

Altitude Sickness

By Kim Critchfield, MD

This issue's article will focus on symptoms and treatment of acute mountain sickness (AMS) and more severe forms of altitude illness, high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), and high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE). Please refer to the last issue of the newsletter for an overview of altitude sickness and prevention. Keep in mind that serious symptoms rarely occur under 8000 feet. Signs of AMS include headache, nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, and insomnia. AMS requires no treatment other than discontinuation of ascent or descending until symptoms resolve themselves. Once symptoms resolve themselves ascent to higher altitudes can continue. Motrin or Tylenol may be used for headache. HAPE occurs when fluid from blood vessels enters the air spaces of the lungs. Symptoms consist of shortness of breath, exercise

intolerance, fatigue, cough, and in severe cases bluish discoloration of the lips and fingers. Patients can be treated with oxygen if available or by descending to between 2000 and 4000 feet, generally. More specialized treatments include medication (Nifedipine) or use of a portable hyperbaric chamber (Gamow bag).

HACE occurs when brain tissues swell. The hallmark of HACE is progressive deterioration of neurologic status. Telltale signs include severe headache, poor coordination, impaired judgement, hallucinations, and eventually coma. Treatment gain consists of oxygen and descent. Steroids (dexamethasone) and the Gamow bag are also options if available.

Since the advanced treatments mentioned above would likely be unavailable on most trips, the best way to treat altitude illness is to recognize early symptoms and signs and descend accordingly.

(This is the second of a two part article.)

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Many of the giving options available to the Wilderness Volunteers Endowment Fund can earn you benefits such as savings on income taxes or estate taxes for your heirs, while allowing you to help Wilderness Volunteers provide stewardship for our precious natural treasures.

To learn more about the Wilderness Volunteers Endowment Fund, please contact Board President, John Sherman, 503.525.5870 or john@wildernessvolunteers.org.

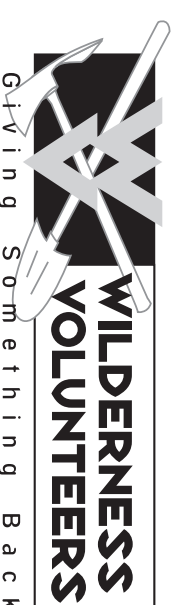
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SPRING 2004 NEWSLETTER

A Devil of a Good Time

By Debra Eilers

Contrary to the name, which originates from a Nez Perce legend, the Seven Devils Mountains in Idaho are a sub-Alpine paradise. Only the names—The Black Imp, He Devil, She Devil—are hellish in this part of the Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area. Well, maybe the hiking was a little hellish for some because in a week a group of hardy volunteers put over sixty miles on their boots while working there in July 2003. For starters, participants backpacked twelve miles to base camp at a high elevation meadow known as "Horse Heaven." This huge expanse of green grasses and wildflowers offers nirvana to pack stock and wildlife including deer, elk, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats. From Horse Heaven, a web of trails spreads out, some with several seasons of deadfall needing to be cleared.

The group was rewarded with a plunge into the cool clear lake after work. The ranger gave the group an "easy" day to complete the work week, with some workers brushing (clipping away small

whacking away the many branches, working carefully around the precariously perched log, and sawing the huge tree into numerous sections to facilitate safe removal of the tree away from the trail. Day two found the group hiking a six mile loop for more trail clearing with cross-cut saws. While the mileage was less than the day before, the elevation change of 2,500' challenged everyone's aerobic capacity. No giant trees along this section of trail, but plenty of interesting scenery such as Rankin Mill, a relic from the area's mining heyday a century earlier.



WV photo

Although free of work, the

group's free day was anything but leisurely. One bunch hiked back to Ruth Lake for another swim while another party did an off-trail scramble up to Pyramid Peak and enjoyed a refreshing swim in Horse Heaven Lake where an osprey circled over the lake, fishing for lunch. After a relaxing evening, many of the group spread their sleeping bags under the stars to watch meteor showers in the dark sky, far from city lights.

trees or branches that interfere with trail access) with others rerouting a section of eroded trail.

Our first work day had us clearing four miles of trail into Ruth Lake, where after a hot day of cross-cut sawing, swinging axes, and moving heavy logs, most of the group enjoyed a swim in the cool clear waters. Four of the group were not able to enjoy the lake interlude because the lucky four worked the entire afternoon at the "mother of all deadfalls," a fallen tree about three feet in diameter, with many large branches, and cracked about ten feet above the base so that it had fallen high above the trail. The band of four persevered for hours, mile hike to Baldy Lake to clear more trail.

The backpack down was made easier by ripe huckleberries along the way, which we thoroughly enjoyed. The group reflected on a week of hard work, camaraderie, and feelings of accomplishment. This agency has had its recreation funding cut and can no longer afford to hire a trail crew. WV filled a crucial role to keep trails open in this beautiful place.

Wilderness Volunteers loves stories and photos from service trips for use on our website, catalog and newsletter. We are particularly interested in photos of volunteers at work and of volunteers hiking in beautiful places. Please send submissions to Wilderness Volunteers, PO Box 22292, Flagstaff, AZ 86002-2292, or e-mail to: debbie@wildernessvolunteers.org

STEWARDSHIP OF AMERICA'S WILD LANDS THROUGH ORGANIZING AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEER SERVICE



Wilderness Volunteers (WV) promotes national service trips in cooperation with the National Park Service, the National Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

WV is a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code. As such, contributions to WV are tax-deductible to the limits allowed by law.

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Wilderness Volunteers is proud to be a sponsor of Leave No Trace, Inc.



AT PRESS TIME, THESE 2004 TRIPS STILL HAVE OPENINGS:

Tetlin NWR, AK	July	Boundary Waters CAV, MN	Aug/Sept
Seven Devils Wilderness, ID	July	Island of Kauai, HI	September
John Muir Wilderness, CA	August	Acadia National Park, ME	September
Holy Cross Wilderness, CO	August	Joyce Kilmer Wilderness, NC	Sept/Oct
Kachina Peaks Wilderness, AZ	August	Mojave Preserve, CA	October
Jed Smith Wilderness, ID/WY	August	Zion National Park, UT	October

TRIED & TRUE RECIPES

Black Beans & Polenta

Serves: 10-12 Time: 35 min.

Submitted by Donna Manion

- prepared polenta rolls, 2 slices for each person
6 cloves garlic, minced
3 x 14.5 oz cans Italian tomatoes (or 12 fresh ones)
3-4 cans of black beans, rinsed and drained
3 cups tightly-packed parsley leaves, chopped
1. Slice the polenta and fry lightly in olive oil. Set aside.
 2. Mince garlic. (If using fresh tomatoes, quarter them, remove the seeds with a spoon, and chop). Rinse and drain the black beans.
 3. Heat olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and tomatoes and sauté, stirring until you can smell the garlic and the tomatoes (if fresh) start to wilt, about 2-3 min.
 4. Add the beans and lemon peel. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low, cover skillet, and simmer about 15 min. (Add a little water, if necessary to prevent sticking.)
 5. When ready to serve, remove from heat and stir in chopped parsley. Adjust seasonings. Serve over polenta slices.

MAILBAG

R and I attended the San Juan Island trip; we are real Wilderness Volunteer advocates now and intend on including WV trips as (an) on-going part of our vacation planning.

I would also like to add that the two leaders were outstanding representatives for WV, and made our trip a vacationing event that ranks at the very top of our adventures.

V.B. San Juan Island

Yes the trip to the marbles was just great—the leadership was excellent, the food selections were great and plentiful—I couldn't have had a better time!! The whole group was great. I look forward to more backpacking trips with WV—the trail work was done with an energetic spirit shared by all—I loved it—regards,

RR, Marble Mountain Wilderness

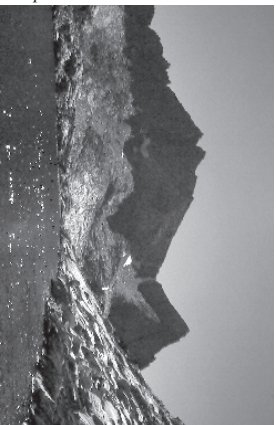
I had such a great time on the trip, and I really hope that others in the group might be interested in trying to link up for another trip

High Times in the Sierra Nevada

Misha Kokotovic

We gasp for air in what seems like a near total vacuum. Despite the last three days of acclimation through backpacking and trail work, and the weeks of exercise in preparation for our service trip, the air still seems impossibly thin up here, several hundred feet below Mt. Gabb's 13,741' summit in the central Sierra Nevada. As we wheeze and stagger upward over a jumble of truck-sized blocks of granite, I discover through fragments of conversation between loud sucking sounds that this is the highest some in our party have ever climbed. At the top, we are rewarded with a magnificent view of the Sierras spreading like petrified waves to the north and south as far as we can see.

WV photo



At lunch the day before, several people took a swim in Rose Lake at 10,495'. For some it was their first swim in a frigidly cold, impossibly clear, high alpine lake. The swimming habit began on the twelve-mile backpack to our base camp, when we stopped by an inviting bend of Bear Creek framed by a glacier-polished and sun-drenched expanse of granite slickrock. Inevitably, the creek drew several of us in from the heat of the afternoon. For the remainder of the week, a plunge into the nearest body of water, moving or still, became a daily ritual for most of the group.

Yes, along with all this fun we also did a lot of good work during last August's John Muir Wilderness service trip in the Sierra National Forest. Our project was to clear fallen trees and repair water bars

WV photo



along a dozen miles of the Pacific Crest Trail in the Bear Creek drainage. We did this and more while covering a lot of ground and seeing some spectacular scenery along the way. However, above and beyond the work accomplished, what I always remember most about Wilderness Volunteers trips, and about this one in particular, is the camaraderie and the sharing of experiences like climbing a 13,000' peak, swimming in a 10,000' lake, cutting enormous logs with a crosscut saw, repairing water bars in a pouring

rain, cooking for twelve hungry people miles from the nearest kitchen. For some these are first-time experiences, but even for those like me who have done such things before, they always seem new in the context of each Wilderness Volunteers service trip. I suppose each trip seems new because I always learn something new, or relearn something old, from and with a group of dedicated people committed to working together for public lands in general and wilderness in particular.

BOOK REVIEW

The Enigmas of Easter Island

By John Flenley and Paul Bahn

Easter Island is the most remote habitable piece of land on earth, lying far out in the southeastern Pacific, 2,300 miles west of Chile and 1,300 miles east of Pitcairn Island. The images of the 397 gigantic stone statues that dominate the island are familiar to almost everyone and add an air of mystery to this treeless land. But new evidence indicates that Easter Island was once home to forests of giant palm trees and supported a population which peaked at around 15,000.

Easter Islanders arrived from Polynesian islands to the west around AD 900 and initially thrived on a diet of large dolphins, sea and land birds, supplemented with yams, taro, bananas, and sugar cane. Recent discoveries indicate that the large palms trees on the island were used to build ocean-going canoes and to fashion the ropes and lumber to move the giant statues into place around the island. And what of these famous giant heads, some as tall as seventy feet and weighing 270 tons? Why were they built, and what do they have to do with Easter Island's decline? Credible evidence supports the notion that the statues, as well as other decorative stone structures, were built by the various territorial chieftains as a form of competition. The bigger the statue, the more important the chieftain. The statues were transported from the rock quarry by means of "ladders," parallel wooden rails joined by fixed wooden crosspieces. UCLA professor and author Jared Diamond reports having seen such ladders used in New Guinea, and in a technique once demonstrated to Thor Heyerdahl by islanders, the ancient statues were raised a little at a time by means of stone and earth ramps until they stood vertically.

Construction, transport, and placement of the statues required using the island's large trees, but the islanders also used trees for firewood, the building of houses, and the making of sails, baskets, mats, and other useful items. Trees were also cleared for gardens, and by 1650 the forests were gone, and islanders were burning herbs, grasses, and crop wastes for fuel. Most sources of wild food were lost, as was the ability of the islanders to go to sea. As the quality of life spiraled downward, the population declined, and by 1774, when Captain Cook visited the island, the islanders were described as "small, timid, and miserable."

There are some striking similarities between what the Easter Islanders did to their island world and what is going on in our own larger world. Did the Easter Islanders debate the issue of jobs versus trees as the last tree was felled? Did they think somehow that technology would come to their rescue? Before they used up their resources, did they see themselves cut off from any hope of help from beyond? When the Easter Islanders got into trouble, they had nowhere to go and were isolated in the vast Pacific Ocean much as Earth is isolated in space. Where will we turn when our resources run out? Will technology save us? Will we learn from the mistakes of a society that saw bigger as better, albeit in the form of statues? Or will we still be debating the jobs versus trees issue when the last one is cut down?