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10TH MOUNTAIN HUT TRIP EXPLORE THE BACKCOUNTRY IN WINTER

Starts: January 15, 2012

Trip Price: \$1,195

Ends: January 21, 2012

Capacity: 13

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Highlights

1. Live off the grid for 6-days, 5-nights at a 10th Mountain Division Hut System hut;
2. Explore the high alpine tundra of the Rockies in winter;
3. Ski (or Board, or snow shoe) an untracked powder wonderland.

What's Included

1. All lodging and on-trip transportation including transfers from DIA;
2. All meals and snacks from the first evening until the last lunch;
3. Fully stocked kitchen, fire wood, comfortable bunks, great views.



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The Trip:

There is hardly anyone who has not heard of the 10th Mountain Division, the elite mountaineering troops who trained for 3 years at Camp Hale, midway between Leadville and Minturn, Colorado on Highway 24, before being committed to battle in World War II with the Allied invasion of Italy, and the fierce battles waged in the mountains of Europe. Their training camp was in some of the highest and most beautiful, rugged mountain country in the continental United States. As an attestation to that remoteness and beauty, the White River National Forest, where Camp Hale was located, and the neighboring Arapaho and Pike National Forests host 4 Wilderness Areas, the Hunter Fryingpan, the Mt. Massive, the Holy Cross, and the Gore Wilderness Areas.



Pristine Slopes

The 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, and the huts that comprise it, were built by former 10th Mountain Division members, their family and friends, beginning in 1980. Six of the huts were built by family to honor soldiers lost in the Italian campaigns. The huts, of which there are now 29 either owned by or owned privately and managed by the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, are located roughly in a U-shape from Aspen, Colorado on the north and west to Vail on the north and east, with the bottom of the U at Leadville. All of the huts are truly "high altitude", with most at or above 11,000'. As a result of their altitude and remoteness, all are "off the grid" meaning they rely on wood or propane for heating and cooking, low-voltage, solar photo-voltaic systems for electric lights, or in some cases, propane gas lighting, and none are connected to the electrical grid.

Our hut trip spends 5 nights at Betty Bear (at 11,100') Hut. Betty Bear Hut is in the White River National Forest on the northern edge of Hunter Frying Pan Wilderness Area. North and east of Betty Bear is Hagerman Pass (at 11,925'), a possible day trip destination, in the Pike San Isabel National Forest on the northern edge of the Mt. Massive Wilderness Area. We access the trailhead for Betty Bear Hut approximately 30 miles east of Basalt, CO at an altitude of 9,100'. Clearly, this is a high altitude trip with some tough climbs and long days in and out. Skiing around the hut ranges from gentle terrain suitable for snow shoeing or cross country skiing, to extreme slopes with steep vertical pitches with significant avalanche danger. The trail into Betty Bear is 6.5 miles from the trail head and follows a forest road that may be packed out most of the way. However, the last mile or so up to the hut involves a strenuous climb through the trees. The terrain surrounding Betty Bear Hut, makes this an ideal location to spend 5 days exploring a backcountry winter wonderland.



Hagerman Pass

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Itinerary:

Our Sierra Club trip begins with your arrival at Denver International Airport (DIA) or if you choose to drive, our meeting place at a motel in Carbondale, CO. We will meet at DIA around noon and travel by van to Carbondale, CO. We will meet late in the afternoon in the lobby of our comfortable motel to go over trip, safety plans, and gear, and answer any questions you might have before our departure. On the final day of our trip, we should be back at the trail head around noon, and back in Denver around 6:00PM. However, due to the uncertainties of mountain weather at this time of year, it probably would be best to plan your departure for the next day. If you have the time, arriving a day or two early to begin your acclimatization process also would be smart. This trip is strenuous by virtue of the fact that we will start at an elevation of 9,100' and our destination is over 11,000'; if you are from an elevation lower than 6,000' your body takes at least 2 days to adjust to the higher altitude! More information can be found in the *Difficulty, Health and Trip Price* sections below.

Daily Itinerary:

Day 1 - Arrival at DIA or Carbondale. Plan your arrival no later than noon at Denver International Airport. We will schedule one departure, in a van driven by your Denver area co-leaders, arriving in Carbondale around 6:00PM. Trip members who choose to fly into Aspen will be picked up by your Durango trip leader. If you plan to drive yourself, please plan your arrival at our motel in Carbondale no later than 6 PM. Upon arrival we will check into our rooms and then meet in the lobby where we will go over trip plans and answer any questions you may have. This will also give us an opportunity to do a last minute gear check and review our safety plan. Afterwards, we will continue conversations over dinner. Overnight Motel.

Day 2 – Carbondale, CO to trail head to Betty Bear Hut. After an early breakfast at the motel, we will board our vehicles for the 15-mile drive to the trail head. We want to get an early start because we have a long, strenuous day ahead of us. From the parking area elevation of 9,100', we must climb about 2,000' over a distance of six miles to reach our destination, Betty Bear Hut. If you are on skis, you will want to bring climbing skins. Wax or fish scale bottoms on cross-country skis probably won't get you up this mountain. Please don't go cheap on equipment. Overnight Hut.

Days 3, 4, 5 & 6 – Day Trips around Betty Bear Hut. We will explore the terrain around Betty Bear Hut. There are big, open meadows, old forest and timber roads, gentle slopes, and steep, challenging slopes for those who dare. For the adventuresome, we could ski to Hagerman Pass and return in one day, a distance of around 12 miles. Note: there is avalanche danger around Betty Bear on the steeper slopes; if you have not had at least an Avalanche I class, do not plan to do these slopes. Overnight Hut.

Day 7 – Betty Bear Hut to DIA and Home. This morning we will pack up for the descent back to our vehicles. Skiers and boarders can take the road or ski through the trees, but our snow shoers will probably want to take the road. At any rate, it is 6 miles mostly down hill now, giving up the 2,000' we gained on the first day. We should be back at the parking area around lunch time. We will have lunch and depart, those that came in the van headed



Open Meadows Around Betty Bear Hut

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for DIA, and those who came into Carbondale or Aspen, back there. For those going to Denver we will probably be there by 6 PM. However, due to the uncertainties of mountain weather, it might be best to plan an overnight stay in Denver and your departure for the following day.

Getting There

Plan your arrival for noon or earlier on Sunday, January 15, 2012. You may fly into Denver International Airport (DIA) from most major cities in the U.S. Your trip leaders will schedule one pickup at DIA or at hotels located nearby around noon. You also may drive yourself, if you prefer; Carbondale is 193 miles west of Denver on I-70, through Glenwood Springs via CO 82. Our meeting place will be at a Carbondale motel which will be communicated to trip members in pre-trip communications. If your schedule allows you to arrive a day or two early, it would be wise to give yourself some extra time to acclimatize to the thin air. Denver is the "mile high" city and Carbondale is 6,840 feet. Our trail head is at 9,120', and our destination Betty Bear Hut is an even loftier 11,100 feet. Glenwood Springs (which we must pass through to reach Carbondale) is at the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Colorado Rivers and is the site of world famous hot springs. Think about spending an extra day before or after or trip there (see <http://www.ci.glenwood-springs.co.us/>).

Accommodations and Food:

From dinner on Sunday, January 15 through lunch on Saturday, January 21, all meals, including snacks are provided. If you have special dietary needs, please let your trip leaders know well in advance. We can accommodate most requests as long as we have sufficient warning. On our first day, food for the trip will be divided between trip members for the climb to the hut, but cooking gear, including all kitchen pots and pans, serving utensils, plates, cups, forks, spoons, and knives, i.e., all necessary kitchen gear, are provided at the hut. Betty Bear Hut accommodates up to 16 people, in a number of semi-private rooms and common sleeping areas. We will have the hut to ourselves



Hut Interior

and the only sleeping gear you will need is your sleeping bag. Mattresses and pillows are provided. Duties in the hut will be divided into details and scheduled at the beginning of the trip. In addition to breakfast, dinner and kitchen clean up details (lunch will be on your own from materials provided), we will have wood detail (responsibility to split firewood, which is provided, for the cooking and heating stoves), water detail (from the well if isn't frozen or collect snow to melt if it is), and hut cleaning detail (to keep the area swept up and in order while we are there). We will all pitch in to clean the hut up before we leave so that it is as clean as when we arrived.

Trip Difficulty:

This is a strenuous trip by virtue of the altitude and our initial climb from the trail head to the Betty Bear Hut. Once at the hut, we have numerous possibilities for day trips. The area has many forest roads and old logging roads and rolling meadows to accommodate snow shoers and cross-country skiers. There are gentle, protected slopes for skiers and boarders, and more extreme slopes in the area. Maps compiled by the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association will be provided to all trip

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members before our departure from the trail head. Map reading skills, and facility with a compass or GPS are good skills to have, but your trip leaders will take smaller groups out on day trips around the hut.

Health

There will be no trip physician, but your Durango leader holds a current WEMT certification from NOLS/Wilderness Medicine Institute and is a professional ski patrolman at Purgatory, the ski area at Durango Mountain Resort. Your Denver area co-leaders have their WFR and WFA credentials. While our group will carry emergency medical supplies, we do not carry medications; you must bring a basic, personal first-aid kit and whatever personal medications you need. Your reservation confirmation packet contains a medical form that must be filled out and submitted to your leaders before you are accepted on the trip. When completing the medical form, realize that your safety -- and the group's -- depends on candid responses. Due to the altitude at which our trip spends 5 days, you would be wise to arrive a day or two early to help your body acclimatize. While on our trip, you must force yourself to drink water copiously and avoid caffeine and other diuretics. Prior to our trip, consider talking with your physician about the efficacy of acetazolamide, a drug used to aid acclimatization and possibly to reduce the risk of altitude sickness .

Equipment:

This trip is intended for skiers on telemark or alpine touring (AT) gear, cross-country skiers, snow boarders, or snow shoers. This is not an instructional trip so you should feel competent on your chosen gear. If you want to rent gear, we will facilitate that for you. Skiers will want climbing skins for their skis; if you are a cross-country skier, wax or fish-scale bottoms will not be adequate for our initial climb. Temperatures around this time of year range from freezing to 15 or 20 below zero, and if windy, the wind-chill will be even colder, so bring layers (no cotton) that allow you to accommodate that range of temperatures while resting or exercising.

You will want a pack (around 45-60L) that can hold whatever clothing you bring, your sleeping bag, a personal first aid kit, toiletries, other personal gear, and has room for your share of the food that we will be carrying. If you have your own avalanche transponder, shovel, and probe pole, you might want to bring them, but complete avalanche safety gear will be provided for trip members. A detailed equipment list will be provided to registered trip members.



Day Trip

References:

- White River National Forest (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/whiteriver/>)
- Hunter Frying Pan Wilderness Area (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/whiteriver/recreation/wilderness/hunterfryingpan/index.shtml>)
- Pike San Isabel National Forest (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/>);
- Mt. Massive Wilderness Area (http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/recreation/wilderness/ldv_mass_wild.shtml);
- 10th Mountain Division Hut Association (<http://www.huts.org>)

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- Brian Litz, *Colorado Hut to Hut: Northern and Central Regions*, Big Earth Publishing, 2000.
- Peter Shelton, *Climb to Conquer: The Untold Story of WWII's 10th Mountain Division Ski Troops*, Scribner, 2003.
- Dave Black, *Living Off the Grid: A Simple Guide to Creating and Maintaining a Self-Reliant Supply of Energy, Water, Shelter, and More*, Skyhorse Publishing, 2008.

Conservation:

Our carbon footprint is becoming a huge issue as global climate changes progress. Everything we do contributes CO₂ to the atmosphere, some things more than others. Even coming on this trip adds more greenhouse gases than would be the case if we stayed home, but there are things we can do to ameliorate our impacts and still enjoy the fantastic opportunities the Rockies in winter offer. For those of you flying, consider buying carbon offsets from Native Energy (see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/offsets/>); we are providing van transportation in order to cut down on the number of separate vehicle trips, and those of you driving yourselves, consider car-pooling. A major contributor of greenhouse gases are the coal-fired power plants that provide energy to our electrical grid. A solution advocated to reduce greenhouse gases has been to live "off the grid". Here is your opportunity to try it out! While staying at Betty Bear Hut, heat is provided by wood stoves, cooking is with wood and propane, and lights are photo-voltaic. Of course, all of these contribute CO₂ to the atmosphere, but possibly less (and certainly without the sulfur and mercury contaminants found in coal) than from a large, coal-fired power plant. Each evening we'll be covering topics including climate change, impact on habitat and wildlife and we'll take the time to discuss these and other environmental topics. Participants will learn about conservation actions already taken by Sierra Club, plans for the future and how they might participate. And finally, our stay will give us the opportunity to contemplate what it means to live off the grid.

Trip Price:

The price for this trip is \$1,195. This trip requires a \$200 per-person deposit. Trip prices are based on double-occupancy at our Carbondale, CO motel and Betty Bear Hut. There are a limited number of semi-private rooms, but ample common sleeping areas at Betty Bear so accommodating singles should not be a problem. Single rooms may be available for our one night in Carbondale at additional cost but you must notify your trip leaders well in advance if you want such arrangements. If you have any questions regarding double occupancy, please contact your trip leaders. See the How to Apply for an Outing section for more details on registering for this trip and details about our Reservation and Cancellation Policy.

The payment of a deposit does not confirm you as a member on the trip. Participants must be approved by the trip leader. After signing up for this trip, you will be sent a confirmation packet containing approval materials or a link to the Sierra Club site with links to the necessary forms (Participant Approval Questionnaire, Medical Form, Liability Release Form). Each applicant (including those on the wait list) must fill out these forms and promptly mail them to the trip leaders. The leaders will review the approval materials and notify you of your acceptance in a timely manner.

The trip fee covers everything starting from your arrival in Denver or Carbondale, meals as noted in the itinerary, airport transfers, lodging, on-trip transportation to and from trail heads, group gear used on the trip, and any permits or fees.

Also note that if you arrive late or leave the trip early for any reason, the Sierra Club will not pay for any costs incurred and you are not entitled to a refund.

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Staff:



Jim Sumrall

Jim Sumrall has been a Sierra Club outings leader since 1997. He has led Sierra Club trips in Sikkim, Nepal, Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia), Latin America, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and, domestically, in Colorado and New Mexico. He has traveled the United States, much of Canada, and South America, and visited New Zealand and the Philippines as well. Jim works summers as a Wilderness Ranger in the Weminuche and South San Juan Wilderness Areas in the San Juan National Forest in southwest Colorado, winters on Ski Patrol at Purgatory Ski Area, and has volunteered with the San Juan Mountains Association as a wilderness information specialist, and with the Southwest Colorado chapter of the American Red Cross as a CPR, First Aid, and Wilderness First Aid instructor. He currently holds a WEMT from NOLS/Wilderness Medicine Institute. His

[website](#) features trip journals and photographs from prior Sierra Club trips. Jim's e-mail address is jim.sumrall@rmc.sierraclub.org.



Deirdre Butler

Born in the UK, *Deirdre Butler* showed a love for nature and passion for animals from an early age and grew up hiking and horseback riding in Dartmoor National Park, southern England. As Wildlife Chair for the Rocky Mountain chapter of the Sierra Club, Deirdre takes delight in sharing her knowledge and observations of wildlife with trip participants identifying tracks and scat and more. Deirdre is a certified Wilderness First Responder. When not hiking, she barter her labor for organic veggies on a local CSA farm and enjoys spending time with her husband, twelve chickens and six cats. Deirdre's e-mail address is deirdre@cogico.com



Bill Farrow

Bill Farrow joined the Sierra Club and Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) after relocating to Boulder in 2003. He has led numerous outings for both organizations, including a trip to New Zealand for the CMC in 2007. He has climbed the 54 Colorado Peaks over 14,000ft and also climbed Mt. Rainier. Bill has completed numerous courses from the CMC including Wilderness Trekking, Basic Mountaineering, High Altitude Mountaineering, Avalanche School, Outdoor Survival and Advanced Crevasse Rescue. He also completed Mountaineering Oriented First Aid and NOLS/Wilderness First Aid.

Prior to moving to Colorado, Bill lived in Wisconsin where he was active in cross country skiing. He completed the Birkebeiner ski race (52.5 km.) 13 times. Bill's email address is bfarrow@comcast.net.