

NORTH FORK PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

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

Volume XXX

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Number 1

Where Are We? The Year in Review

By John Frederick

The paving of the North Fork Road is no longer an issue because the county has done such a fine job of grading with dust abatement and the proper crushed gravel, with money (for possibly the last time) from the Flathead Resource Advisory Committee. A recent study paid for by the County and the state indicated a gravel road like this is what people wanted. NFPA gives Flathead County a big "Thank You" for a job well done.

The gentlemen's agreement between Montana and British Columbia is slowly coming to a close. The Nature Conservancy is gathering the money to compensate those companies that spent money on energy exploration in the Flathead of B.C. (see related article). British Columbia has already outlawed oil and gas leases in their section of the Flathead watershed. This has not yet been matched on the U.S. side. Senate bill S233, introduced by Montana Senators Tester and Baucus, would allow no more leasing of federal land for oil and gas in the North Fork area and thereby match what has been done in B.C. To help support this bill you might add your name as a supporter at the protectglacier.com web site. The legislation needs a lot of support, even if attached to a larger bill.

The wolf issue in Montana comes down to how many wolves the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks want killed and where. The North Fork is fortunate that the legally permitted wolf kill is only two, but it would be wiser if "0" were the number, as wolves cause no problems here. Other parts of Montana are not so fortunate, with high quotas and a newly extended hunting season. Further, the wolf is now an animal allowed to be taken by leg-hold traps. Not enough wolves were killed in the recent hunting season according to Montana FWP. They want a quarter of the estimated 653 wolves in the state removed.

Next year the U. S. Forest Service is expected to start updating the Flathead Forest Plan. North Forkers are in-holders in Flathead National Forest and have a keen interest in what happens there. NFPA wants to be a participant in the process and hopes other individuals and organizations will be involved as well.

Bylaws were changed at the last annual meeting of NFPA in 2011 such that we can have two more board members now, totaling eleven. Welcome aboard to Bob Nelson and Steve Gniadek.

Dr. John Weaver to Speak at NFPA Annual Meeting

By John Frederick

NFPA is most fortunate to have Dr. John Weaver of the Wildlife Conservation Society to speak at the annual meeting. It took some cajoling because the timing was such that it would be in the middle of his field season. His recent publication is *Conservation Value of Roadless Areas for Vulnerable Fish and Wildlife Species in the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, Montana*. This booklet can be found on the Internet: Google "Dr. John L. Weaver" and you will find it. A chapter on the North Fork and the Ten Lakes Area starts on page 116. You will find him most interesting in print and in person.

The annual meeting starts with a potluck at 5pm on Saturday, July 28, at Sondreson Community Hall (11 miles north of Polebridge at Whale Creek) followed by election of officers at 7:00 p.m. and the program (Dr. Weaver) at 7:30 p.m.

Nature Conservancy Campaigning for "North Fork Now!" Funds

By John Frederick

The Nature Conservancy of Canada and The Nature Conservancy of the United States (two different organizations) agreed to raise nearly \$10 million dollars to compensate companies that had invested in energy exploration in British Columbia's Flathead Valley. The province, in response to a memorandum of understanding reached with Montana in 2010, terminated resource development in the transboundary Flathead River drainage, as well as surrounding areas including Waterton/Glacier International Peace Park and Flathead National Forest. It is not easy to raise \$10 million dollars and the organizations are still working at it. If you wish to donate money, make sure you write "North Fork Now! Campaign" in the bottom left of the check or the money will go to the general fund, instead. Send checks to: The Nature Conservancy, 32 South Ewing Street, Helena, MT 59601.

A Gentle Reminder: Time to Pay Your Dues!

If you have not yet paid your NFPA membership dues for 2012, it's time!

Regular membership dues are \$20/year; \$25/year for the whole family.

"Living lightly" (students and such like) dues are only \$10/year.

The Whitefish Range Needs You!

By Rachel Potter

You, your family and your friends have been hunting, fishing, boating, hiking and playing in the Whitefish Range for years. Now is the time to be a good steward, so grab your family, roll up your sleeves and help keep the Whitefish Range the way it is. Look through the activities below; we think there is something you will find fun or rewarding.

Trail Maintenance: Keeping trails in good shape not only makes our trips safer and more enjoyable, but it prevents erosion and keeps our waters crystal clear. An hour spent now may prevent many hours of work down the road.

August 11 and 12: Chain Lakes Trail Work Weekend with the Montana Wilderness Association. For more info and to confirm the dates, contact Sarah Lundstrum at 406-755-6304 or slundstrum@wildmontana.org.

Whitefish Trail Crew Volunteers: Whitefish Legacy Partners will be constructing three new miles on the Whitefish Trail during this summer season. Now's the time to get in touch with your inner shovel-scooper or pickaxe-swinger!

There will be weekly volunteer opportunities (on both weekdays and weekends) to continue moving the trail forward. Go to http://whitefishlegacy.org/trail_crew.php for dates and times and then contact Whitefish Legacy Partners (406) 862-3880, heidi@whitefishlegacy.org to sign up.

Fish and Wildlife: Biologists and managers will never have enough resources to collect all the information they need about our fish and wildlife. Reporting what you see or catch contributes scientific information that may help conserve our precious native species for future generations.

Wildlife Sightings: Pick up the pocket size "Identification Guide: Terrestrial Species Sensitive to Climate Change" at the Fish Wildlife and Parks office in Kalispell, a Flathead Forest District Office, or at the Polebridge Mercantile. Call first, a new printing is underway. It is especially important to gather basic information on species likely to be impacted by climate change. However, you can also use the included forms to report other sightings that you think may be important. One rule of thumb is that if you tell a friend about an observation, it is likely also of interest to biologists. If you are out and about a lot, make extra copies of the sighting forms.

There is particular concern about amphibian and reptile populations, so please report all sightings. To become familiar with our species, go to the Montana Natural Heritage Program Montana Field Guide <http://fieldguide.mt.gov/default.aspx>. Species you may see in our area include the long-toed salamander, pacific tree frog, Rocky Mountain spotted frog, Columbia spotted frog, western toad,

northern alligator lizard and a number of other reptiles. The western toad and northern alligator lizard are Montana Species of Concern, so reports of those are particularly important.

Fishing Logs: Keep track of what you catch where. Send in your log once a year and receive a summary of the previous year's data. Enroll online at <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/guide/fishingLog/fishingLogEnrollment.html> or submit your name, address and phone number to: Fisheries Bureau, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701, or call (406) 444-2449. For more background and information about fishing logs, go to <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishing/guide/fishingLog/default.html>.

Fish Wildlife and Parks fisheries biologist Mark Deleray reminds us that fishing for bull trout is illegal. However, if you do incidentally catch a bull trout, he would like you to record it in your fishing log as well as email him at mdeleray@mt.gov the following information: Location (if in the river, where), length or weight of fish, gear used and did it survive?

Weed Control: Controlling invasive plants protects wildflowers and other native plants, biodiversity and wildlife habitat. Pulling knapweed is the control method of choice along the river corridor where herbicides are precluded. Because of its taproot, pulling is also effective on small populations.

Wednesday, August 15th. Neighborhood Knapweed Pull. Meet at the Polebridge Mercantile at 10 am to carpool. Contact Valerie Cox (valeriecox@yahoo.com) for more info or go to <http://nflandowners.com/Committees.html#WeedCommittee> to check for current year updates. Sponsored by the North Fork Landowners' Association Weed Committee.

Environmental Education: As our kids spend more and more time in front of screens, getting them outside to learn becomes ever more important. The Glacier Institute has been doing just that for 25 years. The Institute's Big Creek Outdoor Education Center takes a thousand kids a year into the woods and streams.

Big Creek Outdoor Education Camp Support: The camp can use all sorts of help: working with the kids, maintaining the buildings and helping keep the place ship shape. Contact Joyce Baltz or Lilly Beebe, register@glacierinstitute.org or 406-755-1211 for specifics. Since you may be working with youngsters, they'll need some personal data from you for a background check. Schedules are flexible, but extra help is always needed on turnover days, from 9 am - 1 pm. For more about the Glacier Institute go to www.glacierinstitute.org

Whitefish Trail Patrol and Ambassadors: Volunteer PATROLLERS (may provide medical help) and AMBASSADORS are needed to provide user assistance and information for the Whitefish Trail. You will need to commit to at least two days/month. For more information, go to: http://whitefishlegacy.org/bike_patrol.php.

Water Quality: Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network trains "citizen scientists" to monitor 40 lakes in NW Montana by collecting basic limnological measurements that will establish lake trend data over time, and to monitor for the presence of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). Many of these lakes previously had no scientific data. Go to <http://www.nwmtlvmn.org/index.php> for more information. Additional training will be conducted as needed. Monitors are especially needed on lakes around Eureka and north of Whitefish.

Don't Feed the Bears Chickens; Do Feed the Web Site

By Bill Walker

The web site continues to do well, with a range of visitors interested in environmental matters, as well as quite a few visitors searching for information about the area. As in past years, we also drew quite a few views from people interested in our Wildfire and Flood Information pages.

We linked to all sorts of interesting stories, but my favorite is a situation that started getting press coverage late last summer. It seems many folks are raising chickens as a way to save money. Grizzly bears love chickens. Given a chance, they will just about completely clean out an entire flock. The result is often a dead bear, since there is no reliable way to break them of the habit. The whole situation is extremely frustrating for bear managers. They finally get people to stop leaving unsecured garbage and animal feed out where it will attract bears and now they have a chicken problem. So far, the only solution is an electric fence that costs a whole lot more than the flock it protects.

As usual, we're always on the lookout for contributions – photos, articles, pointers to useful material and so forth. Suggestions are always appreciated, as is the occasional compliment.

The NFPA web site is at <http://www.gravel.org/>.

North Fork Preservation Association Summer Events — 2012

Saturday, July 28. North Fork Preservation Association annual meeting and potluck. Potluck at 5:00 p.m., business meeting at 7:00 p.m. At 7:30 Dr. John Weaver of the Wildlife Conservation Society speaks about the Whitefish Range. For more information call 888-5084.

Other Activities

These events are sponsored by the North Fork Landowners' Association. See their web site (<http://www.nflandowners.com>) for further details and listings of more activities.

Wednesday, July 25, Hike to Mt Thompson-Seton. Meet at Whale Creek & NF Roads at 9:00 a.m. Moderate to strenuous.

Wednesday, August 15, Kneighborhood Knapweed Pull. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at place to be determined. Details on bulletin board in Polebridge and on NFLA website. Host NFLA weed committee.

Monday, August 27, Hike to Upper Quartz Lake. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Polebridge Ranger Station.

Friday, September 7, Hike along the Middle Fork. Meet at Pittman's (9340 NF Rd) at 8:30 a.m.

These hikes are sponsored by the Montana Wilderness Association (MWA). They are fielding a number of hikes in the Whitefish Range this summer. Download the MWA Wilderness Walks guide for full details (<http://www.wildmontana.org/events/walks/summer.php>) or contact Sarah Lundstrum (sarah.lundstrum@gmail.com) in the Kalispell MWA office. Here is a sampler of hikes related to the North Fork:

Saturday, August 18, Nasukoin Mountain. Strenuous.

Saturday, September 8, Chain Lakes. Moderate.

Sunday, September 23, Huntsburger Lake. Moderate.

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR DUES YET, IT'S TIME!

If you have paid your dues for 2012. ***Thank you!***

I want to help protect the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley at the western edge of Glacier National Park.

_____	New	Name	_____
_____	Renewal	Address	_____

		Phone	_____
		Email	_____

I want to join the NFPA. Here is my membership fee of \$20.00/year _____
family membership of \$25.00/year _____
living lightly membership of \$10.00/year _____

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

Please remove me from your mailing list. _____

NFPA is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Mail check or cash to: North Fork Preservation Association
80 Beaver Drive
Polebridge, MT 59928
(406) 888-5084

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Officers are elected for a one-year term; board members for two. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact a board member.

Don't forget to keep an eye on our web site! – www.gravel.org

North Fork Preservation Association

80 Beaver Drive
Polebridge MT 59928

1982

NFPA 30th Anniversary

2012

Return Postage Guaranteed

Please remember to pay your dues!