



PEAK EXPERIENCE

The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

Volume 2, Number 1 • January/February, 2006



A Look Ahead at 2006

By *Phil Hough*, Chair of the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

In January, the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness celebrates its first anniversary. Thanks to you, your neighbors and all of our many friends, we have come a long way in this last year in bringing together community support for wilderness protection for the Scotchmans. Our publications, presentations, meetings and other outreach events are building strong support within our community for wilderness designation for this special place. But we have much more work to do before Congress will designate permanent wilderness protection for the Scotchmans. With help from our "friends", like you, we can continue the valuable mission of outreach and education in 2006. And, you can have fun, too, while supporting wilderness – come join us for a winter walk/snowshoe!

With regards to the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai Forest planning, we are in a waiting period while they prepare their draft forest plan. The outrageous decision of the Kootenai Forest to replace "recommended wilderness" with a "wildlands" designation still looms over the landscape as an imminent and significant threat. Through letters, media attention and meetings, the Friends of Scotchman Peaks along with other conservation groups are working to see that this decision does not stand. With the release of the draft forest plans in February, there will be a 90-day comment period, an opportunity for us all to let these agencies know there is strong support for wilderness designation for the Scotchman Peaks area.



Snowshoeing near Scotchman Peak

Photo by Phil Hough

Shortly after the release of the draft plan, we will hold a "State of the Scotchmans" meeting, open to all friends and supporters. This will be an opportunity to come together as a group, celebrate our successes, review the forest plans' treatment of the Scotchmans and look at the year ahead in detail. We are in the early stages of putting together other informational, educational and fun events for 2006 and will share these with you at the "State of the Scotchmans." Mostly, we hope you will come to the "State of the Scotchmans" and share the camaraderie and your love for the Scotchmans!

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness (FSPW) is a non-profit organization. The proceeds from all events and sales benefit our wilderness preservation efforts.

Donations are tax deductible.

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Wish List

We need a new or used laptop and computer/video projector. Please contact Phil Hough at (208)255-2780 or at nowhere_man97@hotmail.com to donate.

We also need an outdoor booth cover. Please contact Jan Griffitts at (208)265-4380 or jan@looptravel.com for more information.

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail and have an email address please help us save postage by sending us your email address.

From the Top

Snow softening the faces of the Scotchmans invites us into a quiet winter wonderland. As the New Year begins, consider making some conservation minded New Year's Resolutions. If you have not already, become a Friend. Our campaign is strengthened by numbers, both locally and in other parts of the country. If you are a Friend, consider becoming more active in whatever way you wish: invite others to become Friends, make a donation to support our educational efforts, volunteer to help us with events or fill one of our volunteer positions. Resolve now to help with our letter writing campaigns, beginning with the response to the draft forest plan when needed. Again, both local and national support is needed. Join us for our "State of the Scotchmans" and our Economic Forum. And most of all, if you live close enough to do so, resolve to actually get out and enjoy the beautiful Scotchman Peaks area in all seasons. This issue lists snowshoe hikes of varying degrees of difficulty. Hope to see you there.

Ann Wimberley, *Editor*

The Future Looks Bright

January 26, 27, 28: FSPW will have a table at the Banff Film Festival at the Panida Theatre in Sandpoint, Idaho. Doors open at 6:00pm; Film starts at 7:00pm.

January 29: FSPW will have a table at the Banff Film Festival at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene. This show will be a "best of" the three nights in Sandpoint. Doors open at 5:30pm; Film starts at 6:30pm.

February 28: Presentation to Sandpoint Garden Club.

"State of the Scotchmans" TBA:

Come join us for a progress report on the campaign for Wilderness designation and a look at the year ahead. Also, hear our insight on the draft forest plan (due to be released in February) and spend some fun time with your friends and neighbors who support Wilderness designation for the Scotchman Peaks!

Spring/Summer: FSPW will host an "Economic Forum" to explore the positive impact of designating wilderness and protecting public lands. Details in future issues of the newsletter.

Along The Trail

By *Phil Hough*

On Saturday Nov 26th, the monthly Native Plant Society meeting featured a slide show and presentation by Phil Hough on "Scotchman Peaks - Wilderness Potential and Native Plants". The audience enjoyed a peek at some beautiful native flora, including some rare and sensitive species. They also learned how wilderness designation can protect native plant habitat.

During the Montana Wilderness Association's annual convention held the first weekend of December in Billings, Cesar Hernandez and Phil Hough presented updates on the Scotchman Peaks campaign for Wilderness. Despite severe winter weather, the audience still numbered almost 200 people and responded with enthusiastic support. MWA again confirmed that the Scotchman's remain on their short roster of "official" and active campaigns!



Tales of Scotchman

Scotchman 101 *By Kermit Kiebert*

Perhaps it is those first rays of light climbing over the distant horizon, or the faint afterglow of that fiery pastel sunset as it slips behind the margins of our earth to the west, or perhaps it is the crisp whistle of the conifer busily putting up “winter hay” or the hoary marmot basking in the early autumn’s last streams of summer light, or lastly, it might be the pleasant scent of the alpine fir as the wind carries it, along with the other distinctive smells of the high country, over the ridge.

Silence permeates the entire timberline ecosystem except for an occasional unnatural sound which signifies the intrusion of man and his inventions into this virtual paradise.

Any or all of these high country experiences are cause for one to be drawn back to those alpine slopes and talus crests for just one more time.

As a native of North North Idaho, and encouraged by those who enjoyed the simple lifestyle, i.e. hunting, fishing, berry picking and camping, early on I developed a deep respect for Ole Mother Nature. I treasured not only the sights and sounds of true tranquility, but also the more subtle and challenging side of her which included wind, rain, sleet, snow, and blistering seasonal heat. She always pulled me back to the less complicated, which only left me with an insatiable appetite for more of her bounty.

Upon becoming a college graduate (which I might add was not necessarily a noteworthy achievement in the eyes of many old timers who really didn’t care about “acer labrum” but did understand the utilitarian uses for mountain maple), I cultivated my deep interest in natural history and chose to share it with a captive audience of 7th and 8th graders at Hope School.

I found myself on a bully pulpit espousing the necessity of knowing about the natural world which envelops our community. We have all been there, those early spring days when the sun has gathered enough warmth to share with earth and push those dismal wintry days into a virulent spring. Nearly every student in my experience saw this natural progression as a harbinger of “academic withdrawal.” The only antidote to this condition was the promise of a high-country backpack trip when school adjourned for the summer break. The students would grudgingly grind out my academic expectations with the promise of a chance to be included in the annual High Country Adventure Hike.



Hope School Class of 72/73, left to right, Danny McChesnie, David Ford, 7/8th grade teacher and principal Kermit Kiebert, Travis Kiebert, Mark Stevens, 5/6 grade teacher Lee McLaughin, Brett Rolfson, Steve McLaughin, Chris McLaughin, Andy McChesnie, Tim Fitzpatrick, Tim Shields, and Dennis Bossingham. Photo by Dave Finkleberg

Vasculums, plant presses, magnifying lenses, and handbooks which identified the flora and fauna were all part of the required supply list for the expedition. Included with our scientific tools on this trek were great deals of horseplay and high jinx as well as a huge dose of camaraderie.

Climbing up the Sam Morris Creek Drainage, crossing Goat Mountain at ridgeline, and the final ascent to the old lookout on Scotchman Peak was the favorite. For me, it seemed that it was as close as one could get to the “Old Feller” without cashing in your worldly chips.

Well it worked! The Hope School Outward Bound Expedition was a huge success. Not only did I keep the kids in a learning mode which started on those early spring days, but also the interest in the local adventure grew with each succeeding class. Soon, former students who had moved on to high school and college were also eagerly waiting each spring for the annual hike.

As one knows, all good things come to an end, but the desire to share nature’s realm still persists. Many of the former students, now parents in our community, express the deep satisfaction of being part of the original Hope Hikers. Even more important is their passage of the understanding of our primeval space in the natural world onto their children, the special places like Scotchman Peak.



Peak Views

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Snowshoe Hikes Winter 2006 Schedule

Sunday February 26th ROSS CREEK CEDARS – Easy to moderate – 6 miles roundtrip.

Come join us as we explore the winter wonderland of the Ross Creek Cedars. The trip will be “out and back.” We will enter and exit the grove on a snow covered Forest Service Road, involving a gradual elevation loss / gain of several hundred feet. We will have plenty of time to enjoy the quiet solitude of this old growth grove of cedars, even more profound in the winter. Meet at the Bull River Junction (small store at the junction of Highway 200 and Highway 56).

8:30 a.m. Pacific Time, 9:30 a.m. Mountain Time. Contact Phil Hough (208) 255-2780 nowhere_man97@hotmail.com to sign up. Reservations deadline Wednesday February 22nd. Sponsored by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Saturday March 4th, ROSS CREEK CEDARS – Easy to moderate – 6 miles roundtrip.

Come join us as we explore the winter wonderland of the Ross Creek Cedars. The trip will be “out and back.” We will enter and exit the grove on a snow covered Forest Service Road, involving a gradual elevation loss / gain of several hundred feet. We will have plenty of time to enjoy the quiet solitude of this old growth grove of cedars, even more profound in the winter. Meet at the Bull River Junction (small store at the junction of Highway 200 and Highway 56).

8:30 a.m. Pacific Time, 9:30 am Mountain Time. Contact Neil & Ann Wimberley 208-264-5379 neilwim@yahoo.com to sign up. Reservations deadline Wednesday February 29th. Sponsored by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Saturday March 18th STAR PEAK - Moderate - The ascent of Star Peak uses

old roads and a well-established trail. The trail climbs 4,000 feet in 5 miles along a series of switchbacks through forest cover. The skill level required is only beginner to moderate, but to reach the top does require stamina and determination. Intrepid winter travelers are rewarded with breathtaking winter views of the Scotchmans. A historic fire tower and stone cabin crown this jewel. The trip will be “out and back” along the same route. Coming From Idaho – Meet at 8:00 a.m. PST / 9:00 a.m. MST at the Clark Fork Chevron. Coming from Montana – ask when you reserve your spot. Contact Phil Hough (208) 255-2780 nowhere_man97@hotmail.com to sign up. Reservations deadline Wednesday March 15th. Sponsored by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Saturday March 25th WALKING THE EDGES OF THE SCOTCHMAN – Moderate. This hike is dependent on snow pack, weather and ability of people who sign up. We may hike up to the Berray Mtn. Lookout and look west into the Scotchman Peaks or we may snowshoe up the Dry Creek drainage in the Bull River Valley. Meet at the Bull River Country Store at the junction of Highway 200 and Highway 56. Contact Cesar Hernandez (406) 883-5019 or mwanw@wildmontana.org to sign up. Reservations deadline is Wednesday, March 1st. Sponsored by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Photo courtesy Neil Wimberley



Snowshoeing in the Ross Creek Cedars.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness is looking for a wilderness minded Web Manager to manage our website. For more information, please contact Phil Hough at (208) 255-2780 or at nowhere_man97@hotmail.com

If you have ideas for programs, events, or other activities, please contact one of the board members.



Scotchman Rocks

By Bill Martin

After the better part of a billion years, the belt sedimentary basin was pretty much full, with most of the sediments thought to have come in from the west. Perhaps the west got tired of doing all the work, or maybe the weight of accumulated sediments 12 miles thick cracked the underlying tectonic plate, but for some reason, about

800,000,000 years ago (give or take a few millennia) the land mass split, roughly along what is now the Idaho/Washington border, and the west floated off into the sunset. Current theory is that it is now in central Asia or China. Geologists from the University of Montana went looking for it last summer and if I find out where they found it I will tell you.

Even without the ripple marks in the sandstone and the mud cracks in the mudstones, we would know that the basin was a shallow sea before it split apart, because sunlight sufficient for photosynthesis can only penetrate even the clearest water for about thirty feet, and the younger belt rocks are chock full of fossilized algae.



Stromatolites, courtesy of Mark Heisel and Jon Burkhardt, photo by Neil Wimberley.

It is a common misconception that there are no fossils before the Cambrian Age, but that is only true (so far) of creatures with skeletons or shells of some sort. Bacterial and algal fossils have been dated to over 3 billion years.

The algal fossils we have here are called stromatolites, which means "layered stone".

Imagine a mud-flat covered with pond scum that periodically dries up, and then is re-inundated with fine silts, on which grows another algal mat, a process repeated over over, and you get a picture of where the name comes from.

Now picture a very dirty aquarium (or somewhat deeper

water) full of great billowing masses of algae that are slowly infiltrated and buried by fine silts, without being squashed flat. So formed other types of stromatolite. They're quite common here, perhaps most common in yellowish rock. Chunks tumbled in creeks are called "brain rocks" by some because of the convolutions. Layers exposed in cliffs often resemble strange alien hieroglyphics. If there's any interest, we'll do a field trip when it warms up.

Next issue: How the mountains got there.

Please Invite Us to Speak to Your Group

We are available to do a 10 minute or longer Power Point Presentation and discussion for businesses, service organizations, clubs, and groups of friends and neighbors.

Please contact us if you are interested.

In Idaho or Washington, contact Jan Griffiths at 265-4380 or jan@looptravel.com or

Phil Hough at 255-2780 or nowhere_man97@hotmail.com

In Hope/East Hope/ Clark Fork, contact Neil or Ann Wimberley at neilwim@yahoo.com or afwim@yahoo.com

In Montana, contact Doug Ferrell at mferrell@yahoo.com

Winter Hiking in the Scotchmans

By Phil Hough

Winter is a special time in the Scotchmans. While a blanket of white may intimidate some, the rewards are great for those who bundle up with extra layers of synthetics, fleece or wool. If you seek solitude there is no better playground! The fair weather hikers have gone home and the adventure seekers are skiing down the slopes at Schweitzer. But, those who are willing to strap on a pair of snow shoes or "skinny skies" can experience the truly wild side of the Scotchmans.

On those winter days when the air is cold and clear, a blanket of snow snatches up the sound and a profound silence settles over the landscape. Tracks in the snow tell a tale of who has passed this way. While many critters are quietly hibernating, those that are active engage our imagination and gain our admiration. This is after all a harsh landscape at anytime; in the winter it is even more demanding. And rewarding.

Come join us for a winter hike/snow shoe, an introduction to this special season in the Scotchmans.



Wild Creatures of the Scotchmans

By Doug and Mindy Ferrell

Pine martens are an elusive member of the weasel family. They are beautiful, vivacious, quick, and energetic creatures. They were heavily trapped in the past, and are making a slow recovery in old growth forests. They have beautiful, thick, reddish brown fur on their back, and nearly black legs and tail. Martens are rather small, 12 -18 inches, with their bushy, black-tipped tail being almost half of their length. They have a gray face with a buff colored chest patch.



The marten's diet is primarily squirrels and rodents, but like all weasels they are opportunistic feeders. Unlike most other weasels, they are at home in treetops. Occasionally they can be seen chasing a squirrel with astonishing speed and agility, racing to match every twist, turn, dive, and leap. They are mostly active at night, are largely solitary creatures, and are very shy of human interaction. They are active both summer and winter.

Their prime habitat is mature coniferous woods, especially where big trees have fallen, providing them with prey, protection, and den sites. They den in hollow trees, crevices, or vacant ground burrows.

In June through August pine martens find mates and breed, using strong scent marks to locate each other. Implantation of the egg is delayed until mid-winter, with birth taking place in late March or early April. The dens are lined with dried plant material to hold the 1 to 5 blind kits, who are weaned after 2 days. Full size is reached about 3 ½ months after birth and sexual maturity arrives at 15 to 24 months.

Martens were trapped in the winter when their sleek coats were thickest. Historically, traps were set in deep wedge shaped pockets chopped in big trees. You can see these pockets today in the Scotchmans area, including along the nature trail at the Ross Creek Cedars Natural Area on the east side of the Scotchmans proposed wilderness.

Wilderness and protected roadless areas are very important to pine martens because of their shyness, and because of their reliance on large stands of mature timber. Marten tracks can occasionally be discovered in winter, providing a dramatic sense of the diversity, wonder and beauty of the forests around us.

What Grows There

By Ann Wimberley

Beneath the snow covering the Scotchman Peaks lie the bulbs of Glacier Lilies, *Erythronium grandiflorum*. The yellow flowers will bloom as the snow melts, often at the edge of receding snow banks. Two oblong 4 to 6 inch long parallel veined leaves at the base give rise to a single stalk with 1 to 4 flowers. Flowers are usually yellow, but a white flowered variety, *candidum*, is also found in southeastern Washington and the adjacent area of Idaho. The six petals abruptly curve back. The six stamens, which protrude, are tipped with anthers of white, red, yellow, or purple. Other common names are dog toothed violet,

fawn lily, trout lily, and adder's tongue.

Native Americans gathered the bulbs from June to August as root vegetables. The bulbs, which are inedible raw, were dried or steamed. Grizzly bears are known to dig the glacier lilies, let them wilt for a few days on the ground and then return to eat them.

Lewis and Clark collected the first specimen of glacier lily in the spring of 1806 along the Clearwater River near present-day Peck, Idaho and a second specimen along the Lolo Trail.



Glacier Lily, *Erythronium grandiflorum*

Photo by Marjorie George



Birds Found on the Scotchman Peaks

White Tailed Ptarmigan

By Earl Chapin

White Tailed Ptarmigan live in the Cabinet and Selkirk Mountains of Idaho. They live in small groups throughout the area, usually four to twelve in a group. Not only are they rare, but very small and hard to see. In winter they are all white except for the eye and black bill. In summer, they look like small granite rocks. They are very tame and will let you almost step on them before they move. They feed on small juniper buds, berries, etc.



Ptarmigan live at or near timberline. When they are white, they stay on snow and as the snow recedes in the spring they follow the receding line. As they turn back to their summer plumage they again stay on the bare ground that will camouflage them.

Sometimes things elude us for one reason or another. I have spent over 55 years hiking in the Selkirks. My wife and I fish the mountain lakes and climb the peaks every year. We snowmobile and ski and I have never seen a White Tailed Ptarmigan in North Idaho. I have seen them in Alaska, Colorado, and Montana.

I have many friends that have seen the Ptarmigan in this area. I have photos that they have taken, and I have over 30 records of sightings over many years.

My oldest record is from Les Gissel, conservation officer in Sandpoint from 1945 to 1974. In 1967, Ed Crocket, the local druggist, shot two "white grouse" on Baldy Mt. Gissel checked them and they were Ptarmigan. I have dependable records of sightings on Blue Creek near Scotchman Peak and on Roundtop above Hope, and in many places in the Selkirks, Harrison Lake, Chimney Rock and Grass Mt. Conservation officer Greg Johnson saw a flock of about a dozen on Trapper Peak in the fall of 1990. I have photos from other friends taken on Trapper and Grass Mt.

I have had 50 or more reports over the years from Schweitzer Ski Resort. But in the winter of 1989-90 everyone saw the Ptarmigan. They were all over the area. Six birds sat at the top of chair six, sunning themselves and eating gravel for many days. It was the first year I didn't ski. They were gone by the time I heard about them.

Thanks for Help from our Friends

Thanks to Jim Mellen for volunteering to manage our clothing sales.

Thanks to Eichardts, Monarch Mountain Coffee, Outdoor Experience, Pack River Potions in Sandpoint, Huckleberry Thicket, Trout Creek, MT, Big Sky Pantry in Noxon and Northwest Music in Troy, MT for selling Jack Gladstone Concert tickets for FSPW.

New Arrivals for the New Year

By Jan Griffitts

Hooded, zippered sweatshirts have arrived along with more variety of sizes in the long sleeved T-shirts, sweatshirts, and hooded sweatshirts. All proceeds benefit our wilderness preservation efforts. These striking shirts are black with our logo on the front; the sweatshirts come with or without a hood. Hoodies are available with or without zippers. Short sleeved T-shirts are available in Scotchman blue. Check out the shirts on our website.

Prices are:

- T-shirt (Scotchman blue) \$15
- Long sleeved T-shirt (black) \$25
- Sweatshirt (Black) \$35
- Hooded sweatshirt (black) \$40
- Zippered hooded sweatshirt (black) . \$45

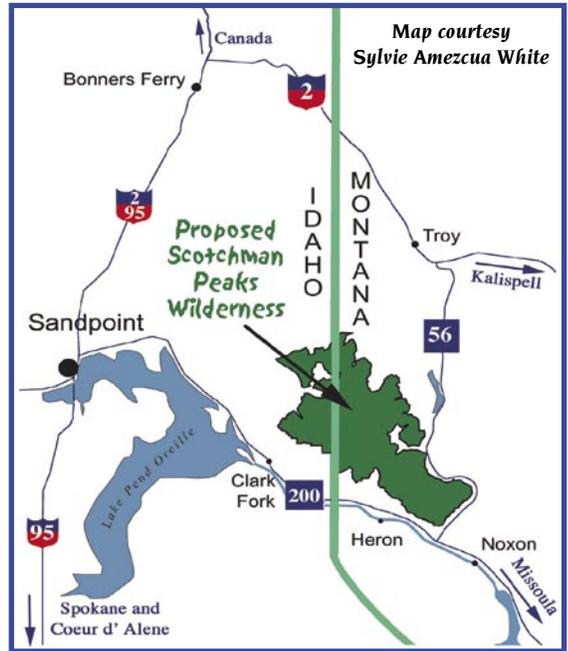
Outlets are Outdoor Experience in Sandpoint and the Hope Market Café in Hope. For out of the area orders, contact info@scotchmanpeaks.org.



How You Can Help

Support Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

As concerned citizens, we support protecting and preserving the Scotchman Peaks area for ourselves and future generations. Highway 200, Highway 56, Lightning Creek Road, and Rattle Creek crossing the Idaho and Montana border surround this scenic 88,000-acre area. Wilderness Designation for the Scotchmans will protect plants and wildlife, including the endangered grizzly bears, mountain goat, and bull trout; it will protect water quality; and it will preserve a special place for future generations. In addition, local communities will benefit from the unparalleled recreational and economic opportunities such wilderness provides.



Name: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Donation enclosed (optional). Donations are tax deductible.

Please make checks payable to the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Detach & Mail to the address below.



Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness
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