

Swan View's News

Fall 2013



Swan View Coalition
3165 Foothill Road
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"Nature and human nature on the same path."

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Mileposts and Deja Vu!

Swan View Coalition was formed while the Flathead National Forest was drafting its 1986 Forest Plan. We became fully involved in finalizing the Plan and later won improvements to it through appeals, litigation, and Forest Plan amendments.

The Flathead has now begun revising its Plan with a heavy reliance on "collaboration" with "stakeholders" that have the time and money to meet almost endlessly. But the Flathead is still required by law to include all interested citizens in the broader planning effort.

In this newsletter, we will discuss our reservations about collaboration, based on our past and current experiences with it (pages 2-3). And we'll redouble our pledge to keep the Forest Planning process readily available to our members so they can help advocate for the full protection of the Flathead's roadless lands as non-mechanized Wilderness areas (page 4)!



Fall colors on Jimmie Ridge!

We'll announce the launch of our new on-line, interactive map of Ecosystem Threats and Remedies in the Flathead River Basin (page 4). A timely tool to help fix what we can through public comments on Forest Plan Revision and other initiatives - and to highlight past successes!

We are announcing our Annual General Membership Meeting for Sunday, Nov 17, at 4pm. So mark your calendars and join us for a short business meeting followed by a potluck and music jam session (page 6)!

Our Swan Ranger outings and volunteer trail maintenance continue to be very popular. We held our 400th outing July 27 (page 5)!

Last but not least, don't forget that November is your last chance this year to have your donation doubled by Cinnabar Foundation (pages 6- 7)!

Keith

Why Collaboration and What's the Fuss?

Definitions of collaboration include "working together" and "traitorous co-operation with an enemy." Over the past several decades, the Forest Service has increased its use of collaboration to forge consensus among key "stakeholders."

This has allowed it to marginalize those of lesser means or not in agreement with social compromises that again "cut the baby in half" and perhaps violate laws protecting fish, wildlife, and water quality. Indeed, the National Forest Foundation's "A Roadmap for Collaboration Before, During and After the NEPA Process" warns of the significant expenditures of "time, effort, funds and social capital necessary for an ongoing collaborative process."

Current Forest Planning regulations urge that an optional collaborative process precede then parallel the National Environmental Policy Act's (NEPA) public involvement process. And therein lie two aspects of the rub: 1) collaborators get to front-load the process with their proposals while, 2) many folks who can't afford to do both must choose whether to collaborate or follow the legally required NEPA process.

The process of seeking consensus through collaboration remains contentious, especially when the Forest Service and industry use it to enlist enough folks to agree with them so they can marginalize those who disagree. Consider these quotes:

"Between private lands and public lands the world that was once covered with a sea of green was now pocked with clearcuts and criss-crossed by roads. But we still continued until we were faced with a segment of the public that had a differing view of what their national forests should be." (Former USFS Chief Jack Ward Thomas; Chronicle of Community Vol. 3, No. 1, 1998).

"[W]hen local environmental groups and timber representatives learn to reach consensus . . . that will marginalize extremists." (Former USFS Chief Jack Ward Thomas; Daily Inter Lake 6/8/97).

"We need to find common ground so the people who want to litigate are marginalized." (Former Assistant Secretary of Interior Rebecca Watson; Missoulian 11/28/02).

"The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act . . . is largely being used to circumvent existing environmental laws and give control of the management of our National Forests to local special interests." (Al Espinosa and Harry Jageman, retired USFS fisheries and wildlife biologists; Letter to Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests 8/21/10).

"I believe that we . . . have public lands that belong to all people . . . I fear that localized decisions are usually based on 'How much can I get now?'" (Former Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor Gloria Flora; Chronicle of Community Vol. 3, No. 1, 1998).

"There's something unreasonably comfortable about focusing primarily on alternative structures for decision making instead of the issues that lie at the heart of the debate." (Economist Tom Power; Chronicle of Community Vol. 3, No. 1, 1998).

"Consensus is the process of abandoning all beliefs, principles, values and policies in search of something in which no one believes; but to which no one objects; the process of avoiding the very issues that have to be solved, merely because you cannot get agreement on the way ahead. What great cause would have been fought and won under the banner, 'I stand for consensus'?" (Former UK Primer Minister Margaret Thatcher).

Swan View Coalition on Collaboration

Swan View will always follow the legally required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public involvement process and will participate in optional collaborative processes as time and funds allow. We appreciate both as avenues to better understand all interests and issues.

But we have seen the collaborative process abused by federal agencies and key "stakeholders." In 1997, national "conservation" groups joined industry in insisting its Flathead Common Ground logging plan be called "ecologically-driven vegetation treatments," even though the scientific panel they asked to review their proposal disagreed and concluded "The desire to harvest timber products should be explicitly recognized here as the driving force." This oft-repeated collaborative myth allows industry to argue old logging roads are ecologically necessary to log the forest back to health!

In 2012, the SW Crown Collaborative down-played opportunities for road decommissioning to benefit fish and wildlife in the Swan Valley, based on a mistaken report by the Flathead Forest Supervisor that "the Swan RD has already decommissioned 800 miles of roads . . ." We had to correct the record by providing the Supervisor's own spreadsheet indicating less than 10 miles of road have been decommissioned in the Swan Valley! Who's on watch here?

Forest-based collaboratives are skewed toward logging as "forest restoration," rather than including a robust consideration of road decommissioning and other time-proven means to restore over-logged and over-roaded forests. Indeed, National Forest Foundation's "A Roadmap for Collaboration Before, During and After the NEPA Process" helps institutionalize the assumption that trees must be removed to restore forest ecosystems. It offers the following tip: "It can be helpful when in the



Flathead National Forest field tour.

Keith Hammer photo

field to ask stakeholders what they would do to improve the condition of the project area. In the case of forest restoration, it can be as simple as asking stakeholders which trees they would leave on the landscape and why."

We will continue to provide the Forest Service

with the scientific research - most of it its own - indicating most forests suffer from too many roads and motorized vehicles, not too many trees. We'll always do so through the NEPA process and will via the collaborative process when able. But we'll continue to file lawsuits when necessary to prevent the Forest Service from continuing to create a landscape "pocked with clearcuts and criss-crossed by roads" (see the comments of Former USFS Chief Jack Ward Thomas on page 2) and we'll refuse to be marginalized simply because we dare speak up and advocate for fish and wildlife.

Your Guide to Flathead Forest Plan Revision!

Revision of the Flathead Forest Plan has begun and will continue for many months, during which your comments will be essential to protecting quiet habitats for fish, wildlife and people. We'll keep you posted and ask you to email in comments at the most critical junctures, so please make sure you are on our email alert list by sending your address to keith@swanview.org.

You can read our findings and guiding principles for revising the Flathead Forest Plan at <http://www.swanview.org> under Reports and Documents. You can track the actual revision process and download per-

inent documents from the Flathead's web site at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>.

We've launched an interactive map of Ecosystem Threats and Remedies in the Flathead River Basin which will help you encourage the Forest Service at any time to remove mechanized vehicles from roadless lands and take other actions to restore ecosystem integrity. Our interactive map is at <http://www.swanview.org> under Resources (see screen shot of map below).

Last but not least you can email the Flathead Forest Plan revision team any time at flatheadplanrevision@fs.fed.us.

Swan View Coalition
Protecting Montana's Swan Range Since 1984



Illegal motorcycle at Lamoose Lake.

Ecosystem Threats and Remedies Flathead River Basin

- Click on the red/brown Threats or green Remedies for more info.
- To zoom in and out, use the slider along the left side of the map.
- To navigate, use the arrows button or click and drag the map.
- Select Map or Satellite views in the upper right corner of the map.



Road removed from Big Creek.



Swan Rangers Celebrated Their 400th Outing and Will Mark 400 Volunteer Hours this Year!

The Swan Rangers celebrated their 400th Saturday outing on July 27th, hiking the Broken Leg Trail to Lunch Rock - where they celebrated with sparkling apple juice and Pam's excellent Morning Glory muffins! As Fall winds down, the Rangers are fast approaching their 400th hour of volunteer service maintaining public trails.

The first outing was November 12, 2005, and a formal volunteer agreement with the Forest Service was entered into in September 2011.

Follow the Rangers' work and play at <http://www.swanrange.org> !

"The hikes are very good exercise, informative, and well organized. And the members are interesting and thoughtful folks - the kind I like to meet." Edward S.



Toasting the 400th outing with sparkling apple juice at Lunch Rock!

Keith Hammer photo

Annual Membership Meeting, Potluck and Music Sunday, November 17, 4pm!

Make tracks on over to the Mountain Brook Community Library, 2353 Foothill Road, on November 17 and join us for our annual membership meeting!

We'll recap recent events, elect officers, then socialize over a potluck dinner followed by a regularly scheduled Swan Range Community Music Jam Session!

We'll meet at 4pm, potluck at 5, and the music will start around 6!

We hope you'll renew any lagging annual dues prior to the meeting (minimum \$25) and join the following folks whose recent contributions will be matched by Cinnabar Foundation: Gayle, Pete, Riley, Pat, Cindie, Daniel, Mark, Jana, Malcolm, Karen, Tad, Inger, Helen, Bill, Scott, Jill, Eileen, Debi, and Ned.

Remember to donate in November if you want it doubled by Cinnabar Foundation (see page 7)!



Life is uncertain, **DONATE NOW!**

Keith Hammer Photo

Your Donations Will Again be Doubled By Cinnabar Foundation - Through November!

We've again been issued a \$4,000 Challenge Grant by Cinnabar Foundation, meaning \$4,000 in our members' individual **donations will be matched by Cinnabar. So donate in November and see your money doubled!**

Swan View Coalition relies in large part on member donations to fund its work protecting habitat for fish, wildlife and people. ! It's easy to join others in supporting our work:



1. Send a check to Swan View Coalition at 3165 Foothill Road, Kalispell, MT 59901 - or -
2. Use your credit card securely on-line at www.swanview.org or www.swanrange.org, by clicking on the Donate Now button!

Network for Good handles your transaction securely for us and informs us immediately via email of your donation by credit card. You can also choose to give monthly, quarterly or yearly there to make it easier or more affordable (or change your mind anytime)! If you have other info you want to get to us, such as Gift Membership info, simply email it to keith@swanview.org or mail them to the address in #1, above.



If there is pink on your mailing label, it means you haven't donated in nearly a year or more. Please make a donation so we can keep sending you our newsletter and continue our work!

- [] Here's \$25 to cover my minimum dues, newsletters, alerts, and Swan Ranger Reports.
- [] Here's \$50 to help restore a bit of peace and quiet to America's public lands.
- [] Here's \$100 to help keep forest roads from ending up in America's bull trout streams.
- [] Here's \$500 to help secure grizzly, lynx and wolverine habitat for future generations.
- [] Here's \$_____ to help save the world, one mountain range and one river at a time!
- [] Here's \$_____ for _____ Gift Memberships at a minimum of \$25 each. I've included each recipient's name, mailing address, email address, and my greeting on separate paper.
- [] As a gift of appreciation for my donation, please send me [] the Swan/Flathead history booklet "The Lineage of Chief Aeneas: A History of People and Place" and/or [] a Swan Ranger patch (circle "hang-loop" or "sew-on").
- [] Save paper! Email my newsletters to _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

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Deja Vu as Flathead Forest Plan Revision Begins!

Mileposts and Deja Vu!	page 1
Why Collaboration and What's the Fuss?	page 2
Our Experiences and Thoughts on Collaboration!	page 3
A Guide to Flathead Forest Plan Revision and Our New Interactive Map!	page 4
Swan Rangers Celebrate 400th Outing, Close in on 400 Volunteer Hours!	page 5
<u>Annual Membership Meeting, Potluck and Music Nov. 17!</u>	page 6
<u>Your Donations in November Doubled by Cinnabar Foundation!</u>	page 7