



WHEN REPLYING
PLEASE QUOTE FILE NO. 2-2-1-58

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
PARKS BRANCH

Victoria, B. C.,

May 11, 1962.

Mr. Douglas Kermode,
2903 Tromson Avenue,
Vernon, B. C.

Dear Mr. Kermode,

In response to your telephoned request we are sending you maps outlining the boundaries of the newly established Monashee Provincial Park, Class A. Attached also is a copy of the Order-in-Council boundary description.

We trust this is the information you are seeking.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "H. G. McWilliams".

H. G. McWilliams,
Director,
Provincial Parks Branch.

Encl.

Comments for Monashee Park Master Plan.

By Doug Kermode, Vernon, B.C.

Firstly, as a long time lover of this beautiful Alpine Area, may I compliment the organizers of this report, on the splendid job they have come up with. It indicates a very thorough study, of the terrain, and some carefully thought out proposals and recommendations. I have "ticked" many of the questions, and left a few on abeyance, pending a final report.

As noted on the final page of "The Master plan background Report" Ministry of Parks. I was one of the 6 noted as organizers of this area to be classified as a park; and did much of the correspondence for that original group. I believe it was nearly five years before our efforts hit 'pay dirt' We were indeed indebted at that time to Mr. Bob Ahrens, who made a personal exploration of the area we had recommended, and came back with glowing reports, which he said he would incorporate in his field report. Not long afterwards, we had our first news indicating an area, that included the Big Trees on the Spectrum trail (Rainbow, to us at that time) was being outlined as a Wilderness Park, that we had recommended. It was not a decision accepted by hunting interests, and with protest signatures, timed appropriately near an election period; the hunting aspect was unfortunately lifted. Our own observations had been that caribou, goat, and bear, black, and grizzly, in that relatively small area, were too few in number to sustain too many eager hunters. Your present recommendations appear to uphold those early observations.

One or two casual comments-- Spectrum Lake, has been stocked with trout as long as I can recall-- apparently naturally, in spite of the blockage of Spectrum Falls, near the Shuswap River. Old Bill Fraser, undoubtedly the pioneer of that plateau, and maybe the first to observe Peters Lake (1907?) and my first guide into his beloved alpine wonderland, told me this story. - His theory was that an eagle, Osprey, or similar fish angling bird, had lost his grip on a fish taken from the lower creek or shuswap and dropped it at Spectrum, possibly a similar mishap later with an opposite sex fish, started the cycle- or maybe Indians?. Anyway he fished that lake years ago.

Peters Lake was stocked with a memorable trip by Andrew Hankey, of Lumby when he made literally a non-stop trip on horseback, with a pack pony carrying 2-4 gallon containers of trout, supplied by a hatchery, and taken to Sugar Lake. He made this gruelling trip in 9 hours, ~~not even~~ ^{only} stopping to renew the cans of water. He arrived at Little Peter at dusk, met by 'Old Bill' Fraser, ~~Bill Fraser~~ ^{of THE 8000} and "Wash Ryan". They immediately released the fish, and found surprisingly few had died from the experience. This was the start of the fish population in Peters Lake. I do not have accurate information at the moment re stocking of Margie Lake.

I do not personally favor stocking Mike's or Fawn Lakes, leave them minus anglers rimming the shores. Incidentally Mike's, named after Michael Freeman (also on the 1953 group) has always been known as "Mikes Pond" instead of "Lake": a term that seems more appropriate to this small alpine body of water, with the striking background of "Fostall peak" being framed with a set of tree line balsam or spruce.

If it is the intention of the organizing committee to further name some of the features of this alpine beauty spot with appropriate names of pioneers or early advocates; May I be permitted to recommend amongst them; Andrew Hankey, noted above, and Bob Ahrens, Likewise Kenneth Dobson, who with his wife, spent a month alone in the late '30's exploring much of the area (including a grizzly). This aspect will probably take a research within itself, to properly honor those who deserve to be genuine pioneers or advocates

As I write this, my phone call to Mrs. Hankey has revealed the date of fish release as Aug 2. 1940. Also his brief stop at crossing creeks to renew water. Peters Lake was named after her Father's cousin, Frank Peters taken into the country by Bill Fraser circa 1924 or '25. Trusting above notations may prove of interest.

Yours very truly,

Doug Kermode

SOME PETERS LAKE PARK HISTORY

by Doug Kermode

November 1993

The attached article is intended as an adjunct for publication in connection with the BC Government's September 1993 publication "Monashee Park Master Plan", or as a story for the Okanagan Historical Society's Annual Report, if deemed suitable. Hopefully it will provide a few bits of missing information.

Primarily, in this article, I wish to draw attention to the several names involved with the initial recommendations to the B.C. Government over 40 years ago for the creation of a Park Area adjoining Peters Lake in the Monashee Range. Included also are the names of many individuals and groups who have contributed over the years to the development of that beautiful alpine country.

It is inevitable that some names, places and events are going to be missed; if this be so, I humbly apologize, as memory fails all of us unfortunately at the wrong time, and few notes are now available. Should such blanks or errors appear, I would appreciate being advised, or publishers being informed please, so corrections can be considered for the future. Thanks.

The Parks division is to be profoundly congratulated for the excellent job they have done in the thorough study and recommendations embodied in their September 1993 publication "Master Plan for Monashee Provincial Park."

To the new, increasingly greater number of park lovers who have made their way to this alpine wonderland, I know they will want to return at every possible opportunity. For those whose desire has been whetted to view relatively virgin mountainous territory. I can assure you that you will not be disappointed. Maybe, as pointed out on page 6 of that Park's brochure, you may encounter a brief wet period, typical of mountainous terrain. But, you know as a practical back-packer, that sunshine, and gorgeous days will soon prevail. Being well prepared is always the hiker's motto to counter nature's caprices.

Certainly one of the early, if not the first, white persons to visit the area was William Fraser (born Iowa, 1872, died Vernon, 1960), affectionately referred to in his later years as "Old Bill". Together with his companion, whose name I do not recollect they made their way Westward from Fraser's home in Nelson in 1908. Bill, as I recall his enthralling stories around the camp fire at Spectrum (Rainbow) Lake on my first venture, when he guided me into Peters in 1946, had been employed as an electrical engineer at a power house in that city. He had had a yearning to go to Vancouver, and with his companion decided the cheapest and most interesting way was over the mountains to the West of Kootenay and Arrow Lakes, and to be an adventure as well.

Their exploits during that safari, would literally have filled a novel, and I regret that I did not have a note book, and jot them down, as the smoke curled from that campfire, and the wafting aroma of freshly fried trout from Spectrum Lake, assailed one's nostrils. But it appears they made a type of log cabin, on the shores of the first lake of any size encountered, later to be named Margie. In the process they constructed a stone-built fireplace and chimney, with ample height for an anticipated 6 or 8 foot snowfall (portions of this fireplace are still

discernable 40 years later). As it was now December, both decided to head back to Nelson for Christmas, using the snowshoes they had packed in on their exploratory trip. The journey out would also see them stock up with staples, not obtainable on that remote plateau. All such items of course, had to be backpacked in, so you can be sure, no frills were on their shopping list. Their prime food supply was netted with rifles, largely goat and winged meat. In fact, as Bill detailed in my eagerly listening ear, on one occasion, when he had gone out alone, the venture nearly cost him his life. He had spotted a mountain goat, a little ways up, what we now term Slate Mountain, and when he shot it, it tumbled down the slope, and very nearly dislodged him from his precarious perch on a jutting rock. With his partner, some 5 miles away, as the lone human nearby, he knew it would be "curtains" had he been struck. They resolved that any further food forays should be performed as a team in the future. However, after recovering the goat's carcass, and skinning it he transported the meat to their cabin, with a type of "stone boat" constructed on the spot, and bound together with an ever-ready supply of rope, slung over his shoulder. Quite a feat, 5 miles on snowshoes!

It should be noted, as Bill recounted their return trip from Nelson, that when they arrived in the general area of their cabin "home", its location was only precisely located by observing a slight blob of snow a bit higher than the blanket over the nearby lake surface, it was on the top of their crudely constructed stone chimney. The 6 feet of snow they had anticipated earlier was now approximately 14 feet!

In the spring Bill and his companion decided to wend their way ever West, and following the height of land, they encountered Peters Lake, undoubtedly still frozen at the time, and then

followed the outlet stream (the chute) down that now familiar steep slope to Rainbow (Spectrum) Lake.

After striking camp there, they tried their hand at catching some of the fat trout, easily visible from the shoreline. Whilst they might not have been the first every to land some of those beauties, they certainly were amongst the very early anglers on a lake that hardy souls have ploughed through underbrush to reach in later years. It was Fraser's contention that Spectrum Lake was naturally stocked. The mystery has been just how fish in the Shuswap overcame the barrier of Rainbow Falls. "Old Bill's" theory was that possibly, by good fortune, a male and female fish had been accidentally dropped, probably within weeks, by an eagle, or osprey at a point somewhere above the falls. Anyway, we do not have any records of early fish stocking, and the terrain would have made it tough to hope live fish would survive such a transplant.

But to continue Fraser's account. After leaving camp at Rainbow Lake they bush-whacked their way down Rainbow Creek (still the most feasible route to Peter's plateau) skirting Rainbow Falls, and ended up at the confluence of Rainbow, at the Shuswap River. From there they proceeded downstream, finally encountering a superbly beautiful body of water - Sugar Lake - old timers will tell you that before it was dammed up for power storage, it had pristine water, and beautiful white sand beaches. It proved so appealing that Bill abandoned his objective to get to the coast, and decided to make this place his home from here on in. Ultimately he built "Fraser Lodge", constructed in his own inimitable fashion of poles and cedar shakes. This welcome abode served many of his visitors to Sugar Lake for approximately forty years. It was also the terminus for Fraser's horses that he used to guide his travellers up the trails to Rainbow or Peters Lakes. Originally, before the high water was created by the dam,

the trail commenced at the North end of Sugar, paralleled the Shuswap, and then turned Eastward, through the beautiful stately old growth cedars of Rainbow Creek, and then onto the slide areas and alder brush, up the switchbacks to the top. En route he had established the welcome camping spots at Deer, Ptarmigan, and Rainbow Creeks, complete with up-turned pots, and campfire iron grills. In later years, the trail was changed to a lower gradient to the other side of Rainbow Creek with the addition of a very practical bridge made by cleverly felling two identical large cedars on the south side of the creek, planking them over with cedar boards hewed on the spot. This ingenious structure served until the recent trail was established beyond Rainbow Falls. Assisting on this very worthwhile scheme were at least three of his old time buddies: Charlie Holmes, "Wash" Ryan, and Les Viel. Bill also teamed up for a time with George Gates, who did a fair amount of trapping in that area (One of his 'huts' is that familiar one on the trail above Rainbow Lake). His name is immortalized with "Gates Ledge" and "Gates Lake". Other names associated with Fraser, many residing in the Sugar Lake area, were Bill Shunter and Ben Anderson. Several others over time have trodden or snowshoed their way up those various trails; the author made his first venture with "Old Bill" accompanied by 'Sandy' and 'Fly', his faithful pack-horses burdened with our supplies, for the two day trek up that tortuous "52 switchback" climb to the Peters Lake plateau. Carefully secured with a diamond hitch were the essential axes and hand crosscut saws, to remove the cursed deadfalls that regularly barred our pack-horses (in 1946 chain saws were only then entering the market in Interior B.C.).

Amongst some of the later pioneering visitors willing to brave this venture to the fabled Alpine Shang-ri-la of Peters Lake, and who went with families or partners, some guided by

Fraser, were Ken Dobson and wife Una, Mike Freeman and wife Jean, Doug Kermode and wife Nesta, Paddy Mackie, Sid Draper, George Falconer and C.D. "Bill" Osborn. This group formed the nucleus of the concerned parties that petitioned the then Forest Service of B.C. in 1950 to consider creating this alpine paradise into a wilderness park.

Our main concern then, in particular, was to curtail the slaughter by indiscriminate hunters, of the sparse mountain caribou herd that frequented Peters Lake terrain. Also to protect the limited number of bear, both black and Grizzlies, and easily picked-off mountain goat. Soon after we made those initial concerns and recommendations to the government, we learned that an early summer hiker had discovered the remains of five caribou, one of which, a large male, had been beheaded. Undoubtedly the work of a kill-crazy trophy hunter, perpetrating his carnage, probably in late Autumn, the year before.

Reports such as this, and the knowledge that many other indiscriminate hunters were making it tough on preservation-wise woodsmen and others, and rapidly decimating the wild animal herds, we pressed our case to the government. By this time, I believe, the area had come under the jurisdiction of the Parks Division. Our pleadings did not fall on deaf ears, and in 1955, after five years of correspondence (see attached letter), a fieldsman, Mr. Bob Ahrens, was dispatched to look over this proposed area that these environmentalists (for that is the name applied then) were harping on, to scrutinize the territory.

Much credit is owed to Bob Ahrens for the development of the present park. Upon his return from this trek into that suggested park site, Mr. Ahrens made a point of knocking on my door at home, to state how very enthusiastic he was from his initial survey of this wilderness location. He explained that his department had numerous recommendations each year from

many points in B.C. all stating they had wonderful parkland to consider allocating as such. However, it was apparent that Mr. Ahrens was really enthusiastic about this "find", and we could be assured that our strong feelings and recommendations would be receiving his most vigorous support. In fact, it would receive top priority if his viewpoints could be shared by senior officials in the department. There was no question that we had now an influential and friendly voice now in our appeals. Great credit also goes to Ahrens' superiors, E.G. Oldham, R. Broadland, and the Ministry, who soon after proclaimed an order that this area be known as a Wilderness Park. However, our initial flags of joy did not fly for long because soon after this "no hunting" ban in that region had been announced, a vigorous petition was launched by members of the sporting goods stores around Vernon and adjacent areas denouncing this decision. This well timed crusade coincided, at that time, with some oncoming elections and soon after the "wilderness" feature was literally "shot down". However, to the credit of others who have followed in the steps of those original pioneers who pushed for this development, now known as Monashee Provincial Park, future generations are going to enjoy an alpine paradise, now becoming renowned for its natural beauty, wildlife, and accessibility.

There are several persons who were not initially linked with the original approach to the government but who have in some way done a lot. One, whom I feel deserves a shining medal is Andrew Hankey of Lumby. The desire to have Peters Lake stocked had been made known to the fisheries department prior to the war, so on August 2, 1940 they showed up at Fraser's Lodge with a tankful of trout fingerlings. These were immediately transferred to a couple of four gallon square coal-oil type cans, securely lashed to an awaiting pack-horse and Andrew started off on the customarily one day, one night stopover trail, headed for Peters along with a

prayer that sufficient fish would survive to reach the top. I believe something like 8,000 fry started that journey. Hankey later told me he proceeded non-stop, barring a creek drink for the horses, and a few cupfuls of fresh water for the fish. He reached the outskirts of Little Peters (adjoining Peters) nine and a half hours later, and with the aid of Dr. Hugh Campbell-Brown, Bill Fraser, and "Wash" Ryan, who had preceded Hankey by one day, released the contents of those two cans, as the sun was setting in the West. He said a surprising number of fish were still alive, and today fishermen can butter their frying pan, and listen to the welcome sizzle of fresh trout, due to the superhuman efforts of Andrew Hankey. I will challenge anyone today to emulate that feat of Andrew's even with the added advantage of reduced trail mileage.

Also, in later years, Ernie Laviolette and Eugene Foisy spent two seasons in the early '60's producing a comprehensive 16mm documentary of the area. Later, when this footage was shown at many points in B.C. and Alberta, it acquainted the public and Government officials graphically on the potential of this superb parkland. The Naturalists Club of Vernon also has proven of great assistance in furthering these studies, certainly one of the spark-plugs who has served as President, and one of the few surviving members of that original 1950 group, was Paddy Mackie.

As a footnote to this disjointed diatribe re any history pertaining to Peters and other Lakes in the area, I am not too familiar with the history of the native Indian tribes that once roamed some of these regions. But Fraser told me that Paint Lake (10 miles east of Peters) was visited by tribes as far distant as Oregon, in search of the coloured mud-like pigments, well known to aboriginal visitors there. They used them, apparently, as war paint. A geologist who visited Paint Lake explained to me that the well-known zinc and iron deposits found in that

region were responsible for the distinct bluish and brown mud streaks that strangely are deposited at different points on the lake floor.

Peter's Lake, I believe, was named after Frank Peters, a native of England. He made several visits to this neck of the woods, usually guided by Fraser. Frank often visited his cousin, Richard Peters, of Vernon, and in 1925, the largest lake at the foot of Mt. Fostal, was named after him - Peters Lake.

Mt. Fostal, incidently, has been frequently called Fraser Mountain in honour of "Old Bill" but is officially inscribed on topographical maps as Fostal. That name, also Fostal Creek, can be traced by referring to Post WWI explorers of the vicinity, including the Guggenheim group, by noting government and other publications, outlining the '20's and '30's activities in that region of the Monashee Mountains.

Amongst the inquiries that persons interested in Peters Lake Terrain ask are the possibility of viewing wildlife. The B.C. Park's recent 1993 Monashee Park's Plan gives a good outline on that subject, but if one is fortunate in being at the right place at the right time, or purposely tracking for a species, good sized animals can often be seen.

For example, the small herd of Mountain Caribou (reportedly the most southernly in the world) or segments, can occasionally be spotted grazing on lush meadows, or drinking from one of the numerous ponds or streams. As winter nears, they usually migrate through either S. or N. Caribou passes. Binoculars of course should always be part of your holiday kit on these safaris. Nearby Mountain goat, too, are best located by such viewing of the high slopes. A fairly frequent visitor to a convenient campsite, is the always loveable (at a distance) porcupine. Much more wary and not too often viewed, is the wolverine. His super-keen sense of smell,

tearing claws and teeth, have made themselves known to many a careless camper. His pre-dawn forays are only too well-known to those who did not carefully guard food, especially any meat. Many of the smaller members of the animal kingdom also frequent the area, including the industrious little Pica, usually located near his drying pile of hay.

If a shrill whistle sounds like one game warden signalling to his accomplice, it usually means you are near a shattered rock slide, home of a marmot, signalling the presence of an intruder - likely you!

The most asked question, probably topping the list in your animal repertoire, pertains to bears. Yes, both black and grizzly inhabit that region. If due attention is heeded on the advise

of Park Wardens on the subject, the general rule is that if you leave them alone, they will respect your view on that point too. ^{In 1963,} The author's son, Dale, then ¹⁴ ~~13~~ year's old, along with his

travelling companion, on that afternoon's trip, Paddy Mackie, trailed by Jack Dobie, and son

Craig, ^{had a close} encountered a large male grizzly ^{with} close by ^{although the wind was behind} in 1960. Fortunately, ~~the wind favoured them,~~

~~and~~ Mr. Bruin continued his sauntering gait - away! Ken Dobson and wife Una, also spotted

a nearby Grizzly on their first trek in 1937. He was right at the edge of the plateau, and reared

up, sniffed the air to better appraise the situation, and also meandered away. Likewise Ernie

Laviolette and Eugene Foisey, during their month of filming on top, noted grizzlies on several

occasions - one fairly close, several via binoculars, including mothers and cubs. Likewise, Alec

Jones, the geologist we met during one of his sample-gathering trips, recounted a 15 minute

binocular-viewed episode, as a family frolicked with their cubs at the base of their grand-stand

viewing cliff. But those who have heard the roar of an enraged or wounded grizzly all describe

it the same way - the most spine-chilling sound they will ever hear - "Old Bill" Fraser was

ced to climb a tree on his first sudden encounter. Fortunately grizzlies cannot tree climb but he said that nerve tingler roar lingered in his mind for many a day.

There are a couple of other bear encounters at, or nearby, Peters Lake that have occurred over the years but since time has erased some of those who could relate them or I have been unable to ascertain there whereabouts, we will let others try to recall then, in due time.

Nicholas Marrant, the famous C.P.R. photographer, who was with a companion, suddenly came upon a mother and her two cubs, whilst Nick was "casing" a proposed C.P.R. Lodge area on the B.C.-Alberta border fifty years ago. Shortly afterwards their paths crossed, and she charged (both he and his guide were attacked as they headed for trees). Marrant was badly mauled, spending four months in hospital. He too, in recounting his terrible experience to me, also mentioned the nerve-wracking roar that still lived with him. He displayed the torn scalp scars and teeth marks still on his arm a year and a half after the encounter. If my memory serves me right, I believe the guide later died from his injuries. Another who, with his fishing companion, also experienced that spine-chiller was Carl Wylie. He is also an avid Peter Laker. But this brief, but close-quarters encounter occurred on an expedition with a companion to the Bella Coola country. They had surprised a good sized male, with a young female nearby. The bear apparently became annoyed at the rude human interruption of the planned romance. His roaring protest of this interference apparently - inadvertently - had a favourable angling aspect. Carl claims that the erratic pattern of their jiggling lures, was the direct result of their still-shaking forearms! Certainly at their estimated distance of fifty feet, by remaining motionless, as bruin lowered himself again to ground level was a cool and proper procedure at these close quarters. These are rare examples of bear problems but serve as a warning, to heed any

instructions posted in Provincial or National parks. Always try to seek out a warden for up-to-the-minute advice on rules and procedures that will assure you an enjoyable holiday. A memorable vacation hiking over flower-carpeted meadows, or climbing Mt. Fostal, or other nearby slopes to view the spectacular panorama offered by the Peter's Lake section of Monashee Park.

Author Doug Kermodé, Vernon, B.C.

November 1993