

Trails

Newsletter Date

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Cumbres-Toltec Railroad (Chama RR)

As you might imagine, planning for this trip needs to start early. The club is planning to take a ride on the Cumbres-Toltec Railroad out of Chama, N.M. on the weekend of May 23rd..specifically on Saturday, May 24, which, as it turns out, is the railroad's first day of operation for this season. I've called the operations and we need to reserve all of our tickets by March 1st to insure enough tickets for the group.

I can tell you that the trip is going to make because we've already received money from several club members. As I told you earlier in an email, I need your commitment by February 29th with a check made out to the Sibley Nature Center for \$79. The trip starts in Chama, New Mexico and travels all the way to Antonito, Colorado, at which point we will be bussed back to Chama and

get there by 5:30 p.m. local time (approximately). If you don't plan to camp you should make plans for a motel/hotel room independently. You can Google Chama or call their Chamber of Commerce for information on accommodations.

If you've never taken this trip, you're in for a real



treat. The last time that I took the trip we had to stop 3 or 4 times to let elk get off of the track. The train fee also pays for a great meal at a restaurant that is WAY up in the mountains at the crest of the run. This is an experience that you don't

want to miss. I've taken both the Cumbres-Toltec and the Silverton-Durango and I really like this run better (my opinion only). On this train you can wander through all of the cars and even ride in an empty coal car on the outside if you wish. The photographic opportunities are aplenty so if you plan to attend be sure and have your cameras on board. Also, as you might imagine, you should take at least a light jacket....May is still fairly early at the elevations that we'll be traveling.

Let me know by February 29th (leap year this year) if you plan to go. We will use the Sibley credit card to order tickets but we can't do that unless we have money in hand so get me those checks for \$79 by this Friday if you want to attend this fabulous trip.

April Float Trip

We've checked with both the National Park and State Park and they're not going to allow us to launch over 20 people on any given day for a canoe trip.....so we've got to come up with an alternate idea for

the weekend of April 25th. Pat Dearen and I checked out "The Post" which is a county park just south of Marathon in the Big Bend country. We can rent the entire park complete with bar-b-que pits, a small lake,

bathrooms, etc. if you're interested in easy camping or we can go storm chasing in the panhandle or any number of things. Let me know by phone or email if you have any ideas.

March 28th Rappelling Trip-Ft. Davis

We will be, once again, teaching rappelling on the weekend of March 28th at "Point of Rocks" park near Ft. Davis. A bit of good news....we now have a 100 meter rope (312 feet) so we can throw.....er.....allow people to go off of the very top of the peak. The total rappel is about 260 to 280 feet and I will have you on belay the whole way so this is a VERY safe activity....that is, if you decide to let go of the rope (don't laugh...it's happened) or pass out or wave with both hands, etc. you won't go anywhere. We've been

teaching climbing and rappelling at this site for years and years with nothing



more than a scraped knuckle a couple of times...and the view from the top is incredible. This activity is great for just

about any age group. All of the equipment that you'll need for the rappel is a pair of good shoes and loose clothing.

I do need to know soon how many of you are going so that we can reserve campsites at Davis Mountains State Park. Let's say by March 14th at the latest. I've already started a list so if you plan to go, let me know. If you already have accommodations let me know anyway so that I'll know how much equipment to bring.

"If at first you don't succeed, failure may be your style."

Trip Report—Big Bend Ranch State Park

Well we started out with 18 people planning to attend this trip but, with questionable weather here, we ended up with 10 members actually attending. Michael Nickell rode with me and we were pleasantly surprised to find the air and sky getting warmer and clearer the further south that we went. Michael and I took the Study Butte route in order to try to get good pictures of Santiago Mountain for a project that Pat Dearen is working on (didn't get what we wanted but...oh well...another trip in the future). On the El Camino del Rio we stopped at the Big Hill to get pictures of the river and the "DOM" rock where Kevin Costner dug up a bottle of champagne, etc. and it was almost HOT. As we got to camp, however, reality caught up with us with a

brisk north wind. Everyone else was at camp, wondering where we were. They consisted of David and Kay, Steven and Gae, Sherri and Mary (Gilliam), and with Tom Cooper and Janie right behind us, the group was complete. The night got a little windy and chilly but not overly uncomfortable. Tom, Sherri, Janie, and I got into Tom's "Hilton" tent, complete with lawn chairs, and traded ghost stories. The tent got quite comfortable with body heat and other sources of hot air.

On Saturday morning we all saddled up for a trip to the mysterious Solitario. Several got into the back of our 4 wheel drive vehicles for the rougher part of the approach to the Solitario

but, as you can see in the accompanying photos, the weather wasn't all that bad. We kept getting threatened with rain and even had a short shower but the hike was otherwise uneventful. Sherri, Tom, and Janie went almost to the end of the "Left Hand Shutup" and reported beautiful and awe-inspiring sites. Tom was awed at the speed at which the girls hiked!

After a bit of a chilly trip back to camp everyone had dinner and talked over the day's events. Michael and I loaded up and headed back for the Permian Basin but David reported later that everyone had fun on Sunday and extended the day as long as they could. All in all, a very successful trip.

Big Bend Ranch Pics!



"The Group" (sans me...Richard...taking photo)



Putting where we were in perspective



Kay "negotiating rock"



Looking into the Solitario



Kevin Costner's "famous" DOM rock from the movie Fandango

"The secret of success is to know who to blame for your failures."

March PBOC Meeting

We will be discussing the upcoming rappelling trip at our regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 25th at 6:30 p.m. at the Casa Lopez restaurant

at 4111 W. Illinois in Midland. We also will discuss an alternate activity for the April trip.....and if our new president Sammy can attend, I will be presenting

his "scepter"...the symbol of his new office as president. Kay Crum has left her indelible mark on the object and it is up to Sammy as to what he wants to contribute to it later!



**The Newsletter of the
Permian basin outing**

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