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# FRIENDS OF BLACK MOUNTAIN/SNTSK'IL'NTEN SOCIETY

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## New Regional Park

Welcome to our first newsletter. The iconic mountain on the east slopes of highway 33 is now a regional park dedicated to the conservation of this beautiful and varied ecosystem. In this and future newsletters we hope to keep you informed of news of this park, as well as share our knowledge of the wildlife, history and events of which you can partake. Hopefully by next spring there will be marked trails, parking and facilities so everyone can enjoy the natural wonders of the park.



The mountain has many beautiful vistas. This photo on the left is taken from the top of the mountain looking west to the valley below on a day when the clouds hovered but then the sun shone through.

There is an access road to the top which is used by Fortis and other companies who have communication towers, which are visible from highway 33.

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[www.friendsofblackmountain.com](http://www.friendsofblackmountain.com)

## AGM Speakers John Powell and Ian Pooley



“Volcanoes and Glaciers” was the topic of John Powell’s presentation at the Friends of Black Mountain AGM on Feb. 8th. Showing recent photographs of landforms of the Okanagan, he identified evidence of volcanoes and glacial erosion and deposits that shaped our valley.

If you look at the top bench of Rutland and scan across to the top of the sharp cliffs of South-East Kelowna you will get an idea of the depth and breadth

of the ancient Penticton Lake. Imagine the water then flowing north to the Fraser and you will get a sense of the changes that have taken place since 10 million years ago. The string of lakes, including Lake Okanagan and the river, now Mission Creek are remnants of this earlier age.

Undulating hills, hanging ‘U’ valleys and grassland plains are all evidence of glacial erosion and depositions. This terrain is unlike any other in B.C.



Jumping ahead to the more recent past, Ian Pooley gave a well documented presentation of the history of early settlers of Black Mountain going back 150 years.

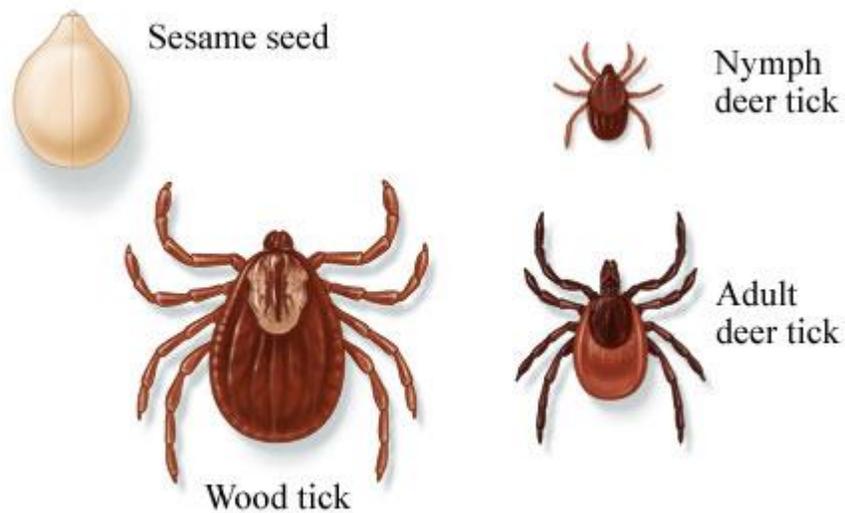
Ian used old photographs, some dating back to the early 1900s taken from his grandfather’s album, to illustrate early ranches, farms and orchards of the area.

From early cattle grazing on what was once common land to the era of land ownership by the big cattle ranchers, and finally, the era of early preemptors trying to eke out a living on the grasslands, the history of Black Mountain is one of success for some, but failure for most.

Eli Lequime, an early rancher, took advantage of the opening up of the government land reserve in 1879 to purchase land circling a good part of the mountain, from Scotty Creek to the south slopes of Black Mountain. These slopes became the location of the Pyman horse ranch in 1911. Pyman did well

with his ranch but joined up during WWI and was later killed in the trenches. Sadly, Pyman had no successors to take up his endeavors. Sam Long who moved to the East Kelowna benches in 1902 had more success, putting in the first apple orchard on the benchlands. Today, all the early ranches around Black Mountain have gone, but a 1200 acre regional park has emerged for everyone to enjoy.

## Ticks



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Tick season is upon us. Fear of Lyme disease often keeps us away from spring hiking. Perhaps this is a good time to look at some facts about ticks and think about how to both avoid ticks and how to deal with them once one has hitchhiked unbidden to our skin.

Ticks really aren't that scary. They don't fly, they do not leap upon you from nearby bushes, they just creep onto you from the grass if you brush by them. They crawl up you to find a nice bit of exposed skin so they can feed on your blood. But they are slow and can be discovered once you get home and make a quick body check for them.

According to the British Columbia Medical Journal, the wood tick, most common in the interior, does not carry Lyme disease. Lyme disease carrying ticks, *Ixodes Pacificus*, are more common in coastal areas. They do not now exist north of 51 degrees latitude, but can live in the valley bottoms of the Okanagan. However the common wood tick can carry Rocky Mountain spotted fever. This toxin can cause temporary muscle weakness or paralysis, but symptoms subside once the tick is removed.

In 2011, a two year testing of ticks and deer mice (their carriers), in the Okanagan, found that antibodies for *B. burgdorferi* (Lyme disease) were all found to be negative.

According to this study it was concluded that, “There is no evidence to support an epidemic of Lyme disease in BC. The primary vector, *I. pacificus*, is found in populous areas in consistently low numbers, and rates of infection in the tick population remain less than 1%. Human case rates in BC are less than 0.5 per 100 000.”

However, if you do find a tick nestled into your skin, take some tweezers and gently pull the little devil out straight and slowly by the head – that’s the part penetrating your body. If a couple of days later you observe a bulls eye red circle on your skin, don’t ignore it. There is a complicated 2 step process to diagnose Lyme disease but it can be detected and treated.

Best to take precautions and follow simple procedures if you do detect a tick on you after a lovely hike on the trails of the Okanagan. Wear light colour clothing that covers most of your skin and tuck those pant legs into your socks. It may look dorky, but you might find others with you following suit. Wearing an insect repellent with Deet is recommended, but my experience is that a tick will walk right over Deet covered skin. The best bet is when you get home, shake out your boots outside, take off all your clothes in the bathroom and shake them out. Any little ticks that might fall out can be flushed down the toilet. Alternatively, you can put them in a sealed jar and take them into your doctor if a telltale bullseye appears. Then, have a shower, get a friend or partner to do a quick tick check of your hair and you can be pretty confident all is well. Don’t let the little insects deter you from getting out in nature.

Issue: BCMJ, Vol. 53, No. 5, June 2011, page(s) 224-229 Articles

[Bonnie Henry, MD, FRCPC](#), [Muhammad Morshed, MD, PhD, SCCM](#)

“Lyme Disease in British Columbia: Are we really missing an epidemic?”

## Future Plans for the Park

Hopefully, you too are starting to fall in love with this park and you want to get out and enjoy all the natural beauty that the park has to offer. How can you do this? What are the future plans for the park?

It may be a few years before signage, parking and washroom facilities are available, but the Friends of Black Mountain/Sntsk’il’nten Park are making opportunities for forays into the park and activities to improve the natural eco-systems. If you go to the website [www.friendsofblackmountain.com](http://www.friendsofblackmountain.com) you can see a weekly hiking schedule. Also, plans are being made to have bluebird boxes made and fencing to be put around parts of the park to deter cattle and quads. Meanwhile, keep in touch. We plan to provide a quarterly newsletter to keep you informed and share with you information on the park and its history.

