

The 1963 High Trip

(The 58th High Trip)

“Among all the days that we have experienced in our Sierra summers,” wrote Marion Parsons, “none is more wonderful than this one, when we crossed Muir Pass. The region is the climax of Sierra grandeur – a region of canons rich in vegetation and in wonderfully sculptured walls, of peaks more ruggedly and superbly fashioned even than their gigantic neighbors of the Kern.”

This was the report of the 1920 High Trip; the first to cross Muir Pass and the first such outing to make camp in Evolution Valley, in LeConte Canyon, and at Grouse Meadow.

The 19th High Trip was one of the greatest of a now venerable line of outings. The 260 vacationers and crew members often recalled the thrills of their month-long pioneering adventure in the climax country of the High Sierra. Memories included a vivid image of the picturesque Colonel, who was the camp cook, riding in “on his white charger” and a recollection of “a strike on the part of some of the packers.”

That early High Trip laid the groundwork for several later outings through the same extraordinary terrain. Again, this summer, if you wish to follow the John Muir Trail into the climax of the range, you may join the 58th High Trip.

What is a High Trip, and why should you choose this means of enjoying the mountain scene? First, it is a moving trip, on which you will spend a day or two or three in each of five camps. Second, on the layover days and on moving days too, you will be able to devote your time and energy to exploring and enjoying the lakes, valleys, meadows and peaks.

There will be opportunity for fishing, photographing, and the many other activities that make a mountain experience unforgettable. The reason you will have time is that your personal gear will be carried by a trusted and faithful four-legged servant, the mule. A central commissary group will prepare your meals and do most of the chores of setting up and breaking camp. All that is required of the individual member is that he set up and break his personal camp and make the hike to the next campsite on a moving day. Of course, at times, the hiking is fairly strenuous. And, because the commissary crew is not large enough to do every chore, a helping hand is always welcomed.

The Third big reason to choose the High Trip is that it is composed of a varied and fascinating group of people. The range of ages is from young teen-ager (who should be accompanied by a fully responsible adult, preferably a parent or parents) up to and beyond the threescore mark. The requirements are merely an ability to take some rather strenuous physical exercise and at the same time appreciate this superb mountain country and all its wonders. Although the High Trip no longer has 260 members, it is still large enough to insure that you will meet many congenial persons with interests like yours. The talent present in such a group, if it can be discovered, will make for campfires that will be long remembered. The mountains are big, and the group disperses daily in such a way that you can enjoy the Sierra either all to yourself or with a small group.

High Trip 1 – Evolution Valley, Muir Pass – July 21 - August 3

Starting from the roadhead at North Lake, the party will enter the high country over Piute Pass. The first camp will be made along Piute Creek near Hutchinson Meadow. Camps will be made later at Evolution Meadow, Darwin Bench (near Evolution Lake) and in upper LeConte Canyon. All of these sites are close to the John Muir Trail. The last camp will be in Dusy Basin, before the group leaves the mountains by way of Bishop Pass. Leader of the first trip will be Al Baxter.

High Trip 2 – Palisades, Bench Lake – August 4 - 17

The second trip will start where the first ends, at the South Lake roadhead. First move will be to camp in Dusy Basin, after a hike over Bishop Pass. From there the group will move to the John Muir Trail and camps at Grouse Meadow, Palisade Lakes, Upper Basin (of the South Fork of Kings River), and Bench Lake. The last day will take us out of the mountains over Taboose pass. Leader of the second trip will be Ted Grubb.

Excerpt taken from the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, February 1963