



# Gore Range Group e-News

March 2024

*“What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness.”*

John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*

After a dry start, winter finally came to the Gore Range in January. And we Gore Rangers have been busy with backcountry skiing, resort skiing, daylight and moonlight snowshoeing, nordic skiing, and travelling across the state to take advantage of our Colorado winter. And there is more to come, with a number of backcountry, nordic and resort skiing trips on the calendar for the month of March. Summer will be here soon enough, with a full slate of hiking, backpacking and climbing trips to keep us busy.

Our club is made up of dedicated members and volunteers who understand that our Colorado mountains are a gift. A gift that gives us all the opportunity to enjoy nature and to be part of a community of like-minded adventurers who love to recreate in the outdoors no matter what season. I encourage everyone to take advantage of what our club has to offer and to get involved by coming along on our trips, becoming a trip leader, or joining our governing council. If you want to learn more about our club and all it has to offer, don't hesitate to contact me or any of our governing council members to find out how you can take the best advantage of your membership in the CMC Gore Range Group.

See you outside!

Jim Borgel  
Gore Range Chair

## **Who is the Gore Range Group?**

submitted by Maryann Gaug, Membership Chair

Have you ever wondered who belongs to the Gore Range Group of the Colorado Mountain Club? Not by name, but by where they live and other such demographics? State does not share people's ages with membership chairs.

As of Feb. 15, 2024, GRG has 128 members, including 6 Lifetime members, 3 40-year members, 42 Family memberships, 66 regular members, and 11 Under 30 members.

Three members joined CMC back in 1968, 56 years ago! Twenty-two members joined prior to 2000. Seven members live in states such as Arizona, Hawaii, Kansas, Maine, and the Carolinas. Some of these folks also live in Summit or Eagle counties part-time.

Most of us list Colorado as our primary residence. Eagle County is home to 36 members while 43 call Summit County home. Twenty-four members list their residence as the Front Range area. Other members are spread from Montrose to Salida and Steamboat Springs to Buena Vista plus neighboring Grand and Lake counties.

We, the GRG, are a mixture of people from many parts of the central regions of Colorado! Next time you participate in a GRG event, take time to learn where people are from. With such a wide variety of home towns, surely we are a very interesting group living in different environments and mini-cultures. We all have something unique that we can share as a GRG member.

# COUNCIL NEWS

*As Bob Dylan said, The times, they are a changin'*

GRG Council is experiencing changes in leadership, and we welcome new participation from our members. Bring your ideas, skills, and experiences and please join us as we move forward. All members are welcome to attend any Council meeting. Currently, we are seeking Chair and Safety Officers.

## Chair – Open position

- Preside at all meetings of the GRG and of the GRG Council.
- Represent the GRG on the CMC State Council (or appointee).
- Be an ex-officio member of all GRG committees.
- Appointments by the Chair shall be subject to the confirmation of the GRG Council.

## Safety – Open position

- Provide recommendations to the GRG Council to maintain adequate safety standards for the GRG and its outings.
- Maintain contact and represent the GRG on the State CMC Risk Management Committee as needed.

## Summer Trip Leader Planning Meeting

**Thu, Apr 4, 2024 from 06:30 PM to 07:30 PM**

<https://www.cmc.org/groups-sections/groups-around-the-state/gore-range-group/calendar/winter-trip-leader-planning-2024-04-04#:~:text=Special%20Interest%20Sections,-Summer%20Trip%20Leader%20Planning,-Zoom%20meeting%20for>

Leaders, please click on the link to register for our annual planning meeting for summer trips. All members are invited to attend this meeting. A zoom link will be sent to GRG Trip Leaders and CMC members who register for this event.



## GRG COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chair	James Borgel	Jbborgel@yahoo.com	Membership	Maryann Gaug	Megaug@earthlink.net
Vice Chair	Doug Werner	Dwerner@douglasengrg.com	Leader Training	Candace Winkle	Candace.winkle@gmail.com
Secretary	Jan Dudley	Jandudley01@gmail.com	Activities	Barbara Audin	Barbaudin@gmail.com
Treasurer	James Bradley	Bradley-james-07@comcast.net	Social Media	Jan Dudley	Jandudley01@gmail.com
Safety	OPEN		Leader Appreciation	Curt Audin	Chaudin51@gmail.com
State Council	Candace Winkle	Candace.winkle@gmail.com			

# GRG WINTER FUN

## SIGN UP FOR WINTER GRG TRIPS

**Mon, Mar 4, 2024**

### [BACKCOUNTRY SKIING/SPLITBOARDING – OPHIR MOUNTAIN](#)

**BACKCOUNTRY SKI/SPLTBOARD with Candace**

<https://www.cmc.org/education-adventure/trips/find-trips/backcountry-skiing-splitboarding-2013-ophir-mountain>

**Fri, Mar 8, 2024**

### [NORDIC SKIING – COPPER MOUNTAIN SKI RESORT](#)

**NORDIC SKI with Jan**

<https://www.cmc.org/education-adventure/trips/find-trips/nordic-skiing-2013-copper-mountain-ski-resort>

**Tue, Mar 12, 2024**

### [RESORT SKIING/SNOWBOARDING – BEAVER CREEK RESORT, AVON, CO](#)

**RESORT SKI/SNOWBOARD with Curt**

<https://www.cmc.org/education-adventure/trips/find-trips/resort-skiing-snowboarding-2013-downhill-skiing-snowboarding-beaver-creek-resort-avon-co>

**Fri, Mar 29, 2024**

### [BACKCOUNTRY SKIING/SPLITBOARDING – COPPER MOUNTAIN SKI RESORT](#)

**BACKCOUNTRY SKI/SPLITBOARD with Jan**

<https://www.cmc.org/education-adventure/trips/find-trips/backcountry-skiing-splitboarding-2013-copper-mountain-ski-resort-1>

**Thu, Apr 4, 2024 from 06:30 PM to 07:30 PM**

**Summer Trip Leader Planning**

<https://www.cmc.org/groups-sections/groups-around-the-state/gore-range-group/calendar/winter-trip-leader-planning-2024-04-04#:~:text=Special%20Interest%20Sections,Summer%20Trip%20Leader%20Planning,-Zoom%20meeting%20for>

A zoom link will be sent to GRG Trip Leaders and CMC members who register for this event.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR GRG MEETING DATES**

GRG Members are welcome to attend all GRG Meetings. Meetings are posted on the GRG Calendar. Click on the link to register. Jan will send a zoom link prior to the meeting.

# ANIMAL TRACKS

Submitted by Curt Audin

Now in my sixth winter in the Gore Range, I have become intrigued by the tracks seen in the snow. What and where is this creature? I know you are out there somewhere. Today's mammals are a large group of animals with over 400 species in North America. Of these species, 130 are native to Colorado. During the winter months, you will encounter many tracks in the snow. They are either hoof or paw prints. This article will talk about paw prints.

## Is it a dog or a cat?

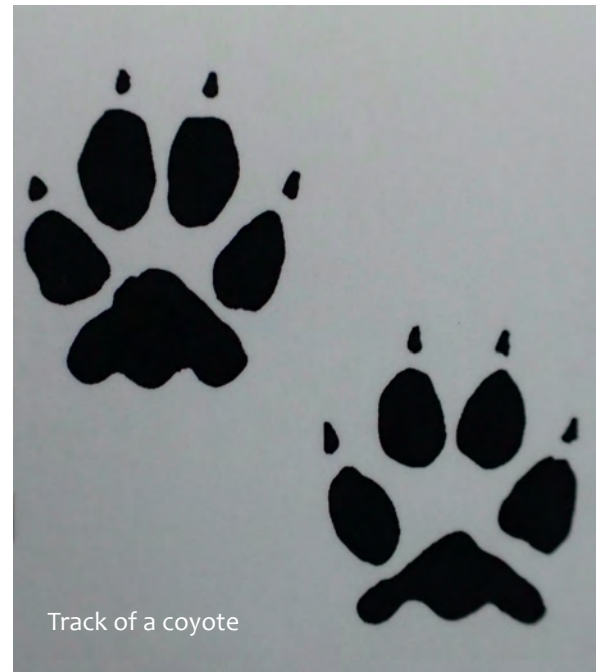
While many hikers bring their dogs with them, our interest is other members of the dog family "Canidae", such as the fox, coyote, or wolf. I doubt anyone will see pet kitty tracks, but "tabby" does have cousins in the cat family "Felidae" that we need to know about, such as the bobcat, Canada lynx, or mountain lion.

There are similarities in the tracks between the dog and cat, but their difference is what provides the answer to this question. The standout feature of these tracks is the impression of the toes and the heel pad. Both dog and cat have four toes, and behind these, a heel pad. This where the similarity ends.

Let's look at how they differ. In the front of a dog's toe print, you should note a small "scratch" mark at the top of each toe. This mark is made by the claw of a dog. Because the cat has retractable claws, the toe print of a cat leaves no "scratch" mark. But let's say you still cannot tell the difference between a dog or cat print. Look at the heel pad. On the leading edge of the heel pad is a hump, kind of like that of a camel. The heel pad of the dog is a single hump, while the heel pad of the cat is bifurcated or a double hump. Also, the heel pad of a cat is proportionally larger than that of a dog. Finally, the imprint of a cat is more rounded than that of the dog.

Typically, I'm not worried about the hiker with "man's best friend", but I would like to know about the fox, coyote, and wolf; or the bobcat, Canada lynx, and mountain lion. Obviously, if the track is not accompanied by that of human tracks, you most likely have encountered the track of wildlife. The fox family includes the kit, swift (not Taylor), gray, and red species. Fox tracks are what I most often see. Among these four species of fox, the tracks are nearly identical with the front paw 1.5 inches in length and the hind paw slightly smaller. Being the smaller species, the kit and swift fox have a stride of 8 to 12 inches in a straight line. The larger species of gray and red fox have a slightly larger paw print of 2 inches in length. The stride of the gray and red fox measures 10-14 inches, again in a straight line.

The coyote (also referred to as brush or prairie wolf) has tracks that are 2.5 inches long and 2 inches wide, with a visible claw mark in front of the toes. The front and hind prints differ in size. The front print is slightly larger with a wider toe and more prominent heel pad. The stride of the coyote can vary from 12 to 15 inches in a straight line. The coyote can often be heard with their eerie distinguishable yapping howl. Also note that the coyote can be seen to run with its tail down, unlike that of the dog or wolf that runs with its tail out straight, or upright.



# ANIMAL TRACKS

The wolf is being reintroduced into Colorado and has been identified in Summit County, so don't be surprised if you come across wolf tracks. A larger animal, the front paw is slightly larger, measuring 5 to 6.5 inches in length and 4 inches wide. Also, the spread of the toes on the front foot is wider than that of the hind foot. The stride length for the wolf is much longer, ranging from 15 to 30 inches in a straight line. The gray wolf rarely walks along roads as you will notice with the pet dog, and tends to shy away from humans.

Our friendly "tabby" cousins include the bobcat, Canada lynx, and mountain lion. The cat, a much more sophisticated animal, will walk more neatly and leave a straighter trail. The toes are evenly spread, with the hind foot impacting near or on the front paw track. The bobcat is essentially a larger version of our domestic cat. The front and hind paws are about the same in measurement: 1.75 inches in length and 1.5 inches wide. The major difference is that the heel pad of the front

foot is slightly larger than that of the hind foot. Again, you will not see a claw mark in front of the toes due to the retractable claws of the cat. The typical walking stride measures from about 8 to 14 inches in a straight line. A nocturnal animal, it is unlikely you will come across a bobcat.



The Canada lynx, slightly larger than the bobcat and about half the size of the mountain lion, is currently listed as endangered in Colorado. This animal has adapted to living in the cold and snowy environment. In addition to its coat, its paws are large and furry, acting like snowshoes that prevent sinking deeply into the snow. The Canada lynx has a larger paw print of 3 to 4 inches in length, and 3.75 inches in width. The front paw is slightly larger than the hind paw. The stride may be as short as 9 inches, or as long as 16 inches, in a straight line. As with the bobcat, the hind paw impacts near or on the front paw track. The Canada lynx is a solitary and nocturnal animal, but if you are fortunate enough to spot one, you will note the distinctive ear tufts, which are not present on the bobcat or mountain lion.

Finally ... the mountain lion (aka cougar, panther, or puma). Mountain lions have taken up residence in Silverthorne. The front and hind paws are similar in size, measuring 5 to 6 inches in length, with a rounded appearance. The toes of the front paw may be more spread out and the heel pad of the hind paw is compressed. The stride length varies from 12 to 28 inches in a straight line. One notable feature, especially in snow, is the tail drag as they carry their tail in a low "J" that can impact the snow behind them. This is not always present, but is a significant characteristic. Mountain lions are also solitary and nocturnal, but have been known to stalk humans. Chances are they see you long before you know they are there. If you are hiking below a ridge, you may want to periodically scan above and behind you to see what's stalking you. After a kill, the mountain lion will return to the carcass over the next few days to feed. You may come across a pile of leaves with a buried carcass or you may even spot the carcass of a deer up in a tree.

## From predator to prey ... Which way is that bunny going?

Let's see what Bug Bunny is up to. "Which way did that wabbit go?" exclaimed Elmer Fudd.

First, let's clarify that hares are not rabbits, and rabbits are not hares. That is a different discussion that is not covered in this article. For the purposes of this article, though not completely accurate, I'll refer to all as rabbits.

# ANIMAL TRACKS

Here in Colorado, we have cottontails (mountain, desert, and eastern), jack rabbits (black and white tail), and the snowshoe hare. Rabbit tracks have a distinctive pattern. Similar to a dog or cat, rabbits have 4 toes. A typical rabbit track in the snow looks like an uppercase “Y”. For the most part, they vary only in their size. For the purposes of this article, I’m only focusing on what direction the rabbit is heading. The direction of travel may not be so obvious to the casual observer.

The hind feet of the rabbit are significantly larger than the front feet, and the prints in the snow reveal this. On a closer look, you will notice that the hind feet imprint directly ahead of the front feet as they travel. When looking at the “Y”



pattern of the track, the two upper branches are made by the hind feet. The lower trunk is that of the front feet. This lower trunk is also slightly staggered, giving it that elongated look. Therefore, looking at our “Y”, the rabbit would be traveling upward (which is counter intuitive to the aerodynamic look of an arrowhead). So if you are tracking one of these bunnies, you will know where it is going, and where it has come from.

Snow makes an awesome medium for observing animal tracks. The more you look, the more you will notice about what is really going on in your areas of travel. It is not as quiet as you think!

I want to give special thanks and acknowledgement to Eric Erslev for providing his knowledge and review of this article.

1. Murie, Olaus J. (1975). *A Field Guide to Animal Tracks* Second Edition. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin. pp 91-121, 235-247.
2. Tekiela, Stan. (2007). *Mammals of Colorado Field Guide*. Adventure Publications. pp 183-205, 267-301.

# GRG WINTER FUN



Mayflower Gulch



Full moon on Boreas Pass



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Legacy of GRG friendships



Downhill at Keystone

# GRG WINTER FUN

