Swan View's News

Spring 2015

Swan View Coalition
3165 Foothill Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

"Nature and human nature on the same path."

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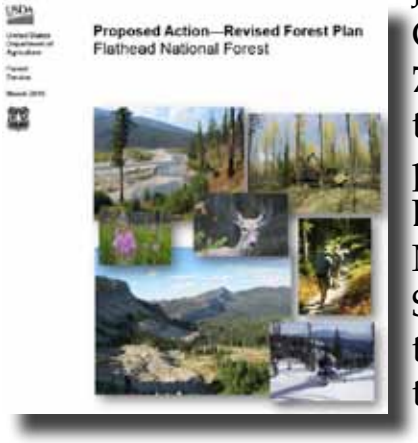
Time to Speak Out Against Weak Forest Plans And Grizzly Bear De-Listing!

We need you to take 10-15 minutes to speak up for fish and wildlife by May 15 - and we'll make it easy for you on page 3 of this newsletter! The bad news is that the five National Forests in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem have proposed to weaken, rather than strengthen, their Forest Plans to pave the way for removing Endangered Species Act protection from grizzly bears! The good news is that the Flathead National Forest is leading the whole effort, so you need write only a single short letter or email!



We provide you with the necessary background on page 2 and suggest seven comments on page 3 that you may wish to use or adapt to your liking. (If that's too easy, you can also Google "Flathead Forest Plan Revision" and download the 500-page Flathead Plan and the 50-page Grizzly Bear Amendments!)

In case you need a little inspiration, we are hosting a slide show and book signing by wilderness historian Frederick Swanson on May 13. Join us at the Swan River Community hall from 7-9 pm to learn about the legendary battles for protecting Jewel Basin, Bunker Creek, the Bob Marshall, Great Bear, Scapegoat and other fantastic wildlands in Montana and Idaho!

The battle for protection of wildlife and wildlands has always been about strong voices at the grass-roots. So let's have a little fun and let our voices be heard!

Oh, and your generous donation will help us continue digesting 500-page plans into single-page action alerts!

Keith

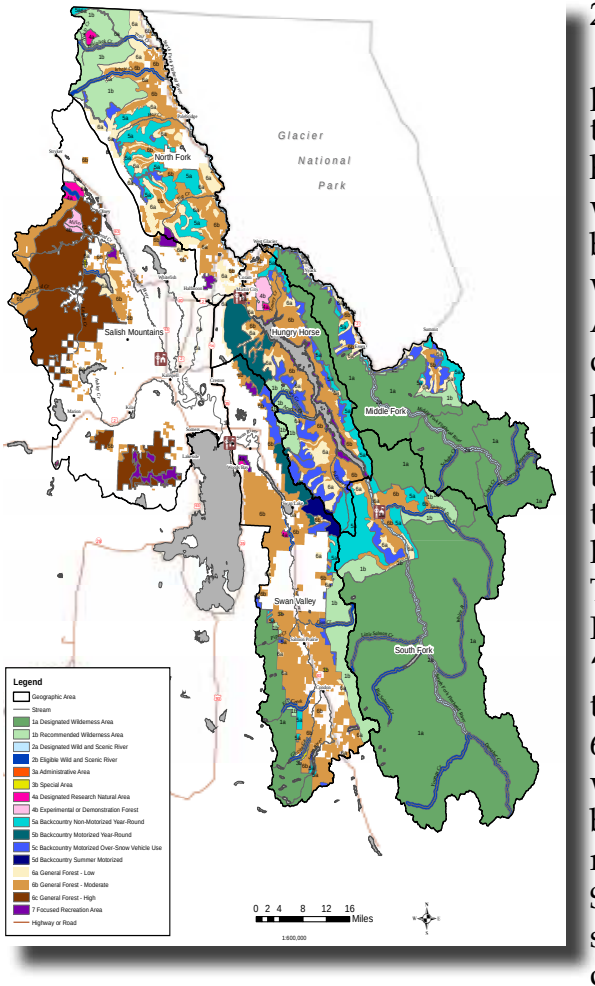
Proposed Flathead Forest Plan and Grizzly Amendments out for Public Comment!

The Flathead National Forest has released its draft revised Forest Plan and is accepting public comments until May 15! The article on this page will provide a little background and, on page 3, we ask you to take a few minutes to email or write the Flathead - and we provide a few suggestions to make it easy!

Public comment at this time is doubly important because, not only does the Proposed Flathead Plan pave the way to removing Endangered Species Act protections for grizzly bear, the Flathead has also proposed amendments to the other four Forest Plans in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem to accomplish the same!

Rather than provide stricter habitat management standards to replace ESA protection, the Forest Plans would instead do away with further implementation of road and motorized vehicle restrictions like those contained in Flathead Forest Plan Amendment 19 since 1995! The Lolo, Kooteanai, Helena, and Lewis & Clark National Forests would similarly weaken the standards in their Forest Plans!

Worse yet, the proposed Flathead Plan would do away with its Inland Native Fish Management Strategy, relax standards for protecting streamside areas and bull trout habitat, relax management standards for threatened lynx habitat, and do away with standards to protect scenic vistas from clearcutting! Simply put, this is a full reversal of what the Flathead proposed in its never-finished draft 2006 Plan.



In order to better protect grizzly bear, the 2006 draft Plan halved the acreage where logging would be scheduled and would have retained Amendment 19's road decommissioning program to likewise trim back on the cost to taxpayers of maintaining the bloated logging road network. The new proposed Plan inflates that "suitable timber base" to nearly its original 670,000 acre size and would log 28 million board feet per year - requiring an annual $3.4 million taxpayer subsidy for its below cost timber program.

While the proposed Plan recommends some wilderness be designated, it is not nearly enough to maintain wildlife habitat connectivity - nor would the Plan protect recommended areas from mechanized and other non-conforming uses! (NEXT PAGE)

(Zoom in on the map to see the proposed Management Areas)

Our Suggested Comments on the Proposed Forest Plan(s)

The Flathead National Forest has invited public comments on its proposed revised Forest Plan and on proposed amendments to Forest Plans for four other Forests as a step toward removing Endangered Species Act protections for grizzly bear (de-listing). The proposal reneges on protections afforded in the never-finished draft 2006 Plan. **We urge you to submit comments by May 15, 2015 to flatheadplanrevision@fs.fed.us or 650 Wolf Pack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901. Here are some suggestions:**

1. Grizzly bear management standards and guidelines for all five forests are largely discretionary and do not constitute the "adequate regulatory mechanisms" necessary to replace federal Endangered Species Act protections. These Forest Plans must continue with Flathead Forest Plan Amendment 19 and similar mandatory habitat standards.

2. Do not abandon the Inland Native Fish Strategy and its mandatory standards for streamside area management. Keep the Strategy and establish clear road density standards that protect the clear, cold waters needed by bull trout and other fish.

3. Reduce the "suitable timber base" by at least half, as was done in the 2006 draft Flathead Forest Plan to better protect water quality, fish, wildlife, and visual quality. The proposal weakens protection for all these resources, retaining the bloated 3,500-mile road system needed to log the inflated timber base rather than removing roads to protect resources and ease the burden on taxpayers. Conduct an economic analysis of the subsidies needed to retain the bloated road system and money-losing timber sales.

4. Areas where snowmobiling and summer motorized recreation are allowed are excessive and fragment lynx travel corridors, key wolverine habitats and grizzly bear security habitats. These include areas recommended by Wildlife Conservation Society's John Weaver in 2014 and the Citizen reVision of the Flathead Forest Plan as wilderness, wildland restoration zones, and backcountry non-motorized conservation areas.

5. Develop, analyze and compare as management alternatives the 2006 draft proposed Flathead Forest Plan, John Weaver's 2014 recommendations, and the Citizen reVision that would recommend wilderness designation for all wilderness-suitable lands and is currently endorsed by 100 folks including wildlife biologists and economists. Recommend and manage all wilderness-suitable lands as Wilderness!

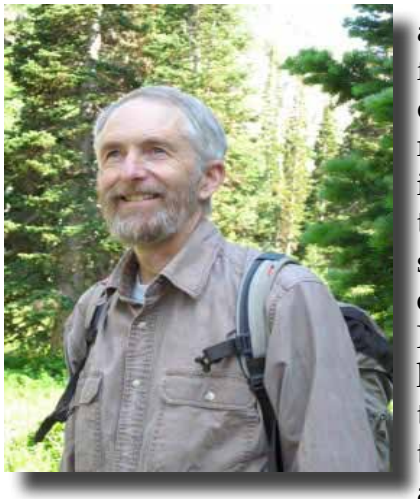
6. Remove the western slopes of the northern Swan Range from the "suitable timber base," as was done in the 2006 draft Plan, and assign the area the highest Scenic Integrity Objectives along with enforceable standards to maintain those objectives.

7. Close the outdated ATV trails in the Krause Basin area to motorized uses to finally provide adequate security for grizzly bear and calving elk. Do not designate the area a "Focused Recreation Area" as proposed, instead letting foot, bike and ski use blend in.

You can cut and paste from this newsletter at http://www.swanview.org/newsletters/Spring_2015e.pdf

*Join Us for an Evening with Wilderness Historian Frederick Swanson on May 13, 7-9 pm Swan River Community Hall**

Come learn about the hard-fought battles for Wilderness in Montana and Idaho - and be inspired to continue the charge! Frederick Swanson will emphasize the long fight for the Swan Range's Jewel Basin and Bunker Creek, while talking about his new book Where Roads Will Never Reach: Wilderness and Its Visionaries in the Northern Rockies. It chronicles more than half a century of advocacy by dedicated citizens, beginning with wilderness visionaries such as Winton Weydemeyer, "Hobnail Tom" Edwards, Cecil Garland, Ken and Florence Baldwin, Morton Brigham, Olaus Murie and Doris Milner. Swanson, a former Helena resident, will relate their inspiring stories with historical photographs and selections from his book, which was released in April by the University of Utah Press.



Where Roads Will Never Reach tells how citizens in Montana and Idaho beginning in the 1940s fought off federal dam-building agencies and the Forest Service from opening up wild lands in the upper Flathead, Clearwater, Selway and Missouri River drainages. Ultimately they persuaded Congress, through the leadership of Senators Mike Mansfield, Lee Metcalf, Frank Church and others, to set aside some of the largest wilderness areas in the country, including the Scapegoat, Great Bear, Absaroka-Beartooth, Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return.

Swanson recalled meeting many of these activists when he attended college in Missoula in the 1970s. "Conservationists such as Loren Kreck, Clif Merritt and Dale Burk inspired me back then with their love of Montana's wild places," he says. "I've always felt that their work needs to be remembered, especially as we face equally difficult decisions over protecting and managing wilderness today."

Hunters, outfitters, and anglers were the leading force behind the early wilderness preservation movement in the Northern Rockies, Swanson says, working to stop dams from flooding streams such as the Sun River and the North Fork and Middle Forks of the Flathead. Many of them went on to oppose road-building and timber harvesting projects in areas such as the Jewel Basin, Bunker Creek, the Lincoln Back Country, the Cabinet-Yaak region, and the upper Selway River.

"These concerned citizens made frequent use of these lands and cared deeply about their wild character," Swanson says. They objected to the federal government's overriding program of full resource development, which threatened to turn prized backcountry areas and key wildlife habitats into reservoirs and tree farms. Although their message "wasn't slick or sophisticated, in the end it carried the day in many areas." (www.fredswansonbooks.com)

Kitty-corner from Echo Lake Cafe on Hwy 83 NE of Bigfork

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 your continued support in 2015 - as we work overtime on Forest Plan revision and stopping Grizzly Bear de-listing!

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!

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 them 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!

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[ ] 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.
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[ ] Here's $_____ to help save the world, one mountain range and one river at a time!
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3165 Foothill Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

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Flathead Proposes Weakening Grizzly Standards for 4 Other Forests! **page 2**

A 7-Point Guide for Your Essential Comments to the Flathead NF! **page 3**

PLEASE TAKE TEN MINUTES TO COMMENT BY MAY 15! **page 3**

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