

The Mountain Ear

December 2021

From the Editor

Is winter finally here?

Its easy to get depressed lately. Most of us are winter enthusiasts and are chomping at the bit to click into the ski's or swing the tools or strap on the snowshoes. Sixty degrees and no snowstorms day after day makes one feel like screaming! I wore shorts on my run yesterday...that isn't supposed to happen this time of year.

However, its amazing what just waking up to a little skiff of snow will do to rejuvenate. Hope is alive! Let's pray for snow, cold and all things WINTER!

Most of our activities these next few months will be embracing all things winter. A bunch of us will be attending the Bozeman Ice Festival next week (please let us know if you will be there and let's get together). The following week, our feature presentation will discuss all the great places to go backcountry skiing around western Montana. A couple of Lolo Pass XC ski trips. Winter Solstice BC ski trip up Ward Mountain. And, looking forward to mid-January, our second annual Winterfest. Get out and join us!

We will also continue to offer educational opportunities. About ten folks got together this past week for our skin-regluing party. Our Avalanche Course is on the calendar and still has space left. We have one roundtable planned for January and more in the works. Let us know what else we as a club can do to help you achieve the necessary skills to feel confident in the mountains!

Here's to a happy holiday season to all of you. Thank you for being a member and a valued part of our Missoula area outdoor community.

Cheers,
Forest Dean

December Feature Presentation

"Backcountry Skiing in Western Montana"

This month's presentation will be on backcountry skiing in western Montana.

Paul Jensen, a local skier, will show photos from the 70's to the present. Local and some not so local destinations will be shown to hopefully give skiers more ideas of places to go and what they look like. The focus will be on Bitterroot skiing because it's good and it's also close to Missoula.

Paul started hiking, climbing and skiing in western Montana in his teens and has never stopped. In addition to multiple ski tours over nearly every known local backcountry destination over the years, he has skied and climbed all over the world: Canadian Rockies, BC, Yukon, Alaska, South America, the Alps, Himalaya....the list is extensive. One of the most unassuming people you will ever come across, he is a true local legend!

Location: Spirit of Peace Community Building- 506 Toole Avenue. This is located on the north side of the downtown area- very close to the pedestrian bridge over the train tracks.

Event begins at **6:00PM** Dec. 14. Open to everyone!

NOTE: You are more than welcome to bring food and beverages (including adult beverages) for this event! Additionally, we will have beer and snacks on hand (donation suggested).

Looking Ahead...

January- "The Forgotten Motherlode" - A presentation about various climbers that have completed world-class mountaineering routes around Montana over the last 60 years. Presenter: Justin Willis

February- "The Snowman Trek: High Altitude Adventure in Bhutan". Presenters: Sarah Halvorson and Mary Morrison

March- "30 Years of River Diplomacy in Tibet and China". Presenter: Travis Winn

April- "Climbing the 9000' Peaks in the Bitterroots". Presenter: Forest Dean

May- "Nutrition for the Mountain Athlete". Presenter: Jessie Thomas

Winter Conditioning Wednesdays

Join us for our weekly climb of Mount Sentinel! Hikes start at 6PM- bring your headlamp, traction crampons (if snowy/icy) and/or poles. Start or continue conditioning for your favorite winter sports & activities or come along just to get some fresh air midweek. All abilities welcome. Meet at 6pm. See the website calendar or our social media sites for information on which trailhead we will be starting from and who that week's leader/coordinator will be.

Coming in January, we will transition from Sentinel/Jumbo hikes to Winter Rando and Winter XC Ski Wednesdays. Winter Rando will be at either Snowbowl or Marshall, depending on the week and conditions. Winter XC will take place at one of the local groomed trail systems. Details in next newsletter.

ALSO...for those of you who live in the Bitterroot (or for those who don't mind driving a bit) we are pleased to announce BITTERROOT WINTER CONDITIONING. Andrew Twardowski will lead hikes up St. Mary Road every Tuesday and Thursday morning starting on Dec. 14th. For more details, check the calendar page on our website.

Level 1 Avalanche Course- January 11-16, 2022

For the fourth consecutive year we are pleased to announce a LEVEL 1 AVALANCHE COURSE (Sponsored and Trainers provided by: West Central Montana Avalanche Center)

This course is available exclusively to members of The Rocky Mountaineers! Due to COVID the course will once again be structured a little different than in the past. Instead of in-person classroom sessions, that portion of the course will be done on-line. Also, in order to keep group sizes smaller and keep folks more physically distant, the student to instructor ratio will be 4:1.

Course Description

Format:

2 part classroom component + 2 day field component

Date | Location:

Tuesday-Thursday Evenings (1/11 & 1/13) On-Line Classroom Component

Sat-Sun- All Day (1/15-1/16) Field Component | Lolo Pass Backcountry

Price: \$450.00

Avalanche Level 1

The level 1 course is designed for current and aspiring backcountry travelers. This course focuses on developing a solid foundation in avalanche knowledge and backcountry travel skills. Following the American Avalanche Association (A3) curriculum instructors cover systematic approaches for sorting and prioritizing information in the complex environment of decision-making in the backcountry. Forty percent of the course is classroom based and the other sixty percent is field based. Participants will travel in the backcountry, in and around avalanche terrain.

This course focuses on the following:

- Basic avalanche terminology
- Recognizing avalanche terrain
- Travel procedures in avalanche terrain
- Formation of the mountain snowpack
- How weather changes the snowpack
- Human factors and how they can influence decision-making
- Interpreting the avalanche forecast and advisory
- Tour planning
- Avalanche transceiver use and rescue skills
- Field observations of terrain, snowpack, and weather
- Use and interpretation of stability tests
- Implementing systems for prioritizing information, working as a team
- Classroom decision-making scenarios to practice use of the checklist

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What is included:

1. Professional instruction (4:1 Student/Instructor Ratio)
2. Coursework books
3. Classroom (on-line) and field instruction

What is not included:

1. Transportation to and from Lolo Pass
2. Personal gear
3. Avalanche rescue gear
4. Food

TO REGISTER: Please contact Forest Dean (406-240-7612 mtnear1@gmail.com).

Payment (\$450) required to guarantee your spot.
COURSE LIMIT: 12 participants

2nd Annual - Winterfest!

The Rocky Mountaineers will be hosting our second annual "Winterfest" for members to attend. This was a great event last year with nearly 40 people attending!

Mark your calendar for Saturday, January 15th for WINTERFEST at Lolo Pass area! We will offer a slew of trips that day: Backcountry and XC skiing, Snowshoeing, Beacon Park Practice, Hot Springing, etc. In the evening we plan to gather at Lolo Hot Springs. We will have an outdoor gathering with a bonfire AND each member attending will also receive a new TRM Pint Glass! Snacks and beverages will be provided.

This is an event for members only. You are welcome to bring a guest, family member, kids, etc. RSVP requested- email: mtnear1@gmail.com

Check The Rocky Mountaineers' Website www.rockymountaineers.com for trip listings and event details (coming soon). Current trip lineup:

- AVALANCHE COURSE- LEVEL ONE
- LOLO PASS BEACON PARK PRACTICE
- LOLO PASS XC SKI TRIP
- LOLO PASS BC SKI TOUR
- LOLO HOT SPRINGS SNOWSHOE TRIP

Accommodations are available at
Lolo Hot Springs, call 406-273-2297
For RV And Cabins 406-273-2294
(Winter Tent and RV hookups)
Lochsa Lodge in Idaho 208-942-3405
OR, Camp in your vehicle or tent!

Upcoming Trips and Activities

Ice Climbing- **Bozeman Ice Festival**- Wed-Sun, Dec 8-12
XC Skiing- **Lolo Pass**- Sat, Dec 11
XC Ski/Snowshoe- **Lolo Pass**- Sun, Dec 19

BC Skiing- **Ward Mountain**- Tues, Dec 21
Snowshoe Climb- **Sweeney Peak**- Wed, Dec 29
BC Skiing- **TRM Cabin/Little St. Joseph Peak**- Fri-Sun, Jan 7-9
Various- **WINTERFEST!**- Sat, Jan 15
BC Skiing- **Gash Point (Bitterroots)**- Sat, Jan 22
XC Skiing- **Lee Creek (Lolo Pass)**- Sat, Jan 23
BC Ski/Multiday- **Lima Peaks Ski Tour**- Dates TBD
Education- **Ten Essentials**- Tues, Jan 25
BC Skiing- **TRM Cabin/Little St. Joseph Peak**- Fri-Sun, Feb 4-6

Please visit our website for all the details on these trips!!

www.rockymountaineers.com

Trip Leaders WANTED

Do you have experience leading trips into the backcountry. Or, perhaps you don't, but would like to start doing so? Trip leadership can be a very rewarding experience. It can also provide you with partners to go and do things you would otherwise maybe be doing solo. Either way, if you are interested, WE WANT YOU. One of our greatest challenges with this club is always coming up with enough trips for our membership. We need folks willing and capable of leading these adventures. Interested? Please consider attending our Trip Leader Meetings on January 4th and March 10th. Contact Forest for more details: mtnear1@gmail.com

Trip Reports

All reports from club trips can be found on our website. Check it out. Reports are now easier to locate thanks to the diligent work of Alden Wright.

rockymountaineers.com/tripreports

Club Officers

President- Elizabeth Moore
Vice President/Safety Officer- Casey Lammers
Secretary- Tom Statz
Treasurer- Chris Soriano

Website- Alden Wright
Archivist- Julie Kahl

Newsletter/Trip Coordinator- Forest Dean