

Mission Statement

"To protect the Scotchman Peaks for future generations through Wilderness designation, ongoing stewardship and education."

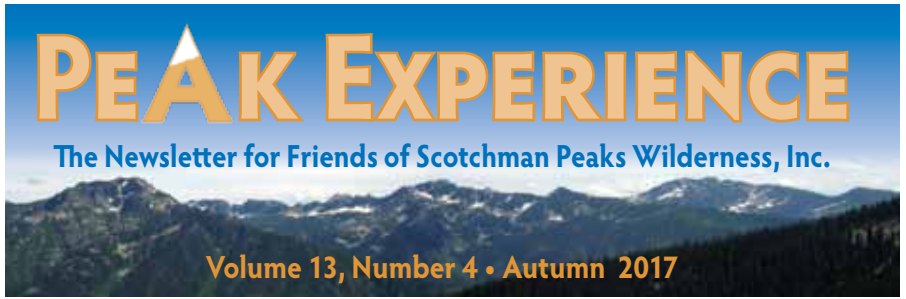
The Scotchmans are one of the last and largest wild areas in our region. The Friends believe the Scotchman Peaks deserve congressional designation as Wilderness for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.



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

If you receive this newsletter by mail and have an email address, you can help us save postage by sending us your email address.

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Layout and design: Celeste Boatwright Grace



The artists and intern Sam Olson make art below the peak of Scotchman Number Two. From left to right, Aaron Johnson, Ed Robinson, Cory Johnson, Marjolein Groot Nibbelink and Olson. **Sandy Compton photo**

By Sandy Compton

"Can we paint?"

It's a question I've heard several — even many — times each summer since 2009, excepting 2015, when fire closed the backcountry of the Scotchman Peaks about the time when we should have been packing in. For the other eight of those nine summers, I've had the privilege and pleasure of taking visual artists into the proposed Wilderness for attempts to capture the place — on canvas, on paper, on film, in sculpture and in free electrons arranged creatively in digital photo files. This annual pilgrimage is the Extreme Plein Air.

En plein air is French for "painting outdoors." It came into vogue during the impressionism movement in France during the late 19th century, when painters like Renoir and Monet moved from the studio outdoors. The implication is that the artist must work quickly to catch the landscape in a certain light, a pleasurable challenge for some, maddening for others. My painters — I suppose they are not really mine, but still — seem to be of the former variety.

Accomplished painters Aaron Johnson of Moscow, Idaho, and Jared Shear of Thompson Falls, Montana,

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WILDERNESS TAKES A COMMUNITY

To preserve Wilderness takes a strong community. Community consensus is the foundation for action by agency planners in their recommendations. Elected officials also look to community consensus for the political support needed to enact legislation. Keeping an area's wilderness character intact requires a community of stewards. For 12 plus years, we have been building a strong community of advocates, volunteers, stewards and general supporters. Wilderness takes a community. Wilderness also builds a community.

Even strong community consensus does not mean there is complete unanimity. On issues this important, there will always be diverse opinions including opposition. What is important to keeping a community strong is to listen to diverse viewpoints and understand

that there are folks with with the best of intentions who have questions or concerns. Sometimes questions and concerns are misunderstandings that can be cleared up with additional information. Sometimes, different perspectives can be used to improve an approach or improve a bill.

Through the many years of forest planning, divergent views about land management were brought together to create the Forest Service's proposal for wilderness. As a result, it is a strong proposal, built on compromise with other forest plan elements; and it is one that we support. As with all plans, there may be room for some improvement. We expect that when Senator Risch reintroduces a bill for Idaho there may be some changes or modifications that will make the bill better.

We are open to that possibility.

This public process in which the Senator receives feedback, makes changes and improves draft legislation is one of the hallmarks of our democratic legislative process. A process that enshrines public involvement and community input. It is a process in which we the people come together. Not only does legislation improve but we also come to value our differences and we come together as a community. When this legislation finally passes, our community will again be strengthened by the wilderness benefits it brings and by the community building it brings.

In Montana, as we work alongside others in the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders (KFSH), we see the same dynamic. Communities are coming together to build a wilderness bill. In

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WHITE BARK REDUX

By Britta Mireley, FSPW Asst. Program Coordinator

The weather gods smiled down on FSPW and the Idaho Panhandle Forests in late September for another whitebark pine seed sowing trip. The snow had mostly melted and the 6-person crew enjoyed nice weather for sowing another 2,300 whitebark pine seeds (give or take a few) in a previously burned area of the proposed wilderness.

The whitebark pine tree is a keystone species that is an important food-source for many birds and mammals in their high elevation home. The population has been hurt by white pine blister rust, mountain pine beetles and increased competition from shade-loving trees.

FSPW volunteers John Harbuck, Geoff Meek and Ed Robinson; and USFS employees led by FS Botanist Jennifer



Hardy FSPW volunteers and USFS personnel enjoy a frosty breakfast during the fall whitebark pine planting. **John Harbuck photo**

Costich-Thompson sowed the pound of seeds over 30 acres on the ridge to the southeast of Scotchman Peak.

A NEW MISSION STATEMENT

You may have noticed on the front page of this Peak Experience that we have streamlined our Mission Statement. The simplified statement does not change who we are, but more succinctly says what we are about.

FRIENDS PROGRAM COORDINATOR JOINS NWSA BOARD

Sandy Compton recently joined the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance Board of Directors. While FSPW concentrates on one chunk of wild country in Montana and Idaho, NWSA is building a nationwide network of volunteer organizations that provide stewardship for America's enduring resource of wilderness. The NWSA vision is to see each Wilderness area within the National Wilderness Preservation System adopted by a wilderness stewardship organization dedicated to protecting, restoring and nurturing the area's wilderness.



For more information about NWSA, visit www.wildernessalliance.org

FSPW HELPS THOMPSON FALLS TEACHER CHRISTENSEN GET KIDS OUTSIDE

Western Montana kids benefit by collaboration between Project ASCENT and Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness

By Jen Kreiner, Sanders County Outreach Coordinator

Surrounded by the great outdoors, residents of Sanders County are privy to the abundance of local public lands. Many kids are been raised hunting, camping and fishing, but some have never been on a hike or used a tent. With this in mind, Rob Christensen, Thompson Falls Elementary Guidance Counselor, has created a summer program that addresses outdoor recreation safety, skills and awareness for kids ages 8-16 through Project ASCENT.

This program is designed to introduce participants into the world of the wilderness through education and expedition. Project ASCENT is jam-packed full of basic wilderness and safety information as well as a chance to experience varying levels of wilderness skills and activities in an experiential setting. An appreciation of our environment is coupled with the opportunity to meet outdoor and recreational professionals from our community in a service learning atmosphere to provide students with the ability and motivation to become lifelong stewards of wild places.



FSPW volunteer Charlotte Milling, PhD., (at right) of Thompson Falls gives kids the rundown on the specialization of teeth in mammals during Project ASCENT's week long camp at Bull River Campground.

Jen Kreiner photo

Curriculum ranges from core camping skills like using equipment and gear to ethical environmental practices like Leave No Trace principles. The camp arms students with survival essentials in potential situations where shelter, food and clean water are not readily available. The week-long

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HARVEST FESTIVAL IN LIBBY IS BIG SUCCESS

By Annie Gassman

Lincoln County Outreach Coordinator

After weeks of indoor recess for kids and air quality warnings, Saturday, September 16th, was a perfect day of blue skies without a whiff of smoke for families to flock to the Kootenai



Sack races were just part of the fun at the 2017 Harvest Festival
Annie Gassman Photo

Harvest Festival in Libby and enjoy an afternoon in the sunshine surrounded by friends, live music, vendors, and fall activities.

Montana Wilderness Association and Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness began the Festival three years ago to grow community and celebrate healthy lifestyles made possible

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KOOTENAI FOREST STAKEHOLDERS: WORKING FOR A COLLECTIVE FUTURE

By Doug Ferrell

Board Chairman, FSPW

FSPW has participated in the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders collaborative for almost ten years, and the results are very encouraging. The most obvious benefit is that the group has recommended wilderness additions that, if enacted in D.C., would triple the acres of Wilderness on the Kootenai Forest. This recommendation includes the Friend of Scotchman Peaks full proposal, some important additions around the existing Cabinet Wilderness, and also new Wilderness in the Yaak drainage and elsewhere.



FSPW Board Chair
Doug Ferrell

The existing and much-loved Cabinet Wilderness covers 93 million acres and was dedicated in 1964 with the passage of the original Wilderness Act. Since

then the Kootenai has not added a single acre of wilderness, so the strong endorsement of the well respected and diverse Stakeholders group holds great promise to help us permanently protect many of the most deserving of the glorious Kootenai wild lands.

Some of the other benefits run deeper and are not so obvious.

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7-17-17 — THE DAY I DIDN'T DIE

By Marjolein Groot Nibbelink

Hike leader Sandy Compton casually mentions that the distance to the Sawtooth summit is just 2.5 miles as a crow flies. So I figure, with my limited understanding of off-trail hiking, that our route should be no more than 4.5. Joining Kate, Celeste, Annie and Cary, we drive up the rugged road to the east fork of Blue Creek. At 9:15 we turn and hike straight into the forest.



A wave year for bear grass.

Photo by Marjolein Groot Nibbelink

We move from wild ginger floors and huckleberry slopes to bear grass meadows — this is a wave year. Up the cliff we go, through the holes in the alder until we reach 24-hour pass. Lunch is taken over a snowfield still clinging to the north side of the mountain. Flies disguised as bumblebees, hummingbirds and a Clark's Nutcracker keep an eye on us while Laddie the trail dog keeps an eye on everyone's food.

We start up the face of Middle Mountain. About four years ago, I had a traumatic experience in the high Andes where I got off trail and had to find my way home in the dark, cold night. Some environments trigger this trauma and two-thirds up this rock slide I look back and suddenly break into tears. I crouch down, shaking, listening to the clambering feet above me as they kick down the talus. I knew this might happen, and so does Sandy, who hangs back and encourages me to be strong.

We drop into the saddle between Middle and Sawtooth, where we leave our packs to ease the final ascent. Suddenly the ridge narrows to a curvy spine. We navigate through ancient spruce, bent by time and the elements, up a little ridge until the sky opens into a 360 panorama of the Bull River, Scotchman Peaks and the Cabinet Mountain wilderness. We absorb this magical place while Sandy points at stuff, naming every peak he knows.

After retrieving our packs we make down a stunning slope — a slick waterfall of bear grass. We hop boulders around where the South Fork of Ross Creek springs from the mountains.



On top of the world on Sawtooth Mountain

Photo by Sandy Compton

We've been taking it easy; we have plenty of daylight left. Seemingly improvising, Sandy turns up an elk trail that leads back up the hill. After 200 yards he decides he doesn't like the elk trail and starts right down a 100% slope. We are then surprised by a *serious* cliff, which climbing down takes an hour, feeling like three.

OK, Annie did it in two minutes.

I watch Sandy make his way down while I am desperately clinging to the planet's face to keep from sliding down. Once he makes it I feel assured that I can too, but he sends us one chute to the north. I begin to panic. Celeste and I are cautiously clambering up, sending rocks down in endless freefall. She is faster than I am and as she comes alongside, I look at her.

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CALENDAR — THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

October 21: Free plein air workshop with Artist-In-Residence Karen Robinson. FSPW staff and volunteers will lead students from the University of Montana Wilderness and Civilization track on a trail maintenance outing on Pilik Ridge trail #1036.

October 21-22: Carol Jenkins will teach Wilderness and Remote First Aid at the ICL offices in Sandpoint.

October 26: Goat Hop Ale returns to MickDuff's Beer Hall. FSPW will provide snacks and there may even be some goodies you could win. MickDuff's will donate a portion of the proceeds to FSPW; have a drink, enjoy great company AND support the Scotchmans! 6 or 8 pm.

November 9: Avalance expert Jon Jeresek will give a presentation on safe winter travel at Simple Simon Pizza in Libby. The pizza and soda is on FSPW. Montana-brewed beer will be available by donation.

November 14: FSPW and the Idaho Conservation League will host environmental writer George Wuertner, Fund for Wild Nature's Grassroots Activist of the Year Award for 2017, at the Coeur d' Alene Eagles Club, 209 E. Sherman Ave.; doors open at 6:00. Presentation begins at 6:30. This is a free event (donations are gladly accepted). No host bar available.

December 1: Winter Tracks Season begins. Volunteers! Get ready for another great opportunity for getting kids outside and outdoor education

December 9: FSPW will participate in the Cabinet Peaks Medical Center Festival of Trees.

January 13: Celebrate the 13th anniversary of FSPW with a gathering at the Panida Theater featuring eminent outdoor journalist Rich Landers and stories of 40 years of wild reporting for the Spokesman Review. Doors open at 6:30.



FSPW RECEIVES \$6,000 NWSA GRANT

National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance awards Friends of Scotchman Peaks funds for trail maintenance and construction.

Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness (FSPW) recently received just over \$6,000 from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) to aid the FSPW trail program for the 2017 summer stewardship season. The funds were made available through the new NWSA National Forest System Trail Stewardship Grants program. In its inaugural year, 23 grants were awarded nationwide to fund projects utilizing private donations, volunteer resources, and a generous Forest Service agreement.

"FSPW is honored to have received one of the NWSA grants," said FSPW exec Phil Hough. "The process was highly competitive, but Britta Mireley (FSPW assistant program coordinator) wrote a great application and we got all that we asked for."

This is good news for local trail users who like to hike in the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness. FSPW crews, along with their Forest Service partners, work each summer improving and maintaining trails in the proposal, starting with a single day in 2010 and expanding the program each year to a total of 10 days this year, plus 4 training days for trail workers and crew leaders.

NWSA-funded projects are taking place in all USFS Regions, covering over 20 National Forests in 13 different states. The FSPW grant accounts for two of the states and two of the

National Forests, facilitating trail projects in the Kootenai National Forest of Montana and Panhandle National Forests in Idaho. Trails worked on include Scotchman Peak Trail #65, Morris Creek Trail #132 and Regal Creek Trail #556 on the Panhandle; and Star Peak Historic Trail #999, Napoleon Gulch Trail #1019, Hamilton Gulch Trail #1016 and the new Spar Lake Trail #143-A on the Kootenai.

"The National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance is excited to support volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and agency partners who are stewarding their local public lands, including Friends of Scotchman Peaks," Randy Welsh, NWSA executive director said.

"These National Forest System Trail Stewardship Grants will accomplish much needed work to improve the National Forest trail system while engaging local volunteers to get out and enjoy the National Forests."

CINNABAR MATCHING GRANT FULFILLED

Once again, the generous personal donations of Friends have matched the pledge of the Cinnabar Foundation, this year in record time. Cinnabar has offered a matching grant to FSPW every year for nearly a decade, and we have never failed to achieve the challenge.

This year's challenge was for \$5,000, which was achieved by September 2, the earliest FSPW donors have met the match. Thank you very much!

THANKS TO THESE GENEROUS FOLKS FOR RECENT INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

Nicky Pleass, Sandpoint
 Joseph J. Karahuta, Puyallup, WA
 Dawnya Clarine, Sandpoint
 Jacob Styer, Sandpoint
 Howard Shay, Sandpoint
 Maggie Schenk, Coeur d'Alene
 Susan Beard, Dover, ID
 Marilyn McIntyre, Sandpoint
 Dennis Rieger, Sagle
 Lanie Johnson & Ken Fischman, Sandpoint
 Thomas Magee, Renton, WA
 John & Susan Harbuck, Sandpoint
 Chris Baldini, Spokane
 Mary Jo Haag, Sandpoint
 Fred & Judy Gaudet, Sagle
 Ruth Ungerer, Sagle
 Dennis & Diane Schwehr, Thompson Falls, MT
 Irv & Carol Jenkins, Sagle
 Rebecca Mills, Boise
 Douglas Toland, Sagle
 Brian McVey, Clark Fork
 Ron Giddings, Sandpoint
 Eric & Celeste Grace, Sandpoint
 JoAnn & John Rohyans, Sandpoint
 Robert & Leslie Fletcher, Thompson Falls, MT
 Peter Lupsha & Ursula Hill, Tome, NM
 Ken Meyers, Sagle
 Lexie de Fremery, Sagle
 Sandra Lamson, Sandpoint
 Ronald Mamajek & Denise Zembryki, Sagle
 Joyce Pence & Konrad Dahlstrom, Clark Fork
 Dennis Braun, Sandpoint
 David Coupal, Noxon, MT
 Vinetta Spencer, Coeur d'Alene
 Bruce Sterling, Thompson Falls
 Pam Duquette, Ketchum, ID
 Karen Sheets, Thompson Falls
 Susan Conway-Kean, Kihei, HI
 Kris Anderson, Thompson Falls, MT
 Ken & Ginger Wright, Coeur d'Alene

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July - August: Lincoln County Outreach Coordinator Annie Gassmann had an outreach table at the Troy Farmer's Market every other Friday.

July 18: About 300 people attended an open house hosted by Senator Risch's staff and USFS personnel in Clark Fork.

July 19: Annie Gassmann led a Moms and Kids Hike on Ross Creek Trail #142.

July 21: A FSPW Community Kid's Hike visited Ross Creek Cedars.

July 21-23: Eight volunteers and staff participated in a Trail Work Weekend near Spar Lake on Three Rivers Ranger District.

August 4: FSPW staff and volunteers worked Trail #65 repairing tread and rehabilitating "shortcut" trails on several switchbacks.

August 4-5: Annie Gassmann had an outreach table at the Kootenai River Stampede rodeo in Libby.

August 7-12: FSPW volunteers and staff handed out information, answered questions and signed up Friends at Bonner County Fair.

August 11-13: FSPW volunteers and staff signed up new Friends at the Trout Creek Huckleberry Festival.

August 25: Five volunteers and staff worked on the Hamilton Gulch Trail on the Cabinet Ranger District.

September 8: FSPW Program Coordinator Sandy Compton gave a presentation on trail-building to 60 students at Clark Fork High School.

September 10: Thirty people attended the Thompson Falls Picnic held at Power Park.

September 16: Kootenai Harvest Festival was held at the Riverfront Park in Libby with 500-plus people in attendance.

September 17: FSPW had an outreach table at Winter Ridge Customer Appreciation Day.

September 22: Annie Gassmann and volunteers had an outreach table at the Troy Apple Festival.

September 25: Twenty-two "Pirates" cruised Lake Pend Oreille with FSPW staff aboard the good ship Shawnodese.

September 27-28: USFS personnel and FSPW volunteers planted whitebark pine seeds on the southeast ridge of Scotchman Peak.

September 30: National Public Lands Day. FSPW staff and volunteers worked on Morris and Regal Creek Trails.

October 1-6: Sandy Compton and Phil Hough traveled to Arkansas for the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance conference.

October 3: Annie Gassmann taught Leave No Trace at Green Mountain Conservation District's Water Festival at Thompson Falls.

October 8: Annual FSPW Highway 200 Cleanup; Last day of Goat Education Ambassador season; Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic at the Compton Pavilion.

October 14: Brian Baxter led a "Wetland Wandering" nature class; FSPW executive director; Phil Hough had a display table at the ALDHA West Fall Hiker Fest in Coeur d'Alene; Larson's Good Clothing donated a portion of Fall for Sandpoint sales to FSPW.

Didn't Die, from page 4

"I can *not* be the last in line."

She sees tears and a gray face and for the next half hour she stays close to keep me calm, reminding me to breathe.

At the other chute, Carey is going down. We need to sit absolutely still, and when a rock starts rolling, we yell "ROCK!" as they fly past people's heads. Now it's my turn. I'm going to move very, very, slowly. Breathing deeply, I shuffle toward the abyss as Carey gives directions from below. Sandy tries to catch my eye. *I'm not looking at you.* I defiantly think. *You got us into this and you know how hard this is for me.* As I squeeze by him, he asks "You all right?"

"NO."

I plant my butt next to Kate's, out of rock's way. I find a Snickers in my pack. It looks very appealing, but belongs to Sandy. *I'm going to eat the whole damn thing.* I think to myself. *Serves him right to get me into that mess.* I'm still eating when I notice something move from the corner of my eye. Celeste's trekking poles are like spears as they sail down 70 feet. They're followed closely by her pack

and when I look at Kate I realize she is anticipating her friend will be plummeting down next. Her eyes are wide and she's stopped chewing.

"Celeste said she'd throw her pack down." I report — to Kate's great relief.

I'm calm enough to look at Sandy again. I say, "That was *not* funny!" I mean it more than anything I've said this month.



The cliff.

Photo by Marjolein Groot Nibbelink

We cross a creek to the East Fork Meadow. The mountains' shadows envelops us, offering cooler air and a rushed sense of excitement over what we just did. For a moment, we stand looking at the cliff, and a joint sense of accomplishment settles into us. Now we can move on.

I realize we are at least another four talus slopes, three alder tunnels, two smaller cliffs, and one stream crossing away from the cars. We move as fast as we can on sore feet and tired legs. Just beating complete darkness, Sandy and I are last to limp out of the forest.

I look at him sideways and smile. I feel invigorated. "Sandy, that was *hard*."

"Yes. I think Sawtooth is the hardest day hike in the Scotchmans."

Twelve miles and 12 hours after setting off, I can barely stand up. I come from a flat country, you know. The following day I see Celeste. We seem to have a new level of appreciation for each other. "What'd you have for dinner last night?" she asks.

"Crisps and whiskey." I truthfully report.

The day offered stunning photography moments, but due to an accidental change of settings, some of my best pictures came out at low quality.

"You know what that means, right?" Sandy asks, when he sees my sad face.

I know exactly what he's going to say. "You'll have to go back."

"GOAT SEASON" ENDED OCTOBER 8

By Mary Franzel, FSPW Goat
Ambassador Coordinator

As hiking season slowly winds down, the goats atop Scotchman are beginning to disperse and prepare for winter. It's been a good summer in the proposed Wilderness. Visitors from all over the country – from Florida to Alaska — have enjoyed nature in the Scotchmans. Thanks to a dedicated group of FSPW volunteers, the trail is in excellent shape and has received many compliments over the summer, ranging from "excellent trail – thanks!" to "it was much harder than I thought but great" to "stunning!!!"

The goats are responding to visitor education about do's and don'ts of safe hiking in goat country. One misconception is that as long as you don't approach the goats it's okay if they approach you. Hikers should stay 100' or more away from goats at all times.

FSPW Ambassadors advise people to yell loudly, wave their arms or smack hiking poles together to keep goats at a safe distance. If that doesn't work, hikers are encouraged to throw rocks — not to be mean or scare goats off the peak, but to keep both hikers and goats safe.

Despite several signs, there are a few humans who don't heed the warnings. Goats are wild animals and should not be dependant on humans for anything. Natural curiosity is fine but corn chips

and granola bars may lead to a bad ending for both the hiker and the goat.

Goats that become dependent on humans for minerals (especially salt) may fail to teach youngsters the locations of natural mineral licks.

Thanks to all the Goat Ambassadors who hiked this season — Kate Walker, Jason Smith, Susan Harbuck, Suzanne Davis, Diane Brockway, Francine Mejia, Erick Berntsen, Cate Huisman, Susan Conway-Kean, Ken Thacker, Bonnie Jakobos, Don Otis, Phil Hough, Deb Hunsicker, Brian McVey, Holly Clements, Mark Cochran, Eric and Celeste Grace, Chris Bachman, Leslie Keibert, Larry Siegrist, Susan Drumheller, Howard and Connie Shay and Sam Olson — every volunteer makes a difference!

Festival, from page 3

with local food and the great outdoors easily accessible in the Kootenai Region. In its third year, the Kootenai Harvest Festival at Riverfront Park on the banks of the Kootenai River drew upwards of 500 visitors over the course of the event. Due to combined efforts of many people, MWA, FSPW, Libby Community Garden and other local organizations the Festival was again a success.

The committee consisted of Grete Gansauer from MWA, April Rainey, Mandy Bell, Alyssa Ramiez, Linda Alkire, Virginia Kocieda and myself.

Festival volunteers worked in the Libby Community Garden to grow most of the vegetables for the community dinner at the Festival. The Garden sets aside a section of the community garden each year for the Harvest Festival, where most of the organic food is grown. Many different people are involved in the planning, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting.

The Libby Community Garden provides opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to experience the joy of growing a community through gardening. People learn how to plan and



Diving for sweets in the Kid Zone.

Photo by Annie Gassmann

nurture a garden, preserve food, proper nutrition, and volunteer with garden events to give back to the communities in which we live.

Other foods were locally sourced as well, including meats, buns, fruits, and sauces. The meal catered by the Gracious Table, a unique Libby restaurant. During the week leading up to the Festival, over ten people took turns in the Gracious Table kitchen chopping, measuring, mixing and laughing; enjoying the gratifying experience of seeing food stacked and labeled, filling the refrigerators, ready to feed 300 people.

Festive decorations such as straw bales, flowers, grasses and corn stalks required a small army of generous volun-

teers to pick, store, arrange, and decorate. More than 30 vendors provided goods from garden veggies, flowers, soaps, honey, jewelry, and antique furniture to face painting and cotton candy. Beer from the Cabinet Mountain Brewery was popular, with enthusiastic volunteers making many trips to replenish the kegs.

The Kids Zone was a big hit. The Straw Stack Search was a child magnet, with sweet treats buried in the straw. Once the festival started at 2 p.m., the straw pit was never empty of determined candy searchers until close at 8 p.m. Even as the straw pit was being disassembled, there were a few persistent youngsters taking last slides and jumps into the soft straw. There were sack races, tug-o-wars, a water balloon battle, dance lessons, dress-up, drums, and face painting. It was a beautiful day with sunshine, clean air, no wind, and wonderful people.

It's been a great experience to work on the KHF committee. To plan, work, organize and spend valuable time to make sure this event was a success enabled us all to walk away at the end of the day knowing that the local community will look forward to next year's Kootenai Harvest Festival.

Director's Message , from page 2

In addition, that wilderness bill is building a stronger community. As the community works through all the issues that the KFSH has agreed upon, not just the wilderness component, the stakeholders each come to a better common understanding of our individual and collective needs, our shared values and our mutually strong connection to the landscape. Our bonds to each other are strengthened. Our community is stronger.

As the late-night TV advertiser says, "But wait, there's more!" It takes a community to maintain the wilderness characteristics before and after designation. We have spent the 12 plus years building

a strong community of volunteer stewards. This summer alone our volunteers have put in more than 400 hours doing trail maintenance, have been out twice planting whitebark pines seeds (including a trip in the snow in September) and more than 25 volunteer Mountain Goat Ambassadors have covered every weekend and holiday from early June to early October helping to keep goats wild and people safe.

Stewardship takes a commitment from our community and it builds commitment from within the community – a dedication to preserving the Wilderness in the Scotchmans for the future.

— Phil Hough

ASCENT, from page 3

agenda for students in grades 6 - 11 includes backpacking, fly fishing, rock climbing and water recreation.

The final July Ascent Camp ventured to western Sanders County in the heart of the Cabinets and found base camp at Bull River Campground, where Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness coordinated Leave No Trace and Bear Aware presentations with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and USFS Plains Ranger District for camps. The week-long adventure included day trips into the proposed Scotchman Peaks Wilderness.

The week started with FSPW volunteers Leah Lambert and Carolyn Hidy at Ross Creek Cedars. They shared their enthusiasm about riparian habitat looking at aquatic macroinvertebrates in a controlled setting with the students. After exploring the Cedars the Ascent Camp ventured down Trail #142 into the proposed wilderness on their first hike. Early to rise the next day, the group met Sam Olson, FSPW summer back country ranger intern at Historic Star Peak Trail #999 just west of Big Eddy Campground off of Highway 200. The group achieved perfectly plump huckleberry picking altitude and were rewarded with pur-

ple fingers and amazing views! That evening FSPW volunteer Charlotte Milling, PhD shared a mammology lesson as well as information about being a field scientist. Milling shared photos and videos of her career and other colleagues' work.

On the final day at Bull River Campground, USFS Forestry Technician Joel Sather gave an overview of wilderness safety and first-aid practices. This presentation was followed by Ryan Kreiner, FWP Fish Biologist who talked about FWP's work with cold water fisheries species, both native and non-native and different methods to study populations.

It was a jam-packed week and the Friends and their diverse volunteers are excited to have had this opportunity with youth outdoor education through the Ascent Camp!

Project ASCENT was made possible by the Gear Up grant funding through Thompson Falls School. The Gear Up funding sunsets in 2018, but Christensen aims to keep the camps going strong. If you are interested in helping keep these FREE camps in our community, please contact Rob Christensen at rchristensen@blackfoot.net to see how you can get involved and sustain these great opportunities for local students.

Recent Donors, from page 5

John & Charlotte Sullivan, Spokane
Emily Cleveland, Sandpoint
Steve Mullin & Carol Holmes, Sandpoint
Greg Dugdale, Havre, Montana
Lizzy Hughes, Bend, Oregon

**Stakeholders, from page 3**

The Stakeholder's Wilderness recommendation dramatically illuminates the fact that there is deep and widespread support deep and widespread support from most forest user groups for protecting wild country. Whatever opposition we hear is mostly from a noisy minority that has little interest in working together to find solutions and improve land management on the ground.

Another major benefit is that we have found some very strong allies in the timber industry as well as other businesses, Rod & Gun clubs and others who are often considered traditional opponents of wilderness. Many have observed that timber and wilderness people seem like unlikely allies, but in reality we are natural allies with a great deal in common. We both want to break through gridlock in the Forest Service and D.C. and get some positive decisions and actions applied on the ground.

Right now the Stakeholders are working on a series of presentations to community groups and some more public meetings. We plan to have a specific legislative proposal ready before long. This together with progress on the Idaho Scotchman's bill, will add great power and credibility to our efforts to protect wild country in Montana.

Extreme, from page 1

started it all. After participating in the 2008 FSPW Plein Air Paintout, a front-country event concentrated on painting the Scotchmans mostly from the outside, they approached Paintout organizer Neil Wimberley and said, “We want to paint from the inside.” Neil looked around the room and found me. He pointed and said, “Go talk to that guy.” That’s how I met Aaron and Jared.

The first Extreme, a four-day, three-night expedition in July of 2009, included many requests by the artists — Aaron, Jared and Victor Vosen — to stop. And, moving at the speed of a clutch of plein air artists is a lovely way to experience the wilderness, particularly the West Cabinets, where views change dramatically within even a few steps; and the steps are often up or down some steep-ass talus slope.

“Can we paint?” I look back and there are two or three faces with the look of first graders asking permission to go to recess.

“OK,” I grump — expedition leaders are supposed to be grumpy, right? “Thirty minutes.” They scramble to get their paints out and I gratefully lay down my pack. I might wander off in the general direction we are headed and make sure there’s a navigable route ahead — which makes me look like a genius when the actual trek resumes. Or, I might take a nap.

I cherish memories of each expedition. They were all similar, and all remarkably different. One member started out terrified he would be eaten by a bear, so Johnson named him “Bacon.” He still loves that nickname. Shear and Johnson feed off each other’s creative bents and I have watched them paint on rocks and bark with huckleberry juice, flower pigments and crushed leaves, using a tuft of mountain goat hair for a brush. I have above my desk a painting Shear made using *Chlamydomonas nivalis*, the pink algae responsible for watermelon snow.

This year, we ran out of daylight at the end of what was to be our last day. An hour later, we found ourselves blocked from going farther safely and I called it a day. As luck would have it — good luck at that — we were on a nice little gravel bar in

the middle of the dewatered West Fork of Blue Creek, just big enough for six humans and a dog to lay their weary frames. Nobody argued. The next morning, we found we were 200 yards from the truck. Still, most of the participants say that last night was one of the greatest they have ever spent in the woods.

Something binds us together in grateful comradeship on these trips. Whether it is purpose or place, I’m not sure, but it may be a combination of the two. We are in no hurry to get anywhere. Besides, even if we were, the artists would just ask, “Can we paint?” And I would likely say, “Yes.”



Little Spar Lake.

Painting by Ed Robinson

The mediums employed during the 2017 edition of the Extreme were oils, watercolor, pencil, graphite and digital photography. Johnson returned with his son, 13-year-old Cory, who made watercolors. Sandpoint painter Ed Robinson brought oils and watercolors. Marjolein Groot Nibbelink of Sandpoint sketched and wielded a camera.

Many images were captured during the five days and four nights of this year’s Extreme Plein Air, rudimentary sketches caught during 30-minute breaks from hiking rocky ridges and masterpieces made sitting in some incredible place for the better part of a day.

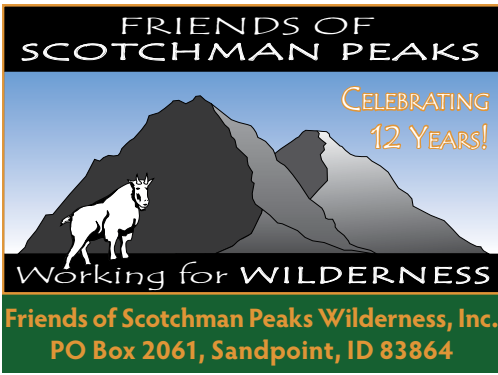
By the nature of painting out of a backpack, canvases are generally small, but later, images captured by sketch or camera are turned into big pieces in the studio. Robinson is working on larger paintings and Johnson and Shear have created some large and intricate paintings from their Extreme experiences. FSPW intends to have a showing of the creations produced by the 2017 Extreme Plein Air — and art from previous Extremes — in midwinter.

“Can we paint?”

I hope to hear that question a number of times more. It will tell me, first of all, that we are in a place the beauty of which is worth trying to capture visually, and second of all, that we are on another expedition: the Extreme Plein Air.



Evening in Melissa Basin Painting by Aaron Johnson



How You Can Help

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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 Creek divide 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.

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