



JANUARY 2011

THE MOUNTAIN EAR

This Issue:

- *Avalanche Presentation*
- *Doug Ammons Presentation*
- *Trekking in Nepal Presentation*
- *Trip Listings*

The Monthly Newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers



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

Club Contacts

Website: <http://rockymountaineers.com>

e-mail: info@rockymountaineers.com

Mailing Address:
The Rocky Mountaineers
PO Box 4262
Missoula MT 59806

President: Tom Hanou
tlhanou@aol.com

Vice-President: Joshua Phillips
mtsurveyor@gmail.com

Secretary: Shawn Bennett
shawnedwardbennett@gmail.com

Treasurer: Steve Niday
seniday@yahoo.com

Webmaster: Alden Wright
webmaster@rockymountaineers.com

Newsletter Editor: Forest Dean
mtnear1@gmail.com

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

President's Message

Rocky Mountaineers,

The Holidays are over and it is time to discipline ourselves to get outside; get out for ones enjoyment. We here in Missoula are so fortunate in what we have 10 minutes away, a half hour away, a few hours away to really enjoy being out, be it x-c skiing, downhill skiing, hiking, ice climbing, etc. Time to get out and invite others by emailing our club newsletter editor: mtnear1@gmail.com with a trip invite.

We really have some exciting speakers for our next few club meetings. On Wednesday, Jan 12th at the Trailhead, 221 East Front in Missoula, we will have our annual Avalanche Awareness presentation by the West Central Montana Avalanche Center. A must attend for anyone who gets out in the backcountry. There will be a film and a discussion after.

On February 10th, we are hosting along with UM Campus Outdoor Recreation, a presentation by Missoula's own world class whitewater adventurer, Doug Ammons, and his latest film, "Wildwater, A Love Story". Showing will be at the Urey Lecture Hall at 7 PM on Thursday. More information to come in our next newsletter.

I understand that Paul Jensen will be doing the March meeting on his recent trip to Nepal. Wow, looking forward to it.

A special thank you to our own Stephen Schombel for his continuing work in getting excellent speakers for our meetings. It is much appreciated.

Tom Hanou
406-360-3564
tthanou@aol.com

Upcoming Presentations

January.....

"Avalanche Awareness"

By the West Central Montana Avalanche Center

We sure do have a lot of wonderful snow, and a lot of us are probably out enjoying it. But it also looks like a bad year for avalanches. A few days after Christmas two people were caught in one just outside of Snowbowl (luckily they got out on their own). Right now the West Central Montana Avalanche Center has a high danger advisory for many areas. Many are probably wondering about even going up to the backcountry right now, but The Rocky Mountaineers have one solution to help people learn about the dangers and evaluate the rewards versus risks involved.

On Wednesday, January 12th at 7:00 PM at The Trailhead we will have our annual Avalanche Awareness presentation by the West Central Montana Avalanche Center. The talk will mainly be about snow conditions posted on the website, missoulaavalanche.org, and a film. The film is "The Fine Line" and has some great cinematography and interviews of avalanche experts, survivors as well as some epic skiing and riding.

This is a very valuable resource for people's safety, and we will be passing a hat for donations during the show. You can also make donations on the website, but, most importantly, check it out for the valuable information.

As always, the monthly TRM business meeting will precede the presentation and begin at 6:00 PM.



Large slab avalanche on the false peak (Mormon Ridge) of Lolo Peak. Photo taken on April 16, 2010 by Dale Dufor from the bridge across Lolo Creek at Travelers Rest State Park.

February.....

Wildwater: a Love Story A new film about the soul of white water

Mark your calendars, everyone. The Rocky Mountaineers are hosting a very special show in February. This show is on a different day and in a different place than our regular monthly meeting. It will be in the **Urey Lecture Hall at 7 PM on Thursday, February 10th**, done jointly with Campus Outdoor Recreation. The show will be a presentation by Missoula's own world class whitewater adventurer, **Doug Ammons**, and his latest film, "Wildwater, A Love Story." There will be more about the show next month. This month let's learn more about the speaker.

Doug Ammons is best known as an expedition kayaker with many first descents and solo trips. He also has done swift creeks and waterfalls. He has written two books and made films for ESPN, Outdoor Life and National Geographic. Among other honors he was named by Outside magazine, in April, 2010, as "One of the ten all-time game changers in adventure." (see excerpt on next page). Along the way he also became a great

motivational speaker and promoter of his sport. He also wants to preserve natural rivers and the native people who live along them. We thank him a lot for offering to do a Rocky Mountaineers show, free and open to all. There will be copies of his books for sale at the show, with proceeds going to two schools in a remote part of Nepal. Please stop by the table, go to his website, dougammons.com, to learn a lot more and to make donations.

Here is a short biography from his website:

Doug Ammons, Age: 52, Home: Missoula, MT

Doug Ammons is a Montana native and has been a world class kayaker for the last 25+ years. He has done dozens of expedition first descents of rivers around the world, as well as steep creeks and rivers in the Rocky Mountains in the US, Canada, and Alaska. He is particularly known for his outrageous solo descents of highwater and extended wilderness Class V+ and VI runs. He writes regularly for adventure publications and published the book, "The Laugh of the Water Nymph" in 2005, voted one of the best outdoors books of the year by the National Outdoor Book Awards. He published a second book, called "Whitewater Philosophy" in February, 2009. He has several more in draft form, including "The Stikine". This is the dramatic history of the attempts on the Grand Canyon of the Stikine, together with the story of his 1992 solo run, which has been equated to Himalayan climber Reinhold Messner's epic solo of Mt. Everest.

March.....

Trekking in Nepal- Manaslu Circuit

At our meeting on **Wednesday, March 9**, we will have a talk and slide show by long time club member **Paul Jensen**. Recently Paul and a friend spent about a month in Nepal, and they visited some less traveled areas. More details in the next newsletter.

MORE>>>>

Interesting Website dedicated to Tree Wells..... <http://www.treewelldeepsnowsafety.com/index.php>

What is Alpinism? <https://admin.alpineclubofcanada.ca/link/to/3345-73259-156-02>

Cover Photo: The west face of Grey Wolf Peak in the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness. Photo taken from the SE ridge route on East St. Mary's Peak. F. Dean photo.

"Game Changers: the ten greatest adventurers since 1900"

From the Editors of Outside Magazine:

In the April issue of *Outside*, we list the ten greatest adventurers since 1900. They had to be game changers. Read the article, or look at the summary of our picks below. Then vote in our poll or leave a message in the comments section below. Who are your picks? We'll release the full reader results here on April 15.

Our Picks

10. Loic Jean-Albert

9. Robyn Davidson

8. Greg Noll

7. Doug Ammons

6. Yvon Chouinard

5. Lynn Hill

4. Thor Heyerdahl

3. Beryl Markham

2. Reinhold Messner

1. Roald Amundsen



WHAT HE DID: In 1990, Ammons snagged the second descent of British Columbia's Grand Canyon of the Stikine, a roiling, 60-mile Class V canyon that's the pinnacle of expedition kayaking. Two years later, he came back to do it solo—a feat that's never been repeated.

LEGACY: What Reinhold Messner (see No. 2) did for alpinism, Ammons did for paddling. The Montanan's solo on the Stikine still stands as the sport's ultimate test of commitment and perseverance. "I tried to do the hardest thing I could conceive of, in the purest style possible," Ammons later wrote.

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 or Sunday (and some Fridays!), January/February weekends (wherever the snow is best...around Missoula)

Rating: East to Moderate level backcountry skiing, *Elevation Gain:* 2500' - 4000'

Description: I plan on skiing at least every weekend in January and February at various locations in the surrounding area and am encouraging folks to come along. The weather and snow conditions/stability will dictate the locations as well as the amount of vertical feet gained/descended. The Bitterroots, Missions, Lewis and Clarks and Swans are all in striking distance; let me know if you're interested. Snow stability investigations will be made on every trip.

Email me to get on my "back country ski partner" email list. I usually send out an email on Thursdays.

Special Equipment: Skis/skins, beacon, shovel, and probe. Some lending gear available.

Leader: Joshua Phillips—H: 396-3162, email: mtsurveyor@gmail.com

Saturday, January 15 – KOOTENAI CREEK (Bitterroots)

Description: I am heading out Kootenai Creek on Saturday at 9:00AM. The trail follows along the north side of the creek and unlike other trails up the Bitterroot Canyons, does not have a former road going up the drainage. This is a dog friendly hike. I plan on being out 4 hours or so and don't plan on needing or using snow shoes or skis. I live up the Bitterroot and will meet everyone at the trailhead. Call or e-mail me and I will arrange transportation.

Leader: Tom Hanou, tlhanou@aol.com, 360-3564

Friday, January 28 – WEST SAINT MARY'S PEAK (Missions)

Rating: Possibly Class 4; *Distance:* 6.5 miles RT; *Elevation:* 5500'

Description: This will be an attempt on the South Ridge of WSM Peak (el. 9372'). It appears they are plowing the road to St. Mary Lake; if this is discontinued, I won't do this trip. Plan to start a little ways before the lake and head straight north and up the South Ridge. With the good snow, I am hoping the brush will be mostly covered. This is an exploratory type climb; if anyone has info on doing this route I would certainly welcome it. The ridge near the summit gets very narrow and looks quite steep. We will bring crampons, an ice axe and probably a rope and some protection. Personally undecided on snowshoes vs. ski's, but either will be welcome. Experience and good physical condition required.

Special Equipment: Ski's or snowshoes; crampons; ice axe; harness; pickets?; helmet; transceiver; CSKT Recreation Permit.

Leader: Forest Dean, mtnear1@gmail.com, 240-7612

Saturday, January 29 – PATTEE CANYON SNOWSHOE

Description: Snowshoe in the Pattee Canyon area. Most of you have probably been out enjoying the snow we have this year. There are several areas to go in Pattee Canyon instead of the groomed trails. We could go up the road that circles around University Mountain, or the road that heads south to upper Deer Creek. I'd want to do something short, 4 to 6 miles.

Leader: Steve Schombel, 721-4686

TRIP FORUM

Smith River Float Trip

Some of us are going to, again, apply for permits to float the Smith River. Our target dates will be around Father's Day weekend in late June. If any one out there is interested, the deal is that, if anyone in our club is successful in getting a permit, then the other people in the club who put in applications get to go along, up to the maximum number. February is the month you have to send in permit applications for the drawing. If you want an application or more info you should go out to the MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks Office on West Spurgin Road, or call them or visit their website. For more info contact Steve Schombel at 721-4686.

TRIP REPORTS

December 21 – East Saint Mary's Peak (Mission Mountains)

Having not been on skis yet this year, I figured it was about time to get out. I advertised this Tuesday trip not expecting to get many takers and I wasn't stunned when nobody came along. It was the Winter Solstice and a full moon to boot. Temps were cold, skies were clear and the snow was everywhere. For those of you who haven't been there, the trail (its not on maps) begins on the west end of St. Mary Reservoir about 8 miles up the road from St. Ignatius. Fortunately, the road was plowed all the way back there (and beyond) as there was a lot of snow. I began in the dark at 7:15 am on skis (elevation 4000'). The trail is quite steep and I soon took off the skis and hoofed it for about a thousand vertical. Put the skis back on and cut switchbacks up the still steep south ridge to about 6500'. Somewhere around that elevation you break out of the forest and start to enjoy great views as you continue to ascend (but not so steeply). The route sticks to the south ridge which then turns and becomes a southeast ridge of the Peak proper. Avalanche danger is mostly avoided as this is an all ridge route. Around 8000' the ridge levels out for about a mile of cruising toward the final 500' ridge climb. At that point I took off skis and put on crampons and grabbed the ice axe. This final ridge was extremely hard packed



West and East St. Mary's Peaks from the SE Ridge

views as you continue to ascend (but not so steeply). The route sticks to the south ridge which then turns and becomes a southeast ridge of the Peak proper. Avalanche danger is mostly avoided as this is an all ridge route. Around 8000' the ridge levels out for about a mile of cruising toward the final 500' ridge climb. At that point I took off skis and put on crampons and grabbed the ice axe. This final ridge was extremely hard packed

snow and gets quite steep near the summit. Stopping 15 feet below the summit cornice I took a picture of the slope (55 degrees?) and then promptly cut off a small slab avalanche. Being that I was on top of it and right on the ridge crest, I didn't go anywhere, and the slab didn't go to far either, but it was pretty exciting. I had to dig my way through the summit cornice and then there I was (9425' - 12:15 PM). After spending a good solid 3 minutes on top (cold and windy), I headed back down. Enjoyed great views of the west side of Gray Wolf looking at the splendid west couloir that I will never probably climb. Not being much of a skier, I struggled back down the very steep ridge taking the skis off for the final 1200' of thicker forest. Arrived out at 3:00 PM very tired. Was a great way to kick off Winter! (Details: approximately a 7 mile round trip with 5500' of elevation gain). *Forest Dean*

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.