



# PEAK EXPERIENCE

The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness  
Volume 2, Number 2 • March/April, 2006



## Wild Creatures of the Scotchmans

By Doug and Mindy Ferrell

One glamorous creature of the Scotchmans is the Bull Trout, *Savelinus confluentus*. Last September Phil Hough and Carol Jenkins made a dramatic discovery of some very big fish in a very small stream. They were spawners who had apparently been stranded by low water in the upper reaches of Thunder Creek, in a high bowl between Twin and Drift Peaks. The backs of the fish were literally sticking out of the water. When Phil returned in October the fish were gone, apparently flushed down after some good fall rains.

Protected places like the Scotchmans are very important to bull trout, which are threatened with extinction. The fish have disappeared from California and much of their former ranges, and are considered secure in only 2 percent of the stream sections they inhabit in Montana. Bull trout are extremely sensitive to habitat degradation and are considered excellent indicators of water quality. They have also suffered from hybridization and competition from brook trout, rainbows and other non-native species.

Non-migratory forms of the bull trout spend their entire lives in relatively small tributary streams. Some migratory forms live



**Bull Trout**

Photo courtesy Michael Healy

in lakes or rivers as adults, and move up to small tributaries to spawn. Adults can get very large, as big as three feet long and 32 pounds.

Clean gravels with upwelling ground water are critical for spawning. Complex

habitat, characterized by a variety of pools, riffles and water depths and velocities, is important to meet the seasonal needs of all age classes of bull trout. Long spawning migrations make habitat connectivity important. Grazing, logging and road building tend to elevate water temperatures and cause sedimentation of spawning gravels as well as loss of stream habitat structure and overhead vegetative cover. The eggs are laid into gravel in the

*Continues on following page*

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](mailto:nowhere_man97@hotmail.com) to donate.

We also need an outdoor booth cover and two tables for our booth, preferably 4-6 feet in length and lightweight. Please contact Jan Griffitts at (208)265-4380 or [jan@looptravel.com](mailto: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.*

## Along the Trail

The Banff Mountain Film Festival goes on tour, bringing the best of mountain sports and culture to the big screen, a memorable experience for the avid adventurer and the armchair enthusiast alike. This year's tour spent 4 nights in North Idaho with stops in Sandpoint and Coeur d'Alene. The Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness was proud to be part of the experience. We set up information tables in the lobby each night, handed out brochures, talked wilderness to folks, swapped tales of our own adventures, sold some t-shirts and added many new names to the list of our supporters!

Phil Hough and Carol Jenkins presented a program to the Sandpoint Garden Club on Tuesday evening, February 28. The program consisted of a beautiful photographic overview of the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Of particular interest to Garden Club members were the stunning photos of the native plants found in the mountains and meadows of the Scotchmans. Carol spoke for the group, expressing a desire for spring in order to get out into the garden and into the mountains.

## We Need To Protect Our Wildlife

*By Earl A. Chapin*

Many birds that were common in this area 50 years ago are quite hard to find today. Most of this is due to loss of habitat. We need to do everything we can do to keep our birds, fish and wildlife from disappearing from this area.

Fifty years ago there were a lot of Mountain Bluebirds in the fields and clearings of Bonner and Boundary counties. House wrens were common and nested in our yards. We could walk the high country and see several Blue Grouse in a day. I can remember walking the 20 miles of the 120 trail from Trestle Peak to Clark Fork and seeing a dozen or more Blue Grouse. The last time I walked that trail, I didn't see a grouse. Blue Grouse were also common in Scotchman Peaks.

I have never hunted wildfowl, but if it were not for the duck hunters our duck population would be in trouble. Starting in 1934, duck and goose hunters were required by the government to purchase a Migratory Wildfowl stamp. The cost was one dollar for a stamp. Today the price of a stamp is \$15. Most of this money is spent on purchasing nesting areas in Canada and Alaska. This has maintained an excellent waterfowl population in the U.S. Thanks to the duck hunters.

## Wild Creatures of the Scotchmans... *Continues from previous page*

stream bottom, and too much sediment can literally suffocate the embryos in their eggs. Live fish are incredibly beautiful, with vivid colors. Identifying marks include olive green to brown coloration with dark red sides and red or light colored spots. During spawning there is often a white streak on the front of the fins from the pectoral to the anal fin. They have a slightly forked tail. Bull trout have no dark mark on the upper or dorsal fin, and this is probably the most reliable way to identify the species. If you are fishing and happen to catch one, release it immediately. It is illegal to keep one, and bull trout need all the help we can give them.



## Peak Views

### Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Snowshoe Hikes Winter 2006 Schedule

#### 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](mailto:neilwim@yahoo.com) to sign up.

#### 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](mailto:nowhere_man97@hotmail.com) to sign up.

**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](mailto:mwanw@wildmontana.org) to sign up.

## Trail(s) of the Month

By Phil Hough

The question often comes up about where to go hiking in the Scotchmans. The calendar of summer and winter group hikes offered by the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness is a great place to begin for an introduction to hiking in the Scotchmans. But for some people these schedules aren't when, or where, they really want to go. Or, they might prefer the solitude which wilderness provides best when not part of a group. For such intrepid hikers we offer the following suggestions, insights and resources.

The best hiking guidebook to the general area is “*Trails of the Wild Cabinets*”, which includes information about several hikes in the Scotchmans.

In the near future our website's hiking section will be expanded to include details on several of the most popular hikes including access to trailheads so you can more easily plan your own hiking adventure in the Scotchmans.

The Scotchman Peaks area is rugged country defined by steep mountains. Creeks are often clogged with boulders and thick stands of alder. Most trails are fairly short and steep, going quickly to high ridges or prominent peaks. They are ideally suited for “out and back in one day” experiences such as a hike up the “namesake” Scotchman Peak itself. Other popular peaks include Spar Peak and East Fork Peak. Star Peak has several routes to its

top allowing for interesting loops and combinations. The trip to Little Spar Lake follows the lovely Spar Creek Valley. Other lower elevation trails follow Morris Creek, East Fork Creek or Regal Creek. The Ross Creek Cedars Scenic area sits at the Scotchman's edge beckoning the avid hiker to explore further into the depths of the wilderness.

Spar Lake makes a very nice destination for an overnight hike. Another option for multiple days is to “car camp” along the East Fork



Hiking the spine of the Scotchman

Photo courtesy Phil Hough

Road just outside the recommended wilderness and use that as a base for a couple of different day hikes into the Scotchmans. Otherwise, finding flat areas with water suitable for camping can be a challenge in this rocky rugged terrain. But there are special, hidden places awaiting those interested in multiple day “cross-country” hikes beyond the confines of a trail. These rewards only go to individuals who are prepared physically and mentally. Bushwhacking is not easy. Off trail adventures abound but are suggested only for experienced hikers with good stamina and good gear and for those who are truly self-sufficient.



## From the Top

Winter brought disappointments for the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness: little snow for snowshoeing, disappointment over the “wildlands” designation in the Kootenai National Forest, and postponement of our planned State of the Scotchmans because of the delay in the release of the draft forest plan. As buds begin to swell in anticipation of spring, our hopes swell with the recent endorsements for wilderness designation for the Scotchmans and our growing list of friends. Here’s to Spring Fever.

*Ann Wimberley*

## What Grows There

*By Jon Burkhart*

A spring walk in the deep forests of the Cabinets can often result in the pleasant discovery of large white mushrooms which look a lot like the coral that grows in the oceans. These will usually be three to ten inches across and are quite easily spotted even in the shade of the large conifers under which they tend to grow. This is the Yellow Coral Mushroom. The stem and most of the mushroom is pure white but the branches will be creamy yellow. They do



**Yellow Coral Mushroom or *Ramaria Rasilispora***

*Photo courtesy fungus@fungajungle.org*

Others mention that they are good used raw in salads. In the logging camp we fried them in a cast iron pan which caused them to turn purplish black. Not very attractive but it didn’t seem to affect the flavor. Maybe it was the old bacon grease in the pan that caused this phenomenon. I don’t know.

There are many types of coral mushrooms, none of which are dangerously toxic but some of the fall corals should be avoided. As mentioned above the yellow coral is a spring mushroom, usually found in May. It is written that some people (1 in 10) have experienced a laxative effect but I don’t know of anyone who has had a problem with them. As with any wild mushroom always eat a small amount in your first setting. This is extremely difficult to do with one of nature’s bounties such as this particular Cabinet Mountains treasure.

## The Future Looks Bright

Radical Reels (the “Faster, Steeper, Higher, Deeper!” version of the Banff Film Festival) will be at the Panida in Sandpoint for one night, Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. The Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness will also return for more community outreach. Come down, buy a sweatshirt and join us for some fun!

## 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](mailto:jan@looptravel.com)

or Phil Hough at 255-2780 or [nowhere\\_man97@hotmail.com](mailto:nowhere_man97@hotmail.com)

In Hope/East Hope/ Clark Fork, contact Neil or Ann Wimberley at [neilwim@yahoo.com](mailto:neilwim@yahoo.com) or [afwim@yahoo.com](mailto:afwim@yahoo.com)

In Montana, contact Doug Ferrell at [mferrell@yahoo.com](mailto:mferrell@yahoo.com)



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# *the* Sanders County **Ledger**

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Thursday, January 12, 2006 • THOMPSON FALLS, MT

## ***Our viewpoint***

### ***Scotchman Peaks offers grand wilderness addition***

We're a strong proponent of multiple use of our forests and public lands and don't like to see lands tied up or restricted on a long-term basis.

But there's an exception to our protectionism that we'll accept for the lands proposed for the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

Here, a group of dedicated supporters are asking for the federal designation of 88,000 acres of high elevation federal land that straddles the Montana/Idaho border in western Montana and Sanders and Lincoln counties.

The roadless expanse has been managed as a defacto wilderness area since 1987 and for years before that, because the area offered no economical opportunities for resource extraction, the area has evaded development and occupation. Now, the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness want to see the protection the area has enjoyed, be a permanent entitlement.

And we would agree.

Just as areas around Thompson Falls have evaded man's activities, and offer solitude and undisturbed landscapes, the Scotchman Peaks area is one of those treasured wild lands. And while we would not necessarily recommend

the same eternal protection for all undisturbed roadless areas, the Scotchman Peaks area is worthy of that mantle.

The area encompasses one of the highest landscapes in north Idaho and offers some of the most rugged country of western Montana. One mountaineer compared his experience in the area to that of exploring Mount Everest. John Roskelley said hiking in the Scotchman Peaks is like "walking into heaven."

We like to see multiple use areas with more accessibility, but there's also a need for areas with amenities that require an effort to reach.

Scotchman Peaks is one of those areas. It requires a hike to get into, but then once there, it's an area that won't be soon forgotten.

Lots of areas have received protection through the management of the Forest Service and other agencies and we fully expect them to remain that way for years to come, even without formal protection. That's fine and we would expect a continuance of that management.

But in the case of Scotchman Peaks, it's a special area that earns special protection.

We would join those in urging the formal designation of the area as the next wilderness area of Montana and Idaho.



## Birds Found on the Scotchman Peaks

### Ruffed Grouse, Spruce Grouse and Blue Grouse

By Earl A. Chapin

Beside the rare White Tailed Ptarmigan, we have three grouse species in North Idaho. They are quite tame and easy to approach, easy to hunt and good to eat. Like many bird species, they are also declining in numbers.

The Ruffed Grouse is the most common and widespread and weighs 1.3 pounds. It prefers dense areas of aspen, birch and alder and is usually found in damp areas below 4,000 feet in elevation. In breeding season the male drums to attract the females by standing on a log and beating his wings in a forward and upward direction, against the log. Females have one brood and lay from 8 to 12 eggs. Adults eat 80% buds, leaves, flowers and seeds, and 20% insects. The Ruffed Grouse winters by diving into the snow and tunneling an area out of the wind.

The Spruce Grouse is our smallest grouse, weighing just 1 pound. This bird prefers dense, large growth forest and is usually found in very wet areas near small mountain streams and alder thickets above 4,000 feet. The male calls the female with low pitched hoots, while strutting and spreading his tail and sometimes drumming his wings. Females lay from 6 to 9 eggs. The diet is mostly spruce, fir and cedar buds and needles. When alarmed the grouse "freeze" in trees and have earned the name "fool hen".

The Blue Grouse is twice the size of the other grouse, weighing 2.3 pounds. It prefers high, dry country such as Scotchman Peak. The males hoot and grunt quite loudly to attract the females and are easily heard. The Blue Grouse often has a bluish, gray color, thus getting its name. Females have one brood and lay 7 to 10 eggs. Diet is mostly needles, with some fruit and in winter it is almost entirely needles.



**Spruce Grouse.**

*Photo courtesy Earl Chapin*

## 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](mailto:nowhere_man97@hotmail.com)

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

## Thanks for Help from our Friends

We would like to give a big thank you to Michael Boge and Mountain Fever Productions who annually bring the Banff Mountain Film Festival and Radical Reels to North Idaho and who allowed us to be part of this exciting experience.

## Check Out the Shirts on Our Website

<b>T-shirt</b> (Scotchman blue) . . . . .	\$15	Outlets are Outdoor Experience in Sandpoint and The Hope Market Café in Hope.
<b>Long-sleeved T-shirt</b> (black) . . . . .	\$25	
<b>Sweatshirt</b> (black) . . . . .	\$35	
<b>Hooded sweatshirt</b> (black) . . . . .	\$40	
<b>Zippered hooded sweatshirt</b> (black) .	\$45	For out of the area orders, contact: <a href="mailto:info@scotchmanpeaks.org">info@scotchmanpeaks.org</a> .

All proceeds benefit our wilderness preservation efforts.



## Tales of Scotchman

**A Question for the Scotchman** *By Todd Dunfield*  
Assistant Director of CCASL/Gonzaga University  
Spokane Mountaineer & Eagle Scout

I first went hiking in the Proposed Scotchman Peak Wilderness area in 2000 with a few friends from Gonzaga University. The 4,000 ft elevation gain of Scotchman Peak made it seem like a worthy challenge, and I was also drawn by the fact that it was just two hours outside Spokane. That hike did more than just show how out of shape I was; it turned me onto the outdoors again after a long absence from my days as a boy scout. Since that first hike, I have done hundreds of other hikes and find great satisfaction in the outdoors. I have climbed Scotchman Peak approximately 25 times, and every trip has been a special and life-enriching event.

During Graduate School at Seattle University I served as an advisor to the outdoor recreation club. One year, I proposed to the students that we drive all the way to North Idaho and backpack to the summit of Scotchman Peak because I missed that forest so much. The students had a great time glissading down the upper reaches of the mountain and were thrilled at not seeing another hiker in our three days of solitude. We left our local Cascade Mountains and drove 6 hours because of the uniqueness and wonder of the Proposed Scotchman Peak Wilderness. That weekend tradition has continued every year since.

I have climbed this mountain and the surrounding mountains in all sorts of weather and seasons. I have taken groups of students from Gonzaga University and Seattle University there for their first foray into snow camping, and every time they love it. While on the summit I have been in whiteouts and come within feet of mountain goats. All of these memories increase my love for the outdoors.

My wife and I recently welcomed our first child into the world. And now I am concerned that he will never have the opportunity to climb up the same steep hill when he comes of age as a hiker. This life-changing event increases my desire for preservation. I hope to explore the Scotchmans in the coming years with my son in his baby backpack and my wife hiking beside me. I also dream of rock climbing the steep north face of Scotchman Peak with my climbing buddies from Spokane

During my winter trips I have met snowmobiles on the road to the trailhead and endured their exhaust and constant noise. It is inevitable that more and more people will find this gem tucked between Idaho and Montana and utilize it for all sorts of recreation. The question is what regulations will protect the land from the beating of humans?



**Looking ahead to Savage Mountain**

*Photo courtesy Phil Hough*

## Endorsements

**Bonner County Commissioners:** In their recent letter to Idaho's Governor, Dirk Kempthorne, regarding management of roadless areas, the Bonner County Commissioners wrote:

"The Commission further supports the designation and management of the Scotchman's Peak Wilderness Area. Its steep slopes, remote valleys, grizzly bear habitat and possession of the highest point in Bonner County all support inclusion as wilderness."

**INPS:** Both the Idaho Native Plant Society as well as its local, Sandpoint based Kinnikinnick Chapter have endorsed the following resolution: Resolution Supporting the Proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Area

"The Idaho Native Plant Society recognizes the need to protect contiguous and intact ecosystems, retaining their natural state, in order to ensure the continued health and survival of native flora. Therefore we encourage and support local, state and federal representatives to act in favor of the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Designating the Scotchman Peaks as wilderness protects the natural beauty, the unique qualities and the biodiversity of this special place, offering safe harbor for many rare and endangered species and their habitats."



## Scotchman Rocks

By Bill Martin

When I began this series, I pointed out that geological knowledge is by no means rock solid; that our understanding of what has happened over time is changing all the time. In the last issue, I said that this issue's article would be about how the mountains got here. That's changed. I've realized that I was skipping over way too many millennia, and if I don't slow down, I'll quickly be up to the present, with nothing left to write.

We last left the future site of the Scotchmans as it was poking up out of the water, after being submerged for many hundreds of millions of years. It still had about 200 million years to go to get out of the Precambrian period and into the Cambrian, when life forms more interesting than algae appeared.



**Trilobite** (extinct marine arthropod fossilized in Paleozoic rocks) courtesy of Jon Burkhardt

I don't mean to disparage algae. It was due to the hard work of uncountable numbers of algal cells over billions of years that enough carbon dioxide was sequestered and enough oxygen produced to cool down the greenhouse effect and create a breathable atmosphere so that more complex life could get it on. There really should be a global algal appreciation day.

This place more or less kept its head above water until the early Cambrian period at the beginning of the Paleozoic era, about 570 million years ago. Paleozoic means "old life". There were some life forms more complex than algae around at the end of the Precambrian period: the ediacarids and the eozoons.

Sea level rose then and we went underwater again. In that water were trilobites and brachiopods, the first shellfish.

This having been a very busy place, geologically speaking, a great deal of the rock formed subsequent to the vast Precambrian deposits has been obliterated. There remain in our lower Clark Fork basin a few discrete Cambrian depositions containing the fossils of these creatures, about the exact locations of which I shall remain discreet.

NEXT: Mountains, but not the ones we've got now.

## Message from the Chair

Thanks to all of you, momentum has been building for the Scotchman Peaks to fulfill its wilderness potential! Our outreach at the Banff Film festival resulted in adding enough "friends" to our list of supporters that we now tip the scales at a little over 600 individuals. And, recently, the Sanders County Ledger, the Bonner County Commissioners and the Idaho Native Plant Society have all endorsed the concept of a Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Area!

While we are excited at these developments, now is not the time to rest. The KIPZ (Kootenai-Idaho Panhandle Forest Zone) forest plan revision process has delayed the release of the draft forest plan from February to April, at least. Possibly, it will be later. A 90-day public comment period will follow the plan's release. Once this plan is actually available for public review and comment, the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness will hold a meeting to review and discuss this plan with our supporters. Of course, we can't plan our meeting of

"friends" until we have an actual plan, in hand, to review. So, we are playing the "waiting game."

In the meantime, we would like to thank all of you who have written to various elected and appointed officials to express your concern about the Kootenai Forest's decision to eliminate "recommended wilderness" from their plan. Your comments have been heard and will help to make a difference. The KIPZ planning team has been sending out postcards to individuals who have submitted comments to let them know that the comments are "being read and shared with members of the planning team." We know that the current situation is not the "end of the road" and that the potential for changing this outrageous decision exists in both the draft and final plans. And we know that our collective voice(s) can make a difference in the final decision regarding wilderness.

*Phil Hough*

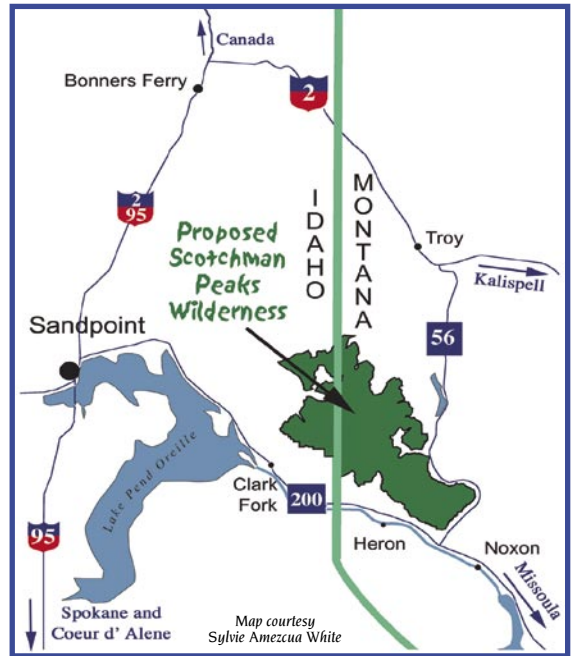




## How You Can Help

### 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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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**  
**PO Box 2061, Sandpoint, ID 83864**