

CDMC

Trip Report

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Sun Aug 10, 2014

 Leader: **Tim Penney**

Co-Leader:

Mirren Lake 10-8-2014

16 People in total turned out for this trip to Mirren Lake with 5 Vehicles passing through the TW gate at around 8:00AM for the 30 kilometre drive to the trailhead. About 4 kilometres from the trailhead one vehicle lost a driveshaft and was not able to carry on in 4WD. Driver and passengers were distributed to the other vehicles. 2.5 Kilometres from the trailhead another vehicle was not suitable for the deep culvert crossing area. Again the driver and passengers were added to the other vehicles.

By 9:20 we were all heading up the 900 foot steep climb through the logged off area almost bordering the edge of the park. A short break was taken for refreshments and photographs at the beautiful meadows area just inside the park boundary. From here we more or less followed the Kweishun Creek for another 1.5 kilometres to the base of the waterfall where we rock hopped across to the south side for the climb to the next level.

The low snow winter, combined with exceptionally warm weather, has reduced the amount of snow in the Kweishun Creek gully to an extent that I have not seen before. A hanging snow bridge about 50 foot above the creek shows the amazing depth of snow that accumulates in this area even on a low snow winter. In other years the snow level in July has been 30 foot or more deeper.

At this point in the hike, one of our members, decided that he didnt wish to go any further and would prefer to wait whilst the rest of us carried on. The location seemed to be about as good as it gets, plenty of water and areas of shade.

The trail from the gully heads up over an open rocky area leading into a small valley on the north side of the creek, eventually joining up again with the usual route just before Gordon Wood Lake. This is a bushy area in places and I missed the correct route for 8 minutes hiking in another small valley one over from the correct route. Back on the correct route again we gathered at Gordon Wood Lake for a late lunch at around 2:00 PM.

Although I would have liked to continue on to Mirren Lake, the logistics of full vehicles and the gate key prompted us to all return together. As it turned out, this was a very good decision. At 3:15 on arriving back to our waiting hiker he was found to have a badly broken right leg caused by a large rock that he had dislodged about 20 minutes after we had left him. We gave what comfort we could and, leaving 3 club members at the accident scene, the other 12 took off for the vehicles with the intention of calling in support as soon as cell phone reception was available. Meanwhile at 3:30 I deployed my ResQLink device, initially from the creek area, and then moved higher up to the ridge above us.

By 4:30 the RCMP were advised of the emergency via the ResQLink service and

deployed a helicopter. Another RCMP officer was picked up on the way, taken from his duties at Comox Lake. On the way in to the Kweishun Valley the pilot spotted our vehicles at the trailhead and the waving hikers who had only just arrived. He landed by the vehicles to gather more information, let off the other RCMP and took on Board Ken R. to guide the pilot to the accident location.

After the other hikers left 3 of us with the injured hiker we were quite expecting that we might have to spend the night. Gathering a good pile of firewood and shading our injured hiker from the intense sun kept us busy.

Whilst waiting on the higher ridge with my ACR device I was extremely relieved to first hear, and then see an RCMP helicopter landing within a few feet the injured hiker. In a few minutes his leg was stabilized and the five of us, in small increments, were able to get him into the chopper. By 6:15 he was on his way to hospital in Campbell River. After the chopper left the three of us started on a careful descent back to the trailhead where the others were still waiting.

This was not the only injury on this trip. On the way down from Gordon Wood Lake another hiker took a tumble in a boulder field and sustained a bad cut on his forearm. It was dealt with using a tensor bandage and butterfly closure strips. Also, another hiker took a tumble further down the trail resulting in some fascial abrasions.

All in all, this was not a very good day in the mountains, but some lessons were learnt. Primarily, the effectiveness of the emergency transmitting device in an area where there is no cellphone service is invaluable. Without this device it could have meant a night in the mountains for the four of us and that would not have been a pleasant outcome, especially for the injured hiker.

This afternoon I visited the injured hiker in Campbell River Hospital along with two other club members. I am pleased to report that he was in good spirits and was even up to joking about the accident. I am sure that we all wish him a speedy and uncomplicated recovery.

An FMCBC Incident Report has been completed for this accident.



*First meadow on entering in the
Park*
[Tim Penney photo]



*Small side creek running into
Kweishun Creek*
[Geoff Brameld photo]



Creek crossing below the main waterfall
[Tim Penney photo]



Panorama shot of the very low snow levels in the creek gully this year
[Tim Penney photo]



Snow bridge about 50 foot above the rocks below
[Tim Penney photo]



Hiker in front of the melting snow
[Tim Penney photo]



This is the area where the injured hiker waited. The red spot marks the rock before it was dislodged
[Tim Penney photo]



Lots of snow melt from the Comox Glacier above
[Tim Penney photo]



RCMP at the trailhead area
[Geoff Brameld photo]



Gordon Wood Lake, bowl of Mirren Lake, and Iceberg Peak
[Paula Field photo]

Report contributors: Geoff B, Paula F, Lubosh K, Harold O, Tim P,

Participant list (16 of 16): Geoff B, Paula F, Mary F, Jack F, Ian H, Lubosh K, Kathryn L, Dorothy M, Sheila O, Harold O, Susan O, Tim P, Ken R, Ron T, Brian V, Otto W,

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