

October 4, 2008

Five Swan Rangers took advantage of a rainy day Saturday and hiked in the Western Hemlock "rain forest" of Krause Basin, along old roads they like to ski in winter. It was a drippy but warm day; an excellent time to visit forests that require lots of snow and rainfall to create the moist microclimate necessary for their survival.

More about these special forests can be learned by visiting the quarter-mile Krause Basin Interpretive Trail that Swan View Coalition maintains 2.8 miles up the Strawberry Lake Road. Interpretive brochures are available along the trail or at <http://www.swanview.org/KrauseBasin.html>.

From legend and the brochure's prologue: "A very long time ago, the Great Spirit visited the earth and walked in the forest. In his presence all living things bowed their heads in respect--everything except the proud and mighty hemlock. The Great Spirit noticed and said, 'For placing yourself above everything else in my forest, you will bow your head forever.' The result of this foolish act can be seen today along the Krause Basin Interpretive Trail, where western hemlock trees continue to bow their heads."

The Swan Rangers meet every Saturday (rain or shine) 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

Photos on following pages by Keith Hammer:



A young Western Hemlock tree bows its head along the old Krause Basin Road, now an excellent trail for hiking and skiing.





The yellow leaves of fall Devil's Club brighten the shaded understory of the Western Hemlock forest.



When it's too wet to hike in the brush, try the creek bottom!