



Permian Basin Outing Club

McKittrick Canyon Trip Report - Richard Galle

As most of you know, the club went to McKittrick Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains National Park on the weekend of October 13th. We had about a dozen folks show up to enjoy a Friday night campfire at our campsite at Parks Ranch. Parks Ranch is on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and is a pretty good place to camp in that you can build campfires, shoot guns, howl at the moon, follow the little animals around, etc. Also, Parks Ranch is covered in gypsum caves so several of our members decided to give caving a try or to continue their caving experiences. We had a great "roundtable" at the campfire. Eventually everyone wandered back to their camp for a good night's sleep before a 9:30 a.m. Texas time departure for the 20 minute drive to McKittrick Canyon.

Saturday morning we loaded up and headed to McKittrick. We noticed that Friday night wasn't a bit cloudy but there were dire warnings that Saturday was going to resemble the second coming with torrential rains. As it turned out, the subsequent cloud cover on Saturday provided absolutely perfect weather. Great temperature and no wind. It did shower lightly on us on the hike back but it added to the experience and everyone was prepared. I was extremely please when we reached the parking lot at the McKittrick Canyon trailhead to turn around and see our old friend and original outing club member Alice Eads. Alice was one of the early members of the 1984-2001 Permian Basin Outing Club. Alice is

a retired librarian and is a tiger on the trail (try to keep up with her). She is known for her tenacious hiking and backpacking and her home made recipes for trail mix, baking, and many other talents. Mostly, she's just a great person and a great friend.

Everyone paid their trail fee and headed out. We predictably spread out along the trail, ebbing and flowing while visiting taking pictures and sampling trail treats in all of its forms (Pat B.)that's our little secret! We eventually ended up at Pratt's Cabin and the Grotto, some 3 to 3 1/2 miles in (about 7 miles round-trip). The trail is very easy and no one had trouble in making the entire route. Pat Barber ended up taking a portion of the McKittrick Ridge trail and spent some of the "rain time" in a cave (picture included). Charley and Virginia Burks and Carla McCullough, Pat Dearen, Pat Barber, Alice Eads and her grandson Kyle, Bill Bentley, Michael Nickell, Don Moore, and I all made the trek and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Then there was the herd of black Angus cattle and really one ticked off bull.....but that's another story.



Pat Barber's Cave—Photo by Pat Barber



Yes, there was color!
Photo by Richard



Pat Barber at the trailhead
Photo by Pat Barber



Patrick Dearen on the Trail—
Photo by Bill Bentley



Bill Bentley contemplating...something—Photo by Bill Bentley



Charley and Virginia
Photo By Carlla (with 2 L's)



"On the Trail"
Photo by Virginia (I think)

Update on November Trip—Richard

If you haven't heard by now, we DO have permission to hike the Solitario in the Big Bend Ranch State Park. Don't dismiss this as just another hike, this wasn't easy to get and may become a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see some very unique country. David Crum went to some lengths to get us into the Solitario and the chances to see it are rare.

The Solitario is a very prominent feature on any topographic map that you might see of the Big Bend area. It is the dormant remains of a very early volcano

and contains scenery unrivaled in the Chihuahuan desert. There are all kinds of really spooky stories involving the Solitario, including one that David has recited that jives with several printed accounts. That's all I'm going to say; you need to make this trip if you want to hear the rest.

The trip is scheduled for the weekend of November 10th. We have been given a campsite near the Solitario and this may end up being another car camping trip with day hikes into the Solitario. Photographic opportu-

nities should abound. Access to the campsite should be available to all vehicles (with care). David and I are planning a "re-con" trip to scope out our needs (sounds like a legitimate excuse, doesn't it?) There will be much more information at the November 7th meeting, complete with maps, descriptions, questions and answers, pizza, salad, etc.

November Meeting

The November PBOC meeting will be at Mr. Gatti's Pizza 614 W. Wadley in Midland at 6:30 p.m. David Crum and I had lunch there the other day and they've got some great "back rooms" that we can close the door to if things get a bit noisy. There is a buffet that's hard to beat and with an assortment of pizza, salad, etc. They will also set up A/V equipment for us if needed. I really encourage everyone to make this meeting.

Camping Equipment

Remember that the Sibley Nature Center has brand new camping equipment if you have any needs. We have tents, back pads, sleeping bags, packs, and compasses. The equipment is really good quality, as well. If you find yourself needing any, give Sibley a call at 684-6827. A couple of people have used the equipment to decide what they wanted to eventually buy so if that's for you, give it a shot.

Bring a Friend

I encourage you to bring friends to the PBOC meetings if they have even a inkling of an idea that they might enjoy getting out into Ma Nature. The club is growing every month and is, apparently, going to take off. We will soon be planning the 2007 calendar and new areas and ideas for activities are welcome. New folks may have some great ideas and may even have access to new areas!

Christmas Party

I e-mailed Olivia the other day to see if she is still alive, etc. and she assured me that all was fine. She recently got new training and a promotion and was up to her ears in alligators with new responsibilities but wanted to remain active in the club. She hasn't shirked her responsibilities toward planning the PBOC Christmas party but still needs help with finding a location to hold the party. If you can help

her out, that'd be great. Ideally we want an area, much like an apartment party house, where we can spread out and, even better, where I can show off my great skills on a Ping Pong or pool table. The party is scheduled for Saturday, December 2nd at ?. That's the problem; we need to fill in the ?. If you have any good ideas, please, please let me or Olivia know. There will be festivities, a slide show, etc.

It's a great way to polish off the club's first year and to hand out the 2007 calendar, etc.



Richard and Don Moore on the trail
Photo by a couple of strangers



Friends Alice Eads and Michael



Early McKittrick Colors
Photo by Richard