

July 5, 2008

Five Swan Rangers hiked Peters Ridge Trail amid glorious wildflowers and threatening skies Saturday, hitting plenty of snow immediately upon crossing the Swan Crest from west to east.

The high-elevation trail head becomes easier to reach each July 1, when the gate lower down on the Peters Ridge Road is swung open by the Forest Service after offering calving elk, grizzly bear and other wildlife several months of much needed springtime security in the wildlife-rich Krause Basin area.

The extra wait each year only adds to the appreciation of the extraordinary wildflowers along this trail, which Saturday included bear grass, mountain ash, larkspur, forget-me-not, columbine, virgin's bower, glacier lily, trillium, and Indian paintbrush.

Some of the best wildflower meadows are yet to be revealed as snow melts along Alpine Trail #7 between Peters Ridge Trail and Lamoose Lake! It seems it's always springtime somewhere along the Swan Crest!

The Swan Rangers meet every Saturday at the Echo Lake Cafe for breakfast at 7:30, leaving at 8:30 for a partial day outing in the northern Swan Mountains and foothills.

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 on following pages:



It's looking to be another banner year for bear grass blooms along the Peters Ridge Trail.



The Swan Rangers are a "stop and smell the roses" crew, taking time to enjoy and photograph wildflowers like these glacier lilies as they emerge from a retreating snowdrift.



Peters Ridge reaches its arm toward the Flathead Valley floor under an ominous sky.