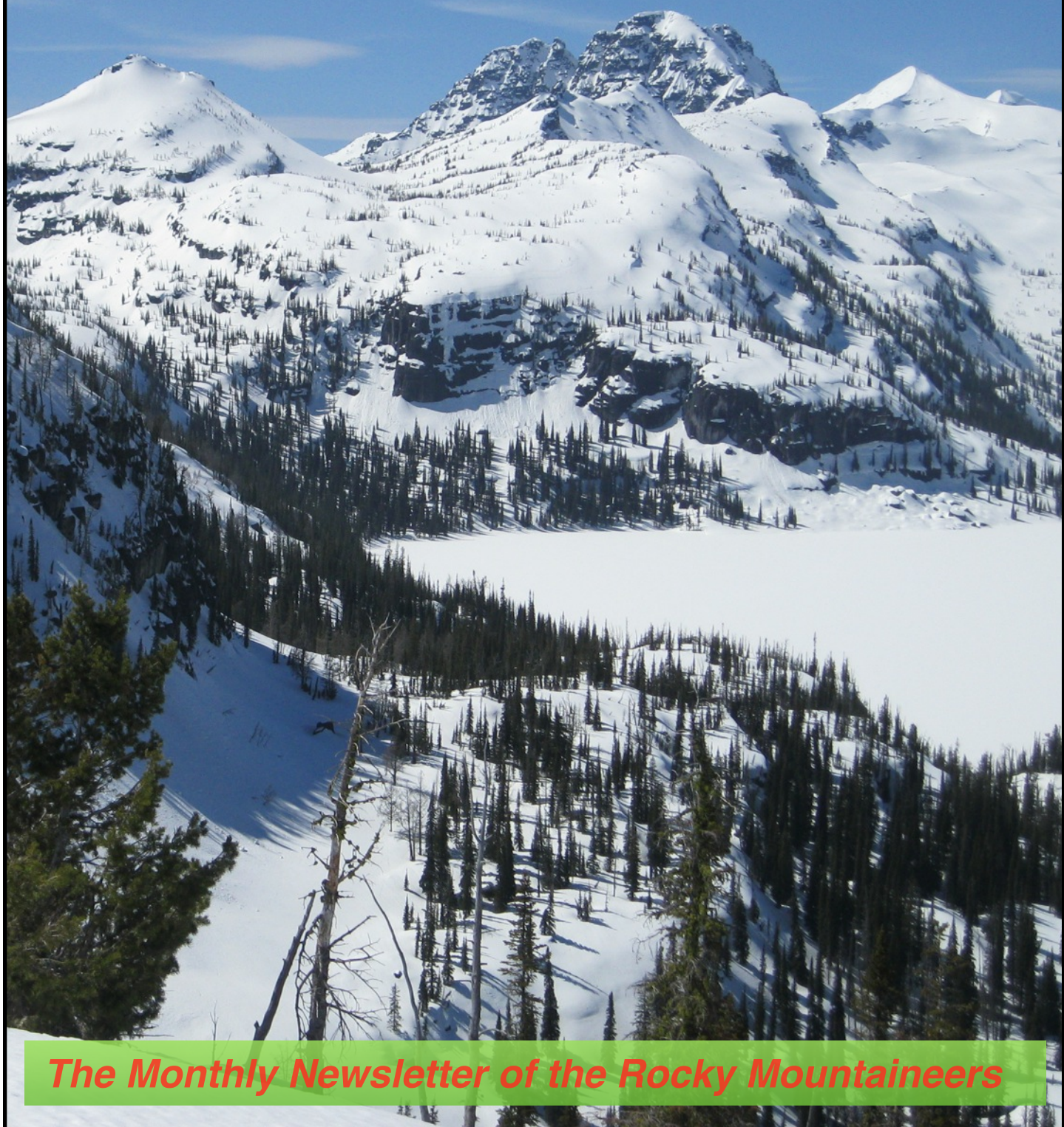


APRIL 2016

# 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.**

#### Club Contacts

Website: <http://rockymountaineers.com>  
e-mail: [info@rockymountaineers.com](mailto:info@rockymountaineers.com)

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

President: Steve Schombel  
[stephenschombel@yahoo.com](mailto:stephenschombel@yahoo.com)

Vice-President: Paul Jensen  
[paulfjensen@yahoo.com](mailto:paulfjensen@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Lois Crepeau  
[lcrepeau@centric.net](mailto:lcrepeau@centric.net)

Treasurer: Steve Niday  
[seniday@yahoo.com](mailto:seniday@yahoo.com)

Newsletter Editor: Dan Saxton  
[apologist497@yahoo.com](mailto:apologist497@yahoo.com)

Webmaster: Alden Wright  
[rocky@wrightmontana.net](mailto:rocky@wrightmontana.net)

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:* During September-April, business meetings are generally held 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: It's spring down low, but winter still holds its grip on Gray Wolf Peak and Lake in the Mission Mountains, as seen from the ridgeline east of North Jocko Peak. Photo by Dan Saxton.*

## Farewell Message from the Newsletter Editor:

For two and a half years I have immensely enjoyed the task of being the newsletter editor for the Rocky Mountaineers. It has been so wonderful to revive the newsletter and devote special care to it, so that it has become a valuable resource and inspiration once again to the Missoula climbing community. However, life moves on in many directions, and I must regretfully announce that I am concluding my duties as newsletter editor for the Mountaineers. I have become engaged to a beautiful and wonderful young lady from the amazing state of Maine, which is to the East as Montana is to the West, and now am moving there to join her, get married this fall, and build our lives together in the Pine Tree State.

Even though I am leaving Montana, it will continue to hold a special place in my heart. Ever since I was 6 years old in 1990, when I first entered the Rocky Mountains through the Many Glacier gateway and became enthralled by the West's rugged beauty, Montana imprinted itself upon me and I have never ever forgotten its allure. No matter where I end up, or if I return, this beautiful land will remain a precious jewel to me.

It is my hope that the Rocky Mountaineers will endure. A lot has changed in the world since the Mountaineers were formed over 50 years ago, and much has shifted in the way that clubs operate, yet the Mountaineers retain a venerable sense of history and tradition. The Club must now move into the future in a way that balances both this deep rootedness in the past with a healthy adaptability for what is to come. What we desire is strong, passionate adventurers who will propose plenty of awesome trips!

Julie Kahl will take over the newsletter in my absence, but I strongly encourage any club members who have a passion for both writing and adventure to take up the reins; just contact the club leaders if you desire to do so!

I wish you all the best, and hope to see many of you again in the future when I visit Montana again. For the last time, I bid you,

Happy Climbing!

~ Dan Saxton

Dan atop Tweedy Mountain in the Pioneers, April 21, 2016.



## **\*Attention: Annual dues are due immediately.\***

**Please pay as soon as possible to retain active membership.** This includes receiving a personal copy of the newsletter by email and voting privileges at the club election during the May picnic. Dues are still only **\$10.00**, and there is a Paypal account and a post office box to send a check to. See the last page of this newsletter for more info.

## **Trip Reports**

### **Saturday, April 2, 2016 - Stark Mountain**



Inspired by Daryl Greaser's Facebook post from the weekend before, Todd Kaye, Bryan Kercher, Lauren de Paepe, and Alden Wright snowshoe hiked to Stark Mountain which is northwest of Missoula. We took I-90 to the Tarkio exit, and then followed the well-signed Nemote Creek Road towards the lookout until we were stopped by snow. We hiked about 1.3 miles to the gate and then 3.6 more miles to the lookout. If one follows the road to the lookout, there is nothing at all steep. Near the lookout, we took some shortcuts which were somewhat steeper. From the peak we had great views of the Missions and the Bitterroots. Bryan has posted pictures for the trip on Facebook. *Alden Wright*

At Stark Mountain Lookout. Photo by Bryan Kercher.



Alden Wright near the lip of the basin. Photo by Bryan Kercher.

### **Saturday, April 16, 2016 - North Jocko Peak**

Dan Saxton gave a Facebook report on his trip to North Jocko Peak from the week before. This sounded like a great hike/ski, so I proposed it for April 16. Bryan Kercher, Todd Kaye, Megan Syner, Kameron Kidrick, and I (along with dogs Sadie and Izzie) left from Grant Creek in Missoula a little after 8 am, and we started hiking at 9:45. Roads and trails on the reservation have few signs, so make sure than you know where you are going. We had 3-5 inches of new snow from the last few days. As promised by Dan's description, we had about 7 tenths of a mile of hiking through snow to get to the trailhead.

On the way up North Jocko Peak. Photo by Bryan Kercher.





The amazing scene from North Jocko Peak. Photo by Bryan Kercher.

Bryan, Todd, and Alden were on snowshoes, and Megan and Kameron used skis with skins. For about 2 miles past the trailhead, the trail followed an old road. After that, we needed a GPS and map reading to approximately follow the trail. Dan had posted a Hillmap route, and that was very helpful. We approximately followed the trail up to the basin below. There was one section of the trail just after the junction which was quite steep and might pose avalanche danger under bad conditions. Going further east may have been less steep. We went considerably to the west of Lost Sheep Lake, and climbed to the ridge about half a mile to the east of the peak. Climbing to the peak was not hard. The views from the peak were simply outstanding. We were looking down on Gray Wolf Lake, north and west to the Missions, east to the Swans, and west and south to the Rattlesnake. Kameron and Megan skied down the south face of the peak while the rest of us followed the same route back down. On the way down, Bryan dropped his phone, but fortunately Alden found it. We arrived back at the car at about 6 pm. The hike was 12 miles and 3500' elevation gain. Bryan has posted a great set of pictures on the Rocky Mountaineers Facebook group. *Alden Wright*



Descending North Jocko Peak, looking to the Swan Range. Photo by Bryan Kercher.

### **Sunday, April 17, 2016 - Miller Creek “Tick-Free Hike”**

This trip was billed as tick resistant; we did our best to stay out of the brush, but most of us found ticks on us either out there or at home later.

One of the most interesting parts of this trip was that Lois Crepeau had an old map that showed a cross-country ski trail loop through this area, starting and ending at Plant Creek which is where they stop plowing Miller Creek Rd. A short distance further, Miller Creek Rd. splits and an older road goes south around Mistletoe Mt., the “southwest corner” of the Miller Creek Valley, and comes out in the Woodchuck drainage in the other side of the Eight Mile Divide. The other split we think of as the road to Holloman Saddle, and thus Miller Peak, but the GPS says it’s actually Middle Fork of Schwartz Creek Rd. (MFSCR). Her older map also showed an Elk Mt. just to the northwest of Holloman Saddle. The ski trail route goes south up a logging road about a mile up the Plant Creek Rd., then skirts the divide between Plant Creek and Holloman Creek, crosses over a saddle, and goes down into the Holloman Creek drainage where it meets up with the MFSCR road. From there it loops back down to Miller Creek Rd. to Plant Creek, a distance of a little over eight miles. It was our intent to

walk the roads and scout this loop, knowing that between the logging roads and MFSCR was a section that deteriorates to a trail, which we didn't intend to go on.



Baby moose droppings. Photo by Julia Kahl.

We drove up Plant Creek the mile or so to the intersection and Lois, Barbara Ross, Dave Robertson, Steve Schombel, and Eileen McGurty joined Julie & David Kahl in the hike that started up the road going south. Steve and Eileen had brought their dogs. As it was in the morning, this west facing road was in the shade and cool enough for vapor to be rising off of Plant Creek, but warm enough so the smell told us that apparently a lot of people walked their dogs in this area. The road climbed steadily the entire way up to the saddle, and when we got around on the southwest facing slope in the sun we shed layers. About a mile up that road, we came to a locked gate, and shortly beyond it stopped for lunch in an intersection with one of the many older roads we found coming off this road. There was snow in places in the woods, and in a few places on the road yet. We were expecting to see shooting stars and yellow bells, but glacier lilies and one or two arrowleaf balsam root was all we saw. There was elk and moose sign, including a baby moose, all over, especially after we passed the locked gate. Continuing up, we saw blue diamonds on the trees letting us know that this was indeed the old cross-country ski route, and now we could get views of the Bitterroot

Mts. beyond Mistletoe Mt. We only went about 2 1/2 miles to the high point, the saddle between Plant Creek and Holloman Creek. From there, where within a short distance roughly seven roads radiate from here, all running a distance and then ending, we could see MFSCR running along the opposite side to the valley. Tracing the route of the roads coming from the saddle, we could see the route the trail probably followed. Several people wandered off and explored some of the roads, then after a short break we started back down.



Looking down into Holloman Creek, road in center, Holloman Saddle left. Photo by Julia Kahl.

On the other side of the locked gate we were back in the land of guns and garbage. Sites of target shooting were littered with empty shell casings, including those for AK47's. Skeet shooting targets had rained down on the banks and scatted their bright orange color throughout the woods. When we skied Plant Creek earlier in the year we had seen the garbage dumps lower down, but the slope next to the locked gate topped them all. An older, bright red 4-wheeler had been pushed off the edge with other garbage, like an old TV, and it had been done long enough ago that the vegetation had grown up in the spot where it had gone through from the road. Lois called the FS about it and they said they had plans to deal with the Miller Creek dumping and would take care of it. She and Dave R. carried out a garbage bag of bottles, cans, and other trash. When we skied the Plant Creek Rd. earlier, we had run across a retired FS guy who had moved here from Helena, who was picking up the metal shells that were melting out of the snow, right by the entrance to Planet Creek. He said that he would rather see the city buy the dump than the water system, since in places where the community owned the dump, like Helena, they didn't have this problem with the "natural edges" of the city becoming dump sites. That makes sense to us. G&G were the only things to mar this otherwise great day and hike. *Julia Kahl*

## Saturday, April 23, 2016 - Trapper Peak



The 2016 Trapper Peak group. Photo by Bryan Kercher.

Alden Wright has been climbing Trapper Peak in April at least since 1990. This year Alden “led” (from the rear) 14 people to the peak on his 74th birthday. Several dropped out because the forecast was for rain. But we lucked out, and there was no precipitation until we were most of the way to the top, and then we had some frozen rain and snow (much better than rain). Most of us left from Missoula at 6:30, with Lindsey being picked up in Victor, and Bryan, Edna, and Sharon driving from Hamilton. Fortunately, Norman drove first and drove as far as he could, which was two switchbacks from the summer trailhead. So we walked west to the next switchback, and then bushwhacked (not bad at all) up the hill to the road, and walked about half a mile to the summer trailhead. We left the cars at 8:50, and the summer trailhead at 9:15. We all put on snowshoes at about 9000’. Vick used some relatively ancient wood and leather snowshoes---they seemed to work for him except at the top. The first group used the snowshoes most of the way down while the second group took theirs off a little below where we put them on. The snow was considerably softer coming down than going up.

As planned, we had two groups. Norman, Elizabeth, Julie, Ron, Neil, Kathy, Julia, Lindsey, Bryan, and Dan were in the first group, while Vick, Edna, Sharon, and Alden were in the second group. Vick pointed out Rosy Finches to some of us in the second group, which

helped Alden recall collecting trips for Rosy Finches with his ornithologist father. We could see the high mortality of whitebark pine from pine beetles and blister rust. Unfortunately, we never had a view of other peaks, although we had eerie views of South Trapper as shown by some of Bryan's photographs.

Norman brought brandy "birthday" cupcakes which we shared at the top----thanks Norman. The first group waited for the second group who arrived at the cars at about 5:30. We had some beers and salsa and chips. Most of us went out to dinner at Bitterroot Brewing. It was a good day.

Bryan and Julie have posted pictures of the trip on the Rocky Mountaineers Facebook group. *Alden Wright*



74-year old Alden Wright with misty East Trapper in the distance. Photo by Bryan Kercher.

# **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.

## **Saturday, May 7, 2016 – EAST BOULDER PEAK (9448') (Bitterroots)**

*Rating:* Class 4?

*Distance:* 11 miles round trip

*Elevation Gain:* 5200'

*Description:* This will be an attempt to ascend a route on the north face of East Boulder Peak. Being that I haven't heard of this being done, I will term it an "exploratory" trip. The trip will begin and end at the Boulder Creek Trailhead. Will hike up the trail to Boulder Falls (approx.. 4 miles), then hopefully cross the creek above the falls. From there the goal is to pick a combination of the steep snow-filled couloirs and ridge spines that lead to the summit of East Boulder. Will return to trailhead by descent of the ridge to Boulder Point, then drop back down into the Boulder Creek drainage. Will plan on bringing a rope, harness, some protection and pickets, ice tools, etc.

*Leader:* Forest Dean - [mtnear1@gmail.com](mailto:mtnear1@gmail.com)

## **Sunday, May 15th, 2016 - FORT FIZZLE/SAWMILL GULCH HIGH POINT**

*Description:* This is a hike on the southwest flanks of Blue Mt. in the Sawmill Gulch area, just north of Fort Fizzle, part of it through the old 1988 burn area. The Nee Mee-Poo trail runs

through part of it, also. We will walk the roads until just below the high point on the ridge separating Lolo Creek from the South Fork of Sleeman Creek, and bushwhack to the summit. From there we can see Blue Mt. to the north and have views down into Chickman and Westerman Gulches to the south and southwest. It starts at around 3300 ft and the high points are above 5500 ft., gaining around 2200 ft in 3 1/2 to 4 miles.

*Leader:* Julia Kahl - [jawkal@hotmail.com](mailto:jawkal@hotmail.com)

### **Sun-Mon, May 29-30, 2016 – GLACIER/ICEFLOE/MOUNTAINEER PEAKS (Missions)**

*Rating:* Class 3-4

*Distance:* 13-16 miles round trip

*Elevation Gain:* 7200-8200'

*Description:* This is a make-up date from the same trip rained out in April. Will hike up to the Lucifer Lake area on Sunday morning, find a place to set up a camp, then climb one or more of these peaks. Monday morning (Memorial Day) we can climb whatever we didn't climb the day before, then head out again. The tentative plan is to climb the south ridge of Icefloe Peak (Peak 9328') and traverse to Glacier Peak (9407'). A possibility could then be to traverse the Garden Wall for a climb of Mountaineer Peak (9261'). Will probably bring a rope and harness, ice axe, crampons. A Tribal Recreation Permit is needed as well.

*Leader:* Forest Dean - [mtnear1@gmail.com](mailto:mtnear1@gmail.com)

### **Sunday, June 12th, 2016 - SPOTTED DOG AREA (East of Deer Lodge)**

*Description:* I decided to put this trip to do more exploring of this new WMA area off until June in hopes that the roads will be dry and it still won't be too hot to hike around in this open, rolling hills terrain. First we will drive up the O'Neil Cr. Rd. to its end around 5500 ft. and see how far we can hike in from that end. Summits in the area are in the 5800-6400 ft. range. If there is no reasonable access we can drive to the roads coming in from Avon and hike around in that area.

*Leader:* Julia Kahl - [jawkal@hotmail.com](mailto:jawkal@hotmail.com)

### **Late July/Early August, 2016 - ELK SUMMIT CAMPING TRIP**

*Description:* In the planning is a camping trip to the Elk Summit area south of Hwy 12 in the Lochsa Cr. area. Elk Summit is on the divide between the Lochsa and Selway Rivers, and the trailhead for numerous long trails down into the wilderness areas. The plan is to spend 2 nights at the campground, which is roughly 23 miles down a dirt road after you leave Hwy. 12. One day in, one day to climb something - probably Diablo Mt. - and out the next day.

*Leader:* Julia Kahl - [jawkal@hotmail.com](mailto:jawkal@hotmail.com)

## Looking ahead.....

The Rocky Mountaineers will **have their annual picnic on Tuesday, May 10, 2016, in Pattee Canyon** (if the location changes, we will inform asap). Please plan on coming for a fun time socializing and electing new club members for the upcoming year! Keep in mind that **only members who have their dues current may vote**, so please remit club dues if you haven't done so already.

## The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Glacier Classic



Stormy clouds leer over Ipasha Peak from Mount Henkel, 2014 Glacier Classic. Photo by Dan Saxton.

**Dates: Friday, August 26 - Sunday, August 28**

**Basecamp: St. Mary's Campground**

Now is the time to mark your calendars for The Rocky Mountaineers' biggest annual event—The Glacier Classic! Every year since 2005 we have gathered in a different location in Glacier National Park on the last weekend of August to climb peaks, hike trails, and just have a great time in camp eating, drinking, and socializing. It's always a good opportunity to come and meet old friends, make new ones, and spend some time with a bunch of other like-minded folks in this Crown Jewel that we are so lucky to have in our backyards!

Planning for this 12<sup>th</sup> installment of the Classic is still in progress, but here are some of the details. We have one of the Group Sites reserved at St. Mary's Campground for the nights of Friday and Saturday. 24 individuals are allowed to stay in the site. Please let us know if you'd like to reserve your "spot." You can certainly attend the festivities but stay in your own site or somewhere else if you so choose. Those staying in the group site will be asked to split the cost of the site (will likely be around \$15/person for the weekend—what a bargain!)

Most of the attendees will arrive at St. Mary's sometime on Friday afternoon or evening. There are usually many folks looking for a ride from Missoula (or elsewhere) or folks willing to offer a ride. Let us know if you'd like to carpool.

Plan on bringing your own food and drinks for all meals. We have had a traditional Burrito Feed on Saturday evening in most of the past Classics, but this is not yet confirmed for this year.

Activities! Of course, the main reason we hold this event is to climb and hike and explore Glacier! The list of trips is still being put together, and quite honestly, many of the trips don't get decided upon until right before the event, or even during the event. If you have something you'd like to do, an idea to throw out there, well, let us know! Anyone attending can suggest a trip and/or offer to lead something. Here are a few early listings to whet the appetite:

**\*Citadel Mountain (9,030')** - This will likely be done on Friday for those wanting an extra day. Will involve a good bit of bushwhacking low on the mountain. Probably a class 3-4 scramble. Climb the bowl on the north side to a saddle between Citadel and Dusty Star Mountain, then ascend the NE Ridge to the summit. *Leader:* Forest Dean

**\*Going to the Sun Mountain (9,642')** - East face route. This is a class 4 route with some steep climbing on rock lower on route, and some steep glacier travel on upper part of route. Would probably descend the west side (standard) route. *Leader:* Paul Jensen/Forest Dean

**\*Siyeh Bend to Sunrift Gorge** - A good scenic hike originating at Siyeh Bend, hiking to Siyeh Pass between Mt. Siyeh and Matahpi Peak, then descending the Sunrift Gorge. *Leader:* Julia Kahl

**\*Reynolds Mountain (9,125')** - Begin at Logan Pass and hike around the west side of Reynolds on good climbers' trails to the south side of mountain, then ascend scree slopes to some upper cliff bands which require a relatively easy class 3 scramble to reach the summit. *Leader:* Alden Wright and/or Forest Dean

Again, these are just a few ideas thus far. Let us know if you have an idea!

For more information, or to let us know you are coming, contact the event organizer:

Forest Dean, [mtnear1@gmail.com](mailto:mtnear1@gmail.com), 406-240-7612

## Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes 4/12/2016

I. Call To Order: 6:18pm, MacKenzie River Pizza

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

III. Treasurer's Report: \$791.28

IV. Discussions:

A. Cassie Randal of the Montana Back Country Alliance spoke on the Outdoor Alliance and invited us to join, [outdooralliance.org](http://outdooralliance.org)

1. Human-powered Recreation - non motorized

2. Unites organizations to comment on policies, unified voice, unified stand

a. If one organization objects, comment withheld

b. can pursue other avenues

3. Occasional meetings - they just had one, but monthly calls to update member groups

4. Steve N. asked about agendas and notes from meeting

5. She asked for our issues: Major Wilderness areas, owners locking recreationists out of land, like summits

6. Contact Jeff Schmerker, gave her E-mail address, [cassidyran@gmail.com](mailto:cassidyran@gmail.com)

7. Our Discussion:

a. Bring it up to general membership -didn't

b. Steve N. no harm getting on list- most agreed

c. Paul -we can discuss it later if there was a fee

B. Picnic in May in Pattee Canyon - yes, but may have to change venue at last minute, Lois checked it out, seemed ok

C. Officers: Steve S. thinks he can stay on as president another year, Julie said she would take over the newsletter, go back to being secretary.

D. Discussed bikes in the wilderness.

E. Glacier Classic - Forest will get a notice out

F. Trips:

1. Julie: Miller Creek logging road hike 4/17/2016
2. Alden: Trapper Peak 4/23/2016, West Jocko Peak 4/16
3. Forest: Icefloe Peak, Glacier Peak, and maybe Mountaineer Peak, Missions 4/23-24

V. Adjourn 6:52 PM



From the summit of Homer Youngs Peak, looking west into the Salmon country of Idaho, April 22, 2016 - Copperhead Peak is the pointy crag. Photo by Dan Saxton - his last peak in Montana (for now!).

## 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.

