



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

September, 1991

MEETING

Time and Place: 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. The September meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11.

Program: The program will be the traditional September 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.

NEWS

The Forest Service is proposing to close the road up Little St. Joe Peak in the Bitterroots from December 1 to May 15 at the campground. Little St. Joe contains the Club's cabin and some of the best backcountry telemarking slopes in the Bitterroots. This closure will require skiers to start trudging uphill from valley level throughout the fall and winter ski season. We suspect that it will discourage the majority of skiers from visiting Little St. Joe. With Lolo Peak also rendered inaccessible by recent road closures, this leaves only Gash Point with high quality and reasonably accessible telemarking slopes. Dave Pengelly and Peter Dayton have met with the Forest Service to discuss the proposed closure, and will report on the discussion. If you want to provide the Forest Service with oral or written input into this proposed action, Dave can give you the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the people to whom you should direct your comments.

TRIP CALENDAR

Sat-Sun, September 14-15 or 21-22, Anaconda Pintlars. Two-day trip into the Anaconda Pintlars. Call Dave Pengelly at 728-6512 for details.

Late September, Cabin Work Party. The annual Little St. Joe Cabin work party will be held in Late September. Call Dave Pengelly for details at 728-6512.

October and November, animal removal activities. Once again, Peter Dayton, Dave Pengelly, and other public-spirited members of the mountaineers have volunteered to help the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks remove excess animals from the mountains around Missoula. Please give Peter and Dave your name if you would like to assist them in this worthy project, and they will give you a call when they have located a critter that needs to be removed from the woods.

TRIP REPORTS

Mt. Rainier, July 4th Weekend. Bill Burnett, Rick Murney, Steve Jorgenson, Steve Niday and Dave Pengelly cruised over to Mt. Rainier for the annual attempt on Liberty Ridge. This

year the only obstacle was our inability to get out of Spokane until Steve located a certain Mexican restaurant. We never did find it. Once we got to Rainier we had excellent weather and climbing conditions. The first day we hiked from White River Campground up past Inter Glacier, over St. Elmo's Pass, crossed the Winthrop Glacier, traversed Curtis Ridge, and climbed to the head of the Carbon Glacier. All but Dave spent the night listening to ice falling off the Willis Wall above us (ignorance is bliss!). The second day we gained the lower edge of Liberty Ridge and had ideal climbing conditions. Very little hard ice was encountered and we were able to climb unroped for the entire route. After crossing Liberty Cap, Bill, Rick and Steve Niday opted to spend the night on top while Dave and Steve Jorgenson descended to the lower Winthrop Glacier. We all reassembled the next day and hiked out and drove home for the traditional 3 a.m. return. - Dave Pengelly.

Selway River, July 17-19. A permit to float the Selway River is one of the hardest river permits in the country to obtain. This river flows through the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in Idaho in the area west of Darby and Hamilton, joining the Lochsa River at Lowell, Idaho, to form the Clearwater River. After failing (of course) to receive a permit through the annual lottery, Art Gidel and Peter Dayton began to call the West Fork Ranger Station south of Darby every day in hopes of latching onto a permit turned back in by somebody who couldn't make the trip. This persistence paid off in the second week of July, when the Station advised Art that a permit to launch on Wednesday, July 17, was available. Art hung up, and immediately called Peter to ask if he could make the trip. After considering the proposal for about five seconds, Peter said he could make it, Art called back the Station to claim the permit, and the trip was on. After some furious telephone activity, Dave Ryan and Jim Stubblefield signed on as rafters. They each brought a passenger, and Art and Peter ran the river in kayaks. Shuttles were arranged, food was packed, and the whole thing fell together in less than a week. The Selway was at 1.55 feet when we arrived at the put-in, which is a fairly low and rocky level. However, the weather was good, the scenery was great, the wilderness was pristine, the water was clear and green, and the rapids were pretty exciting despite the low level. The horizon lines and rock-congested routes found in many of the rapids encouraged us to do a lot of scouting, and the rafts had to perform a some very skillful rock-dodging. Dave and his passenger got dumped in the water when their raft tried to climb up on a rock in No Slouch Rapid, but other than that the trip was uneventful. - Peter Dayton.

Grand Ronde River, July 20-22. The Grand Ronde is located in north-east Oregon, and flows into the Snake River at Heller Bar, south of Lewiston, Idaho. This trip was planned several months in advance, but the planning for it was complicated at the last minute when Art Gidel, Peter Dayton, and Dave Ryan decided to float the Selway during the three days preceding the put-in. However, it all worked out pretty slick; Art, Peter, and Dave were picked up at the end of the Selway trip by Beverly Chin, Bill Burnett, Joyce McDonough, Dave and Vicki Pengelly, Marilyn Ryan, and the two Ryan kids, who brought canoes for Art and Peter, and the group proceeded to Lewiston for the night. After sorting out some gear, the group proceeded to the put-in at Minim, Oregon, on the 20th, and started the float. We floated from Minim, which is actually on the Wallowa River, to the Powwatka Bridge on the Grand Ronde, which is a wild and scenic section about 45 miles long. No permit is required, and the river is real scenic and undeveloped. It somewhat resembles Hells Canyon on the Snake and the Lower Gorge of the Salmon, only smaller and with more trees. Everybody was in canoes except the Ryans, who were in a raft. The water is Class II-III, and was fairly exciting in loaded tandem canoes. Nobody got completely dumped, but we definitely took on water. We didn't see any other canoes on the river, but know other folks from Missoula who have run it in canoes. The river is harder and much less developed than the Smith River in Montana. The campgrounds are in fairly good shape despite the amount of traffic on the river, but would benefit from fire pan and porta-potty requirements. On the second night we discovered a rattlesnake about six feet from where we were lounging after dinner. We couldn't chase it away, and were particularly worried because we had two small children along, so we terminated it with extreme prejudice. This is a river worth visiting. - Peter Dayton.

Canadian Climbing, August 21-25. Dave Pengelly and Steve Niday ventured north to do some glacier climbing. Our first route to tune up on was the Silverhorn route on Mt.

Athabasca at the Columbia Icefields. All went well until Steve broke the pick on his ice axe. Fortunately, he'd already climbed most of the steeper parts of the route and was able to complete the route without further mishap. After we descended, we began to look for some moderate rock climbs since we didn't have a spare ice axe. We settled on Mt. Sir Donald in B.C. By a stroke of luck the predicted 80% chance of rain didn't materialize and we had a successful climb. Our feeling of triumph was somewhat tempered by a one-armed climber from Calgary who passed us on the ascent with his partner. (Steve has vowed to do him one better by trying a thirty-mile hike on one leg.) The summit register had an entry by Jim Ullrich from the prior weekend. Congratulations, Jim. - Dave Pengelly.

Lower Salmon Gorge, August 31-September 3. Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, Wayne Hecker, Pat Ulik, and Beverly Chin floated the Lower Salmon Gorge over Labor Day weekend. Wayne, Pat, and Beverly floated in Wayne's raft, and Art and Peter floated in kayaks. No permit is required for this section of the Main Salmon, which starts at Whitebird, Idaho (about twenty-five miles downstream from Riggins), runs into the Snake River about thirty miles below Hells Canyon, and continues down to Heller Bar, which is where the Grand Ronde flows into the Snake. The scenery is outstanding throughout the trip, and although primitive roads run along the river in three places, there is very little development. The river was at about 3600 cfs, which is a typical and popular late-summer level. Although there is a lot of flatwater in this section, there are also quite a number of big class II-III rapids, with one Class IV. Art and Peter found some super big-wave surfing. We saw a lot of people on the first day, but the groups spread out and got ahead of us after that. - 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: _____

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to
Arnold Finklin, P.O. Box
4262, Missoula, Montana

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____ 59807

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