

The Mountain Ear

A photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, there are several tall, thin, reddish-brown plants with green leaves. A single, tall, dead, grey tree trunk stands prominently on the left side. The background shows rolling hills covered in sparse vegetation, with a few evergreen trees visible on the ridges. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

October 2016

Monthly Newsletter of
The Rocky Mountaineers



Cover Photo: All the contours of the land are visible in Fish Creek's Deer Creek
Photo: Maria Cassidy

Glacier Classic Follow up
In Randi Minetor's newly released *Death In Glacier National Park: Stories of Accidents and Foolhardiness in the Crown Of The Continent* on page 56, she explains that "siyeh" is a Blackfoot Language word meaning "rabid" or "mad animal"



About the Club

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

Meeting and Presentations:
During September through April, on the second Tuesday of the month, business meeting are generally held at 6:PM at MacKenzie River Pizza in downtown Missoula, before the general membership meeting at 7:PM the Trail Head, with a featured presentation or speaker. General meeting is free and open to the public, business meeting is open to all members. The May meeting is usually a picnic.
On a weekend in late August we gather in Glacier NP for the Glacier Classic Outing

Dues: Club dues are \$10, and due in April of each year, payment can be made through **PayPal**. Membership application is at the back of this newsletter.

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

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The FaceBook group is used to post short notice and up-to-date news as well as recent trip reports
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/rockymountaineers/>

The Mountain Ear is the club newsletter of the Rocky Mountaineers and is usually published once a month.
Anyone wishing to contribute articles are encouraged to do so - contact the editor

Cover Photo Submission Guidelines: Must be up and down format (Portrait), prefer no recognizable people
Retro Photos Submission Guidelines: Should be a former or current dues paying member or speaker to submit, but it doesn't have to be from a Rocky Mountaineers trip, no recognizable people

Date Change for the November meeting. As Nov. 8th is election day we have moved the meeting to Tues. Nov. 15th



OCT. 11TH MONTHLY MEETING

Jim Ullrich will present a slide show and presentation of "Denali in the days of cotton and wool". He summited Denali on July 5, 1976, forty years ago. Climbing Denali is a lot different now than it was 40 years ago, fewer crowds, fewer regulations (which are needed) about human waste, the advances in clothing and sleds. It took two attempts for him to make the summit, with the famous guide Ray Genet who later died on Everest.

NOV. 15TH MONTHLY MEETING

Namibia and South Africa: Wildlife, Native Culture, and Sand Dunes

On a recent trip to Namibia and South Africa, Alden and Sally Wright saw a wide variety of wild animals: rhinos, elephants, leopards, cheetah, wild dogs, wart hogs, zebra, a pangolin, and much more. We also visited the Himba tribe which maintains their traditional life style, and we learned about the San (Bushmen). Namibia has amazing sand dunes. Namibia is the African country most like Montana, semi-arid and sparsely populated. We will give a presentation on what we saw and what we learned during our visit. Alden Wright



In the works for the **DEC. 13TH MONTHLY MEETING** is the annual Avalanche program

The Missoula Folklore Society would like to thank all of the Rocky Mountaineers who turned out for the Draught Work's Pint Night Charity on Sept. 27th.

UP COMING TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

SUN. OCT 23RD, MUDD LAKE, OR FLATHEAD RIVER on the Flathead Reservation. These lakes lie east of Pablo. If it remains dry we should be able to drive up a logging road to @5000'. From there the trail drops about 500', then switchbacks up a ridge high above Mud Creek Falls to the first lake. The first lake is at 5790', the second, 6010' and the third 6593'. The elevation gain is @ 1300' from the low point. It's hard to figure in all the switchbacks, but my best guess for distance one way would be between 3 and 4 miles. And there is 500' to gain on the last part of the return trip. A black bear popped up pretty close to me while I was scouting out the roads, so be prepared for this. It would be better to have a high clearance vehicle for this road, but I've driven rougher ones. If it is wet up there I will substitute a hike along the river near the Sloans Bridge, or the Buffalo Bridge up to the rapids. I'm more comfortable that the area around the Sloans Bridge would be on Tribal Land. The lakes are in the Tribal Wilderness, so people will need to get a recreation permit for either one. If you want more information call Steve Schombel at 721-4686 or e mail: stephenschombel@yahoo.com

LOLO PASS WINTER OUTING SUN. NOV. 27TH

Keeping up with the tradition of doing something at Lolo Pass on the Sun. after Thanksgiving. In the past we have always been able to ski. Julie Kahl jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

Trip Notes

Please contact the trip leader for more information regarding any listed trips.

Milage listed is round trip mileage

Elevation listed is gain only

For information on class rating see below:

Class Rating System

CLASS 1 - Hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, biking etc. mostly on trails or roads, but may include some easy cross country travel

CLASS 2 - Easy Scrambling Rugged off trail hiking, no hands required

CLASS 3 - Scrambling Use of hands 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 possibly cause serious injury. Use of rope and protection at times possible.

CLASS 5- Technical Climbing Use of rope, protection and belay a must.

CLASS 6 - Aid Climbing Use of equipment to support your weight as you climb

TRIP REPORTS

Trip Report, Sept 9-11

Hikes to Dunham Point, Morrell Mtn and an unnamed summit on the Bob Marshall Wilderness Boundary

Typical Ridge Route near Morrell Mtn



Sandwiched around the Ovando Gran Fondo, a mountain-bike fund raiser for the Missoula Symphony, Tom Crosser and Vick Applegate completed three summit hikes, September 9-11. Two TRM members had to cancel at the last moment.

Dunham Point is a short mile hike from a saddle up Little Shanley Creek north of Ovando. The first half is on an old USFS trail that skirts a large active rock slide. Leaving the trail we continued up the ridge to the summit. Clark's nutcrackers squawked and a couple of mule deer alerted our presence. Temperature was perfect and a few clouds dotted the blue sky. We had fine views of upper Dunham Creek, Dunham Falls and summits in the Scapegoat Wilderness.

Saturday afternoon after reaching camp at a saddle near Morrell Lookout we hiked along the ridge to Morrell Mountain. The summit has a short scramble up very surpris-

ingly loose small rock slope.

The following day we hiked to an unnamed summit just over 8000' at the head of Dunham and Blind Canyon Creek. This 7 mile hike is entirely on ridge tops with four approximately 500' elevation loss/gains. The route is very easy to follow and is mostly open grass, rock and scattered trees. More mule deer, Clark's nutcrackers and a dozen migrating raptors were seen along the route. Two large dusky grouse burst into the air in a heart stopping wing beat just ahead of our feet. Also three large but fortunately old bear-scats lay on the summit.

Besides taking in the beauty of the mountains, lakes and forest, and fall colors, Vick set up a small ham radio antenna. On the three summits he contacted 56 hams around the US and Canada as far away as Nova Scotia, New Hampshire, Florida, Texas and California.

Monday we drove home after an inch of snow fell during the night. Fall season had definitely arrived. -Vick Applegate



Back At The Truck-Time To Leave



Trip Report, Deer Peak Sept. 18th, 2016 More Grueling Than We Thought

Although a hike for Deer Peak was stated as an objective, what the real reason for this hike was to get up into this area east of Fish Creek to explore the extensive area of logging roads along the divide between Petty and Fish Creeks. Looking on a map, Deer Peak is directly west of Petty Mountain, the highest peak in the Bitterroots, to the east, between Petty Cr./ Graves Creek and the Bitterroot River. At 6,703 ft (2048m) it is the highest peak of the Petty Creek -Fish Creek Divide. The West Fork of Petty Creek lies to the northeast, and the South Fork of Petty drains the south east flank. Deer Creek drains the west slope. Extensively logged and burned, this former Plum Creek Timber land became part of the Nature Conservancy's Montana Legacy Project and is now either part of the Forest Service or the new State Of Montana Fish Creek Wildlife Refuge, of which Deer Cr. is the northern boundary of the section south of Interstate 90. All of it is in Mineral County, and you can drive up Deer Creek a little over three miles to where the road rec-



Typical Slope

lamation begins. Around 2 miles in is an old backcountry road sign saying it was mile 14, probably meaning that when the road went all the way across the divide in the past it was 14 miles from its start on the Petty Cr. side -not sure where that was.

When you stand by the campsite at is at the end of the road, at 3900ft, and look around at the maze of logging roads on all sides, it seems you could hike logging roads up there forever. Instead it turned out that it seemed to take forever to hike just 3 miles on one road. Dave Robertson and Maria Cassidy had met David and Julie Kahl at the Snowbowl parking lot up Grant Creek and because of various personal obligations we all went in our own vehicles. As we were driving down Fish Cr. Road, just before the Forks Fishing Access, where the West and South Forks of Fish Cr. come together, David and I saw a bear cub run up the bank from the creek and then back down into it. We stopped at the Forks to use the facilities, then 3 miles further on Deer Cr. comes in from the east, the west end of the former "Deer Cr. Road" now is FS road 7704. About two miles in, around the 14 mile sign there are some ponds in Deer Cr., probably beaver ponds, that when we had been here last April were full of water, so we were surprised to find them still full of water, and scared up two deer, one almost covered by the water in the pond. There had been a small fire in here early in August that they apparently had put out immediately. We could see the burned area along the creek side of the road most of the way back to a little beyond the road end. It burned mostly grass, as there just wasn't that much left in this area to burn.

We parked at the road's end, where there was already another vehicle parked. It was partly cloudy, in the 50's and by later in the afternoon a cold front was to come in with wind and rain. It was no surprise that most of the road is gone just beyond the end of the road in an area with a little spring and a small scree slope, the camber of the hillside making it impossible to drive a vehicle through this area, but a well used footpath transversed it to the other side of what I will call a "washout," an area where the culverts had been removed and the combination of the culvert removal and the natural erosion of a stream had created a "valley." We could see the road bed resume on the other side and quickly became acquainted with what were to be reoccurring themes for the day, one -the washouts, most with running water, the scattered bones of a small ungulate and bear scat. Piles and piles and piles of it, some new enough so it wasn't "smashed down yet." It seemed the bears were mostly eating huckleberries. Large bunches of elder berries still on the bushes, easily reachable from the road, make it look like the bears weren't eating anything locally today. We never saw any bears. The washouts we were encountering here where only in the 3-4 deep category, the road was a little eroded but an obvious trail was easy to follow, we could see trails in the grass where someone or something had gone before us, probably the hunters. We dropped down into a wide washout with a small stream in willow bush, a path had been cut through it, and on the other side we encountered waist high grass with some scattered very healthy knapweed, a few were -I'm not very tall- neck high on me. Shortly after that the road seemed to just end. Consulting maps and the GPS it appeared that the road had once crossed the creek there and switchbacked to go up the west side of the ridge opposite where it would meet another dead end road coming in from the right (west), but the road we wanted went to the left. We tried to follow the not very obvious track of the road across the creek and ended up bush-whacking what seemed like the bank of the road above some willow

Rockier Section Of The Road





We aren't kidding about the bear scat

brush. This road rose quickly and in just a few hundred feet was high enough and the slope steep enough so you wouldn't consider trying to drop down to the creek. This section of the road was a little chewed up and eroded, but it was at the upcoming intersection that we first really encountered what we came to consider a truly reclaimed road -it was like before they permanently closed the roads a bulldozer had gone over them with some of the spikey things behind it and ripped up the road surface. It wasn't just washed out tire tracks as the furrows were too close together, and it became difficult to find a continuous track through them. In some places the road was just a rock field and we found the best track was in the grass and shrubs along the side of the road, on the very edge above the steep slope. Not very comforting as you had to worry about the edge of the road crumbling.

The road we wanted switchbacked at this intersection and we would go back close to 1/2 mile before we were clear of the road we had come on below, and now could see why the road hadn't continued up the Deer Cr. draw, there was a nice little cliff face on the opposite slope and when we looked down saw cliffs below us as well. This section of the road would climb up to the 4,600 ft level and pretty much stay there for most of its route back to below Deer Peak. The washouts steadily became deeper and steeper the higher up we went, we were still seeing the bones and bear scat everywhere. In this traverse we did see one pile of elk old scat and some from a small deer, later on we would see a pile of very old moose scat. After about a mile on this road we rounded a ridge side and came to what the GPS showed as the end of Deer Cr. Rd., shortly before getting there we found an old campfire pit in the road. At the road end, on our right, a road switched back up the hill, but according to the GPS, it just went away towards the top of this ridge and stopped. Our route, now a trail on the GPS, dropped down probably a good 25 feet into a washout with a small stream in it, but we could see the road bed on the other side. We stopped for lunch on the only log we could find, partway up a steep bank. We scrambled up to it, and it supported our weight without sliding down the hill. Now we could look up into the steep gullies that came directly down from the dividing ridge to the south of Deer Peak, but probably couldn't see the peak its self as it was behind the ridge opposite us. The nearly treeless slopes covered in red and yellow shrubs. As Maria noted, it was special to be able to see the lay of the land so clearly and we all loved the view up. We carefully eased ourself down into the washout, crossed the stream in several places and scrambled up the opposite bank. We were only on the ripped road bed for a few hundred feet before we were face to face with another almost as steep washout, we were at the fork were two of the streams coming down from the divide came together, with about equal amounts of water. This stream, however, had something none of us had ever seen before, what seemed to be a bear wallow, a spot in the stream where it looked like a bear had laid in it and made a shallow rounded pool in black dirt.

On the other side of the second deep washout the road was still difficult to walk on with stretches of just rock. The washouts had become progressively deep and now more numerous. After about another 1/2 -3/4 of a mile we came to yet another deeper washout. Previously Dave and Maria had just charged down into the washouts, but here they stopped, mostly because they saw a grouse under a tree on the opposite bank, David got out his binoculars to scope it out and as they observed the only wildlife we had seen besides a few small birds, I got out my maps and on the GPS it looked like our road would end short of the summit and a little over 200 feet below a road we would need to finish the climb. The 2001 Lolo Forest map showed the road ending in the same spot but had trails going up to the road. An alternative route would add another three or so miles. It was going on 1:30, the wind was getting strong with rain drops in it, we still had over two miles to go with 2000 feet of elevation gain. Before we crossed yet another washout we decided we had seen what we came to see and to turn back, having gone a little over 3 miles. We took another break and started back. It seemed like we hadn't gone far before we could see the road we had come in on (Deer Cr. Road). Just before starting down the first of the two deep washouts David and I noticed a piece of flattened aluminum rod, slightly bent, like the stays in internal frame backpacks. David was closer so he picked it up to put it in his pack to carry out. Dave had stashed some bailing twine he had found under a rock to keep it from blowing away, he picked that up on the way out, and I added a piece I found. Other than these items and a piece of logging cable with some sort of gadget on the end, right by the end of the road, that was the only litter we saw. Along the way most of us had gotten out our rain gear. As we came to the switchback above the main road the wind was fierce, like



Bear Wallow?

the wind we'd had in Glacier a few weeks back, and rain drops becoming more numerous. We figured it would be better when we turned the other way on the switchbacks but it didn't matter, it was like the wind was just blowing up the face. As we dropped down to the creek crossing the wind became less, and it was unanimously agreed that we didn't want to climb up on that bank to get around the brush to the old hairpin turn at the creek crossing so when we got down to creek level Dave and Maria started down the slope to cross the creek there, it was pretty open on that side, but when we stepped over the creek we were in alders and had to fight through them to the base of the very steep bank up to the road. The brush helped some but eventually we had to just climb the crumbling dirt and rock of the road edge. It wasn't far from there back through the small stream with the willows and onto the washout before the end of the road. The wind had quieted down enough and it had stopped spitting rain long enough, for us to stop by the vehicles to chat and take pictures before heading home. The hunters also came out about the same time but we never saw them otherwise. We all agreed it had been a great hike in a very different place, even if it had been in conditions more strenuous than we had expected. Now as I looked up at the roads I wondered if all of them had been similarly ripped, or if only the main connector roads had been ripped. Was all logging road walking in that area going to be the same as we had experienced today? We will probably go back someday. it will be fascinating over the next ten years or so to watch this area recover from the logging and burns as nature heals it. The lack of sign of any wildlife other than bear made us wonder just how good for hunting it was.

Deer Peak By The Maps

It isn't very often that we get land back for hiking and back country purposes, but due to the actions of the Nature Conservancy and the Forest Service, this maybe happing in and around Deer Peak (6703 ft). The newest Nine Mile Ranger District Travel Plan Map from 2015 shows no open roads within 3-6 miles of Deer peak in any direction, except one road coming up from the South Fork Of Petty Creek, Rd 5539-2. On the 2001 Travel Plan Map this is designated as a 4-wheel drive road. A call to the Ranger Dist. office confirmed that Rd 5539, "maybe passable for 4-WD trucks," but only to the junction with Rd. 22 (the road from the West Fork Of Petty Cr. Rd. that runs below Deer Peak on the east) where it is gated. This is 2-3 miles (section-wise) from the summit. Road 22 is also closed 2-3 miles (section-wise) on the north side in the West Fork Of Petty Creek drainage. Elevations on the various road closure "trail starts" are, 3900 ft -Deer Creek (5-6 miles by road and ???), 5200 ft, Rd 22, -West Fork Of Petty Creek, but of the two shorter routes it may have the most road mileage, 6040 ft Rd 22/5539-2, with 7-8 miles in on a 4WD road.



2001 FS Map

Also of interest is on the 2001 map is trail 144, that the GPS says is the Petty Cr.-Fish Cr. Divide Trail that starts from the Sawmill Gulch area south of Cyr and runs to the old Wagon Mountain Road on the Graves Cr.-Petty Cr. Divide, estimated to be 15-20 miles distance. This trail goes to the Deer Peak Summit then for a ways follows both Rd 22 (south of Deer Peak) and Rd 5539-2. The 2001 map shows a spur of the trail going from Pete's Deer Cr. Rd., where the roads would have ended on our trek, but that spur is not there on the GPS map. We still don't know what we would have found when we got to the end of the road. In the future as this area recovers from both past logging and the big burns in the area TR 144 may become a nice trail to hike on.



2015 FS Travel Plan Map, the area today

9/21/2016 Very interesting report! A note: Deer Peak is actually not the highest peak in this area, there is an unnamed peak with a highest contour line of 6,720' a few miles to the SW. I climbed it a couple yrs ago, and Alden Wright also did so not too long afterwards. It's located at the head of Burdette Ck drainage and is easily accessible from Fish Creek. -Dan Saxton Via FaceBook
Thanks for this update Dan. I searched it out on my GPS and found it on the divide between Burdette Creek and Deer Creek, we were looking up on it from the end of the road. From there over to Deer Peak is the highest ridge in the area. Julie



Trip Report Cabin Work Party and Picnic Oct. 1st, 2016

The weather for this day was interesting, it was suppose to rain early in the morning, which it did, clearing off as we met to workout transportation up to the Bass Creek Overlook, with another round expected in early mid afternoon, then wind in the 15 MPH range with gusts up to 20 MPH. At the overlook the party consisting of trip leader Paul Jensen, Steve Schombel, Alden Wright, Lois Crepeau, Paul Gazzo and dog Sky, Bryan Kercher, Rob McLoed, Linda Pirtariner, Dennis Rogers, David & Julie Kahl divvied up chainsaws, chinking materials, tools and newspapers to haul the roughly 2 1/4 miles to the cabin. The geriatric crew, Lois, Steve, Julie and David, moved slower. This is a strange trail, though it's roughly the equivalent of hiking to the top of Mt. Sentinel, and the more you hike a trail the easier it usually seems, that doesn't happen with this trail -it just remains a grunt that takes us about 2 hrs to climb.

We had a good crew division, two chainsaws, three splitting sites and enough people to carry log rounds, and transport cut pieces to the stackers under the cabin. Most everybody changed off jobs except Rob and Linda who just kept at the chinking. Around 1:30 it rained, with some grappuel, and we sat either inside the cabin or under it, out of the weather and had some lunch and visited, and checked the Griz game score on a smart phone. When the rain stopped after about 15 min. we finished up the wood cutting, ready to head back down after a group photo, around 3:PM. Rob and Linda stayed later to continue chinking. Lois had brought up her "Flat Bob" a cutout of Bob Marshall she takes places and photographs., we got pictures of that before we headed down to get the picnic together.

It was very windy at the overlook, but we set up anyway, we had to put the cover down on the little grill to get it to light, put a full can of beer on the paper bowls to keep them from blowing away, there were many times that someone went chasing a wayward object. We had much of the usual fare, beer, chips and dip for snacking, grilled brats, coleslaw and several other good salads, cookies, and Steve's plum cobbler made from the plums from his tree. The last of the workers got down and we sat around a very active fire and visited and ate, until the wind got to us between 6:30 and 7. A seven gallon jug of water was used to put the fire out and tired but satisfied people loaded up to call it a day. -Julie Kahl



Photo Julie Kahl

Flat Bob



Rob: Photo Bryan Kercher
Linda: Photo Julie Kahl



The Group

Photo Julie Kahl

We would like to thank:
 Bob Garrity for sawing out all of the blowdown over the trail before the work party day
 Mark and Susan Behrman, of Weatherall Northwest, in Hamilton for the donation of chinking materials, and Rob McLoed and Linda Pietariner for making many trips up to the cabin to do the chinking.



Photo Julie Kahl

Loading up



The cutting

Photos Bryan Kercher



The Splitting



Stacking



RETRO PHOTO ESSAY

10 YEARS AGO, JUNE 3RD 2006, WE RE-ROOFED THE CABIN



Tom Hanou donated the aluminum panels and quite a bit of conversation went into deciding how to get them up to the cabin. It was eventually decided to bolt them to 2 X 4's and do a variety of "deer carry" type efforts. Electric tools with batteries and the ladder also had to be carried up.



South side finished



The south side was done first

Steve Niday and Tom Hanou
scope out the north side



Workers
Steve Niday, Tom Hanou,
Paul Jensen, Forest Dean,
Alden Wright, David Kahl,
Fred Schwanemann,
John Wolverton, Paolo Segre,
Doug Kitchen, Lorraine Riedl,
Julie Kahl -photos

Steve Niday flashes the stove pipe



The long over hanging ends were trimmed off



All finished

Edges are covered



The following weekend, June 11th a 2nd party would haul up concrete and water to mix it with, to make a more stable base for a front cabin support
Steve Niday, Tom Hanou
Paul Jensen, John Wolverton,
Ron Pierson, Steve Schombel,
Jim McLean, Doug Kitchen
Mary Dalton
David & Julie Kahl

ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Annual Membership Fee \$10

Note: Membership includes all members of a family or household

Make Check payable to “the Rocky Mountaineers” and send to: The Rocky Mountaineers, PO Box 4262, Missoula MT 59801

Name: _____

Additional Family Members' Names: _____

Address: _____

Best Phone include area code: _____

2nd Phone (optional): _____

E-Mail: _____

2nd E-Mail (optional): _____

Pay by **PayPal** available on the Rocky Mountaineers' Website.
Click on the membership link on the main page



Doug Kitchen, David Kahl, John Wolverton, Steve Niday, Tom Hanou