

**Westman Wilderness Club  
2019 Major Event  
Waterton Lakes National Park, August 20-26**

Seventeen members of the Westman Wilderness Club converged upon Waterton Lakes National Park from August 20-26, making this the largest group ever to attend an event of this length in the history of the club!



We had a base camp in the Townsite Campground, with members staying in tents, RVs, and 2 members enjoying all the amenities of home in a hotel. We would definitely describe our group as a motely crew, defined by Wikipedia as:

*“A roughly organized assembly of individuals of various backgrounds, appearance, and character.*

*Motley crews are, by definition, non-uniform and undisciplined as a whole. They are typified by containing characters of conflicting personality, varied backgrounds and, usually to the benefit of the group, a wide array of methods for overcoming adversity.”*

Our motely crew was comprised of the following individuals: Bert & Judy, Ed & Linda, James & Olwen, Jeannine, Di, Pascal, Robert, Audrey, Bill & Carol, Rick, Sue, Caeli & Marie-Claude.

Waterton Lakes National Park was devastated by forest fires in 2017; as a result almost 60% of the forests were destroyed. Despite the stark reminders of the fire, there was still much great scenery and beauty to be found. Some hiking trails were still accessible; others were open, but trailheads were inaccessible by vehicle, necessitating the use of bicycles. Because of the huge number of hikes to choose from (thanks James for doing all the homework for us!) and because of diverse nature of our group, we were rarely all in the same place at the same time. As a result, our report is a group effort covering the hikes our motely crew participated in.

## **Crypt Lake (Wed. August 21 Hike, reported by Rick)**

The hike to Crypt Lake was a highlight for many of us! After crossing Upper Waterton Lake by boat, Bert & Judy, Ed, James & Olwen, Jeannine, Di, Pascal, Sue, Caeli, Marie-Claude, & Rick ventured up the mountain.



After many switchbacks, we passed a campground that had been closed due to previous campers leaving open food, which had attracted bears to the site.

Proceeding along the trail we encountered an 8 ft steel ladder on the face of the cliff. This ladder led to the mouth of a 60 foot natural tunnel through the mountain.

After a short maneuver around the cliff, with cable for added security, we arrived at beautiful Crypt Lake, where Pascal cooled off by doing push-ups submerging his head & upper body in the icy water!



The 18 km hike was strenuous, but well worth the effort... we passed 4 beautiful waterfalls en route... Hell Roaring Falls, Twin Falls, Burnt Rock Falls, and Crypt Falls, and had amazing views from the summit.

On the way down, we encountered a hiker in distress (not one of our group!) He was dehydrated from a night of drinking, disorientated, and had been deserted by the rest of his crew. Our club members stepped up, shared (non-alcoholic) liquids with him, and coached him down the mountain.



Additional photos of Crypt Lake:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/XV1gj6RetuecvxX36>



## **Glacier National Park (Thurs. August 22 Hike, reported by Rick)**

On Thursday James, Olwen, Jeannine, Ed, Sue, Caeli, Marie-Claude & Rick crossed the border into Montana to hike in Glacier National Park.

The 15 km hike was moderate in difficulty, and had beautiful views of the valley.

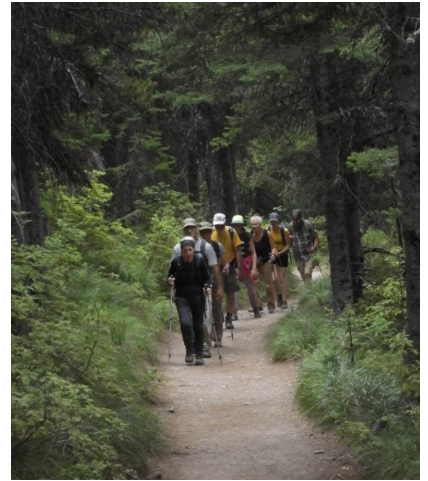
About 4 km along the trail was the site of the beautiful Ptarmigan Falls.



Further along the trail we came upon 2 moose having their lunch. They were wonderfully oblivious to us, so we were able to watch for quite a while!

We reached beautiful Glacier Lake, a lake that is fed by melt water from a glacier. The lake is surrounded by mountains on 3 sides. A highlight for James was the discovery of a “virtual geocache”!

As we enjoyed our lunch at the lake, we were joined by several well-fed squirrels & chipmunks.



Additional photos of Iceberg Lake:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/XV1gj6RetuecvxX36>





## **Red Rock Canyon (Fri. August 23 Hike, reported by Rick)**

On Friday, Bert & Judy, Olwen, Pascal, Di, Sue, Marie-Claude, Caeli, & Rick rode their bikes to the trailhead of Red Rock Canyon, led by Dwayne, a friend from Alberta who was camping at Waterton.

The road was closed to traffic due to repairs being done to the guard rails that had been destroyed by the 2017 forest fire, so it was a very stress-free ride.

Upon reaching the trailhead, we meandered around the stream, then proceeded with the short hike to the canyon.



We were fortunate in that normally there are so many tourists it is hard to get into the canyon, let alone get nice photos, but we virtually had the place to ourselves.

We then hiked 1 km to Red Rock Falls, which had newly constructed walkouts above the falls.





## **Boundary Bay Lakeshore Hike to Montana** *(Thursday, August 23 Hike, reported by James)*

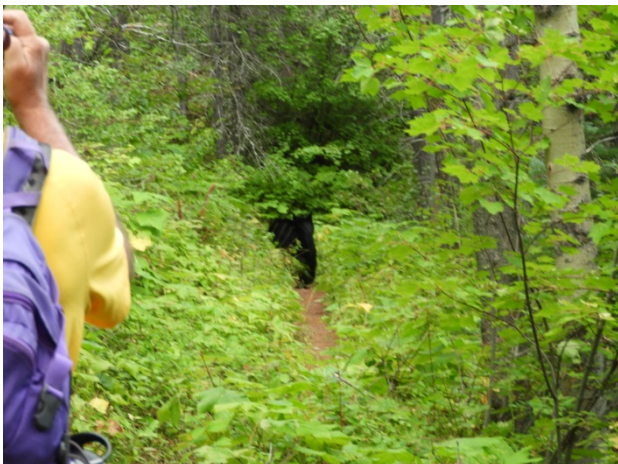


The non-bikers Ed, Linda, Jeannine and James headed south to Montana while the rest of the group headed out on their bicycle excursions.

The first few kilometres of this hike shared the trail to Bertha Lake, and then we branched off and headed south along the west shore of Upper Waterton Lake. As we headed south we left the area that was burnt by the 2017 fire. The trail was a mixture of Inland forest and Lakeshore views with a few spots where we crossed some beaches.



About an hour and a half into the hike we encountered a black bear coming towards us on our Trail. The Beast was not readily willing to give up the trail so with lots of loud talking we drew our weapons. At this point the bear left the trail and skirted above us about 3 metres from us. It started towards us a few times as it was making its way around but our shouting seems to have deterred it. It proceeded to come onto the trail behind us. Relieved that we did not have to discharge our weapons into the wind, we holstered them and carried on with the hike.





We continued on to Boundary Bay and had our lunch on a dock in Montana. No passports

required! Just on the Canadian side of the Border was one of the fanciest outhouses I saw in the parks. It was constructed of cedar and had a fancy toilet which had a foot lever that seem to operate a little conveyor belt to transport the #2 droppings to the depths below.



An interesting feature at the border was a 50 metre wide cut line where the brush had been cleared right up the side of the mountain on both sides of the lake.



There were two official markers at the border. On the markers were the dates that two or three treaties were signed between Canada and the US.

It was a 16 km hike with a variety of elevation changes along the shoreline.



Additional photos of Boundary Bay:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/XV1qj6RetuecvxX36>



## Vimy Peak (Sat, August 24 Hike, reported by Di & Jeannine)



The weather finally cooperated, so Jeanine and Di followed James up the 1138 m climb to Vimy Peak.

It began with a boat ride to the rocky beach with 3 trail runners – and some directions on how to find the trail – marked with Cairns and Inukshuks. Having started the climb on a well-defined trail – the trail runners disappeared and were never to be seen again!

The trail took us around the mountain with views of the Lions Head and of our final destination. It looked pretty daunting! There was fresh bear scat and tracks – but no actual bear sightings.

The final push to the peak was steep and on loose gravel – and was more of a scramble than a hike!

The views from the top were spectacular! After signing the log book – we started down the mountain.

We met quite a few hikers on their way up as we traveled down. There were also some horseback riders closer to the beach – and we had to debate the trail etiquette of who gave way to who!

About 2 km from the beach – James had an unfortunate moment and twisted an ankle. Thankfully, he was able to hobble to where we were meeting the boat. This could have been a very different story if we had been further up the mountain.

We completed our 18 km hike in 6½ hours.



Our boat ride back to the dock was an experience in itself. It was a speed boat – and driven at speed, too! The wind had increased and so had the waves... and our skipper took great delight in giving us a bone shaking ride back!!

Additional photos of Vimy Peak:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/XV1gj6RetuecvxX36>



**Bertha Falls (Sat. August 24 Hike, reported by Bill Stadnyk)**

Tuesday, August 20- Jeannine, James & Olwen, Bert & Judy, Marie-Claude, Caeli, Rick & Sue

Saturday August 24- Bill, Carol, Olwen and Ed

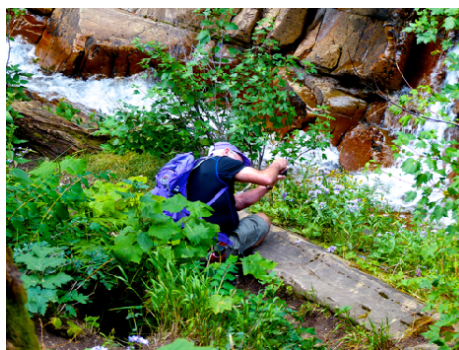


Bill & Carol, Olwen and Ed hiked Bertha Falls on Saturday, Aug 24. It was a real treat for Bill & Carol as it was the first hike they had done at Waterton.

Olwen and Ed were seasoned hikers and bicyclists of “Team Waterton” having already participated in quite a few outings, so it was great having them along. Even though we had done many hikes in the past, we were unsure of our capabilities at the time of this hike. The hike was a steady upgrade to the first plateau with a distance of 1.5 km, basically following the lakeshore. We reached the first level and had an awesome view looking Southward toward Upper Waterton Lake. A very strong Southerly wind on the plateau made sure we held on to our hats!



We then took a turn Westward into a canyon and proceeded for 1.4 km to our destination of Bertha Falls with the wind finally abating in the canyon. We enjoyed the view(s) of the falls and had lunch before proceeding back to the trailhead. The trail was very busy both ways.



All in all, a great hike. The views all along the trails were spectacular... which Bill described as ‘National Geographic’ views. Ed and Bill made great use of their cameras!

Bill and Carol were very pleased that they were able to make it! Thanks Ed and Olwen for being great hiking partners.

Additional photos of Bertha Lake: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/XV1gj6RetuecvxX36>



## Cameron Lake Road Bicycle Ride (Saturday, August 24 Hike, reported by Bert)



After the Red Rock canyon ride, Pascal and Bert wanted to try a more strenuous ride. They invited all interested parties, along with a special invite to Dwayne who had led us on the Red Rock Canyon ride. Dwayne was the only taker.

The Cameron Lake Road started with a steep climb and switchbacks for about a kilometer, then settled into a steady and more gradual climb for another kilometer and a half, followed by a slight downhill, then more up. On its 16 km length, there were only a couple of spots along the road to Cameron Lake that didn't require pedalling. There were fewer bicycles and e-Bikes on this road than on the road to Red Rock Canyon.

The gay profusion of wildflowers that follow forest fires were in bloom, so Bert suggested that Pascal and Dwayne should pose for some Burt Reynolds/Cosmo Magazine centerfold type cheesecake photos that they could post on their Facebook pages. Dwayne declined citing that he was a happily married man and had devoted much of his career in the RCMP to suppressing smut (although I was proposing "dignified" cheesecake pics). Pascal said he likes the quiet life and wasn't up to dealing with the lewd solicitations from randy women (or whoever) that such photos would undoubtedly attract, or the possibility of a career ending court martial for... something about revealing an arsenal.



At the top/Lake Cameron, Pascal and Bert hiked a path along the lakeshore for as far as it went, and then a bit further, while Dwayne took a break to contemplate the cheesecake offer.



On sober second thought, he didn't change his mind.





The ride back to town was fast and easy, only requiring us to pedal a bit on a couple of uphill sections. Pascal's CatEye indicated we reached to speeds over 50 kph. I think if we were younger and more daring (aka, stupider) we could have exceeded 60 kph in the switchbacks, but Bert showed some caution because he hadn't recovered from his last high speed bike crash, and the others are less daring (aka less stu...). Back at the campground, Bert told those who hadn't done the ride that it had been "a piece of cake".

### **Cameron Lake Road Switchbacks (Sunday, August 25 hike reported by Bert)**

Sunday morning Bert continued to tell everyone that the Cameron Lake Road was "a piece of cake" and that he would gladly lead a ride up the hill for anyone that wanted to come along. It was beginning to rain, so he was certain no one would take him up on his offer. It was forecast to rain all day and he was packing up camp. Judy took him aside and hissed in a motherly way "Audrey and Robert are dressed for a ride. If you don't intend to go for a bike ride, get out there and tell them."

When a man has his bluff called, he has to make a choice – back down and have his manhood brought into question, or step up and have his sanity brought into question. Bert concluded that he had a greater need to defend any semblance manhood than his fellow campers might attribute to him than any semblance of sanity. So off the three of them rode.

At the switchbacks, we all geared down and ground up the hill. The rain intensified. Audrey led the way and Robert pulled up the rear. When we got to the first downhill section (about 2.5 km along the Cameron Lake Road), Bert told Audrey and Robert that after climbing that hill and commenting that it had been "a piece of cake" (which they did say), they had proven that they could do the whole ride. They didn't need to ride all the way to Cameron Lake, to claim they had conquered this road. Because it was pouring rain by this time, and for no other reason, they decided to head back to town. Thus in one short ride they covered the toughest climb, and the fastest, curviest, most fun descent in the park.

Back at the campsite, Audrey and Robert confirmed to any that would listen, that the ride was indeed "a piece of cake", and that the only downside for Audrey and Bert, who hadn't worn rain pants, was that they had very soggy bottoms. And a soggy bottom is precisely why many of us like to ride in the rain.



*"Life is like a multi-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use." Charles Schulz*