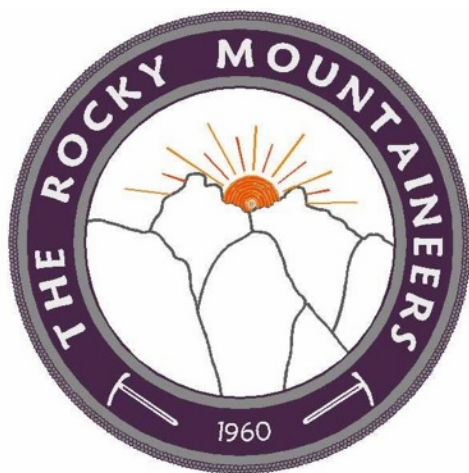


A photograph of a snowy forest. The ground is covered in a thick layer of white snow. Numerous thin, vertical tree trunks, likely aspens or birches, are covered in a layer of snow. The trees are densely packed, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus white, suggesting a deep snow cover and possibly some snow-laden branches. The overall scene is peaceful and wintry.

DECEMBER 2015

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 encouraged to do so - contact the editor. The 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: Business meetings are held the second Tuesday, September through May, at 6:00 PM at MacKenzie River Pizza in downtown Missoula. The regular meeting with a featured presentation or speaker then follows at 7:00 PM at the Trail Head.

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: Somewhere on the northern slopes of West Fork Butte near Hwy 12 west of Lolo..... Photo by Dan Saxton.

TRIP REPORTS

Sunday, November 29, 2015 - Lolo Pass Ski Trip



Some obstacles..... Photo by Julia Kahl.

To make the best of a cold day we held off meeting until 11am then took a few minutes to eat lunch in the Visitors' Center before heading out. Except Alden Wright who took a chance to ski the Glade Creek Loop. It was the first outing of the season for most of us. Lois C. and David K. decided to stay local and ski around the area south of Hwy 12. Julie K. led John W., Beth Anne A., Maria C. and two others to cross Hwy 12 and ski down to Crystal Amphitheater, about 2 1/2 miles down on the Montana side. Alden caught up with us just before we started down the side road. Cameras came out often. We needed to break trail, but the snow wasn't too deep and we had plenty of people to do it. In one place there was some trees down, one that was a go over a low end on the edge of a drop off or crawl under the higher end. On the east slope going back into the Amphitheater we went through an alder brush patch that had large delicate ice crystals on them. Being out late in the day, the sun was low and we were mostly in shadows. We would ski towards a patch of sunlight only to have it gone when we got there. There was sunlight on the higher walls of the Amphitheater for a good view when we took a short break before heading back, having gone about 3 miles. *Julia Kahl*

Saturday, December 12, 2015 - Bear Creek



We had a real nice hike up Bear Creek last Saturday. There was about an inch of new snow, so it was easy to drive all the way in and hike up the trail. It was a little tricky to get down near the falls. A couple of people had their feet slip out from under them, but it was much better conditions than I was expecting. We took our time and lots of photos. There also weren't as many ice formations as I had hoped. We went a little past the last rapids, over 2 miles on Julie's GPS. We talked about going farther but it was starting to snow and a front had been predicted to hit around 4pm, so we decided it was best to head back to the highway. The front never materialized and the snow stopped, so it was a smooth drive all the way back to town. The participants were: Eileen M., Julie and Dave K, another Dave, R., and myself. We'll be getting together on other trips soon. *Steve Schombel*

Bear Creek cascades. Photo by Steve Schombel.



Crags above Bear Creek. Photo by Steve Schombel.

Sunday, December 20, 2015 - Lolo Pass Ski Trip



The snow's getting deep up there now..... Photo by Julia Kahl.

We don't know who ordered us a perfect ski day, but we all appreciated it. Blue sky, white fluffy clouds, not too warm, not too cold. Eight of us headed up to Lolo Pass around 10am. Steve S. took Eileen M. on her first ever snowshoeing trip, and they took their time to enjoy the beautiful day on the snowshoe trail. The rest headed up 3.12 miles to the Lee Creek saddle on an already tracked trail that ended there. It was the perfect route to wow newcomer Jeb R., actually a back country skier, with views of most of the terrain available to backcountry ski in the Lolo Pass area. It was Rita C.'s and Charles T.'s first outing of the season; Nancy G. led much of the way, joined by David & Julie K. On the way back Charles fell, took off his NNN skis to get up, and then couldn't get his skis back on. Fortunately, we weren't far from Elk Meadows Rd., so, annoyed, he postholed to the road then started to hike up it. The others went back on the trail as David and Julie joined Charles. He kept trying, and eventually got his skis back on to finish the ski to the visitors center. Everyone was satisfied with their day.

I've been leading ski trips for the Rocky Mountaineers for over 20 years, and this NNN system freeze up has been the most frequent equipment failure I've seen on my trips. Also,

we've ended up with shortened lunch breaks, because the NNN users hesitate to take their skis off to sit down and end up standing all through the break. This is why many of us older backcountry touring folks stick to our three-pin bindings. *Julia Kahl*



Fresh snow, light, and shadow. Photo by Julia Kahl.

Saturday, December 26, 2015 - Moonlight Ski

Our moonlight ski was a story of the old and the young. It was cold. We went up to the Rattlesnake. One man, who I thought was going to meet us, was coming back while we were getting our gear ready. He said he didn't go far and got cold. Another person bailed and went home. The three (relatively) young ones set off on skis. I snowshoed up to the outhouse past the Spring Gulch turnoff and got cold. I couldn't stretch another layer over my snow boots, so I strapped my snowshoes on the pack and walked back. The Rattlesnake gets so much traffic you don't need snowshoes or skis. However, there are nice tracks for those who do like to ski. It was very quiet and pretty, with light reflecting off the slopes and among the trees. I heard that the other three took their time and made it to the area of the dog on leash

sign, 1.7 miles from the parking lot. They said the moon topped the hills about 7:40, and they also had great views. Participants were: Genevieve Andrus, Beth Ann Austin, Lois Crepeau, Fred Schwanemenn, Steve Schombel, and John Wolverton. *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 hands 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, January 17, 2016 - LEE CREEK SKI

Description: This is an 8 mile ski down on the Montana side from Lolo Pass to the Lee Creek campground.

Leader: Julia Kahl, jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

Sunday, February 28, 2016 - PACK CREEK SKI

Description: This is an 8 mile ski down on the Idaho side from Lolo Pass to the Crooked Fork Bridge. It is all downhill, on logging roads, with some moderately steep sections in the lower end.

Leader: Julia Kahl, jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

Looking ahead.....

The Rocky Mountaineers will **meet at the Trail Head**, 221 E. Front St., Missoula, at **7pm on Tuesday, January 12, 2015** for the following presentation:

Adventures in the Big Wilds of the northern Rockies with Bob Clark

Bob Clark, long-time local organizer with the Sierra Club, and Wilderness Backpacking Guide will show slides and discuss his 2015 Adventures in the Big Wilds. Bob has spent nearly 50 nights under the stars guiding hikers into the remote wilderness of Yellowstone, the Tetons, the Rocky Mountain Front, and elsewhere.



Sit back, relax, and journey to the Jedediah Smith Wilderness, Wind River Range, Badger-Two Medicine, and more.

Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes 12/8/2015

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

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

III. Treasurer's Report:

A. \$938.28

B. Steve Schombel, Steve Niday, & Joshua Phillips went to the bank on 12/5/2015 to take care of the bank account signatures, but Joshua didn't need to be there.

C. Lois had receipt for \$34 for cookies

IV. Discussions:

A. Speakers

1. Brian Martens will do the Avalanche program this month
2. Jan. Bob Clark
3. Alden - people who biked the State Line trail choice of months?
4. Marc Ankenbauer who jumped in every lake in Glacier, in April
5. Alden gave Steve S. Mike Hoyt's e-mail

B. Christmas Party, get together at the Press Box, Dec. 17th

C. Julie's suggestion to have the 2016 Glacier Classic at Sun River Canyon, just this once

1. Looked over maps for trips in the area
2. Alden - run it by Forest 1st before putting it out for general discussion

D. Steve S. Possibly won't be at Jan. Meeting

E. Lois, Lolo Pass Park and Ski parking permit is \$35 this year

F. Trips:

1. Steve S. - Bear Creek Falls, 12/12/2015
2. Alden - car pool to Lolo Pass on Sat. or Sun.
3. Julie - Lolo Pass 12/20/2015, Lee Creek 1/17/2016, Pack Creek 2/28/2016, also planning Chief Joseph and Freezeout Lake outings

V. Adjourn 6:28 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.