

EAGLE POST 39

The newsletter of **Friends of Eagles Nest Wilderness**, apprising you of important activities in and around Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, and Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness Areas.

[VIEW IN BROWSER](#)



Before we begin...

1. The FENW **PHOTO CONTEST** deadline has been extended to **AUGUST 6**. Submit your favorite photos (up to 3) from Eagles Nest, Holy Cross, or Ptarmigan Peak Wilderness by August 6. First prize is a canvas-mounted copy, ready to hang. Send photos to photocontest@fenw.org. Read detailed rules [HERE](#).

2. SAVE THE DATE: AUG 18 FENW's Annual Meeting / WILDERFEST as we **THANK YOU** for your support and *celebrate* our 25th year, new name, new logo, new Award, and more... Free lunch for our member/donors and VWRs.

Sunday, Aug 18. noon-3pm, Frisco Historic Park

August 2019

Dear *|FNAME|*

Greetings! Our topic this month is

The 1935 Gore Range Expedition

By Stan Moore

INTRODUCTION:

Eighty-four years ago, the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) made the astonishing choice of Black Creek in the Gore Range as the venue for its annual expedition. This was no Lily Pad Lake (today's most popular destination, hosting hundreds of hikers on a typical summer weekend day). Rather, it was then, as it remains today, *the most rugged, inaccessible drainage* in the entire range. It took the two dozen women and men *three full days* just to get from Denver to their campsite, which was still more than 3 trailless miles from the headwall of Black Creek. For the next two weeks, in their jodhpurs and high-laced hob-nailed boots, they joyfully climbed every peak in sight, some for the first recorded time



ever.

The crew was led by **Charles Moore**. His son [Stan Moore](#), popular Colorado historian and lecturer, writes below about the adventure, drawing from his personal archive, as well as that of the CMC.

Stan and his friends reprised the 1935 trip a few years ago, and photos from that trip are also included.

Altogether, the photos are wonderful, and you can see the entire gallery, which is annotated by Stan, by **clicking [HERE](#) or on any photo**

CLICK ANY IMAGE BELOW TO SEE THE ANNOTATED PHOTO GALLERY

THE 1935 CMC GORE RANGE EXPEDITION

By Stan Moore

Twenty four members of the Colorado Mountain Club ([CMC](#)) participated in the 1935 summer outing. These folks made historic and unique contributions to mountaineering. That outing was virtually the last home grown, self funded expedition to attain significant mountaineering feats in the lower 48.



By the early 1930's, the Gore Range was probably the last area near an American city which offered a number of unclimbed peaks. Not just virgin routes, but unclimbed peaks.

Even for Colorado, the Gore Range is craggy and harsh. Access is difficult and the range was never logged for fuel, railroad ties or mining timbers.

For years the range was little explored. Prospectors made a few desultory attempts to pierce the range in the 1860 and 70s. Minerals worth mining weren't found. The rocky jumble of valleys and sharp peaks enjoyed a lofty peace. Elsewhere, mining, tourism, ranching and railroad development occurred all around.

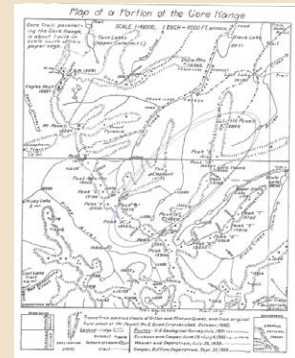
There was an exception to this regal solitude. Not surprisingly, it involved Major John Wesley Powell. He did some climbing in 1868 before he started to boat down the Colorado River. On August 23rd he led the first party of Europeans to the top of Longs Peak. Despite this, Powell is not remembered as a mountaineer. His name is connected with first descents, not first ascents.

A month later, Powell climbed a prominent peak in the northern 'Eagle River Range.' On September 26 he and his party stood atop what is now called Mount Powell. At 13,534' above sea level, it is the high point of the range. The party left papers with names and the date, stashed in a cocoa tin under a cairn.

The peak was next climbed in 1873. A party from the Hayden Survey got to the top on August 28. They found the tin with Powell's register and added their own paper register with date and names. The peak was listed as Mount Powell in the Hayden Survey Atlas of 1877.

The CMC has traditionally put on a summer outing. They last a week or two and go to a specific area to climb, hike, and enjoy. In the early years, with limited access and few people, these outings were exploratory and expeditionary in nature.

The March 1935 CMC magazine *Trail and Timberline* announced the Gore Outing for August 11-24: "Designated as a primitive area by the United States Forest Service, this region is noted for the ruggedness of its peaks, the beauty of its lakes and valleys, and the excellence of its fishing possibilities. It has been this inaccessibility of the Gore Range that has kept it from being chosen as the site of the Summer Outing in previous years. This year, however, the committee is planning to establish camp in the heart of the wildest part of the region." The best map available wasn't exactly thick with details (right).



In the Gore, most peaks are known not by name but by letters of the alphabet. In 1932, the CMC's Ed Cooper and Carl Erickson combined the alphabet with the Gore. From north to south, Eagles Nest was designated Peak A, Powell B, and so on all the way south. This structure remains today. Starting with Peak C just to the south of Powell, the range is populated with letters not names. This runs to Peak R at least. The USGS doesn't put these letters on their maps, nor have they approved other names.

The Outing Committee had peaks in the Black Creek valley in its crosshairs. The peaks they wanted were named for the middle letters of the alphabet, from D through P.

The October 1935 *Trail and Timberline* reported on the Outing. Referring to upper Black Creek and access: "This spot was made available through the cooperation of the Forest Service in building five miles of trail."

That description is, shall we say, sanitized. Charles Moore was in the advance party. He later recollected how it went. "Some of the descriptions of the trail building in the T&T article are classic understatements.

He concluded, "As further evidence that this was just a 'way' & not a 'trail', we made no attempt to pack in tent poles. They just wouldn't go so we cut all poles on site from aspen & small firs."

Moore and the rest of the advance party left Denver August 6. They improved the trail for several days. By Friday the 9th tents were being set up.

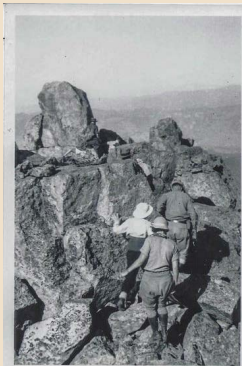
The camp was set up in a meadow at the north end of the valley of upper Black Creek. The trees open up as one comes up the steeps and there is a nice meadow in the lower valley. It has room for tents and horses to graze. The twenty four participants listed in the T&T were all in camp by Sunday evening the 11th. Also there was Hod Nicholson, a horsepacker from Aspen who had worked with other Summer Outings. He brought in supplies and tents with his horses with the help of several hired hands. When all were set up, there were about fifteen tents for sleeping and cooking. The cook tent was sited about twenty five yards from the creek. Much of the area between tents and creek was marshy. Trees were cut, limbed, and laid as a walkway so the kitchen crew could easily walk to get water.



The cook was Homer Taylor. He cooked and fed the group, very well from all reports. He faced some unique challenges. Not only did he need a steady supply of wood and water, but other citizens of the valley took an interest in his duties. One day there was a commotion in the cook tent. Out of the tent burst a bear with a ham in its mouth, followed by a yelling Taylor, waving a frying pan. The bear made good its escape. No word on whether it tried again.



Hiking and exploring started right away. On Monday most of the group hiked to lakes at the head of the valley. Legs were stretched, and equipment was fine tuned. People were eager to get out at altitude and use the gear they would be hiking with for two weeks.

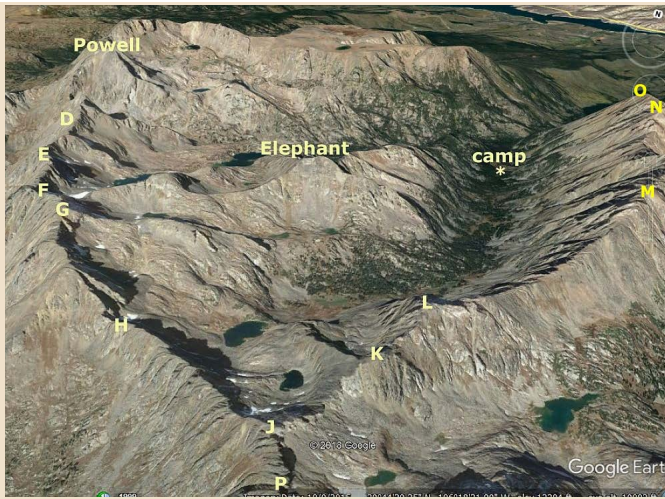


Equipment was state of the art, the latest in design and utility. Pictures of the expedition show people in denim jeans, laceup leather boots, fabric jackets, and head covering of some sort. Most of the men wore fedora type hats; the women slightly more stylish tams or other women's hats. The women wore pants, not skirts, and sported boots as well.

Moore spoke to the sport and craft of mountaineering in 1935: "Basically it was not greatly different than today except in the equipment. Footgear was hobnailed boots, usually knee high. And if you were really into it they had Swiss edging nails for rock climbing. Sleeping bags were pretty poor compared to today's down & fiber fill articles. Pack boards and ruck sacks were primitive equipment alongside the current pack styles."

Here is a map showing the peaks that they climbed over the next several days:

After Monday's warmup, the fun started. On Tuesday, Moore took the main party, of about eighteen or twenty, up Peak L, 13,193'. Most reached the summit ridge and almost a dozen climbed to



the summit. This was not a first ascent.

The same day, a party of four early went to the head of the valley, to the right of upper Black Lakes. They were Stanley

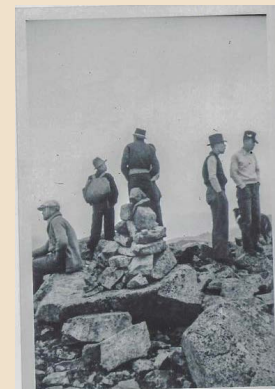
Midgely, Clifton Snively, Maxwell Mery and Pete Alexander. The group climbed what they thought was Peak G. They found themselves on a false summit and for a short while looked up at their mountain. Traversing a ridge with 'a precipitous drop' to the true summit, they got the Outing's first 'first' at 13,274. They weren't done. The trip report describes the rest of their day: 'Continuing their traverse, the four worked their way to the top of Peak F at 13,200, for another first ascent. The descent was made to the north and east, part of the way over an unnamed glacier of considerable extent.'



The camp was set about three and a half miles from the head of the valley. To reach the peaks from there, hikers had to gain 2000 to 2500 feet of vertical. The country had no trails and was strewn with fallen timber, bogs, and in places avalanche debris. Despite all this, the job got done. Almost every peak summited during these two weeks was bagged in a day. From camp to summit to camp meant that some of those days and hikes were long and demanding.

Wednesday the 14th saw a first of the Elephant, 12,732 by a party of four: Stanley Midgely, Clifton Snively, Don McBride, and Carleton Long. They worked up the valley, gained the ridge, and followed it northwest to the summit.

What is a 'first ascent' and how did they determine if they had one? The climbers looked for signs of people. For example, Peak H was climbed later in the trip. As they neared the summit, it was thought the group was going to be able to brag of another first. But 'upon reaching the summit a weathered match stick bore mute evidence of human predecessors.' It was conjectured in the T&T that the climber came in from the Piney Lake drainage to the west. Even today that approach offers much easier access to peaks in the Range.



None of the peaks claimed as a first by the Outing Committee bore any evidence of human contact or presence. It is conceivable but unlikely that

someone came to the top of one or more of those peaks, looked around, and left with no mark. In that era, it was common, even expected, to leave a cairn or some other evidence of having gained a summit. The 'leave no trace' ethic practiced today was far in the future. Nature was still something to be bested, not coexisted with.

Thursday the 15th. Everett Long and Carl Blaurock led a large group past the lakes at the head of the valley. Goal for the day was Peak K, 12,858. Some of the group became 'converts to the Order of the Snail', that is, they dropped off at the upper lake, sat, and enjoyed the scenery. The fifteen remaining hikers reached the col between K and J, 12,450'. They followed the ridge north to K. A cairn was constructed and a club register in a tube was deposited. The group returned to the col for a rest and lunch. They then followed the ridge southwest, reaching Peak J (12,924) in less than an hour. Approaching weather dictated a quick retreat, which was made down the northwest ridge to a col at 12,600. From there "an exhilarating slide 1,000 feet down a large snow and ice bank brought them to the highest of the four upper Black Lakes...." Camp was reached in a drizzling rain.

On Saturday the 17th Carl Blaurock led a party through rain, sleet, hail and wind. Objective was Mt. Powell. This was the fifth recorded ascent of the peak. All who started from camp made the summit. The party's route isn't clear but was challenging. As the T&T reported, "The Mt Powell trip was the longest made from camp."

That same day, Saturday, a group of four (Bob Lewis, Fred & John Nagel, and Gene Shaetzel) regained the J-K saddle. From there they crossed the valley to bag a first of Peak P (12,965). On the return they came along the ridge, over J for a second ascent.

Wednesday the 21st saw the final first ascents of the trip. Fred Nagel, Bob Thallon, Gene Schaetzel and Bob Blair climbed both D (13,047) and E (approx. 12,960). This is the one trip which took more than a day. The group ran out of daylight and had one lagging member; they bivouacked out but returned to camp in time for breakfast.

Another group went to Mt Powell, the sixth recorded climb, on Thursday the 22nd. Led by Charles Moore, the group had good weather and all attained the summit. The group found the original summit register (in a cocoa tin) left by Major Powell's 1868 party. The register left by the 1873 Hayden party was in the same can. Both registers and the can were recovered, brought back to camp, and ultimately turned over to the State Historical Society (they are difficult to read). A standard summit register and tube were left in Powell's summit cairn.



The CMC participants not mentioned by name were also busy. They climbed numerous peaks including M, N, Little Powell (Peak O), and the Elephant twice.

Those fortunate enough to have participated in the Gore Range Outing went into tough, unknown country. They explored the valley and climbed numerous peaks, many for the first time. It is an unparalleled but little known accomplishment in American mountaineering.

The Trail and Timberline summed things up well: “Participants in the Gore Range Outing had an opportunity for exploring and pioneering in a new region – an opportunity that cannot be had every year....”

Joe Kramarsic had an interesting experience in 2015. He ascended Peak K and traversed over to J then down to camp. He was accompanied most of the way along the ridge by a mountain goat.

Members of the 2015 CMC Gore Range Black Creek trip: Helen Carlsen, Joe Kramarsic, Katie Larsen, Dan Martel, Stan Moore, Herb Taylor, Jim Wheeler, Candace Winkle.

The 2014 scouting crew: Dan Martel, Herb Taylor, Stan Moore.

Note, photos are from CMC archives or Stan Moore's collection.

Sources:

Personal recollections, Charles Moore.

Colorado Mountain Club Trail and Timberline magazine.

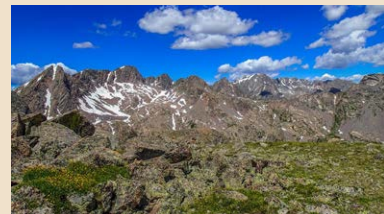
Colorado Mountain Club 1935 Outing photo album.

Roof of the Rockies, a History of Mountaineering in Colorado by William M Bueler.

Mountaineering in the Gore Range, A Record of Explorations, Climbs, Routes and Names, by Joe Kramarsic.

Personal recollections, Joe Kramarsic.

PICTURES FROM THE 2015 RETURN TRIP (click any to see the gallery)

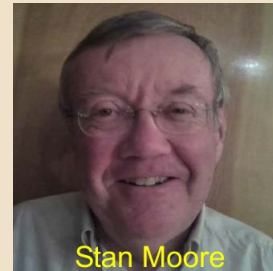


And a personal thanks to Katie Sauter, librarian at the American Alpine Club.

ABOUT STAN MOORE

[Stan Moore](#) is a husband, father, grandfather; a third generation Coloradan; a graduate of the University of Colorado; an author and historian; a Vietnam veteran; a retired small business owner; a (very) amateur blacksmith, and an avid mountaineer,

backpacker and desert rat. Moore and his wife make their home near Denver with a cat that lets them stay there.



Stan Moore

BELOW: Charles (Stan's father and the leader of the 1935 Expedition) in 1978 (left) and Stan leaning on the same tree (2015).



Our backcountry lakes face a growing problem: human waste in the surrounding woods. There's just too much of it to count on natural processes of degradation to do the cleanup work. Short of limiting the number of visitors, the only solution is to CARRY IT OUT, like they do on raft trips in the Grand Canyon. WE CAN HELP! Thanks to a generous donation from [RESTOP](#), volunteer rangers from FENW and FDRD carry a limited supply of *Toilets To Go*. Or order your own. Restop is the leader in personal sanitation and hygiene in the backcountry, as well as many other venues. THANKS [RESTOP!](#)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. To open, tear along perforation line.
2. Gently unfold the foil bag and remove toilet paper and antimicrobial wipe.
3. Set foil bag on ground.
4. After use, lift bag with drawstrings...

Holding straps together, slide liner closed and tie straps. Tuck liner inside foil bag and firmly seal zip-top. Waste is safely contained by solidifying polymers and enzymes.




5. Dispose in trash receptacle. Landfill safe.



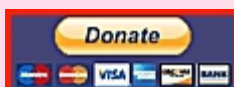
A huge thanks to [ARAPAHOE BASIN SKI AREA](#). For more than two decades, A-Basin staff have donated generously to their **Employee Environmental Fund**, of which FENW has been a steady beneficiary. Last year, more than 150 employees donated, led by A-Basin Director **Alan**

Henceroth. Our enduring THANKS!



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... make a difference!

2019 TRAIL & CAMPSITE WORK SCHEDULE

Join a crew this summer and help maintain trails and campsites in the Wilderness. No training required!

OVERNIGHT PROJECTS head deep into the backcountry. Gear is packed by our two llamas - Dom and Powell. Contact Trail Boss [Tim Drescher](#) to reserve a spot.

July 12-14 - Eagles Nest Wilderness Overnight with llamas (Slate Lakes, Summit County)

August 9-11 - Eagles Nest Wilderness Overnight with llamas (Gore Creek, Eagle County)

DAY PROJECTS (no reservation necessary)

June 8 - National Trails Day with FDRD (Salt Lick Trail) (contact [Laurie Alexander](#))

Follow us



Join us! Next **Planning Meeting**
THURSDAY AUGUST 8, 5:30 PM,
USFS offices in Minturn & Silverthorne
(video link)

Details at www.fenw.org/



Coming up: In our September edition: JENNIFER HOPKINS of the [BLUE RIVER WATERSHED GROUP](#) (BRWG) will describe the important work that they do to protect Summit County's liquid gold. They are holding their annual [Headwater Hops Fest](#) on August 15 at the Dillon Marina.

Check out other [recent monthly eNewsletters](#)

The

June 28 - Deluge Lake Trail (contact [Ken Harper](#))

July 4 and July 10- Gore Creek Trail (contact [Tim Drescher](#))

July 13 - Weed Pull with the Sierra Club on Acorn Creek (contact [Jim Alexander](#))

July 26 - Deluge Lake Trail (contact [Ken Harper](#))

August 13 - Gore Creek Trail (contact [Tim Drescher](#))

August 23 - Deluge Lake Trail (contact [Ken Harper](#))

August 24 - Lily Pad Lake Trail Bridge Construction



Summer 2019 hard copy newsletter was mailed in mid-

May. It contains two dozen fun and informative articles, all of them about FENW - past, present, and future. If you didn't receive a copy, then *we don't have your mailing address - please send it to us at info@fenw.org.*

CITY MARKET COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Please [register](#) your City Market Value Card, linking it to FENW, which will send rebates to FENW without compromising your earned fuel points. Please note that each card holder may only sign up for one tax exempt organization. **THANKS!**



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