



# **The Brainard Cabin Handbook**

*How to use and enjoy the CMC cabin at Brainard Lake*



*Published by*

**Colorado Mountain Club  
Boulder Group**

## **To the holder of this handbook:**

**If you have been given this handbook and the key to the Brainard Cabin, then you are responsible for the safety and proper operation of the cabin during your stay. You are also responsible, for yourself, members of your party, and visitors who use the cabin, for following the rules and correct procedures for its use.**

The most important rule is:

### **NO SMOKING OR OPEN FLAMES IN THE CABIN**

**No:**

- **Tobacco products**
- **Candles**
- **Portable gas stoves**
- **Gas lanterns**
- **Gas heaters**
- **Any other portable devices that use solid, liquid, or gaseous fuel**

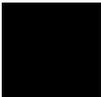
The Brainard Cabin has stood since 1928. A fire in this cabin could have terrible consequences and end a seventy-year-plus tradition.

The rest of the rules and procedures appear throughout this handbook. Rules are summarized in Appendix A.

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# About This Handbook

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This handbook is the latest version of the publication also known as the *Brainard Bible*. It contains instructions, safety and emergency information, tips, rules, maps, history, anecdotes, and suggested side trips. The information in this handbook is for anyone who uses the Brainard Cabin, day or overnight, as a host or otherwise.

Because people of many experience levels use the Brainard Cabin, this handbook is written primarily for the first-time user. Cabin veterans might find some of the material “old hat,” but this way we err on the side of completeness and safety.

The object, of course, is to enjoy the cabin once you’ve taken care of preliminaries. This handbook also contains plenty of lore—essential and otherwise—for your leisure reading.

**Chapters 1-6** have simple, step-by-step instructions for getting the cabin opened, warmed up, and ready for guests quickly and correctly.

**Chapter 7** has special instructions for hosts.

**Chapters 8-16** have more step-by-step instructions for tasks that come later.

**Appendixes A and B** summarize the rules and safety information.

**Appendixes C and D** describe the cabin management policy and the CMC.

**Appendixes E-G** have the cabin history, area trails, and personal stories written by cabin users.

Enjoy!

## Road

From the Peak-to-Peak Highway (Route 72) near Ward, turn west on the Brainard Lake Road. From there it's:

- 2.7 miles to the winter closure gate
- 4.7 miles to Brainard Lake
- 5.5 miles to the cabin

In summer, you can drive past Brainard Lake and very close to the cabin. At the winter closure gate, which will be open, you might have to pay an entrance fee. Follow signs to the Mitchell Lake trailhead. Before you get to the trailhead, a wooden post on the right marks a footpath that goes 200' east to the cabin.

In winter, or any time the Forest Service has closed the winter closure gate, you must stop and park before the gate. From there, it is 2.8 miles by the road to the cabin.

## Trails

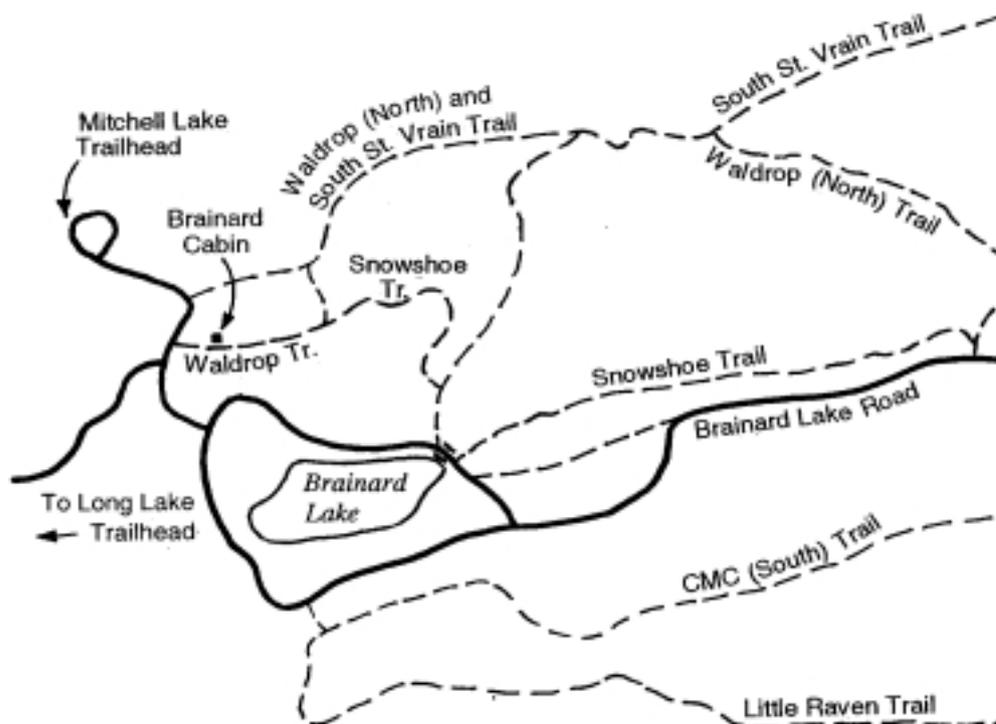
From the winter closure gate, four trails go west to the cabin. Distances listed are the total mileages to the cabin:

- **The CMC South Trail.** 3.0 miles. An easy ski trail.  
*No hiking or snowshoeing, please.*
- **The CMC Snowshoe Trail.** 2.9 miles. An easy snowshoe trail that branches off the CMC South Trail.
- **The Waldrop Trail.** 2.9 miles. A more difficult ski trail.  
*No hiking or snowshoeing, please.*
- **The Little Raven Trail.** 3.8 miles. A more difficult ski trail that uses the Left Hand Park Reservoir Road for part of its route.

## Getting to the Cabin

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### Map of the Brainard Lake Area



#### Trail Information

**Brainard Lake Road:** Easy hike, snowshoe, or ski trail. Might be windy and scoured of snow.

**CMC (South) Trail:** Easy ski trail.  
*Skis only, please.*

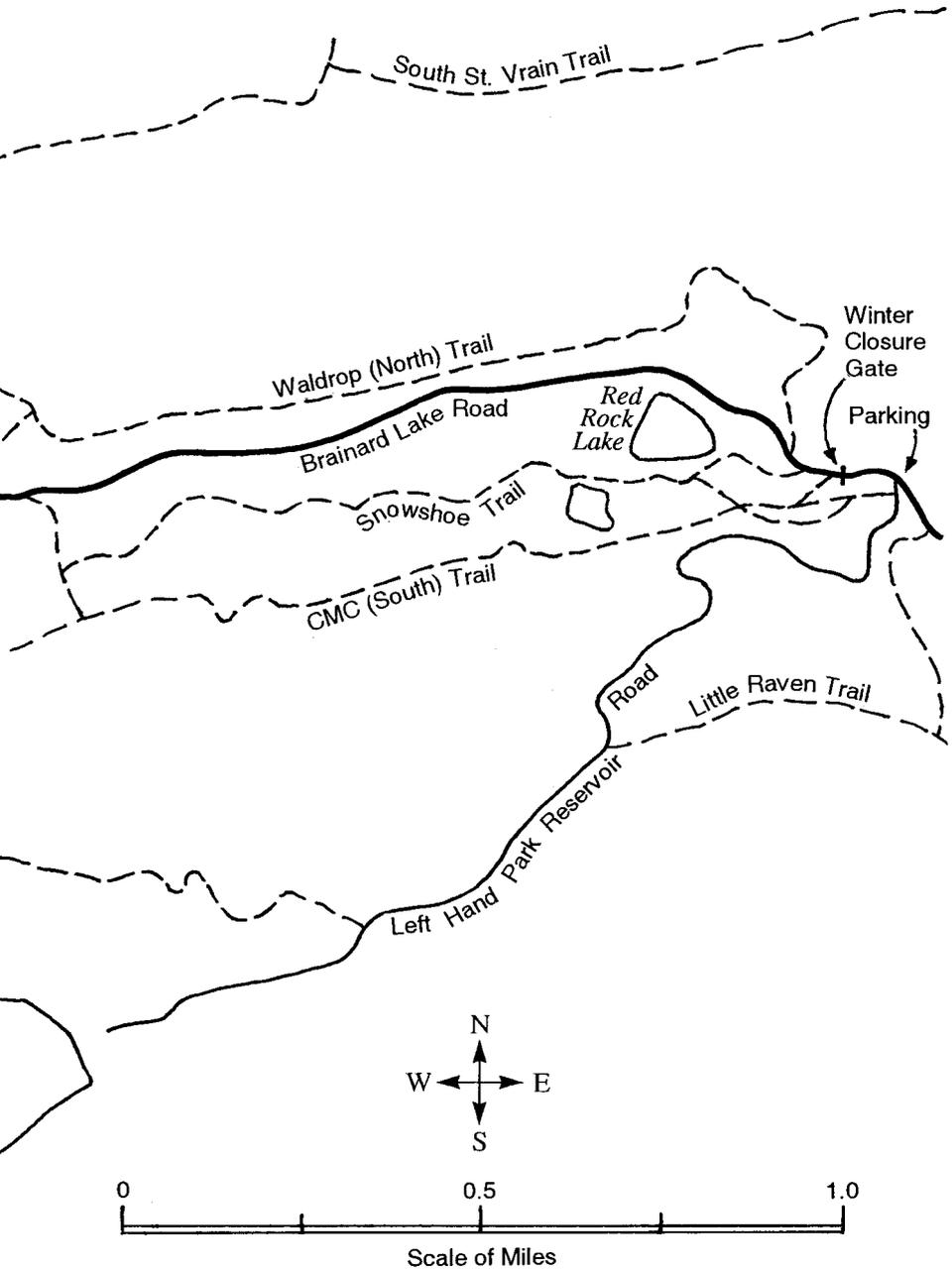
**Snowshoe Trail:** Easy snowshoe trail. Starts a short distance down the CMC (South) Trail.

**Waldrop (North) and Little Raven Trails:** More difficult ski trails.  
*Skis only, please.*

*Left Hand Park Reservoir*

# Getting to the Cabin

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### **Warning**

The Brainard Cabin is in a harsh mountain environment. It is at 10,400 feet and subject to sudden storms. In winter the cabin is three miles from the nearest parking lot by foot, ski, or snowshoe. The exertion of getting to the cabin can be too much for inexperienced or poorly conditioned people.

Altitude sickness, exhaustion, exposure, dehydration, even sunburn and snowblindness, are possible. Be prepared and be vigilant. Do not split up your group. Do not count on cell phone coverage in this area, either.

### **In Case of Emergency**

You are in a valley that rises to the west. Civilization is to the east. The most obvious and direct way back to the parking lot is the road. Consider your location and the nature of the emergency when deciding whether to stay put, go to the cabin, or go back to the cars.

If you are lost or in a whiteout and have a GPS, find these features by their coordinates, using the NAD27 datum:

#### **Brainard Cabin**

40° 04' 52" N. Lat.; 105° 34' 40" W. Long.

#### **Winter closure gate at parking area**

40° 04' 51" N. Lat.; 105° 32' 09" W. Long.

### **A Note to Winter Day Hosts**

Visitation is heaviest on winter weekends. Please try to get to the cabin by 8:30 AM, as it takes about two hours to get the cabin open, warmed up, and ready for guests.

To open the cabin:

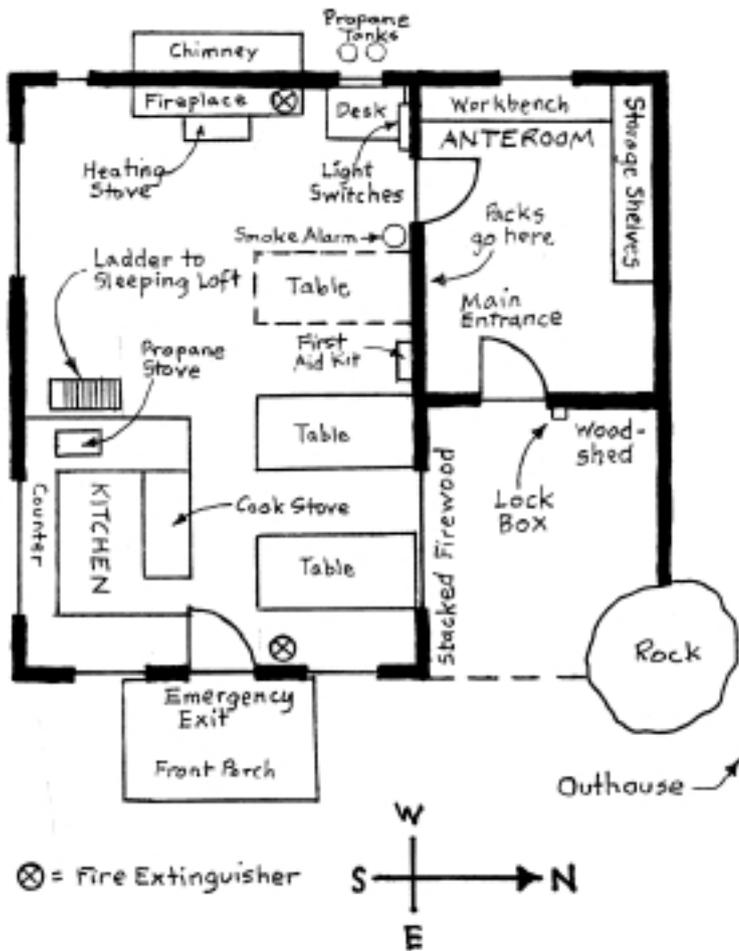
1. **Leave your skis, snowshoes, and poles outside.**
2. **Go to the main entrance** under the right eave of the roof where it ends at a big rock. In winter, use this entrance only; the other door is an emergency exit only.
3. **Brush the snow off yourself.** A brush is by the door. Snow tracked in keeps the floor wet, which rots the wood.
4. **Unlock the door.** Dial the 4-digit combination for the lock box. Open the box, extract the key, and unlock the padlocks from the door hasps. Place the locks and key in the lock box. Set the combination to 0000 and close the box. Give the lock box a few tugs to make sure it's locked.
5. **Hang your packs.** The door opens into the anteroom. Hang your packs on the pegs on the left wall of the anteroom.

Do or delegate the following:

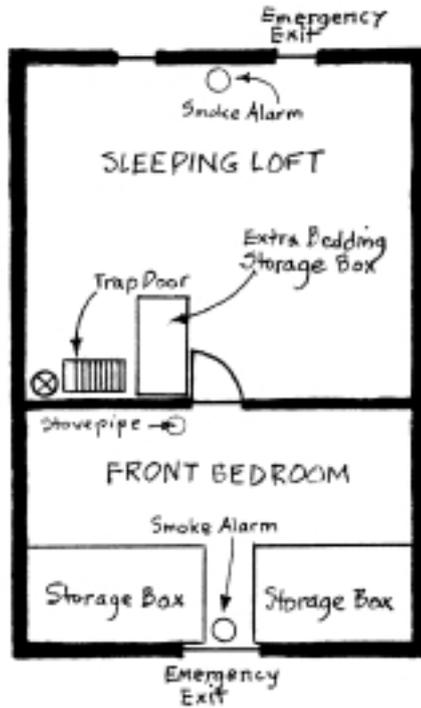
6. **Open the shutters.** This takes two people. One goes around the inside of the cabin, opens the windows, and unlatches the shutters. The other goes around the outside, clears any snow, swings the shutters open, and hooks them against the outside wall. Be extra careful if it's windy.
7. **Shovel snow.** Shovel the path to the front entrance so it's obvious this is the entrance, and make some steps where it's steepest. Dig out the outhouse door and make steps there, too, if necessary.
8. **Use the outhouse if you have to go.** Don't make yellow snow.
9. **Light the stove.** See "Lighting the Stove" on page 8.
10. **Get water.** See "Getting Water" on page 15.

# Opening the Cabin

## Main (Ground) Floor



**Top Floor**



⊗ = Fire Extinguisher

These instructions are for the Monarch cooking stove located between the kitchen and dining area. Start this stove first; you need it to heat water. This stove also heats the cabin nicely.

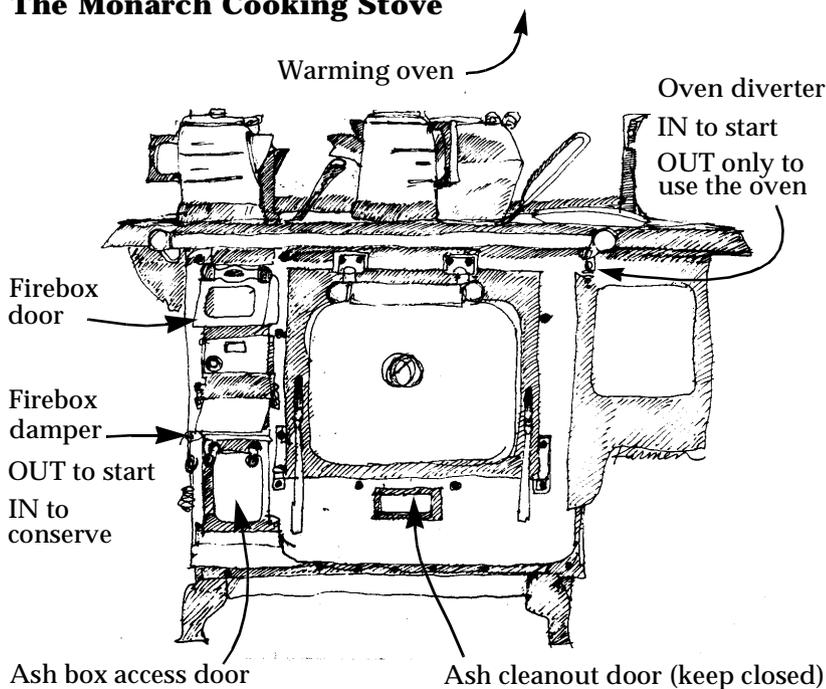
## Lighting the Stove

1. Clean out the ashes, **but only if they're cold.**
  - Remove parts of the stove top in the center and above the firebox. Use the curved handle (lid lifter) designed for this. Scrape any ashes on top of the oven into the firebox. The tool for this is a metal rectangle with a long handle. Scrape the ashes in the firebox so they fall through the grate and into the ash box below. Pull out the ash box and use it in the next step.
  - Open the ash cleanout door below the oven. Scrape the ashes out the door and into the ash box.
  - Empty the ash box into one of the covered metal ash cans in the entryway and replace the lid of the can tightly. Put the ash box back in the stove.
2. Pull *out* the firebox damper. This is a rod below and to the left of the firebox. The out position props open doors in front and back of the firebox so more air can circulate.
3. Push *in* the oven diverter. This is a rod on the upper right of the stove. It can be hard to move. Check that it's in by looking under the center rear disk of the stove top. The rectangular door below it should be *open*. Trying to light a fire with this diverter closed fills the cabin with smoke.
4. Check that the vent inside the warming oven is closed. The vent is a chimney bleeder that stops the chimney draft if it's open. The stove needs the draft to work properly.

5. Load the firebox with wadded paper, then kindling, then some stove wood, all loosely layered.
6. Replace all parts of the stove top.
7. Open the firebox door on the upper left of the stove. Light the paper in the firebox. Matches are in the metal bread box on the counter. Have more wadded paper and kindling handy, as you might have to nurse the fire to get it going steadily. Close the firebox door.
8. When the kindling is burning steadily, add stove wood from the box under the counter to the left of the stove.

**Don't burn coal.** If you find any coal in a wood bin, don't burn it. It burns too hot and in the past almost destroyed the stove.

### The Monarch Cooking Stove



### Using the Stove

When the stove is hot, you can:

- Adjust the firebox damper to regulate the fire. Pushing in slows the fire and reduces the heat; pulling out accelerates the fire and increases the heat.
- Use the stove top to heat water and cook. The hottest part of the stove top is the left rear. The coolest is the right front. Adjust cooking temperatures by moving pots and pans around and adjusting the firebox damper.
- Pull out the oven diverter to use the oven. This causes the smoke to circulate around the oven before it enters the chimney. Regulate the oven temperature by adjusting the firebox damper or adding wood.
- Use the warming oven to warm food. There's a vent in the warming oven that has nothing to do with the warming oven. **Keep the vent closed.** (The vent is a chimney bleeder that stops the chimney draft if it's open.)

**Be careful with water. A spill could crack the stovetop.**

**Don't leave the curved handle (lid lifter) on the stovetop. It will get too hot to touch.**

Also see "Cooking" on page 23.

### Shutting Down the Stove

When you are through with the stove:

1. Stop stoking the firebox with wood.
2. Open the firebox damper (pull it all the way out).

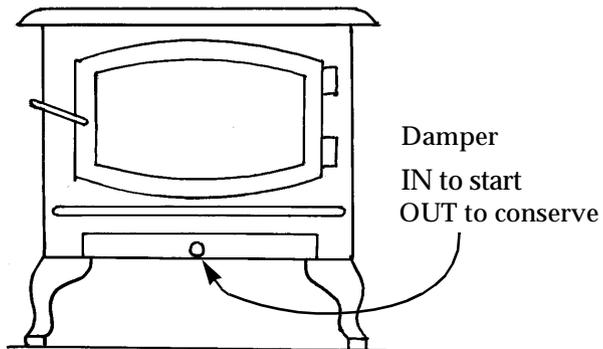
**Do not empty ashes. Leave the hot ashes in the stove to cool. It is safest for the next user to empty them.**

These instructions are for the Avalon stove located in the fireplace at the west end of the cabin.

## Lighting the Avalon Stove

1. **If the ashes are cold**, remove enough ashes to leave a bed about 1/2 inch deep to hold the live coals. Place the removed ashes in the covered metal ash can in the entryway. Close the lid of the can securely.
2. Load the grate with paper, kindling, and firewood.
3. Push the damper all the way in. The damper is below the door.
4. Light the fire. If the chimney has trouble drawing at first, light a wad of newspaper near the chimney opening.
5. Close the door. Leave the damper in until the wood is burning well.

## The Avalon Stove



### Using the Avalon Stove

When the stove is hot:

- Pull the damper out part way, until the fire is burning more slowly. The stove is the most efficient at this setting. Experiment. Small, hot fires are cleaner and more efficient than large, slow ones.
- To add more wood, first push the damper all the way in and wait a few seconds. Then open the door slowly. Otherwise, smoke comes out the door when you open it.
- After adding wood, leave the damper all the way in until the wood is burning well before pulling the damper out again. This helps keep the chimney clean and reduces danger of chimney fire.
- Operate the stove at full air supply (damper pushed in) at least 1/2 hour per day. This burns the creosote out of the chimney and off the inside of the glass window.
- To run the stove overnight, fill it with large, tightly packed pieces of wood. Get them burning well, then pull out the damper until the fire is burning slowly. The stove should burn all night and provide hot coals for the morning.

### Shutting Down the Avalon Stove

When you are through with the stove:

1. Stop stoking it with wood.
2. Open the damper (push it all the way in).

**Do not empty ashes.** Leave the hot ashes in the stove to cool. It is safest for the next user to empty them.

These instructions are for the propane stove, located on the counter top to the left of the cook stove. Use the propane stove to heat water quickly. To conserve propane, heat water on the cook stove as soon as the cook stove gets hot.

### Lighting the Stove

1. Turn the blue supply valve handle under the counter top to the open position—in line with the pipe.
2. Set the timer next to the stove to the desired cooking time, up to one hour. For less than 10 minutes, turn the dial past the 10-minute mark, then back to the desired time.
3. Light a match and hold it close to the burner you want to use.
4. **Keep your hands and face away from the burners.** Open the valve for the burner you want to use.

### Using the Stove

- Adjust the flame as needed with the gas valve for each burner.
- Gas flow stops when the timer reaches zero. Reset the timer and relight the stove as necessary.

### Shutting Down the Stove

1. Make sure the burner valves are closed.
2. Close the blue supply valve handle under the counter top to the closed position—at a right angle to the pipe.

### **If You Smell Gas**

1. Leave the cabin immediately.
2. Go to the back (west side) of the cabin, find the propane tanks, and close the valves on the top of the tanks (turn them clockwise).

### **Propane Supply**

Don't mess with the propane tanks at the back of the cabin. It's unlikely you'll run out of gas. Use is typically one-half tank per season, and there are two tanks. If one tank empties, the system automatically switches to the other one.

In the unlikely event the system stops working, notify the hutmeister.

You'll need lots of water for making coffee and tea and for cooking and cleaning. **Boil all water vigorously for 10 minutes before drinking it.**

## Mitchell Creek

The water supply is Mitchell Creek, in the culvert where it goes under the road.

1. Obtain some 5-gallon water jugs and a short-handled snow shovel.
2. Walk out the footpath to the road. Cross the road and go left about 50 feet to the culvert. Go down to the creek just to the right, or west, of the culvert.
3. **Test the ice before venturing onto it.**
4. Go inside the culvert and look up. A large X is painted on the ceiling of the culvert, just above the water hole.
5. Remove the snow under the X. You'll find wood strips covering the hole.
6. Remove the wood strips to access the hole.
7. Dip the jugs and fill them to about 3/4 full.
8. When you're done, replace the wood strips and cover them with a lot of snow for insulation.

## Melted Snow

Don't melt snow for water. It's a gross waste of time and firewood. Even if the snow is clean, it doesn't taste good. Also you might mistakenly collect yellow or sooty snow.

The CMC and the Forest Service have agreed that when the cabin is open, it's open to the public. Anyone who has opened the cabin during the day should be prepared for daytime visitors, particularly between 10:30 AM and 2:30 PM. The day host represents the CMC. The heaviest visitation is on winter weekends, when the day host is usually a CMC volunteer.

## Duties

As the cabin day host, you should:

- **Greet people.** Start by asking if they've been to the cabin before. Be cheerful.
- **Make sure people follow the rules.** You might have to act quickly; keep an eye out the windows at new arrivals. Be prompt but tactful asking people to:
  - Use the outhouse
  - Leave their skis and snowshoes outside
  - Brush the snow off themselves, especially their feet, **outside.**
  - Leave their packs in the anteroom
- **Ask people to sign the guest register and inform them of the \$1 donation.** The guest register and donation jar are on the desk by the door to the anteroom.
- **Make coffee, tea, and hot chocolate available.** Set out mugs and the fixings and offer it free to all visitors.
- **Represent the CMC** by telling newcomers about the cabin and the club. You might get questions about cabin history and policy, how to join the CMC, or what trails are in the area. This handbook has lots of answers.

- **Bus tables.** Keep them tidy. You might have to remind people to pack out their trash.
- **Do dishes.** A more or less constant job.
- **Sweep floors.** Sweep up snow often. The anteroom floor just inside the main entrance is the worst spot. Sweep the grate outside the main entrance, too. The broom and dust pan are in the anteroom.
- **Maintain the fires.** It seems the stoves are constantly in the process of going out.
- **Split wood.** Lulls between visitors are a good time to do this if you have to. See “Firewood and Ashes” on page 21.
- **Keep a supply of hot water.** Jockey pots and pans of water on the stove top so that one pot is always boiling and others are preheating.
- **Get more water.** Keep an eye on your supply. Getting more water is a perfect job for an assistant.
- **Sell maps.** CMC Ski Trail Maps and possibly also CMC Hiking Trail Maps are for sale at the desk.
- **Collect names of people interested in volunteering** for cabin maintenance or other projects.

Yes, you’re going to be busy! You could get over 50 visitors in a day. It takes two or more people to host the cabin well.

## Authority

The day host has the authority to delegate hosting tasks, ensure all users follow the cabin rules and procedures, and ask unruly guests or cabin crashers (people who arrive expecting to spend the night without reservations) to leave.

### Help-the-Host Tradition

Hosting the cabin can be a big job. It is a CMC tradition that other visitors help the day host, and that the day host may ask for help, when needed.

### Emergencies

As a cabin day host you might find yourself involved in a visitor's emergency. People have arrived at the cabin cold, exhausted, injured, lost, or missing part of their group.

Although the day host can ask cabin crashers (people who arrive expecting to spend the night without reservations) to leave, consider allowing them to stay if it's an emergency. In that case, get their names and contact information to report to the hutmeister and try (tactfully) either to collect the overnight use fee or tell them how they can pay the hutmeister.

You are not required to render aid just because you are the cabin day host. If you decide to help anyway, use your best judgment. Help if:

- You don't endanger yourself
- You don't endanger others
- You have the appropriate training
- Your help is clearly beneficial and needed

The warmth and shelter of the cabin go far to alleviate an emergency. The hot fluids and first aid kit could come in handy. You or other guests could donate extra food or clothes.

Your experience and knowledge can help, too. You might just need to give someone directions. At the other extreme, one night a host skied all the way out to the winter closure gate to find a lost group.

By now, you have dishes, mugs, and silverware that need to be washed.

**Make sure a bucket is under the sink drain before you pour water in the sink.**

Wash dishes by hand:

- Place sink strainers over the sink drains. This keeps food scraps out of the waste water.
- Use the plastic basins to wash and rinse the dishes. This keeps the water warm longer.
- Use warm water from the stovetop.
- Find dish soap, rubber gloves, and dishrags near the sink.
- Use a minimum of soap, and of water.

Get rid of waste water:

Watch the level of waste water in the bucket under the sink. When it gets about 3/4 full (so it doesn't slosh), take it outside and empty it **away from the cabin or any ski trail**. Or see "Idea," below.

When picking a spot to toss the water, consider that the waste water could make a patch of ice that would be a nuisance to hikers, snowshoers, or skiers.

Once per weekend, empty one bucket of water into the vault in the outhouse.

**Idea:** If the waste water is relatively free of food scraps, empty it at the bases of the small trees along the path that leads out to the road. These trees were planted deliberately to help eventually hide the cabin from view. A little extra water will help them grow faster.

The outhouse, also known as the James R. Roeder Outhouse and Warming Hut, is about 100' northwest of the cabin. You already know much of what you need to use the outhouse. However, also follow these tips:

- If the door is snowed in, shovel it out. Forcing it open against the snow damages the hinges and frame.
- Don't throw any trash or solid objects into the vault.
- Once a weekend in the winter, pour a bucket of sink waste water into the vault.
- Keep the toilet paper under the coffee cans. Snow blowing in the door makes the TP wet.
- Latch the door when you leave the outhouse. Unlatched, the door blows in the wind and gets damaged.
- Find extra TP (and paper towels) in one of the storage boxes in the front bedroom.

## Firewood

The cook stove and heating stove burn firewood only, no coal. Firewood is stored in order of size. All firewood migrates through the following sequence:

- **Unsplit rounds**, if there are any, are west of the cabin. The greenest wood is furthest west; the driest is closest to the cabin.
- **Coarsely split wood** makes up most of the wood supply. It's stacked west of the cabin. Cabin users should split this further and keep the next piles topped off:
- **Smaller split wood** is stored in the covered entryway, both below the dining-room windows and in the woodshed across from them. Here it gets a chance to dry out. Most of this is the right size for the Avalon heating stove. Or split the shortest pieces further to make the next size:
- **Smallest split wood**, about wrist-sized, is for the Monarch cooking stove. It's stored in the wood box under the counter by the stove. Replenish this box for the next users.
- **Kindling** is stored in a box or a bucket under the sink or elsewhere in the cabin. **Don't store kindling near stoves.** Replenish kindling also. Kindling is anywhere you can find it or make it. The ground around the cabin is covered with wood chips, especially to the west.

Around April of every year, use split wood only from the woodshed in the entryway. The woodshed needs to be empty by the fall maintenance work party.

Don't store wood in the anteroom.

### **Don't chop or split wood in the cabin.**

The floor, and even the concrete hearth in front of the fireplace, have been damaged by people splitting wood.

Use a large round, outside on the ground, as a chopping block. Axes, mauls, and wedges are stored in the anteroom, just inside the main entrance.

### **Warning: Be careful with axes, mauls and wedges.**

**Chopping and splitting wood is dangerous and requires skill and care. Wear eye protection. Make sure other people are at a safe distance.**

Think what a bad day it would be if you chopped a shin or a foot or a thumb. It would be difficult to get you to medical help or medical help to you quickly. If you're not experienced or comfortable splitting wood, delegate the job.

If you break a tool, please consider repairing or replacing it yourself. Yes, this is a pain and an expense, but it would be even more unfair to make someone else replace or repair it. Notify the hutmeister too; it may be possible to reimburse you.

## **Ashes**

Like firewood, ashes migrate through a short cycle.

1. **If the ashes are cold**, they go from the stoves to the covered metal ash cans in the entryway.
2. When the ash cans fill up, empty the cans into heavy duty plastic bags and keep the bags in the entryway also.

One of the best reasons to spend a night in the cabin is to have a fine meal in the wilderness. By dividing up the load, a small party can pack in a feast.

## Storing Food

If you have any food that isn't in a rodent-proof container, store it in the metal cabinet under the counter on the south wall of the kitchen. Keep the doors closed all the way all the time.

## Cooking

The Monarch cook stove is designed for cooking, but it takes some experience, as well as trial and error, to use it well. The heat control is:

- The amount of fire in the firebox
- The damper settings
- The positions of the pots and pans on the stovetop

To use the oven, pull the oven diverter out. Allow the oven enough time to heat. The thermometer mounted in the oven door is loose and will not read accurately unless it is pushed into place and contacts the inside of the oven door. If you're serious about using the oven, consider packing in an oven thermometer.

Also see "Using the Stove" on page 10.

**Be careful with water. A big enough spill could crack the cast-iron stovetop.**

**Please don't deep-fry anything. The smell is bad and the fire danger is worse.**

## Food and Cooking

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At 10,400 feet, water boils at a lower temperature than at 5,200 feet, let alone at sea level. Pasta tends to cook to mush. The increased altitude might also be a challenge for making bread.

As a cook you'll find that your working efficiency decreases as a function of the square of the number of other people in the kitchen. Shoo them out as necessary.

### A Little Background

Thanksgiving dinners have been prepared in the cabin. Turkeys, hams, and bread have been baked in the oven! There is even a photograph somewhere of the ceiling hung with freshly made pasta. The tradition likely got started as soon as the cabin was built in 1928. And it continues—the year 2000 was greeted by a major party complete with formalwear. The possibilities are many and delightful.



The controls for the lighting system are mounted on the wall in the northwest corner of the cabin near the desk. To use the lights, turn ON the Master Light Shutoff switch. Turn this switch OFF when you close the cabin.

Below the controls are the individual light switches:

- Upstairs (main sleeping loft and front bedroom)
- Living room
- Dining room (middle)
- Dining room (east)
- Kitchen (two lights)
- Anteroom
- Desk

The upstairs lights have a second switch near the light in the main sleeping loft. Because of this, you can't tell if the upstairs lights are on or off by the position of the downstairs switch; you have to look.

The lighting system is designed with the capacity to run the lights. However, it has a low-voltage cutoff that turns off the lights if the battery voltage gets too low. The lights will not come back on until the batteries are charged.

**Notify the hutmeister of any problems with the lighting.**

**To maximize the time available on the batteries, turn off the lights you're not using.**

**Keep the solar panel on the roof clear of snow and soot.**

**The control box and batteries need no routine maintenance. Please don't open the control box or the cooler that houses the batteries.**

## Anteroom

The anteroom is for storing things that don't care if they're cold, such as packs, tools, and supplies.

Pegs on the south wall (on the left as you come in from the outside) are for packs.

A workbench is on the west wall. A toolbox containing basic hand tools is kept there.

Shelves are on the north wall. They're for supplies and tools.

Axes, mauls, shovels, and brooms are in the northeast corner (just to the right as you come in from the outside).

Large items, such as rescue litters, are in overhead storage near the main entrance door.

## Loft

The loft has mattresses and is divided into two sleeping areas:

- **Main sleeping loft** is for overnight guests, up to eight. At the top of the ladder is a metal box that contains pillows and blankets.
- **Front bedroom** is smaller, more private, and a bit warmer because the stovepipe comes through the room. It sleeps up to four and is often used by the day host(s). Two raised sleeping platforms double as storage boxes.

Each area has an electric light controlled by a switch near the light in the main sleeping loft. The "Upstairs" switch under the control panel near the desk also controls them.

**No food or wet boots in the loft, please.**

This is a catch-all chapter for lots of other cabin features.

## **Workbench and Tools**

The workbench is on the west wall of the anteroom and the toolbox is on or under the workbench. The workbench and tools are for maintaining and repairing the cabin and mountaineering gear. The workbench was made extra long to accommodate skis.

If you break a tool, please consider repairing or replacing it yourself. Yes, it's a pain and an expense, but it would be even more unfair to make someone else repair or replace it. Notify the hutmeister too; it may be possible to reimburse you.

## **Storage Shed**

The storage shed is a covered addition to the anteroom, traditionally used to store lumber, wheelbarrows, and large or seldom-used supplies. The door is to the right of the shelves on the north wall of the anteroom.

## **Bulletin Board**

The bulletin board is on a tree just outside the covered entryway to the main entrance. The bulletin board is for area users to communicate with each other for general information and safety. Keep it stocked with paper and sharpened pencils.

## **Mousetraps**

To set a mousetrap, place a small dab of peanut butter in the little cup in the middle of the yellow trigger. Place any mousetraps you set in plain view on the floor only.

### **Emergency Radio Antenna**

A 155 MHz emergency radio antenna is mounted on the roof for use by Rocky Mountain Rescue. The antenna cable ends with a plug located near the ladder to the loft.

### **Cabin Register**

The cabin register is on the desk. All cabin users should enter their name, address, phone number, and/or email address in the register. The Boulder Group uses the register to:

- Help locate lost skiers
- Track cabin visitation for planning, budgeting, and permit renewal purposes
- Contact people for the cabin work party and other help

### **Cabin Journal**

The cabin journal is at the desk also. Here our cabin visitors write of their experiences in and around the cabin. Write anything you'd like, and enjoy the ruminations of others.

### **Books and Games**

All cabin users may enjoy:

- A growing library of books, from the serious to the fanciful
- Two editions of Trivial Pursuit
- Several decks of cards and some cribbage boards
- A chess and checkers set

A tradition at the cabin is a reading of Robert Service's "The Cremation of Sam McGee" late on a winter's night accompanied by the soft whistle of the Avalon stove.

To prepare the cabin for overnight use,

- Let the Monarch cooking stove go out. It can't be made to run all night.
- If you want to run the Avalon stove overnight, prepare it for this. See "Using the Avalon Stove" on page 12.
- Empty the waste water bucket away from the cabin or trails and put it back under the sink. See "Dishes and Waste Water" on page 19.
- Clean up food leftovers, scraps and crumbs. Leave nothing for rodents to eat.
- Store any food not in a rodent-proof container in the metal cabinet under the kitchen counter. Store trash here too if it's mixed with food scraps. Close the doors of this cabinet all the way.
- Test the smoke alarms.
- Bar the emergency door near the kitchen by placing the wood bars in the brackets on the door frame.
- Turn off any lights you're not using.

Closing the cabin involves making it clean, secure, and free of fire danger.

Start no later than 3 to 4 hours before dark. This allows an hour and a half to close the cabin, a half hour for you and your party to gear up for the trip back, and two hours to get back to the winter closure gate at an easy pace in daylight.

To close the cabin:

- Allow both stove fires to go out; add no further fuel.

**Do not empty ashes. Leave the hot ashes in the stove to cool. It is safest for the next user to empty them.**

- Open the dampers to both stoves.
  - On the Monarch cooking stove, pull the firebox damper *out*.
  - On the Avalon heating stove, push the damper *in*.
- Turn off the propane supply. Turn the blue valve handle under the counter top so it's perpendicular to the pipe.
- Wash and dry the dishes and cookware.
- Empty the waste water away from the cabin or any ski trail, or water the small trees along the footpath.
- Empty the 5-gallon water jugs and the pots and pans away from the cabin or any ski trail, or water the trees.
- Replenish the firewood supply. Fill the box next to the cook stove. Fill the bucket with kindling. Top off the woodpiles in the sheltered entryway.
- Bring all tools, such as axes, mauls, wedges, brooms, and shovels, inside and stow them in the right place.

- Stock the outhouse with toilet paper. Make sure there's a roll under each coffee can.
- Pack up all trash and uneaten food. You have to pack it out, so consider dividing it among your party.
- Close and stow containers of cabin consumables like coffee, hot chocolate, and tea. Leave nothing for rodents to eat.
- Clean the counters and tabletops.
- Sweep the floors.
- Bar the emergency door with both wood bars.
- Fill out the Brainard Cabin Check List And Status Report. Note any damage, malfunctions, or shortages.
- Day hosts: Remove all but \$5 (in singles) from the donation can. Write a check to the CMC for the amount.
- Check all rooms for belongings.
- Close **and latch** the shutters and windows. This takes two people working together inside and outside the cabin.
- Close the curtains to hide the interior from view.
- Turn off the light switches and the master light shutoff.
- Leave by the main entrance. Lock the padlocks on the door. Make sure the key is in the lock box and the lock is closed and set to 0000. Give the lock a few tugs to make sure it's really closed.
- Stop by the outhouse and make sure it's latched.

### **Late Arrivals**

You might get visitors while you're trying to close up. You might have to be firm that the cabin is closing.

This appendix compiles all the rules for operating the cabin. The most important:

## **No smoking or open flames in the cabin.**

This includes all smokable products, candles, candle lanterns, portable gas stoves, gas lanterns, gas heaters, and any other portable devices that use solid, liquid, or gaseous fuel.

Other rules, roughly in the order you'll encounter them:

## **Travel prepared as if the cabin were not there.**

Yes, you have the combination. Or do you? What if you left it at home, or it fell out of your pack, or it didn't work? Always travel prepared for a retreat in outdoor mountain conditions.

## **Use the outhouse; don't make yellow snow.**

Yellow snow is unsightly and a health hazard.

## **Store skis, snowshoes, and poles outside.**

They don't care if they get snowy.

## **Don't go on the roof...**

...except to clear snow from the solar panels.

## **Brush the snow off you outside.**

Remind other visitors to brush off, too. Snow tracked into the cabin keeps the floors slippery and wet, rotting the wood.

## **Use the main (anteroom) entrance.**

The front (kitchen) door is an emergency exit only. Heat gets out and snow gets in if you use it in the winter.

### **Store packs in the anteroom.**

Packs don't care if they're cold, and it's often crowded inside the cabin.

### **Burn wood only, no coal.**

You might find some lumps of coal, but don't burn it. The high heat almost destroyed the stove.

### **Make sure there's a bucket under the sink.**

The drain pipe just ends down there; you don't want a flood when you do the dishes!

### **Empty waste water away from the cabin or trails.**

Waste water makes a patch of ice that could be dangerous. The only exception is carefully watering the small trees on the south side of the cabin.

### **Keep the TP in the outhouse covered.**

Even if it's on the shelf, TP gets wet from snow blowing in.

### **Latch and don't force the outhouse door.**

Latch it to keep it from blowing in the wind. Avoid forcing the door open or closed against snow.

### **Don't chop or split wood in the cabin.**

Even the stone hearth and wooden porch are off limits for chopping. Using a large unsplit round outside as a foundation gives the best results.

### **Be careful with axes, mauls, and wedges.**

You're a long way from an emergency room.

## Rules

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**Keep food cleaned up and stored, especially overnight.**

Don't feed the mice. They do get in.

**Before you leave, let the fires go out. Leave the ashes in the stoves.**

**When you leave, turn off the lighting system.**

Turn off the individual switches and the one labeled "Master Light Shutoff"

**Leave the cabin clean, locked, and secure from fire danger.**

The next users expect to find the cabin there and clean.

**When you leave, make sure the outhouse door is latched.**

We need to keep critters and snow out. The door should not be allowed to blow around in the wind.

This appendix deals with safety and emergency readiness.

## **Fire**

### **Fire extinguishers**

- Just outside the kitchen by the emergency door
- On the mantel of the stone fireplace
- At the top of the ladder in the sleeping loft

### **Fire exits**

- From the sleeping loft: Open the right-hand window. Climb down the stone chimney.
- From the front bedroom: Open the window. Hook the chain ladder on the sill and throw it down the outside wall.
- From the main floor: Use either door or any of the windows.

### **Smoke alarms**

- In the main sleeping loft
- In the front bedroom
- Near the door from the living room to the anteroom

### **Fire safety**

- No smoking, open flames, or portable devices that use solid, liquid, or gaseous fuel in the cabin
- Empty ashes from the stoves only when the ashes are cold.
- Keep kindling and flammable items away from the stoves.

### **Injury**

#### **First Aid**

A first aid kit is on the wall above the dining room tables.

#### **Splitting wood**

- Use skill and care with axes, mauls, and wedges.
- Wear eye protection.
- Make sure others are at a safe distance.

### **Skiing, Snowshoeing, or Hiking**

- Be prepared for mountain conditions.
- Have and use warm clothes and an outer windproof layer as necessary.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat snacks as necessary to keep your energy up.
- Use sunglasses and sunscreen as necessary.
- Keep your group together.
- Watch all members of your group for signs of fatigue, exposure, dehydration, or altitude sickness.

### **Cell Phone Coverage**

Do not count on cell phone coverage at or near the cabin.

The Brainard Cabin is owned by the Boulder Group of the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) and open to the public. The cabin operates under a special-use permit with the Arapahoe National Forest.

**Unusual circumstances could cause the cabin to remain closed. The CMC urges all users of the area to travel prepared as if the cabin were not there.**

## **Types and Times of Operation**

### **Day Use**

Both CMC members and non-members may use the cabin during the day. The person who opened the cabin is considered to be the day host and the CMC representative to the public.

On winter weekend days, from December 15 to April 1, the cabin is open and day-hosted by CMC volunteers from 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM.

Whenever the cabin is open during the day, all visitors are welcome to use the cabin for shelter, rest, refreshment, and socializing. A donation is requested of all visitors.

### **Overnight Use**

The cabin is a shared resource, like a hostel. Both CMC members and non-members may reserve available overnight space in the cabin, up to 12 spaces, except by special arrangement.

On winter weekends, the day hosts have some of the spaces. Emergencies, maintenance projects, and scheduled CMC events also have priority.

### Reservations

Make your reservation at least 6 weeks in advance:

1. Check for available space at <http://www.calendar.yahoo.com/brainardcabin>. Click on “month” for the best view.
2. Email [brainardcabin@yahoo.com](mailto:brainardcabin@yahoo.com). State how many people and which nights you want.
3. You will receive a return email that acknowledges your request, states whether you’re in the database as a “qualified user,” and gives payment instructions. Credit card payment is preferred.
4. After your payment is accepted, you will get another email with last-minute instructions and the lock combination.

### Fees

The CMC uses the following fee structure:

- Day-use donation: \$1 per person
- Overnight use: \$20 per person

In winter, the day host and a co-host are exempt from the overnight fee. In addition, anyone who participates in the yearly work party gets one free night in the cabin.

U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Rescue, and Sheriff’s Department personnel on official business are exempt from cabin use fees.

### Experience

One or more members of a party reserving the cabin must be a “qualified user.” with sufficient experience in operating the cabin. The CMC offers a yearly training session for new users.

## **Dogs**

Dogs are not allowed inside the cabin or outhouse. The Forest Service allows dogs only on the Brainard Lake Road, and they must be leashed.

## **Alcohol**

Alcohol is allowed at the cabin. Be judicious; space in the cabin is limited and must be shared by others. Don't modify your behavior so much that you become a nuisance.

Also, alcohol is known to hamper the body's adjustment to cold and high altitude. Adjust your intake accordingly.

## **Tobacco, Drugs, and Firearms**

Smoking and firearms are prohibited in the cabin. Illegal drugs are just as illegal here as elsewhere. See "Law Enforcement," below.

## **Law Enforcement**

The Brainard Cabin is on Federal land administered by the U. S. Forest Service. Users of the cabin are subject to:

- Code of Federal Regulations
- National Forest Regulations
- Colorado State laws
- Boulder County laws

## **Non-Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination: Write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Our cabin is a treasure, created and maintained by loving volunteers. But it's fragile. It's extra vulnerable to wear, damage and fire; it's set in a harsh environment, also vulnerable to fire; and it's subject to use by people who might not know how to use it properly. To help insure that future generations get to enjoy the Brainard Cabin:

### **Follow this book**

The procedures and rules in this book are the result of exhaustive research and our best efforts to organize the information and put it in plain language. The more closely you follow it, the less likely you will make a mistake.

### **Report damage or supply shortage**

Tell the hutmeister about any emergencies, damage, misuse, or shortages you found when you were at the cabin.

### **Attend the annual work party**

One weekend each fall, the air around the cabin is filled with the sound of axes and brooms, wheelbarrows and chain saws, hammers and drills, and the happy chatter of friends doing a good job. At the end of it, the cabin is ready for another winter season. It's hard work, but it's a well-attended tradition. All attendees get a free night in the cabin, too! See the August or September issue of *Compass* for the announcement, or call the clubroom at 303-554-7688 or email [cabin@cmcboulder.org](mailto:cabin@cmcboulder.org)

### **Give money**

The Boulder Group cheerfully accepts donations for the cabin. The donation jar is on the desk in the cabin. To donate large sums of money, please call the clubroom at 303-554-7688.

## How to Help the Cabin

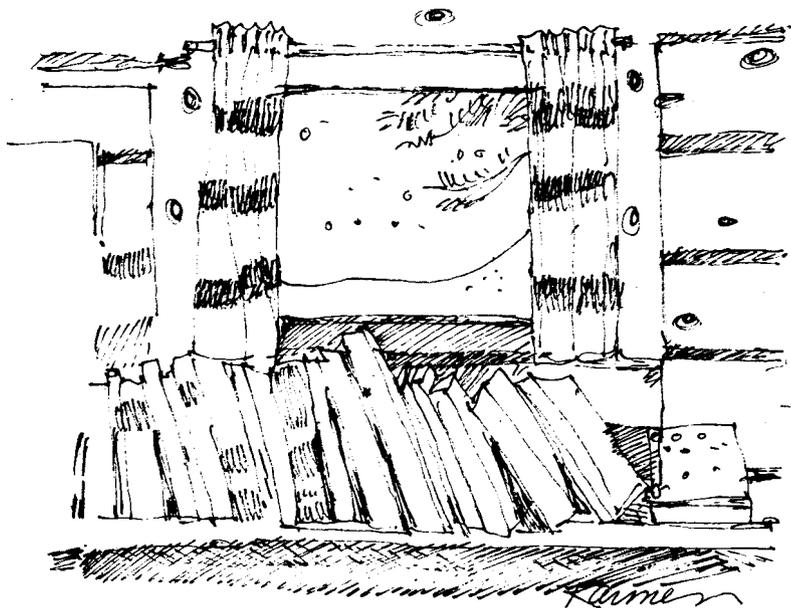
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### Donate things

All the dishes, mugs, silverware, pots and pans, tools, games, bedding, and books have been donated. Don't just take 'em up, though. And please, no food. We've hauled out a lot of unneeded "gifts," especially food. Always pack out your leftovers and contact the hutmeister if you have donations.

### Attend a day-host training session

The Boulder Group offers a Brainard Cabin day-host training session for anyone who plans to use the cabin, as a day host or otherwise. It's a one-day, hands-on training course held at the cabin. Watch *Compass* for announcements of dates and times, or call the Boulder Group Clubroom at 303-554-7688.



## Activities

Formed in 1920, the Boulder Group of the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) offers a full range of mountaineering outings, from easy to difficult hikes, high peak climbs, rock climbs, and ski and snowshoe trips, to its members. Easy outings usually accept members' guests if they sign a waiver, are approved by the leader, and there is room on the outing.

To members, the Boulder Group also offers a full range of schools that have a combination of lectures, field trips, and outings for school participants:

- **Boulder Hiking School (BHS):** Outdoor survival, clothing, footwear, equipment, weather, navigation, etc.
- **Basic Rock School (BRS):** Ropes, knots, belaying, rappelling, climbing, etc.
- **Advanced Mountaineering School (AMS):** Winter camping and climbing; expedition planning.
- **Rock Leading School (RLS):** Fundamentals of anchors, protection, and lead climbing.

The Boulder Group also offers one- and two-day field trips on:

- Avalanche awareness
- Backcountry skiing
- Winter camping
- Snow travel
- Ice climbing
- Rock leading

In all activities, the focus is *safety*.

## About the CMC

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A series of new-member orientation meetings, a monthly slide show, a leadership seminar, and an annual dress-up dinner complement the outings. The Group maintains two mountain cabins. It publishes a monthly newsletter called *Compass*, a hiking trail map of the Boulder area, and a ski trail map of the Brainard Lake area.

The Group is involved in conservation efforts statewide but concentrates on the Boulder area. Its members contribute to trail work, revegetation, mapping, and field studies in cooperation with public land management agencies.

The spacious Boulder Group clubroom is located in the Table Mesa Shopping Center, at 633 South Broadway, ~~Unit N~~. The clubroom hosts our many gatherings, is open to the public, and features a mountaineering library and a pleasant reading room with a view of the flatirons. Unit K

## Membership

Boulder Group members receive the Group's newsletter, *Compass*, which has news, articles, outing schedules, and photographs of interest to Boulder-area mountaineers.

Members may also sign up for the email-based online weekly newsletter, *GPS*.

They also receive *Trail and Timberline*, the monthly magazine from the state headquarters of the CMC in Golden. Members of all the groups get this magazine, which has statewide news, articles, photographs, and a compiled listing of all the groups' scheduled outings coming up in the next half year.

**To join the CMC Boulder Group, call 303-554-7688.**

**For information, visit [www.cmcboulder.org](http://www.cmcboulder.org).**

This retelling of the history of the Brainard Cabin was drawn from four sources available at the Boulder Group Clubroom:

- *The Front Rangers*. Janet Robertson, 1971
- *Compass—The Boulder Group Newsletter*, 1981 to 2000
- *1928: A Vintage Year*. Article by Janet Robertson
- *The New C. M. C. Cabin at Brainerd*. Article by S. Wakeham

## The CMC Boulder Group

In 1910, a group of University of Colorado summer students formed a club called the High Hikers. They were drawn by views of the Arapaho Peaks and began to organize climbs there. Their Chief High Trail Breaker was Frank E. “Pop” Thompson. By 1918, campus interest in mountaineering had become year-round, and the group changed its name to the Front Range Club.

Since 1912, Denver had had its own club, the Colorado Mountain Club. In 1920 they approached “Pop” with the idea to join forces. On May 7, the Front Range Club disbanded and formed the Boulder Group of the Colorado Mountain Club.

“Pop” was the Group’s first chair, and the membership list included CU professors Gayle Waldrop, Horace Van Valkenburgh, Charles Hutchinson, Francis Ramaley, Severance Burage, Robert Lewis, Hugh Kingery, Edna Johnson, and Claribel Kendall.

The new members were described as “forty good fellows who can cook in the rain, sleep on the rocks, tramp without ceasing—and smile through it all; whose ideals are high and whose traditions shine beside those of any mountain club in the land.”

### The Cabin

In 1927, a mountain cabin was a gleam in the eye of chemistry professor Van Valkenburgh. In April he proposed that the Boulder Group “build its own place,” and he and mathematics professor Hutchinson found two sites. One was near Caribou, the other near Brainard Lake. They chose the latter when biology professor Ramaley told them it would be more free of mosquitoes.

Some were appalled at the idea. One journalist said, “Not long ago, visitors . . . were happy to make their beds on the ground with a tent for a shelter, and a rough plank for a dining table. Now it is cabins, and cots, mattresses, and electric lights and a laundry and shower baths with hot water and all the comforts and blankets of home . . .”

But most liked the idea, and construction began. The Group hired builder Joe Stapp and carpenter Theron Fry, a CU student. Logs were cut at a mill in Peaceful Valley, trucked up to Brainard Lake, and hauled by horse-drawn wagon to the site, where Joe expertly hand-notched them with an axe.

By 1928, most of the construction was finished, and the cabin was dedicated. A series of “furnishing bees” and woodcutting, chinking, and trail marking parties followed. The work party tradition had begun, too.

Twenty-five dollars furnished the larder—a pound of bacon or a gallon of jam cost a dollar; a pound of walnuts 25 cents. The fee charged to visitors was also 25 cents, with CMC members paying only 10 cents.

There was no kitchen and no woodshed. Still, the cabin was an instant hit and began to be the spiritual home of the Boulder Group, which immediately began to run ski tours from it. In 1929, a group of CMCers skied around Brainard Lake—naked.

In 1930 a kitchen was added, with a stove, in what is now the anteroom. The Thanksgiving dinner that year was marred by a fire (soon doused) when the hot stovepipe ignited bedding straw in the sleeping loft. At some point during these years a woodshed was added.

Starting in the 1930s, the Depression, then the rise in private car use, then World War II, all contributed to a decline in cabin use. At times the guest register had only two or three names. In 1956 a visitor described the cabin as “. . . a rough-hewn affair with chairs and tables made of logs. The kitchen was in the shed and a dark, depressing, mouse-infested place it was.”

By 1961 the pot-bellied stove in the middle of the main room was broken. The stone fireplace stole whatever heat that could be generated. There was even an old phonograph, and even it was broken. Cabin Chairman Al Bartlett saw the problem and began a rescue.

Al, with Dave Lind and Joel Muzzy, converted the anteroom from a kitchen to a bunkhouse and moved the kitchen to its present location in the main room. Then they set about building and installing things we use today. They installed the mouseproof kitchen cabinets. They put a Franklin stove in the fireplace. They built the rack for drying socks and gloves. They built the benches and folding tables. They rescued the green couch and chairs from the remodeled Timberline Lounge on the CU campus, as the furniture had belonged to the University of Colorado Hiking Club.

And use increased; so did abuse. The Boulder Group was lax at first about giving out the key, limiting numbers, and taking show-ups for the night. Overcrowding was common.

In the 1970s ski touring boomed. The Boulder Group built the CMC South and Waldrop (North) trails from the winter closure gate to Brainard Lake, a project led by master skier Ingvar Sodal. Annual ski races now got their start as well.

## History of the Cabin

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In 1973, to handle the boom in popularity, John Michaud and Peter Korba lived in the cabin continuously through the ski season. They replaced the windows, extended the roof, replaced the cotton mattresses (which the mice loved) with foam ones, and put up curtains. Ingvar Sodal barred the original front door and built a heat-conserving entrance through the anteroom. And Dave Robertson replaced the cooking stove with the one we use today.

In 1977 the Group changed the hosted hours to be on the weekend only, and created day- and overnight-use fees.

In 1981 the Group built the Little Raven Trail.

In the early 1980s, Steve Priem, Russ Hayes, and others installed the photovoltaic lighting system.

In the early 1990s, the Gold Spittoon Ski Race was revived for a few years, but it failed to become a yearly tradition.

In 1996 new mattresses appeared; in 1997, new curtains.

In 1998 the roof was replaced. David Greist spent fourteen days at the cabin, working between storms, to get the job done before the winter snows arrived for good. Work also began on a snowshoe trail from the winter closure gate to the cabin.

Early in 2000, the snowshoe trail was finished. At the annual work party that year, 60 people showed up to do the routine work, and the roof got a new fascia.

In an Eagle Scout project in fall 2001, the Boy Scouts removed the old styrofoam and paneled the loft with wood.

In 2002 the front porch was replaced.

Today, the cabin is as well-used and well-loved as ever. Three generations can now recall perfect mountain days and merry nights with friends, perfectly sheltered at 10,400 feet.

The trails listed here are the ones closest to the Brainard Cabin, and the descriptions assume you've started at the cabin. For fuller descriptions of these and more distant trails, see the CMC Ski Trail Map.

## **CMC Snowshoe**

Easy snowshoe. From the cabin, follow the trail east 0.2 miles to a trail junction signed with a snowshoer symbol. This trail breaks off to the right and goes 2.7 miles and descends 310' to the parking area near the winter closure gate. Along the way, it reaches Brainard Lake. Cross the bridge and immediately pick the trail up again to the left. Later, the trail joins the Brainard Lake Road from the north, follows it for a few hundred feet, then continues on the south side of the road. Follow the snowshoer symbols on the trees to stay on the trail.

## **CMC South**

Easy ski. From the cabin, follow the road 0.5 miles to the southwest end of Brainard Lake. A trail breaks off the road and heads south through a field and into some trees. There, a stone monument marks the junction of the Little Raven and CMC South Trails. From there the CMC South Trail goes 2.4 miles east and descends 280 feet to the parking area near the winter closure gate.

## **Little Raven**

Moderate ski. From the same stone monument mentioned above, the Little Raven Trail heads south, then east 1.7 miles, gaining 140 feet, to join the Lefthand Park Reservoir Road. After 0.5 miles the trail branches off the road to the right and continues 0.6 miles east to join the Sourdough Trail. Turn left

## **Trails in the Area**

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here and go 0.4 miles to return to the parking area. You can also take the Lefthand Park Reservoir Road northeast all the way back to the parking area, a distance of 1.3 miles. Either way is a descent of 460 feet.

### **Mitchell Lake-Blue Lake**

Moderate to difficult ski. From the cabin, follow the road 0.2 miles northwest to the Mitchell Lake Trailhead. From there, the Mitchell Lake-Blue Lake Trail goes northwest 0.9 miles and gains 240 feet to reach Mitchell Lake. Then it goes west another 1.5 miles and gains another 600 feet, steeply at times, to reach Blue Lake. High winds are possible.

### **Niwot Cutoff**

Moderate ski. Goes 0.6 miles west from the west end of Brainard Lake, and gains 180 feet to the east end of Long Lake. High winds are possible.

### **Pawnee Pass**

Moderate to difficult ski. From the cabin, take the road south and follow the signs to the Long Lake Trailhead. From the trailhead, the Pawnee Pass trail heads southwest past Long Lake. After 0.2 miles it reaches a junction with the east end of the Jean Lunning Trail. It passes Long Lake and reaches a junction with the west end of the Jean Lunning Trail at 1.2 miles and 100 feet gained. The Jean Lunning Trail makes a good loop to return by. The Pawnee Pass Trail continues another 0.6 miles and gains 240 feet to reach Lake Isabelle.

### **Jean Lunning**

Easy ski. Take the Pawnee Pass Trail 0.2 miles. The Jean Lunning Trail goes to the left, then follows the south side of Long Lake for 1.4 miles and 100 feet gained, to rejoin the Pawnee Pass Trail above Long Lake.

### **Sourdough**

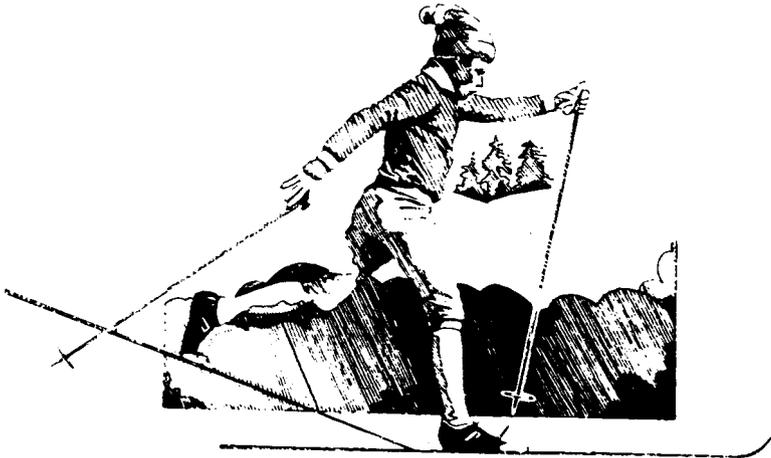
Moderate ski. A long, sinuous, 13-mile trail that connects Beaver Reservoir in the north to the Rainbow Lakes Road in the south. At its midpoint, it crosses the Brainard Lake Road at the parking area near the winter closure gate.

### **South St. Vrain**

Moderate ski. From the cabin, take the road a few hundred feet to the north to a small parking area. The South St. Vrain trail goes eastward from here for 5.7 miles and descends 1700 feet to end at Camp Tahosa on the Peak-to-Peak Highway.

### **Waldrop (CMC North)**

Moderate ski. From the cabin, the Waldrop (CMC North) Trail goes eastward for 2.9 miles and descends 300 feet to join the Brainard Lake Road just west of the winter closure gate.



Over the years, people who have used and loved the Brainard Cabin have seen fit to write of their experiences. Enjoy.

## **The Brainard Cabin: A Pioneer Remembers**

By Kurt Gerstle, 1998

Today I skied up to the Brainard Cabin with a bunch of young people and noticed the sign in front: Colorado Mountain Club—Boulder Group—1928. It's seventy years old! I found myself reminiscing about the good times at this "home away from home," as it has been for many of us over the years. Today people ought to give thanks to the pioneers of mountaineering who created this, and our other mountain huts, for the enjoyment of those who came after them.

One pioneer, Janet Robertson, gives an account of the cabin's origin in her 1971 Boulder Group history, *The Front Rangers*. Other names that old-timers will recall with affection: Van Valkenburg, Waldrop, Hutchinson—all CU professors.

Harold Walton probably introduced more folks to the joys of mountain life than anyone else. Many of our memories start on New Year's Day 1953, when Harold took us from the cabin to Mount Toll, a major ski tour then as it is now. Many good friendships got their start over the years from such cabin stays.

But don't think of the cabin then as it is now. The front door was the only entrance; each guest came in with a blast of cold air. The sleeping loft was totally uninsulated. One year the cabin hosted 36 overnight guests. Now the loft is insulated and the "official" capacity is 12. There was no Franklin stove. The cook stove was in what is now the entrance lobby, where it could do nothing to heat the quarters. The fireplace sucked

more heat out of the cabin than it delivered. Eva and I remember the snow banks that drifted in through the cracks in the wall next to the fireplace and *didn't melt* during a “cozy” cabin weekend. We were tough then.

Only after Al Bartlett, Dave Lind, and others remodeled it, did the cabin become really livable. Even then, lighting came from candles and kerosene lamps, and it's a miracle that the cabin never burned down. That was before the solar electricity was installed.

Many times in the '60s and '70s, Eva and I sponsored New Year's Eve parties. There were pots of “Gluehwein” made from wine and spices, and sometimes whole hams or turkeys, all carried in by the guests. Companionship and song ruled the evenings, with ski tours afterwards. Oh, for those carefree nights of yore.

For many years the cabin was headquarters for the Boulder Group's Gold Spittoon and Waldrop cross-country ski races. One year, competitors crossed the finish line from opposite directions!

There is more to tell, but let others do that. For now, let's enjoy the cabin and our beautiful mountains, take good care of both, and remember to thank the old-timers who made it possible.

### **An Episode by Moonlight**

By Richard Holmes, 1992

It was a warm night for February. The full moon cast spectral highlights in the fresh powder as we glided quietly through the new fallen snow. The snow so intensified the moonlight that the night seemed like day.

We moved effortlessly along, out skis noiseless as we traversed the shores of Long Lake. To the south, above the ice-

## Our Members Write...

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covered lake, Niwot Ridge broke the horizon in a single broad stroke; the irregular outline of the continental divide loomed to the west. The night was windless. Not a sound in the air. A clear, starry night, a starlight muted by the moon's brilliance. For some of us it was our first venture into the night on skis, borne across an expanse of white under a symphony of stars.

Each tree, each rock, each ruffle in the snow was delineated as if lit by a thousand sparklers. It was as if the ground was iridescent, with the snow becoming a source of light in itself. In single file we continued on, pausing occasionally to absorb the stunning beauty of our surroundings. An occasional glint of moonlight reflected from a ski up ahead. The mood was spellbinding.

At last we drew up in a circle at the far end of the lake, our group sensing that this was as far as we would go. Reluctantly we turned, each person carrying away his own thoughts and impressions—visions that were fleeting before the eyes but imprinted indelibly upon the mind.

We returned as we came, recrossing open stretches along the lake, passing through shadows of isolated trees. The stark shadows were vivid, every bit as intense as that from sunlight. Then up into the woods, the contrast of moonlight and shade tantalizing our imagination.

We emerged from the woods into the roadway, then headed back toward the Brainard Cabin from where we began. The cabin welcomed us, enveloping us as it were, with the warmth of a hearth and the voices of friends.

## **Brainard Lake Rescue**

By Aaron Schiff, 1993

For most of us the Brainard Cabin is a warm place out of the wind to enjoy a cup of tea and the camaraderie of other backcountry skiers; but on many occasions in the past it has become a crucial link in a life-saving rescue. Once again the cabin served this function on Saturday night February 13th.

After a beautiful day skiing, I stopped into the Brainard Cabin to visit with my friends, Ann and Russ Hayes, who were hosting for the weekend. I was tempted to stay for the homemade pasta but decided to return home about 5:15 PM. Since I knew I would be skiing part of the way out by headlamp, I told Russ and Ann that I would go out via the South trail in case any problems arose. Ann mentioned that I might meet on the trail their friends Rhoda and Art Nozik and David Makowski, who would be skiing in for the night.

As I left the road and started up toward the junction of the South and the Little Raven trails, I noticed several people, including Art and David. They had passed a man pulling a toddler on a sled a short way back on the Little Raven trail; Rhoda had gone back to find out if the man needed help. Altogether there were four adults, a six-year-old boy, and a two-and-a-half-year-old toddler. They were lost, cold, and exhausted, and were separated from four others in their party, who had apparently skied out. I agreed to lead the group out via the road, and Rhoda, Art, and David went on to the cabin for the night.

The six-year-old was whining and angry; the toddler alternated between sleeping and crying; one of the two women was hysterical and angry; and the two men appeared tired, but kept up a strong front. I realized how serious the situation was when I saw that they could not stay together as a group to ski the 50 yards down to the road. By now several of

## **Our Members Write...**

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them had lost the ability to think and behave rationally due to hypothermia. I decided to take charge and get them instead to the cabin to get warm.

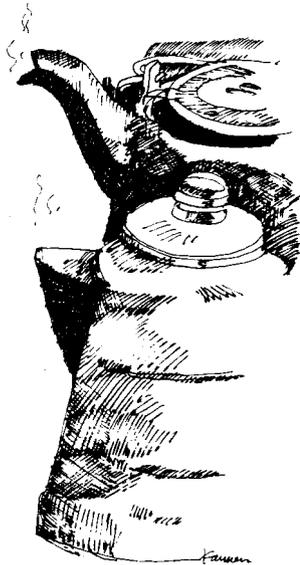
I put the strongest and most alert woman in the rear, and told everyone that we had to ski with the tips of our skis close to the tails of the skis in front, and that the whole group could not spread out more than 50 feet. The father began to carry the toddler, who had his hands inside his father's coat because the toddler's mittens would not stay on. When the father became too tired to continue, I took over. The wind was gusting to 35 mph and it took two hours to shepherd this group the 3/8 mile to the cabin.

When we arrived we were warmly welcomed by those at the cabin, all CMC members. We got the group out of their wet clothes and began to warm them and examine them for frostbite and injuries. After I determined that everyone was out of immediate danger and that the club members in the cabin had the situation well in hand, I got names, addresses, and phone numbers for everyone in the group.

I began to ski out to the emergency phone on the south side of the lake to notify the Sheriff's Department and Rocky Mountain Rescue (RMR). On my way I met Craig Sky of RMR on a snowmobile. RMR had been notified by the other four people from the original group and were beginning the search. They had set up a base at the winter closure gate, brought in two snowmobiles with rescue sleds, and had three other people on skis and snowshoes.

Shortly after midnight the rescue was completed, with all the victims, the RMR personnel, and myself out of the backcountry. The next Monday Pam Engstrom, the Boulder Group Secretary, got a call from one of the men who wanted to join the group and sign up for the Basic Mountaineering School (BMS).

I don't think that I would have successfully rescued these people without the Brainard Cabin. They did not have the strength to ski out. I was prepared to spend the night out, but none of them were. If I had built a shelter for them, then told them to stay there while I went for help, I think one or more of them would have wandered off. If I had built a shelter and stayed with the group, I'm not sure that everyone would have survived until RMR found us. I've spent many cold nights in the Indian Peaks, but below-zero temperatures and a 35-mph wind can kill someone in wet cotton clothes. Everyone who skis in the Indian Peaks is very fortunate to have the Brainard Cabin, the training available through the CMC [such as BMS], and club members like the ones at the cabin who shared their hospitality, warm beverages, and hot homemade pasta with people in need.



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