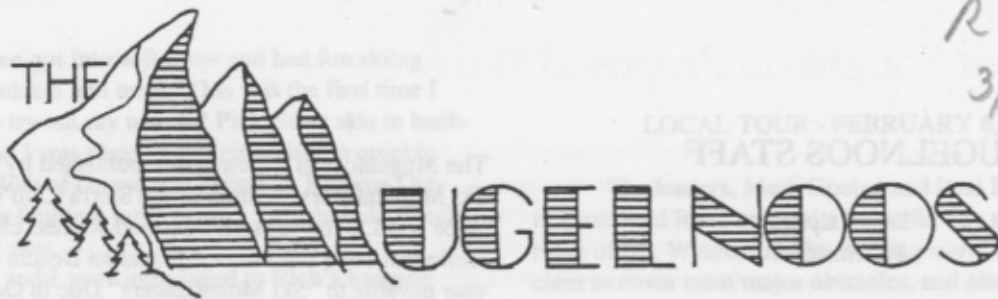
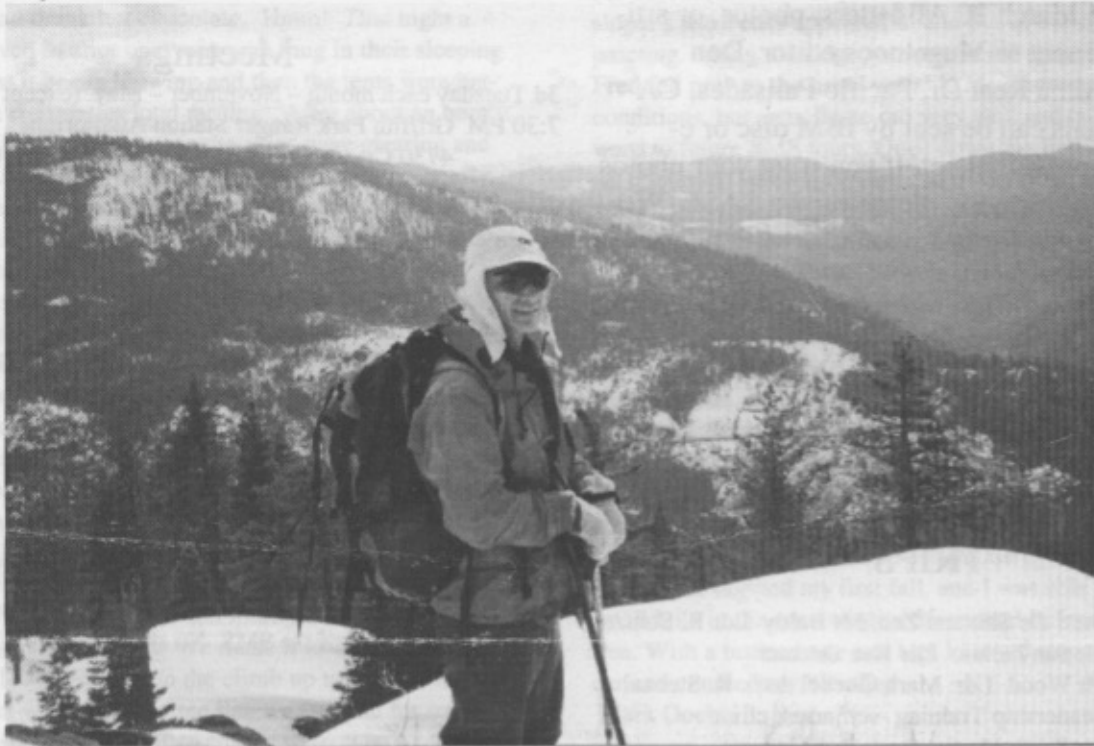


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THE  MUGELNOOS

February 1999

Issue # 749



Rich Henke overlooking the north rim of Yosemite Valley

TAMARACK FLAT/NORTH RIM YOSEMITE VALLEY TRIP

FEBRUARY 12 – 15, 1999

Trip Report by Keith Martin

As the weekend arrived it appeared that there would be a break in the storm sequence except for a little disturbance Saturday night. Six of us: Scott and Julie Meek (OCSS /SMS), Ron Haky (Sierra Club), Rich Henke (SMS), John Kornak (new SMS) and myself stayed at my house in Groveland. We all got up an hour early and had the place clean and ready to go by 8am. No need for a maid. Pete Yamagata and Ken Kerner (SMS) joined us the next day. The morning was clear and sunny and we all anticipated a great weekend.

We made the long slog up the Tioga Pass Road to Gin Flat where we then headed south along the old Big Oak Flat road. This is the first road to reach Yosemite Valley and was used until the early 1950's. As we skied along the old road the weather began to cloud up and the road became indistinct. At one point we lost the road in the trees, but Rich was able to relocate the road after a little XC. The views of the snow covered north rim country were inspirational. We were in camp by about 1:30p. Tamarack Creek flowed nearby with fresh snow melt. We found that the bathrooms were not locked and with a little snow removal (about 4 feet) we were able to open the doors and avoid one of the less favored rigors of snow camping.

About 3pm, Rich, John, and I headed south to the Devils Dance Floor. It was located about a mile due south from camp and involved only a few hundred feet of gain. Portions of the ascent were steep and covered with large boulders. On top we were treated to spectacular views of Yosemite Valley including Bridalveil Falls. The sky was beginning to get really threatening, a cold wind was blowing and it was close to sunset; so we had to leave. The upper slopes were breakable crust. As

(Continued on page 3)

MUGELNOOS STAFF

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MUGELMAILER Pat Hollman

NEXT ISSUE

Issue deadline March 20 All letters, photos, or articles should be sent to Mugelnoos editor, Don Ralphs, 431 Alma Real Dr, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Materials can be sent by IBM disc or e-mailed to dralphs@ibm.net. If you want your photos returned after publication please send a SASE. We are not responsible for lost photos.

SMS WEB PAGE

HTTP:www.angeleschapter.org/skimt/
Slide Show, Five years of trip reports, backcountry link sand much more. Check it out

TRIPS

March 13-14 Dare the Shit and Zen, Mt Baldy Ldr R. Stenzel
March 20-21 Mt San Jacinto Ldr Ken Deemer
March 27-28 Mt Wood Ldr: Mark Goebel Asst: R. Stenzel
April 3-4 Leadership Training -self arrest clinic
Ldr Keith Martin Asst: Brad Jensen
April 10-11 Cloudripper (13,525) Ldr R. Stenzel Asst: Marsh
May 8-9 Mt Morgan Ldr Mark Goebel Asst: Dan Richter
May 8-13 Eastern Sierra ski tour
Ldr Tom Marsh Asst McGuir
May 15-16 Mammoth area day tours
Ldr Gerry Holleman Asst Paul Harris
May 22-23 Treasure Lakes, Dade Couloir
Ldr Reiner Stenzel Asst Owen Maloy
May 29-31 Tioga and Sonora Pass Ski Camp
Ldr Owen Maloy Asst Kathy Crandall

NOTE SCHEDULE CHANGES MT. WOOD AND MT MORGAN TOURS

Due to family events, the leaders have changed the dates for these two scheduled Sierra outings. The Mt Wood (12,650') climb and ski descent originally scheduled for Apr 17-18, has been changed to Mar 27-28 (the Mt Baldy tour on this date is cancelled due to lack of snow). The climb and ski of Mt Morgan (13,005') via Esha Canyon is now scheduled for May 8-9, instead of May 1-2. Please contact Mark Goebel for additional details on either outing.

The Mugelnoos is a newsletter published by and for the Ski Mountaineers Section of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Send subscriptions and address changes to: Pat Holleman, 1638 6th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA. 90266 \$7 per year payable to "Ski Mountaineers" Due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions

Meetings

3d Tuesday each month - November - May (except December)
7:30 PM Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium
4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles, CA

OFFICERS

Chair	Kieth Martin	Vice-chair	Richard Geist
Secretary	Susan Loftus	Treasurer	Mark Goebel
Programs	Steve Hessen	Webmaster	Owen Maloy
Outings and Safety			Owen Maloy

NOMINATIONS PERIOD STILL OPEN

Members have until April 20 to put forth the names of the future officers of the SMS. No skiing or route finding tests required.

Printer Volunteer Wanted

With printing costs going nowhere but up, we could really use the assistance of a member with some fancy computer driven printers in their office. Help us out.

BARGAIN GEAR

Much of the backcountry gear we buy for a lot of money can be had for 30-50% off the regular price, which is still a lot of money. Check out REI-Outlet.com for the close-out deals and such.

AVALANCHE INFORMATION FOR THE EASTERN SIERRA

Phone: 760-924-5500
Web: www.csac.org/Bulletins/Calif/current

LOCAL TOUR - FEBRUARY 6, 1999

we descended we got into soft snow and had fun skiing between the boulders and trees. This was the first time I had a chance to try out my new K2 Piste Stinx skis in back-county snow and I was pleased at their ability to quickly initiate turns. Rich of course was skiing on Kazama Out-backs and doing faultless jump turns....the triumph of technique over new gear.

That night Ron and I were introduced to Rich's hanging stove. He cooked in the tent and while outside the temperatures fell into the 20's, we laid about in a balmy 50 degrees and drank hot chocolate. Hmm! That night a storm moved in after everyone was snug in their sleeping bags. First it began blowing and then the tents were battered by a continuous loud rattling. After about an hour it subsided and in the morning the skies were clearing and about a quarter inch of snow and ice covered the rainfly. Rich, Ken, John and I choose to do the long tour to Ribbon Meadows. The rest decided to spend the day up on Devil's Dance Floor.

We started down the road at 9am. I had expected an easy ski to the footbridge over Tamarack Creek. I was in for a surprise. The road had not been maintained since its closure in the 50's. Every time we came to a stream crossing, the road had been washed out with six foot snow covered embankments. We built character as we bravely crossed the roaring tempests, usually though not always without our skis. At one point the creek had flowed down the road for about a quarter mile, forcing us to try and ski off to the side. We found ourselves in a meadow criss-crossed with downed trees and multiple stream crossings. More character building. We made it to Tamarack Creek by about 11am, and began the climb up to Ribbon Meadows. After we got above tree line we stopped for lunch and enjoyed the views. By 1pm we were at an overlook gazing into Yosemite Valley across from the entrance to the Wawona Tunnel. We contemplated the closeness of civilization, the spectacular view and the day and a half on skis which separated us from the tiny motorists below. We were all back in camp by 4pm and listened to the other group rave about the fantastic views they enjoyed for nearly two hours while up on the Devils Dance Floor. Everyone had fun.

This was a great midwinter tour in a seldom visited area, lots of views, fun skiing at varying skill levels yet minimal avalanche danger. Several participants commented on how nice it was to have tours appropriate to intermediate level.(4th class) skiers.

Monday we all packed up and were all starting back by about a quarter to 9. The last ones made it back to Crane Flat by 12:30p. The day was warm and sunny. Rich and John decided to ski a portion of the old road which parallels the highway. They had fun jumping over downed trees while skiing with full packs.

My thanks to all the participants, especially Scott Meek who stepped in as assistant at the last minute.

The leaders, Mark Goebel and Paul Harris, plus participant Fred Reed enjoyed a beautiful day skiing the east ridge of Mt. Waterman. The existing snow was just sufficient to cover most major obstacles, and about one inch had fallen overnight and decorated the trees. Throughout the day, clouds floated just over the trees along the south slope. Twin Peaks appeared in and out of the clouds like a painting. Along the ridge we were in the sun, with no wind. Fred fell prey to the usual variable Mt Waterman snow conditions, but actually he did very well and is looking forward to future SMS tours. Once down the first big drop, we continued eastward to the end of the ridge and grabbed a few more turns down to the car. All in all, a relaxing and pleasant day in the mountains.

In contrast, Russ Hazwell and I returned a week later drawn because of a reported additional snowfall. However, conditions had changed dramatically. Although we made it to the top on skis, a great deal of bare ground had appeared, and even for a warm day, the snow ranged from hard to I have to pound with my pole to get a tip in. We followed the same course as on the prior outing, and at first the firm snow was a blessing because it kept us above the rocks and dirt. For the final turns at the end of the ridge, the steep and icy slope caught me by surprise. A ski pole arrest stopped my first fall, and I was able to grab a small hole in the crust to stop the second before hitting a tree. With a bruised ego and hip, I kicked steps down to the car and counted my blessing.

Mark Goebel

STEVE WILKIE WRITES IN

Long-time SMSer **Steve Wilkie** writes to us from Healdsburg in northern California where he lives on an 8-acre ranchette with his dear friend Doris, two cats, a Labrador dog, a Vietnamese pig, and a horse. Steve broke his hip last January so is now paddling a canoe to get his outdoor recreation. Steve adds that long-time SMSers **Walt Boge** and **Ed Unge** come up and visit for a few days every summer and talk about the old days skiing together.



Input Sought on Proposed Wilderness Quota Period

The Inyo National Forest is proposing to extend the season during which trailhead quotas are in effect in the Golden Trout, John Muir, and Ansel Adams wildernesses. This action would extend the quota period to year-round on trails which currently have quotas in place. The number of people allowed each day into a specific drainage (the quota) will not be modified by this proposal. Trails in the Inyo National Forest that do not have an entry quota will remain non-quota. The goal of a quota is to disperse use in order to protect the environment and ensure a quality visitor experience.

Presently, the Inyo National Forest has a mix of dates when quotas are in effect. For example, the Whitney Trail quota is May 22-Oct. 15. Other trails have quotas from the third Friday in June through Sept. 15. A few trails have quotas only during holiday weekends.

Established wilderness trailhead quotas in the Inyo National Forest and in adjacent national parks are being exceeded outside of the present quota dates especially during early season (April and May), and after quotas end (September, October, November). The length of the quota season was originally based on historical high-use seasons. While logical at the time, during the past 25 years use patterns have changed dramatically. During the summer, many trails are full and people are actually turned away, however, at times during the spring and fall, the number of people entering a trailhead exceeds the established summer quota by a factor of three or four.

Central Sierra wilderness managers (Inyo National Forest, Yosemite National Park-, Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park-, and adjacent forests) feel that quotas should not be exceeded at any time during the year, as the quota reflects the carrying capacity (maximum- number of people) that are in an area on any given day. While the quota is being exceeded in relatively few places and days, the implementation of a year-round quota is being considered not only for the purpose of resource protection, but also for Central Sierra consistency and for ease of public understanding of the quota and permit system.

The action, if implemented, would go in effect on Jan 1, 2000. Please send comments postmarked no later than March 31 to Diana Pietrasanta, Wilderness Manager, 873 N. Main St., Bishop, CA 93514. Mammoth Times reports.

Mugelnoos

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