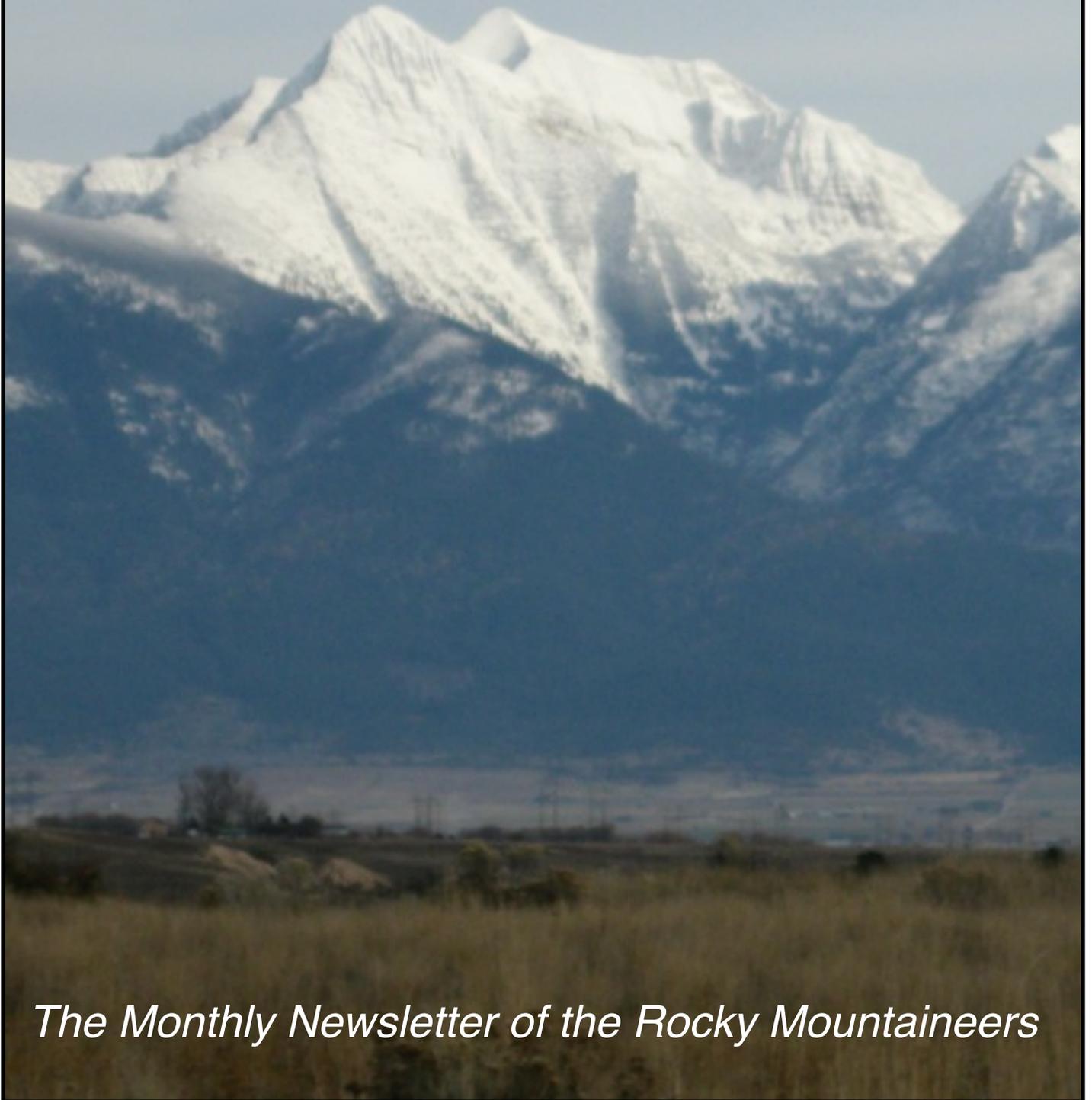


OCT/NOV 2013

# THE MOUNTAIN EAR



*The Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers*



**Climb. Hike. Ski. Bike. Paddle. Dedicated to the Enjoyment and Promotion of Responsible Outdoor Adventure.**

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The Mountain Ear is the club newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers and is published at the end of every month. Anyone wishing to contribute articles of interest are welcomed and encouraged to do so - contact the editor.

Membership application can be found at the end of the newsletter.

#### ABOUT THE CLUB:

##### *Mission Statement:*

The Rocky Mountaineers is a non-profit club dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of responsible outdoor adventures.

##### *Meetings and Presentations:*

Meetings are held the second Tuesday, September through May, at 6:00 PM at the Trail Head. Each meeting is followed by a featured presentation or speaker at 7:00 PM.

Please be sure to check out our **Facebook group** to receive the latest up-to-date news and post short-notice trip proposals:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rockymountaineers/>

## A Message from the Editor:

I am privileged to start up this newsletter after a hiatus of a couple years, and hope that it will once again be a great source of information about climbs in the Northern Rockies. The advent of the Internet has certainly changed many things and we are always constantly adjusting to the new innovations and developments that keep coming up, but the reassuring continuity of a newsletter reminds us that as a club we are still together, still getting outside, and still enjoying many great adventures. This first letter covers two months, but I hope to get it going on a monthly basis.

I'd like to encourage all members to consider posting official trip proposals ahead of time, and to think of good reports to write up. The Northern Rockies are an amazingly gorgeous and diverse area, and there are many places that definitely merit trips and reports about. One thing this newsletter can also do is "showcase" many of these memorable locations. I will be trying some different things over the next few months to make this newsletter a quality resource for all members, and I greatly appreciate support and advice from anyone.

Happy Climbing!

- *Dan Saxton*



## **TRIP REPORTS**

### **Saturday, October 5, 2013 - Swan Peak**

Ron and Jake Oman joined Frank and I for a climb of Swan Peak (9289'- second highest in range) in the northern Swan Range on this first Saturday in October. After a 2 hour drive to trailhead we started at 7:50am. Hiked up Squeezer Creek on a good trail through the woods. Reached lower lake at 10:50 then proceeded to upper lake. From there we gained the west ridge then made our way to the NW ridge of Swan. Ridge was covered with about 8" of new snow and ice. Jake and Ron turned back about half way up ridge, Frank made it bit further before throwing in towel. Being 250 from summit, I made a quick but quite challenging snow climb up through a frozen couloir reaching the summit at 1:45pm. Took a picture then downclimbed the couloir. Back out the way we came arriving at truck at 6:25pm. 14.5 miles round trip, 6000' of total elevation gain, 10.5 hours. *Forest Dean*

### **Saturday, October 5, 2013 - Cabin Work Day**

Six of us made the trip to the Cabin with the plan to start the sleeping platform remodel project. We ended up having a very productive day. Thanks to Bob we completed the platform remodel so that now 4 people can sleep on the lower level. We also cut quite a bit more wood so now there should be enough for the long, snowy winter we'll hopefully have. On the hike out we also cut out most of the downfall across the trail. Trip participants were Bob Garrity, Chris Stout, Rob McLeod, Kirsten Schmidt, Jerry Kogan and Paul Jensen. *Paul Jensen*

### **Sunday, October 6, 2013 - Mount Fuji**

I forgot and left my GPS at home as I went to Wal-Mart to meet Lois C. and Steve S. We rode up to Lolo Pass in my pick-up truck. We knew the visitor's center and bathrooms at the pass were closed so we stopped at the Lee Creek campground, the outhouse there was open. We drove down Elk Meadows Rd. about 1/2 mile to where Lois has her Breakfast in the Meadow in June, and on the side road to park at the new bridge over Pack Creek there. There was an elderly woman hiking around and we talked to her and discovered that she was no less then Jacquie M., the lady that had done the original art work for the Rocky Mountaineers newsletters back in the 1960's. She's moving back to Missoula and was thinking of looking us up. She gave us some insights into the TRM of the 1960's including the new information that they had been affiliated with the University somehow, and hinted at the elusive connection between TRM and the earlier Montana Mountaineers. She also had information on the climbing school they used to hold in Blodgett Canyon. I'll interview her later.

We got on the road to the west side of Fuji by 11:AM, The old clearcut on the north face of Fuji from the 1970's is almost entirely over grown with alder brush, so you can't see the roads anymore. Our road along the base of Fuji had us making our way

through the brush, joking about machetes, but as we got around to the gully on the west side the alder brush stopped except in the sides of the gully where the stream was. We started up from where the creek came down to the road and climbed north to the brow of the ridge. That was fairly easy going, following faint game trails through red, thigh high huckleberry bushes and some mature timber. That was until we started running into old logging roads with a steep bank to get up to the road and another steep bank to get off it on the other side. Most were very over grown, in some places almost obliterated, but we did follow a few out to the north face and was starting to get good views to the north. We ran into the first spots of snow on the north face about 5500 ft., and from one clearing could see the summit a few hundred feet above us yet. We got back in the brow of the ridge and went up to the 2nd last road, we could see the last road just below the summit clearly and climbed up to it to be presented with a small rock out cropping on the high side of the road, we 4th classed that and went up to the summit. Lois had skied around Fuji many times but had never been on the summit.

To the north we could see over Granite Ridge to White Mountain, and snow covered Granite and Rhodes Peaks in Idaho. To the west was the west edge of the Crooked fork drainage with Rocky Point, all snow covered. To the east we saw Lee Ridge and the basin on it's south side where Lost Park is, Sally Ridge and the back side of snow covered Lolo Peak were beyond. We opted to eat lunch where we could see south and west to the snow covered Idaho peaks of Ranger Peak, Grave Peak & Tom Beal Peak.

We started back down at 2PM dropping down into the saddle between Fuji and high point of Moose Ridge next to it looking for an old logging road that would take us out to a road that comes into the Packer Meadows Loop. We could see traces up roads up high, but none that seemed to go anywhere, it was all steep and we slid down some fallen logs covered with a bit of snow to a flat spot that seemed like a road. Here we make our big mistake, the road seemed to be going up so we didn't follow it to the right, as we should have so we would have ended up on the right side of a gully that was below us. Instead we went down and ended up on the edge of the gully, I knew we weren't suppose to go into the gully and we started to trend left, still going down, and ended up in the numerous feeder gullies, following deer tracks through the head high huckleberry bushes, that on the east side of the mountain had turned yellow instead of red. Through little forest patches with needle duff, and some alder with stems as thick as our wrists. Lois said something about needing to be further to the right and that was when I realized the mistake made above. There wasn't anything we could do about it now except keep going down. Occasionally we could see the tracks of old roads in the canopy or in spots in the forest but nothing that could help us, but the air was getting warmer.

As we were going through a stand of evergreen trees a tiny branch I never saw got between my glasses and my face and scratched my left eye, it teared for a minute but

was Ok to get out with. Just below that we found a road with sawed logs and blazes, we followed, going right and crossed over the creek that came out of the gully we were now below, so we were now on the correct side of the gully but the road seemed to be going up so once again we started down, and soon saw that there was an open space beyond the trees coming up. We came out into low spot with an open forested hill on the other side, we started over the hill, came to a tarn that was dried up and over grown with nice knee-high grass. We could see behind us now and found that we were a good 1/3 - 1/2 miles away from Fuji, but kept going down, expecting, that because of our persistent left trending to come out somewhere on the Glade Creek Loop trail. So when at 4PM we found a logging road we went right on it, only after 1/4 mile or so to come to the junction of the road we had hoped to come down and the Packer Meadows Loop. We turned around and hiked back to the pick up.

Jacquie was waiting for us with a copy of a Missoulian newspaper article from 1969 about a TRM snowshoe trip into Garnet Ghost town, we chatted a bit more than head for the newly opened Lumber Jack saloon. The stripped down menu didn't appeal to us so we came back to town. After I dropped off Lois and Steve I went to the mall to try and get into Now Care, The Mall was just closing and Now Care had closed at 4:30. I went to the emergency room at Community Hospital, to a crush of incoming patients and it was 8PM before I got the scratch on my eye treated. I hadn't eaten since lunch on the summit and once home headed for left overs in the fridge. We all agreed that we had made the best of a beautiful Oct. day, but it's better to climb Fuji in the winter. *Julia Kahl*

### **Saturday, October 12, 2013 - "Hey Joe Traverse"**

Having no takers for my "Hey Joe Traverse" idea, I set out alone at 8am on this Saturday morning. Alternating running and hiking I arrived at Bass Lake a little before 10am (8 miles, 3000'). From there I hiked up the trail to saddle leading to South Fork of Lolo Creek. At the saddle I left the trail and ascended the west ridge of Stormy Joe, arriving at the summit at a few mins past 11:00. Shared the environs with a goat, but then he got bored and ran away. I descended off the east ridge intending to climb St. Joseph Peak. Going was easy until a large gendarme blocked the way as I neared the saddle. Weather looked to be moving in, and I didn't feel like getting home real late, so I bailed and jogged back down to the trail (breaking a pole en route). Back on the trail at 1pm, I changed socks and ran the approx. 6 miles back to trailhead- arriving a few mins after 2pm. 17.5 miles, 5250' of gain and 6 hours of travel. The traverse idea would be best done with no snow, or a bunch. *Forest Dean*

### **Sunday, October 13, 2013 - Cabin Hike**

Sunday the 13th Lois, Julie and I took advantage of the next to last day the road would be open and drove to the overlook and hiked to the cabin. We had good weather and enjoyed the fall colors. The trail was especially beautiful with fresh snow on the crags and the larch starting to turn. We hauled up lots of newspaper, a can of Coleman fuel, wicks for the lanterns and candles. The previous crew did a fine job.

The bunks look good and there is a lot of firewood. The radio even worked. Only one of the lanterns appears to be usable, perhaps one of the wintertime users could donate a battery lantern. *Stephen Schombel*

### **Saturday, October 19, 2013 - Bob Marshall Country Ramble**

I set out from the Monture Creek trailhead at sunrise to start a long loop up both Spread (8,047') and Omar (8,503') Mountains. The Spread Mountain trail ascended at a pretty sustained grade, about 4,000 feet in 4-5 miles to the top of Spread. It doesn't appear to have received maintenance for at least a couple years, as numerous trees across the trail and faint tread in places demonstrated. But it was not too difficult to go in the right direction. After summiting the west peak, which has good views, I continued on to the main summit of Spread (about 11:45am), which lies just off the trail. It has views to the east and south, but is otherwise wooded.

From there to Camp Pass, there was quite a bit more snow on north-facing slopes (south slopes were largely bare), and the trail was harder to follow in spots, especially where it went through a recent burn. After crossing the pass, I picked up the Conger Point trail and continued towards Omar. That section was a bit tedious in places where it went onto north-facing slopes and almost 1/2 foot of snow. At the base of Omar, I cut up the SE ridge cross-country, which was steep but not difficult. The summit area (at 3pm) was beautiful, with 2 knobs separated by a broad snowcovered plateau. Magnificent views of the Scapegoat massif, Swan Range, Mission Mountains, Bitterroots, Pintlers, and Flint Creeks. It gives a good feeling of the vastness of the Bob!

Returned by the Fenn Mountain trail down to Falls Creek, it's more used by horses but the open slopes are very nice. The golden larches in Falls Creek were brilliant!

However, I returned to the trailhead just after dark to find my back truck tire flat! Fortunately, 2 hunters were there and helped me change into the spare, which I was able to get back to Missoula on. The next day, I found the small puncture mark and had it plugged up, so all turned out well!

Despite this setback at the end, it was a great 20+ mile ramble, and the half snow-covered mountains were gorgeous. Omar is a better peak than Spread when it comes to the views, so if you have to pick between the two, go with Omar. Even though the peaks in this area are not especially rugged, the rambling opportunities are endless, so all who are inclined to that form of travel need to check out this area..... *Dan Saxton*

### **Saturday, October 26, 2013 - Sky Pilot (8,800+)**

One of the most gorgeous days of the entire year! Started at 8am from Bear Creek TH; only one other vehicle was there and not hunting-related. The trail is relatively smooth going, a couple trees across it and had to cross Bear Creek on a log 2.5 miles in, but otherwise very nice grade and quick travel. Took 4 hrs to get to Bryan Lake, which was beautifully pristine with amazing fall colors and splendid meadows. Snow patches

on N-facing slopes from about 6,500' up and generally solid coverage on the north faces of all prominent peaks, but south faces are largely bare; Sky Pilot itself was clear the whole way up the W ridge/SW face route from Bear Creek Pass. Reached the top at 1:45pm, the most inspiring view I've seen in the Bitterroots to date! Returned to the trailhead at 7pm during dusk, a long hike but not terribly difficult; I'd highly recommend this peak and especially if you can take your time along the way - especially to enjoy Bryan Lake and the meadows above it. *Dan Saxton*

### **Saturday, October 26, 2013 - Walman Trail**

We were lucky to be out on this blue sky day. The larch were at their prime gold color, with other colorful leaves all around. The trail now has more switchbacks than we remembered, so it was a lot longer hike but not as steep. There was a lot of smoke in the Bitterroot but it was clear above us. We also visited some of the beautiful pools near the trailhead. I forgot my camera so check out Julies photos of the hike. Also along were Fred and Eileene Schwanemann. I realized that I've been hiking and skiing with some of these friends for at least 12 years, and I might not have even met some of them if not for the Rocky Mountaineers. *Stephen Schombel*

### **November 2, 2013 - Mount Haggin**

Ron Oman and I drove to Anaconda and started up the trail to Hearst Lake at 8:30am. Cool morning, windy up high, but sunny. Starting on bare ground, snow gradually got deeper as we neared lake (8200'). From lake we hiked up to a saddle then ascended the narrow north ridge all the way to summit. With unconsolidated snow the ridge was slow, but fun as views were great in both directions. Summited at 1:50 just ahead of approaching storm. Was very windy. Descended down the north bowl. Snow and rain on hike out. Back to truck at 5:00pm. 14.5 miles, 5200' of gain, 8.5 hours. A good November climb! *Forest Dean*

### **Sunday, November 24, 2013 - Snowshoeing at Lolo Pass**

Five people gathered to enjoy the beautiful snow conditions, and sunny day, at Lolo Pass. Cristi D. was joined by her puppy, Camas and Leta B. to ski the Pack Creek Loop. It was Camas' first snow outing and she thoroughly enjoyed herself. Lois C. fighting shoulder issues, just snowshoed down Pack Creek Road a ways, while Steve S. and Julie K. snowshoed up a newly routed snowshoe trail to the point of Pack Ridge above the Visitors Center and followed skier's and other snowshoer's tracks down to Pack Creek Road. A great break-in day for all of us. *Julia Kahl*

# UPCOMING TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

## **Trip Notes:**

Please contact the trip leader for more information regarding any listed trips. Mileage listed is round trip mileage. Elevation listed is gain only. For information on Class Rating see below:

### Class Rating System

**CLASS 1** –HIKING Mostly on trails, but may also include some easy cross country travel.

**CLASS 2** –EASY SCRAMBLING Rugged off trail hiking, no hands required.

**CLASS 3** –SCRAMBLING Use of hand to ascend some sections of rock. Little to no exposure; a fall would not likely cause serious injury.

**CLASS 4** –CLIMBING Easy climbing, great exposure; a fall would quite possibly cause serious injury. Use of a rope and protection at times possible.

**CLASS 5** –TECHNICAL CLIMBING Use of rope, protection and belay are a must.

**CLASS 6** –AID CLIMBING Use of equipment to support your weight as you climb.

## **Saturday, December 14, 2013 - CHIEF JOSEPH XC SKI TRIP**

*Description:* The Bitterroot Ski Club is putting on a classic XC ski race at the Chief Joseph ski trails on Dec. 14. I will be going to do the race, and others can join me either to ski on the groomed trails or do the race.

[http://missoulanordic.org/races/cont\\_divide\\_poster2013.jpg](http://missoulanordic.org/races/cont_divide_poster2013.jpg)

*Leader:* Alden Wright

## **Saturday, December 14, 2013 - LOLO PASS FULL MOON SKI TRIP**

*Description:* There will be a full moon event at Lolo Pass on Saturday, Dec. 14th. The warming hut will be open 4:30 to 8:30 PST with a fire going. If interested let's meet at 4:30 MST at the south end of Wal Mart near the Miller Creek Road. The not quite full moon should be up high by the time we get on the trail. We'll ski some then go in and have a Christmas potluck. The meeting time may change, so check back a few days before the event. *Leader:* Stephen Schombel

## **Looking ahead.....**

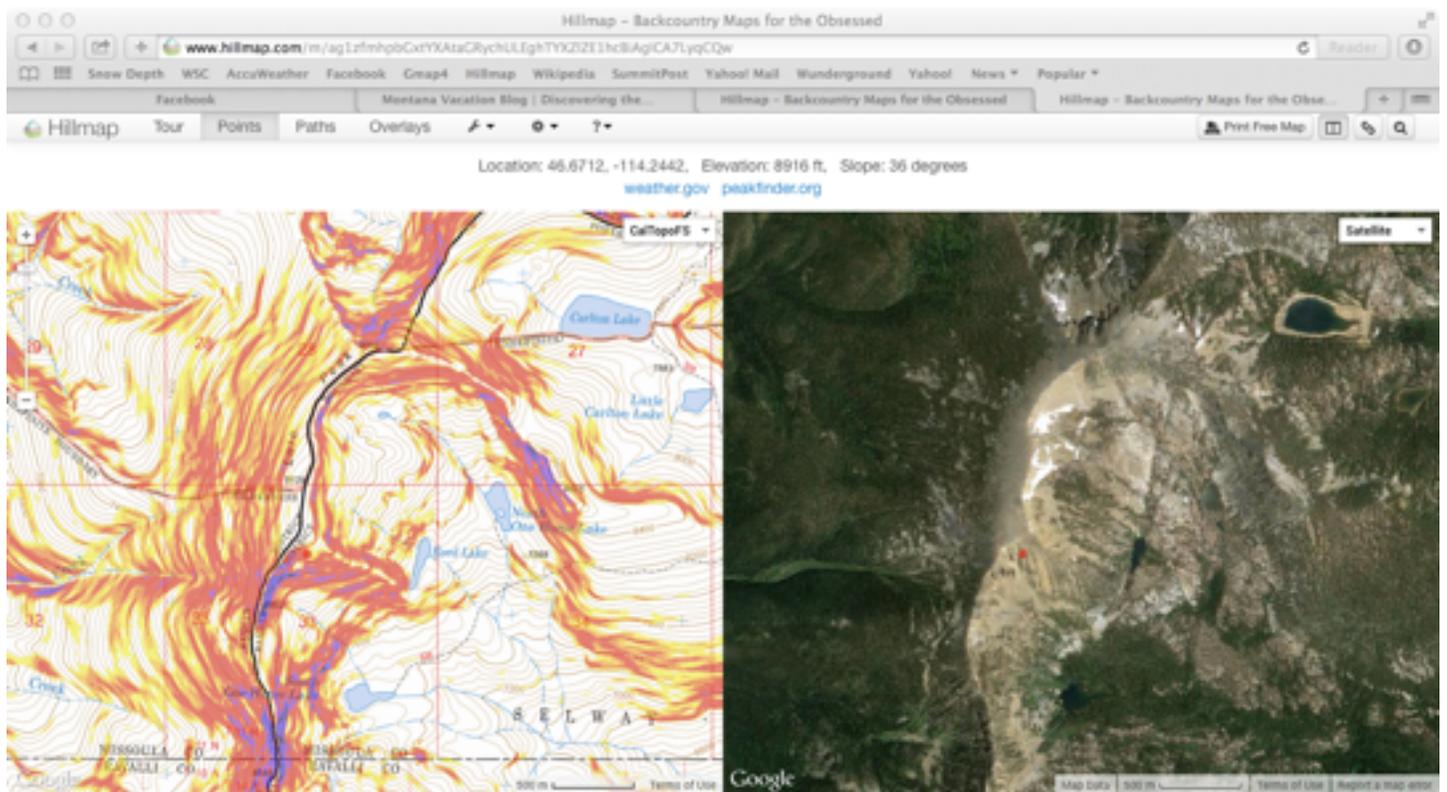
**Next meeting - Tuesday, December 10:** Brian Story will give a presentation: "Back-country skiing in the Missions and the Bitterroots." Brian is a very active, local backcountry skier who has helped take the sport to a new level. He plans on talking about 3 or 4 of his favorite long tours in the area. The presentation will be at 7 pm at the [Trailhead](#).

## Excellent resource to use when planning trips.....

[www.hillmap.com](http://www.hillmap.com)

**Ryan Bressler** and **Jen Gregory** have been working on a fantastic resource for outdoor adventurers, a mapping website that combines many diverse interactive features. They include:

- Terrain shading - slopes steep enough to avalanche are shaded.
- Integration with [www.peakfinder.org](http://www.peakfinder.org) - any place you click on the map, you can turn on PeakFinder and see the view from that location!
- Point and click forecasts from [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) as well.
- Elevation and lat/long coordinates are also shown each time you point and click.
- Topographic map overlays, based on [www.caltopo.com](http://www.caltopo.com). Many different map layer options. These maps can be printed as well.
- Ability to create waypoints and routes.
- Handy split screen allows you to compare two different maps - for example, both the topo and satellite maps. A single screen option is also available.
- Ryan continues to add new features to the site over time.....so use it regularly and spread the word! Below is Lolo Peak as shown on Hillmap:



## Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes, 11/12/2013

A. Call To Order: 6:10

B. Attendees: Paul Jensen, Steve Niday, Julia Kahl, Dan Saxton, Lois Crepeau, Steve Schombel, Tom Hanou

C. Treasurer's Report: \$935.48

D. Discussions:

1. Speakers

- a. Brian Story in Dec., Check to see if he needs a laptop
- b. Jan Speakers
  - 1. Steve S. will contact Steve Karkonen
  - 2. Will Steve K. do a field day?

2. Cabin

- a. Paul gave a \$20 bottle of wine to the guy that did the chinking
- b. Moving the sleeping platforms exposed more areas to be chinked
- c. Remove the gas lanterns and replace them with battery LCD lanterns?

3. Social Media

- a. Use the Facebook page "event" function for meeting notices
- b. Can Facebook have customized heading and such?

4. Trips

- a. Anything new on classic series? Haven't heard from Forest
- b. Julie's 2 ski trips, and Steve S.' moonlight skis

5. Misc.

- a. Dan Saxton will be the new newsletter editor
- b. Who does tasks if the regular person is indisposed? Someone else just picks it up
- c. Steve N. is going to check into who can sign checks
- d. Lois wondered about Lolo Pass's Memorial for Bill Myers - check web site?
- e. Christmas Party, Steve S. wants to do one as a part of a moonlight ski on 12/14

E. Adjourn 6:53 PM

# THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee: \$10.00

*Note: Membership includes all members of a family or household.*

Make checks payable to 'The Rocky Mountaineers' and send to: The Rocky Mountaineers, PO Box 4262, Missoula, MT 59806

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Family Members Names:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Email (optional):

\_\_\_\_\_

Joining or maintaining your Rocky Mountaineers membership has never been easier!

PayPal is now available on the Rocky Mountaineers website. Click on the membership link on the main page.