

May 12, 2012

Eighteen Swan Rangers hiked up the Switchback Trail from Jewel Basin Road on a sunny Saturday, finding firm snow-pack near the top of the 79 switchbacks! From there on the group turned around in twos and threes, but six made it to the top of the ridge overlooking Camp Misery and the Jewel Basin parking lot!

A blue grouse provided company during an early lunch a bit below snow line and it was a great day to spend with kids out and about. The Rangers had one young lass along and crossed paths with a couple young lads and their dad on the way back down! Let's hear it for more youngsters enjoying the Swan Range!

The legendary Bob Marshall hiked the Switchback Trail on August 28, 1928 as he began his Forest Service hike of mountains that would later bear his name as the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The northern Swan Range, however, still awaits designation as Wilderness. Marshall summed up the threats to wild lands even in those early days by writing "wilderness is melting away like some last snowbank on some south-facing mountainside."

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 and Bob Muth:



A hillside of Swan Rangers!



A blue grouse poses against a blue sky!



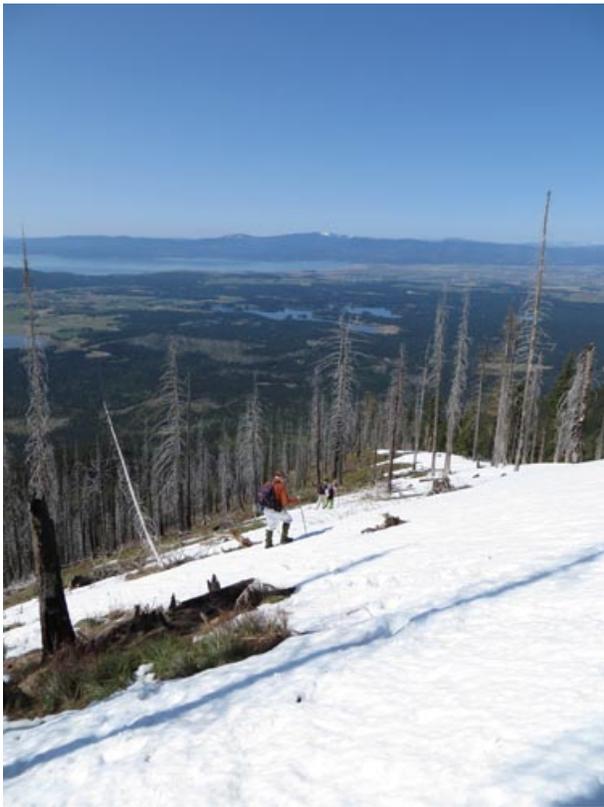
With Dad in hand, Jasmine leaves the Flathead Valley far behind . . .



. . . discusses her plans for the tooth fairy . . .



. . . and shows her big brother the quickest route back down!



A "last snowbank on a south facing mountainside," above Echo and Flathead Lakes.