



# PEAK EXPERIENCE

The Newsletter for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, Inc.

Volume 8, Number 6 • November / December 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.

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Editor: Ann Wimberley

Layout and design: Celeste Grace



## Looking up, Looking back

By Jack Nisbet

*Iliamna rivularis*

Courtesy USFS

### David Douglas and Streambank Hollyhock

*Editor's Note: In the summer of 2011, Jack led two hikes which were co-sponsored by FSPW and the Idaho Master Naturalists, Pend Oreille Chapter. This article describes one of the hikes.*

In early August of 2011, I was part of a group that took a little walk up Morris Creek in the Kaniksu National Forest. This drainage forms the cut visible to any hiker who looks down off the north side of the ridge along the final ascent to Scotchman Peak; from the mountaintop Morris Creek appears as a winding thread far below. For a person following that thread, the sheer scale of the mountain's shoulder and larger basin inspire new appreciation of both Scotchman and its wilderness setting.

Although the weather was hot that August, the area around the lower part of the creek remained shaded and cool, with a few late wildflowers hugging the dark soil. As the trail ascended and the terrain grew rockier and more exposed, the blooms for the most part dwindled away, and we sometimes emerged from thick forest to find ourselves trudging along exposed talus slopes in full sun.

A couple of miles in, the trail descended across one such scree slope, then bent sharply to cross a fast-running stretch of the creek. As we worked our way down loose rock steps carved into the trail, we passed a couple of odd plants three to five feet tall, with distinct maple-shaped leaves.

Both sported tall racemes of elegant pink flowers. This was streambank (also known as wild or mountain) hollyhock, one of the most distinctive plants in the Intermountain West. One walker remarked how closely *Iliamna rivularis* resembled the cultivated hollyhocks of their grandmother's flower garden, while others recalled the few other times they had



**Streambank Hollyhock**

Marilyn George photo

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## Jerry Brown Shares His Wild Career November 30 in Libby

By **Sandy Compton**

Jerry Brown began working in Lincoln County in 1974 as a wildlife biologist, and retired from Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks in the fall of 2010 after a 36-year career that covered the gamut of western Montana wildlife study and conservation and the attending challenges.

“Actually,” he says, “I worked for FWP before 1974. I helped do a whitetail deer study in 1971 and 1972 in the area that the (Libby) dam was going to flood.”

It was then that he realized that if he wanted to work with wildlife and make a decent living, he would need a Masters degree, which he went and got from the University of Montana.

During his years with FWP, he studied and advised locally, regionally and even internationally on moose, bear, mountain lions and particularly mountains goats, whose continued existence in the Scotchman Peaks as well as the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness can be credited in great part to his dedication.

Jerry will share his expertise and stories about his career on November 30 during a presentation at the Libby VFW beginning at 6 pm. The program he will present is one he has done in the past about animal population assessments, particularly using aerial methods.

“I originally put this program together to take to Argentina when I went there to talk about mountain lion populations. It’s about when and where and how to do assessment. There are good times and bad times. It explores windows of opportunity in the science of wildlife surveys, but it’s also information and educational and fun”.

Jerry’s residency in Lincoln County began in 1971, when he and his new wife, Chris “escaped” the San Diego area, where the canyons he had hunted and trapped in since he was a kid began to disappear through development. As a FWP employee, he spent his entire career based in Lincoln County, and that allowed him to do extended work with many of the large species, including bears, mountain goats, mountain lions and moose. He began an age analysis for harvested bears using tooth studies, “so we could determine if the harvest was cutting a long way into the population. He also pioneered and



**Jerry Brown (with Don Clark) celebrates on top of Scotchman.**

sustained moose and mountain goat management in north-western Montana.

Jerry admits that mountain goats are a favorite species. “Behaviorally, goats aren’t that spectacular. They eat, sleep and hang out in the sunshine in the winter. But, I’ve always been fond of that critter because of the terrain they inhabit, where they live.”

Jerry and Chris have two grown children, a daughter in Spokane and a son in medical school in Loma Linda, California. Jerry received the Governor’s Award for Excellence as a wildlife management biologist in 1999, was invited to Argentina to consult about mountains lions in 2008 and helped organize and host the International Moose Conference in Whitefish in the Spring of 2011.

FSPW invites all interested to join us for Jerry’s program on November 30 at the VFW at 114 W. 2nd St. in Libby.

### The Future Looks Bright

**November 8:** Pickup date for submissions to the annual Sanders County essay competition.

**November 18:** The StoryTelling Company, sponsored in part by FSPW, kicks off its 2012/13 season at Ivano’s Restaurant in Sandpoint. 5:00 dinner, 6:00 show.

**November 26:** Annual FSPW Sip and Shop event will be held at the Pend Oreille Winery beginning at 4:00 p.m.

**November 30:** Retired Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologist Jerry Brown will give a presentation at the VFW in Libby. Snacks and a no host bar will be available at the Meet and Greet beginning at 6:00 p.m. Speaker begins at 7:00 p.m.

**November 30:** FSPW will have a table at the Backcountry Film Festival sponsored by SOLE at the Panida Theater in Sandpoint.

**December 1:** End of the voting period for the 2012 Scotchman Peaks photo contest.

**December 15:** Deadline to get a winter hike proposal into the January/February Peak Experience

**December 23:** The StoryTelling Company, sponsored in part by FSPW, holds its annual Christmas show at DiLuna’s Restaurant in Sandpoint.

#### On the Horizon

**January (Dates, times and places to be announced):**

Rare Forest Carnivore research seasonal briefing and training.  
Rare Forest Carnivore research season begins.

All day winter tracking class with Brian Baxter beginning with classroom work at the Heron Community Center;

**February 23:** Winter ecology class with Brian Baxter, all day, beginning with classroom work at the Heron Community Center. 9 a.m. Pacific time, 10 Mountain



## The Power of Art: Fifth Annual Scotchman Peaks Plein Air Paintout

By Neil Wimberley

Twenty-two artists from the Inland NW gathered in Hope, Idaho, at the Outskirts Gallery the first weekend of October for the 5th Annual Scotchmans Paint Out. They pulled out their canvases, brushes, and paint, and began capturing the awesome colors of the sunny fall weekend. By noon Sunday, sixty fresh paintings were hung, and ready for judging.

The 1st Prize Purchase Award went to Marilyn McIntyre of Grouse Creek for her stunning watercolor "Old Tree, New Light". Patsey Parson of Spirit Lake, ID, took second prize for her impressionistic "Quiet Water", and third prize went to Gregg Caudell of Republic, WA, for capturing the simple beauty of the nearby "Church of Hope". Honorable mention went to Forrest Dickison from Moscow, ID, for bringing to life rocks in a stream ("3's a Crowd"), and to local artist Kenny Olsen for his autumn sunrise vista "Delta Rising". A very special compliment is given when your painting is judged "best of show" by your fellow artists. The Artist Choice Award went to Gregg Caudell for his boldly stroked and colored canvas "Cottage Island." Honorable mention was awarded to Robert Bissett of Naples, ID, for his nuanced capture of light on a stand of trees.

This year the artists surprised the Friends of Scotchman Peaks with a unique and beautiful gift to be used to inspire our quest to permanently protect our local wilderness. Local artist Marilyn McIntyre imagined and then crafted a magnificent folio box adorned with a luminous copper etching of our craggy mountains, and challenged each artist to produce one or more inspirational watercolors complemented by a quotation. This commemorative folio will contain forty original images that capture the powerful



spiritual insights forged by the coming together of art and nature.

Another artistic gift of a different nature was shared with the crowd on Sunday. Kelsey Brasseur has studied the elusive wolverine in his environment, and coordinated our successful Wolverine Project last winter. Reading her poem "Song of the Wolverine", she brought to our gathering the spirit of this wild and free creature of the high backcountry.



Creativity inspires creativity. Look in the future for a beautiful book inspired by the artists' wilderness folio, a broadside art poster showcasing the wolverine poem, and an art show on the move in Sandpoint and beyond – all to share our passion for art and wilderness.



The paintings are currently hanging in Kally Thurman's Outskirts Gallery in Hope, ID, and are available for viewing and purchase until Christmas. Her phone number is 208-264-5696 and email is kallythurman@gmail.com

In January & February the show moves to The Readery in downtown Sandpoint (209 N 1<sup>st</sup> Ave) – stop by for a healthy bite and enjoy the view: "A Sweetheart Deal: Buy for the

Legacy".



**From the top: Copper etching on the folio box created by Marilyn McIntyre to contain artwork and quotations from all participating artists, donated to FSPW; watercolor by Thompson Falls artist, Kyle Sivertsen, included in commemorative folio; Artists' Choice Award Winner, Cottage Island by Gregg Caudell; Judge, artist Aaron Cordell Johnson, and Outskirts Gallery owner and Plein Air organizer Kally Thurman**

Photos by Neil Wimberley



## Message From the Chair: Wilderness Traveler

"Like all great travelers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen." — Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister and Novelist (1804-1881).

Anyone who has spent time or traveled in Wilderness or areas which still maintain their wilderness character understands the experience of recalling the *sense* of a place, which is far more than has been seen.

We often speak of the value of Wilderness as tangible things which can be observed, measured and shown to others. We describe the unspoiled beauty of Wilderness noting the grand panoramas, special places and scenic vistas, proudly showing photos for all to see. Photos and art can capture many truly awe inspiring sights.

We also speak of the value Wilderness has for preserving species, measuring acres of habitat, taking wild flower counts and tree stand assessments. We study wildlife visually, counting the number of individual critters for each threatened and endangered species.

The economic impact of protecting public lands can be measured by property value, tourist dollars and the robust economies of desirable communities.

But it's the *Wilderness travelers* who immerse themselves into the essence of wild country and experience it with all their senses who truly appreciate the meaning, and value, of Wilderness. These intrepid souls experience more than what they see and take home more than memories. They returned transformed. The Wilderness traveler knows, and feels, with all his or her senses that Wilderness is much more than the sum of empirical measurements or observations.

### A Wild View of Holiday Shopping

FSPW bandanas, long and short sleeved tees, sweats and hats are much appreciated gifts. Buy our swag from local merchants 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



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 [www.scotchmanpeaks.org/store/html](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/store/html)

We feel wildness with all our being. We remember more than we saw, because we experience more than sight; we experience more than our conscious memory records, we feel it on a level that works its way into the very essence of our being, a transformative experience, a spiritual awakening.

A rain storm is different when walking in it rather than watching it through a glass window. The wilderness traveler can smell the coming rainstorm, can hear the drops splatter on leaves, can feel the cool mist against the face, and the feet slipping on a muddy trail. A steady rain for several days becomes a whole new experience with all challenges and rewards that camping in the rain entails.

Seeing a bear in the wild engages all our senses. The heart beats faster, hearing is heightened, legs are tightened and whether the first thought is fight, flight, or to freeze in wonderment and awe, the experience and the memory transcend the sight; a bear is more than visual, it's a visceral delight. We simply feel alive, only it's not that simple.

Wilderness connects us to something bigger than ourselves. We are connected with the wild bear and through him with our ancestors who knew these wild lands as their only home. And when we return to the cocoon of our everyday lives we take the feeling of this Wilderness travel with us, and remember that the value of Wilderness goes way beyond the surface beauty that we saw.

— *Phil Hough*

### From the Top

As I sent the final articles and pictures for this issue off for layout, I looked out at a dusting of snow on my garden and enjoyed the warmth of a morning fire. Yes! The garden is officially done – no more guilt about neglecting it to head off into the woods.

What a wonderful harvest FSPW had this year: a bumper crop of trail projects, awesome paintings from the Plein Air artists, many of whom reward us by returning year after year, volunteers who help young people learn to appreciate and enjoy the outdoors, a contribution by a local naturalist and author highlighting a regional museum exhibit and new book focused on David Douglas, the man who shared the flora of the Northwest with the rest of the world so many years ago, our partnership with the Idaho Master Naturalists, Pend Oreille Chapter which increases our focus on the natural world, our columnists and photographers who contribute first class articles and photos issue after issue plus those who contribute their own stories and photos illustrating how important wilderness is for all of us.

Happy Holidays!

— *Ann Wimberley*



## Money Matters: Making Movies and Watching for Wolverines



**Jake Glass (right) and Joe Foster used some unique techniques to get their shots**

**Bonnie Jakubos photo**

In July 2010, three young men from Connecticut spent two weeks filming around the Scotchmans for a college student project. As Wildman Pictures, they produced *En Plein Air*, a documentary focused on the Extreme Plein Air, our annual backcountry art project. They also did a trailer for *Grass//Routes*, a film showcasing the efforts of FSPW to protect the Scotchman Peaks as Wilderness.

To complete *Grass//Routes*, Jake Glass and Joe Foster visited in July of this year. They are now engaged in producing a film telling the story of the Scotchman

Peaks, as well as what makes FSPW a unique conservation group. We are raising funds for the completion of this project, and certain benefits come with certain levels of giving:

**Moviegoer** — \$50 – \$99 — a ticket to the premier showing in Sandpoint and a listing in the credits as an underwriter;

**Film Lover** — \$100 – \$249 — a pair of tickets to the movie's premier, and underwriter film credit;

**Film Patron** — \$250 – \$499 — four tickets to the premier, underwriter credit, and a DVD of *Grass Routes*;

**Associate Producer** — \$500 or more — (We now have three!) credit at the beginning of the film with the tag line, "made possible in part by a donation from" along with a company logo) four tickets to the premier and a DVD of *Grass Routes*.

If you've enjoyed *En Plein Air*, you'll be as excited as we are about the prospects for *Grass//Routes* (see the trailer at <http://vimeo.com/14360382>) In order to be mentioned in the film credits, your tax-deductible contributions must be received by November 20.

Glass was also recently honored with a prestigious David Brower Youth Award for his work on *En Plein Air*. You can view the short film he is featured in by clicking on the video link at the bottom of [www.scotchmanpeaks.org/donate](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/donate)

We will also continue the FSPW Wolverine Project, a rare forest carnivore study we have undertaken for the last two winters, helping Idaho Department of Fish and Game monitor mustelids and other rare predators in the Scotchman Peaks, as well as the Selkirk Mountains. Our success was not only in the field, but also in drawing attention to our cause

and adding many Friends to our ranks.

Last year, much funding was provided by a Zoo Boise grant, which we did not get this year, but our goal is to continue our involvement in the study at a significant level. To that end, individuals, businesses and organizations can help by financially "adopting" individual stations. We also have an anonymous matching grant of \$1,000 aimed specifically at the Wolverine Project, a generous gesture made by one of last year's wolverine volunteers.

To help either of these causes, donate online at [www.scotchmanpeaks.org/donate](http://www.scotchmanpeaks.org/donate). When you visit the donate page, check the special instructions that will enable you to designate your donation for whichever fund you wish to add to, or send your check with your preference noted directly to:

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

PO Box 2061

Sandpoint, ID 83864

Contact us at [info@scotchmanpeaks.org](mailto:info@scotchmanpeaks.org) with any questions.



### Along the Trail

**September 6:** FSPW summer project coordinator Bonnie Jakubos and exec Phil Hough had a booth for First Thursday in downtown Sandpoint.

**September 15:** 10 FSPW volunteers led by FSPW treasurer Jacob Styer participated in the Annual Scotchman Peaks Highway 200 cleanup day.

**September 29 (National Public Lands Day):** 19 FSPW volunteers and staff and 3 USFS personnel worked together on the Morris Creek trail.

**October 5 – 7:** 22 artists created over 60 paintings for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Scotchman Peaks Plein Air Paintout held in and around the Scotchmans, with headquarters in Hope at the Outskirts Gallery

**October 24:** FSPW and Idaho Conservation League hosted a conservation appreciation party at the Sandpoint Event Center for hike leaders and other key volunteers.

**October 29 – November 4:** FSPW program coordinator Sandy Compton attended the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance Conference in Asheville, NC.

**October 31:** End of submission period for the 2012 Scotchman Peaks photo contest. Voting begins November 5 at [www.facebook.com/ScotchmanPeaks](http://www.facebook.com/ScotchmanPeaks)



## Over The Top Volunteer

### John Hastings has never lost a bear

By **Sandy Compton**

The first thing you might notice about John Hastings is a robust sense of humor. He laughs a lot about a lot of things. He relishes life, and, as if to prove it, he's lived on the edge a few times. Like the time he gave mouth-to-nose resuscitation to a bear.

"I was working for the National Park Service in Glacier and we trapped a problem bear. The first dose of sedative didn't work, so we gave him another one and he went into cardiac arrest. There were four of us, but none of us were bear rangers. I was a fire fighter. But, we didn't want to be the crew that lost a bear. So we used (chest) compression and I gave him mouth-to-nose breathing and we revived him."

John is pretty matter of fact when he tells this story, like it's something we all might do given the opportunity. "He wasn't a big bear," John disclaims. "He was young." And, yes, it was a grizzly.

John grew up where there are plenty of bears, also, on Lake Superior, in that part of Minnesota that points east along the north shore of the world's largest fresh-water lake. He began life in Tofte, a small town in a big country (the 2000 census listed the population of Tofte township as 226). He graduated high school Osseo, just north of Minneapolis, and got his degree in biology (as well as a teaching credential) from University of Minnesota, Duluth.

He didn't start out to be a teacher, but "I had a good advisor in college," he says. "I was guiding dog sled trips and canoe trips in the Boundary Waters, which was fun, but my advisor pointed out that I was never going to make a lot of money that way."

He has been using that advisors advice and the resulting education, plus another teacher's credential in working with emotionally disturbed or learning disabled children for the past fifteen years at Sandpoint High School. He was originally hired to work with challenged kids, but made the move to teaching science after three years, which is exactly where he wants to be. He now teaches Natural Resources Management, which includes three classes: environmental sciences, plant and soil sciences and advanced forestry and

wildlife management. In some of his spare time John does volunteer work for Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness — in addition to being an accomplished musician, father to Noah and Logan, and a partner in All Seasons Garden and Floral with his wife Nancy.

It was in Glacier in the days of bear CPR that he met Nancy, who was working as a hostess in a restaurant. After a mere

decade of friendship, they decided to take the next step and start dating. Two years later they were married. They got to Sandpoint for the first time when Nancy was working as a travel agent and took a "fam" trip to Sandpoint and skiing at Schweitzer. They came back for the Festival at Sandpoint a couple of times and then decided that they would move to Sandpoint as a "staging platform" for their next move to someplace else in the West. Fifteen years later, the Hastings have instead come to be a well-established part of the community and education in Sandpoint, which carries over into his work as a FSPW volunteer.

"I don't know when I started actually volunteering," he confesses, "and don't know the first thing I ever did. As the owners of All Seasons, we would always contribute, and always be there for events. Some of my first volunteer stuff, I'm sure, was getting kids to help at the Panida or other events."

But it doesn't stop there. John has used his musical talents to entertain at FSPW

events, he swings a mean Pulaski on trail projects and he was an accomplished bait station leader during last winter's rare forest carnivore study, during which he brought his students out into the winter wilds with him.

"My favorite part of working with FSPW," John says "is getting the kids involved. First, because it's good for them to do outdoor activities, and next because they get to see what they are studying in a truly wild environment. I also think it's important for them to get involved with the community. The only way to get extra credit in my science class is through community work.

John gets extra credit from FSPW for all of his help with our various stewardship and outreach projects; and even more for bringing his students along. It is vital to our future to involve kids in outdoor endeavors and education. You never know which one of them might get a wilderness created — or save a bear's life.



**John Hastings enjoys life to the max.**

**Bonnie Jakubos photo**



## Birds of the Scotchmans

### Chickens

By Jon Isacoff, PhD

No, not the kind you eat or the kind neighbors might have in the yard. "Chickens" is the endearing word birders give to wild game or gallinaceous birds. The Scotchman Peaks area is home to quite a few different types of game birds, some native, some not. If you don't own chickens but you see a "chicken" strutting past your home, what might it be?

Let's begin with the non-natives. The most common non-native species in the Scotchman's region is Wild Turkey. Despite various misconceptions, Turkeys naturally are an Eastern bird with their historical Western-most limits in the Great Lakes to the North and East Texas to the South. They were introduced to the Western US for one purpose: hunting. Sadly, of the introduced game bird species, Turkeys seem to have created the most measurable ecological disturbance, altering the undergrowth in wild forests and possibly negatively impacting our native Ruffed Grouse. California Quail and Ring-necked Pheasant are two non-natives that just about anyone in Idaho

or Montana would recognize. Quail are very civilization-oriented and you're unlikely to see them out of sight of larger towns like Sandpoint. Pheasants are ephemeral field birds but unlike Turkeys don't seem to compete with our native birds.

If you hike in the woods of the Scotchman's, you might see one of our native chickens, from the most common Ruffed Grouse, to Dusky Grouse (formerly called "Blue Grouse"), to the rarely seen Spruce Grouse. Ruffed Grouse are transcontinental forest birds that are rather large, typically brown, and have a beautiful fanned tail when displaying. They are equally at home in lower elevation and subalpine country so long as there is forest cover and developed understory.



**Ruffed Grouse**

Photo by Donald M. Jones  
www.donaldmjones.com

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## Scotchman Natives

### Wild cranberries are gift from Nature

By Valle Novak

Several years ago, while visiting son Grant and his family at their home on Kodiak Island, Alaska, I was thrilled to discover, on one of our many exploratory hikes, a great acreage of wild cranberries! They were not actually in a bog situation, but covered a great matted expanse of very moist, peaty soil. I gathered a bagful, and on later trips, if the season was right, I would gather more for a wonderful, wild relish.

Up to that first trip, I had never before, nor since, seen cranberries growing in the wild. Now, this past spring/summer season, fellow Master Naturalist Derek Antonelli of IDFG, led a group of volunteers in transecting the Hager Lake area and discovered an enormous bog of them – "acres" – according to Derek. I would have loved to have been part of that discovery, but can at least pass it on to others who are also perhaps unaware of such a gift of Nature so close at hand.

While researching the bog cranberry, I discovered that the best source of information was *Discovering Wild Plants – Alaska, Western Canada, and the Northwest* by Janice J. Schofield, ISBN #0-88240-355-9, Alaska Northwest Books. To me, this was apropos, since Alaska was my first experience of them. Of interest to me is the fact that Schofield lists them as

*Oxycoccus* species, while acknowledging that "other experts" list them as *Vacciniums* - which includes blueberries, huckleberries and lingonberries. Indeed, Peterson's "Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants" lists it as *Vaccinium spp.*

Moot, probably, because the important thing is, they are here! I have hopes of enticing Derek to lead a 2013 Autumn gathering trip to "his" Hager Lake bog for a harvest. We'll see what transpires.

As our illustrations (kindly supplied by Derek) show, the pretty flower resembles a Shooting Star (*Dodecatheon*), which morph into the berries shown in the second photo. The shrubby, mat-like growth consists of delicate thread-like creepers that generally trail through moss and are often concealed by it. The sour berries, loaded with Vitamin C, are the

same used in breads, drinks and relishes by Native Americans and settlers through history. (By the way, *Oxycoccus* is Latin for "sour berry").

Found in bogs from Alaska and the Yukon and down into Oregon, and on the East Coast from Newfoundland down



**Cranberry Flower**

Derek Antonelli, Idaho Master Naturalist, Pend Oreille Chapter

*Continued page 9*



## Scotchman Creatures: Western Toads



**Western toad**

**Michael Lucid photo**

**By Michael Lucid, IDFG**

'Mojo! Where are you?!' A couple summers ago I was camped out a long way from anywhere with several work colleagues and we couldn't figure out where my German short-hair mix, Mojo, had disappeared to. After calling for a while he finally showed up gagging with a mouth full of foam. Looked like Mojo had found himself the only kind of toad we have in northern Idaho, a western. Western toads are easy to identify. They have a body like a frog, but have fairly dry bumpy skin, and have two big poison glands on the side of their head to discourage predators. Mojo was okay after drinking some water and, thanks to those poison glands, has never picked up a western toad again!

Western toads begin their summer like many amphibians; at breeding pools. A female can lay up to 12,000 eggs and if several females lay in the same place, the result can be a pretty impressive wall of toad eggs. While I was doing an amphibian survey this summer, I came across a mass of western toad eggs about 10 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 4 feet tall. With reproduction like that you wouldn't think western toad populations would be facing any kind of threats. But for reasons we don't really understand western toad populations do seem to be declining throughout their range in western North America.

Jet black tadpoles hatch in just a few days in warm temperatures and up to 12 days in cool temperatures. While babies are getting ready to hatch, mom saunters up towards more terrestrial habitats up to a mile away. With parental care like this, it might not come as a surprise that only a small portion of tadpoles survive a myriad of predators ranging from diving beetles to garter snakes to emerge as fully formed toads in one to three months. While it doesn't take too long to turn

into an adult looking toad, real adult toads are truly survivors with males not reaching sexual maturity until at least four years old and females waiting until they are at least six.

The first step in figuring out why western toads seem to be declining is determining where they reproduce. Right now, there are less than ten known reproduction sites for western toads in the Idaho Panhandle (none known in the Idaho west Cabinets, but that's probably because no one has looked). To get us headed in the right direction the Multi-species Baseline Initiative (MBI) will be conducting the most comprehensive amphibian survey ever undertaken in the Idaho panhandle during the summer of 2013 (including the west Cabinets). To learn more about western toads, MBI, and how you can help keep your eye on the MBI website this winter: <https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/baseline>.

We need to figure out where amphibians live and how many we have. Only then can we begin to address any real threats these populations may face — other than German shorthairs that is. . .

## Tales of Scotchman Peaks

### North Idaho Taxi

Bill Hawkins submitted this picture for the 2012 photo contest with the following comments:



"Shortly after sunrise on November 19, 2011, I was just off from the summit while in pursuit of mule deer. Fortunately for the deer my desire to ride to the top on such a cold and windy day outweighed my desire to track down winter's meat. While I was sitting alone on the summit looking far to the panorama, I received an unsolicited text from one of my best friends. It read: 'ARRRRGH, I hate Times Square!!!'

"Deep down I thought to myself here I am all alone, and there he is in the middle of the rat race. I think all of us can agree it's fun to go to Times Square except for when we're actually in Times Square. So I snapped this photo, called it 'North Idaho Taxi' and replied to his text.

"I headed back down the trail feeling the two of us were as far apart in the spectrum of population density as we could get, and everyone but the mule knew I was in the better place."





## Summer 2012 Stewardship: By the Numbers

### A short report on the Summer Stewardship Program for 2012:

#### Trail work and related projects

Total volunteer hours: 846 (That's 20 weeks, four-and-a-half days of full time work)

Unique Volunteers: 41 (an average of 20 plus hours per volunteer. — wow! Ar thanks!)

Montana Conservation Corp Youth Crews: 560 hours

Forest Service person-hours on projects with FSPW: 152-plus

Forest Service mule- and horse-hours on Star Peak lookout project: 120-plus

#### Specific Trail Projects

Pillick Ridge Trail #1036 — weed remediation

Blacktail Creek #997 — Tread repair, brush clearing and trail-head sign installation

Little Spar Lake Trail #143 — Tread repair and relocation, camp-site rehab, brush clearing, rock removal, weed remediation

Goat Mountain Trail #35 — bushing and blowdown removal

Star Peak Trail #??? — Constructed 1.25 miles of new tread along the historic trail (Trail number is yet to be determined)

Morris Creek Trail #132 — 2.5 - plus miles of restoration work.



Star Peak restoration project — two days of hauling materials to Star Peak with the Nine-Mile Mule Team.

, FSPW volunteers marched in parades and celebrations on the Fourth of July; signed up booths during Logger Days in Libby, the Strawberry Festival, The Bonner County Fair and Sandpoint First Thursday; and cleaned up our two miles of Highway 200.

**Thank you to all of our great volunteers for a bunch of jobs well done.**

## Peak Views

### It's never too early.

I know, I know. It's still fall . . . sort of . . . but it's getting on time to start thinking about leading your favorite (or a brand new) winter hike in the Scotchman Peaks. Will it be an easy stroll up the Lightning Creek Road or a grind to the top of Goat Peak. Your choice, of course. And, it's not that we won't ask again.

But, today, just imagine where you might like to go this winter and take some of your Scotchman Peaks Friends with you. Deadline for inclusion in the January issue of Peak Experience isn't until December 15, but we're up for suggestions any time. Contact Sandy@scotchmanpeaks.org.

### *Cranberries, from page 7*

into New England, the wild cranberry is known by many names: Bog cranberry, swamp cranberry, moss cranberry, mountain cranberry, small (and large) cranberry, and true cranberry. The latter is very appropriate, since the larger, "tamer" ones we purchase in the fall and winter are cultivars less tart than the natives.

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

If you are lucky enough to know the location of a cranberry bog, now's the time to visit it, for like other berries, it is



**Cranberries at Hager Lake**

**Photo by Marilyn George**

best after first frost. (The fruits remain good and useable into spring, however). Use the recipe in the Ball Book for making up some wonderful relish for Thanksgiving and Christmas. All you need is the berries, oranges, walnuts and sugar (I like brown sugar best), using a bit more sugar for the wild-gathered ones. When I made cranberry-nut bread with the wild berries, I used some chopped up dates for extra sweetness to offset (and enhance) the tartness.

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

Cheers!



## Scotchman Rocks

### Shopping the Talus

By **Mark McFadden, PhD**

Every pile of rocky roadside rubble has a story to tell. Like books tumbled from the shelves of time, the stone fragments of earth history play host to countless interesting textures, color variations, and mysterious features. Generally free of the old-age masking effects of weather stains and lichen that obscure the surfaces of most outcrops of solid bedrock, the talus apron of fragments on many slopes is often a bit easier to read. Talus is especially fresh (and convenient) at the bases of nearly vertical cliffs formed as a result of blasting during road construction. Various mechanical weathering processes such as ice wedging dislodge and contribute a fresh supply of blocks to the talus each season. To the casual observer, the major problem is in sorting out the significant text of Earth's diary from the graffiti of weathering effects.

Because percolating water from surface precipitation eventually permeates every hair-line fracture in solid bedrock, iron staining is the most noticeable feature on the broken faces of talus blocks. Wavy or concentric bands of residual iron oxide form cryptic and visually striking patterns, but tell us nothing about the geologic history of the rock itself. Similarly, black dendrites of manganese oxide (pseudofossils resembling tiny ferns) are left behind as thin films of invading water dry up and precipitate their dissolved mineral load. Both secondary features catch the eye and perhaps even tempt us to take home a particularly fetching pet rock, but neither tells us the original story.



**Cubic salt crystal casts on the smooth, ripple-marked argillite surface of a talus block. The crystals formed as salty water evaporated on a shallow mudflat nearly 1.5 billion years ago. Pencil tip for scale.**

Photo by Mark McFadden

information that is difficult to glean from a solid, intact outcrop – the pages of Earth's diary are wide open!

The small cubic bumps in the adjacent photograph are a great example of significant features related to real geologic history represented in a talus block. Preserved on the smooth, red argillite surface of a bedding plane, the salt crystal casts are exact replicas of the original crystals deposited as salty water evaporated on an ancient mud flat in Precambrian time. Although the actual salt was dissolved away in the early stages of the process of turning the muddy sediment to solid rock more than a billion years ago, the details of the salt crystals are exquisitely preserved. These features are common in only one significant stratigraphic interval in the Cabinet Mountains of Idaho within the Belt Supergroup stack of metasedimentary rocks almost ten miles thick. Their recognition makes it possible to tell your stratigraphic level in a vast pile of rather similar layers. Distinguishing these tiny but diagnostic features would be nearly impossible in a cross-sectional view, so shopping the talus for scientific bargains can really pay off!

### Birds, from page 7

Dusky Grouse are a subalpine specialist of the drier, more open parts of montane forests. Hikers on Scotchman and Goat Peaks frequently encounter Dusky's, which are noticeably larger than Ruffed and typically a blue-gray color. The Spruce Grouse is the rarest, smallest, and ironically, the tamest of the native Grouse. Often Spruce Grouse will stand still and let people approach them to within a few feet. Why so uncommon? Spruce Grouse is a Boreal species of the Spruce bogs of Northern Canada and Alaska, where they are abundant. In the lower 48, they are restricted to high Spruce forests within striking distance of the Canadian border.

Often coveted for checklists by American birders, they are notoriously hard to locate south of the border.

One final bird merits mention: though there hasn't been a confirmed sighting in some years, legendary Scotchman birder Earl Chapin has recorded White-tailed Ptarmigan in the Scotchman's high elevation alpine. While common in the Alaskan tundra, Ptarmigan are a rare bird in the rocky snow-beaten mountains of the American West. Smaller than the other three species, the Ptarmigan is incredibly cryptically colored and very difficult to spot.

So on that next visit to the Scotchman's be sure to mind your chickens!



## Hollyhocks, from page 1

seen this hollyhock in the wild. Their accounts described single or at most a few plants, and the pink flowers always came as a delightful surprise. We all convinced ourselves that Morris Creek had provided us with a special treat, even for a day in the wilderness.

Which is strange, because two centuries years ago David Douglas—a Scottish naturalist best known for the totem coniferous tree that bears his name—had a very different view of our Northwest hollyhock. On June 25, 1826, as he was sorting through plants he had collected up the South Fork of the Walla Walla River, Douglas penned the following entry in his journal.

**(179) *Malva sp.* Perennial; flowers large, fine rose colour; leaves three to five lobed, dentate, rough; a strong growing plant, 4 to 6 feet high; margins of pools and rivers; abundant.**

Even though the genus name of this hollyhock has changed since Douglas identified it, there can be no mistaking the three- to five-lobed leaves; their rough surface and toothed margins; their strong-growing form, as tall as a person; and especially the beautiful rose-colored flowers. Even the sites he described fit with the plant's common name and our own Morris Creek sighting. But where could Douglas's idea of "abundant" have come from when most people hardly ever see this vigorous plant?

Some answers appear in a Fire Effects Information System report created several decades ago for the U.S. Forest Service fire station in Missoula. On a plant-by-plant survey form meant to calculate what happened on lands that were being managed for timber, wild or streambank hollyhock has a surprisingly long entry. Field scientists noted that the plant sometimes became abundant following clearcuts of Douglas-firs in central Idaho, especially if those cuts were followed by extensive slash burning or stand-destroying wildfires. In Wyoming, workers noted that sheep and cattle clearly preferred streambank hollyhock as food in burned stands of quaking aspen, and that elk and mule deer browsed on the plant in scorched areas of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. Other researchers studying the plant's life history found that wild hollyhocks reproduce only through their profuse seeds, which simply drop off the tall racemes and wait. The seeds were found to be abundant in the soils of certain grand fir and Douglas-fir habitats, and seem to remain viable for well over a hundred years. It is not easy to sprout streambank hollyhock: a smooth, hard coating on each seed requires a heat treatment for germination, and young plants wither quickly in any kind of shade. Thus, after a stand-destroying fire, it makes perfect sense to see lush stands of hollyhocks that provide soil-holding roots, browse for wildlife, and shade for emerging conifers. As new trees rise above five feet or so, the shade-intolerant hollyhocks quickly disappear.



David Douglas specimen

Courtesy Kew Gardens, London

**Crop of Douglas label on specimen paper. Name that word: last word, line 2**

This is where David Douglas's careful records have something to tell us. While he never got closer to Scotchman Peak than the mountains east of Kettle Falls, every single plant, bird, and animal he collected offers clues to the larger landscape that he traveled through. Besides clearcuts and grazing by both domestic animals and rearranged deer populations, fire may well come into play. In a world where Plateau tribes commonly managed their resources with set fires, and lightning strikes were certainly left to burn, a fire-keyed plant like wild hollyhock could have played a much larger role than it has over the past century of fire suppression.

In one more odd twist, there is a David Douglas museum exhibit currently running at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture in Spokane. As part of the show, Kew Gardens outside of London—the largest plant repository in the world, and the place where many of Douglas's specimen papers ended up—generously agreed to send a selection of his original papers back to the region where they were collected. One of the sheets is contains his pressed streambank hollyhock, still in remarkable shape and easy to identify as the plant we saw on Morris Creek. Even

a few petals, aged from pink to russet over the years, remain laddered up the stems.

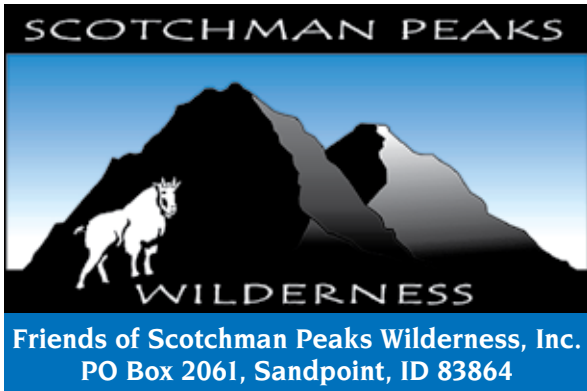
*Malva rivularis* is the name on the sheet, and it's nice to see that the Latin for "streambank," which Douglas applied to the plant he collected in the Blue Mountains, remains as the proper species name for this hollyhock.

"Near streams and on the [indecipherable word] of the low hills of the Interior, even with that distracting blank, places the plant well within the world of Morris Creek."

*Common* can serve as a gentle reminder that although Douglas roamed through our Interior home two centuries ago, and saw a lot of the same plants and animals that delight us today, things have not stayed exactly the same. And note that if some friend of Scotchman Peaks reads and can decipher the unintelligible word in Douglas's description, it would add another small clue to the dynamics of that change.

Thanks to Kathy Ahlenslager, botanist for the Colville National Forest, for her generous help with hollyhocks.

Jack Nisbet's latest work is an illustrated collection of essays that serves as the companion book for the exhibit David Douglas: A Naturalist at Work. This exhibit will run at the MAC in Spokane through August 2013, then move to Tacoma's Washington State History Museum through winter 2014. For more information, visit [www.jacknisbet.com](http://www.jacknisbet.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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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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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