



Denver Leader News

The newsletter for Denver Leaders of the Colorado Mountain Club

www.hikingdenver.net

www.cmc.org

February 2012

All of us on Safety & Leadership would like to wish you a happy and adventurous CMC Centennial New Year. We appreciate all that you do in providing our members with such great experiences in the outdoors. Whether it be leading trips or participating in them, you are the driving force in the success of the CMC.

As a committee, we are working hard to provide you with additional tools to support you in being the great leaders you already are. We need your feedback and ideas. Please drop us an email with your comments and suggestions. Our door is always open. Email us at kaborbed@comcast.net.



WHAT'S NEW

March 4th & 11th – Wilderness First Aid - This course follows a standardized program through the Emergency Care and Safety Institute and consists of 8 hours of lectures, 8 hours of practical training, a written test, and practice scenarios. All leaders are encouraged to take at least one first aid course and refresh periodically.

March 10th - Backcountry Incident Review Conference featuring world-class mountaineer **Susan Ershler** of Seattle and detailed reviews of four CMC trips on which things went awry. Admission: \$10 for leaders committed to leading at least three trips during 2012; \$20 for all other trip leaders. Register : cmc.org/BIRC or <http://www.cmc.org/education/birc2.aspx>

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Three major opportunities for leaders to be involved in the 2012 100th Anniversary of CMC:

July 21 Centennial Celebration Fest – Buena Vista

Join this statewide celebration – THE EVENT of the summer! A day of outdoor activities with everyone meeting in McPhelmy Town Park at 4pm for food, beer, and music from Mountain Holler Bluegrass Band! Trip Leaders are needed for fly fishing trips along the Arkansas River, 14ers, 13ers, lake and other hikes in the area. Volunteers are also needed for family hikes and kids events in the park. Contact: Linda Lawson lk14er@comcast.net.

September 8 – Colorado Fourteener Challenge

CMC led climbs of all the 14ers, all in the same day! This is an unprecedented opportunity – for you, your climb participants and for the club – to be a part of something that will create memories to last a lifetime. To learn how you can be part of a truly special backcountry event that will help generate enormous publicity for the club and help all Coloradans realize and appreciate what a tremendous resource CMC has been for the last 100 years and continues to be! Any leader in good standing is eligible. Denver Group trip-leaders must have a “C” rating. Information & Questions: 14erclimbdirector@cmc.org.

Centennial Peak Climbs

The Centennial Celebration Climbs (CCC) program has been set up to result in the online scheduling and completion (reaching the summit) of the highest 100 ranked peaks in Colorado and multiple times. Trips began in 2011 and will continue through 12/31/2012.

This program is in addition to the separate Centennial Celebration initiative entitled the Colorado 14er Challenge September 8th described above.

Trip leaders are needed for any and all Centennial peaks they wish to lead. Interested trip leaders should contact Beth Dwyer: bdwyer192@gmail.com.

WARNING!

In the fall, Boulder County issued a warning about fallen and weakened trees. Currently there have been several significant wind events throughout the mountains as you have probably seen by the large fallen trees. Other trees have been significantly weakened. Please caution your hikers to be alert in these areas, particularly when encountering wind.



DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 pound of weight is equal to 4 pounds of pressure on your knees.
- When using trekking poles, you can reduce compressive force on the knees by up to 25%. At the same time you expend more energy, burning over 20% more calories.



BRING OUT THE BEST

Novice Trip 1

Having been raised in Chicago, the most climbing I ever did was walking up to my 2nd floor apartment. As a new member of the CMC, I had a horrifying experience on one of my first trips. Albeit this was many years ago, the experience is fresh in my mind and the details embellished, of course.

What was supposed to be a Mod - B trip to Second Creek was my walk Down to hell and back. To this day, I'm still not sure of where we made our descent. Fortunately, my mind seems to block out these things lest I have ongoing nightmares. All I remember is the leader was halfway down the steep scree-laden slope, with me above thinking "Where's the rope?"

I may have looked stunning going up, but now I was reduced to butt running downward. I never had a chance to tell the leader about my inexperience off trail let alone having to make a descent over roller balls. In fact no one else was able to voice their concerns because he was at the base in a nano second.

Novice Trip 2

Fast forward to my first off trail scramble UP to a peak. By this time I had learned to voice my concerns. I told the leader that I had never ascended such a pile of rubble

before. He hiked behind me and encouraged me all along the way. His mere presence was a comfort in this new situation. He talked me through it and assured me I wasn't as wimpy as I was feeling. In fact, he told me of a girl who actually crawled up. She ended up being my future climbing partner! I made it to the top, a little white knuckled, but happy and proud nonetheless.

Lessons to be Learned

These are two contrasting stories about two very different leadership styles.

- Don't assume you are always dealing with experienced hikers. We are seeing a steady rise in new members and many who do not have hiking experience.
- Take the time to get to know your hikers and their abilities. We have found that a pre-trip email to trip participants describing the trail conditions, terrain, forecasted weather and any additional gear is one of the best ways to prepare them and avoid undesirable outcomes.
- When you come to a hazardous or questionable area, pull your group together. Advise them of the steps they need to take in order to stay safe. On a recent trip, the leader announced there was a steep off trail section ahead. He advised participants to tighten and lengthen their poles. The leader had the foresight to identify the hazards and made trip participants aware of what they needed to do to stay safe.
- Ask if anyone feels uncomfortable with the terrain. Keep in mind that many people won't voice their concerns.
- As your group travels across difficult terrain, stay with them. There may be someone like me, sweating bullets along the way. We've heard comments about participants feeling abandoned. Sometimes the leader is totally out of sight. The leader's ability to keep the group together and assess the hazards, contribute greatly to the success of a trip. If a participant feels the leader is competent and concerned with their well-being, they will hopefully be able to overcome any anxiety about conditions.
- You don't need to hold their hand, although I probably would have if someone offered me one.....not really. Your participants just need to know you have their back.

Side note: In the future we will try to donate a portion of the Leader Newsletter to Leadership Skills. We can't always save people from themselves, but hopefully we can give you some tools to make your job as a leader easier.

Have a story and want to share: Contact Deb Robak at kabord@comcast.net

AVALANCHE INFORMATION

Although snow fall has not been what skiers, snow shoers, and alpinists have desired, the possibility of avalanche still remains. From January 1 – January 9, there were four avalanches reported in the Front Range, six in the Summit County-Vail Range, and two in the Sawatch Range. On January 1st on Second Creek at the Berthoud headwall, a skier descended and triggered a hard slab avalanche from part-way down the slope. The skier was carried about 400 vertical feet over rough terrain, was partially buried but was able to keep his face clear of debris, made voice contact with his partner during the beacon search the pair conducted, and was evacuated to medical care. Imagine the consequences of taking a rough ride over the rocks and cliff bands.

Details of all accidents reported on the CAIC website can be viewed at: <http://avalanche.state.co.us>. Remember to check out the CAIC website for avalanche reports and daily forecasts. Teach your participants how to use this site to read the Avalanche Rose to further their knowledge about safe travel.