

## GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB HISTORY 1984-1996

The **GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB** is an organization made up of people 50 years of age or older that are interested in outdoor sports, winter and summer and fellowship year round. The idea for such a club probably began during the winter of 1983-84 in the mind of Betty Lou Reid of Pagosa Springs. Betty Lou was a ski instructor at the Wolf Creek Ski Area at the time. She and another instructor, Bill Farley got about 12 downhill skiers from both the East and the West side of Wolf Creek pass to meet for lunch one day in March of 1984 at the ski area. At that meeting the group decided to meet again in April. By that time 32 people were interested. It was concluded that a club should be formed. They agreed to meet again for a pot-luck lunch in June of 1984.

The actual organization took place at the meeting in June, chaired by A.G. (Red) Hoffman of South Fork. The group discussed different types of organizations. Officers were elected and annual dues were established. There were many suggestions for a name for the organization. The **GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB** was the final decision and it was adopted at that meeting. Officers for that first year were: President Harry Young of Pages Springs. Vice-President, A.G. (Red) Hoffman of South Fork. Secretary-Treasurer Magie Jones of Alamosa. Program Chairman, Bill Laverty of Pagosa Springs.

Dues were set at \$5.00 per person. Fourteen (14) members from the East side and seven (7) members from the West side paid dues at that meeting in June of 1984. Kelley Boyce from the Sargent community in the San Luis Valley, at that time a Public Relations Representative of the Wolf Creek Ski Area was voted as an honorary member. It was also decided to have a monthly Newsletter. The first was distributed in July of 1984. Harry Young was the Editor from that date until November of 1992. Mary Miller of Pages Springs took over at that time. Harry Young was asked to draw up some by-laws for the club to be considered at the next meeting held in August of that same year.

With the recommendation of Attorney Sam Cassidy of Pagosa Springs the club became a non-profit corporation. By-laws and Articles of Incorporation were approved and submitted to the Colorado Department of State at that August meeting. Sam Cassidy holds a copy of the original Articles at his office. A charter membership was closed with seventy (70) paid members, thirty (30) members from the East side and thirty eight (38) members from the West side and two (2) from Oklahoma. Also at that meeting it was decided to designate one day each week of the ski season as a "ski" day, to meet for lunch, to ski together and to have races or other activities as a group. Only Alpine (downhill) skiing was the activity of the club at that time.

In September, cross country skiing programs were discussed for the first time by David Miller, a cross country ski instructor from Adams State College in Alamosa. He agreed to prepare a track from the Wolf Creek Ski Area into Alberta Park for our use during the 1984-85 ski season.

Betty Lou Reid looked into an affiliation with the "Over the Hill Gang", another Senior group that had been initiated at Copper Mountain Ski Area. A representative of the "Over the Hill Gang" met with the **GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB** at a pot-luck that was held in September. It was decided at that time not to affiliate with them.

The by-laws adopted at the August meeting called for one annual meeting at the Wolf Creek Ski Area to be held on the next to the last Saturday that the ski area was open in the spring. Such a meeting was held each year beginning in 1985. The summer of 1992-93 by-laws amendment calls for the annual meeting to be held at the first summer picnic in June of each year. The by laws also called for two (2) summer social gatherings (pot-luck), one to be held on each side of the pass., one in June and one in August. These picnics will alternate from the East and the West side of the pass. These picnic /meetings have been held every year since 1985.

The downhill "ski" day attracted 10 to 50 members each week. The plan has been to meet in Prospectors Lodge of the ski area at about 11:30-12:00 each Tuesday, to have lunch and to visit. In 1995-96 the place was changed to the newly constructed Base Camp Lodge. This is the only lodge at the ski area that allows picnic lunches which is what the GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB members bring each day, they eat either inside the lodge or on the picnic deck. After lunch the club members usually break up into smaller groups or ski together, then possibly join in a racing activity. There have been "treasure hunts, sloppy slalom races, human slaloms and timed speed checks" among the activities. The events were designed for all levels of skiing abilities. At times there are early season lessons offered to the club members.

There have been organized ski trips to other ski areas in Colorado and Utah, beginning in the 1985-86 season. Crested Butte has been visited for seven (7) years. Trips like this have drawn from 15 to 50 people. There is the usual "get aquatinted" cocktail parties, and a group dinner evening. During the 1988-89 season trips were also made to Monarch Ski Area near Salida and to Ski Cooper near Leadville. This ski area was the training site for the famous 10 th Mountain Ranger Division during WW-II. Also it was the beginning of the Colorado ski industry. In the 1990-91 season a group trip was made to Breckenridge. In 1991-92 the Gray Wolves went to Winter Park and in 1992-93 to Park City, Utah. The 1993-94 season to Telluride, and a second trip that year to Keystone. 1994-95 to Copper Mountain and in 1995-96 to Steamboat Springs. In addition to these trips there have been small groups to go to Purgatory ski area near Durango and back to Monarch.

The weekly Cross country skiing program began in 1984-85 season with tours led by Mel Baum of Pagosa Springs for members from both sides of the pass. The following season David Miller conducted lessons on the East side and Dan Park gave lessons on the West side. The designated XC "ski" day has been each Saturday on both sides of the pass. Because of construction during the 85-86 ski season there have been separate programs for each side. After the death of Mel Baum in 1985, Charles Stith led the tours each Saturday. After the death of Charles in 1992, Jerry Sager and Bob Tillerson took over the West side XC ski day. The meeting place for the West side was to be the tower at Fairfield Lodge, now Pagosa Lodge, at 9:00 am. The group on the East side met at Browns store in South Fork. These groups usually return by 3:00 p.m. The routine has stayed the same to date. In addition to these scheduled tours there are small groups of members to meet for morning tours from 1/2 to 2 hours. Notification via telephone tree to listed members or a designated member to do the calling.

Although most of the "downhill" trips usually involved some X country skiing, the first XC ski trip was to Yellowstone National Park in January of 1991. A bus was chartered for this trip. There was some snowmobiling on that trip also. There have been trips to Alexander Lake Lodge on the Grand Mesa in either February or March each year, snow permitting. In January of 1996 a group of 15 members took a 3-4 day tour to the North rim of the Grand Canyon.

In 1990-91 Gail and Reba Adams of Aspen Springs on the West side initiated an annual XC ski-lunch day one Saturday in January of each year. This group consisted of 15 to 40 members to attend. The Gray Wolf Ski Club has asked one couple to host this annual trek since the Adams left Colorado in 1995. The hosts supply the drinks and a soup or stew. The members bring finger foods and desserts.

A very popular activity from 1985-87 was the "moonlight sleigh ride" at the ski area. "Astraddle a Saddle", brought their Blue Clydesdale team to take the club members from the ski area to Alberta Park for a bonfire, marshmallows and songs after a dinner which was served at the Wolf Creek ski lodge. This was one of the most highly attended functions. Unfortunately this program is no longer active due to a change in administration and insurance problems at the ski area.

In 1992-93 Jerry and Joann Sager initiated a full moon XC ski-fest each month that there was decent snow to ski on, near by the hosts home. The group meets, then proceeds to do a 2-3 mile XC ski tour by the light of the full moon, then return to the home of the host for hot or cold drinks, the members bring finger food and desserts. These ski-fest attract 20-40 members. Each month there is a different host and location.

Hiking in the mountains began as a program of the **GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB** in the summer of 1985 when Mel Baum led hikes designated for members of both sides of the pass. Beginning in 1986 separate hiking programs have been held, again due to the highway construction. The hikes on the East side were led by Jack Stout. After Jack stopped leading the hikes there wasn't a designated leader again until Dick Dove and Dennis Shepherd took the lead. On the West side the hikes were led by Charles Stith after the death of Mel Baum and by Jerry Sager and Bob Tillerson after the death of Charles Stith in 1992. Hike day was designated to be on Mondays on the East side and on Tuesdays on the West side. This program begins about the end of May until late October. The meeting places are the same as the XC ski tours. Each week a trail with specific objective is designated. The hikes vary in hiking levels, slow, medium and fast. Some of the hikes on the East side consist of camp-outs, cowboy breakfasts and Bar-B-Qs.

Several folks including Don Ulm began a four wheel drive program in the summer of 1988 on the East side with a three (3) day tour. Tours have been to the Ouray, Leadville and Telluride areas. Some of these four wheel trails are quite severe. The trips are fastly becoming a favorite for a late August activity. There is usually a 2 night 3 all day tour. Numbers of vehicles have gone into the 20s with up to 65 people. A lot of these share rides in the off road vehicle.

A mountain biking program was introduced on the West side in 1989 with a tour led by Guiseppe Margiotta of "Happy Trails Mountain Bike Tours", out of Pagosa Springs. Bikers now meet on Thursdays for local rides on forest service roads and trails. The biking usually starts as soon as the weather permits each spring and goes until the snow falls. On all of these day tours the members bring plenty of water and a lunch.

In the fall of 1988 the golfing program began with Betty Lou Reid heading up the group for a trip to Tamarron near Durango. This trip has continued annually, now led by Harry Young and Hugh Ratchets. Other trips to Battlement Mesa, Pinion Hills, Farmington NM, Laughlin NV, Albuquerque, NM, Tucson, AZ.

The snowmobile group was formed when Glenn Headrick and Gary Richins would round up a bunch to go do the local scene in 1994. When Glenn moved away, Mary Miller took up the slack

for the West side.. It too is by a telephone list. Trips have been made to the Leadville area, Buena Vista, Chama NM and Lake City. Groups of 8 to 30 people have taken these 2 night 3 day trips. Don Ulm has been a leader of this group.

All of the **GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB** activities have involved parties. Dorothy Douglas from the East side was the first to have an organized group gathering at Halloween in 1988. Since that time there is an annual Christmas party and dance, also a fourth of July Ice Cream social which was organized by Ted and Delta Moore of Pagosa. The 4th of July activities also included our participation in the Pagosa Springs 4th of July parade. The Gray Wolves have won awards for the float entry as well as for marching group. In 1994 the ice cream social evolved into a 4th Bar B Q with hot dogs, burgers, salads, watermelon, beer, pop and lots of great desserts.

The **GRAY WOLF SKI CLUB** has also participated with the U.S. Forest Service research program and in local winterfest programs in Pagosa Springs and South Fork.

The Charter Membership list in August of 1984 contained 70 members. At the conclusion of the 1995-96 year there were 412 members. These members represent locals from the East and West side of Wolf Creek pass and eleven (11) states, some from as far as England, Ill, Fl, NJ, OR, CA, SC, NC, VA and AL.