



MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

November, 2005 Missoula, Montana



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

November 9th, Wednesday: Chile & Kamchatka

Dan Shepherd of Grizzly Hackle International will show two awesome videos at the November meeting. They will be about fly-in fishing in remote streams of Chile and Kamchatka. The shots of the mountains from helicopters are breathtaking. The meeting is on Wednesday, November 9th at Pipestone Mountaineering, 129 W. Front Street, and starts at 7:00 PM.

From the President: How to Help the Club

We have a hard working and dedicated group that has been attending our business meetings, and we have made a lot of progress in making the club bigger and better. I have received some compliments from business owners about how we seem to be better organized and more active than we were a few years ago. This is especially gratifying to me as president. However, we are now ambitiously embarking on some projects which will need some help. We want to reach out to our members and other readers and ask them to volunteer for some of these projects.

Pat Caffrey, our speaker in December, is going to donate two copies of his book, Climbers Guide to Montana, for us to use for fund-raising.

Copyrighted in 1986, these books have long been out of print, and are probably the most comprehensive guide to mountains all over the state. These two copies are the ones that Pat originally gave to his parents, and are in nearly new condition. Used copies, when available, sell for \$10 to \$40. We have decided to have a raffle for one of these books. Tickets will be \$2, or 6 for \$10, and will be on sale starting at the November meeting. We hope a lot of you will want to buy some tickets, but we also want

volunteers to sell tickets. This should be easy, just ask friends if they are willing to spend a couple of dollars for a chance to win a rare, out of print, and very useful book. If you are willing to sell tickets, or want to buy some, please call Steve Schombel at 721-4686.

Next item: Steve Niday, our editor, has produced some brochures. They are quite eye-catching; perhaps you have seen some at mountaineering stores. We would like to print a lot more, but this will cost quite a bit. Our secretary, Frank Kletchen, is going to form an ad hoc committee to discuss fund raising for club expenses and to have money for special projects like this. Please stay alert for an announcement for the initial meeting of the funding needs committee and think about being on the list of club supporters, either as an individual or business.

Another project is fixing the roof of the cabin. We have talked and written about this a lot before, and next summer we really are going to fix the cabin roof. Please heed the call for helpers next spring. This will be a fun hands on project, and really not too hard if we get enough workers.

The last item is the one we keep harping on: trip leaders. We wish we could figure out how to get more participation in our activities, and we would like to get more leaders doing a wider variety of trips. All I can say is I used to be a solo peak-bagger, and a lone fly fisherman who jealously guarded his secrets. Then I discovered that participating and leading group hikes was a very rewarding experience. I have met so many wonderful people over the past few years who have become friends. One of them even became my wife. So give it a try. I bet you will enjoy it.

See you on the trail, Steve Schombel

Upcoming Trips

Keep an eye on your e-mail, this is the time of year when trips get scheduled, cancelled, and changed at the last minute due to conditions.

November 5, Saturday: Woody Mountain- Last spring several of us scrambled up the long steep side from Marshall Creek. Near the top we came across a cleared trail. Bret Doucette and Steve Schombel want to go back and try to find the trail and follow it all the way up. Bret worked on the crew that cleared this trail in the 1970's, and he is pretty sure he can find the beginning of it. There may be a little snow on top, and some hunters around, so wear some orange. Call Steve at 721-4686 for more information.

November 12, Saturday: Pattee Canyon- Hunting Season will keep us close to home, and the November kids trip will follow the new trail on the south side of Mt. Sentinel back into Pattee Canyon. We could do this as a point to point or as a go as far as you want then turn back trip. Call Julie Kahl, 543-6508.

November 19, Saturday: Little St. Joseph Peak- This trip will start at the Bass Creek trailhead, the road will be closed beyond, and proceed as conditions and respondents dictate. Contact Forest Dean or Steve Niday for more information and to register your preference. Contact information on on last page.

November 27, Sunday: Mill Point W-N Ridge-Bitterroots- If conditions are reasonable, we will try the north ridge of this peak, from Mill Creek Trail. It would be about 3 easy trail miles, and 1-1/2 difficult off-trail miles, with 4400' of elev. gain. If not this, something similar. Steve Niday, 721-3790

December 3, Saturday: Ski trip- Lois Crepeau will organize a ski trip. Since weather conditions are so uncertain, watch for further details on the website, via e-mail, or call Lois at 728-5321 for the details.

December 10, Saturday: Chief Joseph Pass- this is the day of the "Classic Series" ski trip to Chief Joseph x-country area. If no one else volunteers to lead, I have skied this area several times and can take different trails of varying difficulty, depending on the interests of the group. There are also longer ungroomed trails radiating out which I can point out. There is a wonderful warming cabin for a lunch break. The ski area is free, but the Bitterroot x-country ski club has a voluntary donation box at the entrance. Call Steve at 721-4686 for more information or for carpools.

Waterton Ice Climbing: mid-January- Last year 2 of us went to the hostel in Waterton over MLK weekend for some very good ice climbing and met another climber from the Flathead up there. I was wondering who might be interested in going again this year over MLK weekend. January 12 is a Thursday and the 17 is a Tuesday, so those are the outside dates on either end. Lemme know, thanks. Jim Cossitt, jhckal@yahoo.com

Trip Reports

October 3, Saturday: Kids hike as part of the Classic Series Club Party. It was another beautiful fall day for the Club party in the Charles Waters Campground (Bass Creek), at 1:30 Julie and David Kahl and Michael Bowles (12) took Hannah Warner (8) and Wyatt and Briar Bargmeyer (twins age 5) 1/2 to 1/3 of a mile up the Bass Creek trail to where the trail crosses a scree slope and there are cataracts and a pool. The water was low and not much action at the pool (except that a previous party had left two toy dinosaurs on the beach). All four kids got involved in going down the creek on the rocks, and discovering new pools. Briar found one under a rock that got "really deep" (maybe 2 feet) and he probed it with his stick. Michael helped Briar and Wyatt make their way, and Hannah found the best way back up to the trail. When we got back to the trail, granpa David hid behind a bush and pretended to be a bear. Several of us made it back to camp with wet feet and Wyatt topped it off with a nap. The father of the dinosaur owner came back to retrieve the toys. *Julie Kahl*

Trip Reports

October 8, Saturday: Bass Creek Day Trail-

Unbeknownst to the leader, the name of this loop and the parking lot has been changed from Larry Creek loop to Bass Creek Day Use area. I hope no one got confused and failed to find us. At any rate, Steve Schombel, Cathy Burleson, Alden and Sally Wright and Lorraine Riedl had a fine walk on a well cleared trail. Several of the junctions were not clearly marked, and near the top we mistakenly took a wrong turn and a shorter way down, but at least we were not late for the fun pot luck party that followed. It is nice to see all the improvements at the Bass Creek Recreation Area. *Steve Schombel*

October 8, Saturday: St. Mary Peak-

Bitterroots- Installment number 3 of the Classic Series very nearly didn't happen. The night before the NWS was calling for a Winter Storm Watch and 4-8" of snow. However, Saturday morning the weather looked fine so we decided to go for it and were rewarded by a fairly nice day for this hike to the summit. There were a few patches of snow on the trail and some wind drifts near the top, otherwise the trail was clear. We took about 4 hours to make the round trip, then went down to Charles Waters Campground and partied it up! Participants were John Motta, Bill Martin, Steve Niday and Forest Dean. *F. Dean*

October 15, Saturday: Walman Trail- Steve Schombel, Bret Doucette, Alden Wright and Bill Martin did this moderate hike on a gorgeous sunny day. Even though it was the 25th anniversary of the Rattlesnake Wilderness, and the main trail was full of people engaged in other activities, we encountered no one on the Walman trail. The only major disappointment was that both the trail along Strawberry Ridge and the short spur up to the clearing with the great viewpoint have been closed for rehabilitation. We wish the Forest Service would reconsider these closures. The Larch trees were spectacular. Those of you who do not want to hike over a ridge really should get out to see the display, either up the main creek a couple of miles, or up Spring Gulch. There may be a few colors left by the time you read this. *Steve Schombel*

October 16, Sunday: Stormy Joe Pk. (9003')-

Bitterroot Mtns.- The name comes from a register placed by The Rocky Mountaineers on August 26, 1962. I was excited to see some Club history on a peak almost in our back yard, and happy to accept this name for the peak I had called Bass Lake North. Stormy Joe lived up to it's name this day, with winds strong enough to knock me around a bit. This is a nice easy, but worthwhile peak, with an impressive drop off the north side. I climbed it from the east and descended along the southwest ridge. *S. Niday*

October 16, Sunday: Stark Mountain- Stark Mountain is the highest point on the ridge to the west of the Nine Mile valley. It can be climbed by a road from the southwest, or by a trail from the east. On a cool, overcast, and damp day in October I hiked up the trail to the lookout on top of the mountain. You reach the trailhead via Forest Service Road 5515. The trail is 5 miles long (a 10 mile round trip) and climbs about 3,800 feet. It first runs west for about 3/4 of a mile along Cedar Creek, then climbs to the top of the ridge to the north of the creek, and finally runs west along the ridge to the top of Stark Mountain. The trees on the top and south side of the ridge are pretty open, and you can see a lot of nice scenery from the trail, although you don't see the lookout on top of Stark Mountain until you're only a quarter mile away from it. I saw a number of deer and grouse, and a lot of bear poops. The trail doesn't run along the top of the ridge, as shown on the 1983 topo map. It runs along the south side of the ridge a little bit below the crest, and makes several switchbacks to keep the gradient of the trail low. The trailbed is smooth enough, and the gradient is low enough, that this trail could make a good mountain bike route. You could probably do various loops involving trails and logging roads in the area. In 1988 I skied up Stark Mountain from the Nine Mile Valley with several members of the Rocky Mountaineers. The moderate slope of the ridge and the generally open trees made for good skiing, and I'd like to repeat the ski trip on a year when there's enough low altitude snow. Because we got permission to start from a ranch in the

Trip Reports

USFS Road 5515 was blocked by snow in 1988, Ninemile Valley, but another option is to snowmobile up the road to the trailhead. *Peter*

October 22, Saturday: Rock Creek Wildlife Viewing Area- Nineteen people and one dog showed up on this beautiful fall day for this trip and we eventually split up into three groups to explore different areas. It was Mariah Kensinger's (8) 1st hike and her mother Raychelle Kensinger came along to help. She was going slow and trip leader Julie Kahl stayed with them. Other kids Camryn Williams (6), McKinley Williams (10), Hannah Warner (9) and Abby Roth (9) had a little more experience and got along well. Teenagers Steph Tadej (14), April Roth (13), Jon Kensinger (12) and Jarrod Worth (12) hung out together and moved as their own group, with Gharrett Warner (11) and Riley Stevens (10) satelliting between the groups. Mark Sharkey brought his little dog Gretchen along. The younger girls wanted to lead the dog on her leash, and when they fell behind, Gretchen chewed through the leash to get free to run ahead to Mark (something she does all the time). We kept hiking up a "gully" that most of us thought was Spring Creek (we had left the Spring Creek Trail Head and followed the signs that said it was the trail.) When the gully just kept going and we were probably a good 2 1/2 to 3 miles back everyone stopped for lunch and regrouped, with the slower of us coming just as the others finished lunch. Mark Sharkey, and Linda and Roger Holtum wanted to continue up the gully and did. Lorraine Reid, Barbara Farrel and Maxine Williams with her daughters Camryn & McKinley decided to climb one of the slopes for about 300 feet to get on the open ridge tops, then decided to return that way. Gharrett and Riley climbed up also but had to come back down because they had left their packs where we were having lunch. The teenagers took off down the trail, at first meeting up with the party going back down the gully but then running down the trail, so they ended up waiting a long time at the trailhead. The ridge party came out about 10 min. behind us and we were all out by 4:00 PM except the "further up the gully" party. After returning from taking Steph,

April & Abby back to Fort Benton on Mon. I called Linda and she reported that they had followed the gully up to a developed spring and got on some roads above. I didn't remember any roads from a previous trip (around 10 years ago) and looked in the gazetteer. There I noticed that this area was covered in some topo maps I bought last year and consulted them. Further confusion. Following the trail signs as we had, we had started out in Spring Creek and then crossed over the low face of a ridge into Babcock Creek, the spring they had encountered was Mormon Spring and the roads ones that come down from the Babcock Mt.-Burnt Mt. Ridge (closed from above as I recall). The trails shown on the map didn't line up with what was on the ground. It showed a trail going up the right bank of Spring Creek which I don't remember seeing. The way we went, crossing Spring Creek to a trail junction just the other side of the creek (left bank), there was a trail going up the left bank, but the only sign -just a picture no words, showed the hiking trail as going over to Babcock Creek (the way we went). The map showed the left bank trail as going only a short ways before it starts up the ridge between Spring & Babcock Creeks eventually running into the roads above. There may be some interesting loop and point to point hikes in this area for the future.

Julie Kahl

October 24, Monday: Heavenly Twins-South Summit- Deciding to take advantage of the great fall weather, I sent out an email two days prior, but the only respondee was my dog Trooper. Set out from Big Creek trailhead about 9:00 AM. Hiked 4.5 miles up the trail to a drainage that flows in from north. This is the fourth watercourse after crossing the bridge over Big Creek. Turned north and followed the drainage up to the base of the south Twin (the higher of the two). The first half of the drainage I bushwacked along the slopes to either side of creek to stay out of heavy brush-went fairly well. The upper part is a delightful but strenuous hike up granite slabs of different color as well as some boulder slopes. We traversed around the base of the peak to the west and into the Beaver Creek drainage, before scrambling the last 500 feet up boulder slopes. Someone recently put a summit

register up here. Weather was perfect! Trip climbed 5200', round trip mileage of about 15 miles, took 7 ¼ hours. *Forest Dean*

October 29, Saturday: Hoodoo Meadows Hike- Temporary Missoula residents Linda Cooper & Dick Yeaw carpoled with Steve Schombel and Bret Doucette for a 9:30 rendezvous at Durango's Restaurant in Superior. Jim Goss met up with them, and we all carpoled to an unmarked trailhead for Hoodoo Lake, about 2 road miles short of Hoodoo Pass. After 1 mile of fairly steep hiking, we turned right on a less well maintained trail that leads to the Stateline trail at Hoodoo Meadows. After a bit of hiking on the state line in dense fog, we stopped for lunch under a fir tree and headed back. We were rewarded with some limited views as the wind picked up a wiped out some of the fog. There was about 2 inches of new snow on the ground, but the footing was good and we made our way back to the car without incident. Linda and Dick are a retired couple staying in Missoula through November, at which time they will head to Oregon before eventually making their way back to Vermont. I hope they have a chance to make some more Rocky Mountaineer trips before their departure, as they have interesting stories to tell about leading trips both in Europe and domestically. *Jim Goss*

October 30, Sunday: Romney Ridge W- Due North of the outlet of Canyon Lake is the west end of Romney Ridge. The high point is 8685'. I climbed into the prominent saddle southwest of the peak and ascended on the ridge crest. I climbed two very short (maybe only 10 feet each) pitches of 5th class rock, which could be avoided on the south. There were about 2" of fresh snow, which demanded attention to details, and made the many slab rock areas something to avoid. For variety, I descended off trail to the north of Canyon Creek Falls, and found some challenging boulder fields. At one point, the best option was to take my pack off and squirm through a small gap beneath a house size boulder. There was light snowfall much of the day, with a little sunshine occasionally. The trail up Canyon Creek is not particularly scenic, and is not a good running trail, but the upper basin is very nice. *Steve Niday*

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND LIABILITY WAIVER

Family Yearly Membership: \$20.00 - paper newsletter
Family Yearly Membership: \$10.00 - electronic newsletter
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 .

Club Contacts

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