



COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB

BACKPACKING SECTION



BACKCOUNTRY CACHE

A Newsletter for Members of CMC Backpacking Section (BPX)

March 2026

CHAIR'S CORNER - Louise Campbell-Blair



Your BPX Trip Leaders are off to a fantastic start—they've already added 17 spring/summer trips to the calendar, and it's shaping up to be an incredible season ahead! With more than 150 carefully curated Routes and Places available, there's no shortage of inspiration for upcoming adventures. As a BPX Member, you're welcome to explore these options too: [BPX Routes & Places Catalog](#). See something that catches your eye? Send us a note at cmcbpx@gmail.com, and we'll encourage a Trip Leader to bring it to life.

To help you prepare for the season, we've added two new Zoom events you won't want to miss:

Wildland fires are becoming more frequent, more intense, and faster-moving due to prolonged drought and increasingly extreme weather. That means the risk of encountering a wildfire during a BPX multi-day trip is on the rise. Join us in May for an important session presented by Evergreen Fire & Rescue, alongside BPX Trip Leader Linda Lawson, to learn how to prepare and stay safe in the backcountry.

We're also excited to offer a practical session with BPX Trip Leader Steve Frank, who will walk you through how to reduce your pack weight by focusing on the "Big 4." This is the perfect lead-in to the BPX Tents and Tastes event at CMC Basecamp on June 6 - be sure to check out the details below.

Talking of Tents and Tastes – thank you to all those who have volunteered to show off their set ups. I'm looking forward to seeing you all there!

Stay connected with us – we love hearing from you on our socials and at cmcbpx@gmail.com.

BPX SPRING/SUMMER TRIPS

Check your email **May 1** for the **2026 BPX Trips Catalog!**

BPX Trip Leaders have already posted 17 spring/summer trips. First up is [40 mile Creek to Willow Gulch \(Escalante, Utah\)](#) Wednesday, April 29 - Sunday, May 3.

Stay tuned as BPX Trip Leaders are adding more all the time!

BPX EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

☐☐☐ **Managing Wildfire Risk in the Backcountry**

Thursday, May 7 6:30-8:00pm Zoom

Einar Jensen, Risk Reduction Coordinator & Public Information Officer for Evergreen Fire/Rescue and Linda Lawson, BPX Trip Leader, will discuss best practices for managing wildfire risk, wildfire notification, and wildfire evacuations when recreating in the backcountry.

[Wildfire Risk Registration](#)

☐ **The Big 4**

Saturday, June 2 6:30-8:00pm Zoom

Steve Frank, CMC & BPX Trip Leader and Co-Director of the Denver Backpacking School, will give a Zoom presentation on selecting the 'Big Four' gear items for backpacking.

[Big 4 Registration](#)

☐ **Tour of Tents** and ☐ **Elevate Your Meals Workshop**

Saturday, June 6 09:30 AM to 01:00 PM CMC Basecamp

A handful of BPX Members will show off their dialed-in systems — from ultralight ninja setups to comfy campground castles. You'll get to peek inside, ask questions, and steal their best ideas. Lightweight, regular, full-glamp... it's all fair game. Then we turn up the heat with Chef Corso who'll share fast, easy, ridiculously tasty recipes to level up your outdoor eats. Less fuss. More flavor. Zero sad trail meals.

[BPX Tents & Tastes Registration](#)

BPX TRIP LEADER SUMMIT 2026

Last night the BPX Committee hosted the 7th Annual BPX Trip Leader Summit at the CMC Basecamp/Zoom--a great kickoff for the upcoming season! Presentations included:

- How to book a BPX Trip on the CMC Website
- Ideas for BPX Trips
- Overview of the 2026 BPX Routes & Places Catalog

Slides from the Summit are available [here](#).

BPX TIP OF THE MONTH

Sleep on the Trail ☐

Getting a good night's sleep on the trail can be a challenge: setting up your tent on uneven ground; weather and wildlife worries; a sleeping pad that's too thin, has an inadequate R-value, or your pillow and sleeping bag slide off during the night. But a good night's sleep is key to physical, mental, and emotional performance on the trail, lowering the risk of injury and poor decision making. Here are some tips that don't require fancy gear.

When You Wake Up--Sunshine, Not Screen Time

Exposing ourselves to natural light when we wake up helps establish our circadian rhythm by suppressing melatonin production in the morning but then increasing it later in the day. This makes it easier to fall asleep. However, reaching for our phone before sunshine increases our exposure to concentrated blue light, and this can interfere with melatonin production. In addition, our morning (and evening) scrolling can increase stress and anxiety, also sleep busters.

Eating Enough Food

We burn more calories when we are on the trail, so we need more food than on a usual day. How much more varies by person as well as the rigors of the day. Rough estimates are 200 - 300 more calories per hour of hiking, but paying attention to your hunger signals is the best way to judge if you need an extra snack.

Not consuming enough calories throughout the day can make you "hangry" as well as negatively impact your body's ability to regulate melatonin and cortisol (the stress hormone). Even if you're exhausted, high cortisol can keep you up worrying about trivial stuff. Having trouble falling back asleep can be caused by low blood sugar or because you are cold due to lacking enough calories to recover from the day's activities while still keeping you warm. Complex carbohydrates like starchy vegetables, whole grains, and legumes can help regulate cortisol, so eat them in your evening meal. And of course, avoid caffeine later in the day, especially if you are caffeine-sensitive. The same for alcohol, especially close to bedtime.

Winding Down

Taking time to wind down at the end of the day can really help you get a good night's sleep. The day's exploits on the trail can be a lot to process mentally as well as physically. Taking time to relax signals your brain and body to calm down. This causes production of melatonin to increase and cortisol to decrease. Scheduling your wind down routine at about the same time every evening allows your body to naturally know when to start mellowing out and let the melatonin flow. Journaling, meditating, stretching, slow breathing techniques, or just watching the stars are free, easy ways to unwind. And they don't add extra weight to your pack!

Reference: Becker, Ali. "How to Improve Your Sleep on Trail". Garage Grown Gear, 1 Mar. 2024, https://www.garagegrowngear.com/blogs/trail-talk/how-to-improve-your-sleep-on-trail?utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=email&_kx=bO7B7A08bSW7Tel9Jjyp35vBulpvhbBuaFcFxDL6-i8.XFCpi2

TREAD LIGHTLY

Sustainability, Recycling, Leave No Trace

Wild Fire - Myths and Truths

Myth: Wildfires are natural and should be allowed to burn freely.

Reality: Wildfires are driven by climate change, pose a huge threat, and demand forest management practices. Experts advise that wildfires will probably continue to be larger and more destructive, spurred by drier and hotter weather. Removal of burned trees could harm the biodiversity and supporting life from shrubs to bears.



Myth: Logging forests prevents wildfires.

Reality: Fires may burn more intensely in logged forests. Without a forest canopy overhead, the burned limbs and tree tops form a super-charged bed of fuel that dries out quickly.

Myth: All wildfires are “bad” and should be put out immediately.

Reality: Fires play an important ecological role as some species of plants depend on periodic wildfires to disperse their seeds. Wildfire in wilderness areas create wildlife habitat, renews soil nutrients, and limits size of subsequent fires by clearing out old trees and shrubs.

Myth: As wildfires get worse, the USFS is allotted more money to fight them.

Reality: Today, fires burn larger areas and last 60-80 days longer than three decades ago. The USFS spent more than half its budget to suppress wildfires; in 2017 wildfire suppressive cost more than \$2.5 billion.

Myth: Wildfire spending will continue to skyrocket no matter what happens.

Reality: A more strategic approach to wildfire management is needed. A costly aspect of wildfire fighting is for “in-holdings” surrounded by forest. Protecting this property is expensive and dangerous. Costs can be reduced if federal land agencies purchase the in-holdings.

Thanks to Linda Lawson for submitting this article. Adapted from: 2026 Wilderness Society

BPX WINTER TRIPS

Not ready to store your camping gear for the winter just yet? Wayne Howell has 2 BPX winter trips--no crowds, no bugs, no bears; just a cozy night beneath the winter sky for a true cold-season adventure.

Dates / Registration Date	Difficulty	Trip
Mar 26-27 Thu-Fri	Easy	Lost Lake from Hessie TH (Roosevelt National Forest)
Apr 2-3 Thu-Fri	Moderate	Wind River Basin from East Portal TH.(RMNP)

Continue to check the CMC Website since Leaders add trips throughout the season.

SCHOOLS

DENVER	
DAY HIKER SCHOOL	More info here
INTRO TO HIKING SAFETY	Mar 25 Apr 29 May 27 Jun 24

CPR/AED FOR OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS	Apr 9
WILDERNESS TREKKING SCHOOL	Starts Apr 7
WILDERNESS SURVIVAL SCHOOL	Starts May 14
BACKCOUNTRY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL	May 30 Aug 8 Sep 12
BACKPACKING SCHOOL	Starts Jun 4

PIKES PEAK	
WILDERNESS FUNDAMENTALS	Starts May 11 Sep 14
LAND NAVIGATION	Starts Jun 1 Sep 28
INTRO TO BACKPACKING	Starts Jun 17 Aug 12

NORTHERN COLORADO	
BACKCOUNTRY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL	Jul 25

BOULDER	
BACKCOUNTRY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL	Aug 29

STATE	
WILDERNESS FIRST AID/FIRST RESPONDER	Multiple Offerings - Check CMC Website here
TRIP LEADER SCHOOL	More Info here
TRIP LEADER SCHOOL SCENARIOS	Boulder Denver Pikes Peak Western Slope
AIARE L1	Starts Apr 10

Continue to check the CMC Website for additional courses.

CMC Backpacking Section Supports Leave No Trace

View BPX Calendar



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