

# MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

April, 2006 Missoula, Montana



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

## **April 12th, Wednesday: Terracaching and other GPS stuff**

**Jonathon Motta**- local caching enthusiast and owner of TerraCaching.com will give a presentation on this rapidly growing pastime. In it's most basic form, caching (also known as geocaching) is a game/sport/activity wherein players hide a weatherproof container with a log book somewhere on public land and post the Global Positioning System (GPS) derived coordinates of the location to any one of several websites dedicated to the activity. Other players then use those coordinates and their own GPS receiver to hunt for the cache and when/if they find it, sign the log book, return it to it's hiding spot, and log their find on the website. Cache containers can range from a small keychain size capsule disguised to look like a pinecone hanging in your neighborhood park, to a large Army ammo can stuck under a rock near a remote alpine lake, and everything in between. Players range from families with small children to serious outdoor adventurers.

The presentation will discuss;

- the history of how the sport came to be and has evolved in it's short history,
- some of the many variations that have become popular,
- player etiquette,
- factors that make the sport appealing to many different types of people.
- terminology and slang used by players,
- tips on how to find your first cache,
- important information to consider when you're ready to hide one of your own,
- and finally pictures from some of the hundreds of caches around Missoula and beyond.

The presentation is intended to be educational for those interested in participating but have yet to go on their first hunt, as well as for hardcore players with hundreds of notches on their GPS receivers.

Jon will be joined by Steve Niday, who will talk about the basics of GPS hardware and fellow caching enthusiast Jennifer Keith will give a short related presentation on creative camouflage techniques for urban cache containers.

## **Calling all artists!**

**\$100 Reward offered for the best new Club logo.**

We would like to find a new logo. Our current logo featuring mountain ears is in need of an update. This logo was on the very first Mountain Ear, Vol. 1, No. 1, published in October, 1961. There was a lot of original art in the early years of the Club, and the newsletter in those early years is admirable. This was a time for exploration, and some of the routes in the local mountains, which are now well known, were just being discovered. The Club has a long and interesting history and there are still opportunities for exploration. We would like to adopt a new logo reflective of the spirit of the Club, now and then. We would also like to offer that new logo on a variety of goods to allow us to show our Club pride. Selling logo items would allow us to keep our membership fees low and invest in our future. We will vote on all submittals and chose a winner and the winner will receive a \$100 gift certificate from Pipestone Mountaineering, and have the honor of seeing their design adopted as our logo. If you are interested in submitting a design, or know someone who might be, please contact one of the officers.

## Upcoming Trips

**April 8, Saturday: Trapper Peak-** Trapper Peak is the highest peak in the Bitterroots at just over 10,000 feet. We will need to start considerably below the summer trailhead. Either ski skins or snowshoes will be necessary since it does not appear that the snow has consolidated sufficiently that we can be confident of not falling through. We will need to leave from Missoula at 6 or 6:30 am. There is no avalanche danger and the ski down is intermediate. For more information, contact Alden Wright at 243-4790 (until 6 pm), 542-1966 (home)

or e-mail at [trapper@wrightmontana.net](mailto:trapper@wrightmontana.net)

**April 15, Saturday: Ward Mtn.-** The round trip distance is 12 miles and the elevation gain is 5300'. The terrain is easy, and if the snow is good, there is good skiing in the upper part. It's a good workout without a long slog before the climb. Contact Steve Niday, see last page.

**April 23, Sunday: Rattlesnake-** wildflower hike- We will take Trail 99, that's the main trail along Rattlesnake Creek, to Frazer Creek and back. The round trip is 7-8 miles and the altitude change is 400'. Call Fred Schwanemann @ 542-7372 for more information.

**April 23, Sunday: St. Joseph Peak- Bitterroots-**  
*Route:* Hike up Bass Creek and ascend southeast ridge to summit. *Mileage:* 14 miles roundtrip. *Elevation:* 5800' one way. Plan to leave Missoula early so ridge climb can be done on some (hopefully) firm snow. Current conditions will dictate what gear is needed. Due to the mileage, elevation gain, and snow, participants need to be in excellent condition- should be prepared for 10-12 hours of steady hiking/climbing. Alternate date will be the following Saturday- April 29th. Contact: Forest Dean at 240-7612, 721-6384 or e-mail [fdean@midlandimplement.com](mailto:fdean@midlandimplement.com)

**May 6, Saturday: Mill Point West- Bitterroots-** This will be a difficult snow climb up the north ridge of this 8650' foot peak, which is about a mile west of Mill Point. Be prepared for sustained and unpleasant bushwacking, on very steep terrain. Contact Steve Niday, 721-3790.

**May 6, Saturday: The Nez Perce route-** The route that the Nez Perce took in their flight from the Army to get up and around Fort Fizzle has been marked out on maps. Unfortunately, both ends are on private land, but we can scramble up a steep ridge on the west edge of Fort Fizzle to get on the route. It then alternates between game trails and logging roads. A little past the high point we can take a logging road that will avoid private (non Plum Creek) land and takes us back to Fort Fizzle, so no shuttling of vehicles will be needed. There is about 1,000' elevation gain in 6-7 miles. This will be a joint hike with the Bitterroot-Mission Group of the Sierra Club. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 for information.

**May 20, Saturday: Como Peaks- Bitterroots-**  
*Route:* From Lake Como, we will hike up the Little Rock Creek Trail and then ascend the north side of the Como Peaks. If all goes well, will try to summit all three. *Mileage:* 15.5 miles roundtrip. *Elevation gain:* 4700-5700'. Will get an early start from Missoula- this will be a snow climb- crampons and ice ax will be necessary. May bring a rope as well. Due to the mileage, elevation gain, and snow, participants need to be in excellent condition- should be prepared for 10-12 hours of steady hiking/climbing. Alternate date will be the following day. If we get back to Missoula in time, its dinner and beers at my place. Contact: Forest Dean at 240-7612, 721-6384 or e-mail [fdean@midlandimplement.com](mailto:fdean@midlandimplement.com)

**May 20, Saturday: Pattee Canyon-** This will be a nice time of the year to explore the new trail on the south side of Mt. Sentinel that goes back into Pattee Canyon. Participants can make it as long as they like by only going partways, or do it as a point to point by leaving transportation at the Crazy Canyon Trailhead, or go out and back. For more info call Julie Kahl 543-6508

**June 22-25: Mt. Rainier- Sunset Ridge-** This is a class III rated climb up the west side of the mountain. We tentatively have a full party; however, if you are interested let me know- depending on the consensus of the group, we may try to do a couple different routes if more people

## Upcoming Trips

want to come. *Note:* This is not a guided trip. All participants must have their own mountain/glacier climbing gear and know how to use it.

Additionally, all participants must be in excellent shape. Plan is to leave Wednesday evening, June 21<sup>st</sup>. Contact: Forest Dean at 240-7612, 721-6384 or e-mail [fdean@midlandimplement.com](mailto:fdean@midlandimplement.com)

### **June, 2007: Mount Blackburn-Wrangell-St.**

**Elias-** This is not a technically difficult climb, you could think of it as a long ski trip, 2 weeks, in an amazing setting and a good excuse to spend lots of money on gear. At this point it is merely an idea, I have not done any specific planning, and I may even change the mountain to something else in the area, like Mt. Logan. It typically takes me at least a year to prepare, that is why I decided to put this out there now. I plan on leading several multi-day trips over the next year that should allow me to get to know prospective participants. Compatibility, more than ability, is more important to me on a trip like this. Feel free to call or e-mail me, Steve Niday.

## Trip Reports

**March 3-5: Grizzly Mountain- Glacier National Park-** Ron Pierson, Steve Niday and I met Tammy Filliater in East Glacier at 10:30 am Friday morning, then we all drove a few miles to the start of our adventure at the beginning of the Two Medicine Road. We began skiing at 11:00 am- skied across Lower Two Medicine Lake then along the south bank of the creek until we met back up with the road near the bridge over the creek. There was a short but somewhat difficult bushwack in here, so would recommend sticking to the road, or the north side of the creek. Back on the road we skied up to the Two Medicine area (about 7 miles in). Here Tammy decided to let us go on- she had developed some horribly large blisters and not wanting to hold the rest of us back decided to stay and ski out the next day. Ron, Steve and I then skied across most of Two Medicine Lake (in a pretty good snowstorm) till we reached the far south and west shore. Here we ascended up and south, arriving at our campsite goal at Rockwell Falls about 5:15 (9.8 miles in). There was a trickle of running water so we didn't have to melt snow. It continued to snow – we ended up with 3-4" of new stuff- cleared out



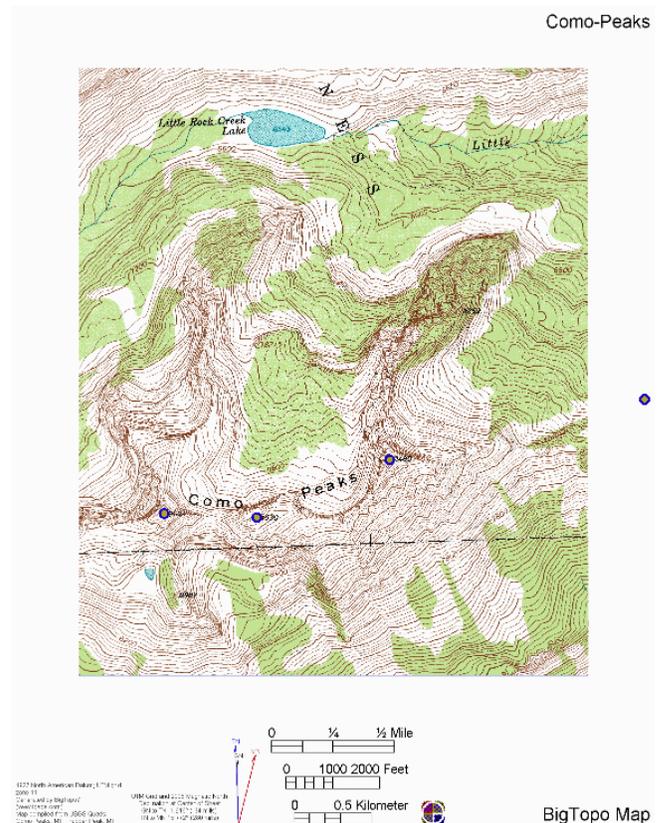
Grizzly Mountain from the northwest, with Chief Lodgepole along the way.

## Trip Reports Continued

overnight though- awoke to about 6 degrees. We ate breakfast then hit the trail about 8:15 heading up toward Cobalt Lake. Skiing was great and extremely beautiful terrain. Achieving Two Medicine Pass was fairly easy. From there we looked at Mt. Rockwell and Grizzly Mountain and weighed the pro's and con's of one vs. the other. The uncertainty of being able to get up the west side of Rockwell (which we couldn't see) drove us to decide on doing Grizzly. This involved a long trek on an open ridge to the base of Grizzly about 1.5 miles away. Ron started out along the ridge but then decided to turn back leaving Steve and I to go on. We arrived at the base and started the 1500 foot climb to the top as wind and clouds started to roll in. Grizzly has three bumps along its summit ridge, the final one being the high point (9067'). Visibility became very poor near the top, but after much effort we finally made it to the summit about 2:00 pm. Through worsening conditions we descended back to the ridge (we had left our ski's and some weight there). Visibility got very poor as we skied back to the Two Medicine Pass- we managed to avoid skiing off the cornices and falling a few thousand feet to the east- much relief was felt when we finally got off the ridge and out of the wind. The ski back to camp was fun (round trip to summit was about 10 miles). Not as cold Saturday night (20 degrees). We hit the trail about 8:30 the next morning and arrived out about noon (10.5 miles taking the road instead of skiing across Lower Two Med Lake). We saw several wolf and moose tracks, and spotted a coyote as well. Ron saw a mountain goat up by the pass the day before. All in all this was a great trip- well worth the effort. We're left wondering if Grizzly has been climbed in the Winter? *Forest Dean*

**March 12, Sunday: Granite Pass Road-** Bret Doucett, Fred Schwanemann and Steve Schombel skied up this road on a bright sunny day. We went a little past the first side road to the left, and looked around a large clearing. I think the trail we were looking for is in this area, but Fred was looking for a trail closer to the highway. At any rate it was hard to tell because of all the snowmobile tracks going everywhere. We'll have to return in the summer and look for signs. It was still a fine day to ski. *Steve Schombel*

**March 15, Wednesday: Skalkaho Falls-** We reached the trailhead on the Skalkaho Road late in the morning, and after 5 hours of slogging uphill reached the falls. There were a few inches of wet snow which caused moderate to severe sticking problems for all of us. The falls are lovely in winter, mostly ice covered with some water visible through holes, and boy was it quiet at mid-week. We only encountered two snowmobiles within ten minutes of the parking lot, and three skate skiers. One of them was very friendly, and told us about other places to ski near Hamilton, and wildlife he had seen. Here is another reason to participate in trips; you can meet other people and learn more about the areas you are visiting. We did not see any Bighorns along the road, but followed fresh coyote tracks for quite a way on our return. Participants were: Bret Doucett, Steve Schombel, Will Butler and Fred Schwanemann. *S. Schombel*



## **ROCKY MOUNTAINEER'S CLASSIC SERIES**

Below is a schedule of the next five outings. For more information, or to offer to lead one of these outings, please contact Steve Schombel (721-4686) or Forest Dean (721-6384) or the listed trip leader.

**APRIL: Trapper Peak-** Selway- Bitterroot Wilderness- Leader: Alden Wright;  
Date: Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup>; Category: Ski or snowshoe

**MAY: Stuart Peak-** Rattlesnake Wilderness- Leader: TBA;  
Date: Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup>; Category: Hike

**JUNE: Squaw Peak-** Nine Mile/Reservation Divide area- Leader: TBA;  
Date: Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup>; Category: Scramble

**JULY: Lolo Peak-** Selway- Bitterroot Wilderness- Leader: TBA;  
Date: Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup>; Category: Scramble

**AUGUST 18-20: Glacier Classic-** Glacier National Park- Two Medicine Area- Several trip offerings will be available. We will try to get a group campsite at Two Medicine campground for both Friday and Saturday night. Full details in next month's newsletter. Dates: 18-20.

### **ANNUAL CLUB POTLUCK SUMMER PARTY**

Schedule to be announced in next newsletter.

### **CABIN WORK WEEKEND**

Tentatively scheduled for June 3-4. More information next month. We will be doing a major re-roofing job and will need lots of manpower to help haul supplies up the mountain.

### **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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