

WELLS GRAY TOURS 50th ANNIVERSARY

May 27, 2022 - 3 Days

*Travel back to the roots of Wells Gray
Tours with the founder, Roland Neave*

On May 20, 1972, a bus left Kamloops for a one-day tour to Wells Gray Park. On board were 40 members of the Shuswap Thompson River Research & Development Association and their guide, Roland Neave. STRRADA was protesting BC Hydro's plans to build 7 dams on the pristine Clearwater River in Wells Gray Park. Instead of lying down in front of bulldozers, they decided to run bus tours of the Park to show people where the dams would be built and the sights to be lost to flooding, even part of famous Helmcken Falls. The tours continued all summer and created lots of publicity, resulting in cancellation of the dams project. Roland and his geography friends at Simon Fraser University operated the tours each summer until he graduated, then he turned it into a business in 1975. Fifty years later, Wells Gray Tours is British Columbia's largest outbound tour company and offers group holidays all over the world.

Activity Level: 1

All Meals Included (7):

2 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners

Fares per person:

\$975 double/twin; \$1,085 single; \$940 triple

Please add 5% GST.

Experience Points:

Earn 20 points on this tour.

Departure from: BC Interior



ITINERARY:

Day 1: Friday, May 27

We travel north along the Yellowhead Highway to Clearwater. After lunch, driving through the **Clearwater River Valley**, we see extinct Pyramid Volcano and Mushroom Canyon, and admire a panoramic view across southern Wells Gray Park from the summit of Green Mountain. The highlight is awesome **Helmcken Falls** where the Murtle River plunges 141 metres (465 feet) over a lava cliff to form Canada's 4th highest waterfall.

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Wells Gray Inn

Day 2: Saturday, May 28

While driving up to Clearwater Lake, we stop at 90-metre wide **Dawson Falls** on the Murtle River. At road's end, we board two fast jet-boats for the journey up lovely **Clearwater Lake** with splendid views of the Cariboo Mountains and **Garnet Peak**, Wells Gray Park's third-highest mountain. This two-hour boat excursion provides a taste of a remote region of the Park that few tourists get to see, since it can only be reached by boat. After lunch at Osprey Falls, we enjoy the walk through an old-growth forest to **Bailey's Chute**, the furthest point that spawning salmon swim up the Clearwater River. Tonight's Anniversary Dinner

features a nostalgic slide show about 50 years of Wells Gray experiences around the world along with music and dancing. You may want to find your favourite 1970s outfit and show it off tonight (Roland saved his!).

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Wells Gray Inn

Day 3: Sunday, May 29

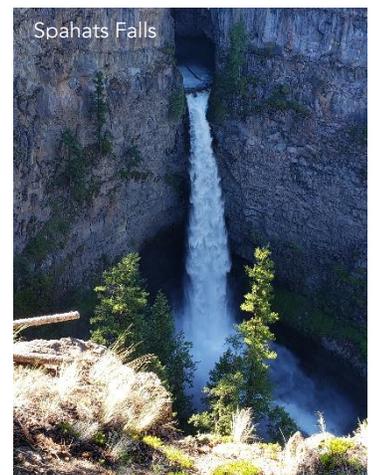
At **Spahats Falls**, we stand on the edge of a colourful 200-metre deep gorge. There are also stops at Clearwater Valley Overlook and the waterfalls of Third Canyon. Next, we go to the Thompson Rivers University Education & Research Centre which opened in 2021 and provides students in Biology, Geography, Geology, Tourism, and other faculties with a professional facility to enhance their studies about the Park. A guest speaker has been invited to talk about some aspect of the Park. After that, we plan to re-create a typical picnic lunch served on a 1972 Wells Gray Park tour and reminisce about how an all-day tour with lunch and dinner cost \$5. The Wells Gray Park Visitor Centre is our last stop, then we travel home in the afternoon.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

THE "WATERFALLS PARK" OF CANADA

Wells Gray Park is a vast wilderness area of 1.3 million acres, nicknamed "Canada's Waterfalls Park" for its 41 named falls and "Volcanoes Park" for its 6 old volcanoes and vast lava flows. During this tour, the waterfalls should be at peak runoff volumes. The tour is directed by Roland Neave, the founder and owner of Wells Gray Tours. Roland is also the author of the guidebook *Exploring Wells Gray Park*, now in its 6th Edition, and a complimentary autographed copy of this 400-page all-colour book is yours as a souvenir of this tour.

Roland made his first visit to the Park in 1966, drawn by the beauty of Helmcken Falls and many other waterfalls. His father was intrigued with mountaineering in the backcountry and achieved the first ascent in 1974 of Garnet Peak, the Park's 3rd highest; nearby Mount Hugh Neave was later named to recognize his years of exploring. The 1st edition of Roland's guidebook was also published in 1974 (a modest 190 pages). Roland and his wife Anne got engaged at Helmcken Falls in 1987. During the 1990s, they acquired 470 acres of land in the Clearwater Valley, restored historic Trophies Lodge, and opened two guest cabins for overnight travellers. Wells Gray Park has featured prominently in Roland's career.



THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Fifty years in business is an achievement for any company. Roland and his staff have long recognized the importance of celebrating anniversaries at Wells Gray Tours. The first one was the 14th, held in Reno in 1986, then every year after that until 1997, the 25th. We considered a quarter century to be quite a milestone, so we chartered the *Rotterdam* from Holland America, filled it with 1,100 enthusiastic customers, and sailed away from Vancouver for a special cruise route to Ocean Falls. Roland still remembers being really nervous about signing that cheque!

After 1997, anniversaries were planned every 5 years, so they seemed more special than doing it every year. The 30th travelled to Banff Springs Hotel on the Rocky Mountaineer train. The 35th, 40th and 45th were on cruise ships with many special Wells Gray activities and 700-800 customers participating on each.

What to do for the 50th? Our staff were kicking around ideas starting 2½ years ago and, when Covid reared its ugly head, they put on their well-worn thinking caps again. Finally, you are among the first to be reading this exciting announcement. Our 50th year will actually be the first of 5 years of events. We begin in 2022 going back to our roots in Wells Gray Park in 1972. During this 5-year journey to our 55th Anniversary, we anticipate fewer travel restrictions, so the celebrations can be more elaborate. Watch for the 51st anniversary announcement coming to your e-mail in January 2022!

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Coach transportation for 3 days
- 2 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- 2-hour boat excursion on Clearwater Lake
- Gratuities for boat crew
- Anniversary dinner with nostalgic slide show
- Guest speaker at TRU Centre
- Copy of *Exploring Wells Gray Park*, 6th edition
- Tour director Roland Neave
- **All meals (7):** 2 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 2 dinners



Activity Level 1: Light activity with short walks on gravel trails, sometimes with uneven surfaces. Getting into the boat requires a few steps up and down. The stairway of the Green Mountain tower has 30 steps. Other walks are short (times are round trip): Dawson Falls (15 mins), Bailey's Chute (25 mins), and Spahats Falls (15 mins). There are no bathrooms on the boats and the trip is 2 hours. Luggage handling is not available at the hotel. The coach cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. Dress appropriately for spending time outdoors in spring weather. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide frequent assistance.

TOUR POLICIES:

Payments: A deposit of \$150 per person is requested at the time of booking and balance is due April 20, 2022. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Cancellation Policy: Up to March 21, 2022, the cancellation charge is \$50 per person. From March 22 to April 20, the cancellation charge is \$100 per person. From April 21 to May 13, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. After May 13, there is no refund.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than April 20, 2022 if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to a remote destination where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Experience Points: This tour earns 20 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on tours longer than 3 days.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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