

December 15, 2007

Six Swan Rangers hiked the Peterson Creek road and trail for an eight mile loop Saturday. We turned around just short of the junction with the Broken Leg Divide Trail.

We saw a really nice whitetail buck and lots of tracks from a mountain lion that appeared to be covering the hillside extensively near where we saw the whitetail.

We also discovered a fir tree on the ridge that had been struck by lightning since our last outing there on November 10, with multiple splits in the bark running up the tree.

The Peterson Creek Road is now (since December 1) closed to motor vehicles to provide better security for big game to browse on the south-facing slopes for forage. It has about five inches of snow and is skiable, although there is not yet enough snow to ski once under the cover of trees on the Peterson Creek Trail. The closed Peterson Creek Road offers open, sunny skiing when the weather cooperates!

There is currently not enough snow to ski rock-free in the lower parts of Krause Basin near Foothill Road, although the logging activity on DNRC lands there is now complete and the area roads should begin snowing in soon.

The Swan Rangers meet every Saturday at the Echo Lake Cafe for breakfast at 8:30, leaving the Swan River School parking lot next door at 9:30 for a partial day outing in the northern Swan Mountains and foothills.

Everyone is Welcome!

Hope to see you soon,

Keith

Keith Hammer photos:



The Swan Rangers cross Patterson Creek along the Peterson Creek Trail.



Mountain lion tracks along the Peterson Creek Trail.



The lion tracks were fresh enough to encourage the Rangers to keep their eyes open.



This fir tree on the ridge above the Peterson Creek Trail was struck by lightning, blowing bark off in narrow bands spiraling up the tree.