

June 4, 2011

Ten Swan Rangers hiked Peterson Creek Trail #293 Saturday, under sunny skies but with heavy dew. Half called it good enough at a testy crossing of a swollen Patterson Creek, while the others continued up to snow line just below the junction with Sidehill Trail #353.

We found fresh tracks of either a small wolverine or a fisher (bigger cousin of the pine marten) in the snow. My track book and I now think it was fisher due to the smaller size, its alternating stride, and its proclivity to travel on fallen logs when possible.

Other than size, however, the tracks of wolverine and fisher are nearly identical, with both often showing only 4 of their 5 toes and both showing claws. Any expertise to share on the photo of the tracks 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.

When hiking in bear country, remember to carry bear spray and avoid the 3-D's: dawn, dusk, and darkness.

Everyone is welcome!



Keith

Photos on following pages by Keith Hammer:



It's a mile walk on a road gated until July 1 to provide wildlife security from motor vehicles.



A swollen Patterson Creek has divided into two channels, presenting an unbridged crossing to get to the log bridge!



A spider web sparkles with morning dew and sunlight.



Spiny devil's club stalks are beginning to unfurl their spiny leaves!



An old Trail #353 sign from when the lower portion of Peterson Creek Trail was numbered same as the Sidehill Trail - autographed in 1964 and 1986.



Fisher tracks showing also the rear forelegs where it reared back to jump up on a log for easier travel.