





FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT - Jessica Murray

When I first stepped into the role of club president, it was to be an interim position of roughly six months, long enough to keep the wheels turning until someone who'd be a perfect fit took over.

A year and a half later, all I can say is that it's been a privilege to serve our amazing community of climbers, paddlers, skiers, mountaineers and mountain adventurers.

During my time as president, I implemented new waivers that better protect our trip organizers, an important tool to ensure our volunteer trip organizers can keep doing what they love with confidence. I also explored new membership management tools but ultimately decided to stick with Meetup, though far from perfect it's still the best fit for our club.

It's been rewarding to see the club stay active and continue to grow through this period of transition. The strength of this club has always been its people, especially it's organizers who volunteer to lead exciting trips and to mentor others to grow into leaders. We also wouldn't have a club without our committed members who always bring the stoke!

I'm thrilled to pass the torch to our new president Parker Townes!! Parker is a passionate young leader who'll bring fresh energy and new ideas to the club. I'm confident the future of our community is in excellent hands and can't wait to see where the next chapter take us.

See you in the mountains, Jess



It is an honour to step into the role of President of the Canadian Scrambling and Mountaineering Club.

When I first joined in 2018 as a novice climber seeking mentorship, I never could have imagined how profoundly this community would shape my growth and ignite my passion for exploring the alpine. In 2022, I deepened my involvement by becoming a trip leader for both summer and winter activities. The club has provided me with some of my most cherished experiences and friendships, and I'm thrilled to pass on that same stoke to others through this new position.

When I first considered which mountain club to join, what stood out most about CSMC was its steadfast commitment to safety and education. As President, I will ensure our priorities remain focused not only on what to do when things go well, but also on developing the skills and knowledge to handle challenges when they don't. Whether it's practicing avalanche companion rescue after work in the park, rolling down snowy slopes with ice axes, or mastering advanced rock rescue systems alongside an ACMG-certified guide, these shared learning experiences make us stronger, safer, and more capable in the mountains.

One of the many reasons I've remained an active member for the past eight years is the strong sense of community that CSMC fosters. Our members come from diverse backgrounds and experience levels, yet we share a common vision—to recreate responsibly, respectfully, and passionately in the mountains. As President, my goal is to help CSMC continue to inspire that same passion and camaraderie in others that it has instilled in me. The welcoming environment our club has built ensures everyone feels supported and included, from first-time scramblers to seasoned mountaineers. I look forward to seeing many of you on upcoming trips in the mountains, at social gatherings, the gym, or during skills practice days in the park.

Here's to another season of safe, memorable adventures together!

Warm regards,

Parker Townes

President, Canadian Scrambling and Mountaineering Club





Swing Your Axes Under the Stars Event Series Returns in 2025!

Did you know that CSMCers have been swinging their ice axes under the stars since 2013? That's a lot of swings, and even more stars observed!

Except for a few years when only one or two events took place, the Swing Your Axes series has taken place four to six weeks in a row after work on weekdays. Events start as early as ice climbing conditions are sufficiently good in the front range mountains, which typically occurs around mid-November. In the first years, Swing Your Axes outings were organized by Alex Joseph, Gerry Richardson and Bert Blankenstein, who have since handed over the series to other organizers, creating a great partnership between multiple trip leaders. On some years, night ice climbing sessions even took place in town at Fish Creek Provincial Park for ice climbers at the beginner level.

The event series pursues the easiest ice climbs in the Bow Valley or Kananaskis so that CSMCers can get practice time on ice between weekends, instead of visiting those climbs when they are bustling with other climbers on Saturdays and Sundays. Our favorite spots for Swing Your Axes sessions: Grotto Falls and Chantilly Falls (easy multipitches), Heart Falls, Solstice, Wedge Smear, Kings Creek Falls and the Canmore Junkyards. Climbs with longer hikes in such as Bear Spirit have been visited too, but a shorter approach helps maximizing the time spent ice climbing.

Some memorable Swing Your Axes moments over the years:

• One November evening, we went to check out if there was any ice at Heart Creek. There was none, so we continued our evening exploration along the creek, and we call the night a Swing Your Poles on the Hiking Trail, Under the Stars instead!

Continued on page 7 >





Swing Your Axes continued.

- In November 2022, a group of 9 CSMCers went to Wedge Smear to experience a wonderful ice climbing evening with temperatures hovered just below OC. The ice was well formed and just hard enough, not too plastic, and we really enjoyed the stars sighting, in the hear of Kananaskis darkness. One participant later commented: "it was amazing and much better than I remember from last year"!
- On the 2nd ice weeknight in 2013 at Heart Falls, we hiked in the dark and were amazed at the damage from the flood the previous summer. That night Gerry had brought a portable bonfire in a big metal bin going to keep us warm. It was so deluxe!
- In December 2022, a team of two visiting students from East Germany where so eager to try ice climbing before returning to Germany after their semester that they joined the CSMC only to participate in a Swing Your Axes event at Bear Spirit (they could not afford hiring a mountain guide, unfortunately). It was great to see their tremendous enthusiasm and skills in learning to ice climb in a short evening.

Now, what do you need to participate in a Swing Your Axes Under the Stars event?

• Some ice climbing training: you have taken a formal ice climbing course with a mountain guide, or you have practiced ice climbing several times in daylight,

when it is easier to identify and manage hazards. Trip organizers might be busy setting up ropes and thus might not be available to offer coaching. This is way it is best to come equipped with a basic experience.

- Focus on safety: while many CSMCers like to push themselves, nightly ice climbs are a just another setting to practice having good systems and checks in place, be consistent in packing, using or testing your gear, and limit your exposure to overhead hazards.
- Good preparation: be ready for dropping temperatures as the night sets in, and the ice becomes harder. On some nights, we started the evening with a 0° C temperature at the trailhead, and we observed -15° C when finishing the climbing session.
- And a sense of adventure!

If you are unsure if you have the skillset needed to participate, feel free to reach out to the organizers, or ask questions in the discussion section for a particular event. Swing Your Axes 2025 events are now posted on the club calendar and open to registrations two to three days prior, when the ice climbing venue and exact date are confirmed.







A CSMC trip almost a decade in the making and the realization of a dream initiated in the 90s when a crusty old British UBC Geomorphology professor said, "I've travelled all over the world... and Mt Edziza is the most beautiful place there is."

After delays in logistics trying to figure out how to dirtbag around the flight in, and then COVID, and then other trips like the adjacent Stikine River (2023), we finally made it happen in 2025.

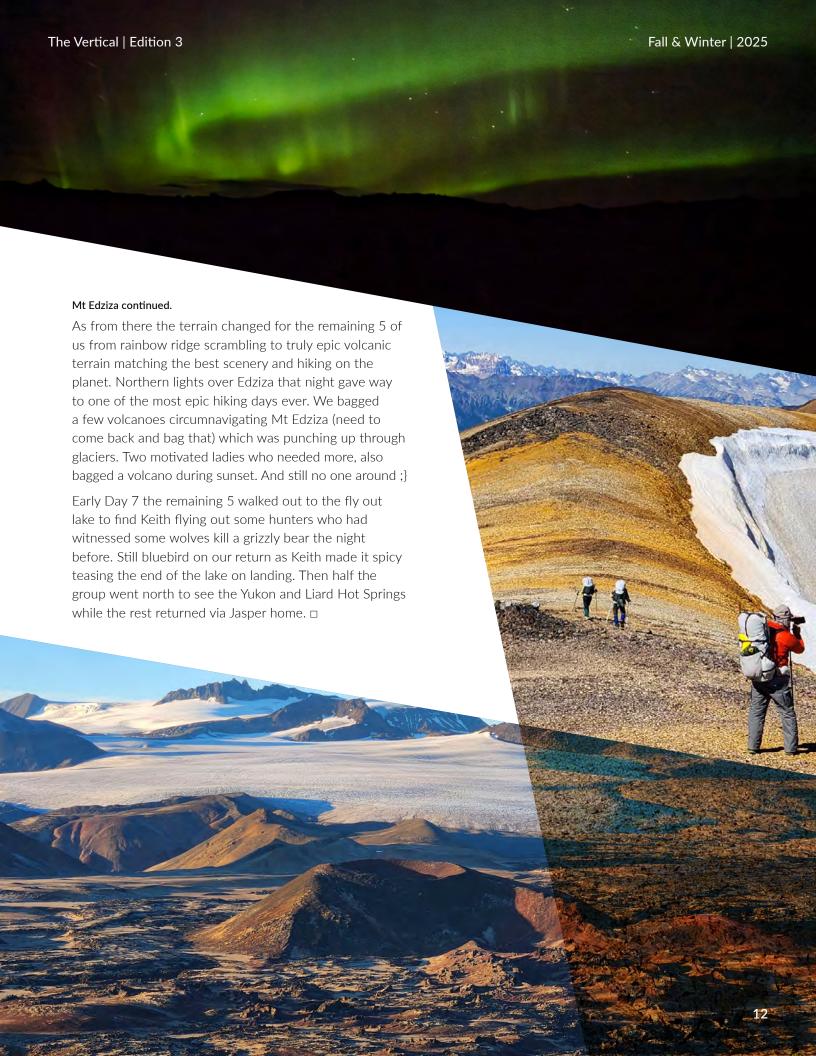
Eight of us set out on a beautiful bluebird Sunday morning in late August after what apparently had been almost solid rain for 8 weeks. The forecast showed a 9-day bluebird

Continued on page 11 >



The Vertical | Edition 3 Fall & Winter | 2025







CSMC continues to expand its offering to club members this time with packrafting. Started in 2022 with a fleet of DIY packrafts built by club members, the group was small when they did a 7-day trip down the Stikine River in 2023. This year numerous Spring practice sessions were done on the Kananaskis River in April

and May which led to increased safety practices (i.e. throw bags) and overall increased capability to paddle Class III. This led to various club trips on the Kootenay River, Sheep River, Spray River, and the Red Deer River. The club now boasts that it is the "largest packrafting club in Canada"!!!!









A trip idea spawned at a CSMC pub night from Eric's enthusiasm about remote Jasper, Kiwi Lisa's stoke, a great Spring of club packrafting, and an innocent blog post.

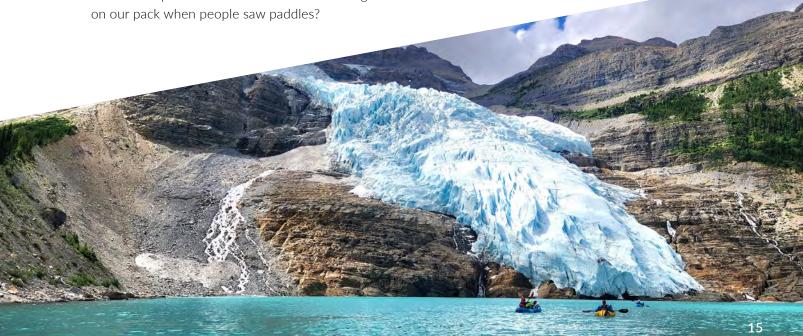
The plan was a week long traverse that started up Berg Lake Trail in a day and followed the once famous Jasper North Boundary trail for 7 days with 100km paddling and 100km hiking. It was the second packraft and hike trip of the month and so our gear was getting lighter and less voluminous.

A long car ferry from East of Jasper to Mt Robson set the stage for an epic Berg Lake Trail in a day including packrafting Robson Glacier on Berg Lake and lots of questions about what that raft thing was on our pack when people saw paddles?

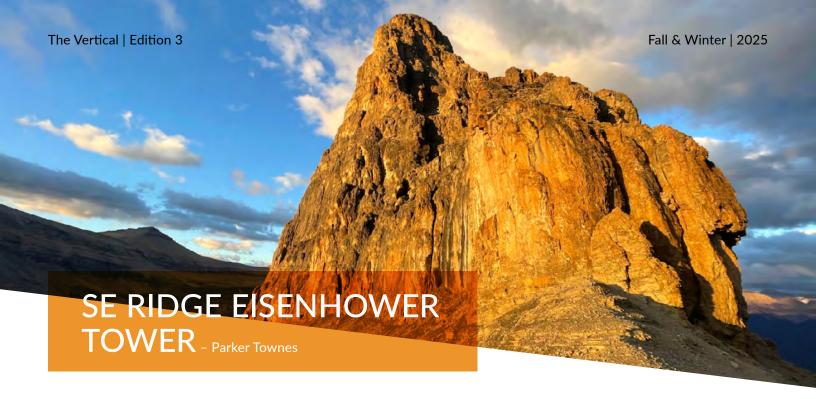
But that was just the appetizer as we camped night one at the Robson Pass with spectacular thunder and lightning to start the 7 day mission which included mostly hike and packraft each day and abandoned horse campgrounds with few mosquitoes and great fire pits.

We ran some spicy Class III rapids going north on the Smoky River including one spicy descent with tree spear threatening the line where we lost 2 paddlers in the process but recovered both boats. The next day Julien ran a Class III chute with style. Later days included a spectacular mountain lake from the campsite and then up and over the Snake Indian

Continued on page 16 >







Organizer: Parker Townes, participants: Sheila La Elefanta & Ian Baillargeon.

The South East Ridge of Eisenhower Tower is an aesthetic alpine traditional climb located on Castle Mountain in Banff National Park.

I have wanted to do this climb for quite some time, and with the announcement of the new Currie Castle Mountain Cabin being built, this was the perfect opportunity to go check out what makes this route so classic.

With a chance of rain on Saturday, our team of three left Calgary at a very casual start time of 11:00 am. Our only plan that day was to hike and scramble our way up to the hut, which is beautifully perched halfway up the mountain on a large ledge. We weren't sure what supplies to bring for our stay, as this was the first weekend the new hut was open and the information on the Alpine Club of Canada website had not yet been updated. So with our propane, two days of water, and rain gear packed, we left the parking lot excited for what adventure lay ahead.

To our pleasant surprise, the day was overcast with very little precipitation. Great for the steep jaunt. We made good time, arriving at the hut in just over two hours and were greeted by a pair of climbers

also staying at the hut who were returning from their day's objective. The hut was clean and spacious, sleeping up to eight people. Compared to the old hut that was more similar to a tuna can than a living arrangement, this new hut was a massive upgrade. Our hut mates informed us of the plentiful running water stream nearby and the supplied propane. Oh well, guess we had some extra weight training on the hike up!

After dinner, Sheila and I climbed an exciting single-pitch sport route called Rim Job that is accessed by a rappel over the edge of the lower half of the mountain right outside the hut. Talk about exposure! The three of us also reviewed our multi-pitch systems, as it was our first time climbing together, and we were off to bed early in preparation for our big day.





particularly necessary to split this objective into two

days, we were happy to have arrived so early because

five parties began after us! A big no thanks for me to

climb behind so many folks on a loose alpine route.

hidden rappel anchor, and before long, we were back down on the ledge and continued to the hut to grab our things. The walk out was chill, and we enjoyed the plentiful display of mushrooms as a result of the uncharacteristically wet July this year. After 12 hours, we made it back to the car and drove home with our tired legs and smiling faces.

Once at the summit, we enjoyed a bite to eat and took pictures before starting the descent. A party of two company up offered some helpful beta regarding a

Another great CSMC adventure in good company with great weather on a classic Rockies alpine objective.



CSMCers: Parker Townes, Benjamin Simonelli, Richard Norton, Ildar Idrisov, Anh Ly, Augurio Trujillo, Joad Clement.

From July 27 to August 1, 2025, a group of seven CSMCers took off to explore the expansive Clemenceau Icefield region, roughly 120 km NW of Golden as the crow flies.

The icefield complex, visited by just a few parties each year given its remoteness, encompasses over 300 km2 of glaciated and rugged terrain, similar in size to the Columbia Icefield. Instead of venturing into a 4-day approach that would have been generously filled with bouts of bushwhacking, river crossing, black flies buzzing and side-hilling, we opted for a 20-minute helicopter flight from the mouth of the Kinbasket River. Partnering with another group of mountaineers who were tackling nearby Tsar Mountain allowed us to reduce our per-person fly-in costs significantly.

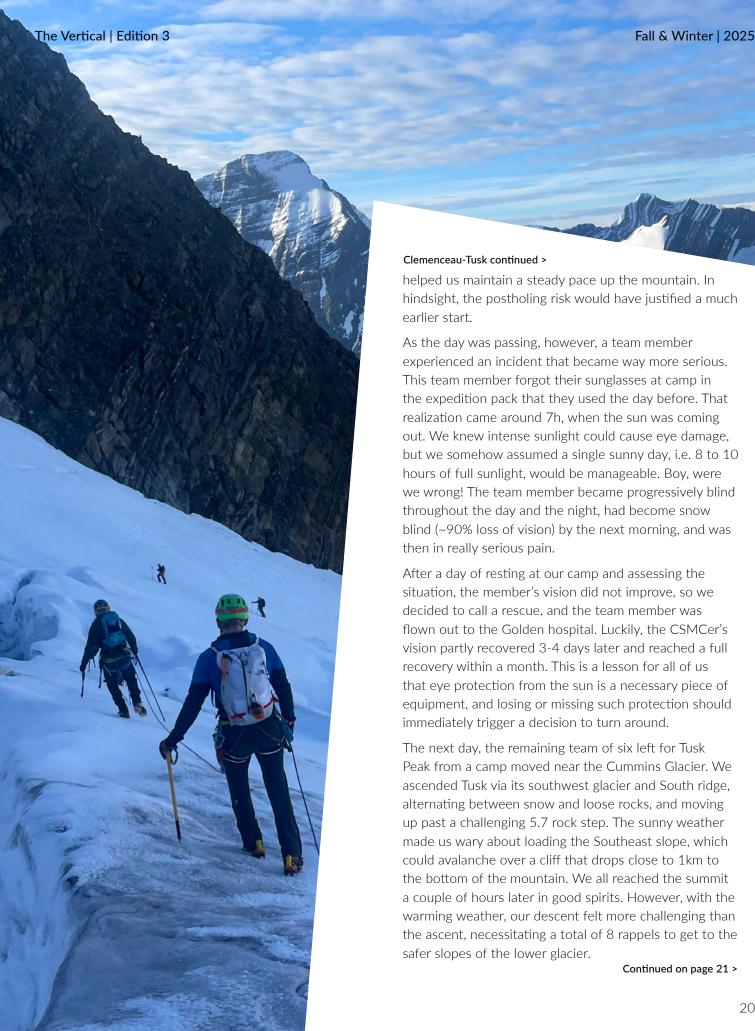
Our trip preparation started in earnest in January, when CSMCers typically begin scheduling their summer holidays and the coming mountaineering season. Over the following months, we assembled a strong team that built its training schedule around the Clemenceau & Tusk expedition. As preparation, some team members went climbing in Peru while others summited Recondite Peak (an 11,000er), on another 3-day CSMC trip in mid July. Two days prior to our expedition departure, the helicopter company let us

know the forestry road was washed out on the way in, a situation that compromised our access to the staging area if the logging company could not promptly repair it. After a few hours of online discussion and researching lots of options, we departed with a few plotted departure scenarios, knowing that the helicopter could pick us up wherever we would be along the forestry road, as long as there was a safe landing zone somewhere on the way to the mouth of Kinbasket River.

In the end, the road was repaired in time, and we made it to the initially planned staging area. Two hours later, after two flights, we all reached the South shoulder of Mount Clemenceau, where we set up our camp. Overlooking the upper Cummins glacier and the spectacular North face of Tusk Peak, we felt privileged to camp in such a pristine and awe-inspiring location at the toe of the Mt Clemenceau glaciated West face, where heard water and rocks tumbling down the face in the distance.

The next day, in two rope teams, we started our climbing by 5:30 under a clear sky, all reaching the snowy and sunny summit by noon, and returning to our camp by 16:30, after navigating around a few large crevasses ½ of the way up. The significant accumulation of fresh snow in early July slowed our progress higher up on the mountain. All of us were punching through the snow crust, sometimes knee deep or even deeper, as the temperatures were rising, except Anh, who floated on the snow surface, leaving bird-like prints in the snow. Taking turns to break trail

Continued on page 20 >



The Vertical | Edition 3 Fall & Winter | 2025



Clemenceau-Tusk continued >

Sixteen hours after our departure, we were back at our camp, after a climbing day that turned out, once again, longer than anticipated. We ate well, basked in the evening light, and continued to enjoy the views of the surrounding mountains.

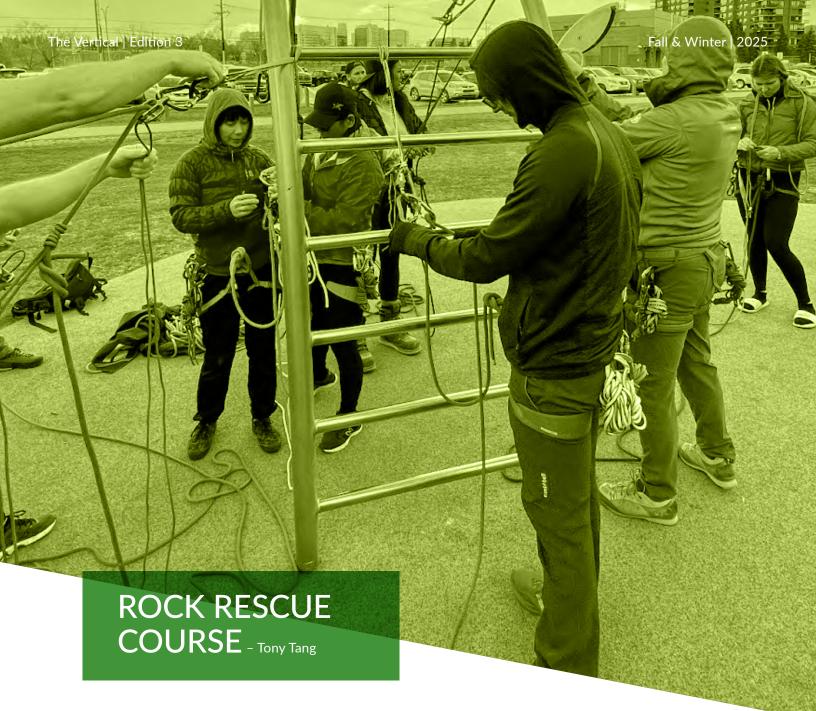
The next day, we started the glaciated 24-km traverse to Tsar Mountain, first descending the Tusk glacier, then crossing the Duplicate glacier, and then started our ascent up the Clemenceau Glacier that features a crevasse field lower down. While our initial plan was to bypass the crevasse field on its South side, we decided to change plans since that approach was exposed to rockfall from a cliff higher up. We thus went up in the middle in two rope teams, aiming to exit the glacier before the crevasse field became too intricate.

Once in the middle of it, though, it became too difficult to navigate the terrain and know where to best exit the glacier. We were enticed to go further up, thinking a flatter zone above the crevasses was a short distance away. Thus, we continued up for an hour or so, going up and down crevasses by climbing WI3 ice. Big mistake! Our two teams got separated, and all of a sudden, our mindset turned to simply trying to get out of the crevasse labyrinth.

Our two teams succeeded at this task a few hours later, and we called it a day. While each team was setting up their camp on the North and South sides of the Clemenceau Glacier, 1.5 km apart, we dreaded the stormy weather in the forecast over the next couple of days. We also considered the very long walking distance to get to the vehicles from our location and the fact that we had used our two spare days, making an ascent of Tsar Mountain no longer possible.

Therefore, we collectively decided to fly out from our respective camps. Our planned ascent of Tsar Mountain would have to wait another year! In this situation, InReach devices were instrumental in helping us to communicate with each other and the helicopter company. While our expedition was scheduled to last a maximum of eight days, we were back to our vehicles the sixth day after our departure.

A well-deserved cold bath and swim in Kinbasket Lake was top of mind once we landed. Overall, the expedition was a fun and challenging experience, full of learning lessons, and we pushed some limits while not breaking them with potentially dramatic



Keeping with what has now become an annual CSMC tradition, this year's free Rock Rescue Course brought members together for three evening sessions and a full mountain day led by Kevin and Tony.

Day 1 saw members learn about gear, anchors, guide belays, and climbing hitches. Day 2 had members building 3:1 and 5:1 hauling systems, as well as how to transfer a load using a block and tackle. Day 3 had members rappelling past a damaged rope and practising the skills learned

in the previous days. On the final mountain day, members headed to the mountains to practise ascending a rope, different lowering techniques from the top, as well as introducing high-efficiency devices such as Tiblocs and Micro Traxions. The course offered a fun and supportive environment where members could learn practical techniques for dealing with mountain climbing emergencies.

If you missed it this year, stay tuned to the CSMC events calendar for more rope skills practice opportunities throughout the year.



Join the CSMC WhatsApp Community

Stay connected with fellow adventurers through the CSMC WhatsApp community. The group includes a candy store of chats for ice climbing, rock climbing, skiing, packrafting, mountaineering, scrambling, and training.

To join, open WhatsApp, tap the camera icon and scan the code below.



CSMC Sport Captains support the Organizers and Membership.

Here are your Sport Captains and the categories they each represent:

1. Ski

Michael Schoemaker, Dave Murray, Mika Hakkola

2. Ice Climb

Kris Tranter, Jerry Richardson

3. Rock Climb

Alex Joseph & Eric Klaszus

4. Mountaineering

Mark Koob & Ildar Idrisov, & Joad Clément

5. Scramble / Hike

Brandon Bouillier

6. Watersports

Lisa Lee-Johnson & Tamas Fustos

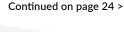
Captains do the following:

- 1. Vet trips for their sport. (Safety/Risk, Skills, Conditions).
- 2. Support Organizers for their sport. (Trip ideas, Member vetting, general support)
- 3. Keep some equipment for shared use (Club Gear).

New Waiver Process:

In 2024, CSMC introduced a new liability waiver prepared by a lawyer. All participants must read, understand, and sign this waiver. Once signed, it's valid for the rest of the calendar year.

Each organizer will include a new waiver link (provided to them by Gerry Richardson) in their trip description. Before you can be moved from the waitlist to the go list, your membership must be paid and your waiver must be current. If you haven't yet signed the new waiver, click on the waiver link in the trip description and your organizer will sign it too. Once completed, the organizer can add you to the trip right away, and the club will update your status within a few days. Note: When your waiver is completed and received by CSMC, your Meetup profile will show a Custom Title such as W-26 for 2026) to confirm your waiver year.









The goal of the CSMC goal is to advance recreation by providing opportunities to Canadians regardless of age, gender, cultural, or religious background, or physical ability to learn and develop the skills necessary for pleasure and recreation in the Canadian Rocky Mountains."

