

Venture24 Writeup – Kylie & Colby

Expedition Phase – Kylie (Day in the life)

The bell for morning parade rings at 7am – best I get up 15 minutes before so I have a chance to put some shoes and a scarf on. Outside for parade gives us a chance to check on the weather and plan the day. Breakfast and chores need to be done before we head off on our activities.

The Bogong Rover Chalet is set in the Alpine National Park about 13km from Falls Creek. Our expedition ran in much the same way as a winter skiing party does meaning each day everyone has a job to do – from chopping wood to fuel the stove and the water heater, doing the dishes, cooking, cleaning the bathrooms or being a table steward everyone pitches in to get things done.

Today my group is hiking. We head off in misty weather up past Cope Hut to the car park where we stop to let some put on raincoats as it is now drizzling rain. The high plains stretch before us and we set off along the trail past Mount Cope. Despite the rain spirits are high. Groups come together and move apart and conversation ranges from where everyone is from to what they want to do and beyond. The trail is quite narrow in places so that we walk in single file – it is so quiet in the rain but so beautiful.

With a few stops along the way we come to the Cope Saddle SEC Hut and stop for a break. A clear mountain stream runs alongside the hut and some discuss the fishing potential. The group travels on and I return to the Rover Chalet. They lunch at Ryders Yards and hike back along a different route seeing more of the amazing countryside.

Cooking dinner is quite a big job – most have never cooked on a wood fired stove before and it is quite a skill but it all comes together and after a hearty meal and some clean up it is time to play some games, build a puzzle or just sit and chat. The air hockey / pool table gets a pretty solid workout.

The next day we swap and my group is on mountain bikes. We spend the morning completing basic skills training around the Chalet using various obstacles to expand our skills and then the afternoon riding nearby trails.

We finish off our expedition by spending a day based in Falls Creek with one group hiking and the other mountain biking and a swap at lunch time.

By the time we head for core camp there are some strong friendships developing amongst Venturers from all over the country.

Expedition Phase – Colby (day in the life)

Our final day of expedition is here. A 5am wake up feels very early but we know have to hit the trail before it gets too hot. Today we are mountain biking along Lake Mountain Cascades Trail – 28km of dirt, rock and mud including one of the most epic descents in Australia. All week we have been slowly tackling harder and harder trails to build our skills ready for today.

Driving up the mountain and the road just kept on going, truly showing us just how high we were going to be starting. When we got to the top it was time to choose. With butterflies in my stomach I stepped up to the trail head and decided to take on the challenge – no way did I want to give up the opportunity to do this mega trail. Some of our group were driven down to the lower, easier trail to take their time and stick within their capabilities but the other half chose to take on the Cascades Trail.

The first part of the trail warmed us up with plenty of technical sections to prepare us for the real deal. After the first descent it was time to get through the major climb before a quick morning tea at “The Lunchroom” – a rest spot set up complete with a fridge, microwave and speaker ... unfortunately no power out here though! Now we hit the section this trail is renowned for – berms, tabletops, switchbacks and a number of stacks for yours truly. It was exhilarating, terrifying and fantastic all at once. The final section gave us a chance to wind down a little as we came to the end of our adventure. Over the trail we dropped over 1550 metres of elevation with 500 metres of climbing!

We rode into Marysville and collapsed on the grass knowing we had just conquered one of Australia’s most epic mountain bike trails. We spent some time exploring Marysville before heading back to Alexandra for a swim at the pool and returning to the Scout Hall for tea and an early night as tomorrow was another early start as we head to core camp.