



COLORADO MOUNTAIN CLUB

BACKPACKING SECTION



BACKCOUNTRY CACHE

A Newsletter for Members of CMC Backpacking Section (BPX)

August 2026

CHAIR'S CORNER - Louise Campbell-Blair



Did you see the new PBS documentary, "[Building the Colorado Trail](#)"? It's a wonderful look at the history and people behind this incredible trail. We're so lucky to have this jewel right in our own backyard.

We have 3 Colorado Trail trips coming up on the BPX calendar, and I encourage you to take a look at them. I've just completed the final 4 segments of the trail on a week-long, supported camping adventure organized by the Colorado Trail Foundation. I can attest firsthand to the beauty of this trail as it winds over the high peaks toward Durango.

Despite the relentless heat—and now the monsoon rains—our BPX Trip Leaders have done an awesome job making sure our trips don't get cancelled. A huge thank-you to all of our Trip Leaders, and especially to those who have stepped up to help out when needed.

We're always looking for members who are interested in becoming BPX Trip Leaders. If that sounds like something you'd enjoy, please reach out—we'd love to hear from you!

Please note that there will NOT be a September edition of the Backcountry Cache newsletter since our newsletter editor will be off adventuring.

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

JOIN THE BPX COMMITTEE!

BPX is looking for that special member who not only loves backpacking but gets a kick out of volunteering. We are interviewing for Committee Chair, Trip Leader Coordinator and Events/Social Media Coordinator. The BPX Committee meets monthly via Zoom and holds 3-4 in person events each year. Volunteer hours average less than 8 hours a month. The BPX section is in its 6th season delivering high quality programming, and now the Committee needs **"YOU"** to keep it going and growing. Please contact Louise Campbell-Blair, BPX Committee Chair, to chat about these opportunities at lcampbellblair@hotmail.com.

Join us and be part of a great team!

I'm the "I don't need it but I might need it, so Imma bring it" type of packer.



BPX TRIP REPORTS

Lake Constantine - Holy Cross Wilderness

Trip Leader Michael Rees - Denver Group

We had an excellent trip. Arriving at the Half Moon trailhead around noon on Sunday, the parking area was pretty full, mostly people hiking up Mt. Holy Cross. Luckily we found one parking spot. My hiking companions, John and Julie, were both strong, experienced backpackers. The hike up wasn't too steep, but we hiked continuously up. The trail was in excellent condition up to the lake. The route follows Fall Creek, as we passed through dense spruce and pine woods, and cascading water of Fall Creek. It did rain a bit on us hiking up the trail, but it stopped by the time we reached the lake. We found a very nice, wooded area to pitch our tents. We had the lake mostly to ourselves. (A couple found another campsite not too far from us.) Lake Constantine is a beautiful lake, with mountains all around us and dramatic cliff backdrops. We ate our dinners by the lake. Very peaceful and quiet. The next morning after breakfast we took a short hike up the trail past the lake for about 30 minutes or so, enjoying the mountain scenery. Then we broke camp and headed back down to the Half Moon trailhead. I'd recommend Lake Constantine as a good overnight backpacking trip.



Hassell Lake

Trip Leader Candace Winkle - Gore Range Group

A BPX trip intended for Lake Evelyn was moved at the last minute to Hassell Lake due to recent road conditions, cancellations, and lack of appropriate vehicles. At Hassell Lake we found an established campsite with plenty of room for our 6 small tents. Some participants took a stroll around the lake after lunch and others relaxed at camp. The next day was sunny so we bushwacked uphill through the woods, then walked above treeline to a beautiful alpine lake surrounded by colorful flowers. On the return to camp we followed the drainage towards Hassell Lake, creating a loop hike. At dinner there was laughter and storytelling, and the next day we were all sad to part ways. It is a great year for backpacking - we saw very few mosquitos!



Hunky Dory and Harvey Lakes - Holy Cross Wilderness

Trip Leaders Eric Butler and Lisa Shroyer - Denver Group

Five of us made the trip up into the Holy Cross Wilderness for this loop hike featuring 2 passes and a dozen lakes. Our route required a shuttle to avoid a 6-mile walk up the road.

Day 1: Our route took us past Lake Constantine, over Fall Creek Pass, by the Seven Sisters (a series of alpine lakes), and ended at Hunky Dory Lake. Hunky Dory does not have a lot of good established campsites, but we found one north of the lake. Note: we spent over 3 miles above tree line on the pass on this day and were over 7 miles in before we had good cover; it is imperative to have decent weather before setting out.

Day 2: After rounding by Holy Cross City, we made the short side trip to Fancy Lake, then climbed Fancy Pass. The weather cooperated again, allowing us a short stop at Treasure Vault Lake before we descended into the wide Cross Creek Valley. Harvey Lake is easy to miss - there is only a social trail up a hill - but it's a beauty. We decided to spend our second night there. There are few established camp sites at Harvey Lake; fortunately, only one other group was camping.

Day 3: A 13-mile trip down Cross Creek. There aren't a lot of good camping sites below Harvey Lake, but we did note one just over 3 miles from Harvey Lake. Thanks to an early start, we made it to the trailhead in the early afternoon.



BPX TIP OF THE MONTH

Choosing a Backpacking Stove

My old stove was beginning to fall apart, when I happened to come across a 1.6 oz, under \$20 stove. What could beat that—well, altitude and wind. So here are some things to consider from the research I should have done first.

- On/Off Switch. Stoves using alternative fuels like alcohol and wood can be ultra-light. But without an on/off switch they are banned in many places due to wildfire concerns, especially during Stage 2 and above fire restrictions. Liquid fuels can also fall under these restrictions.
- Easy to set up and take down without a complicated pot arm assembly.
- Stove's pot supports so the pot won't easily topple over spilling hot liquid on you as well as wasting water, fuel, and maybe sparking a wildfire.
- Pressure Regulator Valve for canister stoves. This ensures a steady flame even in the cold when the canister's internal pressure drops. (If it's in the 20's or 30's, warm up your canister in your sleeping bag before breakfast and use a high-quality fuel with as little butane as possible.)
- Burner Head that provides wind resistance.
- Packability and weight.
- Flame Control vs Boil Speed. If you actually cook real food in the backcountry, you need a stove with a broad burner head and highly adjustable flame control for consistent, even heat distribution, like the SOTO WindMaster or MSR PocketRocket Deluxe. On the other hand, if you only need to boil water for dehydrated meals and coffee, boil speed is what's important. Integrated stoves like the Jetboil Flash and MSR Reactor can boil water in half the time but have a flame that's basically full-blast or off.
- Ignition. Some come with a built-in lighter (although these often fail overtime as noted by Chef Corso).
- Price. Less expensive stoves can do the job. But they are often not as fast, reliable, or efficient. Their weight savings can be offset by the amount of extra fuel they burn.

Or you can skip a stove all together for cold soaking OR use the [Gossamer Crotch Pot](#) to cook while you're on the trail:



Reference: Murphy, Mary, Carter, Chris, & Atkinson, Ian. "The Best Backpacking Stoves of 2026". GEARJUNKIE, 7 May 2026, https://gearjunkie.com/camping/best-backpacking-stoves?utm_source=google&utm_medium=h5d&utm_campaign=h_gj_00166&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22667037788&gbraid=0AAAAA9zBTKVustkreh31nSTV7_cp1Mmd8&gclid=Cj0KCQjw3K7RBhDJARIsAKRtP5RDWJO0ENLAjTEgTFSfNZIKvOUfCw2ogX5E3Xr5_d0GI-pLgoV5B2UaAtUJEALw_wcB#the-best-backpacking-stoves-of-2026

Reference: Thomas, Liz. "Best Backpacking Stoves of 2026". treeline review, 28 May 2026, <https://www.treelinereview.com/gearreviews/best-backpacking-stoves>

BPX TRIPS

Upcoming Trips With Openings*

Dates / Registration Date	Difficulty	Trip
Aug 26-28 Wed-Fri	Easy	Burning Bear Campground
Sep 18-20 Fri-Sun	Challenging	Colorado Trail - Segment 6 from Kenosha Pass West TH
Sep 25-26 Fri-Sat / Aug 25	Easy	Staunton State Park
Sep 29-Oct 1 Tue-Thu	Difficult	Parika and Bowen Lakes vir Baker Gulch and Bowen Gulch (RMNP).

Upcoming Trips With 0-1 On Waitlist*

Dates / Registration Date	Difficulty	Trip
Aug 22-26 Sat-Wed	Challenging	Granite Canyon TH to Jenny Lake (Grand Teton National Park)
Aug 25-27 Tue-Thu	Moderate	Rich, Rough, and Tumbling Creeks from Rich Creek TH

Aug 29-30 Sat-Sun	Challenging	Colorado Trail - Collegiate West 02 from Cottonwood Pass TH
Sep 9-11 Wed-Fri	Moderate	Fancy, Treasure Vault, Missouri Lakes from Missouri Lake/Fancy Pass TH
Sep 17-18 Thu-Fri	Moderate	Araphaoe Lakes from East Portal TH

*As Of Aug 20

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

Whether you are on a waitlist or a roster, if you decide to NOT go, **CANCEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to open up a spot for the next person.

[Mountain Side Gear Rental](#) in Golden rents backpacking gear with a 10% discount for CMC Members.

SCHOOLS

DENVER	
DAY HIKER SCHOOL	More info here
WILDERNESS TREKKING SCHOOL (WTS)	More info here
CPR/AED FOR OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS	Sep 14
BACKCOUNTRY INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SCHOOL	Sep 12

PIKES PEAK	
WILDERNESS FUNDAMENTALS	Starts Sep 14
LAND NAVIGATION	Starts Sep 28

BOULDER	
RISK AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT	Aug 22

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

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](#)

Continue to check the CMC Website for additional courses.

CMC Backpacking Section Supports Leave No Trace

[View BPX Calendar](#)



The Colorado Mountain Club

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