



# CUB REPORTER



Karina Eustace-Wallis climbs Heart Mountain in summer 2023 as part of her goal to raise funds for Alberta Wilderness Association. Photo © Lindsey Wallis

## Keep Our Wilderness Wildernessy: Thoughts From an 8-Year-Old Adventure Girl

**H**i, my name is Karina. I am eight years old and I like to climb, hike, and ski. I love wild places because they are sacred. Because they are ancient. They make me feel special. I like spending time in wild places because they are life. I want to protect them because they are extraordinary. They make me feel calm and settled. This year I climbed eight summits before my eighth birthday on September eighth! I was trying to raise \$8,000 for Alberta Wilderness Association. [As of publication date Karina has raised \$8,468]

For her 40th birthday, my mom did a 40/40/40 where she climbed 40 pitches of rock and biked 40 kilometres in 40 hours and that inspired me to do my 8-8-8 project. I thought it would be fun to climb summits because you get to see so many cool views, but one of the summits [Black Rock Mountain, her 8th summit] I saw barely any views because we were hiking in a CLOUD! We tested the theory that you can jump on clouds but turns out it's not true and they are just made of gas and are very WET.

The eight summits I climbed were Ha Ling, Sulphur Skyline, Mount Lipsett, Table Mountain, Windtower, Heart Mountain, Folding Mountain, and Black Rock Mountain. [The total elevation gained was almost 7,000 metres and the total distance she hiked was 80 kilometres].

Heart Mountain was special because I

was rock climbing [21 pitches on the route Heartline] not hiking and I got to go with my mum's friend, who I call Auntie Shy. It was tiring but there were really cool parts like the runnels in the rock created by the water and a huge bunch of fossils. I was a



Karina Eustace-Wallis at Heart Mountain in summer 2023 leading up to her eighth birthday. Photo © L. Wallis

little scared in a part of the climb where there was a harder section in a corner. It was blank on one side and had big, loose yucky rock on the other. I had to tell myself "farting rainbow unicorns," which was a code that my mom and I made up. To translate, it was like you have to keep going. Focus. And I got through it eventually. I told myself "I'm sorry brain, but this is what we're doing. Nothing's going to stop me, not even you, silly brain."

Mount Lipsett was special because I got to do it with my grandpa.

At the top I had a really pretty view of a mountain that was scree almost all the way up [Mist Mountain]. Grandpa found us a dream bed and a princess chair near the glorious, view-filled top.

On my birthday, I was interviewed by Loren McGinnis on the CBC's Eyeopener morning radio show. It was a little bit scary because I'd never done it before, but the people were really nice and asked me easy questions that I could answer.

AWA helps keep the wilderness wildernessy. Nature is really special and beautiful and we wouldn't be able to survive without it. It makes me feel happy and I want to share that with others and I'm very happy that I could. I've only done a tiny part to keep the wilderness and there are so many other things that we can do and I hope that people can do more things to help the wilderness.

