

PEAK EXPERIENCE

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

Keep the Scotchman Peaks Wild and Open

The Scotchman Peaks is a magical place. Having worked in the forests of the Idaho Panhandle for 35 years, I don't say that lightly. This is also not news to anyone who has explored even a small part of this awe-inspiring landscape. From the top of wild and rugged peaks the panoramic views extend in all directions. Deep and steep valleys hold hidden waterfalls. The wonders of this area inspire all who visit. Few places remain as wild as the Scotchmans.

"The Scotchman Peaks is a magical place. Having worked in the forests of the Idaho Panhandle for 35 years, I don't say that lightly."

That's why over 10,000 people have become friends in support of keeping the Scotchman Peaks wild. They want to make sure the Scotchmans stay open for our kids and grandkids to find their own special wild place. They want to make sure mountain goats, wolverines, and grizzly bears can still roam free in our wild backyard. They want to keep North Idaho and NW Montana rugged and wild.

The 4.5 million acres of the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests have plenty of room for many uses.

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There are places for mining, timber production, forest restoration, grazing, and wildlife habitat. There is room for motorized recreation, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, hiking and wilderness. However, not

every use is advisable in every area — some areas are best suited for certain activities. Designating the Scotchmans as Wilderness is the best use for the 88,000-acre Scotchman Peaks area.

FPSW is working alongside snowmobilers, industry groups, and other community stakeholders to find agreement on how to manage our public lands. We are active members of the Panhandle Forest Collaborative and the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders. We are part of an emerging collaborative to develop winter travel plans for snowmobiles.

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From the early 1970s when the Forest Service began their first "Roadless Area Review and Evaluation", to the development of forest management plans in 1987 and the current revised plan in 2015, the Forest Service has consistently recommended the Scotchman Peaks for Wilderness. During all this time, locals from Idaho and Montana have called for it to become designated Wilderness. Folks from all back-grounds love the Scotchmans. Hunters, horsemen, hikers, miners, millers and others believe the Scotchmans are



Ed Robinson enjoying the Scotchmans.

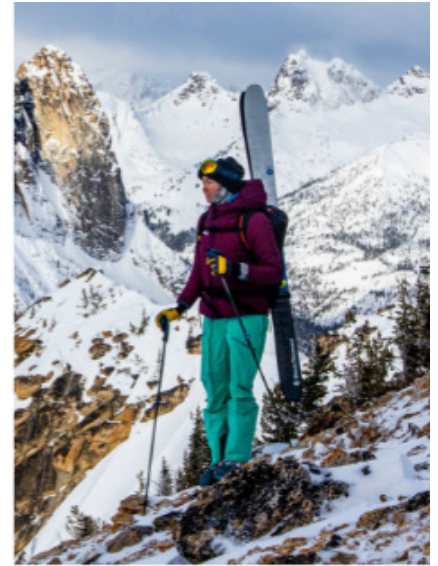
worth saving.

In the end, what matters most is not the planning of the past, but the actions we take for the future. The Forest Service and Congress should act so that the Scotchman Peaks will remain Wilderness for future generations.

I'd like our grandkids to grow up and explore lush cedar forests. I want them to hike summits and hunt in the backcountry. I want them to be able to find a place where wildlife can still roam free. I want them to find that wilderness right here in our backyard!

Author Note: *Ed Robinson worked as a state forester on the Idaho Panhandle for 35 years, retiring as Area Manager. Ed is a board member for FPSW. In his free time, you can find him fly fishing and plein air painting.*

Wild and Scenic Film Festival showcase adventure



FSPW hosted the Wild and Scenic Film Festival this February both online and in-person at the Panida Theatre.

The Festival featured a curated collection of 10 films about our natural world and the people working to keep it wild. It was a celebration of wild places, human resilience and communities built on compassion.

During the show, viewers joined Riverhorse Nakadate as he canoed

'It was a celebration of wild places, human resilience, and communities built on compassion.'

through the Boundary Water wilderness and watched the rehabilitation of an unruly elephant in Northern Kenya. We heard from the woman who has held

several of the most coveted thru-hiking records on earth and learned about one-star reviews of America's most beloved National Parks.

This is the third year the Friends have hosted the Festival. All proceeds from the night went towards the wild Scotchmans.

The festival was possible thanks to local business sponsors including: **Idaho Forest Group**, **Sandpoint Property Managers**, **All Seasons Garden & Floral** and **Williams & Schiller CPAs**, **Blue Sky Broadcasting**, **KRFY**, **The Reader**, **Evergreen Realty**, **Idaho Conservation League**, **Dr. Mark**

William Cochran, **Holistic Chiropractor**, & **Cricket Windsong**, **Personal Life Mastery Coach**, **Keokee Publishing**, **Six Moon Designs**, **Trout Unlimited**, and **Sandpoint Area Veterinary & Emergency Services**.



Voices in the Wilderness: Bart George



Bart George and his hunting hound.

For most of us, it's not an accident that we live in the Inland Northwest (INW). Locals that have been here for generations love this place and are proud of their roots. Transplants move here intentionally because the allure of wide-open spaces and untouched landscapes is impossible to ignore. Most people that spend a few years in our region learn to take advantage of the unique opportunities that the INW's four seasons provide. Some folks live for the skiing or snowmobiling, others can't wait for spring thaw so they can get back on the water with their fly rods. In my case, fall hunting season is what brought me and keeps me exploring the backcountry all year long.

I look forward to the opening day of elk season the way my four-year-old looks forward to his birthday. This year, the night after his birthday party when we were putting him to bed, he asked, "Can I have another birthday tomorrow?" I thought to myself "I can relate, buddy." As soon as hunting season ends, I am thinking about the following year.

Hunts are planned months, even years, in advance. Gear is maintained throughout the year, and tags are purchased as soon as they become available. Around work, things pretty much stop in the fall. We don't plan any meetings in September or October. During these months, hunting becomes the priority, not Zoom calls or construction projects.

It's the usual group of friends getting prepped for the hunt. We get our stock ready, pound shoes on horses and mules, mend busted tack and give the stock trailers a bit of attention. Track down all the packsaddles, gather up boxes of pots and pans, lanterns, collapsible woodstove, horse feed, and our food. Then we make the piles. Piles of gear that look more like a disorganized yard sale than the result of months of planning.

Matt is the packer- he makes the final cut on what goes into the backcountry

"Tough trails are a blessing and a curse. It makes our job more difficult, but it means no one else is there. We always get elk from Idaho's wilderness areas."

and what must be left behind. We all feel a bit like a kid at the grocery, trying to slip things into a cart unnoticed. He's mostly a benevolent packer, allowing some unnecessary weight, which comes at a real cost — 10 days or so of relentless teasing. So, you better really want that extra pillow, because you'll be paying for it around the campfire all week.

I'm the cook. It would be an embarrassment to run short on food and particularly bad if we have to ration coffee as we did in 2015 and which still comes up regularly. As the cook, I'm allocated one mule. I get a cooler on one side and a

dry box on the other. I organize and pack all the food and drink and do my best to keep us fed, but if we hunt hard and spend long days hiking and packing we should all lose some weight.

We pack in a long way. Past all the hikers and day trip hunters, "picnickers" as Matt calls them. Usually, we have a destination in mind, but trail conditions usually determine how far we go. Trails littered with windthrow and down trees slow the pack string and limit our progress. Clearing them with a crosscut saw is an arduous task, but it's also the reason we'll have entire basins to ourselves. Tough trails are a blessing and a curse- it makes our job more difficult, but it means no one else is there.

We always get elk from Idaho's Wilderness areas. Every time we go, at least a couple of us manage to get some meat. The group divides it up and we try to make it last until the following season. I'm thankful for the healthy meat that hunting provides my family. But beyond that, I am thankful for the time spent away from crowds and the bustle of my regular schedule. We go to the Wilderness to hunt even though there are far easier places to find elk. We really go there to challenge ourselves and get away from our comfortable routine and cozy lifestyle. The Wilderness gives us the opportunity to test ourselves and our gear — it also gives us a season to anticipate every year, like a kid anticipates their birthday.

About the author: Bart George is a wildlife biologist for the Kalispel Tribe Natural Resources Dept. and hunting guide. When he's not busy with his wife and two sons, he enjoys pursuing backcountry elk and following his hounds on the trail of a cougar.

The Friends launch Scotchman Peaks Endowment Funds

Since 2005, we have been growing deep roots in Idaho and Montana. We connect people with their wild backyard and work to save the Scotchmans. Our community of wilderness stewards is committed to protecting this land forever, even after the Scotchmans become Wilderness.

How are we planning for forever?

Through the creation of an endowment fund. Our endowment will ensure that in 30 years, we will still be clearing trails, teaching kids science outdoors, and getting people out into our wild backyard. Our endowment fund will ensure that our communities will forever benefit from the enduring legacy of wilderness. Our endowment will ensure that in 30 years, we will still be clearing trails, teaching kids science, and helping folks discover our wild backyard.

"Our endowment will ensure that in 30 years, we will still be clearing trails, teaching kids science, and helping folks discover our wild backyard."



"We love hiking in the Scotchmans. By contributing to FSPW's endowment, we can commemorate the special memories we have in those mountains."

- Nick Cravedi & Jessie Grossman, FSPW Board Chair & endowment contributor.



"I'm excited that we've established an endowment for FSPW, and I'm delighted to say I'm the very first person to contribute!"

Launching this endowment lends a tremendous degree of credibility to our organization and shows the world FSPW has "arrived" as a nonprofit.

A robust and growing endowment assures our ongoing financial stability, and expands our capacity to continue our important work in wilderness advocacy, stewardship and education.

I'd love to have you hop aboard with me!"

- Dr. Mark William Cochran, FSPW board member and endowment contributor.

Leaving a legacy

We're calling on everyone who loves the Scotchmans to make a contribution to the endowment. It's the best way to leave a legacy of a wild backyard for future generations.

Endowments gifts to the Scotchmans can be made directly through two community foundations: Idaho Community Foundation or Montana Community Foundation.

You can make a gift today online or via check. Or, you can plan a gift for the future. To plan your gift, we encourage you to contact a financial advisor or speak with our staff and foundation partners.

To learn more visit: scotchmanpeaks.org/endowment.

Conservation:

From the Timber Wars to collaboration

By Zach Hagadone

This story winds through the earliest days of economic development in North Idaho taking in the booms and busts of the first half of the 20th century. It illustrates the deep roots of what would come to be called the “Timber Wars,” which shook the nation in the 1980s and ’90s, and brings us into the 21st century with a changed spirit of how to leverage conservation for both ecological and economic benefit.

The central themes of conflict and collaboration — especially as they relate to timberlands and how to manage them — require a longer view. The conversations surrounding them, unearthed in the records of regional newspapers, sound eerily familiar even as far back as the turn of the 20th century.

To understand how the conflict of the Timber Wars has evolved into collaboration, then we must start at the beginning — with the development of the timber industry and how its interplay with notions of conservation changed during the first five decades of the 20th century. Using the experience of the Inland Northwest, and North Idaho in particular, as a case study offers a unique perspective on the far larger trends that continue to resonate today.

So it is there that this story starts, amid the forests, mountains, lakes and river valleys of Bonner County and its surrounds.

‘Cut-and-run’

It didn’t take long for Euro-American settlement in the Inland Northwest to run headlong into the forests of the region. In the larger states and territories of the West in the late-19th century,



Lumberjacks pose for a photo at the turn of the 20th century.

timber harvesting had been a booming industry for decades. But as the 19th turned into the 20th century, what had been considered backcountry or pass-through land on the way to the Pacific Coast was starting to fill up with homesteaders, hacking out farms and fields from the vast stands of old growth.

One large wave of settlement followed the Homestead Act of 1862, which offered 160 acres to citizens or those who planned to become citizens. Rooted in the ideal of an agrarian America, this land clearance would provide a massive economic boon while acting to expand and tie together the United States after the Civil War. However, this was accomplished at the expense of Indigenous tribes across the country, which were displaced by land seizures, faulty treaties and violence that culminated in the strategic and systematic removal of native people from territories that federal policies insisted were best exploited by white

settlement and industry.

Yet, as settler colonists moved farther west, into the thick forests and rugged terrain of places like western Montana, northern Idaho and the then-Washington Territory, those 160 acres started to feel inadequate for establishing a profitable agricultural operation. And so, from the 1870s to the 1890s, Congress passed a raft of laws that allowed settlers more options for increasing their homestead allotment — if they installed irrigation, for instance, they would be entitled to more acreage. One of those laws, the Timber Land Act of 1878, expanded the ability of settlers to buy large sections of forested territory. In 1892, it was extended from the states of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory to all public land states, including Idaho.

While the Homestead Act had been intended to support agrarian settlement and the removal of Indigenous peoples, supplementary laws in the Northwest

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had morphed it into an invitation to commercialize timber cutting. Why bust your hump clearing a mountain valley full of rocks and trees unless you could make something off the labor itself? Indeed, why even bother with the trouble of digging and blasting stumps to plant crops when the stone and timber itself could be more profitable than the produce of your fields?

Adam Sowards, an environmental historian who serves as director of the Pacific Northwest Studies Program at the University of Idaho, described this as part of a “cut-and-run mentality” that was common at the time.

“On the one hand a really strong, prevailing ideology in that era was that land should be farmed and trees were sort of in the way of that, so the first step in improving the land was to cut down the trees,” he said.

However, following the flurry of legislation surrounding the Homestead Act, it became clear that “almost all of these laws were horribly corrupt and ineffective in doing what they were set up to do.”

“Land agents would look the other way when there was fraud,” Sowards said, “it was really easy for a timber company for example or a mining company to hire people to acquire the land and then sign it right over to the company.”

The newspapers published in the communities of northern Idaho in the late-1800s and early-1900s are filled with evidence of the boom in timberland purchases empowered by federal legislation — sometimes whole pages of



A look inside Humbird Mill during a turn-of-the-century timber operation.

broadsheet covered in notices of claims made in the Coeur d'Alene land office that settlers would “offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes.”

From the beginning of these policies, there came concerns from observers in more densely populated regions — and, critically, among those in the East — that unrestrained exploitation of timberlands would result in a “timber famine.”

“With that ideal of improvement and that ideal of laissez faire economies you have a recipe for cutting and running, not a lot of investment from timber owners in communities and a real concern as you got toward the end of the 19th century that we’re going to run out of trees — we’re going to run out of wood,” Sowards said.

The solution in 1891 was to actively conserve some of those forested sections, putting them aside in a system

of reserves to be administered by the federal government.

“In fact the law that timber reserves were created out of in 1891 was mostly about reforming and revising some of these other laws,” according to Sowards.

The reserve policy, well-intentioned as it was, proved to be among the first flash points of conflict between resource exploitation and conservation in the West — and the newspapers of early-20th century northern Idaho reflected clearly just how vigorous the opposition to that policy was, touching on a range of arguments and issues that would continue to simmer into the present day.

This excerpt is part of a series that uncovers the modern history of our forests. The collaborative project between The Reader and FSPW was made possible by a grant from the Idaho Humanities Council. To read the full story, visit www.scotchmanpeaks.org/news.

Snowshoeing the Scotchmans

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness supporter Rebecca Sanchez, knows a thing or two about getting outdoors in the wintertime.

An outdoor enthusiast and longtime North Idaho resident, she and her kids have learned how to get outside into the backcountry every month of the year.

"More and more newcomers are taking interest in the prospect of seeing the snow-covered vistas of the Inland Northwest."

Sanchez learned 11 or 12 years ago, before her kids came around, that there's rarely a reason to stay indoors for long. That's when she started looking into snowshoeing as an additional wintertime activity.

"It definitely feels different than hiking because of the elements, but it's also exciting to get out there in the peace and quiet," Sanchez said.

As more people come to North Idaho, attracted by the natural beauty and outdoor recreation, the groups organized around various activities are seeing a surge in interest. Snowshoeing is no different. And each season, more and more newcomers are taking interest in the prospect of seeing the snow-covered vistas of the Inland Northwest.

"Snowshoeing can be a little slowgoing, but it's a great way to get outside in the winter," said FSPW supporter Jim Mellen, a local who has been exploring summertime and wintertime North Idaho for decades.

Snowshoes have been an essential tool in navigating wintertime terrain for millennia. Native Americans perfected the pre-modern design, and in the 19th



Snowshoers enjoy the Ross Creek Cedars landscapes .

century, trappers and fur-traders used them to gather the pelts that fueled their trade.

While modern materials and design trends differ today, the basic snowshoe concept remains the same. They consist of a wide framework that distributes body weight over a larger area. This prevents the sinking that a person would typically experience walking through deep snow. Snowshoe designs often feature latticework or holes to prevent snow accumulation, and they attach to the feet via bindings.

Given the rich tradition of snowshoeing spanning hundreds of worldwide cultures, the hobby can be a great way to connect with the roots of a region. And in the North Idaho region, there is no shortage of places to explore. When the conditions are right, the experience can be downright magical.

"One great thing about snowshoeing is that it can get you above the clouds," said Sanchez. "Some days you look out your window, see the clouds and get discouraged. But when you get above them, it's a whole different world."

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A winter wonderland

Some of the most popular areas within the region to explore include Round Lake, Gold Hill and Mickinnick Trail. If you're looking for more solitude, head to the Scotchmans to explore the Ross Creek Cedars, Spar Lake, or Star Peak.

When explaining the Mickinnick trail in Sandpoint Mellen noted, "you wouldn't want to ski it, because it's just too steep," he said. "You get some decent views further down, too, so you don't have to climb up as high."

Other areas, like Lightning Creek and Trestle Creek, are also great for a wintertime expedition. But experienced snowshoers caution newcomers to be mindful of the other hobbyists who will share the trail.

"I probably wouldn't take my kids to Trestle Creek on a Saturday because that's a snowmobile highway," Sanchez said.

"Experienced snowshoers caution newcomers to be mindful of the other hobbyists who will share the trail."

Areas where motorized vehicle use is prohibited can go a long way to ensuring a peaceful snowshoeing experience. There's no shortage of such trails in the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness or the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness, for instance. Both of these areas are exclusively for foot-powered adventuring.

Just remember to come prepared. When hiking you should always bring the "Ten Essentials:" appropriate footwear, navigation tools, water, food, rain

gear, safety items, a first aid kit, a knife, sun protection and a shelter. Sanchez also recommends an extra pair of socks, a lightweight emergency blanket and extra batteries or recharging pack for your phone, headlamp or cellphone, since cold weather drains batteries faster.

"Avalanches are a uniquely wintertime danger, and one not to be taken lightly."

Avalanches are a uniquely wintertime danger, and one not to be taken lightly. Check out the Idaho Panhandle Avalanche Center for resources on safety and prevention. It's also a good idea to check on road closures before heading out.

"There's nothing worse than driving 30 minutes and realizing you can't even get to the trailhead," Sanchez said.

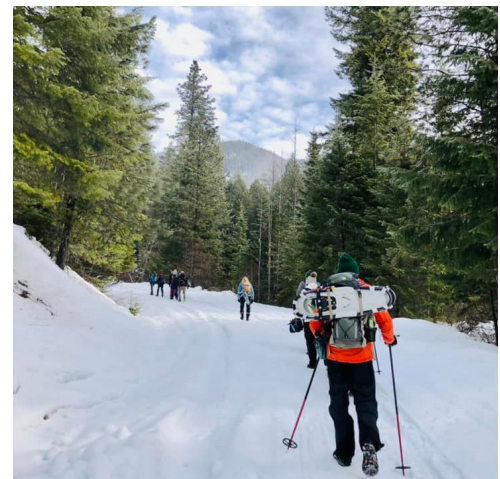
When in doubt, it's never a bad idea to ask an expert. Luckily, there's no shortage of snowshoeing veterans in the area. One great method of finding group snowshoeing hikes is through the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness website, which organizes regular guided hikes in summer and winter alike.

Regardless of the method one chooses to explore North Idaho's winter wonderland, it's an experience not to be missed. The winter is a chance to see a new side of the wild Northwest, one every bit as beautiful and awe-inspiring.

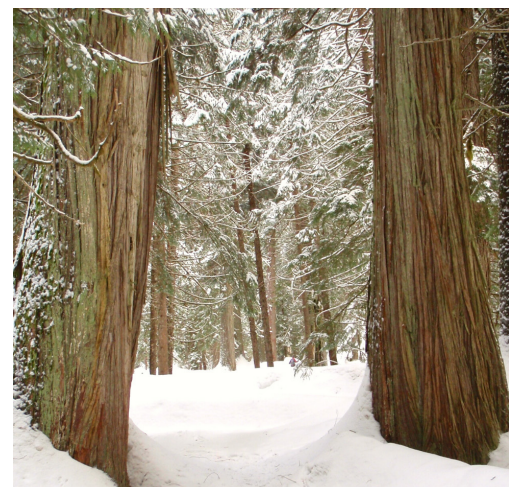
-Cameron Rasmusson



Hikers pose during a trek with Erin Plue.



Hikers take on Star Peak on a snowy day.



The Ross Creek Cedars offer winter beauty.

Are you smarter than a Winter Tracks student?

FSPW hosts weekly Winter Tracks outdoor education programs for local area schools throughout the winter season.

These day long events are designed for students in the counties surrounding the Scotchman Peaks area and are created to deepen a sense of place, build community, and to broaden a connection to the out of doors world.

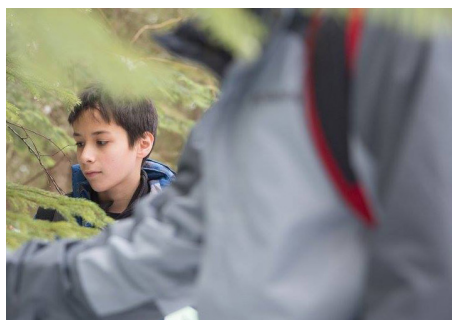
Volunteers with professional expertise teach kids throughout the day about a variety of topics, ranging from tree identification and mammal identification to principles of Leave No Trace. Do you know the answers to some of the facts they learn during their field trips?



Can you answer the same questions we asked the students at Winter Tracks?

Winter Tracks Quiz

1. How can you tell the difference between a fir tree and a pine tree by looking at the needles?
2. Which tree needs more sun to thrive, a Western Red Cedar or a Ponderosa Pine?
3. What are the 7 principles of Leave No Trace?
4. Name 3 animals in North Idaho that stay active through the winter rather than hibernating.
5. How does eye placement let you know if an animal is a predator or prey?



Kids learn to identify local tree species.

1: Pine trees have needles in groups of two, three, or five, whereas fir trees have single needles. 2: Ponderosa Pine 3: Plan Ahead and Prepare; Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces; Dispose of Waste Properly; Leave What You Find; Minimize Campfire Impacts; Respect Wildlife; Be Considerate of Others. 4: Elk, coyote, wolf, cougar, ermine, otter, lynx, mountain goat, moose 5: "Eyes on the front, likes to hunt. Eyes on the side, likes to hide." Predators have eyes on the front of their head, whereas prey animals have eyes on the sides of their head.

ANSWERS

Your Wild Place Podcast

In the latest episode of Your Wild Place, we talk to Don Clark about big cat hunting and Montana living. Don Clark is a retired teacher, and avid sportsman, a resident of Libby, Montana, and a passionate advocate for Wilderness.

You'll hear some of Don's wild stories and find out what happens when a seasoned hunter and wildlife biologist get together to lead a gaggle of teens on a mountain



Don Clark, Libby local & big cat hunter.

"Mountain lions are fascinating creatures, and their unique biology makes them a vital part of their environment."

and ecosystems of our wild backyard. Mountain lions are fascinating creatures, and their unique biology makes them a vital part of their environment.

That's just a taste of the great stories you'll find in the Your Wild Place podcast. To listen, visit scotchmanpeaks.org/podcast.

lion hunt.

It's an adventure for the ages, but the entertainment isn't all you'll enjoy. It's also a great way to learn about the wildlife



Our Mission

We're uniting thousands of people from Idaho and Montana to pass on a Scotchman Peaks Wilderness for our children and grandchildren.



Situated along the Idaho-Montana border, Scotchman Peaks is an 88,000-acre roadless where wildlife and people can roam free.

Save us a stamp!

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



SAVE THE WILD SCOTCHMANS!

Send us a check at: FSPW/ PO Box 2061, Sandpoint, ID 83864

Donate online at: Scotchmanpeaks.org

Make a legacy gift: Scotchmanpeaks.org/endowment

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