



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

JUNE, 1995

MEETING

Meetings: The Club does not hold meetings during the summer. The next meeting will be on September 13. You will be relieved to learn that the club has a policy of permitting its members to engage in outdoor activities during the summer even though there are no monthly meetings.

CALENDAR

Thursday Evenings and Saturdays, Rock Climbing. The rock climbing group meets on most Thursday evenings and Saturdays. This group usually climbs a wide variety of technical climbs; some easy, some hard, most top-roped, some multi-pitched. Beginners are encouraged to come and gain some experience. See last month's trip report below. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for details.

July/August, Mount Baker. Climbing trip to Mount Baker, one of the volcanoes of the North Cascades in Washington, on August 5-10. There will be a training trip on July 21-23. Mount Baker (10,781') will be climbed via the Easton Glacier which approaches the summit from the south. Even though Mt. Baker is easier than Mt. Rainier, (less distance, lower elevation, less time on glacier), all climbers must be familiar with an ice ax, self-arrest, glacier travel, etc. This trip is in conjunction with a group from Denver. Call Richard White at 251-6430 for more information.

June 24-25, Saturday-Sunday, McDonald Peak. Overnight climbing trip to McDonald Peak which is the highest peak in the Missions. Only a small part of the route follows a trail. Most of the route involves bushwhacking, scrambling through cliffy areas, and travelling up a snowfield with an ice ax. This trip is not technically difficult and would be a good introduction to mountaineering. The main requirements for participants are good endurance and winter camping skills. Reservation recreation permit required. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

July 1-4, Saturday-Tuesday, Goat Mountain. Overnight climbing trip to Goat Mountain (8845 feet) which is located in a little used section of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The route will begin at the Youngs Pass trailhead at 5600 feet, and then follow Jenny Creek. After ten miles, camp will be made on Marshall Creek at about 5000 feet. Goat Mountain is about three miles up Marshall Creek from this point. A scramble-type climb will lead to the summit of Goat Mountain. This trip is well suited for intermediate backpackers who would like to scramble to a summit. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for details.

July 10-14, Monday-Friday, Rainier. Climbing trip to Mount Rainier (14,410 feet), the highest peak in Washington. The exact route taken will depend on the interests of participants; probably either the Camp Muir or Katz Glacier route. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

July 20-24, (approx), Grand Teton. Climbing trip to the Grand Teton (13,770 feet) probably via the Upper Exum route. Technical rock climbing and rope handling skills required. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

Mid August, Canadian Rockies. One or Two week climbing trip to the Canadian Rockies. Several mountains will be climbed. Most routes will be over snow, ice and rocks, requiring technical rock and ice climbing ability. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

Future Trips. If there is enough interest, other mountaineering trips will be scheduled in August and September. Possibilities include: Granite Peak, Glacier Park, North Cascades, Grand Teton via the Black Ice Couloir, or other peaks in the Tetons. If interested, make early arrangements with Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

Kayaking. Next time you spend the weekend inside watching TV because it is raining, say to yourself "I'll bet that Art Gidel and Peter Dayton are out kayaking right now and don't give a hoot that it's raining, in as much as they pretty much expected to get wet anyhow." To join them call Art at 543-6352 or Peter at 728-8101.

Wanna lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, contact Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

TRIP REPORTS

Jarbridge and Bruneau Rivers, May 6-8. The Jarbridge and Bruneau Rivers are located in the high desert which lies southwest of Twin Falls, Idaho. Between the hamlets of Murphy Hot Springs and Bruneau these rivers run through 69 miles of remote and spectacularly scenic basalt canyon, with almost continuous white water. In many years these rivers don't get high enough to run, so when we learned that the Bruneau had risen to 1,500 cfs, Ben Davis, Art Gidel, Doug Kolwaite, Ben Stanley, Mike Worrall, and I headed south on short notice for a three day wilderness kayak trip. The shuttle was as challenging as the river. It had been raining for several days, and the road was a frictionless morass of gumbo. We went into a skid when we left the pavement, and didn't pull out of it until we reached the launch site. The pickup would slither down the road at a thirty degree angle to the left for hundreds of yards, and then whip around into a similar angle to the right for a while. At some point a tire popped off its rim, and in the general ruckus we didn't notice it until we began to smell burning rubber. When Ben Stanley put on his spare, it only contained about ten pounds of pressure. We figured we were screwed. Fortunately this occurred only a quarter of a mile from a cow camp consisting of two trailers and a shed, which was the only habitation for dozens of miles in any direction. Nobody was at this facility, but we snooped around and discovered a generator and an air compressor in the shed. I figure that this used up all of my good luck for about the next ten years. We cranked up the generator and the compressor, filled up the tire, and slithered on up the road to the launch site on the Jarbridge. These rivers contain delightful and almost constant Class II, III, and IV whitewater, with outrageously beautiful cliffs hundreds of feet high lining the banks for most of the 69 mile trip. It rained about 2.5 inches on the first day, and hundreds of waterfalls poured down the cliffs along the Jarbridge. It was a spectacular sight, and probably a rare one. The weather got better on the second day, and was clear and sunny for most of the third day. The river rose from 1,500 cfs on the first day to 2,000 cfs on the second day to 2,600 cfs on the third day. Doug Kolwaite and Ben Stanley both ran Jarbridge Falls, which is a long Class V rapid; the rest of us portaged that drop. Luxuriant and evil-looking thickets of poison ivy line the banks of the lower sections of the Bruneau, but we anticipated the problem and camped just below Clover Creek the second night, upstream from the area which is rendered uninhabitable by the poison ivy. In Five Mile Rapid, the last stretch of whitewater before the take-out, the high water created huge breaking waves which slammed us all over the place. This is just about one of the best river trips imaginable. Rafts float these rivers, but they should be small and ready to maneuver like mad. You can do this trip in three days like we did, but you really ought to take much longer so you can enjoy the hiking and the scenery. - Peter Dayton.

Gray Wolf Peak, May 20. At 6:00 in the morning, a group of five mountaineers headed out to climb Gray Wolf Peak. Members of the group included: Dale Bickell, Larry Bickell, Brigitte Hendrix, Gerald Olbu, and Dave Siemens. The hike in was pretty straight forward; we got into snow a little below treeline. It was a lot of work kicking steps up the couloir, but the snow was just the right softness. After we reached the top of the couloir, we tried to traverse along the backside of the mountain. The snow was too sketchy for reliable support; it was like unconsolidated corn snow. Instead, we climbed up to the south summit and then down the backside on rocks and firm snow. It was a challenge to descend down to the notch separating the south summit and main summit. We set up a fixed rope and climbed with a prussic down a 150-foot, 70-80 degree snow and rock chute. This was the high point of the trip and was very exciting. The snow on the other side was a little sketchy and unreliable so we thought this would be a good place to turn around. The trip out was uneventful and was done mostly after dark. - Gerald Olbu.

Middle Fork of the Flathead, May 20-21. On Friday evening, May 19, Art Gidel and I drove to Kalispell and flew into Schaeffer Meadows in the Big Bear Wilderness with our kayaks. We camped near the grass airstrip that night, and headed down the river the next day for a two-day float trip. According to the sign-up sheets, we were only the second group to do the trip in 1995. This is a very scenic 35 mile Class III-IV wilderness float trip. The river was at 3 feet on the Essex gauge, which packs a pleasant degree of punch, and the weather was great all weekend. There was still a lot of snow in the mountains above the river. On Saturday night a deer kept wandering through our camp, often passing within ten or fifteen feet of us. It just ignored us and kept eating. At one point it stuck its head right into my tent and started licking the hood of my sleeping bag, which no doubt contains a lot of salt and other nasty stuff. This was pretty funny, but I discouraged it as I didn't want deer spit all over my sleeping bag. That night as I was drifting off to sleep with the door of my tent open, I suddenly felt whiskers nuzzling my face. Yow! I sat up fast, but fortunately it was only the deer again. After that I decided to zip up my screen door. This is a great trip; nice whitewater, nice scenery, a quality wilderness experience, no permit required, close to Missoula, and the airplane trip keeps out the riff-raff. - Peter Dayton

Rock Climbing, May. The rock climbing group has been climbing on most Thursday evenings and Saturdays. Most climbs were with the aid of a top rope, but some were led. Climbers this month include: Dale Bickell, Twan Brekelmans, Dan Chisholm, Roland Giller, Gary Halligan, Brigitte Hendrix, Gerald Olbu, Dave Siemens, Jennifer Sleezer, Judy Stack, Jennifer Vogel, and Paul Wilson. All had a good time. - Gerald Olbu.

Brushy Fork Creek, June 3. Brushy Fork Creek and Crooked Creek are two tributaries of the Lochsa River. They come together just after the bridge which is six or seven miles west of Lolo Pass on Highway 12. Crooked Fork Creek sounds like a pretty nasty momma, but Brushy Fork Creek is more approachable, and has been on my "things to do" list for a couple of years. Art Gidel, Doug Kolwaite, and some other folks kayaked the creek on Friday, June 2, and declared it to be survivable, so John O'Bannon, Seth Wilson and I joined Art and Doug for another run on Saturday. The put-in is located on the Elk Meadows road about nine miles southeast of Lolo Pass. It was raining, the vegetation was lush and green, and there was a nifty looking layer of fog about five feet deep lying on the surface of the stream. After a couple of miles of moderate water and a number of portages around log jams, the creek starts heading downhill in a major way and you enter a Class IV+ rapid about six miles long. It contains non-stop action with few eddys, and while you can generally see down the drops and there are only a few really hairy moves, everything comes up on you very fast. This is a really fun run, but there is definitely some accident potential. Several people on this trip had momentary broaches on rocks

or logs, and there was one nasty roll with a head banging. This is not a place for the members of your cub scout troop to earn their canoeing merit badges. The creek is a definite step up in difficulty from the Lochsa River, White Sands Creek, and some of the other favorite local trips. The description in the Moore & McClaren book seems about right, but the creek isn't as hard as the description in the Amaral book. I think there may be an editing error in the description in Amaral's book. - Peter Dayton.

Middle Fork Salmon, June 10-11. The Middle Fork of the Salmon is a 100 mile whitewater float trip in central Idaho. It is one of the best known wilderness river trips in the country. The Forest Service holds a lottery each year to award permits to float this river, and your chances of getting a prime time permit via the USFS lottery are just about the same as your chances of winning the Powerball Lottery. As a result, instead of applying for a permit I put the telephone number for the Challis Ranger Station into my speed dialer and called the Ranger station once or twice a day all spring in hopes of obtaining a cancellation. On Wednesday afternoon, June 7, I succeeded in latching onto a permit for Saturday, June 10. It was raining and snowing and the river was running at 6.5 to 7.0 feet at that time, which is pretty high and fast for rafts, so some group probably chickened out. Within a day we assembled a group consisting of Art Gidel, Lisa Hallenbeck, Jeremy Keene, John O'Bannon, and myself in kayaks and Doug Kolwaite and Camille in a cataraft. I had originally hoped to do the trip in three or four days, but due to various work schedule problems we ending up doing the 100 mile trip in only two days. The level had dropped to about 5.5 feet by the time that we put in, but the river still romped along at a great clip. The rapids were a bit bigger and more continuous than they are at lower levels, but the whitewater is still only moderately difficult in a kayak. Rafts find the river harder at levels above 6 feet. We floated 46 miles to Whitey Cox hot spring the first day, and then 54 miles to the Cache Bar take-out the second day. We really didn't have to paddle especially hard, and we got out by 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. We even had time to stop and check out various hot springs for a while. The weather was great all weekend, and as always the scenery was just dandy. I'll bet the folks who relinquished the permit were kicking themselves. - Peter Dayton.

Eagle Pass, June 11. Just as it began raining, Jo Ellen Lyns and Gerald Olbu began an all-day hike over Eagle Pass. The brush was wet, and we were soaked, as you would expect. The log across the raging creek was wet and slippery. We continued and were rewarded by the rain quitting and the sun coming out. There was still a lot of snow near Long, Frog, and Summit Lakes. We saw lots of Grizzly tracks. When we arrived at Summit Lake, we looked up to the pass and saw several cliff bands and snow. We plotted our route. At times, we were unsure which would be the best way around a cliffy area. At these times, it was convenient to follow the grizzly tracks. The grizzlies knew the best route. We reached Eagle Pass at 6:15, had a quick snack and headed down. It was very fast going down the Eagle Pass Trail; it only took us three hours to reach the trailhead. - Gerald Olbu.

OFFICERS

Gerald Olbu, President - 549-4769

Peter Dayton, Newsletter Editor 728-8101

Dave Pengelly, Secretary-Treasurer - 728-6512

Dave Siemens, Vice President - 549-0102

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Mail a check payable to
"Rocky Mountaineers" to

Address: _____

Dave Pengelly
P.O. Box 4262

Check one: Individual (\$6.00/year) _____ Family (\$8.00/year) _____ (9398)

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