Swan View’s News

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“Nature and human nature on the same path.”

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Keeping Our Eye on the Ball!

There’s plenty to distract us during this COVID crisis and election year! This newsletter will focus on where we are headed while paying our respects for what has come before us.


On page 3 we provide updates about current issues and our ongoing Flathead Forest Plan lawsuit - all aimed at seeing that public lands are not overrun by roads, logging and commercial recreation.

On pages 4 and 5 we look at the Good Neighbor Authority and how it is a feel-good euphemism for turning federal public resources over to the states and private corporations.

Last newsletter we shared some unsolicited praise for the continuation of our weekly Swan Ranger email reports, even though we’ve had to suspend the weekly group outings indefinitely due to the pandemic. While those weekly reports continue to be very popular, on page 6 we share unsolicited praise for our role as a 36-year repository of documents still important to today’s public lands battles!

On page 6 we also announce our October 11 general membership meeting. We’ve moved it forward a month this year so we can hold it outdoors during this time of COVID distancing.

On page 7 we remind you that Cinnabar Foundation has again said it will match the first $4,000 of your donations to support our work! So act quickly to double your donation!

We hope you and yours are well and healthy. While there is a lot of unrest in the streets these days, we see the non-violent aspects of those protests as a very good sign that people do not intend to let democracy, racial justice or environmental justice die at the hands of privilege.

As uncomfortable as the 1960s and 1970s were for many, it was that civil unrest that brought about bedrock civil rights and environmental legislation, signed into law by presidents from both political parties, that we still rely on!

May we all stay strong, stand together and keep our eye on the ball!

Reading a hard copy newsletter and want to access it in color with linked citations? Visit http://www.swanview.org

Keith
Remembering and Appreciating Jim Posewitz

“Jim Posewitz stepped into the Wilderness Beyond near high noon on a sun-filled glorious Montana day. Our happy warrior crossed The Great Divide on July 3, 2020. In life he blazed a trail for all conservationists to follow.” (Click here for Jim’s obituary).

SVC Chair Keith Hammer first met Jim when he sat alongside him as part of a panel discussion on conservation issues in the early 1990s. Jim was still working for Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at that time. It was clearly evident that, in addition to his commitment to “Fair Chase” hunting ethics, Jim was dedicated to protecting the habitat that fish and wildlife depend on.

Jim was also a founding member and Executive Director of the Cinnabar Foundation for 25 years. During this time we got to know Jim pretty well and received a number of Challenge Grants from Cinnabar, which required that we raise an equal amount from other sources in order to receive the grant.

We chose to match the grants with individual contributions from our members rather than with grants from other foundations whenever possible. This is in keeping with one of the “rules to lead by” that Jim wrote in 1989: “Never, never, never stray from our grassroots constituents. Be one of them and among them.”

Another of Jim’s rules we took to heart was “Never let your opponent’s appraisal of your chances influence you. If they say you can’t win or they will kick your butt, show up anyhow. Surrender nothing; make your opponent take it from you. Just standing there makes a big difference.”

We received the highest form of praise from Jim and Cinnabar Foundation when they awarded Keith Hammer the 2006 Len and Sandy Sargent Stewardship Award at the Echo Lake Cafe (see photo below). The award was given because we “stood firm against the peddlers of hate, threat, and intimidation . . . unbowed.”

Jim’s final rule was “Trust your intuition and don’t take yourself too seriously. Cling to your sense of humor. Learn to laugh at your troubles and you’ll never run out of things to laugh at. Humor allows you to bite the forbidden truth. Besides, it will drive your enemies nuts.”

We will miss you Jim, but we’ll never forget you!
Culverts and Lawsuits!

Earthjustice filed the initial summary judgement briefs in our Flathead Forest Plan lawsuit August 5, seeking to reinstate road and culvert limits to protect grizzly bear and bull trout habitat. Meanwhile, the Flathead has issued two annual reports under its new culvert monitoring plan, which monitors culverts in closed roads in bull trout habitat only once every six years rather than the previous every-year requirement - and the results are not good!

The 2017 report, conducted in the north half of the North Fork Flathead, found 37% of the culverts to be at high risk of failing, 39% at moderate risk, and only 24% at low risk. When culverts fail, which they inevitably do when not cleaned regularly, the road dirt ends up in the creek where it can smother bull trout and other fish eggs in nests called redds.

The report concludes, as shown in its graph above: “The vast majority [of] high risk culverts are within Red Meadow Creek sub-watershed.” It’s clear that Red Meadow watershed also has the most moderate and low risk culverts.

The Flathead’s Frozen Moose EA notes that “bull trout redds have not been observed in Red Meadow Creek since 2008.” Yet it plans to build more roads and log and/or burn over 8,000 acres in the north half of the North Fork, while admitting “short-term increases in sediment delivery primarily to Red Meadow Creek Drainage would overlap critical bull trout spawning habitat.”

This is the Forest Service ensuring extirpation of bull trout from Red Meadow Creek and we are letting the FS know it is not acceptable! We have commented on the Frozen Moose EA alongside Friends of the Wild Swan and we continue to press for relief via our Forest Plan lawsuit, which hopefully will be decided next year.

Trail Runner Collides with Grizzly Bear!

A trail runner physically collided with a grizzly bear in Glacier National Park on July 11. Fortunately, the bear was forgiving and ran away after they both tumbled off the trail.

Meanwhile, the Whitefish Legacy Partners and Flathead National Forest are wanting to turn trail running in grizzly bear habitat into a spectator sport! A special use permit for WLP’s race from Whitefish to the top of Big Mountain and back would allow 400 runners and 300 spectators and volunteers!

WLP’s web site currently states a decision on whether or not to run the October 3 race due to COVID concerns will be made by September 1. Does it really take a potentially lethal virus pandemic to cancel a really bad idea?

What about concern over flooding grizzly bear habitat with 700 people during the time of year the bears are trying to fatten up on huckleberries and other foods for winter hibernation? Events like this instead spread the notion that the outdoors is nothing more than an amusement park!
2014 Farm Bill’s “Good Neighbor Authority:” A “Good Ol’ Boy” Scheme for Privatizing Public Resources!

The clearcutting of Helena, Montana’s water supply was done under the Good Neighbor Authority of the 2014 Farm Bill, as pictured on this page. In 2016 Montana Governor Steve Bullock stood in front of this clearcut and a log skidder to announce his signing of a Good Neighbor Authority Agreement with Montana Dept. of Resources and Conservation and the U.S. Forest Service. (Click here for photo/article).

The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) is one of Congress’ many attempts to speed up logging projects on federal land - but this time by granting authority to State forestry departments like DNRC to help do so. DNRC in Montana, for example, can help plan and execute federal timber sales. As recently announced by the Flathead National Forest, it had sold its Taylor Hellroaring timber sale to the local F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company. DNRC “oversaw the bidding process and will be responsible for administering the sale.”

So, essentially, we now have states being the go-between in transferring federal resources to private corporations. The deed for the land remains federal, but not the resources sold! In other words, the federal taxpayers pay for the management of their public lands, but private business reaps the profits from the resources removed from those lands!

But this should nonetheless be a good deal for the land, right? Surely the local DNRC and sawmills know better than the federal Forest Service how to manage forest lands? The photos on page 5 show that all three land managers are a concern when it comes to their logging practices!

All post-logging photos were taken by Swan View Coalition in August 2020. From top to bottom they show Stoltze, DNRC and Forest Service logging.

What all three logging jobs have in common is that they have reduced the diversity of tree species and ages in shady forests that were cooler and more moist before logging. A visit to these forests disproves, for example, the Forest Service’s claim that its Weed Lake Landscape Restoration Project (another GNA project) “diversifies the landscape by changing the balance of tree sizes and species dominance. By diversifying the tree size and species, a landscape becomes less susceptible to damage from a single disturbance.”

The GNA is just one more tool allowing government and industry to rob stored carbon from public forests as logs, leaving the more flammable logging slash behind or sending it up in smoke!
Logging by U.S. Forest Service, DNRC and F.H. Stoltze

F.H. Stoltze logging unit in Haskill Basin and adjacent forest (8/13/20)

MT DNRC logging unit in Krause Basin and adjacent forest (8/1/20)

USFS Weed Lake Landscape Restoration logging before (9/7/19) and after (8/8/20)
Unsolicited Praise for Our Work and Assistance!

“I appreciate your watchdog eyes on things - being still newer to the Flathead Valley, I appreciate people who can put events like this into a broader context and bring in questions about transparency and accessibility for commenting on events that were only surface-level described by the Forest [Service].”

K.G.

“The NFPA thanks you for your research and response. I believe we will be incorporating aspects of it regarding the National Forest in our response.”

R.K.

“Thanks for EVERYTHING you do for the outdoors in general, and our community in particular. We are blessed to have you on board!”

D.K.

“Thanks. The North Fork community is definitely getting engaged!”

E.H.

“I thought that stuff was lost forever and appreciate your efforts to retrieve it. Thanks for sending the files. It has also reinforced the gratitude I feel toward you and others who have stayed in the fight and who continue to serve the interests of wildlands and wildlife.”

L.M.

“These PDFs are golden and are shared with political leaders, agencies and others. Thanks again for the service.”

M.B.

“Thanks for all you do and your leadership.”

D.H.

Annual Membership Meeting Outdoors October 11!

Join us for our Membership Meeting Sunday, October 11, at 4pm! We will meet outdoors in Keith and Pam’s yard at 3165 Foothill Road.

We’ll spend an hour electing officers, discussing a bit of business, and summarizing the past year’s challenges and accomplishments!

Then we’ll enjoy a bring-your-own dinner and socializing in a relaxed atmosphere!

Please bring you own food, dishes, beverage, and folding chair. This will not be potluck as a COVID precaution. Please dress for the weather and bring a COVID face mask.

We hope you can join us for a bit of business and a fun, COVID-safe gathering!

You can also help us meet our Cinnabar Matching Grant by renewing your membership dues (see next page)!
Your Donations Again Doubled by Cinnabar Foundation!

Cinnabar Foundation has again issued us a Challenge/Matching Grant for $4,000 - so be among the first to donate to get your money doubled by Cinnabar!

We rely in large part on member donations to fund our work protecting habitat for fish, wildlife and people. You can help us broaden our membership by giving Gift Memberships at $25 each, either on-line or using the form below! It’s easy to join with and help others support 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 https://swanviewcoalition.networkforgood.com (or by clicking on the Donate Now button at right)!

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 it 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: ____________________________________________________________
Executive Summary

Remembering and Appreciating Jim Posewitz!

Culverts, Lawsuit, Trail Runner Collides with Grizzly Bear!

Good Neighbor Authority a Good Ol’ Boy Privatization Scheme!

Photos of Recent Logging by USFS, MT DNRC and F.H. Stoltze!

Unsolicited Praise for our Work and Assistance, Annual Meeting Oct. 11!

Donate Now and Cinnabar Foundation Will Double Your Money!