



10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION
HUT SYSTEM NEWSLETTER
WINTER HUT SEASON
2018

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Base of Operations in Leadville

10th Mountain now relies on vastly more sophisticated computer hardware, software, and the internet, to handle reservations which, in 2017, amounted to 64,813 hut user nights.

I AM DELIGHTED TO REPORT that construction of 10th Mountain's new Base of Operations in Leadville is proceeding well, and we expect substantial completion by the end of February. We look forward to completion and all that it means: it will help ensure that hut visitors continue to have rewarding, meaningful experiences in Colorado's remote backcountry; it brings permanence and strength to our presence in the Leadville community; and it allows us to more fully preserve and perpetuate the remarkable legacy of the WWII 10th Mountain Division. Thank you to everyone who has helped make the project happen—we are grateful!

P.S. To clarify, this facility is intended to improve field operations coordinated in the Leadville area while administrative/field functions will continue at the Aspen headquarters.

BEST WISHES DEBBIE!

DEBBIE KROHN, who heads up 10th Mountain Reservations, plans to retire in March. Debbie's retirement is significant because she has been with 10th Mountain since 1989, and her work ethic, expertise and leadership have contributed greatly to 10th Mountain's success. It's remarkable that Debbie chose to give this many years to 10th Mountain: her tenure says a lot not only about her dedication, but also about the kind people calling to make reservations and the value of the backcountry hut experience.

Twenty-nine years is quite a run, and Debbie has seen some changes since she began: for example, in 1989, 10th Mountain had just moved beyond paper calendars used to record reservations and relied instead on two finicky Macintosh computers to handle reservations, which amounted to 7,077 hut user nights. Flash forward to 2018 (hmm, would Debbie think of it as a "flash"?) and 10th Mountain now relies on vastly more sophisticated computer hardware, software and the internet to handle reservations which, in 2017, amounted to 64,813 hut user nights. What has remained the same? Among other things, Debbie's friendly personality, great attitude, and stellar attention to detail!

10th Mountain is a strong organization, and this is made possible only by people such as Debbie who care and are really good at what they do. If you call soon and reach Debbie, please thank her for all that she's done to facilitate so many great backcountry hut adventures, and join us in wishing her all the best in her new adventures.

SLOG V GLIDE

MANY SUGGESTED ROUTES to the huts are gradual and don't require full-width or full-length skins. It is much easier and faster to use narrow and/or short skins for these gradual routes, and it can make for a much more pleasant trip. Be sure to bring wide/long skins

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for steeper climbs along the way and for day skiing at the hut. This does require purchasing a second set of skins but it's a minimal investment relative to all the other gear already purchased. Visit your local specialty outdoor retail shop and purchase narrow skins, or purchase bulk wide skins and cut them in half lengthwise. Fabricate a tip loop and perhaps a tail clip, and you'll be set to go faster with less effort.

Another way to dramatically improve your travel to the huts is to apply wax to your climbing skins. This is especially useful given fresh snow, warm sun, and southern exposure when snow can "ice" on the skin creating a massive block of snow that adds considerable weight, resistance, and misery. Consult with your local ski shop for the appropriate wax, but almost any carbon-based glide wax will suffice. Simply apply the wax to the climbing skin before you begin skiing, and reapply as needed.

Another way to get superb grip and glide is to use Nordic grip wax. Used correctly, grip wax provides adequate grip and is faster than skins. Grip wax can be used to get to the easier huts, and is particularly useful when the trail back to the trailhead includes flat sections and short uphill which can be arduous to skate, herringbone, double pole, or stomp along without skins or wax. For these sections, grip wax provides grip to get up the hills and across the flats, and still has decent glide. Grip wax can be tricky to use at times and it's a good idea to stop by your local Nordic ski shop to learn more and experiment before the hut trip. 🏔️

—Ben Dodge | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
10th Mountain Division Hut Association

10TH MOUNTAIN PROFILE

Deborah D. Krohn

I FIRST STARTED WORKING for the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association in the summer of 1989. In the beginning, I knew very little about the huts and about the 10th Mountain Division troops. I continued to learn more about the huts and about the history of the men who served in the 10th Mountain Division. I soon became very proud of my affiliations with them, and I realized how privileged I was to be working for such a wonderful organization.



It did not take long for me to fall in love with the huts, the backcountry, and the people I worked with at 10th Mountain. I have experienced a tremendous amount of support and encouragement from the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and my coworkers at 10th Mountain.

Deciding to retire from my position at 10th Mountain has been a difficult decision for me, but I hope that the many great friendships and memories will last a lifetime. My experience working at 10th Mountain has been fun, educational, and very fulfilling.

I am now excited to start the next chapter of my life, which translates to spending more quality time with my family and friends. I am also looking forward to many days of pursuing my passions of hiking and skiing.

I will miss you all. 🏔️

NEW! FREE PDF MAPS

10TH MOUNTAIN is now offering free printable PDF maps so that you can produce your own paper maps. These maps are provided with the help of CalTopo.com, a powerful and easy-to-use mapping website which lets you customize layers, layout and scale of maps you print. These maps are not intended to be replacements for our tear & waterproof-paper printed maps, but do include all the essential route information. They are perfect for last minute trips, or when you don't have time to get one of our paper maps. 🏔️

10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION HUT ASSOCIATION | JANUARY 2018

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The 10th Mountain Division Hut Association is a privately funded not-for-profit organization located in Aspen, Colorado. The purpose of 10th Mountain is to plan, finance, build and manage, for public use, a mountain hut system that promotes understanding and appreciation of the natural mountain environment while developing individual self reliance. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have. 10th Mountain Division Hut System Newsletter (Vol. XXXVI, No. 1) is published twice/year (January and September) by the 10th Mountain Division Hut Association, a 501(c)(3) organization, 1280 Ute Avenue • Suite 21 • Aspen, Colorado 81611.



Felling a Tree

IN THE HUT WORLD, it is our goal to provide you with a warm refuge in the mountains. Much of our work involves maintaining the huts. The other large component of our job revolves around the logistics of supplying the firewood that is constantly fed into the stoves to provide warmth.

If there is a tired refrain from tired hut keepers throughout time, it is: "People are burning too much wood!" Fred Braun, namesake of the Braun Huts, was notoriously picky about his clientele and was even rumored to not give the keys out to groups who he deemed as non-skiers who would lounge around all day in a steaming hut burning up the wood he and his crews had gathered.

The modern incarnation of the huts and our attitude towards firewood consumption are less austere than those of our German founder, however, each year it is still a stressful challenge to supply all of the wood that we need for the winter. Summer is short in the alpine, and from the moment that the last snow drifts melt from the Taylor Pass road in early July until the first substantial snows in late September, firewood is always on my mind.

Each hut uses about five cords of wood each winter. A cord is a measure of volume: 4' x 4' x 8' or about one pickup truck load. As our use increases, I am now supplying about 35 cords for all of the huts each summer. This involves moving about 90,000 lbs. of wood. Rather than face a rough 16-mile round trip journey to town, we still cut most of our wood near the huts with a firewood permit for standing dead trees.

Felling a tree is all about cautious selection. Care must be taken to look to see if it has a bad lean, a spiraling crack from a lightning strike, a looming widow maker branch in the crown, the hollow sound of a rotten trunk, or most important, a bird tree that is someone's home. As I skin around in the winter and bounce around in the truck in the summer, I always keep a mental inventory of good standing dead timber near the road.

One tree that I had my eye on this summer was a large 24" diameter Engelmann spruce out near the Barnard Hut.

The tree is well over 100' tall and probably weighed more than 1,000 lbs. Larger than most trees that I fell, it stood there as a beautiful monument to the size of the trees in the forest that existed before the timbering and fires of the mining era.

As a stressed hut manager, however, it was easy to look beyond its commanding weathered beauty and see it as a much needed commodity, a "wood shed filler." There was also a perfect 20' wide gap in the trees through which it could be dropped downhill to the road.

After my hopeful inspection of the tree, I broke the silence of the forest with the high-pitched whine of the chainsaw and began to clean up the branches and brush around the base for an escape route into the forest.



The first step is to make a steep, wedge-shaped face cut about ¼ of the way through the trunk. After carefully making the face cut I re-checked direction of the fell, sighting perpendicularly across the saw towards the gap in the forest. Now it was time for the careful back cut.

The goal is to create about an inch of holding wood that will act as a hinge. The hinge should be weak enough that the tree will easily tilt forward and yet strong enough laterally that the direction of the fall is controlled.

With a quick pull, the warm saw came back to life and all focus was on the tip of the saw bar as the chain ripped around at 9,000 rpm., zipping the 38 razor sharp teeth through the trunk and pulling out long curling chips. I paused to pound plastic felling wedges into this back cut to keep the tree from pinching the saw and to encourage the direction of the fall.

As I neared the hinge wood, I had to carefully work from both sides as the tree was slightly larger than the saw bar. I took careful pauses to pound on the wedges, feeling them and eying the top of the tree to make sure that the cut was not opening too soon. When the cut was finished, I turned off the saw and I gave the wedges several more thwacks with the ax.

Then there was that hovering moment and one final

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thwack on the wedge. I ran into the forest and watched the tree in the slow motion beginning of its rapid and destructive acceleration to the ground. I muttered an explicative as I saw the spruce pulling a few degrees off of my desired path through the narrow gap in the trees. It hit a tree on the left. However, its earthbound inertia was so great that it simply scraped a few boughs off the neighboring tree and came to land with a splintering thud.

Silence returned to the forest. Though the tree pulled too far left, it still barely made it through the clearing. As the adrenaline subsided, I walked up to the stump to look at the hinge wood. The hinge had a slightly triangular shape to it, a half inch of sloppy difference that could have been a crucial error. I was lucky this time in that the tree

made it through the gap and did not get hung up. Here was a note to file away, a reality check for the ego, and another reminder that felling trees is highly dangerous.

Now that the tree has been felled it must now be: ① limbed, ② bucked up into rounds, ③ each round rolled down to the road, ④ loaded into the truck, ⑤ stacked in the truck, ⑥ unloaded at the hut, ⑦ moved to the woodshed, ⑧ stacked in the shed.

From the time a tree is dropped in the forest, I will often have to handle each piece about ten times before it is sitting there ready for you to use. Please enjoy the warmth that this wood provides, but do not waste it. 🌲

—MORGAN BOYLES | Alfred A. Braun Hut Manager

OLDEST US FOREST SERVICE RECREATIONAL USE CABIN IN THE STATE

Historic Cabin Needs a New Outhouse

AN ENGINEERING STUDENT DESIGN TEAM from Colorado State University is working to design and build a new restroom facility for the First Creek Cabin and Grand Huts Association. Grand Huts Association is currently working with the United States Forest Service (USFS—Arapaho National Forest, Sulphur Ranger District) to assume management of the First Creek Cabin on Berthoud Pass, Colo. (U.S. HWY 40 near Winter Park ski area).

The cabin was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the early 1930s on public land and currently lacks administrative management. The current restroom facilities at the cabin are two pit-style outhouses that do not meet modern environmental standards and cannot meet usage demand of the increasing use of the cabin. Grand Huts Association will assume management of the cabin pending the installation of a new restroom facility. The waste from the new restroom facility must be removed from the site via helicopter, as the cabin is not accessible by vehicle.

Current use of the cabin includes backpackers and hikers in the summer and backcountry skiers in the winter. The cabin was also recently added to the Colorado Register of Historic Places and is the oldest US Forest Service recreational use cabin in the state of Colorado. The

elevation and fragile tundra ecosystem at the cabin's 11,500-ft. elevation make for considerable design and engineering challenges associated with the new restroom facility.



If the cabin does not obtain management soon, it will most likely be torn down and removed due to the health liabilities associated with the outhouses. Support for this project is needed. Grand Huts Association is a non-profit (501-3c3), and funds are needed for building materials and construction costs. Please help ensure the historic First Creek Cabin remains open to the public for generations to come!

You can help support this project by donating to:

① The Engineering Student Design Team is raising \$7,500 for the mechanical systems of the new facility. Donations can be made at:

<http://c-fund.us/dev>

② Grand Huts Association is raising an additional \$15,000 for the building and costs associated with construction. You can donate at: <http://grandhuts.org/donate/>

If you have any questions about the project, please contact Forest Miller (forestm@rams.colostate.edu). 🌲

—Thank you for your Support!

Sisters Cabin

AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE of planning, Summit Huts Association (SHA) is pleased to announce that construction of its newest hut is set to begin in May 2018, with an anticipated opening early in the winter of 2018/2019.

The **Sisters Cabin** will be the fifth backcountry hut in the Summit Huts system and will be located in Weber Gulch on the northern flank of Bald Mountain (a.k.a. Baldy), at an elevation of 11,445 feet. Operating under a special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service, it is the first new hut to be approved on public land in Summit County in 22 years.

"We're very grateful to be able to add this hut to our already world-class network of backcountry cabins, and we took great care to ensure we are building it in the right location and under the right conditions," SHA president Rich Rowley said. "I can't wait for people to experience it in person."

The **Sisters Cabin** will be a winter-only hut, open to guests from the third week of November through the end of April. The Sturm Family Foundation, founded by Don and Sue Sturm, owners of ANB Bank, has donated up to \$1,000,000 toward the construction of the cabin. The **Sisters Cabin** name celebrates the close bonds amongst Sue's friends and family that flourish in the challenge of backcountry skiing and adventure.

The 2,090-square-foot hut will offer state-of-the-art design and green-building techniques to minimize its environmental impact and offer users an experience similar to those they have come to expect at SHA's flagship huts, Janet's Cabin and Francie's Cabin. Breckenridge architect Robbie Dickson, a former Summit Huts president and principal of Equinox Architecture LLC, designed the hut pro-bono with early conceptual help from Andy Stabile and Tim Sabo. Turner Mountain Construction, which is owned by longtime SHA volunteers Jill and Merle Turner, was selected to serve as the general contractor for the hut's construction.

The hut will be built using structural insulated panels (SIP) as well as a Douglas fir timber frame. All materials will be flown in by helicopter due to the remote site.

"What we're trying to do is make a hut that has all the traditional appeal and comfort and coziness of Francie's and Janet's, but with cutting-edge technology," Dickson said.

Groundbreaking on the **Sisters Cabin** will mark a milestone in a process that began, indirectly, when SHA's founders drew up the organization's master plan in 1987.



SUMMIT HUTS ASSOCIATION

That plan envisioned five to seven backcountry huts throughout Summit County. Between 1987 and 1998, SHA built or restored the existing four cabins in the system: Janet's (1991), Francie's (1995), Section House (1997) and Ken's Cabin (1998). After the restoration of Ken's was complete, the association shifted its focus to developing the backcountry user experience and educational program opportunities at its huts.

In 2005, as the existing huts began to reach practical capacity—roughly 7,500 guests visit the cabins each year—SHA's staff and board revisited the master plan and explored the feasibility of adding a new hut to the system. The Forest Service issued its approval in 2015; SHA has spent the past two years ironing out final details and securing funds to build the hut.

Among its features, the **Sisters Cabin** will accommodate 14 guests with beds for two more in the hutmaster quarters. It will be heated by a wood stove in the main living area and passive solar energy via large south- and west-facing windows, with electricity drawn from a solar array outside the hut. Two bathrooms within the hut will feed a composting toilet below, similar to those at Janet's and Francie's, while an adjacent sauna and woodshed will be connected to the hut by a covered walkway.

To accommodate **Sisters Cabin** guests and minimize the impact on other recreationists, SHA worked with the Town of Breckenridge and Summit County government to plan a new, 17-space parking lot that will be constructed near the Sallie Barber Trailhead on French Gulch Road this fall.

SHA anticipates that the **Sisters Cabin** will be ready for guests at the start of the 2018/2019 winter season. Reservations will be taken once construction is underway and this opening is more certain.

For more information, email summithuts@colorado.net, call 970-453-8583, or visit summithuts.org.

Huts For Vets | Reaching National Veterans Groups

AFTER FIVE YEARS of running successful programs for over 150 veterans, Aspen-based **Huts For Vets** is inviting leadership cohorts from national veteran organizations to the 10th Mountain Hut system in summer 2018.

As **Huts For Vets** prepares to expand its reach and to scale its programs, a logical step is bringing in national organizations with large memberships. Taking leadership teams into the wilderness and introducing them to the 10th Mountain Huts will both accelerate our program growth and provide a new level of credibility for our proven wilderness methodology.

Team Red, White and Blue is an athletically-oriented veterans program that has been referring its members to HFV for several years. Thanks to a regional RWB leader in Colorado Springs, who is a Tenth Mountain Division veteran and attended one of our first programs in 2013, HFV has brought in a dozen RWB members from across the country.

Team Rubicon, the next in line, is a national veteran-founded organization of first responders that answers calls for disaster relief. A leadership cohort from Rubicon's

western region will partake in a summer HFV program that will include men and women, veterans and civilians, all of whom wrestle with post-traumatic stress, not only from military service, but from their roles as first responders. **Huts For Vets** is also inviting veteran leaders from "The Mission Continues," "The Headstrong Project," and "Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America."

By showcasing the HFV methodology of wilderness immersion and philosophical discussions to other veterans groups, their leaders may opt to apply the **Huts For Vets** methodology for their leaders and members in different geographical locations.

A HFV field guide and operations manual issued to participating organization leaders will tell the story of **Huts For Vets** and inform future leaders on the details of running wilderness programs for trauma relief.

For more information on **Huts For Vets**, please visit our website, which describes our unique healing opportunities in the wilderness at the 10th Mountain Huts—www.hutsforvets.org

—Paul Andersen

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | HUTS FOR VETS

NEW HUT WAITLIST

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE NOTIFIED about hut cancellations, go to www.huts.org, select Trip Planning, then scroll down to Waitlist Signup. Complete the simple form, and we'll email you whenever a hut cancellation meets your criteria. Keep in mind:

- Cancellations are open to everyone as soon as they are processed. The waitlist does not hold spaces, and new bookings are on a first-come, first-served basis. It is possible that by the time you call or try to book online, the spaces may have already been re-booked.

- We don't receive many cancellations, especially for weekends, holidays, or at popular huts – so don't expect many notifications.

- Enter huts that are appropriate for your group in terms of difficulty as well as capacity, and enter dates when huts are open (see Rates, Dates & Capacities at www.huts.org, Trip Planning).

- Braun Huts and the Friends' Hut are not included in the waitlist.

10th Mountain Medical Course 2018

Earn a Wilderness First Aid (WFA) Certificate!
Courses will take place over two 8-hour days.

April 7-8 | **University of Colorado, Boulder**
November 3-4 | **Anschutz Medical Campus, Denver**
December 1-2 | **Anschutz Medical Campus, Denver**
December 7-9 | **Sangree's Hut**

The course is equivalent to a Wilderness First Aid Course, but is contextualized for 10th Mountain Hut travel and extreme winter adventure, including topics of avalanche safety, high altitude, hypothermia, frostbite, immersion, snow travel, trauma, musculoskeletal soft tissue issues, dislocations/fractures, navigation, and lost persons.

Expert faculty from the CU School of Medicine will teach through a combination of lectures and hands-on practical skills, and participants will receive a certificate from the School of Medicine attesting to a WFA in the 10th Mountain Medicine Course.

Cost: \$345, Sangree's Hut \$495

Sign up | www.huts.org

Hard-Working Hut Volunteers | 2017

We just can't say it enough about these folks...**Thank You 10th Mountain Volunteers!**



PHOTOS BY DAVE LEE



Tenth Mountain Division Hut Association
1280 Ute Avenue | Suite 21
Aspen, Colorado 81611

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by mail. Thanks

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FROM THE GUIDE'S CORNER

FOR MANY, the first months of this winter have brought some disappointments. For users of the 10th Mountain Hut System we have experienced low snow and, in some areas, no snow. With early January storms hitting central Colorado it appears that winter has finally arrived, but it will be important for all who venture to the huts to not forget that the winter of 2017-18 may be a winter to remember.

For many who have already been to the huts, it is quite obvious that the snowpack is thin. Meadows may still show last summer's dried up vegetation still reaching for the sky. Deeper forests show the barely hidden forms of fallen trees, stumps and rocks. For the experienced ski tourer these "red flags" should immediately spell caution on the trail and on the slopes.

When descending on the trail or searching for another powder turn, be aware of slope aspect and terrain. You may be skiing in two feet of snow on a north aspect or riding on a stiff wind slab on a ridgeline, but moving to a southerly aspect or onto a leeward slope will most likely put you on a foot or less of snow or into an area that will not support you staying on top of the snowpack.

Simple precautions to consider are:

- **Ski slower**, it's good for your technique anyway.
- **Ski lower angle slopes** so you don't need to apply as much ski pressure, hopefully staying above hidden obstacles.
- **Keep your vision** out in front of you, keeping an eye out for

barely covered obstacles

- On descents, **remove your ski pole straps** in case your pole basket gets caught on something.

Step off the packed trail and you are most likely going to sink into unconsolidated snow. "Old-Schoolers" like myself call this type of old snow "sugar snow."

From weeks and months of a thin snowpack exposed to clear skies and cold nighttime temperatures, the snow loses its cohesiveness and can become bottomless and unsupportable for a skier, snowboarder or snowshoer.

Things to be aware of when touring include:

- **Sugar snow** can be most prevalent near rocks, deeper forests and "tree-wells."
- **Breaking trail** can become difficult, especially in areas of deeper snow.
- Skiing down a slope may be relatively easy, but **climbing back up through sugar snow may be not only difficult**, but could take more time, so watch the clock when taking that late afternoon tour.

Enjoy the world in winter, share it with family and friends, seek some solitude and be careful. 🏔️

—Donny Shefchik | FIELD DIRECTOR, PARAGON GUIDES