



Swan View Coalition
3165 Foothill Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

"Nature and human nature on the same path."

www.swanview.org
www.swanrange.org
swanview@swanview.org

How to Stay Positive in a Warming Climate!

How can the mining and shipping of coal from southeast Montana to China harm wolverine high in the Mountains of northwest Montana? Or the mining of tar sands in Alberta, diluted to a form of crude oil that is piped to Gulf Coast refineries? Or the logging of trees to feed "biomass facilities" that produce electricity and carbon-based fuels?

The short answer is: "Due to carbon emissions that are warming the climate, whether we burn fossil fuels or trees." Indeed, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed that wolverine in the lower 48 states join the arctic polar bear on the list of species threatened with extinction by climate warming!

We'll explain on page 2 of this newsletter how it is not just glaciers that are melting, but also the late-spring mountain snow packs that wolverine absolutely depend on for their survival. And, on page 3, we'll look at other threats to wolverine and show you what you can do to help secure them protections under the Endangered Species Act.

There is a carbon connection between the horrible air pollution in Beijing, record summer temperatures set in Australia and globally, and diminishing snow fields that alpine ski areas depend on. This winter in the Swan Range was so warm I only pulled a hat over my ears twice and wore mittens only once while searching for cold-snow ski conditions every weekend!

But there are simple things we can do personally, locally and globally to slow climate warming. We'll list a few of them on page 4.

Protecting the environment we all depend on does, however, require a lifelong commitment at our core and good daily

habits. In this regard, on pages 5 and 6, we give a nod of thanks to Bigfork's George Darrow, a longtime member, pioneer in Montana environmental policy, and steadfast advocate for designation of the Swan Crest as Wilderness!



Jerry Sprunger Cartoon

Keith

FWS Proposes to List Wolverine as "Threatened!"

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in February proposed to list wolverine in the contiguous United States as "threatened" with extinction under the Endangered Species Act. FWS finds wolverine are threatened by climate warming that has already and will continue to decrease late-season snow fields absolutely essential to wolverine survival.

Wolverine dig elaborate dens in the snow to protect their young from harsh winter temperatures and predators. They also cache food in deep snow to keep it secure from other predators. FWS estimates cold, snowy wolverine habitat will decline another 31% by 2045 and by 63% by 2085! In concert with the primary threat of climate change, genetic isolation of sub-populations and trapping are also listed as threats.

A lawsuit filed in 2012 by Western Environmental Law Center on behalf of Swan View Coalition and other groups challenged Montana's wolverine trapping season - the last in the contiguous 48 states. A judge halted the trapping season the day prior to its December 1 opening, and set a hearing date in January. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks later agreed to forgo the hearing and voluntarily canceled the winter trapping season in light of FWS's pending proposal to list the species as threatened.

Under its proposal, FWS would not allow the continued trapping of lower-48 wolverine and would make it unlawful to

kill wolverine by accident while trapping other species. Montana FWP and trappers are expected to ask for special exemptions from these rules, so it is important for the general public to speak out in their favor! (See next page).

Like grizzly bears, wolverine are among the slowest reproducing mammals. This is due, in part, to the delayed implantation of the fertilized egg in the uterus, which allows the female to abort the egg if she is not in good physical condition going into winter.

It can take two consecutive years of favorable conditions for a female wolverine to obtain the health necessary to bear young!

Unlike grizzly bear, however, wolverine do not hibernate during the winter. They instead travel on and dig deep within winter snow pack

to feed on animals as small as snowshoe hare and as large as elk. They are also known to move their maternal dens when disturbed by humans, expending precious energy and exposing their young to predators.

Several hundred wolverine still inhabit portions of the Rocky Mountains in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, the Willowa Range of Oregon, and the North Cascade Range in Washington. Only a single wolverine each has been confirmed in the Sierra Nevada of California and high mountains of Colorado. Due to Colorado's geographic isolation, FWS also proposes to reintroduce more wolverine there. (Continued on next page).



Wolverine navigating deep snow. Steve Kroschel Photo

More on Threats to Wolverine and What You Can Do!

FWS's proposal downplays other threats to wolverine due to lack of research and data to confirm those threats. Rightfully, FWS's Draft Recovery Outline calls for "research into possible human impacts to wolverines and their habitat to ensure human activities remain nonthreatening.

Perhaps FWS's greatest oversight is the high potential for snowmobiles to displace wolverine and their dens as they compete for the same high elevation snowfields! Indeed, Hornocker and Hash's seminal 1970's research on wolverine in the Swan Range warned "human access on snowmobiles or all-terrain vehicles could bring about disturbance and conflict, not to mention ease of access for fur trappers." This warning was issued decades prior to today's "mountain sleds"



Swan Range wolverine den. Keith Hammer photo

that have more horsepower than a Subaru and can climb to the very tops of peaks and ridge-lines!

We have documented how the unlawful clearing of a snowmobile trail in the Swan

Range was quickly followed by snowmobile-riding trappers setting conibear traps for fur-bearing wildlife! Since securing a court-ordered closure of this trail, Swan View has documented the area's use by wolverine for travel, feeding and denning!

While FWS does make large of how climate warming has contributed to the genetic isolation of lower-48 sub-populations, it errs in proposing lesser "threatened" rather than "endangered" status for wolverine.

FWS finds that lower-48 populations are no longer interbreeding with Canadian wolverine and are already likely suffering a loss of genetic diversity due to small population sizes. Given FWS's admission that listing the wolverine "will not regulate greenhouse gas emissions" that contribute to climate warming and its

dire predictions that essential snowfields will decline by another 63% by 2085, FWS should grant wolverine the more protective "endangered" status now, not later!



We ask you to take 5 minutes and urge FWS to do the following:

1. List wolverine as "endangered."
2. Identify snowmobiling as a clear threat to wolverine.
3. Move quickly to designate "critical habitat" for wolverine survival.

To comment by May 6:

- A. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>
- B. Enter FWS-R6-ES-2012-0107 in the Search Box.
- C. On the resulting page, hit the Comment Now button - and comment away!

More info is at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolverine>

What You Can Do About Climate Warming!

All kidding aside (photo), there's plenty we can do about climate warming rather than migrate northward or to higher elevations, as plant and wildlife species are having to do:

1. We can decrease our CO₂ emissions by driving less and driving fuel efficient vehicles.
2. Minimize our use of motor vehicles when we recreate, and protect and designate non-motorized recreation areas close to home so we don't have to drive far to get there.
3. Grow our own food as best we can and buy the rest as locally-sourced as possible.
4. Line dry our clothes and invest in wind and solar solutions to local and global needs.
5. Recognize that every place on the planet is upwind and upstream. Whether it is Canadian tar sands petroleum or Montana coal shipped to China, the CO₂ and acid rain end up in our atmosphere, oceans, lakes, and rivers! Leave carbon in the ground and trees!
6. Get involved and informed about climate warming! Check out movements like <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Flathead-Climate-Alliance/532862260069022?fref=ts> and <http://350.org>!



The Swan Rangers seek out cooler climes atop the Swan Crest's Infinity Ridge! *Joel Vignere Photo*

George Darrow: Pioneer in MT Environmental Policy - Swan Range Wilderness Advocate!

"Bigfork Chamber of Commerce Supports Swan Crest Wilderness!" This type of news headline in the mid-1980's led me directly to Bigfork's George Darrow. He and his wife Elna were active in the Bigfork Chamber and key in its support of proposed Wilderness designation for the Swan Crest. George and Elna then owned an art gallery in Bigfork and a small wheat farm where they lived just north of there.

Some time later I'd learn George was active in oil exploration out of Billings for 27 years before moving to Bigfork and that he had been a Republican State Legislator in both Montana's House and Senate from 1967-1974. I'd soon learn it was no profound conversion of George from oil prospector to wilderness champion, but rather a passion and concern for the environment always at his core.

As a Legislator, George in 1971 wrote and led passage of the Montana Environmental Policy Act. This landmark law, along with the National Environmental Policy Act signed into law by President Richard Nixon the year before, remains key in guiding the planning of development projects with the goals of engaging the public and minimizing project impacts on the human environment.

As an elected Legislator in 1972, George could not participate in Montana's Constitutional Convention as one of its 100 citizen delegates. But he followed it closely through the ratification of a newly rewritten Montana Constitution. George recently

gave me a copy of the resulting Constitution in which he'd highlighted the following:

"We the people of Montana, grateful to God for the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains, the vastness of our rolling plains, and desiring to improve the quality of life, equality of opportunity and to secure the blessings of liberty for this and future generations do ordain and establish this constitution. . .

All persons are born free and have certain inalienable rights. They include the right to a clean and healthful environment . . . In enjoying these rights, all persons recognize corresponding responsibilities."

And therein lies the thread I would find in George's writings and testimony over the years; that for every right we may claim to property, freedom and happiness we owe a corresponding responsibility to protect the earth and the environment from which these goods are derived. With degrees in both geology and economics,

George has faithfully and repeatedly led the charge to not kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

George has been at the cutting edge in arguing for preservation of the incalculable value pristine forests and waters contribute to local economies. In 1992 George testified before a U.S. House Agriculture Subcommittee:

"One of the sustaining attributes of the Bigfork area and indeed, the other forest



George Darrow Keith Hammer Photo

inter-linked communities of the Flathead Valley, are the ramparts of the Swan Range rising 4,000 feet above the valley floor within the Flathead National Forest. The entire snow-capped Swan Crest from Columbia Mountain through the Jewel Basin and into the Bob Marshall Wilderness provides the high-quality watershed, recreation and wildlife habitat that underlie the Flathead economy."

"The entire snow-capped Swan Crest . . . provides the high-quality watershed, recreation and wildlife habitat that underlie the Flathead economy."
George Darrow

George was the chief sponsor of the Montana Water Policy Act in the 1967 Legislature and continues to this day to speak about the value of clean water and caution against its appropriation by extractive industries. Writing as President of the Crown of the Continent Institute, George notes:

"A million Montanans take pride in living in the state with the most Blue Ribbon trout streams in the nation. Ten million annual visitors are attracted by the opportunity to camp beside and dip a line in these sparkling waters where you can count the colors of the pebbles in the streambed."

George recounts with sadness and distaste then-President Regan's 1988 veto of a Montana Wilderness Bill that had passed both the U.S. House and Senate and would have designated the Swan Crest, among other areas, as Wilderness. He and many others see it as a political

favor that indeed helped Republican candidate Conrad Burns narrowly defeat incumbent Democratic John Melcher (a co-author of the Wilderness Bill) for a Montana seat in the U.S. Senate.

Writing of a time when Montana's Governor publicly stated she didn't mind being known as a "lapdog for industry," George laments changes in

the political landscape: "In an almost incredible inversion, the Republican political mainstream of 30 years ago that sought to move Montana forward against a then corporate-dominated Democratic machine, has now become today's Republican machine dedicated to re-installing the extractive industries of an earlier time as their political patrons."

In spite of the damage this rollback has done to Montana's environmental protection laws, George has far from given up the fight. He continues his work from a small homestead log cabin next to his home north of Bigfork, which serves as his Crown of the Continent Institute office. There he pulls

out a beautiful, large map he's produced of the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and readily details the work that remains to provide wilderness designations and other protections to public lands on both sides of the United State - Canada border!



George and his dog Ginger enjoying their view of the Swan Range. Keith Hammer Photo

Your Financial Support is Key to Our Work!

Swan View Coalition relies in large part on member donations to fund its work protecting habitat for fish, wildlife and people. Thanks to your support, we met our budget last year and accomplished a lot (see below)! 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 the names, addresses and greetings you choose for \$25 Gift Memberships, simply email them to keith@swanview.org or mail them to the address in #1, above.

Last year, your support and letters stopped 3 Flathead timber sales that would log lynx habitat, spared hundreds of big larch seed trees, got Big Creek off the "impaired" list, stopped the trapping of imperiled wolverine, and removed bike ramps from hiking trails!



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 _____

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Swan View Coalition, Inc.
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Swan View's News

Winter-Spring 2013



Climate Warming Comes Home to Roost!

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