



PLAY LEARN EXPLORE PROTECT YOUTH RENEW



# BACKCOUNTRY CACHE

A Newsletter for Members of CMC Backpacking Section

November 2024

## CHAIR'S CORNER - Louise Campbell-Blair

As Thanksgiving approaches, there's much to be thankful for. First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to our amazing BPX Committee for their active participation in the inspiring retreat we held at the end of October. Thought-provoking discussion included the ongoing support needed for our Trip Leaders, emphasized trail safety and preparedness education for our members, and explored new trip styles, including easy/supportive options for beginners, women-only trips, foodie adventures, and more. Stay tuned for more details in the coming months.



Many of you have shared your appreciation for the BPX Newsletter, skillfully crafted by Leila Murphy – thank you Leila! This month we are excited to launch a new column – 'Tread Lightly' – focused on sustainability, recycling, and leave no trace. If you have suggestions for our new column we would love to hear from you at [cmcbpx@gmail.com](mailto:cmcbpx@gmail.com).

I also would like to congratulate BPX Trip Leaders Wayne Howell and Tim Musil for receiving the Denver Group Outstanding Volunteer Series award.

This is our last BPX Newsletter for 2024. I hope everyone has a joyous and peaceful holiday season and am looking forward to 2025 filled with backpacking and camping adventures!



BPX Committee: Louise Cambell-Blair, Dave Molyneaux, Lisa Shroyer, Susan Quechenberger, Maggie Burns, and Leila Murphy (not pictured: Craig Townsend)

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## UPCOMING BPX TRIPS

Not ready to store your camping gear for the winter just yet? Want to continue to support BPX as a year-round camping and backpacking section?

We will tentatively be offering our **3rd Annual Winter Camping Gear Check** this coming **December 6-8** at **Burning Bear Campground** just north of **Grant, Colorado**.



Then, **January 11-12** will take us to **Aspenglen Campground** where we'll explore **Rocky Mountain National Park's** backcountry campsites for a possible winter backpacking trip later in the season.

Plans for **February, March, and April** are yet to be determined, and suggestions are welcome!!!

These trips will soon be posted, and registration for each will open on **Monday November 25th**.

Winter Camping School or equivalent and leader permission is required. Email [dschweissing@gmail.com](mailto:dschweissing@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining one of the trips.

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## BPX TRIP REPORTS

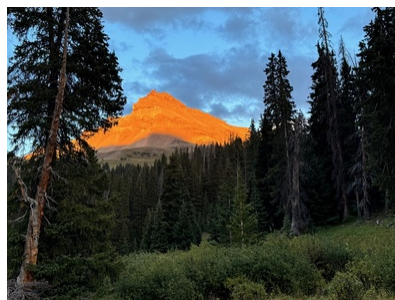
[Five Pass Tour of the Horns - Uncompahgre Wilderness](#)

It was going to be my last BPX backpack of the 2024 “Easy Season” and I knew I wanted to lead something challenging. The Five Pass Tour of the Horns in the Uncompahgre Wilderness down by Gunnison seemed perfect. This approximately 20-mile loop circles the Wetterhorn and Matterhorn Peaks and includes over 6,400 vertical feet of climb over 5 passes and is considered difficult. It did not disappoint! If you have been to the Maroon Bells and completed the Four Pass Loop, you will be struck by the similarity to that iconic backpack – with one major difference: the number of people backpacking here is ridiculously low compared to what you will find in the Maroon Bells.

This remote wilderness area is populated by herds of sheep kept in loose formation by the shepherds and their well-trained dogs who live in these mountains all summer long. The views are incredible, as are the stars each night. In the 4 days we took to complete the loop, we saw fewer than 6 other people, and 4 of them were bow hunters on a pre-season reconnaissance.

I am calling this my new favorite backpack in Colorado (sorry, Cathedral Lake). It has plenty of good sources for water, is easily accessed from Lake City, and includes the beautiful vistas and steep climbs associated with more popular destinations. Don't be lulled into thinking you can complete it without some training, however. This trip is a real wilderness experience and should only be attempted by the physically fit and well-prepared. I recommend this trip for groups of 4 to 6 experienced backpackers. I will definitely be leading it again in 2025!

Thanks to trip participants Julie Rinaldi and Bruce Ryan.



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## BPX TIP OF THE MONTH

### Backcountry Safety Tips

#### Signaling

There are multiple techniques and technologies that can be used to signal for help in a backcountry emergency. It is always best to have available a range of signaling techniques and technologies. One method is a [RECCO Reflector](#): a safety device used in outdoor sports like skiing or mountaineering. It is a small, passive electronic tag that reflects signals from a RECCO rescue detector. When buried in an avalanche or lost in remote areas, SAR teams with a RECCO detector can use the signal to locate the wearer more easily. RECCO Reflectors are integrated into products from more than 150 brands, including jackets, pants, helmets, backpacks, back protectors, boots, transceivers, and harnesses and are also available as single products that can be attached to helmets and backpacks.

#### Keeping Warm

Hypothermia is one of the leading causes of death in the backcountry. Therefore, we need to be ready with multiple techniques to maintain our body temperature. When our body begins to get cold, and our insulation isn't enough, we need to utilize external means to maintain our body temperature. Two useful techniques are Mega Warmers and making a fire.

[Mega Warmers](#) are like chemical hand warmers but larger (typically 4in x 5in) and last longer (up to 18 hrs). They use all-natural, non-toxic ingredients that begin to heat us as soon as exposed to oxygen. If someone is having trouble maintaining their body temperature, try placing a couple Mega Warmers near their core, underneath their shell and insulating layers (do not place directly on the skin) to help a person warm up.

To start a fire in adverse conditions, you need methods that work first time, every time. You'll need an ignition source (try [stormproof matches](#)) and fire starting material that is easy to light and stays lit long enough to begin burning wood, even wet wood in the rain. The top two fire sources recommended by CMC's Backcountry Incident Management School and Wilderness Survival School are [Trioxane](#) and [WetFire](#). Trioxane was originally developed by the U.S. Military for heating up MREs and now available as army surplus. These need to remain completely sealed in the aluminum packaging or the trioxane table will degrade. WetFire is a commercially available, less expensive product, similar to [Esbit](#) (hexamine) tablets. Both have been shown to work in adverse conditions.

## Enhance Your Backcountry Skills

If you want to enhance your backcountry skills, consider taking these CMC courses:

[Wilderness Trekking School](#)

[Wilderness First Aid](#)

[Backcountry Incident Management School](#)

[Wilderness Survival School](#)

Courtesy of Wayne Howell: CMC and BPX Trip Leader and Instructor in CMC Schools. If you have questions or want to learn more, feel free to email [Wayne](#).

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## TREAD LIGHTLY

### Sustainability, Recycling, Leave No Trace

Styrofoam recycling – yes you can! What will you do with those sheets of Styrofoam packed around new appliance or electronics you bought in the sale? Fill a car load of any size Styrofoam and take it to a Sustainability Recycling location (Arvada, Broomfield, or Westminster). Check out the other hard to recycle items they will handle for you [here](#).



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## SCHOOLS/EVENTS

### DENVER

[DAY HIKER SCHOOL](#) Virtual Alternative to WTS. More info [here](#)

[TRIP LEADER SCHOOL](#) More info [here](#)

[AVALANCHE TERRAIN AVOIDANCE](#) [Dec 21](#) [Jan 4](#) [Jan 25](#) [Feb 15](#)

[AIARE 1](#) Starts [Jan 10](#) [Jan 13](#) [Jan 31](#) [Feb 18](#) [Feb 21](#) [Mar 11](#) [Mar 14](#)

[AVALANCHE RESCUE](#) [Jan 25](#) [Feb 8](#) [Feb 15](#)

[WINTER CAMPING SCHOOL](#) Starts [Feb 11](#)

### PIKES PEAK

[AVALANCHE TERRAIN AVOIDANCE](#) Starts [Jan 9](#)

[AIARE 1](#) Starts [Jan 14](#)

[WTS - WILDERNESS FUNDAMENTALS](#) Starts [Feb 3](#)

## NORTHERN COLORADO

AVALANCHE TERRAIN AVOIDANCE Starts [Dec 10](#)

AVALANCHE RESCUE [Mar 8](#)

AIARE 1 Starts [Mar 28](#)

## STATE

WILDERNESS FIRST AID/FIRST RESPONDER Multiple Offerings - Check CMC Website [here](#)

Continue to check the CMC Website for additional courses.

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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS

### My Favorite Backpacking Things

Raindrops on a Cuben fiber tent at night  
Bright colored clothes and a warm sleeping bag  
A lightweight pack on a fresh summer day  
These are a few of my favorite things

Instant mash potatoes on a cold rainy night  
Some crunchy Fritos in a bean burrito wrap  
Three Oreos after climbing a high mountain pass  
These are a few of my favorite things

Warm and dry sleep socks in a down sleeping bag  
A bear cannister I don't have to hang in a tree  
My sun hat and shades on a nice clear tundra day  
These are a few of my favorite things

Cold filtered spring water on a hot sunny day  
Eating ramen and curry and watching the sun set  
Stroopwafels and a mocha café at the start of my day  
These are a few of my favorite things

When the thunder cracks  
When the miles hurt me  
When I am feeling lonely  
I simply remember my favorites things  
And then I don't feel so bad

*Lyrics by Randy Blosser*

*Melody "My Favorite Things" by Rodgers and Hammerstein from The Sound of Music*

**BPX FACEBOOK:** [BPX FB](#) Send Photos and Trips Reports to post on BPX Facebook Page  
to: [maggie.burns1@gmail.com](mailto:maggie.burns1@gmail.com)

**BPX INSTAGRAM:** [@co\\_backpacking\\_bpx](#)

**BPX LINKS:** Click [here](#) for BPX web page, [here](#) for BPX Member Benefits, and [here](#) for CMC Member Benefits.

**BPX MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:** When renewing your CMC Membership, remember to choose the Backpacking Section for an additional \$20 on the SELECT YOUR SECTIONS page. You can also join/renew your BPX membership any time by calling the CMC Office at (303) 279-3080.

**DENVER GROUP MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES:** [here](#)

**COLORADO ROAD INFORMATION:** [here](#)

**FIRE INFO:** [National Interagency Fire Center News](#) [Colorado Fire Restrictions](#) [Wildfire Risk Management Checklist](#)

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*CMC Backpacking Section Supports Leave No Trace*

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**CMC connects Coloradans with more than 3,000 trips, hikes and activities annually. Members also receive huge deals on outdoor gear, lodging, events and more.**

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