



DECEMBER 2007

# THE MOUNTAIN EAR

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*The Monthly Newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers*



**Climb. Hike. Ski. Bike. Paddle.**  
**Dedicated to the Enjoyment and Promotion of**  
**Responsible Outdoor Adventure.**

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The Mountain Ear is the club newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers and is published near the beginning of every month. Anyone wishing to contribute articles of interest are welcomed and encouraged to do so- contact the editor.

Membership application can be found at the end of the newsletter.

### **ABOUT THE CLUB:**

#### *Mission Statement:*

The Rocky Mountaineers is a non-profit club dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of responsible outdoor adventures.

#### *Meetings and Presentations:*

Meetings are held the second Wednesday, September through May, at 6:00 PM at Pipestone Mountaineering. Each meeting is followed by a featured presentation or speaker at 7:00 PM.

#### *Activities:*

- ☐ Hiking
- ☐ Backpacking
- ☐ Alpine Climbing & Scrambling
- ☐ Peak Bagging
- ☐ Backcountry Skiing
- ☐ Winter Mountaineering
- ☐ Track Skiing
- ☐ Snowshoeing
- ☐ Snowboarding
- ☐ Mountain Biking
- ☐ Rock Climbing
- ☐ Canoeing & Kayaking
- ☐ Rafting
- ☐ Kids Trips
- ☐ Terracaching/Geocaching

## *December Meeting and Feature Presentation*

Last year one of our members, Becky Richards, lost her son Ben to one of winter's most feared occurrences- an avalanche. In honor of Ben, and inspired by Becky's desire to promote avalanche awareness in the wake of her son's death, we are planning a special two part December Presentation. Steve Karkanen, avalanche specialist with the USFS and West Central Montana Avalanche Center, has kindly agreed to give a presentation at our regular meeting on Wednesday, December 12. He will cover local avalanche history, statistics, as well as some basic avalanche awareness- followed by a question and answer session. Then on Saturday, December 15, Minot Maser, representative for Backcountry Access, will lead a field day of avalanche training at Lolo Pass (see description below). Both of these events are free to members. However, we would like to ask that if you attend that you would at least consider making a donation to the Avalanche Center. For those of us who enjoy the winter backcountry and utilize the reports made weekly by Steve and others, it would be a nice way to not only thank them for their time with this presentation, but more importantly help to support what they do. Club meeting begins at 6:00 followed by the Presentation at 7:00. Both are held at Pipestone Mountaineering and open to all.



### **Avalanche Clinic: Snow Pits & Transceiver Training**

December 15th, Lolo Pass  
8AM Departure from K-Mart parking lot to car pool.

Join us for a field day to cover basics on snow stability assessment via snow pits, shovel shear tests, compression tests, and Rutschblocks followed by transceiver practice and modern rescue digging techniques. Finish up the day with a little backcountry skiing. Non-skiers welcome as snowshoes will suffice. Bring backcountry equipment: shovel, transceiver, probe and snow transport device (skis w/ skins or snowshoes) as well as a bag lunch. Extra transceivers, probes, and shovels available.

Instructor: Minot Maser  
Backcountry Access Regional Rep  
Level III US Certified; Canadian Level I

Questions? [minotmaser@aol.com](mailto:minotmaser@aol.com), 546-2771

# UPCOMING TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

## **Trip Notes:**

Please contact the trip leader for more information regarding any listed trips.

Mileage listed is round trip mileage. Elevation listed is gain only. For information on Class Rating see below:

## Class Rating System

**CLASS 1 – HIKING** Mostly on trails, but may also include some easy cross country travel.

**CLASS 2 – EASY SCRAMBLING** Rugged off trail hiking, no hands required.

**CLASS 3 – SCRAMBLING** Use of hand to ascend some sections of rock. Little to no exposure; a fall would not likely cause serious injury.

**CLASS 4 – CLIMBING** Easy climbing, great exposure; a fall would quite possibly cause serious injury. Use of a rope and protection at times possible.

**CLASS 5 – TECHNICAL CLIMBING** Use of rope, protection and belay are a must.

**CLASS 6 – AID CLIMBING** Use of equipment to support your weight as you climb.

## **Saturday, December 1 - CHIEF JOSEPH PASS (Bitterroots)-(Classic Trip)**

*Description:* We will leave Missoula at 8:30 and carpool to the Chief Joseph parking lot. Then we snowshoe across the trail area to Windy Corner, through a thick forest to Scooter Creek, then down through some meadows. There is a steep narrow canyon near the end which would be tough to ski through. The total distance is around 4 to 5 miles. Hopefully we can shuttle enough vehicles down to Scooter Creek along Highway 43 so everyone can head back to Missoula from there. Those who want to ski the trails the same day are welcome to try to coordinate with this group.

*Leader:* Steve Schombel - 721-4686

## **Saturday, December 22 – LOLO PASS SKI (Bitterroots)**

*Description:* Join us for ski touring at Lolo Pass. Perhaps we will ski up to the State Line, or perhaps stay on the loop, depending on who goes and what conditions are like. We will do something short and easy; after all it will be a very short day.

*Leader:* Steve Schombel -721-4686

## **Sunday, December 30 – LOLO PASS SKI (Bitterroots)**

*Description:* Ski touring at Lolo Pass. Exact routes to be decided as time gets closer and upon group or leaders' preference.

*Leader:* Julie Kahl – 543-6508

## **Sunday, January 13 – LOLO PASS SKI (Bitterroots)**

*Description:* Ski touring at Lolo Pass. Exact routes to be decided as time gets closer and upon group or leaders' preference.

*Leader:* Julie Kahl – 543-6508

*Editor's note: Fellow members, perhaps you notice the pathetic lack of trips here? A club is only as strong as its members make it. The Rocky Mountaineers has roughly 85 members of which it seems only 6-8 ever seem to lead trips. I urgently cry out for more trip leaders! Even if you don't have any concrete plans, submit something (that is what the Trip Forum column that follows is all about). Or have a spur of the moment idea? Send to me and we can send out an email to the rest of the members. We need people to get involved, for the strength of the club, and mostly because its FUN! Thanks to Julie and Steve for keeping the "Upcoming Trips" column from getting shutout this month!*

## **TRIP FORUM**

### **Mt. Jackson, (or something....)**

I am going to keep this as a sort of loose plan due to the big unknowns of snow conditions and - even more problematic of late- my day to day schedule. I would like to re-attempt Mount Jackson in Glacier National Park (I tried it last February)- on the last few days of December. Ideally would drive up early Saturday morning (December 29<sup>th</sup>), ski in, camp a couple nights, and attempt this 10,052' peak. Perhaps if Jackson doesn't look good, or we have less time, we could try something else up there—Apikuni Mountain comes to mind. Ski's, skins, avy gear, good winter gear and clothing will be a must. Let me know if interested! Forest Dean @ 240-7612, 721-6384, email: [mtnear1@gmail.com](mailto:mtnear1@gmail.com)

### **Teton Crest Ski Trip**

My plan is to do a 4-5 day ski traverse of the Teton Crest from Teton Pass to Teton Canyon (or vice versa). If conditions are good and there is interest, we may want to attempt a side trip to summit one or more mountains along the crest- such as Table Mountain. Two vehicles would be ideal so we could create our own shuttle. This trip will likely take place in March—I will schedule something more concrete as the time gets closer. If interested in participating, call Forest Dean @ 240-7612, 721-6384, or email: [mtnear1@gmail.com](mailto:mtnear1@gmail.com)

### **"Bob Marshall Wilderness" Backpack**

For next summer I am thinking of going up the North Fork Of The Blackfoot into what is actually the Scapegoat Wilderness. I've never been there but looking at a map it looks like a 6-7 mile hike to the North Fork Cabin, North Fork waterfall is another 1/2 mile or so. We could set up a base camp in that area and do some day hikes like to Falls Point, or there are two 25-30 mile loops that would bring us back to the same trailhead. I'd like to hear from people who have been in this area for suggestions of destinations etc. I'm planning on mid July 2008 that still seems like the best window between -still frozen in and -the start of fire season. Julie Kahl 543-6508

## **Rocky Mountaineers Merchandise - For Sale!!**

Just in time for the holidays, we have unveiled our first ever Rocky Mountaineers merchandise featuring our new logo! Be one of the first to own and wear this great new stuff. More to come!

Short Sleeve T-Shirt	\$13.00 (\$17 non-members)
Long Sleeve T-Shirt	\$17.00 (\$22 non-members)
Caps	\$18.00 (\$23 non-members)
Fleece Beanie's	\$16.00 (\$20 non-members)

Shirts and hats are available in various sizes and/or colors. For more information, or to place your order email: [seniday@yahoo.com](mailto:seniday@yahoo.com) or call Steve at 721-3790. Additionally, all of the above will be available at the December meeting.



## **TRIP REPORTS**

### **November 3- Mt. Calowahcan (Mission Mountains)**

Joshua Phillips, Lewis Kogan and Chris Dunn joined me this Saturday morning for an attempt on the Northwest Ridge Route of the mighty Calowahcan in the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness. As is the case with most of this area, finding the trailhead was a rather difficult endeavor. After opening and closing a gate or two and driving way back in the woods, we began our hike on the valley floor bottom. Much to our surprise after hiking a couple miles down a very primitive jeep trail, we popped out on a very nice improved gravel road. Soon we encountered utility lines and then upscale homes. Nothing like a surprise! Anyway after about an hour of hiking we finally got to where we could have started and then we started again. We found a few game trails and hunter trails here and there, but mostly we took the hardest route through the thickest brush. Joshua was sort of leading, so I will blame that on him. After climbing about two thousand feet and finally finding a pretty good "trail" our trip came to a sudden end. Chris who was walking fourth in our little party, took a rogue branch in the eye. He was in a tremendous amount of discomfort (a little while later while checking him out Joshua saw a distinct scratch across his cornea). We made the disappointing but certainly proper decision to turn around and hike out. Chris was certainly a tough customer- he was obviously in some pain, but never complained and did the long hike out. So we ended up chalking this trip up to a re-con mission and will be back for the attack at some point in the near future. Feel free to contact me if you need directions to this very confusing "trailhead".  
*Forest Dean*

### **November 11- Sawmill Gulch (Rattlesnake NRA)**

On Sunday, November 11, 2007, Fred and Eileen Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, Barbara Ross, and Lois Crepeau trekked up the North drainage of Sawmill Gulch. Then four of us took the Grant Creek Divide Trail to Trail 28.3 where we had lunch. There was quite a snow shower when we approached the Grant Creek Divide Trail. The snow shower left an eighth to a quarter inch of new snow in the area. After lunch, we came down the North drainage of Curry Gulch and then back to Sawmill Gulch. Lois saw a small weasel in what's left of Curry Cabin. There was variable weather, but a good day. *Fred Schwanemann*

### **November 18- Transceiver Practice Day**

As advertised in the last newsletter, we decided to do a little transceiver practice to prep for the upcoming winter ski season. Joshua Phillips and Lewis Kogan made the long trip out to the west side of Missoula to join Forest Dean in his amber waves of knapweed. Being that we didn't have any snow yet, we ended up taking turns hiding transceivers under dead grass or the aforementioned knapweed, then doing a search. Although the conditions weren't very realistic, it was good to just do a basic refresher. Practice can never hurt. As we finished it even started to snow, so you can all thank us for "bringing it on!" *Forest Dean*

### **December 1-2 – Thompson Peak (Sawtooths)**

Trip unfortunately had to be canceled (or postponed?) due to the leader having to coach his kids' hockey team in a tournament. Bad leader!! *Forest Dean*

### **December 1 - Chief Joseph snowshoe (November Classic Trip)**

Here was a trip that went pretty much, but not exactly, as planned. It was chilly, probably low to mid teens, but we were fine as long as we kept moving. We spotted a car down below on hwy. 43 and left the parking lot around 11. There were several inches of new snow to wade through. In order to avoid tracking up the groomed runs we took the ungroomed Tele trail most of the way to Windy Corner. There were several downed trees across this trail to climb over or crawl around. It was more tiring than anticipated. We reached Windy Corner and found the entrance to the Scooter Creek Trail to be well signed. The first part didn't quite have enough blue diamonds, but we took it slow and managed to stay on track. We weren't very far down this trail when we ran across two moose hunters. We had thought that hunting was over, but apparently special moose permits have a longer season. They were friendly, and it turned out that their pickup was the other vehicle in the parking spot

down below. So, naturally, we followed their footprints which followed the blue diamonds for quite a ways. Somewhere near the second meadow (clear-cut with lots of 10' trees) their tracks and the blue diamonds diverged, and we did not see any blue diamonds the rest of the day. The tracks led us down to a creek bottom, then climbed up a ridge to the west not once but twice. After some debate we decided to abandon the tracks and follow the creek. We were wading through another clear-cut thick with 10' trees dumping snow down our necks when we happened across a logging road which took us out to the highway only a few hundred feet from our car. We are really certain that we were in Scooter Creek, especially since this logging road is shown on maps. There was a sign at Windy Corner which said that the Scooter Creek Trail followed an old logging road on the east side of the creek down the last part, and we were on a more recent road on the west side, which probably explains why we didn't see any more blue diamonds. Participants were: Fred Schwanemann, Bret Doucett and Steve Schombel.

## MOUNTAIN TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Steve Schombel correctly answered 4 of 5 questions to take home the title of November Trivia Contest King! Congrats to Steve- you have earned some brews! (See answers below). This month we switch gears away from places. This contest is all about Knots! Email to: [mtnear1@gmail.com](mailto:mtnear1@gmail.com)

- 1- Which of the following knots reduce the relative strength of a rope the most? *Double Fisherman's, Clove Hitch, Square Knot*
- 2- This knot shares a name with an insect and is commonly used to tie in middle climbers during glacier travel. What is it?
- 3- Name the great "backup system" knot for belaying or rappelling if you suddenly lose your belay device.
- 4- What is another name for the "Flemish Bend"?
- 5- What knot will I have created if I do the following? Pass a loop of sling or rope around some other fixed object, then pull the sling or rope back through the loop, fastening it to the object I just passed it around.

### NOVEMBER CONTEST ANSWERS:

- 1 – Mount Cleveland, Mount Stimson, Kintla Peak (First, second, third highest peaks in Glacier National Park)
- 2 – Fremont Peak (WY), Castle Mountain (MT), Mt. Church (ID) (The third highest peak in each of these 3 states)
- 3 - Mt. Calowahcan, Sawmill Gulch, Chief Joseph Pass, Thompson Peak (The four trips listed in the November newsletter)
- 4 - Sagarmatha, Chomolungma, Mt. Everest (Names for the world's highest mountain)
- 5 - Pingora, Wolfs Head, Overhanging Tower, Sharks Nose, Block Tower, Watch Tower, Pylon Peak, Warrior Peak, War Bonnet Peak (The peaks that comprise The Cirque of the Towers in Wyoming's Wind River Range)

## ***The Minutes of The Rocky Mountaineers - November 14, 2007***

Called to Order 6:20 PM

Attendance: Steve Niday, Forest Dean, Julie Kahl, Steve Schombel, Alden Wright, Lewis Kogan, Jon Garvin, and Jim Wilson.

Previous meeting minutes not available, approved with no changes

Correspondence: none

Treasurers report: \$267.75 checking, \$235.44 savings

Club Business: It was decided to sell short sleeve shirts to members for \$13.00 and

long sleeve shirts for \$17. For non-members the prices are \$17.00 and \$22.00. Forest Dean to order 10 hats and 10 beanies. Steve Niday to order some stickers and get some photos of the shirts. My plan of having pretty young girls model the shirts was thwarted by the fact that the shirts are too big. I'll get something soon.

Lewis Kogan gave a history of the U M Outdoor Club, which he started, and an overview of the Club's current status. We ran out of time and would like to continue the discussion to reach an agreement, which would be beneficial to his Club and The Rocky Mountaineers.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM



*Winter arrives! The Sweathouse Spires as viewed from Sky Pilot as a November storm sets in.  
F. Dean photo.*



## THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 for paper newsletter  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 for electronic newsletter

*Note: Membership includes all members of a family or household.*

Make checks payable to 'The Rocky Mountaineers' and send to:

The Rocky Mountaineers, PO Box 4262, Missoula, MT 59806

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Family Members Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

*Joining or maintaining your Rocky Mountaineers membership has never been easier! **PayPal** is now available on the Rocky Mountaineers website. Click on the membership link on the main page.*

*Cover Photo: Chief Joseph Pass Ski Trails. Photo by Mike Hoyt.*



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