

## BMN HIKE REPORT

### Rainbow Mountain Trails (September 23, 2017)

by Chris Wright



Above Long Lake, looking across the Green River valley (hidden) toward the mountains of Garibaldi Park. The highest peak, in the centre background, is Wedge Mountain. To the left of Wedge, partially obscured by cloud, is Mount Weart. The west end of the Spearhead Range, including Blackcomb Mountain, is on the right. *Chris Wright photo.*

On Saturday, September 23, five BMN members hiked a subalpine and alpine loop located to the east of Rainbow Mountain in Whistler. We assembled at Roy's Whistler house in the early morning before piling into his four-wheel drive truck for the short trip to the trailhead. At the end of Alpine Way is a gated road that we were able to access given Roy's trail maintenance status. The narrow and heavily water-barred gravel road climbs steeply northward above Nineteen Mile Creek. Nearly 3 km from the gate, the road ends at Nineteen Mile Creek and here was the starting point of our hike along the aptly named 19 Mile Creek Trail.

The conditions were cool with high cloud as we headed across the creek and into the forest. Soon after starting, we encountered a way station with volunteers, food and water supporting the Whistler Alpine Meadows race. As we hiked through the beautiful rainforest following 19 Mile Creek Trail, numerous waterfall and cascade sections were visible and accessible. As we crossed one section of



the creek on a bridge, there was a great shout from the last hiker, and as we looked back we realised he had been stung by some wasps.

**Along 19 Mile Creek Trail: one of numerous waterfalls and cascades.**

*Chris Wright photo.*

Thankful that the person was not allergic to wasps, and thankful it wasn't our turn to "take one for the team," we continued through the rainforest, still ascending. Just below Iceberg Lake, we emerged from the dense forest into the subalpine and had our first views of the northern mountains, albeit with overcast conditions. We had a short break here to eat some food, take in the mountain views, and spot the racers heading back down the trail.

After enjoying the break, we headed off westward on the Skywalk North trail. We ascended steeply on exposed rock with a scattering of subalpine fir trees to Iceberg Lake.



**Iceberg Lake, nestled below a scree slope and craggy rock walls.**

*Chris Wright photo.*

Nestled below a scree slope and craggy rock walls is the beautiful Iceberg Lake with still, green water and a wedge of ice and snow on the upslope side. The towering mountain and rock wall was certainly a sight to see and we took the opportunity to take some photos and enjoy a quick snack.

We departed Iceberg Lake just before lunch and ascended a steep trail northward through subalpine fir trees to the saddle east of Rainbow Mountain. Along the way, we passed another way station for the racers and passed racers heading down the trail. As we ascended to the saddle, thankful the climb

was done, with almost perfect timing the clouds began lifting. As we headed eastward to the nearby lunch spot, the clouds continued lifting and moving off, providing us with the beautiful weather we had all hoped for. Our lunch spot overlooked Iceberg Lake to the south and provided a nearly 180-



degree view of Rainbow Mountain, Iceberg Lake, and the southeast mountains. We all took full advantage of the spectacular views and improved weather to eat our lunch and snap some photos.

**From the lunch spot, overlooking Iceberg Lake and the surrounding scree slopes and exposed rock walls.**

*Chris Wright photo.*

After a restful and lengthy break, we continued east along Skywalk North before descending to Long Lake, which offered more spectacular mountain views. Here we took another short break and enjoyed the view across the lake toward the rock pillars and the distant mountains.

Continuing eastward on past Long Lake, we re-entered patches of subalpine forest with small tarns. We then used a newer trail, Kevin's Home Run, to return southward to 19 Mile Creek Trail. Roy explained that the trail was a year old and had required extensive work to create it.

The trail descends through lovely

rainforest, and as we hiked along, the trail building effort was certainly appreciated as it offered a good trail with a shorter return to 19 Mile Creek Trail. From the junction we retraced our steps along Nineteen Mile Creek and arrived at the truck in the late afternoon. It was a very enjoyable hike and all of the hikers certainly appreciated Roy's knowledge of the area, as he provided excellent details on the various lakes, mountains, and trails.