

A photograph of a snowy mountain landscape. In the foreground, a pair of skis is visible, partially buried in the snow. The middle ground shows a valley with snow-covered slopes and some evergreen trees. In the background, a large, rugged mountain peak is visible, partially obscured by mist or low clouds. The overall scene is a winter mountain setting.

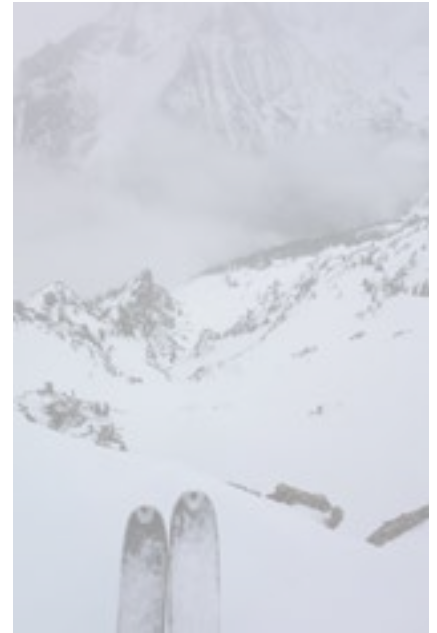
The Mountain Ear

Monthly Newsletter of The Rocky Mountaineers

April, 2017



Cover Photo: The one that got away,
couloir on the way to
Little Tincup Peak not skied
Photo: Joshua Phillips



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

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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 meetings are generally held at 6:PM at a location 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.

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: Should 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



APRIL 11TH, 2017 MONTHLY MEETING

Bryan Kercher, will give a presentation on photos from Glacier National Park

DUES PAID IN APRIL

MAY 9TH, 2017 MONTHLY MEETING

Club Picnic in Pattee Canyon, 6:PM (eastern end, left side of the road, but park in lot with outhouse on the right side of the road, walk down to the site) and election of Officers



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

There are a few loose ends to tidy up. First, April is the month when dues are paid. This will be the last chance to become an official member, and eligible to vote in the next election. Also, there will be a business meeting prior to the regular meeting on April 11th at 6:00 PM at the Elk’s Club Grill, 112 N. Pattee Street. We need to finalize the list of candidates for the election, and a few other items. I think we have a very good list so far; in fact, we have more volunteers than jobs. This is unusual! It will be more of a matter of deciding who will do what. We might ask members to choose between two candidates at the May meeting for one of the positions. We will also take nominations from the floor at the general meeting, if any of the readers feel left out. There is information on April’s presentation in this newsletter.

The May meeting will be a potluck picnic up at Pattee Canyon on Tuesday, May 9th. After having some food we pause and take a vote on candidates, and discuss other business. We gather at one of the group sites. The campground is not open yet, so people have to carry in food and drinks from the main parking lot across the road. You can come and go as you want, but some people start gathering as early as 5:30. This will be the last club gathering until the Glacier Classic in August. If the weather turns bad we may have to move this event. Watch for announcements in early May.

The Glacier Classic will be at a private campground, Johnson’s, in St. Mary this year. This is also new for our club, but the reservable group sites were snapped up this year. It was decided that it would be better to go somewhere with a reservation than to try to find something on short notice. There should be more details on the Glacier Classic, so read on.

The next group of not-yet officers have some exciting ideas for changes for the club. The September meeting will probably be at a brewery and will be a fun event to socialize, instead of having someone showing slides. We will definitely try to find a better place for the business meetings, and, probably, for the general meeting. And maybe we’ll try to find some big name speakers, at least a few times a year. All for the better.

This may be my last message, but I hope the club continues to grow. Steve Schombel



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, 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

UP COMING TRIPS AND ADVENTURES

POINT OF ROCKS HIKE, SUNDAY, APRIL 9TH

This is a short hike, 1.2 miles one way, with 272 ft. elevation gain, on a constructed trail downstream from Albeton. Background: a few years ago there arose great interest in the Mullan Road. This area was one of two where the road was actually constructed, with excavations, blasting, and rock work. It is also one of the few areas where the original path of the road could be seen. Volunteers cleared off the area, made a nice foot trail, and the DOT put up interpretive signs. I'm curious to see if the path is still being maintained. It may be brushy and hard to follow. Since it is such a short hike I propose to also drive down to the Triple Bridge area, where we can drop down to the river and hike upstream, looking up some magnificent cliffs to another constructed section of the Mullan Road. Or we could drive down to Fish Creek and hike to where it flows into the Clark Fork. If you've never been there this is a very pretty place. Or we could try to do all three, if time allows.

If interested e mail stephenschombel@yahoo.com, or indicate below if we know each other

TRAPPER PEAK (10,157 FT) SNOWSHOE HIKE SATURDAY, APRIL 22

This is great snowshoe (or ski) hike with no avalanche danger, great views, and intermediate difficulty (non-technical). In the summer it is 8.4 miles round trip with 3800' elevation gain. It is unlikely that we will be able to drive to the summer trailhead, so we might have another 3 miles round trip and another 1000' elevation gain (off trail). This is a popular trip, and there will be several groups climbing at different speeds. I have friends who will lead faster groups to the peak while I lead "from the rear." Skiers are welcome, but I hope that skiers will be together in a group or groups. Alden Wright rocky@wrightmontana.net

WILDFLOWER WALK, PATTEE CANYON OR MILLER CREEK APRIL 23RD

We will watch the conditions to see which is the best area to see early season wildflowers
jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

O'BRIAN CREEK, MAY 21ST

This will be a go as far as we want, on roads in the O'Brian Creek area west of Missoula. Wildflower viewing should continue with later season flowers, may see some early bitterroots jawkal@rockymountaineers.com

TRIP REPORTS



CHIEF JOSEPH MAR. 10-11TH

At 7200 feet (but 100 miles further south) we expected Chief Joseph -Lost Trail Pass to be colder than the rest of the area that we ski, so it was a surprise when Lois Crepeau, David & Julie Kahl, about noon on the 10th, looked down at mushy, almost corn snow. And no new snow. Steve Schombel, the 4th member of our party had had jury duty late yesterday and wouldn't be joining us until tonight at our cabin at the Broad Axe east of Sula. First we went to the Gordon Reese cabin to have lunch and take pictures, as usual Lois ran into people she knows. She spent the day snowshoeing down Broadway to the Gibbons Pass Rd. There was a snowmobile hill climb at Powder Mt. on the 11 & 12th and snowmobiles were racing up and down Gibbons Pass Rd. some very loud. There was a report that some were seen on the cross country trails.



The groomer was just coming in as we started out for the cabin, David & I decided to try and ski Banshee, got there from the cabin and found it hadn't been groomed, we could see old tracks and went down the 1st two hills, finding that lumpiness under the snow made it almost impossible to get into a snow plow, so we climbed back up, then skied around the Technique Meadows circle and then up the Timber Trail to the Moose Trail and took the furthest west trail -the Lost Trail Loop- with some nice downhill, back to the parking lot. Lois was just coming back and we headed down to the Broad Axe around 4 PM. It was a great day for photos, the last few years we had been here it was raining, so no good views. Today it was clear enough to see east to the Pintlars and the Pioneers from the cabin, and south into the Bitterroots in Idaho from the Lost Trail Loop. Got some good



Rockies variation Three Toed Woodpecker (They have some yellow on their heads)
All Photos Julie Kahl

views of the Bitterroots in MT on the way down to the Broad Axe. On the hills to the north of the East Fork drainage we only saw deer, some sitting in the shade to avoid the 50 degree plus temperature. No critters on the hills above the lodge tonight. Steve and Lois were already at the cabin when we got there. We unloaded and settled in. Had snacks and salads while waiting for the pot luck food to warm, then the guys did the dishes while Lois and I walked over to the Restaurant to pay. We spent the evening discussing the ins and outs of home brewing beer and wine.

It got below freezing over night and we lingered over breakfast, waiting for the rising sun to burn the frost off our vehicles, there were deer and sheep on the hills to the north this morning .Around 9:30 we loaded and headed back up to Chief Joseph. At the road over Lost Trail Pass, both sides were parked up with vehicles and the Gibbons Pass Rd. trailhead was completely parked up. Parked at Chief Joseph, two ladies coming out from skiing said it was really icy, because all the melting snow from yesterday had refrozen on the trails. We all decided to walk or snowshoe. Lois and Steve went to the cabin then down to the Gibbons Pass Rd. again. David and I went to check out Banshee, found it was groomed, but very icy and slick, the hard packed trail wasn't something you wanted to fall on. We decided to continue to walk down Banshee, an interesting trek as normally when going down you are so concentrating on the track in front of you, you don't get to see the scenery. Today we got to see the scenery, including a Rockies variation of a three toed woodpecker. We came back up the Joseph Creek Trail, at the Whoop-ee Trail junction, with a bench, there are gray jays that will sit on your hand looking for handouts. From there we went up to the cabin, then down the Continental Divide Trail to the parking lot. Lois and Steve were also just getting back and as we changed our clothes Norm Singley and his girl friend came over to visit -they were heading down to the May Creek Cabin to spent the weekend with two big dogs. We must have visited almost an hour before everyone headed out. The day had warmed up slightly then clouds moved in with a chilly wind, but still it had been a good day. Julie Kahl



Bitterroot Mts. in Idaho



WATERWORKS HILL MARCH 19, 2017

This was a routine hike on the edge of town. As you get farther north the traffic noise is almost gone, so we drove up Duncan Drive to the Sunrise TH. There are some other TH's along Duncan Drive, but this one has a lot of parking. We took the longer path NW to the base of some hills, then S on a trail which follows a ridge, and on top in some places. We went down the Mountainview Trail, then up the Old Duncan along the creek and a short spur back to the car. There are other junctions along the way.

It was a pleasant spring day. Things are greening up. There was some mud but very little ice left. And there were Meadow Larks and other birds singing in the distance. Lots of other hikers, too. We did about 4 miles in 2 ¾ hours, a good pace. Joining me were: Roy R., Dave R., and Alden. Steve Schombel



LITTLE TIN CUP PEAK (PEAK 9617')- BITTERROOTS MARCH 19



Photos Joshua Phillips

On this final day of the 2016-17 winter (and a good one it has been!), Joshua Phillips and I skied up and down one of the Bitterroots higher peaks- via a very rarely used approach- up the Little Tin Cup Creek drainage. From “downtown” Darby we headed west toward the Tin Cup Creek trailhead (this becomes FR 639 at some point) but my truck was stopped by unplowed roads right at the FS boundary. So at about 7:30am we started skiing up the road. After about a mile, we turned and headed south on 639-B (I think). Followed this for around another mile and a half to a major switchback right near the mouth of Little Tin Cup Creek drainage. My original plan was to more or less follow the creek and head straight up the canyon, but Joshua suggested we instead follow the north ridge to a point where we could then descend to a small lake a few miles up the canyon. I thought this sounded good so we started heading up the ridge. The weather had started off fairly overcast and as we continued to ascend the clouds became thicker, the views fewer, and it even started to lightly snow. At around 7500’ we decided to abandon the trip to about 8500’ (the ridge narrows there and we were going to drop into that small lake at that point) and instead contoured and slightly descended back down to the Little Tin Cup Creek basin. From there we gained elevation gradually into the upper part of the drainage. Around 8900’ we cleared the last remaining trees and geared up for the final push to the summit. Another 700’ of very moderate climbing put us on top at about 2:30 pm. The clouds broke just enough to see Sugarloaf Peak across the Chaffin Creek drainage, but we were unable to view The Shard, South Chaffin Peak or even much of anything back to the east. After a couple pics we ripped the skins and began the descent. The top couple thousand feet was fun, but as we got lower it became more work. We stuck to the north side of the canyon. Joshua has a good many years of BC skiing under his belt so he did fine- I struggled. He kindly put up with my naiveté though, and we eventually made it back to the FR 639-B. On the way out we passed some “hard working Montanans” who had managed to get their truck stuck on a road they shouldn’t have been driving on. We arrived back at my truck at 6:30pm. Fun day!

Trip stats: Approx 16 miles round trip from the FS boundary where we were forced to begin. About 5700’ of elevation gain overall. 11 hours of near continuous movement.
Forest Dean March 26th,





✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

FREEZEOUT LAKE MAR 22-23



Photo David Kahl

Once again we got there too late, in very windy conditions (to us, but normal for over there). Maybe we need to start planning this trip a week or so earlier. There were a few snow geese there, we couldn't see them, but hear them, also a good number of swans and ducks. Wed. the 22nd was warm, but with Chinook winds, you can tell from the color of the water, from a distance -green- that it was choppy, but not quite with white caps. Lois Crepeau and Zona Linderman came up through Augusta, where they like to stop for ice cream, and were driving around the west side of the lake when Julie & David Kahl got there around 12:30. Lois and Zona saw a golden eagle on that side, and picked up a horse skull. David and I had lunch at the Priest Butte Pond, then went to Pond 1 that had a few sea gulls, ducks and swans in its choppy water. With our binoculars we could see Lois and Zona on the far side of the lake. We checked out some of the other ponds on the east side, there are several ponds you can't see well and they may have had a few geese on them.

After braving the wind for a few hours we went to find our guest house, The Rusty Spur, Lois had suggested we try. It had a Fairfield address, but tracking it down on my phone we found it was 12 miles west on Hwy 408, between Fairfield and Augusta, about one half of the way, at a farm tucked up on Golden Bench. There were great views of Crown Butte and The Reef, rock formations around the Deerborn River to the south, as well as the Highwood Mts. to the east along Hwy 408. Lois and Zona weren't far behind us and we had some time to unpack and rest a bit before meeting our granddaughter Abby and her finance, Taylor (they live in Vaughn) at the Cozy Corner Cafe in Fairfield, at 6:PM. We thought that the cafe was open into the evening, but found it closed at 3:PM (Off season maybe?) so we went into Choteau to the Elk Country Grill only to find it was also closed, with no explanation. So we had a nice dinner at the Log Cabin. It turned out that years ago Lois had been on an outfitted trip in to the Bob Marshall Wilderness outfitted by Taylor's uncle Rocky Heckman. She also told us about working on a lookout repair camp in Idaho that had a four wheel, square box motorized "wheel barrow." We visited a bit before turning in, it was very quiet.



Golden Eagle
All Photos Julie Kahl

On the morning of the 23rd, I went out to take pictures and 6 swans flew over my head at about 20 feet, I tried to get a picture but my camera was on telephoto and I only got a picture of the sky between them. There are several little stock ponds on the neighboring farms where the swans may have spent the night somewhat sheltered from the wind, though it wasn't near as windy up there. We headed back to the ponds about 10 AM, stopping to take pictures. Lois and Zona were going to visit the ponds on the east side, and David and I drove around to the west side. Still only a few sea gulls, ducks and swans braving the choppy water, a little white-cappy today. We saw the golden eagle in the same place Lois and Zona had seen it the day before, on a spit behind it was two bald eagles, also saw a harrier hawk. Meadow larks and horned larks were everywhere and groups of smaller birds. Lois and Zona joined us on the west side then we all went back to Pond 1 where on the far side was a raft of snow geese, a few came in and they did a fly up. Three and then four pelicans were soaring over the lakes and the neighboring country side, but never landed to join a few on the far shore. There were more swans, ducks and seagulls on the pond today, it's nesting islands were busy. We had lunch on our tailgates, and David saw a white ermine run from cover to cover, but never saw it again. There was no snow on the ground so it really stood out. We went up to check out the Priest Butte Pond again, as Lois and Zona went back to the main area. Two seagulls were searching the shore and mud flats on the Priest Butte Pond, but other than a scattering of ducks no action. As we passed Pond 1 on our way back to Fairfield the raft of snow geese had moved over to the near shore, people were lined up taking photos.

We drove Hwy 408 to Augusta, then took the Sterns-Augusta Road (Bean Lake Rd.) back to Hwy 200. Back there we saw lots of blue birds, a hawk, and two ponds with 2 sandhill cranes each. No ducks or swans on these very choppy ponds. The partially melting snow on the mountains of the front range left interesting stripped patterns on the slopes, and we saw mule deer in several places. Coming back on Hwy 200 we saw several bald eagles and in Potomac David saw some elk up on a hillside. Julie Kahl



Front Range near where the Deerborn River emerges



Sandhill Cranes
on a
Front Range Pond



LARRY CREEK MAR. 26TH

Seven of us, plus one dog, met and went down to the Larry Creek trailhead which is near the Bass Creek trailhead south of Florence. It was a great day for spring hiking: blue sky, sunny, and warm. We took the main trail, Larry Creek Trail #129, about 2 1/2 miles to a spur trail which looped back and rejoined the main trail about 1/2 mile from the parking lot. The route featured a few small creek crossings, one decent uphill, and one short steep downhill. Most of the terrain is open forest dominated by big Ponderosas but we also saw stands of aspen and some spring buttercups. We all agreed it's a beautiful place to hike. Participants were Me, Steve S., Dave and Julie K., Lois C., Fred, Eileen M. and her dog. Total mileage was 4.38 miles. Dave Robertson





Left: Sapphire Mts. and Bitterroot Valley to the east

Below- Lots of riders out today
All Photos: Julie Kahl



ADVENTURES OF FLAT BOB

Left: first buttercups, Larry Creek Loop, Mar. 26th 2016

Right: Sunlight through the snow on the Chief Joseph Cabin porch, Mar. 10th.



RETRO PHOTOS ESSAY

Missoulian 4/16/1969

Spring Trip to Garnet Offers Family Adventure

Spring outings into Montana's snow-covered areas are a family affair these days, particularly for the outdoor enthusiasts in an outing group like the Rocky Mountaineers of Western Montana.

The club, which headquarters in Missoula, arranges trips into the mountains like one taken recently into the old ghost town of Garnet while the winter's snow still lay heavy on the ground.

The party on this particular trip, a group of 19, included a seven-year-old hiker, Dean Moore, who made the trip all the way in and out on his own while his two-month-old brother,

Sean, slept in a rabbit-skin bunting nestled in a box hauled on a toboggan.

Transportation was by snowshoe and skis and the day was enhanced by bright sunshine that made visiting the ghost town a connoisseur's delight.

The Rocky Mountaineers, a club that features outdoor activities for the entire family, has announced plans to expand its membership in Missoula and vicinity as well as its activities.

They offer group participation in hiking, camping, backpacking, mountaineering and winter ski activities, bicycling, canoeing, kayaking and rafting.

Membership is open to anyone and interested persons can contact the member of the club, or one of its officers.

Recently elected by members of the Rocky Mountaineers were: Dave Line, president; Bill Myers, vice president; Rhoda Bjelland, secretary; and Bob Berson, treasurer.

The club's activities over the next month include a bike ride to Freshwater rock climbing school in the Hater Roots, a family hike and picnic to the end of Lake McDonald in the Missouas and a ski tour to Hoodoo Pass west of Supai.



PHOTOS BY DON WRIGHT



This copy of the April 4th, 1969
Missoulian was made available to the
club by Jackie Moore
(pictured with the baby upper left)
in 2015
Jackie was the creator of much of the
hand drawn art in the early
Mountain Ears



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

Rocky Mountaineers' Meeting Minutes 3/14/2017

I. Call To Order: 6:07, Brooks & Browns

II. Attendees: Steve Schombel, Paul Jensen, Steve Niday, Julie Kahl, Alden Wright, Lois Crepeau, Forest Dean, David Kahl, Joshua Phillips John Bardsley, Susanna Phillips, Barbara Schwarz

III. Treasurer's Report: \$825.28

IV. Discussions:

A. New officers:

1. Forest Dean was thinking of running for president
2. John or Brent or Joshua -new VP, sec. or tres., or newsletter editor
3. Steve Niday suggested Joshua for tres. as he's already on the signature list

B. Glacier Classic

1. Steve Niday will checkout the Johnson private campground in St. Marys
2. Chewing Blackbones
 - a. Can't make good reservations until guy comes on in April
 - b. Some thought too expensive, other's thought \$20 a night for a tent ok
 - c. Joshua thought we should see if we can make a bid

C. GMAR (Grizzly Man Adventure Race)

1. Joshua still runs into people who ask when they will start up again, it was their favorite race
2. He might revive it if the right people got in on it
3. Need to be working on it by Nov., to have the website up by Dec.
4. Joshua -why TRM interested in that account?
 - a. If GMAR permanently gone -funds are just sitting there
 - b. If no activity account my get closed? -it's collecting interest
 - c. If the race may get resurrected -leave it alone for now

D. September meeting

1. Some sort of social gathering
2. Steve S. had suggested having it as part of a cabin work day, earlier in Sept.
3. Welcome Back Party
 - a. Put up flyers
 - b. Have videos, awards
 - c. Ask for peoples' feedback on what they would like to see from the club
 - d. Where? Most wanted it to be indoors
 - 1) Image-Nation Brewery
 - 2) Iron Horse
 - 3) Press Box
 - 4) Brooks & Browns
 - 5) Senior Center

E. Need a new business meeting place, even with no band Brooks & Browns too noisy

1. Need a new place for having meetings period
2. Most of us are uncomfortable meeting at the Trail Head
 - a. Feel rushed -can't stand around and visit afterwards around snacks and drinks
 - b. Feel like we are infringing on their space

F. Barbara Schwarz will speak in Oct.

V. Adjourn 6:46 PM