



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

July, 1991

MEETING

Time and Place: The club does not hold formal meetings during the summer. The next meeting will be held on September 11. Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Montana Power Building at 1903 Russell Street in Missoula.

Program: The program for the September meeting will be the traditional potluck slide show of trips taken by members of the club during the last year. Everybody is invited to bring their favorite slides from the 1990-1991 season. If you are new to the club, this is a good way to find out more about the kinds of trips taken by club members. If you don't have any slides, just come and drool.

TRIP CALENDAR

Sunday, July 28, Holland Peak. Hike and scramble up Holland Peak, one of the most scenic mountains in the Swan Range. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for details.

July-August, Stewart Peak. Hike up Stewart Peak, the tallest mountain in the Rattlesnake Wilderness area. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for details.

July-August, Sweeney Peak. Hike up Sweeney Peak, which is south of Lolo Peak in the Bitterroot Mountains. Call Art Gidel at 543-6352 for details.

July-August, Glacier Park. Steve Niday will try to schedule weekend trips to Glacier to climb Mt. Walton, Mt. Kinnerly, and Mt. Cleveland. Call Steve at 721-3790 for details.

August, Swan Peak. Climb of Swan Peak, the tallest mountain in the Swan Range, via a new route made possible by a timber sale and logging road to the northwest. We hope this route will shorten the approach, which is long and gasty by most routes. Mountain Bikes may be desirable on the logging road. Call Peter Dayton at 728-8101 for details.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

Carlton Ridge. The McClaim Creek road access to Carlton Ridge/Carlton Lake has been closed by the USFS. Dave Pengelly (728-6512) has further details.

St. Joe Cabin. The USFS has still not processed the Little St. Joe cabin special use permit. They have promised to do so this summer. Volunteers to help haul the new stove to the cabin should call Dave Pengelly (728-6512) for more info. We will try to organize a work party for a Saturday or Sunday in July.

TRIP REPORTS

Mt. Moran, May 25-27. Steve Niday and Dave Pengelly drove to the Tetons to climb Mt. Moran (12,605 feet). After registering for the climb at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station in the Tetons (this year the ranger didn't try to talk us out of it by badmouthing the snow conditions) we packed up and hiked into our base camp on the east side of the peak. We took the trail around the east shores of String Lake and Leigh

Lake, then on past Bearpaw and Trapper Lakes to the 7,500 foot level (snowline). We arrived at our camp around 1:30 p.m. By 2:30 Steve was in his bivy tent asleep and Dave was sitting on a log in the rain twiddling his thumbs. Since it didn't get very cold, we skipped the alpine start idea and headed up around 7:30 a.m. The snow was soft, making for slow travel up the snowfield below the Skillet Glacier. The mixed snow/rain didn't help our attitude. Once on the glacier, at around 10,000 feet, we strapped on our crampons. The route is quite steep above that point. After about 6 hours of climbing, we broke out of the clouds onto the summit ridge to a great view of the upper 1,000 feet of the Grand Teton. The trip down was slow for the first 1,000-1,500 feet. Then we were able to glissade on our butts (rainpants) most of the rest of the way down. After packing up our camp we hiked out and drove back to Missoula. - Dave Pengelly

Missouri River, May 25-27. Over the Memorial Day weekend, Art Gidel, Beverly Chin, Peter Dayton, Colleen Hunter, Joyce McDonough, Bill Burnett, Dave and Marilyn Ryan and their two children, and two other people floated the seventy mile section of the wild and scenic Missouri between the Judith River (P.N. Bridge) and the Fred Robinson Bridge. The Ryans were in a drift boat, and the rest of the group was in canoes. The scenery in this section is consistently outstanding. It looks like badlands country, and is quite different from the scenery in the White Cliffs section which is upstream. This is a high-quality wilderness float, with very little development along the river. We did a lot of hiking. Bring leather boots if you take this trip; there is a lot of cactus in the area. We also encountered a number of rattlesnakes. The floating was easy, as the river was high and fast and we didn't encounter any serious headwinds. At lower water you might want to take four days to float this section. The weather was excellent. High points of the trip were finding fossilized wood and bones during one of our hikes, and almost getting clobbered by a ten foot high and four foot thick slab of dirt which peeled off a vertical bank as we floated by, sort of like a glacier calving. This is an outstanding flatwater float trip. - Peter Dayton

Lolo Peak, June 2. Dave Pengelly, Art Gidel, and Steve Niday led a hike to Lolo Peak as part of the Missoula Trails Celebration. Fifteen people started out, four on skis and eleven walking. Eight people made it to the summit on a gorgeous day. There were another ten to fifteen telemarkers on the peak, as well as a few other hikers. Those with skis had a slushy ride off the north face, while Dave showed some of the hikers the joy of "butt glissading." One of the "students" was a fellow from Philadelphia who was passing through town on his bicycle and joined us for the hike while his partner rested. I'm sure the club will be asked to lead this or a similar hike next year. - Dave Pengelly

Jocko River, June 8. While casting around for new and novel experiences, the club's intrepid boating team focused upon the Jocko River. Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, Colleen Hunter, Beverly Chin, Bill Burnett, and Joyce McDonough set out in canoes from Jocko Hollow, which is a mile or so north of Arlee, and floated sixteen miles north to Dixon, where the Jocko flows into the Flathead. The river (some might view it as a creek) was high, fast, twisty, and full of obstructions, with some moderate waves. Don't try this float unless you have excellent control of back ferry maneuvers. We kept a sharp eye out for fences, but only found one or two. Most of the obstructions were natural. About six miles below Jocko Hollow the river flows into a canyon, which begins about three miles above Ravalli. From this point there were far fewer obstructions, and the stream became less twisty. There is a bridge at the beginning of this canyon which would make a good put-in. Antique car buffs will not want to miss the the outstanding display of auto body rip-rap in the section between this bridge and Ravalli. We saw a big herd of buffalo as we floated past the Buffalo Range. This is a fun float, but not for the timid. Due to the limitations of tandem canoes and the potential for disaster, I would rate it up near the Lochsa on the excitement scale. - Peter Dayton.

Flint Creek, June 9. The day after running the Jocko, some of our insatiable boaters (Bill Burnett, Joyce McDonough, Peter Dayton, and Colleen Hunter) floated Flint Creek from a mile or so below Phillipsburg to Maxville. This creek is smaller and twistier than the Jocko, but is considerably easier, due to slower current and a cleaner channel. It is quite a slalom course, with constant 180 degree meanders, but most of it can be negotiated in the forward paddling mode. We were repeatedly treated to the sight of the heads and shoulders of the other floaters cruising in strange and inappropriate directions across what appeared from river level to be uninterrupted grassy fields and bushes. There is a good take-out by an abandoned mine west of Maxville, which is accessible by county road. At this point the creek begins to flow down over a very rocky glacial moraine, and for several miles looks like something of a boat-eater. However, it appears to resume its placid but twisty character in the valley around Drummond, and should be a nice float for the rest of the way to the Clark Fork River. - Peter Dayton.

"TEAM YUKON" Tackles McDonald Peak via the East side, June 22-23. Dave Pengelly, Rick Murney, Jenny Davis, and I (Steve Niday) left Missoula around noon on Saturday, June 22, 1991, and drove up the Seeley-Swan Valley to Kraft Creek Road which is about 2 miles north of Holland Lake Road. Eleven miles of gravel took us to the trailhead and the realization that none of us had any bug repellent, but we did all manage to remember our Asolo Yukons, hence the name "TEAM YUKON". We hiked in past Heart and Crescent Lakes, first encountering snow a little ways past the trail that forks off to Turquoise Lake. We more or less followed the trail around the north side of Heart Lake and on westerly up the drainage to around 6600 feet. We then took an easy open gully southwesterly up to the ridge crest at approximately 6900 feet, which turned out to be a very nice campsite. We had running water from snow melt, a dry area to cook and hang out at, a large flat snow covered area for the tents, and great views. Thunder boomed around us, but aside from a few sprinkles we escaped any real dowsing.

Sunday dawned cool and nearly clear. The snow was crunchy until the sun hit it. We left camp around 7:00 AM and traveled up the ridge, veering south into the basin that leads up to the saddle at 7450 feet. This is the Flathead Indian Reservation Boundary, and a sign here warns that this area is closed as of July 15. From here we descended into Cliff Lake (6770' elev.) and headed around the north side of it and up the drainage to the northwest. We then gained the east ridge of McDonald Peak and from here there are quite a few options. There are two cliff bands with a wide range of routes, from easy scrambling to too hard for me without a rope. I was able to stay on rock most of the way up to the eastern peak of McDonald, the others stayed mostly on snow. The summit is about 1200 feet west of and 10-20 feet higher than the eastern peak. Jenny might disagree with this last statement. The views from the top were enhanced by the broken clouds and we had a few snow flakes fall on us while we lunched. I think we got to the top around 11:00 AM. We retraced our steps to the eastern peak and then took the gradual slope down to the southeast until we got below the lower cliffs. We then traversed back to the north and descended the same drainage we had ascended, butt-sliding most of the way down to Cliff Lake. We got back to the trailhead around 5:30. This was a very enjoyable trip and a much nicer approach to McDonald Peak than the western approach. Camping at Cliff Lake would provide one with many nice day climbs in the immediate vicinity. - Steve Niday

North Fork of the Clearwater and Kelly Creek, June 15-16. Art Gidel, Peter Dayton, and Paul Fawcett headed into Idaho with their kayaks to try out the North Fork of the Clearwater and its major tributary, Kelly Creek. These rivers lie in the major drainage immediately to the north of the Lochsa. The easiest way to reach these rivers from Montana is via Superior and Hoodoo Pass. The North Fork is about eighty miles of paved and dirt back roads from Superior, so we spent the whole weekend there. The scenery is much like the Lochsa, but a bit lusher, and with steeper canyon walls. Many rocky cascades and avalanche chutes run directly into the river, so the overall appearance of the canyon is quite alpine. The North Fork is about the same size as the Lochsa, and

Kelly Creek is about a third that size. Much of these rivers are fairly difficult (Class III to IV+) whitewater, but there are some nice Class I-II canoe-type stretches on the North Fork. The whitewater is slightly less difficult than the Lochsa, but the rapids tend to be longer. There is one rapid, Irish Railroad, which is nastier than anything on the Lochsa. Art and Peter had a lot of trouble with their glasses fogging up due to warm air and cold water, and ran a bunch of rapids practically blind. We had a great weekend, and will certainly come back for more. This area is somewhat remote, and doesn't seem to be very well known to Montanans, but is well worth a visit whether or not you are a floater. There is good camping in many places along the river. - Peter Dayton.

St. Joe River, June 22-23. Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, and Al Silars made another exploratory trip into Idaho to kayak the St. Joe River, which is located in the drainage to the north of the North Fork of the Clearwater. The river is only 28 miles from St. Regis, most of this on paved roads, so it is close enough to Missoula to visit on a day trip. The scenery is very similar to the Lochsa and the North Fork of the Clearwater, but the river is considerably smaller. However, it packs a good punch, and has a number of long class IV Rapids. We found some excellent play waves in the section below Gold Creek. We had hoped to float the upper wilderness section on Sunday, but found that the road was still blocked by snow. Consequently, we floated the Gold Creek section again. It was even more fun the second time around. - Peter Dayton.

North Fork of the Flathead, July 4-5. Peter Dayton, Colleen Hunter, Al Silars, and Connie Silars took an overnight canoe trip on the North Fork of the Flathead from the Canadian Border to the Big Bend Campground. The river was still quite high, so we made very good time. There were some large waves, particularly in the Kintla Rapids area (Class II), but we didn't ship much water. The river has lots of log jams, but we always found easy routes around them. The weather was great, and we had outstanding views from the water of the mountains in Glacier Park. - Peter Dayton.

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OFFICERS

Dave Pengelly, President - 728-6512
Arnold Finklin, Treasurer - 543-8705

Peter Dayton, V.P. and Newsletter- 728-8101
Your Name Here - Trip Leader (hint, hint)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to
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