

May 19, 2007

Nine Swan Rangers hiked up the Switchback Trail to Alpine Trail #7 Saturday, laughing and chatting their way through 79 switchbacks each direction!

Because of its southern exposure, Switchback Trail offers snow-free access to elevations above the Jewel Basin Parking lot prior to the road to the parking lot becoming snow-free. We did not hit snow until the last few hundred yards of the junction with Alpine Trail #7.

Because of all those switchbacks, the trail is actually set on a moderate grade.

The Switchback Trail leaves the Jewel Basin Road about a quarter mile above mile marker 3. Look for a sign in a tree above the road as it leaves the old clear cut and rounds a ridge.

Conversation was once again as rewarding as the hike, views and exercise, with one of the Rangers recently returning from winter in Honduras.

**REMEMBER, STARTING NEXT SATURDAY, MAY 26, THE RANGERS BEGIN SUMMER HOURS, MEETING AT 7:30 FOR BREAKFAST AT ECHO LAKE CAFE, LEAVING AT 8:30 FOR HIKING.**

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.

Keith Hammer photos:



The upper portion of the Switchback Trail offers excellent views of Flathead Lake and the valley below as it climbs through an area burned intentionally by the Forest Service in 2002 to help whitebark pine get a new start.



Rangers take in the views of Noisy Basin from Alpine Trail #7 at its junction with the Switchback Trail, at 6,435 feet elevation high above the Camp Misery/Jewel Basin parking lot.



A GPS tracking view of the last couple dozen switchbacks.