participants of the Ski Touring and Glacier Travel course. Photo by Stefan Feldmann.

Mid-left: Jim Haberl Hut at dusk with its new roof installed in 2020. Photo by Anna Milino.

Mid-right: Swimming at the Sandspit on Lake Lovely Water, a short hike or paddle from the Tantalus Hut. Photo by Anna Milino.

Bottom: The Ski Touring and Glacier Travel course. Photo by Stefan Feldmann.



A GOURMET CHRISTMAS DINNER AT THE KEES

Story and photos by Gabrielle Toupin and Esteban Sanchez

When I arrived in Squamish and joined the ACC, I quickly realized I had stumbled into one of the most amazing communities I'd ever been a part of. Many people come here for the mountains and adventures, and many end up sticking around for the holidays, away from their families. It made me think—what better way to spend the season than organizing something special? A cozy gathering, but with a twist...

Instead of just a dinner, why not make it a 3-day, 2-night holiday getaway to the Kees & Claire Hut in Whistler's backcountry? Of course, it would have to include a three-course homemade dinner with wine pairings! The idea sparked, and before we knew it, 13 of us were ready to gather for a holiday adventure that would be anything but ordinary.

It kicked off early Friday morning in the parking lot. Everyone got their share of food to carry—about 1.5 kilos each. Eager participants took more than their share of weight to carry, leaving latecomers with lighter loads—a testament to the group's enthusiasm! The most nerve-racking item? A delicate chocolate cake, which survived the journey intact (and would later steal the show).

That night, we pulled off a feast that felt downright luxurious, considering we were far away from civilization. We started with a spread of cheeses, dips, nuts, pickled goodies, and homemade sourdough focaccia. For the main course, there were two options: a rich pork cheek ragout or a fragrant wild mushroom ragout. And dessert? That vegan chocolate cake—with chocolate buttercream and honeycomb—had everyone in awe. We even had enough to share with other groups at the hut, making instant friends.

The dinner wasn't just about the food, though. It broke the ice between strangers and sparked the kind of camaraderie you don't often find with people you've just met. We played games, swapped stories, and even had some yoga sessions. By the end of the night, everyone felt like old friends. Saturday was what dreams are made of. Fresh, fluffy powder covered the slopes,

This page, top-right: Gabrielle heating up the wild mushroom ragout simmered in white wine and the pork cheek ragout slow-cooked in red wine.

Bottom-right: The decadent vegan chocolate cake topped with chocolate buttercream, fresh strawberries, and homemade maple toffee that stole the show.

Facing page, top-left: Early 2025 blessed us with incredible deep and fluffy powder—a stark contrast to last season's dry spell!

Mid-left: The group enjoyed carving fresh pow lines on Saturday,

Mid-right: The stunning hut nestled in the snow, a welcome sight after a full day of powder skiing.

Bottom: Friday night vibes! The group is all smiles, gathered around the table and ready to dig into the appetizers.





and we were out there all day, carving through the snow. We split into three ski groups but kept in touch via radio, sharing avalanche conditions and lunch spots. It felt like we were all part of one big, connected team, even as we explored different runs. Honestly, it had been a while since we'd experienced a pow-day like that, and it left everyone grinning from ear to ear.

Back at the hut, we warmed up with shared stories and a simple dinner. Two participants who'd helped build the hut shared tales of its construction, adding a beautiful sense of connection to the place we were calling home for the weekend.

As Sunday rolled around and we packed up to leave, I felt a mix of satisfaction and gratitude. This trip had been everything I had hoped for—a perfect blend of adventure, laughter, and incredible food. More than just an outdoor escape, it was a reminder of the power of community. I left with a sense of belonging and a head full of memories that'll keep me smiling until next time. — ACC



BEEES LIKE HONEY

Story by Jane Millen, photos by Leah Walker and Marissa Russbueldst

Like some other ACC sections, the Whistler Section built and maintains its own hut, the Wendy Thompson Memorial Hut in the Marriott Basin backcountry northeast of Pemberton, BC. The hut is open year-round but is very much a ski destination and it's the primary focus of the Whistler chapter in winter.

Roughly four years ago the section launched a custodian program to ensure the hut is properly cared for and that things run smoothly. The program now has a waitlist and is full of passionate Whistler Section members who do everything from checking reservations, to helping visitors around the hut, to dealing with the outhouse barrels. The section could not feasibly keep it maintained and operating without the incredible work of all our dedicated volunteer custodians.

As the Wendy Thompson Hut sits in excellent ski terrain, and it is the only reservable hut in the Duffy Lake area, it is in high demand every winter. It is typically booked to capacity during the ski season, with the few exceptions being the dates that the section carves out for school group bookings and the select few ski trips that the section runs, such as our popular women's-only trips.

This year's outing, the Women's Beginner Hut Life trip, included two section members from Vancouver, two from Whistler and one from Pemberton. We had clear weather and had the opportunity to explore the terrain around the hut quite a bit.

The group was made up of a mix of experience and ages. One of our group, Shannon, had ski toured and done lots of wilderness trips before having kids, and for this trip she was getting out for an overnight ski tour for the first time in a decade. Marissa and Leah had done some backcountry skiing and were looking for more experience and were happy to be in the company of other women. My friend Val, who is a great skier and volunteers as a hut custodian, joined us as well.

Shannon's wilderness experience was an asset at the decision point as we proceeded to the top of the one named run in the area, 'Honey Bronzed and Very Desirable.' It's a steep and exciting climb, threading a thin line at the top between two large overhanging cornices, which makes it really feel like a big objective. When we stopped to dig a pit and check out the snowpack, a few of the group expressed discomfort. Happily honouring their feelings and not wanting to split up, we headed back to the hut for lunch. It is important to build trust and openness in these outings.



Above: Leah arrives at the beautiful Wendy Thompson Hut.

Facing page, top-left: Marissa cannot help but smile at the views.

Top right: Shannon, Jane, Val, and Marissa pose for the perfect group shot.

Mid-left: All smiles because of the successful sunset-hunt.

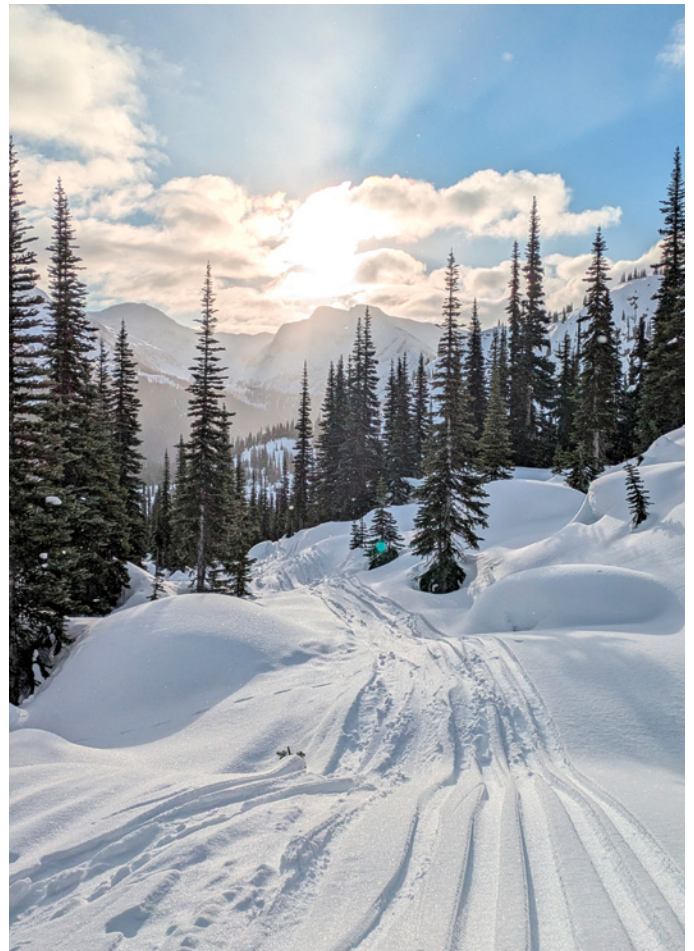
Bottom-left: Explorers making their way towards the famous ski run: Honey Bronzed and Very Desirable.

Bottom-right: The sun, clouds and snowy landscape put on a dazzling display.

One evening we wondered: how do runs get named? Who names them? We decided that until someone tells us otherwise, we were going to name them. It was Shannon who suggested playing on 'Honey Bronzed,' and that we keep going with a bee theme. We had fun coming up with names, including a steep run that drops to the lake that we called 'The Stinger'.

As the nights arrive quickly in January, we spent a late afternoon on a sunset hunt up a nearby ridge. We were well rewarded with views across the valley swathed in alpenglow on the peaks and clouds. This outing ended with a ski back by headlamp, via the home run where we found some sweet powder in fun glades close to the trees. We named this run that took us back to the hut 'The Hive.'

When the Whistler Section ran this trip about three years ago, the Squamish Section had a simultaneous women's trip and so we were about 12 women in the cabin together that weekend. It was so much fun! All of us this year agreed that for next year we will book the whole hut and plan a combined trip again. I like to pick a weekend with a full moon, so I believe I already know the date! — ACC



SIDE COUNTRY WITH CINNAMON BUNS

Story by Amy Knapp



This page: “Everything is looking peachy for the skin up” (Julia, Benjamin, Kurtis).
Photo by Chris Wagner.

Facing page, top-left: “Can’t catch Lauren!”
Photo by Chris Wagner.

Top right: “Carving is so much easier than skinning!” (Kurtis). Photo by Chris Wagner.

Mid-right: This yoga pose is what we call the “newbie tries to kick-turn” (Amy, Caitlin).
Photo by Lauren Phillips.



Winter is a time when the world becomes a playground, covered entirely in soft white powder to play in. At least that's what it should be, but Prince George's early spring this year, with rain in January, was pathetic. But we in PG are lucky to have nearby mountains to escape to.

And that's what we did. While it was raining in Prince George, six of us ran away for a weekend Intro to Touring in Wells trip in nearby Wells, BC, where it was snowing fluffy flakes, rather than spitting rain on our dreams of winter fun. The original plan was to spend a day working on our touring skills in the side country terrain of the Troll Ski Resort and then explore the backcountry on the second day.

Some of us had never toured, for some it was their second or third time, and one couldn't remember, but we were all game for adventure! I had to scramble to borrow everything I needed, but as the outdoor community in PG is close knit and wants to share the passion, I was able to find gear that (mostly) fit.

Saturday started with playing on some groomers and fresh powder and it didn't take those of us with borrowed gear long to get excited to take our boots off! A couple of us were in enough pain early on that we were expecting to have to bail on the day of 'real touring' on Sunday.

After a break, boot adjustments, and some of Troll's GIANT cinnamon buns, we headed up high for a mini tour off the top of the T-bar and up to the old cat skiing trails. Not a soul had been up there, and the runs were full of fresh powder!

We took time to nerd out over avalanche safety and snow quality and worked on our kick turns, which sometimes looked more like awkward snow yoga.

The evening involved a little après-ski, another cinnamon bun and live music. From friends we got reports that the snow conditions at the nearby mountains that we were planning on skiing the next day absolutely sucked.

The next morning, we took time to dive into trip planning processes with the entire group and decided to spend another day at Troll, this time touring up in the new development on the west side of the main hill.



The sun was out, and it was a beautiful day! Things were steady and easy, until they weren't. Skiing up a road brought us to the bottom of a steep willowy section. Let's just say that by the time we got to the top of it we had all gotten better at kick turns. At the top of it we discovered someone else's up track on an old road and we chuckled to ourselves that we may not have taken the easiest line after all, but we were happy to have gotten in some practice in setting tracks and choosing lines through more difficult terrain.

We pushed to the top and after a break for lunch and switching out of our skins we were ready to fly! Only the first part of the run wasn't very steep and there was a lot of double-polling over the ups and downs. And poor Kurtis who was on a split-board. We cleared the flats and rode an easy run that was nice and loooong!

It had been the most work I had ever done for a green ski run, but it was such a fun experience with a great group.

As we had parked at Troll, we heard the cinnamon buns calling us one more time, and we snacked and relived the wonderful weekend in the lodge.

Thank you so much to those who lent me gear so that I could get hooked on touring, to the crew for such a great weekend, and to Lauren and Chris for sharing their experience and knowledge and leading the trip!

And now I am in search of my own gear, because I definitely want to do more touring! — ACC

ASULKAN STOKE

Story and photos by Marcus Athans

Frost collects on the inside of the car windows as we enter Rogers Pass's world of pointy peaks, cold blue skies, and fluffy flakes. This trip has been marked on my calendar for the better part of a year and it's finally underway. Our cars are full of eager skiers and a full Costco haul, and we're heading for the ACC's Asulkan Cabin for the weekend.

Our team of ten congregates at the bottom of the Illecillewaet Valley to check gear and divide the food. We're all reluctant to add more weight to our already large packs, but eventually all the bits make it in.

We click into our skis, throw our oversized packs on our backs and begin the trek to the hut, our steps a symphony of squeaky boots and crunchy snow. Anticipation of the powder ahead fuels our ascent and we scurry our way through the last of the bottlenecked valley climb known as "The Mousetrap" and get our first view of the snowy playground ahead. I can't help but visualize ski lines down all the surrounding slopes.

A stop for lunch below the tree triangle and the final ascent doesn't last long as the shadows and cold breeze remind us that it's -20. We push up the last climb and arrive at the hut, our home for the next two nights.



Facing page, top: The Selkirk range emerging from the cloud, glowing with promise of ski-dreams-come-true.

Bottom: Breaking trail in a winter wonderland.

This page, top-left: Gary and Isaac arrive at Asulkan Cabin.

Mid-left: A triumphant arrival - time to unload!

Bottom-left: Cheesy smash burgers on the way.

Bottom-right: Marcus feeling the Asulkan stoke.



We load up the kitchen with our supplies and cook an incredible meal for our crew of starving skiers. Smash burgers and pasta salad are on the menu and two burgers each ensures maximum recovery from the day's work. Hours of Codenames, our favourite board game, follows with a heavy competitive spirit in the air.

Our first day concludes with the cozy jumbo bunks calling our names. The wind howls louder than our snores.

Our morning begins at the crack of dawn with laps on steep, deep, light powder for breakfast. Low danger avalanche conditions allow us to ski all the different aspects in the area and the Illecillewaet Valley quickly looks like a resort piste. Winter days are short and as the sun starts to creep away, we turn back for the cabin, our thoughts turning to the pork belly burritos that will be our dinner.

The evening is a time of storytelling, guidebook reading, and of course more Codenames. We revel in the deep relaxation that follows a day of incredible turns, meals, and shared excitement.

One more day of skiing is followed by saying our goodbyes to the terrain and a ski down to our cars and 'real life.' The memories of adventure, great meals and amazing company will last a long time.

Thanks team, and thanks ACC Asulkan Cabin; we'll be back. — ACC



Columbia Mountains

THE INAUGURAL SPLIT//SKI FESTIVAL

A CELEBRATION OF THE BACKCOUNTRY COMMUNITY'S
SHARED PASSION FOR EXPLORATION, SAFETY, AND STEWARDSHIP

Story by Kirsten Silfvenius, photos by Back Deck Studios

This page & facing page, bottom-right:
Skiers and snowboarders unite to enjoy the
In-Bounds Touring Partner Meetup.

Facing page, top-left: Festival attendees
listen intently to talks.

Top-right: Erin Code helps facilitate
connections between new touring partners
in a game organized by Open Mountains
Project, a non-profit dedicated to fostering
inclusive mountain culture in Revelstoke.





This January 2025, the backcountry community of Revelstoke came together at the first-ever SPLIT//SKI Festival, hosted by the Columbia Mountains Section. With a focus on stewardship, safety, and stoke, the festival brought splitboarders and skiers together for a great program of film screenings, educational talks, community networking, and backcountry skills training.

The festival began with ACMG guide and author Greg Hill hosting the Friday evening Arc'teryx Film Night. The event featured a screening of the ski touring and avalanche control movie *The Pass*, along with an engaging presentation by professional skier and *Girls Do Ski* Director, Leah Evans. Attendees filled the venue, eager to take in the films and partake in discussions that highlighted the adventure, risk, and passion that define backcountry skiing and splitboarding.

Saturday night's Community Night at the Revelstoke Community & Aquatic Centre was a hub of activity, drawing attendees for a smorgasbord of education, networking, and entertainment. The tradeshow and raffle featured big brands and local vendors, exciting prizes, and a fun, social, Bingo-style activity that encouraged festival-goers to mingle and make new connections.

Other social activities on Saturday evening included a She-Touring Social led by Jade Berrill celebrating women in backcountry sports, a snowpack panel discussion led by Adam Zok, Ben Yeager, and ACMG guide Marty Schaffer, and mini talks on backcountry safety and careers. The evening was intended to welcome, inspire and educate the skiing and splitboarding community and was hugely successful.

To help participants find like-minded touring partners, festival organizers hosted an In-Bounds Touring Partner Group Meetup at Revelstoke Mountain Resort on the Sunday. This stress-free environment allowed attendees to connect in-bounds and share their stoke for playing on the snow.

With a successful inaugural event, SPLIT//SKI Festival has set the stage for an annual tradition in Revelstoke. Plans are already in motion for 2026, with dates set for January 9-11. Those interested in staying informed can join the festival mailing list.



A huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the event happen, as well as the partners and sponsors, including Arc'teryx, Avalanche Canada, Karakoram, Free Spirit Sports, Society Snow & Skate, and Revy Outdoors. Their support helped bring this incredible weekend to life.

The SPLIT//SKI Festival proved to be a much-needed gathering for the splitboarding and ski touring community, reinforcing the importance of safety, stewardship, and connection in the backcountry. See you next year in Revelstoke! — ACC





This page, top: The replica ice axe gifted to the Japanese Alpine Club, from American climbers, Ayers and Oberlin.

Bottom: Expedition members Heinrich Fuhrer, Tanezo Hayakawa, Yukio Maki, Hans Kohler and Seiichi Hashimoto on Mount Alberta, 1925.

Facing page, top-left: The original ice axe in its two pieces displayed at Jasper museum.

Top-right: Mount Alberta, 1925.

Middle: Mount Alberta Expedition members at Jasper Park Lodge, 1925.

Bottom: Expedition members on Mount Alberta, 1925.

MOUNT ALBERTA CENTENNIAL

A 100-YEAR-OLD TALE OF LEGENDARY CLIMBING,
A 'SILVER' ICE-AXE, AND THE UNITING OF NATIONS

Story by the Jasper/Hinton Section, images courtesy of Jasper-Yellowhead Museum & Archives

One of the coolest stories of mountaineering in the Canadian Rockies happened in Jasper exactly 100 years ago. It's the story of the first ascent of Mt. Alberta – perhaps the most difficult peak in the range – in 1925.

At the time, all the other high peaks of the Rockies had been climbed, but Mt. Alberta remained as a prize that Canadian, American, and European climbers were eyeing.

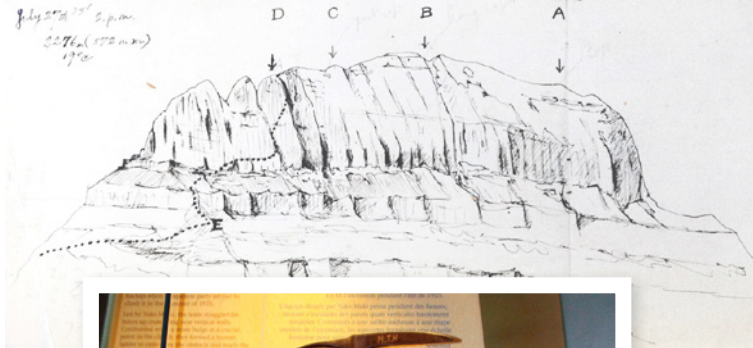
When the peak was finally climbed, it was by a Japanese party led by Yukio Maki during the first ever Japanese overseas climbing expedition.

Their route up Mt. Alberta involved extreme climbing, loose rock and a nervy human-ladder shoulder stand to overcome an overhang. They carried pitons (new to Canada) and an extra ice axe (made of ordinary wood, not silver as legend had it), that they left on the summit. The ascent effectively ended the first great era of exploration and climbing in the Canadian Rockies, but the story was only beginning.

The second ascent of the mountain was made in 1948 by an American party that found and retrieved the ice axe – or at least the top part of it as the wooden shaft broke when it was removed from the ice of the summit cairn where it was planted by the Japanese 23 years earlier. This top part of the axe lived in the American Alpine Club office in New York until 1995, which after much pleading from the Jasper-Yellowhead Historical Society, it was returned to Jasper.

Interestingly, the broken off bottom part of the axe was retrieved by the fourth ascent party in 1965, also a Japanese





アルバート東面 (小アルバート山腹)

 A 頂上

 B 頂上の岩壁

 C 頂上の岩壁

 D 頂上の岩壁

 E 頂上の岩壁



team. They didn't immediately understand the significance of the piece and took it with them back to Japan.

It wasn't until 1997, during the preparations for the 75th anniversary celebration of the 1925 ascent, that it was discovered that the two pieces – one that had made it to a Jasper museum by way of New York City and the other in Japan – were from the same ice axe. Ceremonies were held in Japan and in Canada joining the two pieces together and they now reside permanently in the Jasper-Yellowhead Museum and Archives as one of the most important symbols of the advancement of mountaineering on the continent.

2025 is the 100th anniversary of the historic Japanese ascent of Mt. Alberta and this July, the ACC's Jasper/Hinton Section is celebrating. The section has invited ACC members to join in the celebrations, including presentations and guided walks. Twenty members of the Japan Alpine Club will be in attendance.

The town of Jasper will also be creating a lasting legacy of the event in the form of a mural in town honouring the first ascent.

If you are in Jasper this summer, plan to take in the Mt. Alberta Centennial events, and stop by the museum to see the legendary 'silver' ice axe. — ACC

Top: Violet cutting confident shapes on the west ridge of Pigeon Spire.

Mid-left: The youngest members of the Bugaboo Section on the summit of Eastpost.

Bottom-left: The youngest Caswell discovering a new perspective while preparing for some food-hanging practice at Applebee.

KIDS IN THE BUGS

Story by Joshua Lavigne, photos by Mike Caswell

The ACC Bugaboo Section, the club's newest section located in the East Kootenays of BC, took its first hut trip to the Conrad Kain Hut in August, 2024. This trip brought together climbers and hikers, both young and old, to enjoy the alpine experience of the Bugaboo Spires and surrounding glaciers, tarns, and trails.

The Kain Hut, located in Bugaboo Provincial Park and managed by the ACC, provides a base for hiking and climbing up and around Bugaboo and Crescent Glaciers.

The trip took place between August 11th and 14th. The Bugaboo Section booked the entire hut for three nights, and with 11 kids under the age of 12, (including two at four years old and a baby at 15 months old) the hut was a busy place. Thankfully everyone got to spend a lot of time outside and there were no serious injuries from the kids' fight club on the third floor. Members without children from the ACC Columbia Mountains Section also joined the party. Thanks, Revelstoke team.

A highlight was having so many keen parents and kids, and of note was Mike Caswell, ACMG guide, who joined the trip with his family—Racheal, Lachlan, Violet, and Conrad. He and his intrepid daughter, Violet (nine years old) woke up before sunrise and climbed Pigeon Spire via the West Ridge. The previous day he climbed Eastpost Spire with several other families and including his four-year-old son Lauchlan.

Another highlight was the guided hiking experience for children, led by ACMG hiking guide Hahn Vincent from Edgewater, BC. These excursions introduced young hikers to the alpine

For Violet (aged 8), the day was the “hardest thing” she had ever done, but in the end, totally worth it.

— Mike Caswell

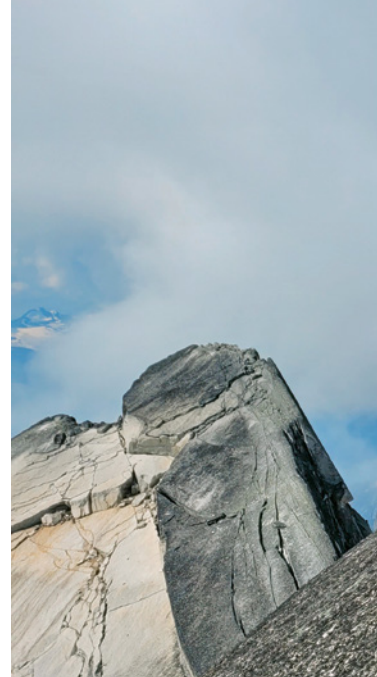
environment in a safe and engaging way. The trip emphasized the ACC's goal of encouraging outdoor appreciation across generations. This group spent their days hiking up and around the hut and playing in the lakes and mud flats around the glaciers. It was a fantastic and unforgettable experience for the kids.

For the climbers, Pigeon Spire was a goal and highlight. Known for its moderate routes, the spire is considered one of the most scenic summits in North America. On August 12th, a group climbed its West Ridge, an accessible route with great views on well-worn granite. Classic!

The trip also included several celebrations with shared food and candles, mixing happy times in with the shared struggles. Everyone felt connected to each other and to the rhythm of the mountains.

The Kain Hut is not only a building but a place that sustains the legacy of the climbers and adventurers who have explored in the Bugaboos, as well as a place that helps gather the community.

The ACC Bugaboo Section is keeping the legacy alive and has the hut booked again this September. We'll be back with more keen kids running around on the peaks and glaciers. Check in next year. — ACC





Middle: The Caswell Clan always ready for an adventure.

Mid-right: Nathan Koss and his son Sam bonding over the shared suffering.

Bottom right: Grouped in front of Kain Hut, the Bugaboo Section crew is happy that the way out is all downhill.



Rocky Mountain

SNOWFALL LODGE DELIVERS

Story by Laurie Harvey, photos by Lynn Harvey

The Rocky Mountain Section hosts many ski camps, and most are self-catered and self-guided, but in January 2025 the section headed to Snowfall Lodge in the southern Selkirk Mountains for big ski terrain and a week that was a bit more luxurious.

Snowfall Lodge is east of Revelstoke and south of Rogers Pass with helicopter access from Beaton, BC. The lodge sleeps 18 guests and has a very large and diverse ski touring area that covers 38 square kilometres.

Initially, I questioned doing a ski camp in early January when I'm often not in my best ski shape, the days are short, the temperatures can be on the cold side, and the snowpack questionable. But I was pleasantly surprised. January was unseasonably warm, and the snowpack was strong. Most days were pleasant with a mix of sun and cloud, with only one day where we experienced very high winds and snow.

Gabrielle Meszaros was our fabulous camp leader and was so generous with her vast knowledge and skill. She helped manage the safety of our group through practise in companion rescue and snowpack analysis, informative morning meetings, and daily check-ins, and was a terrific mentor for the entire group. The tone set for communication and group skiing and riding was inclusive and collaborative, focusing on safe practices and Gabi's bright sense of humour always shone through. There was a lot of smilin' going on.

In true Rocky Mountain Section style, after settling into our rooms and having a quick meeting over lunch, we met outside the lodge and participated in companion rescue practice, which is such a valuable way to start the week. We formed small groups and set out to ski various aspects and elevations to assess the snowpack. All groups returned to the lodge late afternoon feeling assured that we had stable conditions.





Bottom left: Preparing for departure!

Top left: Some of the great variety of ski terrain awaiting visitors to Snowfall Lodge.

Far-right: The shining full-moon, as seen from Snowfall Lodge at dusk.



Snowfall offers BIG, diverse terrain and we skied everything from tight trees to moraines, pillows, boulder fields, and steep chutes. And, in recognition of International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, we skied the East Illusion Glacier and Beowulf Glacier.

The catering and hospitality at Snowfall moved our week from fabulous to over the top. We enjoyed a delicious, diverse, and generous array of foods including plenty of fruits and vegetables, sinful desserts, and satisfying soups, appetizers, and main courses. Although our group helped with dishes, the custodian and cooks did everything else, including

ensuring coffee was ready for our 6:30 am daily meetings and the sauna was hot when we returned from our ski days. It felt decadent to have paths shoveled and the lodge duties taken care of. The extra money we paid for a catered week was well worth it!

Diverse terrain, solid stability, perfect temperatures, and great food – what more could you want? Great people to share it with! I think this was one of the nicest and most inclusive groups that I have ever skied with. We started the camp as a ski group and ended as a friend group.

If you are looking for a ski week that offers a lot of great skiing, flexibility with terrain, camaraderie, and fun, please consider joining the Rocky Mountain Section for a 2026 ski camp. The section will be hosting trips in January to Icefall Lodge (a sister lodge of Snowfall) and the Outpost in the Valhalla range, and in March to Golden Alpine Holidays' Sunrise Lodge and the lovely Amiskwi Lodge. Check out the Rocky Mountain Section Event Calendar for details and to register. — ACC

ROCK RESCUE

WITH THE SOUTHERN ALBERTA SECTION

Story by Ryan Leavitt

Back in 2015, during my first year of climbing, I found myself in a bit over my head, tied into the top anchor of a double rope rappel on the popular “The Fold” climb in Kananaskis. It was pitch dark and my partner had started the rappel about an hour earlier. We had opted to only bring one rope, and we were very aware that we had to find the mid station of this rap to make it to the ground safely.

The wind was howling, and I had zero chance of understanding my partner’s calls, but I knew that he hadn’t found the mid station anchor and was struggling to perform some kind of improvised rappel extension. I knew at that moment that I had no idea what he was trying to do, and also that I didn’t have any skills, experience, or ability to do anything to help him.

Luckily, he made it to the ground, and then I was able to find the mid station anchor on my rappel without having to teach myself a new skill while suspended 40 metres off the ground in absolute darkness. Our evening ended with lots of laughs over a beer in the parking lot, happy to have escaped without harm, but it could have ended much differently.

Since then, I have learned numerous climbing lessons, perhaps the most important one being that things don’t always go as planned and when they don’t, we need skills and training to be able to handle what comes up.

Having the opportunity to learn new skills is one of the most valuable benefits of ACC membership. Over the years our





Southern Alberta Section has coordinated many different levels of formal training from avalanche beacon practice, crevasse rescue, glacier travel, AST 1 and 2, navigation, anchor building, and much more. Much of the section training has been with ACMG certified mountain guides and has been subsidized by the section for our members.

This June I attended a rock rescue course organized by our section's Director of Safety and Training Justin Jensen and taught by Tim McAllister of Bugaboo Mountain Guides. Tim has worked with our small section numerous times over the years and has always been accommodating and able to tailor the courses specifically to the needs of our members. On the first day of the course, approximately 15 ACC members met at the Bible Camp climbing crag in the Crowsnest Pass and learned rock rescue skills. We practiced escaping the belay, setting up a hauling system to help an injured climber, rappelling to an injured climber, and tandem rappelling. On the second day, we practiced what we had learned and hung on the wall working counterbalance rappels and rope ascension techniques. We all had learned so much from Tim and had a lot of fun working together that weekend.

When we climb in the mountains, we open ourselves to many possible "what if" scenarios and we will all eventually find ourselves in a situation different to the one we were expecting. If we are prepared for those moments, we will be able to move from system to system safely and with confidence until we are back safely on the ground laughing with our partners and sharing the adventure of the day.

Big thanks to Tim and the many mountain guides who offer invaluable teaching and services to our mountain community.

— ACC



Facing page: Amanda Woodtke captures the relaxed atmosphere at Bible Camp Crag.

This page, top left: Tim demonstrating how to set up a rescue haul system. Photo by Amanda Woodtke.

Top-right: Janelle Jensen and Director of Safety and Training Justin Jensen practice counter-balance rappelling. Photo by Janelle Jensen.

PRISM

SKI MOUNTAINEERING WITH THE CALGARY SECTION

Story and photos by Brendan Clark

In early 2024, Simon Trudel and I developed what we call the Peaks and Ridges Ski Mountaineering (PRiSM) series of outings. Our goal? To take ski mountaineering with the section to some great heights. Our PRiSM trips focus on sharing adventures and summits (and occasional suffering) with the passionate skiers and split-boarders in the section.

The mountain objectives vary wildly depending upon the conditions, weather, and participant enthusiasm (or masochism). One weekend, we might head up on a short trip to a ridgetop. The next weekend we could be hauling heavy packs up larger peaks over multiple days of travel on glaciated terrain.

Regardless of the destination, the goal is always the same: mentor fellow mountaineers and teach new skills in the mountains while ideally reaching a summit. The rewards include making new friends, soaking in the mountain scenery, and - snow gods allowing - finding some epic turns. PRiSM places a strong emphasis on safety and conservative decision-making, with open communication encouraged among all participants. Since launching the series, we've climbed and skied over 20 Rockies summits.

Simon and I make a point of including participants of all levels whenever possible, with the goal of helping mentor the next generation of ACC leaders. More than anything, PRiSM is about building a tight-knit community of ski mountaineering enthusiasts in the Calgary Section. So far, it seems to be working!



Some of our most memorable PRiSM trips over the past year include:

- A tricky finish to the high point of Cirque Forepeak
- A bluebird day on Unity Peak
- Perfect spring conditions on Ramp Peak (finally, soft turns!)
- Breathtaking glacier views from the top of Crowfoot Mountain
- A 1,300-metre summit-to-river ski descent on Ochre Spring Peak (that made all the uphill worth it!)
- A steep descent of the south face of Snow Peak during stable conditions
- A frigid -30°C weekend at the Hilda Creek Hostel (proving that yes, we are slightly insane!)



One of our finest adventures was a Bow-Yoho Traverse in April, 2024. We spent five incredible days on the Wapta Icefields, hopping between Bow, Guy, and Stanley Mitchell Huts. On the first day we got to the top of the Onion near Bow Hut before retreating from an incoming storm. Day two brought clearer skies and a successful push to the top of Yoho Peak near the Louise and Richard Guy Hut. The next day we ascended Mount McArthur via the east glacier in perfect sunshine - one of those days where the mountains and glaciers feel like magic. Day four featured our highest and most technical objectives: The President and The Vice President, topped off with a beautiful descent down the President Glacier. Altogether we were able to ski five summits in five days, all while immersed in the raw beauty of Banff and Yoho National Parks. Not a bad way to spend a week!

We hope to see you out there on the next PRISM ski adventure! — ACC



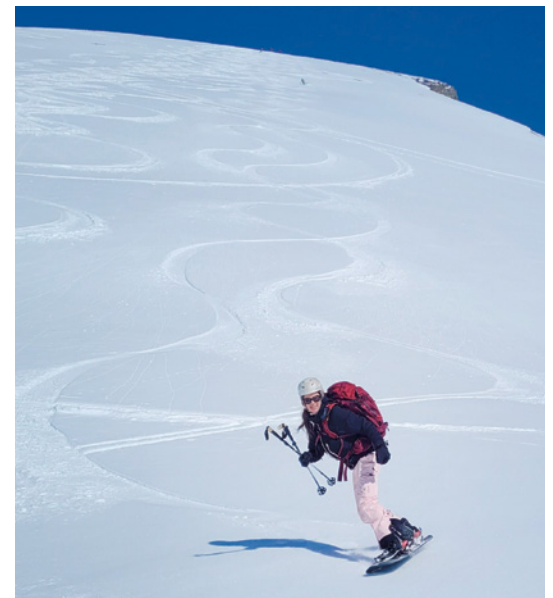
Facing page: Chris Candela makes his way up Mt. McArthur.

This page, top-left: Simon Trudel, Graeme Garner, Brendan Clark, Emma Pettey, Tiff Schebesch, and Jonathan MacKinnon pose for a group shot at the summit of Ochre Spring Peak.

Mid-left: Graeme Garner smiles as he pushes through knee-deep snow to the top of Cirque Forepeak.

Bottom-left: Jonathan MacKinnon skis down Crowfoot Mountain with views of Mount Balfour and the Waputik Icefield.

Bottom-right: Emma Pettey scores fresh turns down Ramp Peak.



A TOUR OF THE WAPTA ICEFIELDS

Story by Ellen Homola

I hadn't met any of our group of nine who would be traversing the Wapta Icefields, so we met in an Edmonton playground to practise our crevasse rescue. I had taken a crevasse course but hadn't done any glacier travel since, so I practised every day for a week in my living room. We carpoled to Lake Louise where we spent the night at the hostel in shared dorm rooms just like a bunch of kids on a sleepover.

Our first objective was the Bow Hut, which I had never been to previously. I had some trouble on the approach as my ski skins started slipping as soon as the trail became steep. I got great advice on technique from the group, but eventually I had to put on my ski crampons and slog my way up to the hut.

The Bow Hut sleeps 30 and feels more like a busy hostel than a hut. When I arrived, I was so tired that I could barely talk, but I got my second wind after a snack and a cup of tea. My team was on kitchen duty, and we cooked risotto with chicken sausage. I slept well and recovered my energy for the next



day. My pack felt much lighter minus one dinner for six. Rather than the short ski to the Balfour Hut that we had planned, we decided to go up to the Wapta glacier and climb Mt. Gordon. The crevasse risks were increased due to a thin snowpack, and we were roped together. We reached the base of Mt. Gordon, but it was too windy to climb the peak.

Three of our party skied down the steep couloir which led directly to the hut while the rest of us skied back to the hut the long way. It was my first time skiing with a rope on, and I fell many times. Many thanks to my friend for lifting me up by my pack so I didn't have to take it off!

When I arrived at the Balfour Hut, I was tired but felt much better than I had at Bow the night before. I was glad to have had the chance to experience more ski mountaineering on a longer route. We had an amazing spaghetti supper. The hut sleeps 18, and the vestibule provides storage while keeping snow and cold air out of the hut.

The next morning, two of our team decided to return to the Bow Hut and to the highway because of a painful attack of tendonitis. We were sad to see them go, but I felt confident that both groups had good leadership. Our remaining party of seven took the Balfour High Col route to the Scott Duncan Hut. This was my favorite day of the trip, as we had clear skies and sunshine as we





Facing page, top-left: Organised chaos at the Scott Duncan Hut. Photo by Dustin McLachlan.
Mid-left: Ellen makes her way down the Sherbrook Creek Drainage; Mt. Ogden in the background. Photo by Dustin McLachlan.
Bottom-left: Dustin takes a selfie on the climb to Balfour Col.
This page, top-right: Kurt gazes upon the South Face of Mt. Gordon. Photo by Dustin McLachlan.
Mid-right: Kurt and Neil enjoy sunshine and hot tea outside the Balfour Hut. Photo by Dustin McLachlan.
Bottom-right: Cris, Ellen and Karim on the Balfour High Col with BC in the background. Photo by Neil Yakimet.

crossed the Great Divide. The views of the mountains were stunning, and the glaciers seemed infinite.

The Scott Duncan Hut feels like a small treehouse with great views and a lot of exposure. There is no vestibule like at the Balfour Hut, so it can be cold and windy when the door opens, and the floor becomes wet with melted snow from boots. We had an excellent shrimp pasta for dinner and then fell asleep to the sound of the wind singing through the cables that hold down the hut.

The next day, we skied out to the highway via the Schiesser-Lomas route. It was steep and icy, and I side-slipped down the whole mountain. Next came the steep and narrow creek descent with trees and ice-covered moguls with running water between them. One of my colleagues kindly suggested that I take off my skis and walk. Finally, we arrived at Sherbrooke Lake for either skate-skiing across the ice or an opportunity for relaxed conversation on our way home. Our group was reunited at the Lake Louise Hostel, and we enjoyed a hot meal in the cafe.

Thanks to everyone in the group for helping me feel safe, welcome, and supported. The Wapta Traverse is a bucket list trip of mine, and it was a great way for me to celebrate my recent 60th birthday. The Wapta was just as challenging, beautiful, and inspiring as I imagined. I would love to do it again, and the only thing I would change would be my skins. — ACC



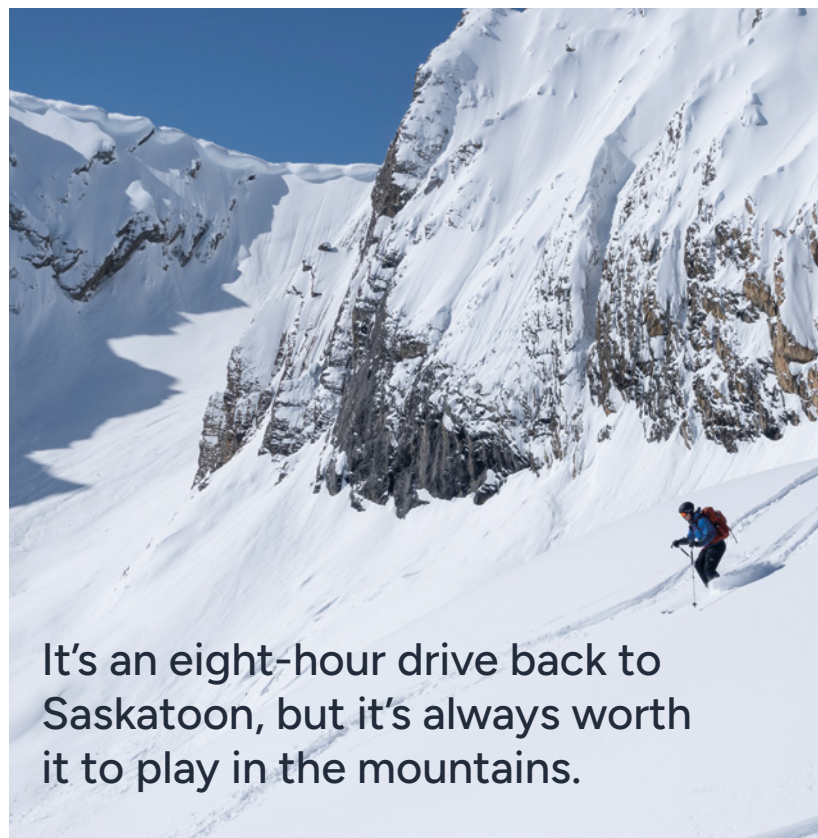
SKI FEST 2024 TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Story and photos by Erik deConinck Smith



Avalanche and weather conditions aligned perfectly for the first annual ACC Saskatchewan Section Ski and Board Fest from March 28 to April 1. Our team was made up of nine section members, six of us made the long drive from Saskatoon, and met up with three who came from Calgary. The trip was based out of the Lake Louise Alpine Centre hostel, and we toured different locations in the area for four days. In total, we climbed over 3,500 metres and travelled almost 50 kilometres on our skis and split boards.

The first day was cloudy and at times snowing very heavily so we stuck to lower elevations, tree skiing under a sub-peak of Observation Peak. It was a good day getting a feel for the abilities of the group and for checking out the snow conditions in the area. Day two was forecast to be nice and sunny, so we decided to get up in the alpine and check out the views and snow on Ogden Bench above Sherbrooke Lake. Getting to the Bench involves almost 1,000 metres of ascent from the trailhead, and with the powerful sun expected in the afternoon we hurried up through the trees to Sherbrooke Lake and then up into the alpine. The cliffs of Ogden Peak were towering above us as we travelled up the slope and every so often the cliffs would send some snow thundering down, reminding us not to linger. We summited around noon and had a great ski back down to the lake.



It's an eight-hour drive back to Saskatoon, but it's always worth it to play in the mountains.



Top-left: A majestic ski back to the car on Chephren Lake.

Bottom: Joel shreds down Ogden Bench.

Top-right: Eight happy Flatlanders (plus Erik) with Howse Peak in the background.



The Bench is south facing, and it had a sun crust below the 20 centimetres of fresh snow and that just wouldn't do for us Saskers... we needed bottomless powder! So, on our third day we chose a north-facing slope beside the spectacular Howse Peak. The approach to Howse involves a ski across Chephren Lake and as the sun came up the peak came into view. The fog was rolling through the lake, and it felt like we were dreaming. We ascended a knob above the moraines and skied down some of the best snow I have skied all year. One lap was about 500 metres, so we headed up to do another. For several in the group, if we could get back to the summit of the knob, they would achieve their first ever 1,000 metre day on skis. There was some mild complaining, but we pushed on and reached the summit once more.

On day four, we were looking for something close to home because we had a big drive ahead of us back to Saskatchewan. We decided that Surprise Pass which starts at the Fairmont Hotel was our best option. The route takes you up and around Fairview Mountain into a cirque that looks like a dead end, but then, surprise! There is a pass that you can't see until the last minute that you have to boot back up to, and the run down the north side puts you on the west end of Lake Louise. Like the slopes beneath Howse Peak, the ski down these north-facing slopes was amazing. We finished the trip with a ski across Lake Louise, meeting a jealous tourist wondering where we could possibly have been coming from.

It's an eight-hour drive back to Saskatoon, but it's always worth it to play in the mountains.

I hope to continue leading this type of trip with the Saskatchewan Section every year with the long-term goal of building a community of strong ski mountaineers that live in the prairies. — ACC

FROM FROZEN PLAINS TO CLIFFS OF ICE

THE GREAT PLAINS SECTION GOES
ICE CLIMBING IN WATERTON

Story by Jennifer Arends, photos by James Lewis

If there's one thing that Saskatchewanians understand, it's ice. The frozen, wind-swept landscapes of southern Saskatchewan present a survival (and often a spiritual) challenge for its brave inhabitants for what can feel like months without end.

In March, four intrepid Great Plains Section members climbed into a car and travelled west in search of not palm trees, but... more ice. The plan: introduce two brand-new ice climbers to the ice of beautiful Waterton National Park, climb for two days, develop new skills, and build amazing memories.

For members of the section, access to alpine pursuits can be challenging. Without mountains or cliffs on their doorstep, prairie folk have to travel further afield to find alpine adventures. The geography combined with a frequent lack of gear and nearby experts leads to a significant access challenge. But as Great Plains leader extraordinaire James Lewis explained, this just makes providing unique opportunities all the more rewarding:

"I like to share this sport with people who don't have access to it as easily as other clubs. Climbing is a relatively small entity in Regina, so letting people know the different places it can take you is awesome."

Despite six hours of dry fields from Moose Jaw, SK to Pincher Creek, AB, the trip delivered on its participants' expectations. And while the surroundings, complete with what participant and first-time ice climber Mike Horvey called "beautiful scenery, big horn sheep and deer, running streams beside banks of snow, and cliffs of ice backdropped with flowing waterfalls," were amazing, it was clearly the people who made the trip particularly special. "I love seeing people try the sport, and I love watching them succeed," said



Lewis. "The cool thing about ice climbing is that success is measured differently for everyone, and we all share the stoke and build each other up. Over the years, I've learned and really believe that it is the people that make the trips, it's the memories you make and the experiences you share that you remember. No one really cares that you singularly suffered through a white-out in 100 km winds after retreating from a summit, but man does that story get entertaining when it's you and a mate."

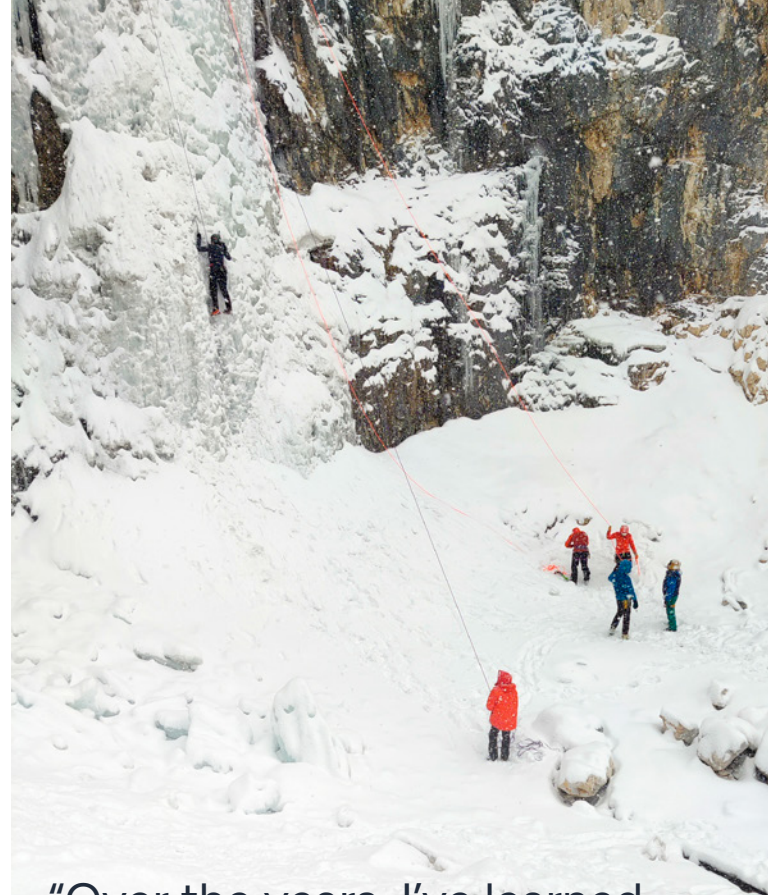
The Great Plains Section looks forward to continuing to expand its winter offerings in the years to come so that more prairie folk have opportunities for adventure and have access to our treasured Canadian mountains. — ACC

Top-left: The impressive 180-foot frozen waterfall makes for an epic arena.

Top-right: A friendly group from BC climbing the bottom of Quick and Dirty.

Bottom-left: Sofia and a new friend swinging ice tools in unison.

Bottom-right: The crew play a game of Cat's Cradle between pitches.



"Over the years, I've learned and really believe that it is the people that make the trips, **it's the memories you make and the experiences you share that you remember.**"



FROM PEAKS TO PREMIERE

HOW TWO PRAIRIE CLIMBERS
BECAME FILMMAKERS

Story and photos by Ray and Jackie Hope

Before we ever touched an ice tool or filmed a documentary, we were two people approaching 50, feeling the pull to do something different, something bold. We didn't know it yet, but the ACC—especially the Manitoba and St. Boniface sections—would be the spark, the structure, and the community that would set our next decade in motion.

The turning point came during a trip to Japan. One beautiful afternoon, standing on a summit in the Yatsugatake Mountains, something shifted. Maybe it was the altitude, or the quiet beauty of that moment, but we came home to Winnipeg having made a decision: we were going to climb.

We joined the local sections of the ACC (Manitoba and St. Boniface) and immediately found ourselves surrounded by inspiration and support. These two prairie-based sections became our foundation, offering mentorship, training, and a welcoming community that turned our curiosity into commitment.

We dove headfirst into climbing: ice, rock, and alpine. From the exhilaration of swinging ice tools into the St. Boniface section's 60-foot ice tower, to climbing rock in northwestern Ontario, we explored everything our local community had to offer and beyond. We attended multiple General Mountaineering Camps (GMCs) and were awed by the scale of the mountains—and the experience of the people around us.

Soon, we began leading trips of our own. We weren't elite athletes, but we brought energy, organization, and a love for sharing wild places with others. We also brought cameras.

That's when a second transformation began.





We started Midlife Mountaineer, a video production company, to tell stories of people embracing adventure later in life—often after years of setting dreams aside. Our first short film, *Prairie Ice Farmers*, captured the passion and grit behind Manitoba's unique ice climbing scene. To our amazement, it was selected by the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival (VIMFF), and later by Hory a Mesto in Bratislava, Slovakia. We traveled to both festivals, realizing we'd found a second love: filmmaking. (*Prairie Ice Farmers* is available to watch on midlifemountaineer.com/pif).

That led us to *Midlife Mavericks*, a four-part documentary series being released this summer on Bell Fibe TV1. It tells the stories of people who reignite old dreams in midlife—through adventure, creativity, and resilience. The first episode follows our own journey, from that mountaintop in Japan to the Canadian Rockies to international film festivals.

The Manitoba and St. Boniface sections were there from the beginning—and they remain central to our story. From mountain summits to community screenings, this incredible group of people helped turn a midlife pivot into something lasting and meaningful.

We've come to believe that some of life's greatest summits aren't always mountains—they're moments of transformation. And just like in climbing, those moments are best reached with a community around you. — ACC



Facing page, top: A pivotal moment - Ray & Jackie on a peak of the Yatsugatake mountain range, Japan, 2014.

Middle: Ray & Jackie after reaching their first summit at the 2017 GMC, taking place at the Albert Icefields.

Bottom: Ray & Jackie filming at the artificial ice-climbing tower of St. Boniface, 2025.

This page, top: Ray on the ACC's Summer Leadership Course, taking place at the Mummery Glacier.

Middle: Club trip members and guides on summit of Mount Little, in the Valley of the Ten Peaks.

Bottom: Jackie exploring the Albert Icefield at the 2017 GMC.



Saint Boniface

UN ENGAGEMENT À L'ANNÉE

Texte et photos : Dre DeBattista
Read in English overleaf.

St. Boniface n'a pas de structures élevées excepté deux tours. Et sans être le lieu de guerres épiques dignes de la Terre du Milieu, l'une d'elles est le site de contributions bénévoles aux proportions fantastiques.

Il s'agit des prairies, ce qui permet de repérer ces deux tours à des kilomètres de distance. L'une d'elles est un château d'eau désaffecté qui ne nous concerne pas. L'autre, qui peut vaguement ressembler à une tour de télécommunications, forme le cœur de la section locale du CAC.

Si l'on se rapproche de cette tour, en toute saison, on remarquera sans doute des gens en train de l'escalader. Si vous interrogez un de ces grimpeurs à son sujet, il vous parlera de leur club le sourire aux lèvres. C'est juste : la section du CAC de St Boniface exploite cette tour d'escalade de 60 pieds en plein cœur des prairies.

C'était la vision d'André Mahé et de Denis Gravel d'amener l'escalade sur glace dans les prairies. Ils entamèrent la construction de la tour en 1993 et l'ont englacée pour la première fois en 1996. Des bénévoles de sa section n'ont cessé de l'entretenir depuis.

La partie « faire de la glace » n'a pas fonctionné parfaitement tout de suite. Les premiers jours, de l'eau s'infiltrait dans la tour, et couvrir chaque surface de l'extérieur s'avérait incroyablement difficile.

Mais le processus s'est amélioré. Les panneaux de la tour furent scellés avec des joints à onglets et du calfeutrage, et des boulons en inox furent utilisés pour boucher les trous des écrous en T. Le président de section Charles Roy a innové avec un collecteur équipé de buses pour disperser l'eau



également du sommet à la base, et fixe d'anciennes cordes d'escalade pour évacuer l'eau vers les zones à problèmes, ce qui a réduit la consommation d'eau et amélioré la formation et la rétention de la glace.

Rendre la tour accessible à l'escalade est un engagement à l'année qui demande le travail de nombreux bénévoles. Au printemps, une équipe effectue un entretien de routine sur la tour et une mise à jour majeure de ses 25 itinéraires. Avec des angles aigus sur toute la hauteur de la tour, il est possible d'établir des itinéraires qui imitent l'escalade rocheuse sur des arêtes et des dièdres.

Durant la saison d'escalade sur roche, tous les soirs de semaine et les week-ends, une équipe de la section surveille les grimpeurs alors qu'ils attaquent les dalles minces et les bancs à mi-paroi.

L'automne arrive, et d'autres bénévoles enlèvent toutes les prises et préparent la tour pour l'hiver, mais elle est loin d'hiberner toute seule. Des bénévoles préparent la tour afin qu'elle puisse être inondée pendant les jours les plus froids de décembre et puisse être grimpée avec des piolets et crampons tout l'hiver. Chaque année, elle gèle avec des caractéristiques nouvelles et intéressantes, et des voies amusantes se rangeant de WI 4 à WI 5. La supervision de l'escalade de glace représente une autre tâche intense pour les bénévoles, et ce, tout l'hiver.

Alors, comment le club parvient-il à conserver son lot de bénévoles? Avec des avantages et une communauté. Selon la coordinatrice des bénévoles de la section, Trisha Burch, la clé de la réussite repose sur une communication cohérente. Exprimer de l'intérêt et de l'appréciation dans le travail et les compétences des autres, elle les attire vers la tour. C'est un environnement stimulant à offrir aux bénévoles, avec une valeur ajoutée.

« Quand les gens viennent aux formations », dit Burch, « nous essayons de varier l'information, de manière à ce que ceux qui reviennent en tirent aussi profit. »

Certains membres de la section ont régulièrement participé pendant des années. D'autres sont des voyageurs en quête d'escalade abordable et de communauté pendant leur séjour à Winnipeg. D'autres bénévoles viennent ponctuellement quand ils en ont le temps. Burch œuvre à harmoniser tous les horaires, coordonne des événements d'appréciation, et consacre de nombreuses heures à la tour elle-même.

L'année dernière a requis le travail de 66 bénévoles pour un total combiné de 1 796 heures pour garder la tour accessible. Ce monument spécial de St Boniface continue d'offrir à plusieurs la chance de grimper toute l'année grâce à leurs efforts. — CAC



Facing page: Des grimpeurs escaladent impressionnant tour de 60 pieds en été.

This page: Le soir a beau tomber rapidement en hiver, l'escalade de glace se poursuit dans la nuit.

Saint Boniface

A YEAR-ROUND COMMITMENT

Story and photos by Dre DeBattista

St. Boniface doesn't have many tall structures except for two towers. And rather than the site of a Middle Earth war of fantastic proportions, one of them is the site of volunteer contributions of fantastic proportions.

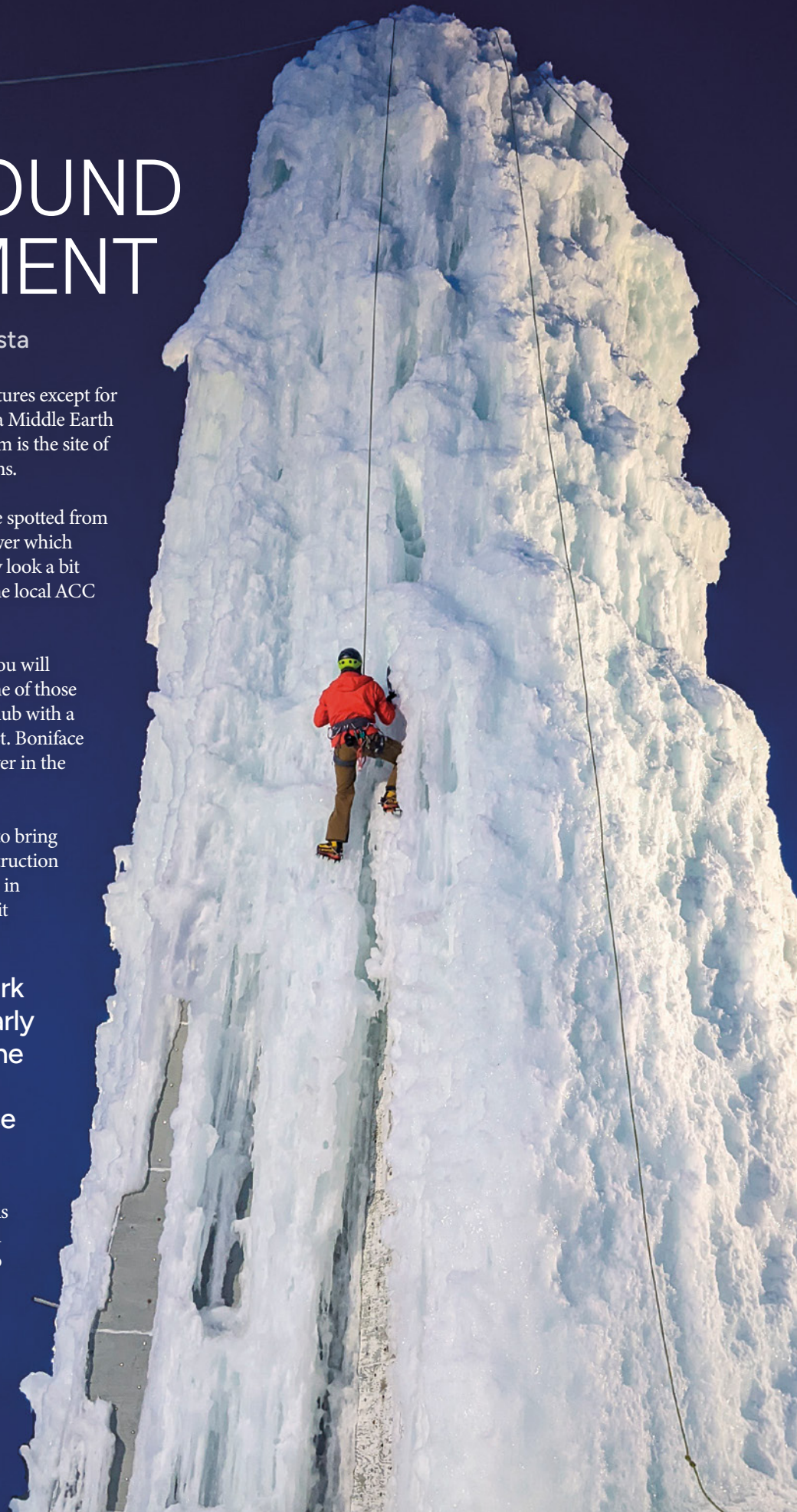
It's the prairies, so the two towers can easily be spotted from a mile away. One of them is a retired water tower which doesn't concern us. The other, although it may look a bit like a communications tower, is the heart of the local ACC section.

If you get closer to this tower, in any season, you will probably notice people scaling it. If you ask one of those climbers about it, they'll tell you about their club with a smile across their face. That's right, the ACC St. Boniface Section operates this 60-foot-tall climbing tower in the heart of the prairies.

It was André Mahé and Denis Gravel's vision to bring ice climbing to the prairies. They started construction of the tower in 1993 and first glazed it with ice in 1996. Section volunteers have been operating it ever since.

The making ice part didn't work perfectly right away. In the early days water would seep into the tower, and it was incredibly difficult to cover every surface of the exterior.

But the process has been improved. The panels on the tower were sealed with miter joints and caulking, and stainless-steel bolts were used to plug the T-nut holes. Section Chair Charles Roy has innovated a manifold with nozzles to evenly disperse water from top to bottom, and he fixes retired climbing ropes to wick the water towards problem areas. This has reduced water consumption and improved ice formation and retention.



Making the tower work for climbing is a year-round commitment and the job of many, many volunteers. In the spring, a team does routine maintenance on the tower before setting more than a dozen routes on the featured walls. With sharp corners that run the entire height of the tower, it's possible to set routes that mimic rock climbing on arêtes and dihedrals.

During the rock climbing season, every weeknight and on weekends, a team from the section supervises climbers as they work out the thin slabs and mid-wall dynos.

Then come fall, more volunteers remove all the holds and prepare the tower for winter, but it doesn't hibernate alone. No. Volunteers rig the tower so that it can be flooded on the coldest days of December and climbed with ice axes and crampons all winter. Every year it freezes with new and interesting features and fun problems ranging from WI 4 to WI 5. Supervision of the ice climbing is another massive winter-long job for volunteers.

So, how does the club maintain consistent volunteers? With incentives and community. Section Volunteer Coordinator Trisha Burch says the key to success has been consistent communication. Showing interest and appreciation in the work and skills of others, she invites them to the tower. It's a fun environment for her to offer them volunteer opportunities with added value.

"When people come to orientations," said Burch, "we try to vary the information, so the returning people get something out of it too."

Some section members have been contributing regularly for years. Others are travellers looking for affordable climbing and community during their stay in Winnipeg. Others volunteer intermittently when they have time. Burch works to align all the schedules, coordinates appreciation events, and puts in a lot of hours at the tower herself.

Last year it took the work of 66 volunteers over 1,796 combined hours to keep the tower open. This special landmark in St. Boniface continues to give so many the chance to climb year-round because of their efforts.

— ACC



Facing page: The impressive 60-foot artificial ice-climbing wall.

This page, top: Climbers scaling the tower in summer.

Middle: Volunteers work to help climbers learn and have fun.

Bottom: Trisha Burch setting a challenging route for the members.

Thunder Bay

This page: A recent photo of Wes and Shawn on an ice-climbing day on la Pomme d'Or, Quebec.

Centre image: Climbing la Pomme d'Or.

Facing page, top-right: Wes and Shawn on la Pomme d'Or in 2013.

Mid-right: Wes and Shawn on their trip to Norway.

THE FREEZE FORGE

Story by Frank Pianka, photos by Wes Bender and Shawn Morgan

Like all ACC chapters, the Thunder Bay Section is a place where climbers connect to find partners and do some climbing. Sometimes those partnerships last a route, and sometimes they last a lifetime.

In 2003, Shawn Morgan arrived in Thunder Bay from Toronto and within a day we had him boating across Lake Superior to put his skills to work with Project Peregrine (climbers working with biologists to access falcon nests on cliffs) at one of the most challenging sites – the east side cliffs of Old Woman Bay.

Around this time, Wes Bender joined the TBay Section as well, eager to learn all he could about climbing from the club's mentors. Wes decided he wasn't especially keen on rock but loved ice climbing. And he became really good at it. It might have been their shared appreciation for a good joke, guitar playing and singing, or perhaps even beer, but something clicked with Shawn and Wes. It was the ice climbing that took their friendship to a new level as they honed their skills over the next decade, climbing in the Thunder Bay region and beyond.

Although it might be lesser known than the Rockies, Northwestern Ontario, centred around Thunder Bay, is home to some of the finest ice climbing in Canada.

Shawn and Wes' shared passion for ice began locally but very soon it took them farther afield. In their first couple seasons on the ice their focus was on Quebec, including climbing la Pomme d'Or, one of the most famous pure ice climbs in eastern

Canada. That was followed by a marathon trip to the Rockies to bag some of the classics of the west.

They chased big world-class ice routes in other cold countries as well. First was Iceland, where they learned to accept less than ideal conditions, to be rewarded with perfect conditions later in the trip. When one of them, usually Wes, hatches an idea they get right to it without second thoughts. "How about Norway next year?" "Let's do it!"



Indeed, they did, and many of us in the section followed along, eagerly scrolling through their online progress reports and photos, vicariously enjoying their icy adventures in far flung places.

Over the years Shawn has passed on his passion to his sons and was always ready for the next adventure. Wes continues to be recognized as one





of the best ice climbers in our region and became Chair of the Thunder Bay Section for a stint. The expertise, focus and grace of his movement over ice is still there.

Both Wes and Shawn have made a significant contribution to our section by helping with Project Peregrine and by modelling a solid climbing partnership. Wes continues to map all the best ice climbs in our region and post witty but honest condition reports for the larger ice climbing community.

Their enthusiasm for the next great adventure is still there as well, continuing to ride on the bond of a friendship formed when the trajectory of two people happened to intersect in the Thunder Bay Section of the ACC. You can't ask for much more! — ACC



EXPLORING CHILEAN ROCK CLIMBING

Story by Greg Millican

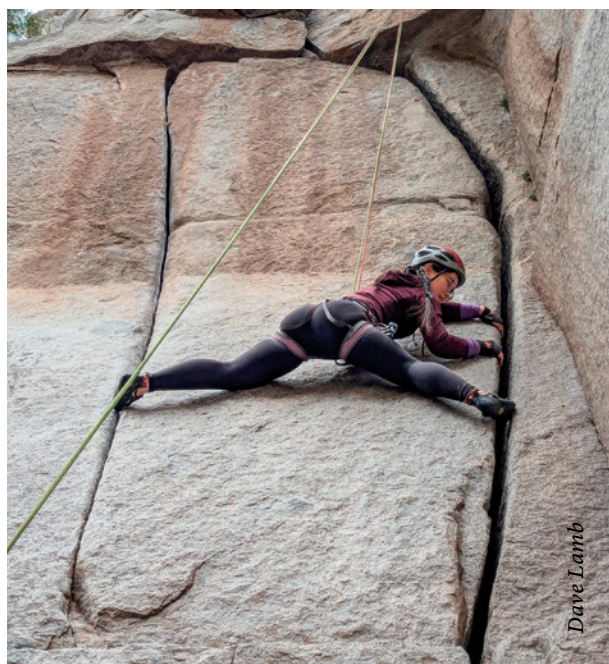
Spanning 7,000 kilometres along the west coast of South America, the Andes is a huge and breathtaking mountain range with many climbing opportunities that allow Canadians to escape our northern winter. We knew that there were beautiful views, brilliant climbing, excellent food, and near limitless opportunities for exploration. But in one of the world's longest mountain ranges, where do you start?

When conceiving the Toronto Section's inaugural South America climbing trip amongst some gym partners, we decided to look for something near Santiago, the capital and largest city of Chile, and we chose Cajón del Maipo (roughly "the little drawer"), a canyon tucked away some 50 km to the southeast.

The climbing turned out to be fabulous, but the beta was initially obscure. We sought out information through Wikiexplora, an online Spanish-language route and crag guide, and settled on the Torrecillas area for the vast amount of multi-pitch sport climbs, and El Alfalfal for the many trad climbs. We rented an Airbnb in the area that conveniently backed onto the local mountain and connected us to various crags with a bit of walking or a short drive.



Richard Linley



Dave Lamb



Dave Lamb



Matthew Waller

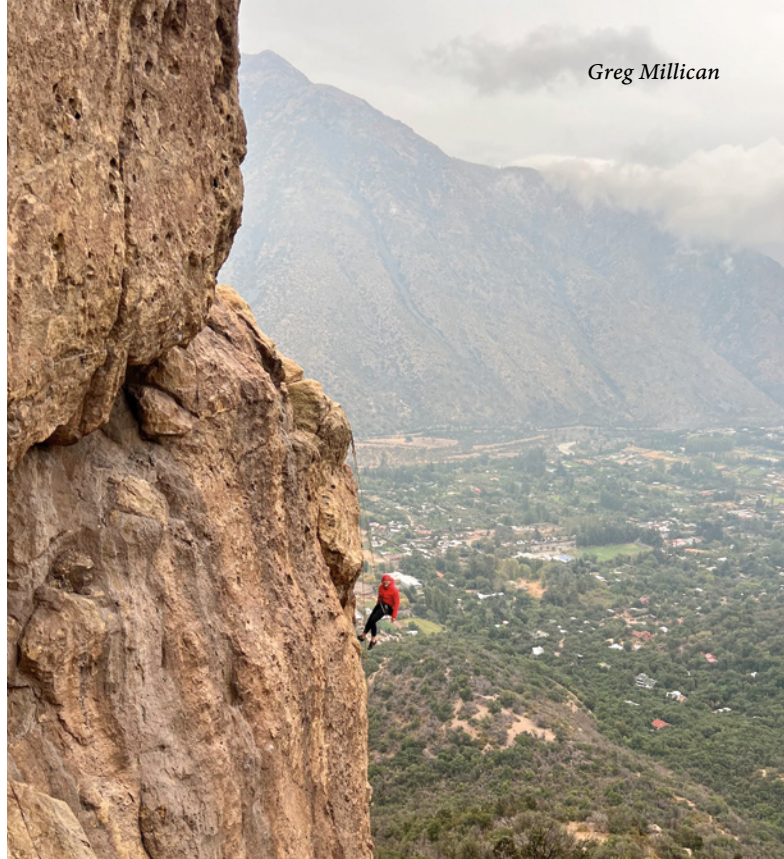


Dave Lamb

The climbing throughout the valley was picturesque and epic. On a multi-pitch climb at Torrecillas, we managed to climb in the shade all day while watching the sun chase us up the valley, not catching us until we topped out. At El Alfalfal, the kilometres of immaculate granite cracks and trad routes were first class – trad routes that you can simply drive up to and climb. More notable was the even bigger and undeveloped potential of the crags.

There was much to learn about the local climbing. The trick to navigating off-width cracks at El Alfalfal seemed to be shimmying up by figuring out which body part could best replicate the cam size that the crack would take.

Another day, while climbing Los Colombianos, a trad multi-pitch route in the San Gabriel mountains, we discovered that the thorn bushes and wandering crack systems of the area sometimes made it equally difficult to navigate the approaches and descents. Neither of our teams topped out



that epic day, but our experience was exceptional, and the unfinished business gives us another reason to return.

On a touring day, while adventuring further into Cajón del Maipo, we discovered remote areas with more rock than we could ever climb. Rob Wood on our team sourced a sufficient variety of empanadas from local vendors to fuel our day and we eventually found ourselves at Baños Morales, a natural hot spring a short distance from Volcán San José (5,856 m), one of the big classic volcanoes of the area.

While this first iteration was a smaller trip with the objective of exploring, we are hoping to expand the size and scope of next year's trip and invite members from all ACC sections to join us. The trip was very affordable at a cost of about \$2,100 for nine days including flights. With much better beta, our trip next year will involve more climbing, more long multi-pitch routes, and possibly some glacier travel on a trek to the top of Volcán San José. Keep an eye on the Toronto Section event calendar if you're keen to join us! — ACC

Photo: Jamie Leibold



Facing page, top: Emily Zwier about to finish a scenic pitch.
Middle: Jessica Cao pulling out the moves on a cracking route.
Bottom-left: Jessica enjoying the view at the top of Torrecillas.
Bottom-right: Richard Linley honing his crack-climbing technique.
This page, top-left: Jessica enjoying a 5.10a trad route in El Alfalfal.
Top-right: Matthew Waller after sending the first route of the trip.
Bottom: Cedric De Belder, Carter Nyman, and Jamie Leibold approve of rock climbing in Chile!

SUMMER CAMP AT BOW HUT

Story by John Pert and Damien Brown-Graham

This page: Passing the Mt. Gordon tarn just below the summit of Mt. Gordon. Photo by Damien Brown-Graham.

Facing page, top right: On the summit of Mt. Rhondda. Photo by Damien Brown-Graham.

Bottom-left: Damien Brown-Graham and Andy Alder crossing the slab below the summit of Mt. St. Nicholas. Photo by Bill Barrett.

Mid-right: View across Bow Lake toward Bow Glacier and Mt. St. Nicholas. Photo by Damien Brown-Graham.

Bottom right: A magical performance to a sellout audience at the Bow Hut from John Pert. Photo by Damien Brown-Graham.



In July of 2024, 10 members of the Ottawa Section of the ACC gathered for another great adventure in the Rocky Mountains. Our plan was to hike up to the Bow Hut and spend time on the glaciers and peaks of the Wapta Icefields. We had excellent weather and great times with good friends.

We met at the Clubhouse in Canmore and set off on our first adventure – heading to the local grocery store for the serious business of fueling up. Soon after we were on the road to Lake Louise for two nights at the hostel.

From Lake Louise we climbed Cirque Peak (2,993 m), a popular hike along the Icefields Parkway, and were entertained by playful marmots along the way. This big day (more than 1,000 metres elevation gain) helped us prepare for the main event of our trip, four nights at Bow Hut.

The hike from Bow Lake up to the hut began at 7:00 am. The route to the hut is well travelled and crosses a giant boulder that forms a natural bridge over a steep canyon and creek. We arrived at the hut late in the morning and spent the afternoon practising crevasse rescue skills in preparation for the days ahead.

We left the hut at 4:30 am the next day and moved across the glacier in two rope teams heading toward our first objective:

Mount Rhondda (3,062 m). A couple hours of glacier travel, thankfully with no crevasses, led to some gentle slopes, an abandoned weather station, and eventually the summit. We returned after a stop at The Onion, a smaller peak with nice views of the hut and Bow Lake below.

The following day we left the hut as two rope teams once again, but this time with the intention of parting ways at a col and climbing two different peaks: Mt. Olive and St. Nicholas.

St. Nicholas Peak (2,938 m) is a striking mountain, easily spotted from many places on the Wapta. The peak is not a long way from the hut, but the climb involves some scrambling and exposure that requires calculated movements. The east side is a very long and steep slope, and the west side is a sheer drop. The team short roped some sections for safety. The summit gives amazing views of the surrounding mountains and the crevassed glaciers below.

From Mt. Olive / St. Nicholas col, the second team gained elevation on a classic, steep snow slope to the ridge. Each stage of the journey revealed scenic vistas with the northern fringe of the Vulture Glacier and Crowfoot Mountain dominating the view to the east, and the great expanse of the Wapta across to Mt. Gordon and beyond to the West. To top

it off, the beautiful line of the full length of the ridge of Mt. Olive, back towards the col and over St Nicholas Peak, was laid out to the north. The weather continued to be excellent and one of our rope teams was able to complete both climbs in the same day.

The Bow Hut came alive that night with John Pert's "Magic in the Mountains" show. His entertaining performance created a special evening full of fun and laughter for the hut guests. Ice chopped from the toe of the mighty Bow Glacier became the rocks for the evening's dram of whisky.

Before sunrise, five climbers roped up for the final objective of our Bow Hut trip, Mount Gordon (3,161 m). The weather had been cooperative all week and today was no exception. We traversed the glacier en route to a massive wind scooped area that led us to the shoulder of the peak. We fastened our crampons for a steep section that brought us onto the ridge and on to the summit. Below us was a stunning and beautiful turquoise tarn filled with giant pieces of ice.

We returned to the highway the following day, with a quick detour to the beautiful Bow Glacier Falls.

Climbing mountains and enjoying the friendship of each other made for a wonderful Ottawa Section summer camp. — ACC



FAIRE DÉCOUVRIR LE PLEIN AIR AUX NOUVEAUX IMMIGRANTS

Par Stéphanie Pages. Read in English overleaf.

S'installer dans un nouveau pays vient souvent avec son lot de défis. Entre les démarches administratives, la barrière de la langue, les différences culturelles (et climatiques!), ce n'est pas toujours évident de créer des liens et de s'adapter à son nouvel environnement.

C'est fort de ce constat que David Dannenbaum – membre actif du Club alpin du Canada, section de Montréal, et leader de nombreuses sorties – nourrissait depuis longtemps l'idée de favoriser l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants par le biais du plein air.

La rencontre avec Kristina Chechel, du Centre social d'aide aux immigrants (CSAI), a permis de donner vie - et une dimension encore plus profonde - à son projet. D'origine ukrainienne, c'est tout naturellement que Kristina a réuni des réfugiés, principalement touchés par la guerre en Ukraine. De son côté, David a proposé des lieux de sortie accessibles depuis Montréal et mobilisé quelques membres du Club pour que cette activité devienne possible, marquant ainsi le début d'une

belle collaboration et d'une nouvelle série d'activités désormais récurrente.

Depuis 2022, une dizaine de sorties ont ainsi eu lieu au Québec : ski de fond, ski, raquette, randonnée, escalade dans les Laurentides (Val-David, Camping Ste-Agathe, Montagne d'Argent) ou en Montérégie (Mont Saint-Hilaire). Chacune de ces activités a permis à des dizaines de nouveaux arrivants de découvrir les plaisirs du plein air, tout en tissant des liens avec des membres du Club.

Au fil du temps, les sorties ont accueilli une plus grande diversité de participants, réunissant ukrainiens, réfugiés syriens ainsi que des personnes venues d'Amérique du Sud et d'Afrique.

En plus de l'activité proposée, chaque sortie est en effet propice à des moments d'échange entre participants : un café au départ, une collation sur le sentier, un feu de camp en fin de journée. Certains sites partenaires ont généreusement offert le matériel, un chocolat chaud ou un jus de pommes cuites... et même parfois une poutine!



L'appréhension du matin
laisse toujours place à la joie
et à la fierté en fin de journée.



Pour certains, ces activités les sortent de leur zone de confort, comme l'escalade ou le ski de fond. Mais l'inquiétude du matin laisse toujours place aux sourires de fin de journée et à la fierté d'avoir surmonté sa peur, grâce à l'encadrement bienveillant et attentif des bénévoles.

“Le ski de fond, c'était super fun! C'était la première fois pour moi, et les bénévoles du Club ont été vraiment patients et ont donné de très bons conseils. J'ai adoré, et j'aimerais vraiment en refaire! Je recommande vivement, vivement cette sortie!”

— Un participant

Pour assurer la cohésion et la sécurité, chaque activité réunit 5 à 10 membres du Club et 15 à 25 immigrants par sortie. Des sous-groupes sont formés selon les niveaux et les envies de chacun, mais tout le monde se retrouve à la fin de la journée pour partager leurs expériences, impressions et prolonger le plaisir visiblement partagé.

“Nous sommes reconnaissants d'avoir eu la chance d'en apprendre davantage sur l'histoire et la culture de la région, et d'écouter les récits et légendes transmis de génération en génération. Votre passion et votre enthousiasme transparaissent dans chaque aspect de l'événement, et vous en avez fait une expérience inoubliable.”

— Kristina Chechel, (agente de communications et des activités collectives au CSAI)

Les places s'envolent généralement en quelques heures et David aimerait beaucoup qu'on puisse organiser plus de sorties, puisqu'il est difficile d'ajouter plus de participants.

« C'est toujours un plaisir d'organiser ces sorties. Il se passe quelque chose de spécial à chaque fois : les échanges, les découvertes, l'énergie du groupe. Cette initiative répond à une vraie demande : alors si des membres ont envie de se lancer et de partager leur passion, je demeure disponible pour les accompagner dans l'organisation. »

— David Dannenbaum

Que ce soit pour nos membres ou pour les nouveaux arrivants, le pari est réussi : chacun repart avec le sourire, enrichi par les échanges, le plaisir partagé et les liens créés. Reste maintenant à multiplier les occasions afin de permettre à toujours plus de personnes de vivre une première expérience de plein air inoubliable et mémorable, dans un climat de confiance et de bienveillance.

Une superbe initiative de la section de Montréal, qui illustre parfaitement les valeurs d'inclusion du Club Alpin. Un beau succès qui, espérons-le, continuera de rayonner et inspirera d'autres sections à travers le pays! — CAC

This page, bottom-left: Posing for a group shot after a fun day of hiking and climbing at Montagne d'Argent.

Bottom-right: The cross country skiing trip introduced many to a new sport. First time on skis!

Facing page: Rock-climbing in Montagne d'Argent was a great way to build friendships, trust and excitement for the outdoors. Photo by Frederick Legault.

INTRODUCING NEWCOMERS TO THE OUTDOORS

Story by Stéphanie Pages

Settling in a new country often comes with its share of challenges. Between administrative procedures, language barriers, and cultural and climate differences, it's not always easy to build connections and adjust to one's new environment.

It was with this reality in mind that David Dannenbaum — an active member of The Alpine Club of Canada, Montreal Section, and leader of numerous outings — had long nurtured the idea of promoting the integration of newcomers through outdoor activities.

His idea took an even more meaningful shape after meeting Kristina Chechel from the Centre social d'aide aux immigrants (CSAI), an organization in Montreal that supports immigrants and refugees. Originally from Ukraine herself, Kristina connected a group of Ukrainian refugees with the Montreal Section. David gathered a few club members and organized an outing, which marked the start of a fruitful collaboration and a new series of section trips. Since 2022, about ten outings have taken place across Quebec: cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and climbing in the Laurentians and in Montérégie. Each time, these

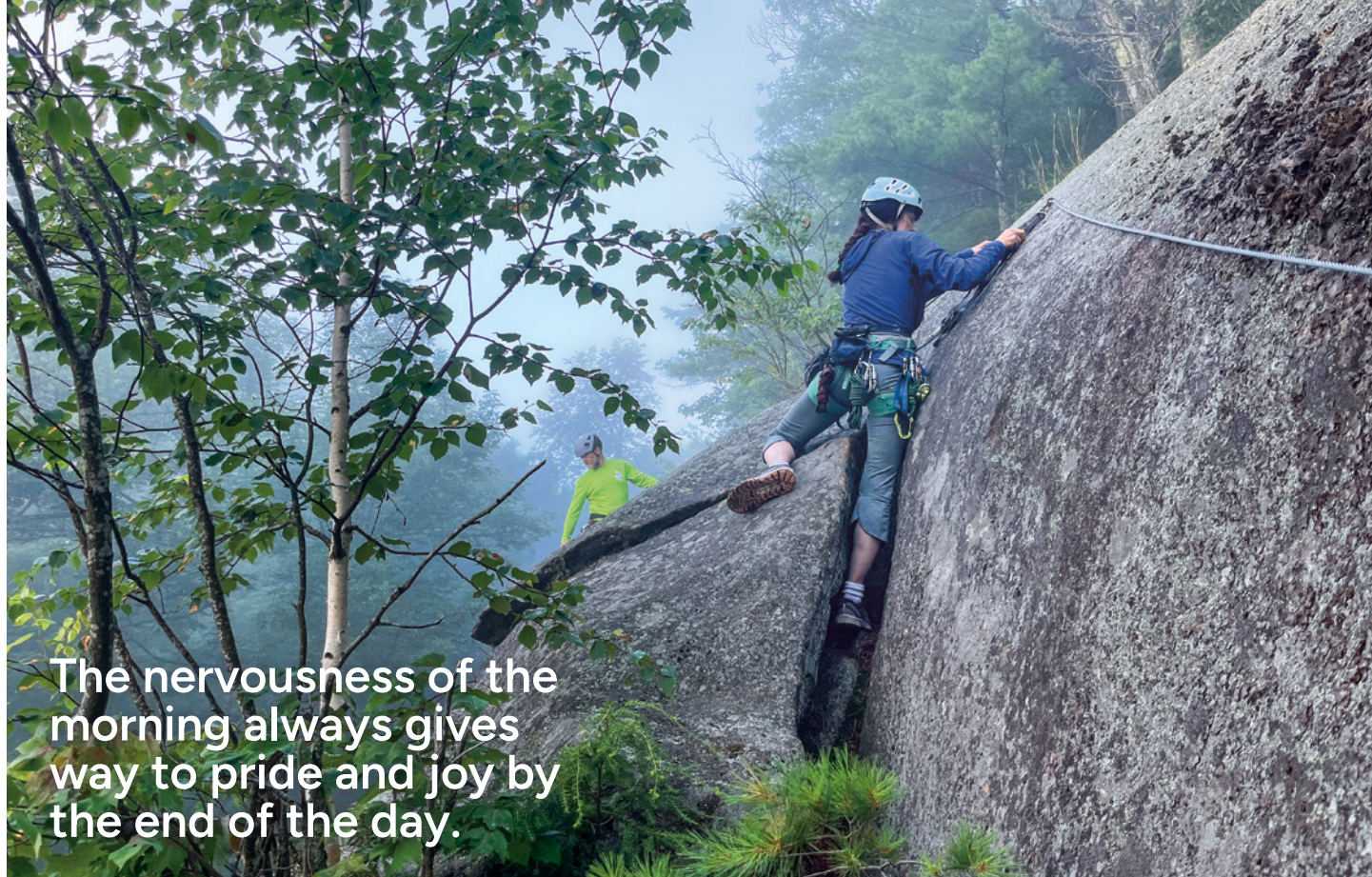
activities have allowed dozens and dozens of newcomers to discover the joys of the outdoors while forming connections with ACC members.

Over time, the outings gradually diversified, bringing together Ukrainians, Syrian refugees, and participants from South America and Africa.

Indeed, in addition to the activity itself, each outing is a chance for participants to exchange stories and to connect over coffee at the start, a snack on the trail, or a campfire at the end of the day. Several partner sites have generously provided equipment, hot chocolate, or apple cider — and sometimes even poutine!

For some of the new participants, these outings push them beyond their comfort zone, especially when trying something new like cross-country skiing or rock climbing. But the nervousness of the morning always gives way to pride and joy by the end of the day, thanks to the patient and supportive guidance of section volunteers.





The nervousness of the morning always gives way to pride and joy by the end of the day.

"The cross-country skiing was super fun! It was the first time for me, and the volunteers were so patient and gave good advice! I loved it and I'd like to do it again! Highly, highly recommended."

— A participant

To ensure both safety and cohesion, each outing brings together 5 to 10 club members and 15 to 25 newcomers. Participants are divided into smaller sub-groups according to their experience level and interests, but everyone reunites at the end of the day to share impressions and extend the good vibes.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the history and culture of the area, and to hear the stories and legends that have been passed down through the generations. Your passion and enthusiasm for what you do shine through in every aspect of the event, and you made it an experience that we will never forget."

— Kristina Chechel, CSAI communications and community activities agent

Spots usually fill up within hours, and David hopes to see more outings organized, as it's difficult to accommodate more participants.

"It's always a pleasure to organize these outings. There's something special every time — the exchanges, the discoveries, the group energy. This initiative clearly answers a real desire. If other members feel like getting involved and sharing their passion, I'm happy to support them with the logistics."

— David Dannenbaum

For both the newcomers who get to experience a new part of Canada, as well as the club members who volunteer, the experience is always rewarding. There are meaningful exchanges, shared joy, and lasting connections from the day. The next step is to multiply these opportunities and offer even more newcomers the chance to enjoy a positive, memorable outdoor experience in a setting of trust and kindness.

These activities welcoming newcomers to our area are a wonderful initiative by the Montreal Section, and one that perfectly embodies the Alpine Club's values of inclusion. A resounding success — and one that we hope will continue to inspire other sections across the country! — ACC

THE HISTORY OF FLATROCK FESTIVAL

Story by Thatcher Flynn

This page: Ellen Gleadow on Gabe Direct, 5.11a, Flatrock Festival 2022. Photo by Greg Locke.

Facing page, bottom-left: Flatrock Festival in July 2023. Photo by Trevor Harris.

Top-right: Erin Locke on Good Country Lovin 5.11a, during her first Flatrock Festival in 2013. Photo by Greg Locke.

On the farthest East Coast of Canada resides the beloved province of Newfoundland and Labrador. For most people, Newfoundland evokes an image of our Jellybean Row houses, our thick accent, or perhaps our Screech-drinkin', cod-kissin' "Screech In" ceremony. What one mightn't think of is our tight-knit, ever-growing community of rock climbers. Our island is a big hunk of rock out in the Atlantic Ocean. It's green, it's rugged, and it's wild. Nowhere else can you find such easy access to the wilderness and a feeling of remoteness while being so close to town. While our crags are plenty, it wasn't always that way.

In the early 1990s, a group of local climbers began route development 25 kilometres north of St. John's in the small outport community of Flatrock. In 1994, as the community was growing, Inge van Ulden opened Wallnuts, Newfoundland's first climbing gym. Her son Leo van Ulden was an avid climber and route developer during Flatrock's infancy. With the growth of the community, Leo found himself guiding countless groups of new climbers to Flatrock. As a better way to get new climbers outside, he, Phil Stennet, Mark Dyke, and Lorri Ennis founded the Avalon Climbing Club, but they quickly realized that there was a vital flaw – their club wasn't insured. In May 2012, they looked to the ACC and turned their club into the Newfoundland and Labrador Section.

A year before the ACC executive started running the festival, Kaleb Thomas and Terry Day hosted the first top-rope festival in Flatrock. Since the newfound club's main goal was to get as many people as possible out on real rock, it was a natural progression for the club to pick up where the previous festival hosts left off. Today, Flatrock boasts 144 routes in seven areas. With 88 trad, sport, and mixed routes, Main Face is where most of the action happens.

After that first year, Flatrock Fest ran annually from 2012-2016, each year getting bigger and better. The day before the event, festival volunteers brought tables, a tent, ropes and gear, a BBQ, snacks, water, and sunscreen from the parking lot, down the hill,



across the scramble, and over the scree to the base of Main Face. They put up top ropes on more than 20 of the most classic routes, ranging from 5.7 to 5.12. It was a community affair. Wallnuts loaned their helmets, rental shoe fleet, and harnesses for the event, The Outfitters Adventure Gear & Apparel sponsored prizes, volunteers took turns belaying, and local and professional climbers hosted clinics. Each year, around 150 participants showed up to try climbing on rock. From newcomers to the most experienced climbers, everyone came together for the festivities.

After four successful years, life happened. Leo had two kids, people were moving on and out of the province, the executive saw many different faces, and eventually the winter's freeze/thaw cycles washed out a section of the trail to Main Face, making it too dangerous for inexperienced climbers to descend. Then there was the pandemic, which halted all community outings. However, in 2023, there was a resurgence of the local section, and with it, stoke to get the festival back up and running. That year we hosted another incredible festival with 150 participants coming out to experience our beloved seaside cliff. While the club took another break from the festival last year, this year we are hosting it once again!

With an executive of avid, stoked, committed climbers, we are planning three festivals in the 2025 calendar year. The first of the run will be Flatrock Festival on Saturday, July 12th from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm To celebrate the end of summer, we will host our third Swift Current Festival, two hours west of St. John's, in the scenic, granite-riddled town of Swift Current. This is a themed festival, where we will have 20+ top-ropes, an overnight campout at the nearby river, and prizes related to the festival's theme. (Previously we hosted "Swift Current Prom" and "Swift Current Swashbuckle"!). This year, Swift Current Festival runs from the morning of August 30th until the afternoon of the 31st. Finally, in the perfect fall conditions, we're bringing back the long-missed Flat Bloc Fest, a bouldering festival that takes place on the top and surrounding sides of the same land formation as Flatrock Fest – we're spoiled to have amazing routes and boulders all in the same place. If you weren't already dreaming of visiting our rugged island, we hope that these festivals will entice you to come on out. — ACC

OUTDOOR SAFETY PLEDGE



Since day one, we've pledged \$2 from every radio sold to advancing outdoor safety.

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