

Libby Polar Bear Club, Libby, Montana

THINGS ONE SHOULD KNOW BEFORE TAKING THE “PLUNGE”

Libby Polar Bear Club: (Rick Klin) E-mail: techrkdk@libby.org, Phone: 406-293-5014 (work), 406-293-5534 (home)

More info online about the Club: www.libbymt.com/outdoors/polarbearclub.htm

Polar Bears meet at 2:00 PM on Sundays, October to first Sunday in April, at the Farm-to-Market bridge over Libby Creek. Newcomers and spectators welcome!

1. Not recommended if one may have a bad heart, kidneys, poor circulation or any other medical condition that may cause one to have a problem while jumping into cold water. If you turn blue in cold water, then you should find another hobby. Red is good. (There is a normal cold water shock reaction when one PLUNGES into cold water.)
2. Do not drink alcohol before taking the PLUNGE. Hot drinks are ok before and after you take the PLUNGE.
3. Wear an old pair of gym shoes or wet suit type foot wear. Do not wear sandals unless they are the kind that will strap tightly to ones foot. A loose fitting pair will end up going down the stream. This is to protect ones feet from sharp rocks and other objects that might be in the water that may cut ones feet. When your feet get cold you won't know that you have cut yourself.
4. The best way to prepare for the PLUNGE is to put your suit and shoes (that you're going to wear in the water) on at home. It will save time and is less of a problem. The time flies by very fast.
5. Bring a towel to dry off with (you may want to bring extra towels for setting on or putting your clothes on when you strip down to your bathing suit). Bring dry socks and shoes to change into to get your feet warm. You should wear a warm hat before taking the PLUNGE and putting it on afterwards, since more heat is lost from your head. Have a warm car to get into and dry clothes if needed before arriving at home.
6. The PLUNGE takes place at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, January 2, 2005 at the bridge over Libby Creek on the Farm-To-Market road south of Libby. Be there a little early so you won't feel rushed. Keep your coat on until the announcement is made for all Polar Bears to get ready to enter the water. At that time, one removes his warm clothes and forms a line. Then it is a matter of “follow the leader”. Since we don't have a nice sandy beach and the water isn't very deep, we go in single file or one or two at a time until all have had a chance to take the PLUNGE. You will come out of the water and dry off as much of the water on your body. This will warm you up faster than anything else you can do. If you wore a tee shirt into the water, it is important to change into something dry. If not, then be sure you have extra clothing for your upper body.
7. The object is to submerge one's self into the water. Some may only get part of their body into the water, and that is up to the individual. We want everyone to have a good time. We never force people to go beyond what they feel comfortable doing. We may offer words of encouragement, but one never needs to feel bad if he or she doesn't go completely under. The average time to take the PLUNGE is 12 to 20 seconds. It is best to do it quickly by walking into the water, holding your breath then submerging the whole body at one time. The long time Polar Bears may just float in the water for a time and may even go in a couple of times. If there is snow on the ground, then they like to cover them selves with the snow. Everyone is not required to do it.
8. What to expect from the PLUNGE: First, entering the water you will notice that the water is very cold. If you take time to think about what you're doing at this point, you may not go any farther. Do it quick. The body will react by wanting to suck in air and then making you feel like you can't get your breath. This is a normal

reaction to cold water. It is involuntary. This is what they refer to as Cold Water Shock. Hypothermia is not a problem. It takes a much longer period of time to ever have it. Just don't over do it if it is your first time.

9. Be sure to leave your name and phone number at the table provided. Each PLUNGER will receive a certificate in the next day or two following the event. If you want to continue and do this every week, same time same place, then after 12 times of weekly PLUNGES you will get a membership card and become one of Libby's very own Polar Bears.

We are looking forward to seeing many who want to take the PLUNGE and many spectators to support the brave souls that will take the PLUNGE. HAPPY NEW YEARS! Polar Bear Rick

