

FEBRUARY 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 Bitterroot River and Mount Sentinel/University Mountain in the distance from the lower slopes of Blue Mountain.  
Photo by Dan Saxton*

# **TRIP REPORTS**

## **Sunday, February 2, 2014 – Pack Creek Road**

One of the things that makes this trip interesting is that you could find any type of conditions, from icy fast down hill to tons of new snow. Roy R, Jeff S., and Julie & David K. left Lolo Pass about 11:AM, after leaving Roy's car down below at the Crooked Fork Bridge on Hwy. 12. The road was fairly packed by previous grooming and snowmobiles down to the Pack Creek bridge 1 1/2 miles down. There most of the snowmobiles went up towards Moose Pass, but at least one or one party had gone down Pack Creek Road, and then a skier had followed. But fresh snow was dusted on the tracks so it hadn't been earlier this day. We followed the ski tracks - there isn't very much steep downhill in this section - and as we approached the 4 mile half way point, there was two sets of ski tracks and one set had been walked in by a moose. We took a lunch break there, the sun was coming out occasionally and the snow was getting sticky when Jeff led off after the break. The snowmobile had gone maybe another mile then turned back, but the skier went on for another 1/2 mile or so then turned back also. Moose tracks were everywhere. Roy and Jeff were now breaking trail. Roy was leading when he came around a curve and encountered a female moose bedded down in the snow on the road. She headed downhill and got off the road. The guys continued to break trail for about a mile, not even getting runs in even some of the steepest sections. Eventually about 3/4 mile from the bottom we found ski tracks coming up from below, and managed to get in a few runs in the last 1/2 mile. We were tired, and got in the car and headed back to Lolo Pass by 4pm. It was a beautiful day, the snow was nice, and it's one Roy isn't going to forget for a long time. *Julia Kahl*



*Photo by Julia Kahl*

### **Friday-Sunday, February 9, 2014 - Little St. Joe Cabin and Peak**

On Friday afternoon Jake W and I skied up to the cabin arriving at 8pm. Our arrival time was later than it should have been because we skied around in a big circle looking for the cabin in the dark. It can be hard to find! On Sat after some tough trail breaking we skied off the top of Little St. Joe peak to the east. The conditions were some of the best I've ever seen! We skied some different runs through the amazing powder until dark. The cabin was warm and cozy (the new chinking and bunks are great!) and we celebrated with a great dinner and some drinks. On Sunday we made good use of our up track and skied another run before heading back to town. *Paul Jensen*

### **Sunday, February 16, 2014 - Bobcat Creek**

I kept talking to friends, and they said the weather didn't sound too bad up near Lolo Pass, so we took two dogs up Bobcat Creek Sunday. We had a very decent day, no wind and only an occasional flurry. The snow was nice and deep. I had a day my skis didn't work right, and fell several times, but the others really enjoyed it. The dogs got exhausted. Two had never been up this small drainage before. The participants were Bert, Kristi, Roy and myself. *Steve Schombel*



# **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.

*It's been a crazy time lately in terms of weather and avalanche danger (which has probably wearied many of us) so there are unfortunately no projected trips at present. BUT spring and summer are approaching, and there should be a whole slew of trip proposals (including from me; I am drawing up a good list of objectives for this summer and will propose each outing as it comes along).*

*Please, 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!*

*~ Dan Saxton*

**A new and promising topographic map company!**

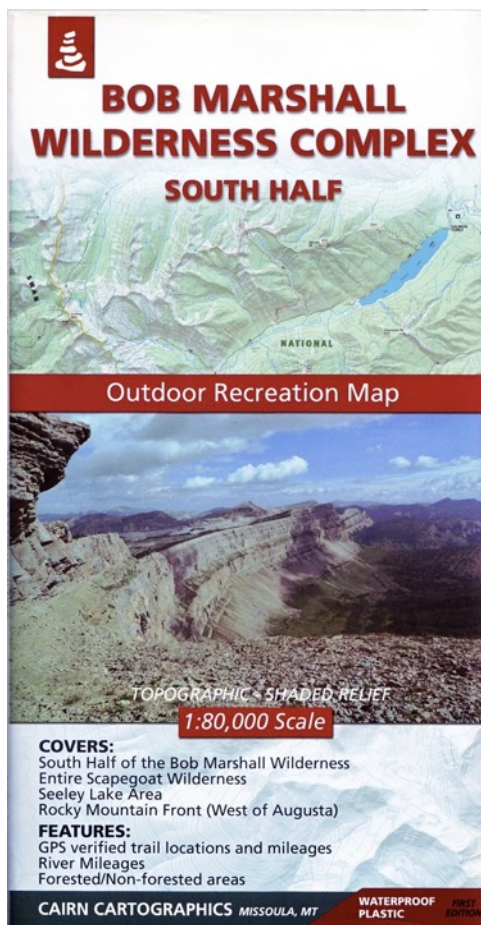


## **Cairn Cartographics**

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

There is a lot of potential for one of the newcomers upon the Northern Rockies topographic mapping scene. Cairn Cartographics, founded by Jamie Robertson and Amelia Hagen-Dillon in 2010, has been busy producing outstanding and authoritative maps of Western Montana. They now have four maps out: Missoula/Rattlesnake area, Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (in 2 sections: North and South), and just recently the Mission Mountains. Two more maps are currently in progress to portray the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (which should be released sometime this year), and then Cairn Cartographics will undoubtedly move on to cover many other amazing areas in the Rockies!

Cairn Cartographics produces durable, plastic waterproof maps, and the majority of the trails on their maps (except for some remote waypaths in the distant quarters of the Bob) have been covered on the ground and GPS-checked for accuracy of mileage. The trails have different line styles to indicate what type of traffic is allowed (Rattlesnake/Missoula), and what trails are infrequently maintained (in the Bob Marshall Wilderness). Since the Forest Service maps of these areas are often infrequently updated and are not always the most aesthetically helpful, Cairn Cartographics's topos are a necessary, attractive, and valuable resource.

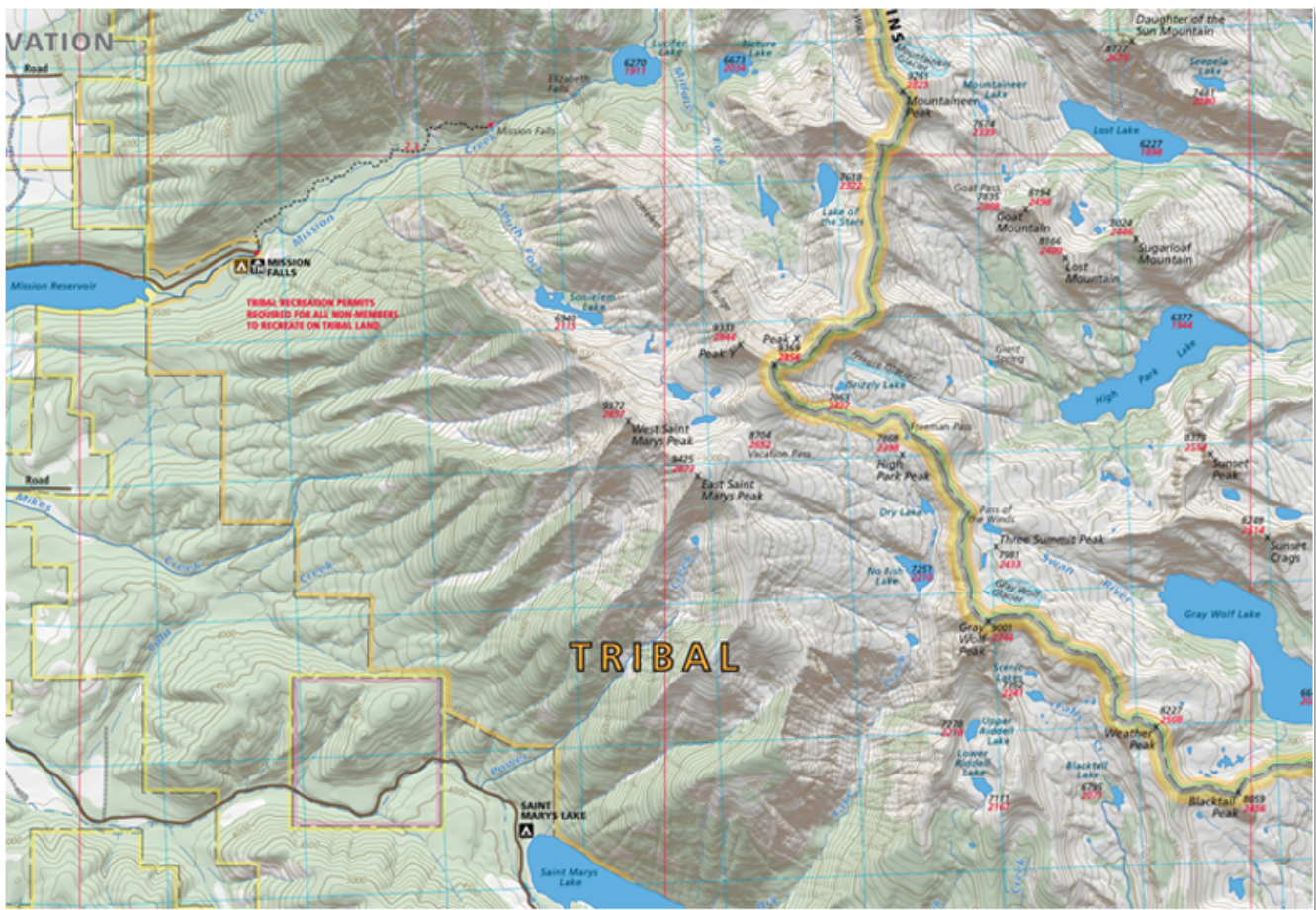


The contour interval of the maps is 100 feet, which is great for hiking and backpacking trips; those inclined to scrambling and technical climbing may desire to use the normal USGS quads as supplements for closer detail. The Missoula/Rattlesnake map is particularly valuable for the higher-use areas such as Pattee Canyon and Blue Mountain; there are zoom insets of both areas allowing one to make out the maze of trails in them.

Cairn Cartographics's topos can be found at the usual local retail locations such as the Rocky Mountain Map Gallery and the Trail Head. The Missoula/Rattlesnake map sells for \$12 and the Bob Marshall and Missions maps sell for \$15 each, a good investment for those who frequently go out!

Thus, I feel Cairn Cartographics definitely deserves our support! On the next page is a sample of the newest map, for the Mission Mountains.

*~ Dan Saxton*



*The southern end of the High Missions, centering on the Saint Mary's Peaks and Gray Wolf Peak.*

## Showcasing Snapshot.....

### Snowcrest Range



*Some of the major summits of the Snowcrest Range from the Crest, looking north:  
Sunset, Olson, and Hogback peaks.*

The Snowcrest Range is one of the tantalizing secrets of southwestern Montana. It lies west of the Madison and Gravelly Ranges, southwest of Ennis, MT, and north of I-15 as it crosses the Great Divide at Monida Pass - a wide and empty region, devoid of gigantic landmark peaks but full of outstanding and interesting summits. The Snowcrest Range was the last important range of Montana I found out about, since it is located in an area one wouldn't think much of looking in - some distance away from Greater Yellowstone, but not close enough to the higher ranges of the Lemhis and Lost Rivers in Idaho. The fact that the Snowcrests do not straddle the Divide is also an important factor in ensuring their obscurity. Yet their beauty has been recognized in one significant way; they are proposed to become an official wilderness area in the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act legislation pending in Congress.



*Hogback Mountain, probably the most distinctive summit in the Snowcrests.*

Once you find out about them, a sudden rush of exhilaration rushes into your veins - what marvelous open grassy expanses! What an interesting triple main thrust of peaks - Sliderock, Hogback, and Sunset - rearing their light brown heights above valleys teeming with elk and big game, largely freed from disturbance except for a short period in the fall (hunting season is the only time people really venture in there). Miles of rollingridgeline to stroll, and the horizon the only limit of sight.

As height goes, the Snowcrests are of moderate elevation: Sunset Peak at 10,581' is their monarch. Hogback is very nearly the same height, and Sliderock just about 150 feet lower. Other important summits are Sawtooth Mountain (10,090') and Antone Peak (10,247'), both also worthy goals. Early-to-mid July is probably the best time to visit, since there are still a few snowbanks to keep the vistas interesting and provide water if you choose to stick up on the crest. Things get more dull (and hot) towards the end of summer.



*High camp right atop the Crest, looking east to Black Butte in the Gravelly Range.*

There seem to be three ways you can get to the Snowcrests; the most direct is from Dillon, up the Blacktail Deer Valley; another is by linking several roads from I-15 and Monida, and another possibility is from Hwy 287 and Ruby River Reservoir. Prepare for long stretches of gravel road and make sure your vehicle is in good working condition! (As is usual anytime you venture into the kingdoms of obscurity....)

Backpackers and trekkers will love the ramble along the Snowcrest ridgeline, running from Stonehouse Mountain (topped by the ruins of a shepherds' enclosure) to Antone Peak, following the Crest Trail most of the way. It is there that you can feel on top of what can seem like the true Divide, which takes a more modest line along the Centennial Mountains to the south. A loop can be formed starting from Blacktail Deer Creek East Fork and utilizing the Crest Trail in this manner.

Above all, solitude will be your companion - this range deserves to be beloved in the same way as the Yellowstone area, but it now happily awaits the informed and hardy souls who desire to experience quintessential Big Sky Country!

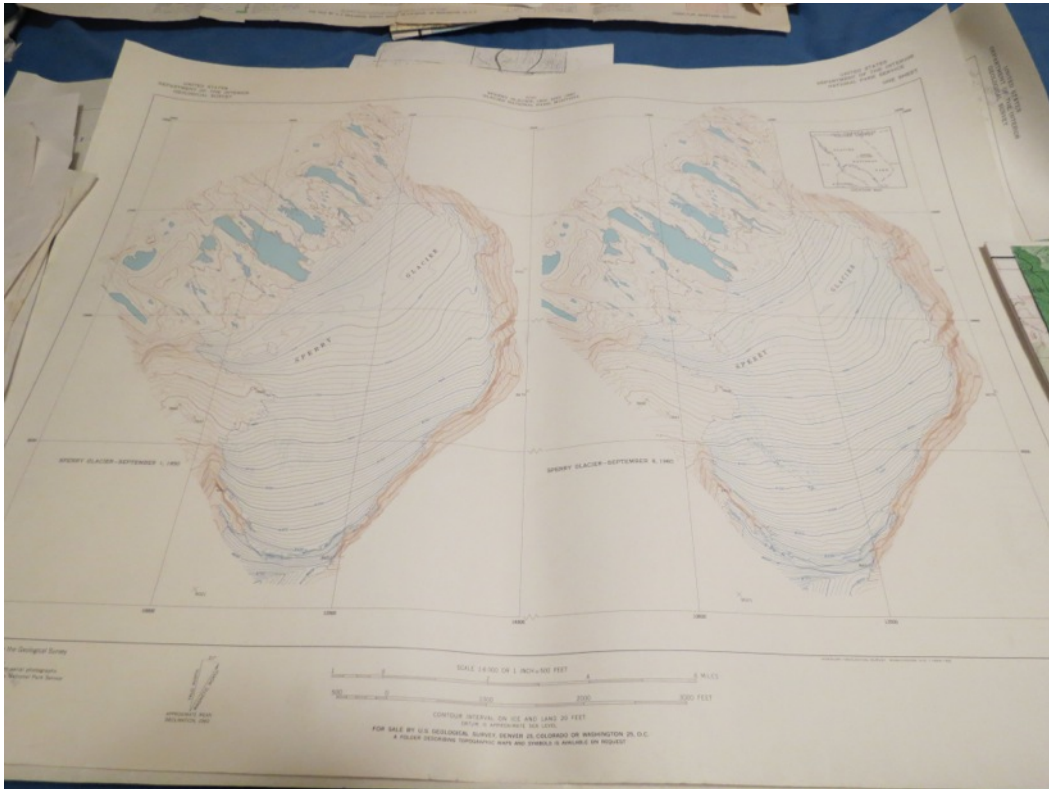


*Sunset Peak from the south.*

*All photos courtesy of Fred McDonald*

## **Arnold Finklin's Materials: Available for those interested!**

*The Rocky Mountaineers were named as beneficiaries of some of the outdoor possessions of Arnold Finklin, who recently passed away and stated this wish in his will. They mostly consist of historical topographic maps and guidebooks, so this is a good opportunity for antiquaries to collect some treasure. Contact Julia Kahl if you want more information or desire to claim some of these items.*



*Old topo of Sperry Glacier.*

Mission Mountains Map - TRM, not available

Entire US Topo **1916**, reprinted **1934**

### Alaska

1:250,000 All Alaska 1954

1:250,000 Juneau 1962

### Canada

1:500,000 2 Waterton Lakes 1971-1982

Jasper

## California

7.5 Beverly Hills 1950

7.5 Topanga (Santa Monica) 1952

## Colorado

7.5 McHenry's Peak 1957

## Washington

5.5 5 of Bellingham Area 1952-1954

## Washington, Idaho & Wyoming

1:125,000 5 Relief Maps

Victoria 1973

Dubois 1955

Mt. Baker 1962

Challis 1963

Wallace 1966

## Idaho

1:250,000 Wallace 1956

1:250,000 Sandpoint 1958

15 Lane 1957

? Lane Landsat

7.5 28 maps 1966-1978

## Montana

1:250,000 Hamilton 1954

15 Mount Cleveland 1959

Ravenna 1959

2 Bozeman 1951, 1953

Albion 1959

Straight Peak 1960

7.5 Glacier NP 1962-1968

Swans, Missions, Rattlesnake 1964-1965

Garnets, Sapphires, AC-Pintlers 1962-1977

Bitterroots 1964-1967

Rare II Final Environmental Statement, Northern Region NF, MT 1:100,000 Jan. 1979

### Black & White FS Maps

Topo Index Maps: MT 1988, 1971, Idaho 1979

National FS maps: Bitterroot 1981, Lolo 1966

Mission Mountains 1979

Anaconda-Pintler 1983

### Books

Backpacker - All Weather All Season, Trip Planner Trailside Gourmet: Backpacker's Selected Recipes

Fodor's 96 Canada High Country Empire: The High Plains And Rockies

Walking: A Guide To Beautiful Walks And Trails In America - 1977

Alaska-Yukon Handbook, Including the Canadian Rockies - 1988

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### **Some recent advocacy letters in support of new recreational opportunities:**

#### Milltown Proposed Trails

Beth R. Shumate

Trails Program Manager

PO Box 200701

Helena, MT. 59620

February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Dear Ms. Shumate:

The Rocky Mountaineers are an outdoor-oriented recreational club based in Missoula, MT. In addition to climbing, club members like to hike, bike and float rivers. We regularly use areas around Missoula, and are excited about new trails and trailheads in Milltown State Park. We support the proposals for developing the Bandmann Flats area. They will connect with other trails proposed within the park and region. Interpretative sites and viewpoints will make the system even better. Long term, this trail could become part of a great rails to trails system.

Thank you for your support, and we hope the grant request is successful.

Paul Jensen, president,  
and the Board of Directors

## Nordic Ski Club Grant

Missoula Nordic Ski Club  
State Trails Program Coordinator  
Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
1420 East 6th Ave Helena, MT 59620  
February 11, 2014

Dear Trails Program Grant Committee,

The Rocky Mountaineers are an outdoor club dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of outdoor adventure. Every year we lead trips to the Lubrecht Ski Trails, and our members enjoy skiing at the Lubrecht and Pattee Canyon ski trails and in the Rattlesnake. The club wholeheartedly supports the Missoula Nordic Ski Club's Recreational Trail program grant application.

Sincerely,  
Paul Jensen, President  
On behalf of the Rocky Mountaineers Executive Board

## Looking ahead.....

**Next meeting - Tuesday, March 11, 2014.** On Tuesday, March 11, 2014, The Rocky Mountaineers will have their monthly meeting.

Norm Singley, Aaron Baldwin & Michael Moser will be presenting their bike trip from Banff National Park to Seeley Lake, MT. This route, traveling under the towering skylines of the Northern Rockies, is spectacular, challenging, and memorable. It promises to be another good night of socializing and hearing about some awesome adventures!

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

## Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes, 2/11/2014

I. Call To Order: 6:10

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

III. Treasurer's Report: \$894.01

IV. Discussions:

A. Speakers

1. March is Norm Singley, Aaron Baldwin & Michael Moser doing a Banff to Seeley bike trip
2. April - Don Gesselbeck will present on MT's real ski season - spring
3. May - picnic - time to get on that?

B. Media

1. Facebook

- a. Paul put St. Joe trip on Facebook only
  - 1) Paul got no responses
  - 2) Neither has anyone else from Facebook
  - 3) Most postings get around 29 views
  - 4) Problem - no phone numbers?
- b. Facebook need to repost trips as they get closer
- c. Try joining other Facebook groups?

2. Website

- a. Can set up alias on the website
- b. Can track views also
- c. Move trips to the front page?

3. *Independent* - trips not in Mt. High Column because they don't get a newsletter any more.

C. Trips for Glacier Classic - Many Glacier, Aug. 22-24th.

1. Group site not reservable
2. Maybe a site outside of the park?
3. Sat. night meal if Tom Hanou doesn't come?

D. Arnold Finklin's Materials

1. Steve N. took the Mission Mountains' map to scan, then see if the Mansfield Library wants it or archive it
2. Books to the Public Library's give away table
3. Topo Maps
  - a. All versions online or at Mansfield Library

- b. Forest thought Sperry and Grinnell Glacier maps would be nice framed
- c. Julie wants Miller Creek topos
- d. Lolo Pass visitor's center wants any topos that cover them
- e. Julie will compile a list for the newsletter

E. Peak lists

- 1. Dan suggested some changes, most agreed
- 2. Put new lists out and get input
- 3. We'll vote online

V. Adjourn 7:00 PM



*Marvelous view of the Missions from atop Ch-paa-qn Peak!*

*Photo by Dan Saxton.*

## 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.