

DECEMBER 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: Up in the Rattlesnake. Photo by Dan Saxton.

TRIP REPORTS

Sunday, November 30, 2014 - Lolo Pass Winter Outing

There was plenty of snow for skiing, on the roads, but brush still snowing off the roads. Lois C., David and Julie K. decided to ski down Pack Creek Rd. Then we went a ways up the old D Trail, breaking trail. We had a lunch break then headed back out. It was good day for our first ski - we got to try out some different conditions and got the gear shaken out. *Julia Kahl*

Saturday, December 20, 2014 - Chief Joseph Ski

Chris Jaquet and Alden Wright participated in the Bitterroot Ski Club tour of their new multi-use ski trails. The Bitterroot Ski club now has access to a Pisten Bully groomer which enables them to keep up with the not infrequent snow dumps at their Chief Joseph Ski trails. They are now grooming at least 30K of additional trails besides their traditional trails. These trails are open to skiers, snow bikes, and snowmobiles. On Saturday, Dec. 20 they led tours of these newly groomed trails. They had two groups: skaters and classic skiers. We opted to ski with the skaters, who were led by Annie Creighton and Tony Neaves. Tony told us lots of stories about grooming. Tony has groomed the Como ski trails for the past few winters and is now grooming Skalkaho Pass all the way over to Sapphire Mountain on the other side, and sometimes grooms the Rye Creek road which is great skating. Check http://missoulanordic.org/snow_grooming for conditions on these trails and most of the other groomed trails in Western Montana. We did a big loop of about 16 miles that included going past Hogan Cabin. It was great to see and ski some new trails. *Alden Wright*

Saturday, December 27, 2014 - Lubrecht Forest Ski

Fred and I had a really fine time skiing at Lubrecht. The snow was great and the trails were well groomed. The groomer was out working hard on Saturday to keep things in good shape. My dog had the best time. There were lots of people and other dogs to make friends with. I bet all of the areas in Western Montana have great snow now. We just have to wait until it warms up a bit. *Steve Schombel*

Note on Charity Peak

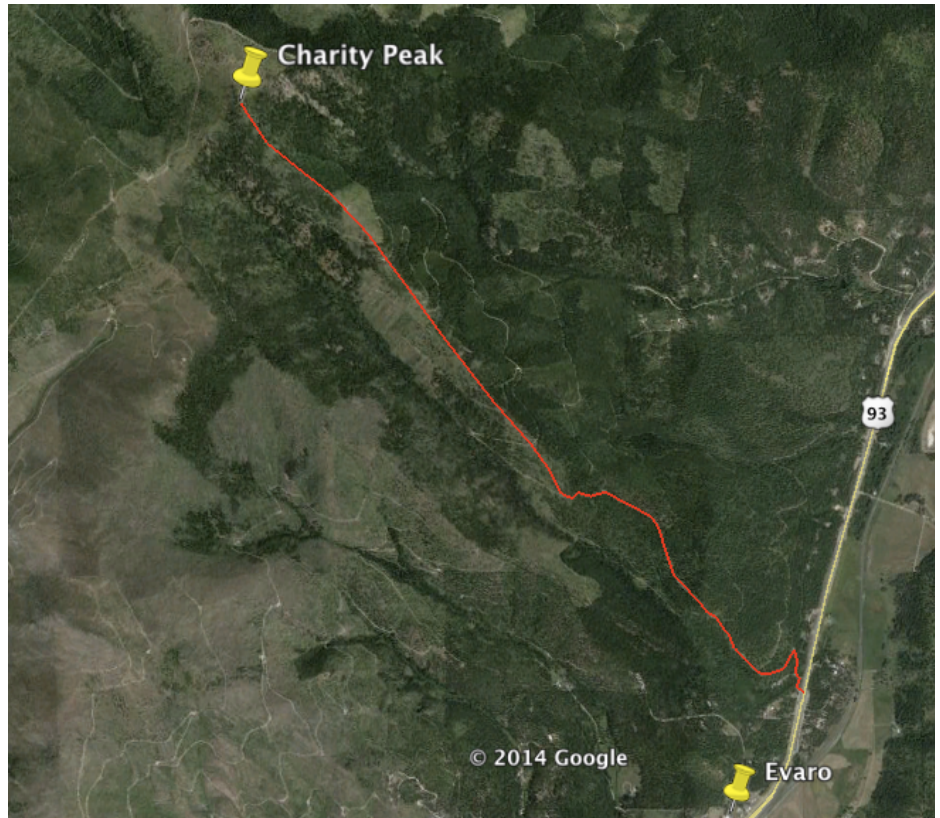
Since Charity Peak is on the Missoula Horizon list (a new addition), I thought it would be helpful for people to be aware of the best route up it. It will definitely get some more interest in the future thanks to its inclusion on the list.

My friends and I climbed it from the Evaro side off US 93. After Evaro itself, going north, the road makes a small left turn and then reduces down to only one lane. Turn left at the next intersection immediately after the lane reduction takes place into "Scotty's Road" (Or "Sonny's?" - hopefully my memory serves me right here on that name). Immediately turn right, make another right

away from a private driveway, and then turn left from another private driveway. If you get to a hairpin turn, you know you're on the right road (the topo map does not show this right, use Google Earth instead). Take this all the way up (stay north of Frog Creek), you can drive quite a ways in good conditions to where the road starts to go under a ridge (approx. 4,500 feet).

Just go straight up that ridge all the way to the top - it's very nice and open woods, a great snow climb for sure. It took us 3 hrs one way, 2 down, something like 6-7 miles RT. This is all on tribal land with no private property issues, just remember the usual Flathead Reservation permit.

Looking southwest from Charity Peak. Photo by Dan Saxton.



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.

Friday, January 9, 2015 - Sunday, January 11, 2015 - LITTLE ST. JOE CABIN

Description: For those who don't know, this is a moderately difficult trip that accesses some great ski terrain. Snowshoers could also have fun climbing the peak. The plan is to climb to the cabin and possibly ski a run on Friday, ski all day Saturday and maybe Sunday morning before heading out on Sunday afternoon. For more information please give me a call by Jan 7th.

Leader: Paul Jensen - 728-6881

Sunday, January 18, 2015 - LOLO PASS SKI

Distance: 8 miles

Description: The trail rises 200 feet from the visitor's center for about 4 miles to the Lee Creek saddle, then the last 4 miles are all downhill, 1200 feet, to the Lee Creek campground in Montana.

Leader: Julia Kahl - jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

Friday, February 6 - Sunday, February 8 – MT. JERUSALEM (Bitterroots)

Rating: Class 3; *Distance:* 20 miles round trip; *Elevation Gain:* 5000'

Description: Mt. Jerusalem is a remote 9355' peak north of the Nez Perce Fork of the Bitterroot River. This trip will start on Friday after a drive to the end of the plowed portion of the West Fork Road (near Little West Fork Campground). From here, we will follow FR 5635 to FR 13480 then gain the ridge north of Sentimental Creek. Somewhere along the ascent of this ridge will be camp. On Saturday the plan will be to follow the ridge as it heads west then north to the summit. Depending on energy, conditions, etc., I may explore the possibility of finding a route to Peak 9169 (North Jerusalem) approximately a mile to the north. Return to camp that night then head out Sunday.

Note: If conditions are no good, I will either not go, or change trip to an entirely different location.

Equipment: Skis or snowshoes, winter camping gear. May bring a short rope and harness for traverse to North Jerusalem.

Leader: Forest Dean, mtnear1@gmail.com

Saturday, February 8, 2015 - LOLO PASS SKI

Distance: 8 miles

Description: This trail is all downhill, for 1200 feet, from the visitor's center 8 miles down to the Crooked Fork bridge in Idaho.

Leader: Julia Kahl - jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

The Rocky Mountains: Making Sense of Them All, Part 2



Titcomb Basin, Wind River Range. Gannett Peak is the snow top at the far right. Photo by John Kirk.

This is the second section of a three-part series on the geography of the Rocky Mountains, and focuses on the central portion of the range, encompassing a more familiar country to us all: Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. Where we live is truly a wonderful and diverse area, and many of us have been exploring it for decades. How I present the Central Rockies may seem different in some ways from how many people know them, and so I hope to be able to give a good justification for why I have classified its parts the way I have. Please feel free to give me feedback or corrections!

Central Rockies

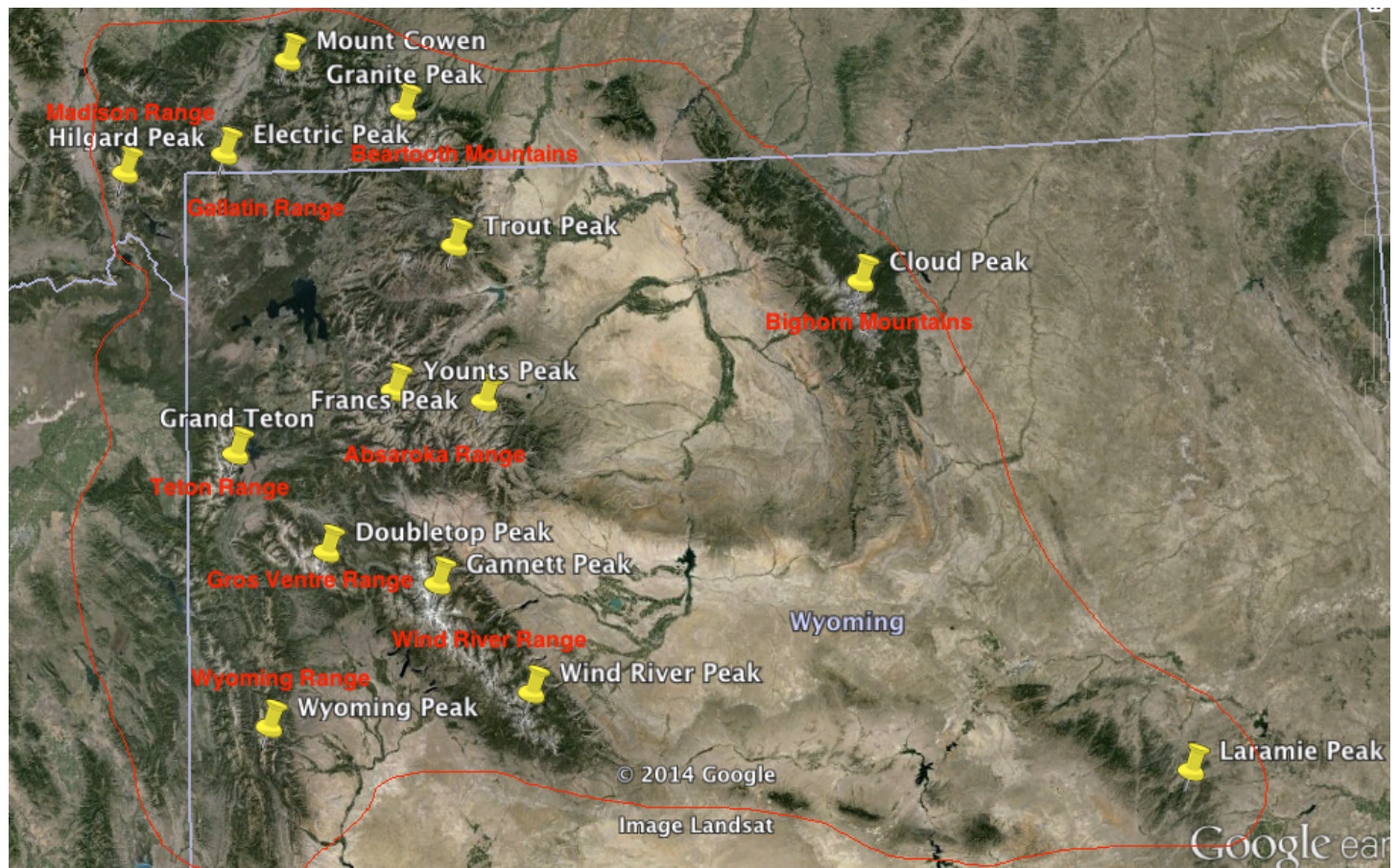


What I have designated as the central portion of the Rocky Mountains is their most disorganized area overall. In Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, the Rockies are broken up into dozens of sub-ranges and irregular masses that defy easy categorization. One well-known example is what geographers have designated as the “Bitterroot Range,” which encompasses an astonishing diversity of mountains ranging from the semi-arid Centennial Mountains near Yellowstone to the lush ridges above Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho. From a purely geographical and geological sense which only considers the mountains themselves, this unifying term seems rather suspect, and it would seem that the mere presence of the Montana-Idaho state line is the primary reason why so many different types of mountains would go under the same general name. This shows why it may not be best to use political boundaries as aids in classifying parts of one whole mountain range. As you will see below, I have split the so-called “Bitterroot Range” into two sections which I consider to be quite different in geologic, climatic, and terrain aspects - partly in the Island Ranges, and partly in the Interior Ranges.

Fortunately, the Central Rockies make up in grandeur and diversity what they lack in neat organization. No other part of the Rockies has such a potpourri of landforms, ranging from desertlike steppes to archetypal craggy glaciated summits to massive, rolling ridgelines a delight to ramble along for mile after mile. There is something for everybody to enjoy here,

not just the specialized alpinist. The lack of heavily populated areas in the Central Rockies also manage to keep many of these mountains local havens, largely unknown to the outside world except for a few densely concentrated special regions such as Yellowstone National Park (and even in Yellowstone, once you step off the road and away from tourist areas, you are in sheer wilderness). For those who love America, yet desire to explore “off the beaten path,” there is no better place to live than the Central Rocky Mountains.

A. Greater Yellowstone Country



Admittedly for purposes of neater organization, I have designated not only the country integrally part of the Greater Yellowstone area but also the arid Wyoming plains ranges such as the Bighorn Mountains and Laramie Range as part of this region. They may strictly belong to the “Island Ranges” area since that type of range is indeed what they are, but it is best to discuss them here for easier organization. See the general SP page for the Yellowstone Country and go from there for more info: <http://www.summitpost.org/greater-yellowstone-ecosystem/231352>

The Great Divide Basin and the mountains surrounding it form a great hole in the middle of the Rockies. Some smaller scattered ranges such as the Ferris Mountains help to break up some of the monotony, but the Laramie Range along the Basin’s eastern end is the most majestic - topped by **Laramie Peak (10,272’, P = 3,317’)**.

Further north away from the Basin, and the first of the great ranges of the Rockies which greet intrepid travelers on I-90 are the Bighorn Mountains. The Bighorns present one of the

greatest overall vertical rises in the Rockies, almost 9,000 feet above the eastern plains, and ascend in successive stages from aridity to pine forest to barren granitic heights - their monarch is **Cloud Peak (13,167', P = 7,077')**.



From left to right - Peak 12,590', Mount Woolsey, and Black Tooth, Bighorns (from sheridanwyoming.org).

On the west end of the Great Divide Basin begin the huge array of mountains which protectively encircle the immense caldera of Yellowstone. Two main spur ranges sweep away to the south from that circle - the Wyoming and Salt River Ranges (**Wyoming Peak, 11,378', P = 3,558'**). Another range forks away to the southeast and rears higher than any other area in the Central Rockies - the stupendous Wind River Range, justly famed for its marvelous fishing, technical rock climbing masterpieces (none better than the Cirque of the Towers, one of the few crowded areas), and the largest glaciers in the Central Rockies. **Wind**



River Peak (13,192', P = 2,572') and **Gannett Peak (13,804', P = 7,079')**, the king of Wyoming and of the Central Rockies, anchor both ends of the range. Between the Winds and the Tetons is the Gros Ventre Range (**Doubletop Peak, 11,740', P = 3,000'**), often overlooked yet amazingly beautiful with sweeping basins and rugged limestone cliffs.

Magnificent meadows and basins below Gros Peak, Gros Ventres (SP member shalman).

Yet another spoke forks away from the Yellowstone circle just to the north - the Absaroka Range. This is the wildest mountain range in the Central Rockies, filled with many of the Great Bears. Chossy, barren, vast, and untamed, the Absarokas do not present fun scrambling, but there is no better range to simply *explore*. **Francs Peak (13,153', P = 4,053')** presides over their southeastern end, and **Younts Peak (12,156', P = 2,241')** at the headwaters of the Yellowstone River holds the title of most remote mountain (though certainly *not* least-visited) in the lower 48 states at about 30 miles from the nearest real road.

Younts Peak in the far distance (center left) as seen from the Pinnacle Buttes. Photo by Mike W. (from SP member "Doublecabin")



The Absarokas rise all along the eastern end of Yellowstone but hide their most extreme heights away from the Park, flinging gigantic ramparts along the sides of the Shoshone River watershed. **Trout Peak (12,244', P = 3,704')** is just barely the most important point on these walls. By far the most distinctive Absaroka summit, however, is the razor-thin spire of **Pilot Peak (11,699', P = 2,519')**, overlooking Cooke City and the Beartooth Highway.



Carter Mountain and Turret Pinnacle, one of the great Absaroka ramparts near Cody, WY (SP member chugach mtn boy).



Stunning, rotten, and intrepid Pilot Peak (from flyinmypint.com).

At Yellowstone's northeast corner stands one of the most remarkable plateaus in North America, a giant mass known as the Beartooth Mountains, Montana's highest area. Dissected and hacked by glaciers, their king, **Granite Peak (12,801', P = 4,781')**, is a noble representative of the Rockies. To the west, in an area that is sometimes controversially labelled as the "Northern Absarokas" even though they are geologically quite different from the main Absarokas, is **Mount Cowen (11,212', P = 2,672')**, one of the most jagged great summits in Yellowstone Country.



Two ranges wall in Yellowstone from the northwest: the Gallatin and Madison Ranges. A playground for Bozeman and for the elite, parts of these ranges have seen extensive development, yet the southern Gallatins in Yellowstone (**Electric Peak, 10,969', P = 3,399'**) and the high country of the Taylor-Hilgard wilderness (**Hilgard Peak, 11,297', P = 4,044'**) present some of Greater Yellowstone's most sublime scenery.

Mount Cowen (from skialong.com).

Last, and greatest of all, to the southwest of Yellowstone, is the quintessential Rocky Mountain Range: The Teton Range. No description needs to be given of them here; they strike awe into anyone who simply hears of them, and the **Grand Teton (13,770', P = 6,550')** is the classic summit of the Lower 48 states.

Perhaps the best source of general information for the mountains of Greater Yellowstone is Thomas Turiano's labor of love, *Select Peaks*, now unfortunately out of print but still available from him via a PDF version on CD (www.selectpeaks.com).

Hilgard Peak. Photo by Bob Sihler.



B. Island Ranges



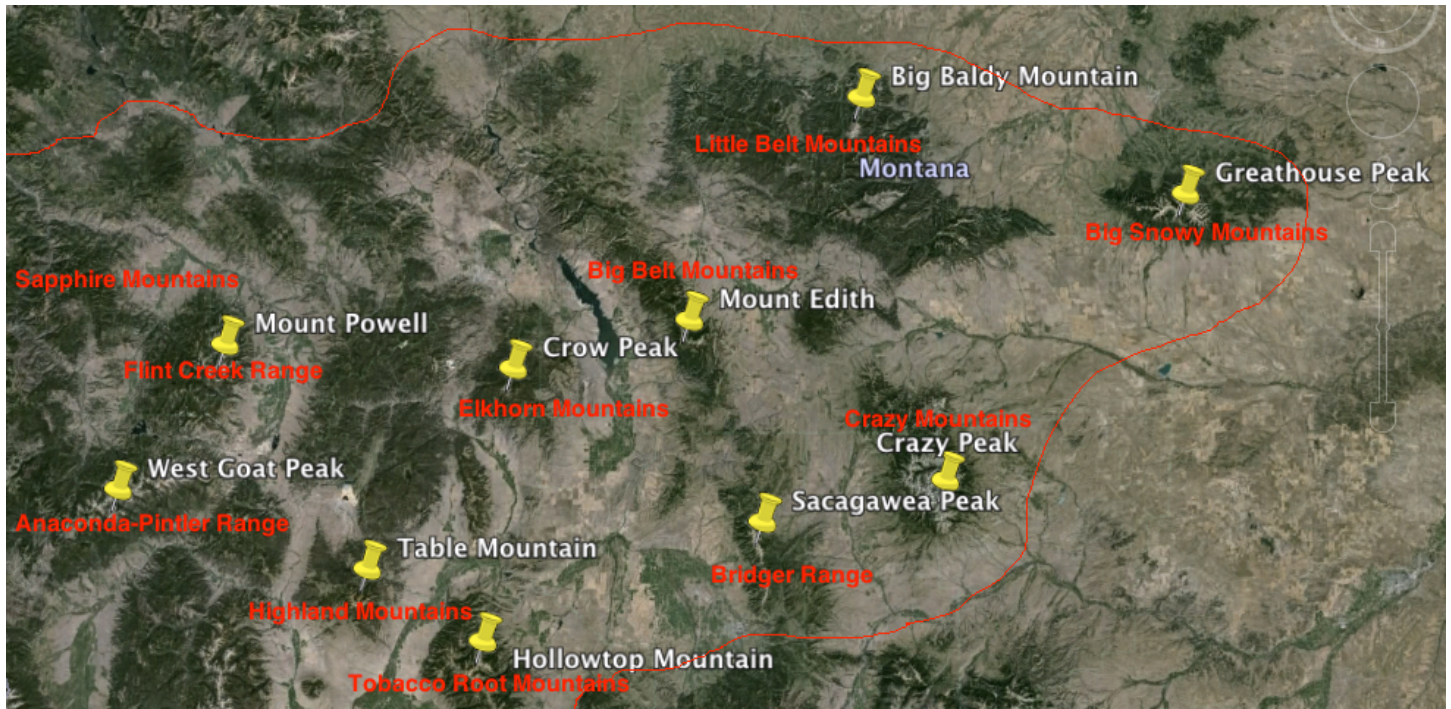
Remote basin under unnamed peaks just south of May Mountain, Lemhi Range. Photo by Dan Saxton.

This section of the Rockies largely encompasses Montana and a part of Idaho. It is full of isolated, separated mountains that each hold unique and beautiful secrets, just like little caches of treasure in different locations. There are way too many of them to describe in detail, so this section will be more of a “list” of the peaks and special attributes of particular ranges. Many of these island ranges would take months to explore just by themselves, especially the bigger ones in SW MT and central Idaho. I consider isolated Plains ranges like the Highwood Mountains, Bearpaw Mountains, and the Sweetgrass Hills to not be part of the Rockies proper.

I have drawn the western boundary along the Bitterroot and Salmon River valleys since they are a clear demarcation between more arid, broken-up mountain country and the singular mass of the Interior Ranges; indeed, these valleys could be considered a southern extension of the great Rocky Mountain Trench that is so prominent further north in Canada. Lost Trail Pass provides the only ridgeline “connector” between the Interior Ranges and the Island Ranges, as it is at a junction with ridges moving from the Anaconda-Pintlers and the West

Big Hole Range. The northern boundary follows the Blackfoot River to Rogers Pass and then into the Plains.

As a rule, there is much less Internet information on these mountains, especially on SummitPost, so local inquiry and local guidebooks are probably the best sources of beta.



Here are the ranges and highest peaks of each:

- **Big Snowy Mountains: Greathouse Peak (8,700', P = 4,090) or Old Baldy** - similar height.
- **Little Belt Mountains: Big Baldy Mountain (9,175', P = 3,565')**
- **Big Belt Mountains: Mount Edith (9,500', P = 4,110')**



-**Crazy Mountains: Crazy Peak (11,209', P = 5,719)** - This is Montana's tallest island range as measured from base to top; Crazy Peak is the prominence king of the entire state. A wild, rugged, and little-visited range.

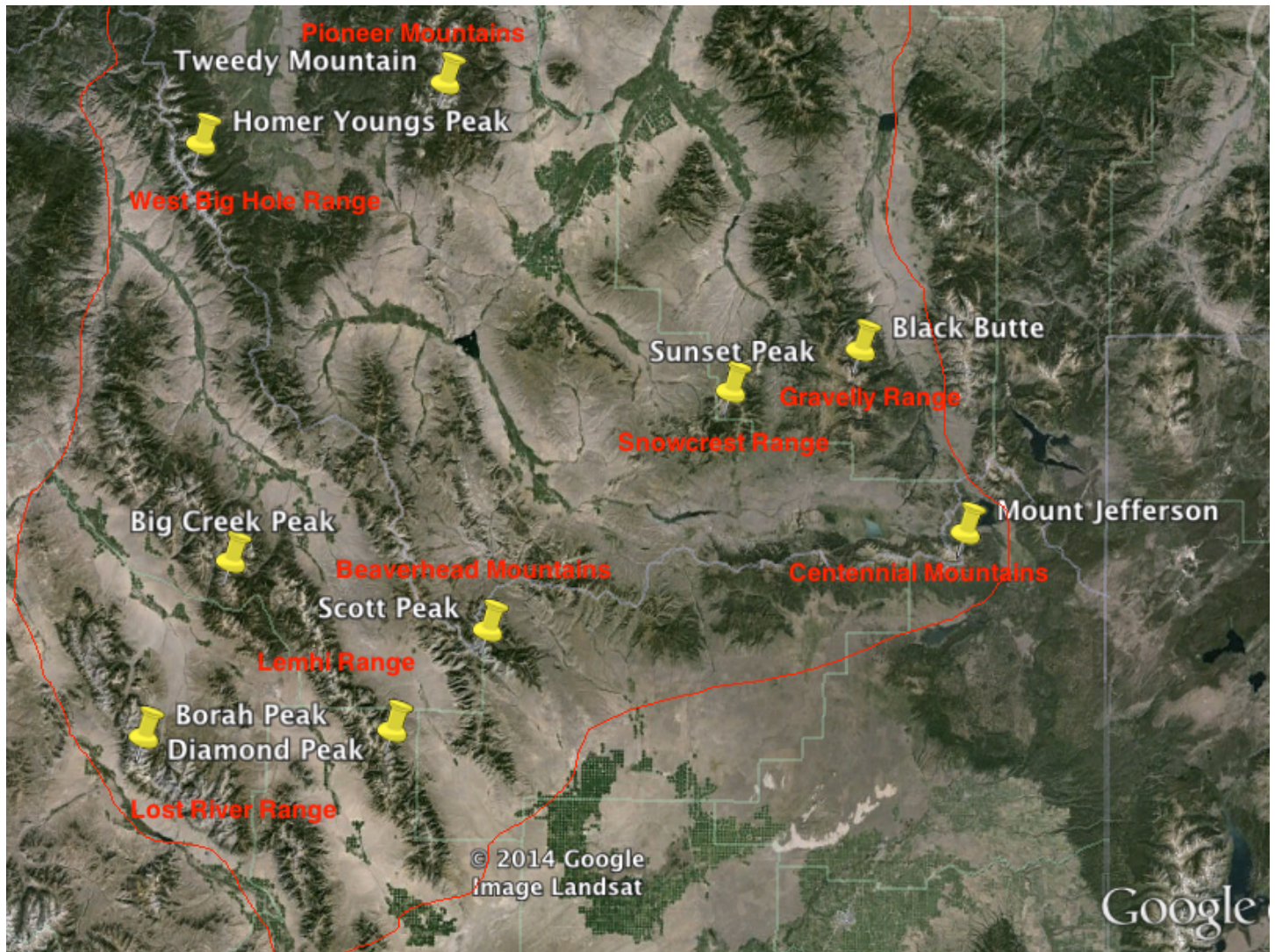
The Crazy Mountains.
Photo by Pat Clayton
(tetongravity.com).

- **Bridger Range: Sacagawea Peak (9,650', P = 3,950')** - Bozeman's neighborhood mountain playground.
- **Elkhorn Mountains: Crow Peak (9,415', P = 3,755')** - Just south of Helena.
- **Highland Mountains: Table Mountain (10,223', P = 4,403')** - Just south of Butte.
- **Anaconda-Pintler Range: West Goat Peak (10,793', P = 3,973')** - Full of sweeping barren ridgelines and lakes, a favorite area of many locals.
- **Flint Creek Range: Mount Powell (10,168', P = 3,748')**
- **Tobacco Root Mountains: Hollowtop Mountain (10,604', P = 3,904')** - Riddled with many small mining developments, which adds a distinctive flavor to this range. Yet, it is still rewarding for peak baggers!



Mount Jackson,
Tobacco Roots.
Photo by tharwell
(panoramio.com)

- **Pioneer Mountains: Tweedy Mountain (11,154', P = 3,814')** - Highest peaks in SW Montana, composed of two parallel ranges, a lower western one and a more lofty eastern ridge.
- **West Big Hole Range: Homer Youngs Peak (10,621', P = 3,201')** - No definite nomenclature, sometimes called the "Northern Beaverheads." Lots of nice peaks and lakes, a lot more vertical relief and drier on the Idaho side.



- **Gravelly Range: Black Butte (10,542', P = 3,202')** - Mostly gentle range with dirt roads, good for just touring around casually.
- **Snowcrest Range: Sunset Peak (10,581', P = 3,761')** - Largely unspoiled, magnificent range full of elk and many opportunities to ramble.
- **Centennial Mountains: Mount Jefferson (10,202', P = 3,383')** - Hosts the ultimate source of the Missouri/Mississippi River.
- **Beaverhead Mountains: Scott Peak (11,393', P = 4,233')** - A long range running along the MT/ID state line. Scott Peak is entirely in Idaho. Also worth checking out are the Lima Peaks near I-15 over Monida Pass.



The final stretch along the east ridge (Class 3+) to the summit of May Mountain, one of the most interesting peaks in the northern Lemhis, on the Fourth of July. Photo by Dan Saxton.

- **Lemhi Range: Diamond Peak (12,197', P = 5,377')** - One of Idaho's most prominent ranges and relatively unknown, except for Diamond Peak itself. Tons of amazing country to explore and a myriad of unnamed and remote summits, some of which have only been climbed a handful of times. The northern section, topped by **Big Creek Peak (11,350', P = 2,517')** is more forested and spread out while the southern portion is steep, arid, and narrow.
- **Lost River Range: Borah Peak (12,662', P = 5,982')** - The greatest Island Range in this section in terms of vertical relief and singular impressiveness: dramatic heights rear out of barren valleys to towering summits composed of contorted rock bands. 7 of Idaho's 9 12,000-footers grace this range, but any other peak in the Lost Rivers is little-visited.



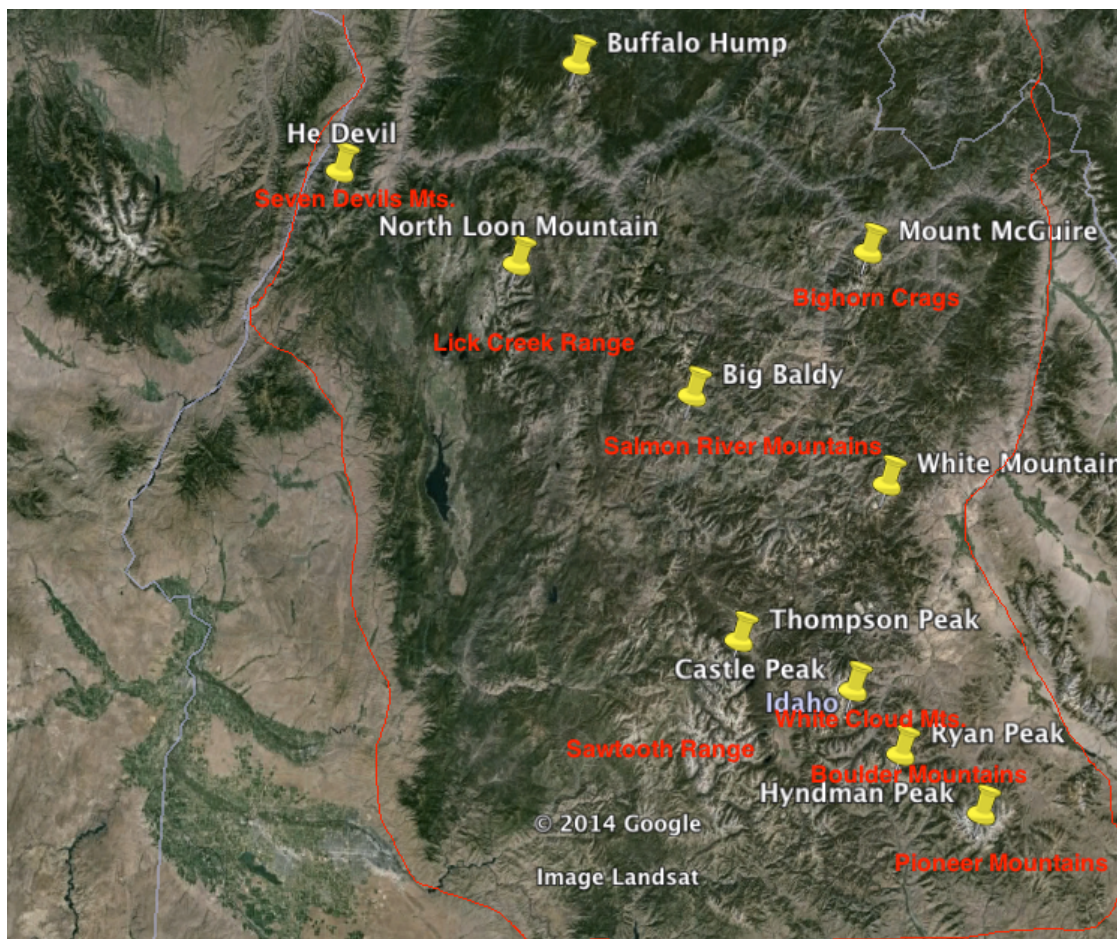
Looking towards Mount Church and peaks in the Lost Rivers from Leatherman Peak. Photo by Brian Story.

C. Interior Ranges

The Central Rockies in much of Idaho (and a small area of Montana) are a never-ending sea of mountains, one gigantic unit of ruggedness. This area is not as lofty in height as the Island Ranges to the east, yet is far more difficult to travel in, and easy to lose your way in. Why do I call this area the Interior Ranges? It's an interesting explanation. In Canada, all the mountains behind the main spine of the Rockies to the west are sometimes referred to as the "Interior Ranges" (or the Columbia Mountains), and these visibly continue down into the USA, separated from the main Rockies by the Rocky Mountain Trench (which has a southerly continuation of sorts into Idaho, as I mentioned before). On satellite, it is easy to see this huge mass of mountains as a whole, stretching all the way down across Idaho to the Snake River Plain. Coming from the east, once you cross the front ranges/island ranges, you come right into this vast country, the very same country that almost destroyed Lewis and Clark in their long journey to the Pacific and back.

The Interior Ranges also differ greatly from the east side of the Rockies; they tend to be wetter and lusher (more so the further north you go), harboring beautiful (when unburned) pine forests, and also have a more widespread coverage of granite, thanks to the extensive Idaho Batholith, of which the Sawtooths and Bitterroots are prime examples. They are, however, even more difficult to make sense of geographically than the Island Ranges; the Island Ranges are at least definite and prominent, even if there are so many of them, but in the Interior Ranges few mountains stand out from above the multitude of peaks. There almost seems to be no sense of order in them, especially in the Salmon River country.

Fortunately, thanks to a lot of study, I've been able to make approximate sense of them, and the most "important" summits can be reasonably identified. It was a difficult decision in some ways, but I had to leave out the Wallowa Mountains of eastern Oregon in spite of their being very much like the Rockies, because geologically many indicate them as belonging rather



to an isolated Pacific Ranges granite batholith (from the so-called “Insular Belt”). The Snake River and the plains of eastern Washington north of it thus form the western boundary of the Rockies. For much of Idaho, Tom Lopez’s guidebook is the standard resource, supplemented online by <http://www.idahoacimbingguide.com>.



Castle Peak, White Clouds. Photo by Roy Luck (Wikimedia Commons).

The southern Interior Range area is the highest in the whole region, a mass of rugged interconnected ranges. The Pioneer Mountains (**Hyndman Peak, 12,009', P = 4,809'**), one of Idaho's most exemplary group of peaks, are the first, rising up out of the lava plains where lie the Craters of the Moon. They then continue into the Boulder Mountains (**Ryan Peak, 11,714', P = 3,194'**), which snake around the head of the famous Ketchum/Sun Valley resort area. Just across the valley to the northwest of the Boulders lie the White Clouds, topped by one of Idaho's most distinctive summits, **Castle Peak (11,815', P = 4,015')**.

Somewhat lower, across a beautiful open valley to the west, lie one of America's most serrated and famous ranges: the stupendous Sawtooths. Their granitic nature, as well as a slightly lower treeline due to a wetter climate, make them seem much higher than they are. **Thompson Peak (10,751', P = 2,431')** is the highest summit, but such peaks as Warbonnet Peak, Mount Heyburn, and the North Raker present far more aesthetic profiles and amazing rock climbing routes (The North Raker is only surmountable by direct aid; see last's month's issue for a photo of it). <http://www.summitpost.org/sawtooth-range/171128>

North of these ranges, the mountain elevations drop off dramatically, and there are no longer any dominant peaks. It is the country of the River of No Return, even more aptly named when one considers just how incomprehensible the vast wildernesses around these deep canyons are. See <http://www.summitpost.org/salmon-river-mountains/172905> for a basic central house of information. The highest peak of this vast land, **White Mountain (10,442', P = 3,762')**, lies along the eastern side, an easy approach by Salmon River Country standards. In the bend of the Middle Fork of the Salmon is stately **Big Baldy (9,705', P = 3,185')**, one of the furthest county high points in the West to reach on foot - a 35-mile ramble there and back from the nearest road.



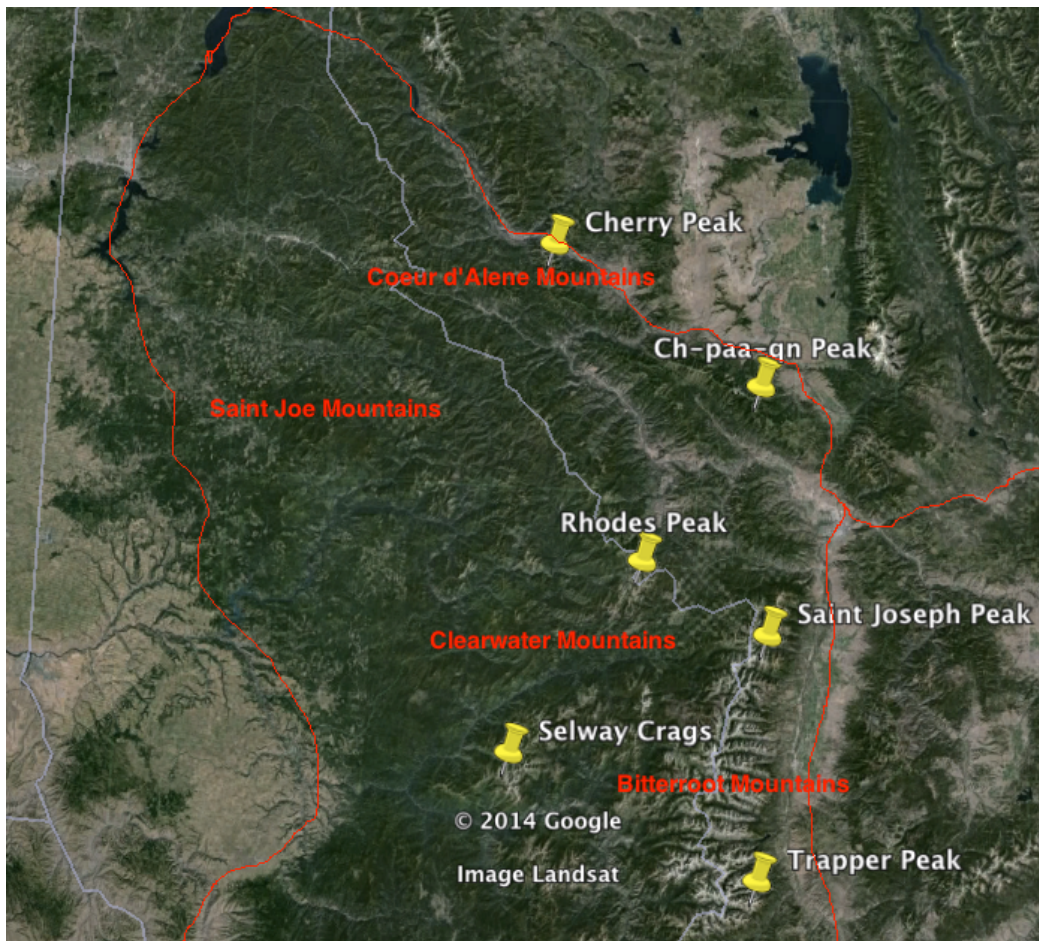
Deep in the Bighorn Crags. From elisabethjoanne.blogspot.com.

In the corner between the Middle Fork and the Main Fork of the Salmon lies the Salmon River Country's most precious jewel: the Bighorn Crags (**Mount McGuire, 10,082', P = 3,522'**), offering many splendid lakes and pinnacles to scale.

The rugged country continues to sweep away to the west over numerous ranges. The most important group of mountains on the west side of the Salmon country is the Lick Creek Range (**North Loon Mountain, 9,322', P = 2,974'**), easily accessible from McCall. They've

been unfortunately extensively burned over but still have some fine summits. Finally, above the Snake River lie the Seven Devils Mountains, hosting Idaho's biggest vertical drop: over 8,000 feet from **He Devil (9,420', P = 5,200')** to the bottom of Hells Canyon, a canyon depth surpassed in the USA only by the Kings River canyon in the Sierra Nevada. The Seven Devils are by far the most spectacular single range in the Salmon/Snake area.

The Seven Devils. From <http://hurricanehaylie.blogspot.com>.



The immense wilderness, with few distinctive summits, continues north of the Salmon to the Selway, crossed only by the dirt Magruder Road. On the north side of the Salmon is the Gospel-Hump area, topped by **Buffalo Hump (8,938, P = 3,418')**. The **Selway Crags (Fenn Mountain, 8,021', P = 1,979')** reign proudly 6,000+ feet above the Lochsa and Selway Rivers. This area is broadly called the "Clearwater Mountains."



The Bitterroot Mountains along the MT/ID border present a formidable eastern battlement for the Interior Ranges, its two main summits being **Trapper Peak (10,157', P = 3,570')** and **Saint Joseph Peak (9,587', P = 3,407')**.

El Capitan (9,983'), second highest in the Bitterroots, from the slopes of Koch Mountain. Photo by Dan Saxton.

Ridges upon ridges of bare granite, dozens of valleys snaking east-west, and many secluded lakes tantalize the Bitterroot explorer, and many who are reading this newsletter have intimate experience with it all. It is my opinion that the name "Bitterroot" should be restricted exclusively to the range extending from Nez Perce Pass to Lolo Pass, for this is a singular range, very different from anything else around it.

<http://www.summitpost.org/bitterroot-mountains/170887>

Beyond Lolo Pass, the mountains grow lower and less rugged, but are still quite wild for about 50 miles or so in the "Great Burn" area, which is more treeless (and beautiful) than many would expect thanks to the effects of the humongous fires 100 years ago.

Crater Mountain, one of the crown jewels of the Great Burn. Photo by Dan Saxton.



This section is generally called the “Northern Bitterroots” by many (in keeping with the “Bitterroot Range” designation which I discussed earlier) but it has more affinities with the Clearwater and Saint Joe Mountains than with the actual Bitterroot Mountains, so I’d be open to an alternate name. **Rhodes Peak (7,930’, P = 2,690’)** is the highest summit in Idaho north of Highway 12.

Across I-90 are the Coeur d’Alene Mountains, a range hard to define. Most broadly, they may extend from the Ninemile and Reservation Divides all the way to Lake Pend Oreille. **Ch-paa-qn (Squaw) Peak (7,996’, P = 4,016’)** and **Cherry Peak (7,352’, P = 2,652’)** are the most important summits in this area, which form the very northern end of the Central Rockies, the Flathead/Clark Fork valleys being the boundary.

And, lastly, many will find it interesting that I have placed Missoula squarely on the boundary between the Central and Northern Rockies. This, in my opinion, is more than a mere coincidence. The nature of the mountains changes quite rapidly on the north and south sides of Missoula; the Mission Mountains and the Bitterroots, though a mere 50 miles apart or so, are entirely different in their character, alpine nature, geology, and organization. It is thus appropriate to say that Missoula is at a crossroads: between wetter and drier climates/terrain, between Island and Interior Ranges, between glacier-carved yet largely barren peaks and increasingly glaciated summits, and between the American- and Canadian-centered cordilleras of the Rocky Mountains. It is perfectly suited in a position where mountain enthusiasts can enjoy the most diverse options of enjoying the great Rockies.



Eagles Rest Peak, Northern Tetons - an area “off the beaten path” (SP member “Doublecabin”).

Looking ahead.....

The Rocky Mountaineers will be meeting at 7pm on Tuesday, January 13th, at the Trail Head, 221 E. Front St. There will be a presentation by Bitterroot photographer Mike Hoyt.

Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes 12/9/2014

I. Call To Order: 6:05, Met at MacKenzie River Pizza

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

III. Treasurer's Report:

A. \$856.01

B. Alden has gotten reimbursed for web hosting

IV. Discussions:

A. Speakers

1. Mike Hoyt in Jan.

2. Steven Gnam & Steven Sheriff - No's

3. Forest Dean & Casey (works for David) possibles

4. Alden never heard back from Aaron Teasdale, but he will still try to set up a bicycle show

B. GMAR

1. Paul talked to Josh, GMAR on back burner for now.

2. Remind Steve Niday to do some activity with the account

C. Paul went back up to the cabin and took up a broom

D. Trips

1. Paul - up to the cabin Jan. 9-11th, 2015

2. Steve Schombel - Seeley Lake or Lubrecht skiing

3. Julie - Lee Creek 1/18/2015

4. Alden - 12/20/2014 Chief Joseph, and Pistol Creek Lookout with Dan Saxton, 12/13/2014 (the latter trip was eventually canceled due to weather)

V. Adjourn 6:45 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.