

CMC TRIP REPORTS

Winter Membership Meeting

March 7-9, 2008

by Joe White

This was the first time, in a few years, the CMC has had a snow skills practice weekend, and I was happy to be involved with it. There were three additional, and very knowledgeable, co-leaders to help with the different practice sessions; Jan Lorenzen, Tom Ritchie, and Ron Norton.

It is hard to beat the scenic setting and snow conditions of the Sierra! Over the years, several of us have attempted to do similar outings in the southern California local mountains, but usually ended up canceling due to the lack of snow. The location for this outing was in Rock Creek Canyon, about one quarter mile past the snow road closure, in and around the East Fork Campground.

Ron and I decided to leave on Thursday, so that we could do some back-country skiing before the participants started to arrive on Friday. Not wanting to prepare dinner Thursday night, we stopped at the Independence Subway on the way up. Ron and I arrived at the snow road closure in Rock Creek Canyon by late afternoon. We loaded up our gear and headed in to find a camping area. One that was open and flat enough to accommodate our large group. The camping area we found was close enough to the cars if you needed to make two trips, but tucked into a group of trees that provided privacy and wind protection. In addition, the Forest Service had a working bathroom open for everyone to use.



Brian, Joe and Reiner in Camp.

Ron and I quickly set up camp, and still had enough time to get a four mile ski in, before eating our sandwich dinner back in camp. On Friday morning Ron and I met up with Reiner Stenzel near the parking area, and the three of us headed out for a fun day of back-country skiing, to the Little Lakes area. By the time we got back to camp, later that afternoon, the other participants were starting to arrive; Brian Beach, Bahram Manahedgi, Bruce Kocka, Mike Larrabee, Munish Lal, Chris Nicolaides, and two guests.

On Saturday morning, under a clear blue sky, we started out by practicing knots and setting up equalized no-extension anchor systems using pickets and cordelettes. After the knot and anchor practice session, my group took turns tying into the rope, practicing roped snow travel, and team self-arrest.



Chris, Joe and Brian Practicing Knots.

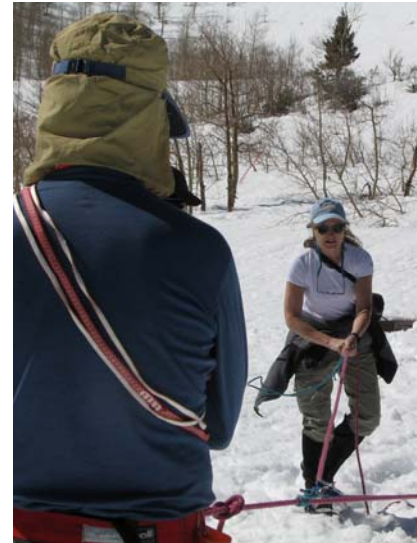
Next, it was Jan's turn to practice "Z" and "Z" + "C" crevasse rescue systems. Jan did a great job setting up and illustrating the system. After lunch, we headed to a slope above camp, where Tom had set up a fixed line utilizing a couple of different anchor options. Everyone practiced using different types of ascending devices to go up and down the fixed line. Tom also discussed a variety of anchoring options. Special thanks to Ron for his help assisting at all three practice stations.

After a great day of practice, we drank a few beers in camp, and then skied (some walked) two miles up the canyon to have dinner at Rock Creek Lodge. I would have gone on this outing just for the dinner! Dinner at the Lodge is not cheap, but the food is really good, (a lot better than freeze-dried!) and you can't beat the atmosphere and the warmth. The real thrill of the evening came after dinner (and half a bottle of wine). We skied back to camp in the dark! Thankfully, everyone made it back to camp safely. On Sunday morning, most of us packed up, hiked out and headed home.

Practicing these skills is especially important to anyone who is heading to the Cascades or any other glaciated peaks. The turnout was so good that we [the four leaders] will be doing the same trip next March. We hope to see even more CMC members on our next outing!



Joe Headed to Camp.



Jan Working Hauling System. Photo: Joe W.