

On the Path

Celebrating the Swan Range!

By Keith Hammer

August 13, 2009, Lakeshore Country Journal

It is said a picture is worth a thousand words, so why not combine both to foster public appreciation of how the wonderful Swan Range enriches our lives? That's exactly what has happened and the results will be on display at the Bigfork Museum of Art and History August 25 through September 5!

"Celebrating the Swan Range!" is a photo exhibit co-hosted by the Museum and the nonprofit Swan View Coalition as it celebrates its 25th anniversary conserving quiet habitat for fish, wildlife and people in the Swan Range. Photographers were given the option when submitting their photos to also submit a few words about their appreciation of the Swan Range. The depth and diversity expressed in these kind words and photographs is truly remarkable!

The show's amateur and professional divisions each include four categories: 1) views of the Swan Range, 2) views from within the Swan Range, 3) plants and wildlife in the Swan Range, and 4) people in the Swan Range. Jury Awards have already been selected for best in each category for each division, and folks viewing the show at the Museum can vote for the Peoples' Choice Award for each category. The eight Jury Award winning photographs can be previewed in color by downloading Swan View Coalition's "Summer 2009" newsletter from www.swanview.org.

All photographs on exhibit will be for sale and proceeds will benefit the art of photography and conservation of the Swan Range. A number of businesses have generously donated prizes for the sixteen prizewinners. Our many thanks go out to:

Bill Hunger Therapeutic Massage
Bonelli's Bistro
Burch's One Hour Photo Digital
Don Gee Woodworking
Echo Lake Cafe
El Topo Cantina
Electric Avenue Gifts
Great Northern Foods
INVITE
Kravingz Café and Bakery
Lindy Dewey Therapeutic Body-Mind-Spirit Work
Medicine Owl Massage
Montana Coffee Traders
Mountain Brook Studio
River Street Diner and Pub
Rocky Mountain Outfitter
Rosa's Pizza
Saketome Sushi

Swan Valley Herbs
Wheaton's Cycling and Fitness

We also want to thank the many photographers who submitted photographs for the show and who, virtually without exception, have donated use of their digital images to further the nonprofit educational work of Swan View Coalition! Their names are too numerous to list here, so please come see the show and some fifty of their photographs!

You'll also be treated to a display of a 1984 "Instamatic" paste-up panorama of the Swan Range that was used successfully at public meetings during Swan View Coalition's infancy to prevent the clear-cutting of this magnificent viewshed. This alongside a few newspaper headlines from those days, when the Bigfork Chamber of Commerce announced its opposition to clear-cutting the Swan Face and the Bigfork Eagle cost just 25 cents!

So please come see the show and explore our appreciation and conservation of the Swan Range through the art and power of photography. An opening reception will be held August 25, from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at the Museum, which is located at 525 Electric Avenue and is otherwise open 10 – 5, Tuesday through Saturday.

Keith Hammer grew up hiking, skiing, camping, hunting, and fishing in the Swan Mountains. He has worked a number of jobs, from Forest Service trail worker to logger to backcountry guide, and currently works as an environmental consultant and head of the nonprofit Swan View Coalition. His column appears regularly in this paper and is archived at www.swanrange.org. Keith can be reached at 406-755-1379 or keith@swanview.org.



Best Seat in the House! Laurie Darrow photo.