

Swan View's News

Winter 2015



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"Nature and human nature on the same path."

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A New Year: Time for Intervention!

Unfortunately the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act ended on a sour note. The Public Lands Rider attached to the December must-pass Defense Bill removed some Wilderness to allow mountain biking and the paltry acres of Wilderness designated paled in comparison to Wilderness Study Areas released for fossil fuel development and public forests given outright to big corporations!

The big "wilderness" groups were less than forthcoming about the public lands and resources given away in the Defense Bill in trade for a little bit of Wilderness! While The Wilderness Society and Montana Wilderness Association touted protections afforded the Rocky Mountain Front, others pointed out it was at the cost of releasing wilderness study areas elsewhere for fossil fuels (page 2)!

These same wilderness groups are now publicly criticizing grassroots efforts to protect fish and wildlife in the courts while bragging up their alliances with industry (page 3). This newsletter is dedicated to tracking how some groups are abusing collaboration and are now playing out the predetermined role of helping the government

marginalize the general public and their access to due process (page 3).

The ugly underbelly of local collaboration has brought the political treachery of Washington D.C. to local communities and undercut the national movement for better protection of wilderness, fish and wildlife. Two examples close to home are the Southwest Crown Collaborative (page 3) and MWA and Headwaters Montana following up their Whitefish Range Partnership by selling out northern Swan Range roadless lands proposed as Wilderness in 1988 and 1994 Wilderness bills (pages 4-5).

Loving families practice the "tough love" of intervention when members adopt addictive and destructive forms of behavior. We're asking for your help calling folks out on expedient behaviors that are destroying America's conservation movement, legacy and ethic!

This is not a feel-good newsletter, but it is a must-read and a must-act. We'll conclude on page 6 with a recap of what's at stake and what you can do!

Please read on!



Lynx on snow.

Keith Williams photo

Keith

Defense Bill Public Lands Riders: Privatizing Public Lands Through Industry Pork, Token Protections

Industry wants the profits from extracting public resources while shifting the costs to the public through giveaways and subsidies. It insists on being provided public timber, minerals, coal, oil, gas, and access for mechanized recreation that fuels sales of ATVs, snowmobiles and mountain bikes.

The [Omnibus Public Lands Rider](#), attached at the 11th hour to the must-pass Defense Spending Bill in December, gives plenty of "pork" to industry with no opportunity for public hearings. It's a down and dirty way of doing business that essentially shuts the taxpayer out of the process.

The Rider flat out gives 70,000 acres of the Tongass National Forest, not just its big timber, to the Sealaska Corporation. It trades away 2,400 acres of public land sacred to Native American tribes in Arizona to a foreign copper company.

Yet the Rider was praised by The Wilderness Society, Montana Wilderness Association and others because it designated a paltry 67,000 acres of Wilderness along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. That's just 1% of the public roadless lands in Montana deserving protection as Wilderness.

Nationally, Wilderness fared even worse. Only 0.2% of eligible roadless lands were designated Wilderness. Meanwhile, 208,000 acres of the Rocky Mountain Front was instead designated a Conservation Management Area that locks in ATV and mountain bike uses, spoiling the area's

chances of being designated Wilderness in the future! In New Mexico, part of an area originally designated Wilderness in the 1964 Wilderness Act was un-designated to allow mountain biking. What a way to finish celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act!

The [International Mountain Biking Association heaps praise on the Rider](#) and the "Wilderness advocates" that help keep Wilderness away from mountain bike trails, including along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. The Wilderness Society indeed has begun [recommending alternatives to Wilderness](#) that maintain the status quo rather than protecting and restoring Wilderness values! This is an incredibly sad reversal of "wilderness advocacy!"

There are precedents being set in such Riders that are even more alarming than the particular areas protected or traded off. Firstly, these last-minute deals are being made in the dark of night with no public hearings. Then the groups getting a little something out of the deal are not telling their members what was given away in exchange, instead asking members to blindly thank their Congressional delegation for the "favor."

An open, democratic process is rapidly being dumbed down and replaced by governance by the few and select, who tell their constituents little other than to trust them. The article on the next page describes how "collaboration" is doing likewise.



Collaboration as a Government Booster Club!

In the late 1990s, Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas acknowledge that public forests "once covered with a sea of green [are] now pocked with clearcuts and criss-crossed by roads" and that the government was "faced by a segment of the public that had a differing view of what their national forests should be." Rather than change course, however, Thomas and the government branded such citizens "extremists" and set out to use collaboration to marginalize those who use the courts to enforce America's bedrock environmental laws. ([See page 2 of our Fall 2013 newsletter](#)).

Unfortunately, a number of "conservation" groups have aligned themselves with the government's redefinition of the problem as too many trees rather than too many roads. They've joined the "logging is restoration" booster club and are bad-mouthing those of us that resort to the courts when necessary.

For example, the 2009 [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program](#) (CFLRP) is designed to retain the excessive road network needed for removing forest biomass (a.k.a. trees). This even though research confirms that untidy, un-thinned forests are essential to the survival of rare and threatened species like lynx, fisher and wolverine. And, on the Flathead National Forest, research and Forest Plan standards require that substantial miles of existing road must be removed to restore grizzly bear habitat security and watersheds.

Simply put, CFLRP uses tax dollars to match private and other government funding, enticing others to support "logging is

restoration" because there is money to be made in doing so. Groups like The Wilderness Society heap praise on CFLRP's [Southwest Crown Collaborative](#), even though the Forest Service continues to fight against the road decommissioning required by its Forest Plan, especially on former Plum Creek lands now owned by the Forest Service.

Our pleadings at SWCC meetings fell on deaf ears, so we had to secure a court order directing the Forest Service to apply its road decommissioning standards! It's bad enough when collaborators sit silently as the agency runs amok. It's even worse when collaborators like TWS and Montana Wilderness Association publicly bad-mouth - [as they have recently](#) - those of us that retain enough autonomy to challenge the agency when necessary.

In a [12/4/14 joint press release](#), TWS, the timber industry and others urge Congress to fund more collaboration so they can increase the scale and pace of logging-as-restoration - while criticizing folks who "use litigation . . . to influence Forest Service policy." There is something dreadfully wrong when [booster clubs urge Congress to listen only to them](#) and to ignore the broader public and those working to see our bedrock environmental laws enforced!

Have no doubts that collaborative booster clubs and late-night deals like the Defense Bill are replacing your voice and democracy with governance by the select and privileged! It's big money with those who flock to it once again bullying those who insist average people, fish and wildlife have a voice.



"In my book a pioneer is a man who turned all the grass upside down, strung bob-wire over the dust that was left, poisoned the water, cut down the trees, killed the Indian who owned the land, and called it progress. If I had my way, the land here would be like God made it, and none of you sons of bitches would be here at all."

Charlie Russell, 1923, to the Great Falls Booster Club

MWA and Headwaters Sell Out Northern Swan Range!

Montana Wilderness Association and Headwaters Montana have sold out wilderness-quality lands in the northern Swan Range, telling the Flathead National Forest to instead reserve them for snowmobiles, dirt bikes and mountain bikes - with the exception of an enlarged Jewel Basin Hiking Area! [Their proposal](#) deceptively calls these motorized trails and play areas "Non-Motorized with Exceptions," though they would occupy the majority of the area!

Similarly, MWA-HMT call for virtually no Wilderness on the west slopes of the Swan Range. This though the [Flathead finds most of it may be wilderness suitable](#) in its inventory and the [Wildlife Conservation Society's John Weaver recommends](#) Wilderness from the Bob Marshall Wilderness north "to above Lake Blaine."

Dr. Weaver also recommends Wilderness along the east slopes of the Swan Range and calls for the decommissioning of roads in upper Quintonkin, Wheeler and Doris Creeks to protect avalanche chutes key to grizzly bears and to reconnect habitats severed by trans-Swan motorcycle trails. MWA-HMT instead specifically retain the trans-Swan Peterson-Quintonkin motorcycle route as well as the Columbia-Doris, Hemler-Doris, and Peters Ridge-Jimmie Ridge trans-Swan motorcycle routes. Also protected by MWA-HMT

are motorcycle and mountain bike use of Alpine Trail #7 and vast snowmobile play areas that include late-season areas north and south of Jewel Basin. There snowmobiles are allowed as late as the end of May, even though grizzly bears begin emerging from their winter dens in late March and wolverines once found in densities higher than Glacier Park continue to rely on persistent spring snow pack for their survival!

The Swan Range is the largest contiguous chunk of roadless and wilderness suitable lands on the Flathead. These lands



Swan Crest sold out by MWA-HMT!

Keith Hammer photo

deserve to be protected by wilderness advocates, not sold out by wilderness apologists!

The Flathead has found 280,000 acres in the Swan Range may be wilderness suitable. MWA-HMT recommend about half of it and omit substantial areas deemed worthy of Wil-

derness designation by Congress in 1988!

It is a sad day when "wilderness" groups ask for less wilderness than scientists and grass-roots groups. The chart on the next page shows how poorly the MWA-HMT proposal stacks up against Dr. Weaver's recommendations and those in our [Citizen reVision of the Flathead Forest Plan](#). As with the [Whitefish Range Partnership](#), this represents another rush to compromise early so the proposal can be compromised again and again on down the line.

A Comparison of Wilderness and Backcountry Recommendations: Flathead National Forest Portion of the Swan Range (North to South)

Area	1. Citizen reVision	2. Dr. John Weaver-WCS	3. MWA-Headwaters
Columbia Mountain	Wilderness	Non-Motorized	Motors Allowed
Doris, Lost Johnny	Wilderness	Wilderness	Motors Allowed
Wounded Buck, Wildcat	Wilderness	Wilderness	Motors Allowed
Jewel Basin, Broken Leg	Wilderness	Wilderness	Wilderness
West Slope Jewel-Napa	Wilderness	Wilderness	Motors Allowed
Upper Quintonkon	Wilderness	Wilderness	Motors Allowed
Lower Sullivan	Wilderness	Wilderness	Snowmobiles Allowed
Upper Sullivan-Bunker	Wilderness	Wilderness	Wilderness
Swan Front Napa South	Wilderness	Wilderness	Wilderness

The Citizen reVision and Wildlife Conservation Society's Dr. John Weaver recommend Wilderness for virtually all contiguous roadless lands from the Bob Marshall to Columbia Mtn., though Weaver omits Columbia Mountain and some adjacent lands. The MWA-Headwaters Wilderness recommendations are disjunct, retaining motorcycle trails, roads and snowmobile areas that disconnect Jewel Basin from the Sullivan-Bunker-Bob Marshall areas. The MWA-Headwaters recommendations "reflect [Flathead Forest Plan] Amendment 24," which allows snowmobiling in the majority of the northern Swan Ranges' wolverine habitat and after grizzly bears have emerged from their winter dens both north and south of Jewel Basin. MWA-Headwaters retain a cross-Swan motorized route up the Patterson Creek Trail and down the Quintonkon Trail and Road south of Jewel Basin. MWA-Headwaters retain similar cross-Swan motorized routes north of Jewel Basin.

1. "Citizen reVision of the Flathead Forest Plan," March 2014, Swan View Coalition and Friends of the Wild Swan. Provides recommendations for Wilderness designations and Wildland Recovery Areas where roads would be decommissioned and mechanized vehicles disallowed.

http://www.swanview.org/reports/Citizen_reVision_Flathead_Forest_Plan.pdf

2. "Conservation Legacy on a Flagship Forest: Wildlife and Wildlands on the Flathead National Forest, Montana," May 2014, John Weaver, Wildlife Conservation Society. Provides recommendations for Wilderness designations, Wildland Restoration Zones where roads would be decommissioned and closed to motor vehicles, and Backcountry Non-Motorized designations.

<http://www.wcs.org/press/press-releases/report-maps-out-future-for-flathead.aspx>

3. "Swan Mountain Range: Flathead National Forest," November 2014, Montana Wilderness Association and Headwaters Montana. Provides recommendations for Wilderness designations, Wildland Restoration where roads would be decommissioned and closed to motor vehicles, and "Backcountry Non-Motorized with Exceptions" designations "maintaining and limiting motorized use to current routes, play areas, and trails."

http://www.headwatersmontana.com/sites/default/files/BunkerJewelReport_Final.compressed_0.pdf

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Intervening to Avert Disaster: What You Can Do!

The old adage that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it remains true - and those who want to continue destroying public wildlands are counting on it! We pioneered our way across America and have roaded and chewed up the vast majority of it. Yet our political system remains based in the mistaken notion that we can destroy another half of what's left, then another half and another.

Many folks have become so enamoured with the collaborative process they no longer judge it by its results. What better way for government to continue destroying wildlife habitat and wildlands than by getting advocates so tied up in collaborative meetings they no longer have time to study, remember and enforce environmental law!

Both Montana Wilderness Association and The Wilderness Society are hiring new staff to attend meetings to help meet the growing demands of collaboration. MWA told its members to heap praise on Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) without noting he released some Wilderness Study Areas as ransom for the Rocky Mtn. Front Act, but are now accusing him of a "sucker punch" in his bid to remove protections from more WSAs.

TWS and MWA are organizing a Helena rally to protest efforts to transfer federal lands to Montana ownership while simultaneously [agreeing to work collaboratively on forest management reform at the behest of Sen. Daines](#). Daines wants to ["transfer some of that responsibility back to our governors and our states to allow them to take](#)

[the lead on managing timber harvests on these federal lands."](#) Is anyone going to say NO to this transfer of federal authority?

We should never confuse "balanced" with "two-faced" or "restoration" with "more logging." In the past, the grass-roots activists that knew the local landscape could count on regional and national groups to have their backs in Helena and D.C.. Not so anymore.

The bedrock civil rights and environmental laws of the 1960s and 1970s were won by movements based in social justice, antimaterialism, and direct public challenges to "the establishment." We are dangerously close to losing it all to folks intent instead on social favoritism, giving the consumer everything they want, and paying any price for access to elected officials.

We urge you to hone your skills at knowing the difference between a wilderness apologist that gives the lion's share away to save a bit of Wilderness and a wilderness advocate that knows we need all we can get for the conservation of fish and wildlife - one who is willing to protect it in court until the day it can be permanently protected by Congress.

Write a letter to the editor when you think fish, wildlife and wildlands are getting the short end of the stick. Speak up for the grass-roots defenders when collaborators attack them in the press. Urge TWS, MWA and HMT to be strong advocates.

We give voice to fish, wildlife and wildlands. We need all the help we can get and yours is GREATLY APPRECIATED!



Fisher

Forest Service photo

Your Financial Support is Key to Our Work!

We rely in large part on member donations to fund our work protecting habitat for fish, wildlife and people. THANK YOU for the \$20,000 in December that raised 40% of our 2014 budget and for your continued support in 2015!

You can help broaden our membership base by giving Gift Memberships at \$25 each, on-line or using the donation form below!



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!

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- 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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