



Newsletter



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From the Editor:



Scott Farquhar

WOW, just when I thought “the little red hen” would be creating most of the newsletter on it's own, a flurry of folks agreed to help!!! Thank you Ward Whicker, David Wasson, Manuel Fillon, and JoAnn Herkenhoff for your contributions. I appreciated it and I believe that the readers of the newsletter appreciate it. Ellie Adventure Awards for all!!

Due to your great contributions I delayed writing an article on on ways to use smart phones and satellite communicators in the woods (Spot, InReach, and other Personnel Locator Beacons). However, Shiela, Manuel, Ward and Steve be forewarned that I will be coming to each of you in October to get your expert input for the article I plan to write (note if there are others that have extensive experience that would like to offer advice just contact me at fccmcmcguy@gmail.com).

Finally, (as occurs in every newsletter) I would like to welcome the 6 new members that have joined the Fort Collins Group since June (see the next page for a listing). If you need any help in taking advantage of the resources the club has to offer don't hesitate to contact me or Chris Haugen, our Membership Director. For all of you existing members remember to extend a hearty welcome to any new members you see.

Note that the Member Report tool was acting a bit squirrely so if I missed someone I apologize and I will try to correct the mistake in the next newsletter.

See ya on the trail Scott

Welcome New Members!

July	August
Mathew Bergquist	Timothy,
	Elisabeth,
	Spahr, and
	Susan Wexler
	Mark Nunn

Message from the Chair:

By Ward Whicker



East Ridge of Lead Mountain from it's saddle with "Jiffy Pop Peak". The true summit is not visible.
Photo by John Raich

The summer season is winding down and the days are rapidly getting shorter. As I shivered on a recent morning camped in Skeleton Gulch below Lead Mountain, it was evident that the nights are getting cooler. As scrambling course students Valerie Steen and Timo Nagel, with John Raich and I as leaders/instructors, started our climb of Lead Mountain's east ridge, I noticed that the wildflowers so abundant and lush a few short weeks ago were fading away and the alpine grasses were transitioning from green to golden hues. I also noticed that my stomach was not well, and my energy level was not up to par either. When we reached the saddle at 12,000' between Lead Mountain and "Jiffy Pop Peak", I decided I could not safely and efficiently scramble up the more difficult terrain

ahead like I had been able to do three weeks earlier on Static Peak. I encouraged my companions to proceed upward and I promised to stay put. Then I got to asking, did I eat something bad? Did I have altitude illness? Was I just getting old like the alpine flowers? Well, the definitive answer never came, but I did mentally replay what a busy and amazing summer I and most of my CMC friends had experienced in our high country.

Message from the Chair: (cont.)

After a couple of long hours waiting at the saddle, I had not seen my trip companions. They should have been in view by now, climbing down the sharp, rugged ridge. What could have happened? This is serious terrain, and I could not from my vantage point see any other feasible routes back down. I had watched them ascend along the ridge, and thought I had seen all three on the summit, not more than an hour after leaving the saddle. I was wishing John and I had radios. Did someone fall? I was the one carrying a personal locator beacon (PLB), but I was in the dark as to what was happening. I finally decided that if they did not appear by noon, I would start climbing up to try and locate them, at least visually. Thankfully, a few minutes before I would start climbing despite my nausea and weakness, they appeared on the ridge, all three of them. Ten minutes later they reached the saddle, all chipper and in fine form & spirits. I don't recall telling them how worried I was. What I thought was the summit was only a "false" one, and on the descent, they traversed down much of the ridge on the south side, out of my view, to avoid one difficult & exposed crux section. Had I know these facts beforehand, I would not have worried.

Now, in retrospect, what did I learn from this experience, and what should one do differently, if anything? Well, at least I did two things right; (1) We got an early start and avoided the thunder storms that occurred later in the day; and (2) I asked John Raich, a true mountaineer far more experienced in serious terrain than I, to co-lead the trip. John knew the route well, which is particularly important when leading much less-experienced climbers. One thing I regretted was not having 2-way radio communication. This turned out to be no problem, as things went well on the climb. Had some sort of accident or injury occurred however, our inability to communicate could easily have put our party in jeopardy. Also, I should have given

Message from the Chair: (cont.)

my ResQLink PLB to John to carry to the summit and back, in case a serious accident should happen. While the likelihood of an accident in this case was quite low, the consequences of one could be very high. One thing I learned (re-learned, actually) as well, particularly about myself, is that a string of recent climbs where I felt good and strong, does not necessarily mean that I am immune from experiencing a day of weakness now and then.



ASC students Valerie Steen and Timo Nagel on the East Ridge of Lead Mountain. The pace slows markedly on such terrain.
Photo by John Raich

As to the question of 2-way radios and having a reliable PLB, our Council has approved the use of FC-Group funds to purchase these items. Their cost is modest, and yet their value could be immense, and even potentially life-saving. I have ordered such items and will, as Chair, be the custodian of them. Leaders planning off-trail trips, particularly the more adventuresome ones, will be able to check them out and use them. Also, leaders are always encouraged to ask others to serve as co-leaders on trips. This helps assure a measure of safety and adds response options should a party experience an accident or a need for any number of reasons to split into two groups. In my experience, our club is blessed with a team of highly-competent and skilled leaders who always try to put safety first. The ability to check out 2-way radios and a reliable PLB will add to the layers of safety we all try to implement.

Ward Whicker

New Trip Leader- Peter Gill

By Ward Whicker



Peter Instructing on
N. Diamond Peak
Photo by John Wullschleger

Welcome Peter to our roster of trip leaders for the CMC - Fort Collins Group! Peter completed his Leader-in-Training (LIT) trip, a snow climb of North and South Diamond Peaks, on June 27, 2015. This trip was one of the snow climbs that fulfilled a requirement for completion of the Alpine Scrambling Course (ASC). Kevin Willey and I served as Peter's mentors for the LIT requirement, although for me (not Kevin), the relationship was strictly a formality, as Peter is far more experienced than I when it comes to climbing skills on snow or ice. Peter served as a Senior Instructor for the ASC, both in the lecture and field trip sessions.

ASC students on this trip were Robert Seward, Carly Caprio, Timo Nagel, as well as Jim Pisula & Carolyn Hammond (both ASC students from 2014). Assistant Instructors participating in the climb were John Wullschleger and Terri Gerard.

The ability to safely navigate snowfields can be a great asset to hikers and climbers. This is especially true in spring and early summer when the most efficient mountain routes are often blocked with snowfields, which can be steep and potentially dangerous. On the other hand, some couloirs, gullies and other terrain features can offer much easier travel when snow-covered than at other times when loose talus or scree is the only option. However, in some conditions the steeper snowfields can present real dangers, such as avalanches or losing control and sliding uncontrolled into rocks, trees, or over cliffs. The ASC and especially the Basic Mountaineering Course (BMC) teach the knowledge, techniques and equipment necessary to travel safely on snow.

New Trip Leader (cont.)

Having climbed extensively in the Pacific Northwest, Peter has considerable experience on snow. Among many other things, Peter demonstrated proper snow climbing techniques such as kicking steps, ice axe self-belay, ice axe self-arrest, and the sitting glissade with ice axe control. Certain differences in stepping technique were taught, depending on the angle of the climb, hardness of the snow, and whether one is ascending, traversing, or descending. Fortunately on this trip, the snow was soft enough to allow us to kick platforms to stand on with ordinary stiffer hiking boots. Very hard snow and ice requires crampons, and our Group only teaches these techniques in the BMC. It was very clear to Kevin and I that Peter will be a highly competent leader and one who is lots of fun to be out with.



Peter works in the area of natural resource planning, and currently focuses on river basins as a Project Manager for the Wyoming Water Development Office. He lives in Fort Collins and plans to lead a variety of trips for our Club.

Students on a steep snow traverse
Photo by John Wullschleger

What's Coming Up?

New/Prospective Member Meeting

The next new and prospective members meeting for the CMC Fort Collins Group will be held at the Harmony Library Community Room Wednesday, 16 Sep @ 18:00 (6:00PM). If you know anyone interested in attending, please let them know.

Monthly Programs

September – The speaker is TBD, the program will be held at the Fort Collins Senior Center on September 23rd At 7PM

October - 3000 KMs Journey through North West Namibia by Mark Sickles. The program will be held at the Fort Collins Senior Center on October 28th at 7PM. Use the link below for more information on this program

http://fortcmc.org/MonthlyFlyer/2015_10_flyer.pdf

Graduation Hikes – Mountain Hiking School

By David Wasson

The challenges of the graduation hike began 50 yards from the trailhead. The leader had warned of a treacherous crossing of the swollen river. Also on our minds were other challenges on the trail: Route finding through thick forest, ascending 2900' in 3-1/2 miles, and negotiating a narrow summit ridge with a treacherous drop to the south. Mt Mahler's 12,493' dramatic first view driving southwest from Cameron Pass had added to the excitement and anxiety.

Three weeks earlier, another graduation hike was offered to accommodate MHS students' schedules. No less daunting, the off trail route up Battle Mountain 12,044' via the Larkspur Creek drainage required bushwhacking, map and compass navigation, boulder hopping in the talus slopes, and securing steps on the summit in the howling winds.

Photos by David Wasson

Battle Mountain Graduation Hike

left "Going Up?"

Right – Graduates on the summit



Graduation Hikes – Mountain Hiking School (cont.)

Photos by Scott Farquhar



"I think I can, I think I can,,
Seven Utes in the background



Lake Agnes and Noku Crag



"I KNOW I can, I KNOW I can

The 2015 Mountain Hiking School began in February, met five times in classrooms, traveled together on five field trips, and ended with these graduation hikes that allowed the students to stretch their hiking abilities while helping one another to the goal. Eighteen students began the class, and nine completed all components to graduate. They learned about clothing and gear, map and compass navigation, off trail route finding, mountain weather, Leave No Trace, basic knots, benefits of a GPS device, mountain hazards, the emergency situation process, snow travel, and use of an ice axe for glissading and self-arrest. A variety of scenarios were utilized to practice situations that simulated group and trail challenges and allowed students to think through and discuss their choices together.

Graduation Hikes – Mountain Hiking School (cont.)

Joe Allen, Brittany Pennington, Joan Avens, Kim Cunningham, and Bruce Williams ascended Battle Mtn, found their way through the thick krummholz of Pine Ridge, spotted a herd of elk meandering the talus slope, clung to the rocky summit in the high winds, and descended the Longs Peak trail.

Sarah Bailey, Jeff Bisko, Jessica Cunningham, Bruce Williams, and David Walters crossed an existing three log bridge over the Michigan River, hiked through a field of wildflowers below the saddle of Seven Utes, persevered on the steepest slope, and avoided the severe drop on the summit of Mt Mahler.

Congratulations to the graduates and all the students in the 2015 Mountain Hiking School. Many thanks to the instructors, Scott Farquhar, Terri Gerard, JoAnn Herkenhoff, and Ward Whicker, who made the hours of learning possible and fun.

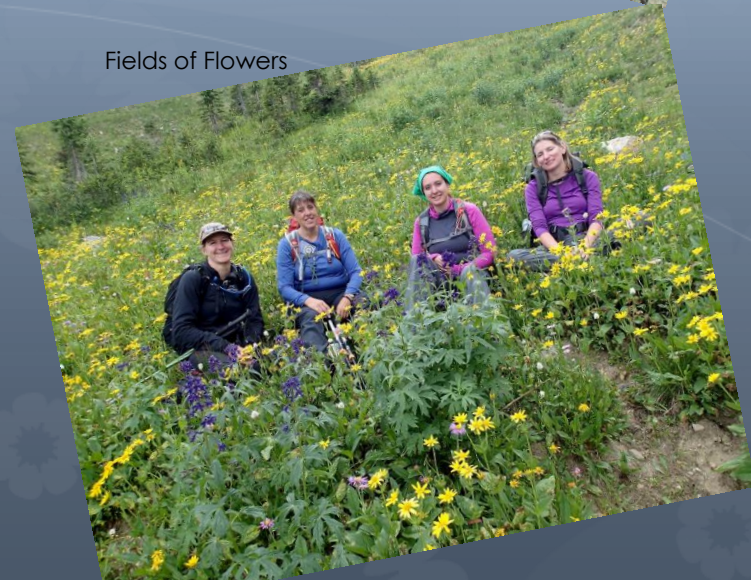
David Wasson, MHS School Director

Photos by Scott Farquhar



Celebrating on top of Mahler

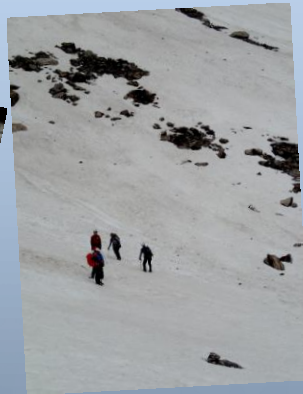
Fields of Flowers



Alpine Scrambling Course Photos

I have included a few photos from the Alpine Scrambling Course Field Days. If folks share additional photos with me, I will include a few more in the November newsletter (note in some "photo share" systems like Flickr I can not download photos if you do not make them public, so you may have to e-mail them to me).

Photos by Scott Farquhar



Practicing in the snow above
Emerald Lake

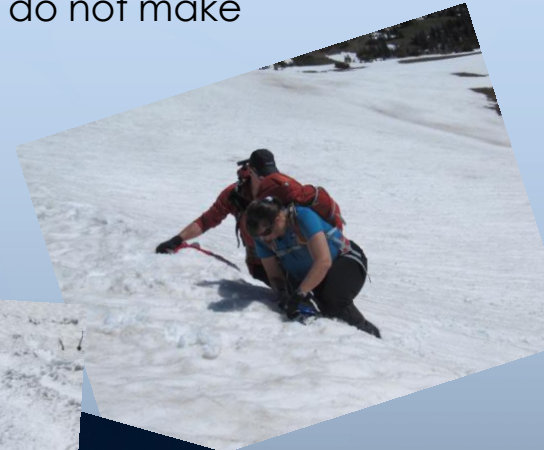


Photo by John Raich



More Snow practice at Diamond
Peaks



Alpine Scrambling Course Photos (cont.)

Climbing Static Peak



Photos by Kim Cunningham



Photo by Nicki Worrell

Did you Know?

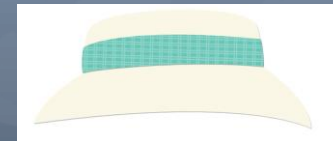
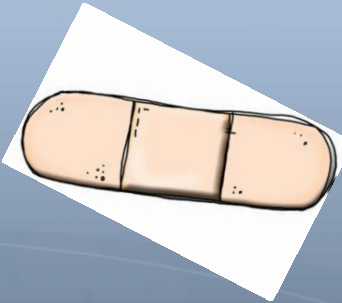
The 10 Essentials – Why you need them!

In July 9NEWS reported on rescues of a 13 year old girl and 43 year old woman

<http://www.9news.com/story/news/local/2015/07/21/rocky-mountain-national-park-the-pool-rescue/30450181/>.

During the first incident the father of the girl called for help at 7:30 pm and the rescuers reached her between 1:30 and 2:00 am. The girl was flown out by helicopter at 4:30 am. Shortly after this rescue was complete the 43 year old called from near Emerald Lake. The rescuers reached her at 7:45 am and did not expect to be back at the trailhead until 10:00 am.

In both cases the rescuers did a fantastic job! However, note the time it may take for a rescue team to reach you. These are both sober reminders why you should be prepared with the 10 essentials to wait for help.

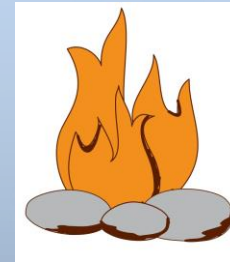


Did you Know?

The 10 Essentials – Why you need them!

Ten Essential Systems

1. **Navigation** (compass / map / GPS)
2. **Sun protection** (sunscreen / hat)
3. **Insulation** (extra clothing)
4. **Illumination** (flashlight / extra batteries)
5. **First aid supplies**
6. **Fire** (matches / lighter / starter)
7. **Repair kit and tools** with knife
8. **Nutrition** (extra food)
9. **Hydration** (extra water)
10. **Emergency shelter**



Thanks go out to Jeffrey Bisko (recent Mountain Hiking School Graduate) for sharing the news article.

Trip Reports – Lookout & Horsetooth Mountains 7/19/15

By Scott Farquhar

Stats; 5.1 miles, 2600 ft elevation gain, Time on trail 6.5 hours
Leader: Scott Farquhar, Co-leader John Wullschleger

Winter decided to hang around a bit longer this year so both of these peaks had very slippery conditions on the original scheduled day for this hike in late May. Since the whole intent of the trip was to give folks a bit of scrambling, John and I agreed to move the trip back to July 19th. This seemed like a good idea at the time, but second thoughts reared their ugly heads when the weather forecast on the 19th called for a 60% chance of thunder storms at 11 a.m.

Unwilling to reschedule again John and I decided to plan for the worst and hope for the best. Due to the weather forecast and extremely limited parking at the Horse Creek trailhead John convinced me that we needed to start early ☺.

I was glad we had scouted the trip earlier because the road to the trailhead makes you wonder if you are misplaced before you even get out of the car (though it is MUCH easier to follow when it is not covered with snow). However, once on trail it is easy to follow through the woods. There are a couple of official trails that cut off from the Horse Creek Trail, but these are well marked. On this trip John and I decided to do Lookout Mountain from the north-west, so we continued on trail all the way to the saddle between

The Leader on belay. Much better climbing in July

Photo by Terri Gerard



Lookout Mt. in May during a scouting trip

Photo by Scott Farquhar



Trip Reports – Lookout & Horsetooth Mountains (cont.)

Meeker Ridge and Lookout Mountain. Note to others that may want to go to Lookout Mountain from the north-east, we must have passed the trail which leads to the saddle between Lookout and Horsetooth Mountains, but we did not notice it.

Once we reached the saddle between Meeker Ridge and Lookout we broke out of the dense woods and were rewarded with views of the mountains to the west. As an added bonus we could see that the weather seemed to be holding. From this point we could also see the rocky summit of Lookout Mountain. So after a brief stop for pictures, water and a snack we continued up through the small pines to the top. At this point the trail was not marked very well, but as I told everyone, “Just keep going UP”.

Near the top, the group dropped packs to prepare for the 30 foot scramble up a rock tower to the summit. In Rocky Mountain National Park, The Complete Hiking Guide Lisa Foster indicates that getting to the top “requires a few extremely committing Class 3 moves”. In my opinion the moves border on Class 4 and I was extremely thankful to be roped in while scrambling to the top. I also do not recommend attempting the scramble if the rock is wet.

Thankfully, John W. is a skilled climber, so he was able to scramble up the tower with a rope to belay others making the climb. With this safety measure all in the group, one by one, were able to make it to the top. Even with the rope most folks were happy to have someone below help to point out “unseen” ledges for foot placement on the way down.

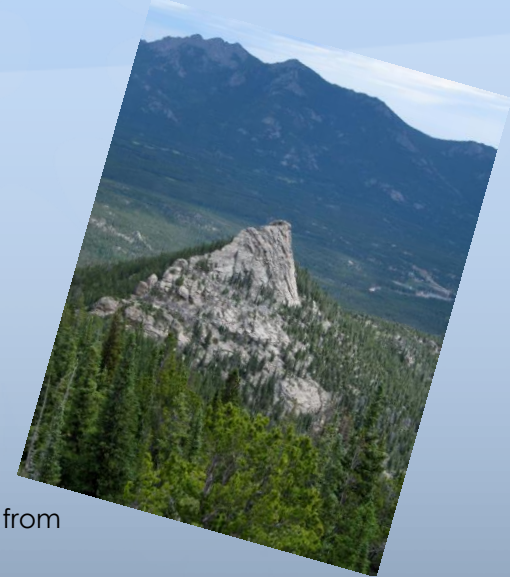
Getting' by with a little help from his friends

Photo by Terri Gerard



Trip Reports – Lookout & Horsetooth Mountains (cont.)

After completing the climb the group reassembled and we started down to the saddle between Lookout and Horsetooth to the north-east. This portion of the hike is not marked and we carefully made our way down around multiple rock outcroppings to the saddle. From the saddle we contoured around the west side of Horsetooth ridge on talus rock until we were just below a rock outcropping that defined the summit. From here the group climbed directly up the talus rock to reach the rock outcropping and made the Class 3 scramble to the summit. Here again I would caution folks that “The Complete Hiking Guide” indicates this is a Class 2 scramble, but in my opinion (and in the opinion of other more experienced folks that I consulted with) it is clearly Class 3. In any case it was a fun scramble for the entire group and we were rewarded with spectacular views at the top.

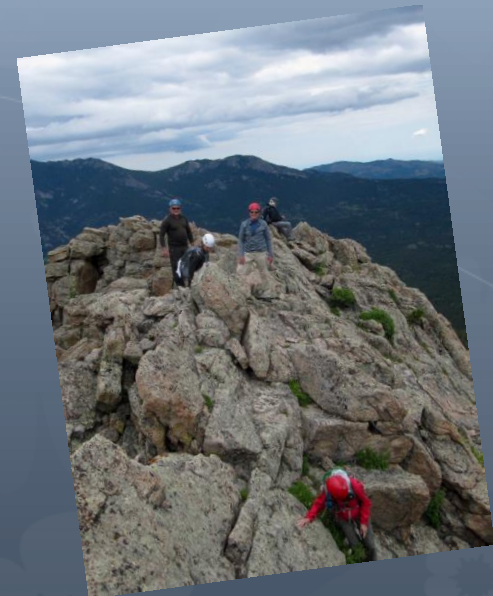


View of Horsetooth from Lookout

Photos by
Scott Farquhar



A Class 2(?) climb up Horsetooth



On top of Horsetooth

Trip Reports – Lookout & Horsetooth Mountains (cont.)

However, we cut any celebrations short because the clouds seemed to be building and someone heard thunder way off in the distance, so we quickly scrambled down off the summit and made our way down the talus slope in a north-west direction. The intent was to move toward the “trail” that leads from the saddle between Lookout and Horsetooth down to the main Horse Creek Trail. Once off the talus and safely below tree line, the group stopped for a well-deserved rest and a bit of lunch. After refueling we continued down toward Horse Creek Trail, and I have to admit that even though the GPS indicated we crossed the “trail” multiple times we never did seem to be on it. Oh well what fun is a hike if you can’t be “misplaced” a bit. Even though I did receive a bit of “ribbing” we quickly made our way down and hit the main trail. From here we retraced our early route back to the trailhead.

In closing I felt privileged to lead such a great group of folks and I am thankful that the mountains and weather allowed us to share in the strength and beauty of the peaks. I also want to give extra thanks to John Wullschleger, I “pick on him” a lot to be co-leader because he is so great at it and I would not have been able to get everyone up the summit of Lookout Mountain without him. Finally, I want to warn folks that this hike is a bit more of a challenge than the guidebooks would indicate. In addition to the scramble classifications I mentioned above, the hike “seems” longer than the mileage would indicate. However, that having been said I highly recommend if you have a chance that you make your way to this little used area in the National Park.

Photo by
Scott Farquhar

John W. finally gets to
come down once
everyone else has safely
made it



Trip Reports – Thatchtop Mountain

8/1/15

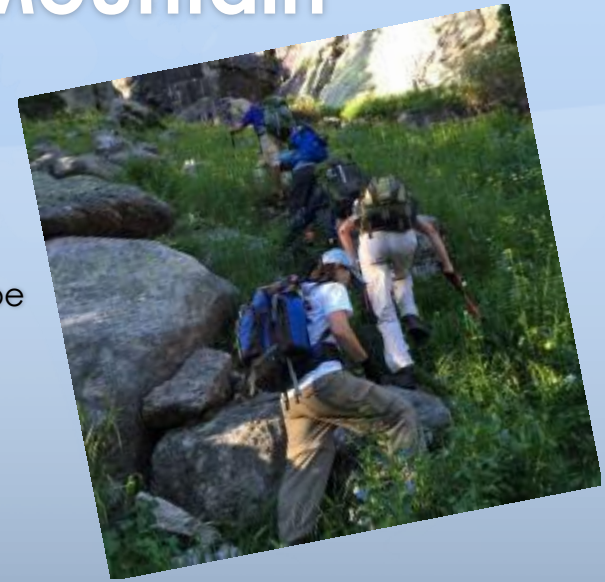
By Manuel Fillon

On the 1st of August, the alarm clock was set really early (Most difficult part for me is to set the alarm clock at 4AM on a Saturday morning- unless I will be using my skis). All was quiet in Fort Collins but the day was very promising: Hiking Thatchtop.

Thatchtop (12,668-ft) is located between the spectacular Loch Vale and Glacier Gorge drainages in RMNP. Rugged cliffs guard most of Thatchtop's lower slopes while the upper slopes are talus laden, providing easy class 2 hiking.

Mary, Sarah, David, John, Meredith from Denver and myself joined the leaders Steve and Scott.

From Bear lake Trailhead (Glacier Gorge parking lot was already full), we hiked up the ranger trail, which connects to the Loch. After some relatively steep bushwhacking, we entered the "S" Couloir.



Bushwhacking to the "S Couloir"



Hiking up the "S Couloir"

Photos by Manuel Fillon

Trip Reports – Thatchtop Mountain (cont.)

Above the “S” couloir we followed the ridge to gain Thatchtop's summit. At this point the show was ON. Every where you looked there was one gorgeous place after another (the Never Summer, Andrew glacier...). Each view seeming to try to outdo the others!

At the summit we stopped just to enjoy the VIEW (Arrowhead, McHenry's Peak, Chiefs Head, Pagoda, Long's Peak)



Walking up the Talus

Photos by Manuel Fillon

Panoramic View from the summit of Thatchtop
(Mary's red cap is on the right)



Trip Reports – Thatchtop Mountain (cont.)

All great things must come to an end, so we began to descend down talus to Solitude Lake, then continued our decent past Shelf Lake. Once past this lake we followed a steep “mountaineers’ trail” down to Glacier Creek and reconnected with the Black Lake trail.

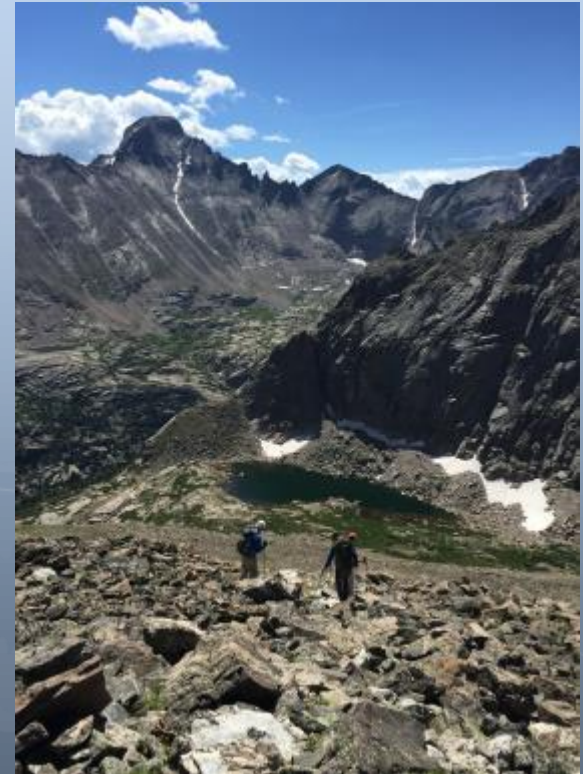
It was a beautiful day that you could not help but enjoy! I now have a new favorite hike in Rocky Mountain National Park



On the summit



Solitude Lake



Going down to Solitude Lake from the summit

Photo by Manuel Fillon

Meeting the CMC State Staff Members

This is a continuation of a series of articles to meet the State Staff Members. This month covers Roger Wendell in Membership Services

Roger Wendell, Membership Services

1. Can you provide a bit of your background?

I started hiking and volunteering with the CMC in 1996, eventually joining staff in 2013. In the 90s, I completed most of the Denver Group's schools at that time - including WTS, IRCS, BMS, HAMS, and MOFA. In the 2000s I completed WFA, AIARE, Trip Leader School and Advanced Leader Training. I have assisted with YEP, Champ Camp, and have been an instructor for BRCS and IRCS. I also lead technical climbs, backcountry ski trips, and Adventure Travel trips. Additionally I have served on the Denver Group Council, Conservation Committee, and chaired the Classification Change Committee.



A photo of Roger Wendell and Gudy Gaskill at the CMC office.

Gudy is the founder of the Colorado Trail and is the one person responsible for making it become a reality!

2. Can you outline your responsibilities in Membership Services?

I work part-time in Membership Services, in the Golden Office, assisting with all aspects of membership. My responsibilities include membership renewals, membership sign-ups, helping with trip and calendar postings, and helping with database access/updates. Additionally I assist in answering Email, mail, and telephone correspondence. With the office normally open until 7 pm, I also assist the various schools, classes, and section meetings with their room reservations, media needs, and event advertising.

Middle Fork of the Salmon River – Life on the River

By JoAnn Herkenhoff

While residents of Colorado were reading about raging rivers and subsequent fatalities, my husband, John, and I were preparing to boat the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho at record low water level. The forest service ranger who provided our pre-launch orientation indicated that they hadn't seen levels this low since 2001 and their spring-fed water system at the put-in was currently inoperable.

We arrived at the put-in mid-afternoon on Sunday, June 28, and after the requisite hellos and hugs with our fellow boaters (there were 14 of us in total), we began the laborious process of rigging the seven rafts that would take us 98 miles downriver. We travel with our boat frame pre-assembled, so the first step is to inflate the tubes to set the frame upon, using a pump that pulls power from the car battery. The subsequent assembly involves some strategic (pre-identified) location placement for each aluminum box and dry bag using an excessive amount of cam straps.



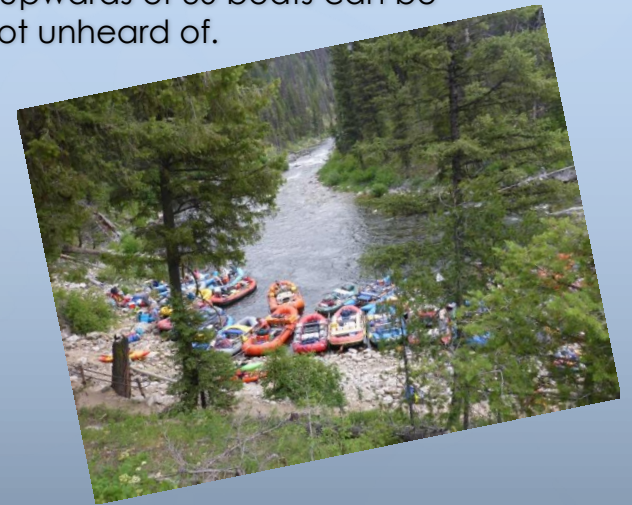
Since half of our party had arrived the day prior and had access to the boat launch earlier on this day, we had help schlepping gear and were soon well enough assembled to put the boat in the water. The Middle Fork of the Salmon has a rather unique launch – a 100 foot ramp at a 35-degree angle rigged with a pulley system.

Life on the River (cont.)

The experienced outfitters would station a captain on the oars of the ramped boat and let go about two-thirds of the way down, allowing gravity to finish the task of depositing the boat in the water. We weren't so bold, walking the boat down the ramp in a gentle manner. Upwards of 30 boats can be stationed at the shore, awaiting final shove-off, and double-parking is not unheard of.

I now know what a pinball feels like! The first two days were plagued with bouncing off one rock or another. There were sections that I swore did not contain a passable route, yet with collective experience of over 100 trips on different crafts and on different rivers among the seven captains, we managed to pick our way slowly through day one (12 miles) and day two (16 miles).

You're not always guaranteed to bounce off, however. One of the compounded challenges rested with the fact that river etiquette (and federal regulations) dictate that groups must stay together. While we tried to space our crafts adequately apart, often times if one got snagged in the middle of the best route, it caused the boatman behind them to avert to an alternate course that often resulted in that boat getting hung up on a rock as well. And in one case, a second boat, in an attempt to avoid hitting a snagged boat, found themselves pinned perpendicular to the flow against a large rock in the middle of the river. Good communication is the key to any successful rescue, and after establishing a plan, explaining it to the two people on the incapacitated craft (who, incidentally, were "high-siding" on the tube that was being pushed up the rock so the water pushing against the bottom tube wouldn't cause the raft to flip), four of us were able to, using a rope anchored to the boat frame, pivot the boat around the rock and point them back downstream.



Life on the River (cont.)

That afternoon, as John and I approached Pistol Rapid, two fellow boatmen had managed to hang up on the cobble stone shallows above the recommended right-hand run. John split the two boats, knowing we would hang up on a rock. We were able to help free the boats, but we ended up really stuck! And I think after two days of pushing and pulling and rocking our boat (which was heavy due to the kitchen box and 12 gallons of water), we were exhausted. Time might pass quickly while you're in the middle of a detangling, but after what was likely 30 minutes with our party watching from below the rapid, we were able to finally break free and catch the current into the rapid. Unfortunately, any set-up John had maneuvered up-river in preparation for the white water was lost, and we ended up heading into the rapid backwards. Obviously, we made it through, but not without elevated heart rates.

The simplicity of daily existence on the river is directly correlated to having streamlined, simple systems in place. In addition to personal gear, each boat carries community gear, which as a rule, comes off the boats first, and is assembled for use before individual camp items are dealt with.

The kitchen is always first priority (followed very closely by the cocktail table). To abide by Leave No Trace principles, a tarp is placed as the floor of the kitchen, with assorted tables and workspaces erected round the perimeter. All cooking utensils and supplies are kept in one dry box. Each morning the kitchen is broken down in reverse and relegated to the respective boats to go down river.



Life on the River (cont.)

The laws of physiology dictate that fuel in equals waste out, and the toilet system is arranged equally as efficient as the kitchen. In the early days of boating, before rocket boxes had a seat, rafters would hover to do their business on the “groover.” As the sport has adopted more comforts, the rocket box now includes a seat. To ensure you’re not interrupted, the Doodoo Dragon serves as the “available” signal; if it’s hanging in the identified location, the groover is available. If he’s missing, wait your turn. And you’d better remember to bring the Doodoo Dragon back to his resting place when you’re done!



To ensure cleanliness, the groover has a dedicated hand wash station, as does the kitchen.

Life on the River (cont.)

The Middle Fork is known for its hot springs. Although a November trip would have made the warm pools more welcoming, I had to test the waters!

As is much of Idaho, the Middle Fork is scarred by the remnants of years of wildfires. But the wildlife were prevalent, as we saw many big horn sheep, as well as osprey and even a bald eagle (spotted at river's edge on July 4). Although we never saw a bear, we certainly saw evidence as we hiked up to a hot springs on our lay-over day. And we made several stops to view the pictographs, representing the deep history of the area.

Of course, there was plenty of white water, particularly the final two days, which brought thirteen rapids each!



Despite the drama of snagged boats and the sequence of rapids those final two days, life on the river really is very simple. You get up. You go down river. You rest. You do it all over again the next day. What a pleasure it is to not be influenced or distracted by the media or other communication devices, or even the daily stressors that plague the routine at home. We are truly blessed by the glorious playground that awaits our next adventure!

Life on the River (cont.)

