

Swan View's News

Holidays 2008



Swan View Coalition
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"Nature and human nature on the same path."

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Receiving Humbly and Giving Generously

It is easy to take things for granted but, once we realize the true value of a gift and the effort that went into it, it makes us want to care for the gift and return the favor. So it should also be for the gift of public lands protected for the quiet enjoyment of all Americans.

Quiet habitat for fish, wildlife and humans on public land is not a given, however. It is earned only through the hard work of dedicated citizens. The lands they protect are their gift to us. It is our responsibility to care for and expand upon their gift.

This newsletter will begin with excerpts from the late Clif Merritt's telling of his successful 15-year effort to get Jewel Basin designated as a hiking area protected from roads and motorized vehicles (pages 2-3). A legacy now taken for granted by many, Swan View and others work tirelessly to protect Jewel Basin from increasing pressures by snowmobiles, motorcycles and 4-wheel ATVs and to secure other trails leading to Jewel Basin and equally pristine portions of the Swan Range from motorized abuse (page 4).

This Holiday Season we ask you to take a moment to appreciate the incredible gift of public lands and our efforts to protect them, especially in the Swan Range. We also ask you to support our work through a generous donation and describe several easy ways to do so (pages 6-7).

Plus, your gift of Swan View memberships to friends will brighten their lives with weekly Swan Ranger reports and photos, timely alerts helping them protect fish and wildlife, and our quarterly newsletter (page 6). Don't forget your donations and gift memberships made before Christmas will help us raise the \$4,000 necessary to meet our \$4,000 Cinnabar Challenge Grant - doubling your contribution!

As we wrap up our 24th year of conservation and prepare for our 25th Anniversary, we give many thanks for your support!

Thank You and Happy Holidays!

Keith



Escaping the hubbub of the Flathead Valley for a day in the Jewel Basin Hiking Area.

Keith Hammer photo

The Land of Snow-Painted Peaks and Jewel-Like Lakes

Excerpts from the Writings of Clifton R. Merritt

The following is condensed from writings by Clif Merritt of his successful 15-year effort to get Jewel Basin designated a hiking area off-limits to roads and motor vehicles. Clif died August 12, 2008 at age 89.

"The Swan Range, a pristine land of snow-painted peaks and jewel-like lakes, is the home of the mountain goat, grizzly bear, bighorn sheep, moose, elk and other wilderness-associated wildlife. From the time in 1948, when I took a job in Kalispell, I spent many weekends in the area. What an ideal place, I often thought, for a young family to enjoy a weekend wilderness retreat camping amid the exquisite natural scenery of the glistening peaks, rushing streams, and parks richly carpeted with colorful wildflowers - if someone didn't develop and destroy it first.

Little did I realize then how soon that threat would come. Bill

Friedrick, an outfitter friend from Bigfork, one summer evening in 1956 stopped by my place and said 'Did you know that the Forest Service is surveying a road across the Swan Range? They are surveying up Graves Creek from Hungry Horse Reservoir toward Blackfoot Lake, then over by Black Lake and across the Swan Crest, probably at Aeneas Notch.'

The next morning we rode horseback across the Swan Crest and, just below Blackfoot Lake, came upon a huge stack of

survey stakes. We rode down the drainage along the line of flagged stakes to Handkerchief Lake near the Hungry Horse Reservoir, then back up the eastern slope of the range to a small grassy park. For a while, Bill and I sat enthralled by the spectacular view below us. Finally, I asked him what the area was called and he replied 'I don't know that it's got a name.'

'It has to have a name if we want people to fight for its protection,' I said. I gazed down on those exquisite lakes sparkling like jewels and told him, 'Let's call it Jewel Basin.'

That evening I wrote a short letter to the Forest Supervisor. I told him that our nonprofit organization, Flathead Wildlife, was aware of the Forest Service surveying a road across the wild Swan Range east of Kalispell. I pointed out that the wild area contained extremely little sawtimber and no

indication of operable minerals or other commodities. But it was irreplaceable, I said, as a weekend wilderness retreat for the citizens of Flathead Valley and their visitors. A road by the lakes would result in excessive fishing pressure and eliminate the sensitive cutthroat trout. It would also cause erosion, scar the steep landscape, and impact the wild habitat of the moose, elk, mountain goat, bighorn sheep and grizzly bear, all species that did not prosper where man and his works prevailed. (next page)



"Backpack" Zack leads a group up Jewel Basin's Mount Aeneas. Keith Hammer photo

Clif Merritt on Jewel Basin (continued)

I ended the letter with the statement that we felt he desired to act in the public interest, and that we intended to do all in our power that was honorable to assure that the Jewel Basin area remained undeveloped and wild. The next evening I prepared an article for the weekly column I contributed to the Daily Interlake.

Bill Friedrich phoned the Forest Supervisor and also expressed his thoughts on the matter. Soon after receiving my letter and getting Friedrich's phone call, the Supervisor called Friedrich and asked him if he could put together 20 saddle horses and some pack stock for a two-day ride through Jewel Basin.

Friedrich welcomed the prompt request, and the Forest Service advisory Board made an investigative horseback trip through the area. The Flathead Forest Supervisor, the chairman of the timber association, and the president of Flathead Wildlife were among those making the trip. All agreed that the road didn't need to be built and a public hearing held in Columbia Falls on February 15, 1957 officially determined there would be no road.

Flathead Wildlife and other conservation groups then took the next logical step. I proposed that the area be designated as the Jewel Basin Wild Area under the Forest Service's U-2 regulation, which provided for the administrative classification and protection of Wild Areas. This was seven years before passage of the 1964 Wilder-

ness Act, which would automatically place all Wild Areas as Wilderness Areas in the National Wilderness System.

In early summer of 1962 I led a Wilderness Walk sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association in Jewel Basin. The turnout for the trip was astounding. Fifty men, women and children came for the Walk! Jewel Basin impressed Dr. Loren Kreck, who with his sister made a movie of the wildland, showed it to many Montana citizens and helped considerably to get the area protected.

It appeared that the two Forest Service representatives were impressed with the large turnout and strong interest in protecting the entire magnificent area. In due time, the Flathead Forest decided on a Jewel Basin Wild Area of some 15,000 acres.

The Regional Forester in Missoula glanced at the proposal and refused to sign it. The Flathead Forest representatives returned to Kalispell disappointed. But there was

another approach: establish the area as the Jewel Basin Hiking Area. The hiking area didn't require the Regional Forester's approval. Motorized vehicles, roads and other developments would be prohibited.

The conservation groups even asked that saddle horses and pack stock be excluded from the area because of the damage that they felt the animals were causing to the trails. The Flathead Forest established the Jewel Basin Hiking area in 1970, and the name was placed on the state maps."



Mountain goats overlooking Picnic Lakes in Jewel Basin. *Keith Hammer photo*

Protecting and Seeking Wilderness Designation For Jewel Basin and the Northern Swan Range!

Our gift from Clif Merritt and the citizens he mobilized is the administratively designated Jewel Basin Hiking Area. Swan View efforts since 1984 to finish their work protecting and securing congressional Wilderness Designation for Jewel Basin and the rest of the Swan Range include:

1984 - Stopped the huge Noisy Face Timber Sale, which would have built roads and clear-cut in the Inventoried Roadless Area between Jewel Basin and the Flathead Valley.

1988 - Secured from motorized use scores of unauthorized ATV trails and abandoned logging roads in the foothills below Jewel Basin, as well as the Broken Leg and Crater Notch Trails accessing Jewel Basin from the foothills, providing better wildlife habitat security.

1995 - Secured an amendment to the Flathead Forest Plan establishing strict standards for grizzly bear habitat security, which in turn protect roadless lands and limit motor use.

1999 - Secured a court order physically closing and obliterating an unauthorized snowmobile trail through Krause Basin used to trespass illegally in Jewel Basin Hiking Area.

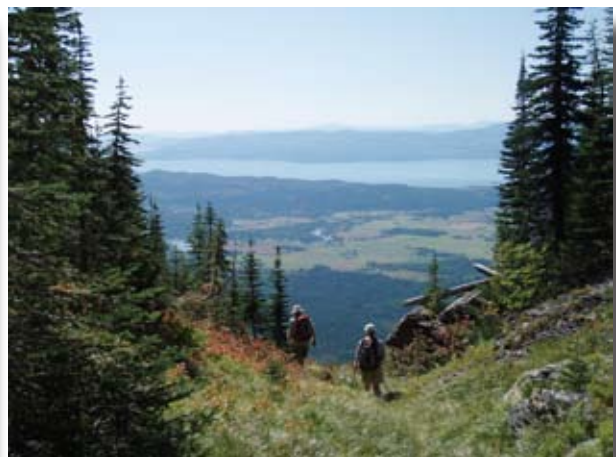
2004 - Secured a court order removing a snowmobile bridge installed over Lost Johnny Creek. The bridge was used to extend the snowmobile season during spring snow-melt and as a popular snowmobile route to trespass illegally in Jewel Basin Hiking Area.

2007 - Submitted testimony to a Congressional Subcommittee hearing on the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act, which we co-authored and would among other things designate all roadless lands in the Swan Range as Wilderness, including Jewel Basin.

2008 - Secured a court order banning snowmobiling in the Swan Range north and south of Jewel Basin when vulnerable grizzly bears have emerged from their dens in spring.



Monitoring snowmobile trespass in Jewel Basin from atop Infinity Ridge. *Keith Hammer photo*



Exiting Jewel Basin via the Crater Notch Trail, closed to motor vehicles in 1988. *Keith Hammer photo*

Helping Each Other During Economic Hard Times

As the world's economic crisis deepens, we can see it as an opportunity to help each other reorganize our priorities and make our lives all the more meaningful. Indeed, conservation becomes all the more paramount as cash and finance get tighter.

We can use this as an opportunity to consume less in luxury and run around less in a frenzy. We can choose to drive less for recreation and walk, bike and hike more for our health. And we can better appreciate having plenty of quiet, secure places close to home when we need a break but can't afford to drive long distances to visit a National Park.

We can seize the opportunity to return our attention to the heart-warming essentials of food, shelter, family and community. And we can better appreciate the importance of a clean environment that provides wholesome food, abundant wildlife, spiritual rejuvenation, and clean water that doesn't cost a fortune to filter and bottle.

We can welcome the opportunity for energy efficient cars and homes to become the norm rather than the exception. And we can appreciate the need to lessen the demand and price for fuel, burning less in oversized automobiles, speedboats, snowmobiles and ATVs so the elderly and others on fixed incomes can better afford to heat their homes in winter.

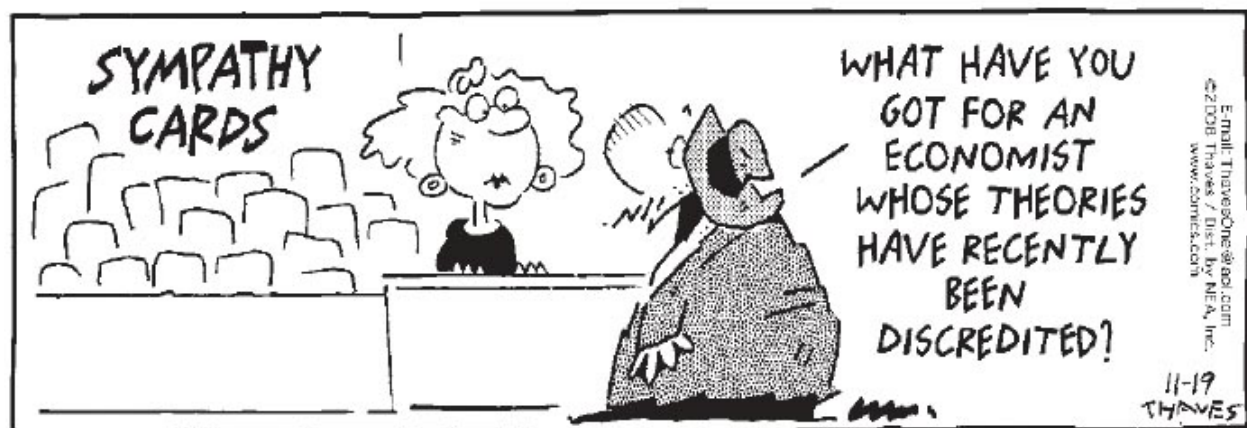
We at Swan View want to thank you for helping us conserve resources as we conduct our work and business. Each of you that have elected to receive our newsletters by email save us the printing and postage costs which, while saving trees, also lets us put more of your money directly to work conserving quiet habitat for fish, wildlife and humans. Over the past year, our membership and demand for our eNewsletter have grown while demand for our hard-copy newsletter has lessened!

Our funding depends largely on membership dues and your dues must be paid up a week prior in order to vote on officers and business at our annual membership meeting. Our bylaws and philosophy, however, allow us to waive dues under exceptional circumstance in order to keep willing members involved and active.

If you find yourself on hard times and unable to donate at least \$25 per year, contact us (see page 7 contact info) and let us know what you can do in exchange, perhaps pledging to write letters to public land managers about conservation issues or donating an item for our fund-raising events.

We will continue to stretch your donations by using a small, donated office space. And we will continue to insure that quality outdoor and community activities are close to home and don't cost an arm and a leg!

FRANK AND ERNEST



Help Us Raise \$4,000 by Christmas - Doubling Your Money and Helping Us do Our Work!

Donations: We must finish raising \$4,000 by Christmas to match a \$4,000 Challenge Grant from Cinnabar Foundation. Please make a generous donation today and know it will be doubled by Cinnabar Foundation! Same applies to Gift Memberships, below!

Gift Memberships: Give the gift that keeps on giving - a gift membership to Swan View Coalition! For your minimum dues donation of \$25 each, recipients will receive a note from us wishing them Happy Holidays (or other greeting you designate) on your behalf. We'll then send them our weekly Swan Ranger email reports and photos, occasional alerts that help them protect fish, wildlife and quiet recreation, and our quarterly newsletter. We'll keep them informed for a year, then ask if they'd like to renew.

Gift memberships are a great way to avoid shopping for gifts that often end up sitting on the shelf and they bring a weekly ray of sunshine and hope into the recipient's life. All of the photos in this newsletter, for example, were previously included in our weekly Swan Ranger email reports! Here's what some folks say about our reports and alerts:

I really appreciate your weekly hiking reports from the rangers. I haven't spent nearly enough time in the Swan so I am hiking vicariously with those! D.F.

Congratulations on the 100th outing! Your email radiated warmth and openness. True community often needs a sparkplug like you. BRAVO! D.M.

I really appreciate your alerts! I'm quite busy and your alerts allow me to comment on things I might otherwise not have time for – so please keep em coming! D.B.

Thank you for the effort to maintain pristine areas that my great-grandchildren may experience. T.M.

I'll be joining the Swan Rangers. I'm excited to meet new friends and fellow hikers. P.B.

Beautiful pictures. I so enjoy reading about your hikes every Saturday. L.B.

Thanks for putting me on the list – next season I would love to come out with the family to enjoy one of the ranger's hikes. Very good way to keep people involved. D.Z.

Simply email or mail us the name, mailing address, email address, and greeting of your choice for each Gift Membership you wish to give and send us a minimum of \$25 for each gift, although every additional dollar helps (see the following /opposite page for how to contact us and to easily make payment). If you don't provide the recipient's email address, we will only be able to mail them our quarterly newsletter.

How to Make a Donation or Gift Membership Payment

1. Send a check to Swan View Coalition at 3165 Foothill Road, Kalispell, MT 59901.
2. Use your credit card securely on-line at www.swanview.org or www.swanrange.org, by clicking on the Donate Now button!



Groundspring/Network for Good handles your transaction for us and informs us immediately via email of your donation by credit card. If you have other info you want to get to us, such as the names, addresses and greetings you choose for your Gift Memberships, simply email them to keith@swanview.org or mail them to the address in #1, above.

You can also choose to have your credit card donations recur automatically. Simply select the "recurring" option under "frequency." You can edit or cancel your choices of frequency and amount at any future time via your "edit settings" button near the top of the secure donation page. This option allows you to budget your donations over time and saves us time and money by not having to send you "renewal" notices!

3. The Charitable IRA Rollover provision for taxpayers age 70½ and older was renewed for 2008. This allows taxpayers not wanting to receive their annual IRA distribution and then having to pay income tax on it to instead gift it directly from their IRA to the charity of their choice tax-free! If you'd like to donate your distribution to Swan View Coalition, consult with your tax advisor and tell them our IRS charitable ID number is 81-0423034.



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 \$_____ to help secure grizzly, lynx and wolverine habitat for future generations.
- [] 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."
- [] Save paper! Email my newsletters to _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

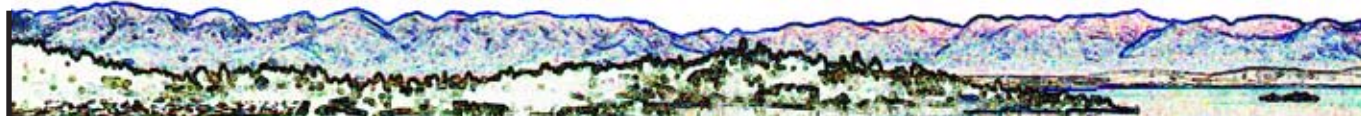
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