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Trip Report

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Mosquito Creek To Molar Meadows (hiking)

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Fri Sep 18, 2015

Leader: **Bob St. John**

Co-Leader: **Carol Hunter**

With the weather still unsettled we chose the trail up Mosquito Creek to Molar Meadows as a suitable trip. The trailhead is on the Icefields Parkway north of Lake Louise. The route follows the creek through forest and open avalanche runouts, then climbs up to expansive alpine meadows below North Molar Pass.

For the first hour or so the trail follows a forested bench above the creek. The subject of interest here were mushrooms of all kinds, in particular very large dark ones... either dark naturally or from later stages of decay. The pace here was slower as Carol had too many chances for mushroom photos and Jim, with his training in biology, was interested in the many forms of lichens present in the trees and on the ground.

We came out of the forest into the valley between Mts Andromache and Dolomite. Here avalanches off Andromache kept the forest at bay, giving us very nice mountain views. The trail was somewhat muddy with snowmelt, and Park wardens had recently taken horses up the valley chopping up the trail as well.

At the head of the valley there are three options... take a trail north to Quartzite Pass, take a trail south to South Molar Pass, or the trail east up to Molar Meadows and North Molar Pass. We took the latter, and were soon on the very large expanse of meadows with magnificent views all around. We decided not to continue up to North Molar Pass as it would have been another 2 hours, and I suspect the views into the Pipestone Valley would have been obscured by cloud.

We had a late lunch on a highpoint near Mosquito Lake. It was interesting to watch weather systems come over the peaks... at one point we had a bit of graupel (snow-ice pellets) come down on us. Jim scanned the far reaches of the meadows and alpine for signs of grizzly, but no luck. Indeed we had not seen any sign over the last week except for very old scat.

The return trip seemed to go very quickly. It was for the most part a gentle downward descent to the trailhead. We arrived at the parking lot after 7 hours and about 24 km of travel.

Unfortunately Jim needed to get back to his farm, and this will be the last report. We may add a forum post when we get back at the end of September.

For those not in the know, this 2 week trip was posted on the website for a few weeks prior to leaving. We will post individual trips as they happen if they get the 3 minimum for a club trip. Jim Wright came down from his farm in Alberta to join us while waiting for his crops to mature.



Mushrooms in the forest
[Carol Hunter photo]



Mosquito Creek
[Carol Hunter photo]



[Carol Hunter photo]



[Carol Hunter photo]



Mt Andromache
[Carol Hunter photo]



Heading towards North Molar Pass
[Carol Hunter photo]



Mosquito lake with North Molar Pass in the background
[Carol Hunter photo]



Lunch with a view
[Carol Hunter photo]



*Heading back, with Bow Peak
ahead*
[Carol Hunter photo]



Dolomite Peak
[Carol Hunter photo]

Report contributors: Carol H, Bob S,

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