



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

November 2002

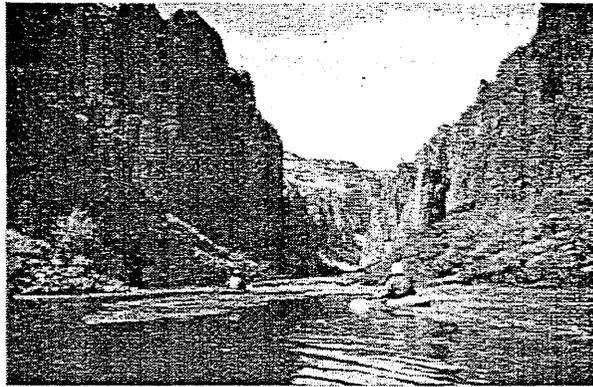
The Rocky Mountaineers Keep on Treking

No, the Rocky Mountaineers are not the hottest act in town. We do not attract big crowds to our monthly meetings, nor do we usually get a lot of people out on our weekend trips. But we do keep plodding on. Every month we get one or two new people at a meeting or on a hike, or a request to receive a copy of the newsletter.

We are very happy with the large attendance for the two work days at the cabin we held. In October ten people participated and did a lot of work. Ron Pierson carried his chain saw up the hill, and we got the wood bin completely full. We decided not to climb all over the roof, but instead sealed up the holes we could reach from the ladder. The roofing material is only a few years old, and we have heard that it doesn't leak much, if at all - so we will probably let it go for a while. We have talked about putting on metal, but this would be a major

project and require a lot of volunteer help plus donations. We didn't hear from the Bitterroot National Forest, so we assume that the fire proofing work we did in late July met their standards. Other workers on October 13th were: Charles Tree, Julie Warner, Mike McMichael, Fred and Eileen Schwanemann, David Kahl, Bret Doucett, Steve Schombel and Matt Galier. We wish to thank Steve and Pat Niday, who not only renewed, but also made a generous donation to the cabin fund.

Our President, Julie Warner, also announces that the club has received a Federal tax I. D. number to use on the bank account, instead of using an officer's social security number. This is a step on the way to getting tax exempt status, and registering our name.



Rocky and Art below Widowmaker

November Meeting

We have several fascinating meetings planned this fall and winter. On November 13th Peter Dayton will present a slide show on an 8-day, 130-mile kayak trip on the East and Main Forks of the Owyhee River. This river runs through remote and spectacularly scenic slot canyons in the high desert south of Boise, and is periodically punctuated with difficult boulder-choked rapids. Although this is one of the finest wilderness whitewater trips in North

America, the upper sections of the East Fork of the Owyhee only get visited by a couple of groups a year. These canyons are one of the little known gems of the Western USA, and Peter's photos are spectacular.

In December Jeremy Lurgio, photographer for the *Ravalli Republic*, will have slides and stories of back country skiing in the Bitter-

roots. In January Wayne Fairchild of Lewis and Clark Adventures will give a program on the upcoming Lewis and Clark bicentennial. Wayne worked with the late Stephen Ambrose, and will have some unique insights. In February we have scheduled Don Carroll, Missoula District Ranger, who will speak on a timely subject yet to be determined. In March or April we hope Bill Meyers will return again. We had an unfortunate bulb burnout that kept us from seeing most of his beautiful slides from the Alps.

We meet in the Court House Annex on Pine Street in the second floor meeting room on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM. Our meetings are free and open to the public, so bring a friend.

TRIP REPORTS

September 15th Lone Tree Pass

We got an early start and made good time on the trail. After leaving the trail we quickly realized how rugged the terrain was. We bushwhacked up and down but did not find the goat trail until we were almost high above the upper end of Turquoise Lake. Here Kirk Arnold and Steve Schombel elected to stop and explore the basin below. Bret Doucett and Mike McMichael dashed up the trail, reached the pass and scouted out some routes up to Sunrise Glacier. We all rendezvoused back at the car just at dark.

September 22nd Mountain Bike Ride

Since there were no takers on the Holland Lake/ Great Divide Mt. Bike Ride, Lois Crepeau and I, Karen Aplan, opted for a different ride. We parked a truck at the Lumberjack Saloon on Graves Creek Road. We pedaled down to Highway 12 and on up to Howard Creek Road. We enjoyed some small rolling hills until the climb got a little more serious around mile 8. (I may add Lois has some interesting new geological terms for hills that I had never heard before!) We climbed along the ridge between Howard Creek and Graves Creek for about 12 miles, all during this climb we had fantastic views of the Bitterroot mountains and the peaks in the Fish Creek drainage. We had 1 confusing intersection at about mile 18, this intersection was not on the map. After conferring with some grouse hunters, we took a hard right and kept climbing up the ridge. At about mile 20 we hit the top and started on a fast track down the hill. We encountered some sand and ruts but otherwise had a quick cruise down to the truck. What a treat to have warm sunny weather in late Sept. We stopped for beer and burgers at the Lumberjack before heading home.

September 22nd Bass Creek

We thought a lot about Karen and her group humping their way over trails up by Seeley Lake. They had the same beautiful weather and great scenery just as we did up Bass Creek. Fred and Eileen Schwanemann, Nancy Shrader, Steve Schombel, David Kahl, Julie Warner and new comer Mark Bellus hiked about five miles back, above the worst of the trail climbing. None of us had been over the trail since they widened it a few years ago to repair the dam, and most of it was as we remembered except it seemed that there were switchbacks in some of the steeper places now. We discussed routes that previous club trips had used to climb St. Joseph's Peak, and watched for a turn off to Lappi Lake, the former site of the club cabin, but didn't see it. This was a great way to knock off ten or so miles on a Sunday afternoon.

September 28th Highline Trail in Glacier NP

Steve suggested this hike as an alternate to Siyeh Bend to many Glacier Hotel, which required much more driving. Fred, Eileen, Steve, Cathy, and her son Michael started off from Logan Pass about 10AM on a beautiful, cool day in Glacier National Park. The cable had already been removed from the cliff area at the start of the hike. There were icy spots here and on and off for several miles. The spectacular scenery began right away. The mountains above and across from the trail were covered with snow. Combined with the blue sky, clouds and many meadows below us, miles and miles of gorgeous scenery continued to appear. We saw many mountain goats about half way to Granite Chalet. We did not see any bears, but passed several piles of scat along the way. The one surprise while hiking were three joggers who passed us (barely) both going and coming back on their run. We could see Granite Chalet even before the Grinnell Glacier Overlook trail junction. Once to the Chalet, we had lunch on the top deck with super views. On the way down to the Loop we saw a small family of grouse. We finished the hike of 11.6 miles about 5PM and then went back up to Logan Pass to pick up the other car. All agreed it was one of the most beautiful hikes ever done.

October 6th Welcome Creek

Doing this creek the easy way turned out to be complicated. I thought I had scouted out the route to the trailhead, but got confused on the roads while riding up in Nancy's van. We ended up down the hill and about 1 1/2 mile farther away than we should have been. But we hiked up the jeep road and found the signs to Welcome Creek. Some unmarked trails branch off, but stay on the road until you reach the Wilderness Boundary sign, which is at the crest of the Sapphires. We took a short side trip north along the ridge and found a large cairn and benchmark on top of Cleveland Mountain, where we had lunch. We returned to the road which soon narrowed to a trail. There were signs to Welcome Creek at each junction. Then it was just a long downhill trek along the creek. The middle section of the trail doesn't appear to get much use, and had some ups and downs. We were glad when we finally reached the other car parked at the suspension bridge. Everyone got back to town before dark except for Steve and Nancy who had to drive way up Three Mile Creek and retrieve the van. But we agreed that point-to-point hikes are worth the extra time and effort. Participants were Nancy Shrader, Fred Schwanemann, Bret Doucett and Steve Schombel, the confused leader.

