



MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

HIKING-CLIMBING-MOUNTAINEERING-SKIING-
EXOTIC TRAVEL-EXPLORATION OF PEAKS AND
MOUNTAINS OF MONTANA AND OF THE WORLD

February 2002

The Lolo Trail

Our monthly meeting on February 13th will be a great chance for everyone to learn more about the Lolo Trail. Our speaker is Roger

Free, Forest Service Archeologist. He will talk a little about the history of this trail, but most of his presentation will be on recreational opportunities, restoration work being done, and what is in store for the public during the upcoming

Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Celebration.

Roger has hiked approximately 77 miles of the Lolo Trail from Lolo Pass to Weippe, Idaho. He has first hand knowledge of good places to hike and places to avoid. He has also worked with restoration crews, including the Salish and Nez Perce crews you may have read about. He has several slides, maps and handouts. Our meetings are free and open to the public. They start at 7:00 PM in the second floor meeting room of the Court House Annex, south of the Pine Street

Bus Terminal. Join us for an informative evening.

After the talk there will be a business



Breaking the "A" Trail, part of the Lolo Trail. Photo by Charles Tree.

meeting. We have a final draft of the new by laws read for a member's vote. We have consulted with members who are lawyers and have reassuring news on the liability issues for participants and trip leaders.

Please,

would a quorum stay so we can get this done and move on to other matters. Copies of the draft bylaws will be available at the meeting. If you want to look over a copy in advance contact Julie or Steve at a number inside.

One other issue we will have to deal with this spring is to form a work crew and hike back up to the cabin and install some fire-proof materials under the stove. Nothing big and heavy, but while up there we can clean and cut wood. A volunteer snowmobile would be most welcome.

UPCOMING TRIPS

Volunteers Needed

Here's your chance to break in those new cross-country skis and snowshoes and check out the beauty of the Great Burn in winter. The Great Burn Study Group is conducting backcountry trips this winter, collecting data on snowmobile use in the Lolo National Forest portion of the Great Burn Proposed Wilderness. Snowmobiling is prohibited here, though violations regularly occur.

We will keep a base camp for the entire four days of each trip, volunteers can do 2-4 days, (day trip will be possible at Heart Lake). Let's have some fun in the snow and do some important monitoring to help keep the Great Burn Wild!

For more information contact Bob Clark at 721-8789 or mtclarks@montana.com

Feb. 15 - 18 Shley Mountain corridor, Irish Basin. (for rugged types!)

Mar. 1 - 4 Granite Pass

Mar. 22 - 25 Heart Lake (day trip possible)



The above information is a follow up to the January meeting, when Bob Clark gave a fine show on the Great Burn area. Most of us would like to see this area remain unspoiled, but The Rocky Mountaineers have not taken a position on whether the Great Burn should become a Wilderness Area. Nor are we anti-snowmobiling. In the past few weeks several of us Nordic skiers have had quite a taste of what it would be like without mechanized grooming or snowmobile routes to follow. There should be a balance of uses, with plenty of room for all.

We do strongly urge all outdoor users to follow rules and regulations. A lot of the Montana portion of the Great Burn is closed to motorized vehicles year round. We hope some of our readers will participate in the above, or future, monitoring trips.

February 10th Gold Creek

We will drive up the Gold Creek Road to the junction with rd. 2112, or as far as we can. This road winds way up the Rattlesnakes, and should be a great ski. Eventually it reaches Shoo Fly Meadows, but we probably won't go this far. Meet at 9 A.M. at the Chamber of Commerce lot next to Eastgate, or call Lois Crepeau at 728-5321 for information.

February 17th Beginners Ski

Join our President and well seasoned instructor for a fun day at Lolo Pass. Like she says in the trip report, participants can experience a wide variety of terrain. And it's all free. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 for information.

February 23rd & 24th Cummings Cabin

We have reserved this Forest Service Cabin for the night, and are going to ski Alice Creek, Stemple Pass, or any other area around Lincoln that strikes our fancy. The cabin only sleeps six, and unfortunately the spots are spoken for. You can call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 to see if there has been a cancellation, or if you want to try to hook up with us on one of the days.

February 24th Lubrecht Forest

This groomed trail area should have some great snow this year, plus it will not have avalanche danger. Most of the trails are easy or moderate and the terrain is gentle and forested. Call Fred Schwanemann at 542-7372 for information.

February 27th Full Moon

Would anyone be interested in skiing a couple of hours near town under a full moon this Wednesday night? Miller Creek would be nice. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686.

March 3rd Chief Joseph

Would like to hook up with some of our new friends from the Bitterroot. If not we can go off on our own, Hogan Cabin or Anderson Mountain if the snowpack has stabilized. Will probably meet at the usual spot at 8 A.M., but call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for an update.

TRIP REPORTS

January 12th Scooter Creek

Lois Crepeau, Mike McMichael and Steve Schombel drove down to Hamilton where we met up with Mel Mooers of the Bitterroot Cross Country Ski Club. Mel was trip leader and had invited us to join him on this snowshoe hike. We were joined by Ray Ohl and Dusty Samouce from the Bitterroot club. Mike opted to ski around the Chief Joseph area, and the rest of us snowshoed to Sentinel Meadows, then along the trail toward Hogan Cabin and down through a large clear-cut, over a little hump and down Scooter Creek to the highway. Back at the pass we strapped on our skis and checked out the marvelous warming hut the Bitterrooters have constructed. You must get down to see it. We topped off the day with a ski over the Gold Meadow Loop, then home. - Steve Schombel

January 13th Beginners Ski

One of the reasons I take beginning skiers to Lolo Pass is so that they can get introduced to the sport under great conditions. This was the experience that Alice Deppy of Maryland got when Fred Schwanemann and I took her skiing at Lolo Pass. Alice got to try a little bit of everything from groomed trails, to back country trails and some skiing on open slopes. We all enjoyed the day. - Julie Warner

January 20th "A" Trail

We invited people from the Bitterroot Cross Country Club to see one of our favorite trails at Lolo Pass, and we had a tremendous turnout. Bitterrooters joining us were Darel Seibert (?), Barb Allen, Janis Cooper, Mel Mooers, Mike McKeegan and Phil Mason. From our club were Lois Crepeau, Charles Tree, Julie Warner, David Kahl, Fred Schwanemann, Karen Apland and Steve Schombel.

We chose this trail because it is usually well tracked and an easy, mostly downhill glide. Today, from a few hundred yards past the State Line to about half way down Lee Creek we had to break through deep untouched powder. With so many participants we could take turns in the lead and not get too tired out. Those who had not been skiing at Lolo Pass marveled at the scenery and the long downhill. It was a great day. - Steve Schombel

January 26th Miller Creek

Steve Schombel joined Lois Crepeau to get a taste of this large area so close to town. In the parking lot were a couple of cat hunters with their pack of hounds. They were interesting to talk to. They had a little dog house trailer they towed behind a snowmobile, and they explained how they hunted. Then we skied up the Holloman Saddle Road to the turnoff on rd. 2135. No tracks of any kind to follow. A short way up this road we looked down in a small saddle and saw a cow and a large calf moose. When we tried to get a closer view we spooked them. A little above this spot the snow got deeper and very heavy. We took turns for a couple more miles but it was tiring, and we had another trip on Sunday. We'd like to explore this area some more. - Steve Schombel

January 27th Packer Meadow Loop

This day was one of the few beautiful days so far this winter. The plan was to cross country ski Packer Creek Road at Lolo Pass. But a recent dump of heavy, wet snow made avalanche danger high, so we decided to ski Packer Meadow Loop instead. Fred Schwanemann, Steve Schombel, Karen Apland, Lois Crepeau, David Kahl, and Julie Warner set off on the trail that had not been groomed at all. Although we took turns breaking trail, the snow was so heavy that several people turned around, and the rest elected to take a shortcut on Elk Meadow Road where some of the trail was broken up by snowmobiles. Upon reaching to Lolo Pass, a thoroughly exercised group returned to Missoula. - Fred Schwanemann

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