



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

June, 1993

MEETING

Time and Place: The Club does not hold meetings during the summer. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 8. The program in September will be the traditional retrospective slide show of Club trips during the previous year, so start choosing your favorite slides.

TRIP CALENDAR

Tuesday Night Mount Sentinel Hikes: If you're bored with the stair machine at the club, meet in the Mount Sentinel parking lot at 5:30 p.m. each Tuesday for a more interesting climb.

Thursday evenings and Saturdays, Rock Climbing. If you're interested in beginning, intermediate or advanced rock climbing at Kootenai Canyon, Blodgett Canyon or Lolo Pass on Thursday evenings or Saturdays call Gerald Olbu 549-4769. See last month's report below.

Kayaking and rafting. If you are interested in single or multi-day kayaking and/or rafting trips, call Peter Dayton at 728-8101 or Art Gidel at 543-6352.

June 13, Grey Wolf Peak: Non-technical climb of Grey Wolf Peak in the south end of the Mission Mountains. Great scenery, moderate difficulty. Call Dave Pengelly 728-6512 for details.

June 20, Eagle Pass Hike. Day hike in the Mission Mountains along Post Creek, several lakes and over Eagle Pass. This 15-mile loop is of moderate difficulty. Call Gerald Olbu 549-4769 for details.

June 27, East St. Mary's Peak. Hike to the top of East St. Mary's Peak in the Mission Mountains. Great scenery, moderate difficulty. Those with more energy can climb West St. Mary's Peak or Peaks X and Y on Sonielem Ridge. Call Gerald Olbu 549-4769 for details.

July 11, Lolo Peak. Due to popular demand, the Lolo Peak hike, which cancelled due to snow conditions, will be rescheduled. From the top of Lolo Peak, one has an excellent view of the Missoula valley. Call Gerald Olbu 549-4769 for details.

July 15-18 (approx), Granite Peak Climb. Climb Granite Peak, Montana's highest peak. We will climb the peak from a base camp on Frozen To Death Plateau. This is a semi-technical climb featuring both snow and rock climbing. Call Gerald Olbu 549-4769 for details.

Summer Mountain Climbing. Interest has been expressed in climbing several regional mountains this summer. Prime candidates are: Granite Peak, Mount Rainier, Mount Hood, Mount Olympus, Grand Teton or other peak in the Tetons, Gannett Peak or other peak in the Wind River Range of Wyoming, and a peak in Glacier Park. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu 549-4769.

Wanna lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, help is only a telephone call away; Gerald Olbu 549-4769 will be delighted to sign you up.

TRIP REPORTS

Owyhee River, May 1-9. The Owyhee River system starts in the high desert country of north-central Nevada and the southwestern corner of Idaho, and flows into Oregon. It is one of the most remote and undeveloped river systems in the country, and contains spectacular scenery. Precipitous basalt cliffs line both sides of the canyon for large portions of the system, in many cases rising straight out of the water. The main rivers in the system are the East Fork and the South Fork of the Owyhee, which combine to form the main Owyhee, but it is also possible to enter the system from the north via Battle Creek, Deep Creek, or the North Fork of the Owyhee. The high water season on these rivers is often only a few weeks long, although people take low-water canoe trips on the river when it contains only a few hundred cfs. We scheduled

trips on these rivers during the last four years, but had to cancel each year due to inadequate water. This year, however, the area received 145 percent of normal snowfall, and the river reached record levels, about 54,000 cfs, during a warm spell in early spring. Consequently, we were finally able to visit the system. After considering a number of different sections of the river, Art Gidel and Peter Dayton decided to see as much of the system as possible, and took a two-person eight-day 137-mile self-contained kayak trip starting on the East Fork of the Owyhee in the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in Idaho, just north of the border with Nevada, and taking out on the Main Owyhee at Rome, Oregon. We packed very frugally; for example, we wore the same clothing both on the river (under our dry suits) and on shore. Nevertheless our boats were very heavy at the beginning of the trip, due to the nine days of food we were carrying. The upper sections of the trip contained many steep, rocky, and technical rapids, the middle section contained a lot of flat water, and the last two and a half days contained a lot of big whitewater. Spaced along the river were a number of particularly difficult rapids created by huge boulders which had fallen off the cliffs, in some cases creating unrunnable boulder sieves. We portaged around six of these rapids. Some of the portages were long and grueling, through truck-sized rocks. The weather changed about every half-hour, but was frequently cold, windy (upriver, of course), and rainy. We got snowed on for much of one day. Fortunately, intervals of good weather permitted us to dry out our tents and other gear every day or so, and our dry suits and other equipment kept us comfortable throughout the trip. We took side hikes every day. The scenery and remoteness were truly impressive, and we rank this among one of the best wilderness river trips we have taken. I brought both a waterproof camera for use while floating, and a 35mm SLR for use on shore. Unfortunately my waterproof camera, which I had been nursing through various terminal illnesses, died for good part of the way through the trip, so I only got shots from shore for the last part of the trip. I guess I'll have to repeat the trip in order to complete my photo files. Expect a slide show next fall. - Peter Dayton.

McDonald Peak, May 16. David Bixby, Tom Kenney, Bret Doucett, and Gerald Olbu set out at the crack of dawn to climb McDonald Peak, the highest peak in the Mission Mountains. McDonald Creek was easy to cross even though it was high water. Most of the trip was over snow. We headed up the main snowfield on the north side of McDonald Peak, traversed across West McDonald Glacier and climbed the headwall leading to the summit. The view from the top was spectacular with all the surrounding peaks blanketed in their spring snow. The trip down was quite fast as we were able to glissade a full 3000 vertical feet. We reached McDonald Creek just as it turned dark and hiked out on the trail after dark. The only sad note was that we lost a jacket somewhere on the mountain. But that only gave us an excuse to go back 3 days later. We found the jacket and then celebrated over pizza and beer in the appropriate manner. - Gerald Olbu.

Mount Teewinot, May 29, 1993. Due to heavy rainfall on Mount Rainier, Dave Pengelly, Ralph Flockerzi and Gerald Olbu travelled in the opposite direction in search of better weather, which we found in the Tetons. After examining the conditions on several peaks, we decided to climb Mount Teewinot. We camped at the base of Teton Glacier. The moderately difficult climb was entirely on snow. None of the pitches were very steep, however the snow was not set up which made for somewhat hazardous conditions. We roped up for one section which was intermixed with snow and rock. After some effort we reached the peak which was actually a narrow pinnacle just barely large enough for one person with a 500-foot drop off on three sides. We took turns photographing each other on the pinnacle with the Grand Teton in the immediate background.-- Gerald Olbu.

Jarbridge and Bruneau Rivers, May 29-June 1. The Jarbridge and Bruneau Rivers, which are located in south-central Idaho, are very similar in scenery and remoteness to the Owyhee River. They start in the Jarbridge Mountains in Nevada, and flow north past Mountain Home to the Snake River. As in the case of the Owyhee, good snow pack this year permitted us to float these rivers, after several years of inadequate runoff. Beverly Chin, Peter Dayton, Art Gidel, Wayne Hecker, and Doug Kolwaite took a four-day 69-mile trip on these rivers. Peter, Art, and Doug were in kayaks, and Wayne and Beverly were in a raft. The scenery was possibly even better than the scenery on the Owyhee, there was almost constant whitewater action, we had two portages, one of them long, we got in some long side hikes, and the weather was excellent throughout the trip with the exception of rain the last night. For details see our upcoming slide show. - Peter Dayton.

Rock Climbing, May 1993. The rock climbing group has met at Kootenai Canyon on most Thursday evenings and Saturdays. We have about an equal mix of beginner and intermediate climbers. On a typical day, we top-rope an easy climb for beginners and to warm up, then we progress to more difficult climbs. Some of us have begun lead climbing. Climbers last month include: Gerald Olbu, Rich Cronn, Tom Kenney, David Bixby, Kathy Olson, Mary Haugan, Rick Rister, Bret Doucett, Mel (Melissa) Waggy, Justin Cunningham, and Cheryl Bier. Next month, we

will continue to top-rope easy climbs as well as more challenging climbs. Toward the end of the month, we plan to go to Blodgett Canyon and do a 5-pitch climb.

Bass Lake, June 5. Due to snow conditions on Lolo Peak, we hiked to Bass Peak as part of the Missoula Trails Celebration. Participants this year included: John Bonicksen, Dale Bouvia, Angela Czegledi, Rex Denison, Roger Ehret, Jackie Medjo, and Gerald Olbu. Even though the sky was cloudy and the forecast called for rain, we had the good fortune of no rain. Hikers found the trip to be quite scenic with lots of open country with spacious views. Waterfalls, Alders, lush green meadows, mountain goat, rabbits, and deer were some of the highlights of the trip. Afterwards, we enjoyed good conversation over pizza and beer.--Gerald Olbu.

White Sands Creek, June 6. Idaho contains a lot of hair-ball steep-creek kayaking, suitable only for expert boaters with high tolerances for risk and a fondness for jumping waterfalls. In the past us old and chicken kayakers have regarded most of these creeks as out of our league. However, now that the Lochsa River has become an old friend, as snugly and comfortable as our beds at night, we have begun turning our attention to its headwaters, which lie on the west side of Lolo Pass. As it turns out, we should have done so years ago. White Sands Creek is a small river which joins with the Brushy Fork near Powell Ranger Station and Lochsa Lodge to form the Lochsa. The lower section of this river is a delightful piece of water, with long sections of non-stop Class III-IV whitewater. No roads run along this twelve-mile section of river. The rapids are continuous for miles, but you can see down almost all of them and avoid the many rocks and holes. The scenery, when you have a chance to look at it, is like that on the lower Selway, a steep wooded canyon with cedar trees and moss-covered cliffs along the shores. This beautiful and fun little river is under consideration for wild and scenic river status. We'll be back. - Peter Dayton.

OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769

Dave Pengelly, Secretary-Treasurer - 728-6512

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101

Rick Murney, Vice President - 543-7586

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to

Dave Pengelly

P.O. Box 4262

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____ Missoula, Montana 59806

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MISSOULA, MT 59806

(STAMP)

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