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Sat Aug 15 to Sun Aug 16, 2015

Leader: **Julianna Wells**

Co-Leader: **Ed Tickner**

A somewhat drippy morning met us as we gathered at the trailhead Saturday morning. However, spirits were not dampened as everyone geared up for our weekend in the Park. Raincoats and pack covers were donned and smiles were all around as we headed out at 9am from Raven Lodge - 10 in all from near and far.

We made our way through the trees and meadows and past the ponds and newly rushing creeks through the varying degrees of rain showers, stopping for gear adjustments and re-grouping occasionally along the way. Great company and conversation through the trees alongside Lake Helen Mackenzie kept us going through the sometimes deep mud, roots, and rocks, and new mushrooms and toadstools along the way made for some great photos. The greenery all around brightened our route as the rain continued to keep us cool on the trail. We paused again on the switchbacks to regroup, then headed on up to the highest point on the trail. Smiles all around, we enjoyed a quick break... "its all downhill from here!"

Sunshine poking through the clouds, rain falling down, we headed on past the Ranger Station and down the trail to Kwai Lake. With perfect timing, the rain stopped as we arrived at noon. Camp spots were found, tents were set up, and we enjoyed a relaxing lunch break.

Around 1:30pm we headed out for a walk to the Cruickshank Canyon. We could see evidence of the heavy rains from the night before on the trail with lots of debris showing where all the rain had been flowing during the storm. Our luck continued to hold on the weather, and in fact it even warmed up enough to un-layer along the way.

Happily, the inflow to Lake Beautiful was running (waterfalls are always prettier when there is actually water running through them!) but the water was still low enough to make for an easy creek crossing. We stopped for some photos, then continued on past the ever-growing rock cairns and out to the canyon lookout. More great conversation was enjoyed, some snacks to re-energize, and photos were taken as we spent a relaxing time watching the clouds go by across the canyon and teased the whiskey jacks with empty hands. No mountain tops could be seen, but the clouds were high up above the canyon giving us a great view.

We started out on the next bit of our adventure, heading across towards Strata Mountain, then down into the meadows below. We followed the creek to Meadow Lake, enjoying the bright colours of the newly-dampened grasses and low bushes along the way. We picked our way around the pretty little lake, following a small game trail and doing some light bushwhacking as we made our way to the outflow. Following the outflow and crossing back and forth as we made our way down the lightly running creek, we continued our way around past some ponds and meadows and to the Upper Lake Beautiful. The game trail was picked up again and followed back to the main trail above Lake Beautiful, completing our little detour.

Smiles all around in the warmth of the late afternoon, it was time to head back to camp. A short walk past Mariwood Lake and up to Kwai Lake got us back in time for a well-deserved dinner. Everyone cooked up their fare, sharing ideas and stories of past trips and adventures as we enjoyed the evening together in camp before heading to bed.

Sunday morning dawned with clear skies, sunshine, and a fabulous view of the mountains, with a low mist on the lake. We enjoyed a leisurely morning of visiting, breakfast, and packing up of gear, and at 10:30 we decided to begin the walk out to the trailhead.

We headed off down the trail to Murray Meadows, then up to Croteau Lake where we checked out the site of what will be the new group camping area, possibly to be completed later this year. Continuing on, we passed Lady Lake, through the meadows alongside Mt. Elma, then down past Kooso Lake and to Battleship Lake, with lots of blueberries to eat and pretty fungus to name along the way.

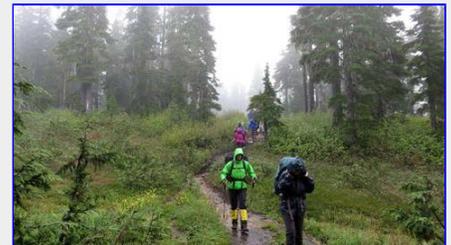
The trail alongside Battleship Lake was busy with families out for walks on such a beautiful Sunday morning, and at the Battleship Lake day use area, we enjoyed some sunshine and "lunch on the rocks" with the view of the lake in front of us. The warmth of the day was fading with some clouds coming in, so we passed on a swim and decided to continue on down and around Paradise Meadows and back to the trailhead. We arrived back at our vehicles around 2pm which was perfect timing for those needing to travel home down Island for dinner.

It was a most fabulous weekend in the Park. Lots of ideas and stories were shared, and I would like to thank everyone who came out for making it such a fun time. It was great to see the new members and members new to backpacking join the group for this trip. I look forward to seeing you all again on the trails!



*Slogging up the muddy slippery
hill above Lake Helen*

*Mackenzie
[Ed Tickner photo]*



[Julianna Wells photo]



[Julianna Wells photo]

[Joanne Cruise photo]

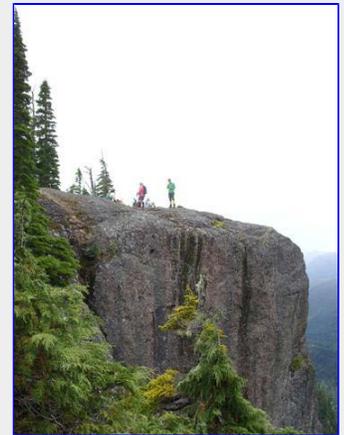


[Julianna Wells photo]

[Phil Dol photo]



[Julianna Wells photo]



[Phil Dol photo]



[Julianna Wells photo]



[Ed Tickner photo]



[Julianna Wells photo]



[Phil Dol photo]



[Julianna Wells photo]

What a view to wake up to!

[Ed Tickner photo]



Relaxing lunch on the rocks at Battleship Lake, almost home.

[Ed Tickner photo]

Report contributors: Ed T, Julianna W,

Participant list (10 of 12): Joanne C, Phil D, Kurtis F, 🟩Shawna K, Raquel L:**guest**, Ron L, Thomas M, Elaine S, 🟩Ed T, Julianna W,

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