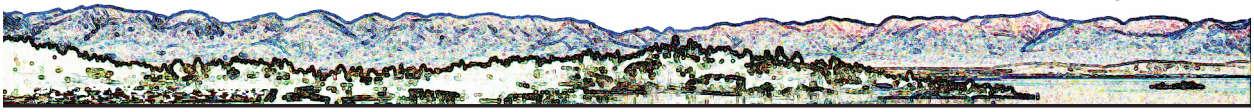
Swan View's News

Holidays 2022



Swan View Coalition
3165 Foothill Road
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"Nature and human nature on the same path."

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Learning from Our Past and Moving Forward!

The extraordinary explosion in outdoor recreation during the worst of the COVID pandemic caught us all by surprise! On page 2 we look at how that explosion is still being driven by social media and commercial exploitation, what we've learned from it, and what we've changed here at Swan View Coalition.

On page 3 we look more closely at the commercial exploitation of recreation on our public lands. And we look at how the buzz word "sustainable" is being abused.

On page 4 we provide a brief recap on the issues we are working on here on the Flathead National Forest. There is never a dull moment as bad ideas for both recreational and logging development run rampant! We also provide a brief report on our annual membership meeting held November 20.

On page 5 we express our appreciation for our members, their kind words and their monetary support of our work. As a publicly support non-profit, we simply couldn't do it without you!

On page 6 we share some of our members' unsolicited praise for our work!

On page 7 we make our usual plea for your donations and make the process easy, either securely online or via the postal service. We also suggest gift memberships to Swan View Coalition as a way to spread the word, support our work and provide meaningful gifts to loved ones that run no risk of gathering dust on a shelf!

We've always tried to live by the motto "Live Simply so Others Can Simply Live." We feel the benefits of that motto apply to both people and wildlife and we renew that pledge for 2023!

We say THANK YOU once again to all of you who helped us meet our Cinnabar Foundation matching grant, send us photos of your outings to include in our Ranger Reports, speak out on public land management issues, or otherwise support our work through your kind words and donations!

Happy Solstice and Happy Holidays!

Keith

Reading a hard copy newsletter and want to access it in color with linked citations? Visit http://www.swanview.org

How Recreation Gets Out of Control!

Outdoor recreation on public lands exploded during the COVID pandemic when people had fewer options to spend time indoors with others. While some of that outdoor intensity has waned as vaccines have become available and indoor restrictions have been eased, recreation pressure on public lands remains unprecedented.

Social media has had a huge impact on increased recreation pressure as people post photos and descriptions of their favorite places for millions of other people to see and seek out for themselves. While it is perhaps human nature to want to share with our best friends the experiences we've had outdoors, the vast amplification via social media often results in reduced chances of anyone finding solitude in your favorite place.

We at Swan View Coalition have made a conscious effort to become as vague as possible when posting nature photos on either social media or our web sites. And we don't show photos of wildlife tracks alongside a description of where they are located, lest it destroy wildlife security by leading casual observers, legal hunters or unlawful poachers there.

We also keep "location services" turned off on our cell phone so that nature photos taken with the phone do not have the GPS coordinates attached to the photo file's meta-data. When you distribute such a photo, it allows others to enter that GPS location into an app such as GAIA to see the photo's location on a map.

In fact, a number of phone apps, such as Trailforks, allow you to record your hike or bike ride route and post it on the Trailforks web site for all to see! This is of course a good way to find less solitude and wildlife security along the route you have posted publicly.

Such apps have been used to promote unauthorized "improvements" to these trails that include banked turns, ramps and jumps for speeding mountain bikes that will make the trail more dangerous and less desirable for hikers and equestrians.

Simply put, we need to be smart about the technology we use and know that it is rooted in commercialism, where more is always better. We've made some mistakes, but we are learning.

It is one thing to share knowledge of the outdoors and specific locations with people you trust to come to the land with the utmost of care and respect. And we need people to share in that knowledge and respect if they are to be advocates for the protection of public lands. But it is another thing entirely to knowingly feed into the intentional commercial exploitation of recreation and public lands (see next page).

Time to Say "Enough is Enough" to "More is Better!"

Too many of our economies and cultures are rooted in the notion that "more is better." Politicians consistently repeat the manta "we need to grow the economy." Economists fear a reduction in the world's human birth rate - not a negative birth rate, mind you, just a reduction in how fast the human population is growing - citing the need to have more young people to support the old people.

How can perpetual growth be considered sustainable? Usually it comes down to the word "sustainable" being used to disguise a scam by those wanting to forever make more and more money at the expense of those working to sustain or get by with what we already have.

Consider, for example, the example of the huge POWDR Corporation saying it needs to add a new lodge at Holland Lake, along with a big restaurant, store, and 26 new cabins in order to make the necessary repairs to the small historic Holland Lake Lodge that is located on public land! (See more).

Or consider that the Flathead NF wants to add more trails, trailheads and trail signs to the wildlife-rich Krause Basin in order to achieve sustainable recreation! (See more).

Or consider the Montana Access Project, which wants to channel more money into "packaging outdoor recreation . . . to retain and attract a resident population [and] using trails and recreation access as a way to attract and retain visitors supporting the hospitality industry." Or, as summed up in a handout by the Bigfork Outdoor Recreation Alliance, "the area's outdoor recreation amenities offer a key competitive advantage for attracting and retaining resident businesses and employees, building sustainable tourism, and providing high quality of life." (See more).

As we responded to MAP and BORA, "the Bigfork area already offers a wide range of recreation opportunities. The key to sustainable recreation is learning how to live with what we have, not continually creating more recreation infrastructure and promotional materials that bring more people to the area. The Flathead already has plenty of problems with lack of affordable housing and a backlog of existing recreation infrastructure maintenance."

Flathead County has now surpassed Gallatin County as the fastest growing in Montana. Glacier Park and the Flathead NF are already overrun with visitors, the working class can barely afford to live here, and potential new employees are going elsewhere because of it.

Public opposition to the corporate mega-expansion of Holland Lake Lodge spanned the political spectrum. Let's hope the public similarly unites in opposition to the hair-brained notion that we "build" sustainable tourism and recreation by building more and more infrastructure and promoting increased use of it.

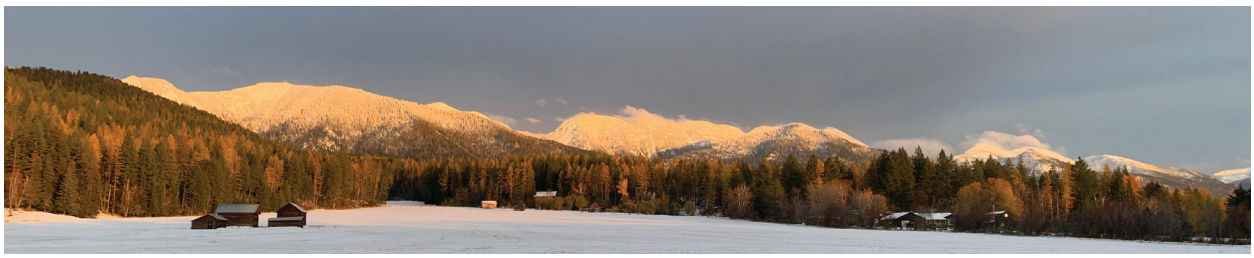
2022 in Review: A Brief Summary of our Work!

In September we fired the first volley against POWDR Corp.'s mega-expansion of the historic Holland Lake Lodge with our action alert. The Missoulian mentioned it on its front page, public opposition exploded and the Forest Service has sent the proposal back to the drawing board at least temporarily! (Read more here).

In September we finished nearly a year of helping coach our members and others through the Krause Basin Collaborative process. We got corrections made to FS maps, kept the FS from unlawfully asking for a consensus from the entire group, and formulated an alternative to be considered by the FS that would retain hiker and horseback use only. The Facilitator has not yet issued the Collaborative reports he promised in October.

We filed a second round of lawsuits against the revised Flathead Forest Plan. U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy ruled in June 2021 that Fish and Wildlife Service must redo its Biological Opinion on the Plan, but he didn't rule the FS must redo similar portions of its Plan. We have appealed that shortcoming to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and have filed a new lawsuit in U.S. District Court over the new Biological Opinion, which suffers the same practical and legal deficiencies as the first one did. (Read more here).

We continue to monitor the Flathead's out of control Special Use Permit program, by which it permits commercial outfitting/guiding services and structures on public land. Grizzly bear experts and others have come on board in opposition to the mega-expansion of Holland Lake Lodge and the Flathead's plans to build new rental cabins near Wilderness lands, where neither people nor wildlife can afford the tremendous increase in human recreation this would promote. The Flathead is providing no opportunity for public comment on some of its SUPs and for others providing only a brief comment period that ends days before the permits will be issued. Click here to view a partial list of the SUPs being considered and click here for a partial list of SUPs that have already been issued.



Annual Membership Meeting Report

Swan View Coalition held its annual meeting November 20 in conjunction with our now-resumed Swan Range community pot lucks and music jam sessions. It was a lot of fun to be able to get back together indoors with our community and members!

Working Committee officers were re-elected to their same positions for another year: Keith Hammer - Chair, Julie Bates - Secretary, and Carol Buchan - Treasurer.

Why Your Membership is Important!

Your membership is important to us and we trust that it is important to you. Firstly, your membership means that you belong to a group of people that share some deep, underlying values about life and what it means to live on this planet. In this day and age, it is a comfort to know you are not alone in your feelings of compassion for fish and wildlife, as well as in your understanding of our human relationships with them and their habitats.

The unsolicited feedback we get from our members is also key to our success. Your kind words and constructive criticism are what keeps us feeling encouraged to keep up the good fight when so much in the world seems against us and our planet. That's why we include a sampling of those kind words in each of our newsletters - so you too can feel encouraged to be a part of our work.

Your membership is also important because of the way Swan View Coalition is incorporated and registered as a publicly supported non-profit. Each year, when we file our 990 tax returns, we must show the IRS that we get at least one-third of our income in donations of less than $5,000 each. Simply put, this "public support test" is intended to insure we are supported by lots of smaller public donations and not just by a few huge donations from wealthy individuals or a few huge grants from private foundations.

That's part of why you'll see a number of non-profits announce they have a big donor willing to match their member donations up to $10,000 or more. This is not only a way for members to see their donation doubled, it is a formula that helps insure that a large donation that is not considered public support because it is $5,000 or larger is matched by plenty of public support donations of less than $5,000. Matching grants by large donors or foundations, however, are also intended to promote a strong membership base and lessen a non-profit's reliance on large grants.

Your membership is also important when you see one of our action alerts and speak up for quiet habitats for fish, wildlife and people! When we and other groups asked our members to comment on the proposed revision of the Flathead Forest Plan, 98% of the 33,744 comments the Flathead received supported the principles of our Citizen reVision alternative that would protect all roadless areas as wilderness and continue the prior Plan's Amendment 19 road decommissioning program!

When we and other groups asked our members to oppose the mega-expansion of the Holland Lake Lodge, the Flathead NF received 6,500 comments - with 99% opposing the expansion and with the Flathead now sending that plan back to the drawing board. That's the power of membership! THANK YOU!

Unsolicited Praise for Our Work and Ranger Reports!

"Just sent $500 toward the [Cinnabar] match. Thank you." *J.N.*

"I am grateful there are organizations holding our government to account!" *N.J.*

"Thank you so much for talking with us about the important work Swan View Coalition does for grizzlies and bull trout! It was fascinating to learn how FS roads can have such a high impact on wildlife." *WITW Students*

"Thanks for the update on the work your organization has done to maintain Krause Basin area. We are very appreciative of all your volunteers' time." *T.M.*

"Thank you for your dedication to the planet!!!!" *C.B.*

"Thank you for protecting, supporting and nurturing Mother Earth in all her forms." *C.R.*

"Keep it wild and keep it quiet!" *B.H.*

"So grateful there are groups like yours that get on top of these things." *M.N.*

"Thank you for the work you are doing to help to save Holland Lake." *V.B.*

"Great work! Thanks for taking lead on this." *M.T.*

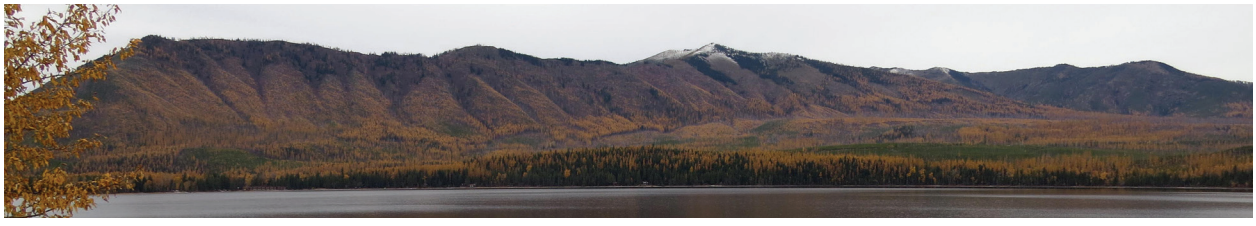
"I just wanted to congratulate you on your excellent comment letter on the ill-advised Holland Lake Lodge destination resort proposal. Thanks for doing such a good job on these comments." *C.S.*

"We support your lawsuit targeting the 2018 U.S. Forest Service plan that allows for significant new road building in the Flathead National Forest." *T.V.*

"Thanks for letting us know [about Holland Lake Lodge]! I'll get right on it! I love the photos from the weekly reports of everyone's activities you send - beautiful and inspiring." *L.M.*

"Your photos and reports rock!" *B.H.*

"Please tell the gang . . . that these pics are especially gorgeous . . . Absolutely stunning and magic . . . Well done!!" *K.K.*



Your Donations Make Our Work Possible!

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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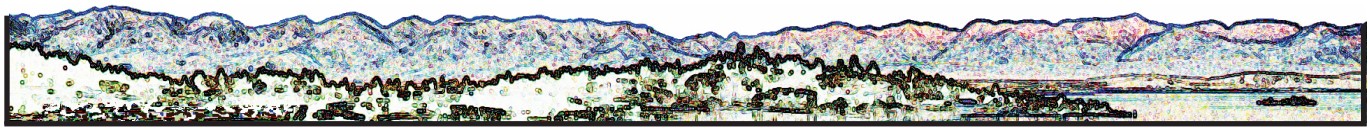

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