

May 23, 2009

Eight Swan Rangers followed in the footsteps of Bob Marshall Saturday, hiking up the Switchback Trail from the Jewel Basin Road. In 1928, however, Bob Marshall set out further down from the old Echo Ranger Station at what was then the end of the road and is now a gravel pit across from the Echo-Broken Leg trail head and parking lot.

Bob Marshall went all the way to Spotted Bear that August 28, while we Swan Rangers hiked a ways above snow line and called it good for the day. We saw old #9 telephone wire along the trail while detouring around many wind-thrown trees in the lower stretches of the trail, wondering if it had been there when Marshall hiked it in the days before two-way radios and cell or satellite phones.

The Switchback Trail is a bit of a challenge this early in the season, with lots of wind-thrown trees yet to be cleared and snow higher up - but it nonetheless is worth the hike for the wonderful views of the valley below!

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

Photos on following pages by Keith Hammer:



The south-facing slopes are mostly free of snow until higher up in the burn.



The burn, conducted by the Forest Service in 2002 to spur the regeneration of whitebark pine, offers plenty of sunshine on a nice day!



The ridge proved easier to walk than the side hill, once above snow line, and provided great views of Flathead, Mud and Echo Lakes!