



"...to protect the natural resources that make the North Fork an unparalleled environment for wildlife and people."

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Number 1

SHARING THE FOREST: THE FLATHEAD WINTER ACCORD

Conservationists, snowmobilers and the Flathead National Forest have reached an agreement on winter recreation covering the North Fork side of the Whitefish Range. The agreement protects key areas for quiet recreation and wildlife habitat, while insuring that 100% of groomed snowmobile routes and 90% of snowmobile play areas remain open for snowmobile use.

The agreement was reached between the U.S. Forest Service, Flathead Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association, Montana Snowmobile Association, Flathead Snowmobile Association, Cut Bank Sno-Goers and American Council of Snowmobile Associations.

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The negotiations took ten grueling months. Under the proposal, winter recreation in the North Fork remains for the most part unchanged south of Red Meadow Road and slightly changed to the north. The heaviest concentration of snowmobile routes and areas are south of Red Meadow, while most of the more remote lands to the north will be managed for quiet recreation and wildlife habitat. Exceptions that allow snowmobile use north of Red Meadow include the Whitefish Divide Trail to Huntsberger Lake as well as a large snowmobile play area surrounding Red Meadow, Link and Chain Lakes. Snowmobiles will also be able to drive a series of unplowed roads from Whale Creek Road to Hornet Lookout or Ninko Cabin. Snowmobile access to the Kootenai National Forest in the north starts on the Trail Creek Road, switching to the Frozen Lake Road, a route chosen by Flathead National Forest. (The route following Yakinikak Creek and the Trail Cr. Rd. near the Whitefish Divide is more avalanche prone than the Frozen Lake Route.)

a "remarkable achievement" ...a solution that is "reasonable, workable, and definable"
-Daily Inter Lake

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President's Corner

TWENTY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE BY NFPA

First, I want to thank past President Ed Heger for a job well-done the previous year. His achievements include a membership brochure, over fifty new members and a seminar on conservation easements. Today Ed remains NFPA representative to the North Fork Land Use Planning Committee.

In the lead article, I write about the recent winter recreation agreement on Flathead National Forest. I neglected to stress that it is extremely significant to have finally made such a large stride toward resolution of user conflicts between snowmobilers and those who prefer more leisurely travel, such as cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. I am not trying to make a value judgment here as to which recreation is better; rather, it is a matter of different things for different folks.

In a related issue, motorized recreationists are sometimes not where they are supposed to be because of a simple lack of information. Often informational signs are missing and many times there are no recent Forest Service maps available. NFPA requested a grant from the State Trails Program for directional signs, signs showing trails open or closed to motorized recreation and bulletin boards for posting travel maps and other pertinent information such as bear safety. The U.S. Forest Service will maintain the bulletin boards and post information on them. The bulletin boards and signs will be at the Link Lake/Whitefish Divide trails, at the end of Whale Creek Road and near Tuchuck Campground. In April, NFPA will know if the grant is approved.

In March of this year the Preservation Association will be twenty years old. In 1982 about twenty people gathered for a meeting in order to do something to avoid having the North Fork Road paved and to create a group to deal with a proposed coal mine up the river in British Columbia. The group chose the name North Fork Preservation Association. Over the past twenty years, the Preservation Association has kept pressure on government agencies to take the course most friendly to the environment.

Recently, Flathead County has proposed tearing up and rebuilding the thin pavement on the North Fork Road, between the Downes/Ladenburg property and Hay Creek. This "pavement" has been repaired so many times since 1981 that it cannot continue to hold up without starting over. If the county only tears up and rebuilds this section of road, the North Fork Preservation Association has no particular quarrel with it; any environmental damage such as increased access was done long ago. However, the county initially suggested extending the temporary pavement at both ends — from Coal Creek to the south to Polebridge on the north. (Editor's note- the recent word from the county is that it would only be extended to the south). In this case, there would have to be more studies — including an environmental impact statement, if federal money is involved or Forest Service gravel is required.

The Preservation Association will not be pleased with extending the pavement. The accumulated effect of more people on wildlife and the quality of life in the North Fork would be unacceptable. The Preservation Association was founded on the premise that further paving of the road was unnecessary and ultimately detrimental.

-John Frederick

NFPA present John Frederick may be reached by e-mail at john@nfhostel.com. Be sure to visit the NFPA web site at www.gravel.org.



LAND-USE PLANNING UPDATE

North Fork landowners have been working for a number of years on a zoning plan to address commercial development. This process is nearing completion. A balanced plan has been forged that will help maintain the North Fork's unique qualities and ensure the livelihood of residents - both wildlife and humans.

This past summer The North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee, composed entirely of North Fork landowners, drafted a plan with input from a survey of property owners, numerous public meetings, and the help of county planners. At a standing-room-only Flathead County Planning Board hearing, there was impressive testimony expressing the breadth and depth of landowner commitment to the plan. Disappointingly, the board voted to "table" the plan -- that is, to **not make** a recommendation to the Flathead County Board of Commissioners, but to send it back to the committee for further work.

Later in August, the commissioners, as a courtesy, allowed North Forkers to again speak at a hearing. The commissioners, however, could not take action on the plan because of a county law prohibiting them from doing so without a recommendation from the Flathead County Planning Board.

Since October, the North Fork Land Use Advisory Committee has been reworking the plan to address specific concerns of the planning board and the task is nearly finished. The new format conforms to other zoning districts in the county. Rather than prohibiting specific uses, the proposal provides a mechanism for the North Fork community to be involved as development occurs.

Once the committee finalizes the proposed regulations, they will be mailed to all landowners. After receipt of the regulations, letters of support to Flathead County from landowners are critical. Past letters or those received or dated before the official comment period will not be considered. The remaining public hearings will be with the planning board and the county commissioners. A continued show of landowner support at these hearings is essential. We hope to see the whole process completed this spring.

The NFPA is fully in support of the proposed regulations and praises the North Fork community for persevering together through this lengthy process.

-Rachel Potter

*For more information or updates contact:
Karen Reeves, 406-862-4351
North Fork Landowners for Zoning*

WOLF NOTES

-From Tom Meier, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Apgar Pack AKA S. Camas	In the Middle Fork, Apgar to Nyack	1 adult male, 3 pups, death of female under investigation
Kintla Pack , AKA N. Camas	Mostly in the Park, Bowman L. to Canada	4 adults, 2 pups
Whitefish Pack	Denned in Park south of Polebridge	3 adults, 1 pup
Apgar Pack AKA S. Camas	Middle Fork, Nyack to Apgar	1 adult male, 3 pups, death of female under investigation
Grave Cr. Pack	W. of Whitefish Divide, U. Sillwater and N.	4 adults, 2 pups

EASEMENTS PROTECT 528 MORE ACRES of PRIVATE LAND

John and Anne Collins, long-time Whitefish residents, donated conservation easements covering 460 acres of their property to the Montana Land Reliance (MLR). Peter and Caroline Guynn donated an easement covering an additional 68 acres of their land to The Nature Conservancy.

The Collins' property is mainly forested and provides security and habitat for numerous wildlife species. Combined with easements on the adjacent Rocky Bar O Ranch, over 1,650 acres in the Coal Creek-Home Ranch bottom area are now protected from sub-division. "With the pace of development ... in the Flathead Valley, we feel that it is critical to maintain areas with open space and natural habitat," said Anne Collins.

The Guynns purchased two tracts of land last year totaling 173 acres as part of a "conservation buyer" strategy with the

Conservancy. The Guynns signed a conservation easement covering 105 acres of the property last December. Now, all 173 acres – the largest tract of private land in the Trail Creek area – are covered under conservation easements.

"They want to leave a legacy for their children, grandchildren and future generations."

–Amy Eaton, MLR

Both the Guynn and Collins easements are aimed at restricting subdivision in the future, but allow for current uses of the properties. As private lands, the properties

will remain on the tax rolls, and access rights remain with the landowner.

To date, the Conservancy, Montana Land Reliance and the Flathead Land Trust have worked with private landowners to conserve more than 2,400 acres in the North Fork.

To learn more about conservation easements, contact:

- Marilyn Wood, The Nature Conservancy, 406-837-0909, or www.nature.org/Montana
- Amy Eaton, Montana Land Reliance, 406-837-2178 or www.mtlandreliance.org
- Susan How, Flathead Land Trust, 406-752-8293 or www.flatheadlandtrust.org



–John Frederick

Mount Hefty Volunteer Work Day, August 2001. Left to Right: Bob Keibler (U.S. Forest Service), Frank Vitale, Cole Milstead, Dave Hadden, Carolyn Beecher, Ellen Horowitz and Garth North

BAD PAVEMENT AND LONG-TERM PLANS

The October 10 Daily Inter Lake announced Flathead County's intent to "re-pave" a seven mile stretch of the North Fork Road from Coal Creek bridge to the Polebridge turnoff. This notice immediately got people's attention because there is currently no pavement at Coal Creek or as far north as Polebridge. Only a 5.25-mile stretch is paved. Thus, the county intends to re-pave this stretch and add approximately 1.6 miles of new pavement at the north and south ends.

Unfortunately, this is not simply a case of maintaining the status quo. The county's intent to newly pave the 1.6 miles and their effort in 2000 to pave the ten mile stretch from Canyon Creek to Camas junction reveals a piecemeal approach to a vital natural resource issue: Maintaining the integrity of the wildlife habitat of the North Fork valley. The Flathead Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) has recommended to the county that they evaluate their Coal to Polebridge proposal in the context of their full intentions for the road, and prepare an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act.

A meeting on October 15 between MWA and Charlie Johnson, County Road Supervisor, was friendly and informative. There is an opportunity to work with the county and local residents on this project, if it is constrained to the existing paved segment. North Fork residents, even some MWA members, see no net harm to wildlife habitat if the existing pavement is patched and re-coated. A poll conducted by the Land-Use Advisory Committee indicates that the majority of Fork landowners do not want the road from Camas to Polebridge paved. However, as the 5.25-mile segment is already paved, there is a strong sentiment that re-paving is common

sense. In addition, this is not the time for a potentially controversial debate in the North Fork Community, when they are attempting to pull together to finalize commercial land use planning. There is incentive all around to find a solution that makes sense and results in no net loss to wildlife habitat.

"...the county intends to ...add approx. 1.6 miles of new pavement..."

However, if a solution cannot be found, then history will likely repeat itself. If the county insists on newly paving the additional 1.6 miles and eventually comes back to their proposal to pave the ten miles from Canyon to Camas, then the only portion not paved to Polebridge will be the scant 5 miles from Camas to Coal. County Commissioner Dale Williams' stated intention to pave the North Fork Road would be all but accomplished.

In 1980 and again in 1982 the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a jeopardy opinion on the proposal to pave the Canyon to Camas portion of the road. In fact, some would charge that the 5.25-mile section, paved immediately after the 1980 jeopardy opinion, was illegal, as it used federal funds and materials. MWA maintains that the biology has not changed since these opinions were rendered. Those opinions were based in large part on the fact that paving would "provide an incentive for increased subdivision and development of private lands in the North Fork Valley". Paving the road will jeopardize wolves and grizzly bears. Moreover, it's a waste of tax dollars. Other Flathead County roads are in more need of repair, and will better serve the public.

We await the formal announcement of the county's intentions for the North Fork Road.

-based on an article originally published in the November issue of the Wild Flathead

Editor's note: At the January 25 Interlocal meeting, Commissioner Williams announced that the county was still looking for repaving funds. When asked about pavement extension, he said that there were no plans to pave north of the Hay Creek Bridge and that the extension to the south to Coal Creek was for ease of maintenance. NFPA agrees that the Home Ranch bottom section needs to be repaired, but the road can be made safer and better maintained without extending the pavement. Commissioner Williams said that the county has "no desire to extend pavement past Camas"-an apparent change from his earlier position. Williams also stated that the county will be 'reapplying' for money to pave the Canyon Cr. to Camas section. Stay tuned.

MOOSE FIRE SALVAGE LOGGING

The North Fork Preservation Association is in favor of sensible salvage logging in the wake of the Moose Fire. Salvage logging can provide important raw material to local industry, but should be done in a way that protects clean water and wildlife habitat. The State of Montana's Coal Creek State Forest and the Flathead National Forest have projects to salvage timber within the Moose Fire. The main goal on the Coal Creek State Forest is to provide revenue for the school trust fund. The salvage project was split into two phases. Phase I did not entail much controversy and the logging is already being completed. Controversial aspects of Phase II involve logging in old growth stands and building new roads. The Flathead Forest's main goal is to deter a potential insect infestation starting in the burn and spreading out. Controversial parts of the Flathead Forest plan call for entering an inventoried roadless area and extensive logging in streamside areas. Here are a few points the North Fork Preservation Association made in our written comments:

- Loggers should respect and avoid disturbing the last fragments of old growth. There is currently an injunction against harvest of old growth on State Forests until a statewide old growth plan is completed. The state has very little old growth left outside the Coal Cr. State Forest; logging the stands within the fire perimeter does not comply with State Forest Lands Management Plan. Including harvest of partly burned or unburned stands in Phase II will result in delay of the project and therefore significant timber value loss.
- Salvage loggers on the State Forest should use only the existing network of roads. New roads are destructive to water and wildlife and are too costly to build and maintain.
- The *potential* threat of insect infestations starting in stands in USFS inventoried roadless and riparian areas is not great enough to justify logging there.
- FNF should comply with Amendment 19 and decommission roads in the fire area for grizzly bear security. Flathead Forest already has far more roads than it can afford to maintain. Decommissioning roads makes good economic sense, plus it's the best thing to do for the environment.
- Current roads in the inventoried roadless area should also be decommissioned.
- Sufficient numbers of high quality snags, particularly larch over 20" diameter, should

be left standing for wildlife, wherever it is safe to do so.

MOOSE FIRE FACTS

71,000 acres within the fire perimeter
Flathead National Forest - 37,000 acres
Glacier National Park - 24,000 acres
Coal Creek State Forest - 6,500 acres
Private Land - 941 acres

The following numbers are approximate. More accurate figures will be available after next summer.

- Burn severity (effect on vegetation):
 - Unburned - 33%
 - Low/moderate - 26%
 - High (> 80% of trees burned) - 41%
- Fire Severity (effect on soil, which is an indication of erosion potential as well as future vegetation):
 - Unburned/low mosaic - 61%
 - Moderate - 38%
 - High - 1%

- provided by Flathead National Forest

For more detail, see the text of the letters sent by NFFA on our web site at www.gravel.org. During the next comment periods later in the winter, urge Flathead Forest to log only in areas already accessible by roads. Roadless areas are too valuable for water quality, wildlife, and quiet recreation. Tell the State of Montana to conserve the few old growth stands left on state forests.

-Rachel Potter

Stand up for North Fork Old Growth and Roadless Areas -ask these offices to put you on their mailing list for Moose Fire Salvage information. Your letters make a difference.

➤ Brian Manning, Stillwater State Forest
P.O. Box 164, Olney, MT 59927
(406) 881-2371 or bmanning@state.mt.us

Hungry Horse Ranger District
P.O. Box 190340, Hungry Horse, MT 59919
(406) 387-3800

THE "FOREST HEALTH" ENIGMA

As the Moose Fire advanced, opportunists seized the occasion to promote a baseless forest management agenda. They embrace the "forest health" fable, asserting that only "unhealthy" forests are subject to rapidly moving, stand replacing fires. Ignoring the facts, they advocate landscape-scale thinning and logging to prevent such fires. Research has demonstrated that in some western forests (primarily in lower elevations), short-interval fire regimes have been altered by fire suppression. In such stands, where an abnormally dense understory has developed, thinning younger trees and prescribed burning may be a logical procedure. However, attempting to extrapolate this scenario to all forests is irrational. The history across mid- and high-elevation forests of the northern Rocky Mountains is much different and more complex. In many of these forests, large and severe fires were the norm, and intervals between them were long (e.g., more than a century in major portions of Glacier Park - research by Barrett, Arno, and Key). Fire suppression has not significantly altered those fire regimes nor the long-term natural range in variation of forest conditions. Landscape scale thinning and logging in those forests would be improvident. Scientific research does not support any such simplistic approach. Even if such actions were feasible, they would be ineffective in preventing fire and would destroy the diversity essential to the integrity of forest ecosystems.

Over millennia, western Montana forest mosaics have been shaped and reshaped by lightning, fire, wind, wood decay, native insects, diseases, and parasites. In diverse forests, these natural components and processes are as important as are the trees themselves. For example, old-growth larch stands (most have been cut), with components of decay, snags, broken tops, and woody debris, are essential to some wildlife species. These magnificent old stands owe their existence to previous fire and to escaping the saw. Nevertheless, forest stands that are not intensively managed do not fit the popularized image of a "healthy forest." The only stands that comply with the current political "health"

agenda resemble orchards or tree farms. Currently roaded portions of our national forests can continue to supply second-growth timber for local mills, but national forests were not foreordained to be tree farms. The fact is, we cannot objectively define an all-encompassing optimum state of health for a forest, as we can for a human. Depending on our individual experiences and biases, we all infer

"Landscape scale thinning and logging (in many forests)...would be ineffective in preventing fire and would destroy the diversity essential to the integrity of forest ecosystems."

different visions from the term "forest health." The concept is value-laden, ambiguous, and biologically indefensible; therefore, "forest health" is not a legitimate goal on which to base management decisions.

Steps can be taken to reduce the danger of forest fires to lives and structures. Those who build at the national forest interface need to recognize and accept the risk. We need to take responsibility for reducing forest fire hazards on our own properties. Quick suppression efforts may extinguish many fires considered too threatening on adjacent national forest lands, but even the most efficient suppression programs will not overcome low humidity, high temperature, and strong wind in dry years. Firefighters' lives should not be put at risk simply to keep trees from burning. On wildlands, prescribed natural (lightning-ignited) fire programs should be part of the strategy, as they have been in recent years in Glacier Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. But we must avoid conjuring up excessive thinning and logging schemes that would not accomplish their ostensible purposes and would destroy forest diversity. Rather, we must learn to rationally cope with the presence of inevitable large fires that will continue to play a role in national forests and national parks.

-Riley McClelland

Riley is a retired professor from the University of Montana's School of Forestry. He lives in West Glacier.

Reprinted from September 23 Daily Inter Lake.

THE NORTHERN ROCKIES LYNX AMENDMENT – proposed changes to Forest Plans

In a cautionary move to protect a poorly understood species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added the Canada Lynx to the Endangered Species List as a Threatened Species in March of 2000. The service determined that “the factor threatening lynx in the contiguous United States is the lack of guidance to conserve lynx and lynx habitat in federal land management plans”.

Because the listing was prompted by a lack of federal land management guidelines geared toward lynx, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are compelled to amend their land management plans, incorporating measures that will secure the long-term viability of lynx populations in the northern Rockies. The U.S. Forest Service, Region 1, is currently drafting the Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment, which would modify the forest plans for 18 national forests in the northern Rocky Mountains. The proposed amendment is based on the Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy, prepared by biologists from several agencies using the most current scientific information available about lynx and lynx habitat.

The Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy recommends four general courses of action: 1) *Manage within the historic range of variability for vegetation.* This means that land managers will seek to maintain the natural range of vegetative variability that lynx have evolved with over time, and not alter the environment beyond a level to which the species is adapted.

2) *Maintain dense understory conditions for snowshoe hare.* Hares are the primary prey for lynx and they require a dense

understory of conifer saplings. 3) *Minimize snow compaction.* It is theorized that compacted trails created by snowmobiles, cross country skiing and dog sledding gives potential competitors, such as coyotes, access to areas that, without the trails, only lynx could access given their enormous, snow-shoe like paws. 4) *Provide connections within and between lynx habitat.*

Under the proposed amendment, each national forest will divide lynx habitat into Lynx Analysis Units (LAU) according to elevation, snow depth and certain geographic features, such as watersheds. According to Terry Chute, Flathead National Forest coordinator for the amendment, 80% or more of the Flathead National Forest will be designated LAUs. Each unit will consist of at least 25 to 50 square miles, the typical home range of an individual lynx.

Certain forestry practices and recreational uses could be modified or limited in Lynx Analysis Units. Pre-commercial thinning – the practice of thinning young stands in order to promote the growth of commercially desirable timber – would be “deferred” until the stand matures to the point where it does not provide optimum snowshoe hare habitat. Timber harvest practices, such as salvage logging, would be adjusted as needed to maintain the downed woody debris and root wads that lynx use for den sites. Livestock grazing would be managed in such a way that new growth in lodge pole pine and aspen stands is protected.

The proposal calls for no net-increase of snow compacted areas. This means that no new groomed or designated trails could be established in an LAU unless they consolidate use or

are offset by the removal of the same number of miles of groomed trail elsewhere within the LAU. The plan does *not* call for the removal of any groomed or designated trails currently in existence, nor for the removal of habitually used, non-groomed trails, nor for the prohibition of off-trail snowmobile riding or skiing.

The expansion of ski areas and multi-season resorts would be monitored under the amendment so that lynx habitat connectivity is retained and developed sites do not impede lynx movement. Highway crossings would be established and public ownership of federal lands would be retained as needed to maintain habitat connectivity.

An Environmental Assessment is expected to be released for public review in the spring of 2002, with a decision document finalized in the summer. For more information, log onto the Northern Rockies Lynx Amendment web site at www.fs.fed.us/r1/planning/lynx.html.

-Amy Edmonds

Amy has worked on lynx studies for the past four years. She lives in the North Fork.



A View from the North

A REPORT ON CANADIAN CONSERVATION

In November 2001, the British Columbia Liberal government reversed the designation of the Southern Rocky Mountain Wildlife Management Area in the southeast corner of British Columbia. Another process has been started to review the fate of these wild lands, including the transboundary Flathead and Wigwam watersheds. Although we have lost a major conservation win, this new process provides an opportunity for U.S. residents to help determine the future quality of watersheds and wildlife that cross the international border.

The landscape in the southeast corner of British Columbia is being increasingly challenged by the operations of five open pit coal mines, forestry operations, the booming recreational and tourism development of the Fernie area, and increasing motorized access into sensitive areas. Clean air, water and places where wildlife can roam freely must be safeguarded through a conservation plan that includes a core protected wilderness reserve and adjacent management that focuses on wildlife habitat as a priority.

The East Kootenay Environmental Society is recommending to the BC provincial government that they implement conservation management in this area of the Canadian Rockies through the following:

1. The Flathead is an international ecosystem that crosses the Canada-US border. It cannot be managed on a piecemeal basis.
2. An international conservation agreement must be established to ensure the Flathead River valley is managed as a whole.
3. Designate the lower Flathead Valley (east side) a core wilderness reserve that becomes part of Waterton Lakes National Park.
4. Establish a Wildlife Management Area over public lands in the Flathead, Wigwam, Elk and Bull River watersheds to protect lands adjacent to the Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park complex. A Wildlife Management Area would give

priority to wildlife habitat while still allowing sustainable development.

We need your help! Rarely does an opportunity come along to make a meaningful difference for shared watersheds and wildlife. The BC government needs to hear from our neighbors to the south that this conservation vision is critical.

Your letter even if brief is very important. Please take action TODAY to maintain healthy transboundary wildlife populations.

Write to:

→ The BC Southern Rocky Mountain technical team examining land use:
Mr. Ron Bronstein, Regional Director,
Ministry of Sustainable Resource
Management
Suite 401, 333 Victoria Street Nelson,
British Columbia Canada V1L 4K3
Fax: 250.354.6332

Send a copy of your letter to:

- ⇒ The Honourable Gordon Campbell,
Premier of British Columbia
Fax: 250.387.0087
- ⇒ The Honourable Stan Hagen, Minister of
Sustainable Resource Management
Fax: 250.356.8273

*-Erica Konrad
East Kootenay Environmental Society
Fernie, B.C*

"SAVE DON'T PAVE" T Shirts Still Available

For \$10 at the NF Hostel or Send \$12 to:

NFPA
80 Beaver Drive
Polebridge, MT 59928
M (a few left), L or XL

Winter Accord Continued from Page 1

The winter recreation agreement is a carefully balanced compromise that sets reasonable limits to winter vehicle traffic, conserving the remote, primitive character of the Upper North Fork.

The agreement was negotiated as a more practical alternative to a court ruling on the 1985 Flathead National Forest Plan, which would almost certainly have required all non-motorized Management Area 2A areas off limits to snowmobile traffic, blocking popular snowmobile play areas and groomed trails south of Red Meadow. Ironically, a ruling based on the 1985 forest plan would likely push expanding snowmobile traffic into Thompson-Seton, Tuchuck and more remote areas in Trail and Whale Creeks.

The Flathead Forest will limit winter vehicle use based on this accord for one year, during which time an EIS for an amendment to the Forest Plan will be prepared. The

A year-round Canadian-owned condominium resort town for 4,000 new residents is planned on the Kootenai side of the Whitefish Divide for Grave Creek Road, which connects directly to Trail Creek via the Yakiniqak and Frozen Lake roads.

conservation-snowmobilers' agreement will be one of several alternatives up for consideration.

Public support for this alternative will be crucial to successfully amend the Flathead Forest Plan to include this remarkable winter accord. *Be involved!!*

It is vital to keep the North End of the Glacier View Ranger District remote and primitive-- managed primarily for wildlife habitat and quiet, traditional recreational enjoyment. Development pressures will only increase, placing more and more demands on the North Fork. As once-remote areas continue to disappear, areas of solitude that remain will be priceless.

Adherence to and enforcement of the plan -interim or final - is also essential for success.

Flathead members of the Montana Snowmobile Association and the Montana Wilderness Association have pledged to work cooperatively to make the agreement a success. Both organizations deserve our support for their hard work achieving a balanced and workable solution for sharing and conserving the North Fork.

-John Frederick, NFPA President

Maps of the plan will soon be available at Flathead Forest District Offices or by calling (406) 387-3800.



Brown Creeper

CELEBRATING CONSERVATION IN THE FLATHEAD - April 20, 2002

Local conservation groups from throughout the valley are sponsoring a spring conference to promote a basic understanding of conservation. The conference, titled ***Celebrating Conservation in the Flathead***, is part conservation fair where local groups can display their work to the public, and part celebration of the history and significance of conservation in the Flathead. Terry Treweiler, Montana Supreme Court Justice, will give the keynote address.

Support the work of the North Fork Preservation Association and the valley-wide conservation effort by attending the conference, **Saturday, April 20, 2002**, West Coast Hotel, Kalispell Center Mall. Be sure to register early for the banquet lunch, as space is limited. Cost of the banquet is \$10. There is no charge for the conference.

For more information, contact Dave at 406-837-0783 or paddler@digisys.net

MEMBERSHIP- RENEWAL INFO

I want to help protect the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley.

_____ New _____ Renewal

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I want to join the NFPA. Here is my membership fee of: _____ \$15/year individual

_____ \$20/year family

NFPA is a 501(c)-(3) organization. Your contribution is tax deductible. _____ \$10/year living lightly

I want to help. Here is my donation of _____ for _____

Mail a check or cash to: North Fork Preservation Association, c/o Rachel Potter
P.O. Box 394
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

Stop!! If there is a green line on your address label, your membership is current.
Thank you!

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- Amy Edmonds, (406) 758-4105 edmonds@starband.net
- Ellen Horowitz (406) 752-2909 horowitz@centurytel.net
- Rick Mace, (406) 755-8709
- Cole Milstead, (406) 756-3125 colem49@hotmail.com

Officers are elected for a one-year term; board members for two. If you are interested in getting more involved or serving on the board, please contact a board member. Our website is www.gravel.org.

Mark your calendars now
Don't miss the
NFPA Annual Meeting
Saturday, July 27

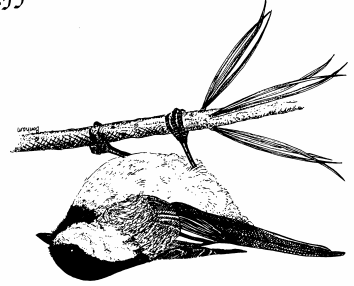
Field Trip Leaders Needed
Please contact a board member if you are willing to lead a field trip in the North Fork anytime during the year.

-Thank you to Jan Metzmaker for the use of her illustrations.

Red Monkeyflower



Chickadee



North Fork Preservation Association
80 Beaver Drive
Polbridge, MT 59928

"A unique community of carnivore species resides in the transboundary Flathead region that appears unmatched in North America for its variety, completeness, use of valley bottomlands, and density of species which are rare elsewhere.

...due to these unique characteristics and its strategic position as a linkage between National Parks in both countries, the transboundary Flathead may be the single most important basin for carnivores in the Rocky Mountains"

*-from John Weaver, 2001, "The transboundary Flathead - a critical landscape for carnivores in the Rocky Mountains".
A report for the Wildlife Conservation Society.*
