



MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

September, 2004 Missoula, Montana

The Rocky Mountaineers is a non-profit club organized to promote all types of recreational use of mountainous areas.



From the President: Greetings all; several things are happening for our club. First, the monthly meetings are starting on September 8th. The first one is the traditional slide show, where anyone can talk and show pictures of their outdoor adventures during the prior year. There will be both a digital and regular projector available. This meeting will be in the second floor meeting room of the Courthouse Annex at 7 PM. On Oct. 13th the speaker will be Mario Locatelli, who climbed Mt. McKinley last spring and simultaneously reached the highest point of all fifty states. He also can talk about the High Pointers Club, the Mountain Goat Marathon, and lots more. This meeting will be at 7 PM in the downstairs meeting room of the new Pipestone Mountaineering store. More directions in a future newsletter. In November we are trying to arrange an informational meeting by a scientist or naturalist associated with the Natural History Center. In December we will have a show on cave explorations in the Absaroka/Beartooth and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas by Joe and Tina Oliphant. These last two will also be on second Wednesdays at 7 PM, but could be at either location, depending on which people like better. We also have to spend some time at the September meeting planning the cabin work party. What to do about the latrine - fire, explosives or dig a new pit? Does anyone have good ideas? Replacing a couple of sections of stovepipe shouldn't be too hard, but messy. The cabin will need a good sweeping afterward. The roof has a lot of holes again, and we need someone on a rope and harness to patch the highest ones. We should have two chain saws and hope to have enough helpers to make all this easy. We are planning to go on Saturday, September 25th and back again Sunday if necessary. Please set this date aside and bring a friend. Also, Alden Wright has offered to do the

technical work necessary to create a website for the Club, but we need a volunteer willing to do the creative design work, and someone to keep it updated. Anyone out there interested? Last, we had a couple of accidents on club trips during the past year. We really should talk more about safety and develop more guidelines for trip leaders and participants, but perhaps we should save this for a future meeting when there is time to discuss it more thoroughly.

One of our members deserves special recognition. Through Peter Dayton's efforts, and the work of many others, the Alberton Gorge has finally passed into public ownership. Peter has been working on this for a long time, and is also the one who has talked to us and other groups about efforts to preserve the gorge. All those who play there will be enjoying this legacy.

Club meetings are free and open to all.
Thanks, Steve Schombel

Trip Reports

August 8, Sunday: Mount Siyeh- The backpack trip to Mount Stimson got rained out. In fact, in Glacier N.P. it rained all night Friday and off and on all Saturday. We camped out far enough west to have a dry spot, then on Sunday, Forrest Dean, Bret Doucett and I climbed the south face of Mount Siyeh. We headed east at Preston Park on the Siyeh Pass trail, then up the mountain at a good break in the trees. When we encountered cliffs we traversed east to a prominent gully. When it became steep we traversed east again to another gully, and repeated until near the top of the cliff band, where you can traverse east out of the gullies and find an easy way up the last cliff. If you take time route

More Trip Reports

finding the south face is a level three scramble, but there still is a lot of tiring scree to do above the cliffs. It would probably be better to hike a mile or so up the Siyeh Pass trail until you see the large gullies, like the guidebook recommends. The huge outwash area makes a good target for the descent. It was cool and overcast most of the way up, and raining on top. There was also a little new snow. Unfortunately, it was too clouded-in to see anything. This was Forrest's first summit in Glacier, and Bret has now reached the top of all six of Glacier's 10,000 footers. A very good job, my friends. Steve Schombel

August 8, Sunday: Daughter-of-the-Sun- Peter Dayton and I hiked 6 miles on a very good trail to Turquoise Lake. There are lots of nice looking camping places around the lake. We crossed the outlet stream and headed due east up a cone of talus at the base of a prominent gully which is easily identifiable on the 7.5 minute topographic map. At the top of the broad gully, we headed south to a low spot in the ridge at about 7900'. At this point, Peter's ongoing rehabilitation efforts for his broken knee was terminated, until the hike out. I wasted a lot of time and energy trying to stay on or near the ridge crest that leads southwesterly. The ridge has several cliffs that require some difficult downclimbing. Eventually I gave in and gave up a few hundred feet of elevation to get on some easier terrain below the ridge crest. After some time searching for easy access to the top, I gained the last fifty feet on the west side of the summit. Approximately 30 feet of that is the crux of the climb. If you take the nose, the exposure is significant, but the climbing is not hard. I felt more comfortable in a dihedral immediately south of the nose, which was less exposed. I would characterize it as 4th class in the YDS system. This is not a bad route if you don't try to stay too high. A more direct route would be up the southeast ridge from Seepela Lake, which could be gained either from Crystal Lake or Meadow Lake. Another option would be to climb Lindy Peak from Meadow Lake and then drop and traverse to the Seepela Lake basin. Lindy can be easily climbed via the east ridge on the south side of Beanhole

Lake. Although the ridge up to Lindy is fairly brushy, there are some good game trails near the crest. Steve Niday

August 14, Saturday: Hoodoo Lake- Fred and Eileen Schwanemann joined Jim Goss on a short trek to Hoodoo Lake to beat the mid-90s heat. We could think of no better way to enjoy the day, but we did have competition from at least two other hikes that had been planned on the 14th. Jim hiked in with a two man raft which Eileen found perfect for lounging. Fred and Jim each swam in the relatively warm waters of this glacially carved lake a couple of times. Other than a dusty trip back to Superior on 17 miles of dirt road, it was a perfect trip which we wish more people could have enjoyed. Jim Goss

August 14, Saturday: Fuse Lake- Plans changed somewhat over the weekend when I had to have kids back in Missoula by 3:00 PM on Sunday. Instead of camping Sat. night and hiking on Sun. We: David Kahl, Julie Warner, Hannah Warner -7, Abby Roth -8, Gharrett Warner -9 and April Roth -12, left at noon on Sat. After a brief stop at Skalkako Falls, we set up camp at the Crystal Creek unimproved (3 sites, outhouse, no water) campground. We hiked to Fuse Lake, 2 1/2 miles, starting at 3:30 and arriving at the lake at 5:00 PM. All of the kids did great on the easy trail, this was Abby's first real hike. There was only one other party at the lake. The kids swam and climbed around on the rocks and we started back at 6:30. By 8:00 PM we were back at camp for dinner and roasting marshmallows. We stayed up late enough to go out into the road and see the stars. Sunday was a leisurely morning with a longer stop at Skalkaho Falls where April and Gharrett climbed to the top. Julie Warner

August 19-22, Thur-Sun: Vulture Peak- Pat Caffrey, Forrest Dean, Ron Pierson, and I met at Apgar Thursday afternoon to obtain the necessary permits from the Park Service Backcountry Office. Fortunately, Pat arrived early and had everything smoothed out, helped by the fact that the ranger we dealt with was very reasonable. The Park's website: <http://www.nps.gov/glac/home.htm> is a good source for information. Of particular interest

Continued Trip Reports

is the section on backcountry camping, which includes sections on reserving campsites and trail status. We hiked the five miles to the campsite at the foot of Logging Lake the first afternoon and hurriedly set up camp in a light rain. Friday morning we started up the trail and 100 yards later is where the trail crew quit cutting the trailside brush. Our feet were wet most of the rest of the trip. We hiked the overgrown, but otherwise good trail along the northerly side of Logging Lake, past a large bull moose grazing just offshore at the head of the lake, to the campsite near the foot of Grace Lake. From here the trail quickly fades away and the next 1-1/2 miles to the upper lake at 4170' on the topo map is not a pleasant affair. We camped at this upper lake, known as Marion Lake by the Park rangers, and went to bed early. That night we experienced a thunderstorm that seemed to just keep bouncing around the big cirque in which we were camped. There were periods of intense rain, lots of lightening and thunder, and a wind that buffeted our tents. Not a good night for sleep. Far worse for Pat than the rest of us, as he had decided to cut some weight by using a poncho for shelter. He weathered the storm alone at Grace Lake, having decided that this was the appropriate destination for him. The next morning the heavy blanket of fog over the valley kept us from seeing more than a few hundred feet and we were definitely conflicted over whether to try the climb or not. We had a long way to go, 5500 vertical feet, and the lower slopes were covered with nasty, thick, over head-high, dripping wet, vegetation. The idea of fighting through the brush, only to be confronted with wet slippery rocks up higher, and possibly worsening weather was a lot to accept. Throw in the possibility of a hot date that night if Ron could get back in time and it was too much to overcome, for him. To help him in his decision, the rain started coming down again. Forrest, on the other hand was all for giving it a go. His enthusiasm made my decision fairly easy. We said goodbye to Ron and headed into the jungle. The myriad of little channels were now rushing with water from the storm. Swimming uphill

through the tangle of Alder and every other type of vegetation that grows in this part of the Park, I was thankful for my Gore-Tex boots, pants, and jacket. They kept me dry and comfortable for at least two minutes. Getting thoroughly soaked and struggling to make any headway through the dense tangle of brush, I very nearly cried uncle. A few moments later we found a game trail and things started improving. The weather started looking encouraging and we finally cleared the worst of the brush. We could finally see up the slopes and started gaining speed and confidence. The weather cleared, the rocks dried, and the views were becoming inspiring. When we finally got a look at Vulture Peak, Forrest spotted a dark object high up on the steep talus slope. With binoculars, we finally identified it as a bear, probably a grizzly due to it's location, and kept an eye on it as we headed towards the southeast ridge at 8200'. The ridge crest is quite broken up and can be climbed directly or on either side. We went a few hundred feet along ledges on the north side and then up some steep ledges to the crest, then alternated between ledges on the south side and the crest all the way to the summit. The south side of the ridge seems a little easier than the north. There was a lot of moisture over the Park and the views were not as clear as we would have liked, but still very impressive. The 9390' peak a mile south across Vulture Glacier, known as South Vulture Peak in Edwards' Glacier Park Guide, is very impressive. We headed down the southwest ridge and soon had made enough noise to alert the bear we had seen earlier. He gained several hundred vertical feet of loose rock in a flash, getting away from us as fast as he could go. He stood up for an instant and looked at us, then rocketed out of sight. Three hours later and we were back at camp, for an eight hour round trip. That night during dinner a black bear strolled part way around the lake then bedded down just above the shore. We tied our food up into a tree, half expecting a visit later. Another round of thunderstorms during the night and we packed up early and left Sunday morning on a rainy 15 mile hike out. Between Marion Lake and Grace Lake

The End of the Trip Reports

we stayed on the east side of the valley on the way out and found some decent game trails. When we got to Grace Lake we walked the narrow shoreline where we could and cut our time in half for this 1-1/2 mile leg of the trip. We stayed on the west side of the valley on the way up and it took us 3 hours for this leg. I could find very few game trails on the west side, and the going was difficult. The route description in Edwards' book, although somewhat confusing when looking at a map, is actually pretty close to the route we took, other than the decent route, and the fact that all snow could be avoided. No ice axe necessary. There are several key points from Marion Lake to the 8000' level that helps in avoiding the worst of the difficulties. I logged waypoints with my GPS receiver at these points and would be happy to provide them to anyone. The upper Logging Creek drainage has a real wilderness feel and the upper slopes around Vulture Peak are very enjoyable. Steve N.

August 22, Sunday: Heart Lake near Lincoln.
Trip cancelled due to injury.

August 28, Saturday: Granite Peak in the Great Burn-Idaho- Saturday was cool and overcast but dry after several days of rain, and we had a decent turnout. Everyone was very happy to be out and all agreed that this collection of spires in a roadless area with its surrounding view was well worth the distance and 2300' of elevation gain. The only complaints were about the bitter cold wind blowing on top. Several of us circled the highest spire and tried different approaches but could find no 4th class route up top. We think it might be 5th class, technical. Others should evaluate it. Participants were: Fran Coover, Carla Abrams, Margot Higgins, Paul Lachapelle, Ron Pierson, Bret Doucett, Alden Wright, and Steve Schombel, leader.

August 29, Sunday: East Como Peak- I got a post-alpine start on this one, leaving the vehicle at 11:30AM. I drove past the short stub road that leads to the Little Rock Creek trailhead and gained a little elevation. This put me on the east-

west ridge that leads up to East Como Peak at about the 5200' level. There's no trail, but the bushwacking is not bad at all. The broad ridge leads up to a point at 7600'. The next 1/2 mile is a narrow rocky ridge that leads into an easy portion up to another point at 8500'. The next 1/4 mile contains some short spires and then drops into a saddle that makes a good point to drop into the basin to the north and down to the trail for the return trip. From here it is a matter of picking the route you want, anything from technical to 3rd class, with just a touch of 4th class at the very top on the south side. The south side has some very nice clean rock, with some easy technical lines for several hundred feet. A few hundred feet from the top I saw a guy coming down and yelled to him. He waited for me and when I got to him he recognized me from a one time brief encounter shopping for sunglasses at REI around 4 months earlier. He and his girlfriend were preparing for a trip to McKinley and in fact the two of them made the summit in July. I was amazed that he recognized me and we had a pleasant trip out together. Kevin had hiked in to the base of El Capitan on Saturday, then traversed that mountain, Lonesome Bachelor, and all three Como Peaks on Sunday. Quite an ambitious day. We got back to the trailhead at dark and he drove me around to my vehicle. I am glad I got such a late start, otherwise I would not have met up with Kevin. Steve Niday

September 5, Sunday: Eagle Cliff- No report received.

Upcoming Trips

September 10-12, Fri-Sun: No trips scheduled, see above comments.

September 16-19, Thur-Sun, or 17-20 Fri-Mon: Mount Stimson-redux- We will ford the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and spend two days backpacking into one of the least visited areas of Glacier National Park, Martha's Basin. This will allow us an easy second day, in preparation of a

More Upcoming Trips

I appeal to all of you to consider leading a trip. Leading a trip can be as easy as picking a date, a destination, and acting as a coordinator for the participants. If you want to take it a step further you can provide some additional information about the prospective route, like difficulty, type of terrain anticipated, length, elevation gain, etc. If you don't like the kind of trips being offered, lead one of your own choosing. If you're happy with the recent offerings, that is good, but it is better to have a variety of trips led by a variety of people. If you are interested, contact me by the end of the month and I can let you know what trips have already been scheduled. Personally, I would like to see a couple different trips every weekend.

tough summit day. From Martha's Basin it is a long day to the summit of 10,412' Mt. Stimson, involving a tricky traverse around Mt. Pinchot. Steve Schombel, 721-4686.

September 25, Saturday: Cabin work trip- We will be discussing this at the meeting on the 8th.

September 30 -October 3, Thur-Sun: Hilgard Peak- According to Pat Caffrey's, "Climbers Guide to Montana", this is a "C" rated climb, with North Hilgard being "T" rated. If you are interested, but concerned about the difficulty of the climb, bring a helmet, harness, and rappel/belay device. It doesn't sound like the difficulties are sustained. I will be taking a helmet, rope, harness, and small assortment of chocks and slings. I propose leaving Thurs. at 2:00PM and driving to a car camping spot near the trailhead. Friday we hike in, Sat. climb, Sun. hike out and drive home. Feel free to come along for the hike, even if you don't want to do the climb. If there is snow on these peaks, I will change the objective. Steve Niday

Achievement Awards

I would like to offer the following for discussion. There is an ever-growing number of lists out there. Lists of peaks that meet certain criteria, like the very popular 50 state high points, a state's county's high points, a state's mountain range's high points, National Park high points, continental high points, 8,000 meter peaks, the so called 14'ers in Colorado, and many more. There is even a computer program that can sample digital terrain models and produce a subset of elevations determined by the user.

Many years ago I did this manually with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness map, using a highlighter to mark the 8500' contour line. I did this because I prefer going to new high places and was having a hard time finding areas I had not yet visited. My backyard playground for 30 years was getting stale. By looking at the newly annotated map, I was able to identify many new objectives. I no longer had to work at finding somewhere to go, I was excited about the Selway-Bitterroot again. The reward I get for visiting these places is purely personal. I would be surprised if there is a mountaineer out there that doesn't have their own written or unwritten list of peaks they would like to climb. And, I would be even more surprised if any of these same people check off the peaks on their list with any thought of being acknowledged or materially rewarded. I view lists as an aid to stimulate us and keep us excited about mountaineering. So, to facilitate, acknowledge, and promote these lists, and the people who attain the summits on them, I suggest we develop Achievement Awards. The Glacier Mountaineering Society has their awards for the six 10,000'+ peaks, and the five technical peaks. I propose we adopt the same awards for Glacier Park, and add one for the Park for all peaks 9000'+, there are 54 of them. I further propose we create awards for all peaks 9000'+ in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, 8500'+ in the Swan Range, 8500'+ in the Mission Mountains, the highest peak in all the ranges of Montana, and any others we collectively decide on. Be thinking about what type of awards we could offer. It might be no more than a list published once a year with the names of those who have attained the summits of one or more lists. Visit www.peakbagger.com for inspiration. S. Niday

Date to be announced: Butte-Mineral Museum-
This trip is a wild card, but it must be on a Sat., and no later than Oct. Julie Warner, 543-6508.

Newsletter CD's for sale:

All back issues of the Rocky Mountain Ear are available on CD for the low price of \$20.00. All proceeds to go directly into the club's treasury.

Digital Newsletters

Digital copies of this and future newsletters are available to members. If any member would prefer digital newsletters only, please let me know. This option would save printing and postage costs.

Newsletter Costs

We currently have 40 paid members who receive a newsletter. We also send 30 complimentary newsletters to individuals and organizations. Another 10 for the sporting goods stores and extras to hand out, which makes a total of 80 newsletters printed. Approximately 70 will get mailed at \$0.37 each for a total mailing cost of \$25.90. Double-sided b&w copies are \$0.12 each. Mailing labels and seals cost around \$0.01 each, for a total cost per 6-1/2 page mailed newsletter of \$0.81. That makes September's newsletter cost \$61.10. Using an average cost of \$60 per month, if we put a newsletter out every month the annual cost is \$720. With 40 paying members at \$13 each, our dues are only generating \$520 annually. We need to talk.

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.

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).

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