

CDMC

Trip Report

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Sun Jul 10, 2011

Leader: **Tim Penney**

Co-Leader:

Mirren Lake 10-7-2011

Having made two trips to reconnoitre the roads into Mirren Lake trailhead, and last Sunday's Lee Plateau hike to look down into Kweishun Creek Valley, it was great to finally make the trip to the lake. We were also lucky enough to have quite reasonable weather, including a few patches of blue sky.

As expected, we were able to drive to within 1/2 kilometre of the washed out part of the road where we exchanged our boots for more appropriate footwear to cross the 16 foot and 18" deep slow moving creek. With all of us safely across to the other side, with one minor exception, we had 3 kilometres of logging road to get to the trailhead, with an elevation gain of 650 feet. The road was in good condition and no more washouts were encountered. At the end of the road we had an ugly 600 foot climb up through a steep logged off hillside to gain access to the park.

At the Strathcona Park boundary, at 2600 foot elevation, we were already on several feet of snow, but with quite a lot of free water around Kweishun Creek outfall from the park. We headed around to the right towards the sheer cliff sided valley wall before turning almost due west, paralleling the creek towards Mirren Lake. With so much snow this winter it's hard to recognize the area from how it was when some of us last visited. A lot of trees have been broken by the heavy snow load, or flattened by numerous avalanche areas that have scattered large amounts of broken and pulverized trees across the valley floor. Fortunately for us all the snow slopes have now stabilized.

Because of the deep snow we were able to take a direct route to Mirren Lake climbing steadily past the first waterfall on the South side and then, most probably, right on top of the creek most of the way to Gordon Wood Lake, a small lake just before the last rise to Mirren Lake. A short distance before Mirren Lake we stopped for lunch on a large rock boulder, the top of which was free of snow.

After lunch it was time for photography and a walk to the far end of the lake. We had spectacular views of Mount Harmston, Rees Ridge and Iceberg Peak. We could also see the North Summit of the Comox Glacier 3000 feet above Mirren Lake. With most of the gullies filled with snow it would have been quite possible to climb another 1200 feet to the ridge above Milla Lake.

After lingering for awhile we reluctantly head back down the valley. For the steep down climb section by the first waterfall most of us strapped on our crampons. They were most probably not really necessary but, nonetheless, do give a good sense of security. Before long we were faced with the dismal down climb through the logging slash. It was harder going down than going up. We had to be careful to make sure that secure footing was found before taking the next step. Fortunately, only a small drop or two of blood was left on that part of the trail and, thanks to the well practised

hands of nurse Kim B, I lived to tell the tale.

This was a spectacular trip and much enjoyed by the company of all who found the time to come along. Once back in Courtenay seven of us stopped at the Atlas Restaurant for a fine meal and time to mull over our day in the mountains. It was good to see Carol H. who was able to join us for dinner.

[More photos](#) are available for viewing.

[Check out these pictures](#) for a good comparison of snow depths from the CDMC trip to Mirren Lake 2 years ago.



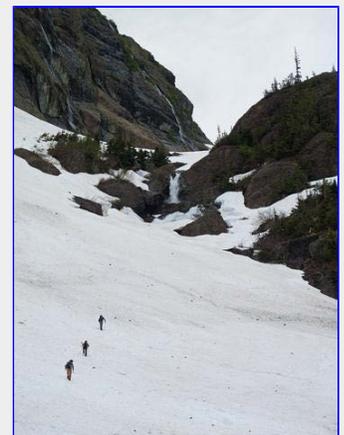
Mirren Lake GPS map
[Tim Penney photo]



The washed out road crossing
[Tim Penney photo]



Just entering Strathcona Park
[Tim Penney photo]



Approaching Kweishun Falls
[Darrell Tomkins photo]



Approaching the first lake to the Mirren Lake cirque
[Darrell Tomkins photo]



Oh Happy Day
[William Wright photo]



*At the second lake reflecting
Mount Harmston above Rees
Ridge*
[Darrell Tomkins photo]



The lunch rock
[Tim Penney photo]



*The north summit of the Comox
Glacier*
[Tim Penney photo]



Skiing Home
[William Wright photo]

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