



# PEAK EXPERIENCE

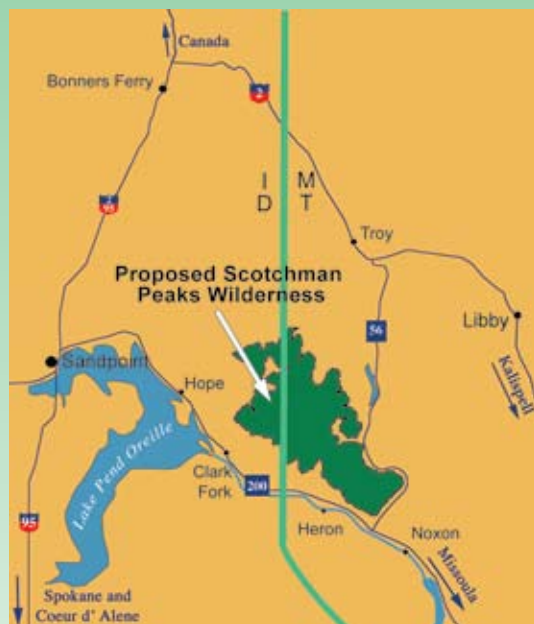
The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.

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## 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.

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## Wild Creatures of the Scotchmans



### Lynx Collared in West Cabinet Mountains

First in Idaho?

Photo by Michael Lucid

By Michael Lucid

Regional Wildlife Biologist  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Two trapping partners had a trapline of only two bobcat traps set in the West Cabinet Mountains. They had each set one trap. Imagine their surprise on January 29 when they walked up to the first set and discovered not a bobcat, but a lynx, in a trap. The trappers knew just what to do. They called Idaho Fish and Game to report the non-target capture.

It just so happens that Idaho Fish and Game and partner organizations had recently started our own effort to capture and collar lynx and wolverine in the Panhandle as part of the Multi-species Baseline Initiative (MBI). MBI is a collaborative effort of over 15 organizations (including FSPW) collecting information on 20 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Idaho and Washington. One of those species is lynx and Fish and Game had capture kits complete with satellite tracking collars, purchased by the Idaho Panhandle National Forest, ready to process the animal.

I was just settling into a day of email catch-up when I got the call. After talking to the trappers I was convinced they had a lynx in their trap and it became apparent that the email was going to have to wait until another day. I dropped everything and jumped in the truck. I met up with the trappers in the woods and worked with them to drug and process the lynx. The 17 pound adult female was uninjured by the trap.

The snowshoe-like feet of lynx are completely covered in dense fur and huge in comparison to the rest of their body. This adaptation allows lynx to float on top of the snow as they hunt snowshoe hares and helps secure the higher elevation hunting grounds for themselves without having to compete with their

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## Message from the Executive Director

When President Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law 50 years ago on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1964, he noted: *"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."*

To commemorate the Wilderness Act's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary many people across the country will celebrate the lasting legacy of lands designated as Wilderness by congress. From iconic places like the Bob Marshall, Frank Church River of No Return, John Muir and Alpine Lakes Wilderness Areas to places that are smaller or less well known, many Wilderness areas will be photographed, visited, talked about and written about. They will be held up as manifestations of the promises made those fifty years ago.

The story of how these 757 units of the 109+ million acres that are now preserved as wilderness came to be will be told, and retold. We will hear about the tales of many individuals who committed themselves with great passion to achieving permanent protection for these areas. I know I will join many others in these celebrations, uplifting moments, memories and events.

However, for me, the most significant part of the Wilderness Act is the HOPE that it provides. Here we are fifty years later and the process of adding wilderness areas continues – the vision of the wilderness act is not yet complete and it continues to inspire actions from citizen and Congress alike. Many areas with characteristics as wild as any unit currently preserved as wilderness remain not only "eligible", but firmly in the eye and hearts of those who have a special connection to these places.

Some of these proposed wilderness areas have legislation pending before congress, like the Rocky Mountain Front, while others have "active" campaigns like the Scotchman Peaks. And still other places have been recommended as wilderness by the

### From the Top

Although snow still covers my garden, this issue of the newsletter is a reminder that the dormant season is almost over. I will be amazed if Celeste can fit all the articles and pictures I'm sending into the layout. The Multispecies Baseline Initiative, off and running with our monitoring sites established or being established despite the best efforts of winter ice, received unexpected help from local trappers. Our stewardship program continues to grow, as our volunteers care for the wild lands we love. We're glad to welcome Mark McFadden back as our geology columnist and also to welcome Maggie Pittman as a new Board member. We have cause to celebrate the accomplishments of the Friends of Scotchman Peaks as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act this year at our many upcoming events. Please join us as we continue to work for Congressional designation of wilderness for the Scotchmans. Hope to see you on the trail.

–Ann Wimberley

forest service and await the community building work to settle issues and/or build the broad community support needed for congressional action. What ALL these places have is HOPE. And they have that HOPE because of the Wilderness Act.

When we think of the American Experience and those things that make our culture unique, we often speak of the American Dream, of individual resilience or of a young nation exploring new frontiers. We think of people setting foot across a continent with a wagon full of supplies and a heart filled with HOPE. The Wilderness Act and the work yet to be completed to fulfill its vision are firmly rooted in this same HOPE.

So as we celebrate the Wilderness Act, let's not only celebrate 50 years of accomplishments let's celebrate the hope that it has provided and continues to provide. In whatever part of the landscape we find ourselves most personally connected we are all ultimately celebrating promise and potential which are the offspring of the Wilderness Act.

–Phil Hough

### FSPW Welcomes Maggie Pittman

We are pleased to announce that Maggie Pittman has joined the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Board of Directors! Maggie's background will provide a unique and valuable perspective; she brings with her an enthusiasm that inspires. For those of you who don't yet know Maggie, I'd like to share some of her background.



**FSPW welcomes new board member Maggie Pittman**

Maggie retired in 2012 from a 32-year career with the US Forest Service. She most recently served as the deputy forest supervisor of the Idaho Panhandle National Forest and the Missoula District Ranger on the Lolo National Forest. In 2006 she received the Brass Lantern Award from the Montana Wilderness Association for her collaborative leadership during the Lolo forest planning efforts. She has a BS in forestry and recreation resource management from the University of Montana.

Maggie grew up in the Pacific Northwest and has spent many days hiking and biking the trails and roads throughout. Her hikes in the Cabinet and Selkirk Mountains have solidified her desire and commitment to protect the Wilderness character of the Scotchman Peaks. She lives in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho where she is established as a professional meeting facilitator and certified mediator in organizational problem solving.





## Over the Top Volunteer

### Irv McGeachy, Negotiator

By Sandy Compton

Irv McGeachy is a familiar face in the FSPW world, a volunteer who hunts for wolverines in winter and works on trails in summer. In his third winter involved in the rare carnivore study, he has been part of teams that set up some of the most difficult stations. His four-wheeler and Pulaski skills have been invaluable on the Star Peak trail reconstruction, and he was part of the trails skills training group last spring. He's also a careful shopper, you might say. He did a lot of research before picking his "cause." We are glad he picked us.

Irv and his wife Michelle — also a Friends volunteer — have lived in Hope since 2004, moving in almost exactly a year before FSPW was formed. "I retired January 7," he says, "moved here on January 8 and started Great Turns (ski lessons at Schweitzer Mountain Resort) on January 10."

That might seem a bit impulsive, but if you know Irv, you know it was a well-considered move. He has been hovering around this area for most of his life, and knew where he wanted to retire quite a while before he did.

Irv grew up in a number of small towns in the northwest. "My dad loved the outdoors," Irv says. "We would move to a new place and he would hunt and fish hard, and then, to prevent boredom, I think, he would move to another place."

His dad mustered out of the Navy at Farragut Naval Training Center in 1945. After a few years of teaching at the two-year college that sprang up out of the Training Center in 1946, the family moved to Kendrick, a small town on the Potlach River,

which drains into the Clearwater about 15 miles upstream from Lewiston. Then, they moved to Pomeroy, Washington; to Lind, Washington, and to Libby, where his dad fished and hunted, taught English and logged in the summer months.

Injuries his dad sustained in a logging accident moved the family to Portland, and then Camas, Washington, where Irv graduated from high school. After a couple of years at WSU, he joined the Peace Corps and lived in Calcutta, India for

two years, a life changing experience. "I was basically a farm boy, all of a sudden in the middle of extreme poverty."

After India, Irv returned to WSU, where he met Michelle, got a degree in Sociology and got married. In that order. He went to work in Seattle in Children's Protective Service, another eye-opening experience. "I had some very serious cases," he says. "In three years, I was burned out."

He went back to school to become a teacher, but student teaching convinced him that wasn't the right route, either. Then, neces-

sity led to another big change. He needed a job and the City of Portland was accepting applications for their police force. He applied. They hired him. Thirty years later, he retired from the force.

"If someone had told me I was going to be a cop," he says, "I would have laughed at them. But it was a great combination for me: case work, teaching, and law enforcement."

He worked as a patrol officer and detective, became a sergeant, and then, as a lieutenant, became commander of the hostage negotiation team.

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Irv McGeachy

Photo by Sandy Compton

## Along the Trail

**January 8:** 60-plus Friends attended the winter hike season and rare carnivore study kickoff party at the Idaho Pour Authority on Cedar Street in Sandpoint.

**January 17:** FSPW and Idaho Conservation League presented the Winter Wildlands Film Festival to a crowd of 250 in Coeur d' Alene at the Eagles Club.

**January 26 and 27:** FSPW volunteers were present at an information table at the Banff Film Festival in Coeur d' Alene at the Kroc Center.

**January 28:** FSPW exec Phil Hough and program coordinator

Sandy Compton traveled to the Lubrecht Center east of Missoula for the Annual Region 1 Wilderness Trails meeting, where they and FS partner Joel Sather gave a joint presentation.

**January 29:** FSPW exec Phil Hough gave a presentation to the Society of American Foresters in Libby.

**February 20:** Community Prosperity Forum in Libby. Sponsors include FSPW, and other members of the business community in Lincoln County.

**February 27:** FSPW had a table at Idaho Conservation League's Panida Theater presentation on innovative energy solutions.



## 2014 Friends of Scotchman Peaks Scholarship Essay Competition Announced

### ***Annual competition solicits essays on wilderness from local high school seniors.***

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness annually offers scholarships to a graduating senior from each high school in Thompson Falls, Plains, Noxon, Troy and Libby, Montana; as well as Clark Fork, Sandpoint and the Lake Pend Oreille Alternative High School in Idaho.

A \$300 scholarship will be awarded for the winning essay from each school, with an additional \$300 awarded 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.

The theme of the essay is "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.

Students should check with their school counselors for more details. The application for the scholarship can also be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/2014FSPWEssays>. The deadline for submission is Monday, April 14.

## Birds of the Scotchmans: Frozen

**By Jon Isacoff, PhD**

OK. It's true. I saw the Disney movie with my two girls. Twice. But the fact is, that's what everything is while this is written, with wind chills in the double-digits below zero from Spokane across the Idaho Panhandle into Montana. What do birds do? If they were people, the answer would be simple: stay inside!



**Rough-legged Hawk**

**Photo by Jon Isacoff**

Actually there are a number of interesting things to notice when the region gets an arctic blast. Firstly, many birds, especially song-birds, will hunker down and remain inactive and hidden. However, well-stocked feeders may provide an exception to this, since the food is so easy and so guaranteed, it's worth it to come out of hiding. Waterfowl and other water-

oriented birds will get pushed around by ice-ups, leaving newly frozen areas to search for open water. Around the Scotchman's, all arrows point to one place: Lake Pend Oreille, which remains open even in the harshest of winters.

Another interesting phenomenon one may notice in heavy arctic winds is that parts of Lake Pend Oreille that until recently had hundreds or thousands of birds now seem empty. Where did the birds go? To find out, check which way the wind is blowing. Ducks, geese, coots, and other water birds will bunch up on the leeward side of islands, points, and in sheltered bays, even those where they typically aren't found. So sometimes the "disappeared" ducks are just on the other side of an island or point that isn't viewable from shore.

One may also notice that hawks and eagles that were out and about on favored poles and snags seem to have also disappeared. But check carefully: many birds of prey will come out later in the day, sometimes not till the early afternoon. When the weather is fierce, their rodent and smaller bird prey often "sleep in" and so sitting on that favorite telephone pole or snag in the freezing morning wind loses its appeal. But for many raptors such as Harriers and Eagles, the heavy wind has advantages. With their powerful wings, they are affected relatively less so than smaller birds and can use the wind to avoid being heard as they swoop down and pounce on prey.

One bird that seems to be utterly unconcerned with cold, wind, snow, or anything else is our dear friend the Common Raven. Why this is so, I confess I don't know. Maybe they're just tough. Or just silly. But Ravens have about the highest tolerance for extreme weather of any land bird, being the only species recorded annually on Christmas Bird Counts in Nunavut and other extreme locations near to the Arctic Circle. So if it's frozen and you have to get out and get that birding fix, go find some Ravens, it may be your only consolation!

### **Friends seeking donations for Kootenai Outdoor Adventure Program.**

Upgrade your tent lately? Buy yourself a new pack? Do you have a pair of wading shoes you never waded in? We have a new home for your gently-used or extra gear. Kootenai Outdoor Adventure Program takes Lincoln County kids on outdoor adventures (really!) and some of the kids don't have (and can't afford) the essentials of camping and backpacking. So, be good Friends and see what you have in the closet, garage, attic and storage unit that might help a kid to go camping. Tennis and wading shoes, hiking shoes and boots, rain gear, tents, camping stoves, day packs and trip packs in good condition will be gratefully accepted.

Drop donations off at the Scotchman Peaks office at 323 N. First (upstairs behind the radio station) Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 10 and 1, or write to [sandy@scotchman-peaks.org](mailto:sandy@scotchman-peaks.org) to arrange pickup.



## Wolverine Watch

By **Kristen Nowicki**

This year's FSPW Wolverine Watch, a part of a statewide, comprehensive population analysis for 20 species of greatest concern in Idaho (as outlined by ID Fish&Game's Multi-species Baseline Initiative), has overcome some major challenges in getting off the ground this year.

The 2013-2014 bait station plots are some of the most remote stations our volunteers have encountered in the study's four years. They are located within the West Cabinet Mountains, an area known for its steep and forbidding rock. The majority of these research cells that remain to be established this year require several miles of cross-country traversing before reaching the intended coordinates.

This challenging reality has been compounded by unusual weather patterns wreaking havoc across the region. These patterns have resulted in extremely icy conditions for roadways and snowfields and have also created areas of high avalanche risk. Our crew leaders have had to make some big choices and endure extra plot-scouting this season to account for the unpredictable conditions. This has added on increased effort to already difficult plots.

We were endowed with 8, highly difficult-to-access plots at the beginning of this winter. Six have been established. Overseeing this effort, I can say without a doubt that this accomplishment is

truly remarkable.

We also charged our volunteers with setting up 12 corridor cameras (passive, non-baited camera stations) to supplement the data coming from the West Cabinet Mountains with data from wildlife travel pathways in the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness Area.

These sites are at lower elevations than our bait plots, on average, but included many of the same access challenges with the icy conditions that culminated in the month of January. I am proud to report that all 12 of these sites will be established by the end of February.

FSPW has been able to engage and support community school groups in our Wolverine Watch again this year. At the Forrest M. Bird Charter Middle School, Becky Bigley's seventh grade



**Coyote on the prowl**

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## The Future Looks Bright

**Tuesdays and Wednesdays, throughout the winter:** The Libby office at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Mineral, Suite 205, will be open. Tuesdays, noon to 5; Wednesdays, 9 to 4.

**March 19:** The Little Olive Restaurant at the corner of Lake and Second will host an evening dinner fundraiser for FSPW, 3:30-8:30pm. Call (208) 597-7499 for reservations.

**March 20:** Community Prosperity Forum in Libby. Sponsors include FSPW, and other members of the business community in Lincoln County.

**March 23:** The Spring StoryTelling Company, sponsored in part by Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, will be held at Ivano's in Sandpoint. Call 208-263-0211 for reservations.

**April 17:** Community Prosperity Forum in Libby. Sponsors include FSPW, and other members of the business community in Lincoln County.

**April 19:** FSPW will participate in the annual Earthday celebration at the Forrest Bird Charter School in Sandpoint from noon until 4 pm.

**April 26:** FSPW will have a table at the Bonners Ferry Earthday celebration at the Boundary County Fairgrounds.

**May 1:** FSPW and other nonprofits statewide will participate in the 2014 Idaho Gives campaign.

### On The Horizon

**May 10 and 11:** FSPW will be a sponsor for the STOKR race in Lincoln County to benefit Kootenai Valley Partners Habitat for Humanity

**May 14:** State of the Scotchmans with Heather Anderson.

**May 31 and June 1:** Summer volunteer training.

**June 7:** National Trails Day

**June 22:** Sanders County Picnic

**June 14:** Brian Baxter will lead a hike focused on botany and wildflowers.

**July 11, 12, 13: Celebrating 50 Years of Wilderness!** FSPW, Cabinet Resource Group, the Forest Service, Montana Wilderness Association, the Yaak Valley Forest Council and the Back Country Horsemen will host a three day celebration of wilderness and the Wilderness Act at the Bull Lake Rod and Gun Club.

**August 23:** FSPW presents Wylie and the Wild West Show in Libby in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

**September 6:** FSPW and Idaho Conservation League will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> in Sandpoint. Somewhere. Stay tuned.

**September 20:** FSPW fun fundraiser! Join us on the Shawnodese for a gourmet hors d'oeuvres buffet, beverages and a three-hour cruise (*not* to Gilligan's Island) on Lake Pend Oreille. \$50 per person.





## Scotchman Past: The Golden Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

In this coming summer of 2014, we have plenty of reason to celebrate, and we will. It was 50 years ago, in September, 1964, that President Lyndon Johnson brought eight years (and more) of work in Congress and around the country to an end by signing the Wilderness Act into law. Of course, for many people, the work was just beginning. From that original moment on September 3, when 9.1 million acres were protected as part of the National Wilderness System, many leaps forward have been made, some longer than others.

As a result of these leaps, there are now 757 designated areas and 109 million acres of Wilderness, with a capital "W." But shorter steps count, too, for they are what the "leaps" are really made of. Each new supporter of "untrammelled" country, as defined by the 1964 law, is a step forward.

The Scotchman Peaks were first discussed as wilderness five years after the Wilderness Act was passed, in conversations with the Forest Service in 1969. They have also been a part of no less than eight congressional Bills, some of which passed the House, some of which passed the Senate, and one of them — a 1988 Montana wilderness bill — which passed both houses and then was left unsigned by

Ronald Reagan — a pocket veto. This happened at the end of a Congressional session, or it probably would have been overridden and the Montana portion of the Scotchmans, at least, would be Wilderness.



***In the Rose Garden, September 3, 1964. President Lyndon B. Johnson has just signed the Wilderness Act and hands pens to Mardy Murie (left) and Alice Zahniser. Their husbands, Olaus and Howard, had died during the final year of the long lobbying campaign. Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall leans over the president as members of Congress look on: Senator Frank Church (Idaho) behind Murie; Representative Wayne Aspinall (Colorado) behind Zahniser; Senator Clinton P. Anderson (New Mexico) to the right of Aspinall and directly above the president; and Representative John P. Saylor (Pennsylvania), with glasses, standing closest to Udall.***

Setbacks? In some views, maybe, but not really. Each introduction, no matter how it came out, marks a step forward.

Although Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness didn't form until January of 2005 (FSPW is into its 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence!), we inherited the huge amount of good works pointing toward the appropriateness and necessity of designation from Cabinet Resource Group, Montana Wilderness Association, the Kootenai/Lolo Accords, the Forest Service, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Montana legislators like Pat Williams, Max Baucus and John Melcher. And since we have formed, we con-

tinue to get help from these organizations as well as the Idaho Conservation League, Kinnickinnick Native Plant Society and the National Forest Foundation.

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### ***Wolverine from page 5***

class has now received training in plot set-up by FSPW Project Director Kristen Nowicki, and will head out together in the latter half of February to engage in their first citizen scientist project. Congratulations, class! Additionally, FSPW has been able to support Selkirk Outdoor Leadership Education (SOLE) as they begin to bring students out in the field to participate in the MBI study south of Sandpoint.

I suspect there are few conservation groups that include members with as much gusto, positivity, and can-do realities as I have seen come from FSPW Wolverine Crews this winter. Each time

a crew returns, I listen to their stories and am amazed. For what these crews accomplish, for all their strengths and aptitudes, I suggest replacing the word stewards with shepherds. Their level of concern, care and commitment to the Scotchman Peaks Area is a platform for other stewardship organizations to climb to in achieving the most sincere spirit of preservation. Our volunteers are MAKING IT HAPPEN!

For more detail about the adventures of our volunteers, please visit our blog, It's Wolverine Wednesday!, at [www.scotchmanpeaks.org](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org). For further information regarding FSPW and its Stewardship opportunities, contact [kristen@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:kristen@scotchmanpeaks.org)



## Scotchman Natives

### Stinging Nettles: A Mixed Blessing

By Valle Novak

Anyone who has spent time in the woods has had the experience: One moment, blithely enjoying the surroundings – the next moment – ZAP! A stinging, burning whiplash along an unprotected arm, leg or other body part that takes your breath away and brings immediate pain that can last up to an hour. Stinging nettle (*Urtica*) has done it again, hiding behind its innocent façade of pretty slender green toothed leaves that, in the words of Gregory F. Tilford in his *Edible and Medicinal Plants of the West*, “offers a crash course in plant identification (and contact dermatitis).”

The underside of those pretty leaves is covered with miniscule hollow, needlelike hairs that literally inject their contents into anything that makes forceful contact – i.e., your arm or leg. The stems, too, are covered with fine stinging hairs. The protein antigens and formic acid that make up the contents cause immediate burning and a rash of tiny pustules that, if rubbed or scratched (they do itch) magnify the discomfort tenfold. Formic acid, by the way, is the chosen weapon of red ants.

Ironically, despite their protective compunctions, stinging nettle is coveted by many foragers who actually seek it out for its delicious and nutritious enhancements. Gathered with glove-wearing care, and cooked as spinach, it is lauded in every book on nature's plants that I have explored as being high in iron, calcium, potassium, manganese and Vitamins A, C, and D. One may also dry the leaves, which negates the stinging as well as cooking.

Best gathered in the spring when it emerges from the ground in little many-leaved reddish-colored leaf sprouts, there is no



**Stinging Nettle**

Photo by Doug Goldman @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / USDA-NRCS-NPDT

danger of over-use since it spreads by rhizomes. Simply snip off the leaf bundle at the base (wearing gloves) and the root will continue to create new ones. Once cooked, it loses its stinging propensities and makes a nutritious tea, or served like spinach, tastes great with butter, salt and pepper, and maybe a dash of nutmeg. One caveat: Do not gather for eating after spring and/or during or after bloom stage. Old plants are not palatable.

Stinging nettle prefers rich, moist soil, and thrives most anywhere in such conditions, from high country sites to lowland ditches and roadways. Our most common resident is *U. dioica*. It is an erect plant, generally growing in colonies, and

**Continued page 11**

### Creatures from page 1

more aggressive, but smaller footed, bobcat cousins which tend to post-hole through deep snow. This adaptation, which



**West Cabinet surprise**

Photo by Michael Lucid

allowed lynx to thrive over the eons, is the same thing that causes concern for its security in a changing climate. In the coming decades climate models predict north Idaho will have warmer and wetter winters. This means less snow, more rain on snow events, and possibly more bobcats at high elevations to out-compete lynx.

Very little is known about the status of lynx in Idaho and, to my knowledge, this is the first lynx ever to be collared in the state. The data we get from this lynx collar will allow us to determine if the animal is a resident of the West Cabinets, determine its home range, assess reproductive status, provide land managers with important information of how lynx use the local landscape, and maybe...just maybe...provide a starting point to help us figure out how to help our local lynx adapt to climate change.

There are lots of ways to help further wildlife conservation in north Idaho. Calling Fish and Game to report a lynx in a trap and setting up a bait station as a FSPW volunteer are both great examples of how everyone can be involved in working together to further wildlife conservation.





## Scotchman Rocks

### North Idaho Rocks: Scratching the Surface

By Mark McFadden, PhD

One of the greatest challenges in deciphering the history written in the rock record is to separate the superficial from the substantial. Rocks overwhelm us with layer after layer of information at every scale and distance, whether we are looking at landscape panoramas or a small sample in the palm of our hand. Colors, cracks, bumps, textures and patterns compete for our attention and beg the question at every turn – what does it really mean? Or does it mean anything at all? Perhaps they are just pretty colors after all, and we should not dare to look deeper.

It was a huge jump in reasoning when the fledgling science of geology first began to understand that all of these diverse clues added up to the outrageous, unsettling, and unavoidable conclusion that the Earth had not always looked as it does today. The realization that this dynamic planet had recorded its long and complex history in countless layers of sediment, bodies of originally molten rock, and indeed the entire crust beneath our feet was both breathtaking and intimidating at the same time – where to even start?

Field geologists working to unravel Earth history constantly struggle to manage the thousands of observations per hour entering their senses. Tiny and commonly subtle features

may be the most significant in solving a geologic problem and setting up the next test of an idea. On other occasions, we need the big picture in order to even determine which questions to ask in the first place. Most of the time, even Sherlock Holmes would be proud of the levels of observation necessary to solve geological riddles.

The hand sample in the photograph is a good example of sorting out information. Concentric rust-colored ovals immediately catch the eye and our curiosity. Is something really unique hiding inside the sample, or was it rolled up like a rug? A closer look at the surface reveals that the color bands are simply the result of groundwater seeping along a planar crack in the rock, leaving behind successive strand lines of iron oxide from the edges toward the center. The lighter patch in the middle is actually the original color of the rock, the last unstained surface.

Disappointing? Only for a second, as the significance of the dull, fine-grained sand comprising the rock comes to mind. Holding the solidified remains of a sandy

Precambrian deposit left behind in northern Idaho a billion and a half years ago on a nearly flat landscape is enough to stretch any imagination and overwhelm us with perspective. Superficially with the pretty colors and patterns, or substantially because of the history it records in this small package, it was worth picking up and taking home for the bookshelf!



***The surface of this sample sports some interesting iron staining rings. However, a closer look at the small broken corner near the pencil point indicates that the real story is the dull, fine-grained sand beneath the superficial decoration.***

Photo by Mark McFadden

### Past, from page 6

And, as of this writing, we may not be 50 years old, but we have also taken over 4500 “steps forward,” our approximate Friends count as of February 15.

“Our” movement, though, is really a lot older than 50. It might have started 100 years *before* the signing of the Wilderness Act when Frederick Olmstead began to advocate for the federal protection of Yosemite. Following in his footsteps are John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Howard Zahnizer, Bob Marshall, Mardie Murie, David Brower, Elizabeth Putnam and hundreds of other men and women, heroes large and small, who worked to make that signing in September of 1964 a possibility and then, a reality. So, as we celebrate the last 50 years this summer, we are really celebrating a conservation tradition much older.

In this 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Wilderness Act, The Forest Service, Montana Wilderness Association, Cabinet Resource Group, Cabinet Back Country Horsemen, Idaho Conservation League and FSPW are throwing a party or three to celebrate a half-cen-

tury of growth in designated wilderness, keeping the thought and hope that it ain't over yet, and won't be as long as there are wild places to set aside and people who love them enough to work for them.

July 11, 12, and 13, at Bull Lake in the heart of the Cabinets (with the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness on the east and the Scotchmans on the west), will be a three-day shindig including kid's activities, hikes of all ken, historical displays, a ranger reunion, demonstrations on horse packing, critter displays, films, horseshoes, music, food and drink, camping and stewardship opportunities.

August 23 at Libby, FSPW and MWA will celebrate with Wiley and the Wild West at Riverfront Park. The day will include films about “our” wildernesses, outdoor company displays and booths and a free evening concert and dance.

September 6, ICL and FSPW will host a 50<sup>th</sup> celebration in Sandpoint with panels on wilderness and other environmental issues, music, food, and drink.



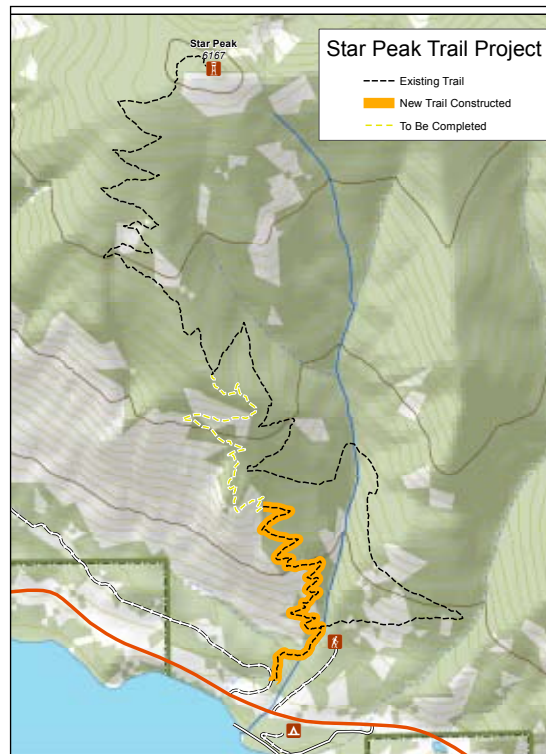


## Trail Talk

How many trails are there in the Scotchmans? And how many miles of? Those are good questions as we move toward stewardship season. We will be out there again in 2014 with Pulaskis, saws, McCleods, shovels and rockbars — to name a few of a trail crew's favorite tools — making trails safer, more sustainable and ultimately more user friendly.

But first, a sobering thought. At least two-thirds of these trails are in need of some sort of maintenance: tread work, brushing, clearing blow-downs, building water-bars, weed eradication.

It's good work. You can tell by the glow a volunteer crew has at the end of a day on the trail. You can tell by the way hikers say "thank you" when a crew steps aside and lets them continue on their way. If you're a trail volunteer, you can tell by the way you feel when you look back at what you've done.



*This shows the approximate extent of the work done on the trail that might become Trail #999*

Now, let's take inventory. Starting at the northwest corner of the proposal and proceeding counterclockwise, we begin with Mud Creek Trail, six miles of newish tread skirting the northern edge of the proposal, made of reclaimed roads and recently connected to its trailhead on National Public Lands Day by volunteers that included the District Ranger.

Next is East Fork Creek Trail #134, climbing eight miles to the base of Lightning Peak, also of reclaimed roads. Branching off of #134 one mile out, Trail #563 leads three and a half miles to East Fork Peak.

Morris Creek Trail #132 runs three and a half miles up a steep-sided canyon until it hits the wall that is the Scotchman ridge.

Regal Creek Trail #556 follows an old prospect road three miles to a beautiful cascade and the hole the prospectors left behind.

*Continued page 11*

## Peak Views

Hike date	Exertion Rating	Destination/Hike Name	Leader(s)	Description and contact info
3/8/14	M	Gourmet Ski and Snowshoe	Celeste and Eric Grace	<b>Contact:</b> Celeste and Eric Grace <a href="mailto:celestebgrace@gmail.com">celestebgrace@gmail.com</a> Join us in exploring the newly restored historic Star Peak trail via snowshoes or skis. Gourmet lunch and a hot drink will be provided. No one can opt to summit. 4000 ft gain if you summit, somewhat less than that to lunch spot.
3/29/14	S+	Goat Mountain Hop	Jim Mellen	<b>Contact:</b> Jim Mellen <a href="mailto:jimnsandii@gmail.com">jimnsandii@gmail.com</a> This will be the 8th 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. Round trip: 7 miles, Elevation gain +/- 4000ft. To sign up for this hike, fill out the online <a href="#">Hike Signup Form</a> . For further information about this hike, please contact the hike leader..
4/26/14	S	Scotchman Peak Snow Bound	Jim and Sandii Mellen	<b>Contact:</b> Jim and Sandii Mellen <a href="mailto:jimnsandii@gmail.com">jimnsandii@gmail.com</a> Snowshoe, ski, or snowboard the tallest peak in the Scotchman's. This is the 9th annual Scotchman Peaks winter hike. Generally, the trailhead is inaccessible this time of year, adding 2.5 miles each way and 500ft elevation gain for an incredible day. This is for the extremely fit adventurers only! Round trip: 12 miles, Elevation gain: 4200ft. To sign up for this hike, please fill out our online <a href="#">Hike Signup Form</a> . For further information about this hike, please contact the hike leaders..

**E = Easy; M = Moderate; S = Strenuous**

Summer hike suggestions are being accepted, and we are looking for hike leaders for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act celebration at Bull Lake, July 11 and 12. Contact [trails@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:trails@scotchmanpeaks.org) or go to our online hike form at <http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/hiking/leading-hikes/> Happy Trails!

*There is no wifi in the forest, but you'll find a better connection. (Anon.)*



## Tales of the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

### The Interminable Mile

By Brad Smith

The shrubs and grasses are covered with dew. It looks like someone misted them with a spray bottle like my mom used to do when she ironed her clothes. Perhaps because of the dew, the air smells clean and sweet. Sort of like how the nectar of a honeysuckle flower tastes.

The car door slams shut. We embark on the trail. The sun has not been up very long. We are in a race against it to reach the high country before the valley warms up. In no time, I can feel my heart beginning to thump against the inside of my sternum like a bass drum as we ascend the first mile of the Scotchman Peak Trail. I call it the "interminable mile." If you have hiked the trail, you know what I mean.

There is no question that the interminable mile tests the body and the mind. I think about the time my good friend Sandy Compton and I surveyed (and yes, survived) the interminable mile. According to his clinometer, segments of the interminable mile exceed twenty-five percent grade. For the laymen, that means twenty-five feet of vertical elevation is gained for every one hundred feet of tread. No wonder my heart is about to explode. Or is it my mind that is about to blow up?

With each step, I imagine walking on ball bearings. The soil slips away beneath my feet. Every time another hiker takes another step on the interminable mile, countless soil particles move closer and closer to the bottom of the hill. No doubt, you have heard the analogy, "death by a thousand paper cuts." There must be some similar analogy for trails, but my mind is too consumed by my physical exertions to think of one.

Rain and snow also exact their toll on the interminable mile. The tread dives straight down hill like the chute on a cement truck. Every time it rains and every time the snow melts, soil particles are carried away by water in its endless pursuit of the ocean. A slurry of mud is deposited at the bottom.

In recent years I have learned to confront the consequences of my favorite past time. It is true, that of all the things we could

be doing, hiking has a very minimal environmental impact. Nonetheless, hiking the backcountry is a privilege. With that privilege comes the responsibility to be good stewards of our natural resources. I do my part by swinging a Pulaski, pulling a cross cut saw and picking up trash. In an era when Congress is slashing and burning the federal budget, the Forest Service no longer has enough boots on the ground to take care of the trails we use and enjoy.

As we continue up the interminable mile, I see a strip of neon pink flagging dangling from the branch of a shrub like Pavlov dangling a dinner bell in front of his dogs. This flag has no earthly business being in this landscape, but for me it warrants no explanation. I tied it there. Beyond this flag is another and another. There are even more beyond that. These flags mark the approximate route where the Friends of Scotchman Peaks will reconstruct the interminable mile so that it is not so interminable anymore.

With the Forest Service's blessing, we will incorporate some switchbacks into the trail so that the grade is physically and environmentally reasonable. This work will completely redefine the interminable mile. Until the work is complete, exercise your mind, body and soul before attempting it, and please don't tear down any of those pink flags. They are tied up there for a good reason.



**FSPW volunteer trail steward Rodd Galloway clears out a waterbar in the midst of the "interminable mile", an annual event made necessary by the steep grade**

Photo by Phil Hough

### Volunteer from page 3

"Portland was growing into a major city," he says. "We followed the New York City plan of separate SWAT and hostage negotiation teams. Hostage negotiation always tries to remove folks without harm. I really liked the system, but we were called out two or three times a week, which was very disruptive to family life."

After several years on the hostage team, he ended his career as the commander at the precinct where he started.

After retiring, he was concerned about what to do with his time, besides skiing, and began "shopping" for a cause. After checking out several other groups and working as a Marine Deputy for a year, "I eventually found my way to Scotchman Peaks."

"I got involved on the periphery at first, because I didn't want to get into something with hardcore views. Did a hike or two. Other folks I skied with were Friends. I went with Brian Baxter on one of his tracking class."

"I eventually picked FSPW because of the philosophy of the leadership. FSPW fits my personality. They are a unique organization because they are willing to negotiate. I believe there's enough country out there for all interests. Logging and mining are part of life and culture here and the Friends are willing to work within those boundaries. The Friends are willing to sit down with all these people and listen to what they have to say. And the other people involved are down to earth, great folks."

Sort of like Irv himself. Thanks for picking FSPW, Irv.



## Natives, from page 7

can reach 7 feet tall. Opposing leaves are toothed and lance-shaped. Most reproduction is from its shallow rhizomes, but seed-bearing flowers also grow from leaf axils and appear as brownish, somewhat "catkin-like" drooping clusters.

Medicinal use of *Urtica* has been recorded from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, when it was considered one of the Sacred Herbs. It was used as a poultice for many ailments, from gout to menstrual problems, and to counteract the pains of rheumatism and arthritis. In the Bronze Age, nettle stems were pounded in water into fibers which could be twisted into string and woven into fishing nets.

More recently, early American Indians often whipped themselves with the leafed stems for bone ache and arthritis. It was also cooked and eaten or used as a tea for a spring tonic. This has been accepted as a valid use by the Self-Heal Herbal Centre of Victoria, B.C., Canada, since *Urtica* contains "secretin which causes the bowel to slough off its heavy mucous lining from eating the heavier winter foods" (*Discovering Wild Plants*, Janice J. Schofield).

Schofield herself says that in her home nettles "serve as seasoning, tea, plant fertilizer, shampoo, hair rinse, liniment and favorite spring green."

It's probably doubtful whether any of us will be making such good things from any nettles we encounter, but it's good to know that this much-maligned plant has such great hidden virtues. Meanwhile, we can prepare ourselves for any unexpected meetings with a light over-shirt at the very least.

## Trail from page 9

Goat Peak Trail #135, reputedly the steepest in Idaho, takes just three heart-stopping miles to gain 4,000 feet.

All of the above trails are accessed from Lightning Creek Road #419.

We then follow southeast along the Hope Fault to famous Trail #65, leading four miles to the top of Scotchman Peak itself.

After a ten-mile gap between trailheads is Trail #998, leading five miles to Star Peak. We are planning to finish Trail #999 by this summer's end, a three mile rebuilt historic section connecting to #998 that takes allows hikers to avoid a road.

Next is Blacktail Trail #997, two-and-a-half miles that climbs toward (but not to) Pilik Ridge.

Turn north along the eastern boundary to Pilik Ridge Trail #1036, which leads 11 long miles to Star Peak Lookout.

Four miles up Montana 56 is Dry Creek Road # 1118 and the trailhead for Dry Creek Trail #1020, which runs south five miles between the proposed wilderness boundary and Bull River, connecting to Hamilton Gulch Trail #1019, Star Gulch Trail #1016 and terminating at Napoleon Gulch Trail #1035.

Trail #1019 runs three and a half miles to the top of the ridge between Hamilton Gulch and Dry Creek. Trail #1016 leads five

miles to Star Peak Lookout. Trail #1035 climbs four miles to Trail #1036.

Classified as a trail, but really a closed (and very grown-in) road is Dry Creek Trail # 1021, beginning at the end of Road #1118 and running seven-plus miles to near the divide between Dry Creek and the South Fork of Ross Creek.

Ross Creek Trail #142 begins at the west end of the loop at Ross Creek Cedars Scenic Area. Trail #142 leads five miles through cedar forest and terminates at the "wall," where upper Ross Creek begins to climb toward the Craggs separating it from the East and West Forks of Blue Creek.

At mile two on Trail #142, Trail #321 turns left and climbs three miles to the south fork of Ross Creek falls before petering out in the upper basin.

Beginning at the end of Spar Lake Road #384, Trail #143 leads four miles to Little Spar Lake. A half mile from the trailhead, Trail #324 splits off and climbs very steeply two and a half miles to Spar Peak. At the top of the ridge between Spar Creek and Ross Creek, Trail # 513 leaves Trail #324 and runs about three and a half miles east along the ridge top before intersecting a prospect road.

So, there you have it; all told, there are 21 "official" trails in the Scotchman Peaks and about 95 miles of tread, give or take a few miles. A lot to take care of.

The Forest Service is a great partner, but they no longer have the resources to do it all themselves. That's why Friends of Scotchman Peaks have lined up to help them, and why we want you to come help us. We hope to see you out there this season. Watch for your "Trail of Opportunities" in the next issue of *Peak Experience*.



## 2014 Idaho Master Naturalist Course

The Pend Oreille Chapter of the Idaho Master Naturalists is looking for new members interested in actively working towards the stewardship of Idaho's natural environment. Conservation Education and Citizen Science Training classes will be offered from April 8 through May 20, 2014, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons and some Saturdays at the Waterlife Discovery Center, 2100 Lakeshore Dr., Sagle, (the old Sandpoint Fish Hatchery). See details at [www.idahomasternaturalist.org](http://www.idahomasternaturalist.org) click on the Sandpoint link in the left hand column. The class schedule and application will be found there. **The deadline for application is April 1, 2014.**

Contact us at Idaho Master Naturalists, Pend Oreille Chapter, PO Box 1062, Sandpoint, ID 83864 or [imn\\_sandpoint@gmail.com](mailto:imn_sandpoint@gmail.com).





## 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.

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