

*Call of the Wild*

Adventure Travel for Women since 1978



## **Mt. Whitney: High Sierra Backpacking Adventure August 1-8, 2008**

**Rating:** Challenging Backpacking

**Group Size Limit:** 13

**Cost:** \$1,350 Reservation Deposit \$500. Balance due 3 months before start date of trip.

Please Note: Price subject to change until your deposit is received

Ready to make a change in your life? This high adventure appeals to women ready to meet a challenge – physical or otherwise! This is our 25th annual backpacking trip to Mt. Whitney and Call of the Wild has guided dozens of groups to the summit. This eight-day trip covers approximately 58 miles in six days of hiking. We'll walk through some of the most dramatic, beautiful scenery in the High Sierra. Our route goes through Sequoia National Park and John Muir Wilderness, and follows the Pacific Crest Trail and the Muir Trail. The climax of our trip is the summit of Mt. Whitney, at 14,495' it's the highest point in the lower 48 states.

### **Day 1, (August 1) ~ Arrive at Horseshoe Meadow**

Drive to our camp at Horseshoe Meadow. (See directions below.) You should arrive around 1-2 PM, so leaders can check packs and distribute group food and equipment. Please come well prepared, having considered the weight and utility of each item in your pack – and do not put off packing until the last minute. Taking our pre-trip class will help insure that you'll be prepared with the lightest pack possible. We will have dinner together at our Horseshoe Meadow campsite at about 6:30 PM. Spending the first night at this elevation (9900') is immensely important – the best thing you can do to get used to high altitude. Many people on this trip choose to come a day or even two days early to acclimate. (*Dinner*)

### **Day 2 ~ Backpack to Chicken Springs Lake via Cottonwood Pass**

Early breakfast, break camp, pack up, and begin our hike to Chicken Spring Lake. Today's mileage is 4.5 miles, but with an elevation change from 9900' to 11,242'. Our route takes us along the edge of Horseshoe Meadow, then switchbacks steeply up to Cottonwood Pass to Chicken Springs Lake. The lake is warm and shallow, and there will be time to relax and even swim in the evening. (*Breakfast, Dinner*)

### **Day 3 ~ Backpack to Lower Rock Creek**

We'll hike 9 miles to Lower Rock Creek, 9600'. We cross into Sequoia National Park and drop down steeply into the Rock Creek drainage. This is a lovely little valley where deer graze in the meadow in the evening and you can fish for Golden Trout in Rock Creek. (*Breakfast, Dinner*)

#### **Day 4 ~ Backpack to Upper Crabtree Meadows**

Hike about 8 miles from Lower Rock Creek to Upper Crabtree Meadows (10,700'), where we will camp for three nights. *(Breakfast, Dinner)*

#### **Day 5 ~ Rest Day at Upper Crabtree Meadows**

Rest day at Upper Crabtree Meadows. Relax and prepare for our summit of Mt Whitney. Weather permitting, we'll take the famous Solar-heated Garbage Bag Bath! *(Breakfast, Dinner)*

#### **Day 6 ~ Hike to the summit of Mt Whitney**

Today we have an alpine start, in other words, we'll start walking the summit trail in the dark. You will leave your backpacks behind in camp and carry only light daypacks with lunch, water, trail snacks, rain gear, extra warm layers and a **warm hat**. Be advised that our summit day may be difficult. You will hike a total of 15 miles this day, beginning at about 3 AM at 10,700'. In about 5.5 miles, we'll be at Trailcrest Pass (13,500') and then walk our final 2 miles to the summit (14,495'). At the summit (weather permitting), we'll have lunch, sign the guest register, take photos, and then retrace our steps 7.5 miles back down to Upper Crabtree Meadows. The fantastic views are among the best in the entire Sierra (in the world!) and after your ascent the highest peak in the lower 48 states, you'll be able to appreciate the incredible scenery! *(Breakfast, Dinner)*

#### **Day 7 ~ Backpack to Upper Rock Creek**

Hike about 8 miles, mostly downhill, back along our trail to Upper Rock Creek, 9,600'. Enjoy a great meal and last night's campfire. *(Breakfast, Dinner)*

#### **Day 8 ~ Backpack out to Horseshoe Meadow trailhead**

Break camp early and retrace our steps about 13 miles to Horseshoe Meadow (9,600'-11,242'-9000'). This will be a long day and you may want to stay in Lone Pine or Bishop that evening rather than drive home (see Accommodations section below). *(Breakfast)*

**Elevation Changes:** 9900'-14,495'-9900'

**Mileage:** 58 miles total (43 miles with pack, 15 without)

**Topographical Maps:** Tom Harrison Map – Mt Whitney High Country is recommended although many good maps of the area are available.

**Note:** Itinerary subject to change at leader's discretion due to weather and other contingencies.

#### **WHAT YOUR TRIP INCLUDES:**

- Experienced leadership
- Excellent food (provided meals are noted on itinerary)
- Tents and community camping equipment
- Camping fees and permits

#### **NOT INCLUDED:**

- Air and ground transportation (some participants may be interested in carpooling)
- Lunches and trail snacks
- Personal gear (see equipment list mailed in your registration packet)
- Optional tips for your guides

**About tipping:** People on our trips often ask us about gratuities, so here are some guidelines: Each person usually tips \$5-\$10 per day for each guide depending on the level of service and the number of guides assigned to the trip (people do not usually tip any guide interns or camp helpers). If Carole Latimer is leading your trip she, as the owner of the business, does not accept tips—but the other guides do! They cook and serve your meals and take care of many extra details to give you a safe and fun trip. Tips at the end of the trip are a way of showing your special appreciation if you feel your guides have given very good service to you. Tips are appreciated, never expected.

### **DAILY MILEAGE AND ELEVATION**

Day 1 ~ 0 miles, elevation 9900'  
Day 2 ~ 4.5 miles, elevation 9900' - 11,240'  
Day 3 ~ 9.5 miles, elevation 11,240' - 9600'  
Day 4 ~ 8 miles, elevation 9600' - 10,770'  
Day 5 ~ Rest day at 10,770'  
Day 6 ~ 15 miles, elevation 10,770' - 14,495' - 10,770'  
Day 7 ~ 8 miles, elevation 10,770' - 9600'  
Day 8 ~ 13 miles, elevation 9,600' - 11,520' - 9900'

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

Trip participants must be aerobically fit, highly motivated to get to the summit, and experienced backpackers. Everyone should be equipped with a spirit of adventure, the sensitivity to recognize the needs of the group, a willingness to undergo the potential hardships of outdoor living, and a sense of humor! Our Mt Whitney trip is always challenging, interesting and lots of FUN! However, please make no mistake, you must be tough and in good shape to do this trip. Mt Whitney is a challenging trip for most people, sometimes both physically and emotionally. You must have the stamina and the mind set to carry a backpack at high altitude over rocky trails for several days. We hope you'll join us on this exciting adventure to the summit of Mt. Whitney!

### **HOW TO REGISTER**

*First*, call us to make sure there are spaces left on the trip. You can also make a quick reservation form on our website <http://www.callwild.com/quickreserv.htm> We will hold your space for 7 days while you are completing the application process, making travel arrangements, and mailing your deposit check. Part of the application process is also talking with us about your experience; Carole Latimer has a personal telephone interview with everyone who signs up for this trip. *Next*, send in completed and signed Trip Application. The Trip Application is available by fax, mail, or from our Web site at [www.callwild.com/trip\\_application.htm](http://www.callwild.com/trip_application.htm) After receiving your deposit and application, we will send you confirmation of your reservation and an information packet on your trip.

### **TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE**

*We strongly suggest that you take out trip cancellation insurance.* Call of the Wild does not issue cash refunds, whatever circumstances may cause a cancellation. Depending on the time of your cancellation, you may or may not be eligible for a credit for another trip; please read our refund and cancellation policy at [www.callwild.com/jointrip.htm](http://www.callwild.com/jointrip.htm) We also include a copy in our trip packets; or you may phone our office. You may be committed to going on your trip, but people have been forced to cancel due to circumstances beyond their control or because of a completely unexpected misfortune. To sign up for Travel Guard insurance call us for a brochure or visit [www.callwild.com/travelguard.htm](http://www.callwild.com/travelguard.htm) For certain coverage, you must purchase insurance within 14 days of making your initial deposit with Call of the Wild.

**Please Note:** Call of the Wild provides Travel Guard insurance brochures and a link to their website for your convenience, but there are many other travel insurance companies. It is your responsibility to know the restrictions and provisions of your policy.

### **AIR TRAVEL AGENT**

For air travel, please contact Wendy Fazio at Skyline Travel 510-530-1100 or e-mail [wendyatskyline@aol.com](mailto:wendyatskyline@aol.com) . Let her know that you are traveling with Call of the Wild.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PLANNING**

Please plan to arrive at Horseshoe Meadow Campground by 1 PM on Day 1.

We highly recommend spending a couple nights at altitude (8000-9000') before the trip begins to help you acclimate. If you choose to do this, be aware that motels in the town of Lone Pine are not at a high enough elevation to be of much help. Therefore we suggest staying at the campground at Horseshoe Meadow (9900').

We will return to Horseshoe Meadow by late afternoon (depends on group hiking speed) on the last day. You may wish to stay in Lone Pine that night, rather than start a long drive after a strenuous day of hiking. See Accommodation section below.

### **DIRECTIONS TO HORSESHOE MEADOW CAMPGROUND**

Horseshoe Meadow is near the town of Lone Pine, CA on Highway 395 which runs along the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

**From the San Francisco Bay Area**, it's about an 8-9 hour drive (350 miles) to Horseshoe Meadow. If you choose to go through Yosemite National Park there is a \$20 entrance fee. You can also go Sonora Pass but this will add about 30-45 minutes driving time, which may be worth it if there is lots of traffic through Yosemite.

**From Los Angeles (and LAX airport)**, it's about a 5-6 hour drive (210 miles). Another option is to fly into Ontario Airport.

**From the Reno Airport**, it's 5-6 hours (260 miles). Most of this is highway driving, with slower traffic in Carson City.

Get a road map for the state of California! This will help you determine the best way to get to the eastern Sierra. If you are traveling from the north, take 395 South to Lone Pine. If you are traveling from the south, take 395 North to Lone Pine. In the middle of the town of Lone Pine, from Highway 395, take Whitney Portal Road west toward the mountains and turn left on Horseshoe Meadow Road after 3.1 miles. You will drive for about 19 miles and the road switchbacks steeply up the mountain. When you get to the Horseshoe Meadow area, continue straight. Do not go to Cottonwood Pack Station. The road then loops around to a hiker's walk-in campground and two bathrooms. Look for the group of women, the campground is small.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you decide to stay the last night in Lone Pine here is some information to help plan your stay. We like Dow Villa Motel on 310 South Main Street in Lone Pine (760-876-5521). It has a spa and a pool with a view of Mt Whitney. There is also the Trails Motel (760-876-5555) and the Mt Whitney Motel (800-845-2362). Lone Pine has several restaurants and many shops with "I Climbed Mt Whitney" T-shirts, hats and other Whitney memorabilia.

### **WEATHER**

We will most likely experience sunny, benign weather (with perhaps scattered afternoon or evening showers). As testimony to that, we have successfully summited Mt Whitney for more

than 25 years. However, there is always the chance of experiencing dramatically changing mountain weather. It is important to be prepared for all kinds of weather, including sun, wind, rain, hail or lightning. The Sierras in summer are especially prone to afternoon thunderstorms and there have been severe instances of lightning strikes on Mt Whitney. Your guides will inform you of what to do in the case of a thunderstorm.

## **CONDITIONING**

The two main aspects of your physical conditioning are aerobic and strength conditioning and altitude acclimation. See below for altitude acclimation information. The best aerobic and strength conditioning for backpacking is backpacking! If possible, hike with your pack on steep, rocky trails. Start with a low weight of 15-20 lbs and gradually add weight. Of course, most of us can't hike on wilderness trails every day. So, the next best alternative is to spend time running and hiking on inclined trails with a daypack. If you can't get to a trail, Stairmasters, Nordic trainers, and treadmills are good for your aerobic capacity and weights are good for your strength. You want especially to strengthen your quadriceps, also your back, and upper body. How many months ahead of your trip you start conditioning depends on your general level of fitness. Someone with a good level of fitness should begin conditioning at least 8 weeks before this trip.

## **ALTITUDE ACCLIMATION**

There are a few things that you can do to help you acclimate. First, have a high level of fitness (see above for aerobic and strength conditioning). Second, drink lots and lots of water, at least two days before the trip starts! It gives your body and muscles the water it needs to be well hydrated to facilitate acclimation. Also, a sign of acclimation is frequent urination. So if you are not drinking enough water, it is hard to tell if you are acclimating properly. Third and most effective, spend significant time at altitude. This includes sleeping and exercising at altitude. Some people arrive a couple of days early on this trip. The first day they exercise moderately (a hike) and sleep at altitude (about 9000') and the second day, they rest and sleep at altitude. This does wonders for acclimation. Be aware that altitude will increase your heart rate. You may also feel lassitude, nausea, shortness of breath, headache, and no desire to eat. All these can be symptoms of what is known as acute mountain sickness (the effects of not being acclimated to altitude), or AMS. For most people, the symptoms of AMS abate in 12-48 hours.

## **SHARING TENTS / WILDERNESS CAMPING**

Our tents are Sierra Designs Comets or Meteorlights, designed for 2-3 people. On horse packing or base camp trips, we have 2 people in each tent. If you prefer not to share a tent, you can bring your own *small* tent (weight about 5 pounds max) or rent one from us.

## **THE WEIGHT OF YOUR BACKPACK AND DAYPACK**

Hiking boots (well broken in) will be needed on this trip, and full packs may weigh up to 40 lbs at the beginning, even more if you do not pack carefully. You can expect Call of the Wild to give you about 10-12 pounds of food, group equipment, and part of a tent (unless you bring your own). For this reason, we ask you to arrive with your pack contents weighing only about 25 pounds, including your lunches, camera, water, and so on. For more information check your trip packet for the Equipment List, Notes About What You Need to Bring, and Choosing a Backpack & Packing for a Trip. If possible, you can also attend one of our pre-trip classes. Refer to our website or your trip packet for dates/times.

**Daypack:** You will carry a day pack when hiking to the summit; since we are camping in the same place that night heavy backpacks will be left in camp. Please do not overload your daypack

with unnecessary items. Water weighs 2 pounds per liter, and you will need to carry 3 liters of water on summit day. The total weight of your daypack should be no more than 10 to 12 pounds and it is mandatory that you carry an extra layer of clothes, a warm hat and rain gear--no matter how promising the weather looks when we start out. See your information packet. All this information is repeated and expanded on your List of Things to Bring. Plan ahead and don't wait until the last minute to pack. Thanks!

### **ABOUT OUR GUIDES**

Call of the Wild guides have extensive experience and bring proven leadership to your trip. We pride ourselves on giving women safe opportunities to venture out and do something they've never done before. Our guides are certified Wilderness First Responders and they'll go the extra mile to make you feel comfortable. They all share a love of the wilderness and an enjoyment of people's company. You may read more about our guides on our website:

<http://www.callwild.com/guides.htm>

### **ABOUT OUR FOOD**

Our menu features hearty, healthy meals made with recipes from Carole Latimer's cookbook *Wilderness Cuisine*. You'll feast on dishes such as Pad Thai, Pesto Fettuccini, Truffled Porcini Potato Soup, and fresh-baked Coffee Cake. Our meals tend to be higher in carbohydrates and lower in fat for hiking trips, and we dehydrate some food in order to preserve freshness and decrease weight. Meals are often vegetarian, but we serve meat dishes as well. We avoid processed food, but you won't get a strict brown rice and wheat germ regime either, and we think there's nothing wrong with an occasional backslide to decadently rich food after a hard day on the trail.

Most people love our food and much care and effort goes into preparing your meals. However we are not able to accommodate each person's preferences. Often we are cooking in the wilderness and our menus are limited by weight, fuel, refrigeration, space, and so on. We cannot make separate meals or bring different provisions for individual diets and preferences. Therefore, if you have food allergies, if you are vegan, or if you don't eat certain foods we suggest that you call us and then possibly plan your own food to supplement our menu.