Swan View's News

Summer-Fall 2022

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

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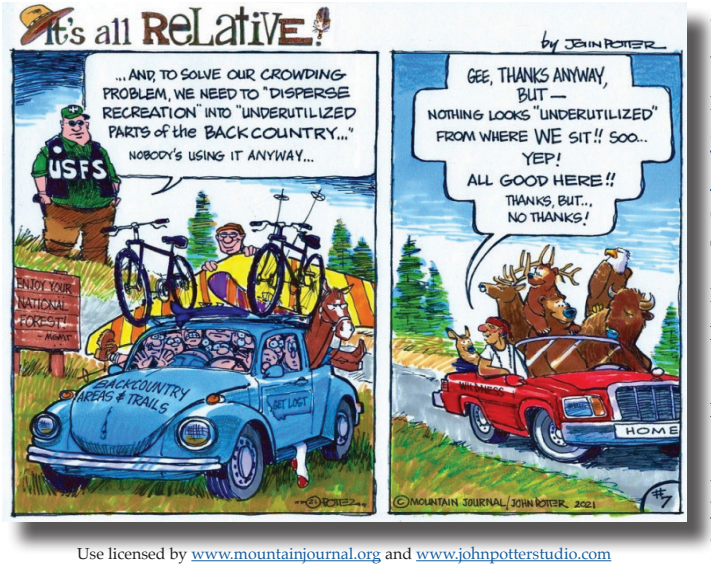
Plunder Blunders!

An increasingly arrogant Flathead National Forest is making grievous mistakes as it tries to force recreational development on a public that is tired of seeing its public lands turned into playgrounds for the rich and racy. On pages 2 and 3, we introduce you to how the Flathead is trying to turn the historic Holland Lake Lodge into a mega-resort without providing the public a chance to study the environmental, social and economic impacts.

On pages 4 and 5 we describe how the Krause Basin Collaborative is coming to an end with the Flathead only then finally admitting its maps of the area's trails have been wrong throughout the process! We told the Flathead in 2015 and repeatedly during the Krause Basin Collaborative that its maps were wrong, but it insisted it was right and wasted both time and process. Sadly, stubbornness, foolishness and deceit have become the hallmarks of how the Flathead deals with the public.

We are pleased to announce we are again holding our biweekly Swan Range Community Potlucks and Jam Sessions after a couple years off due to COVID! And, on page 6, **we announce our November 20 annual membership meeting** is being held in conjunction with one of those potlucks! Also on page 6, we share some of the unsolicited praise we receive for our work.



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We want to thank all of you who helped us meet our $4,000 Cinnabar Foundation Challenge Grant this year! That, in turn, means that Cinnabar matched/doubled your donation!

Of course, on page 7, we ask for your continued financial support. The costs of doing business, even for a nonprofit like ours, continue to rise.

Last, but not least, we thank all of you who write emails and letters to the government to secure quiet and calm habitats for fish, wildlife and people! We couldn't do it without you!

Keith

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

Pouring Gas on the Fire at Holland Lake Lodge!

The Flathead NF really kicked a hornets nest when it proposed to approve a mega-expansion of the historic Holland Lake Lodge into a destination resort. It proposed to allow mega-resort POWDR Corporation to simply take over the Special Use Permit for the Lodge (which sits on public FS land), tear down a number of historic buildings, and build a new 13,000 square foot lodge, 26 cabins, a 2,000 square foot visitor center, a 3,000 square foot restaurant, and various support buildings.

As can be seen in the two development maps on the following page, the historic Lodge and its ambiance would be reduced to a mere footnote at one corner of the permitted property. About half of the trees would be removed to make room for the new buildings and parking lots!

In an insult to the public's right to learn about and comment on a project of this scale, the Flathead proposed to use a Categorical Exclusion (CE) from the preparation of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. It sent out its notice on September 1, just prior to Labor Day Weekend, and gave the public until September 21 to submit comments.

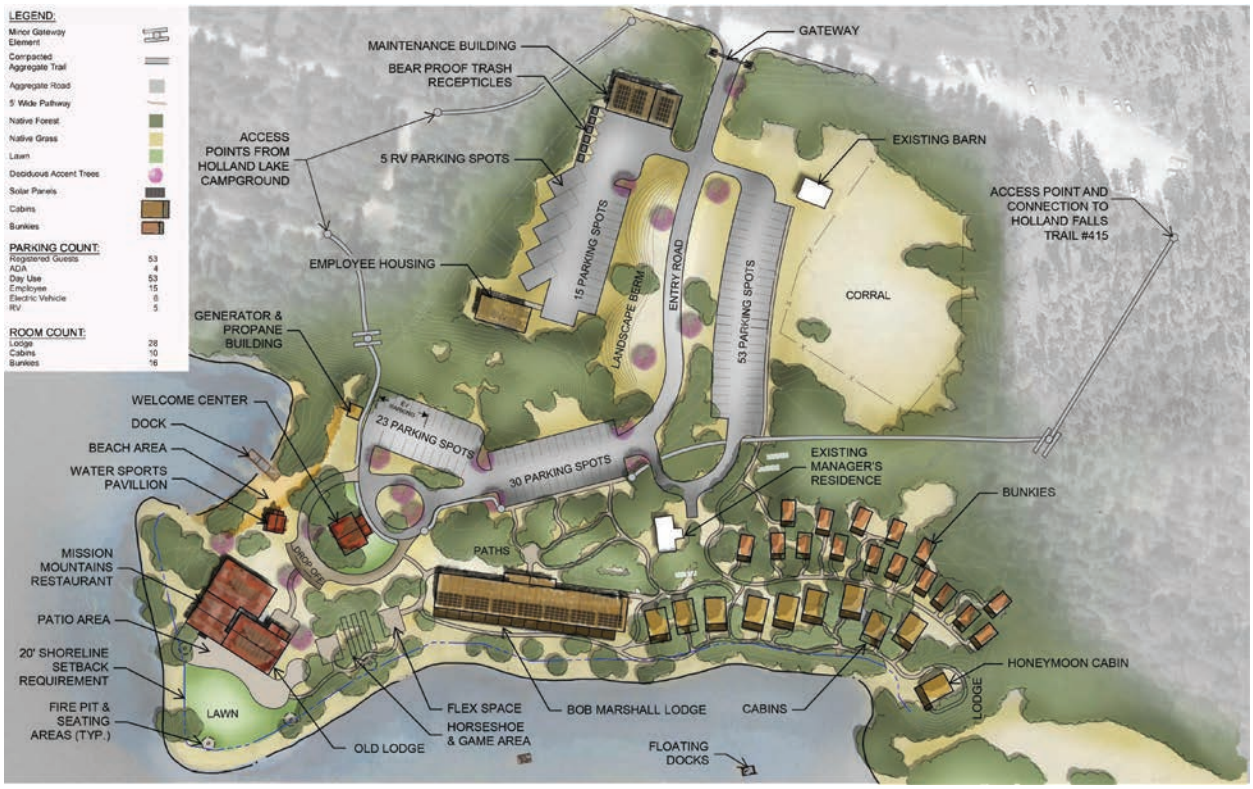
We immediately posted an alert to our members and our web site, asking for a 60 day public comment period and the preparation of an EIS, noting that the CE shortcut the FS wanted to use is "intended for constructing an outhouse or a tool shed, not a destination resort." The Missoulian picked up our alert, ran a front-page story, and it was off to the races!

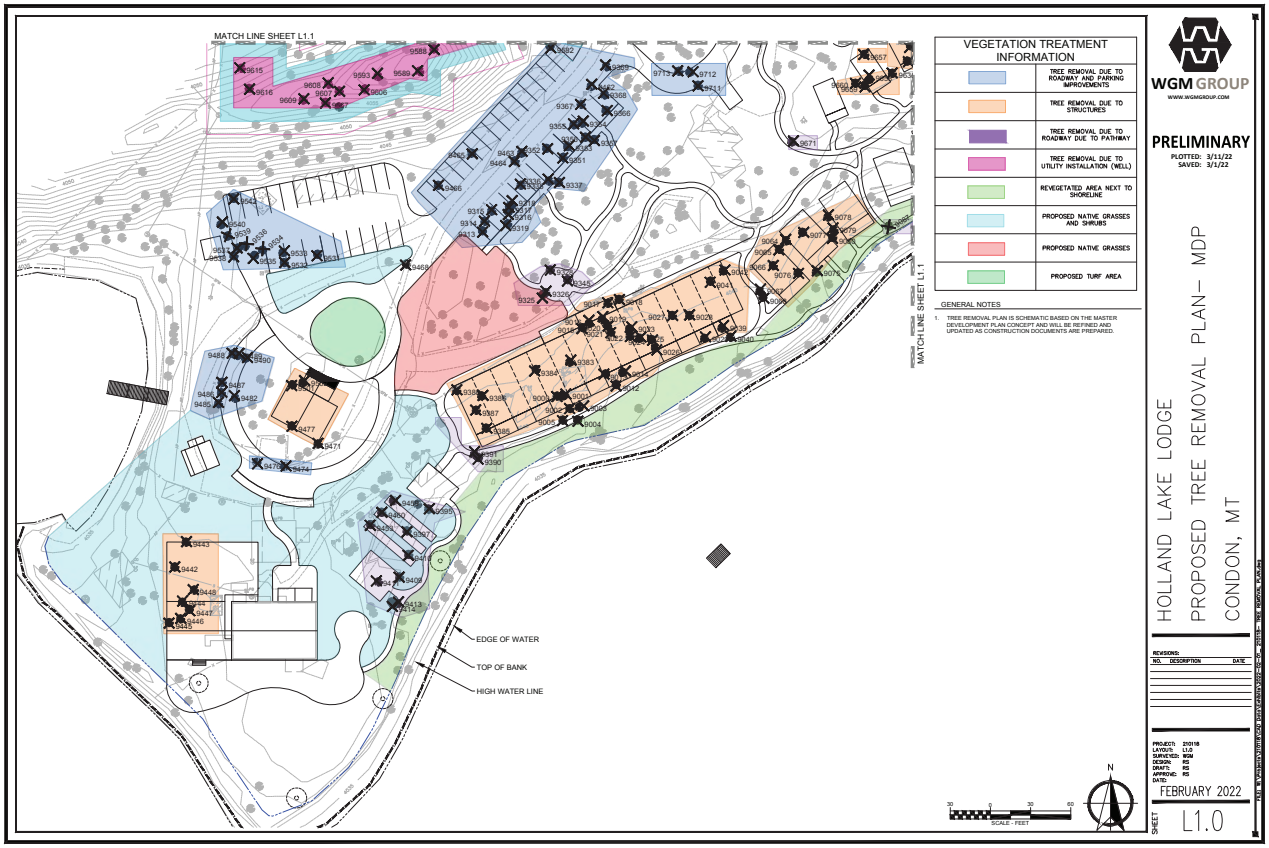
As opposition to the expansion grew, Flathead Forest Supervisor Kurt Steele extended the public comment period to October 7 but blamed the need for the extension on the public's "confusion" over the use of a CE. By this he implies the public doesn't know the difference between a few pages of "environmental analysis" hidden away in his drawer to an orderly EA or EIS that is distributed widely for public comment. Or that an EA or EIS is followed by a process in which the public can formally Object to the project while the public has no right to Object to a project approved using a CE.

Not to be outdone by her boss, however, Steele's Public Information Officer said this about their use of a CE: "It causes an inflammatory reaction, but the reason we do that is to get that reaction and to get those comments." Wish granted - the Missoula Current reports that the Flathead received over 6,500 comments, with 99% opposed to the expansion "for a myriad of reasons!"

Among those reasons is the fact that the existing SUP for the Lodge provides for use of 10.5 acres of public land, while the Flathead told the public the SUP covers 15 acres - an issue it is still stumbling over. What the Flathead still has not told the public is that the plain language in the existing SUP says that the SUP cannot simply be transferred from the existing owner to POWDR Corp., which states outright it will be "the future owner." To the contrary, the existing SUP states that a transfer of title or any change in control of the business entity "shall result in termination of the permit" and that any new owner "must submit an application for a special use permit. The Forest Service is not obligated to issue a new permit to the party who acquires control."

In our comments, we ask the FS to start over and prepare an EIS on its entire recreation and SUP program in order to capture the cumulative effects of the dozens of SUPs the Flathead issues each year in addition to its plans for Holland Lake Lodge. You can search for and download any of the 6,507 comments submitted online here.


LEGEND:
Minor Gateway Element
Compacted Aggregate Trail
Aggregate Road
5' Wide Pathway
Native Forest
Native Grass
Lawn
Deciduous Accent Trees
Solar Panels
Cabins
Bunkies
PARKING COUNT:
Registered Guests 53
ADA 4
Day Use 53
Employee 15
Electric Vehicle 6
RV 5
ROOM COUNT:
Lodge 28
Cabins 10
Bunkies 16
MAINTENANCE BUILDING
BEAR PROOF TRASH RECEPTICLES
GATEWAY
ACCESS POINTS FROM HOLLAND LAKE CAMPGROUND
5 RV PARKING SPOTS
EXISTING BARN
ACCESS POINT AND CONNECTION TO HOLLAND FALLS TRAIL #415
EMPLOYEE HOUSING
15 PARKING SPOTS
LANDSCAPE BERM
ENTRY ROAD
53 PARKING SPOTS
CORRAL
GENERATOR & PROPANE BUILDING
WELCOME CENTER
DOCK
BEACH AREA
WATER SPORTS PAVILLION
23 PARKING SPOTS
30 PARKING SPOTS
EXISTING MANAGER'S RESIDENCE
BUNKIES
MISSION MOUNTAINS RESTAURANT
PATHS
PATIO AREA
20' SHORELINE SETBACK REQUIREMENT
HONEYMOON CABIN
FIRE PIT & SEATING AREAS (TYP.)
LAWN
FLEX SPACE
HORSESHOE & GAME AREA
BOB MARSHALL LODGE
CABINS
LODGE
OLD LODGE
FLOATING DOCKS


MATCH LINE SHEET L1.1
VEGETATION TREATMENT INFORMATION
TREE REMOVAL DUE TO ROADWAY AND PARKING IMPROVEMENTS
TREE REMOVAL DUE TO STRUCTURES
TREE REMOVAL DUE TO ROADWAY DUE TO PATHWAY
TREE REMOVAL DUE TO UTILITY INSTALLATION (WELL)
REVEGETATED AREA NEXT TO SHORELINE
PROPOSED NATIVE GRASSES AND SHRUBS
PROPOSED NATIVE GRASSES
PROPOSED TURF AREA
GENERAL NOTES
1. TREE REMOVAL PLAN IS SCHEMATIC BASED ON THE MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONCEPT AND WILL BE REFINED AND UPDATED AS CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS ARE PREPARED.
EDGE OF WATER
TOP OF BANK
HIGH WATER LINE
WGM GROUP
PRELIMINARY
PLOTTED: 3/11/22
SAVED: 3/1/22
HOLLAND LAKE LODGE
PROPOSED TREE REMOVAL PLAN– MDP
CONDON, MT
REVISIONS:
NO. DESCRIPTION DATE
FEBRUARY 2022
SHEET
L1.0

Back to the Future in Krause Basin!

Unfortunately, the Forest Service took its usual "everything is on the table" approach to its Krause Basin Collaborative. It encouraged participants to champion mechanized use of unlawful user-created trails and to consider extending the season for motorized uses. Never did it inform the collaborative that the Flathead Forest Plan requires that grizzly bear security cannot be decreased below the levels that existed in 2011, which increasing trail density and season of use would most certainly do.

Nonetheless, a handful of participants including SVC were able to develop a "hike and horseback only" alternative that would put an end to the mayhem and unlawful trails being created by users of mechanized vehicles that include everything from mountain bikes to e-bikes to motorcycles and ATVs. Backcountry Horsemen of the Flathead has endorsed our Alternative C, which would retain mainly those trails authorized in the 1988 Noisy Face Plan that have not naturally re-vegetated.

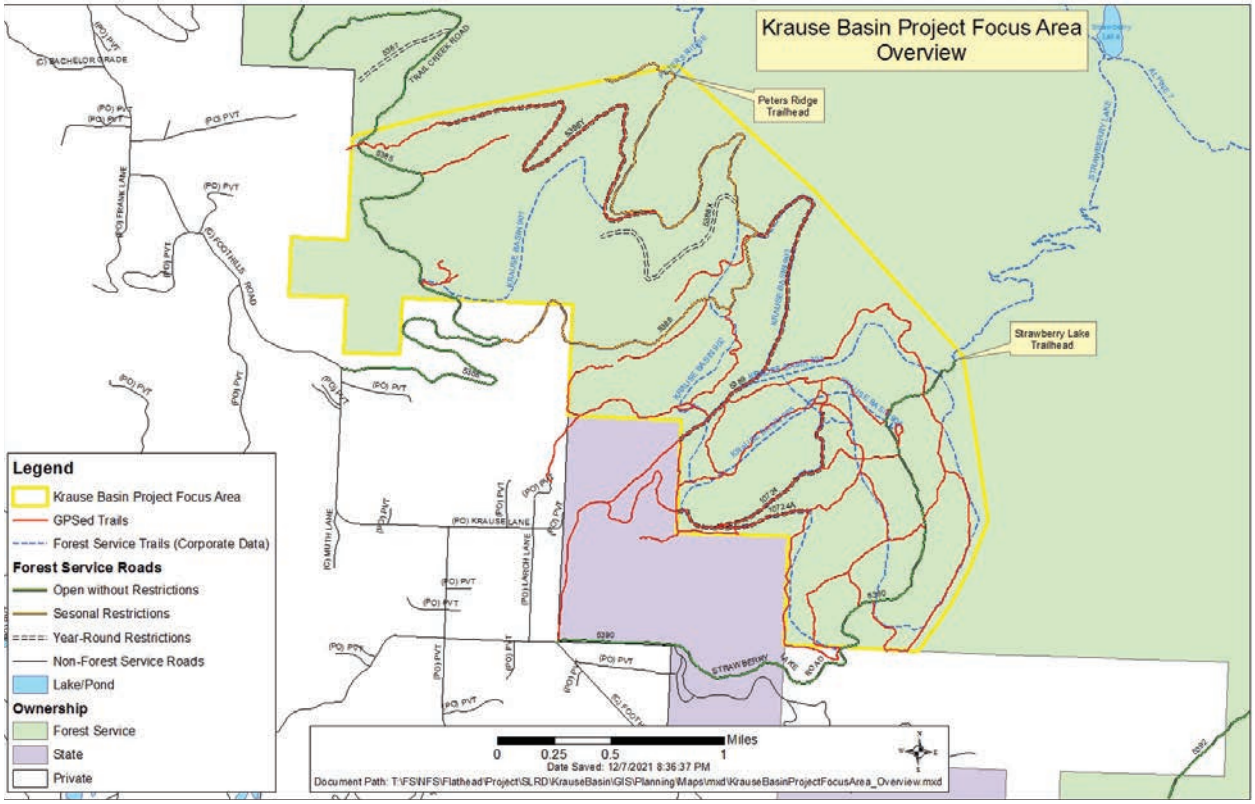
Mechanized advocates, of course, want as many trails as they can get, lawful or not, and want the motorized season extended from July and August to include September. All of this goes against the 1988 Noisy Face Plan, which was intended to limit the mileage of trails and phase them out through disuse by not marking them on the ground. It also goes against the science and previous FS findings that all the trails in Krause Basin, including the Peters Ridge and Strawberry Lake trails, need to be closed to motorized use in order to minimize harm to grizzly bears.

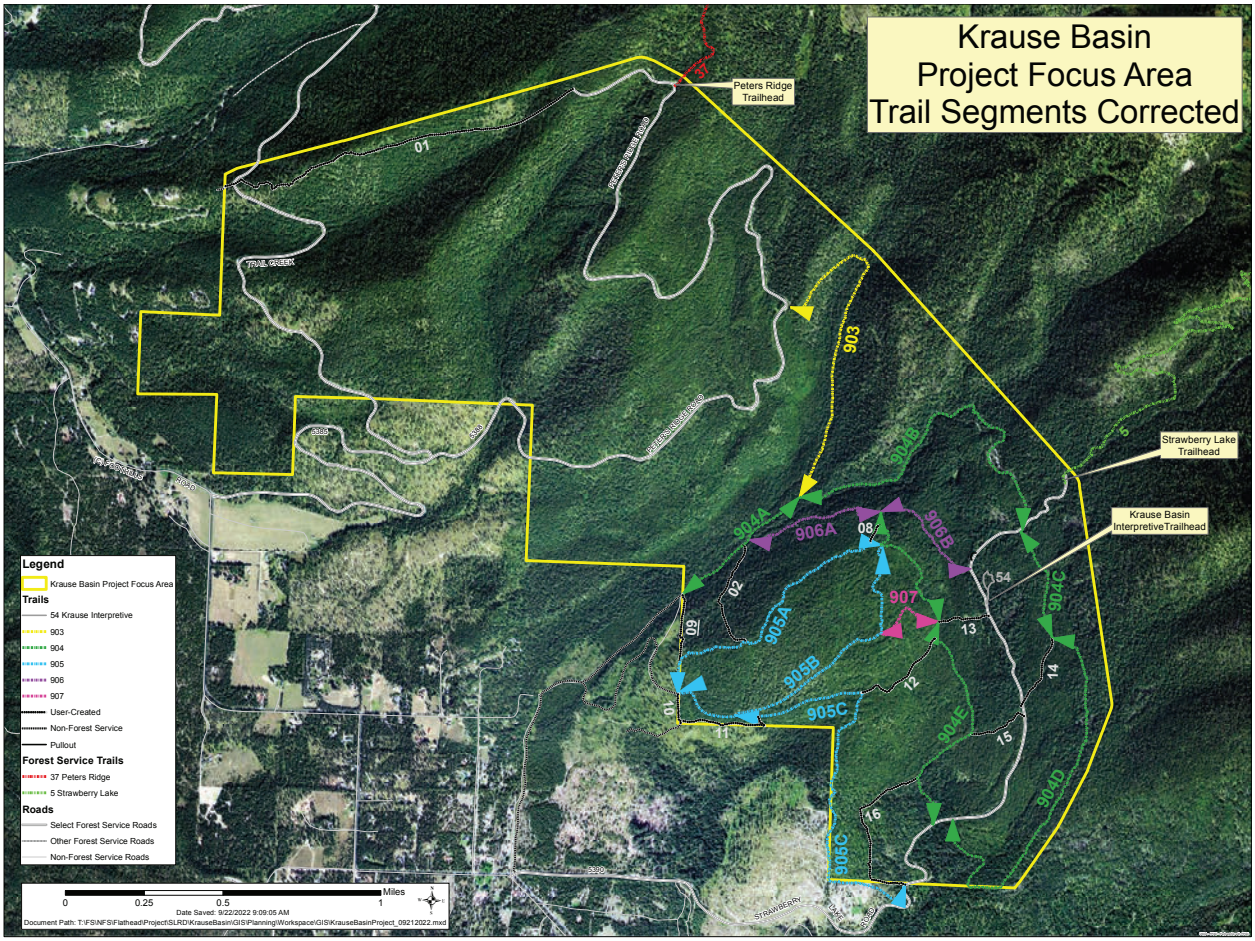
The FS refused to talk about these findings. It also insisted it knew where all the 1988 and unlawful trails were located in Krause Basin and what condition they were in - right up until the last Collaborative meeting in September. After finally sending its recreation officer out to see what was on the ground, the FS acknowledged it had misplaced numerous trails and that many of the 1988 trails in the northern half of the Basin had fallen into disuse and were naturally re-vegetating. This helps make our case for reducing trail mileage as called for in the 1988 Plan and in the Forest Plan.

On the following page, we have included the map provided the Collaborative last December (top) and the "corrected" map provided in September (bottom). While progress has been made in correcting these working maps, it should have been done back in 2015 when we first notified the FS of the errors. When the public obtains a Ranger District map or uses an app such as Gaia, it is seeing the flawed maps that remain in the FS's public database. This has contributed to people illegally cutting trails where the map says one should be!

There remains plenty of ill-will in Krause Basin, however, as motorized advocates showed up for the only Collaborative field trip packing guns and later attempted to "pack the ballot box" with outside input when Collaborative participants were asked to fill out a survey. Motorcycles continue to violate the Basin during the closed months and the wheelchair accessible Interpretive Trail we manage is repeatedly vandalized. Meanwhile, the FS remains inert and mountain bikers caught clearing illegal trails go unpunished.

We thank those of you that stuck it out during this Collaborative sideshow and we'll let all of you know what you can do as this enters the formal planning process next year. We'll be refining our "hike and horseback only" alternative, insisting on further corrections to the maps, and will never give up on our calls for more law enforcement and an end to mechanized abuse in Krause Basin!


Krause Basin Project Focus Area Overview
Peters Ridge Trailhead
Strawberry Lake Trailhead
Legend
Krause Basin Project Focus Area
GPSed Trails
Forest Service Trails (Corporate Data)
Forest Service Roads
Open without Restrictions
Seasonal Restrictions
Year-Round Restrictions
Non-Forest Service Roads
Lake/Pond
Ownership
Forest Service
State
Private
Miles
0 0.25 0.5 1
Date Saved: 12/7/2021 8:36:37 PM
Document Path: T:\FS\NFS\Flathead\Project\SLRD\KrauseBasin\GIS\Planning\Maps\mxd\KrauseBasinProjectFocusArea_Overview.mxd


Krause Basin
Project Focus Area
Trail Segments Corrected
Peters Ridge Trailhead
Strawberry Lake Trailhead
Krause Basin InterpretiveTrailhead
01
02
903
904A
904B
904C
904D
904E
905A
905B
905C
906A
906B
907
08
09
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
54
5
Legend
Krause Basin Project Focus Area
Trails
54 Krause Interpretive
903
904
905
906
907
User-Created
Non-Forest Service
Pullout
Forest Service Trails
37 Peters Ridge
5 Strawberry Lake
Roads
Select Forest Service Roads
Other Forest Service Roads
Non-Forest Service Roads
Miles
0 0.25 0.5 1
Date Saved: 9/22/2022 9:09:05 AM
Document Path: T:\FS\NFS\Flathead\Project\SLRD\KrauseBasin\GIS\Planning\Workspace\GIS\KrauseBasinProject_09212022.mxd

Unsolicited Praise for Our Work and Ranger Reports!

"Just sent a donation in gratitude for all the things you do, small and large."

C.R.

"So glad you are part of our community."

S.H.

"Swan View does great work to preserve habitat for wildlife and to protect forests into the future."

M.D.

"Great organization protecting the Swan crest and particularly Krause Basin from abuse by motorized vehicles."

J.L.

"Thank you for your work to stop the USFS from moving forward with the expansion of Holland Lake Lodge."

M.U.

"I wanted to thank you for speaking out on this issue and providing a voice for conservation."

H.A.

"Wonderful photos! This is such a tonic amidst the battle for wildlife. What a humane and spiritual service you provide."

C.P.

"I should tell you more often that your Swan reports are quite fabulous.

R.Q.

"Thanks for getting them to post this important information. The public's right to know is crucial."

M.B.

"Thank goodness for advocates like you!"

D.S.

"I can't tell you how fantastic your work is! It's good to know the fight continues. Love all your nature pics too.

H.W.

"Thanks for your enduring commitment to our wild lands and to keeping us informed. Please renew my membership."

K.N.

Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck November 20!

Join us for our Membership Meeting Sunday, November 20, at 4pm! We meet at the Mountain Brook Community Library at 2353 Foothill Road.

We'll spend an hour electing officers, discussing a bit of business, and summarizing the past year's challenges and accomplishments!

Then we'll enjoy a potluck dinner and socializing in a relaxed atmosphere!

Dinner will be followed by a regularly scheduled Swan Range Community Music Jam Session at 6pm for those who wish to stay! You don't have to play an instrument to enjoy this low key get together!

We hope you can join us for a bit of business and a whole lot of FUN!

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.

❤ ❤ ❤ ❤ ❤ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ✍ ❤ ❤ ❤ ❤ ❤

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.
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Kalispell, MT 59901

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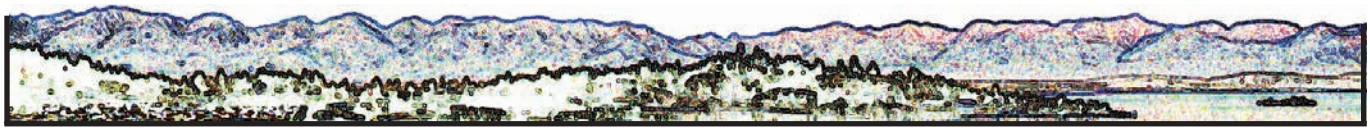
Swan View's News

Summer-Fall 2022



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