



MOUNTAIN EAR

Monthly Newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers

January, 2005 Missoula, Montana

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



**Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 12th,
7:00 PM at Pipestone Mountaineering,
129 West Front Street, Missoula, MT.**

Five Valleys Land Trust

Wendy Ninteman, Executive Director of the Five Valleys Land Trust will be giving a presentation at our monthly meeting.

Western Montana's extraordinary natural landscape has led to the creation of an incomparable sense of place. Our rivers and natural lands provide for our recreational needs and feed our souls. They bring us together and define us as a community that takes great pride in our natural heritage. That being said, take one look around and it's easy to see that our home is facing significant development pressures that could alter our precious landscape forever. We must find a way to conserve our best places. The trick is to find a way to conserve them in a way that is in line with Montanans' way of life and concern for private property rights. Five Valleys Land Trust finds conservation solutions that do just that. We work cooperatively with private landowners and other partners on conservation easements, public land acquisitions, and habitat rehabilitation projects that protect western Montana's signature lands and waterways and maintain our unique lifestyle and culture. Please join us for a presentation that explores how the Land Trust utilizes these conservation tools and how you can get involved in their work.

From the President: There are two items of business that the club should decide on soon. The first is an invitation to rejoin the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs. The Rocky Mountaineers once belonged to this Federation, but apparently let the membership

expire sometime during the 1990's. This Federation has a long list of member clubs from throughout the west. They have an annual convention and adopt a set of resolutions. More information about this Federation and a complete list of resolutions can be seen at www.federationofwesternoutdoorclubs.org. Annual dues are \$25.00, but we just restructured our dues and expenditures to cover our own expenses. We need to save up for cabin repairs, and it would also be important to register as a tax exempt organization. As President, I'm leaning toward not rejoining, there is plenty to do locally. The other item of business is the proposed ski resort on Lolo Peak. This will be a major destination resort, with an adjoining Nordic area, and a golf course. It will cost to ride a lift to the Nordic area, which runs along Carlton Ridge and crosses the trail from the Mormon Peak Road. Those of you who like to slog up this road in the Spring and ski Lolo Peak for free will likely have this access cut off. And, while the developer claims there will be no impacts on hiking, there will be a restaurant on top of Carlton Ridge, a lift down to the lake and a lift from there to the top of Lolo Peak. Most resorts run these lifts in the summer for tourists, which will make it a less than pristine place to hike. In all they are proposing to develop over 10,000 acres of public land. It's obvious from the above how the President feels, but we need to hear from the members. Since our regular meetings have become so well attended we probably should have a board meeting later in January to discuss and vote on these issues. We don't have to take a position as a club on Lolo Peak, but those of you who have concerns can sign up for more information and updates from a new group that is being formed right now, the Friends of Lolo Peak. Steve Schombel

Trip Reports

December 4, Saturday: Lolo Pass- This was a good, early season ski trip. What snow was there was great and quite skiable. Most of the short loop was groomed, and the visitor center and warming hut were open. A couple of the participants wanted to stick to the groomed trails, and went with us to Packer Meadows. Most of us went up the A & B trail to a junction just beyond the State Line before most of the uphill starts. A few went on up to the saddle between Lolo and Lee Creek where you can get good views. Everyone seemed to enjoy the day. Participants were: Barbara Ross, Eileen and Fred Schwanemann, Bret Doucett, Charles Tree, Julie Warner, Lynda Dale, Cathy Burlison, Michael Bowles and Steve Schombel. Steve Schombel

December 11, Saturday: Lolo Pass- Karen Apland and I were the only ones on this trip. We drove to the pass, but it was raining lightly so we headed back down the road and cut our Christmas trees. Mighty fine ones I must say. Joe only had to cut three and a half FEET off of the one I hauled home this year. A "brewski" @ the Hot Springs where we watched the "Griz" game. Lois Crepeau

December 17, Friday: Sweeney Peak, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness- Lynda Dale joined me for this "newcomer to winter mountaineering" adventure- neither of us had much experience in backcountry winter travel. I had decided on Thursday to make this a snowshoe outing as I heard there wasn't a lot of snow up on Sweeney Ridge. We arrived at the lower trailhead (the last mile up to the official trailhead is pretty steep and although not much snow I was worried about ice) and started about 9:15. Starting elevation was about 5300 feet here. Absolutely no snow. We hiked up the ridge and eventually met up with the official trail at about 6000 feet. Consistent snow was encountered about 6200'. We hiked along the Sweeney Ridge trail for about 2 miles- about to where a spring is adjacent to the trail (7500'). Here we put on the snowshoes, hiked to the Wilderness boundary, then began ascending NW up the ridge. The snow was quite powdery until we topped out along the ridge- here it was firmer and easier walking. We had been hiking under overcast skies till this point- as we got higher we got into the cloud layers and the wind picked up

as well making for poor visibility. We continued up through sparse forest along the ridge and then open alpine country. Attained the 9000' ridge and took off our snowshoes as the top is all rocky and the wind had mostly swept the ridge clean. From here it was a stroll along the top through dense clouds and strong wind for the last third mile to the summit (9162'). Views were nil, so I congratulated Lynda on her first Bitterroot summit and then we headed back. Encountered 5 skiers just as we dropped off the top ridge- they were skiing the bowls to the north. As we started descending the clouds rapidly cleared and we were rewarded with great views of the valley and St. Joseph peak to the south. We snapped a couple pictures then continued our trip out arriving at the vehicle just as dark was really setting in (5:30)- total distance was about 9 miles. A great day- much better than working! *Forest Dean*

December 19, Sunday: Runt Mountain-Our continuing snow drought didn't prevent Carol Anderson, Barbara Ross, Steve Schombel, Steve Niday, and Jim Goss from mixing it up in the back and front country at, around, and behind Lookout Pass Ski Area on the Idaho border. What little snow there was yielded to our turns, though the bare patches at the very bottom were less forgiving. We broke up into two groups, those who took a lift ride up and skied over, and those choosing to ski around the mountain's base. A couple of us poked our way into the first part of the St. Regis basin, then we all met back at the ski area almost simultaneously. After a refresher at the pub, a couple of us purchased some more single lift tickets and tried our luck down the groomed but steeper slopes within ski area boundaries. Considering overall snow conditions in Western Montana, the outing was successful and enjoyable. Jim Goss

December 30, Thursday: Gash Point, Selway-Bitterroot- In spite of the decent snowfall the previous day, there was very little snow in this area of the Bitterroots. I drove to the end of the road and found a total of 1-2" on the south slopes and 6-8" on the north slopes. I did some road skiing and made a few short runs. Steve Niday

Upcoming Trips

January 6-10, Thur-Mon: Mt. Stimson, Glacier Park- One-way distance is about 12 miles, with 6500' of elevation gain. The trip will start off with a ford of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and follow the Pinchot drainage to it's head, then ascend the southeast ridge of Stimson. You will need good skiing and winter camping skills, and should be prepared for extreme cold. I will be monitoring the snow and weather conditions and will not go if conditions are poor. Flexibility in schedule is desirable to pick the right conditions. Steve Niday, 721-3790 or seniday@yahoo.com

January 9, Sunday: A snowshoe trip- I hope there will be enough snow to snowshoe in the Blue and Black Mountain areas. If not then the trip will be in the Lee Creek drainage near Lolo Hot Springs, or up near the pass. Call Steve Schombel at 721-4686, and check the website after New Year's for updates.

January 13-17, Thur-Mon: Ice Climbing in Waterton NP- Various climbs of WI 3-4. Suitable for beginning & intermediate ice climbers. Participants need their own personal climbing gear (including helmet, harness, biners, some slings, ice tools & spikes), I will bring rope, screws, quickdraws, etc.

Right now, Jim Cossitt, Ronnie Laudati and Jim Foster are going and we are looking for one (or 3) more climber(s). Lodging cost is about \$40/night CDN.

Thursday, Jan. 13, drive up to Waterton & stay the night. Friday, Jan. 14 to Monday, Jan. 17, four days of climbing. Monday, Jan. 17 evening, drive home.

For more info email jhc@abanet.org or call Jim Cossitt at 756-6818.

January 22, Saturday: Superior Area- Trip leader's choice. Jim Goss would like to invite skiers up for a day of skiing on logging roads, and perhaps some side trips off piste. The exact route will depend on snow level, snow quality, and interest/abilities of attendees.

Afterwards, Jim hopes people can stop by our house for supper. My wife Cathy and I also have a small hot tub, so come prepared.

Instead of our usual rendezvous at Durango's, Jim suggests meeting at his house near Lozeau. Call him for specific directions at 822-5000.

January 29-30, Saturday-Sunday: Mt. Powell, Flint Creek Range- (overnighter) This Flint Creek Range highpoint looks to be a fairly gradual climb on its south side. Would like to ski/snowshoe in on Saturday afternoon set up camp somewhere, then summit Sunday morning and ski/snowshoe out again. Contact: Forest Dean @ 721-6384 or fdean@midlandimplement.com

February, Full Moon multi-day trip to Yellowstone Park- I still haven't set the itinerary, and am open to suggestions. The geyser basins are a sensory treat in the winter. More details in the next newsletter. S. Niday seniday@yahoo.com

February 11-13, Friday-Sunday: Ice climbing in the Columbia Valley and Kootenay NP- Probably stay in Radium Hot Springs and possible climbs include: Haffner Creek and Marble Canyon in KNP; other climbs in the Columbia Valley south of Radium, including the Gibraltar Wall (145 m, WI-4) (described in the guidebook as "The western Rockies equivalent of the Weeping Wall . . . The route is a wide expanse of ice in three steep tiers separated by good belay ledges".

Thursday, Feb. 10 get out of the Flathead, drive up to Radium & stay the night

Friday, Feb. 11 to Sunday, Feb. 13, 3 days of climbing. Drive home Sunday.

For more info email jhc@abanet.org or call Jim Cossitt at 756-6818.

Cossitt, Foster, Laudati & Hanners plan to do more local ice climbing (Glacier National Park, the Middle Fork of the Flathead, Mission Falls, etc.) and interested folks can contact Jim at the above.

Note the change in membership fees, which was passed at the October 13, 2004 meeting.

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

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).

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 the newsletters are available on the website. Let me know if you do not want me to e-mail you a newsletter.

Carpooling to the Meetings

There has been some interest in carpooling to the meetings. If you live in the Bitterroot Valley and are interested, contact Lois Walsh at: neverstopexploring@hotmail.com

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