



Mission Statement

“Spanning the Idaho/Montana border, the Scotchmans are one of the last, and largest, wild areas in our region. We conduct education, outreach and stewardship activities to preserve the rugged, scenic and biologically diverse 88,000 acre Scotchman Peaks Roadless Area. We believe the Scotchman Peaks deserve congressional designation as Wilderness for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.”



Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc. (FSPW) is a non-profit organization. The proceeds from all events and sales benefit our wilderness preservation efforts. Donations are tax deductible.

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail and have an email address please help us save postage by sending us your email address.

Editor: Ann Wimberley

Layout and design: Sandy Compton

Stewardship project: Forest Carnivore Monitoring



Remote Camera Monitoring Station 101. Volunteers from FSPW, Idaho Conservation League and other groups get hands-on training in setting up the sort of camera station to be used in this winter's forest carnivore study.

Working Together to Get the Information We Need.

**By Michael Lucid, Field Biologist
Idaho Department of Fish and Game**

Lots of jobs involve management. From managing inventory at a grocery store to managing wildlife - all managers have in common the need for one thing: information. A grocery store manager needs to know to have enough turkeys on hand for thanksgiving, but not so many she doesn't sell most of them. A wildlife manager needs to know how many deer are in a hunting unit compared to previous years. This way she can provide opportunity for humans to watch or hunt deer. Also, she can ensure there are not so many deer they cause road hazards.

Information gathering is the first step in managing wildlife populations. For big game species such as deer and elk we have excellent information because managers are provided the time and money to conduct regular surveys. Unfortunately, there is only so much time and money to go around and other species are often left out of the information gathering loop. As a biologist I am often asked to provide comments and expert opinion on wildlife populations for which information just isn't available.

Continued on page 11



Lincoln and Sanders County: Kids in the news.

Troy Kindergarten ends up with a FSPW Tree

By Molly Kieran

Oh what fun it is to decorate a tree and give it away.

The Festival of Trees & Gala Christmas Event took place December 9 and 10, at the Memorial Center in Libby, Montana. This event is a huge fundraiser for St. John's Lutheran Hospital building fund and is heavily attended. In fact, it's the largest event of the year. Our fresh-cut Douglas fir was put up and decorated Thursday evening, December 8.

Once again Cathie Sullivan and I decorated with the help of another great volunteer, Don Clark. Don and I may have been the only contingency singing Christmas carols as we decorated.

The number of trees is limited to 20 and ours was a beauty, decorated especially for the children. It was covered in red lights, red and white balls, candy canes, garlands of red wood balls and garlands of small pine cones (picked, strung and painted by hand) and about 20 stuffed animals. On Friday, the 9th, the school kids arrive in huge numbers to view the trees and visit Santa. This is open to the public until 8:00 p.m.

I was in attendance on Friday night having some photos taken and was quite amazed at the number of folks who stopped by our tree and wanted to know all about the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Then, of course, there were the little children mesmerized by the stuffed animals – a very fun night.

Saturday night the 10th was the big formal party with silent auctions, of which we were a part; raffles, of which we also a part; and then the big live auction rounds out the evening. The trees are removed from the center Sunday morning.

You may recall that last year we gave our tree to a single mother of 3 who was recovering from cancer. This year we gave our tree to the kindergarten class at W.R. Morrison Elementary School in Troy, Montana. We had to cut it down about 3 feet so it would fit into the classroom. A special thanks to our Volunteer, Bernie Cassidy, for helping out with that task.

There are a total of 23 children in the class. Many of these children have no Christmas tree at home and have never been able to help decorate one. The teacher, Chelcy Goodwin, suggested that we leave the candy canes off the tree so each child could put one on. The stuffed animals will be given to the children and the decorations can be stored for next year.

Our special thanks to, Lois Tyndall, the classroom Grandma, for being such a great help putting this together for the children.



Kids from Ms. Goodwin's Troy Kindergarten class marvel at their Christmas tree.

Montana students will write for Wilderness

By Sandy Compton

The annual Sanders County School Essay Contest featuring the theme "Does Wilderness Have Value?" concluded in late November with entries from Plains, Paradise, Thompson Falls and Noxon schools. The contest, which has become a tradition with Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, is the brain-child of FSPW volunteer and former Sanders County teacher Ernie Scherzer. Scherzer also administers it annually, sending out many posters to the schools calling for entries, sorting through the dozens of entries for the best answers to the question from



Second place winner Natalie Beardsley (Noxon) and contest organizer Ernie Scherzer

each school, and handing off the awards to the individual students who provide those best answers.

This year, six students from Plains High and Middle Schools, Paradise School, Thompson Falls High School and Noxon Elementary and Junior High Schools were awarded FSPW hats and t-shirts for their winning essays. The first and second place winners also received a \$100 US Savings Bond and a Scotchman Peaks hooded sweatshirt, respectively.

Overall winner and recipient of the Savings Bond was Leah Thompson, in the eighth grade at Plains Middle School. Second place overall and winner

of the sweatshirt was Natalia Beardsley, an eighth-grader at Noxon. The four runners up are Logan Whilhite of Paradise, Carter Montgomery from Plains High School, Cody Phillips from Thompson Falls High School and Madison Koonce, a fifth-grader at Noxon Elementary School.

You can read the first- and second-place essays on the web at <http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/news/eighth-graders-take-the-honors-in-the-sanders-county-essay-contest/>



Madison Koonce shows off her essay prizes.



Wild winter ahead for Kelsey Brasseur: wolverine project coordinator

Kelsey Brasseur, fresh from the Alaskan research fields, is the new project coordinator for the FSPW rare carnivore study for the 2011-12 winter season. Kelsey has already been busy coordinating volunteers and helping track data from monitoring stations around northern Idaho and western Montana, including three training days in December getting crews ready to go into the back country. She is also responsible for getting volunteers set up with the equipment to do the job.

That includes supplying them with cameras, appropriate bait to attract mustelids, the myriad supplies needed to capture data about the creatures that will visit the stations throughout the winter as well as the locations of the stations themselves.

"I'm glad that people have so many varied skills," Kelsey said, "because it makes it possible to put up stations in a wide variety of places, and give us a better chance of finding what we are looking for."



Kelsey Brasseur heads up the wildlife survey for FSPW

What is the study looking for? Specifically, wolverines, but more generally, also their cousins such as martens and fishers and forest cohabitators, like Canada lynx. Data gathered will help determine rare forest carnivore populations in the Cabinet, Selkirk and Purcell ranges and provide input to agencies such as IDFG and the Forest Service.

"This is a continuation of a project we got involved in last year," says FSPW exec Phil Hough. "We were amazed by how much interest it generated, and felt that it was certainly worth continuing this year."

The project, initiated by IDFG biologists Michael Lucid and Lacy Robinson, attracted dozens of volunteer-days from groups and individuals during the 2010-11 winter, as well as captured on film at monitoring stations a variety of mustelids and one lynx.

Continued on Page 9

Message from Chair – Adopt a Rare Forest Carnivore Monitoring Station

Maybe it's the "seven year itch". January 2012 does mark our 7th anniversary. Or maybe (with apologies to Robert Duvall) it's just that we love the smell of musty mustelids in the morning! Either way, we are restless. It's time to go looking for Wolverines! And, with funding from Zoo Boise, we literally have no time to rest right now. While other groups are at the end of the "field season" we are moving into the busiest period we have ever had.

In November we were awarded a grant from the Zoo Boise Conservation Fund. Since then it has been full speed ahead. Working under the guidance of Idaho Fish and Game, we ordered equipment, solicited and trained volunteers, hired a Project Coordinator and began setting up camera stations in the backcountry.

Along with community partners including Idaho Conservation League, the US Forest Service, Selkirk Outdoor Leadership Experience, Sandpoint High School Outdoor Adventure Club, Lake Pend O'reille High School, Spokane Mountaineers and others we are setting up approximately 40 stations across the West Cabinet and Selkirk Mountains, complimenting another 20-25 stations that IDFG is setting up. Using motion sensitive, infrared cameras, hair snag devices and bait to bring them in, we should, literally, get a good snapshot of the rare forest carnivores in our area (primarily Wolverine, Lynx, Fisher and Marten.)

This is cutting edge "citizen's science" done with clear objectives, a great degree of integrity and high expectations of results. We see great value in contributing vital information to wildlife and land management agencies, helping them

make good decisions based on knowledge. We are also excited about the sense of community being built and the deepening of our individual and collective connection to the place we call home. Our first three trainings drew over 60 volunteers! We expect to see even more folks involved before this is over. This winter's experience should be one that can be duplicated in future years and other places.

We aren't the only ones excited about this project. Last winter's "trial run", a smaller scale study drew in many new "friends" attracted to the Scotchmans because of the wildlife values involved. Finding areas of interest that engage new supporters keeps our campaign alive, fresh and growing.

Maybe you are reading this and recognize yourself as one of the many "restless" folks already involved in our Wolverine Watch. Or, perhaps you are wondering how to get involved. We will continue to recruit volunteers through the end of the study (late Feb or early March). You can go to our website or email us at mustelids@scotchmanpeaks.org for more information.

Maybe you don't live nearby, or have the time, or desire to snowshoe or ski in deep, delightful powder. You can still help by adopting a monitoring station. That's right, just send in any size donation and let us know that you would like to see photos of the rare forest carnivore(s) who visit your station. In the months of February and March we will send you a few select photos of your adoptee.

Do it for your inner Wolverine!

Phil Hough



From the Top

This issue of Peak Experience is proof positive that for FSPW Winter 2012 is the season of the wolverine. These animals, much less familiar to most Americans than many of the other forest carnivores, have moved to center stage here with the Boise Zoo grant funding to continue the project we began with Idaho Fish and Game last winter. Another great reason to get out into the wilderness.

Check out the winter hike schedule for opportunities to learn more about local birds, tracking, and ecology from experts in these fields. Then sit by the fire and plan an adventure using your new skills. Enjoy the winter wonderland of the proposed wilderness either on one of our hikes or on your own.

— Ann Wimberley

The Future Looks Bright

January 14: Brian Baxter will teach a tracking class beginning with 2.5 hours of classroom studies and followed by 3-plus hours in the field. Contact b_baxter53@yahoo.com to learn more.

January 20: FSPW and Idaho Conservation League will present the Winter Wildlands Film Festival at the Eagles club in Coeur d'Alene.

January 26-28: FSPW will have a table at the Banff Mountain Film Festival at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint

January 28: Brian Baxter will teach a winter ecology class beginning with 2.5 hours in the classroom followed by 3.5 hours in the field. Contact b_baxter53@yahoo.com to learn more.

January 29: The StoryTelling Company, sponsored by FSPW will be at Ivano's in Sandpoint. 5 p.m.

January 29-30: FSPW will have a table at the Banff Mountain Film Festival at the Kroc Center in Coeur d'Alene.

February 10: FSPW sponsors the International Wildlife Film Festival at the Little Theater in Libby

February 11: FSPW sponsors the International Wildlife Film Festival in Thompson Falls.

February 24: The StoryTelling Company, sponsored by FSPW will be at a venue to be announced in Sandpoint. 5 p.m.

February 25: Peak Experience bird columnist Jon Isacoff will lead a birders outing along the north shore of Lake Pend Oreille and in Lightning Creek. Contact isacoff@gonzaga.edu

On the Horizon

March 24: The Cabinet Resource Group will hold their annual meeting at the Big Horn Lodge. No-host bar, potluck, silent auction and a short meeting begin at 4:00 p.m. Look for the FSPW table there.

April 26: The StoryTelling Company will present a fundraising show for Friends of Scotchman Paks Wildernss at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint

Summer photo contest winner



"Goats, goats, goats - big deal! I live up here full time too."

Photo by Neil Wimberley

Along the Trail

November 9: Phil Hough made a presentation to the Gonzaga University Environmental Studies Program

November 10. 40 Friends attended Appreciation Night in Lincoln County at the MK Steakhouse.

November 28: Forty or fifty Friends attended the Scotchman Peaks Sip'n'Shop at Pend Oreille Winery.

December 3, 17 and 19: 60-plus volunteers attended winter awareness training for hike leaders and camera station training for mustelid research volunteers at the Sandpoint District Forest Service offices.

December 9 & 10: FSPW participated in the Festival of Trees and Gala Christmas event at the Memorial Center in Libby. The

FSPW tree was donated to the kindergarten classroom at the W.R. Morrison Elementary School in Troy. See story page 2

December 10: Brian Baxter led eight participants on a tracking class near the proposed wilderness boundary.

December 15: Sanders County school essay winners announced by volunteer Ernie Scherzer. See story page 2.

December 20: Mustelid seeking season officially began with the first camera stations set up by volunteers.

January 1: The winter hiking season begins, as well as the 2012 Winter Photo Contest. See pages 6 and 8 for more details.



Olivia Daleen, Sandpoint High School graduate and FSPW scholarship recipient, attends the University of Idaho. She remains an avid hiker, backpacker and friend of wilderness.

Photo by proud Mom, Healthier Guthrie



Over the Top Volunteer

Mary Franzel is a Funny Gal

By **Sandy Compton**

Mary Franzel (pronounced not fran'•zl, but fran•zel') is not a woman you forget. She's tall, blonde, outspoken and funny. Sometimes very funny. And, folks who gravitate to her can also be very funny. In fact, it was hard to pick a picture of her for this article because she's often clowning around with her funny friends when the shutter clicks, which leads to very interesting pictures. If a normal picture is worth a thousand words, a picture of Mary taken by one of her funny friends might be worth several thousand.

Besides being very good at ending up in funny pictures, Mary is the mother of two "pretty good" kids, Laura and Luke. Luke lives in Colorado, where he goes to school when he's not hiking — he's climbed eight "Fourteeners" since moving there. Laura lives in Coeur d'Alene, with plans to move to Bend.

Mary is a dog lover, a horsewoman, a nurse (semi-retired at the moment), hiker, bicyclist, skater and down hill and cross-country skier. Plus, she's a great volunteer, even though she has been sort of a stealth volunteer until recent months.

"I used to have clandestine meetings with Neil and Ann Wimberley," she confesses, "at the Sam Owens Fire Station. They'd hand me a stack of newsletters and I'd take them home — or to work when I was working nights — fold them and apply stamps, address labels and the little round sticky things that kept them folded in the mail."

Mary was the original FSPW mail clerk. Who knew?

She signed on as a Friend as soon as she moved to her property near Lightning Creek in 2005. "I said, 'Yeah! I want to live across the street from a wilderness area.'" And she's been working toward that end ever since.

"I don't know how many tables I've sat at," she says, "but I keep opening my mouth, and they keep finding things for me to do." This year alone, she has worked at film festivals, helped at the county fair, taken the wolverine remote station training, planted trees on the road reclamation projects in Lightning Creek and — this one endeared her to a number of *other* volunteers — used her horses, Echo and Jazz, aka Elevator and Escalator, to carry volunteer gear to a campsite wa-a-ay up the trail during the Pillick Ridge trail project. Thank you, Mary!

Mary has had a horse since she was ten years old growing up in Orono, Minnesota, which, if you don't know, is right close



Mary Franzel and uber-dachshund Zipper Lee on the trail to Rock Lake.

Photo by Sandii Mellen

to Mound and Minnetrista and Maple Plain and the shores of Lake Minnetonka.

Riding that horse, she developed a love of the outdoors and the natural world that runs deep. She has been involved in environmental issues for a long time. "I had a beach towel with the Earthday green and blue logo on it in junior high. I belonged to the Sierra Club and National Wildlife Federation in high school."

Before moving west, she was the "field trip school nurse" in Buffalo, Minnesota. In summer she under-

took solo backpacking trips, including a number in the Wind River Range of Wyoming. Well, not really solo. She always took her dogs. "My backpacking experience has been 'learn by screwing up,' " she admits. "My first backpacking trip, I brought *canned* dog food. My pack weighed about 90 pounds. I've also learned the hard way not to put anything in a dog pack that can't get wet."

She hasn't done much overnight packing since moving to Lightning Creek, but she still has dogs that she loves to hike with. Carmel and Hershey, siblings from the trust of a tri-colored English spaniel and a golden retriever ("I think") were adopted at three days when their mother was hit by a car. "I'm the first thing they ever saw," Mary says. "I bottle fed them every few hours for a long, long time."

The other dog is Zipper Lee, a long-haired miniature dachshund. Zip is also a hiker, though you wouldn't suspect it to look at her. "She's made it half-way up Goat," Mary says, "and she's been to Rock Lake."

Topping off the menagerie are three cats, 14-year-old Avalanche and Cat One and Cat Two, the last two being barn cats whose lifestyle requires no more name than that.

She admits that it wasn't until this past year that she got involved in the FSPW hike program. "I was pretty much of a lone hiker," she says, "until Sandii (Mellen) shamed me into going on a winter hike up East Fork Creek with Jim Mellen, John Harbuck and some folks who didn't know me. I was on Minnesota cross-country skis without edges, and I had this little quart-sized water container. I kept falling down, and about the fourth time this happened, I made this comment that I shouldn't have this full of vodka. You should have seen the looks."

She's a joker, that Mary, but it's no joke that she is a valuable volunteer for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. We appreciate her help as much as we do her humor.



Peak Views: A winter of hikes and classes are ready for you.

Hike date	Exertion Rating	Destination/ Hike Name	Leader(s)	Description and contact info
1/14/12	E/M	Tracking Hike with Brian Baxter	Brian Baxter	<p>Contact info: b_baxter53@yahoo.com</p> <p>"Animal Tracking and Sign Interpretation" is designed for citizen scientists, presented to convey scientific methodologies and open awareness to the "Art of Tracking." An slide show highlighting Brian's involvement in Marten, Fisher, Wolverine and Lynx research covers 70 species of local wildlife, focusing on the mustelid family, including: ermine; mink; marten; fisher; wolverine; lynx; otter; badger; and the subtle differences in the sign and trails these mid size carnivores leave for us in the solitude of winter's blanket. Participants will measure, track, trail, hypothesize, smell, observe sign and deduce the species of animal and its behavior during our field session. Dress appropriately, and bring lunch, water, snowshoes and a sense of humor! Brian Baxter is a wildlife researcher with over 36 years in the field. Two hours in the classroom are followed by 3 to 4 hours in the field. The hike and course are free. There is a \$5 materials charge.</p> <p>Round trip 6 ± miles. Elevation gain 400 to 800 feet.</p>
1/21/12	M+	Regal Creek	Phil Hough and Deb Hunsicker	<p>Contact info: 208-946-9127 or phil@scotchmanpeaks.org</p> <p>Follow the perimeter of the proposed Wilderness along Lightning Creek road and up newly-cleared Regal Creek Trail. As we climb the moderately steep trail, views will open up of the valley. We may cross Regal Creek and continue in mature forests. The route will be out and back, total distance dependent upon how far we go before turning around. Length and overall difficulty make this a moderate trip with an option to turn back earlier for those wanting something on the easy side.</p> <p>Round trip: 7 ± miles. Elevation gain, 400 feet.</p>
1/28/12	M/S	Winter Ecology Hike	Brian Baxter	<p>Contact info: b_baxter53@yahoo.com</p> <p>A day of adventure in the snow-cloaked forest to study ecological concepts from a winter perspective! A classroom overview focusing on predator/prey relationships and evergreen plant species is followed by a field session. Study hunting behaviors; prey escape strategy; specialized adaptations; tracks and trails; activity under the snow; and wintering birds of prey. We will also focus on plant species that have adapted, winter tree identification, and browse species relied upon for winter survival. Travel mode will depend upon weather and snow conditions and group preference and ability. Dress appropriately in layers; bring lunch, snacks, water, hot drinks; and your snowshoes, poles, and cross country skis. There's a \$5 fee for class materials.</p>
2/5/12	M	Ross Creek Cedars	Neil and Ann Wimberley	<p>Contact info: 208-264-5379 or neil@scotchmanpeaks.org,</p> <p>We will hike up the Ross Creek Cedars road 3.5 miles into the Ross Creek Cedars. An overlook on the way provides stunning views. We will wander along a one mile loop amongst the cedars before returning. Beginner level skill, but the overall length makes this suitable only for those with good conditioning.</p> <p>Round trip: 8 + miles. Elevation gain, 1200 feet.</p>
2/11/12	M	Ross Creek Cedars Ladies Only	Sandii Mellen	<p>Contact info: 208-265-5261 or sandiimellen@gmail.com</p> <p>A lady's day in the great outdoors led by a great lady. Hike to and through Ross Creek Cedars in the quiet of winter. This is an opportunity for first-timers or many-timers. Snowshoes or skis necessary. FSPW has snowshoes to lend. Beginner level skill, but the overall length makes this suitable only for those with good conditioning.</p> <p>Round trip: 8 miles. Elevation gain, 1200 feet.</p>
2/18/12	M	Lightning Creek to East Fork Creek.	John Harbuck	<p>Contact info: harbuck@norlight.org</p> <p>Follow the perimeter of the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness along Lightning Creek Road. Depending on how far we can drive we may cross East Fork Creek and follow its flood plain past the new trailhead, exploring a jumble of trees and boulders. The route will be out and back, total distance dependent upon how far we go before turning around.</p>
2/25/12	E/M	Scotchmans Winter Bird Highlights (Co-sponsored with Spokane Audubon)	Jon Isacoff	<p>Contact info: 509-448-2629 or isacoff@gonzaga.edu</p> <p>This all-day trip to Bonner County and the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Area will focus on waterfowl on Lake Pend Oreille as well as upland winter birds and rarities in Lightning Creek. Be prepared to drive approximately 5 hours round-trip from Spokane and to walk on gravel roads approximately 2-3 miles. Bring WARM clothes, lunch, snacks, and water. Tentatively, we will meet at Liberty Lake Albertson's at 7:00AM and at Sandpoint City Beach at 8:30 AM. Contact the hike leader by February 18 if interested. This trip is dependent on weather and road conditions.</p>
3/10/12	S+ Very difficult	Troy Mine Vent/ Mount Vernon	Sandii Mellen	<p>Contact info: 208-265-5261 or jimnsandii@gmail.com</p> <p>This is a great XC ski, with wonderful views of Bull Lake and the Cabinet Mountains. It climbs steadily up on an old gated road past a mine vent from the Troy mine. Skis are required, (Skins/ snowshoes will be needed in some places). This will be an all day trip. We will go as far as everyone is willing to go. Be prepared for any weather conditions, with adequate clothing, food, water, headlamps, skins for skis or snowshoes to change in to.</p> <p>Round trip, 12 miles. Elevation gain 2,000 to 3,000 feet.</p>
3/17/12	S	Star Peak	Sandy Compton	<p>Contact info: sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org</p> <p>This snowshoe is strenuous and we will need every bit of winter sunlight to gain the summit and return to our cars before dark. We will stick to the main summer trail for the first 2/3 of the hike, but will tuse our off trail route finding skills to reach the summit.</p> <p>Round trip: 10 miles ±. Elevation gain 4140 feet.</p>
3/26/11	S	Goat Mountain Hop	Jim Mellen	<p>Contact info: 208-265-5261 or jimnsandii@gmail.com</p> <p>This will be the 6th annual Goat Mountain Hop. Gaining 4,000 feet vertical, this is one of the steepest trails in the region. Although you don't have to be crazy to sign up, it does help.</p> <p>Round trip: 7 miles; Elevation gain: 4,000 ±</p>
5/5/12	S	Scotchman Peak	Jim and Sandii Mellen	<p>Contact info: 208-265-5261 or jimnsandii@gmail.com</p> <p>Snowshoe, ski or snowboard the tallest peak in the Scotchman Peaks and work off the excesses of Cinco de Mayo. Generally, the trailhead is inaccessible this time of year, adding 2.5 miles each way and 500 vertical (making a total of 4,200 vertical!). This is for the extremely fit adventurers only!</p> <p>Round trip, 12 miles. Elevation gain, 3700 feet.</p>



Tales of Scotchman Peaks: What happened?

By **Tom Horelick**

Editor's note: Tom Horelick, logger, small business owner, hunter and fisherman, lives in Libby. He writes a column for the Kootenai Valley Record, where this article was originally published.

Catching a few extra ZZZ's over Labor Day weekend, I heard the beeper from our wireless outdoor thermometer sensor that sits inside on the kitchen counter. It gives a little signal when the temperature drops to 37 degrees, warning you a freeze is imminent. Not thinking much of it while the daytime temperatures have been well into the 90's, I rolled back over, thinking my tomatoes were safe.

When I finally got up at daylight and headed for that first groggy cup of coffee, I was stunned to see it was 29 degrees outside! Quick as a wink, summer had ended, the garden is toast, and soon it will be my favorite time of the year, early autumn.

As always, it seemed like yesterday when, looking ahead in May, the time for summer trips and outings seemed endless. Plans and daydreams far outstrip the reality of time and energy. Then around mid- July, I'm counting the weekends on one hand, and the crunch begins of which fishing trip or hike is going to happen and which isn't. It seems like it gets worse every year.

The highlight of my summer was a hike to the top of Spar Peak (about 20 miles south of Troy, west of the Bull Lake Road) with my daughter, a senior at Gonzaga University. As with a lot of my hikes, it has been jelling for years. Whenever I fished Spar Lake, I would look up at the jagged rocks far above me and it would actually bother me that I've never been there.

The day was a hot one in the middle of August, but we got an early start. By mid-morning, with the rising sun burning off last night's humidity, my shirt was wringing wet with sweat. That always brings to mind a hike about 10 years ago in the Cabinets with my then teenage boys. As the sweat was pouring off me on our way to Sky Lakes, I commented to David, the basketball player, "I must look like Shaq in the third quarter." He instantly quipped back, "You look like Shaq at the tip-off!" If you're not a basketball fan, forget it, but its little moments like that, that stick with you and give you a memory to chuckle about years later, on days like today.

We pounded along the trail at a steady pace, knowing it was only going to get warmer, taking good breaks to cool off and

have a drink. As we gained in elevation there were a few patches of dirty snow that Wonderdog thoroughly enjoyed rolling and sliding on. Once we were out of the timber and brush, we had a lunch and a nice rest along the ridge top, savoring the view as much as the watermelon I'd packed just for the occasion. As we headed out, it seemed like the trail was teasing us, circling around the summit and not getting us any closer, but once we headed straight up on the final ascent, a sense of accomplishment swelled inside us.

With the morning haze now gone, the air was crystal clear with the sun behind us. The panorama of Scotchman Peaks #1 and #2 dominated the scene to the West, majestically towering into the sky above everything else. We looked down on Spar Lake to the North. I got out my map and binoculars, and started to piece together the peaks and drainages of the Cabinets across the valley. To look around at the beauty of wild

country you love isn't something you just see, it's something you feel as well. For my daughter to take the time to share a day like this with me, made this hike a special one I'll treasure for a long time.

Autumn isn't quite in full swing yet, so there's still time for a few of those "summer" trips that haven't got done, but soon that magical season of bright yellow trees against deep blue skies and perfect temperatures, will be here for that, oh so brief, time to get outdoors. Hunting, fishing, hiking, or just enjoying the ride, it's all precious for this short lived time of year.

Enjoy it while it lasts. My next rude awakening will be here soon enough when the white stuff covers the valley floor.



Spar Peak wildflowers

Photo by Tom Horelick

Wear your wilderness!

Check out the cool, reasonably priced Scotchman Swag at our outlets. Our bandanas, tees, sweats and hats are available at Mountain Meadows in Libby, MT, Huckleberry Thicket in Trout Creek, MT, The Hope MarketPlace in Hope, ID and Foster's Crossing, Eichardt's, and Outdoor Experience in Sandpoint, ID. Out of the area, contact jimmsandii@gmail.com.

Limited edition sweatshirts saluting Team Laughing Dog in the Race Across America are available at Greasy Fingers Bike Shop in Sandpoint. Other Scotchman merchandise is available in our online store run by Café Press at www.scotchmanpeaks.org/store/html.



Scotchman Natives

Grass Widow: Lovely harbinger

By Valle Novak

Just as the early-blooming shrub honeysuckle (*Lonicera utahensis*) awakens the bumblebee with its nectar-filled flowers, the Grass Widow (*Olsynium douglasii*) heralds the fruiting of the Morel mushroom.

This lovely lavender-pink blossomed spring flower follows the succession of Buttercups, Glacier lilies and Yellow bells from snow-melt to late May, when it takes its turn in the vernal spectrum of glorious color. Yellow “eyes” provide a bright counterpoint to its fetching pale purple petals that top stiff, rush-like stems and green spiky grass-like leaves formed at the plant’s base.

Grass Widow is found in grassy meadows that hold spring moisture and along slopes that lead to pine and/or evergreen forests. It truly is a harbinger of morels and for years our family would watch for that eye-catching purple dotting the hillsides, and grab our bags for a (hopeful) harvest.

There seems to be a problem — botanically speaking — with the identification or perhaps even acknowledgement of Grass Widow as its own species. In my research, (no less than eight books!) I found many writers mistaking it for Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*), a member of the Iris family. The passing resemblance is similar, especially in the leaves, but it has a different stem structure and a considerably smaller flower than the Grass Widow. Some books ignored Grass Widow altogether, perhaps thinking they were one and the same.

One book* discusses Blue-Eyed Grass, then places Grass Widow as a “related species” (calling it *S. douglasi - grandiflorum*) and acknowledging it as the “real star of the family” from the north-



Grass Widow (*Olsynium douglasii*)

Photo by Marilyn George

west, “even found in Idaho” and with flowers at least three times as large as the true Blue-eyed Grass. Arthur Krukeberg agrees with the Blue-Eyed Grass information in his book, but never mentions any Grass Widow relationship.

I have, incidentally, been on hikes and outings with people that actually called Grass Widow “blue-eyed grass,” and never gave it much thought until finally seeing the real thing. I figured it was related, but upon checking found it was not. Strangely enough, I’ve only rarely run across Blue-Eyed Grass and felt that Grass Widows were far more prevalent. Yet, they get the majority of the “ink.”

Like Rodney Dangerfield, Grass Widow simply doesn’t “get enough respect.” It’s lovely in a home garden landscape, especially clumped in rock gardens, and once established, self-sows beautifully. If you find a growing plant with a seed head, collect it to dry and plant. I’ve never tried transplanting, but it seems it should be a viable option. A mid- to late-spring bloomer, it adds delicate, fragile beauty to a woodland patch, and though it prefers sun, adapts nicely to dappled or part-time shade. I don’t promise it will draw morels to your landscape, but it will certainly provide welcome early-season beauty.

* American Garden Classics’ *Wildflower Perennials for your Garden* ISBN0-8117-2660-6

Winter photo contest is open!

Send your best shots.

If you are in or around the Scotchman Peaks this winter (you have to be able to see the wilderness), and you take a picture you think is really cool, attach it to an e-mail telling where you took it, when you took it, and maybe even why you took it and send the whole kit and caboodle to sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org.

Only send what you think is the very best, because you can only submit one picture per week to this contest, which starts December 1 and runs through the last hike of the winter season, or April 30, whichever comes last.



The pictures will be judged by that same highly qualified panel from last summer (the Facebook Friends of Scotchman Peaks will vote with their “likes” on pictures posted in a special album), and the best picture of each month will get a very cool Scotchman Peaks hat.

The grand prize for this contest is truly grand: a night’s stay for two next summer at the Huckleberry Tent and Breakfast (<http://huckleberrytentandbreakfast.com>) near Clark Fork. The winner will be the winter picture submitted with the most Facebook “likes”

overall at the end of the season

The way to win: Send those weekly pictures in and invite your friends to vote for your photo(s) on the Scotchman Peaks Facebook page.



Scotchman Rocks: The Hope Fault – A Story of Landscape Evolution

By **Mark McFadden, PhD**

Why does the landscape look this way? What happened here? The answers to these age-old questions have evolved from rich oral traditions to systematic scientific investigations in countless cultures worldwide. Sometimes the solutions are rather obvious and straightforward in a geologic sense. But more often, a complete portrait of landscape evolution is built over generations of geological clue gathering and rigorous testing of numerous possible explanations.

Locally, the distinct mountain range-front north of Lake Pend Oreille is a great example of a conspicuous feature with a definite explanation. From Highway 200, the slopes rise steeply to produce the striking scenery we so appreciate in this corner of the world. A sharp break in the landscape from Sam Owen east into Montana separates lower, rounded hills to the south from the abrupt slopes to the north. Glacial ice has clearly overridden and shaped the lower landforms and knobs, but why the sharp break in slope? The most obvious clue is visible from directly overhead. (Google Earth is a great way to get the satellite view).

The Hope Fault is a nearly straight line for miles when viewed from above, and is one of the most obvious landscape features in Bonner County. Geologists immediately suspect a major fault when such a striking linear feature exists, but not all linears are actual faults. In order to be classified as a true fault, a discontinuity in the Earth's crust must show evidence of past movement, or offset. A close look at the bedrock on both sides of the break will provide the critical evidence of measureable offset.

Rocks on the north side of the Hope Fault belong to the Prichard Formation, the basal unit of the Precambrian Belt Supergroup in this region. The Prichard Rocks are juxtaposed against rocks of the Piegan and Missoula Groups (upper part of the Belt) on the south side of the fault. Geologic mapping and compilation of unit thicknesses indicate that the southern block has been downdropped over 10,000 feet in comparison to the northern block. No wonder the Hope Fault is such a major topographic feature!

Because the simple term "fault" is so commonly associated with earthquakes and related natural disasters, it is certainly alarming to many people. However, a close look at the geologic history of this area should be comforting and provide some perspective. The initial crustal extension that allowed



Crossing the Clark Fork area of the Sandpoint 30 x 60 Minute Quadrangle from northwest to southeast, the Hope Fault appears as a distinct topographic and stratigraphic discontinuity.

Digital Web Map 94, Idaho Geological Survey

the southern block to slowly drop began in Eocene time, approximately 50 million years ago. Countless small adjustments over millions of years eventually resulted in the major displacement that we can measure today. Small seismic events have been recorded to the southeast in Montana along the Hope Fault in historic time, but are not particularly impressive. Perhaps the best way to characterize the Hope Fault today is to realize that although it remains a major discontinuity in the crust, the main tectonic forces that resulted in the break are no longer at work.

Hopefully, we can appreciate the magnitude of geologic change over time along the steep mountain front whenever the dark Winter clouds part long enough to allow us a view. And, of course, we can wonder why the rest of the landscape looks the way it does wherever we travel!

Kelsey from page 3

With Kelsey on board, FSPW expands the hunt. She is funded by a \$29,700 grant from the Zoo Boise Conservation Fund, awarded in November. She will work with Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Conservation League, Selkirk Outdoor Leadership & Education, Selkirk Conservation Alliance and other community volunteers. The grant also provides more remote cameras as well as other peripherals.

Kelsey grew up on the south shore of Lake Superior, where she received her BS in Biology from Northland College in 2009. In 2011, she studied the breeding population of Kittlitz's murrelets in Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve as a Research Technician for Oregon State University. After three months observing seabirds in the backcountry of Glacier Bay, her passions for both wildlife and wilderness were cemented.

"I knew we had found the right woman for the job when I found out that a lot of the fun-hog community already knew her," said FSPW program coordinator Sandy Compton. "We had a horrible time making up our minds from a whole slew of great applicants, but we're really pleased that Kelsey has taken the job."

Kelsey began work on November 21, and will work until spring on the project.



Trail Talk: Tracking in the Scotchmans

By **Sandy Compton**

It was an unlikely tracking day; a hard crust on patches of old snow with frozen ground in between, and yet the place yielded up clue after clue about the secret life of critters in the woods. With Brian Baxter leading, a group of eight more-or-less neophyte trackers managed to gather up a respectable inventory of species — more or less confirmed — during the first of two tracking classes Brian is teaching this winter.

On the December 10 outing, the group found a plethora of sign left by a sometimes surprising variety of animals who were otherwise invisible except by their leavings. The gamut included snowshoe hare, white tailed and mule deer; elk; coyote; wolf; ermine; Ruffed grouse, field mouse, flying squirrel, porcupine, flicker, pileated woodpecker and — yes — wolf.

It is not logically surprising to find signs of the big canids in and around the Scotchmans — many folks have seen them or their tracks — but it seems always physically surprising — and exciting. Under Brian's tutelage, the group was able to deduce quite a bit about this single critter. That it was female was evidenced by her stance while urinating and by blood in the urine that indicated she was in estrus. That it was black was evidenced by a tiny tuft of hair found by one of the tracking students, much to the excitement of us all. That it was wolf, and not coyote, was evidenced by her 4-inch tracks.

The teacher was slow to move to this conclusion, because, as he explained, tracks often "grow" in the sun. A size nine boot impression can become big-foot tracks on a sunny day with the right exposure. But, as we encountered more and more sign, it became more and more logical that this was indeed *Lupus canid*. The final and most convincing evidence was dirty tracks on the snow left by the critter after she trotted through a dirt patch. It was illuminating to follow her tracks, which illustrated her curiosity and confidence, as well as her fondness for field mice.

Tracking is a subtle and detail-oriented pursuit. It was only after two and a half hours in the classroom studying method

and examples that we went out into the field, but this well-prepared the class for finding more than we thought we would. In the classroom, participants learn toe and gait patterns, stride length and straddle width, and much about the mysteries of interdigital pads. In the field, they carry a tape measure and laminated guides to compare what they are seeing on the ground, or up a tree, for that matter. Brain has a way of waking his students to the possibilities via a new way of seeing, where everything is suspect and nothing is for certain until the homework is done.



A flying squirrel landed hard to make this impression.

Sandy Compton photo

A first stop at a spring yielded antler rubs on saplings — including hair samples left on the trees by deer and elk — ungulate tracks in the soft muck

around the spring, porcupine scratches and ancient and not-so-ancient bear claw markings. The surprise was a very distinct and long healed-over bear claw mark 20 feet up in an aspen. It's anybody's guess how long it's been there, but it's also apparent what it is — once it gets noticed.

The group moved to a new location then and took a long walk in the woods, upon which the rest of the species were "found," either by track, smell, scat, urine or sound. The pileated woodpecker and flicker were auditory finds. Olfactory experiences included coyote and wolf urine and the always-interesting experience of smelling a nearby elk, especially when it's not been seen.

The funniest — and possibly most easily-identified — find of the day was the mark of a flying squirrel where it had landed in the snow when it was still soft. There was practically no doubt of what had made the mark, complete with impressions of all four feet and a tail.

"Once you start tracking," Baxter says, "it's hard to turn it off. You have to be careful driving home, because you're looking along the side of the road for sign."

Thinking like a tracker, summer or winter, is a way to open up the world around us, and it works not only to make us aware of the other animals in the woods — besides us — but also of the greater picture. Once you start tracking, as Brian says, it's hard to turn it off. You will find that you are seeing all sorts of things that you might have missed before.



Note the size of the canid track when compared with the boot print.

Sandy Compton photo



Scotchman Creatures: Forest Carnivore Study

From page 1

Just like a grocery manager is unable to do her job well if she doesn't know how many frozen turkeys will be available in November, I can't do my job well without knowing how wildlife populations are trending. Forest carnivores are a case in point. The term 'forest carnivore' typically refers to small to medium sized mammals that hunt or scavenge. Marten, lynx, bobcats, fishers, weasels, and wolverines are all usually lumped into this group. We don't know nearly as much about these animals as big game animals because there is less money available to survey them and they can be pretty tough to find.

Forest carnivores occur at relatively low densities and occupy enormous territories. A male lynx for example, can encompass as much as 100 square kilometers in his home range. In addition, many forest carnivore populations have been in decline in the continental US over the last century, making these animals very rare on the landscape. Recent estimates for number of breeding female wolverine in the lower 48 states are as low as 35. That doesn't leave a whole lot of wiggle room for keeping wolverines on the landscape! Both of these factors make detecting and monitoring forest carnivore populations a very challenging task for wildlife managers.

Biologists have struggled for years to figure out how to monitor forest carnivores in a repeatable and cost effective way. Snowtracking surveys, hair snaring, and remote cameras are common approaches. To do a track survey, a biologist will typically wait for a fresh snow, and then count the number of tracks they encounter along a designated survey route. This approach can work great, assuming the weather and snowfall cooperate. Of course this is not always the case in Idaho! Given the logistics of dealing with winter weather and difficult terrain, completing snowtracking surveys is not always the best option for wildlife biologists.

Hair snares are another technique for surveying forest carnivores. If biologists can obtain a few hairs from an animal, DNA can be extracted from the root of those hairs. Once we have an animal's DNA sample, we can tell a number of things about that animal such as its species, gender, and if it's related it is to other animals surveyed. Remote cameras are often placed along roads and trails to take photographs of animals, but don't gather the detailed information that DNA allows.

A technique for getting data from carnivores that is becoming widely accepted in the scientific community is a combination of hair snaring and remote cameras called a 'bait station'. A bait station consists of a piece of meat or some kind of stinky attractant to lure a carnivore to climb a tree. Below the meat is something metallic, like barbed wire or a gunbrush, which snags tufts of hair as the animal climbs up to the bait. A remote camera is placed on an adjacent tree to photograph animals that visit the station.

Bait stations are really effective for several reasons. For one thing they attract all of the forest carnivore species we are interested in monitoring - this allows us to monitor multiple species with one field effort - saving time and money. The pictures allow us to have immediate knowledge of what species are visiting the sites and to decide which hair samples we'd like to extract DNA from. So if we can't afford to analyze all of our samples but really need DNA samples from rare species like lynx and wolverine, we can choose to only have lab work done from stations where we have pictures of those species.

Another reason bait stations are commonly used is that they require relatively little effort to set up and maintain considering all the great data they produce. In other words, they give us quite a big bang for our buck. A station will usually run fine for at least a month before the camera runs out of batteries. This results in very little effort expended to get some really incredible information. For example, in 2010, a bait station photographed the first lynx detected in the U.S. Selkirk Mountains since 1992. Most likely there have been lynx using this area between 1992

and 2010, but we didn't know that because didn't have a defensible way to detect them.

For the past two winters, Idaho Fish and Game and the Idaho Panhandle National Forest have been working together to develop a bait station monitoring program for multiple species of forest carnivores.

From these bait stations, we hope to learn information such as how large marten populations are in different areas, if fisher

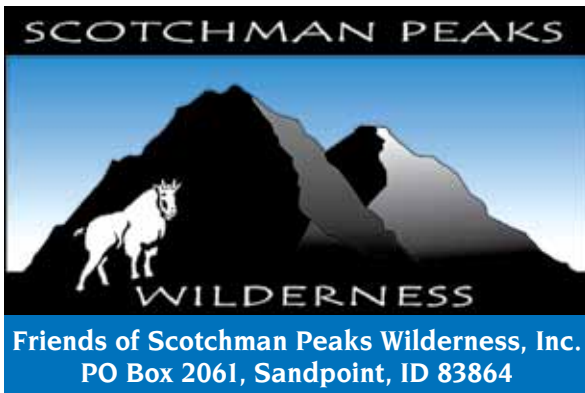
populations from different mountain ranges are genetically related, and if we have local resident populations of lynx and wolverine that are reproducing.

It's important to survey multiple species in the same effort because we simply don't have the time and money to do a survey for each species. The avenue we choose to get over this hurdle is to involve multiple groups. We commonly work with other government and tribal agencies. The Bureau of Land Management and Coeur d' Alene Tribe are working on this project as well this winter. But this winter we're trying something new by working with non-government community groups. Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness and Idaho Conservation League will be leading a volunteer effort in which local 'citizen scientists' will donate their time to go out in the field to establish bait stations. This effort will allow us to establish forest carnivore monitoring stations across the Idaho Panhandle from the Canadian border to the St. Joe River.

The world is changing quickly and with that come threats to forest carnivore populations. The number of humans is growing, development is spreading, there are more cars on highways, and our climate is changing fast. Multiple agencies working together with community groups and volunteer citizen scientists will allow us to harness the time and money necessary to gather the information we so desperately need.



Gun brushes are used to collect hair samples for DNA analysis.



How You Can Help

Support Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

As concerned citizens, we support protecting and preserving the Scotchman Peaks area for ourselves and future generations. Highway 56, Highway 200, Lightning Creek Road, and Rattle Creek/Keeler Road surround this 88,000 acre scenic area which straddles the Idaho and Montana border. Wilderness Designation for the Scotchmans will protect plants and wildlife, including the endangered grizzly bears, mountain goat, and bull trout; it will protect water quality; and it will preserve a special place for future generations. In addition, local communities will benefit from the unparalleled recreational and economic opportunities such wilderness provides.

Name: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Donation enclosed (optional). Donations are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc. Detach & Mail to the address above.

Board Members & Staff:

Chair/Executive Director: Phil Hough, Sagle, ID
(208) 946-9127 phil@scotchmanpeaks.org

Vice-Chairman & Montana Director: Doug Ferrell, Trout Creek, MT
(406) 827-4341 doug@scotchmanpeaks.org

Vice-Chairman & Idaho Director: Carol Jenkins, Sagle, ID
(208) 265-9204 carol@scotchmanpeaks.org

Secretary: Sarah Lundstrum, Whitefish, MT
(406) 755-6304 sarah@scotchmanpeaks.org

Treasurer: Jacob Styer, Sandpoint, ID
(828) 989-8095 jacob@scotchmanpeaks.org

East Bonner County Director: Neil Wimberley, Hope, ID
(208) 264-5379 neil@scotchmanpeaks.org

Board member: Bill Martin, Troy, MT (406) 295-5258

Board member Will Valentine, Sagle, ID
(208) 255-1114 will@scotchmanpeaks.org

Lincoln County Coordinator: Molly Kieran, Troy, MT
(406) 293-2934 molly@scotchmanpeaks.org

Program Coordinator: Sandy Compton, Heron, MT
(208) 290-1281 sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org

Administrative assistant trainee: Jim Murphy, Sandpoint, ID
jmurphy@scotchmanpeaks.org

Wolverine Study Coordinator: Kelsey Brasseur, Sandpoint, ID
kelsey@scotchmanpeaks.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Ann Wimberley, Hope, ID
(208) 264-5379 ann@scotchmanpeaks.org