



# PEAK EXPERIENCE

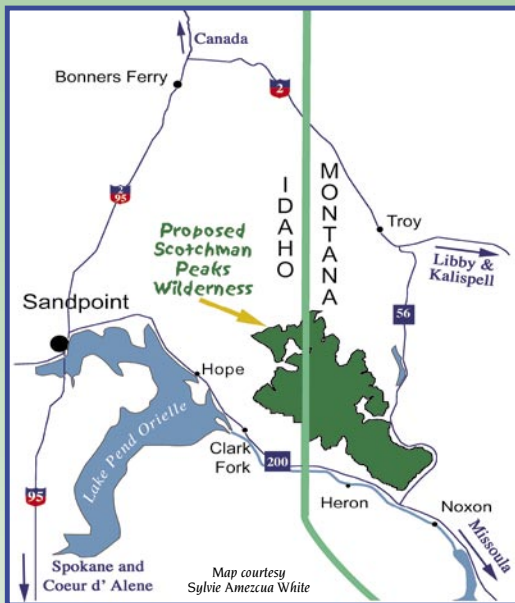
The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.

Volume 5, Number 6 • November / December, 2009



## Mission Statement

"We believe that the 88,000 acre Scotchman Peaks roadless area, spanning the Idaho/Montana border, deserves **permanent protection** as wilderness. Faced with growth and change, we want to make sure this special place stays the same."



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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Editor: Ann Wimberley  
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## Birding in the Scotchmans

### Alpine Birding: Highs and Lows Jon Isacoff

Many birders in the Western US as well as birding tourists from around the globe are attracted to the big mountains we enjoy every day. Alpine and subalpine birding (ASB) is a unique experience, but like dry-fly fishing and golf, some people love the challenge, others balk at the frustration. The proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness area exemplifies all of the highs and lows associated with ASB. Why?

Birds at high elevations have a very short growing and breeding season to eat, mate, fledge, and in many cases, migrate. The net result: not many birds per square mile. It is typical on an ASB trip to go many birdless miles before encountering the much desired "birdy spot." What else can we learn about ASB? Well, from my (admittedly somewhat limited) experiences, three things.

First, this is definitely a quality over quantity endeavor. If you want quantity, go visit a flat, low elevation wetland (not to say there isn't quality there too)! If you want quality, go to an ASB location like the Scotchman Peaks. What might you find? Rare, lone-wolf birds such as Dusky Grouse, Spruce Grouse, and the elusive White-tailed Ptarmigan. The Scotchman's are one of the very few spots in the lower 48 where you can find the latter species. Also you

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**Pine Siskin**  
Photo by Randy Beacham  
[www.agpix.com/beachum](http://www.agpix.com/beachum)

## Scotchman Past



*The late Dale Selle of the Bonner County Historical Society beside a segment of Antelope Mountain trail overlooking the Clark Fork River.*  
Photo by Robert C. Betts.

### Following the Road to the Buffalo By Robert C. Betts, Vanguard Research, Sandpoint Idaho

On October 11, 1809 North West Company fur trader David Thompson started east from Lake Pend Oreille along the north bank of what is today known as the Clark Fork River. Thompson, the first white man to reach Lake Pend Oreille, had left most of his men to complete the construction of Kullyspel House near the mouth of the Clark Fork River and was exploring eastward, searching for a place to establish a second fur trade post on what he called the Salish River. The Salish Indian guide leading Thompson up the Clark Fork River was following the ancient east / west trail that had

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## Q&A on Tester Wilderness Bill

Many Friends in our local communities are wondering about details of Tester's proposed Forest Jobs and Recreation Act. For answers to some common questions we asked Doug Ferrell, our FSPW Vice Chair and Montana Wilderness Association President-Elect, to offer the thoughts below.

**Does the bill mandate logging levels?** The bill directs the FS to "mechanically treat" a certain number of acres per year. Treatment could include logging, thinning, or fuel reduction projects. The Kootenai Forest is directed to treat 30,000 acres over ten years, or an average of 3,000 acres per year across the Three Rivers Ranger District (not just in the Yaak). This represents well under 1% of the district. The legislation steers logging towards areas that are currently degraded, roaded, and identified as suitable for harvest by the Forest Service. No permanent road construction is permitted in projects authorized by this bill.

**Where would restoration money come from?** Stewardship contracts would create jobs aimed at repairing Montana's damaged streams and wildlife habitat, and reducing road densities. Stewardship contracts ensure that income from timber sales is retained and spent locally to restore and improve forest resources.

**What about our fundamental environmental laws?** Nothing in this bill changes or suspends state or national environmental laws. All logging and stewardship activities must be in compliance with all laws, regulations, and policies including NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and multi-agency grizzly bear habitat standards.

**Who supports the Tester bill?** Mainstream conservation groups including the Wilderness Society, Montana Wilderness Association, Trout Unlimited, National Wildlife Federation, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Montana Wildlife Federation, Yaak Valley Forest Council, Campaign for America's Wilderness, former Congressman Pat Williams, Montana rod-and-gun clubs and many others. Other info is available on Senator Tester's website (<http://tester.senate.gov/Legislation/foresthome>) or by contacting Doug Ferrell at 406-827-4341 or [ferrelldoug@gmail.com](mailto:ferrelldoug@gmail.com).

### Birding in the Scotchmans, Continues from Page 1

might luck out and see a Northern Goshawk, Northern Pygmy Owl, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, or breeding Fox and Lincoln's Sparrows.

Second, some birds do flock up in the late summer/early fall in the Scotchmans. This is the best time to find roving flocks of rare finches, including: Pine Grosbeaks, White-winged Crossbills, and Evening Grosbeaks. The Scotchmans is also a great place to see mega-flocks of fall Pine Siskins, up to 200 or 300 at a time!

Finally, as in many ASB locations such as Glacier National Park, when you do find that "birdy spot" after many miles of hard searching, don't be surprised to find tight-knit flocks of mixed species with almost always one or more type of Chickadee present. The theory, studied at Glacier among other places, is that Chickadees have a virtual language with more than 300 vocalizations, which other birds can learn. The other birds in turn listen to Chickadees to be alerted not only to

## From the Chair

As I write this message, autumn rains have finally started to fall outside. Soon we can light the burn piles and when the clouds clear I am sure we will see snow covered peaks. Memories of recent hikes in the deep valleys, high basins and panoramic peaks of the Scotchmans are fading while dreams of winter snow shoe trips still seem premature. It's the mud season here and Scotchman hiking suddenly seems a long ways off.

But there are many exciting things happening this fall to keep us busy! The future of wilderness in our region has made huge strides forward with positive reactions to Senator Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Bill. We will follow developments and report on it as the story unfolds. For now, you can read more about this important piece of wilderness legislation elsewhere in this issue.

Speaking of stories – we are pleased to have author, graphic designer, master story teller, wilderness wanderer and Sanders county native son, Mr. Sandy Compton fully on board. Starting in mid November Sandy will assume duties as our "program coordinator!" Join me in congratulating, and welcoming, Sandy!

To meet the modern audience where they are, we are excited to announce that we will be telling the Scotchmans story on an expanded Social Media network! Odd as it may seem, wilderness lovers are increasingly on-line. Maybe it's the mud season. There are very few things which, at first, seem more distant from Wilderness experience than the World Wide Web and its communities. Yet the internet connects individuals into communities, circles and groups in dynamic ways never before possible. All kinds of people are taking advantage of that. And we are too!

In the last several weeks, I've been working with our webmaster, Trisha Miller and our Social Media Coordinator, Brad Smith. We are putting together a redesigned Scotchmans website so that finding information is easier than ever and we are integrating the website with such feature as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. I never thought I'd write those words! My part's been easy – I started to actually look at (and listen to) the personal facebook page I set up three years ago. When I saw how easy and fun it is to connect with friends from around the country and hiking buddies from long lost trails, sharing photos of good times and tales of the trail, I knew the Friends of Scotchman Peaks were a natural part of the on-line conversation. We hope you will join us, or rather let us join you. There are more details elsewhere in this now "old-fashioned" newsletter. Enjoy!

**Phil Hough**

danger (hawks, owls, etc.), but to the precise level of the threat. That's right: Chickadees are ASB birds' own personal Department of Homeland Security!

In these mixed flocks, it's not unusual to find Chestnut-backed, Mountain, and/or Boreal Chickadees (a rarity in itself) mixing it up with Red-breasted Nuthatches, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Pine Grosbeaks, Juncos, and often a pair or two of Woodpeckers for good measure. So when you hear that "chick-a-dee-dee-dee," pay careful attention, you may have a Boreal Chickadee or Three-toed Woodpecker in your midst!

ASB birding in the Scotchmans is not for everyone. The terrain is rough, long stretches may be birdless, and birds are often heard but not seen. But for those who love the challenge, it's an amazing experience.





## Over the Top Volunteer

### Mindy Ferrell – Wilderness Teacher

Mindy Ferrell is an energetic Scotchmans volunteer and Noxon school teacher. She has enriched the lives of many children – and adults – with her infectious love and respect for the natural world. She has led many children into our local forests and mountains, and even right into the streams, where pictures show kids with huge grins, turning over rocks, examining bugs and exclaiming about what they have found.

As a teacher, Mindy thinks and works like an entertainer, drawing people's interest by creating captivating opportunities and encouraging the process of discovery. Other pictures from some of her field trips show kids on the outside of a circle, standing on their toes to see the lesson unfolding inside the circle. Asked about the value of these experiences, Mindy says "Natural lessons that are learned out of doors have a special intensity and durability for children, and for all ages."

Mindy believes deeply in the value of connecting young people with wilderness. Young people's openness to experience the world, and their questioning of what is valuable, are intensified by experiencing wild country. "Young people who have benefitted from time in wild country will never be the same. These experiences will enrich their lives and help connect them to natural environments wherever they are."

She remembers vividly a trip her two sons, Jack and Pete, took into the Scotchmans high country several years ago. They made a base camp at Little Spar Lake and climbed the high ridges and peaks all around for several days. It was early summer and they swam in the lake, sharing space with a great deal of ice. They arrived home late one night, tired and famished, in spite of the fact they had consumed a huge quantity of food. They reported they had been talking about their dreams for the future, while Mindy threw together a late dinner. Now the boys are scattered to college and work, but there is no doubt those few days represent one of the great experiences of their youth.

As far as her own connection to Scotchmans, Mindy says simply that she loves wild places. "The Scotchmans are remote and rugged and fantastically beautiful. As a school teacher I know how important it is to protect places like this for children." One of her own favorite pastimes is hiking to an alpine lake, pitching a tent, and savoring the magic of a campfire.

We thank Mindy for all her efforts on behalf of Scotchmans, including organizing the Bull River Picnic and all the food, and for being a great supporter and ambassador for wilderness. Mindy's husband Doug also thanks her for supporting all the time and energy he spends on the Scotchmans campaign. We all thank her for helping raise a generation of children with vital experiences and connections with the natural world.



**Mindy Ferrell**

*Photo courtesy Trysta Wood, age 10*

## Along the Trail

**September 9:** Jon Isacoff presented "The Birds of the Scotchmans" to an enthusiastic Spokane Audubon Society.

**September 19:** FSPW handed out over 200 hiking maps and signed up 52 new friends at Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce Health and Wellness Fair!

**September 19, 20:** Fifteen talented plein air artists converged on the Outskirts Gallery in Hope, Idaho for the second annual Scotchman Wilderness Fall Plein Air Paint Out with fresh paintings inspired by the grandeur of the Scotchman's Wilderness. Jared Shear of Thompson Falls, MT, won "Best of Show" with his "Bull River" oil painting. Many beautiful paintings are still available for viewing and purchase at the Outskirts Gallery, and a new Wilderness Art Gallery will soon be accessible on the FSPW website in time for Christmas.

**October 4:** Jace Bylenga and a crew of 10 leaders from the Spokane Inner City Youth program spent the weekend doing needed maintenance on the Regal Creek Trail.

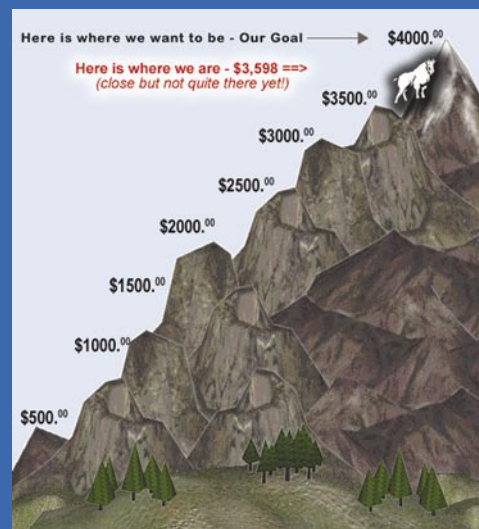
**October 4:** Many Friends turned out for the Wild Idaho North to engage Congressman Walt Minnick in conversation about wilderness in the Idaho Panhandle.

**October 8:** Several FSPW volunteers were kept busy at the Sandpoint Chamber of Commerce Business Fair as we handed out information and signed up 57 new friends!

**October 13:** David Lindsey staffed an information table at the Wild and Scenic Film Festival at NIC in Coeur d'Alene, handing out maps and signing up new friends.

**October 26:** Phil Hough presented an overview of the Scotchman Peaks to Jon Isacoff's class on Ecology and Political thought at Gonzaga – go Zags!

**Friends, we are only \$400 shy of matching the \$4,000 grant from Cinnabar Foundation. Please consider making a donation now to help us achieve this gift. And thank you to everyone who has shown support through recent donations. Your gifts directly enable us to continue the outreach which results in increasing awareness and support for wilderness designation for the Scotchmans. You will be part of the success story when this designation is achieved!**





# Announcing the 2009 FSPW Photo Contest Winners!

This years 2nd Annual FSPW Photo Contest had some fantastic photos entered into it. Congratulations to everyone who entered! We had over 50 photos this year, and narrowing them down to the top three in each of our categories was difficult, but of course it had to be done. Here are this years 1st, 2nd and 3rd place choices for each of our four categories with some honorable mentions. Winning photos will be printed in the newsletter, beginning with this issue.

### Scotchmans Scenery

- 1. Jim Schifferns
  - 2. Mike Kroschel
  - 3. Jolanda Van Ooyen
- HM. Daniele Puccinelli

### Scotchmans Spirit

- 1. Colleen Reynolds
  - 2. Holly Clements
  - 3. Todd Dunfield
- HM. Andrew Klaus  
HM. Colleen Reynolds

### Wild Scotchmans (Plants & Animals)

- 1. Stan Myers
  - 2. Karen Jurasin
  - 3. Andrew Klaus
- HM. Ed Bowers  
HM. Susan Lee

### Scotchmans Water

- 1. Daniele Puccinelli
- 2. Randy Dorian
- 3. Holly Clements



**2009 Scotchman Scenery Winner**  
**First Place photo by Jim Schifferns -**

## Scotchman Past, Continued from Page 1

been used seasonally by countless generations of Native Americans to move between the upper Columbia River drainage and the vast buffalo plains east of the Rocky Mountains. Although diligent search efforts in recent years have identified a few traces of the old trail, most of the heavily travelled and deeply worn tread that Thompson followed has been obliterated by the logging, agricultural, and homesteading activities that began in the late 1800s and by the wagon trails, roads and railroads that today follow the same corridor along the Clark Fork River and around the north end of Lake Pend Oreille.

It is through Thompson's journal and maps as well as the maps and journals of other early white explorers, missionaries, railroad surveyors, prospectors, and military expeditions that we can reconstruct the route of the Road to the Buffalo and begin to appreciate the role the Clark Fork trail played in the lives of Native American tribes at the time of European contact. Once the Kalispel, Kootenai and other Native American tribes west of the Rocky Mountains had obtained horses in the early to mid 1700s and the ability to transport large quantities of dried meat and hides back home from the buffalo country, travel over the Clark Fork trail increased dramatically. By the late 1800s as many as two to three thousand Indians from tribes west of the Rocky Mountains accompanied by three to four thousand horses crossed the mountains annually to hunt bison. It was not just individual family groups or bands that crossed the mountains to hunt buffalo, but entire tribes and multiple tribes that banded together for protection against the dreaded Blackfoot Indians. Some estimates suggest that by the mid 1800s a quarter to half the upper Columbia River Indian population west of the mountains went annually to hunt buffalo once horse transportation became available.

A dramatic first hand account of what it would have been like to travel the Road to the Buffalo is that provided by a trapper named Warren Ferris who in the 1830s accompanied more than a hundred lodges of Pend Oreille Indians travelling the trail up the Clark Fork River. Ferris described the procession as follows:

"...three thousand horses of every variety of size and color, with trappings almost as varied as their appearance, either packed or ridden by a thousand souls ... their persons fantastically ornamented

with scarlet coats, blankets of all colors, painted buffalo robes and sheepskin dresses garnished with porcupine quills, beads, hawk bells, and human hair. Listen to the rattle of numberless lodge poles trailed by packhorses, to the various noises of children screaming, women scolding, and dogs howling. Observe occasional frightened horses running away and scattering their loads over the prairie .. and in every direction crowds of hungry dogs chasing and worrying small animals. Imagine these scenes with all their bustle and confusion, lighted by flashes of hundreds of gleaming gun-barrels, upon which the rays of the sun are playing ... and you have a faint idea of the character and aspect of our march."

Through most of the 19th century large parties of Indians continued to use the Trail to the Buffalo around Lake Pend Oreille and up the Clark Fork River but by the early 1880s major seasonal migrations over the mountains to hunt buffalo had come to an end. By the 1870s increasing white settlement in Montana resulted in more frequent conflict and tension between whites and Indians passing through or near white settlements. White settlers increasingly accused Indians of stealing livestock and causing trouble and demanded military protections and that Indians be confined to reservations. But the fact that by 1882 the plains buffalo had been hunted almost to extinction was the final blow that ended tribal migrations to the buffalo country, although limited Native American use of portions of the trail continued into the early 1900s.

Today the trail is silent. There remain only a few places on the Sunnyside Peninsula and Antelope Mountain and perhaps on Cabinet Mountain near the Montana state line where faint traces of the trail in Idaho remain visible. To come upon those isolated segments of Native American trail is to travel back in time to an era before the changes brought by the white man transformed the vast wilderness of North Idaho into a landscape where what undeveloped land that remains is threatened by continued development if not protected for those wilderness values we have come to appreciate and are so easily lost.





## Tales of Scotchman Peaks

### Orogenesis By Sandy Compton

Often, out of the blue, a new word rolls into my life. Tonight, as the Scotchmans get a good dose of termination dust, the word is “orogenesis” — “the process of mountain building, especially by folding and faulting of the earth’s crust” (American Heritage Dictionary). It’s an appropriate word. Orogenesis has been going on in the Scotchmans for a long, long, long, long, long time. Editors may wish to eliminate several “longs,” but few words describe how long the stone that makes up the Scotchman Peaks has been being folded and faulted. Their orogenesis started more than five galactic years (GY) ago. It takes our little solar system one GY — 250 million years — to revolve once around the core of the Milky Way. Five “longs” are as appropriate as they are approximate.

A short time ago — .0000000001 GY, give or take a zero — a party wandered into the still-orogenesizing peaks to capture this process on paper. Aaron Johnson, Jared Shear, Victor Vosen and a guide took the Friends’ Extreme Plein Air Challenge to paint the Scotchmans from the inside. Laden with backpacks full of camping gear and watercolor supplies and accompanied for the first day by Neil and Ann Wimberley and Daniele Puccinelli (whose grizzly encounter a few days later will be recounted in a future newsletter) they hiked Trail 143 into the heart of the wilderness on July 17. For four days (when the slave-driver guide wasn’t pushing them through the wild), they captured in paint what the Scotchmans have been up to for the past five GY.

Aaron and Jared, both accomplished artists, each created dozens of paintings. Victor, a neophyte painter, turned to poetry between essays with his brushes. The guide kept notes and meandered around in the sunshine.

We camped first in the stone basin north of Vertigo Ridge, where the artists committed that folded, faulted and glaciated chunk of Precambrian rock to paper. Second day, we wandered south, beginning with a clamber up Vertigo that proved everyone had heart — and legs and lungs. While the artists “arted” atop the ridge, the guide — ummm — rested. Thence, to Davis Point above Little Spar, and south along Stonebridge Ridge to 48-Hour Pass and a fine camp in Melissa Basin. Here, we spent two glorious days and nights capturing the results of orogenesis and drinking the headwaters of the West Fork of Blue Creek, just released from the permanent snowfield in the cirque under the Melissa and Elinor Crag.



**Victor Vosen (front), Aaron Johnson and Jared Shear under Joe’s Couloir attempt to capture what they can of Vertigo Ridge. Photo courtesy Sandy Compton**

On, Monday, the 20th, we fought our way through tag alder and mountain mahogany and down 100% slopes to Trail 142, visiting along the way the Holy \_\_\_\_! Grotto — so named by Johnson — a seldom-seen niche in the rock carved by 48-Hour Creek, the west fork of Ross Creek. The beauty of the Grotto, an incredible incision into the stony time map of the Scotchmans, is lovely enough to make the travail of the day — or the whole trip — worthwhile. It was with satiated souls, myriad

paintings and photos, and sore feet that we rewarded ourselves at the Ross Creek Cedars with cold beer out of the creek that the guide had secreted a few days before in anticipation of our exit. (Guides are good for something, after all.)

In the scheme of things, we weren’t there long. The progress of Sol and its satellites around the Way is barely measurable against the backdrop of time since the orogenesized layers of stone that make up these places were laid out in great sheets of sediments at the bottom of the primordial sea, much less since our little green planet was formed. Nor, was the general feeling, were we there long enough. Aaron summed it up when the guide noted that there was enough material for a year in front of him as he sat painting Vertigo Ridge on our first day. He glanced up with that dreamy look artists have when they are indulging their craft and said, “A lifetime.”

The paintings produced by Aaron and Jared were first displayed at Timberstand Gallery in Sandpoint, and now are on display at the Outskirts Gallery in Hope.

## From the Top

This issue wraps up another year of Scotchman activities as we’re pulling out gardens, stacking firewood and otherwise getting ready for winter. The power of nature has already been demonstrated by the blow downs on the Scotchman Trail and will probably be even more evident by spring. It has been an action packed year making it difficult to choose what to include in each issue. We are so fortunate to have people like Bob Betts working to preserve the history of our area and people like Sandy Compton guiding artists out for a visual record of our local beauty. Our photo contest winners provide another beautiful viewpoint. It’s also been a busy year for wilderness nationally as the Tester articles indicate. There is a lull in the action before the winter hike series gets going but those of us lucky enough to live here will be taking advantage of pretty days to head out into the wilderness on our own as our fall tasks are completed. One of my personal favorites in the newsletter is the Tales columns with stories of how people experience the wilderness on a personal level. As you sit by the fire this winter, take the time to write up your own adventure and share it with us.

**Ann Wimberley**  
[ann@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:ann@scotchmanpeaks.org)

## The Future Looks Bright

**November 4, 6pm:** The Lincoln County Friends of Scotchman Peaks will gather in Libby, at the Venture Inn, for their third membership dinner. Doug Scott, a policy director with Campaign for America’s Wilderness will address the group. FSPW hopes to generate some momentum in Lincoln County, as we move ahead with our campaign. Attending members are encouraged to bring a prospective new Friend.

**Monday Nov 30:** Sip and Shop, Pend d’Oreille Winery, 4pm to 7pm — come out and benefit the Scotchmans by sipping wine and stimulate the economy by shopping. What could be more fun?!

FSPW thanks the Wilburforce Foundation for continuing support, and the Campion Foundation for two very generous grants which will take our campaign to a new level of outreach effectiveness!



## Wild Creatures of the Scotchmans

### Elk (*Wapiti*) *cervus canadensis*

By Doug Ferrell

It is no secret that the Scotchmans wilderness is home to thriving populations of elk. On a recent trip to the high country with a group of friends, we were thrilled by a very close up glimpse of a big herd running away through the trees. These are huge and majestic animals and I could not help noticing that the ground was shaking under our feet, though some of the vibrations may have been coming from my racing heart. We later walked into a huge elk wallow and fighting ground, a large trampled area with the ground so stirred up no vegetation was present. A powerful odor hung in the air, and small trees around the perimeter were bent and slashed by the aggressive animals. The raw power of wild nature was palpable in the clearing.

Elk are very easy to identify with their large size, light colored rumps and shaggy necks. Males have large spreading antlers, grown every spring and shed in winter. Elk tracks are much larger than deer, and generally somewhat smaller and rounder in shape than moose. The pellets of elk scat are also normally larger than deer and somewhat smaller than moose, though elk and moose can be difficult to distinguish by tracks or scat alone.

Elk are unique in their tendency to form herds. Females with young tend to congregate and travel together and will sometimes form a compact mass to resist predators, with the more vigorous cows on the perimeter. During the mating season, highly aggressive males will compete to herd a harem of cows. Males spend a great deal of energy growing their antlers, and strutting around and fighting during the rut. After their antlers are shed, males congregate quietly in small groups, marshalling their strength through the long winter. Females expend their energy incubating babies, and making a lot of very rich milk when food sources are abundant. Most cows produce a single calf, but twins are not uncommon when conditions are favorable.

A six month old calf elk normally weighs about as much as a mature white tail deer. Mature cow elk may weigh around 500 pounds, while bulls average about 700 pounds. Large bulls can easily top 800 pounds. Elk are some of the largest wild mammals in North America.

Elk are ungulates with four stomachs, and can graze on grasses as well as browse on buds and forbes. They tend to migrate seasonally, and for our local elk that normally means south facing slopes in early spring, high country through the summer, and lower more protected areas in winter. During hunting season, most elk will seek out remote areas and dense timber.

Species that are closely related to our North American elk are native to both Europe and Asia, but declining habitat has greatly reduced their numbers. Estimates place the North American elk population at 10 million before European colonization, and around 1 million today. Previously elk were common through the Midwest and on the Great Plains. Most of their remaining productive habitat is mountainous areas where human disturbance is limited. The wild Scotchmans provides some great habitat, and a chance to get a thrilling glimpse of these majestic animals.



**Elk (Wapiti)**  
Photo by Donald M. Jones  
[www.donaldmjones.com](http://www.donaldmjones.com)

## Wilderness Hearing Draws a Crowd in Troy

By Doug Ferrell

A mostly supportive crowd of 200 greeted Senator Jon Tester when he came to Troy October 10th, to gather input about his Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, S1470. Many wilderness supporters and few opponents filled the Troy High School auditorium, along with a large group of students who came to observe democracy in action.

Local motorized groups and timber workers also support Tester's bill, and many observers commented on how a welcome spirit of consensus is replacing conflict over public land management. This spirit was especially welcome in Troy, where conflict and controversy have ruled for a long time. Tester's bill would designate 30,000 acres of wilderness in the Roderick Mountain area of Montana, just east of the Idaho border and about 30 miles north of the Scotchmans. The bill would designate a total of some 670,000 acres of wilderness throughout Montana, as well as promote active forest management, timber harvesting, and job creation in already developed forest lands.

News articles in the Missoulian and the Lincoln County papers were generally very favorable about both the hearing and the legislation. The Roderick Mountain proposed wilderness area is mostly rolling mid-elevation forest land, in contrast to the rugged high peaks and rocky backbone of the Scotchmans. A local group called the Yaak Valley Forest Council has worked for many years to protect Roderick and other wild areas in the Yaak River Valley. The Yaak provides some excellent grizzly habitat, with proven connections to Canadian populations that contribute genetic diversity to our local populations.

The FSPW board encourages our friends to consider becoming a Citizen Co-sponsor of this important legislation. For more information about Tester's bill, and how to become a co-sponsor, go to <http://tester.senate.gov/Legislation/foresthome.cfm>.

## Wild Things for Holiday Gifts

We have just the thing for wilderness lovers on your list. Choose a hat in light blue, red, black or beige.. Bandanas are available in orange, hot pink, light blue, green and bright yellow. Our short sleeved shirts in blue, black or white and black long sleeved shirts and sweats remain a great deal. Pick up your Scotchmans gear gifts at our new outlet, Buttercups Gift Shoppe in the Meriwether Inn in Clark Fork or at Café Bodega, Eichardt's, Outdoor Experience, or Sandpoint Sports in Sandpoint, ID, the Hope Market Café in Hope, ID, Mountain Meadows in Libby, MT, Huckleberry Thicket in Trout Creek, MT or REI in Spokane, WA. All hats are \$10, short sleeved tees are all \$10, long sleeved tees are \$15, sweatshirts are \$30 and hoodies are \$35. Bandanas are \$3 or 2 for \$5. Out of the area, contact [jmellen@imbris.net](mailto:jmellen@imbris.net). 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).



## Scotchman Natives

### Alder (*Alnus incana*)

By Valle Novak

One of the most ubiquitous of the small tree populations throughout the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness area is the Alder (*Alnus incana*), which can be found in most any moist to heavily watered site in low to middle elevations.



### Alder (*Alnus incana*)

Photo courtesy Marilyn George

A member of the Birch (*Betula*) family, alder incorporates several species, River, Red, Mountain, and Sitka, all standing up to 25 feet tall, with smooth reddish- or grayish-brown bark, ovate, toothed leaves and catkins in the spring and tiny "pinecones" in the fall.

All varieties share the unique properties that made them a valuable plant for the Native Americans, both for medicinal purposes and the paints and dyes created from their bark.

Author Jeff Hart, in his booklet "Montana - Native Plants and Early Peoples", said Kutenai, Flatheads, Blackfeet and Nez Perce Indians all utilized alder for one or all of these purposes.

A hot tea made from the bark was used for scrofula, and as a women's tonic. Dyes were used for clothing, moccasins and feathers used in decoration, and even as a brilliant red hair coloring.

Today, dyers still use alder for its color properties (it needs no mordant because of its high tannin content), and creative types make rustic furniture and garden arbors from its branches and smaller trunks.

As a landscape asset, alder has a lot going for it, since it is not only pretty but thrives on poor soil (especially if it's wet) and can be used to reclaim bare ground from house building, landfills, dump-sites and even strip-mine areas. While it can be invasive when the only species growing, this makes it ideal for borders, property boundaries and such. However, it co-exists well with various conifers and Mountain Ash for an attractive property enhancement. It is easily propagated from the freshly collected light flaky seeds released from the little conelets of the female plant in the fall. Arthur Kruckeberg ("Gardening with Native Plants") calls it a "tree to count on."

Add the fact that the catkins and conelets provide valuable food for various native birds and small mammals, and the alder's virtues are manifold.

## FSPW Announces our New Website, Facebook and Twitter Pages

### Newly Designed Website

We are excited to announce the launch of a totally revamped website, designed to make it simple to find Scotchman photos and stories, and easy for you to stay on top of the news and events concerning the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. Stay on top of announcements, updates and breaking news with our RSS Feed - subscribe with Feed Reader or via Email!

### Friends on Facebook

Facebook is where friends talk to friends, so we now have a page for all the friends of Scotchman Peaks. Join the conversation - visit our Facebook Fan page by simply clicking on the button on the homepage of our website. Sign up as a fan and receive special content for our online family. You'll never miss a hike or event again. Plus you can see photos and read recaps about recent events long before our newsletter comes out!

### And Twitter Too!

Want to be the first to know about anything and everything "Scotchmans"? "Mr. Scotchman" will send Tweets to all our friends who follow us on Twitter. Find out more from the easy button on our website.

### You Tube

Now you can visit the Scotchman's own You Tube channel. You got the idea - go the website and click the button, make popcorn and start watching videos!

We hope you'll enjoy our new online communities and help spread interest in the Scotchman Peaks!

**Our thanks to Trisha Miller, Webmaster and Brad Smith, Social Media Coordinator.**

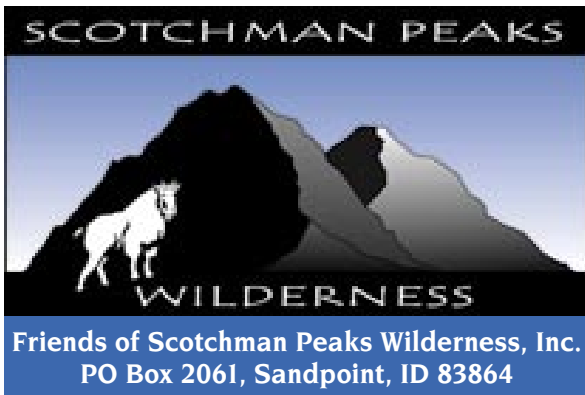
## Peak Views

Planning is under way for our winter hikes/snowshoes which will begin in January. "Peak Views" will return in our January/February issue. Check our website mid December for the new schedule.

### Notice: Scotchman Peak Trail #65

Notice: A high wind event in early October has greatly impacted the Scotchman Peaks Trail #65. There are many downed trees and large piles of debris across the trail. The size, location and instability of these obstacles pose a very difficult and potentially hazardous challenge to traverse and / or bushwhack around. While experienced hikers may accept the personal risk and succeed in getting past these obstacles, we do not recommend use of this trail in its current condition regardless of skill level or ability. We will be working with the forest service to identify solutions / projects to restore the trail to better conditions and let you know about any progress.





## 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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