

May 1, 2010

Eight Swan Rangers hiked along the Swan River Nature Trail upstream from Bigfork Saturday in order to avoid the slush from the week's storms at mid- and higher-elevations. It was a pleasant morning with only a sprinkle of rain from time to time.

The Swan River Nature Trail is 4 miles round-trip and offers lots of viewing of ducks, geese, osprey and other birds associated with water. The Rangers saw lots of pairs of golden-eye ducks, a variety of other duck species, a young osprey in its nest, and a pair of Canada geese with 5 goslings!

The low elevation and southern exposure of the Nature Trail also make it a good spring walk for enjoying early wildflowers, large ponderosa pine, and the roots of trees intertwined with cliffs and boulders!

The Nature Trail was established on the old road into Bigfork and is open to foot, bicycle and horse travel. The old road still shows signs of hand-laid rock work and was used before there were any bridges over the Swan River at Bigfork, when folks had to travel two miles upstream to cross the bridge at Kearny Rapids.

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 Swan River Nature Trail is well suited to group walks . . .



. . . along the old road east of Bigfork.



A Canada goose and goslings.



Clematis vines climb brush along the trail . . .



. . . while Blue Eyed Mary cascades down the cut-slope.



Arrowleaf balsamroot keep an eye on the trail below.