

MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

The Rocky Mountaineers is organized as a nonprofit Club for the mutual benefit of its members to promote all phases of recreational use of mountainous areas.

April 2003

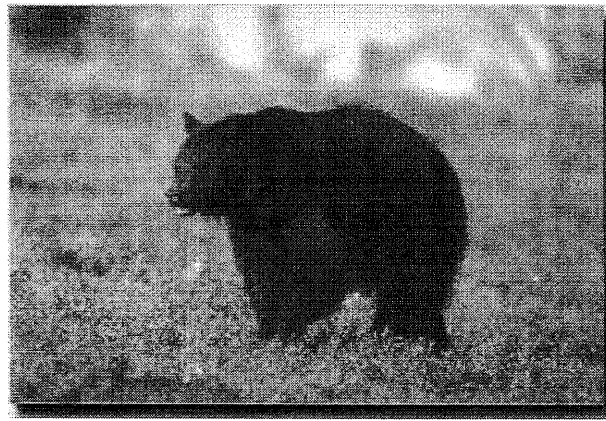
Informative Programs are Scheduled this Spring

We are going to offer thee more meetings this spring. Two of them will have a lot of valuable information for our members and for the public who use the outdoors. We have reserved the large meeting room downstairs at the Missoula Public Library for two of them. All outdoor users should be interested in how to recreate more safely and with less harm to the environment; and there is room for all.

The first meeting is on Tuesday, April 8th at 7:00 PM. Members note - this is a different day and place for our monthly meeting. The speaker is Jamie Jonkel, officially called a Wildlife Conflicts Specialist, but best known for his work with grizzly and black bears. Jamie has been employed by the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for seven years. Before that he spent six years with the Hornocker Wildlife Research Institute, studying big cats - mountain lions, tigers and leopards, etc. Before that he spent 10 years in Yellowstone with the Inter-agency Grizzly Study. Early in his career he spent some time in Idaho and Maine.

Jamie's program will be on "Safety in Bear Country." He will have slides and lots of handouts and will end with a video, leaving a lot of time for questions. He will talk about the safest way to travel, and will also have tips on how to camp and handle food. He will also talk some about mountain lions and other large animals. For instance, it is much more likely for a person to have a dangerous encounter with an elk with a calf or deer with fawn

than it is to meet a grizzly. There will be a lot of new things to learn, plus reminders of what one has forgotten. Bring your family and friends.



Fish, Wildlife and Parks photo

Next on the schedule is a special meeting. Allen Byrd with the Lolo National Forest has volunteered to do a program on "Leave no Trace Backcountry Use"; and the Rocky Mountaineers are very happy to host this meeting. We are still trying to arrange an evening and room for this meeting, but look for the announcement next month. Unfortunately the Public Library is

all booked up. We all camp out quite a bit, either backpacking or around our vehicles. Here is a great opportunity to learn how to do it properly, with minimal harm to the outdoors and few problems for other users, both human and animal.

Our last meeting this spring will be a more traditional entertaining slide show. It will be at the normal time, 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday, May 14th. But it will also be downstairs in the Public Library.

The speakers this evening will be Rich Anderson and friends who spent seven days floating and fishing a small river in the wilds of Alaska in light weight pontoon boats.. They saw wildlife galore - countless grizzlies, lots of wolves and streams full of salmon in stages of spawning and decay. This river is a popular fly in destination for guests at some of Alaska's Fishing Lodges. Come learn about a cheaper way to experience some of the best of the Alaska wildlands.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

Family Yearly Membership: \$13.00

Make checks payable to: "Rocky Mountaineers"

and send to: Rocky Mountaineers
P.O. Box 4262
Missoula, MT. 59806

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I have read this release and indemnity agreement and have fully informed myself of its contents before I have signed it. When I join or renew my membership I also sign on to this agreement.

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian if Participant is Under 18 Years of Age _____

I, (print name) _____ hereby state that I wish to participate in courses and/or activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers, a non-profit organization. I recognize any outdoors activity may involve certain dangers, including but not limited to the hazards of traveling in mountainous terrain, accidents or illness in remote places, forces of nature, and the actions of participants and other persons. I further understand and agree that without some program providing protection of its assets and its leaders, the Rocky Mountaineers would not be able to offer its courses and activities.

In consideration of and as part payment for the right to participate in the activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers, I agree to RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY The Rocky Mountaineers and its members from any and all liability, claims and causes of action arising out of or in any way connected with my participation, or the participation of any minor that I am signing on behalf of, in any activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers. I personally assume all risks in connection with these activities. If I am signing on behalf of a minor, I further agree to RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY The Rocky Mountaineers and its members from any liability, claims and cause of action, which the minor may have arising from the minor's participation in activities. The terms of this agreement shall serve as a release and indemnity agreement for my heirs, personal representative, and for all members of my family, including any minors. (Parents or Legal Guardians must sign for all persons under eighteen (18) years of age).

The Lolo Trail

One of the big philosophical questions facing Americans at the dawn of the 20th Century was how to define themselves after the closing of the frontier. Just what is it that characterizes an American? How can we avoid becoming another Europe?

The answer began to form during the latter half of the century, and crystallized into the movement to preserve our remaining wild lands. For it is the wild lands themselves, not the frontier, that differentiates America from the older civilized parts of the world. And by protecting these natural areas we will secure our vision of ourselves into the future.

However, we should not think of only the wild and natural lands. We should also try to protect and preserve places of cultural and historical importance. This was the purpose of the fun ski trip a few of us took in the Lolo Pass area recently with Bob Clark, Conservation Coordinator for the Sierra Club.

The Lolo Trail (also called the Northern Nez Perce or Nee-Mee-Poo Trail) has great significance to generations of Native Americans who used it as a pathway across the rugged western part of the

Northern Rockies. It is best known to us as one of the most difficult and dangerous parts of the Lewis and Clark Trail. It was here that the Expedition came closest to perishing.

The largest landowner along the trail, Plum Creek, has put its lands up for sale. Some have been sold. What the Sierra Club would like to do is to find some funding to purchase some key sections of the rest to prevent them from being subdivided. They are planning to ask for some Land and Water Conservation Funds to get this project going. Our delegation has been receptive to using these funds in other areas of Montana. Although far from wild, these sections do harbor a lot of wildlife in addition to their historical significance, and some are quite scenic. As a bonus, the sections near Lolo Pass could be part of a large and wonderful winter recreation area. They are already used a lot.

If they are successful they will try to find more funding to preserve more of the Lolo Trail along Lolo Creek, and, hopefully, in Idaho. The long range goal is to transfer these lands to public ownership and to keep it open to the public.

TRIP REPORTS

March 9th

The El Nino broke down and it began to snow big time. There was so much snow at Lolo Pass that there was no parking, so we changed our sled, ski, and snowboard plans to Blue Mountain. The usuals: Michael Burleson (11), Jorden Clock, (11), Mollie Newton (11), Gharrett (8) and Hannah (5) Warner, Kathy Burleson, Steve Schombel, Julie Warner and David Kahl, were joined by Nancy Butler and her dad Ed, for the days fun and a tailgate lunch. The sledding hills at Blue Mountain are great when there is enough snow! - Julie Warner

March 16th

The number one rule of thumb for winter recreation at Lolo Pass is never sit in town and presume you know what it's like "up there". It is almost always worth your while to drive up and check it out. That was the chance we took and were rewarded. It was snowing at the Pass and there was a light layer of new snow on the trail that Bob Clark wanted to ski to discuss land use practices at Lolo Pass. Larry Evens had come along to be educated and educated us: John W., Vera Myers, Steve Schombel and Julie Warner about the mosses, lichens and other vegetation in the forest. We knew better then to stretch our luck and stopped at the Lee Creek Saddle and turned back in a warm sun on corn snow. It was snowing at the pass as we packed up to come home. A great day.

The Sierra Club is in the process of trying to buy the Plum Creek Timber mile square sections at Lolo Pass to keep this land in our winter recreation base. All are on the Montana side of the line. - Julie W.

March 23rd

Lois Crepeau and I set out for Lolo Pass prepared for any conditions- we threw in skis, snow shoes and hiking boots, I thought about the kayak but Lois said "no way". We found 4-5" of new snow at Lolo Pass and more was coming down. We drove on to the Brushy Fork Bridge. From there we skied up the Beaver Ridge Road for several miles. After encountering drifted conditions, we turned around and enjoyed a "screamer ride" down the hill. We stopped to explore a gated road near the bottom for future trips. We enjoyed typical March weather, snow, wind, and sun -sometimes all at once. - Karen Apland and Lois Crepeau

March 26th

On March 26, 2003, at about 10:00 AM, Fred Schwanemann and Steve Schombel took turns breaking trail on the Packer Meadow Loop at Lolo Pass. There was about a foot of good, new snow on the trail and more to come. The skies were cloudy and snow showers to light snow were present for the four hours we spent cross country skiing. Conditions were better than expected. - Eileen Schwanemann

Upcoming Election

May 14th is also the day of our annual election. Our President should spend some time at the April meeting explaining the election and asking if anyone is interested in running for one of the offices. All dues paying members are eligible, and encouraged, to run. If you can't attend the meeting you can call one of the contact people listed below. Right now we have two officers who are willing to serve another year. We will take nominations from the floor. The club will vote in May, and then have the slide show.



The group at the Lee Creek Saddle, Mar. 16th

CLUB CONTACTS

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Editor ssbell@montana.com

UPCOMING TRIPS

April 6th Bear Dance Trail

This trail leaves the shores of Flathead Lake near Woods Bay and is low enough to be snow free. It winds up the hillside for 3-4 miles, gaining about 1750' before ending in a logging area. There is a great view of the lake below, and some public lands along the shore if people want to hike more in the afternoon. This is north of the reservation so no permit is needed. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for the details.

April 13th Spring Skiing

There is a lot of snow left in the higher mountains, and there should be some good skiing this weekend. Or be prepared to bring snowshoes and hiking boots. Several of us like to stay ready for an adventure with the actual destination chosen at the last minute. Call Lois Crepeau at 728-5321 to see what's planned for this Sunday.

April 20th Rattlesnake Hike

Spend a few hours on Easter doing a spring hike with someone who hikes the Rattlesnake regularly. The plan is to hike up trail 99 to Franklin Creek and back. This is short and easy, but there are a lot of flowers and wildlife along the way. Call Fred Schwanemann at 542-7372 for the details.

April 27th Nine Pipes Reservoir

This is another fun day scheduled to take kids out to learn about the outdoors. We will spend a lot of time around Nine Pipes bird watching, looking for fish and amphibians and other animals, perhaps wading and walking. Bring your bird books and binoculars and sturdy shoes. If time allows we will also visit the National Bison Range. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 or Cathy Burleson at 543-9558 to participate.

May 3rd - 4th Ball Rock Point

Saturday will be a scenic drive and some short walks exploring the Missouri Breaks area. We will camp out on the shores of Fort Peck Reservoir. Sunday morning will be a hike to a high point in Iron Stake Ridge, a rugged group of hills on the north side of the reservoir. The length of the hike depends on the condition of the backroads. Then there will be a long drive home. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686.

Early May - Stearshead Bloom

Lois Crepeau would like to hike again to see these delicate little flowers that only bloom for a short time after snowmelt. This will be a short notice hike depending on weather, but keep in touch with any of the people above if you're interested.



Rocky Mountaineers
P. O. Box 4262
Missoula, MT 59806

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