



BOX 1677, BANFF,
ALBERTA, CANADA,
TOL OCO

NEWSLETTER - APRIL 1981

Dear Member:

Environmental Impact at O'Hara

The summer of 1980 brought increased concern over trail use in the Lake O'Hara Region. Warden, Allan Knowles received comments from a number of visitors to the area and expressed his own concerns regarding the deterioration of some fragile "off-trail" areas, especially at Oesa, Opabin and McArthur Pass. Allan recommended better monitoring of trail conditions, continued trail maintenance, more restrictions on trail use, including trail closure as required, and a better program of education for area users.

At the same time, Al Fisk, the Superintendent of Yoho National Park has indicated that three programs have been initiated to provide improved management and planning for areas like O'Hara. The largest of these is the development of an overall management plan for the four mountain parks - Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, and Yoho. While much of the information for this has already been gathered, it is expected that it will be at least two years before a management plan for Yoho is available. A second program will consider specifically backcountry use and will be carried out by people from the University of Calgary along with staff from Calgary Regional Office and Yoho Park. A third study will be undertaken by the Yoho Park Warden Service to initiate management planning specific to Yoho.

These programs should provide a sound foundation for decision making regarding the use of the Lake O'Hara Region and may result in further restrictions. Such management is essential if we are to continue to enjoy the use of this area while ensuring that it is preserved for future generations.

The Lake O'Hara Trails Club can, and hopefully will, take an active part in educating visitors to O'Hara so that the rationale behind restrictions on use is understood and so that continued use will have a minimal impact.

It appears that many visitors do not appreciate the fragility of the O'Hara Area. Much of ground cover is soft and very susceptible to damage from hiking boots coupled with this susceptibility is the

extremely short growing season. Sensitive areas may take years to recover from damage caused by a few minutes of careless walking on the part of a hiker.

Any "off-trail" walking should be carried out with extreme caution and a concern for the natural ground cover. Sensitive areas should not be walked upon at all. If we can keep hikers on the trails at O'Hara and cultivate an awareness for the fragility of the area, we should be able to continue to enjoy the area without having it deteriorate. Your suggestions on how we might enlighten the general public (and specifically visitors to O'Hara) on this subject are most welcome. This will be a topic of discussion at the Annual Meeting.

Signs at O'Hara

In August of 1980, the trails club formally approached Parks Canada with an offer to supply wooden signs for the O'Hara area instead of the planned metal or fibreglass ones. Morris Shumiatcher, who came up with the idea, offered to donate \$500. to the cause and the club planned to raise a further \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 as required. This offer was turned down in a letter from then Park Superintendent, Frank Stephens, who had been advised by the regional sign co-ordinator that "we will have to use the standard signs as designed by the sign committee for use in all National Parks".

This topic was raised again with the new Superintendent, Al Fisk, in September, but to date we have heard nothing further.

Registration as Non-Profit Organization.

Our application for registration as a non-profit organization is currently under review by the Department of National Revenue and we hope to be registered before the summer season. This will mean that all dues and donations will be tax deductible.

Link/Grassi Book

Jon Whyte is currently working on this project which we hope to have completed this summer. We would like to thank all those who sent information and photographs.

Guide to Geology & Ecology

Tim Babey, a club member from Calgary and a former staff member at Lake O'Hara Lodge is currently gathering material for a walker's guide to geological and ecological points of interest around O'Hara to be used in conjunction with the trail map. This idea was brought forward at our last annual meeting and Tim should have a progress report, including some cost estimates, ready for the upcoming annual meeting.

Membership Sales

47 new Life Memberships were issued in 1980 - an increase of 17% making our Life Memberships a total of 319. Total memberships including annual memberships are now 332.

The Trail Ended for Some

Three of our members have passed away since our last report, John Alsberg - Alan Montgomery and Rev. John Tobin - they will be missed.

Next Annual Meeting

The 1981 Annual Meeting of the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will be held at Lake O'Hara Lodge at 9:00 P.M. on Friday, July 24th.

If you have any comments or suggestions and are unable to attend the meeting, please write to us at Box 1677, Banff, Alberta TOL OCO.

We welcome your ideas.

Happy Hiking!

Tim Wake,
President.

LAKE O'HARA TRAILS CLUB
HI-LITES ANNUAL MEETING
JULY 24, 1980

PRESIDENT, TIM WAKE REPORTS

Club President, Tim Wake called the meeting to order and welcomed the excellent turn out of Trails Club members - extended a special welcome to Superintendent, Frank Stephens, and Warden, Alan Knowles, of Yoho National Park.

Reported a record year in 1979 for new Club Memberships - 71 Life and 27 Annual Memberships were issued.

Sales of maps, books and crests had been excellent and all projects were on target.

59% of membership is Canadian from six provinces - 38% is American from twenty-two states and 3% from five countries - Australia, Jamaica, England, Scotland and Switzerland.

Over 500 slides were received in response to requests for slide show presentations - there is a need for more slides of animal shots, historical or older pictures.

We are awaiting further reports from the lawyer and verification that incorporation papers are complete.

Lake O'Hara Lodge will be purchasing a bookcase to accommodate books and other reading material being supplied by the Trails Club. \$300.00 is to be expended for this purpose.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President Tim Wake - Banff
Vice President Austin Ford - Calgary
Secretary Beverley Brodie - Calgary
Treasurer Bob Taylorson - Calgary

PROJECT REPORTS

The notes of Dr. Link have been reviewed. Jon Whyte, a professional writer suggests writing a history of trail building at Lake O'Hara contrasting the thoughts and ideas of Dr. Link and Lawrence Grassi. The book would be about the same size and format as the Lillian Gest Book. Any help in supplying information, stories, and pictures would be appreciated.

PROPOSED SUGGESTIONS

A pocket-sized, geological guidebook of the area.

That Parks Canada be asked to maintain all existing hand carved wooden signs and new additional signs would be appreciated.

As it was agreed that the red and orange paint squares were the most effective back trail markers we would like to see these maintained in the interest of safety and guidance.

An expression of appreciation was made to the Parks Department for the new bridge crossing the creek above Vera Lake.

SPECIAL COMMENTS BY SUPERINTENDENT FRANK STEPHENS

Paid tribute to the work of Alan Knowles - Resident Warden.

Thanked Tim Wake and the Group for assistance.

Recognized the close association with the Alpine Club.

200 miles of trails in Yoho Park with 25% in this area.

Continual maintenance - 6-10 seasonal crew employees working under the warden's guidance.

They will be replacing the wooden bridge near the warden's cabin.

Will be refurbishing the old engraved signs and adding new type ones.

New signs with yellow lettering on brown fiberglass should be ready in about a month's time.

Improvements that have been made:

1976 - Completed lower trunk trail from the parking lot.

1977 - 3/4 mile portion of New Oesa Trail.

1979 - 1/2 mile new Odaray Trail 1/2 mile new Linda Lake - Morning Glory Trail.

Campground facilities and improvements.

APPRECIATION

To Frank Stephens for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

To Frank Stephens, Alan Knowles and Yoho Park Administration for a job well done.