



# PEAK EXPERIENCE

The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.

Volume 9, Number 2 • March / April 2013

## Mission Statement

“Spanning the Idaho/Montana border, the Scotchmans are one of the last, and largest, wild areas in our region. We conduct education, outreach and stewardship activities to preserve the rugged, scenic and biologically diverse 88,000 acre Scotchman Peaks Roadless Area. We believe the Scotchman Peaks deserve congressional designation as Wilderness for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.”



Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc. (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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Editor: Ann Wimberley

Layout and design: Celeste Grace



## The Call of the Mild

By Brian Baxter

Boreal owl in the Bull River Valley near Billiard Table Mountain

Photo by Don Jones, <http://www.donaldjones.com/>

The length, breadth, and depth of the Milky Way is brilliantly obvious on this cold, clear night in late winter. We are waiting, trying to stay focused in sub-zero temperatures. Biting off a glove, and reaching into our packs, we fumble cookies and snacks into our mouths, craving the energy that might help us keep warm. This is no midnight picnic at 5,300 feet elevation. We're learning to listen, to really listen by maximizing our human audio powers. We calculate when the breeze slows, turning our heads to "point" our sound receptors towards likely areas. This two man team has divided the horizon into two 180 degree zones. Each man intensely strains, eyes watering, noses and cheekbones numbing quickly, audio searching for an elusive prey. We are yearning to hear the "Advertising Song" of the Boreal Owl, a combination of the mating and defensive territorial call, not all that commonly heard by the human ear. That is our challenge tonight, our biological research mission, on a late winter owl prowl in the Northern Rockies.

The Boreal Owl, *Aegolius funereus*, is an inhabitant of our Northern Rockies, once thought to be a Canadian migrant to Western Montana, but now believed somewhat common in Western Montana and possibly Northern Idaho. This smaller owl is usually about 9-11 inches tall and weighs approximately 4-6 ounces. Boreals are actually round headed with no discernible ear tufts, although its head may appear rectangular. The eyes are yellow, the bill yellow / white. The facial disk that helps funnel sound to this species is white, and is surrounded by distinct black trim. The forehead is spotted. The front of the owl is white with brown vertical streaks along the chest and flanks while the back is brown with large, variously irregular white spots. The juveniles have a dark brown /black facial disk, white forehead, and a light chocolate brown coloration on the upper chest which can fade to a light brown / tan belly. After the first winter, the juvenile plumage resembles the adults.

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## Wolverine Watch

By Lauren Mitchell

This year's Rare Forest Carnivore study was *supposed* to be a scaled back effort for FSPW. Apparently nobody told our intrepid volunteers that.

Although we were only setting out 17 stations this year – less than half the number of last year's effort – we still had over 35 people show up for our Volunteer Training Day. And halfway through the field season we had over 80 volunteers contributing over 800 hours to the project. I quickly learned that there's no slowing down our tenacious volunteers.

Most of this year's Wolverine Watch are returning members. These folks participated last year, and although they all have some sort of horror story involving smelly dead beavers, broken snowmobiles, interesting creek crossings, etc, they all came back ready and willing to haul a thirty pound chunk of meat into the backcountry.

We also added quite a few new members to our work force! Word of FSPW's citizen science project spread as far south as Pullman, Washington and as far east as Whitefish, Montana. Also, quite a few of our neighbors in Spokane heard about the project and came to join the effort.

The members of Wolverine Watch have found a range of ways to participate in this year's study. Backcountry skills have been put to the test as our hardy volunteers made tremendous efforts to reach locations where there just might be a wolverine passing



Team Gulo gulo at their bait station set up (Chuck Gross, Melissa DeMotte, Steve and Sandy Wall)

Photo by Chuck Gross

by Jim Mellen, Jake Ostman, and Jacob Styer skied over 24 miles in one day with over 4000 feet of vertical change to reach their desired location. Scott Rulander and his friends skinned up over 5000 feet to place their station. Phil Hough and his team cross-country skied back in the dark from their site. John Monks kindly contributed his time and his snowmobile to the effort, participating in two station set-ups. Eric Grace and his crew hauled a very thawed out and smelly beaver for miles and Eric Dickinson tangled

with a moose in route to his station!

We've also had two student groups take on the task of setting up a station. Jan Wasserburger and a group of students from the Lake Pend Oreille High School are taking their learning outdoors, participating in one station set-up and two station removals! Chris Bachman is back, and this time he brought a great group of students from City School in Spokane! He's using his station as an educational tool to teach students about the ecology of the region and the scientific process. Our front country volunteers have been busy as well. The "Photo Warriors" have looked through thousands of photos, identifying the critters that came to visit. Holly Clements and Perky Smith-Hagadone have already contributed to the photo effort and before this season is over I'm sure that the ranks of the "Photo Warriors" will have grown!

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## The Future Looks Bright

**March 1:** An art reception at The Readery on First Avenue honoring our Plein Air Paintout Painters. Unveiling of a special painting by Aaron Johnson honoring the completion of Grass Routes, the movie about the Friends of Scotchman Peaks and the place they work to protect. (See March 14) 4:30 to 6 p.m.

**March 2:** End of the rare carnivore study field season.

**March 3:** Mustelid study volunteer appreciation party and awards ceremony. Eichardt's Pub, 218 Cedar in Sandpoint, upstairs. Potluck snacks. No-host bar. 2:00 p.m.

**March 14:** Sandpoint premier of *Grass routes*, the movie about FSPW and the Scotchman Peaks. Panida Theater, Sandpoint. 6:00 doors, 7:00 films. En Plein Air will also be shown. (See page 3)

**March 16:** A showing of *Grass routes* in Libby at the Little Theater (6 p.m.) and at the Rex Theater in Thompson Falls (2 p.m.) En Plein Air will also be shown.

**March 24:** The StoryTelling Company, sponsored in part by FSPW, continues its 2012/13 season at Ivanos Restaurant in Sandpoint. 5:00 dinner, 6:00 show.

**April 6:** Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness will have a table at the Health Fair in the Memorial Center in Libby at 9:30 a.m.

**April 15:** Deadline to propose summer hikes in time for the May/June newsletter.

**April 19 – 22:** Earthday Celebration in Sandpoint, including the Earthday Festival at Forrest M. Bird Charter High School, Saturday, April 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Learn more at [www.facebook.com/SandpointEarthday](http://www.facebook.com/SandpointEarthday)

**April 21:** The StoryTelling Company, sponsored in part by FSPW, ends its 2012/13 season at DiLuna's Restaurant in Sandpoint. 5:00 dinner, 6:00 show

### On the Horizon

**May 3 — 6:** FSPW program coordinator Sandy Compton will be in Boise for a Zoo Boise presentation.

**May 17 – 19:** FSPW will be represented at Wild Idaho, the annual Idaho Conservation League gathering at Redfish Lake, as well as the Montana Wilderness Association conference in Billings.

**June 1:** National Trails Day

**May/June TBA:** Trails skills class for FSPW crew leader volunteers.

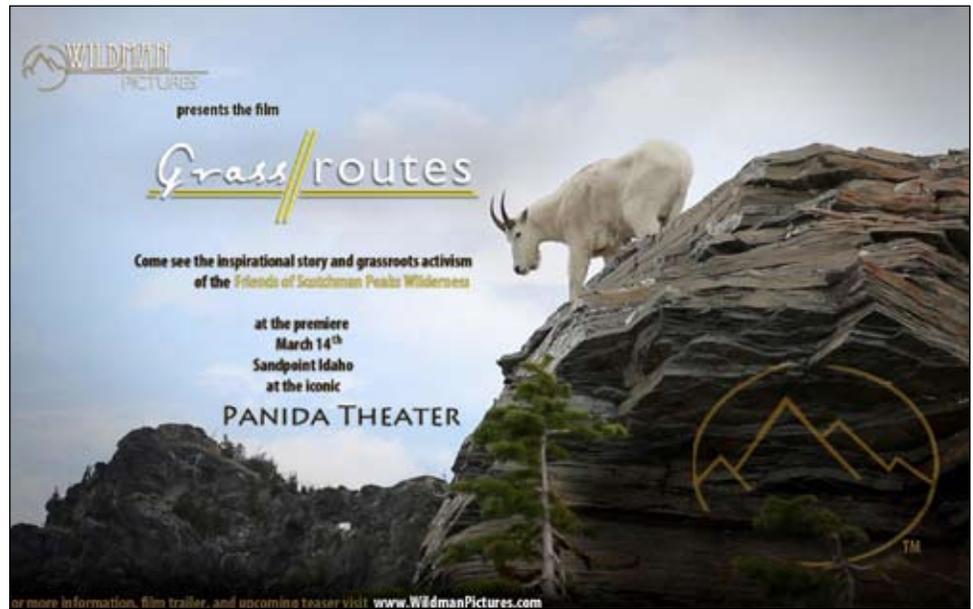


## Wildman Pictures Premieres *Grass routes* in Sandpoint on March 14

When Joe Foster, Jake Glass and Matt Stauble of Wildman Pictures came West in 2010, they were looking for a fight. They were here to make a movie about an environmental group battling with industry to save a beautiful part of the planet. Instead, they found Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness — making friends out of traditional opponents and partners out of federal agencies and using a moderate message to get their point across.

Two and a half years later, Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness and Wildman Pictures are proud to announce the release of *Grass routes: Changing the Conversation*, the movie about the Scotchman Peaks and the group who works to protect them and the unique methods by which the Friends get things done.

*Grass routes*, a visually compelling and thought-provoking film, will premier in Sandpoint at the Panida Theater on Thursday, March 14. Doors open at 6 and the films begin at 7 pm. No-host beer and wine will be available. The film will also be shown in Thompson Falls on March 16 (At the Rex at 2 p.m.) and Libby (at the Little Theater at 6 p.m.) The Wildman film *En*



*Plein Air*, the story of the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Extreme Plein Air expeditions and the artists who participate, will also be shown in all three venues.

Both movies will also be available on DVD.

Advance tickets for the Panida showing are \$8 and available at Eichardt's and The Readery in Sandpoint. Tickets are \$10 at the door. The March 16 showings in Thompson Falls and Libby will be free.

## Trail Talk: Trail Skills and First Aid offered this summer by FSPW

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness recently received a capacity building grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation that will fund a "Trail Building Skills" course. This course will offer special training in trail design and standards, construction techniques and standards, maintenance techniques, gear use and care and project management skills to interested volunteers wanting to develop the necessary skill level to be able to become project leaders. This will allow FSPW to work more independently in the field in the summer and be less reliant on having hands-on guidance from the Forest Service. The training has the blessing of, and will be done with support from, the Forest Service. Tentatively, we will have a 2- to 3-day Skills Class with time in the classroom and in the field. A one-day training class on cross cut saw AND chain saw



**Learn the proper use of a Pulaski this summer courtesy of FSPW**

**Photo by Sandy Compton**

operation (both in one day) will be offered. In addition we will hold a 2-day Wilderness First Aid course, including a CPR class the night prior. Dates are to be announced; sometime in May or June.

The cost of training will be covered via this grant for individuals willing to commit to being a Project Leader or co-leader on one of our summer maintenance days this summer or fall. Project Leaders will attend all three modules: Trail Building Skills Training, Saw Training and First Aid (unless you are already certified in First Aid). Space is limited. Our most active volunteers will be given first priority.

An additional grant request, if approved, will allow us to offer first aid training to HIKE leaders in return for committing to lead at least two hikes (summer or winter) over 2013-2014.

If you are interested in these classes, please write to [info@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:info@scotchmanpeaks.org)



## Message From the Chair: March 2013: Wilderness - Good for Business

The ecological, spiritual and recreational benefits of Wilderness are well understood. Frequently discussed, they are natural reasons for support from many people. The *eco-nomics* of wilderness are something people shy away from. Wilderness supporters are often intimidated by outmoded beliefs, a legacy of historical conflict between extractive industries and conservation. That's a shame. We need to be prepared, and embrace, that discussion.

As early as 1904, Gifford Pinchot wrote a report showing that western counties with "forest reserves", the precursor to our national forests, had the strongest economic growth. President Roosevelt boldly used a

presidential decree to declare the Grand Canyon a National Monument in 1908. Only 11 years later congress reaffirmed this by establishing the Grand Canyon as a National Park, largely because the tourism economy had grown and far overshadowed early mining, grazing and timber activity.

In a series of reports over the last decade the Sonoran Institute and Headwaters Economics have established a strong correlation between vibrant economies in the rural west and counties which have lands protected as Wilderness or national parks. Often economists refer to this as the "amenity driven" economy. We should simply call it good business.

Economic benefit from natural resource conservation goes far beyond tourism. A growing number of retirees, second home owners, telecommuters, small (and large) business owners move to places where they can live and recreate in the outdoors. They bring their personal income and they

*"Majestic landscapes and natural settings such as the Scotchman Peaks provide recreation and inspiration for folks from all walks of life and are part of the reason we choose to do business here."*

— Dennis Pence, founder of Coldwater Creek

spend it, supporting local business. Many pursue the quiet backcountry recreation found in designated Wilderness.

The Outdoor Industry of America recently released a study showing that outdoor recreation, *in Idaho*, creates more than 77,000 jobs, \$6.3 billion in consumer spending, \$1.8 billion in wages and \$461 million in state and local tax revenue. The numbers are similar in Montana. *Nationwide, Americans spend \$646 billion each year on outdoor recreation, directly supporting 6.1 million jobs and generating nearly \$80 billion in tax revenue!*

There is a strong multiplier effect, considering many people choose to live and work where near potential recreation. The Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce endorsed wilderness designation for the Scotchmans noting: "We

*strongly believe one of the best ways we can build a future of prosperity is to help protect the natural resources and beauty of our area and all that it has to offer."*

Timber and commodity production is still an important part of our economy, but we should consider that some businesses benefit from natural resource conservation. We can find a balance. Nominated to be Secretary of the interior, Sally Jewel has a lifetime of personal interest in outdoor recreation and professional experience in balancing the needs of the energy industry with the recreation industry. Some have speculated that this is an indication that the times are changing. But I believe it shows that the political system is finally catching up to what Gifford Pinchot and businessmen in northern Arizona knew 100 years ago – preserving wild places is good for people and good for business.

— Phil Hough

## Along the Trail

**January 5:** 40-plus volunteers took part in training with IDFG, ICL and SOLE for the winter rare forest carnivore study

**January 8:** FSPW hosted *In Search of the Phantom*, a wolverine movie, at Eichardt's.

**January 12:** Fourteen students enjoyed a winter tracking class with Brian Baxter, beginning with classroom work at the Heron Community Center

**January 13:** Field season began for the rare forest carnivore study

**January 27 – 29:** FSPW volunteers worked at a table at the Banff Film Festival at the Kroc Center in Coeur d' Alene

**February 6:** Wolverine project coordinator Lauren Mitchell and program coordinator Sandy Compton presented to Jan Wasserburger's science class at Lake Pend Oreille High School.

**February 8:** FSPW and ICL presented the Winter Wildlands Film

Festival at the Eagles Club in Coeur d' Alene.

**February 15:** FSPW Program Coordinator Sandy Compton traveled to University of Montana with Forest Service partner Joel Sather to make a presentation on the proposed wilderness as well as the growing importance of cooperation and collaboration between non-profits and agencies.

**February 22:** FSPW and ICL presented the Winter Wildlands Film Festival at the Pearl Theater in Bonners Ferry.

**February 23:** Fourteen students enjoyed a winter ecology class with Brian Baxter, beginning with classroom work at the Heron Community Center.

**February 24:** Jon Isacoff, Peak Experience bird columnist and professor at Gonzaga University, led a birding expedition along the north shore of Lake Pend Oreille and into Lightning Creek.



## Over The Top Volunteer

### Sticking it out: Doug Ferrell's life as a conservationist

By Sandy Compton

In 1974, Doug Ferrell and a couple of friends left Wisconsin in a late 1950s' vintage red Ford Panel truck with a gleam in their collective eye and a family size bottle of maple syrup stowed with the rest of their gear in the back. They travelled the West looking for a place to alight, and finally came to rest in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho.

"We were hippies," Doug admits. "We were going to set up the perfect commune. We were looking for our backwoods home."

Doug grew up — "not really," he admits — in Mequon, Wisconsin, a Sandpoint-sized town just north of Milwaukee and a little west of Lake Michigan. From childhood, he went with his folks every summer to a lake in the northern part of the state where his family has owned property since 1908. He and his wife Mindy still return there every summer. But their roots, as well as those of their two sons Pete and Jack, are firmly planted in the place where Doug and his two friends began to build Utopia in the 1970s: Sanders County, Montana.

It was Doug who eventually ended up buying out his partners in the land they had bought on Swamp Creek near the southern boundary of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness. In fact, the trailhead for Wanless Lake was on the property.

Eventually, Doug and Mindy sold that property and bought a piece near Trout Creek where they live today. Their sons, though, began life at the wilderness boundary and it has affected who they are today. And the idea of wilderness has certainly been formative for Doug.

"My family had a long history of conservation," he says. "My grandfather was a member of the Wilderness Society before the Wilderness Act was passed. But, when I was 20 I saw David Brower speak and it changed my life.

"He held an egg in his hand and compared the shell to our atmosphere and then pointed out that our soil layer, which we all are dependent on, is thinner still. And I found his grainy pictures and his passion for our country's great wild places profoundly inspiring." That set Doug on a path West, where he would continue his family's legacy of conservation.

He joined Cabinet Resource Group just six months after it was formed in 1976, and has been a member ever since. In

the 1980s, with other CRG members, including founder Bill Martin and Montana Wilderness Association member Cedron Jones, he helped negotiate an agreement with the Forest Service that suspended development of some of the largest roadless areas on the Kootenai National Forest until the next Forest Plan.

"It is one of the most effective things I was ever involved in," he says, "and the roadless areas of that agreement are still undeveloped."



**Doug Ferrell sticks with FSPW, MWA, and CRG**

Photo by Mindy Ferrell

In 2005, when the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness was forming, Doug was asked by current executive director Phil Hough and other founding members Cesar Hernandez and Jan Griffiths to be a member of the board, which he has been ever since. He now serves as vice-chair and Montana Director, as well as a connection with the Montana Wilderness Association, of which he has been a member for over 30 years. He has just finished a two-year term as President of MWA and will remain on the MWA Council through this year.

It was another MWA president who got Doug interested in the Scotchman Peaks. Former Noxon resident Mike Comola gave a slide presentation on the Scotchmans in the 1980s that opened Doug's eyes to the potential of the West Cabinets. Comola was advocating then for wilderness designation for the Scotchmans and had been since the findings of the Rare II studies were released.

Doug, who set out to build the perfect commune with his friends, did not quite achieve that. "It ended up quite different than we thought it would," he says, "but we are still good friends today." Instead, he has been a home builder and house designer for most of the last 40 years.

It is interesting how little things can make a difference in a life. David Brower's speech, for instance. Oh, and that bottle of maple syrup. It seems that when Doug and his friends got to Coeur d' Alene, they didn't initially rent a place, but kept living out of the Ford. But then the lid came off the bottle one day and stickified much of the contents of the van. They figured then it was time to get a place to live. And, then, they stuck around. Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness are beneficiaries of that maple syrup mishap.



## AVALANCHE! Situational Awareness

By Kevin Davis

*Editor's note: Kevin Davis grew up on XC skis in Illinois and moved to Sandpoint in 1993 to work with the Forest Service in hydrology. He has been involved with the Idaho Panhandle Avalanche Center (IPAC) since the late 1990's and became the Director in 2006. His passion for the mountains and skiing lead him to increase his avalanche knowledge so working with IPAC was a natural fit. As Director of IPAC he has worked to increase avalanche education opportunities in the area and improve the conduit for distributing avalanche advisories through working with a 501c3, Friends of IPAC, President Scott Rulander, to create a new website. The IPAC website address is [www.idahopanhandleavalanche.org](http://www.idahopanhandleavalanche.org); the IPAC phone hotline: 208 765-7323 When not digging in the snow or up a creek Kevin enjoys time outdoors with his wife and 2 kids*



**Kevin Davis & Eric Morgan on Moose Mt. in the Cabinets checking snow stability for the avalanche advisory**

Photo by Brenton White

You wake up bright and early on Saturday morning, pour your coffee, look out the window, and shuffle over to the computer to pull up the avalanche advisory. It's your day off and you're going to the mountains. "The avalanche hazard rating for the Selkirk and Cabinet Mountains is rated as MODERATE on slopes steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. We are dealing with a persistent weak layer of surface hoar that is buried three feet deep now and shearing with moderate to hard force applied but fractures cleanly when it fails". You call your partners and discuss the plan for the day and it's a go. The sun is shining, you're feeling good, your usual posse of friends is ready to go, and you've all been planning this trip together for weeks, what could go wrong.

Sound like a familiar situation? I'm sure many of us have gone out with friends on a day where making sound decisions was difficult because none of the evidence was pointing in a definitive direction. The weather has been coming in fits and spurts with only a little snowfall at a time, no avalanche activity visible to shout, "Warning", and the avalanche guy said the hazard was moderate. "Moderate", what does that mean? It's relatively easy to plan your route when the avalanche hazard is high; don't go on steep slopes. You might notice some of the red flags of instability, shooting cracks, heavy wind-loading, rapidly rising temperature, heavy snowfall, and natural avalanches. But when the avalanche hazard is moderate or considerable we find ourselves in a gray zone, flirting with the 50/50. We could traverse that slope or ski that line and everything will be just fine, or we could trigger an avalanche and then we're on a slide for life.

An avalanche hazard rating of Moderate means that natural avalanches are unlikely and human triggered avalanches are possible. Considerable avalanche hazard is one notch up in rating from that; natural avalanches are possible and human triggered avalanches are probable. Think of it as the likelihood of

triggering an avalanche on any given slope. The forecast will often state which slopes are the most hazardous so during your travels pair up the likelihood of a given slope to slide with the consequences if you are caught in that slide. Roger Atkins, a renowned avalanche specialist, wisely said that, "Knowing the consequences of our actions tends to influence our behavior more than knowing the rules we're supposed to follow". I may be out all day and the conditions seem to be stable on most slopes and I haven't seen anything to make me believe I'd trigger an avalanche. Then I find myself looking down a steep smooth flank of mountainside that goes all the way to the valley below. "What would happen if I triggered an avalanche"? Will I be pin-balled off rocks and trees? Will I be buried 6 feet deep at the bottom of this 1,000 foot descent? Can my partner dig me out in time? Just the thought of these questions going through my head usually averts my

heroic intentions or at least gets me thinking about the immediate situation and whether I know the whole, true picture.

Situational awareness

### From the Top

As I worked on this issue of the newsletter, it became increasingly clear that Spring will soon be here. Each time it snows instead of rains we think we are probably heading out for the last snowshoe of the year. The deer slip into the yard when our Border collie is not looking and pull green plants out from beneath the snow. And babies are arriving daily at our daughter's goat farm.

There's lots of growth in FSPW also. The Plein Air paintings are hung at the Readery; the reception for them will happen before the newsletters are printed. The long awaited world premiere of Grass Routes is on the schedule at the Panida. This year's Forest Carnivore Study is drawing to a close with the pictures and DNA soon to be analyzed. Speakers for wolverine project training share important information on avalanches and traps with a larger audience in this issue of the newsletter. Four Gonzaga seniors are participating in the Capstone project this year, sharing young ideas and talents with FSPW – more information in upcoming newsletters.

I would like to thank Sandy Compton for serving as the Peak Experience layout and design editor for the past two years in addition to all the other things he does for FSPW and to welcome Celeste Grace who has worked with Sandy on the last few issues and is stepping up to take on the job herself.

Happy Spring!

— Ann Wimberley



## Wild Creatures of the Scotchmans: Multispecies Baseline Initiative

By Leslie Van Niel

Editor's note: Leslie is the Citizen Naturalist Coordinator for the Idaho Fish and Game Multispecies Baseline Initiative (MBI). MBI is a collaborative of organizations conducting standardized surveys for wildlife species and micro-climate across the Idaho Panhandle and adjoining mountain ranges. FSPW is proud to be a partner in this project through our participation in the Winter Forest Carnivore Survey, aka the Wolverine project.

When I say salamander I bet you picture the slimy little creatures that you used to catch and release as a child. They are fun to check out up close, but did you know that they are hidden treasures of ecological knowledge? Coeur d'Alene (CDA) salamanders are one species of environmentally important critters that live in our area, yet very little is known about these cool amphibians.

Environmental indicators are species whose health directly relates to the health of their ecosystem. Amphibians exchange gases and moisture through their skin, which allows them to pick up pollutants and toxins quicker than other species. If amphibians are unhealthy, then chances are the environment is having trouble as well. Monitoring salamanders and other amphibians can be a great way to keep an eye on the system as a whole.

Coeur d'Alene salamanders are long-lived, needing about 4 years to reach sexual maturity. The longer it takes a species to mature, the harder it is to recover the populations if they start to decline. Scientists believe that amphibian populations are declining across the globe, but in north Idaho, we don't even know what the current populations of any of our amphibians are. In the case of the CDA salamander, scientists simply do not know enough about them to be able to say if their numbers represent thriving or declining. It is important to establish a base-



**Coeur d'Alene Salamander**

Photo by Dennis Riley, USFS

line for the salamander so that scientists can record changes and understand if the changes are significant or just an annual fluctuation. Some of the problems that we know they face are habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, and non-native predators. Being aware of the problems is only the first step. It is crucial to understand the salamanders that we have in our area; where they live, and how and where they travel. With this information, managers can make informed decisions and take measures to increase overall CDA salamander vitality.

The Multi-species Baseline Initiative (MBI) seeks to do just that; gain more information. The staff, of about twenty, will be looking for salamanders from as far south as the Saint Joe National Forest, all the way to the Canadian border. The salamanders are thought to be mainly active-above ground, in the wet months of April to early May. It will be a challenge to search for them over such a large area, in such a short time frame. Citizen Naturalist

**Continued on page 8**

## Peak Views

Hike date	Exertion Rating	Destination/Hike Name	Leader(s)	Description and contact info
3/23/13	Strenuous	Goat Mountain Hop	Jim Mellen	<b>Contact info: 208-265-5261 or jimnsandii@gmail.com</b> This will be the 7th annual Goat Mountain Hop. Gaining 4,000 feet vertical, this is one of the steepest trails in the region. Although you don't have to be crazy to sign up, it does help. Round trip: 7 miles; Elevation gain: 4,000 ±
4/6/13	Strenuous	Goat Peak	John Harbuck	<b>Contact info: harbuck@norlight.org</b> The easy thing is that we should be able to drive all the way to the trailhead — and there are no stream crossings. This is supposedly the steepest trail in Idaho, but with snow, who needs a trail? Definitely a tough snowshoe, but beautiful country and great views. Skiable, but only if you're very accomplished. Round trip, 8 miles. Elevation gain, 4000 feet.
4/13/13	Strenuous	Star Peak	Sandy Compton and Brad Smith	<b>Contact info: sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org</b> This snowshoe is quite strenuous. We will follow new tread cut last year by FSPW volunteers past some great views of the Clark Fork valley before connecting to the old trail. Expect a little fall-line hiking once we gain the "break over" about half way to the top. Depending on conditions, this could be a good day to bring skis and skins. Round trip: 10 miles ±. Elevation gain 4140 feet.
5/4/13	Strenuous	Scotchman Peak	Jim and Sandii Mellen	<b>Contact info: 208-265-5261 or jimnsandii@gmail.com</b> Snowshoe, ski or snowboard the tallest peak in the Scotchman Peaks This is the 8 <sup>th</sup> annual Scotchman Peaks winter hike. Generally, the trailhead is inaccessible this time of year, adding 2.5 miles each way and 500 vertical (making a total of 4,200 vertical!). This is for the extremely fit adventurers only! Round trip, 12 miles. Elevation gain, 3700 feet.



## Scotchman Natives: Violets serve as precious delights in forest setting

By **Valle Novak**

After all these many years of thinking of myself as a “hiker,” I finally realize I’ve been fooling myself. I’ve never, even in my younger, hardier days, been a hiker. I’ve been an observer.

From the very first time that Daddy took me – his little partner – into the woods and showed me the wonders there, I’ve been an observer: because that’s what my father was. He looked, touched, studied, and analyzed everything from tree bark to footprints to rocks, leaves, flora and streams. Everything had a story, a meaning; everything was absolutely new and amazing and important.

Forest duff (perhaps hosting a colony of Indian pipe), fungi, moss, fallen cedar logs with their crop of new seedlings growing from their moldering remains – all was imparted to me as part of “Environment 101” so to speak. He passed his passion and enthusiasm on to me as his heritage, and always with the deepest respect and reverence.

One day we came upon a shady glade with a shallow brook gurgling through it. Mossy rocks in the water were covered with mats of the lovely Twin Flower (*Linnaea borealis*), and along the banks, tucked among Birch and Cottonwoods, were small bouquets of yellow violets (*Violaceae*). I was awestruck and Daddy was thrilled – probably for me, since it was my first sight of them, and said “now you’ve been given the prettiest gift of all” – and he was right. He set about with his hunting knife, carefully digging out one plant, getting the deep root system well contained, soaked his handkerchief in the brook and carefully nestled the plant in moss to take home to Mother for planting on the shady side of our house in Chilco. She, too, was thrilled – what



**Yellow violets**

Photo by Marilyn George

a sweet gift, after all! She planted it in the dappled shade of a couple of Aspens – apropos to the site from which they came, and they lived and spread for our remaining years there.

A color variation of the purple violet (*Viola purpurea*), the yellow violets are not seen as often as their more fragrant relation, but are still more easily found than the rarer white *Viola beckwithii*, which generally prefers drier, more gravelly sites. All three can be found in our area, however, often unexpectedly.

All species of the wild *Viola* are edible, and while the yellow has an elegant charm on a frosted cake, the richly fragrant purple actually tastes like it smells! Perfect for desserts (as well as tiny bouquets in mini-vases; toothpick holders or egg-cups work well!). Candy them for use on cakes and cookies, or use them as is to add beauty and unique flavor to summer’s green salads. The leaves are edible too, and can also be used for tea.

If you make the trek along the Pend Oreille Divide from Lunch Peak to Pend Oreille Peak you will see a downward trail to the right that leads to Lake Darling. If you follow that trail, as I did years ago, you’ll come eventually to a shady, moist area surrounding a bog that holds (or used to, at any rate) clumps of purple violets among mossy rocks. There were vestiges of Skunk Cabbage in the bog, as I recall. If you find them, let me know!

Sometimes, out in the wilderness, the “bigness” of it all – the great rocks, tree-filled canyons, far-reaching views, and often grueling trails – take our minds and attention away from the small, inconspicuous, precious things. Look down, now and then, at what’s hiding beside the path, so you don’t overlook the “prettiest gift of all.”

### **Salamanders, from page 7**

volunteers would make a tremendous difference in this study! It is very easy to search for salamanders while having a day (or night) of outdoor, family fun.

Biologist Shannon Ehlers recalls her experience searching for salamanders. “One of the best times I have ever had in the field was stalking salamanders on cold, rainy winter nights in Northern Ohio. It may seem miserable from the outside but walking around the woods looking for the slightest movement in the forest duff made me feel like a true predator. I cannot wait to search for salamanders again!”

Starting in April, on rainy days, there will be opportunity for volunteers to go out and search for the CDA salamander. These salamanders are generally found near streams, wet areas, vernal pools, and moist areas such as ditches. They come above

ground when it is the most damp such as during rain events and at night, so get ready for a new, fun, experience.

It could be an amazing experience for you to find a CDA salamander and know for the rest of your life that you have made a valuable contribution to the scientific knowledge of your community. Anyone can participate in science. Anyone can help to better understand the world right outside our doors. So come on and **“See what’s out there...”**

Send us an e-mail at [volunteer4mbi@gmail.com](mailto:volunteer4mbi@gmail.com) with your contact information if you are interested in volunteering. There are a variety of opportunities; indoors, out, night, day, physical, digital, etc.

Please like Multi-species Baseline Initiative on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (Species Inventory MBI /@ MBI Species) for more information about volunteering: <https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/content/baseline>





## Owls, from page 1

Males and females are similar in appearance, though females may be slightly larger. The diet consists mainly of small mammal with a few birds and insects. Boreals in our study areas exhibited a preference for microtis species or Red backed voles.

We found these owls inhabiting mainly high elevation spruce – fir forests between 3,800 feet to 6,800 feet elevation, with a component of mixed coniferous forest and lodgepole pine with a slight tendency toward northern and eastern aspects. The predominant mating/territorial call usually exhibits an ascending and descending series of “toot, toot, toot, toot” notes given rapidly and varying in number. This call has been compared to a winnowing snipe. This particular species usually begins nesting in late March or early April. Most often the nests are in natural cavities, woodpecker holes, or broken off snags. The clutch size (number of eggs) is two to six; incubation lasts approximately 28 days. The young fledge (develop and leave nest) about 30 days post birth.

In our study areas, we (NW U.S. Researchers) theorized that these owls were both resident and migratory. In our calling experience, my partner Eric Schmidt and I noticed a couple of interesting tendencies. We noted some elevation related

mini – migrations during the mating/calling season from late January to about mid-March. We also were privileged to witness on a couple of occasions Boreal Owls perching near our trails, watching us curiously, mellow and not skittish at a safe distance. Blinking but patient. Heads turning, seemingly kind, mild, while still alert.

Latest research from an illustrator and a physician at Johns Hopkins University shows that owls can turn their heads 270 degrees in either direction. Gailloud and Mercado injected dye into the blood vessels of owls and used CT scans to study movement. They found that the vertebrae contain larger than normal canals and air sacks that cushion twisting motions, therefore allowing movement without damage to the arteries and enabling better blood flow to the brain.

On this particular frigid night, the stillness and quiet is mellowing. After several attempts at learning the art of calling the hard way, a faint sound of staccato notes finally reaches our ears. Then another, and still another. The strange music is alive. My partner and I turn to each other and smile. The Boreals have called to us, and we now know them. Loading the sleds to return to “civilization” we somewhat jokingly label the winnowing Boreal owl songs “The Call of the Mild.”

## Trail Talk: A trail to “nowhere” — Hamilton Gulch Trail #1019

### By Sandy Compton

There are in fact, a number of “dead-end” trails in the Scotchman Peaks, out and back hikes with a definite terminus beyond which the term “bush-whacking” is necessarily demonstrated nearly immediately. The bushes most often do the whacking, too. But many of these trails have their unique and significant destination. Scotchman Peak Trail #65 leads to the spectacular views from Scotchman itself. Regal Creek Trail #556 terminates at the abandoned Regal Creek Mine. Ross Creek Trail #142 stops at a very nice camp spot just below “the wall,” where the next step into the backcountry goes up a 100-percent slope just tall enough to make one wonder if hell is a mountainside. Trail #1019, however, just goes nowhere. Sort of.

A number of hopefuls over the decades since Granville Gordon first built this tread have used it in hopes of finding their way to the top of Billiard Table, which figures prominently in the view from a number of spots along the trail. Hamilton Gulch points directly at the mountain, in fact. The trail begins tantalizingly enough up that canyon from Dry Creek Trail #1020 an easy mile and a half south of its trail-head at the intersection of Dry Creek Road and Montana Highway 56. Alas, after climbing steadily through heavy timber (and past several good water sources), #1019 shies to the north and climbs to the top of the ridge between Hamilton Gulch and the South Fork of Dry Creek — and, poof, it's gone. Admittedly, there is a very nice view of Billiard Table from near where the trail disappears — just right over there at the top of some absolutely gnarly cliffs on the other side

of some more cliffs —but the blazes stop and so does any semblance of a cut tread, not that there is much of that for the last mile before “the end.” That last bit is hard to follow, at best, even if it does lead to the middle of nowhere.

Out in the middle of nowhere, though, is not such a bad place to be. From there, many things are possible. A couple of years ago, for instance, a group of us found our way from there to what has been tentatively dubbed Dead Weasel Lake, a little tarn much more beautiful than its name in a cliff-bound cirque a mile north and a little east of Billiard Table (and 1,100 feet below). The lake is the ultimate source of the south Fork of Dry Creek.

From the middle of nowhere to the lake is not easy going, mind you, for there are many bushes with which to be whacked, and an assortment of cliffy spots to lower packs down and talus slopes to be negotiated. But once there — a rough mile that took a couple of hours — the bench to the northeast of the lake offered a variety of good campsites, and the clarity of a spring seeping from a cliff above the lake made it well worth the extra trek for water. Add to that a full moon and the overwhelming and omnipresent silence of the place, and it was worth every whack getting there.

Our exit from the lake was not necessarily the best choice, as we determined that rather than return to the middle of nowhere, we would drop into Dry Creek. We were whacked by many bushes. And encountered some of that 100-plus percent slope prevalent in the stream cuts of the Cabinets.

*Continued on page 11*



# The Longest Walk

**By Carolyn Hidy**

Editor's note: In this article, a long-time Friend of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness shares important information for those of us who hike with our dogs. Carolyn was a wildlife biologist with the Forest Service in Trout Creek until 1996. She was a reporter with the Sanders County Ledger for about a year and a half, leaving to home school one of her sons for a year. Realizing that even some grown men can't open wolf traps, she researched what tools she would need if her own dog was caught in one of them.

The longest walk you ever take with your dog may not be all that far. It might be just out your back door.

Any walk can become the longest ever when your dog gets caught in a trap. Suddenly your peaceful, playful day is rent with shrieks of pain and panic by your best bud. Minutes can feel like hours as you try to release him.

Many traps can be opened by hand. Web videos are available to explain how to open snares, conibears, and furbearer leghold traps.

However, wolf trapping has created a new situation. Traps designed to capture wolves can be much too strong for those of us weighing less than 200 pounds to release, and you will need tools to increase your leverage.

When a dog is caught in a leghold trap, he will probably start biting frantically at the painful metal clamped on his leg, breaking teeth and endangering the person trying to free him. Take your coat or shirt and place the sleeve over his snout. This may help calm him and can protect you from being bitten. Then figure out what trap you're dealing with.

There are two kinds of wolf leghold traps: coil spring and long spring. There are two popular **coil springs**: Bridger, and MB-750. Different trap openers ("setters") are sold for each one. Both types give you a pair of handles that grip the trap and increase your leverage for opening it. Check out [www.scotchmanpeaks.org](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org) for a copy of this article that includes photos of both the Bridger and MB-750 traps and setters (or openers) sold for each with specific directions for opening the traps. Many backpackers and hikers like to minimize the weight they carry. What's the minimum you can carry that will allow you to open both coil spring types? Your best bet may simply be a pair of vice grips to grab hold of the side levers and pry them open. If you want to go light, we have

developed an opener made of angle aluminum, which you can contact me about ([hidys@blackfoot.net](mailto:hidys@blackfoot.net)).

The second type of leghold trap is the **long spring**. Again, the smaller sized ones can usually be opened by standing on the springs beside the jaws. However, wolf-sized long springs can be too stiff for someone under 200 pounds to compress the springs with his or her weight.

Trapping suppliers sell setters that work well, but they are long and may be awkward in your pack. (This type of setter is also pictured in the full article on our website.) You need just one setter; compress one spring at a time, and hold it down with a U-bolt, or a clip. Make sure you get one for a wolf trap, as the smaller ones won't work on this size.

A good alternative available at your hardware store is a trigger-type C-clamp, and a U-bolt:

A regular screw-type C-Clamp is difficult to get to grip onto the springs, so the trigger type is superior.

### Important:

Get the dog to a veterinarian as quickly as possible, even if it's not bleeding, to check for fractured bone.

If the trap has severed a major blood vessel, removing it could cause the dog to bleed to death. Be prepared to cover the cut with sterile dressing and press firmly on it to help stop the bleeding. If blood soaks through the dressing, do not remove it. Instead, add more layers of gauze or cloth and keep applying pressure until the bleeding subsides. If the bleeding has not stopped after 5 minutes, tie a sports bandage or other soft material around the dressing to make sure it does not come off. (<http://www.vetinfo.com/first-aid-dog-bleeding.html>).

If you can't get the trap open, get your dog – with trap attached – into a vet's office as soon as possible.

Wolf trapping season ends in Montana February 28 and in Idaho March 31, along with many furbearer trapping seasons.

However, coyotes can legally be trapped any time of year, and you may also encounter traps accidentally left behind or illegally set.

It may be discomfoting to think about your dog getting caught in trap, but it happens to someone's dog every year. A tool kit and dog first aid kit in your car or pack can help your buddy be able to walk with you again.



**Coil spring**



**Long spring**



**Trigger type C-clamp and U-bolt**



## Scotchman Rocks: Idaho Revealed

By **Mark McFadden, PhD**

Most of the Idaho Cabinet Range between the Clark Fork River and the Canadian border is composed of rocks assigned to the Prichard Formation of the Belt-Purcell Supergroup. As the name implies, a Supergroup is certainly large in scale; the Belt consists of layered, slightly metamorphosed sand and mud in a stack up to 10 miles thick that came to rest in the area of northern Idaho, western Montana, and adjacent Washington and Canada approximately 1.5 to 1.4 billion years ago. Both the huge outcrop area and the immense thickness provide geologists a real challenge in determining their location within this enormous layer cake of ancient rock.

Stratigraphic units of Supergroup scale are certainly unwieldy, and must be subdivided based upon their characteristics into smaller parts so that geologists can effectively work out the geologic history recorded in stone. Supergroups are divided into Groups, and Groups are subdivided into Formations, the fundamental units of the study of layered rocks. In common parlance, many people refer to rock arches, spires, cliffs or countless other rock features as “formations”, but to geologists, a formation is a very distinct unit of layered rock with well-defined upper and lower boundaries. Formally designated formations can be remarkably thin in some strata, but the Prichard



**Rocks of the Prichard Formation in the Idaho Cabinets are typically iron stained on weathered surfaces. This outcrop consists of banded (laminated) fine-grained siltite and dark agillite overlying more massive quartzite beds. The layers are irregular because of soft-sediment deformation as wet sediment was compacted and contorted shortly after the sand and mud was deposited.**

Photo by Mark McFadden

Formation is a heavyweight in its own right and is an impressive part of the vast Belt rocks.

The Prichard Formation is more than three miles thick in the panhandle of northern Idaho, and is the lowest, and therefore oldest, unit within the Belt-Purcell Supergroup. It is overlain by rocks of the Ravalli Group, the Piegan Group, and the Missoula Group at the top of the Belt-Purcell Supergroup. Most stratigraphic units such as formations and groups are named after good locations where the rocks are well-exposed or were first studied. Names such as the Helena and Wallace formations have obvious origins; the Prichard was named for exposures in the Coeur d'Alene mining district in Idaho.

The tremendous thickness of the Prichard Formation is commonly subdivided into a number of informal members, some of which are distinct even to the casual observer. The fine and even millimeter-scale black and white laminated siltites visible in outcrop on the south side of Scotchman Peak from the trail-head up to about 5200 feet in elevation belong to a unit known as Prichard unit “H” in a long list of alphabetically designated sub-units. In contrast to many of the brighter green, tan, and red rocks of higher parts of the Belt, the Prichard in its understated gray and iron-stained drab outcrops really looks like it represents the basement of time in this part of the world!

### **Wolverine, from page 2**

And then there's the always exciting role of being a “Beaver Cleaver.” Phil Degens, Brad Smith, and Sandy Compton took on the rather messy job of preparing the bait. They cut the sixty pound beavers into more manageable thirty pound beaver halves. They also prewired the beavers and pregustoad the sponges so that when the volunteers arrived to pick up their bait they had nice neat packages. Their efforts made things much smoother in the field!

There are many more stories, and I wish I could list all the heroic efforts of our volunteers, but I'd fill up the whole newsletter! It's been absolutely amazing to me the number of folks who've turned out this year to continue the search for the elusive wolverine. The dedication of the people involved in this project demonstrates just how much they care about the area and the species they share it with. I'm incredibly honored to be working with such a talented, tenacious, and intrepid group of volunteers

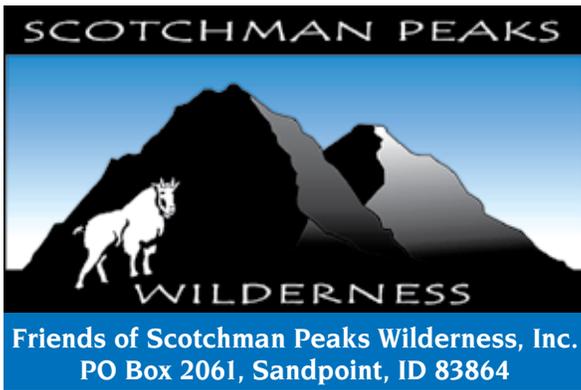
Thank you Wolverine Watch!!

### **Trail Talk from page 9**

The party split when we encountered the old logging road web in Dry Creek. The majority determined to follow out the road and the minority determined to follow the fall line out to where the negotiable road now ends near where the North and South Forks come together.

The fall line followers “won,” by about 20 minutes, but neither party had a good time of it. It was agreed that next time we hike to the middle of nowhere on #1019, we shall return by the same route.

What we learned on that trip was really a reminder of what we all knew already, that no trail really leads “nowhere,” especially in wilderness. There is always “somewhere” to go, even once you get to the end of the blazes.



## 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 56, Highway 200, Lightning Creek Road, and Rattle Creek/Keeler Road surround this 88,000 acre scenic area which straddles the Idaho and Montana border. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Donation enclosed (optional). Donations are tax deductible.  
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### Board Members & Staff:

CHAIR/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:  
 Phil Hough, Sagle, ID  
 (208) 946-9127  
*phil@scotchmanpeaks.org*

VICE-CHAIRMAN &  
 MONTANA DIRECTOR:  
 Doug Ferrell, Trout Creek, MT  
 (406) 827-4341  
*doug@scotchmanpeaks.org*

VICE-CHAIRMAN &  
 IDAHO DIRECTOR:  
 Carol Jenkins, Sagle, ID  
 (208) 265-9204  
*carol@scotchmanpeaks.org*

SECRETARY:  
 Sarah Lundstrum,  
 Whitefish, MT  
 (406) 755-6304  
*sarah@scotchmanpeaks.org*

TREASURER:  
 Jacob Styer, Sandpoint, ID  
 (828) 989-8095  
*jacob@scotchmanpeaks.org*

EAST BONNER  
 COUNTY DIRECTOR:  
 Neil Wimberley, Hope, MT  
 (208) 264-5379  
*neil@scotchmanpeaks.org*

Bill Martin, Troy, MT  
 (406) 295-5258

Will Valentine, Sagle, ID  
 (208) 255-1114  
*will@scotchmanpeaks.org*

LINCOLN COUNTY COORDINATOR  
 Molly Kieran, Troy, MT  
 (406) 293-2934  
*molly@scotchmanpeaks.org*

PROGRAM COORDINATOR:  
 Sandy Compton, Heron, MT  
 (208) 290-1281  
*sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:  
 Ann Wimberley, Hope, ID  
 (208) 264-5379 *ann@scotchmanpeaks.org*