

THE PACKRAT

ROCKY
MOUNTAIN



RAMBLERS
ASSOC.

JUNE - JULY 2000

ACTIVITIES: Hiking, Backpacking, Skiing, Cycling, Climbing, Scrambling, Mountaineering, Educational and Awareness Programs, Social Functions.

MEETINGS: Every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m.
Rosemont Community Hall, 2807 - 10 Street N.W.

MAIL: Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association
c/o Calgary Area Outdoor Council (CAOC)
1111 Memorial Dr. N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2N 3E4

TRIP INFO: 282-6308 Hotline and at meetings.

RMRA EXECUTIVE 1999-2000

President	Garry Denman
Vice President	Danielle Tardif
Past President	Anita O'Reilly
Trips Director	Ron Hunter
Treasurer	Jennifer Oss
Secretary	Linda Eastwood
Social Director	Loris Neff
Programs Director	Carl Potter
Newsletter Editor	Suzanne Costaschuk
Membership (appointed)	Jean Amatt

EDITOR'S NOTES

This Packrat contains a number of business articles that will be addressed as the summer evolves. Of great importance is the June 14 RMRA Forum to be held on the question of club liability. As well, the possibility of a RMRA Website has surfaced. An all encompassing list of what to carry in your summer packsack has been prepared by Dave Mulligan and the cost hauling all that equipment has been worked out by John Schleinich. Ron Hunter's summary of the past winter trips and a review of the motions covering upcoming summer trips will surely encourage all co-ordinators to keep up their great efforts at leading a vast variety of trips.

An interesting history of snow-shoeing and snowshoe design has been prepared by Tony Moran. Wally Drew has written about his recent trip to a fascinating part of the Himalayas. And lastly Dorothy-Ann Reimer clues us in on 'Phantom Parks' a book she has recently read.

Comments from many participants on the recent summer skills day was that it was very enjoyable and that the organizers Bob St. John, Garry Denman, and Jean Amatt, did a great job. There were hopes also that someone would organize a 'Flower Identification Day' this summer and that perhaps the interested hikers would be lead around the slopes in small groups by some of our very knowledgeable co-ordinators. And for simplicity, the grateful participants would treat their willing leaders to 'tea and crumpets' or 'beer and peanuts' after a fine day of enjoying the delicate aspects of our mountains. An area such as Mount Allan's lower slopes could support many small groups of say 4-6 hikers— so please get those 'Rocky Mountain Flowers Books' out and start brushing up for the Big Day! As of late, there has been a lot of interest in Alpine Gardening and folks are keen to learn! Deadline for the next Packrat is July 19, 2000. Happy Holidays, Suzanne Costaschuk

RMRA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 31—a presentation on trail maintenance volunteer opportunities for the club

June 7—a memorial to the late Art Davis dedicated to helping people cope with hearing loss. Speaker Paul Mephram of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services will demonstrate various modern equipment, which will be available during the meeting for members to try out.

June 14—members' forum on proposed changes to the membership and liability waiver process, with our lawyer, Adrienne Waller of Beaumont Church, present to answer questions

Saturday, July 8—The Annual Stampede Breakfast will be held at Terry and Bob Kaufmann's home. The address is 215 Oakfern Way SW. The cost will be \$5.00 per person and the breakfast will get underway about 9:30 a.m. If you are interested in attending, please sign up by June 30. You are required to bring your own plates, cups, silverware and a chair. If you have a folding table that the club could borrow for this event, we would like to hear from you. Call Loris Neff if you have any questions.

September 15 & 16—Annual Car Camp

October 27—In this Packrat, you will find a form that allows you to nominate members of the club in certain categories. Awards will be handed out to the winners of each category at the club's Annual Awards Dinner and Dance on Friday, October 27, 2000. Please be thinking about these categories in the coming months. Nominations are not due until September 27. Call Loris Neff for questions.

SET ASIDE A DATE FOR RAMBLERS' ANNUAL CAR CAMP For the Year 2000 HIGHWOOD GROUP CAMP SEPT 15 and 16

**This year we have our first-ever
2-night camp.
Come Fri. night and hike Saturday. Stay for a
sumptuous Pot Luck Supper.
Come Sat. night and hike Sun.
Or come Fri. night and stay both nights, hike
one day or both days.**

**Lots of great hikes possible!
Also great food!!!**

**Cost: \$13/unit/night, payable in advance
(need a minimum 10 units per night)**

**Unit: A unit is a family, a couple, 2 people
sharing a site, or a single in one site.**

Deadline to Register: Aug 30, 2000

Contact: Dorothy-Ann Reimer

The Executive passed the following motion:

"That a committee be formed to look into the feasibility of a club web site, and particularly the benefits to the club and members."

Garry Denman asked me to chair the committee, and I have accepted. Note that the mandate of the committee is not to build a web site, but to look into the feasibility and benefits of a site. The committee will submit a report on its findings, both pros and cons, to the Executive who would then decide on further action, if any.

The committee will be open to all members of the club, and I hope a wide spectrum of members will participate. Those who have built web sites or who have applicable programming experience would be valuable for the feasibility part of the study. Others who use the web would have insights into what features make a good site, and how a well-designed site would benefit the club. Members who have misgivings about web sites, or who foresee a downside to the club being 'online' are also welcome to participate. At this early stage (May 7) the following people have volunteered to be on the committee: Ron Hunter, Keith Walker, Linda Eastwood Ga Denman, and m

You can contribute in two ways:

1. By being a member of the committee. There is no limit on how many can participate. I do not envision the committee starting its work until sometime in late June, a week or so after the Packrat is mailed out. Contact me if you are interested. (If you have access to the web you can do some homework by searching for good and bad sites, particularly outdoor club sites, and making notes on why they are good or bad.)
2. By submitting ideas or concerns to the committee. If you cannot make regular meetings you can mail submissions to the club at the address shown on the front of the Packrat, or e-mail me at

6 DAY BACK-PACK "THE ROCKWALL"

SEPT 2-7, 2000

CO-ORDINATOR: KEN PARK



In Kootenay National Park is the famous "Rockwall Trail" system travelling along side some 40 km of the soaring "Rockwall". The trail affords spectacular scenery including lakes, glaciers, and beautiful mountain passes. It's very challenging in that it's very "uppie-downie" due to passes such as Numa Pass, Tumbling Pass and Rockwall Pass. For 2 nights we'll camp in the vicinity of Helmet Falls which plummets 1,200 ft (365m) from the Rockwall and provides the opportunity to explore Goodsir Pass which is often used to access the "Lake O'Hara Region". Total length of the trip is approximately 55 km. Maximum 10 persons.



**These boots are
made for walking**

Costs: - Back-country passes - \$6.00/night (\$30.00)
 - National Parks Pass - \$5.00/day (\$30.00)
 - gas, food, reservation fee
 Deposit: \$30.00 Non-refundable
 (Deposit req'd to reserve your spot)
 To reserve for the trip call Ken @ 244-6809

LIABILITY & INSURANCE COMMITTEE FORUM

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14

The special committee established by a vote of the 1999 annual general meeting has completed its review of liability and insurance issues and will host a forum after the regular June 14 meeting, at which members can ask questions or raise concerns. Our legal advisor, Adrienne Waller, of Beaumont Church law firm, who is a noted litigant of insurance suits and writer of liability waivers for outdoors groups, will be present to answer questions.

Committee: Carl Potter, chairman, Bob St. John, Christine Grotefeld, Alistair Desmoulins, John Schleinich, Garry Denman, president, Ron Hunter, trips director, Danielle Tardif, safety committee chairman.

THE ISSUE

The potential effectiveness of our club's current liability waiver was questioned, and concern was expressed that the executive and co-ordinators of the club were exposed to undue risk to their personal assets in case of a lawsuit over alleged negligence.

THE REVIEW

The committee brainstormed all potential issues, reviewed the literature in this field and consulted our lawyer for advice. As a result, we have produced a draft membership documentation and process which, we are advised, should stand up to legal test if properly followed.

THE RECOMMENDED SOLUTION

In order for a voluntary organization to function, the executive and volunteers must be protected from lawsuit. If this is not done, members cannot reasonably be expected to expose themselves to this possibly remote, but potentially catastrophic risk.

There are two main ways of accomplishing this.

1. Liability Insurance. This may be quite expensive, raising membership costs substantially, and may not be totally effective. There is always concern that the insurance company will expend considerable effort avoiding liability for claims, and may cut off the insured after one serious claim. Another major concern is that the insurance company will not insure some activities seen as overly risky, such as mountaineering or water sports. Finally, the insurance company may demand a waiver for members, defeating the purpose of insurance.
2. Liability waiver. We now employ a waiver for members, and the bulk of our work has been on improving the wording and process for this method.

THE WAIVER

Members of the club sign the waiver to accept the *physical* and the *legal* risks of taking part in our outdoor activities. They are taken on trips as *co-adventurers*, meaning they are responsible for their own safety, and waive their legal rights to sue the club for any reason, including *negligence*. Such waivers are very onerous and one-sided, and the courts will always interpret them against their writers in case of any ambiguity. In order to sue, the victim or their family must prove five things:

1. There was negligence on the part of the club or its volunteer
2. There was serious injury or loss to the victim
3. This was a direct result of the negligence
4. There was a "duty of care" owed the victim
5. The victim did not successfully waive his legal rights.

The courts will rule that the attempt to exclude the member's rights will not stand if it can be shown that the member did not fully understand and comprehend the seriousness of the waiver that was signed.

There are different levels of care expected of a person in different situations. In outdoors activities amateurs do not have the same degree of duty of care as professionals, but even friends on a private trip have some duty of care to each other and to themselves.

In a lawsuit over negligence the court will often apportion the negligence between the victim and the leader, if the victim contributed to the problems leading up to an accident.

In order for the waiver to stand up to legal scrutiny, two things must happen:

1. The *wording* must be clear and unambiguous, spelling out in reasonable detail the physical risks involved in the activity and the legal rights which are being given up in order to join the club.
2. The *process* of accepting memberships and waiving the member's rights must be rigorous and consistently applied. If the club fails to keep up the standard of this process, the waiver, no matter how well-worded, may fail in court.

THE WORDING

The proposed membership documentation is as summarized below. It will require members to sign three or four times.

1. A membership application with personal details
2. A membership agreement. This may incorporate by reference parts of the members' manual. This is a legal agreement by which the member accepts certain conditions in return for being allowed to join.
3. A waiver of liability form
4. For members with minor children, an additional waiver stressing the seriousness of waiving a child's rights

This will require the manual to be numbered and indexed and that the version given to the member be noted.

THE PROCESS

The following changes to our process are required in order to preserve the validity of the waiver. The increased responsibility of the membership position should be recognized by a new position on the executive.

1. Members must be given *adequate time* to properly review the documentation and waiver. At least a full day is recommended, and the member has the right to seek legal advice before signing. Waivers that are signed at the same time as they are presented to the member, or by participants in the dark and cold of a trip meeting place, will likely fail when challenged.
2. The waiver is *non-negotiable*. Either the member is willing to accept the conditions or not. If not, they cannot join.
3. The waiver should be *witnessed* by a club official, who must ask the member, "have you read and do you understand the waiver?" The wording also stresses that the member does understand and is intending to be bound by the agreement.
4. The waiver need only be *signed once a year*.
5. There should be a *carry-over period* after the fiscal year end through which the waiver will remain valid, to allow members time to renew.
6. Taking *guests* or allowing prospective members to take one trip to *try out* the club, should be discontinued, due to the amount of administration and notice required. It should be kept in mind that members receive triple the value of their membership on their first trip (commercial guided day trips are \$60 and up), thus the concept of "trying out" a product with a price tag of only \$20 is no longer justifiable.

We are advised that the waiver should not be so strong as to cover transportation to the trip, as all members are required by law to have proper liability insurance. It is not our intention to prevent a member injured in an auto accident from seeking compensation through the driver's insurance policy.

On a side issue which was one of the initial questions which resulted in the formation of the committee, the waiver is valid on trips outside Canada, as the wording legally binds the member to bring any challenge to the courts of Alberta. Naturally, on any trip outside of Alberta, participants should always be required to carry proper personal health and other insurance, and any trip to a socially or politically unstable region would carry other risks to all participants.

The spring Coordinators Council on April 25 accomplished the following:

- Carolyn Croasdale was approved as a full Coordinator.
- Christine Grotefeld and Keith Walker were approved as Probationary Coordinators.
- The summer recommended car pool donation was approved at five (5) cents per kilometre.
- A motion was approved as follows:
Coordinators shall be required to offer a minimum of three trips per year to maintain their Coordinator status, unless the fall Coordinators Council is presented with extenuating circumstances.

The above motion was passed to encourage Coordinators to maintain their coordinating skills by taking trips, to ensure Coordinator Council decisions represent the views of active coordinators and hopefully provide an incentive to broaden the base of the number of Coordinators taking trips out. So far this year 5 out of 43 Coordinators have taken over half the trips.

- A motion was approved as follows:
Other than seeing dogs for the blind, dogs and/or other pets are only permitted on RMRA trips at the sole discretion of the Coordinator.

In practice, any person wishing to take a pet on a trip should phone the Coordinator in advance to obtain their concurrence. The owner would be expected to comply with the appropriate regulations of the area in which they are hiking. In the discussion of the motion a few issues were raised. It was mentioned that Coordinators may be concerned if more than one pet is on the hike since some dogs have been known to fight. There may also be some objections by other participants who find that some dogs that bark and are constantly running back and forth are a major distraction from the wilderness experience. Similarly, the presence of pets may scare off seeing any wildlife that for some people is part of the reason they go into the outdoors.

Some regulations: Banff Park's web site states "Keep your pets on a leash at all times. They look like prey and can lead predators to you." No dogs are allowed in the National Park backcountry overnight. At the Canmore Nordic Centre and in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, pets are not allowed on the ski trails. All Provincial Parks and Provincial Recreation Areas require pets to be on a leash. Pets are allowed in Kananaskis Country but are recommended to be on a leash at all times because they can antagonize bears.

And with the ski season basically over, through April 18 the snow trips this year totaled:

63 cross-country ski (458 person-days),

7 downhill ski (49 P-D)

1 snowshoe (6 P-D)

Comparison to last year:

54 X-C ski (458 P-D),

4 downhill ski (36 P-D)

3 snowshoe (12 P-D)

IN MEMORY OF LEILA NODWELL

The Rocky Mountain Ramblers have made a contribution of \$100 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for the Horseshoe Canyon preservation project, in memory of Leila Nodwell, who built the Horseshoe Canyon interpretive centre near Drumheller and envisioned protecting this unique Alberta habitat. Leila had been scheduled to speak to us in March, but fell victim to cancer and passed away April 25.

Backpackers Comments...

These are actual comments to the US Forestry Service left by hikers:

"A small deer came into my camp and stole my bag of pickles. Is there away I can get reimbursed?" "Escalators would help on steep uphill sections." "Trails need to be wider so people can walk while holding hands." "Please avoid building trails that go uphill." "Too many bugs and leeches and spiders and spider webs. Please spray the wilderness to rid the area of these pests." "Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike to them." "The coyotes made too much noise last night and kept me awake. Please eradicate these annoying animals." "Reflectors need to be placed on trees every 50 feet so people can hike at night with flashlights." "Need more signs to keep area pristine." "A McDonald's would be nice at the trailhead." "Too many rocks in the mountains."



Carfare Costs

Submitted by John F Schleinich

On April the 25th, at the Coordinator-meeting, it was decided that the car fares for summer remain at 5 Cents per km. The arguments for and against this proposal were lengthy and very "interesting". Car fares were mentioned from as low as 3 cents to a maximum of 51 cents per km. Personally I believe that the 51 cent rate was a joke. The toss-up was between 5 and 4 cents, although some Coordinators were serious about higher rates. Five cents won with a small majority.

The following cost analysis, which I calculated prior to the meeting, shows as to why I was opposed to higher rates. I asked a few of the higher rate advocates to send me their analysis, but only Dave responded, the others will probably respond after reading this publication.

My calculation is for a 1990 Camery per each 100 kms:

*Gasoline: 6.5 litres per 100 kms snow free highway-driving @ 61c/litre	\$ 3.96
*Lubrication: (every 6000 km) @ 30 dollars	\$ 0.50
*Tires: (Toyo guaranteed for 150000 km) @ 500.00 for four	\$ 0.40 (approx.)
*Insurance: not applicable, it is obligatory.	
*Depreciation: Not applied, impossible to come up with an exact figure.	
*Repairs: Varies with the age of the car. Not applied.	

By using only concrete figures the price for 100 km comes to \$4.80. Naturally we have to include the driver in cost sharing expenses. In the case of more than one passenger, the money received above the cost can go toward depreciation and/or insurance if one wishes. Perhaps my car is more economical to drive compared with others, but the cost should not be much higher for regular cars.

Dave gave me an analysis calculated by Bob Scott (an old time Rambler) for the Alpine club, and published in the Chinook newsletter. It was never implemented. He based his calculation on a 1993 Mazda Van, and came up with the following figures:

<u>Operating cost:</u> 9 cents per km	
<u>Insurance:</u> 3.5 c/k	
<u>Depreciation:</u> 10 c/k	<u>This totals 22.5 c/k</u>

He mentioned a reduction to 14 c/k, (to lengthy to write about), and came up with the following:

Burstall return	\$ 38.00	Based on 13 cents per km.
Lake Louise	\$ 50.00	"
Bow Lake	\$ 62.00	"

I am not surprised that his figures were not accepted. With those prices there would be fighting amongst the drivers at the trail-head for the privilege of driving and for passengers. I don't believe it fair to set a specific price and expect everybody to accept it. My suggestion would be a maximum price set, and drivers can charge as they wish. Not all of us are in business of making profits on friends.

The reason given for higher fares is that nobody wants to drive if the price is low. On my trips there were always more drivers available than passengers available. I have heard the same argument from some other coordinators too..

KEN'S QUOTABLE QUOTES

"You can't have everything. Where would you put it?"
comedian STEVEN WRIGHT

"Technology makes it possible for people to gain control over everything, except over technology."
JOHN TUDOR

"It is now proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that smoking is one of the leading causes of statistics."
Author FLETCHER KNEBEL

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."
DOLLY PARTON

"Size isn't everything. The whale is endangered, while the ant continues to do just fine."
BILL VAUGHAN, Journalist

"Jogging is very beneficial. It's good for your legs and your feet. It's also very good for the ground. It makes it feel needed."
Cartoonist CHARLES SCHULZ

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SNOWSHOEING AND SNOWSHOE DESIGNS

Prepared by Tony Moran

The earliest that researchers have been able to date a foot extender, i.e. snowshoe / ski was 4,000 B.C. in Central Asia.

For a while in the Bering Strait area where North America and Asia were joined, both skis and snowshoes were used by the Aboriginal peoples. Then the Asians opted for skis and the N. American Indians and Eskimos retained snowshoes. Eskimos didn't use them as much as Indians because they traveled mostly by sea ice.

The first white people to use them were probably the French who colonized the St. Lawrence River area in the 1600's. In 1758 there was a famous "Battle on Snowshoes" in the Adirondacks. From then on they were made part of the military forces basic equipment. Snowshoeing was dominant in North America until the 1800's when Northern Europeans introduced the ski. Later in the 1930's, skiing became a major recreation with only a few trappers, etc. using snowshoes. Then in the late 1960's they started to gain popularity again and presently there are a number of outdoor recreational shops selling them. There is a man in Edmonton who was successful in having snowshoeing included in a demonstration sport in the 1988 winter Olympics.

Now I will say something about the designs, of which there are several shapes and sizes; mostly developed by the early Indians of North America, mainly the Athapascians of the American and Canadian West and the Algonquins of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence River valleys. Each design has a different name in different places. Around here the more popular ones are Beavertail, Bearpaw, modified Bearpaw and Ojibwa. The frame is usually made from white ash and the webbing from rawhide. All designs have an opening slightly in front of centre; this is for the toe of the boot to swivel into. All but the Bearpaw have a "tail" and all are curved up at the front.

The binding or harness also comes in various forms. Sometimes just a simple leather strap or two is used, either tied or buckled. Or you can have a wide piece of leather wrapped around the toe of the boot, tied with a leather lace. A leather heel piece is also used on some.

The reason for the different designs is for different types of snow; including what you carry on your back. I find the best boots to use with them are snowmobile boots as there is a lip on the back of the heel which prevents the strap slipping off.

If you wish to know more about this activity, there are books and videos in the public library.

Blue Horizon Tours

Carl Potter, Owner & Operator

**Announces Grand Opening specials
for members of the
Rocky Mountain Ramblers Association**

**50% off any hiking holiday or
backpack***

6-day Backpack \$415—all food included

Week-long hiking holidays from \$615

All-inclusive packages

Accommodation at:

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Highwood River Inn

Telephone 281-8040

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www.bluehorizontours.com

***subject to availability**

Tourists To Canada...

Courtesy of RV Lifestyles.

True questions, as heard at the information kiosks manned by Parks Canada staff!
How do the elk know they're supposed to cross at the "Elk Crossing" signs? At what elevation does an elk become a moose? Tourist: "How do you pronounce 'Elk'?" Park Information Staff: "'Elk'" Tourist: "Oh" Are the bears with collars tame? Is there anywhere I can see the bears pose? Is it okay to keep an open bag of bacon on the picnic table, or should I store it in my tent? Where can I find Alpine Flamingos? I saw an animal on the way to Banff today - could you tell me what it was? Are there birds in Canada? Did I miss the turnoff to Canada? Where does Alberta end and Canada begin? Do you have a map of the State of Jasper? Is this the part of Canada that speaks French, or is that Saskatchewan? If I go to B.C., do I have to go through Ontario? Which is the way to the Columbia Ricefields? How far is Banff from Canada? What's the best way to see Canada in a day? Do they search you at the B.C. border? When we enter B.C. do we have to convert our money to British pounds? Where can I buy a raccoon hat? ALL Canadians own one don't they? Are there phones in Banff? So it's eight kilometres away... is that in miles? We're on the decibel system you know. Where can I get my husband really, REALLY, lost?? Is that 2 kilometres by foot or by car? Don't you Canadians know anything? Where do you put the animals at night? Tourist: "How do you get your lakes so blue? Park staff: "We take the water out in the winter and paint the bottom" Tourist: "Oh!"



NOTES ON BHUTAN & ADJACENT INDIA

Submitted by Wally Drew

I visited Bhutan & adjacent parts of N.E. India during the last 3 weeks of March. Although it was often cloudy with a couple of showers and thunder showers it was mainly dry with comfortable temperatures. There was snow on the ground only above 9000' / 2700 m. on the highest passes but the higher Himalayas soaring to the north were glistening white. The rhododendron & magnolia trees were in bloom with red or white blossoms. Some rhododendron trees were covered with red blossoms from top to bottom. There were other tree blossoms as well as many ground flowers with purple primulae being most abundant. Views below 9000' / 2700 m. were often hazy due to smog or smaze rising from the densely populated lowlands. To drive here you need a good horn, good brakes, & good luck. Accidents are rare though, since traffic is usually moving at only 25-40 k/h. It is a mixture of motor vehicles (mostly trucks), man-powered rigs and bikes, as well as animals. Roads though hard surfaced, are steep, twisty, broken & narrow. Sometimes they spiral over themselves to mount a steep slope.

Bhutan is an idyllic Himalayan Kingdom squeezed between India & Tibet, east of Nepal. Unlike Nepal it is not mobbed with tourists. To preserve its Buddhist culture, Bhutan admits a maximum of 6000 tourists a year and that quota isn't filled. It has primarily a subsistence agriculture economy but somehow provides universal free education & health care and has a higher standard of living than India or Nepal though still Third World. Smoking is very rare. It is possible to fly in to Paro in West Bhutan a couple of times per week but more practical to enter by bus from India as we did. We were there for the Paro spring Festival, days of outdoor costume dances, etc. and encountered an unexpected one in a mountain village where we were the only tourists. There are too many temples & dzongs but they are beautifully decorated. Bhutan has only 600,000 people. Thimphu, the capital & largest town, has 30,000 and claims to be the only world capitol without a traffic light. We didn't get enough walking but trekking is available later in the spring and fall. The hotels & cottages we stayed in usually had warm water and almost always electricity.

Sending our baggage ahead in our little bus, we decided to take the "Toy Train" from Siliguri up to Darjeeling. It's really narrow guage. The track is 2' wide. It's very slow too. Some bicycles on the highway beside passed us on the flat W. Bengal Plain before we started the steep climb up to the hill station. There were 6 forward & backward zigzags like buses do going up to Takkakaw Falls. It also spiraled over itself out in the air rather than in a tunnel. It would stop every hour or so to have more coal & water fed into the locomotive. The experience & views were worthwhile even with getting facefulls of cinders. It takes about 7 hrs to make the 88 km trip so we finally abandoned it and crammed into 2 hired jeeps the rest of the way. Darjeeling is built on a ridge above and below 7000' / 2100m giving fine views over foothills below and the high Himalayas above. This view included 28,170' / 8586 m. Katchenjunga, 3rd highest peak in the world. From Tiger Hill at sunrise next morning we could see the Himalayas stretching from E. of Katchenjunga all the way west to Everest.

From our little hotel in Gangtok & other places in Sikkim we got closer views of Katchenjunga towering more than 22,500' / 6850 metres above us. Sikkim is a former kingdom now ruled by India, as Tibet is ruled by China. Again, few tourists. I forgot to mention that among other things in Darjeeling we visited a snow leopard & red panda breeding program, the Himalayan Mountain Institute featuring Everest climbs, and Tenzing Norgay's final resting place. Our last hill station was flower-filled Kalimpong. The road up to it climbed 3000' / 900 m. in 14 km. To see the Himalayas without hordes of tourists I would recommend Bhutan, Sikkim, or Tibet over Nepal.

PHANTOM PARKS (or DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS)

A Book Review by Dorothy-Ann Reimer

'Phantom Parks' is a recently published book by Rick Searle and is a definite 'must read' for those who care about Canada's National parks. Drawing on government documents, studies by interested parties, interviews with parks people from senior to junior staff and former staff, and extensive visits to 21 of the 38 national parks, Searle has written an honest and evocative description of the state of our parks system.

In spite of legislation that appears to support a National Parks system which is ecocentric rather than anthropocentric, Searle's findings indicate that the Parks management is badly fractured between those who favour one side versus the other. Unfortunately, the anthropocentrists hold the power and providing tourist facilities and encouraging commercial aspects of operation still remain the main focus.

If you think that turning over endangered lands to National Parks for protection is the answer, think about what happened to the Greenwich Dunes in P.E.I., managed by that province's Natural Areas Protections Act. Little used (by humans), they were considered a very fragile ecosystem and local environmentalists lobbied successfully to have them included under the National Parks system. However, instead of preserving the Dunes, the government announced that they planned to develop the area in order to be able 'to receive upward of 100,000 visitors annually'. So much for protection of a fragile area.

Searle is not without hope, however. He seeks to raise our knowledge and awareness of the need for protection of our wilderness heritage and the need to continue the struggle to promote ecocentric policies and practices within the National Parks system.

About the Author: Rick Searle began life at the edge of Manitoba's Riding Mountain National Park and worked there for 6 years as a park naturalist. In 1979 he joined the Manitoba Provincial parks branch, leaving in 1983 to complete a master's degree in resource management. He currently teaches at the University of Victoria in the Dept. of Geography.

Phantom Parks, published by Key Porter Books, is available at book stores, listed at \$19.99

Confessions of a Wood Tick

Submitted by Ken Park

I want to set the record straight: I'm not bloodsucking scum! I'm just trying to be a good mother. Sucking blood is what wood ticks do. And thanks to your donation of a drop or two of blood, I'll have enough protein to develop my eggs. Mind you, like male ticks, I also use blood as food, but then, you eat cows, so you're in no position to criticize...

After winter, the warm spring sun means it's time to chow down. I climb a blade of grass and wait for dinner to walk or ride by. Better yet, if you sit down in a grassy area to enjoy the view, you can make my life that much easier. I can tell when you're near - I can smell your breath. And a swig of Scope won't help because it's the carbon dioxide you mammals exhale that I sense.

It doesn't matter if you're a moose or Madonna. Some antiseptic so you can't feel me, some glue to help me hang on, some spit to keep the blood from clotting and it's dinner time. With any luck you won't notice and I'll drop off in a few days.

The problem is when you do notice: The crying, the wailing, the gnashing of teeth! You'd think I was Dracula or the Red Cross. If you weren't inviting me to dinner, why did you leave out the welcome mat? Every tick knows that when pants are tucked into socks, all we can do is crawl on the Levis where we'll be seen and given the brush off; pants not tucked... it's a lazy stroll up the leg-hair to Wood Tick Cafe.

If you do find me, remember, I'm in the no-smoking section. That means no cigarettes, matches or hot pins up the butt. They make me want to crawl in deeper. If you think Vaseline will force me out, don't bother. All that does is give the old shell a nice shine.

If you really want to get rid of me, take a pair of tweezers and pull on me with steady, gentle pressure. I won't want to let go, but keep on pulling and I'll come loose. If you yank on me or try to scrape me off, you'll just leave my head buried in your hide and neither of us will be happy.

Just remember, if you're not open for lunch, tuck your pants into your socks and give yourself periodic tick-checks. After all, a tick's gotta do what a tick's gotta do.

Tick season varies from year to year, but usually finishes by July.

Field Day - Backpacking

18 May 2000

Prepared by Dave Mulligan, RMRA Coordinator

BAD

Heavy Tarp
Air Mattress
Bay Wool blanket
Plastic rigid bucket
Plastic rigid sink
Paper plates
Knife & fork
Fire
Coleman 2 burner stove
Frying Pan
Pot with handle
Spatula
Tinned food
Fresh fruit, chocolate bars
Loaf white bread
Plastic Pop bottle
Yellow cheap cord
Nothing
Bottle of dishwashing soap
Teacloth
Cotton cloth

Old canvas backpack

Cotton sleeping bag liner
Cotton underwear
Cotton clothes
Heavy jacket
Umbrella
Cotton shorts only
Cotton socks
Old runners
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Large cotton towel

Also Bring:

Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing
Tourist sketch map
Nothing
Nothing
Nothing

Nothing
Nothing

GOOD

Tent + Fly
Thermarest
Down mummy sleeping bag
Collapsible bag
nothing
1 litre measuring cup
Spoon
MSR stove
MSR stove
1 Pot with lid
1 Pot with lid
Wooden spoon
Pasta, rice, cheese,
Dried fruit, trail mix
Pita bread, bagels?
Nalogen bottle
20 metres x 2mm static line
Water filter or iodine
Nothing
Nothing (air)
Nylon brush

Modern interior frame pack

Long polypro underwear
nylon underwear
Nylon fleece and/or wool
Multi-layers
Waterproof jacket
Long nylon trousers
Polypro and/or wool socks
Leather boots, vibram soles
Waterproof over-trousers
Toque, fleece or wool
Gloves, fleece or wool
Small super cloth

Hat, sunscreen, sun-glasses
Band-aids, first aid
Duct tape
Swiss army knife
Flashlight
Whistle
1:50,000 topo map
Compass
Paper and pencil
Bright coloured garbage
bags
GPS
Needle & thread

WHY IT'S GOOD?

Wind, rain, warmth
Weight, warmth
Warmth/light to carry
Weight, easy to carry
Weight, use cooking pot
More functional, disposal
More functional
Environment damage, reliability
Weight
Weight, more functional
More functional, easy to carry
More functional
Weight, nutrition
Energy, nutrients/Kg
Nutrition, travels well
Reliability, easy to fill
To hang food properly
Against guardia
Weight, environment damage
Weight
Weight, more functional

Easy to carry, less strain

Double use, polypro Ok when wet
Cotton useless when wet
Cotton useless, other warm, when wet
Better heat control
More functional and warm esp. in wind
Warmth
Cotton useless, other warm when wet
Comfort, stability, warmth
It rains!, and for warmth
Warmth
Warmth
Cotton useless, other easy to dry

Prevents sunburn & cancer
For blisters or accident
Repairs everything
Many functions
For use in dark or emergency
Against bears or emergency
Shows the terrain accurately
To use map esp. if lost
To describe situation in emergency
TO keep stuff dry & in emergency
For use esp. if lost
For necessary repairs

AWARDS DINNER AND DANCE NOMINATION FORM

This form allows you to nominate members of the club in certain categories. Awards will be handed out to the winners of each category at the club's Annual Awards Dinner and Dance on Friday, October 27, 2000. Please be thinking about these categories in the coming months. Nominations are not due until September 27. Call Loris Neff at 283-0887 for questions.

Please complete nomination form and return to Loris Neff by September 27, 2000.

Best or more creative hiking or skiing outfit (whose was it and describe outfit)

Most improved hiker or skier

Most interesting thing someone said on a Ramblers trip (who said it and what they said)

Most interesting item found in a pack (whose was it and what was it)

Best joke told on a Ramblers trip (what was it and who said it)

Best gossip/humor (who said it and what was it)

Congeniality Award:
