

The Glacier Question

Many people continue to express concern about the size of the glaciers at Lake O'Hara, wondering if they are melting at an accelerated rate and how long can we expect them to be around for? Joe Shea who has served many a cup of coffee to area visitors at O'Hara over the years and now studying glaciers for his Masters of Science degree at University of Calgary gives us this reply: The glaciers in the Lake O'Hara region are melting at an accelerated rate, a result of higher summer temperatures and lower winter snowfalls. The exact cause of these changes is still up for debate, but evidence seems to point towards us – fossil fuel burning and carbon dioxide emissions, which change the

atmosphere and result in global climate change. The past century has seen remarkable retreats of glaciers throughout the Rockies and O'Hara is no exception (check out the 360 degree black and white panorama at the top of the stairs at the lodge). Temperatures are predicted to continue to rise, and so the question of how long can the glaciers last becomes very interesting. They will most likely continue to get smaller, but as most of them are already recessed into high, shady places, I don't think they will disappear completely, at least in our lifetimes. However, will our great grandchildren be hiking over Opabin glacier on the way to Moraine Lake? Probably not.

Request for Anecdotes!

We want to hear your Lake O'Hara stories! The Trails Club is requesting anecdotes from its members...tales of Lake O'Hara. You can mail your stories to the

Trails Club at Box 98, Lake Louise, AB T0L 1E0 or email spmunn@telus.net, subject: "Lake O'Hara stories". We look forward to hearing from you!

Order the 2003 Trails Club T-Shirt by Mail!

Last year the response to our t-shirt design by Lucie Bause was overwhelming! In 3 months we sold almost 500 t-shirts, all profits going directly to trail maintenance and education in the Lake O'Hara area. This year we have another great design by Lucie, done exclusively for the Lake O'Hara Trails Club.



You may not be visiting the Lake O'Hara area this summer, but you don't have to miss out on wearing the new design.

To order a t-shirt please forward a cheque or money order for \$25.00 to:

Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box 98, Lake Louise, AB
T0L 1E0

If you want a t-shirt shipped to the U.S.A., please send a cheque/money order (US funds) for \$30.00.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Shuttle Service...continued from front page

and/or service you can either fill out a feedback form at Le Relais or mail your letter to the following Parks Canada personnel:

Ed Abbott
Chief Park Warden
P.O. Box 99
Field, BC V0A 1G0

Gerry Israelson
Backcountry
Supervisor
P.O. Box 99
Field, BC V0A 1G0

We Need Your Help!

Your donation to the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will help further the preservation of Lake O'Hara and its trail system.

The Trails Club is a registered non-profit organization and will issue a receipt for income tax purposes. You may donate directly at Le Relais, or mail your donation to:

The Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box 98
Lake Louise AB
T0L 1E0

Would You Like to Join Us?

Life membership in the Lake O'Hara Trails Club is available at Le Relais for a mere \$25. For this you will receive this newsletter annually and help support club activities in the Lake O'Hara area.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 2003 Annual Meeting of the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will be held at Le Relais at 8:30 p.m. on Monday, July 21.

All Members Welcome!

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O'Hara 2003

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New Shuttle Service at O'Hara this Summer

This summer, a new contractor out of Calgary will be operating the Lake O'Hara Bus Service. With this change comes a change in the bus schedule and a very significant shift with regards to Trails Club donations. In the past, a portion of every adult bus fare was donated to the Trails Club to aid in trail work and educational initiatives in the O'Hara area. In 2002 that donation amounted to \$7000.00. At the time of printing this newsletter there has been no indication from Parks Canada or the operator that either wishes to continue with some form of donation to the Trails Club to ensure that money collected from area users will go

directly back into the area through trail maintenance and educational initiatives.

In order for the new bus schedule to work, Parks Canada has placed some restrictions on outgoing bus runs. Day visitors will now be restricted to departures on the 6:30 and 7:30 p.m. buses. Overnight visitors will be asked to depart on the 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. buses. Day visitors wishing to depart on one of the earlier afternoon buses must do so on a stand by basis. Parks Canada is requesting that any day users wishing to attempt to travel stand by are to hike down to the campground and wait to see if there is any room on that particular bus (there will only be 1 bus running for

outbound afternoon buses). There are no restrictions on buses departing in the morning. The schedule is as follows:

INBOUND	OUTBOUND
8:30 AM	9:30 AM
10:30 AM	11:30 AM
3:30 PM	4:30 PM
4:30 PM	5:30 PM
5:30 PM	6:30 PM
6:30 PM	7:30 PM

Exploring Canada Tours Inc. is the new operator of shuttle buses to Lake O'Hara this summer. The company won a 3 year contract for provision of the service through a tendering process held earlier this year by Parks Canada. Based in Calgary, Exploring Canada Tours was formed to provide contract transportation services as well as authentic soft adventure tours. In the summer of 2003, its central focus will be the safe, courteous, on-time transportation of park visitors to and from the O'Hara area. Behind the scenes, the company will be pursuing plans for all-inclusive tour products, to be offered beginning summer 2004.

"Lake O'Hara is a very special place in the Rockies...it's a great jumping-off point for us," said Bill Overend, company director. "It's an honour to be contributing to the overall experience of visitors to the area." Overend, who has worked with Parks Canada in Calgary, Jasper and Whitehorse and now resides in Calgary, said his drivers will work closely with the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, Lake O'Hara Lodge, the Alpine Club of Canada and Parks Canada to ensure that needs are being met.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding the bus schedule

You Have the Power

The McArthur and Cataract Valleys are recognized as an important wildlife movement corridor. Mid-way through this corridor, McArthur Pass links the two valleys. Here wildlife have no choice but to move through a narrow area that is crossed by the Odaray-Highline trail. Compounding the effect of the terrain, the presence of people in this narrow point has the potential to deter wary animals trying to move through.

In 2000, a voluntary use program was initiated to reduce the level of human activity on the trail. This approach gives visitors the power to make informed choices about how they share the land with other species. Visitor surveys and trail counters found this educational, non-regulatory approach was successful. However, a wildlife movement corridor must be secure for generations of individual animals to sustain healthy wildlife populations. We need to continue to maintain low levels of human use within McArthur Pass.

In late summer, grizzly bears begin to

move more widely across the landscape to search out scattered food sources. Consequently, from August 15 – September 15 it's important that no more than two groups per day use the trail. This will keep disturbances in the corridor below 120 per month. This threshold is expected to ensure that grizzly bears can freely use the corridor. Outside this late summer period, four groups per day can use the trail and still maintain a low disturbance level for grizzly bears, wolverines, cougars and ungulates.

Please continue to check the sign-in book at the trailhead. If you choose to hike the trail, it's important that your group sign the book. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the voluntary use approach. If management goals cannot be met, other approaches may be required.

For further details: www.parksCanada.gc.ca/yoho

Jenny Klafki
Warden Service Communications Specialist
Lake Louise, Yoho and Kootenay

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SYNOPSIS OF YOHO NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

In this newsletter, the Trails Club is publishing summary information from Parks Canada's Yoho National Park Management Plan for the benefit of members and guests in the Lake O'Hara area. The space limitations of this newsletter means that we can only publish a partial summary and members seeking more complete and definitive information should refer to the plan in its entirety. The complete "Yoho National Park of Canada Management Plan" is available on Parks Canada's website, at: www.worldweb.com/ParksCanada-Yoho/management_plan_e.html.

The plan may also be obtained in hard

copy by writing Parks Canada, Western Canada Service Centre at a cost of \$20.00/hard copy or \$5.00/CD. Paper copies are available for viewing at the Lake Louise Visitor Reception Centre; Field Information Centre; Banff Administration Building; Calgary Office Reception Desk and Parks Canada Libraries in Calgary and Ottawa.

The planning process in Canada's national parks is driven by the National Parks Act of 1988. In that year, as part of a comprehensive vision for National Parks management, Parks Canada tabled the first management plans for Yoho, Banff, Kootenay and Jasper National Parks. The

implementation of these plans has resulted in many changes in the parks since 1988. Other changes have taken place outside the parks and new issues have emerged. Population growth and increased user demands on the parks have become obvious to us all, in both "front country" and "back country". Not just the parks are affected by these changes. In 1996 the Banff-Bow Valley Task Force submitted more than 400 recommendations concerning protection of the Bow Valley corridor in Banff. While these matters are too complex to be reviewed here, the changes necessitated review of the park management plans. In 1997 Parks Canada released a new management plan for Banff National Park. Later, revised management plans for Yoho, Kootenay, Jasper and Waterton Lakes incorporated key principles and policy direction from the Banff plan.

Parks Canada published a revised management plan for Yoho National Park in May 2000. The revised plan is intended to guide the overall direction of the park for the next 10 to 15 years. The plan is a response to the challenges of maintaining a healthy environment, protecting cultural resources, supporting quality visitor experiences and contributing to social and economic needs. These are reflected in the objectives of the new plan:

- set out a vision for the future;
- preserve and strengthen the ecological integrity of the park in a way that integrates ecological, social and economic values;
- promote high quality visitor experiences based on the parks ecological and cultural heritage;
- establish clear limits to development associated with appropriate activities;
- support Parks Canada's initiative to renew heritage presentation; and
- involve others in protecting the shared ecosystem.

The 1988 Yoho management plan espoused the concept of ecosystem management, a holistic approach that involves working with others to achieve common goals. Ecosystem-based management has received further emphasis in the 2000 plan. It incorporates these key themes, summarized from the plan:

- Ecosystems extend beyond park boundaries. Activities on neighboring lands affect the park's wildlife, air, water and vegetation, and activities in the park may affect neighboring lands in the same way. Integrated management is essential.
- People are a fundamental part of the ecosystem. People's social and economic needs must be considered in the context of protecting environmental and cultural heritage. Consulting with visitors, residents and businesses, and other government agencies is a key component in understanding the relationship of people and the environment.
- Educational programs for visitors,

residents and businesses, inside and outside the park, create awareness of how people can support protection of ecosystems.

- Decisions concerning the park are based on sound ecological, cultural and social information, and supported by benchmarks and index parameters that help people understand the park's health.
- Development and visitor use within the park will be managed; and limits will be set where necessary to ensure respect for protection of ecological and cultural resources.
- Natural processes and, where appropriate, technology, are important in maintaining and restoring ecosystems.

The gist of the Yoho National Park management plan is summarized on the map, reproduced from the plan here.

Because the Trails Club's objectives are closely aligned with Parks Canada's overall objectives, the Trails Club executive seeks closer cooperation with Parks Canada in order to reach its goals.

Parks Canada has plans to review the Yoho National Park Management Plan in 2003, and is seeking comments from park users and area stakeholders. It is intended that there be no directional changes in the plan and this review is the first of several assessments regarding the effectiveness of the existing plan that Parks Canada expects to undertake. Your feedback is welcome.

2003 Trail Work and Education, Update

Despite the loss of bus fare donations which has funded the Speaker Series in the past, the Trails Club executive has decided to continue with the series in 2003 as sole financial sponsor. The programs are very well attended and based on written and verbal feedback (from those who were lucky enough to catch a program last summer), the entire series continues to be ranked as outstanding. Definitely something we feel is worth continuing. We thank Parks Canada who has once again generously offered a campsite to all speakers for the night of their program as well as aiding us in promoting the programs.

On the trail work scene, it appears that 2003 should see some work done on the east Opabin suspension bridge. This should come as welcome news to many members who have expressed concern over the past few years questioning its need for repair. Kim Baines is the Parks Canada employee responsible for the overseeing of Trail Work in the KYL (Kootenay, Yoho, Lake Louise area) district. He has been an excellent person to work with over the years and a true supporter of the Lake O'Hara Trails Club. Kim was keen to give our members some understanding of how trail maintenance is organized within our district as Lake O'Hara falls under his jurisdiction.

For the past few years, Kim has had 4 crews working trail maintenance. Each crew consists of a lead hand and 3

labourers. His crews are responsible for all of Yoho, all of Kootenay National Park and the west half of Banff National Park (everything west of Baker Creek on the south side and north to the Jasper National Park border). To prioritize what work needs to get done each season, Kim starts early in the season to draw up a work plan. The plan would be based on several factors including budget, management plan objectives, staffing levels, seasonal conditions, health and safety issues and environmental issues to name a few. He assures us that Lake O'Hara is a very important part of our district and is given full consideration when work plans are drawn up. He continues to use the report on trail conditions in the O'Hara area completed by Don Gardner in 2001 (funded by the Trails Club) as a reference for prioritizing trail work in the area.

Like many areas of the Parks system, Kim has found that every year he is faced with more cutbacks of one kind or another, whether it is financial or staffing levels. Quite a few years ago there used to be 3 trail crews in Yoho Park with one crew devoted primarily to the Lake O'Hara area alone. Now he has one, four person crew for all of Yoho Park.

There is no question that the Lake O'Hara Trails Club continues to play an important role in helping to enhance the visitor experience to the O'Hara area through trail maintenance and education.

Map 1 Management Plan Summary

KEY INITIATIVES

- Maintain & secure habitat and corridors for wildlife
- Restore natural processes such as fire
- Protect and present cultural heritage
- Reduce impacts on aquatic ecosystems
- Strengthen heritage presentation and outreach programs
- Offer high quality visitor experiences
- Reduce wildlife mortality along transportation corridors
- Work with others to sustain the regional ecosystem

