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BACKCOUNTRY CACHE

A Newsletter for Members of CMC Backpacking Section

October 2024

CHAIR'S CORNER - Louise Campbell-Blair

I'm excited and honored to be the new Chair of the BPX Section. Huge thanks to all of you for trusting me with this role. My goal is to ensure that we offer trips, events, and programs that our members value as well as a strong sense of friendship and community. I'm looking forward to hearing your ideas, sharing adventures, and exploring new trails together.



Please join me in thanking our outgoing chair, Uwe Sartori, for his leadership over the past two years. Uwe has continued to push Backpacking into the CMC limelight and strengthen our Section.

This change in leadership comes at an ideal time as it coincides with the BPX Committee Annual Retreat on October 27. Your awesome Committee will take a deep dive into our programs, work out the knots, and brainstorm new ideas. I'm sure many of you would like to have input into this activity so don't be shy! Simply send an email to cmcbpx@gmail.com and let us know your thoughts. Deadline for input will be end of day Friday, October 25.

Here's to many new adventures ahead!

Congratulations to Louise for being selected by the Denver Group for the Exceptional Volunteer Contribution Award.

CMC MOVE

The CMC staff is busy preparing for the move to their new location at the end of this month. Their new home is a former church at 32nd and McIntyre in Golden. It will be built out in phases to house classrooms, outdoor spaces, event areas, and new climbing spaces. More info can be found at the [CMC Transition Planning Updates Blog](#).



UPCOMING BPX TRIPS

There currently are no more 2024 BPX trips scheduled, but watch the CMC calendar in case any winter outings come up. And stay tuned for the 2025 BPX Trip Rollout event next March!

MYSTERIES OF CMC AUTO-RENEW

If you chose the auto-renew option for your CMC membership, the Sections you have previously joined (BPX, RMOTHG, etc.) will automatically be renewed as well as your CMC membership when the auto-renew happens, and you will be charged the additional costs for any of the Sections with a fee (\$20/year for BPX). You can check your Section memberships by visiting your profile page on cmc.org. Note that the CMC database can only store the start/expiration dates for your CMC membership; not Sections. Consequently, if you join BPX after renewing your CMC membership, your BPX membership will expire the following year at the same time as your CMC membership. If there is a new Section you would like to join, you will need to contact CMC Membership to have this Section added to your profile.

If you do not have auto-renew activated, you can select your Sections at the same time as you are renewing your CMC membership online.

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 [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](#)

AIARE AVALANCHE RESCUE [Mar 2](#)

WINTER WILDERNESS SURVIVAL Starts [Mar 5](#)

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.

BPX TRIP REPORTS

Bison and McCurdy Mountain - Lost Creek Wilderness

Trip Leaders Holly Myers and Wayne Howell - Denver Group

Our Bison and McCurdy Mountain trip in the Lost Creek Wilderness was pleasant the first day and night. We hiked in 4 miles on the gently ascending Brookside McCurdy Trail (from the Lost Creek Campground) and set up camp in an area that was fairly flat and near Indian Creek, our water source. We were fortunate to see a mother and her yearling baby moose come walking into the meadow very near our camp site. They took their time ambling through the willows, eating, and occasionally looking up at us for at least an hour. Temperatures at night were around 40 degrees. Our hike the next day was to include McCurdy and Bison Peaks, but we had a Garmin weather report of thundershowers starting early in the day and lasting through the night. When we reached the Bison plateau, we could see the storm clouds heading our way and decided to abandon our trip plan, head back, break camp and head out. So, our trip was cut short. I hope we can do it another time. The fall is a great time to see the aspens turning!



Wheeler Geologic Area Backpack - La Garita Wilderness

Trip Leader Wayne Howell and Eric Butler - Denver Group

Our 3-day backpacking trip to the Wheeler Geologic Area began at the South Fork Saguache Trailhead, where we followed the Unknown Creek Trail into the pristine La Garita Wilderness. The first day's hike was serene, with the trail weaving through vibrant meadows and thick stands of pine (unfortunately devastated by beetle kill). In the afternoon, we merged onto the Half Moon Pass Trail, ascending steadily through beautiful alpine scenery. By evening, we reached a peaceful campsite by a creek, where we settled in for the night, surrounded by the towering peaks of the wilderness and the sounds of nature.

Day 2 took us over Half Moon Pass where the views were breathtaking. The climb was strenuous, but the volcanic rock formations of the Wheeler Geologic Area made every step worthwhile. Standing amidst the towering spires and eroded hoodoos, we felt transported to another world. After exploring the area, we made our way back over Half Moon Pass to our campsite. The evening rewarded us with rain, a hailstorm, more rain, a second hailstorm, and then, finally quiet. A perfect end to an adventurous day.

On day 3 we packed up camp early and set off for the final stretch of our journey. The hike began with a climb between 2 prominent 12,000-foot peaks, where we were rewarded with expansive views of the rugged wilderness. From there the descent took us through varied and challenging terrain. We first

passed through open meadows. As we continued, the trail led us into a steep canyon, where the terrain shifted dramatically. We traversed across talus fields, carefully navigating the loose rocks while the towering cliffs loomed above us. The canyon's ruggedness was awe-inspiring, with its sheer rock faces and the echoes of the South Fork Saguache Creek rushing below. Emerging from the canyon, we followed the creek along the South Fork Saguache Trail, where the terrain softened again, and we hiked through a dense forest of towering pines and aspen, where the sunlight barely filtered through the canopy. By mid-afternoon, we arrived at the trailhead, completing a stunning and adventurous journey through some of Colorado's most remote and awe-inspiring terrain.



Snowy Range Backpack - Wyoming

Trip Leader Louise Campbell-Blair and Randy Blosser - Denver Group

If you haven't discovered the Snowy Range yet - go NOW! So many lakes, trails, rock formations, and mountains stretching as far as you can see. We camped at serene Deep Lake and then Heart Lake. Great weather with the only big storm hitting overnight. Our big challenge was getting over Medicine Bow Peak on the final day with fully loaded backpacks. It's steep and required scrambling at the summit, then very careful foot work to navigate the rocky descent. This trip is correctly marked as a 'DIFFICULT' trip on our website. There are so many trails and lakes here, so even though we briefly bumped into 2 CMC Backpacking School Groups, we really had the place to ourselves. I'm definitely going back to explore more routes next season.



BPX TIP OF THE MONTH

Repackage Your Freeze Dried/Dehydrated Meals

Backpacker meals often come in big, bulky packaging with pokey edges, and it can be hard to stuff several days' worth into your bear canister. To lighten your load and decrease your pack volume, consider repackaging them into Ziploc bags. This also gives you a chance to add spices or split up a packaged meal into just the right amount for you. When done, there's no cleanup—just suck the air out of the bag, zip, and roll it up, the result taking little space and weighing almost nothing.

Remember to write the information about the meal on the outside of each bag—name, number of calories, cooking instructions, etc. Otherwise, you will end up with mystery meals.

Handling Ziploc bags when filled with boiling water can be precarious and a little dangerous. So, consider putting them in a insulating cozy. These not only provide stability to the bag, but also keep it warm while rehydrating and eating. A couple of options are the [REpack Freezer Bag by Hyperlite Mountain Gear](#) and the [Insulite™ Insulated Food Pouch by Big Sky International](#). (I have the Big Sky pouch, and not only is it inexpensive but does a great job of keeping my food hot while I “savor” my dehydrated meal). You can also just put the bag in your pot while eating.

Most people use Ziploc Freezer bags for repackaging since they are a little thicker than regular Ziploc bags and will not melt with boiling water. You can find lots of opinions as to whether it is safe to use these, however. They are made from food-grade polyethylene and are BPA free, plus you are not eating from them all the time (and water boils at a lower temperature at altitude). But the tradeoffs are definitely worth considering. You can let the water sit for a minute after boiling before pouring into the bag, especially using a cozy while rehydrating. For “cooking”, you can also use instead a bag made to hold boiling water, like the [CNOC Buc Food Bag](#) or [Ziploc Endurables](#). But these do need to be cleaned after each use.

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](#)

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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