



Mountain Ear

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS

JULY-AUGUST, 1997

MEETING

The Club does not hold meetings in the summer. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 10, when we will have our traditional potluck slideshow of members' trips from the past year. We encourage everyone to go on some interesting trips and contribute to this slideshow.

CALENDAR

Wednesday evenings, 6:00 p.m., Mount Sentinel. Need a little bit of mid-week exercise? Meet at the trail head at 6 p.m. for a leaderless tour of Mount Sentinel, or call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for a forecast.

August 17, Sunday, Fischer Peak. Climb Fischer Peak (8845 feet), which is located in the Swans 12 miles north of Seeley Lake. It is a short off-trail hike to the base of the mountain. There are a couple of routes of varying difficulty. One route involves fourth-class climbing and the other route is more like an intense scramble. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

August 24, Sunday, Holland Peak. Climb/scramble to Holland Peak (9356 feet), which is located in the Swans 24 miles north of Seeley Lake. The route follows a faint trail to a very scenic lake at the base of the mountain. The route to the summit is usually mostly a scramble, but there is a lot of exposure to provide excitement. One option is to come for the hike and then hang out at the lake. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

August 30-September 1, Saturday-Monday, Warren Peak. Climb Warren Peak (10463 feet) over the Labor Day weekend, which is located in the Pintlers on the Continental Divide between Missoula and Butte. A short hike along a trail will lead to base camp. The optional climb of the peak on the second day involves moderate fourth-class climbing. This is a great way to cap off the summer. Call Gerald Olbu at 549-4769 for more information.

September 7, Sunday, Pyramid Peak. Scramble to Pyramid Peak (8309 feet), which is in the Swans 6 miles north of Seeley Lake. The route follows a trail to Pyramid Pass, then is a scramble to the peak. One option is to come for the hike to the pass or to nearby Pyramid lake. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for more information.

Wanna lead a trip? If you are interested in leading a trip, contact Gerald Olbu at 549-4769.

TRIP REPORTS

Kakashe Mountain, June 15. For a great snow climb adventure, Brett Doucett and Gerald Olbu headed for Kakashe Mountain. We saw the most unusual wildlife about half way up the mountain. As we rounded a corner, a huge animal jumped up and bolted away. We only had a glimpse; but, from behind, it was big and round. We cautiously proceeded. Then, we got a view through the brush. It was a bison! A mountain bison! Later, we learned he escaped from White's Meat Market in Ronan about four days earlier. They were unloading a truck load of 18 bison and one got away. They shot at him, but he ran away. We wish him the best. We continued toward the peak, and fortunately had snow-free conditions until we reached the snow gully. We needed to descend a short snow gully in order to continue toward the peak. The second snow couloir leading up to the summit ridge was longer and filled with firm-packed snow requiring an ice ax. We climbed the couloir, and after a short scramble, were on top of Kakashe. The views were excellent, as we were surrounded with great peaks: McDonald Peak, Peak 9328, The Garden Wall, Sonielem Ridge and West St. Mary Peak. The route down took us through a large basin filled with snow. With some route finding, we found a gentle snow gully for our descent. We descended snow, then brush and cliffs, then we came to the trail. The trip out was fast. - Gerald Olbu.

Mount Athabasca, June 19-22. In order to really challenge the great weather we had been having, Brett Doucett, Gerald Olbu, Rick Rister, Tony Sabol and Steve Schombel headed for the Canadian Rockies. We camped in a campground near the base of Mount Athabasca and were greeted the next morning with low clouds that looked like they were getting ready for a steady day long drizzle. We began the climb of the north face and almost immediately we were in low clouds. We roped up as is standard for glacier travel. It began snowing. The low clouds became thicker and visibility was only about 100 feet. Due to white out conditions, we couldn't see the route, which traversed a steep snow slope between two ice cliffs (one above and one below). We stopped for bit then headed back. On the way back, we stepped in about five crevasses. They weren't very big; only one leg went through. We had extra time, so at the base of the snow field we practiced crevasse-rescue techniques. During the four-day trip we saw four black bears (one was about 400 pounds), two gray wolves, an osprey with a fish in its claws, as well as the usual deer, elk, mountain sheep, etc. And of course, we checked out the Jasper Pizza Parlor. - Gerald Olbu.

Gray Wolf Peak, June 29. In a feeble attempt to climb Gray Wolf Peak, Ronnie Addleway, James Banister, Brett Doucett, Jo Ellen Lyng, Gerald Olbu, Martin Oleksiewicz and Tony Sabol headed out in the rain. It continued to rain and dampened our desire to climb the peak, but we enjoyed the hike up to the lake. It wasn't exactly a fun-filled picnic at the lake in the rain, so we headed down. Afterwards, we had dinner at a cafe in Ravalli. - Gerald Olbu.

Gray Wolf Peak, July 6. Willing to give Gray Wolf another attempt, Brett Doucett, Gerald Olbu, Martin Oleksiewicz, Sara Rider and Steve Schombel headed out under good weather conditions. Some stayed at the lake and soaked up the sun, while others continued on to the peak. The snow couloir was firm packed and required kicking steps and reliance on the ice ax. We met fellow mountaineers Dave Pengelly and Ralph Flockerzi on the south summit. For those unfamiliar with the mountaineer social scene, Gray Wolf Peak is a great place to hang out and meet your friends. We continued on to the main summit and were surprised to find that there was no snow on this portion of the mountain. With careful route finding, we scrambled to the summit of Gray Wolf and enjoyed views of the Missions and Swans. We explored alternate routes on the way down. - Gerald Olbu.

North Face, Middle Como Peak, July 13. We've climbed the north face of the west peak before but this was the first time for the middle peak. Brett Doucett, Bill Gaeuman, Willis Lambertson, Gerald Olbu and Martin Oleksiewicz headed out early in the morning. The snow has been melting fast, and we didn't get into snow until the basin below the peaks. The middle peak has three snow ramps. First ramp was filled with sketchy snow and very loose rubble rock. The second ramp was steep, hard-packed snow and required proficient use of the ice axe. The third snow field had already melted away, so we just scrambled to the peak. On the way out, as a couple of us were feasting on delicious huckleberries, two of us further up the trail saw a black bear doing the same. - Gerald Olbu.

Pasayten Wilderness Area, July 20-24. Earlier this summer my father, who is 70, invited me on a five day backpack in the Pasayten Wilderness area, which is located in northern Washington in the Cascades. My first thought after he suggested the trip was, "uh-oh, I better get in shape," and I was right; I could hardly keep up with my Dad. One excuse, which I pointed out at every opportunity, was that I had been slouching in a kayak all spring, while he was on his fourth backpack in six weeks. Another excuse was that I had just had my boots resoled, which unfortunately seems to have shrunk them, and my feet got pretty badly abused by my tight footwear. But it was still pretty demoralizing to get left in the dust by my Father. We were accompanied by three of Dad's friends from Oregon. We hiked on the Boundary Trail, which runs within a few miles of the Canadian border, on the east side of the Pacific Crest. Our route went from the Iron Gate trailhead through Horseshoe Basin to Cathedral Lake and back. This trail tends to traverse high along the sides of ridges and basins, generally between 6,200 and 7,500 feet. It doesn't go up and down very much, and you have good views most of the time. There are some interesting open tundra-like basins and mountains around Horseshoe Basin, a lot of nice granite domes and slabs, and some excellent mountain scenery. The weather was generally good, but we got pounded by a viscous hailstorm and thunderstorm the second night. The half-inch hailstones covered the ground like snow, but lurking underneath some of the hail were puddles. Several people stepped through the layer of hail into puddles which came over the tops of their boots. We also got mugged by some gangs of pretty mean mosquitos. But it was a great trip, and I recommend this wilderness area to you. - Peter Dayton.

Daughter of the Sun Mountain, July 27. For one of the more challenging and rewarding rock climbs in the Missions, Marlene Denison, Brett Doucett, Gerald Olbu, Martin Oleksiewicz, Steve Schombel and Rene Taaffe headed for Daughter of the Sun Mountain. It was a beautiful day and one of us decided to stay at the lake and soak up the sun, while the others continued on to the peak. There's quite a bit of snow this year and we had to climb a large snowfield that is usually only half the size. We explored the mountain for new routes with mixed success. We did improve the usual route up the face by finding ways to avoid some of the exposure. This route is characterized by loose rock and lots of exposure. We topped out on the summit ridge with only an easy scramble and a fun chimney to climb between us and the peak. Soon, we were on the peak enjoying the views of the Mission Divide, all the way from Mount Harding to Gray Wolf Peak. There is still a tremendous amount of snow left at the higher elevations. The trip down off the mountain was relatively fast, but with the severe rock fall danger, in some sections, we traveled one at a time and made sure no one was above another person. The hike out was fast and pleasant and we didn't even notice the short rain shower. - Gerald Olbu.

OFFICERS

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