

JANUARY 2014

# THE MOUNTAIN EAR

*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 at the end 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 Tuesday, September through May, at 6:00 PM at the Trail Head. Each meeting is followed by a featured presentation or speaker at 7:00 PM.

Please be sure to check out our **Facebook group** to receive the latest up-to-date news and post short-notice trip proposals:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rockymountaineers/>

*Cover Photo: The summit ridge of Ch-paa-qn (Squaw) Peak,  
Reservation Divide.  
Photo by Dan Saxton*

# **TRIP REPORTS**

## **Fri-Mon, January 17-20, 2014 – Belly River/Kaina Mountain (Glacier NP)**

This trip has been postponed until further notice. *Forest Dean*

## **Lolo Pass Moonlight Snowshoe, Saturday, January 18, 2014**

This was a Montana Wilderness Association Winter Walk I went on. No other RMers signed up. Bert L. was the leader, and we were joined by Bob, Jan and Butch. There were also some women from the club skiing on the roads below. We followed the groomed snowshoe trail up to a point on Packer Ridge, then down the other side, three miles total. The snow was great, weather fine. Bert timed it so we reached the clearing on top just before the moon rose. There were also lots of stars and constellations. It was one of the rare mostly clear nights at the pass. Even though we kept up a steady pace the warming hut was closing and the cookies were gone when we got back. They were kind enough to let us stop in and have some cocoa and tea before we headed home. *Steve Schombel*

## **Lee Creek, Sunday, January 19, 2014**

As has been the case all winter this was another great ski day. Roy joined Julie and David to ski the former “A” Trail from Lolo Pass down eight miles into Montana to the Lee Creek Campground. We have to thank Steve and Fred who broke trail most of the way up to the Lee Creek Saddle last Tues. We followed it, with Roy breaking trail up to the saddle. We



knew that two guys and a dog had gone up from the bottom on Tues. and there would be broken trail down from there. Several warm days since we skied up here on Tues. had softened the crust and we got in some of the nice swooping turns the downhill part of the road is famous for. Even the notorious last mile was in decent shape. It was a beautiful sunny day, we saw moose tracks and we only saw two other people. *Julia Kahl*

*Photo by Julia Kahl*

# **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, February 2, 2014 - PACK CREEK ROAD**

*Description:* This is an 8 mi. point to point ski on logging roads, starting at Lolo Pass and going down to the Crooked Fork Bridge in Idaho. There are downhill sections which can be fast, with some exposure. This trip is downhill all the way. Meet at 9am at the Miller Creek Rd. end of the Wal-Mart parking lot.

*Leader:* Julia Kahl

## **Friday-Sunday, February 7-9, 2014 - LITTLE ST. JOE CABIN AND PEAK**

*Description:* This is a moderate to advanced backcountry ski trip; however, snowshoes could work. On Sat the plan is to climb and ski on Little St. Joe peak.

*Leader:* Call me, Paul Jensen (728-6881) by Feb 5 for more information.

## **Sunday, February 9, 2014 - BOBCAT CREEK**

*Description:* I'd like to ski up Bobcat Creek, maybe even do a loop if people want to go that far. If there still isn't decent snow down low by then I'll head up to Lolo Pass instead.

*Leader:* Steve Schombel

***As always, feel free to propose new trips and write new trip reports! We have a fascinating and huge backcountry all around our corner of Montana/Idaho to explore and play around in!***

**The place to go for maps (plus guidebooks.....)**

## **The Rocky Mountain Map Gallery**

[www.rockymountainmaps.com](http://www.rockymountainmaps.com)

**1710 Brooks St.,  
Missoula, MT  
59801.**

**Open from 10am  
to 6pm on Mon-Fri  
and from  
10am-2pm on  
Saturdays.**



The charming little Rocky Mountain Map Gallery is located at the northern end of the Brooks St. commercial district. I discovered this little store during my first full week in Montana after I moved here and was immediately captivated by its devotion to all types of maps! There are not only topographic maps for outdoor purposes, but also historical maps and 3-D relief maps, along with an excellent selection of guidebooks. That first time, I spent a couple hours just browsing through everything, and ended up buying the local map of Missoula trails, produced by Cairn Cartographics ([www.cairncarto.com](http://www.cairncarto.com)) - an indispensable resource.

The Gallery stocks a very comprehensive collection of trail maps: the Trails Illustrated maps for national parks such as Glacier and Yellowstone; Beartooth Publishing's series of maps covering several important mountain ranges in Montana; and Forest Service maps for the various national forests/wildernesses/ranger districts all across the Western USA. Guidebooks include the Day Hikes series for Missoula and Bozeman; the Falcon Press series for the Selway-Bitterroot and Bob Marshall Wildernesses along with Glacier; and many local guidebooks for the various ranges of Montana, some of which are the only current authority for the particular range they cover. It is an outstanding selection!

The Map Gallery's owner, Kevin McCann, is a dedicated "cartophile." He has spent a great deal of effort making the Gallery a work of art, especially in the way he arranges his amazing collection of historical maps along the walls

I heartily recommend the Rocky Mountain Map Gallery to all outdoors enthusiasts. There is something in there for all hikers, climbers, fishermen, hunters, etc. The selection is unsurpassed for any location in Missoula; plus, you get to support a local business!

~ Dan Saxton

## Showcasing Snapshot.....

### Selway Crags



*The view from Fenn Mountain, king of the Selway Crag*s.

High above the Lochsa River in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness of Idaho, some distance east of Kooskia, lie the granitic and spectacularly rugged Selway Crag

s. Although they're not terribly high by Idaho/Montana standards (8,021' Fenn Mountain is the king), the vegetation-resistant nature of the granite walls and the harsher conditions of a wetter climate make the Crags seem like they could be 10,000 feet high (and besides, they do tower over 6,000 feet above the Lochsa - "small" doesn't always mean SMALL). Besides Fenn Mountain, East Peak, and Chimney Peak - the major summits - there are also a sizable number of unnamed crags not too much lower but equally contorted and spectacular.

It is hard to reach the Crag

s; thus, horsepacking traffic accounts for a significant portion of their use. Perhaps the least-torturous way for hikers is to drive up the rugged 4wd road up to Big Fog Mountain from the Selway River and start from a relatively high elevation. Another option is to begin from the Lochsa and go by way of Stanley Hot Springs and Stanley Butte, which involves long stretches of both uphill and downhill climbing. Other possibilities include the Coolwater Ridge approach, which is another 4wd option, or suffering a vertical mile of gain straight up the Gedney Mountain trail (rumor has it this particular route is quite overgrown and brushy). A good trip to the Crags that allows one to fully maximize the

experience of being in this rugged wilderness normally should take at least three or four days.

The rewards are great - trails are few, but if you endure the tough cross-country travel, you're pretty much guaranteed solitude at your own private lake in many of the numerous basins under the shadows of the Craggs!



*One of the many remote lake basins in the Craggs.*

Here's the definitive resource for the Selway Craggs, Summitpost member "**mrh**"'s colorful page which does a masterful job of displaying the glories of this special place: <http://www.summitpost.org/selway-craggs/501574>

***The above two photos are by "mrh."***



*Photo by Dan Saxton*

## **Uncertain Ski Trail Grooming Situation at Lolo Pass**

I corresponded with Buffie Cerutti, one of the rangers in the Lolo Pass area, about the uncertain situation the Forest Service faces with grooming the ski trails at Lolo Pass. Here are her words below:

“We, the Forest Service, are working very hard to try and come up with feasible solutions for next winter. Up to this point, our ski trails have been groomed by a contractor. The contractor owns, maintains, and operates the equipment. It is a one man operation. Our current groomer has been amazing to work with, and very dedicated to making our trails as nice as possible. He has two snow cats and a snowmobile he keeps on-site to compact the snow and pull the groomer with. However, his equipment is quite old, costly to maintain, and hard to find replacement parts for; thus, he is about ready to retire from the grooming business. Ideally, to adequately deal with our snow load at the pass, a piston bully machine with a blade on the front would be needed. Snowmobiles pulling a groomer cannot handle the snowfall we receive here. Our current groomer does not have a plow, and spends hours hand shoveling the trail trying to smooth it out. Traditionally, we have groomed two days a week and the groomer has been on call for when we receive more than 8 inches of snow.

“For the past two winters, the Forest Service has advertised our grooming contract and put it out for public bid; both times, we received no bids. We have managed to talk our current groomer into helping us out for one more year, to give us time to try and come up with some

feasible solutions in time for winter 2014-2015. The Forest Service does not own grooming equipment, or have the staff to operate and maintain it. The big challenge to contractors is our fairly remote location. In addition to the cost of commuting to and from the Pass, is the cost of fuel to groom the trails. The other challenge is the equipment maintenance. We have no covered facilities on site, so for all maintenance and repairs, the snowcats have to be trailered back to the groomers residence.

“Ideally, the Forest Service would like to partner with a ski or snowmobile club that already has the equipment and could supply the operators. Worst case scenario, would be next year we do not have any groomed ski trails - folks would still be able to ski, it would just be un-groomed. I suspect our visitation in the winter would still be high - as this would have little impact on snowmobilers, snowshoers or sledders. I would also venture to say it would lead to more skiers using the groomed snowmobile trails causing more user conflicts between the skiers and snowmobilers.”

**If any of you can help out the Forest Service by giving your services or introducing them to anyone you might know who is capable of performing this work, please let them know!**

*~ Dan Saxton*



*Photo by Dan Saxton*

## Looking ahead.....

**Next meeting - Tuesday, February 11:** On Tuesday, February 11th, The Rocky Mountaineers will have their monthly meeting.

Jordan Nelson will be talking about his experience thru-hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, which runs 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada through California, Oregon, and Washington.

Jordan is 26 years old and graduated from college in 2010. He has had a lifelong connection with the outdoors that started while hunting in the northern woods of Wisconsin at 4 years old and continues today. Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail was the first of any long distance hike he had ever attempted. He started July 3rd in Washington and finished November 13th in Southern California. The presentation he will be giving will include answers to frequently asked questions, a description of the trail, and why he chose to go "backwards" or southbound instead of the more common northbound route.

This presentation starts at 7 PM at the [Trailhead](#) and is free to all.



## Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes, 1/14/2014

I. Call To Order: 6:13

II. Attendees: Paul Jensen, Alden Wright, Julie Kahl, Dan Saxton, Steve Schombel, Forest Dean

III. Treasurer's Report: \$884.01

- Those who can sign checks are Steve Niday, Steve Schombel & Julie Warner Kahl

IV. Discussions:

A. Speakers

1. Feb. Speakers: Forest has until the end of this week to contact the guy who hiked the Pacific Crest Trail, otherwise it's Rod Alne
2. March is Norm Singley, Aaron Baldwin & Michael Moser doing a Baniff to Seeley bike trip, and maybe 6 women who did a bike packing trip through the Gravelly Range with trailers
3. April - Don Gesselbeck will present on Mt.'s real ski season-spring
4. For next season: Forest, Aaron Teasdale, Ryan with the maps, Mike Hoyt, Skip Horner, Paul Jensen

B. Media

1. Facebook
  - a. Don't put phone numbers on Facebook
  - b. People can e-mail you through Facebook
  - c. Some people won't put multiday trips on Facebook
  - d. Facebook posts not automatically picked up by the website - Alden does it, he needs to be e-mailed posts.
2. Paul will see how the Glacier Mountaineering Society does announcements

C. Trips

- a. Anything new on classic series? Any progress on Forest's idea? - None.
- b. Glacier Classic - Many Glacier, Aug. 22-24th.

D. Misc: Julie will deal with UnCover Missoula

V. Adjourn 6:57 PM

## THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee: \$10.00

*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.