



Fort Collins Chapter Newsletter

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Your local resource for outdoor adventure

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Climbers contend with wind driven snow as they ascend Andrews snowfield during a winter climb of Taylor Peak (see article, page 6)

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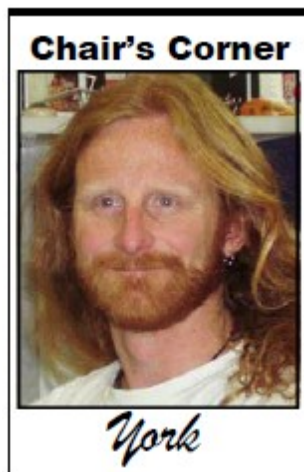
Gratitude

Howdy,

While traveling during May, a friend and I were exploring the San Diego Zoo. We passed a young guy in a wheel chair whose left leg was exposed, elevated, and had some funky hardware attached. As we passed each other he said something about my beard and then asked how long it has taken to get to this stage. So my buddy and I went back to him and started talking.

The young man's last name is Redman and he is in the military. The zoo is his first excursion out of the hospital since stepping on a bomb over in the big Middle East sandbox. His two brothers are with him, but we start talking. Redman's foot is held together with two halos of metal connected by a third along with spokes of metal going into his leg and foot to hold everything in place.

He tells us he is the luckiest man alive because, for one, he is still alive and, two, his foot is still attached. Being curious, I started asking him about the damage to his foot. The foot is twice normal size, the skin is obviously newly healing, and of course he has all the intriguing hardware holding it together. Redman tells us that the main problem is the primary bone in the ankle that allows foot motion to coordinate with leg motion was shattered irreparably. The



doctor's are hoping to take a graft bone segment from his hip to build him a new ankle bone. If it works, he'll be able to walk with mostly normal up and down ankle movement but the side-to-side ankle movement will probably be gone. If it doesn't work, he'll lose his leg below the knee.

While we are talking, people walk by. Several quickly say, "Thank you for your service." Redman appears a bit uncomfortable when people do this as they don't stop long enough for him to reply. He is out enjoying the sun, the zoo, and the people. Other than his brothers and sister-in-law, most people are not willing to interact with him.

Our conversation moves on to the Wounded Warrior Project. He was surprised that I knew about the organization much less the group that is going over

to climb Kilimanjaro. The Kilimanjaro group was training at the Golden Office during the last State Council and State Board Meetings and we were lucky enough to meet them while sharing lunch. Redman plans to be involved in the Wounded Warrior Project when his treatment is completed and he is out of the military.

His love of life and exploring the world came through as we chatted. Hopefully he can keep his leg. Regardless of how that turns out, I'm sure he'll be out hiking the mountains some day.

Later, in thinking about my encounter with him, I couldn't help but marvel at the chance meeting and how he has a great attitude about life even with what he is going through. Thinking about him and what he deals with on a daily basis right now helps me keep in perspective the stressors, commitments, and what-not that want to derail my attitude and day.

Hopefully Redman enjoyed our conversation as much as I did. Hopefully we'll see him on the trails of some mountain soon. And hopefully you'll get out to explore the mountains, meet like minded people, and enjoy all that Colorado has to give while doing so.

Play and Think Hard!

York, The Red Lion

Reporting Accidents

[Editors note: For benefit of trip leaders we are providing commentary on accident reporting by member John Raich, State Safety

and Leadership Chair, followed by the new accident reporting policy approved by the State S&L Committee on 4/26/2011.]

John writes: "One of the possible reasons for a less than 100% record for reporting reasonably serious accidents that occurred

on CMC activities last year may be the lack of clarity regarding which accidents or incidents must be reported and for which accidents reporting is left to the leader's discretion. “

[There is a risk associated with] “ ... not reporting an accident or incident that is perceived as reasonably serious at the time or one that may not be viewed as reportable at the time but develops complications later. CMC liability insurance coverage for leaders assumes that serious accidents or incidents are reported promptly. Leaders who do not report such accidents or incidents run the risk of not being covered through CMC liability insurance.”

“The State S&L Committee members hope that the following clarifies this situation.”

CMC Required Accident or Incident Reporting

If, in the course of any activity, an accident or incident occurs that meets any of the following criteria, the leader must com-

plete a report of the accident or incident as soon as possible using the ‘Incident / Injury / Illness Report Form’ and send it to the CMC office in Golden.

(1) The accident results in a fatality, either at the accident scene or later as a result of the accident.

(2) The accident or incident response involves the use of outside agencies (police, hospital, emergency response, search and rescue, etc.)

(3) A participant involved in the accident or incident receives professional medical care to the knowledge of the leader, is recommended professional medical care by the leader, or refuses the offer or recommendation of professional medical care.

In cases involving potentially life threatening or disabling injuries or in the case of a fatality, the emergency communication procedure outlined in the [CMC Emergency Action Plan](#) must be used.

A leader may file an incident report under other circumstances at his or her discretion. The State Safety and Leadership Committee encourage leaders to report all incidents, even those that did not have major consequences. One reason for doing so is to ensure leader liability insurance coverage for consequences from an accident or incident that the leader may not have been aware of at the time.

Also, by making a variety of incident information available, the Club can provide a valuable learning experience for all leaders. The review of case studies based on real incidents has proven to be a useful tool in improving both participant safety and enjoyment on Club activities. Leaders should be assured that the confidentiality of participant and leader names and other details would be maintained for any case studies if that is desired. The Incident / Injury /Illness Report Form can be downloaded from the [CMC Leader Information Page](#).

Riding the White Rim Road

[A Fort Collins Group member's first person account of riding the White Rim Road in a day]

The website for Canyonlands National Park suggests that mountain bike trips on the 100-mile White Rim Road will take about three to four days. Riding the White Rim over three or four days is probably the best way to take in the magnificent scenery

of what was one of Edward Abbey's favorite desert regions. Attempting to ride the full 100 miles in a single day is definitely *not* the best way to fully appreciate the area, but it does make for one heck of a challenge and adventure. Sometimes it's fun to do crazy things.

Typically, when mountain bikers do White Rim Road as a group

over several days, they bring a truck to carry camping and other supplies. Members of the group take turns driving the truck, so everybody gets a chance to do a lot of biking, and no one is stuck with all of the driving.

For our attempt to ride White Rim in a single day, we were fortunate that a friend offered to drive the support truck for the

entire day. It is possible to do the ride without vehicle support, but it requires riders to carry a lot of water and, as with any back-country adventure, to be well-prepared for mishaps. We opted to use vehicle support, but a few of us harbor desires to try the ride unsupported, just for the extra challenge. Maybe someday. For this ride, we would each carry a normal mountain biking load on our backs (water, some snacks, an extra layer) and the truck would carry all other needs for us (gallons of water, piles of food, tools, gear, and extra clothing).

So, on April 29, a group of six riders (including two that had previously ridden White Rim in a day) embarked on this adventure. We rose before dawn, stumbled into our cycling clothes and drove off to Denny's in Moab to fuel up with a hearty breakfast. Then it was on to Canyonlands' famed Island in the Sky, where we would begin our ride.

We started at the base of the Shafer Trail, near Musselman Arch, and chose to do the loop in a counter-clockwise direction. This meant we started our ride climbing the Shafer Trail, which is the biggest climb of the loop (about 1500 feet)—a painful start but at least we got it out of the way early.

After climbing the Shafer Trail, we pedaled the only pavement section of the White Rim Loop (about 9 miles), we turned onto the road that descends to Mineral Bottom and the Green River. Along this stretch we were buffeted continuously by a chilly desert wind and I couldn't help but think of the weather forecast, which suggested that we would be fighting a stiff head-



Riding along the Green River

wind for much of the last 20 or 30 miles of our ride. But that was hours away, and as we neared the famous descent to Mineral Bottom, the wonderful scenery easily distracted me from my weather concerns. The steep switchbacks were destroyed by a washout last summer, but the Park Service managed to repair the road and re-open it by March. And it is an impressive road!

From Mineral Bottom, the White Rim Road stays at the bottom of the canyon and follows the



Riding along the Green River

Green River for many miles. Along this stretch, we were treated to calmer winds, warmer temperatures, sunshine and breathtaking scenery. We wanted to keep a steady pace so that we wouldn't have to ride after dark, but it was hard not to stop and take pictures.

The primary challenges in riding White Rim Road are the distance, the remoteness, and the lack of water. In general, the road surfaces are pretty mellow and make for easy biking. But the route does present some



The view from Bighorn Mesa

sand, often deep enough to require dismounting and walking, and a few substantial climbs. Our start/finish location was selected so that we could avoid big climbs late in the ride. So we made the biggest three climbs in the first 60 miles of riding. After riding along the Green River for a while, the canyon narrowed and the road climbed up and over the lower slopes of Bighorn Mesa. With this climb we earned a nice view up the river and back up the stretch of road we had just ridden.



White sandstone along the White Rim Road

From here, the origin of the name of this road and route became more and more apparent. Much of canyon country is red. But there is one sandstone layer that is nearly white, and that layer is exposed along the canyon rim in the southwestern portions of the White Rim loop. Here the road zigzags continuously along the edges of side canyons and



The author ascending Murphy Hogback (photo by Mike Greiner)

washes. We stopped several times to admire the scenery and take photos, but we were mindful of the many miles left to pedal.

After pedaling 60 miles and two of the three substantial climbs, the view of the road ascending Murphey Hogback was a bit demoralizing. We knew it was the last major challenge of the day and we knew it would hurt. The last 50 yards of this climb present the steepest stretch of road we would climb all day. A few of us gritted our teeth and pedaled away; the wiser among us opted to save their energy for the remaining 40 miles of riding and walked up the last part of Murphey Hogback. We were greeted at the top by a fierce wind, which would taunt us for the remainder of the ride. But the views and scenery made it all worth it.

Not long after our triumphant ascent of Murphey Hogback, we realized that we would certainly finish the ride in the dark. Alas, we had stopped too often to take in the sights—how could we not! As night fell upon us, the temperature dropped, and the winds would not quit.

My camera stayed in my pocket for the last 30 miles. The last 20 miles were painful, but it was a satisfying pain. It was the same kind of pain I feel as I hike back to the car after summiting a big mountain—the kind of pain that comes with the satisfaction of taking on a big challenge while enjoying a unique adventure. At mile 80, we had to get our lights and batteries out of the truck and rig them up on our bikes.

Fatigue made it a little harder to continue enjoying the experience, but I would occasionally look around and see abundant stars above the silhouettes of mesas and spires all around me. That's not a bad way to spend a Friday night.



The view from Murphy Hogback

By 8:30 pm or so, we were done—my GPS had logged about 100 total miles, a little less than nine hours of pedaling and just under four hours of stops. We quickly piled into the truck and rushed back to camp for warm showers and warm sleeping bags, already talking about the next crazy ride.

[Mark Lorie is a Fort Collins CMC member and trip leader. While he is looking forward to future "epic" rides like the White /Rim, this summer he is also planning to conduct several mountain biking skills clinics for CMC members, to be followed by a ride or two in Summit County, the Snowy Range or other high country destination. Keep an eye out for those upcoming events on the CMC trip schedule online and the Fort Collins Group CMC Update. Ed.]

Canyon Lakes District Update

Everyone knows there is a beetle epidemic that is killing thousands of trees in the mountains of Colorado. The scourge has now begun to seriously affect activities in the Poudre Canyon, Redfeather and Big Thompson areas of the Canyon Lakes District.

Recently the District announced that all volunteers and employees would need to be certified to travel and work on the trails system west of a line formed roughly by the Manhattan Road and the Pingree Park Road.

Trails west of that line are included in an aerial map showing high numbers of hazard trees that could fall, especially during high winds. The certification process was simply an attempt to reinforce a sense of awareness of one's surroundings in all forest users. It is a good reminder to all

of us, especially hike leaders to be careful out there. It is a good idea to stay out of the forests during strong winds and not to depend on using dense woods to reduce threats from thunderstorms.

Among the trails listed as high danger are nearly all of the most popular high elevation trails in the district that have trailheads below timberline and above 8000 feet. Currently, a few of the trails have not been evaluated and most of the higher elevation trails are still under ten or more feet of snow, reducing the numbers of trees that are falling.

Another issue ensuing from the tree hazard has to do with closures. The Long Draw Road trails will all be closed through July or later, while seasonal crews clear

dead trees on or along the roadway all the way to the Reservoir. I was on the road about ten days ago with the USFS and predict it will be at least another month before the task can begin, as the plowed snow along the road is 12 to 20 feet deep.

Although the only other announced closure is Guanella Pass and the access to Mt. Bierstadt, it is advisable to check the for status by phone or on the Canyon Lakes District website prior to embarking on a trip. Currently very few of the roads in the district that are closed seasonally have opened.

- Michael Smilie, Activities Director, CMC Fort Collins

Taylor Peak Trip Report

[Editors note: This is a trip report from a climb of Taylor Peak that occurred several years ago.]

Taylor Peak, 13,153',
Rocky Mountain National Park
Start: Glacier Gorge Junction
Trailhead at 9,200'

Rount trip distance: 13.1 miles
Elevation Gain: ~4000'

Route: The Loch, then Andrews
Glacier to Andrews Pass to Taylor
Summit, with Return Via Same
Route

Team: Vern Bass, Steve Dean,
Jeff Eisele, Jeff Kroon, Steve Martin,
Paul Metz, Carolyn Randall,
Fred Ruess, Mike Stevens, Richard
Taylor, Jonathan White,
Kevin Willey

We left the Glacier Gorge Trailhead a bit before 6 AM, so snowshoeing up the winter cutoff track in the deep timber was done primarily in the dark, using headlamps. It was difficult to keep tabs on everyone in the group of 12 as we moved up through the dark forest. When the rear leader radioed that the tail portion of the team had gotten off course, Mike hurried back to find them and get them back on track.

Beyond the Mills Lake/Loch trail junction, the only tracks in the deep snow were those made 2 days earlier by Carolyn, Deano, and I, when we had broken a trail up to timberline and on to

the upper snowfields on our route. Luckily, our track had not blown completely full of snow, so we all had the advantage of some modest packing.

We stopped below the Loch to put another layer on, knowing that the wind blasting across the icy lake would hit us head-on as we made the crossing. Goggles went on (and stayed on until much later in the day), and another layer of gloves/mitts was added here—and they were really needed. The trek up through the forest to timberline went pleasantly, primarily because wind blasts were somewhat attenuated by the trees. But above the tree line we were ravaged by the fe-

rocious, cold wind. Was this supposed to be fun?

We had finished the steeper snow field below Andrews Tarn and were well onto the more gentle "glacier" ascending up to Andrews Pass when our pace seemed to slow. By this point it had become what many heavily-loaded alpine experiences ultimately become—one foot in front of the other, repeated over and over and over.

And on this day we had already come up several miles through deep snow, wearing double-insulated mountaineering boots and heavy clothing to protect us from the serious wind and cold, and carrying typical winter packs filled with necessary extra clothing and emergency gear; so it wasn't surprising that we were beginning to move slower.

The wind was a constant - Pacman, gobbling up our occasional conversation and recomposing it into nonsense fragments. So as we ascended the snowfield toward Andrews Pass we gave up on trying to converse; each of us became absorbed in our individual thought threads. The process reminded me of Denali, just step after step after step—keep going, keep going-- even though Andrews snowfield was only 600 feet of vertical. Yes, this was simple, yet this same routine had been played out on Denali and on other mountains where the elevation gains had been large by comparison. It was the same procedure, the same feeling. I thought about how I and some others in our group had experi-



enced this on Rainier, and on Aconcagua, and on Kilimanjaro, and on that great white one in Alaska. One foot in front of the other, over and over, with the wind buffeting us on every step forward as our rate of progress seemed to get slower.

The wind on the Andrews Glacier snowfield took away the pleasure of typical alpine climbing: sounds of crampons meeting the snow, of the squeaking made by poles or axes on each entry into snow. It simply became step after step after step, and, it seemed to be getting slower.

Chronomeister Paul, who can always be counted on to know the rates of ascent or descent, announced over the wind rumble that we were ascending at a rate of 34 feet per minute, or about 2,000 feet per hour. So despite appearances, the team was advancing very strongly. When I heard the upward rate of our progress, I reminded myself that it's the psychological stuff that

wears away at you, perhaps more than the erosion of endurance, during these winter climbs.

At Andrews Pass we rested, hydrated and ate, ineffectually seeking some respite from the wind chill. There was no shelter to find. People were so chilled by the time we set out on the final 1,150 feet climb to the summit of Taylor Peak that the starting pace made me think we were participating in a race at sea level. Quickly, the rate of ascent was brought back under control, and we arrived at the summit at about 1 PM (the final 1,100 feet went at about 1,000 feet per hour, yet it seemed like forever), not a bad time considering the effort imposed by the weather and snow conditions.

Imagine the VIEWS from the top of this great peak on the Continental Divide when all the surrounding mountains are cloaked in deep snow. The western aspects of Longs Peak were remarkable, and the splendor of

Powell, McHenry's, Chief's Head, Mt. Alice and the highest peaks of the Mummy Range to the north were made more spectacular by the snow! Oh, the wonder of winter climbing in Colorado's high mountains!

We froze while the mandatory photos were being taken, and no one seemed interested in digging through the snow that was wind-plastered to the summit cairn in order to locate the register jar that was buried there somewhere, placed on April 16, 2005 by 14erWorlders Ryan, Erin, and Kurt (Vern and I had found

and signed this new register on April 24th).

I asked about interest in traversing to Powell. All of us were really gratified to be standing on the crest of Taylor (in consideration of the winds we were encountering), so everyone was content to begin a direct descent to the Pass and then down the glacier.

In the next hour we were down 2,000 feet and in the timber. We closed quickly on the trailhead, and we all felt super about the day. What a strong, fun group/

team. Thanks, everyone, for participating in a wonderful "deep winter" outing. Deep winter is the season when day length is short and alpine conditions get so cold. Although it is difficult to climb during this time of year, the rewards are great, reminding all of us of why we live here and why we so enjoy the high mountains of Colorado! Can any other location in the lower 48, except, perhaps, Washington State, prepare us so well to climb virtually anywhere on this globe?

- Steve Martin



Thanks to John Raich, Mark Lorie, Mike Smilie, and Steve Martin for contributing to this month's newsletter!

Submit your articles, trip reports and pictures to

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jgw311@hotmail.com

Fort Collins CMC wishes to thank businesses that have previously supported us with paid advertising in our newsletter. However, due to a policy change , we will no longer be including paid commercial advertising.

This newsletter is published by the Fort Collins Group of the Colorado Mountain Club. Please send submissions to jgw311@hotmail.com to by the 10th of the month to include in the next month's edition. Members send address changes to *** . Also, please notify the state CMC office if your address has changed.

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