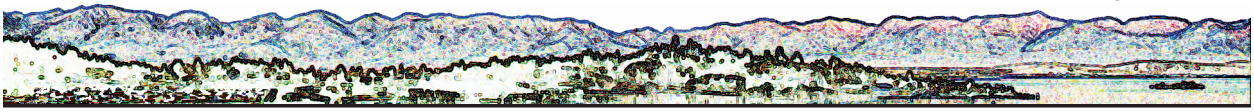
Swan View's News

Holidays 2019



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"Nature and human nature on the same path."

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Seeds of Hope in Dark Times!

As promised, we will deliver some encouraging news and guidance in this Holidays newsletter. Page 2 briefly reminds us of the pickle we have gotten ourselves and the planet into, then the remainder of this newsletter is devoted to describing the many bold initiatives and approaches being taken to make things better.

Page 3 provides a few examples of people speaking out in plain terms to help us change our path away from climate warming, species extinctions and forest mismanagement. These folks can help us find our way and they demonstrate the courage to act!

Page 4 suggests ways to rethink our personal behaviors so we each minimize our impacts on the environment. The rewards of acting mindfully outweigh the "sacrifices." They make us feel healthy and hopeful!

Page 5 helps us rethink what we want from conservation organizations and the way they represent us. Are the groups we support working to conserve fish, wildlife and wildlands at all costs? Or are they instead taking more politically popular and better funded positions that repeatedly cut what's left of the natural world in half?

Page 6 presents a few notable quotes that encourage us to do the right thing, whether it is politically popular at the moment or not. Page 6, as usual, also includes some unsolicited praise for our work - from people young and old, near and far.

Page 7 announces Patagonia will match your donations made Nov 29 - Dec 31 , doubling your money to help us continue our work on behalf of fish, wildlife, wildlands, and people.

But right here we want to say THANK YOU to all of you that helped us meet our $4,000 Cinnabar matching grant - or have otherwise provided us a donation in the past year! Your generous support and kind words are what have kept us going for 35 years!

HAPPY SOLSTICE, HAPPY HOLIDAYS and THANK YOU!

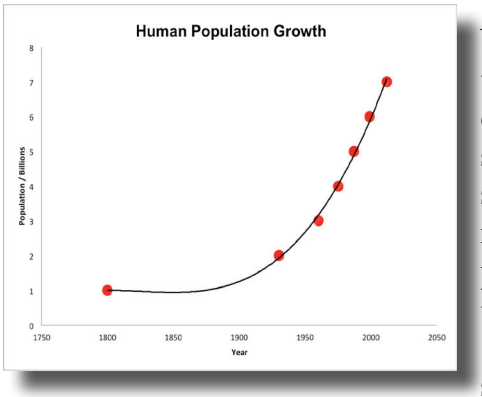
Keith

Reading a hard copy newsletter and want to access its linked citations? A pdf version is at http://www.swanview.org

Minimizing Consumption as Our Population Increases!

As the Wikipedia graph on this page indicates, our human population continues to increase exponentially. Because we live on a finite planet, this means each of us needs to reduce our consumption of natural resources if we are to sustain ourselves and our quality of life.

That's right, we can maintain our quality of life while reducing the quantity of stuff we consume and by making better choices in how and what we consume. Contrary to consumerist advertising - which makes us feel inadequate so we will buy the stuff promised to make us whole again - living sustainably helps us realize we are already whole and an integrated part of the Earth ecosystem.



In our Summer-Fall newsletter, we were quite frank about how the Forest Service and its partners/collaborators have largely turned "conservation" into further "development" of resources. They have done this by renaming logging "restoration forestry" and by rewarding "conservation" groups willing to go along with this hoax the rights to build recreational trails on public land and then promote their use through commercial races as though this increases conservation.

The result is adding unsustainable recreation programs to unsustainable logging programs. There has been plenty of research in this regard. Shannon et al (2017) write: "Ecotourism is often considered highly compatible with conservation efforts because it generates revenue through the nonconsumptive use of wildlife (in contrast to, e.g., fishing and hunting), while helping to foster a conservation ethic among participants. However, it is becoming clear that human presence in natural areas is not without cost. Evidence suggests that human presence does not only cause disturbance to the behavior of animals in the short term but may well have population and ecological level consequences that affect survival, reproductive success, and the structure of ecological communities."

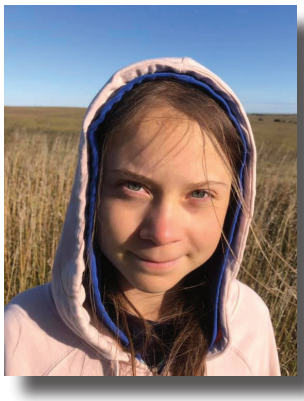
This is not to say that people cannot continue to enjoy their public lands, but it does require people to be mindful of their impacts and to not assume that they are benign. In this day and age, when our National Parks are overcrowded and our National Forests are quickly becoming so, we need to question the wisdom of promoting industrial-strength recreation. We should instead be teaching people how to live, play and work lighter on the land.

There are plenty of steps each of us can take to reduce our consumption of recreational products and our impacts to wildlife - while enriching our connection with the outdoors (see pages 4 and 5). Business can either help or hinder this process.

Recreational Equipment Incorporated (from whom we receive no funding) cautions that "It is not advisable to ride mountain bikes in grizzly country [because] bikes cover ground quickly and quietly, meaning you could encounter a grizzly in a swift and startling manner . . . a grave error." Patagonia (from whom we do receive funding) urges consumers to repair, resell and recycle clothing before purchasing a new product. Patagonia and others invest 1% of profits into "saving the planet."

We Can Lead, We Can Follow, But We Must Act!

People young and old are helping lead the way to a more sustainable future. We can follow their lead, we can lead by our own example, but we must act!



Sixteen year old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg put it this way last December: "Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope . . . if solutions within the system are so impossible to find, maybe we should change the system itself." This September, she told the UN "We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"

Researchers many decades her senior are also calling out the political bias that ignores nature in favor of commerce and industry. Diana Six finds that thinning forests through logging does not select for trees genetically resistant to pine beetles and instead simply increases tree mortality. Tague and Moritz (2019) similarly find that thinning forests through logging can result in trees less resilient to droughts, which are becoming more severe with climate change.

Leaders and educators have taken firm positions opposed to the political and commercial penchant for repeatedly cutting the natural world in half as though that is an acceptable compromise with limitless greed. E.O. Wilson has proposed that half of Earth be conserved for its biodiversity, saying "I will argue that every scrap of biological diversity is priceless, to be learned and cherished, and never to be surrendered without a struggle." David Attenborough emphasizes the non-consumptive value of nature. "I just wish the world was twice as big and half of it was still unexplored . . . An understanding of the natural world and what's in it is a source of not only a great curiosity but great fulfillment."

Conservation groups, scientists and citizens, led by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, decades ago crafted the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA). It has most recently been reintroduced into Congress as H.R. 1321. NREPA uses Wilderness, Wild and Scenic River, Biological Linkage Corridor, and National Wildland Recovery designations to retain, restore and reconnect the ecological integrity of the Greater Yellowstone, Hells Canyon - Wallowa, Salmon Selway, Glacier Northern Continental Divide, and Cabinet - Yaak - Selkirk ecosystems.

Swan View Coalition helped craft NREPA, regarding it as essential to conserving and restoring the biodiversity of the Northern Rockies. Legislation that simply cuts the baby in half time and again, giving roadless lands over to industry, falls far short of what is required in these times of species collapse and climate change.

President Jimmy Carter is among the wide array of NREPA supporters, writing "NREPA heralds in a new era in public lands management, based upon securing the integrity of the ecosystem in a biologically and economically sustainable way." It will take all of us to make what is ecologically necessary politically possible!

Considerations for Making Our Recreation Sustainable: Do We Want Wreck-Creation or Re-Creation?

As the quote by John Muir on this page implies, it is helpful to reexamine what we call recreation and why we go to the woods or mountains looking for it. An early advocate for the preservation of wilderness, Muir was born in 1838 and died in 1914. What would he think of today's fast-paced trail running and mountain biking?

Our public lands are quickly becoming saturated with people seeking recreation. Here are a few questions to help us think about minimizing our impact on those lands, on the wildlife that rely on them as their only home, and on other people:

1. Are we seeking to re-create our connection with nature, or are we focussed instead on exercise?

2. Do we regard the outdoors as a sacred space or a dirty gym?

3. Are we seeking a deeper connection with our surroundings, or are we seeking cheep thrills?

4. Are we willing to go slowly, learn from our surroundings and take the time to fully absorb the healing powers of nature?

5. Are we willing to go slowly, with full awareness of our surroundings, to minimize surprise encounters with wildlife?

6. Are we willing to travel in small groups so that, when we do displace wildlife, it is once for the entire group rather than once for each separate individual?

7. Are we willing to ride a bike to the trailhead, then park it and saunter down the trail, to satisfy our love of biking and reduce our consumption of fossil fuels?

8. Are we willing to keep our bikes and motor vehicles on roads and reserve trails for sauntering and hiking, in order to reduce the distance we travel and the amount of wildlife habitat we disturb in an outing?

9. Are we willing to minimize the amount of outdoor gear we buy and consider essential to our re-creation?

10. Are we willing to advocate for "backyard" wilderness areas so we don't have to drive a car long distances to finally get away from motorized and mechanized vehicles?

11. Are we able to find satisfaction with the trails that already exist on the land, or will we develop an insatiable appetite for more and more trails that invade the habitats of wildlife sensitive to human intrusion?

If these questions seem shocking or austere, it is only because today's popular ideas about recreation have strayed so very far from the root notion of re-creation. We can get all the physical exercise we need at an indoor gym. It is important that we recognize the sacred nature of our time outdoors and act accordingly to preserve all that makes the outdoors so special.

> Hiking - "I don't like either the word or the thing. People ought to saunter in the mountains - not hike! Do you know the origin of that word 'saunter?' It's a beautiful word. Away back in the Middle Ages people used to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and when people in the villages through which they passed asked where they were going, they would reply, 'A la sainte terre,' 'To the Holy Land.' And so they became known as sainte-terre-ers or saunterers. Now these mountains are our Holy Land, and we ought to saunter through them reverently, not 'hike' through them."
>
> John Muir

What Should We Expect from Conservation Groups?

Firstly, it is important that each of us take individual actions to lower our impacts to the planet and to help set our society and culture on a sustainable path. We can't simply rely on conservation groups to magically solve our problems.

That said, we are all busy people and often need help deciphering political jargon, scientific reports, and government double-speak. Most of us rely to some extent on conservation groups to help guide us through the process. And many of us provide financial support through our memberships and donations.

In spite of all our efforts the natural world, and our ability to sustain ourselves as a part of it, continue a downward trend. Here are a few things to ponder when considering what conservation groups to follow, join or support:

1. Are they willing to sound the alarm and advocate for the preservation of what remains of our natural world - or are they willing to conform to the political practice of cutting the baby in half again, and again, and again?

2. Are they willing to acknowledge we have already developed too much of the natural world and need to remove some development so nature can restore herself? Or do they insist, for example, that we can restore forest ecosystems damaged by road building and logging by building more roads and doing more logging?

3. Do they work to nurture advocates for wilderness, wildlands and wildlife - or do they urge people to advocate for more self-serving trails, recreation and "restoration" logging?

4. Are they willing to take the often unpopular position of saying "enough development is enough" - or do they espouse the collaborative approach where everybody gets yet another piece of what is left of the natural resources pie?

5. Are they willing to say no to foundations and corporations that attach strings to their funding, or do they drift from their mission in order to not bite the hand that feeds them?

6. Are they willing to acknowledge our political system is failing the preservation of wilderness, wildlands and wildlife - or do they instead compromise wild things in order to get preferential treatment from politicians?

6. Do they honor and build upon the strength of their membership to pursue what is ecologically necessary - or do they use them instead as political chips in order to cut another short-term political deal?

7. Do they minimize the costs of staff and overhead - or do they hire more and more staff and invest in bigger and fancier offices in ever more locations?

8. Do they spend your donation on getting the work done - or on slick brochures and glossy newsletters?

Words of Encouragement and Wisdom!

"Don't get depressed. Get angry. We're the ones that caused every one of these problems. So, therefore, we're the ones that have to solve it."

Yvon Chouinard.

"Can we demonstrate our willingness to accept restraint and limit our effect on the larger community of life?"

Olause Murie

"It's better to walk alone, than with a crowd going in the wrong direction."

Diane Grant

"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 Russel to a Great Falls Booster Club luncheon in 1923.*

"We don't have to heal the earth, she can heal herself. All we have to do is stop making her sick."

Wallace Black Elk

Unsolicited Praise For Our Work!

"Thank you for working tirelessly to protect wilderness and all the living things within!"

Rebekah J.

"You continue to do amazing work against increasing headwinds. Thanks for your dedication!"

Chris G.

"One of the privileges of my legal career was to work with you to protect bears and their habitat in a special part of the world."

Dan R.

"Thank you for being so open and honest about your work. I look up to your advocacy for the landscape."

Luke

"Thanks for taking the time to travel down here and speak with our class. I appreciate the hard work you do to keep our agencies accountable."

Forrest S.

"[This donation is for] SVC's great work defending fish, wildlife, habitat, and the great grizzly."

Claudia N.

Patagonia Will Match/Double Your Donation!

From Nov 29 - Dec 31, make your donations via our Patagonia Action Works page and Patagonia will match it! Simply use the following secure page rather than our Donate Now page: https://www.patagonia.com/actionworks/grantees/swan-view-coalition/

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.

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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: _____

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Swan View Coalition, Inc.
3165 Foothill Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

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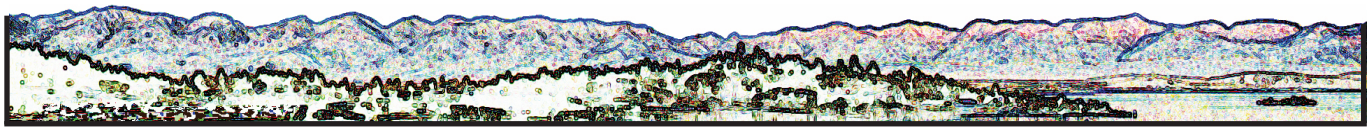
Swan View's News

Holidays 2019



Seeds of Hope in Dark Times!

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