

Murtle Lake ‘risk is too high’

Trees falling on campers’ tents, but no warning from B.C. Parks

Michelle YOUNG
Kamloops Daily News

Less than two weeks after a Kamloops woman warned about trees falling on campers’ tents at Murtle Lake, a Kaslo woman died from exactly that.

The B.C. Coroners Service has named 66-year-old Alice Bernice Gilbert as the woman whose tent was crushed by a 38-metre high tree that fell on her tent.

Coroner Barb McLintock said Monday that Gilbert was camping with family and friends at Murtle Lake in Wells Gray Provincial Park. The tree came down at 5 a.m. Friday.

The Coroners Service and RCMP are still investigating the death.

Cathy Turnbull-Spence was camping at Site 10 at Murtle Lake with her kids and some other families a week and a half before Gilbert.

“From my experience, no signage. I didn’t know anything about weak trees.”

— Cathy Turnbull-Spence

A storm on the morning of Aug. 4 sent many from the group into their tents. But when the wind blew over a tent and some of the fathers heard a loud crack, the tents were evacuated. Thirty seconds later, the top half of a tree slammed into two tents and one of the canoes.

Turnbull-Spence said Monday when she heard about Gilbert’s death, her own narrow brush with trees falling only centimetres away from her own tent at Murtle Lake returned.

“I felt really shaky and ran out to tell my son. I could hardly talk to him at first,” she said.

That another family has suffered a worse fate hit her hard.

“I feel really badly for this lady. I’m sure for the family, it’s a really traumatic experience to go through.”

Although the park employees she spoke with after the incident were aware falling trees were a hazard in the area, there were no signs posted to warn visitors when she was there, she said.

“I went in and out and would have passed everything twice,” she said.

“From my experience, no signage. I didn’t know anything about weak trees.”

The B.C. Parks website does have a caution from August 2010 advising about a hazard from dead trees at Murtle Lake. But Turnbull Spence wondered if people check the site or if they would take the warning seriously.

“Even with a note, I would have thought the risk was fairly low. But after having made the trip, the risk is too high,” she said.

She also wanted to emphasize that the tree that fell on her group was green and alive, not a dead pine-beetle killed tree. She said staff explained that the pine-beetle trees have been removed, but the other trees lean on them and are thereby weakened with the pines gone.

“What bothered me is this problem is known. My thought was, if they know it, then people should know it if they go into that area,” she said.

“The tree that just missed us was a live tree. It cracked right in half. The people up there know there’s a problem.”

Murtle Lake is a popular spot for canoers and kayakers. It’s quiet because no motorized boats are allowed and hearing loons is common, she said.

But with unstable trees there, she questioned whether anyone should be allowed to camp nearby.

“I loved it there. It’s beautiful, but I would not risk taking my kids there. There’s no way,” she said.

“It went through my head, if it happened at night, you wouldn’t know which way to run. The risk is way too high for me to go there.”

A spokesperson for B.C. Parks or the Ministry of Environment did not return calls by deadline. The Kamloops Daily News also wrote a story about Turnbull Spence’s experience on Aug. 7 and calls were not returned from the ministry at that time.



CITIZEN PHOTO BY BRENT BRAATEN

Smelling the flowers

A bee says hello to a sunflower at the Community Garden at Victoria Street and Seventh Avenue.

ICBC urges road safety as school year nears

Citizen staff

With just two weeks to go before the school year begins, ICBC is not only asking parents to prepare their children to get to and from school safely but is also letting drivers know they have a role to play too.

The province’s automobile insurer issued tips this week for all three groups to review in the run up to the first day of classes.

For drivers

- When school is back in session, don’t forget that every school day, unless otherwise posted, a 30-km/h speed limit is in effect in school zones from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- When you’re dropping off your children in school zones, stop and allow them to exit the car on the side closest to the sidewalk. Never allow a child to cross mid-block.
- If a vehicle is stopped in front of you or in the lane next to you, they may be yielding to a pedestrian, so be prepared to stop. Always yield to pedestrians – it’s the law.
- School buses will be back on roads. Vehicles approaching from both directions must

- stop for school buses when their lights are flashing.
- Before getting into your vehicle, make a habit of walking around your vehicle to make sure no small children are behind it. Always look for pedestrians when you’re backing up.

For parents and students

- Post these safety tips in your home and review them with your children – even older children need to be reminded about road safety.
- Remove your headphones and put away your phone or other gadgets when crossing the street. Focus on the road so you can see, hear and respond safely.
- Make eye contact with drivers, so you both know you see each other.
- Road safety lessons should be fun and interactive. Memorize the chorus of Walk ‘n’ Roll, a song by children’s musician Will Stroet, which is included in ICBC’s Kindergarten to grade three road safety curriculum: “Wear something bright; Look left and look right; Wait for the light; Make sure you’re in the driver’s eyesight.”

- Teach your child to cross at intersections that have a pedestrian crossing light or a marked crosswalk whenever possible. Even at a crosswalk, be aware of traffic and always make sure that vehicles are stopped before walking. Use designated crossing points and follow pedestrian traffic signs and signals.
 - Dress to be seen. Wear bright or light coloured clothing. In dark or bad weather, wear reflective material on clothes or accessories.
 - Always walk on the inside edge of the sidewalk. This way, you’re further away from traffic. If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic so you can see oncoming vehicles and drivers see you.
 - Be aware of parked vehicles in a parking lot or on the road. A driver may not see you between parked vehicles and you may not see them moving. Before crossing or walking through a parking lot, stop and look left-right-left around parked vehicles. Children should avoid taking shortcuts through parking lots.
- In North Central B.C., on average, seven children aged five to 18 are killed and 340 are injured in 1,090 crashes every year, according to ICBC numbers.

Float plane crash victim remembered as soft-spoken hiker

The Canadian Press

VANCOUVER — A man identified on a mountaineering club website as one of two people killed in a float plane crash on the west coast of Vancouver Island last week is being described as an accomplished hiker who will be sorely missed.

Two people were killed, two others were wounded, and another two aboard the Air Nootka plane walked away without injuries last Friday when the aircraft crashed about 85 kilometres north of Tofino.

The B.C. Coroners Service

has not officially identified the deceased, but a survivor recovering in Victoria General Hospital has said in media reports Charles Turner and the pilot were killed.

Members of the Comox District Mountaineering Club said on their website’s online forum Turner was a former member and an avid climber who had scaled some of the world’s most significant peaks.

Parksville resident Christine Rivers declined comment when reached by telephone on Tuesday, but confirmed she posted on the forum fond memories of hiking with Turner.

“We are so upset about losing

Charles,” she wrote.

“He was a wonderful person, strong hiker and mountaineer, gentle, soft spoken, strong. He helped me a lot when I was a beginning hiker. He lent me his crampons to use for my first time up the south peak of Colonel Foster... Charles will be missed a lot. We are so sad.”

“Ken R” also posted: “I am shocked and sadden by this news. I was on some of the hikes that Charles led over the years... Charles was a gentle person, he will be missed.”

The Air Nootka plane, carrying five passengers and a pilot,

was heading towards Gold River on Friday morning when it went down, just minutes after take off, into a forested area.

The Transportation Safety Board said Monday it appears a fire broke out after the plane crashed. While the causes of the two deaths have yet to be determined, the board said Friday’s accident appears to confirm its fears that more lives will be lost if Transport Canada does not take action to prevent post-crash fires.

The TSB said it continues to investigate, and a report on the crash likely won’t be available until months later.

McGuire Road redesignated

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A group of rural residents lost their bid Monday night to keep the city from normalizing smaller lots in their neighbourhood.

Representatives from McGuire Road argued before city council against an official community plan amendment that would create a new rural category permitting lots one hectare in size.

One resident’s application to subdivide their property into two one-hectare parcels triggered a recommendation from planning staff to redesignate all 18 properties in the area. Ten out of the 18 parcels of land are already smaller than the current allowable two-hectare size, due to an old zoning bylaw.

“There are several disadvantages city staff may not have considered,” said Cristina Hutchinson, citing issues such as a strain on the aquifer and a

change to the rural character of the community.

Speaking on his applicant parents’ behalf, Jody Schroeder said that with more than half of the lots already subdivided, “one hectare lots are the character of the area.”

He also said that the concerns over increased traffic and noise concerns would be negligible from one lot getting rezoned and subdivided.

Council voted 6-3 in favour of the change, with Couns. Brian Skakun, Murry Krause and Albert Koehler in opposition.

“This isn’t to say those who can now subdivide, will,” said Mayor Shari Green.

A new rural zoning category was also approved to correspond with the new OCP designation (known as Rural D). The rezoning would only be applied to the current applicant’s property, but will be available for others to apply for in the future.

WALMART CORRECTION NOTICE

Our flyer distributed between Aug. 21 - 23 and effective Aug. 23 – 29, 2013. Page 6 : 3-Pack or 4-Pack Hockey Tape (#939332/43923/30/30118389...) at Multi 2 for \$10 or 5.97 each. The price is incorrect. The correct price is as follows : Multi 2 for \$10 or 5.28 each.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

R001589313

WALMART CORRECTION NOTICE

Our flyer distributed between Aug. 21 - 23 and effective Aug. 23 – 29, 2013. Page 6 Grocery Flyer. Page 8 SuperCentre Flyer: Ventura 9’ x 8’ Sport Dome Tent (#30593237) at \$34. Unfortunately, this item will not be available for sale at Walmart.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

R001588048



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