

A photograph of a mountain valley seen through a cave opening. The cave's dark, jagged rock walls frame the view. Outside, a steep, rocky mountain slope rises, dotted with patches of green coniferous trees. In the foreground, several tall, dark evergreen trees stand in silhouette against the bright light coming from the cave's exit. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

NOVEMBER 2010

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. Each meeting is followed by a featured presentation or speaker at 7:00 PM.

Activities:

- ☐ Hiking
- ☐ Backpacking
- ☐ Alpine Climbing & Scrambling
- ☐ Backcountry Skiing
- ☐ Winter Mountaineering
- ☐ Track Skiing
- ☐ Snowshoeing
- ☐ Mountain Biking
- ☐ Rock Climbing
- ☐ Canoeing & Kayaking
- ☐ Rafting
- ☐ Kids Trips

October Meeting

Wednesday, November 10th

Our monthly business meeting will begin at 6:00 PM, downstairs at The Trailhead. General meeting featuring the Presentation is also held downstairs and will start at 7:00 PM. Everyone is invited to both!

Our feature Presentation this month will be given by **Matt Gibson**, owner of the Missoula Independent and founder of Montana Headwall Magazine. He plans to share his vision for Headwall, and show members how they can be a part of Headwall by posting trip reports on line. If time allows he would like to lead a discussion about the reluctance of some outdoor adventurers to share information about their exploits. He'd like to get into the implications of such a beta sharing business.

On Wednesday, December 8th we will have a lecture and slides on "Avalanche Safety" by the West Central Montana Avalanche Foundation. These presentations are very educational, and will be geared toward back country skiers, boarders and snowshoers. There is always time for a lot of questions afterward, and we usually have transceivers, poles and other gear on hand to demonstrate. For more information on avalanches see missoulaavalanche.org.

Contributed by Steve Schombel.

President's Report

Fellow Mountaineers,

Fall is definitely here and going quickly to winter activities. The general rifle hunting season is ongoing till November 28, so do wear hunter's orange when going out this time of the year. I want to thank everyone who helped out at our annual cabin maintenance and firewood cutting day and we had 23 volunteers to help out, so the work was done quickly. We had a BBQ and beers at the trailhead after. Going out for a short hike? Out for an all day adventure? Have members join you, be a trip leader. Show others, places that you like to visit and get involved with the club. Send an invite to club newsletter editor to: mtnear1@gmail.com. Mat Gibson, founder and owner of Montana Headwall Magazine will be our speaker and presenter at our Wednesday club meeting starting at 7:00PM at the Trailhead.

Tom Hanou
tlhanou@aol.com

Cabin maintenance and firewood cutting day

On Saturday, October 2nd, we had the most members ever in our annual cabin maintenance and firewood cutting day. 23 people showed up including 3 members of U of M Backcountry Club, who wanted to show their appreciation of our cabin's existence by helping out. Work got done promptly with all the help we had and the cabin is well stocked with firewood for another season. I want to thank everyone for a job well done.

We got together for a group photo, photo by Julie Kahl.



Afterward a few members went up Little St Joe, while others filtered down to the trailhead where we had a BBQ and refreshments.

Get up there this winter or the spring of next year. The cabin is a wonderful resource that our club has, with excellent skiing in the meadows a short distance above the cabin to the top of Little St Joe.

Tom Hanou

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.

Sunday, November 14 – BLUE MOUNTAIN REC. AREA

Description: Dog friendly hike. We need more trip leaders, and participation in trips. Here is an idea: would some of us dog owners like to get together for a hike? I am proposing to meet at 1 PM on Nov. 14th at the Blue Mountain trailhead near Highway 93. I'll do a short hike with my friendly dog who has a bad knee, and will point out longer trails to the other participants. Call me up with your questions if you're interested.

Leader: Steve Schombel 721-4686

Sunday, November 28 – LOLO PASS (Bitterroots)

Description: This will be an X-Country ski trip (providing conditions allow). Distance and elevation will be determined by what people want to do. If conditions are no good for skiing, then snowshoeing or hiking will be alternate plans.

Leader: Julie Kahl 543-6508, jawkal@hotmail.com

Cover Photo: Looking out of a cave in Refrigerator Canyon by Gates of the Mountains Wilderness Area. Forest Dean photo.

TRIP REPORTS

October 8-9- Echo Peak (Madison Range)

I had advertised this trip as a climb of Hilgard Peak (high point in the Madison Range) on our website and got no takers. Being that I was going to be in West Yellowstone for a business trip, I thought that if the weather cooperated I would do the semi-technical Hilgard anyway, by myself. Well the weather didn't cooperate. The day prior to the trip, it started snowing and raining in the high country. So I opted for something a little less technical, the 11,214' Echo Peak. I started my approach hike at 12:30 PM on Friday up toward Hilgard Basin. The hike to the basin is on a very good and well used trail that alternates between forest and meadows. It's about 8 miles to the basin, three of which I was following very fresh grizzly tracks (never saw it though). The weather was mostly drizzly, which turned to a few flakes as I neared the basin. The Hilgard Basin is a beautiful large meadow area dotted with a dozen or so small lakes. Unlike a lot of high Montana mountain basins, it's not a rocky area. Just lakes, meadows and a few small outcroppings of stunted trees. I set up camp above and near the first lake (Expedition Lake) amidst a snow squall. From here I could see the lower flanks of Echo, about 2 miles away. At about 3:30 I struck out for the Peak. It was mostly a hike up the ever steepening meadows until the last 800' or so. Here I climbed up a steep talus slope to gain the north ridge. Then (as I was met by the west wind) I made my way up through small snow covered and slippery boulders to the summit, arriving at 4:45 PM. Distance from car to summit is about 11.5 miles with 4400' of elevation gain. The clouds had continued to linger over these high peaks and I really only got one good glimpse of the peak as I climbed up. After lingering on the broad summit for 15 minutes, I headed back down, arriving back at my camp at 6:00 PM. It was getting cold, so I ate some food and jumped into my tent. Overnight a couple of inches of snow fell and I awoke to a cold morning. An uneventful 3 hour hike out transpired under ever clearing skies. By the time I arrived out, the sky was blue (figures). *Forest Dean*

October 29- Seeley Lake Trails

Originally I had planned on doing a hike along the new trails at Seeley Lake on Sunday, Oct. 24th. But the weather forecast predicted a lot of rain, so I called people and told them we were postponing this hike. Then the weather forecast looked good for Friday, 10-29, so I called people and organized a trip on that day. Some were not able to go on a work day, and I am sorry. For, as it turns out, it never did rain all that much on Sunday, but we did get rained on quite a bit on Friday.

We did actually have a fun day. We were a group of old friends who have not gotten together as often as we used to, and we had several stories and gossip to share as we walked along. The weather was not all that bad in the morning, kind of overcast but we could see parts of Fisher, Morrel, and some of the other mountains around Seeley Lake. The Western Larch and the other plants were in their absolute best fall colors, and we reached the shores of the lake on a quiet day when the lake had a smooth surface with reflections of the trees and mountains. If the sun had been out we could have gotten some magnificent photos, but the weather continued to deteriorate. Clouds came in and a steady drizzle came up after our lunch break. We kept moving to stay warm and were glad to get back to the car and all agreed to just drive home. There are several other trails in the Seeley Lake area we could go back and explore some day. Participants in this hike were me, *Steve Schombel*, Bret Doucette, Julie Kahl and Fred Schwanemann.

Rocky Mountaineers Merchandise

Short Sleeve T-Shirt	\$13.00 (\$17.00 non-members)
Long Sleeve T-Shirt	\$18.50 (\$23.50 non-members)
Caps	\$18.00 (\$23.00 non-members)
Fleece Beanie's	\$16.00 (\$20.00 non-members)
Stickers	\$ 1.50
Newsletter Archive CD	\$20.00

All of the Mountain Ear newsletters since 1960 on one CD!!



Shirts and hats are available in various sizes and/or colors. For more information, or to place your order email: seniday@yahoo.com or call Steve at 721-3790.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee: \$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.