

Autumn Adventure

Finding fall joys

in our wild backyard

Page 2: An Extreme Plein Air like no other

Looking to find your wild place this winter? Guide a hike!

Page 7: Winter Tracks brings Wilderness to the next generation

From the director: Summer in the Adirondacks

Located in upstate New York, with over 6 million acres, Adirondack State Park is larger than Yellowstone, Everglades, Glacier and Grand Canyon National Parks combined. Among the visionaries who created the park in the 1800s was my great, great grandfather, Franklin B Hough. We wanted to experience, firsthand, this vast area of rugged mountains and remote lakes, which include the largest tracts of Wilderness left in the eastern U.S. So, this summer, Deb and I hiked across the park!

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We navigated through brushy terrain, climbing rocky slopes, hopping on, bouncing off and butt sliding down boulders. We went wallowing in the mud. In places, the slopes we climbed were steeper than anything in the Scotchmans. We pulled up and lowered ourselves down over rock slabs and boulders the size of houses. All this wore down our knees and our nerves while testing upper body strength and stamina.

We hiked on hot days with near 100% humidity, feeling all the while like wet dishrags. Other times we walked in day-long drizzle, soaked

and cold to the bone. Sometimes streams and trails merged and became one. Sloshing in mud through it all, nothing stayed dry. Our feet were rubbed raw, wrinkled, blistered, bruised and calloused. Our natural hiking pace was slowed down to what conditions would allow.

We walked almost 230 miles across the entire Adirondack Park. As we chased the ghost of Franklin B Hough across these hills and hollows we found wild, rugged and remote



places with a real sense of solitude and discovery. Remarkable, considering that over 75 million people live within a 4 hour drive of the Adirondacks. We found the wilderness we were looking for.

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Extreme Plein Air: Devil's Club, Alder and Vine Maple, oh, my!

The Extreme Plein Air Expedition V. 2019 was indeed extreme. Getting in and out of the wild and lovely upper Ross Creek basins — which we headed for on Trail #142 in late July — was more challenging than usual. We got there. But . . .

2019 marked the tenth Extreme Plein

Air, and we planned a ten-day trip to celebrate. We managed seven before the wilderness spit us out. Still, it's the longest Extreme on record. And maybe the hardest; hard to tell, as they have all been hard. But they have all been good, too.

"We" were painters Aaron Johnson,

Ed Robinson and Carol Maddux; FSPW summer intern Sophie Conerly; and the hike leader (me). The painters were to capture the rugged heart of the Scotchmans on canvas and paper and

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The hidden cranberry

Several years ago, while visiting son Grant and his family at their home on Kodiak Island, Alaska, I was thrilled to discover, on one of our many exploratory hikes, a great acreage of wild cranberries! They were not actually in a bog situation, but covered a great matted expanse of very moist, peaty soil.

Up to that first trip, I had never before, nor since, seen cranberries growing in the wild. Now, this past spring/summer season, fellow Master Naturalist Derek Antonelli of Idaho Department of Fish and Game, led a group of volunteers in transecting the Hager Lake area and discovered an enormous bog of them — “acres” — according to Derek.

While researching the bog cranberry, I discovered that the best source of information was “Discovering Wild

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Henry Jorden joins Lincoln County team

The great outdoors are in Henry Jorden's blood. Having grown up along the Rocky Mountain Front in Choteau, Mont., he understands why saving the clean air and water of wild lands is vital. It's a major reason why he joined Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness as Lincoln County outreach coordinator.

Henry's focus is engaging Lincoln County residents on wilderness issues. He puts his passion for youth outdoor education to use as well with FSPW's Winter Tracks program in Lincoln County.

“I couldn't be more excited to become a part of the Friends' dedicated team and start working to save the wild Scotchmans,” Henry said.

Henry graduated from Carroll College in 2016 with a BA in political science and international relations. Public lands and environmental policy was an emphasis in his studies, making him a great fit for work saving the wild Scotchmans.

In addition to his Scotchman Peaks work, Henry is a counselor at Boulder Creek Academy in Bonners Ferry. He resides in Troy, where his efforts are guided by the unique intersection of community engagement, outdoor education and mental health.



FSPW highlighted event

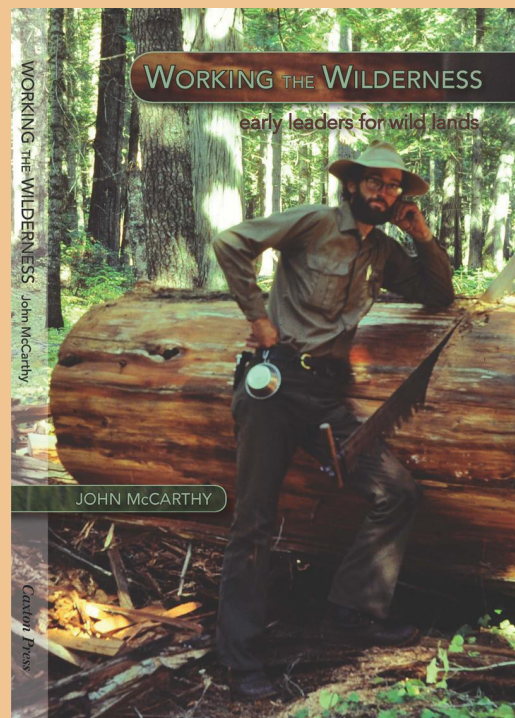
Want more details? www.ScotchmanPeaks.org



Working the Wilderness with John McCarthy

Spend an evening with Idaho author, John McCarthy. His new book, "Working the Wilderness: Early Leaders for Wild Lands," tells the story of the men and women who cut the trails, built the bridges, and worked for decades to maintain the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. As an added bonus, Idaho Trails Association will be there for a crosscut saw demo!

John will be at Utara Brewing Co. in Sandpoint on Nov. 12 from 6-8 p.m. for a presentation and book signing.



Cranberry, from page 3

Plants — Alaska, Western Canada, the Northwest” by Janice J. Schofield. Of interest to me is the fact that Schofield lists them as *Oxycoccus* species, while acknowledging that “other experts” list them as *Vacciniums* — which includes blueberries, huckleberries and lingonberries. Moot, probably, because the important thing is, they are here!

The pretty flower resembles a shooting star (*Dodecatheon*), which morph into the berries. The shrubby, mat-like growth consists of delicate thread-like creepers that generally trail through moss and are often concealed by it. The

sour berries, loaded with Vitamin C, are the same used in breads, drinks and relishes by Native Americans and settlers through history.

Used as food and medicine for centuries, the bog cranberry was part of the Alaskan Inupiat pharmacopoeia juiced as a drink for urinary tract infections and/or ground or pounded with seal fat for bladder problems. In the lower states, they were used ground up with bear fat for pemmican. In our day, of course, cranberry juice is known as an excellent oxidant and digestive tract soother.

If you are lucky enough to know the location of a cranberry bog, it is

best to gather them after first frost. Just remember to use a bit more sugar for the wild-gathered berries. When I made cranberry-nut bread with the wild berries, I used some chopped up dates for extra sweetness to offset (and enhance) the tartness.

As a final note, argon dating has substantiated that the wild cranberry has existed for several million years, so it is truly one of our natural treasures. Enjoy it — or its more subdued descendant — during your holidays. A wonderful toast is a splash of cranberry liqueur in a flute of icy champagne. Cheers!

-Valle Novak

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'The opportunity of a lifetime:' an intern's journey

Accepting the summer internship position offered by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness is probably the best choice I could have possibly made for myself. My entire summer was spent exploring the natural beauty of the Montana and Idaho mountains.

Wildlife education, especially concerning mountain goats, was one of the highlights of my summer. Being a part of the Goat Ambassadors was particularly memorable and connected me with visitors and wildlife.

The internship also allowed for me to work alongside the U.S. Forest Service in Trout Creek. Every day I was able to explore different trails while learning the ins and outs of trail maintenance and restoration.

My top two experiences were with the Friends of Scotchman Peaks. I helped Preston lead a hike to Little Spar Lake, which provided the most breathtaking views of the summer. But the peak experience was joining three artists and Sandy on the Extreme Plein Air. It was by far the most challenging backpacking trip I have ever been on, but it was also my favorite. The raw beauty of this country was like no other. I grew so much from that trip alone. Ed, Carol, Aaron and Sandy are four of the most supportive and positive people I have ever met. If I was ever given the chance to take another trip with them, I would say yes with no hesitation.

This past summer has given me the experience of a lifetime. Moving forward in my future, I have more knowledge, experience, training and love for the outdoors, which will benefit me tremendously. I want to say thank you to the FSPW for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime and everyone who was a part of my incredible journey.

-Sophie Conerly



FSPW intern Sophie Conerly patches up Sandy Compton, program coordinator, on the trail of Extreme Plein Air.

Adirondacks, from page 2

We also found those places within ourselves that we were looking for. We tested and pushed beyond some "limits", and learned to respect others. We were reminded that successful journeys require us to be nimble and adapt. To know when to "stay the course." And to know when to change plans. And to change them

with grace, acceptance and a deeper sense of self.

We did not make it to the top of Hough Peak. The side trip loop we hoped to hike was too elusive. A day hike at the end was ill advised given banged up knees. That summit will wait until another day. Knowing when to go and when not is an important lesson that wilderness teaches.

We did discover what makes the Adirondacks so special that many people for the last 150 years have made it their life's work to save and to explore these wild lands. And, we found one of our wild places; a place that will now, and forever, be a part of the landscape of our souls. Expand your soul; find your own wild place!

-Phil Hough

Making Friends at Harvest Festival



Being a butterfly ain't easy, as the little dancers at the Kootenai Harvest Festival demonstrated. They gave a memorable performance in a day filled with great food and fun. Just as impactful was Lincoln County Outreach Coordinator Henry Jorden, pictured left, who spent the day spreading the Wilderness word at the FSPW booth.

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Trail Ambassadors

Keeping hikers and mountain goats safe from each other on Scotchman Peak.



Winter Tracks

Connecting local kids with nature (and some pretty amazing volunteers).

Get your hike on!

Sign-up online to reserve your spot. Space on hikes is limited!

Regal Creek Snowshoe Jan. 11

Join Phil and Deb for a snowshoe in celebration of Aldo Leopold's 132nd birthday. Plus a great view of the Lightning Creek valley.

Help more folks fall in love with the Scotchmans by leading a hike! Visit scotchmanpeaks.org and click "Lead a Hike."

Upcoming events

Working the Wilderness with John McCarthy Nov. 12

See page 4 for details.

#GivingTuesday goes Downtown Dec. 3

FSPW and MickDuff's encourage you to shop local this holiday season. Details to come!

Laughing Dog Brews for Benefits Jan. 6

A portion of proceeds will help to save the wild Scotchmans.

Celebrating 15 years of Friends Feb. 1

What better way to celebrate FSPW's 15th anniversary than by inviting you, our Friends, to a Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Sandpoint. Keep an eye out for ticket sales soon!

For more information, email info@scotchmanpeaks.org.

Plein Air, from page 2

digitally, which they did wonderfully. Sophie was to enjoy the journey and occasionally use her first aid skills to patch up the hike leader. I was to have a good idea of where to camp, a rough idea of how to get to camp, and to think like an elk to find the “easiest” routes between camps.

Thinking like an elk is never easy. Changes from the fires of 2015 made it harder. Fire dramatically changed how they move through the back country. We did not find their old paths through the jungle above South Fork Falls, nor on the semi-vertical alder/vine maple/devil’s club chaos we slipped and slid down coming out of the upper Middle Fork. Where once were relatively distinct threads through the tangle is now just tangle.

That complicated our lives considerably. But being brave and stalwart painters and intern, the others did not organize a mutiny. Instead they followed me through alder hell, painted many marvelous things — and applied first aid.

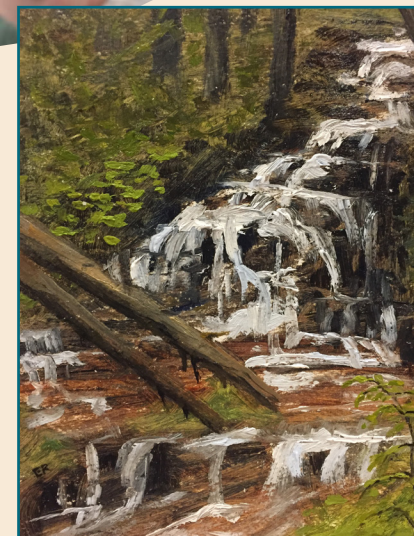
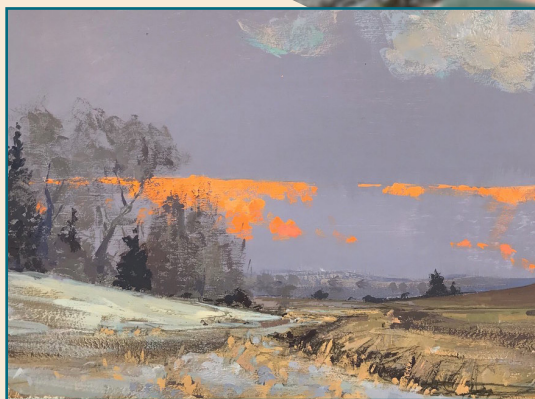
We returned to Trail #142 for resupply on the afternoon of day six. Three of us had planned to go out then. Ed and I and a friend who came to meet us were to go four more days. Ed had an art show to prepare for, and after consideration, took the opportunity to go out. My friend and I stayed one more night at the end of the Trail #142, and then we walked out as well. For good cause.

I had mixed emotions about the early exit. I was pretty banged up from a rough fall on day three, but I love the incredible beauty and isolation from the “real” world at the heart of the Scotchmans, even though the wilderness fights like hell to keep you out. Once in, it fights like hell to keep you. That, I don’t love so much, but it does make the time there more precious.

As we packed on the morning of day seven, I heard the sirens of Upper Ross Creek singing, “Just another half-day in hell, and you’ll be back in heaven!” But I was limping and the painters had gone home. Extreme V. 2019 was over.

It was hard. And good.


-Sandy Compton



Artist credits from top left: Ed Robinson, Aaron Cordell Johnson, Aaron Cordell Johnson, Aaron Cordell Johnson, Ed Robinson.

An autumn walk in the moist montane

Story and art by Marilyn McIntyre



An autumn walk in the moist montane is a dazzling experience, with the colors of the Western Larch trees achieving a bright gold that brings a sense of sunshine to even the most cloudy days. If you are very watchful you might find a bald eagle watching just as intently for the Kokanee Salmon that are currently swimming up the creeks that flow into Lake Pend Oreille.

The Kokanee are land-locked Sockeye who were stranded in the lake 15,000 years ago when the Ice dams broke. They spawn in the months of October through December when they lay their eggs in the rock beds of the streams. There, they will hatch and eventually find their way back into the lake for 4 years before returning to their spawning sites once

again. After spawning, the fish die and are eaten by the eagles. Not only are Kokanee great for humans to fish for and eat during the summer, but they also provide food for other fish species, wetland vegetation and the eagles. Following the spawning banquet, the eagles return to their own breeding grounds where the water is open and fish are available in the winter. They are very territorial and will spread out around the region.

If you want to know more about this amazing local happening, I encourage you to read our local photographer Jerry Ferrara's book "Season of the Eagle." Above all, plan to spend as many days outside in the Wilderness this fall and winter as you can.



Winter Tracks bridges age gap

Part of saving the rugged and wild Scotchman Peaks for our kids and grandkids is helping them “find their wild place.” This is where FSPW Winter Tracks program comes in.

Volunteer instructors help students from Idaho, Montana and Washington learn about wild things and places in a fun and safe setting. Winter Tracks instructors teach students about tracking, leave no trace, avalanche safety, local trees, map and compass, native mammals, winter survival and more.

Retired foresters Jeff Pennick and Ed Robinson team up to teach about trees. “One of my favorite things to do is to teach kids to be curious and go out and explore,” Pennick says. “If they are curious to explore wild places, it’s a wonderful thing.”

Retired Libby teacher Gene Reckin brings a collection of bird and animal mounts to Winter Tracks, and a huge knowledge of wildlife. “Getting kids outside is fun for them and me,” he says.

Not every Winter Tracks volunteer is an instructor. Howard Shay and his wife, Connie, help out as group guides and fire tenders. Holly Clements claims hot chocolate as her specialty. Retired Navy veteran Phil Degens, 80, comes as a “general helper.”

“It keeps me young,” Degens says.

Winter Tracks programs are offered free of charge to schools by FSPW. Venues are public resource areas in Lincoln, Sanders and Bonner counties. Most sessions are held on Fridays, though other arrangements can be made.

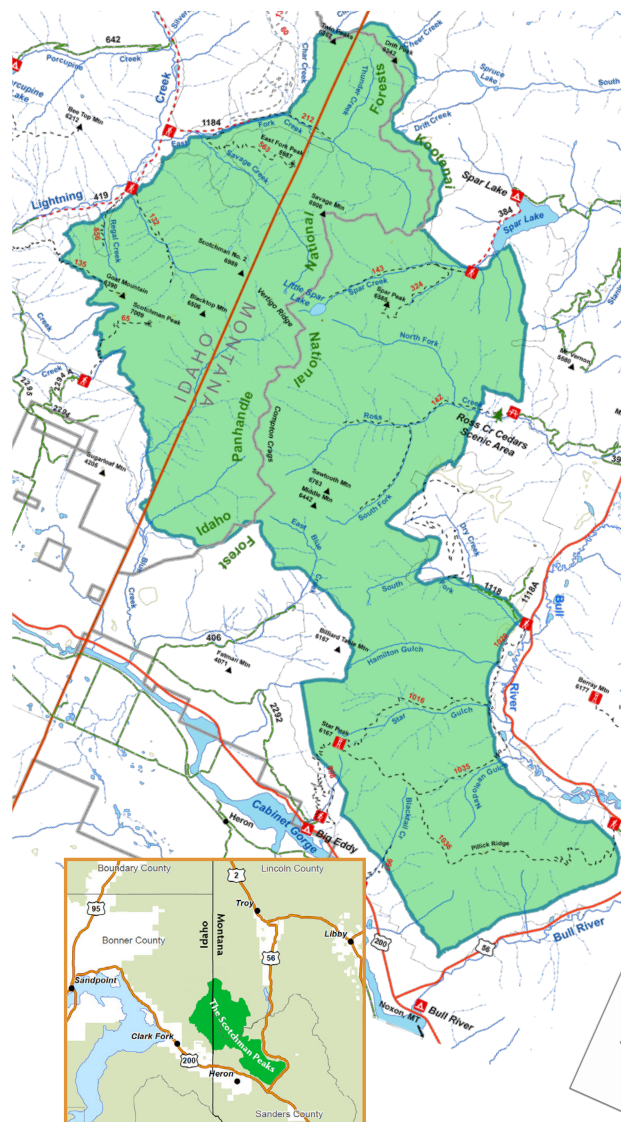
FSPW is taking reservations from schools for the coming year. Teachers should write to sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org.

Interested in teaching a module or spending a day of “keeping young” with the students? Contact us at scotchmanpeaks.org/volunteer.

Deadline for Winter Tracks reservations is Dec. 13.

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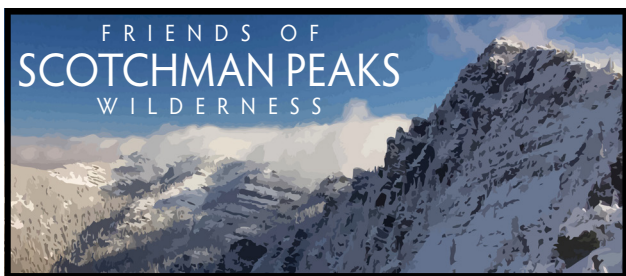
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