

A full-page photograph of a mountain goat with white fur and small black horns, standing on a rocky outcrop. The goat is looking out over a deep, forested mountain valley. In the background, more mountain ranges are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The title 'PEAK EXPERIENCE' is overlaid at the top in large, orange, block letters. The letter 'A' in 'PEAK' is stylized with a white mountain peak shape inside it.

PEAK EXPERIENCE

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 3 • AUTUMN 2021

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scotchmanpeaks.org • [#savethewildscotchmans](https://twitter.com/savethewildscotchmans)

Wilderness: where the heart is

We all have those special places. For me, they are usually wild ones. They are the places where we leave a piece of our heart. My wife, Deb, and I call these our “happy places.” Places we go back to time and time again, to reconnect with the wild, with ourselves, and with the piece of our heart we left there. We might have more than one place, but the count is usually small because they are so special.

That piece of heart safeguards my connection to that special place.

“We might have more than one place, but the count is usually small because they are so special.”

Leaving a piece of my heart means that part of me is always there. Even if I never make it back I will feel the connection. Even many years down the road, or trail, there are places that tug at the heart, that bring back vivid memories.

Wild places stand out for me. Perhaps this is because in solitude and with few distractions, our attention is

fully focused on the place. We can recall the sounds, the smells, the lines of the landscape and colors. The changing clouds and light. We can feel the pulse of the earth and listen to its heartbeat. We are slowed down enough to be in touch with our own heartbeat as well.

I have my special Scotchman places. Some I have explored with others. Some I have enjoyed entirely on my own. And there are those that are so remote and rugged, they feel like places no one else knows about. We all need those places to find our personal connection to the wild.

As I recall these special places, many times the memories that come back are from late summer and early fall. After all, this is prime backpacking season. Even after all these years of hiking I still find new happy places. On a recent trip with Deb, I left another piece of my heart to do its work of grounding



Phil Hough

me there. Exactly where doesn't matter. But it's wild. And remote. And quiet. At least when we were there in late September.

“We all need those places to find our personal connection to the wild.”

Timing does matter. We went seeking solitude. We found it because we were willing to hike off-trail for a few days. We found it because, as Deb put it, “It's September and of course there's no one else is here, it's “friggin cold”. We found it because the landscape is still wild. It has been kept that way because people cared enough to set it aside as Wilderness.

And now it keeps a piece of my heart to connect me. I hope to get back there someday in person. But if I never do, I will still feel the connection. It's Wild, it's where my heart is.

-Phil Hough

Natural bonding



FSPW staffers get to know each other the best way possible: in the great outdoors.

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FSPW reaches 10,000th Friend Milestone

FSPW made our 10,000th Friend this summer! What does that mean? It means that since our beginnings in 2005, over 10,000 people have signed their name in support of keeping the Scotchmans wild. An overwhelming majority of these Friends are from Idaho and Montana, living in the communities surrounding the Scotchmans. They are bow hunters from Libby, back-country horsemen from Rathdrum, mountain bikers from Sandpoint, and everyone else in between.

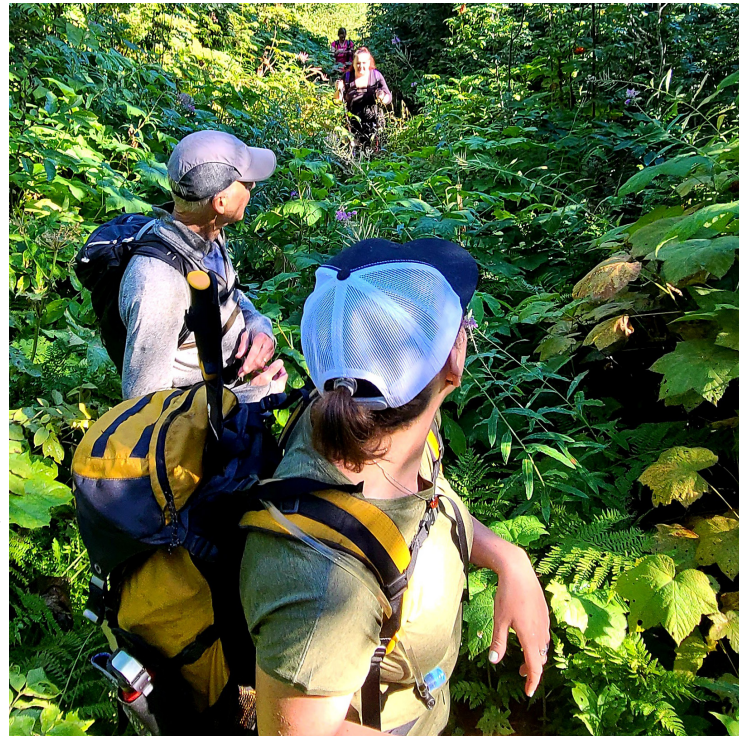
"I believe that our wild lands need protection, and I really love the idea of a community and volunteer driven grassroots collaboration"

FSPW's official 10,000th friend was Lesly Starling, resident of Libby, Montana. She's a mom to three adult children, one grandson, one funny

feline, and partner to her favorite hiking buddy, Brad Bechler. New to Lincoln County after twenty-one years in the Flathead, Lesly is stoked to spend quiet time in the great outdoors. As a nurse, she deeply values her time spent in nature as a source of rejuvenating self-care.

We asked Lesly why she became a Friend of the Scotchmans. Here's what she said: "I believe that our wild lands need protection and I really love the idea of a community and volunteer driven grassroots collaboration working towards that outcome."

Thank you to Lesly and the 999



Thanks to our Friends, FSPW can offer hikes, educate, and build trails.

other Friends for your support in keeping our backyard wild, rugged, and roadless.

Cori Callahan Hired as Program Coordinator



Cori Callahan

We are pleased to announce that we have hired Cori Callahan as Program Coordinator. She will be managing our outdoor education and trail stewardship programs from the Sandpoint office. With over 15 years of experience in outdoor education and trail building, we can't wait for

Cori to get started. She moved to the Sandpoint area in April but was born in eastern Oregon. She has spent most of her life exploring and working across

"With over 15 years of experience in outdoor education and trail building, we can't wait for Cori to get started."

Western landscapes. With a degree in Environmental Education, she has worked for multiple non-profits including Southwest Conservation Corps and

Outward Bound. She has a passion for helping people find joy in the more-than-human world.

When not working with people in the woods, Cori can be found exploring by bike and boat with her dog Spatula, or coloring and practicing yoga at home. **Come meet Cori in Sandpoint at our IPA Fundraiser on Wednesday, Nov. 17 from 6-8 pm.** There will be live music, a raffle, and a tap takeover. Most importantly, you'll get the chance to talk to Cori about her adventures across the West.

Voices in the Wilderness: Melanie Vining



Horse packers in Hells Canyon Wilderness

Cadence: the beat, time, or measure of rhythmical motion or activity.

OK, I had to look that up. I knew other words for it: rhythm, tempo, beat. But the definition eluded me. I have always loved the word cadence the best. It is just a beautiful word.

Last week, I took my horses and mules into the Hells Canyon Wilderness with an Idaho Trails Association volunteer youth trail crew. After what may qualify as the busiest summer I've had since the 2000 wildfire season, or maybe since the summer I had a toddler and a new baby at home, I relished three hours on the trail.

My saddle horse's hooves played first chair in the band, beginning with the hollow ringing of metal shoes on rocks, then the low thumping as the trail passed through deeper forest soils. Pack mules' hooves accompanied. The cadence of

"The cadence of the trail... puts Nature front & center"

the trail. The sound that makes life make sense to me, makes it slow down and puts Nature front and center, no matter the season or the time of day. The cadence of the trail is both slow and soothing, exciting and energizing.

Leaving twelve years with the Forest Service for a job with Idaho Trails Association (ITA) was scary. Leaving colleagues I trusted, job duties I knew by heart- it all spelled risk. It begged the question, "What if it doesn't work out?" or "What the heck am I doing?!" But then, here was the chance to make trails the center of my work universe. To make it a job requirement to find the cadence of the trail- and help others find it too. To

"We are united by our love of the backcountry, and the trails that allow us to find our perfect cadence."

make it possible for more people to walk, or ride, down more trails, their tempo uninterrupted by the unceremonious and clumsy scaling of logs or errant boulders.

This year has been for me, as one ITA Board member foretold, like "drinking from a fire hose". There is so much to learn about running a non-profit. So much to digest, from budget to project planning to outreach to fundraising. Fire hose indeed. The cadence of the first six months was akin to stampeding cattle.

Then I spent a week this spring in Hells Canyon with our Board and staff clearing the Bernard Creek trail. The cadence of my feet climbing the trail each day as we worked higher and higher, of my breath finding the right rhythm for the pitch. Looking back and seeing a dozen other people, most of whom I'd just met, embracing this trail as I was, caring for

it. Wow.

The April Hells Canyon trip was followed by a week in the Frank Church Wilderness with my youngest son, clearing trail with him and a mentor, the retired ITA executive director and one of its founders. We joined a crew that was led by a woman who worked on trails in "the Frank" for thirty years. She was now volunteering to teach her skills to others.

Time with these wonderful people and riding with my son, listening to our animals' hooves pass over trails that had been used for centuries, "What the heck am I doing?" was a mere faint echo replaced with "Look what I get to do!"

All told, I have been able to spend weeks in various wilderness areas this summer. I have been alone, with family (my wonderful husband volunteered one of his precious few days off as a wildland firefighter to hike in to deliver supplies to a youth crew just last weekend), and with friends, new and old. We are united by our love of the backcountry, and the trails that allow us to find our perfect cadence. Clomp clomp, scuffle, thud...ahhhh.

About the Author

Before becoming the Executive Director of Idaho Trails Association, Melanie Vining worked for the Forest Service in several roles, including smokejumper and hydrologist. She lives in Council, Idaho with her husband, teenage sons, and a growing four-legged family of horses, mules and dogs. Everyone in the family spends as much time outside as possible and loves calling Idaho home.



Adopt-a-trail Volunteer Spotlight: John Harbuck



John Harbuck, trail volunteer

This season, John was brave enough to adopt the gnarly but epicly beautiful East Fork Peak trail. As an Adopt-A-Trail volunteer, John elected to hit the trails on his own time, using equipment he rented from FSPW cache. With tools in hand and a heart full of love for the Scotchmans, John managed to clear 32 trees from

the trail in just one long day! Fewer tree crossings mean more members of our community can get out and explore the Scotchmans. We're so grateful for John's grit and dedication to keeping the Scotchmans wild and open for exploration.

Hike Leader Volunteer Spotlight: Jamilee Scheiwe

Jamilee has taken folks to almost every corner of the Scotchmans. In the summer, in the winter, in the rain, and through the smoke – Jamilee has been a brave and particularly enthusiastic hike leader.

In the last year, she led five hikes and even helped some people summit their first peak ever! Here's what she has to say about being a hike leader for FSPW:

"I lead hikes for FSPW as my way to help others get out into this amazing wilderness for the first time or the hundredth time. The best thing about these hikes is the connections we all make, experiences shared, lessons learned and laughs all the way around while we traverse the wilderness. Getting to see a fellow hiker experience a new area, new trail, or just a new season as a trail leader is the most rewarding thing."



Jamilee Scheiwe, hike leader

Trail Volunteer Spotlight: Perky Smith-Hagadone



Perky with other amazing trail volunteers

This was Perky's first season volunteering on the FSPW trail crew. Her enthusiasm for trail work and positivity was infectious. Every day she hit the trails, she made everyone's day brighter. Here's what she said about her first trail season:

"My friends, family and I have always hiked the mountains around Sandpoint and have a deep love for our wild places. Because of these feelings, I felt it was time to try and give back just a little bit. Working on the trails for Scotchman Peak this past summer was amazing. I learned a ton about crosscut saws, helped clear trees, and created some new tread. Besides that, I met so many incredible people who are doing the same. Can't wait until next summer!"

Tales from the Trails: A Staff Adventure

We went, we saw. Places in the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness that most people probably never will.

When Executive Director Phil Hough mentioned that we were going on a staff backpacking trip this summer I was stoked. As a new addition to the FSPW team and new to this particular Wilderness, I knew this excursion would be a unique opportunity to connect with my colleagues and this place.

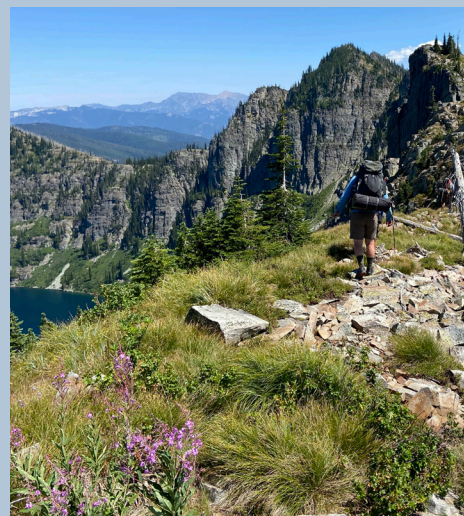
Unique turned out to be the key word.

"We talked about the meaning of life. We talked about Wilderness. We watched for the Buck Moon, bushwhacked through alders with a moose, and reviewed it all as an A+ over comfort food at the Halfway House."

One element I quickly noticed about our organizational culture is a cavalier reference to places no one else has ever heard of. For example, when I mentioned to a friend that we were going to camp at Heart Lake and Melissa Basin, he quickly retorted that those places were not on the map.

He was partially correct; those places are not specifically listed by those names on the map. But, they are places you can go if you know the right people. FSPW people, that is.

FSPW people like to hike off-trail. This is another element of our culture that I quickly became attuned to. After reaching our lunch spot on the first day of the journey, Phil motioned up towards an imposing ridge noting that it was one of our destinations.



It only takes three days and two nights to fall deeply in love with the Scotchmans.

We made it up Vertigo Ridge. We also made it up Scotchman No. 2. We made it down one of the steepest descents ever attempted with a pack into the Ross Creek drainage.

We talked about the meaning of life. We talked about Wilderness. We watched for the Buck Moon, bushwhacked through alders with a

moose, and reviewed it all as an A+ over comfort food at the Halfway House.

We spent three days straight together in the woods. In true Wilderness fashion, I think we all became uniquely part of things. Maybe you can convince one of us to take you. It's not on the map.

-Amy Rae Pearson

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Winter Tracks Returns to the Wild

Connecting with nature has the power to transform a child's life. Our kids have been cooped during the pandemic. Our online (but still hands-on) outdoor education last winter helped to fill some of the gaps. But this year, we're getting kids outside, having experiences that can ignite curiosity and a love for the woods.

We have been providing free winter outdoor education programs to local schools for the past five years. It's called Winter Tracks.

Students get to touch wolf pelts and beaver skulls, learn to identify trees and animal tracks, and navigate through the woods with just a map and compass. They get face-to-face time with our education volunteers who are experts in forestry, wildlife biology, and ecology. But most importantly, they get to experience the joy of being in our wild backyard in the wintertime - something many of our kids lack access to these days.

"I have also brought students up Scotchman's Peak each year for trail maintenance and as Goat Ambassadors, and it has become a cherished tradition for our school."

"We have participated in the Winter Tracks program for a few years, and the day flows beautifully with a variety of stations each being taught by knowledgeable



Students learn the essentials of wildlife identification in a past Winter Tracks outing.

volunteers," said Clark Fork High School teacher Becky Haag. "I have enjoyed the program so much that when I retire, I hope to be able to participate in the program as a volunteer!"

When covid hit, we developed a remote but still hands-on version of Winter Tracks. We put together G.O.A.T. boxes (Great Outdoors Accessibility and Teaching boxes) full of compasses, animal tracking kits, and fake scat, and delivered them to classrooms. Our volunteers taught over Zoom, as the students used our GOAT boxes to learn hands-on about the wild.

This winter we plan to return kids to the wild outdoors. Day-long field trips to local winter wonderlands like Round Lake State Park will inspire our youth with a passion for the natural world.

"I have also brought students up Scotchman's Peak each year for trail maintenance and as Goat Ambassadors,

and it has become a cherished tradition for our school," Becky said. "We are so lucky to allow our students such rigorous hands-on learning in the field with such a well assembled team of experts to share their knowledge and experience."

"I have enjoyed the program so much that when I retire, I hope to be able to participate in the program as a volunteer!"

Finding their way through a cedar grove or discovering critters tracks in the mud and snow ignites imagination. These activities will help children develop a sense of place. By helping connect children with nature, we are nurturing the next generations of public lands stewards.

We know teachers believe in the power of this program. We're excited to work with more of them as Winter Tracks continues in the upcoming season.

Bernard Sheldon is 2021's Old Goat

The first day Bernard Sheldon showed up for a trail project this summer, he brought more tools than FSPW staff - and it was all in the trunk of his Tesla. He then proceeded to dig tread, saw trees, and brush out the corridor like a seasoned "trail dog."

"After participating in nearly all nineteen FSPW trail project days, Bern has still not learned how to take it easy."

Usually, volunteers are a little hesitant with the tools and the work, but not Bern. We spent most of our time politely encouraging him to slow down and take it easy. After participating in nearly all nineteen FSPW trail project days, Bern has still not learned how to take it easy.

Not only was Bern an all-star trail work volunteer, but he also adopted the Regal Creek Trail, joined a guided hike in the Ross Creek Cedars, and volunteered to booth at the Huckleberry Festival. We even convinced him to take a break and come drink beer at our summer kick-off event in Sandpoint.

"Bern has spent over 100 hours this summer volunteering to keep the Scotchmans wild. His enthusiasm for dirt work and passion for wilderness is infectious and inspiring."

Overall, Bern has spent over 100 hours this summer volunteering to keep the Scotchmans wild.

His enthusiasm for dirt work and passion for wilderness is infectious and inspiring. We are so lucky to have such a dedicated steward working to save the wild Scotchmans. Thank



FSPW executive director Phil Hough grabs a photo with 2021 Old Goat Bernard Sheldon.

you, Bern, for keeping our trails open and spreading your love for wilderness to others in our community.

The Scotchmans, and our group of Friends, would be a lot less awesome without you!

find us on facebook • instagram

A Trail Season for the Books

We want everyone to enjoy the wonders of the Scotchmans - today and for years to come. That means making sure the area is accessible with well-maintained trails.

Volunteers make it possible to keep the Scotchmans wild and open for all. Their passion for the dirty work went a long way this summer. We are so grateful for all 1,694 hours that folks volunteered to the Scotchmans this summer.

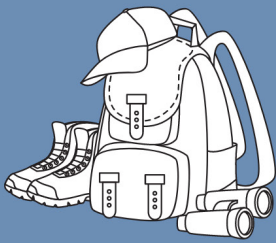
A SUMMER IN THE SCOTCHMANS

What one community of dedicated volunteers can do to keep the Scotchmans Wild

69

**DAYS
ON THE
TRAILS**

hiking, educating & building trails.



1,694

**HOURS
OF STEWARDSHIP**

spent by volunteers
building trails &
educating hikers.



**STEWARDSHIP
VOLUNTEERS 176**

126 TREES

**CLEARED
FROM
TRAILS**



14

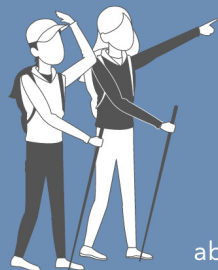
HIKES

led by
volunteer
leaders this
summer.



**141
HIKERS**

signed-up for our
guided hikes.



1,258

**PEOPLE
EDUCATED ON
SCOTCHMAN PEAK**

about keeping goats safe & wild.



Kurt Schimkowitsch was one of several Trail Ambassadors who reminded hikers to stay distanced from wildlife on Scotchman Peak.



FSPW trail crews made our wild backyard more accessible. And they had fun doing it.



So many new friends were made on the trails this year thanks to our hike leader volunteers.

What's happening in Montana?

It was a beautiful and busy summer in northwest Montana! As the new FSPW Outreach Coordinator in Lincoln and Sanders Counties, I tasked myself with getting to know the people and the place to the best of my ability.

"I tasked myself with getting to know the people and the place to the best of my ability"

This equated to a fair amount of travel in order to go see. My summary report back is that this is special country with special people. I'd like to tell you about some specific things that I've been up to.

Tabling

You may have seen me wearing FSPW schwag behind a table with furs and information at a number of events this summer. I truly enjoyed meeting residents and visitors alike at the Farmers Markets in Troy and Libby this summer. I am going to miss that easy access to local goods and the camaraderie of friends that emerged through this experience. I particularly enjoyed tabling with Zero to Five Lincoln County with my wild animal furs at the Apple Festival in Troy at the end of September for the Kids Corner. In October, catch me at the Thompson Falls Chamber of Commerce Harvest Festival!

Event-ing

FSPW got me started on the right foot with a Kick-Off Party at Big Eddy's in June. I attended and helped to host a variety of events this season. I loved reading a poem and meeting many of our longtime supporters at the Kean's



Amy at the Apple Festival in Troy, Mont.

House Party in August. It was also a wonderful opportunity to work with

"Hearing some of our volunteers speak fondly about their experiences in the Scotchmans, I felt moved to be part of such a wonderful family."

Chris Compton and Kate George on our 2021 State of the Scotchman Event at Blue C Ranch outside of Heron. Between watching the Cherry Hill Shanty become a reality, to hearing some of our volunteers speak fondly about their experiences in the Scotchmans, I felt moved to be part of such a wonderful family. Stay tuned for a co-sponsored film showing this winter at Limberlost Brewing Co. in Thompson Falls.

Collaborating

Northwest Montana has an impressive group of folks working together on important community initiatives. I am proud to be part of many working groups across the area. I enjoyed heading up the Kids Area with the Kootenai

Harvest Festival planning committee in Libby. Partnering with the Yaak Valley

"Northwest Montana has an impressive group of folks working together on important community initiatives."

Forest Council, Fish Wildlife & Parks, Trout Creek Backcountry Horsemen, the Libby Chamber, and with the help of many volunteers (including my mother), we were able to host fun and educational opportunities for kids to learn various aspects of the outdoors while earning s'more kits. I look forward to working with schools and community members on our Winter Tracks Program in the upcoming months.

- Amy Rae Pearson



Crosscut demo at the Summer kick-off party

Trail Ambassadors: Not just for adults!

2021 will be remembered as the “Year of the Kid(s).” Not because three adorable mountain goat kids were born Scotchman Peak. Although they were delightful. No. It’s because we had several outstanding trail volunteers who

“If you want to get trail work done, ask an 11-year-old. Their enthusiasm for pruning is unparalleled.”

happened to also be youngsters.

If you want to get trail work done, ask an 11-year-old. Their enthusiasm for pruning is unparalleled. Specifically, ask Kurt Schimkowitsch, whose passion for the Scotchmans is an admiration that has been passed down for generations. It all began with his grandmother Carol Jenkins. Long-time FSPW board member, Carol has made sure her grandson grew up wild. Overgrown brush beware, Kurt has loppers in hand. And while bounding past other hikers, Kurt always reminds them to “leave the goats alone!” All part of a day’s work for the kids on the job this summer.



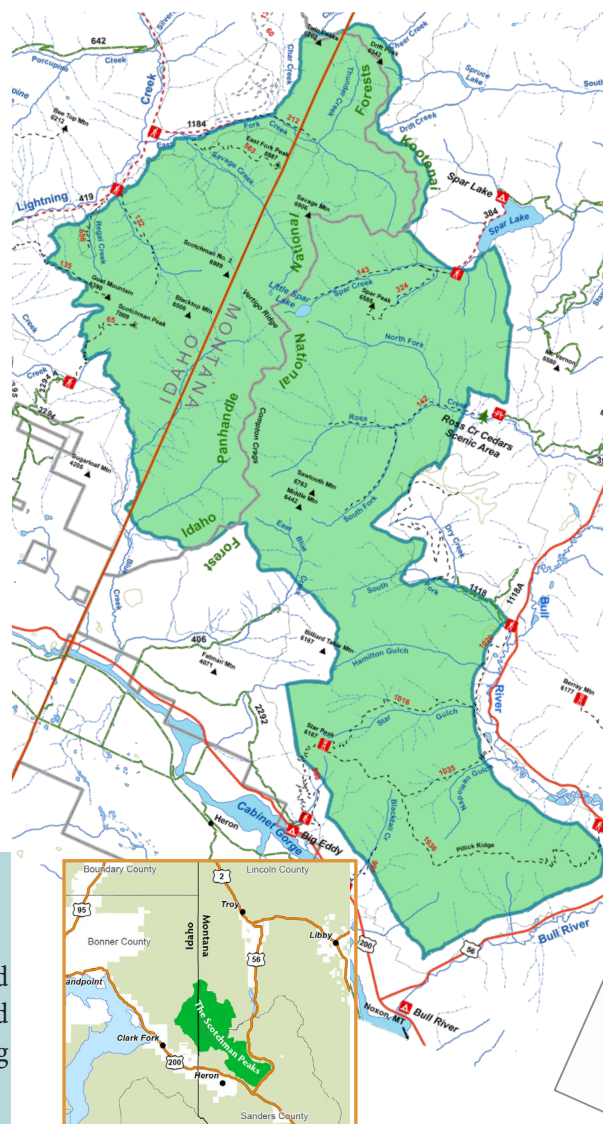
Baby Larson and Jacob Styer

At 22 months, Baby Larson, summited Scotchman Peak for his second time! His parents Jacob and Lindsey have set a goal for him to make it to the top at least once every year. This year Larson donned a Trail Ambassador shirt and helped to teach others about how to behave well and be safe in the mountain goat zone.

Stewardships is not only for our kids and grandkids; it can also be done by our kids and grandkids.

FRIENDS OF
SCOTCHMAN PEAKS
WILDERNESS

Uniting thousands of Montanans
and Idahoans to save the wild
Scotchmans for our children and
grandchildren.



Your Wild Place: Capturing Wild Voices

Did you know that we have a podcast?

Your Wild Place started as an effort to stay connected through the pandemic. We share stories about the wild people and places of North Idaho and Montana.

With hunting season here, tune into our episode featuring Kenton Clairmont, CEO of Train to Hunt. Use

the QR code below to check it out and subscribe for new episodes. Stay tuned for a new series of wild voices coming soon!



Save us a stamp!

Contact info@scotchmanpeaks.org
and ask to receive Peak Experience
by email rather than snail mail.



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To donate, visit our website or mail in the form below to: PO Box 2061, Sandpoint, ID 83864.

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Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$ _____

Donate Monthly ☐ \$ _____

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at <https://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/endowment>

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