

SCOTCHMANS

Continued from Page 4

Hough was recently awarded the highest honor of environmental activism by the Idaho Conservation League.

"Phil is one in a million," says Jim Mellen, of Sagle, an avid climber of Scotchman Peaks. "He's the perfect guy, gets out there himself and has the drive and knowledge."

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life." — John Muir, one of the first modern preservationists

More than 25 named peaks and ridges are within the proposed wilderness area, including the crown jewel, Scotchman Peak, nestled at 7,009 feet and offering majestic panoramic views. The topography is diverse, including the Ross Creek Cedars, a rainforest and glacial rock outcroppings.

It remains remarkably pristine and remote, part of the allure that draws people. Mountain goats, deer, elk, moose, and bears are merely some of the indigenous wildlife.

Mellen, who has climbed Scotchman Peak more than 20 times, once took an aquatic biologist along with him. After doing a water study, they found the water was about as pure as pure can get. Mellen prefers hiking it in the winter, able to not only go more places, but to ski or snowboard down from the top.

"The interior is inaccessible," says Mellen of the wilderness. "You can look at the landscape and say it's es-



—Photo courtesy FRIENDS OF SCOTCHMAN PEAKS

A hiker takes advantage of a Scotchman Peaks trail.

entially unchanged since the last ice age 6,000 years ago."

"Our modern industrial economy takes a mountain covered with trees, lakes and streams, and turns it into a mountain of junk, garbage, slime pits and debris." — Edward Abbey, author

Its remoteness and difficult access remain Scotchman Peaks' best defense against the logging and mining industries which might otherwise have moved in already. While those threats are not as imminent, the need for designation still exists.

"The threat comes from the possibility of the part of the future that we can't see today," says Hough, noting how development has enveloped places people would never have imagined 30 years ago. "In a world where our populations are ever-increasing, the threat to the environment will come from future development of some kind. The threat can nibble away at the edges until there is nothing left in the middle."

"Politics is the art of controlling your environment." — Hunter S. Thompson, author

Rather surprisingly, a Sonoran Institute study looked at every county in

the western United States and found that the most diverse and vibrant economies had a direct correlation between protected public lands and economic vitality. Quality of life is a major force in driving the economy of the new West, and national parks and wilderness areas are a large part of that.

"It's good for the environment, good for the economy, good for the future," says Hough. "The reasons become more compelling as time goes on."

"It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment." — Ansel Adams, photographer

When asked to provide a synopsis of what role politics plays in Scotchman achieving designation, Hough laughed and said there is a two-day answer, a two-hour answer and a two-minute answer. He opted for the two-minute answer.

In short, while the process is inherently political, its success hinges on building enough support to demand attention. Politicians also tend to act incrementally, swayed heavily by the wants and needs of their con-

stituents.

It takes an act of Congress to designate a wilderness area, and it takes another act of Congress to undo that designation. With a new session of Congress slated for 2009, Hough doesn't believe it's overly-optimistic to think it might happen.

"The message starts to filter down, people say 'I get it, there is value to the land,'" says Hough, adding that Congress has always been bipartisan in regards to wilderness. "If enough people say it, congressmen tend to take notice."

"We shall require a substantial new manner of thinking if mankind is to survive." — Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist

Unlike financial or political mistakes, damage to the environment is infinitely more difficult to undo. Each day, more and more natural environment is somehow gouged into, leaving less and less of the pristine land our ancestors knew — land our children will never know.

More than 1,500 people have pledged support for the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness since its inception. The bulk of those reside in Bonner and Kootenai counties, with many from Montana and Washington. All told, 37 different states and four countries are represented, folks intent on keeping a natural beauty as it is, and as it should remain.

"It assures the value of land as wilderness to continue on," explains Hough. "To pass this legacy on to future generations."

Anyone interested in becoming a Friend of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness can send a tax deductible donation to Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, P.O. Box 2061, Sandpoint, Idaho, 83864, or sign up at "www.scotchmanpeaks.org."

Deli
Soda Fountain
Catering
Ice Cream
Sugar Free, Too!



OWEN'S DELI

Corner of 4th & Washington
Newport (509) 447-3525

827166-0402

**PROGRESS IN PURCHASING
A QUALITY PRE-OWNED VEHICLE**

Financing
Available

Trades
Welcome

Reynolds
Auto Sales

815 Hwy 2
Sandpoint

by
Dubs

Deal directly with the owners.

255-5945

Get auto-check history reports on each vehicle.

WWW.REYNOLDSAUTOSALESONLINE.COM

450672S-0329