

THE CHILLIWACK PROGRESS, Friday, October 24, 2003 19

BRITISH COLUMBIA

In British Columbia, getting outdoors is as natural as waking up each morning. This western province, riddled with mountains, lakes and rivers plus ocean shorelines is a haven for fresh air activities. No matter what the season, call a friend, bundle up the family, or take your visitors and head out for a walk.

Every small town or large city boasts trails in urban parks or wilderness green spaces in B.C. In Vancouver there is the ocean-hugging seawall — fun with the kids as there are beaches to explore and fish and chips to be eaten along the way. For a close-by wilderness walk, head to West Vancouver's Lighthouse Park; make sure everyone is wearing sensible footwear for these rugged trails. Pacific Spirit Park on Vancouver's West Side is particularly popular with birders.

For a walk with eclectic pleasures, head to North Vancouver's Capilano River Regional Park. Start at Cleveland Dam and wind

your way downhill. Watch for the Giant Fir Trail which leads to the biggest tree in the park — an impressive 2.4 metres (eight feet) in diameter and 61 metres (200 feet) tall. It's believed to be over 500 years old. Further along on this trail, on the opposite side of the river, you can learn all about salmon at the Salmon Hatchery.

• A hop, skip and look around the province reveals some all-time favourite places to stretch your legs and explore. Kelowna's lakeshore front setting is inviting. Starting at The Sails, an eye-catching sculpture in City Park, follow a lakeshore promenade past sandy beaches, busy marinas and man-made lagoons. If you are a history buff, this walk can be extended to take in the city's past — a brochure is available at the tourism office. For a family nature walk, you can't beat The Mission Greenway particularly in the fall when the Kokanee salmon spawn. This park, reached by driving up Springfield Road, also has an environmental education centre.

CONTINUED *from 18*

•TravelSmith (60 Levrone Court, Novato, CA 94949; 800-950-1600; www.travel-smith.com) has a line of luggage that it claims is 30 per cent lighter than conventional bags. It's made with a plastic frame and nylon fabric, uses in-line skate wheels and it's kind to a traveller's back and spine. The Lightweight 28" Roll-On is \$169US while the Lightweight 22" Roll-On is \$149US.

Tired of those umbrellas that self-destruct after one use? The Compact Lifetime Automatic Umbrella has an aluminum frame and weighs 11 ounces. It opens with one touch and costs \$25US.

Bookworms might like the 100-hour LED Travel Booklight, which provides 100 hours of light on a single set of four AAA batteries. Less than seven inches tall, it costs \$35US.

Finally, the High Security Shoulder Bag has a quarter-inch stainless steel cable that runs the length of the strap. It's \$79US. A similarly reinforced waist pack is \$59US.

• **Walkabout Travel Gear** (P.O. Box 1115, Moab, UT 84532; 800-852-7085; www.walkabouttravelgear.com) has a lot of items that would especially appeal to the Lonely Planet crowd — people who go off the beaten path but want to be well-prepared for the experience. For example, they sell a Travel Smoke Detector that weighs less than six ounces, measures 2.75"x3" and costs

\$19US. The Walkabout Door Lock is \$10.25 and is particularly useful for travellers staying in budget lodgings.

They have the Grundig Traveler II, an AM/FM short-wave radio that's smaller than a paperback book and costs \$65.

And, lastly, for those heading for the tropics and who like to keep a written diary, the Weatherproof

Travel Journal for \$6 and the Weatherproof Pen at \$7.95 might just be the ticket.

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