



MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

HIKING-CLIMBING-MOUNTAINEERING-SKIING-
EXOTIC TRAVEL-EXPLORATION OF PEAKS AND
MOUNTAINS OF MONTANA AND OF THE WORLD

September 2001

MEETING NOTICE

This month we (Steve and I) had hoped to give an update on the cabin. There was a trip planned to go up there on 9/7, with a Forest Service Engineer to check out the stove, and I had planned on leading a work party some time on the weekend of 9/22.

BUT.... as of 9/4 the road into the Bass Creek trailhead is closed for 6 weeks while they work on the bridge. By the time that is done, then the seasonal fall closure of the road will be in effect. But the Forest Service Engineer thinks that she can get us through the locked gate then and we may want to take advantage of that to do a work party at that time. I will pass along information as it becomes available.

Elections are set for the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 19th. It was requested that anyone wanting to run for an office or to nominate someone for an office to contact us either by phone or by our e-mail address at rockymountaineers@hotmail.com. No one contacted us so we have no slate of candidates to give you at this time; however, nominations will be taken from the floor. There will be outside security personnel present to make sure the elections go smoothly. Only those listed as dues paying members by Aug. 31 will be allowed to vote and the voting will be by a written ballot. As the club's only formal officer I will conduct the election.

The question of club members wishing to vote but who will be unable to come to the meeting has come up and the solution seemed to be to allow vote by proxy. This proxy must be an actual physical person (who is eligible to vote themselves). And they must bear written instructions from the person they are voting for, signed by the voter and a witness. This can just be a simple sentence such as "I, _____ authorize _____ to act as my proxy and to submit one additional ballot in my behalf." The proxy can be instructed who to vote for or not vote for, or can be allowed to vote as they see fit. I must exclude myself as proxy for conflict of interest reasons. All members are urged to come out and vote. -Julie Warner

OTHER BUSINESS

It is hard to believe that a fun and peaceful club such as ours should have to hire a security guard to be present at our upcoming election on September 19th. We felt this was necessary due to the disgraceful situation of last May where an organized group of nonmembers were in the room early and demanded the right to vote and tried to hostilely take over the club. There are rumors that this same group may try this again. We hired a guard to insure that the meeting will be safe and enjoyable for our rank and file members.

So, don't be intimidated. Come out and vote on Wednesday, September 19th at 7:00 P.M. in the small meeting room downstairs at the Missoula Public Library. We really need a couple of people who are willing to serve as officers if our club is to grow and prosper. Julie Warner probably will be willing to run for President, if nominated, and myself am willing to run as secretary with the duty of publishing a newsletter. Please show us you care and are willing to help the club out.

The bright news is that we seem to have a real core of people who enjoy hiking together almost every weekend, and who are willing to take turns organizing trips. The rest of you should join us sometime and see how fun it is.

After the election we will have the traditional potluck of slides, photos and stories from people on the outdoor activities they did during the previous year. Please bring something and share it with us.

-Steve Schombel



TRIP REPORTS

Young's Mountain

It was a cool day on July 29th when Fred and Eileen Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, David Kahl, Craig Haley, Anna Grokholevich of Irkutsk, Russia, and myself drove to the Lodgepole Creek trailhead to Youngs Pass, the least used gateway to the Bob Marshall Wilderness. There was new trail in place to avoid some of the steeper sections of the old trail and we made it to Youngs Pass in good time. (The trail is now probably 4 miles instead of 3½ though). Fred and Eileen opted to stay at the pass while the rest of us pressed on. At the pass, while trying to figure the best bushwacking route, we noticed "under" the forest boundary lines on the map what appeared to be the dotted lines of a trail that appeared to go right over Young's Peak. We checked it out and found a very nice new trail that did indeed go to a saddle just south of the peak. And it was easy to follow the old trail from there to the top. (Because of cliffs on both sides there wasn't any where else much to go on this trail that continues on to Hahn Creek). This is the highest point in this area and the views in all directions were stupendous. Anna was much reminded of her home in Russia. It started to rain just as we were leaving the trail head, after a nice cool day of good hiking.

- Julie Warner

High Points-New Mexico/Colorado, July 29th-August 4th

Last year Tami and Tony Sabol climbed the highest peaks in Arizona and Utah. In May we climbed the 5th highest peak in the Continental U.S., highest in Washington State, Mt. Rainier at 14,411 ft. This trip we headed southward to climb two more state high points. It took us two days to reach Taos, New Mexico, but along the way we visited Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, plus took in a lot of scenery throughout Colorado. Just out of Taos, we hiked to the highest New Mexico point, Wheeler Peak, 13,161 feet. There are two common routes up this peak. We took the longer, less steep route up to save the knees for the forthcoming trips. The views of New Mexico were grand... lots of big mountains and huge forested areas. We descended the shorter, steep route. It isn't too bad... the 1-2 inch scree over hard pack makes for some interesting skiing conditions! We made it back to the truck and headed north back into Colorado, stopping at the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. The Dunes are huge and reside along the western edge of the Sangre de Cristo Range of the Rocky Mountains. They span over 39 square miles and are up to 750 feet high! From there we moved northward to Leadville, the highest incorporated city in North America... People reside year round at 10,192 feet, higher than our highest Bitterroot peak! From nearby, we began our hiking/climbing marathons. We had climbed Wheeler on Sunday, Monday we traveled, and on Tuesday we climbed the highest peak in Colorado-the 2nd highest peak in the Continental U.S.,

Mt. Elbert, 14,433 feet. We literally roared up this mountain, passing some 30 plus people, to be the first on top that morning. The normal route is 9+ miles roundtrip with 4400 ft. of gain. We spent the night, then Wednesday climbed Colorado's 2nd highest peak-3rd highest continental peak, Mt. Massive, 14,421 ft. This is an incredibly beautiful mountain, dominating the view westward from Leadville. It is too bad it is not higher than neighboring Mt. Elbert, as Elbert is not appealing at all. Mt. Massive requires a 14 mile round trip with 4500 ft. of gain. On Thursday, we needed a wee rest, so we drove to a 11,200 ft. trailhead and only had to hike up 3,200 feet of gain/ 13 miles roundtrip to climb another 14-er, Mt. Princeton, 14,197 ft. This is a beautiful peak, dominating the view west of Buena Vista. For Friday, we were ready for our coup de grace, Mt. Harvard, 14,420. This is the 3rd highest in Colorado and the 4th highest continental peak. It requires 4,600 feet of elevation gain and is 13 miles roundtrip. This was another spectacular mountain to climb... beautiful high alpine flowers and plants, huge cliff faces, incredible views in all directions. As with all of the previous 3 Colorado peaks, weather threatened us early on in the day, and we got rained on, again, just as we got back to the truck. All totaled, we hiked over 53 miles and climbed over 21,000 feet of elevation gain in six days to climb these 5 mountains. We have now climbed 4 of the 5 highest peaks in the Continental United States, all this year. We now have only Mt. Whitney left... It is the highest of the 5 at 14,494 feet. Located in Southern California, we plan to climb this peak in September. We concluded our trip with a drive through Rocky Mountain National Park. The uniqueness of this park is going from the Colorado plains, up through semi-arid foothills and mountains filled with juniper and Ponderosa pine, then up through lodge pole pine and spruce, finally up into the high alpine and eventual tundra like zone. The drive provides views of the rapidly changing ecosystems depending on the elevation. Apparently, each 1,000 ft. of gain is equivalent to traveling 600 miles northward. The park road tops out at almost 12,200 ft... providing quite a change in ecosystems from the lower 5,000 ft reaches of the park. -Tony & Tami Sabol (Note: Tony and Tami went to the Sierra Nevadas late in August, planning to climb the high points of California and Nevada, and others. They wanted to list this trip, but unfortunately our newsletter wasn't out in time.)

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Beacon Mountain

August 5th dawned a dry, hot and sunny day, and Charles Tree, Steve Schombel and Fred Schwanemann were glad they got an early start while the face of Mount Sentinel was in the shade. We kept up a steady pace to the "M" through the crowd of hikers, and then took it easy the rest of the way. What caught our attention was how quickly some of the plants were turning brown after all the rain of early summer. After crossing the saddle where the Crazy Canyon trail joins we had the ridge trail to ourselves all the way to the beacon. As we were resting and having lunch one young man came up from the East Missoula side, he said. Then it was just us again, back to the saddle, where Fred and Steve opted to stay in the shade on the trail down to the Kim Williams Trail, while Charles went back over Mt. Sentinel and down the face.

Beacon Mountain doesn't seem to get visited a whole lot, and it offers a different perspective of our city and up the Clark Fork. You can see all of the Rattlesnakes, and Mt. Jumbo looks low from here. It is approximately a 2500' elevation gain, making it comparable to St. Mary's, and yet is right next to town. - ss for Charles Tree

Spring and Curry Gulch Hike

Steve Schombel, Cathy Burleson, and Fred and Eileen Schwanemann started hiking about 8:30 am on August 12th since the day was to be very hot. We made good time hiking up Spring Creek and past the three mile limit. There was plenty of shade and still cool temperatures going up to the ridge. We all looked forward to lunch at the 'rock' with great views of Snow Bowl, Stuart Peak and other Rattlesnake Mountains. We had the view all to ourselves. As we started down to Curry Gulch, the knapweed was so thick it seemed hard to believe. We also spotted several young grouse. On this hike we saw more piles of bear scat (6) than people (3 bikers). We enjoyed a break in a cool spot by Curry Cabin as temperatures were rising. We finished the hike in fine spirits after ten miles of more up and down than along the creek. - Eileen Schwanemann

Turquoise Lake

A group of five hale hikers set out for Daughter of the Sun Mountain on August 18th. Actually two were planning to go only to Turquoise Lake. The day was very hot and sunny, and there was a lot of smoke in the air. We took our time, and by the time we reached Turquoise Lake and rested it was mid afternoon and only Brett wanted to try for the mountain. Then he suggested climbing up to a small, unnamed alpine lake about half way up. After a couple of hours of climbing up a steep boulder field Steve and Brett were on the shore of this emerald green deep pothole of a lake. We discovered that it had no outlet and even had to wonder

if anyone had been there before. We found an easier way down, mostly grassy slopes, and got back to the car just before dark. Luckily the others who had only wanted to hike had brought their own car and left a note that they had got back safely earlier. Participants in this hike were Brett Doucett, Steve Schombel, Craig Haley, Cathy Burleson and Anna Grokhovich.

This hike is one of the classic chain of lakes hikes in Western Montana. You get a close-up view down into Glacier Lake, and of MacDonald Peak, Sunrise Glacier and many other points in the rugged Mission Mountains. On a clear day there are good views of the Swan Mtns. across the valley. Once in the subalpine bowl it is a short walk to the shores of three pretty lakes. Highly recommended. -ss for Brett Doucett

St. Mary's Peak

This route has a reputation for being easy and well used that it lived up to. But it was still a nice way for Fred and Eileen Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, George Funkhouser, Marilyn Hoblitt, Tom Andrus, Ginny Andrus, Cathy Burleson and her son Michael Bowles, age 8, and myself, to spend a sunny Sunday afternoon on August 26th. The lookout on top is manned during the fire season (though it was closed this day) and the view from the top shows why. Except for some blocking by the higher St. Joseph's and Lolo Peaks to the north the view was extensive for almost 360 degrees and greatly enjoyed by all. - Julie Warner

Table Mountain

With a sturdy vehicle and good tires it is possible to drive way up in the Highlands south of Butte, and on Sept. 1st Steve Schombel and Brett Doucett camped below the gate on the lookout road at @ 8800'. The next morning we hiked up the switchbacks, past the still-manned Highland Lookout and up to the top of Red Mountain, at 10,070' once the site of the highest lookout in the state. Then we went over another 10,000+ foot unnamed peak in the middle and on to Table Mountain, high point of this range. On the way back we did a short side trip to Little Table, thus doing four 10,000 footers in one day, and, simultaneously, every summit of significance in this compact range.

The rocks are very colorful, there are a lot of minerals along the way, and the views were stupendous; only marred by some forest fire smoke. Let us list the ranges we could see: the Elkhorns, Bulls, Bridgers, Tobacco Roots, Madison, Snowcrest, Rubies, Black-tails, Pioneers, Pintlars, Flint Creeks, topped off with a fine view of Butte. Interesting, from this vantage point the Berkley Pit looks bigger than this city of some 50,000 plus souls. - Steve Schombel

UPCOMING TRIPS

Sunday, September 16th. We will drive to the Beaver Creek trailhead in the Swan River drainage NW of Seeley Lake, and from there hike the 5 miles of trail to Crystal Lake. Then we will try to find a faint, unofficial trail, or will bushwhack a couple of more miles to High Park Lake, one of the largest and most spectacular lakes on the east side of the Missions. If anyone desires, we can also try to scramble up Sunset Peak. Call Brett Doucett at 728-6461 or 543-4927 or Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for information.

Sunday, September 23rd. From the Howard Creek Picnic area up Lolo Creek we will hike along one of the few places where you can follow the track of the old Lolo Trail. The first part of the hike goes steeply right up the hillside, showing what the natives were made of with their babies and gear. Then it runs along the face of the ridge, intersecting a network of logging roads in a saddle about two miles in. From here, anyone who wants can continue for many more miles along these roads. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for information.

Sunday, September 30th. Explore the Rattlesnake Creek drainage with two local hikers. On this trip we will hike up Woods Gulch and down to Lincolnwood. The first part of the hike is well shaded and there is some water along the way. Call Fred or Eileen Schwanemann at 542-7372 for information.

Sunday, October 7th. Hike and scramble along the Stateline ridge in the Hoodoo Pass area to Illinois Peak, at 7690 ft. one of the highest in this part of the Bitterroots. About 5 miles one way. The foliage can be very colorful up here in the fall. Plan on stopping in Superior or 9-Mile afterwards for food and refreshments. Call Lois Crepeau at 728-5321 for information.

Please note: The distances and elevations are estimates of a one way hike. Call the trip leader early in the week to get an idea of experience and gear required. And be prepared to give a definite yes or no on if you will be going. It is generally assumed that participants have at least average outdoor skills and know what clothing is needed for different Montana seasons.

Most members also do a lot of outdoor activities that they do not put in the newsletter. Feel free to call other members you may know.



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