

MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

The Rocky Mountaineers is organized as a nonprofit Club for the mutual benefit of its members to promote all phases of recreational use of mountainous areas.

January 2003

Hiking the Lolo Trail

by Wayne Fairchild

Only one hours' drive from Missoula you will find some of the last true remaining trails of Lewis & Clark, the Lolo Trail. Little has changed since the expedition crossed this ancient trail 200 years ago. Lewis & Clark described this area as the most challenging yet majestic portion of their journey. The Lolo Trail is a high mountainous ridgeline trail that allows you to see where the expedition came from and brings to light the decisions they faced.

Wayne & Gia Fairchild, outfitters of Lewis & Clark Trail Adventures have been hiking and researching this area since the mid 1980's. The slide show will feature photos and discussions about some of our most recent adventures. June of 2002 Wayne hiked 60 miles along the Lolo Trail with Time Magazine correspondent Terry McCarthy. The interesting aspect of this trip was the trail was blanketed under 10 feet of snow! The article appeared in Time Issue July 8, 2002.

September 14-19, 2002 we led the first annual commemorative trek, retracing the expeditions' exact route of September 14-19, 1805.

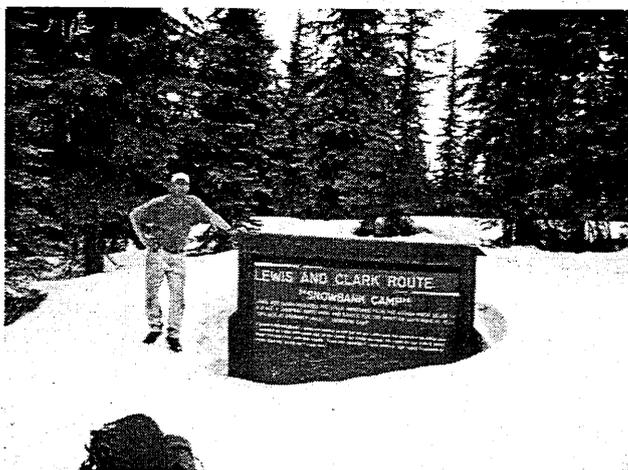
Wayne turned his passion for history and adventure into a business. Lewis & Clark Trail Adventures has been outfitting trips on the Lewis & Clark Trail since 1989. We have had the privilege of outfitting historians and authors such as Stephen Ambrose, Dayton Duncan, and Gary Moulton.

Club Notes

We have more interesting meetings coming up. On February 12th the speaker will be Don Carroll, Missoula District Ranger. He will talk about the Rattlesnake and Blue Mountain areas, and will try to answer questions about other pertinent issues in the Missoula area. If you want to learn more about weed control, the Lewis and Clark Celebration, fees and access, or other things the local office of the Forest Service is involved in, bring your questions. On March 12th Bill Myers will finish his slide show on climbing in the Alps. He has summited several of the most famous peaks in the Old World, and has insights on the places and people, and classic climbing customs versus what we experience in the West.

Our meetings are on the second Wednesday of the month, September through May. They're in the second floor meeting room of the Court House Annex on Pine Street, and are free and open to all. Stay tuned for future speakers and the upcoming election.

Would everyone please take a little time to fill out and send in the enclosed Member's Survey. It will help the active members a whole lot to plan future activities. If you want to make suggestions on meetings and speakers, the cabin or anything the club is involved in fell free to use the back of the sheet. If you would prefer to talk to one of the officers the contact numbers are on page two. We will summarize the results in the next *Mountain Ear*.



TRIP REPORTS

December 7th Lee Creek and Packer Ridge

We had several people who wanted an outing, but only one 4X4 vehicle, so we decided to go to a more accessible area near Lolo Pass instead of up to Clearwater Crossing. We drove up to Lee Creek campground and split up in search of snow. We all had snowshoes except Bret with skis. Bret and Jane Rectenwald went up the main road and then a little ways up a logging road that goes up Lee Ridge. The rest of us, Kirk Arnold, Fred Schwanemann, Steve Schombel and Ron Pierson, did the interpretive trail. Kirk and Ron went up the Lee Ridge Trail a ways. We had a lot of sunshine and nice hiking, but didn't find enough snow to even put on the shoes.

Three of the people decided to go home after lunch, while Ron and Kirk and Steve went up to Lolo Pass. There was more snow there, so we decided to do the designated snowshoe trail in the late afternoon. It was decent in the forest up to Packer Ridge, but once we got out in the clearings the snow was thin with an icy crust. We were happy to get out of the Missoula fog for a day, and saw many places to explore later this winter. - Steve

Lolo Pass no ski day Dec. 15th.

It was good there were no takers for a guided ski trip to Lolo Pass. When David Kahl and myself got there, it was snowing but when the rangers had gotten there a few hours before the temperature had been 38 degrees. We knew what sort of hard crusty snow was under that newly falling snow (we had walked on it the week before) and opted not to ski. We checked out the new facilities (mighty nice) and then headed back down the highway 5 miles to hike at Bobcat Creek. We noticed that the Lolo Trail had now been restored though this section. We hiked in a few inches of snow on logging roads down to the mouth of Mud Creek (by Fish Creek Road) then went back on the new section of the Lolo Trail. It was flagged or marked all the way, but the trail actually hadn't been constructed in some places yet. But it's always exciting to follow old trails and it's hard to get a trail more ancient than the Lolo Tail. The section going west from Bobcat Creek was also marked and has yet to be explored. The weather for us varied from snowing, to raining to the sun shining, it was still a great day in the woods. - Julie

Packer Ridge Snowshoe Dec. 28th

We had some interest in snowshoeing, but the snow looked so good that Fred Schwanemann and Tom Lerner decided to ski the Pack Creek Road. They had a great time, a quiet day, but only had to break trail for about a mile. Join them again next weekend. A repeat of this wonderful route is listed on the back page.

Meanwhile, Steve Schombel and Cathy and Michael Burleson followed a good set of snowshoe tracks up a new route to the top of Packer Ridge. We started south, but soon the other set of tracks led down a steep hillside. There was a lot of new snow to wade through after the tracks ended making forward progress slow and tiring. We decided to return to the nice new warming hut the way we came up. We ran into Lois and Karen and had a great time. It looks like Lolo Pass will have a decent base for the rest of the winter. - Steve



(cont.) Upcoming Trip February 15th - 16th

Snowshoe, soak and spend the night near Sula, or drive down Sunday morning and meet Steve Schombel and Cathy Burleson for a day's skiing on the trails at Chief Joseph area. Call Steve at 721-4686 for information.

CLUB CONTACTS

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Our thank you this month goes to Kirk Arnold, who suggested a member's survey. It's been awhile since we've done one, and we should keep track of our member's interests.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

Family Yearly Membership: \$13.00
Make checks payable to: "Rocky Mountaineers"
and send to: Rocky Mountaineers
P.O. Box 4262
Missoula, MT. 59806

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

I have read this release and indemnity agreement and have fully informed myself of its contents before I have signed it. When I join or renew my membership I also sign on to this agreement.

Print Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian if Participant is Under 18 Years of Age _____

I, (print name) _____ hereby state that I wish to participate in courses and/or activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers, a non-profit organization. I recognize any outdoors activity may involve certain dangers, including but not limited to the hazards of traveling in mountainous terrain, accidents or illness in remote places, forces of nature, and the actions of participants and other persons. I further understand and agree that without some program providing protection of its assets and its leaders, the Rocky Mountaineers would not be able to offer its courses and activities.

In consideration of and as part payment for the right to participate in the activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers, I agree to RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY The Rocky Mountaineers and its members from any and all liability, claims and causes of action arising out of or in any way connected with my participation, or the participation of any minor that I am signing on behalf of, in any activities offered by The Rocky Mountaineers. I personally assume all risks in connection with these activities. If I am signing on behalf of a minor, I further agree to RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFY The Rocky Mountaineers and its members from any liability, claims and cause of action, which the minor may have arising from the minor's participation in activities. The terms of this agreement shall serve as a release and indemnity agreement for my heirs, personal representative, and for all members of my family, including any minors. (Parents or Legal Guardians must sign for all persons under eighteen (18) years of age).

Members' Survey

We would like to end the year by asking members to tell us what you do or don't like about the Club's weekend activities. Please put an X next to each of the following that you are interested in, especially the ones you'd do as a group activity, and send the response to: Rocky Mountaineers, P.O. Box 4262, Missoula, MT 59806; or e-mail to: rockymountaineers@hotmail.com.

Hike ___ Camp ___ Backpack ___ Rock Climbing ___ Mountain Biking ___ Trail Running ___

Peak Bagging ___ Whitewater ___ Plants and Wildlife ___ Old Lookouts ___ Ski Touring ___

Backcountry Skiing and Telemarking ___ Ice Climbing ___ Snowshoeing ___ State High Points ___

Other Interests _____

Do you prefer activities to last: A day or less ___ Overnight ___ Multi day ___?

Would you like the activities to be: Close to town ___ A few hours away ___ Long distance ___?

Would you like activities that are: Family oriented ___ For individual adults ___ Couples ___?

Would you like more details in the Newsletter, like distance and elevation, and ranking trips easy, moderate, hard? Yes ___ No ___

Would you like the club to get more involved in conservation and environmental issues ___, or focus on recreation ___?

Thank you for helping us plan our activities.

UPCOMING TRIPS

January 5th

Pack Creek point to point ski. Here is a very nice ski trip you can do while shuttling two vehicles. It is almost all downhill on a gentle road grade for eight miles from Lolo Pass to the Brushy Fork parking lot in Idaho. As always, snow and weather conditions will determine the difficulty of this trip. Call Fred Schwanemann at 542-7372 for the time and place to meet.

January 12th

Moderate ski tour. This group avoids the rugged and dangerous terrain but likes to do a whole lot of miles. If it is necessary to break trail then the day can get very tiring, but they like to finish it with some refreshments at a nearby pub. It will probably be at Lolo Pass unless there is enough snow to ski closer to town. Call Lois Crepeau at 728-5321 for the meeting place and more information.

January 19th

Kids sledding day. Take your kids to the small hill near Lolo Pass and have a blast. There is a nice warming area and restrooms at the pass. Call Julie Warner at 543-6508 or Cathy Burleson at 543-9558 for information.

January 25th

Snowshoe or ski with skins to the top of Mt. Fuji, which overlooks Lolo Pass. It is moderate in steepness and distance, about five miles round trip (unless we take a longer way down). Great views of the northern Bitterroots. We are inviting friends from the Bitterroot XC Ski Club, so participants can meet some new people. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for information.

February 2nd

Ski up the Blind Canyon Road near Seeley Lake ski area. This is a very pretty area. The canyon gets narrower and steeper, and the road finally ends at a large avalanche chute. Call Bret Doucett at 543-4927 or Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for information.

February 9th

Ski tour in the Lolo Pass area. Some tips can be given to beginners, or just have a laid back and enjoyable day with some good company. Look for more details in the next newsletter, or call Julie Warner at 543-6508.

continued on P. 2



Rocky Mountaineers
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