



The Fowler-Hilliard Hut and most other huts on the 10th Mountain Trail will be open for summer use as the result of a Forest Service decision. On-foot transportation to the huts is recommended, although cars and trucks are acceptable on public roads around the huts. Photo by Allen Best.

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Mountain and Polar Star inns had already been allowed, because they are located on private land. Reservations for their use, however, had been through the 10th Mountain Trail Association office in Aspen. Reservations are also taken by 10th Mountain for Vance's Cabin, although summer use there does not begin until Aug. 15.

In addition to the private huts, summer use has been allowed for the last two years on an experimental basis at the Fowler-Hilliard and Estin huts.

Call 925-5775 if you want to make reservations.

Winter hut use

For the first time in several years, bookings on the 10th Mountain Trail have begun to level off in winter. Last year, despite having one more hut on the route (Janet's Cabin, beginning in January), only 12,000 user nights were record-

ed. That's not substantially more than the year before.

One more hut is being built this summer. Construction has already begun on the Betty Bear Hut, located at Lilly Pad Lake on the west side of Hagerman Pass. (Volunteers are welcome; call 925-5775 if you have time.)

That hut will complete the link between Vail and Aspen. Another hut is being looked at in the Mushroom Bowl area adjacent to the Vail ski area, and permission has already been granted by the Forest Service for two huts north of Vail and Avon. However, the 10th Mountain Trail Association is holding back on those additional huts to see if it can maintain what it already has.

And more hut stuff

Last year about this time the Forest Service called together a task force to consider how winter use conflicts could be minimized in the area from Vail

Pass to Camp Hale. Commercial use is big and growing; ditto for non-commercial use. In particular, cross-country skiers felt like they were getting bumped out by snowmobilers.

The task force agreed to print up maps, to be distributed at frequently used trailheads, letting all users know what to expect in various areas.

Although the maps didn't get distributed until late in the winter, they were considered a reasonably successful experiment. Also successful was the new parking area, on the road from Vail Pass to Black Lakes, which is to be used by snowmobilers and all overnight users of the area. The state highway department plowed the road and spread gravel provided by Vail Associates. Outhouses were provided by the state snowmobilers' association.

The notable failure in the effort was in the "envelope" around the Fowler-Hilliard Hut. Snowmobilers used the area long before the hut was built, and there isn't an obvious way around the hut.

Still, the task force is meeting again, looking for a way to keep snowmobilers and cross-country skiers apart in that area.

In the meantime, the task force is looking for contributions to help print more maps. Call Rich Phelps at the Forest Service office in Minturn (827-5715) if you've got any ideas.

Rock climbing forum

An open forum having to do with the growth of rock climbing in the Vail area is planned for next Wednesday, June 26, at the Vail Athletic Club. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m.

Bolting of rocks will probably be discussed, but meeting organizers say the forum will also get into such issues as maintenance of trails, protecting the environment, and "getting the rock-climbing community together to be the best that it can be in this area."

Call 476-7625 for more information.