

Trip Notes – Banff & Kootenay in Canadian Rockies August 20-29, 2009

Why? This was my 4th Timber Tours venture, the first being *Yellowstone and Tetons* last July, *Death Valley* in February and *Yosemite* this July. Timberline Tours offer good destinations and guides, are convenient, and give a lot for the money.

While the Canadian Rockies didn't offer the big headline like the California Rockies (Half Dome for example), everywhere were huge panoramas that are now permanently etched in my mind's eye if not piecemeal in my camera. The hiking was plenty strenuous for me and the variety as much as one could wish for. Fortunately, like all other Timberline Tours, the guides and participants were also a delight. Besides, why not?

Highlights - as they come to mind

- Backcountry "Shadow Lake Lodge" requiring hiking in over Gibbon Pass (7500') and taking about 8 hours. I'd never packed out for 2 nights, never experienced a cabin without electricity, and I never expected hot showers and gourmet food either, but there they were.
- Lake Louise with its Fairmont Hotel set in a magical and hard to believe glacial setting with even a tea house a few hours up Beehive Mountain.
- Banff Springs Hotel as seen from across the canyon -- sitting majestically above the quaint but touristy town of Banff.
- Unique and special hikers on this trip to include Chuck from my Yellowstone/Grand Tetons adventure.
- Being able to keep up with the rest of the tour. After ascending Sentinel Pass, one hiker wanted to hike the optional trail, another was willing, but we needed four hikers (add the guide) to abide by the park's grizzly bear rules so I went and went easily.



Photoshow – Tom has culled my zillions of photos and offers up a show at this link www.photoshow.com/members/tomskoi. It's called Canadian Rockies.



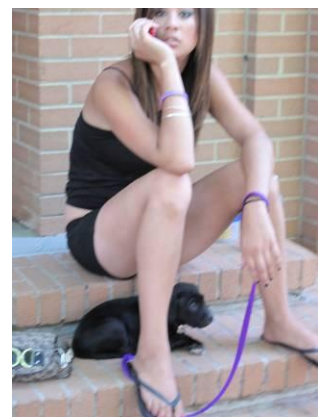
Calgary the town

I had arrived three days before the start of the tour to acclimate and to see the town. Due to the Kansas City memorial I'd been unable to research well, so I hired a city tour guide one day and then returned to visit the top sights on my own.

- Fort Calgary is a 1800s restoration with film, guide and full museum on the outside of town.
- Calgary Tower is their space needle, formed in the shape of an Olympic torch, containing views, revolving restaurant and museum.
- A massive overhead and covered passageway connects most major downtown buildings and shops from both their heavy snows and from their 90 degree temperatures while I was there.
- Seventh Street pedestrian walkway is lined with historical stone faced buildings housing mostly boutique shops and restaurants and traversing much of downtown.
- Old City Hall is connected to the huge new 'V' wing that's both modern and striking.
- Olympic Square is across the street and was host to the '88 Olympic Awards ceremony, now containing water features and lovely sitting areas covered over with trellises.
- Olympic Park's ski jump remains from the '88 Olympics and going to the top reminded me of Lake Placid's tour in June. Their museum allowed us to hold one of the original torches. The trails for mountain bikers gave us loads of eye candy.
- Stampede Park holds one of the largest of its kind every summer when about 1 million arrive. It is also home to the Calgary Flames Hockey team.



Here are some residents of Calgary. Cute dog, yes?



Banff Park -- One of the days I took a Banff full day tour since this tour would cover areas not on my hiking trip. Cascade Mountain, Two Jack's Lakes, around Lake Minnewanka, Bow Falls where two famous blondes went over the falls (Marilyn Monroe and Lassie), the hot springs, and the village of Banff gave me a nice preview of the Rockies. Made all the easier by a 2600 meter cable car ride up Sulfur Mountain. It seems rather too bad that I didn't have time to go up to Jasper but that will have to be added to another Rockies trip.



Pictures are of Lake Louise, up on top of the Beehive is the 'teahouse' and view of Chateau Lake Louise, a Fairmont Hotel where we dined.

The 6 day hike itself – using web site info

We were picked up from our Calgary hotel by van and drove a couple hours to Lake Louise. Fairly easy leisurely hiking along and above the lake to Agnes' Teahouse before dinner at the famous Fairmont Hotel of Lake Louise. Just like in Switzerland, one can hike a couple hours and find a 'teahouse' on top of the mountain.

The picture is of our group minus Craig, one of the leaders, and minus my friend from the Yellowstone trip, Chuck, who was taking a picture, though not this one. I'm still waiting for his (smile)!

Our hotel was Paradise Lodge in Lake Louise (see #2 below and/or <http://www.paradiselodge.com/>) for 2 nights and was unusually nice with private cabin appearances, two rooms, small kitchen and sofa. I was pleased to have free internet access since Kansas City duties continued.



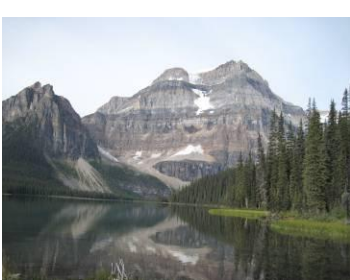
On **day 2** we shuttled the short distance to Moraine Lake to trek through the flowering meadows of beautiful Larch Valley, surrounded by the spectacular spires of the Ten Peaks that hover above the valley, to the awesome switchbacks leading to majestic Sentinel Pass. Parts of this rocky moonscape and very steep trail were unnerving with bare 18" of single track along a steep cliff. The views from Sentinel's summit are incredible; the expanse of the awesome Paradise Valley unfolds before us to the north while the snow-clad summits of the Ten Peaks fill the southern horizon. We returned to Larch Valley for an optional visit to nearby Eiffel Lake along a trail that perhaps offers the most spectacular views of Moraine Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks. This day was around 12

miles and took us from early morning until 5:30pm and since Eiffel Lake was optional, we only had about 15 minutes to get ready for dinner at a cute and noted Train Station.



Day 3 said goodbye to Lake Louise. I might have liked to stay a few days but our adventure was unique if not nervous making to me. We began a 3-day backcountry adventure they promised we won't soon forget. A van shuttled to the Vista Lake Trailhead at the summit of Vermillion Pass near the Continental Divide where we descended immediately to Vista Lake. As you may have guessed, we then climbed to a beautiful Arnica Lake, whose shores are ablaze with the abundant blooms for which the Lake is named. Our trail led to the picturesque Twin Lakes and then climbed to the tundra at timberline astride 7500' Gibbons Pass. A rapid descent and we're at magnificent **Shadow Lake**, a backcountry jewel in the heart of Banff National Park. This would be our home for the next two nights. Though only about 9 miles, it took us all day and we arrived just in time for the end of tea and pastries. The scene and view was breathtaking and I don't expect I was the only one with tears in my eyes. We were all saying 'lucky – lucky – lucky' and we all would have been delighted to stay longer.

More about Shadow Lake Lodge is at #3 below and at <http://www.shadowlakelodge.com/heaven.html> This is backcountry with limited to no power or flush toilets, but luxury cabins. But dream of what delights backcountry might be and they had it all from gourmet meals, pastries, hot showers and absolutely lovely cabins complete with down comforters.



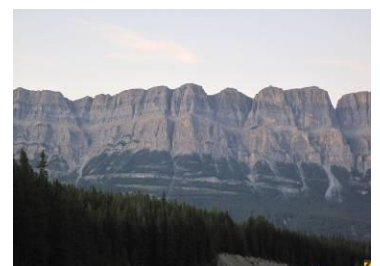
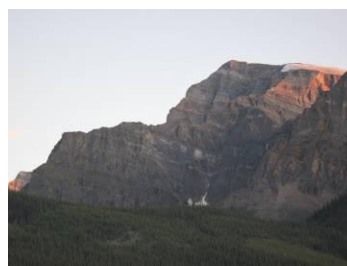
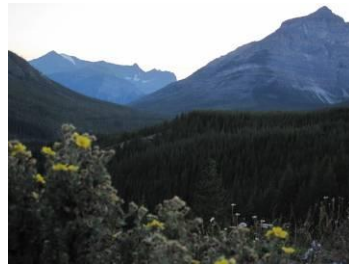
On **day 4**, painful though it may sound, an incredible reward awaits hardy souls willing to leave the delicious warmth of down-quilted beds at sunrise and hike to close by Shadow Lake. As the sun rises and illuminates the crown of rugged Ball Mountain, its reflection in the glassy, still waters of Shadow Lake is a photographer's fantasy. Then onto the usual hearty breakfast that is a Shadow Lake tradition, pack lunches from a sumptuous spread, and then take the optional hike from the Lodge beyond Shadow Lake to beautiful Haiduk Lake, nestled at the

base of Whistling Pass. This too was a full day of climbing despite it only being about 10 miles.

For **day 5**, following another super Shadow Lake breakfast, we had to pack up. No one would want to leave but another hike loomed which was fairly leisurely along Red Earth Creek in a long descent into the Bow River Valley about 9 miles. This was the flattest of all our hikes. Enroute to our final overnight destination at the remarkable Storm Mountain Lodge, we paused at Johnston Canyon to hike along the falls that tumbled through this narrow chasm. I don't think anybody else on our tour got to the end of the two falls and I had to really scramble to do so but it was worth the effort.



Our hotel for the night was Storm Mountain Lodge (see #4 and/or www.stormmountainlodge.com). This wasn't my favorite, but it sure was unique, and it had the best of all dinners. As noted on Timberline's website: Among those of our guests who are veterans of many of our prior programs, Storm Mountain Lodge, perched majestically at the Continental Divide at Vermillion Pass, is perhaps their favorite.



The mountains in the center picture are those we climbed to their saddle to get to Shadow Lake.

Finally to **day 6** and final day: We'll try our best to pry you out of Storm Mountain Lodge in the morning for a final hike into the Stanley Glacier Basin and a close-up view of Stanley Glacier prior to our return to Calgary. This was only about 6 miles but first through easy uphill forest but finally over scree and boulders.



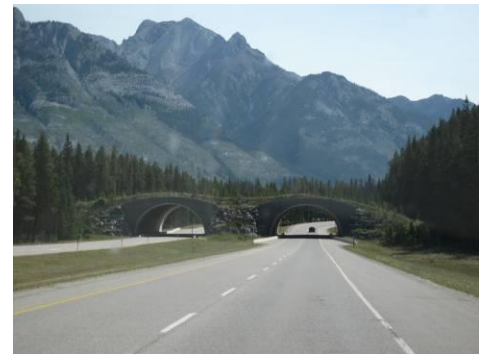
Lunch time gave us a couple hours stop in Banff for shopping and viewing. I was glad to have already been there on my tour from Calgary.

We were tired

There were no mishaps until the last day and then they just kept happening. One guy slipped on the skree and rolled a couple times down a hill, another one slid on the same trail, and still another got tangled in his shoelaces in Banff and took an ugly spill, followed by the first guy falling off his restaurant bar stool. (I'm not making this up.)

There were however turned ankles and massive blistering. I was lucky and only on day 4 (after using a new pair of untested socks – stupid) did I acquire a tiny heel blister. After watching others wrap every toe and heel with massive amounts of duct tape all over their feet did I appreciate my good fortune. While touching wood and holding my breath, I think my good luck is from having custom-made orthotics and light weight shoes. The 'boots crews' seemed to suffer.

I love this following picture. The Canadians have given wildlife a crossover or a tunnel to continue their migrations. See the underpass with forest atop?



What's next?

I'm hot to go on another hiking tour! Can I really wait for May's Grand Canyon Rim-to-Rim and June's Columbia River Gorge out of Portland and Alaska's Kenai in August. I want to see Glacier National Park too. I want. I want. Gotta go while you can

Really – I'm home 4 days before leaving to Albuquerque's Marathon, then home 2 days before Tom and I depart for Milan and the Northern Italian Lakes for 2 weeks, another 2 days home before Omaha Marathon and all that is before September is out.

October brings two half marathons and a visit with Kathrine Switzer in NYC, Hyde Park area for the Roosevelt Presidential Library and the Culinary Arts Institute with Kathy, and Kansas City's Waddell &

Reed Marathon mid-October when I'll spend some extra days to see Marie and hopefully the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene Kansas.

November is my 5th NYC Marathon, the Indianapolis Marathon only 6 days later (can I really do that?), as well as the Philadelphia Marathon. In between I see a bit of blank space and am toying with a trip to Rome (which is NOT allowed to be booked until I clean up some piles at home.) Plus a couple smaller local races that are traditional on the Thanksgiving weekend.

December is the Tucson Marathon and Tom will go too for touring. We keep talking about Paris for the holidays but it doesn't make a lot of sense. Who knows what else, but am I blessed, or am I blessed

Itinerary – with tour repeated but saved intact in case someone wants to use the itinerary

Thu Aug 20

7:30am Depart Newark through Houston to Calgary arriving at 2pm.

Hotel: Calgary Holiday Inn-Airport
1250 McKinnon Drive NE, Calgary Alberta T2E 717
Tele 403 230 1999 with free wireless

Fri Aug 21

City tour

Sat Aug 22

Banff valley tour

Sun Aug 23 – Day 1

9:00am Van shuttle from Holiday Inn - Airport

Hotel Paradise Lodge in Lake Louise (2) for 2 nights
Box 7, Lake Louise, Alberta T0L 1E0
info@ParadiseLodge.com Tele: (403) 522-3595
<http://www.paradiselodge.com/>

Mon Aug 24 – Day 2

Shuttle the short distance to Moraine Lake and trek through the flowering meadows of beautiful Larch Valley, surrounded by the spectacular spires of the Ten Peaks that hover above the valley, to the awesome switchbacks leading to majestic Sentinel Pass. The views from Sentinel's summit are incredible; the expanse of the awesome Paradise Valley unfolds before us to the north while the snow-clad summits of the Ten Peaks fills the southern horizon. We'll return to Larch Valley for a visit to nearby Eiffel Lake along a trail that perhaps offers the most spectacular views of Moraine Lake and the Valley of the Ten Peaks (11-12 miles).

Tue Aug 25 Day 3

Depart Lake Louise to begin a 3-day backcountry adventure you won't soon forget. We'll van shuttle to the Vista Lake Trailhead at the summit of Vermillion Pass near the Continental Divide and descend immediately to Vista Lake. As you may have guessed, we'll then climb to beautiful Arnica Lake, whose shores are ablaze with the abundant blooms for which the Lake is named. Our trail leads to the picturesque Twin Lakes and then climbs to the tundra at timberline astride Gibbons Pass. A rapid descent and we're at magnificent **Shadow Lake**, a backcountry jewel in the heart of Banff National Park, and our home for the next two nights (9 miles).

Hotel Shadow Lake Lodge (3) for 2 nights
P.O. Box 2606, Banff, Alberta T01 OLO
Tele 403 762 0116
<http://www.shadowlakelodge.com/heaven.html>

This is backcountry with limited to no power or flush toilets, but luxury cabins with a bath set up.

Wed Aug 26 – Day 4

Painful though it may sound, an incredible reward awaits those hardy souls willing to leave the delicious warmth of down-quilted beds at sunrise and hike the 1/2-mile to Shadow Lake. As the sun rises and illuminates the crown of rugged Ball Mountain, its reflection in the glassy, still waters of Shadow Lake is a photographer's fantasy. We'll return to the lodge for the usual hearty breakfast that is a Shadow Lake tradition, pack lunches from a sumptuous spread, and then hike from the Lodge beyond Shadow Lake to beautiful Haiduk Lake, nestled at the base of Whistling Pass (10 miles).

Thu Aug 27 - Day 5

Following another incredible Shadow Lake breakfast, we'll hike leisurely along Red Earth Creek in a long descent into the Bow River Valley (9 miles). Enroute to our final overnight destination at the remarkable Storm Mountain Lodge, we'll pause at Johnston Canyon and hike along the falls that tumble through this narrow chasm (2 miles).

Hotel Storm Mountain Lodge (4) for 1 night
 PO Box 3249, Banff, Alberta T01 OCO
 Tele: 403 762 4155
 Email: info@stormmountainlodge.com <http://www.stormmountainlodge.com/>

Among those of our guests who are veterans of many of our prior programs, Storm Mountain Lodge, perched majestically at the Continental Divide at Vermillion Pass, is perhaps their favorite.

Fri Aug 28 – Day 6

We'll try our best to pry you out of Storm Mountain Lodge in the morning for a final hike into the Stanley Glacier Basin and a close-up view of Stanley Glacier prior to our return to Calgary (6 miles).

Hotel Holiday Inn Airport – arrangements made through Timber and reconfirmed

Sat Aug 29

1:04pm Depart Calgary through Houston with arrival in Newark at 11:43pm

(2) Paradise Lodge in Lake Louise - Located in the heart of the Canadian Rockies just 1 km from beautiful Lake Louise, Paradise Lodge and Bungalows allows each guest to fully enjoy a true mountain experience. Our guests visit from around the world to relax and surround themselves in our spectacular scenery.

Paradise Lodge was originally named after a segment of hiking trails called Paradise Valley and Paradise Creek, easily accessible for the hiker's pleasure. Red Cooper, original founder, hiked these trails many times and proclaimed "Never have my eyes experienced such a magnificent sight as the mountains and area surrounding Paradise Valley".

Two types of accommodations are offered at Paradise, one being individual cabins which have been fully modernized and feature private access and parking. Built in the 1930's, the cabins have amazed

guests with their charm and cleanliness and were recognized as an important cultural and heritage resource in the recently completed Lake Louise Community Plan. The cabins have been fully modernized with the redecoration respecting the heritage and rustic theme. The second type of accommodation is provided by way of two separate building housing lodge suites. The lodge suites feature one and two bedroom units with and without kitchens. In the suites, care has been taken to preserve the rustic theme without sacrificing modern-day amenities.

Owned and operated by the Pedersen family for the past 50 years, the Pedersen's take extreme pride in Paradise Lodge. Consequently, extremely high standards of quality and excellence have been maintained. The Lodge is well known for its flower gardens and grounds keeping and is a fourteen-time recipient of the Alberta Housekeeping Award.

(3) Brewster's Shadow Lake Lodge in Banff

<http://www.shadowlakelodge.com/heaven.html>

Situated in the high alpine meadows of Banff National Park, Brewster's Shadow Lake Lodge is a remote back country lodge with cabins, accessible only by hiking or cross-country skiing. Well established trails lead through vast meadows to mountain passes and down to adjoining valleys. Your alpine adventure at Brewster's Shadow Lake Lodge will provide you with a rare holiday in a unique National Park Lodge. We promise exemplary service and individual attention in the splendor of the Canadian Rockies backcountry.

Shadow Lake, A Piece of Heaven, by Sonia Kuczaj – reporter

When Bud Brewster bought Shadow Lake Lodge for a down payment of \$50 in the early 1950s it was a small, lone cabin in the middle of nowhere. Situated in the backcountry next to one of Banff National Park's most spectacular lakes at Ball Mountain, Brewster knew there was something special about the area.

Over the years, Brewster and his father Claude eventually sold their other properties, including the Lake Agnes Tea House and the Lake O'Hara Lodge. But Brewster refused to sell Shadow Lake Lodge. "Dad saw the value of Shadow and always had," said Alison Brewster, who now operates the lodge with her husband Bryan Niehaus.

On Thursday (Oct. 2), the couple won the Banff Heritage Tourism Best Environmental Practice award, beating out the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. Brewster said she had not even bothered writing a speech, believing that Fairmont would win the award. Robyn Dinnadge, executive director of the Banff Heritage Tourism Corporation, said Shadow Lake Lodge was the chosen winner for its progressive efforts. "It is not just about meeting the minimum or legislative environmental standards, but demonstrating leadership and environmental excellence in providing a quality wilderness experience for visitors," she said. No longer a single cabin, Shadow Lake Lodge these days consists of 12 cabins, which can accommodate a total of 48 guests.

Prior to Bud Brewster buying it, the original Shadow Lake rest house had been constructed in 1929 by Canadian Pacific Railway, then sold to Brewster Transport in 1937, which later sold it to Bud Brewster. From the 1950s until the 1990s, the cabin did not operate on a commercial basis.

However, it was used periodically for large outfitting operations and a small tour guiding operation had been based out of the facility.

Alison said her father tried to get permission to expand the lodge in the 1980s under the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program. On July 13, 1991 phase one of the developments was approved and development started the next day. “Deep down my father always wanted it to happen, but I don’t know if he actually believed that it ever really would,” she said. With the development came the need to follow Parks Canada regulations to minimize the impact on the environment.

In the backcountry there is no power, so coming up with efficient ways to run the lodge required some innovative thinking. To reduce green house emissions, Niehaus said the lodge stopped using kerosene lamps last year and has switched to solar power. Niehaus said that also reduces the risk of a potential fire. Other initiatives include the installation of an engineered settling system through which grey water is oxygenated and passed through to remove all grease and food particles, before being dispersed into the tile field. In addition, water consumption is metered for better management and all soaps and detergents used on the premises are phosphate free. “We have been doing everything we were told to do, but in a manner which exceeds what they (Parks Canada) expect,” Niehaus said.

While strategic thinking has helped Shadow Lake Lodge move forward, Niehaus said that not every backcountry lodge is as fortunate. “We have sun exposure, (and) a creek that doesn’t dry up. Whoever picked the spot there for the original cabin knew what they were doing,” Niehaus said. To keep Shadow Lake Lodge moving in the right direction Niehaus said he would like to install a composting unit in the future, but is searching for a unit that can withstand the cold. “They freeze, that is the biggest hurdle,” he said. For now, the lodge will continue flying human waste out and depositing it in the Banff waste treatment plant twice a year. Opportunities for the application of micro-hydro are also being investigated to provide a more consistent power source, and to reduce the requirement for large battery banks.

Brewster said preserving and sharing the heritage of Shadow Lake Lodge is important to her family and it is a piece of family history that she will not put up for sale. “My father sold Lake O’Hara, but he kept Shadow because to this day, my father still believes that Shadow is one of the nicest areas in the national parks,” she said. “And it truly is a piece of heaven.”

- Banff Heritage Tourism Awards Winners
- Most Innovative Commitment to National Park and World Heritage Site Awareness – Parks Canada’s Mountain World Heritage Interpretive Theatre
- Best Heritage Related Product or Service – Simpson’s Num-Ti-Jah Lodge. Banff Tours received an honorable mention.
- Best Environmental Practices – Brewster’s Shadow Lake Lodge
- Strongest Commitment to Staff Heritage Orientation – Mountain Parks Heritage Interpretation Association
- Best “Wonder of Water” Themed Initiative – Banff Mountain Summit 2003: Mountains as Water Towers
- Award for Heritage Excellence – White Mountain Adventures

(4) Storm Mountain Lodge was constructed in 1922 as one of eight Bungalow Camps built by Canadian Pacific Railway to promote tourism in the Rocky Mountains. The completion of a coast-to-coast railway in 1885 significantly contributed to the arrival of visitors and to the popularity of this area. Storm Mountain Bungalow Camp originally consisted of a log lodge with a broad verandah, six log bungalows, a public bathhouse, and bathroom. Six years later another six log bungalows were added. The original lodge and bungalows are still enjoyed by guests today.

The Banff-Windermere Highway officially opened June 1923. The road reaches its pinnacle at Vermillion Pass, elevation 1708 m. (5624 ft.) It is at this location that Storm Mountain Lodge was built to capture the grandeur of the panoramic vistas. Continuing south, the highway enters Kootenay National Park and crosses the Rockies to the Columbia Valley. In the early 1920's, Canadian Pacific proclaimed this route as the most spectacular motor trip on the continent.

The area was then referred to as Rocky Mountain Park. Despite its designation as a National Park the exploitation of resources through hunting, mining and logging occurred until 1930 when a new National Parks Act ended the commercial exploitation and made resource protection a priority.

There is a long history of forest fires in the area. The most recent occurred in 2003 when a fire, started by lightning, consumed 17,000 hectares. While this fire stopped five kilometers from the lodge, an earlier fire in 1968, came much closer. A change in the wind direction saved Storm Mountain Lodge in both fires. A restoration project on all of the historic buildings began in 2003. The interior and exterior of each cabin is being completely restored in a manner that retains the authenticity of these 1922 buildings.

December 17, 2004, marked another important historical date as Storm Mountain Lodge opened to guests for the first time in the winter. Now Storm Mountain can be experienced in all its' winter splendor.

In the past Storm Mountain has also been known as Castle Mountain Bungalow Camp and Mount Eisenhower Bungalow Camp.

Elevation 1708 m. (5600 ft.)

From www.timbertours.com 800 417 2453

Dates: (6 days, 5 nights; Sun-Fri) Aug. 23-28

Assembly Point: Lake Louise - Airline service to Calgary; bus or Timberline van shuttle between Calgary airport and Lake Louise prior to and following tour.

Tour Cost: \$2,095 - (includes all lodging, all meals, park entrance fees, van shuttles between Calgary and Lake Louise, leaders, trail maps & narratives) Plus \$400 guaranteed single occupancy.