

Swan View's News

Winter-Spring 2021



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

Special Issue: We Need Your Help Protecting Krause Basin!

We've again used this photo from Krause Basin to emphasise what is at stake there. It is truly a magical place and one of the few remaining western hemlock forests on the Flathead National Forest. The Flathead, however, is still pursuing turning it into a Focused Recreation Area that institutionalizes motorized uses that were supposed to have been phased out. We've fought off logging and illegal trails in the wildlife-rich Krause Basin since 1984 and we're not about to give up!

Page 2 of this newsletter provides a short history of past threats to Krause Basin, what we've done to fight them off and what we've done to repair damage that has been done. Page 3 describes new threats that promise to come to a head in 2021, as the Flathead attempts to create its revised Forest Plan's "Focused Recreation Area" there.

Pages 4 and 5 lay out our plan for Krause Basin, one which respects the needs of wildlife and past commitments to remove motorized vehicles from the heart of the Basin. We propose a "Focused Education Area" to insure that recreation in Krause Basin is

mindful and fosters attitudes appropriate to responsible recreation on public lands.

As more and more people visit public lands, it is absolutely essential that they adopt habits and behaviors that minimize their impacts on the land, wildlife and other people. Bringing more trails and people into a Focused Recreation Area would destroy the heart and soul of Krause Basin, along with the recreational experience unique to the area. We propose to respect the area's history as a wildlife management area by removing trails cleared illegally, allowing unused trails to continue re-vegetating, and by retaining a limited number of popular routes as non-mechanized trails that allow people to respectfully enjoy and learn from Krause Basin.

Let us know what you think and watch for our alerts as the Krause Basin planning process gets underway!



Keith

Past Assaults on Krause Basin!

Logging in Krause Basin felled a lot, but not all, of the unique hemlock forests there. It also left a legacy of old roads and log-skidding trails the Forest Service failed to close or re-vegetate. Motorcycle advocates took advantage of the situation, running an annual endurance race that kept the trails from re-vegetating as required by law.

Swan View Coalition was formed in 1984 to stop further logging in Krause Basin, which it did. We also challenged the ATV abuse through administrative appeals and a lawsuit. The Forest Service initiated a year-long Noisy Face Recreation Task Force in which we took part. The 1988 Noisy Face Decision permanently barred ATV racing, reduced the trail network to 13 miles in Krause Basin, closed the Basin to motor vehicles Spring and Fall, and made clear that those remaining trails could "not be marked on the ground."

The intent of the wildlife biologists was to phase out motorized trail use in Krause Basin over time. They designated it a "wildlife management area" to emphasize the protection of elk, grizzly bear and other wildlife. Contrary to this intent, the Flathead put the trails on its maps (with many in the wrong locations) and in 2015 proposed to mark the trails on the ground with signs. We gave notice we would file a lawsuit to enforce the 1988 prohibition against marking the trails on the ground. The Flathead backed off and we tried unsuccessfully to get the maps corrected.

In 1995, the Flathead amended its Forest Plan to incorporate new grizzly bear research. The result was Amendment 19, which would indeed require closing all trails in Krause Basin, as well as the Peters Ridge and Strawberry Lake trails, to motorized use.

Snowmobilers cut an illegal trail through the Basin, leading to the deaths of 5 people in a snow avalanche there in 1993, including a 7-year-old boy. Unlawful maintenance of the trail continued until we secured a court order in 1999 that legally

closed the trail and provided for our physical obliteration and re-vegetation of it.

In December 2020, we caught two mountain bikers clearing a trail without authorization in Krause Basin, something that had been going on since about 2015. We turned our video over to FS law

enforcement and either a warning or a citation is likely to be issued. We also provided documentation of other trails being illegally cleared and added to mountain bike maps at [Trailforks.com](https://www.trailforks.com).

This has gotten the Flathead's attention and we have agreed to help decommission unauthorized trails in Krause Basin, provided the Flathead puts an end to the illegal trail clearing. We are also now working with the Flathead to correct its maps.

[Click here](#) for a more detailed history. See the next page for current threats to Krause Basin as the Flathead reneges on its prior commitments.



Unlawful ATV mud-bogging in Krause Basin.

Current Assaults on Krause Basin!

As mentioned on the previous page, wildlife biologists in 1988 intended to phase out ATV use in Krause Basin by initially restricting such use to the months of July and August on only 13 miles of trails. And those trails were to “not be marked on the ground.”

In 1995, newer grizzly bear research was applied and Amendment 19 to the Flathead Forest Plan was issued. For Krause Basin, this meant that all the motorized trails, including the Peters Ridge and Strawberry Lake trails, needed to be closed to motorized use in order to provide adequate wildlife security.

The Forest Service never implemented these restrictions for Krause Basin and instead started printing the trails on its maps without public input, which resulted in gross errors that are yet to be corrected.

Simultaneously, the Flathead began to revise its Forest Plan with the intention of doing away entirely with Amendment 19 and designating Krause Basin a Focused Recreation Area with “nonmotorized trails and limited motorized trails on designated and signed routes.”

Members of Swan View Coalition and others filed 23 Objections to the revised Forest Plan’s “Focused Recreation Area” designation for Krause Basin. In response, the Regional Forester upheld the Flathead’s

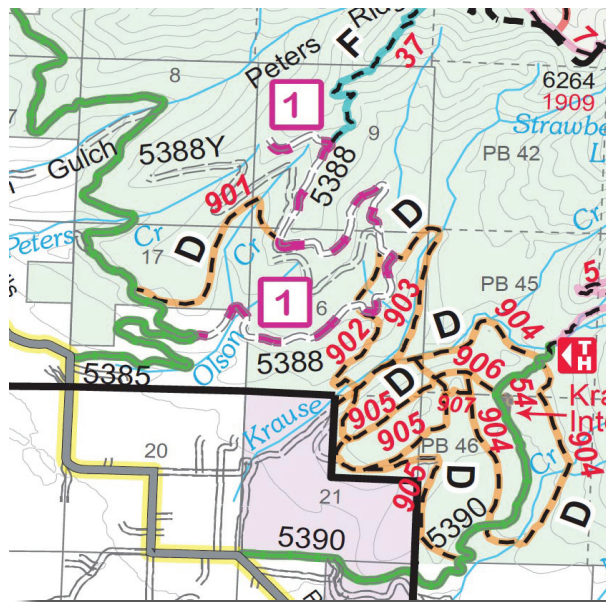
2018 Plan but ordered a collaborative planning process be undertaken by 2021 for Krause Basin. We don’t yet know if that process, reportedly to begin soon, will be limited to recreation or include timber sale planning as well.

Even if the project is limited to just redefining the trail system and types of recreation allowed, we’ve got our work cut out for us. Even though only a handful of people still use motorized vehicles in Krause Basin, they are likely to insist it continue, not

realizing that even their enjoyment will be ruined the day an ATV rental company starts sending it clients to Krause Basin for a place to ride. And we can expect mountain bikers to call for more and more trails, as described in the following pages of this newsletter.

If a timber sale is also in the planning, that will highlight the problems of trying to decommission existing unauthor-

ized trails while simultaneously creating new ones with logging equipment! It will also entail a big fight to not log the hemlock forests unique to Krause Basin, which land management agencies seldom see as anything more than fuel for wildfires. It is motorized use, shooting and beer parties that are the biggest threat of wildfire in Krause Basin, not the trees. Keep your antennae up as this unfolds and we’ll keep you posted!



Krause Basin trails wrongfully displayed on Swan Lake Ranger District map.

Our Plan for Krause Basin: Restore Calm, Reverence and Respect

The lower reaches of Krause Basin lie between two major Forest Service roads; Peters Ridge Road and Strawberry Lake Road. There is no place in this area further than about a mile from one of these two roads, which provide access via cars, pickups, ATVs, mountain bikes, and snowmobiles. We think a modest off-road trail system in Krause Basin should be limited to non-mechanized uses like hiking, horseback riding, skiing, and snowshoeing.



Peace, quiet and reverence in Krause Basin.

A person travelling on foot or horseback covers a lot less ground than those on mechanized vehicles in a given time period. In Krause Basin that difference can determine whether one is content recreating on

a few miles of trail or becomes dissatisfied that there aren't more trails - and it makes a difference in the amount of wildlife habitat traversed and disrupted.

Besides affecting larger areas of wildlife habitat, [research shows](#) that mountain bikes and motor vehicles disrupt elk and grizzly bear to a greater degree than people on foot or horseback. [Recent research in Canada](#) in fact shows mountain bikes disrupting moose and grizzly bear to a greater degree than motor vehicles!

It is no wonder that riders of mountain bikes and ATVs are always clamoring for more trails, due to the rate at which they consume trail miles. Simply put, bikes and ATVs shrink the outdoors.

In addition to wildlife, it is people on foot or horseback that end up paying the price as they too are displaced. Our members report to us that the Whitefish Trails, while being promoted as multiple-use, are so overrun by mountain bikes that they dare not ride horses there. Although equestrians were among the fund-raisers and promoters of the Foy's to Blacktail trails,



Motorized mayhem in Krause Basin.

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

they [report](#) that last year “an inattentive bicyclist collided with a horse, injuring two equestrians in the process.”

We don't want people on foot or horseback in Krause Basin injured or displaced by mechanized vehicles, as has happened elsewhere. According to [Trailforks.com](#), which allows mountain bike riders to post their speeds on a “Leaderboard,” mountain bikers are averaging up to 25 miles per hour on Krause Basin trails!

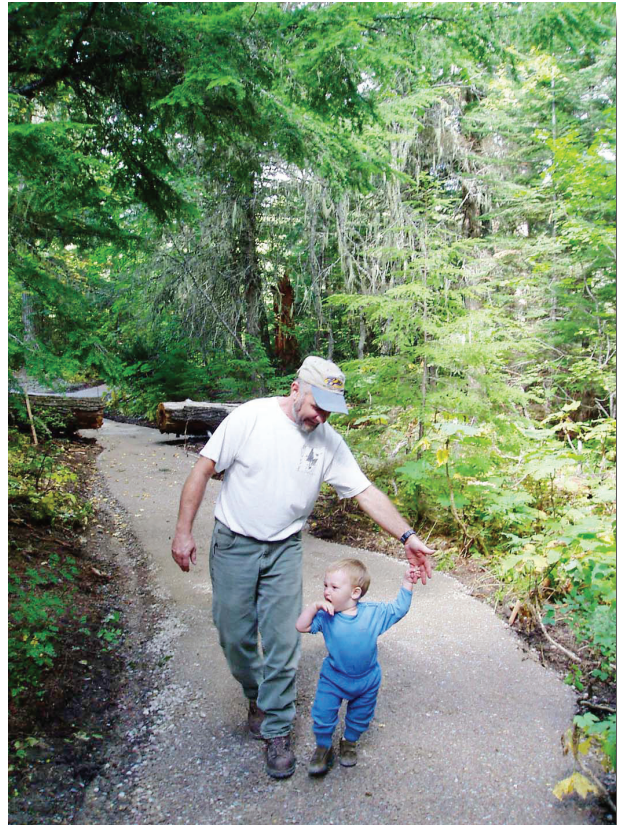
A mountain biker was killed on the Flathead National Forest in 2016 when he slammed into a grizzly bear [at an estimated 20-25 miles per hour](#). What if he had slammed into a hiker or someone on horseback? This irresponsible behavior is far too common and is expressed also in the proliferation of unauthorized trails, jumps and ramps built by mountain bikers. Such behavior on Crane Mountain prompted this cartoon by Jerry Sprunger and, unfortunately, it is now rearing its ugly head in Krause Basin.



Jerry Sprunger Cartoon.

The Flathead National Forest has planned the building of 80 more miles of mountain bike trails in just the past several years. The public, and the Krause Basin neighbors that walk their dogs and take their kids there, deserve a safe and calm

place to recreate without the intrusions of mountain bikes and motorized vehicles.



Next generation enjoying Krause Basin hemlocks.

Motorized use has greatly decreased in Krause Basin since 1988, but the Flathead's plan to mark such trails on-the-ground invites disaster and ATV rentals that would overwhelm the area! The prior Forest Plan required that Krause Basin be closed to motorized use. It's time to honor that commitment and to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

Krause Basin is small yet wildlife rich, with plenty of road access on both sides. It deserves the calm, reverence and respect that can only be fostered in a non-mechanized setting. It can best serve as a focused education area where people can re-create their relationship to the land as they mindfully recreate. We'll let you know when we have maps of our proposal prepared and when the Flathead starts its public process.

Unsolicited Praise for Our Work!

"Way to be a watchdog rather than a lapdog!! Woof woof!"

P.W.

"Love the weekly report - like travelling/hiking/skiing without having gone."

C.R.

"I so admire your persistent and effective efforts on behalf of the Swan."

G.J.

"Thanks for the re-send. I wondered Sunday morning what had happened to my favorite weekly slide-show."

"Wolverines, grizzlies, goshawks, and great horned owls all out in our back yard [the Swan Range]. What a special place to live and spend time exploring."

R.W.

"I love the Swan Ranger Report - it gets me out to the wilds when I can't get there myself!"

G.J.

"Thanks for providing yet another example where the agency prioritized exploitation over protection/true restoration."

A.R.

"THANK YOU for the BEAUTY."

L.C.

"Beautiful!! Thanks for reminding us that we live among Earth's most spectacular displays."

C.M.

"At some point, we must serve and protect the lands that we cherish and enjoy. Happy to help [with a donation]. Thank you."

J.N.

"My husband and I watched David Attenborough's new documentary and it was eye-opening in that if we use our natural resources wisely we can also support healthy biodiversity too. Thanks for all you do to use our resources wisely."

F.D.



Gildart Creek, Swan Valley.

You Helped Us Meet our Budget in 2020 - Let's Do it Again!

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: _____

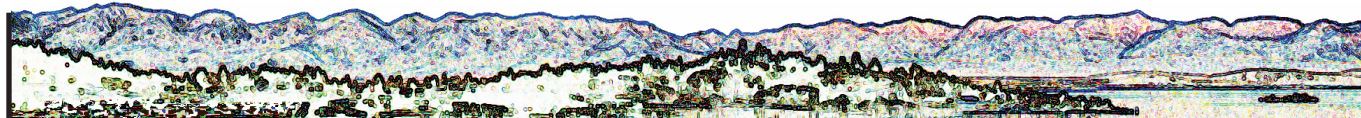
CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

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

Printed on Recycled Paper

Swan View's News

Winter-Spring 2021



Special Issue: We Need Your Help Protecting Krause Basin!

Executive Summary	page 1
Past Assaults on Krause Basin!	page 2
Current Assaults on Krause Basin!	page 3
Our Plan for Krause Basin: Restoring Calm, Reverence and Respect!	page 4
Unsolicited Praise for our Work!	page 6
<u>Donate Now to Help Us Meet Our 2021 Budget!</u>	page 7