



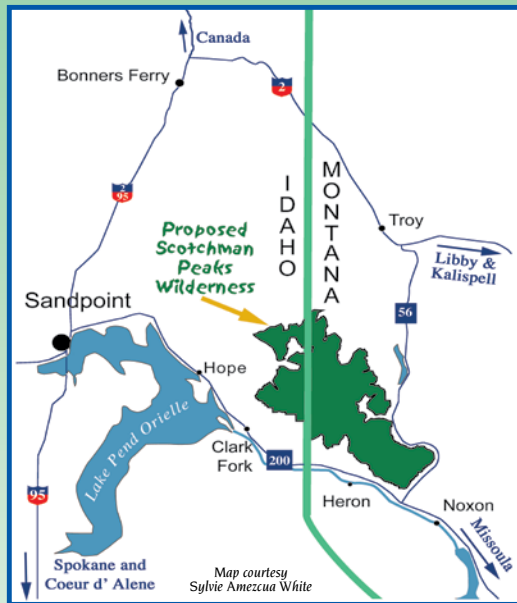
# PEAK EXPERIENCE

The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.

Volume 8, Number 2 • March / April 2012

## 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



## Scotchman Peak from space

### A Long View and a Short View

by John Phillips

*In this self-titled photo, “Two Old Goats” appear in the fog near the top of Scotchman Peak. The nearer of the two is retired astronaut John Phillips, whose photo of Scotchman Peak from space appears on Page 11.*

Photo by Tim Phillips

I didn’t do much hiking in the summer of 2005. When I felt the need to stretch my legs, I put on an uncomfortable torso harness and strapped myself to a treadmill with bungees. I lived in a laboratory with constant temperature, zero weather, and no trees to be seen. There were aspects of my existence, however, that had a backwoods feel: no shower for six months, backpacker-style food, and no internet. In my job as a NASA astronaut, I lived aboard the International Space Station from April to October 2005, arriving from Kazakhstan aboard a Russian “Soyuz” spacecraft. This was the second of my three trips to space, and by far the longest.

I had a special interest in observing and photographing the Inland Northwest from space. My wife, Laura, and I had been visiting the Sandpoint area sporadically since about 1981. Our visits were sometimes centered around skiing, and sometimes around summer recreation with our two children. After several visits, we decided that we wanted to settle near Sandpoint when our working days were over. In 1999 we bought a piece of land on the Sunnyside Peninsula, near the north shore of Lake Pend Oreille. I had heard of the Scotchmans and the effort to create a wilderness area, but had never hiked

*Continued on page 11*

**The Forest Plan and what you can do about it: see the special section inside.**



## Lincoln and Sanders Counties

### Wildlife films shown to Friends in Montana

By Molly Keiran

Both the Libby and Thompson Falls areas of Montana enjoyed wildlife films acquired through the International Wildlife Film Festival headquarters in Missoula, Montana. The event on Friday, February 10 in Libby brought in over 50 folks despite the rain/snow weather mix that evening. Thompson Falls also had over 50 folks for the Saturday matinee on the 11th with 10 new people signing up to become new Friends of the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Once again we asked attendees to bring a non perishable food item for our local food pantries and once again our Friends came through with many cans, jars, packages and boxes of food.

The films were terrific, one of which was filmed in Montana.

An organization called American Prairie Lands has been formed to acquire thousands of acres in which to resurrect the land and the animals that once lived there. The buffalo herd is now over 100 strong and doing well. The film "American Serengeti" was all about the efforts and progress made. A very informative film. We also saw "Wings of Thunder" which takes place in a huge bird refuge near the top of the Salt Lake in Utah. Then there was "Anatomy of a Giant", yes, all about the fabulous redwood forests. All three films were incredibly informative and enjoyed by all.

In addition to the films we offered folks time to review the different alternatives to the Forest Plan that came out the first part of January. It can be a little confusing and both Phil Hough and Doug Ferrell were there to answer questions regarding forest service suggestions for the Scotchman Peaks. If you also have questions regarding the plan just go to our website for information. There it will be easy for you to review the plan as it pertains to the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Your comments can be sent directly from our website.

Our wildlife film events have been a great way for us to visit with other folks with similar interests. Both the Little Theater in Libby and the Rex Theater in Thompson Falls are terrific locations for these events. A big thank you to Dean Herreid in Libby and Doug Grimm in Thompson Falls for their expert help. We are looking forward to next year's film events in both locations.



**FSPW vounteer Don Clark outlines the proposed Scotchman Wildersness area for Peter Leusch at the Libby film festival.**

## FSPW Scholarship: Contest open

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness once again is soliciting entries for their annual scholarship contest. The competition is open to any graduating senior at high schools in Sandpoint and Clark Fork, Idaho, and Libby, Troy, Noxon, Thompson Falls and Plains, Montana.

A \$250 scholarship will be awarded for the winning essay from each school, with an additional \$250 rewarded for the best essay, overall. This scholarship will be paid directly to the individual upon successful graduation, and may be used as they see fit. This scholarship has no minimum GPA, nor does it require any commitment for higher education.

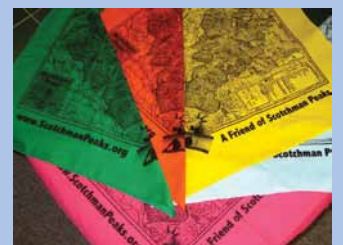
The essay should be typed, double-spaced and of 250 to 750 words in size 12 font addressing the following theme: "A most memorable wilderness experience."

This may be a first-hand account of an experience of the author or an account of a story related to the author by a friend or relative. The experience may have happened in any Wilderness, designated or proposed, and must portray traditional wilderness activities such as backpacking, camping, hunting, fishing, berry picking, or horseback riding.

Scholarship forms are available from counselors at each of the high schools, or by sending an e-mail request to [sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org). The deadline for entry is Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. In Bonner and Sanders County, mail entries to Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, P.O. Box 2061, Sandpoint, ID 83864. In Lincoln County, please mail your entries to FSPW Lincoln County Coordinator Molly Kieran, P.O. Box 696, Troy, MT 59935.

### Wear for all Seasons

On fickle spring days, layer on the Scotchman Swag. 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 [jimnsandii@gmail.com](mailto:jimnsandii@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](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/store/html).





## Message from Chair – The heart and soul of the Scotchmans.

Savage Mountain. The name alone evokes images of nature's wild and rugged side, of real Wilderness! This stunning mountain and the wild basins surrounding it lie at the heart of the Scotchman Peaks area; indeed, they are the very soul of the Scotchmans. The terrain is as tough as it comes and travelling there is a huge challenge, but the rewards of quiet stillness and solitude are just as large. Visiting this area is a trip back in time for a glimpse of the way these mountains were before man came to occupy their edges.

The ridgelines above the basin are prime winter habitat for mountain goats. Billies, nannies and kids dot the steep south and west facing cliffs of Savage Mountain and Drift Peak throughout the year; but come snowfall, these "beasts the color of winter" thrive! In this seemingly harsh environment they find protection from predators and are well adapted, going into semi-hibernation even as the winds howl and scour the slopes clean of snow. The lesson these wild lands teach is simple: some species thrive where others may struggle.



*The view from Son of Savage includes nearly all of the Scotchman Peaks.*

**Sandy Compton Photo**

East Fork Creek and Thunder Creek drain isolated headwater basins just to the north of Savage Peak. Built of fractured rock piled precariously high and full of waterfalls, bull trout, beaver ponds, meandering moose and enough tag alder to keep out all but the hardest hiker, these are some of the most remarkable and inspiring places I have ever personally visited anywhere.

The sheltered basin hanging directly to the north and east of Savage Peak holds snow well into May and has several high pockets of ancient trees; these are prime habitats for bear, lynx and wolverine dens. Elk wallows abound and in the fall the sounds of bugling go on all day and through the night.

**Continued on page 10**

## Over-the-top Volunteer(s)

### The FSPW Wolverine Crew

**By Kelsey Brasseur**

This winter FSPW staff has had the pleasure of getting to know a very special group of people who've volunteered to be a part of the 2011-12 Rare Forest Carnivore project. We call these folks our "Wolverine Crew," and so far this season, they have collectively given over 1000 hours of their time to support the study of wolverines and other forest carnivores in our region. Whether setting wildlife camera stations, sorting photos, or helping with miscellaneous project tasks, this level of commitment has been a truly amazing thing to witness.

Volunteers in the Wolverine Crew hail from communities across the Panhandle, eastern Washington, and western Montana. They are teachers, students, professors, artists, snowmobilers, biologists, retirees, ski bums, mountaineers, business professionals, and much more. They are young bucks and old goats. They are families, friends, and groups of strangers. Some have committed to the project because it's a good excuse to go exploring, some because they miss being a part of a scientific community, and some because they want to give their students a valuable field experience. Whatever the motivation, their eagerness to participate is infectious, and I've begun to wonder if these intrepid volunteers aren't more like wolverines than they think.



**Not much will stay a wolverine station crew from their appointed rounds. This group is headed out to rebait a station.**

**Photo by Chuck Gross**

All our volunteers have found their own way to participate in this project. Those who possess solid backcountry skills have put those skills to work setting up our wildlife camera stations among the peaks and drainages of the Selkirk and West Cabinet mountains. Jim Mellen, Sandii Mellen, and Dennis Aslett skied for more than 11 hours to reach their assigned site, carrying 20 lbs of bait and all their equipment

**Continued on page 10**



## From the Top

It's not quite winter and not quite spring. The peaks are beautiful under the mist of falling snow and fires welcome us back home. But green peeks out from patches of mud as the snow melts, reminding us of the many shades of spring green about to burst forth.

The Scotchman Peaks Wilderness shares its beauty with us in all seasons. Join us at one of our activities or on the Trail as we work to keep it wild.

— Ann Wimberley

## The Future Looks Bright

**March 16:** FSPW and Idaho Conservation League will host the Winter Wildlands Film Festival at the Pearl Theater in Bonners Ferry.

**March 21:** Wolverine project coordinator Kelsey Brasseur will make a presentation on the project to Sandpoint Rotary Club's weekly meeting.

**March 25:** The StoryTelling Company, sponsored by FSPW, will be at Ivano's Ristorante Italiano in Sandpoint

**March 31:** The Cabinet Resource Group will hold their annual meeting at the Big Horn Lodge. Adventurer and wilderness advocate Jon Turk is the featured speaker. No-host bar, potluck, silent auction and a short meeting begin at 4:00 p.m. Look for an FSPW table there.

**April 1:** Wolverine volunteers will gather for a final debriefing, tale swapping, beer drinking and a group picture at Eureka West in Sandpoint

**April 5:** Deadline for submitting comments on the Forest Plan to the USFS. (See next page)

**April 15:** The deadline for entry into the annual FSPW Scholarship Contest (For details, see page 2)

**April 15:** deadline for submitting summer hikes in time for the May newsletter

**April 22:** FSPW and a host of other environmental groups will join together for an Earth Day celebration from noon to 4 pm at Sandpoint Charter School at 614 S. Madison.

**April 26:** A fundraiser for FSPW will feature The StoryTelling Company, local musicians, silent auction and more. Location to be announced.

**April 27-29:** FSPW staff and board members will attend the Montana Wilderness Association annual convention in Helena.

### On the Horizon.

**May 5:** Last hike of the 2012 winter hike season and last day of the 2012 winter photo contest.

**May 15:** FSPW Executive Director Phil Hough and Deb Hunsicker will give a presentation on their Triple Crown accomplishments at the Community Hall in Sandpoint at 6 p.m. Proceeds will be split between FSPW and the Kinnickinnick Chapter of the Native Plant Society.

**May 18-20:** FSPW staff and board members will attend Wild Idaho, the Idaho Conservation League annual meeting at Redfish Lake in the Stanley Basin.

## Along the Trail

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

**January 3:** FSPW showed the prize-winning documentary *Chasing the Phantom* to 40-plus wolverine volunteers at Ivano's in Sandpoint.

**January 14:** Brian Baxter taught an FSPW-sponsored tracking class with 20-plus participants beginning at the Heron Community Center.

**January 17:** FSPW Exec Phil Hough, wolverine project coordinator Kelsey Brasseur and Idaho Conservation League staffer Brad Smith spoke on Gary Lirette's radio show about the wolverine project.

**January 20:** FSPW and Idaho Conservation League presented the Winter Wildlands Film Festival to 235 movie fans at the Eagles club in Coeur d' Alene.

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

**January 28:** Brian Baxter taught an FSPW-sponsored winter ecology class with 19 participants beginning at the Heron Community Center.

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

**February 3:** FSPW wolverine volunteers gathered at Laughing Dog Brewery to swap tales and techniques.

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

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

**February 15:** The Annual FSPW Scholarship contest opened. For details, see page 2.

**February 20:** Brian Baxter taught an FSPW-sponsored tracking class beginning at the Heron Community Center.

**February 23:** FSPW staff attended a partner appreciation gathering hosted by Three Rivers Ranger District in Troy.

**February 25:** *Peak Experience* bird columnist Jon Isacoff led a birders' outing along the north shore of Lake Pend Oreille and in Lightning Creek.

**February 25:** FSPW Exec Phil Hough made a presentation to the Kinnickinnick Native

Plant Society

**March 1:** Wolverine project coordinator Kelsey Brasseur and Phil Hough made a presentation on the project to the Kootenai Environmental Alliance at a luncheon in Coeur d' Alene.

**March 1:** Wolverine volunteers gathered at Laughing Dog Brewery for socializing and tale swapping.



Sierra and Haley take a break on Brian Baxter's January 28 winter ecology hike Photo by Karen Momaney

### Want to scratch your creative itch?

Learn InDesign, Photoshop and production and layout skills! Friends of Scotchman Peaks is seeking a volunteer to work on Peak Experience. For details, contact [sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org)



# The Forest Plan: Special to Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

# PEAK EXPERIENCE

The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.  
Special section to Volume 8, Number 2 • March / April 2012



## A grand opportunity to speak up for wilderness!

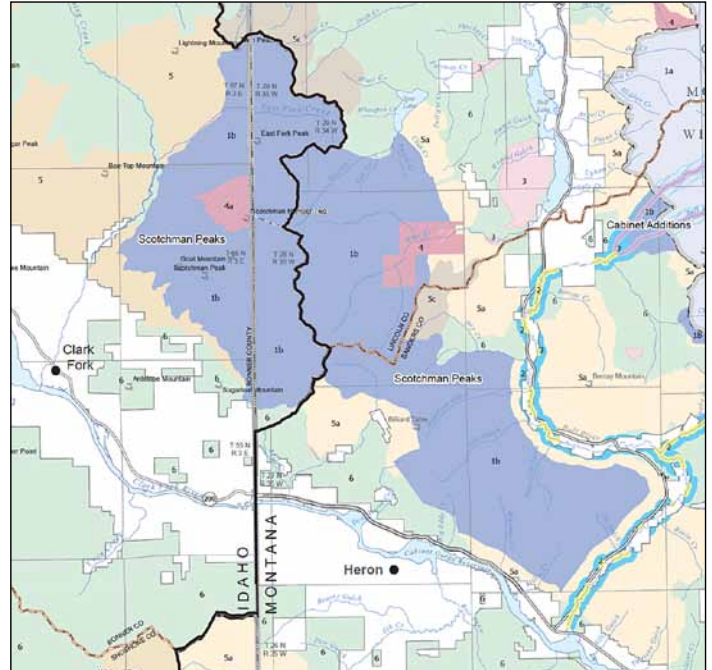
### Forest Planning and Wilderness Designation – A Pivotal Moment in the Long View

By *Phil Hough, FSPW Executive Director*

The Wilderness Act passed in 1964 and established the original units of National Wilderness Preservation System. More importantly it outlined a process whereby other areas could be added. Congress reserved the right to make the final decisions on which areas to designate as part of the Wilderness System, but it delegated to the Forest Service the responsibility to evaluate lands for their suitability as Wilderness and to make recommendations. In this arrangement there is some balance between the executive and legislative branches of power and of control over our public lands. In practice, the public has a huge role in shaping policies and decisions made at every step of the way and is critical to final congressional action.

In the 1970s the forest service conducted the RARE I and RARE II (Roadless Area Review and Evaluation) studies, leading to the eventual classification of Roadless areas and initial suggestions for Wilderness recommendation. Elsewhere in this special section, read a vintage 1971 citizen's letter advocating for Wilderness, one of 3,000 such letter submitted during the RARE studies in support of the Scotchmans. You will also find portions of the August, 1977, article from the Sanders County Ledger outlining findings of the RARE II studies.

*Continued on next page*



*In the forest service's preferred alternative, B, their recommendation for Wilderness in the Scotchmans is overall better than the current plan put into place in 1987. We generally support it. But there is still room for some improvement, and we will be submitting technical comments seeking some minor adjustments to boundaries. Our primary focus will be the Southwestern border below Goat Mountain and Scotchman Peak, the East Fork Blue Creek Drainage and the southeastern boundary below Pillick Ridge. In these areas there are no user conflicts and the "buffers" created by these boundary setbacks are beyond what is needed for any practical purpose.*

## 1970s Rare II studies highlighted the wild nature of the Scotchman Peaks.

*Following is a portion of a nearly full-page report of RARE II findings published in the August 18, 1977, issue of Sanders County Ledger. Of the 12 areas in Sanders County alluded to in the lead paragraph, Scotchman Peak is the largest and the only one which is not entirely in Montana. The other areas reported on were Cube Iron, McKay Creek, McNeely, Cabinet Face West, Trout Creek, Cataract, Galena Creek, McGregor Thompson, Berray Mountain, Government Mountain and Lone Cliff-Smeads.*

**Reprinted with permission from the Sanders County Ledger**

LIBBY - Nearly half of the roadless areas outlined at the Forest Service meeting conducted here recently are located partially or all in Sander County. Forest Service spokesmen identified 25 roadless areas in western Montana and 12 are in Sanders County.

The Libby session was part of the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) nationwide review of all uncommitted roadless and undeveloped federal lands to determine their suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or for other possible uses.

The Forest Service will approach the review of its lands in three states: 1. Inventorying all uncommitted roadless area on national forests or national grasslands. 2. Establishing national criteria for use in evaluating the inventoried areas for wilderness and other uses. 3. Placing inventoried RARE II lands into three separate categories: (a) Those to be recommended for immediate addition to the National Wilderness

*Continued on next page*



# Your opportunity to advocate for wilderness is now!

## Now is the time, from previous page

In the late 1980s, both the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests developed their first Land Management Plans, "master plans" for how the forest would be managed. Some of our board members and other supporters were engaged in that process. These plans were strategic in nature and envisioned to be effective for about 15 years.

In 2002 the Forest Service began a process to revise their land management plans to take into account changing conditions and needs. The Forest Service hosted numerous public meetings and public workgroups to determine desired goals, outcomes and conditions and to develop strategies, guideline and standards towards their achievement. The forest is managed, as it should be, for many uses and the plan addresses timber management, mining, grazing, conservation of species and habitat and a variety of recreation questions from motorized to quiet use. The plan also looks at the role of wildfire and, in some cases, its prevention; the management of wildlife; the social, cultural and economic impacts on management options on communities; the recruitment and retention of old growth forests; and the preservation of Wilderness Characteristics.

ALL of these management goals are valid and necessary for our local communities, our region and our nation and we believe that a good balance can be found in the plans being developed.

## Back to the Wilderness Question

Quite possibly one of the most significant things that the forest plan does is to determine which areas the forest service will recommend as Wilderness. Congress has shown a pattern of stronger interest in designating areas with strong agency support. While Congress may delay any action of their own for quite a long time, the plans being developed now will be in effect for at least the next 15 years and quite possibly a decade



**There is not enough coffee! The plans for Idaho Panhandle National Forests and Kootenai National Forest each include three documents: a Land Management Plan, an Environmental Impact Statement and an Appendices Book, totalling over 2,400 pages, a stack over 5 inches tall. Not shown are the multiplicity of maps and other background materials.**



more beyond that. This means that any action by Congress in the next two or more decades will be guided in part by decisions being made right now. And you have the opportunity, right now, to help shape the final plan.

The forest plans are currently drafts and the public has until April 5th to provide comments (see elsewhere in this issue on how to do that). After that, the Forest Service will review these comments, select an option or, more likely, modify their preferred option, and make other changes they feel necessary before producing a Final Plan by the end of 2012 or in early 2013.

Naturally we would like to ensure that the Wilderness Recommendation for the Scotchman remain strong and improved where possible. What the Forest Service hears from the public — what they hear from YOU — will help guide them to do that! And, it will help to guide potential congressional action in the years to come.

**The final page of this special section contains resources and addresses helpful to making meaningful comments on the plan directly to the Forest Service. In looking back over the past 40 years and looking ahead for 20-plus years, we find very few times more important than now to make your voice heard.**

## RARE II report continued from previous page

Preservation System; (b) those which will undergo further study to determine whether or not they should be included in the wilderness system; (c) those which would be managed for resource values other than wilderness.

These recommendations will then be sent to the secretary of agriculture for further review and administrative or legislative action.

## Scotchman Peaks.

Acreage: Kootenai (National Forest): 47,876, Kaniksu (National Forest); 45,610 federal; 1,310 private. Total 46,920, Total 94,796.

Location: Kootenai and Panhandle National Forests western Lincoln and Sanders counties, Montana, and NE Bonner County, Idaho.

This area is located on the Idaho-Montana border northeast of Clarks Fork, Idaho. It is partially in both states. Kootenai portion: The Scotchman consists primarily of rugged alpine scenery left by glaciers. Perhaps some of the most classic examples of glacial cirques found in the region dominate the upper reaches of Ross Creek. Other displays of deep glaciation are particularly striking in the Savage Creek area. The impacts of this glacial scouring are less noticeable as one moves south through the area, with little occurring south of Star Gulch.

Besides Ross Creek and Bull and Clark Fork rivers, major streams draining the Scotchman area are Spar Creek, Lightning Creek and its many tributaries, and the West and East Forks of Blue Creek. Spar Creek forms a deep canyon from Little Spar Lake to Spar Lake. Little Spar Lake is the only named water

*Continued next page*



## The Scotchmans have been considered for wilderness for 40-plus years

### A letter home: 1971

Following is a letter to the editor of what was then *The Sandpoint Daily Bee* from a young man who grew up in the shadow of the Scotchman Peaks. This family treasure came to light recently — and just in time, in the light of the newly released forest plan — to illustrate how long the Scotchman Peaks have been considered for and managed as wilderness. It was written over 40 years ago, in 1971.

Dear Daily Bee:

Here I am, GI Joe, sitting in my Basic Training barracks in Ft. Knox, Kentucky. My folks sent me some late issues of the *Daily Bee* and in one of them I read about the U.S. Forest Service considering the Scotchman Peak area for a wilderness reserve.

This region has been my backyard playground all my life and in that short span of nineteen years Scotchman Peak has always been a monument of beauty and ruggedness in my eyes.

My first hike to the top of Scotchman was when I was 14 years old. I got such an eyeful of the country behind it that I knew I would be back many more times.



**Time has not been unkind to the Scotchmans. Today's Horse-shoe Lake mirrors Savage Peak just as well as in the Farmin family's 1920s photo of "The Swimming Hole."**

Since then my numerous back packing trips during the summer and winter have always been to the interior of the proposed wilderness area. Much to my secret delight, people do not realize that there is so much superb natural beauty surrounding the Scotchman and Billiard Peak area.

Little Spar Lake is good fishing (if you are smart enough) plus the smaller snow fed ponds above it look like emeralds set in the natural rock bed.

Little Spar is surrounded by sheer rock cliffs on three sides which make it an excellent scenic spot. The back of Middle

Mountain (Clayton Peak) and Monument Peak are also nothing but stone and snow year around.

Of course, not too many people — even the local Bonner County residents — know much about it or have seen it, but I have seen it; and believe me, they don't know what they are missing.

If they want to ignore it, that's fine because it gives me that much more solitude among the Scotchmans.

Sincerely yours,

Pvt. Douglas C. Compton

Heron, Montana



### RARE II report continued from previous page

body in the area although several alpine potholes or ponds are scattered throughout the rocks along the divide. Lightning Creek drains much of the west side, including the north face of Scotchman Peak, before meeting the Clark Fork as it empties into Lake Pend Oreille. Steep, timbered breaks characterize this stretch of Lightning Creeek, where the elevation changes a dramatic 4,500 feet in less than two miles on the slopes of Scotchman Peak. Just over the headwalls of the deep cirques in Ross Creek, hillsides of alpine vegetation slope into the West Fork of Blue Creek while the backsides of distinctive Sawtooth and Billiard Table mountain drain through side hill parks and waterfalls to the East Fork of Blue Creek.

Pellick Ridge with its summit of Squaw Peak tips rocky south slopes nearly 4,000 feet into the Clark Fork and lower Bull River valleys. Around the corner, an almost continuous canopy of trees cover the cooler north aspects of Pellick Ridge in Napoleon and Lower Star Gulches. Upper Star Gulch, like neighboring Hamilton Gulch, shows much of its bedrock at the surface. Just over the level ridge from Dry Creek's north fork, the U-shaped valley of South Fork Ross Creek curves through green meadows

and rock slides to meet the main Ross Creek. The scoured headlands of Ross Creek are soon lost in stands of large cedar, hemlock and white pine, as the creek tumbles through what is often a tangle of moss-covered boulders and devil's club on its way to the Ross Creek scenic cedar grove below.

Approximately 75 per cent of the area is unsuitable for conventional timber harvest, small areas have a potential for big game winter range, most of the unit contains suitable grizzly bear habitat, viewing significance is high over 30 percent of the unit, wilderness suitability is high on the northern two-thirds with more moderate ratings in the southern third of the unit.

Preliminary investigations by the U. S. Geological Survey and the U. S. Bureau of Mines in the Scotchman Peak New Study Area indicate that the potential for the discovery of economic disseminated copper-silver deposits within portions of the area is very high. The Mt. Vernon ASARCO project is planning copper production adjacent to the Scotchman area in the near future.

Grizzly bears reside in portions of the area as well as elk, deer, black bear, mountain goat, moose, big horn sheep and numerous smaller mammals. Fishing opportunities are low. Present recreation use is light due to lack of access and rugged terrain.





## Now is the time!

**The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Management Plans for the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests have been released**, and the Forest Service is asking for comments from the public to help them decide which of three alternatives to choose from, and what modifications might be made to the plan before implementation.

**The Forest Plans do not make decisions on specific projects but provide general guidance** about how the forests are managed for the next 15 years. One of the most important things that the plans do is to make decisions about which areas the Forest Service will manage as "Recommended Wilderness."

**Agency recommendations strongly influence political support** and are partly based on Forest Service understanding of how much public support exists for specific areas.

**Your voice is important! We wish to make sure that the Forest Service understands how important it is to many people that the final plan include the strongest possible recommendation for Wilderness for the Scotchman Peaks.**

**The comment period is open until April 5th.**

Your written comments need to be specific to each draft plan and sent to the individual forest(s). Opportunities to make written or on-line comments are available at the addresses and websites listed in the other column.

**REMEMBER!**

**Written comments mailed directly are the most powerful persuaders of all!**

## Tips on Commenting

The most effective comments contain substantive reasons, your personal judgement, your personal experience or your personal reasons. Don't just comment "I want the Scotchmans to be recommended as Wilderness"; tell them reasons why you support including the Scotchman Peaks as recommended wilderness in the forest plan.

**Include your personal connection to and interest in the Scotchmans.**

Be specific about why you value wilderness protection for the Scotchmans.

- Think about special places in the Scotchmans that you cherish or activities that you engage in and want to see protected. Maybe it's one or more of the following: Hiking • Hunting • Birdwatching • Berry Picking • Simply finding a quiet place of solitude

- Perhaps you want to see the Scotchmans recommended as Wilderness to protect rare species of animals such as Grizzly Bear, Mountain Goat, Wolverine, Fisher, Lynx or Bull Trout.

- Preserve the quality of life which helps to build a well balanced economy.

- Leave a legacy for future generations.

- Consider thanking the Forest Service for including the Savage Basin area in their preferred alternative.



**Savage Basin is recommended wilderness.**

Photo by Phil Hough

Wilderness management for the Scotchmans has many benefits and we each have our own reasons for wanting to see the Scotchmans recommended as Wilderness. **It is much more effective to speak about what is important to you, in your own words, than to copying anything from the above list.**

The proposed Land Management Plan for both forests, with alternatives and additional supporting materials including maps and the Environmental Impact Statement can be picked up from the district ranger offices or found on their website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/kipz/home>

Send written comments directly to the email or postal addresses below:

<b>Kootenai National Forest</b> Email: <a href="mailto:KNFplanrevision@fs.fed.us">KNFplanrevision@fs.fed.us</a> 31374 Highway 2 West Libby, MT 59923	<b>Idaho Panhandle National Forest</b> Email: <a href="mailto:IPNFplanrevision@fs.fed.us">IPNFplanrevision@fs.fed.us</a> 3815 Schreiber Way Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
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Many of our supporters and partners are interested in other potential wilderness areas and issues which are affected by this forest plan. For more information we recommend that you visit

[www.idahoconservation.org/issues/take-action/protect-north-idahos-wild-places](http://www.idahoconservation.org/issues/take-action/protect-north-idahos-wild-places)

<http://www.wildmontana.org/programs/planning/kootenai.php>

**Questions? Write to [info@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:info@scotchmanpeaks.org)**

**For a helpful, more complete overview of the Forest Plans and how to comment on them, visit [www.scotchmanpeaks.org/take-action-forest-plan/](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/take-action-forest-plan/)**





## Scotchman Rocks: A Little Off the Side, Please

By **Mark McFaddan, PhD**

The late winter landscape is magnificent, with snow-frosted forests mantling the steep mountain ranges rising from the valley floors. Though we become familiar and comfortable with the terrain around us during our daily routines, a single change in light and shadow from a fleeting flash of sunlight through the clouds can still overwhelm us when we pause to focus on our surroundings with a new perspective. If we reflect a bit more, the cold, white accents on the dramatic and impressive scenery of today hint of the recent geologic past when glacial ice was the relentless sculptor of an even more spectacular environment. The signs of an age where Spring was *not* just around the corner are all around us if we slow down and look carefully.

Many ice ages have punctuated the last billion or so years of geologic time on planet Earth, most of them several millions of years in duration. They left behind a legacy of countless glacially-related features, including polished and grooved bedrock on every continent as cobbles and boulders served as grit in slowly but constantly moving glacial sandpaper. Our local mountains are full of examples of glacially-polished bedrock, although a few thousand years of exposure to the elements (especially processes such as seasonal freeze-thaw frost wedging) tends to destroy the originally mirror-smooth polish on all but the hardest rock types. Glacial striations and polish are present at



**Classic “U”- shaped valley of the Purcell Trench north of Bonners Ferry. Note the changes in slope angle representing trim lines or distinct high stands of glacial ice, particularly on the slope to the left.**

Photo by **Mark McFaddan**

Panhandle north of Kootenai County display these effects.

With a closer look, it is easy to note the different levels of glacial erosion on the valley walls. Each prolonged high stand of ice has left a slightly steeper slope angle as the last Ice Age waned and valleys were filled to progressively lower and lower elevations. Although these “trim lines” dramatically illustrate the extent of the most recent (lower) erosion best, many slopes present multiple trim lines as changes in slope angle when viewed in profile from a distance. One of the most easily accessed viewpoints for multiple trim lines in the Purcell Trench is a view to the north from the Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge a few miles west of Bonners Ferry. Spend a few minutes contemplating the recent geological past from such a vista, and even a really brisk day seems suddenly rather tropical in comparison!

surprisingly high elevations in many places, including the summit of Clifty Mountain south of Bonners Ferry. Our imaginations are truly stretched to the limit trying to visualize the Purcell Trench filled to such depths as the ice sheet moved south.

The massive erosional power of ice on a large scale is most easily visible from a distance when the profiles of valleys and slopes are examined. Mountain valleys eroded by stream and slope processes alone present a classic “V” shape to the viewer, while the downslope passage of glacial ice tends to steepen and widen the lower slopes of valleys into a distinctive “U” shape that is hard to overlook. Many mountain valleys in the

## Scotchman Birds: Anticipation and Irruption

By **Jon Isacoff, Ph. D**

The biggest bird news in the Scotchmans right now is anticipation: that is anticipation for the upcoming field trip on February 25 (Now past, of course). What will we see? Will it snow? Ice, wind? Two items are on the “be-on-the-lookout” list for our trip: the winter of 2011-12 has been the largest Snowy Owl irruption into the continental US in many decades, perhaps over a half-century. Snowy Owl’s have been in the news everywhere from our regional *Spokesman Review* to MSNBC at the national level. Is there one in the Scotchman’s area? Go look! Though extremely rare, if ever there were a year that one will show up in an agricultural valley in or near the Scotchman’s this is it.

The second item is the minor Common Redpoll irruption also in the region. Though much less profound and noteworthy, this has been an excellent year for Redpolls, which have graced riparian areas and occasionally birdfeeders throughout

the Inland Northwest.

So, back to the title: will March bring a thaw to the Scotchman’s or a return to winter in force? Can’t answer that question. But we can say that a late winter thaw can have predictable effects: big melt-offs and flooding in lowlands and valleys. This is typically bad for houses and farms that get quite wet, but it is good for the movement of ducks and other water-oriented birds into the region.

Many readers will know that ducks fall into two approximate groups known as “dabblers” (aka, affectionately: “puddle ducks”) and “divers.”



**Local visitor. Photo © Jon Isacoff**

*Continued on page 11*



**Volunteers, from page 4**

on their backs while it snowed 8 inches over their newly broken trail. Jacob Styer, Lindsay Larson, and Jake Ostman tackled a peak that is known for its long and difficult approach even in the summer, setting the highest elevation camera station in the Selkirks. In order to check two sites in one day, Mary Franzel, Sandii Mellen, and Celeste Grace endured being towed on their skis for 12 miles by Andrew Klaus and his snowmobile, skiing the whole way back after the snowmobile decided to take a break for the evening. And after setting up his own site, Chris Bachman decided to adopt a second station that he now uses as an educational tool for 10 grade school kids, teaching them about the ecology of our region and the critters that make their home in the woods.

Volunteers have had plenty of fun in the front country as well. Our "Photo Warriors" Denise Zembyrki, Michele McGeachy, and Holly Clements have been tirelessly sorting through the thousands of digital photos retrieved from the wildlife cameras; recording the critters captured in the images and laughing at this unique perspective on the tactics of winter scavenging. Cate Huisman and Mary Franzel have written guest blogs for our website, and a local English teacher has volunteered to record the adventures and reflections of our station volunteers.

Then there are the "Beaver Cleavers", as they've come to be known around the office, a group of locals who took on perhaps the dirtiest job of the season...bait preparation.



**Wolverine work is not without its subtle and not-so-subtle rewards. Chuck Gross photo**

Phil Degens, Cate Huisman, Dan Krabacher, Jim Murphy, and John Harbuck set aside their Saturday morning to process our entire shipment of bait into the convenient prewired packages that our station leaders love so much. True heroes with strong stomachs.

When I signed on to coordinate FSPW's Rare Forest Carnivore Project in late November, I was prepared for 40-50 folks to show up. When we maxed out the 40-person capacity for our first station leader training, I got a little curious about how many people I should really be expecting. Three months later, when we had built a crew of well over 100 dedicated volunteers, I knew that I had greatly

underestimated what has quickly becoming one of the most remarkable citizen science initiatives I've ever seen.

I sincerely wish I could mention everyone's name in this story. Each volunteer has given 110% to the project this season. It has been wonderful to see such an overwhelming response to this study and to feel the deep connection that people have developed to this research by being a working part of the field effort. With any luck, the exceptional volunteer efforts brought forth this winter will serve as a great model for future citizen science collaborations in the Scotchmans and beyond.

Wolverine crew, thank you. You've all earned your claws this season.

**The Chair, from page 4**

Farther down the same slope, just below the edge of this basin, lies Little Spar Creek Valley, one of the preferred locations to release grizzly bears intended to bolster the Cabinet-Yaak population. Out of their transfer cages they burst to run up the valley slopes and into their new wilderness home!

Flowing "gin clear" this same creek drains Little Spar Lake, where undeveloped campsites, sheer cliffs, sunny rocks and fishing offer lasting memories to children of all ages. Rain falls heavy in this cliff lined valley creating some of the most southern reaches of the interior rain forest. Spring and summer wildflowers abound in the open spaces between pockets of old growth Cedar and Hemlocks. The alert scans the cliffs for Peregrine Falcon and Mountain Goats and watches for Northern Goshawk, Marten, Fisher and other species that are drawn to the deep dark woods.

Above Little Spar Lake, the saddle between Savage Mountain and Scotchman II is pocketed with un-named ponds and

provides what one biologist has called the "best black bear habitat" in the region. We simply know the place for awe inspiring camps beneath these two behemoths and feel that there is no other world outside these mountain walls.

Still deeper are the mysteries of upper canyon of Savage creek. Just a the few hundred feet wide, and yet over 2,000 foot deep, the dark depths of this chasm are almost never visited, holding mysteries that can only be explored by imagination and wonder. Does it get any more wild than that?!?!

Savage Mountain and its surrounding basins, the heart and soul of the Scotchmans, are important places very deserving of lasting protection. We hope you will join us in thanking the forest service for including them as "Recommended Wilderness" in the draft forest plan. Speak up about this special area and other locations of specific concern to you! See the Take Action sheet elsewhere in this newsletter or visit our Take Action webpage at: <http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/take-action-forest-plan/>

— Phil Hough





### Space, from page 1

there. In fact, my only experiences in the Cabinet Mountains were a hike to Lake Darling with my teenage son and a couple of picnics at Kootenai Falls.

As spring turned to summer and the skies cleared in 2005, I tried to take every opportunity to observe and photograph the Lake Pend Oreille area from space. The ISS orbit passes over latitudes as high as 51.6 degrees north and south, at an altitude of about 400 kilometers, circling the earth every 91 minutes at a speed of nearly 8 kilometers per second. In the latitudes of the Cabinet Mountains, the ISS is traveling either east-southeast or east-northeast when it passes overhead. If you want to photograph a particular spot on Earth, you have to predict the overhead time using a computer program, set an alarm, take a quick break from work and float over to a window, and hope you get lucky with the weather and lighting. Since my emphasis was mostly on taking photos of the lake, I only have a few photos that show the Scotchmans area. This example was taken on July 21, 2005, at 2:07 pm PDT, using a Kodak 760 digital camera (basically a Nikon F5 35mm SLR with Kodak electronics), with a shutter speed of 1/500 sec, aperture of f4.5, and a 400-mm lens. Fast-forwarding about six years and another space flight, I



**The familiar slash of Lightning Creek bisects this image taken from the Space Station in 2005. Scotchman Peak is at far right center.**

indeed put my working days behind me in the summer of 2011, and Laura and I moved to the Sandpoint area. On October 9th, my son and I joined a group hike to Scotchman Peak, guided by Brad Smith of the Idaho Conservation League. It was a beautiful, seasonably cool day in the valley, but misty and eerie-looking at the top. We met some hunters near the bottom who said they had seen a grizzly bear about halfway up, but the size of our group and the peeling of our bear bells evidently did the trick, as we saw no bears.

To me, this seemed like an ideal day hike. The road to the trailhead was relatively short, and the trail itself was long and steep enough to provide a good workout without being overly punishing. The huckleberries, though picked over by bears and hikers throughout the summer, could still be found here and there. As we lunched at the top, the resident mountain goats posed for pictures, including the "Two Old Goats" shot taken by my son, Tim.

I'm sure I'll visit Scotchman Peak again, probably at least once a year. I'm also pretty sure I won't see it from space again. I count myself lucky to have seen the Earth from a vantage point that emphasizes the majesty and the fragility of our environment and the fact that we're all fellow citizens of the planet. I look forward to exploring the Cabinet range, and the Scotchmans in particular, for many years to come.

## Photo contest and hikes ongoing

**This summer photo contest winner, "The Work in Progress Tree," was taken by Denise Zembryki.**

**Follow our winter photo contest on Facebook. Enter your own photos by sending them to [sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org) and win a night of luxury camping at the base of the Scotchmans. Complete rules are available at [www.scotchmanpeaks.org/put-your-camera-in-your-pack](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/put-your-camera-in-your-pack).**

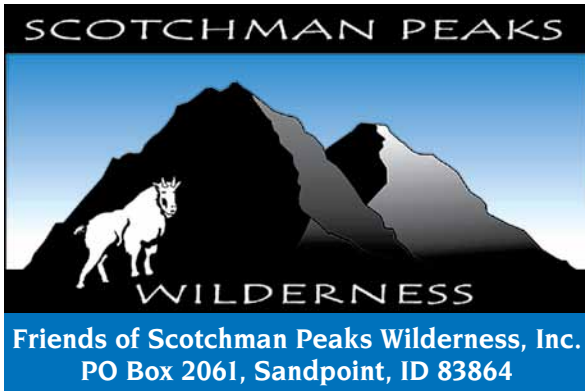
**There are also four hikes left in our winter series, forays to Mount Vernon, Star Peak, Goat Mountain and Scotchman Peak. Learn more about each hike and find sign-up information at [www.scotchmanpeaks.org/hikes](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/hikes)**



### Birds, from page 9

Puddle Ducks don't dive for their food; divers do. Puddle ducks eat mostly vegetation and some bugs, worms, and larvae; divers eat mostly fish and arthropods that live at the bottom of deeper water. The easiest way to know one from the other: does it stick its butt up in the air or does it disappear?! Divers flock to Lake Pend Oreille in the late fall and winter to dive for its abundant and diverse fish supply. They are relatively unaffected by weather as such. But puddle ducks like, you guessed it... puddles. So an early thaw or melt-off can attract thousands or more of puddle ducks to the region to enjoy feeding and roosting in newly formed puddles, ponds, and flooded areas.

What if winter returns with a vengeance? Well, that's harder to determine. A cold, hard, late winter can delay the return of many species of birds, particularly strictly migrant songbirds, which typically arrive in late spring. The main reason for this is that most migrant songbirds are bug-eaters, and as such, they "follow the bugs North." A cold, hard late winter often delays the hatching of spring insects thus stalling migration for many species. In terms of our other winter visitors – Snowy Owls, winter finches, Northern Shrikes – there is no consensus on whether they will stay longer though they certainly won't leave early. Newly arrived or about to depart, check back in next issue's column to find out what we discovered on the trip!



## 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](mailto:phil@scotchmanpeaks.org)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wolverine Study Coordinator: Kelsey Brasseur, Sandpoint, ID  
[kelsey@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:kelsey@scotchmanpeaks.org)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Ann Wimberley, Hope, ID  
(208) 264-5379 [ann@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:ann@scotchmanpeaks.org)