

The Great Outdoors

Local store plans to introduce all people to the great outdoors

By CHRIS MAYER
STAFF WRITER

Mark Crissman's sixth-month stay in Colorado was long enough to convince him everyone should experience the natural beauty and tranquility the outdoors has to offer.

And whether it be hiking, climbing or even white water rafting on a fast-flowing West Virginia river, Crissman believes he is one person who can provide people in this area with those experiences.

"You can't even explain what being in the mountains can do for you," said Crissman, 27. "It's just one of those special things and I hope to get as many people out to areas like that to see what it's really like."

Crissman is the owner and managing partner of Rocky Mountain Outfitters, a downtown Rochester-based store with an impressive outdoor theme. Crissman and 25-year-old Bill Camp-

bell, both Rochester Hills residents, are in the business of selling top-of-the-line outdoors equipment, but currently they have their sights on a new venture — an adventure club.

"We've been talking about the club since the store opened in May of 1994," Crissman said. "The whole idea behind the project is there are a couple of stores in the area that sell the equipment we do, but nobody really gets involved in the travel and actually helping people get to that point. And we think there is just a mass of people out there that have heard about different trips and seen trips on television but don't know how to go about getting the information."

Enter Rocky Mountain Outfitters. Campbell, who will run the store's Adventure Travel Center, and Crissman want to introduce anyone who's interested to activities like hiking, climbing, kayaking, winter snowshoeing,

backpacking and canoeing not only in Michigan but nationwide.

"We want to drive home the point how easy and accessible the outdoors is," Campbell said. "It's basically at your doorstep and you don't have to have any special skills. There are hikes that can accommodate handicapped people all the way to experienced mountaineers, so there's something everyone can do. But it's really important for people to understand and see that that could be them. It's just that easy."

The first club meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 20 at Rocky Mountain Outfitters (115 E. Fourth Street, just east of Main Street) where possible trip ideas will be discussed and organized. Crissman and Campbell said club members will have to pay dues, but in addition receive a 10-percent store credit. For every \$100 spent in the store, \$10 will be set aside good toward future store purchases, for example.

For more information regarding the club and the upcoming meeting, visit the store or call (810) 656-CAMP (2267).

"We want to be an information hub, and in turn that's when people get interested," Crissman said. "We have plans and we're working on it right now to have a full-service adventure travel center featuring anything from a kayaking trip here in Michigan to a hike somewhere in the United States. We would be what you call a middleman between bigger companies that actually put on trips like that."

One trip on the horizon is the first annual RMO Whitewater Rafting Adventure. Rocky Mountain Outfitters, in conjunction with Appalachian Wildwaters, Michigan Motor Coach, 93.9 FM, The River and Woody's Outhouse in Ontario, will present the adventure Oct. 13-15 on the Upper

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HIKING

IT'S A HIKE

Michigan might be a bigger source for hiking than you think. Considering the dozens of state parks and the various Metro-parks and Oakland County Parks located throughout the state, you don't have to travel far to enjoy the area's natural beauty and appreciate what the outdoors has to offer.

Below is a capsule look at a prime hiking location that's relatively close to home. Furthermore, a comprehensive list of hiking spots follows.

PAINT CREEK TRAIL

Hikers wander through downtown Rochester and cross seven additional roads while traveling along this route which covers nine miles one-way.

Paint Creek Trail extends from the Clinton River at the Rochester-Utica Recreation Area to Lake Orion, interrupted briefly in downtown Rochester. Estimated total hiking time is four to five hours one-way.

The trail, which for the most part is a wooded path winding along a trout stream, touches ponds, grassy meadows, wetlands where various wildlife can be sighted.

Paint Creek Trail, which can be easily hiked in tennis shoes and is a popular route for joggers, is accessible from almost a dozen spots where it crosses a road. One of the most scenic portions is a 2.4-mile stretch from Tienken Road to Gallagher Road and Paint Creek Cider Mill.

The southern trailhead is directly

across from the Yates Cider Mill in the Rochester-Utica State Recreation Area, located on the corner of Dequindre and 23 Mile Road (Avon Road).

Other good spots to pick up the trail are Rochester Municipal Park at Pine Street, Tienken Road west of Rochester Road, Silver Bell Road west of Orion Road and at the corner of Clarkston and Korn roads in Bald Mountain Recreation Area. At all of these points, the trail is posted and space is available to park a vehicle.

For more information on the Paint Creek Trail or to pick up a trail map, visit the Rochester-Utica Recreation Area.

MICHIGAN STATE PARKS SOUTHERN LOWER PENINSULA

Name of park, (city)
Dash Mountain, (Lake Orion)
Metamora-Hadley, (Metamora)
Orionville, (Orionville)
Holly, (Holly)
Seven Lakes, (Waterford)
Purdie Lake, (Waterford)
Highland, (Highland)
Proud Lake, (Highland)
Island Lake, (Brighton)
Moyam, (Northville)
Wick, (Wick)
Algonac, (Algonac)
Hart-Hornigum Trail, (Means)
Silver Lake, (Means)
Newaygo, (Newaygo)
Bay City, (Bay City)
Albert E. Sleeper, (Caseville)
Port Crescent, (Port Austin)
Lakeport, (Lakeport)
Duck Lake, (North Muskegon)
Muskegon, (Muskegon)
P.J. Hornmaster, (Muskegon)

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