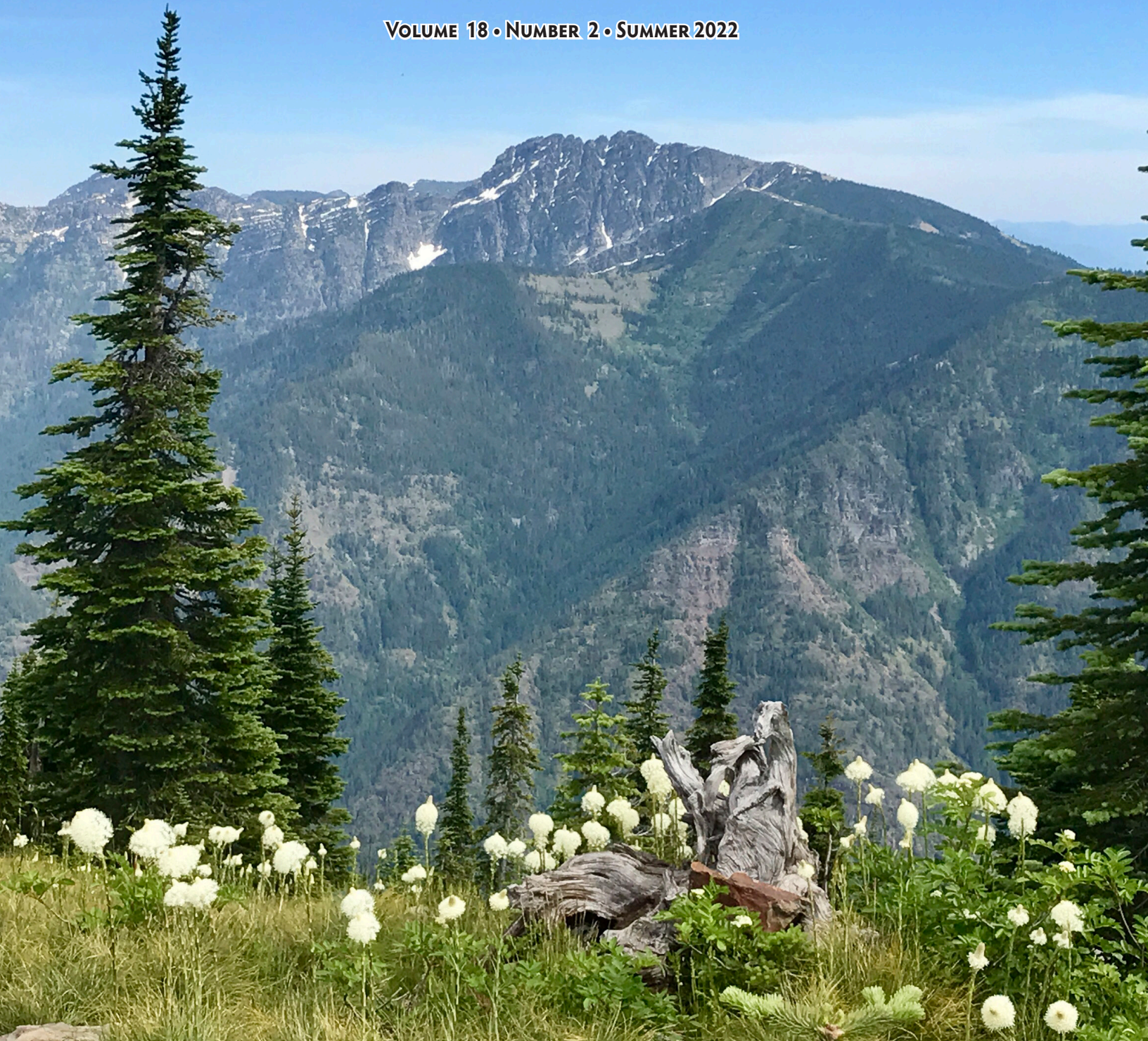


PEAK EXPERIENCE

VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 2022



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Peak Perspectives: Our forests are full of magic

My childhood “wild place” was nowhere near extraordinary by an outdoor enthusiasts’ standard. It was a truly tiny strip of forest in between my best friend’s house and mine in central Massachusetts. It was mostly flat and littered with moderately large granite boulders. A mix of pine and leafy trees. No matter where you stood in our little forest, our houses could be spotted a few hundred feet away. There was only one short trail connecting our two landscaped lawns. But, oh, how that trail was traveled!

“There was only one short trail connecting our two landscaped lawns. But, oh, how that trail was traveled!”

Plush grass and swing sets went unused as we raced towards our wild and untamed forest. In the winter, we made snow caves under pine tree canopies. In the summer, we built fairy homes in dark and mossy rock crevices. Fall was filled with collecting the best and brightest leaves to preserve in scrapbooks. All year round, we remained vigilant, prepared to run from BB gun attacks from older brothers at any moment.

My memory isn’t great, and I don’t remember much about my childhood (sorry to disappoint, mom and dad.) But I remember nearly all the times that my best friend and I spent in those woods: climbing dangerously tall rocks, sledding down dangerously steep hills, racing back home before the last light shone through the oak trees. Finding pure fear and bliss in testing the limits of our scrawny legs and clumsy feet.

Changing and growing alongside the flowers and the ferns.

I didn’t know it, but the forests were shaping me, helping me grow into a strong and fearless girl with a passion for soft ground under my feet. I grew up and I eventually moved far away from my magical forest, but my passion for exploring new places, constantly learning new things, and pushing my physical limits stuck with me forever. Since leaving Massachusetts, I’ve been lucky enough to explore countless other magical forests, each one of them providing me with childlike joy and awe.

Reconnecting with your inner child, finding bliss and wonder from the ferns and flowers is such a precious human experience worth treasuring, worth protecting. Everybody deserves to have these experiences. Kids and adults, today and tomorrow, deserve the chance to grow and change alongside the trees. We all deserve to find our magical backyard forests.

“Reconnecting with your inner child, finding bliss and wonder from the ferns and flowers is such a precious human experience.”

Out here, we’re lucky because our local forests are actually magical. Our wild backyard is nothing like my tiny forest amidst housing developments. Instead,



All smiles atop the Star Peak summit.

we have thousands of acres of forest with clear-flowing streams, abundant wildlife habitat, ancient trees, and rugged peaks.

We have mountain goats scrambling across cliffs as the sun rises over the rugged peaks. We have grizzly bears descending the mountainside to drink from crystal-clear alpine lakes. We have snow falling silently in cedar forests. What we have here is as close to magic as you can get on earth.

Join me in making sure our forests and peaks are kept this magically wild forever. Become a Friend of the Scotchmans Peaks Wilderness. Help us keep trails open and mountain goats wild. Join us to teach kids about the wonders of our wild backyard. Learn more at scotchmanpeaks.org.

-Kelsey Maxwell

find us on facebook • instagram

Students head for college with a little FSPW help



FSPW scholarship winners Hanna Benson, Taylor Staley, Caiya Yanick, Sam Barnett and Adeline Roesler-Begalke.

Every year the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors. We give \$250 to a number of students who write outstanding essays about their experiences in local wild places. This year we received many well-written and exciting essays about hunting, berry picking, spending time with family and more. To read the all seven winning essays, visit scotchmanpeaks.org/news.

Here's what some of our winning students had to say about their adventures in the wild:

"All of us used to do a lot more hiking, camping, and biking but as my brother, Moxley, and I got older we began to have less time to do these things. But I'll never forget those hours upon hours spent outside, hiking up the side of a mountain or following a creek."

Adeline Roesler-Begalke
Troy High School

"On most days, we are usually occupied with technology and other activities, so my brother and I never really hung out like that before. This day out in nature gave us time to clear our minds, get some fresh air, and just talk and have fun."

Taryn Thompson
Libby High School

"I will forever hold these memories in my heart. I would love for more children to have the same experiences as I did. If it came down to it I would bring my kids there every year just like my family did."

Caiya Yanick
Clark Fork High School

Voices in the Wilderness: Toby Walrath

Keeping a canoe moving smoothly on a calm morning requires nothing more than the person in front pulling in unison with the person in the back; unless the person in the front is eight years old and determined. Then it's more like continuous paddle flipping while zig-zagging and yelling out directives like a football coach. Finally accepting that the relaxing morning I planned had suddenly shifted to little more than controlled chaos, I found contentment

"It's more like continuous paddle flipping while zig-zagging and yelling out directives like a football coach."

with the consolation prize of beautiful scenery.

My Granddad was a fur trapper, so was my Dad and it didn't take much to get me out into wild places when I was my son Kaden's age. Hunting, trapping and fishing have been a way of life for me since I was born. Many photos I have of Kaden as a toddler are outdoors. Some are of him riding on my back as I set traps, hiked into remote mountain lakes or carried wild meat out of the backcountry. My own childhood photos are mostly outdoors with a few notable exceptions of me and hound dogs lying on my bed.

It is with this enriched family history that Kaden and I paddled along a remote stretch of River on this early spring morning.

"Dad, look!" Kaden yelled with his finger pointing at the muddy river bank.

Several yellow perch hovered near the surface with damaged tails. River otter tracks, fresh and distinct in the mud told

the story. River otters don't always catch fish on the first bite. We had to stop and investigate. Kaden came up with several theories about what may have happened. We looked at the sign and like detectives made a conclusive statement. Whether it was right or not didn't matter because soon we were pushing off and heading upstream again.

Muskrats swim along the edge of river banks climbing onto anything sturdy enough to hold them. There they leave droppings, lots of droppings. So many that dark piles of stool acting as a territory marker visually stands out even from mid-river. It is at one of these markers that Kaden placed a trap the day before.

"We looked at the sign and like detectives made a conclusive statement."

As the canoe brushed the bank he was already running toward the log.

"Dad, look!" Kaden yelled as he held up a furry muskrat. His broad smile and excitement filled the morning air with joy.

Minutes later the recent ice melt revealed a winter killed western painted turtle on the river bottom. This discov-



Toby Walrath.

ery meant more questions and investigation. Soon satisfied, we moved on to a grassy point on the river where Kaden made a grass shelter before eating lunch and taking a short nap in the sunshine.

The ride out was easier with the river moving us along toward home. Kaden was tired from all the hard work of a trap line and his paddle laid across the bow for most of the journey out.

"Dad, look!" Kaden yelled pointing excitedly to the launching area. "I wonder what we'll catch tomorrow."

Author Note: Toby Walrath is an avid outdoorsman now living in NW Montana with his wife and son where wild places are right out his front door. His motto is "Just get outdoors and bring a kid with you."

FSPW urges smart wildlife practices as hiking ramps up

The days are getting longer, the snow is melting, wildflowers are blooming, and it's time to get out and hike Scotchman Peak! The iconic ridge that looms over Lake Pend Oreille lends itself to fantastic views, and the opportunity to see wild mountain goats in their craggy home.

While it is tempting to get up close and personal with these herbivorous

"They may seem friendly, but mountain goats are still wild creatures with sharp horns and tough attitudes."

creatures, it's important to remember that they are still wild creatures with sharp horns and tough attitudes.

These ungulates are drawn to salt. They will walk many miles to find salt in the wild. On top of Scotchman Peak, they don't need to travel far, as our backpacks, shirts, and urine all possess the precious mineral. The mountain goats of Scotchman Peak have learned that an easier way to find salt is to lick hikers, their equipment, and urine left behind on the ground.

While it can be an amazing feeling to be that close to a wild animal, please remember that it is not only dangerous for you, but also for the goats and future hikers. If a goat becomes a "problem," it may face the death penalty. Future hikers will be harassed by salt-seeking goats. And as we've seen in other busy mountainous places, this



becomes a dangerous habit that can end in the death of a hiker.

Please remember the following protocols when hiking in the home of these amazing wild animals:

- **Give them space.** The recommended safe distance is 100 feet.
- **Be intimidating.** Be loud. Wave your arms. Throw rocks at their hooves. Show the goat you're not an easy target for salt.
- **Practice "leave no trace" principles.** Pack out all trash and food. Urinate well off the trail and in the dirt. Utilize the port-a-potties at the trailhead.
- **Eat somewhere else.** The goats know the summit is a good place to eat. If they start to approach, pack up and move downhill to finish your lunch.
- **Remember where you are!** You're in their home, not the other way around.



Want to help keep goats and hikers safe on Scotchman Peak? Become a Trail Ambassador!

Scan to learn more



Conservation:

From the Timber Wars to collaboration

By Zach Hagadone

The so-called “Timber Wars” are generally described as having occurred in the 1880s and ’90s. It was a period of conflict waged in both the woods and the courtroom between lumber companies and environmentalists. The federal government was stuck in the middle, sometimes regarded as the enemy, sometimes an ally. The reality is more complex. The “wars” are better understood as a series of battles between a constellation of competing and complementary interests. The involved parties jockeyed for economic, political and often social positions. In northern Idaho that meant everyone, to varying degrees, had a stake in the conflict. Some “won,” some “lost,” yet all used the woods as an avatar for their visions of the landscape. The so-called “West” and its attendant lands were never “won;” they’ve been constantly contested and still are today. This is the story of how the United States navigated notions of conserving its primary commodity — land and the things that grow on it — while leveraging them into its mid-20th century ascendancy, and the bitter conflicts over how that commodity should be managed in a flashpoint known as the “Timber Wars.” Getting out the cut By 1906, about 23,000 square miles of Idaho lands had been absorbed into “forest reserves” — a policy initiated by then-President Theodore Roosevelt and the precursor to the National Forest System. That same year, Idaho Sen. Weldon Heyburn denounced the forest reserves from his seat in Congress. On behalf of the powerful mining and



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

lumber interests of his home constituency in the Silver Valley of North Idaho, Heyburn argued: “It is men we want, not trees.” A year later, in 1907, Roosevelt’s chief forester Gifford Pinchot — head of the newly created U.S. Forest Service — traveled to Coeur d’Alene to hear the complaints of Heyburn’s supporters in person. He told them why it was necessary to conserve the nation’s timberlands amid an era of “cut-and-run” logging practices, wherein timber cutting operations both big and small “skinned the land” and moved on with no thought beyond immediate profit. “Forests are disappearing so rapidly that it is estimated that none will remain in 30 or 40 years unless action is taken by the government to protect them,” he said, warning that, “we are rushing with railroad speed toward a timber famine worse than any coal famine that we have ever experienced or are in danger of soon.” The timber famine didn’t mate-

rialize. Attitudes toward forest conservation changed dramatically from Pinchot’s days through the 1930s and early-’40s. During the first two decades of the 20th century the mentality was to “cut and run.” But by the immediate pre-World War II era, that notion had been replaced by increasingly complex ideas about the balance between industrial, recreational and ecological uses for timberlands. Meanwhile, “conservation” as both a term and a goal had transformed from a lot of “moonshine,” as one former Idaho governor put it in the first decades of the century, to a critical piece of policy that underpinned everything that happened in the forests. However, as with so many other aspects of American life, everything changed with the country’s emergence from both the Great Depression and the war. According to Adam Sowards, a professor of environmental history who also serves as director of the

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Pacific Northwest Studies Program at the University of Idaho, by the end of World War II in 1945, most of the big timber companies had either exhausted their private land holdings or pretty well cut through them. At the same time, service members were returning from the battlefields and starting families in record numbers —the “Baby Boom” was on, and that meant a spike in new home building. While the cities expanded in population, the real growth occurred in outlying areas, as an increasingly mobile and affluent population looked for and found its domestic bliss in ever-expanding suburbs. “Building those houses required timber,” Sowards said, but with the lumber companies short on their privately owned supply, “the federal forests became the preferred site of our source of lumber.” There was debate about the wisdom of dipping into the federal forest reserves —by then established as National Forests —which Sowards described as an argument for an “almost socialized timber policy, where federal regulations would also guide private timberlands as well.” Those voices included Robert Marshall, the “Bob” in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in western Montana. His contribution to the Franklin D. Roosevelt-era “Copeland Report” (so named for New York Sen. Royal Copeland, who commissioned the study) presented a radically different view of public land management. Marshall’s policy recommendations were truly revolutionary, calling for 10% of forestlands in the U.S. to be set aside as recreational areas. He also pushed for putting millions of acres



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

of U.S. Forest Service roadless areas into a perpetual wilderness or “primitive area” designation, and federal oversight of timber harvesting on both public and private lands. “[I]n the ‘40s, there’s a surprisingly vigorous debate about whether that’s the right direction to go,” Sowards said of harvesting on federal forests. Meanwhile, “there’s a big push to cut more trees —they talked about ‘getting out the cut,’ which was sort of a catchphrase for that.” In Bonner County, the renewed vigor in the timber market had no greater champion than Jim Parsons, who wrote the “Outdoors Notebook” column in the Sandpoint News Bulletin throughout the 1950s. His articles, again and again, circled back to the idea that private lumber companies should have total access to public lands. In his mind, “conservation” was an empty platitude compared to “getting out the cut.” “There are some strange aspects to the forestry side of

the conservation picture,” Parsons wrote in the Oct. 18, 1951 edition of the News Bulletin. “Even here in north Idaho we still have many people who cling to the old wood-famine philosophy that the nation is running out of timber. ... ‘The ill-informed fail to recognize, first, that trees are Nature’s one renewable resource; and second, that the lumbering industry generally, along with a growing army of farmers, is doing a commendable job of forest management, which has as its goal a continuing supply of timber for generations to come.

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.

Epic summer hikes

The Scotchmans offer adventure for everyone – from first-time hikers to seasoned outdoor recreationists.

There are secret waterfalls to discover, fields of wildflowers to explore, and alpine lakes to dive into. You can explore these trails with us or on your own. Regardless, make sure you have a copy of the trail map. Here are just a few great trails to explore this summer.

“There are secret waterfalls to discover, fields of wildflowers to explore, and alpine lakes to dive into.”

Easy Hikes

North Fork of Ross Creek

- 7 miles round-trip
- 700 ft. elevation gain

Meander through the giant cedars. Once you hike past the boundary of the Ross Creek Cedars Scenic Area, you will be in total solitude. Wild berries are incredibly abundant along this trail! Ross Creek is beautiful all year round. This is a great trail for the family.

Morris Creek

- 8 miles round-trip
- 1,400 ft. elevation gain

You'll travel along Morris Creek through a dense cedar forest filled with berries, mushrooms, wildflowers, and other forest wonders. The



Goat Mountain.

one thing to keep in mind is the creek crossing around mile 2— it can be difficult to cross when the water levels are high. But even the hike up to the creek cross is well worth it!

Moderate Hikes

Little Spar Lake

- 6.8 miles round-trip
- 1,800 ft elevation gain

Take a dip in the largest alpine lake in the Scotchmans! You'll travel through a rugged canyon, a lush temperate rainforest, and end at a crystal clear alpine lake. There are 1-2 well-established campsites too! But

be aware, this area has lots of bear activity. So, bring your bear spray and canisters. And as always, leave no trace!

Ross Creek Waterfall

- 9 miles round-trip
- 1,300 ft elevation gain

This grove old-growth of cedars features numerous flat and well-cleared paths that hikers of all abilities can enjoy. There are educational installations about the plants and animals in the first mile, making it a great hike even if you don't make it to the waterfall!

to make the most of your season

Hard Hikes

Scotchman Peak

- 8 miles round-trip
- 3,700 ft elevation gain

A classic for good reason.

Sweeping views of Lake Pend Orielle and you'll almost certainly see mountain goats! There is no water on the trail and it can get very hot in the summer. So, make sure to bring lots of water and sun protection.

Make sure to keep your distance from the goats – they are wild and can be dangerous.

Spar Peak

- 8 miles round-trip
- 3,300 ft elevation gain

If you're looking to avoid the crowds on Scotchman Peak but still want to enjoy some serious elevation gain, Spar Peak is a great option. The views from the top are incredible, making the elevation gain totally worth it. Be prepared to cross Little Spar Creek.

"Make sure to keep your distance from the goats – they are wild and can be dangerous."

Star Peak

- 10 miles round-trip
- 4,000 ft elevation gain

This new trail is easy to access from the highway, making this a great option for hikers with low-clearance vehicles. The summit of Star Peak offers beautiful views of

the Clark Fork Valley, sweeping views of the Scotchmans and the Cabinets, and a historic lookout tower. This is a great early-season hike as the first half is on a sunny, south-facing slope.

"The summit of Star Peak offers beautiful views of the Clark Fork Valley [and] sweeping views of the Scotchmans and the Cabinets."

Multi-day hikes

Star Peak to Pillick Ridge

- 15 miles one way
- 4,000 ft elevation gain

From the top of Star Peak, link up with the Pillick Ridge trail for an epic multi-day adventure. The Pillick Ridge trail can be overgrown at times, so you'll want to be sure to bring your map, compass, and other navigation tools. The best part of this trip? There's a toilet (a very old-school pit toilet) at the top of Star Peak! Be aware, you'll be in bear country.

Hike with us!

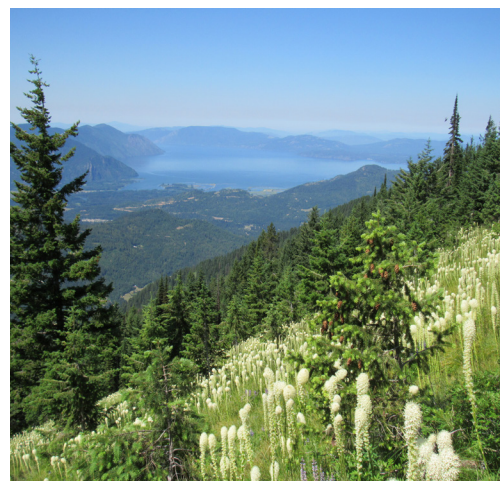
Our free guided hikes will take you to all of these amazing places – and more! We have hikes for families, beginner hikers, and experienced outdoor adventurers. Check out our summer hiking schedule to find the right hike for you at scotchmanpeaks.org.



Keep an eye out for the magnificent plantlife!



Every hike offers a new view.



There's good reason to reach that summit.

New faces abound at Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness



Sam Olson steps in as FSPW's Summer Stewardship Coordinator. Sam has family ties in Libby and to the Yaak area and was our summer 2017 Back Country Ranger Intern. He currently teaches creative writing to underserved youth in Missoula.



A family-oriented lover of the outdoors, Brooke Bolin is FSPW's new Northwest Montana Outreach Coordinator. You can find her taking her kiddos into nature, reading a good book, cooking a delicious meal, or planning more adventures for the future.



Jack Peterson comes on board as our Your Wild Place Podcast Producer. Jack is the Associate Station Manager at KRFY radio in Sandpoint. We are excited for Jack to bring his expertise in storytelling and audio production to FSPW's team.



Speaking of Summer Backcountry Rangers, Rachel Torgerson fills the role this season. She's in school getting a degree in Recreation Management and Leadership with a concentration in Outdoors and is pursuing a career in the National Park Service.

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Your Wild Place Podcast

In the latest episode of Your Wild Place, we talk to local mushroom extraordinaire, Don Childress, about foraging for fungi in the Scotchmans. Our wild backyard is full of nourishing food – berries, greens, and mushrooms are abundant. But knowing how to forage safely and responsibly is key to being a friend of our forests.

Don will tell you all about the fungi that is harvestable in the spring as well as the fall. You'll be surprised to know that morels are not the only delicious and abundant edible mushroom in our local forests.

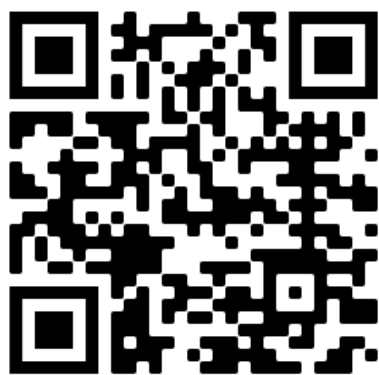


Don Childress, mushroom expert.

"Knowing how to forage safely and responsibly is key to being a friend of our forests."

Your wild place is a Podcast produced by the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness about the wild people and places in North Idaho and Northwest Montana. To listen, visit Scotchmanpeaks.org/podcast or find us on Spotify.

Scan & Listen!



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.



Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.
PO Box 2061, Sandpoint, ID 83864

SAVE THE WILD SCOTCHMANS!

Donate to FSPW

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

Name: _____

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Email: _____

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

Donate Monthly ☐ \$ _____

***Other ways to give:** Learn about leaving a legacy
at <https://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/endowment>

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