

Denver Safety and Leadership Newsletter August 2019



A Communication for CMC Denver Leaders

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Committee

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Hey, Leaders! Your DS&L Committee wants to hear from you. How may we serve you better? How can we help you plan and lead trips more easily? What resources, seminars, workshops, or field training can we provide you to encourage you to lead more trips? What should we advocate for on your behalf? Please send any questions, suggestions, observations, complaints, or thanks to: Durrie Monsma at djmonsma@gmail.com.



Annual Leader Appreciation Night (LAN)

Save the evening of **November 7, 2019** for our annual Leader Appreciation Night. DS&L will provide free food and beverages. Come to see friends, hear policy updates, and ask questions.

Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed at 6:30 p.m. by

the program, including recognition of all active leaders and school instructors, and awards to those who led the most trips in the prior year.

Our featured speaker will be a member of the Colorado Rapid Avalanche Deployment team, who will be accompanied by a couple of their canine helpers. If you like dogs – especially those that could save your life – this is your night!



Stay tuned for more details next month.



New Leaders

Congratulations to **Jay Gelvin, Abbie Gentry, Rachel Jaakola, Tim Lane, Dave Langley, Jeff Roberts, Rich Schiebel, and Daniel Schweissing**. Each of these members recently completed all the requirements to become a Denver Group trip leader. Please support them by signing up for one of their trips or offering your services as a co-leader.

Attention All Backpackers

Plans are underway to create a new CMC Denver Backpacking Section. **Jennie Popovich, Linda Lawson, and John Walters** are leading the effort to launch the new Section during the spring of 2020.

The purpose of the Backpacking Section is to promote backpacking as a mainstream CMC activity: plan, organize and post backpacking trips; and provide early notice of backpacking events to Section members.



Membership is open to all adult CMC members, with no annual dues.

Quite a bit of planning and organization is needed before a new Section can be launched. But plans call for summer trips to be posted in March, 2020, with kickoff events in May. Meanwhile, periodic updates will be emailed to all CMC Backpackers.

Anyone interested in backpacking may become a CMC Backpacker by subscribing to the “CMC Backpacker” mailing list. If you would like to receive backpacking notices, please contact John Walters at johnw14er@gmail.com or by texting 303-995-7638. And thanks to organizers for taking the initiative to increase the number of these much-requested trips



Disruptive Behavior

DS&L has recently received several Leader Incident Reports about disruptive behavior, such as a member leaving the group without permission or refusing to comply with a leader’s reasonable requests.

As a reminder about what to do if this happens to you, it’s best to immediately pull the offender aside and speak to him or her in private. Be kind but firm in stating the problem and what needs to change in order for the trip to continue. In extreme cases, you may need to terminate the trip or remove the participant.

After the trip, check the Incident box as you close out the trip (see below), then immediately complete an Incident Report and send it to the CMC office. Be sure to document exactly what occurred on the trip, including the names of the affected parties and their contact information.

A screenshot of a web-based form titled "Incident/Accident". The form includes a "Total Activity Hours" field with the value "4.5" and a "Trailhead Location or Activity Site:" field. Below these fields is a rich text editor with a menu bar containing "File", "Edit", "View", and "Format". The editor contains the text "Where the Continental Divide Trail intersects R... River Road". A red arrow points to the "Incident/Accident" title.

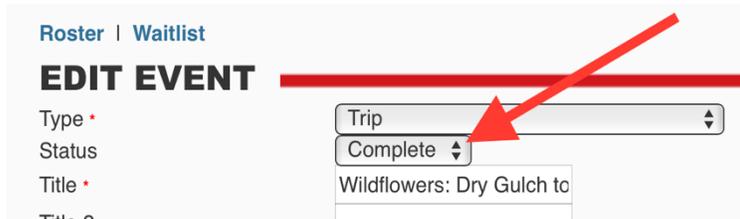
Remember that a leader may bar any participant from his/her future trips for any or no reason. Handling such situations is addressed in more detail starting at page 32 in the Trip Leader Manual:

<https://www.cmc.org/Portals/0/GoverningDocs/Trip%20leader%20manual%202012.pdf>

Closing Out Your Trip

After that great day in the mountains, don't forget to close out your trip. This last

step will ensure you get credit for leading the trip and your trip participants get credit for going on it. This can be important if members are seeking higher classifications or just want a record of their CMC trips.



Roster | Waitlist

EDIT EVENT

Type •
Status
Title •

Trip
Complete
Wildflowers: Dry Gulch to

Completing your trip also ensures that CMC will get participant hours and funding credits from the Denver Scientific and Cultural District. If you have any questions, scroll down to Completing a Trip at: <https://cmcdenver.org/wp-content/uploads/TLS-Manual-Entering-Trip-on-CMC-Website-Sept-2018.pdf>

Preventing and Treating Rattlesnake Bites

By David Ruscitto. Dave teaches WFA for Denver Group and is a Trip Leader.



Warm weather brings occasional rattlesnake sightings on or close to hiking trails. Many people consider an encounter with any snake a frightening moment. Our startle reflex kicks in and we recoil at the mere sight of a slithery creature. Some people are curious, some feel the need to get away as quickly as

possible and then there are those who feel the need to handle the snake. That is a very bad idea and the vast majority of snakebites occur in this manner. The easiest way to prevent snakebite is to slowly back away.

Colorado Rattlesnakes. Colorado is home to two species of rattlesnakes: the western rattlesnake, sometimes called the prairie rattlesnake, and the massasauga. The massasauga is only found in the southeastern plains in dry grasslands and sand hills below 5,500 feet in elevation.

The western rattlesnake is much more widespread in Colorado and inhabits nearly all biological zones in Colorado below 9,000 feet. They have a length of up to 3 feet, and typically have a distinct scale pattern and vary in color from red to brown to gray. Western rattlesnakes typically emerge from their winter dens in eastern Colorado between mid-April and mid-May and return to their dens in mid-to-late September although they may remain active until continuous cold weather arrives. The annual activity period is more restricted at higher elevations.

Not all rattlesnakes have the distinctive coloring pattern and not all have rattles. Some are too young, and others may have lost them through breakage. Since the rattle is not always present or visible, the best way to identify a rattlesnake is the heavy body, slender neck and broad head.

Preventing Snakebite. Colorado rattlesnakes are not considered aggressive but will defend themselves if they feel threatened. Like most snakes, they prefer to escape but once they become agitated, they will assume a defensive posture and may refuse to move off the trail. Here are some tips to avoid an encounter with any snake.

- When bushwhacking in areas with poor ground visibility such as tall grass or brush be aware of where you are stepping and alert snakes to your approach by sweeping the area with a long stick before entering.
- Never turn over rocks, put your hands in rock crevices, or sit down without first carefully checking for snakes.
- When crossing obstacles such as logs, step on top of the log, not over it into an area that you cannot see. If you encounter a rattlesnake on or near the trail, stop and remain motionless, wait for the snake to retreat. If the snake assumes a defensive posture, slowly back away and wait for the snake to calm down and move off.
- If you decide to make a wide detour around a stubborn snake, be aware that if there is one snake there are often others, so watch where you step.
- When in snake territory at night always use a light, especially when leaving a tent for a comfort break or an alpine start.



If You Are Bitten. Snakebite in Colorado is a rare occurrence but every year a few people and many more dogs are bitten. Serious injury and death from snakebite are extremely rare, even with about 2,000 bites and 5 deaths per year in the United States. There has been only one relatively well-publicized death in Colorado since 1999.



In the rare case where a person is bitten it is important to remember a few rules and they are likely different than what you were taught as a kid. What **NOT** to do is as important as what to do. Do not apply a tourniquet, do not cut the skin or try and suck out the venom, and do not apply ice.

Do not panic, because many bites are dry or inject little venom. Walking or running will only increase your heart rate, which will cause any poison to circulate more quickly throughout your body. Do not try to kill or capture the snake because it may lead to additional bites and delay

your arrival at the hospital for professional treatment. Stay calm and immobile once you are away from the snake. If you can safely get a photo of the head and tail, it may be helpful in confirming the species, but positive identification is a secondary priority to treatment and evacuation.

Signs and Symptoms of Envenomation.

- Fang marks are characteristic of rattlesnakes. (Jaw prints without fang marks are characteristic of non-venomous species)
- Local, burning pain immediately after the bite.
- Swelling at the site of the bite, usually beginning within 5 to 20 minutes and spreading slowly over a period of 6 to 12 hours. The faster the swelling progresses up the arm or leg, the worse the degree of envenomation.
- Bruising (black and blue discoloration) and blister formation at the bite site.

- Numbness and tingling of the lips and face, usually 10 to 60 minutes after the bite.
- Twitching of the muscles around the eyes and mouth.
- Rubbery or metallic taste in the mouth.
- After 6 to 12 hours, bleeding from the gums and nose may develop and denote a serious envenomation.
- Weakness, sweating, nausea, vomiting and faintness may occur.

First Aid

- Rinse the area around the bite site with water to remove any venom that might remain on the skin.
- Clean the wound and cover with a loose, sterile dressing.
- Remove any rings or jewelry on the bitten limb.
- Immobilize the limb but **DO NOT** provide compression or constriction.
- Immediately call for help or have someone go for help. This is an evacuation situation and a rapid evacuation is needed if the victim shows signs or symptoms of envenomation.
- Monitor and record signs and symptoms to assist the emergency responders in determining the progression of the poisoning.
- During long evacuations always monitor the ABC's and be alert for developing shock.
- Professional treatment involves supportive care and may include antivenin injection(s) at the hospital.

Summary. Rattlesnakes are an important part of our ecosystem and encounters seldom involve a bite. Avoid a bite by using common sense; let the snake do its natural thing, which is to avoid being stepped on. If bitten, immediately get help and evacuate rapidly if there are signs and symptoms of envenomation.