

FRIENDS OF SCOTCHMAN PEAKS WILDERNESS 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



FRIENDS OF
SCOTCHMAN PEAKS
WILDERNESS

A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES

Executive Director's Outlook

I hear often from people who want to share a fond memory. It might have been a close encounter with a bear, bobcat or mountain goat. They might have looked up at the big deeper or the milky way on a clear night. Or lingered for the view up and down the Clark River valley from atop Star Peak. Something touched them deep inside. Sometimes it was from last weekend. Or it might have been from years ago. A few hours in the Scotchmans will fill folks with a lifetime of memories.

Our intern last summer, Rachel Torgeson put it this way: "The feeling of being so surrounded by nature, completely isolated from the pressures of everyday life, it is what I have been chasing since my childhood. To have found it here in the Scotchmans is such a gift."

The world has changed in many ways over the last three years. The power of nature, the rejuvenating tonic of Wilderness has stayed the same as it always been. But we have begun to appreciate it more than ever. This last year we have continued our work to connect the community to these experiences. We depend on passionate and dedicated volunteers to do that.

Our vision for 2023 and beyond is to pass on a Scotchman Peaks Wilderness for our kids and grandkids. We will continue to keep access to trails open with hands on trail work. We will meet hikers on the trail to talk about wildlife. We want hikers to stay safe and mountain goats and bears stay wild. We are expanding our youth education programs, so everyone can grow up a little bit wilder. We invite you to come along and be a part of this journey with us!



Phil Hough
FSPW Executive Director

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Thank you!

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THANK YOU FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE 2022!

94

**DAYS
ON THE
GROUND**

hiking, educating, clearing trails, & building community.



1,896

**VOLUNTEER
HOURS**

spent by volunteers building trails & educating hikers.



VOLUNTEERS

91

64

**MILES OF
TRAIL**

Built, cleared, & restored.



16

HIKES

led by volunteer leaders all year long



**101
HIKERS**

participated in our guided hikes.



944

**PEOPLE
EDUCATED ON
SCOTCHMAN PEAK**

about keeping goats safe & wild.

OUTREACH

Our goal is to bring people together through a shared love for our wild backyard - the Scotchman Peaks. We want everyone to have the chance to explore the wonders of the Scotchmans.



Playing peek-a-boo during a kids hike in the Ross Creek Cedars

HIKES

FSPW offers free volunteer-led group hikes in and around the Scotchmans. The volunteers who lead these hikes have a deep love for the Scotchman Peaks. They want to help others feel that love too.

In 2022, FSPW led 16 hikes throughout the summer and winter. Volunteers led 101 hikers in the hiking program out into the Scotchmans!

Some exciting new hikes were introduced such as a poetry writing workshop, hike and read for kids, and forest fire interpretive hike.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Each year, FSPW asks local high school seniors to share their stories about getting outside and exploring our local wild lands. Scholarships are awarded to seniors with the most awe-inspiring tales of adventure. In 2022, scholarships were awarded to students in Lincoln, Sanders, and Bonner Counties. You can hear the students tell their stories on several of FSPW's Voices in the Wilderness articles and Your Wild Place podcast episodes.

EVENTS

We had a full schedule of in-person events in 2022. FSPW tabled at a variety of different events across Bonner, Lincoln, and Sanders counties including farmer's markets, health fairs, job fairs, Fourth of July events, the Huckleberry Festival, Harvest Festival, and Forest Fair.

FSPW hosted the State of the Scotchmans at Blue C Ranch with Boulder Creek Bluegrass Band. We had the opportunity to present special volunteer awards to our outstanding volunteers, and update our supporters on programming and progress on designation.



Hikers atop Scotchman Peak during the annual fall hike

COLLABORATIVE GROUPS

Employees and volunteers participated in collaborative groups in our area. The Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition and Panhandle Forest Collaborative have been an excellent way we have been able to reach out to new supporters and volunteers while working to designate our wilderness area.

EDUCATION

FSPW offers outdoor education opportunities for youth and adults. Adults experience education hikes and our Wilderness and Remote First Aid certification course. Kids get outside for a day of hands-on learning in our local wild lands.

Photo by Max Zuberbuler

WINTER TRACKS

We were excited to offer Winter Tracks in person again this past year to classrooms in Montana & Idaho. The program runs from January through March each year teaching children about their natural environment on topics such as tree identification, wildlife identification and tracking, outdoor gear, leave no trace principles, bear safety, fire starting, ice fishing, shelter building, and even how to run in snowshoes! Thank you to the volunteers that make it possible every year!

FSPW has expanded their educational outreach efforts to include Winter Tracks for Teens and Bear Safety. We can now take our winter tracks curriculum into high school natural resource and science classrooms or host them at an outdoor venue to reach even more students! In addition, FSPW staff and volunteers participated in a Bear Education Safety training with Kim Annis, Bear Management Specialist with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to become equipped to share this knowledge to students in winter tracks programs as well as hike participants that join in on our outdoor hikes, events, and trail projects.



Libby students get some hands-on learning with furs of local animal species



Farmin Stidwell students learn about water quality from Carolyn Knaak



STEWARDSHIP

We want everyone to enjoy the wonders of the Scotchmans - today and for years to come. That means making the area accessible with well-maintained trails. Volunteers make it possible to keep the Scotchmans wild and accessible.

Photo by Danielle Tholl

TRAIL BUILDERS

Our trail work volunteers built and restored over 64 miles of trails over 24 days in the Scotchmans this summer. This work was done using traditional trail building tools, crosscut saws, Pulaski, hand saws and loopers. Now imagine carrying these heavy tools up the steep terrain of the Scotchman Peaks mountains. We had a dedicated team of volunteers that became a close knit "trail squad", willing to do trail work in rain, wind and the heat of summer. Our most active volunteers, Ed Vorwerk and Ken Dueis logged 21 trail days between them. That is dedication, gentlemen. Overall, we had over 120 volunteers spend 1,054 hours making the trails in the Scotchmans more accessible this summer.



Matt and Ed take a well-deserved break, with a view, during a work day on Goat Mountain Trail



In 2022, FSPW volunteers and staff cleared over 64 miles of trail using traditional tools like cross-cut saws

TRAIL AMBASSADORS

"Keep wildlife wild," is an often-repeated mantra in the outdoors community. At Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness, we take this another step, we enlist volunteers to spread that message on Scotchman Peak trail #65. The summit of this peak is home to a thriving band of mountain goats. A band is made up of billies, nannies and adorable kid goats. They are curious, large mammals with sharp curved horns, that look upon hikers as a traveling salt lick, descending upon their living quarters.

"My friends, family and I have always hiked the mountains around Sandpoint and have a deep love for our wild places. Because of these feelings, I felt it was time to try and give back just a little bit...I learned a ton about crosscut saws, helped clear trees, and created some new tread. Besides that, I met so many incredible people who are doing the same. Can't wait until next summer!"

- Perky Smith Hagadone, Trail Volunteer

Uneducated hikers view the goats as a goldmine for social media. That's why the Friends also provide education for hikers through the Trail Ambassador program. Trail Ambassadors spend the day atop Scotchman Peak, educating hikers about safety in mountain goat territory. This year our volunteers talked to 944 hikers on Scotchman Peak about best practices to ensure there were no negative interactions between goats and humans

VOICES FOR WILDERNESS

MEGAN LEACH, LIBBY

"Because the value of the land is more than the physical resources it provides. It's also the memories of the past, experiences of the present, and hopes for the future. Protecting our wild places is one way we can honor and respect the land for all of the physical, emotional, and spiritual resources it shares with us."



REBECCA SANCHEZ, HOPE

"The alluring landscape of the Scotchman Peaks has provided countless adventures for my family to enjoy. From winding creek beds vibrant with life to the mountain tops where wild goats tread a path of their own, there is an endless supply of new discoveries to be made. We wrestle the alder and tackle the steep terrain, knowing it is all worth the effort. Whether it be a snowshoe trip up to Star Peak on a crisp winter day or an autumn sunset hike to Goat Mountain, we always leave the trail with full hearts and stories to share.



Two of Rebecca's children enjoying one of their many excursions into the Scotchman Peaks

*"Year after year, these mountains have provided a place for my children to explore, learn, and grow. A place where they can find some solitude and feel free to be themselves. A place where they come to a better understanding of the natural world around them. I'm confident that the Scotchman Peaks will continue to be an integral part of my children's lives. **For this, I'm very thankful.**"*

ADVOCACY

Only congress can designate Wilderness. But deciding how to manage our wild lands starts locally.

Wilderness designation depends upon community support. Without that congress does very little. We build community one person at a time. By engaging every volunteer, hike participant, or person who shows up an event and connecting them to community that cares we develop meaningful support. People from all walks of life, all backgrounds and experiences bound together by one common interest – keeping the Scotchmans wild – brings folks together.

Collaboration is about individuals and groups who might start off with other interest helps us to find common ground. By sharing ideas, information and viewpoints we all learn more. Often finding we have more in common for what we want the future to look like than we originally believe.

Large scale land management is complex. The USFS motto, “For the Greatest Good” means finding a way for the 4.5 million acres of the Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National forests to satisfy many needs. It’s a big landscape. The more complex an issue is, the greater the need for having input from many people. Good public policy depends on satisfying that need. Collaboration can help get us there.

We are active members of several local groups that are doing just that including the Panhandle Forest Collaborative and the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition. We speak up for the thousands of people who want the Scotchmans to stay wild.

Through collaboration and community building we believe we will find a pathway to designating wilderness for the Scotchman Peaks.



YOUR WILD PLACE PODCAST

We launched the Your Wild Place Podcast in 2020 as a way to connect from afar. The podcast seeks to inspire adventure and exploration right here in our backyard. We were able to use our podcast to reach supporters when in-person events weren't an option. The episodes feature storytelling, interviews with community members and reflections on living in wild places.

Check it out on FSPW's website, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

ENDOWMENT

LEAVING A LEGACY FOR THE LAND YOU LOVE.

Photo by Chic Burge

In September we formally launched our endowment campaign, to leave a legacy of wilderness!

Many of us grew up with wild lands all around, taking for granted they would always be there. In my teens, I backpacked with my dad to places where all we could hear was water gurgling over rocks in time with the wind whistling through the trees. Quite the chorus! Solitude, in harmony, with nature.

*Your contribution
to the endowment
will create a
perpetual ripple.*

The wilderness that has always been there will only remain if we have the bold vision to keep it that way. And continue to do the work to protect it. With your help we can make sure that future teens can experience their own wild places.

Wilderness designation takes time. Wilderness stewardship goes on forever. An endowment assures that we will continue to be able to clear trails, keep mountain goats wild and connect kids with nature and wilderness.

Together we can build a permanently endowed fund. One that will provide the steady resources need to protect the Scotchmans into the future. As Mark Cochran, FSPW Board Vice Chair-Secretary puts it: "your contribution will create a perpetual ripple." Imagine, if you are joined by your friends, and others, who will also add to your

effort. The ripples then merge into waves. The impact is magnified and magnificent!

Having the experience of wilderness for our communities tomorrow as well as our kids or grandkids in ten, twenty, thirty or more years will come from the actions we take today. Your contribution will make sure we have a wild Scotchman Peaks area forever, for our communities, kids, and grandkids.

Learn more on our website at www.scotchmanpeaks.org/endowment/

STAFF UPDATES

Our staff continues to evolve to meet our growing programs. We were excited to bring Brooke Bolin onboard in April as our Northwest Montana Outreach Coordinator. In summer, Juli Thurston stepped off the board to become our Sanders County Activities Director. And we brought on Joel Thompson as our Program Manager.



OUR MISSION:

TO PASS ON A SCOTCHMAN PEAKS
WILDERNESS FOR OUR CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2023)

Chair, Dr. Mark Cochran — Sandpoint, ID

Treasurer, Brad Williams — Sandpoint, ID

Chris Compton — Heron, MT

Megan Leech — Libby, MT

Ed Robinson — Sandpoint, ID

Rebecca Sanchez — Hope, ID

STAFF (2023)

Brooke Bolin — Northwest Montana Outreach Coordinator

Phil Hough — Executive Director

Sam Olson — Summer Trails Program Coordinator (2022)

Cameron Rasmusson — Communications Specialist

Joel Thompson — Program Manager

Juli Thurston — Sanders County Activities Coordinator

Rachel Torgerson — Backcountry Ranger Intern (2022)

The Scotchman Peaks are the ancestral lands of the Ktunaxa, Schitsu'umsh, Kalispel, Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla peoples

CONTACT

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Photo by Danielle Tholl