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BACKCOUNTRY CACHE

A Newsletter for Members of CMC Backpacking Section

June 2023

CHAIR'S CORNER - Uwe Sartori

It was good to see sun over the past few days. May's snow and June's rain put us in record territory for cancelled BPX trips. It effected my Wheeler Geologic Area trip, which I've postponed to September. Bummer for sure. However, we have had successful trips. Things are looking up; summer is ahead of us. The optimist in me says we'll enjoy a great rest of season. If your trip was cancelled or postponed, look for a replay of it, or another trip. They are being added, and there are trip openings.

We have a small challenge in non-BPX members signing up for BPX trips, potentially displacing a dues-paying BPX member. The new CMC website does not check for BPX membership. Instead, the Committee is addressing this on a case by case basis. For 2024, we are hoping this will be resolved. With the migration from the old to new system, we're working through membership roster issues. We may contact you to confirm your membership or let you know it is time to renew if you wish to remain in BPX. We appreciate your patience. Remember when you renew your CMC membership to also renew your Backpacking Section membership. Your support is vital to the success of the Backpacking Section.

For those of you getting ready for your upcoming BPX trips, best wishes for great weather and wonderful adventures. We'd love to hear from you.

July is Parks & Recreation Month, recognizing workers and volunteers in our country's local, state, and community parks, so please thank them if you run into them while you're out on the trail.

UPCOMING BPX TRIPS

Trip registration is initially restricted to 3 BPX Backpacking and/or Camping trips, whether you are on 3 separate trip rosters, 3 waitlists, or a combination thereof. However, BPX members can now sign up for any July trips, regardless of how many BPX trips they have already registered for. Remember that you must be a member of the BPX Section to join a BPX Trip. See BPX Renewal info below.

E=Easy M=Moderate D=Difficult

June-July Trips With Openings*

Jun 22-24 Thu-Sat M [RMNP Andrews Creek Area](#)
Jun 26-27 Mon-Tue E [Wigwam Park from Wigwam TH](#)
Jun 26-27 Mon-Tue E [French Pass from Fench Creek TH](#)
Jul 6-8 Thu-Sat M [Bison and McCurdy Peaks from Lost Creek TH](#)
Jul 8-10 Sat-Mon M [Mystery Destination-Navigate there/spend weekend WITHOUT modern technology](#)
Jul 15-16 Sat-Sun D [Macey Lakes from Horn Creek TH](#)
Jul 15-17 Sat-Mon D [Chinese Wall/Devils Causeway Loop from Stillwater Reservoir](#)

June-July Trips With 0-1 on Waitlist*

Jun 24-25 Sat-Sun E [Wigwam Park from Wigwam TH](#)
Jul 6-9 Thu-Sun D [Avalanche Lake from Avalanche Creek TH](#)
Jul 17-20 Mon-Thu M [Larson and Crystal Lake Loop from Crystal Larson TH](#)
Jul 31-Aug 2 Mon-Wed E [Mosquito Lake from Stillwater Reservoir/Hike over Devils Causeway](#)

*As Of June 19. Continue to check the CMC Website since Leaders add trips throughout the season.

You can check your trip status by hovering over your name at the top of the main CMC Home Page and selecting the *My Activities* option from the dropdown. This brings up a page with the activities you have registered for along with your status--Registered (on the trip) or Waitlist and your position on the waitlist. If you are on the waitlist, keep checking since there are often cancellations.

Whether you are on a waitlist or a roster, if you decide to NOT go on a trip, please CANCEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. It may not seem necessary if you are on a waitlist, but many trips have a relatively high turnover shortly before the trip, so please cancel from waitlists as well to open up a spot for the next person.

[Mountain Side Gear Rental](#) in Golden rents backpacking gear with a 25% discount for CMC Members.

SCHOOLS/EVENTS

DENVER

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

TRIP LEADER SCHOOL More info [here](#)

CPR/AED [Jun 27](#)

INTRO TO HIKING SAFETY [Jul 11](#)

WILDERNESS TREKKING SCHOOL (WTS) Starts [Sep 5](#)

BACKCOUNTRY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL (BIMS) [Aug 19](#) [Sep 23](#)

PIKES PEAK (PPG)

WILDERNESS FUNDAMENTALS [Classroom Sep 25](#), [Field Sep 30](#)

INTRO TO BACKPACKING Starts [Jul 10](#) [Aug 14](#)

STATE

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

NAVIGATION Virtual Courses: [Nav1](#) [Nav2](#)

Continue to check the CMC website for additional courses.

BPX TRIP REPORTS

French Pass Scouting Trip

Trip Leader Louise Campbell-Blair - Denver Group

What happened to summer? Scouting for a June backpacking trip turned into a snowy expedition earlier this month. Fifteen hopeful BPX Members were signed up or waitlisted for my one day, gear check to French Pass. With two weeks to go it was time to scout our route. Despite my eternal optimism, the drizzle did not improve but became stinging hail, driving sleet and then snow. We hiked in a mile or so not sure if we were actually in French Creek itself or on the trail. As the temps dropped into the 30s and no chance of finding suitable camp spots, we reluctantly turned around. Sadly, even relocating the trip to lower elevations (Segment 3 of the CT) didn't help in the end. Due to the continued miserable forecast all but 2 hardy souls cancelled so it was time to call it a day. The challenges of a being a BPX Trip Leader!



Please share your BPX Adventures, Trip Reports, and Photos with the rest of us, your backpacking community. You can add them directly to FB and Instagram or send them to maggie.burns1@gmail.com, and she will post them for you on FB. Send them to cmcbpxnewsletter@gmail.com to publish in the BPX Newsletter.

BACKCOUNTRY FOOD STORAGE

On June 5, the U.S. Forest Service issued an order for the Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands concerning the storage of food. Food must be:

- Stored inside a hard-sided vehicle or camper.
- Stored inside a securable container or vehicle constructed of a solid, non-pliable material, without any cracks, openings, lids, hinges, or open windows that would allow a bear to gain entry.

- Suspended at least ten feet above the ground and four feet from any tree, post, or other vertical support.

Violating this order can result in “a fine of not more than \$5,000 for individuals and \$10,000 for organizations, or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both”.

The full text of this order can be found [here](#) and a map of the impacted area [here](#).

In May 2022, the U.S. Forest Service issued a similar type of order for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests but just for developed and designated campsites:

- Attended by a person who is awake, alert, and within 100 feet and line-of-sight of the items.
- Suspended at least 10 feet off the ground and at least 4 feet from any supporting tree or pole.
- Stored in a container or using a method listed in the most current Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Certified Bear-Resistant Products list (IGBC).
- Stored in a closed vehicle, trailer, building, or facility constructed of solid, nonpliable material that, when secured, has no openings, hinges, lids, or coverings that would allow a bear to gain entry by breaking, bending, tearing, biting, or pulling with its claws.

The full text of this order is [here](#).

Currently there is much confusion about these orders, especially when it comes to Ursack Bear Bags versus Bear Canisters. Here is an entry from June 14 by Perry Pravettone on the Colorado Trail Thru-Hike 2023 Facebook page:

My daughter has been calling around all morning to different ranger districts to get an answer on the Ursack/Canister debate.

She spoke with the Pikes Peak Ranger District and they said since it is certified by the IGBC, the Ursack is allowable. The Leadville Ranger District didn't know and said they would call back. She then spoke with South Platte Ranger district's supervisor. Apparently there is another part of the order (Exhibit B) that is NOT available on the Forest Service website that the ranger's have. It defines what is considered bear resistant. And to sum it up, it does NOT state it has to be hard sided, but has to be puncture proof, free of cracks or tears, and be able to withstand 200lbs of force. All of which the Ursack is certified for.

Hopefully the Forest Service will soon provide better clarification to make the rules clearer to both backpackers and Forest Service Rangers. The BPX Committee will continue to follow this and keep you posted.

BPX TIP OF THE MONTH

Food Storage on the Trail

Food storage in the backcountry is not only about making sure some critter doesn't eat your M&M's, but more importantly protecting bears. Bears "finding" food on the trail come to associate food with humans, increasing bear/human encounters. The likely result is the bear being relocated, or worse, euthanized.

Hanging a bear bag from a tree is a standard way to protect your food by positioning it about twelve feet off the ground, five feet away from the trunk, and about five feet below the closest limb. But backpacking guru, Andrew Skurka, does not recommend hanging bear bags for several reasons, starting with "you probably suck at it" (must have seen me throw a ball); it's often impossible to find a tree meeting these criteria, especially above tree line; and it's time-consuming.

Bear canisters provide good protection for your food. Some advantages are: you don't have to hang them or tie them to a tree; they are waterproof and keep your food from getting crushed; can be used to sit on (knees cooperating); and are required in places like Rocky Mountain National Park and the Maroon Bells-

Snowmass Wilderness. Disadvantages include they are heavy and bulky and don't "shrink" as you consume your food; bears can swat and roll them away; and lid can be hard to open. If you use a bear canister, put it a "safe" distance away from camp--25 to 50 yards, and avoid any location where it can be rolled away.

Ursack Bear Bags have been approved by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) and also provide good protection for your food, especially when you put your food first in odor-proof bags like OPSAK or SMELLY PROOF. Advantages are: lightweight and much easier to carry; "shrink" as you consume your food; and can be tied to a tree or rock instead of hung. Disadvantages include not waterproof; not as durable as a canister; bears can walk off with them if not properly tied; and can be crushed by bears (and you) leaning on them. If you use an Ursack, seal it with a double overhand knot and anchor it to an unbreakable tree or branch, as high as you can reach, using a figure-8 knot. Don't tie it low to the ground since that makes it easier for a bear to smash and get leverage. [Here](#) is a good video discussing Ursack Bear Bags and how to properly tie them.

No matter which storage method you use, remember that bears are extremely intelligent. They have learned how to get down bear bags, rip into Ursacks, open a canister with an improperly closed lid, and even treat a canister like a chew toy, eventually breaking through it. The more usage a backcountry campsite has, the greater the odds of finding a "picnic basket" snatching Yogi Bear. Do your part in using good food storage habits to protect your fellow backpackers.

BPX MEMBER INFO

BPX FACEBOOK: [BPX FB](#) Send Photos and Trips Reports to post on BPX Facebook Page to: 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 on the SELECT YOUR SECTIONS page. Currently this is the only time you can renew your BPX membership online. Otherwise, call the CMC Office at (303) 279-3080 and they will take your \$20 membership payment.

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

FIRE INFO: [National Interagency Fire Center News](#) [Colorado Fire Restrictions](#)

LEAD THE PACK

WELCOME NEW BPX TRIP LEADERS

Marianne Curtis - Denver
Mara Saunders - Denver

BPX is always looking for awesome CMC Trip Leaders from ALL CMC groups interested in expanding their trip repertoire by leading backpacking trips. Email your interest and experience to cmcbpx@gmail.com.

More info on becoming a Leader can be found [here](#).

CMC Backpacking Section Supports Leave No Trace

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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