



Spring Corn Camps

Spring is our favorite time to ski the Sierra - the days are long, the weather generally fine, and the snow is fantastic. The snow follows a predictable cycle of firm in the morning to soft and silky in the early afternoon, and we follow the sunny slope aspects as the sun clocks around, seeking out the best runs. This repeated "freeze/thaw" cycle produces a unique form of snow featuring a large grain size known to the spring skier as "corn snow". Never mind the science: we find ourselves constantly in debate as to what is more fun, skiing powder snow, or skiing corn snow. For the pleasant temperatures and ease of skiing, we definitely lean towards corn, at least in the spring.

Ski tours are great trips, offering plenty of skiing and great views but their focus is getting from point A to point B, not necessarily on finding the best skiing. Nothing beats long runs without a big pack, hence these corn camps. We ski one day with a full pack but then set up a base camp, day skiing from here for the next several days. We return in the late afternoons to a well-stocked camp, great food, and solar showers. Truly a hedonists dream ski vacation.

We offer two different locations for our camps; the Palisades and Rock Creek Canyon.

Palisades Corn Camp: The Palisades area is one of the finest sites to savor the best of the best in the Sierra and has long been a favorite area of such pioneers as Norman Clyde. By mid-May the winter snows have stabilized and melted off at the lower elevations but above 10,000 feet the spring corn snow is perfect and offers wonderful skiing. Based above Third Lake, overlooking the spires and buttresses of Temple Crag, we will stay for four nights and ski until we can ski no more. To assist us in getting to camp we will probably use the sturdy backs of porters and reduce the loads we have to carry. We have our choice of numerous lines, descents and tours. Just across Third Lake are the slopes of Temple Crag and the great short descent from Contact Pass. Up the valley a short distance is Mt. Robinson and for even longer runs we will head up to the Palisade Glacier and the four thousand foot runs from high under Mount Sill and Mount Winchel back to camp. We may even get in a summit or two.

Rock Creek Canyon Corn Camp: Norman Clyde was one of the most well known Sierra pioneers and as well as his record of hundred of first ascents in the Sierra was also an accomplished skier whose habit was to seek out the best of the range's skiing. Every spring he would set up a fully equipped base camp in Rock Creek Canyon and ski for days on end, leaving his tracks where few had skied before him. In his footsteps came 70's guru Doug Robinson who also sang praises of Rock Creek's skiing. And now *Sierra Mountain Center* is proud to continue this tradition of spring skiing in this backcountry skier's paradise. It takes us all of the first day to get established at our camp alongside of Treasure Lakes and the following three days are spent exploring the open bowls and secret hidden spots at the head of Rock Creek Canyon. Camp is at an elevation of 11,300 feet and we are surrounded by peaks of up to 13,700 feet. Superb ski runs abound. Try "The Hourglass" under Mt. Dade, venture into the Hidden "Powder Bowls" or climb to the Mills Glacier. For the adventurous we can climb to the 13,000 foot summits of Mt. Dade or Bear Creek Spire and enjoy ski runs that start not far below the crests of these peaks.

Meeting place and time: We will meet the first day at 7.00 am at the world headquarters of Sierra Mountain Center, 174 W. Line Street, in Bishop. Line Street is an east/west street marked by the southern-most traffic light on Main Street/Highway 395, in town. We're west of the light, on the south side of the street next to the health food store. A large parking lot is located on the south side of the building. We will meet for breakfast and will have a thorough pack check so don't plan on finalizing your packing until then.

Dates and Prices: Check the latest brochure, call us or go to our web site for dates and rates. Should minimum participant numbers not be reached you will be given the option of paying our private rate, rescheduling, or cancelling. Price includes guiding, permits, all necessary group climbing gear, tents, kitchen gear and breakfasts, lunches and dinners (you bring hot/cold drinks and snack items).

Notes and other information: Proper acclimatization to the elevation with greatly increase your pleasure and enjoyment of the trip. We highly recommend getting at least one day and night at altitude immediately prior to the trip, for instance, by staying in Mammoth, or better yet, camped at higher trailhead, such as a Big Pine Creek campground since this will give you an edge on acclimatization to the altitude and ensure that you are well rested, ready to start the trip the following day. Local accommodation is not included in the program. Please let us know if you need assistance making reservations.

Prerequisites: No need for prior backcountry ski experience, but you should have downhill ski ability at "SMC Ski Skill Intermediate" or better. Prior camping experience is helpful, but winter experience is not necessary.

Equipment List for Spring Corn Camps

The following list is a general guide and will assist you in packing for the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have specific questions regarding equipment or if you need assistance prior to making a purchase. The following list will vary according to the time of year, and your individual requirements. Items marked with a * are items that we rent or we can coordinate rentals with a local shop.

Essentials

- Skis*. Metal edge telemark mountaineering skis or alpine touring skis are essential. Better too short than too long. Get them tuned freshly waxed and check the bindings for tightness and boot fit prior to the trip. We can coordinate telemark and alpine touring rentals from Wilson's Sports (760) 873-7520 or Mammoth Mountaineering (760) 934-4191.
- Boots*. Stiff, high top boots in good condition and waterproofs. Asolo Extreme and Snopine, Merrell Ultra, and Black Diamond T-2 and 3 are some examples of acceptable telemark boots. For Alpine touring we recommend the Scarpa Lasers, Lowa or Dynafit boots. Make sure your boots are a comfortable fit for walking and skiing. We can coordinate boot rental from Wilson's Sports (760) 873-7520 or Mammoth Mountaineering (760) 934-4191.
- Climbing skins. * These should be close to the width of the ski's waist. Make sure the glue is in good shape.
- Poles. * telescoping probe type are best.
- Internal frame backpack. 4000-4500 cubic inches is the minimum and if your gear is compact this is a good size
- Sleeping bag and pad. A good set up is a 10 degree down bag, full length foam pad and an Ultralite 3/4 Thermarest. A compression stuff sack for your bag will buy you some room in the pack especially if you have a synthetic bag.

Clothing

- 2 pair synthetic liner socks
- 2 pair heavier synthetic or wool blend socks. Some people like to use using vapor barrier or neoprene socks.
- Gaiters. These are usually not necessary in spring, depending on your boot system. If in doubt, please ask.
- Long underwear top and bottom. Capilene or some other synthetic is most desirable
- Warm pants. Tights or Expedition weight Capilene
- Warm shirt. Expedition Capilene or light Synchilla
- Another fuzzy sweater top of some sort
- Light down jacket; synthetic fill is second choice. This is optional & can replace the previous item
- Rain/wind pants & rain jacket. Preferably Goretex or similar and of good quality with a hood. Do not skimp on your rain gear.
- Warm hat that covers the ears.
- Visor hat (for sun).
- Bandanna, surgical mask; for facial and neck sun protection.
- Liner gloves. Midweight capilene, Windstopper or similar is best.
- Shell gloves or mittens.
- Long sleeve lightweight white shirt for sun protection. Hawaiian patterns suggested.
- Down booties for wearing around camp.

Etc...

- Sun glasses. Good quality with side shields.
- Water Bottles. Two quart wide mouth bottles.
- Headlamp. With a spare set of batteries.
- Eating and drinking equipment.
- Pocket knife. Swiss army style.
- Personal toiletries. It is not necessary to smell like a rose each day so do not over do it. Remember toilet paper, a lighter to burn it with and a small zip-lock bag to carry out residue in. Used toilet paper should be packed out, or, in the alpine zone, burned completely and the residue packed out.
- Personal Medical Kit. The guide will carry a large kit so yours will predominately consist of foot repair items, mild pain killer such as Advil and bandaids.
- Camera/film/spare battery.
- Plastic Trash Sac. Handy for keeping in outside the tent should it rain.
- Optional reading material etc.
- We will provide the dinners. Bring your own quick cooking breakfast, lunches and drinks.
- A Crazy Creek style chair is nice for relaxing in camp.

Food

- We will provide breakfast, dinner and lunch but bring some snack items like cliff bars, power bars, gorp concoctions. A days worth for most people would be 2 bars, 3 ounces of gorp, and perhaps a candy bar. Don't over do it.

Group gear that will be provided and divided amongst the group prior to starting the trip

One shovel for each person, avalanche transceiver for each person, food, tents, cooking equipment.

You specifically don't need

- ⊖ Cell phones. They rarely work anyway.
- ⊖ Big first aid kits (we have a comprehensive one)
- ⊖ Deodorant or any toiletries beyond those listed above.
- ⊖ Items that are not on this list.