

April 26, 2008

Nine Swan Rangers set out on the Crater Notch Trail on a very sunny Saturday, with half turning around at the "first lunch spot" and the rest continuing on to the divide between Birch Creek and Deer Creek for a second go at some snacks while looking across at the south slopes of Mount Aeneas!

Crater Notch itself was not attempted due to avalanche danger in the upper bowl before the Notch. The snow was firm in the morning and rotten in the afternoon sun, with about 4" of fresh snow at the upper elevations warming and getting greased up to slide on the south-facing slopes.

It felt like the first day of real spring weather for a change. The birds seemed happy about it too!

The Jewel Basin Road is snow-free to the parking lot for the Wolf Creek-Broken Leg-Crater Notch trailhead at the foot of the mountain.

The Swan Rangers meet every Saturday at the Echo Lake Cafe for breakfast at 8:30, leaving at 9:30 for a partial day outing in the northern Swan Mountains and foothills. Those times will shift an hour earlier beginning May 17.

They carpool from the Swan River School parking lot next to the Cafe.

Everyone is welcome!

Hope to see you soon,

Keith

Keith Hammer photos (next pages):



The lower part of the Crater Notch is snow-free - for a little ways!



But there's plenty of snow by the "first lunch spot!"



After leaving the Crater Notch Trail to gain the Birch-Deer divide ridge, there are plenty of nice views south toward Crater and Broken Leg Mountains.



Snow drifts point the way to Crater Notch, upper left, and the Jewel Basin boundary. The Crater Notch Trail passes along the foot of the open slopes, making it an iffy proposition during times of avalanche danger.