

»»Raush River Trek

In September of 1997, three Dunster residents set of to hike through the Raush River valley. The goal of the trip was to explore the length of the undeveloped portion of the watershed, and to bring to the public's attention the value of the area as an undisturbed wilderness area. The hike also marked the beginning of a lengthy campaign to keep that watershed in a pristine state.



The trek to explore the Raush watershed began by driving to the North Thompson Forest Service Road. From there the hikers followed a tributary south to McAndrew Lake Recreation Area. The group then went through a pass, entering Wells Gray Provincial Park, and followed Argyle Creek from its headwaters to its confluence with the Azure River. From there they traveled along the Azure upstream to its source. This took them past the gold fields discovered by Louis Knutson, and to a remarkably flat alpine meadow in the pass between the Azure and Raush used in the past for an airplane landing strip, Finally, after four and a half days of hard work, they had entered the Raush system.



Once in the Raush system the party proceeded downstream until they reached the pass between the lower Raush and the west fork of Kiwa Creek, where they had arranged to have a vehicle parked. All in all, the hikers considered it an extremely valuable experience, despite the difficulties. Memorable moments of the trip included animal encounters, treacherous stream crossings, fantastic scenic views, giant ancient cedars, more bushwhacking than they would like to remember, and the extreme frustration of being a day overdue and watching a search and rescue helicopter, hunting for but failing to spot them.



The total trek was approximately 80km, as the crow flies, but much more distance was actually traveled. The hike was projected to take 7 to 10 days, but actually took eleven days due to unforeseen obstacles (particularly a large section of recent blow down that was several square kilometers).

Despite the adversities, the hike of the Raush was considered a great trip. FHA has more recently engaged in a trail building initiative starting from the pass at the west fork of Kiwa Creek and following the route of the hike. The 1997 trek provided a great deal of preliminary information for the present trail building project. Additionally, the hike highlighted the vast recreational potential in the Raush watershed.

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