

July 16, 2011

Thirteen Swan Rangers hiked up the Switchback Trail Saturday, with six continuing up past Alpine #7 Trail to the peak of Mount Aeneas. The south-facing Switchback Trail is now clear of snow all the way to Alpine #7 and, while there is considerable snow from Alpine #7 up to the microwave building, the ridge from there up to the peak is mostly snow-free.

The Rangers saw eight mountain goats along the ridge-line of Aeneas, and plenty of snow and ice in Jewel Basin itself! The Switchback Trail is of modest incline due to 79 switchbacks, begins near mile 3 on the Jewel Basin Road, and is a nice alternative to driving to mile 7 and hiking on the still snow-bound road to the parking lot area and on up to Alpine #7 (and the junction with Switchback Trail).

Hiking the Swan Crest this "summer" is quite the contrast of summer green on the southwest side and winter white on the northeast side!

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:



All smiles midway up the 79 switchbacks!



Mountain goats are still shedding their winter coats, as is Jewel Basin!



Picnic Lakes remain mostly frozen over and buried in snow!



Hiking the last of the ridge-line leading to the peak, with great views of Mud, Echo, and Flathead Lakes.



The peak offers great views south along the Swan Crest and of Birch, Inthlam-keh, and Crater lakes (the first two still frozen over but the latter markedly clear of ice)!



Atop Mount Aeneas, where the wind kindly blows the bugs away!