



# Swan View's News

Swan View Coalition

Spring/Summer 2002

3165 Foothill Road, Kalispell, MT 59901

[www.swanview.org](http://www.swanview.org)

**"People Helping People Help the Earth!"**

## *Judge Reaffirms Citizen Restoration Of Illegal Krause Basin ORV Trail!*

U. S. District Judge Donald Molloy on March 18, 2002 reaffirmed his 1999 decision ordering the illegally established snowmobile and off-road vehicle trail in Krause Basin legally closed and, if violated, physically restored and revegetated. Because the trail closure was promptly violated by mo-

torcycles in 1999, Swan View Coalition organized a volunteer effort to help the Forest Service restore and revegetate the trail, as required by the court ordered settlement agreement.

The Montana Snowmobile Association and American Council of Snowmobile As-



*D. Blank photo*

**Swan View Coalition volunteers use dead trees to water-bar a hill badly eroded by an illegal snowmobile and ORV trail in Krause Basin. Closing this trail restored peace and quiet not only to this wildlife-rich roadless area, but to the community of people living nearby.**

sociations filed a lawsuit against the trail restoration early in 2000. After a two-year legal battle, Molloy ruled in favor of Swan View Coalition and dismissed the snowmobilers' lawsuit.

Our monitoring of the former trail this past winter found no snowmobile tracks at

all and instead found fresh wolverine tracks on two occasions! With ORVs physically blocked, the former trail and closure berms are revegetating nicely. Our photographic inventory, however, shows it will take decades for illegally cut trees and brush to grow back to their original condition.

### *Before and After*

**Montana Conservation Corps spreads duff on exposed soil and plants native shrubs and trees donated by Bitterroot Restoration.**

**Snowmobilers nicknamed this "mud hill" because it was continually chewed into the ground, even in winter. With motorized use blocked, brown has since turned to green.**



*Keith Hammer photos*

## *Have Your Say About Snowmobiling On the Flathead National Forest!*

Your comments are needed this summer as the Flathead National Forest amends its Forest Plan to designate where snowmobiles are and are not allowed. The Flathead will soon send out a "scoping notice," asking the public to comment on its proposed Winter Motorized Recreation Amendment. If you want to receive a copy, have the Flathead put you on its mailing list. (Contact information is given on the following page).

The proposal will reflect an agreement by which the Flathead settled a lawsuit filed by Montana Wilderness Association and challenged by the Montana Snowmobile Association. By law, however, the Forest Service must consider public comments and a wide range of alternatives to its proposal in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement before deciding on a final snowmobile management plan. Your comments this summer will help shape the DEIS alternatives, which you will have a chance to comment on this fall before a decision is made.

There is no question that snowmobile technology advanced much more rapidly than the Forest Service's will to control it. As a result, snowmobiles have been using areas designated "nonmotorized" in the 1986 Flathead Forest Plan, which is why

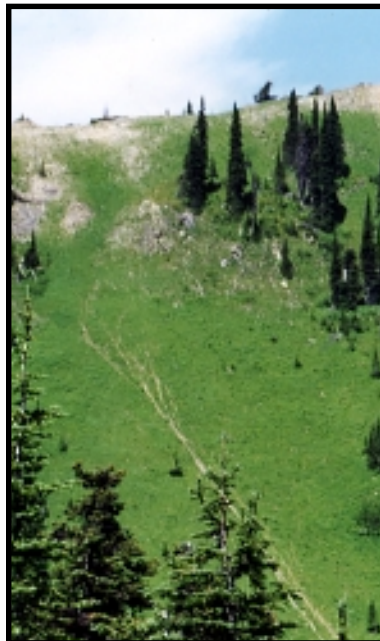
MWA filed its lawsuit. MWA's settlement, however, attempts to keep snowmobile use from expanding into new areas rather than trying to get snowmobiles out of areas where they are currently destroying wildlife security and the ability of others to pursue quiet recreation.

The Forest Plan amendment process, however, requires the Forest Service to begin by asking the question "where is snowmobile use actually appropriate, given concerns for wildlife and other resources?" It will only ask this question seriously, however, if lots of people like yourself demand a clear answer!

In its June 1, 2002 alert, MWA sums up its settlement as follows: "The agreement maintains 100 percent of existing travel routes and 90 percent of existing play areas" for snowmobiling. Existing routes and play areas,

however, were developed randomly over time and without adequate concern for wildlife and the quiet needed by others to enjoy the outdoors. **Only at your insistence will the Forest Service take a serious second look at the areas it is proposing for continued snowmobile use.**

*(Continued on the next page).*



*Keith Hammer photo*

Both snowmobiles and motorcycles "high-mark" in this alpine meadow along the Swan Crest.

## No Season Free From Motorized Abuse

(continued from previous page)

Snowmobilers have been crying bloody murder because the lawsuit settlement doesn't give them unlimited access to the Flathead National Forest. It's time the Flathead hears from you as well!

After a look at preliminary maps of the Flathead's proposal, we suggest you make the following points:

1. The amendment should include motorized restrictions for all seasons since wheel-driven ATVs are operating over-snow and snowmobiles are operating off-snow, regardless of season.

2. Snowmobiles and wheel-driven ATVs should have to follow the same restrictions as conventional passenger vehicles in order to provide adequate wildlife security. Keep the machines on the roads and used only during seasons that don't harm wildlife.

3. The Flathead proposal unacceptably leaves virtually the entire northern Swan Range open yearlong, with the exception of Jewel Basin. It unacceptably leaves the entire east slope of the non-wilderness Mission Mountains open yearlong.

4. While most of the Whitefish Range is marked closed yearlong, many roads are marked open yearlong, failing to provide for seasonal wildlife security needs, such as spring grizzly bear habitat and elk calving. Forest-wide, it appears there is no provision to keep snowmobiling out of

areas used by denning grizzly bear and rare non-denning wildlife like wolverine and the threatened lynx.

5. The assessment must include the effects of noise not only on wildlife and other recreation, but on neighborhoods near snowmobile staging areas, where the noise and trash can be unbearable.

6. Mention the specific areas where you ski and hike and expect quiet forest, not the drone of motorized vehicles.

☛ To get a copy of

**the proposal and participate in the 30-day comment period**, contact Terry Chute at 758-5243 or [tchute@fs.fed.us](mailto:tchute@fs.fed.us). Send your comments to Flathead National Forest, 1935 3rd Avenue East, Kalispell, Montana 59901 or fax them to 758-5363. **Help wildlife and quiet recreation by getting involved!**



Keith Hammer photo

Vegetation destroyed by snowmobiles hill climbing off-snow near Strawberry Lake on June 13, 2002.

## *Sound Research: Quiet Being Driven from the Landscape*

Bernie Krause has spent more than half of his 63 years recording the sounds of living organisms and natural habitats. He finds both the natural habitats and the absence of mechanical noise needed to record them rapidly disappearing.

"In 1968, when I first began my odyssey, I could record for about 15 hours and capture about an hour of usable sound - a ratio of about 15 to 1. Now it takes nearly 2,000 hours to obtain one hour of untainted natural sound," Krause reported in a speech last year. During this same time period, undisturbed old-growth forest habitats decreased from 48% to 2% of what they once were, compounding the problem of increased machine noise.

Krause finds each species occupies a particular niche in the natural spectrum of sounds. When that specie's natural habitat is destroyed, as through clear-cutting, the species is displaced into an unfamiliar landscape of other species' voices which may overlap its niche. As a result, the displaced species is no longer able to communicate effectively and a once naturally orchestrated symphony becomes a blur of noise.

As a musician, Krause replaced Pete Seeger in The Weavers in 1963 and went on to contribute synthesizer performances for such films as "Apocalypse Now." As a naturalist, he has since produced 50 envi-

ronmental record albums through his company Wild Sanctuary.

Krause notes aboriginal cultures "have long been aware that there is a symphony of natural sounds where each creature voice performs as an integral part of an animal orchestra." This he contrasts to our western culture, where "the louder the sounds we can produce, the more virile we are supposed to feel absent anything else of consequence that provides us with a sense of self- or spiritual worth."

Krause has published a number of scientific papers and provides visual soundscape spectrograms. These provide graphic

illustration not only of the particular niches occupied by individual species, but of the effects of intrusive noises like jet overflights. One spectrograph, for example, demonstrates how jet noise disrupts the synchronicity of frog vocalizations, allowing predators to capitalize on the intrusion and zero in on individual frogs!

Krause tells of the aboriginal Pitjantjara of central Australia using the singing of ants and other critters to navigate the flat and otherwise undifferentiated landscape. It is in our own human self-interest to minimize noise whenever and wherever possible if we wish to remain a part of the landscape. Check out the sources for this article at [www.wildsanctuary.com](http://www.wildsanctuary.com)!



*Swan View Coalition photo*

Motorcycles race through clearcut grizzly bear habitat ~ 1986.

## *In Memoriam: Glacier Area Wildlands Lose Two Caring Advocates*

Crown of the Continent communities and wildlands lost two longtime advocates this Spring. Sharlon Willows died May 9 and Dale Gunderson died May 27. Both were born and raised in Montana, were members of Swan View Coalition, and both inspire us to protect the natural environment and quality of life that are unique to Montana.



Sharlon passed away at the age of 54 at the Creston home of her sister, Bonni Quist, with a bold view of the Swan Mountains from her bedroom window. Sharlon cofounded the Coalition for Canyon Preservation in Hungry Horse with Bradley Chase and served as its president. Sharlon was a licensed paralegal who, among other victories, won a court order against the cutting of cedar trees at Avalanche Campground in Glacier National Park when a new parking lot was proposed. She also won substantial changes in the reconstruction design of Highway 2 from Hungry Horse to West Glacier and was fighting to preserve Berne Memorial Park and its native spring in Badrock Canyon from Highway 2 widening plans at the time of her death. Sharlon is survived by her daughter Willow, her parents, sisters and brother, their families, and her dog Grizzly.

Dale passed away at the age of 52, with family and friends at his side and a host of songbirds at his window near the Flathead River. Dale had a forestry degree from University of Montana and had worked for both the Forest Service and Glacier National Park. Dale also taught university classes in Glacier and helped conduct grizzly bear surveys there. He was an avid backcountry hiker and skier and served on the Flathead Nordic Ski Patrol. Dale brought his friends and family together to gift them his worldly possessions in a potlatch celebration, then gracefully passed away a couple days later. His ashes will be spread in Glacier and on Cougar Peak near Thompson Falls. Dale is survived by his son Adam, daughter Lindsey, his mother, his brother and sister and their families, his cousin John Sheldon, and his dog Dax.



Dale (2nd left), friends, and Glacier National Park - 2002.

Ken Degitz photo

## Parting Thoughts



*"As I see beyond the days of now  
 I see a vision:  
 I see the faces of my people,  
 your sons' sons,  
 your daughters' daughters,  
 laughter fills the air  
 that is no longer yellow and heavy,  
 the machines have died,  
 quietness and beauty  
 have returned to the land.  
 The gentle ways of our race  
 have again put us  
 in the days of the old.  
 It is good to live!  
 It is good to die!  
 - This will happen."*

*Helmut Hirnschall drawing of Chief Dan George*

Chief Dan George (Co-Salish)

**Your membership is important to us and we appreciate your voice for wild and quiet places. Your contributions also make us less dependent on grants from foundations. Please ask your friends and hiking companions to join us in protecting the public lands where they work and play!**



If there is pink on your mailing lable, 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 help people help the earth.

**Here is a ( ) token, ( ) a chunk, ( ) all of the money I have, as a tax-deductible contribution.  
 Send me \_\_\_ CDs of songs about wildland predators at \$15 each (not tax-deductible).**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY, STATE, ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

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Kalispell, MT 59901*

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