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BACKCOUNTRY CACHE

A Newsletter for Members of CMC Backpacking Section

September 2024

CHAIR'S CORNER - Uwe Sartori

My last Chair Corner note. I was hoping to be writing it while on my 4-Pass Loop or North Crestone Lake Trip. Instead, I'm writing from sunny Tampa, Florida where I am spending time with Mom. All good.

Congratulations to our incoming CMC Backpacking Section Chair, Louise Campbell-Blair, BPX Vice Chair. As a long time Committee Member, Louise has intimate knowledge about how the BPX Committee runs. She is conversant with our functional areas, participated in planning and executing our 2 -3 annual events, led BPX Trips, managed the *BPX Trip Leader Reward Recognition Program*, and has done an outstanding job as our *Treasurer* for the past 3 years and as our *Vice-Chair* for the past 2 years. Thank you, Louise, for stepping up. I know you and the Committee will continue to keep CMC Backpacking Section on its successful trajectory as one of the best in the CMC Sections program.

As my last official act as Chair, I'd like to welcome Craig Townsend and Dave Molyneaux to the Committee. Craig is our Trips Coordinator. Dave is deciding on his role.

It has been an honor and joy serving on the BPX Committee. I was blessed to worked with a team as passionate about delivering excellence and exceeding expectations as I was. To our BPX Trip Leaders, a heartfelt thanks for your service. To all our dear BPX Members, Happy Trails. I hope to see you on the next one.

UPCOMING BPX TRIPS

Trips will typically open up 30 days prior to their start date (trips requiring camping or permit fees may open up sooner). There is no limit on the number of BPX trips you can go on! However, you must be a member of the BPX Section.

E=Easy M=Moderate C=Challenging D=Difficult

[Upcoming Trips with Openings*](#)

Sep 22-23 Sun-Mon M [Lake of the Clouds from Gibson Creek TH](#)
Sep 28-30 Sat-Mon M [Abyss Lake Trail from Burning Bear TH](#)

Upcoming Trips with 0-1 on Waitlist*

Sep 21-22 Sat-Sun M [Emmaline Lake, Near Pingree Park in Poudre Canyon](#)
Sep 22-24 Sun-Tue C [Bluebird Lake from Wild Basin TH](#)

*As Of Sept 19. Continue to check the CMC Website for BPX Trips.

Stay Tuned for Winter Outings!

[Mountain Side Gear Rental](#) in Golden rents backpacking gear with a 10% 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 [Oct 28](#)

AVALANCHE TERRAIN AVOIDANCE RENEWAL FOR TRIP LEADERS More info [here](#)

WINTER CAMPING SCHOOL Starts [Feb 11](#)

PIKES PEAK

WTS LAND NAVIGATION Starts [Oct 2](#)

AVALANCHE TERRAIN AVOIDANCE Starts [Jan 9](#)

AIARE 1 Starts [Jan 14](#)

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

AIARE AVALANCHE RESCUE [Mar 2](#)

WINTER WILDERNESS SURVIVAL Starts [Mar 5](#)

NORTHERN COLORADO

AVALANCHE TERRAIN AVOIDANCE Starts [Dec 10](#)

STATE

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

Continue to check the CMC Website for additional courses.

BPX TRIP REPORTS

Camp Lake Backpack - Rawah Wilderness

Trip Leader Craig Townsend - Denver Group

On August 23 we started on our 3-day BPX trip into the Rawah Wilderness along the West Branch trail. This was a backpacking trip I had wanted to do for a long time. The temperature was in the mid 50's with rain in the forecast--we hoped it would hold off until we got to camp. We knew there were a couple water crossings, so we all were prepared with water shoes. We made good time and soon found ourselves on the east side of the North Fork West Branch Laramie River--our first water crossing. Luckily we were able

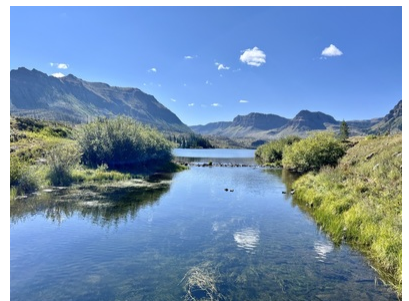
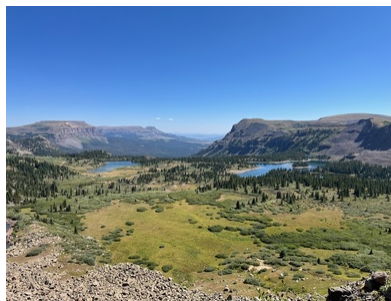
to walk across a series of logs. Less than a mile later, we came to the next water crossing. Again we lucked out--there was a brand new log bridge. About this time it started raining, so out came our rain gear and pack covers. It didn't slow us down, and we were soon at camp. The rain let up just long enough for us to pitch our tents and have lunch. It started up again and continued off and on for the remainder of the afternoon, so we opted not to do the optional hike to Twin Crater Lakes. The rain stopped around 5:00, allowing us to cook and eat dinner--Chicken Dorito Enchilada ... Mmmmm! Afterwards it started raining again, so we all adjourned to our tents for the night. Saturday morning we got up early, had breakfast, and started our climb up Grassy Pass. There were dark clouds to the west, so we wanted to get up and over before it started raining. The morning climb wasn't too bad, and we soon were at the pass enjoying the views to the south and north. We continued on as the trail dropped in elevation to the area near Sandbar Lakes, where we took a well deserved break. We finished the hike for the day, made camp near Camp Lake, and ate lunch. Just like Friday, right after lunch the heavens opened up and we spent the afternoon in our tents. We had planned on doing an optional hike to Upper Camp Lake, but decided not to. That night we walked down to Camp Lake to get water and take pictures. Afterwards we cooked up some Tortilla Soup ... Very Tasty! Sunday morning the sun was shining. Yeah! As we prepared for breakfast, a mother moose and her calf decided to join us. A little too close for my comfort (within 30 yards). So breakfast was delayed until the moose moved on. We then enjoyed pancakes and were on the trail by 9:00 for the hike back to the trailhead. I guess we were in a hurry because we hiked over 8 miles in about 3 1/2 hours. Just as we got to the car, the rain started again. All in all, it was a great trip. We enjoyed each others company, had fun, and savoured good meals throughout the trip. I'd like to go back again with the hopes of being able to do the optional day hikes and/or explore farther north.



Parvin, Island, and Wall Lake Backpack - Flat Tops Wilderness

Trip Leader Dave Molyneaux - Denver Group

We had a great Labor Day weekend in the beautiful Flat Tops Wilderness, camping at a different lake for each of our three nights! This was a nice late season trip. Plenty of water sources and mild weather, which worked out well since there was generally not a lot of tree cover while hiking during the day. Despite it being a holiday weekend, the first night we had Parvin Lake all to ourselves and overall did not see many other hikers/backpackers. After crossing paths with a sheep farmer on Day 2, we can honestly say we saw more sheep than people!



Crystal River Bogan Flats Camping Trip - Maroon Bells Snowmass Wilderness

Trip Leader Linda Lawson - Denver Group

Reading Lisa Shroyer's 2023 camping trip report touting this area and the Crystal Mill filled me with aspirations to lead a similar trip. With only 2 nights and 3 days available in September, the plan was to hike each day, with the Crystal Mill trail being the highlight of the trip.

The Crystal River is appropriately named and runs closely to the 4WD trail a little beyond the town of Marble to the old mining town of Crystal. Crystal is not a "ghost town" as there are current residents.



Eating the dust of jeeps, trucks, and a couple of fearless Subaru drivers, the 7 of us hiked about 10.5 miles RT to capture photos of the "mill". The structure was constructed in 1892 and is one of the most photographed locations in Colorado. It was not a "mill" per se, but a pump house according to a local resident. The structure is privately owned and access to the water below the mill requires a small fee.

Bogan Flats campground has several sites close to Crystal River. They were quite large with one accommodating 4 tents and another 3 tents. There were significant warnings of black bears in the area, which we heeded by using the third campsite for cooking and eating only. Additional campgrounds in the area include the Marble campground and Redstone campground.

Day 3 found us in the quaint town of Redstone where the Redstone Castle can be toured if you have advance reservations. We selected the East Creek trail but due to timing, exploration was limited to a RT hike of about 3 miles and 800' elevation.

Not as much time available as this scenic and historic area of Colorado deserves but definitely should be a BPX standard offering.

BPX TIP OF THE MONTH

Backcountry Outings During Wildfire Season

We've made it to fall, but as the wildfire season continues to get longer, it's always good to consider the wildfire potential when planning a backcountry outing. We never want to put ourselves or search and rescue teams in danger because we didn't plan ahead for them.

Before heading out, check online maps for Air Quality and Active Fires. There are a number of them showing the locations of active fires as well as the air quality near hiking trails. Here are a few options:

- [Google Maps](#). Clicking on the Layers->More button gives an option to show any wildfires in the area you are planning for your outing. Clicking on a fire icon shows its level of containment and other key information. Selecting the Air Quality button layers a color-coded Air Quality Index (AQI) onto the map. An AQI above 100 is not good for people with asthma or other health conditions, and above 150 is bad for everyone.
- [COTREX](#). Shows Active Fire Alerts of both wildfires and prescribed burns, automatically displaying on the app's map as "fire" icons. Tapping on one shows detailed info, including boundaries, links, and descriptions.
- [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#). Has an Air Quality overlay as well as other information like Red Flag warnings and Significant Wildland Potential Outlook maps.
- [National Interagency Fire Center](#) compiles information about the current wildfire situations and statistics that encompass lands managed by federal, state, local, tribal, and private agencies.

You can also contact the local land management office for the area where you are planning your outing.

Another tool is to know how to read smoke if you do encounter it:

- Smoke with a yellow, orange, or red hue is unhealthy.
- White smoke often corresponds to fast-burning fires with finer fuels, like grass fires.
- Dark smoke is a sign of fire from thicker brush or trees, lasting longer and potentially spreading farther through embers carried by wind. These can even cross rivers or other natural fire boundaries.
- Larger smoke columns mean larger fires, so leave the area. You can tell which way the fire is moving by the direction the smoke column bends, so evacuate in the opposite direction
- Smoke across an entire valley and moving in one direction can indicate a fire that is spreading rapidly and where it is going.

When hiking during fire season, note the location of natural feature "safe spots" where you can escape if necessary, like rocky patches, water, meadows, talus slopes, and above tree line. Remember that fires burn faster uphill, so avoid going upslope or downwind from the fire and try to be on its flank or behind it where it's already burned. You cannot outrun it! If you can't escape:

- Head as fast as possible to the nearest "safe spot".
- Lie face down with your feet towards the fire, staying as low as possible and covering yourself with dirt if possible.
- Dig a small hole and cup your hands around your face to breathe.

Sources:

Art Hogling (2023), *Hiking Safety Handbook*, The Colorado Mountain Club Press

Korrin Bishop (Aug 18, 2024). "7 Tips for Hiking During Wildfire Season". Light Feet Blog - Gossamer Gear. <https://www.gossamergear.com/blogs/our-blog/tips-hiking-during-wildfire-season>

WANTED ATA FIELD INSTRUCTORS - Denver Group

AIARE 1 GRADS, REINFORCE YOUR SKILL SET BY VOLUNTEERING TO BE AN ATA FIELD INSTRUCTOR

ATA (Avalanche Terrain Avoidance) teaches students how to **AVOID** avalanche terrain and includes a half-day field session usually held on Jones Pass Road.

Four field sessions are currently planned on Saturdays:

December 21
January 4
January 25
February 15

Field instructor to student ratio held to 1:7 with duties including demonstration of slope angle measurement, avalanche observations to include terrain, wind, snowpack, route finding, and potential triggers. Classroom engagement encouraged. Use of beacon, shovel, and probe rescue is not included in this curriculum.

Contact: Linda Lawson @ lk14er@comcast.net or 303/842-7040

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 for an additional \$20 on the SELECT YOUR SECTIONS page. You can also join/renew your BPX membership any time by clicking [here](#) or calling the CMC Office at (303) 279-3080.

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

AMC PARKING INFO: [here](#)

COLORADO ROAD INFORMATION: [here](#)

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

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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