



O'Hara 2016

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Family Ties: Generations at O'Hara

When Lester Aaron first visited Lake O'Hara in 1916, he travelled by car, train, and horseback through rain, hail, and snow. Nevertheless, accompanied by his father and a local guide, the 15-year-old arrived at the lake nattily attired in a tweed jacket, white shirt, and necktie. It was the beginning of a love affair with Lake O'Hara that has spanned five generations of the Aaron family, and that continues to this day – and it is emblematic of the multigenerational ties that bind many O'Hara visitors to this landscape.

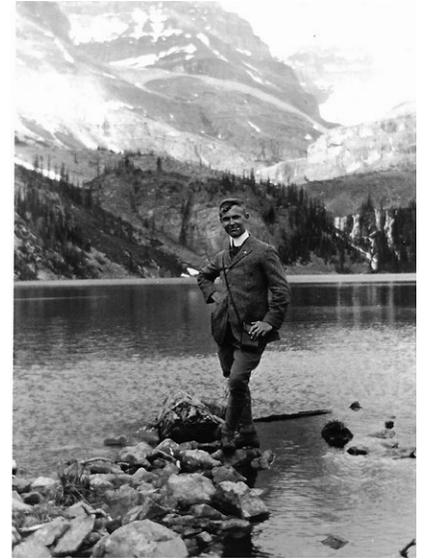
By phone from her home in California, Lester's daughter, Elly Langer, tells me

her father came back to Lake O'Hara with his family in 1951. "We rode in on horseback, and we stayed at the Lodge. It was my first trip to the Canadian Rockies and I remember it very well."

In turn, Elly, and her sisters Fran Hess and Maxine Rosston, introduced their families to O'Hara. "My son Steve's children – they would be the fifth generation – have visited every year of their lives," Elly says. "They grew up on these trails."

Fran Hess so loved the area that she served on the Lake O'Hara Trails Club Board (as did her mother before her) for many years until her death in 2015.

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Lester Aaron dressed for a day's hiking on his first visit to O'Hara in 1916. Photo: Aaron family

Of Waterbars and Lookouts: 2015 Trails Report

Last season (2015) was the third of a five-year trail work partnership agreement between the Lake O'Hara Trails Club and Parks Canada. For the first time in many years, a dedicated trail foreman and labourer were assigned to O'Hara – an arrangement that is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. This means there is someone on the ground with a solid overview and understanding of trail work priorities and how to achieve them, as well as the ability to prepare for future years. The foreman also plays an important role in communicating with visitors about trail projects and other O'Hara information.

In all, about 88.5 person-days were spent on O'Hara trails in 2015. Additional Yoho National Park trail crew staff continue to be brought in as needed to help complete larger projects. Almost all of this season's trail work priorities were addressed, and we are well-positioned for an active 2016 season.

Waterbar Replacement

Replacement of deteriorating wood waterbars ended up consuming a good portion of the trail crew's time in 2015. Functioning waterbars keep water from flowing directly down trails or pooling in low-lying sections. All 57 waterbars were replaced on the East Opabin trail, and 32 of 63

waterbars were replaced between the Elizabeth Parker Hut and Schaffer Lake. More waterbar replacement is scheduled for 2016 on the lower Schaffer Lake trail.

Opabin Plateau

Another major initiative took place on the Opabin Plateau. Early in the season, a working group made up of representatives from Parks Canada, Lake O'Hara Trails Club and Lake O'Hara Lodge conducted an on-site assessment of expanding informal trails and other trail issues on the Plateau. A strategy was developed and mapped for addressing these issues while retaining access to the most popular scenic highlights.

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Family Ties: Generations at O'Hara (continued)

"Fran cared deeply about Lake O'Hara," Elly recalls, "and she wanted to give back."

"It remains a very special place for everyone in my family," she adds, "the extraordinary beauty, the wonderful trails, the chance to relax and meet interesting people."

Jeannette Fish's ties to O'Hara don't stretch as far back as the Aaron family, but they do run deep. "I still vividly recall my first visit," she tells me. "It was the early 1960s. I was living in Vancouver and I accepted a job, sight unseen, working at the Lodge."

"It was magical. I arrived and fell in love. I still remember one day – Hans Gmoser was playing his zither and the snow was falling outside the windows, and I kept pinching myself. I couldn't believe I was there."

Jeannette moved to Banff in 1985, and before long she was bringing her own family to Lake O'Hara. "When my mom was in her late 60s, I took her and my son Alaric to stay at the campground. It was Mom's first experience camping and she had a wonderful time." Today, Jeannette skis up the road for visits to the Elizabeth Parker Hut with Alaric and his two children. "It still seems as magical as that first visit – beautiful no matter what the season!"



Becky, Abe, and Abbie Swanson at Elizabeth Parker Hut in August 1988. (Note crosscut saw over door.) Photo: Jim Swanson

Abbie Swanson's first trip to Lake O'Hara was inspired by the '88 Olympics. "My husband, Jim, and I came to Canmore for the Games," she remembers. "We stayed at the Canmore ACC Clubhouse, and someone mentioned that you could volunteer as a custodian, so I signed up for a week at Elizabeth Parker Hut." She liked it so much; she served as a custodian every summer for the next six years.

"We hiked up to Oesa, the Yukness Ledges, and the Opabin Plateau every year. Our kids, Becky and Abe, loved it. They really enjoyed doing hut chores – fetching water and chopping wood. There used to be a big crosscut saw hanging over the cabin door, and they loved to get that down and saw logs."

Family Camping Adventures

Calgary's Dani Flowerday first visited O'Hara with her parents when she was 11 years old. "It's my favourite place in the world," she tells me. Dani and her husband Bob spent their 1982 honeymoon at the Lodge, and today they make annual pilgrimages with family and friends to stay at the O'Hara campground.

"We started taking our kids, Max and Sydney, camping there from an early age. We first took Sydney when she was just three months. It's not always easy camping with young children, but it's a little easier at Lake O'Hara." Those trips sparked a lifelong love of the outdoors. Today in their twenties, Max and Sydney are now introducing their friends to the O'Hara trails.

I ask Dani why she thinks O'Hara continues to draw families like hers, and so many others, back generation after generation. She says Lake O'Hara casts a special spell.

"It's a little lost world that you can go back to time and time again, and it always stays the same. You can trust it will always be there for you, because everyone takes such good care of it."

Debra Hornsby

Do you have a family story to share about Lake O'Hara? Connect with us on Facebook www.facebook.com/lakeoharatrailsclub

Call for Trail Volunteers

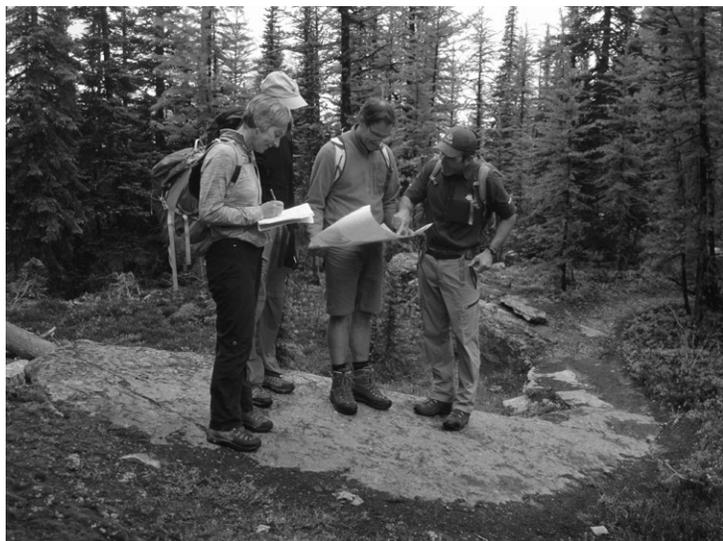
Interested in becoming more directly involved with trail construction at Lake O'Hara? The Trails Club and Parks Canada are contemplating putting together an annual end-of-season volunteer trail work bee, to assist the regular trail crew with a different trail project each season. We are currently gauging interest and assembling a list of potential volunteers.

Volunteers should be:

- in reasonable physical condition
- able to perform moderate physical labour (digging, lifting, pushing wheelbarrows and raking) in potentially inclement outdoor conditions for 2-3 days
- available on weekdays in late September (exact dates TBA)

If you would like to be on the list of potential volunteers for trail work at O'Hara, please send an email to message@lotc.ca with the following information: name and contact information (phone and email address), any relevant trail or other construction experience (not a prerequisite!)

2015 Trails Report (continued)



(l to r) Judy Otton and Tim Wake (LOTC Board), Bruce Millar (Lake O'Hara Lodge), and Glenn Kubian (Parks Canada) discuss options during a trail planning day on the Opabin Plateau.

The trail crew implemented the majority of the group's recommendations, closing some informal trails and formalizing others, as well as making drainage and trail tread improvements. Further refinement and completion of the improvements will continue in 2016. Your cooperation in respecting trail closures (brush piled at trail junctions indicates a closed trail) and staying on designated trails will be critical to the success of this rehabilitation program.

Seven Veils Falls Trail

The Lake O'Hara Trails Club has had a longstanding interest in re-opening the former Lake Oesa access trail beside the Seven Veils Falls. Following a site visit with Parks Canada representatives in 2015, we are pleased to announce that permission has been granted to improve and re-open the lower section of the trail, to a scenic viewpoint beside the falls. Landscape architect Pat Glover was hired by the Trails Club to design a viewpoint/trail terminus, with trail and viewpoint improvements to be completed in 2016. Watch for the lower trail to re-open to O'Hara visitors in late summer or early fall!

Wiwaxy Alpine Route

Proposals for major improvements to the Wiwaxy alpine route were re-visited, and it was determined that erosion

issues could be addressed with added rock steps and other minor improvements rather than the major re-routes we originally envisioned. These improvements are scheduled for 2016.

Trail Maintenance

Despite their commitments to enhanced trail work planning duties and the scope of the waterbar replacement project, the trail crew was still able to spend time carrying out necessary routine maintenance such as brushing, clearing fallen trees, making the lakeshore circuit passable in early season, and clearing drainage features. Paint markers on alpine routes were inspected and repaired as necessary. The crews also spent a couple of days on other O'Hara projects such as campground and cabin clean-up, and stocking firewood. Finally, all trail signs in the area were photographed and recorded with GPS coordinates, to be added to Parks Canada's database for eventual replacement as part of a national initiative. Regular trail maintenance will continue to be a priority in 2016.

As always, the Trails Club welcomes your comments and suggestions. Follow the links on the Lake O'Hara Trails Club website (lotc.ca) to the Trails section to post comments. Happy hiking!

Judy Otton



View of the Seven Veils Falls from the site of the new scenic overlook to be completed in 2016.

Return of the Sandbags

Look for the return of the popular volunteer sandbag initiative this summer! Sandbags filled with gravel trail mix will be available at a staging area close to the Le Relais day use shelter. Anyone interested (and able) can pick up a bag to carry and then empty at defined locations

along the O'Hara Lakeshore trail. The accumulated gravel mix will be used to address drainage issues and tripping hazards. Make this a small part of your day and you will be helping to make the Lakeshore trail experience even more enjoyable!

The Social Lives of Goats

One of the highlights of any trip to Lake O'Hara is a sighting of mountain goats – perched precariously on the Yukness Ledges or scampering across the meadows near Lake McArthur. But the social lives of *Oreamnos americanus* remain a mystery to most visitors. In his *Handbook to the Canadian Rockies*, Ben Gadd provides a glimpse into the robust romantic life of the mountain goat:

“Mating among mountain goats takes place in November. One looks for bizarre behavior among ungulates during the rut, and mountain goats don't disappoint. The billies coat themselves well in urine-soaked dust. They thrash vegetation with their horns, which have scent glands at the bases, and they strike heroic poses before the nannies. Competing billies circle each other, hunching their backs and throwing their heads up and down. They lie next to each other in dust wallows, pawing the ground with a foreleg. In fights, the billies spar with their horns, sometimes inflicting serious injuries or even killing each other.

Harem-building can occur if the snow is deep, but usually the billies and nannies pair off as couples and scatter among the cliffs for the actual mating. A billy approaches his mate-to-be from behind, actually or ritually sneaking up until he can kick her sharply in the side in what must be construed as a sign of affection. Billies rub the sides of their heads on their mates to mark them with scent.

There is usually one kid, sometimes twins, born in late May or mid-June after gestation of 178 days. The little mountain goats are endearing: lively and playful, nursing on bended front knees with tiny wriggling tails, tripping after the nannies wherever they go, up and down the cliffs. They are weaned at six weeks and on their own by the following spring, although they stay in the parents' neighborhood until sexual maturity.”

Excerpted with permission from Handbook of the Canadian Rockies by Ben Gadd, published by Corax Press.

Make a Difference. Leave a Legacy

Be part of O'Hara by becoming a member of the Lake O'Hara Trails Club and/or making a donation. Your support will help us to preserve and enhance the Lake O'Hara area by supporting trail maintenance and interpretative outreach.

A lifetime membership is \$25. Membership fees and donations are fully tax-deductible.

For more information, or to donate, go to www.lotc.ca. Click on the Donate Now button, or go to the Donations and Membership page to download the membership form. You can also forward your name, address, phone number, and membership fee and/or donation to

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

Update of LOTC Bylaws

At this summer's Annual General Meeting, members will be asked to approve an updated version of the Club's bylaws, the first update since 1980. The Board of Directors has prepared this update and recommends it to LOTC members.

Most of the meaning of the bylaws remains the same, but you'll see some changes, including the following:

- We've reorganized the bylaws to make for easier reading.
- We've re-written the preamble to summarize the history of the Club and reflect our work today.
- The updated bylaws would allow members to vote by proxy at general meetings. Because our membership is so spread out geographically, we wanted to find a way for distant members to have a say. In order to exercise your proxy, you would fill out

and sign a form before the meeting, giving your vote to someone you know who will be attending.

- The updated bylaws indicate that the executive officers are elected by the Directors from among themselves. This has always been the practice, but was not clearly laid out in the existing bylaws.
- We've clarified the wording on amendment of bylaws, to show that these changes would require the vote of three-quarters of the members present at a meeting, either in person or by proxy.
- We've included information on how to access the books and records of the Club.

You can view the proposed draft bylaws at www.lotc.ca by following the links under the About tab. If you have any

questions about what you see, please contact Club President Leslie Taylor at lataylor@telusplanet.net.

If the update passes at the AGM, the new bylaws must then be registered with Alberta Corporate Registry, coming into effect around the end of 2016.

2016 Annual General Meeting

4:30 p.m., Monday, August 8, 2016
Warden Cabin at Lake O'Hara
All Members Welcome!



Preservation Through Appreciation