



SIGHTLINES

Fall 2007

NEWSLETTER OF THE SELKIRK CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

The Relicensing of Boundary Dam— An Epic in Cooperation (so far)

by Jerry R. Boggs, Ph.D., SCA board member



Work on the relicensing of Seattle City Light's (SCL) Boundary Dam proceeds through its first year of studies and surveys. You may recall from an earlier article that the Selkirk Conservation Alliance was requested by the national Hydropower Reform Coalition to serve as the non-governmental organization (ngo) providing oversight to sensitive resources issues, especially for bull trout.

The good news for all of us in the conservation business is that SCL has about the best reputation I've run into during my years of working with various large businesses which provide materials and services to the public and negative impacts to natural resources. So far, the staff at SCL, who are the leaders for this multi-million dollar effort, have justified this reputation. Working in concert with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, Washington Department of Ecology, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, U.S. Forest Service and now the Selkirk Conservation Alliance, SCL

is implementing over 20 studies and surveys on or in Boundary Reservoir. Results of this first year of study will be available on the SCL website beginning in January of 2008. If you want to read these firsthand, just go to www.seattle.gov/Light/News/Issues/BndryRelic. Once there, you can look at the Revised Study Plan on the right of the webpage (rather large in volume) or go down the left side to look at Workgroups or Meetings where reports, summaries, etc. are usually listed and can be pulled up.

A couple of new items: our sponsor, the Hydropower Reform Coalition, attended the meeting on October 17, 2007. We're really pleased because, as the process unwinds, we may need the active support of the Coalition to persuade SCL that certain mitigations, compensation for impacts and/or enhancements are necessary. The Coalition is already very active in support of certain actions on Sullivan Creek, the major tributary feeding into Boundary Reservoir. The Sullivan Creek issue may be the subject of a future article once we know the mediated result of a dispute between the Pend Oreille Public Utility District (which owns the Sullivan Lake dam and millpond dam) and the federal government. The second item I'd like to report to you is that, in fact, there are very few native salmonids (bull trout, mountain whitefish, and western slope cut-throat trout) reported in the fish surveys conducted this year. Out of around 23,000 fish captured and identified,

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Selkirk Conservation Alliance Summer Internship

Due to the generosity of one of our members SCA is planning to arrange training for a summer intern. Candidates will be high school students or recent graduates who will be paid to assist with projects or to carry out a project for a maximum of 10 weeks. Our objective is to expand our educational environmental program in the region that the organization covers. It is desired that a successful applicant will be someone who intends to go on to, or is currently enrolled in, college.

Experiences of the intern may include assisting the Executive Director or others in the SCA office, or board members, in achieving SCA objectives. This person may also have an opportunity to help local, state or federal agencies concerned with resource management. If any members know of potential candidates, please have them contact the SCA office for information and/or application forms.

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A Message from the Executive Director — Mark Sprengel

On October 4, a 2-year old grizzly bear was shot in Nordman by Idaho Department of Fish & Game officials after it was determined that the animal had become habituated to people and was becoming a nuisance and potentially dangerous. (The young grizzly apparently never actually threatened anyone.)

Grizzly bears are listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Selkirk population has been determined to be warranted for “endangered” status due to the precariousness of the population’s recovery prospects. So far this autumn, out of an estimated population of approximately 40 bears, there have been a minimum of 4 bears killed.

What makes the death of the Nordman bear particularly tragic is that it was due to deliberate actions by people who should know better. In news reports of the incident, a Nordman-area photographer was identified as a major culprit owing to his long practice of feeding wildlife in his backyard...presumably for personal enjoyment and to serve his photography business. (Most wildlife photographers disdain the practice of baiting wildlife as professionally unethical.)

The photographer’s actions were roundly condemned by a host of wildlife experts including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator Chris Servheen and Idaho Department of Fish & Game biologist Wayne Wakkinen. Several local residents also expressed dismay at both the photographer for his baiting activities as well as IDF&G’s decision to kill the bear. In defense of USF&WS’s concurrence with the decision, Servheen noted, “When (people) do something stupid like feeding animals they will get bears killed.” (Several individuals also pointed out that feeding bears endangers one’s neighbors as well as the bears.)

The media attention encouraged a few black-helicopter-paranoiacs to emerge with a litany of absurd claims such as the photographer’s contention that “grizzly bears are everywhere up here and *they’re* not telling people about it. *They* try to keep it a secret.” (No mention of who *they* are.)

An apologist for the photographer even falsely suggested that grizzly bears were “reintroduced” to the area and both individuals launched into the tedious claim that admonitions against feeding wildlife “... restrict their use of private property...”

Neither individual apparently understands that wild animals do not belong to the landowner whose property they visit or inhabit but are under the management authority of the state which exercises the right (in the name of the citizens) to regulate activities that affect these creatures. It should also be noted that it is not necessarily illegal to feed wildlife though it is almost always ill-advised.

I recognize that people who feed wild animals (other than reprehensible bait hunters) usually do so because they enjoy and appreciate the beauty and grace of wild creatures and desire to see them “up close.” Unfortunately, when individuals’ actions cause wild animals to lose their “wildness” they are committing a grave injustice to the very creatures they admire and enjoy.

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Boundary Dam — continued

only 281 (1.2%) were the native salmonids of concern, i.e. mountain whitefish (266), cut-throat trout (11) and bull trout (4). This is the probable impact of 50 years of replacement of a wild river, i.e. the Pend Oreille, by Albeni Falls Dam, Box Canyon Dam and Boundary Dam. Where once they were abundant, now they are scarce. For me, this is the single most important fact to come out of all the deliberations I’ve attended. What will we do to help this situation? Stay tuned over the next few years and I hope you’ll hear some good news.

Jackhammer of the Woods by Bob Harwood, SCA board member

Twenty species of woodpeckers play important roles in our western forests. The males of most of them have some red coloring on their heads, but you can't mistake the pileated woodpecker.

This one is our largest, nearly crow-size, mostly black with some white, notably in a streak along the side of the neck and with both sexes decorated by a flaming red crest. They make a very loud irregular call somewhat like that of a flicker. They excavate unmistakable large oval or rectangular holes in dead or dying standing trees or large stumps. Especially in rotting grand firs they may produce what look like bumpy abstract sculptures with large wood chips surrounding the base. It seems a marvel of structural engineering that enables the brains of these and other woodpeckers to withstand hammering during wood chipping. Dying trees become infested with insects, especially the larvae of large woodboring beetles. Woodpeckers excavate to feed on these tidbits.

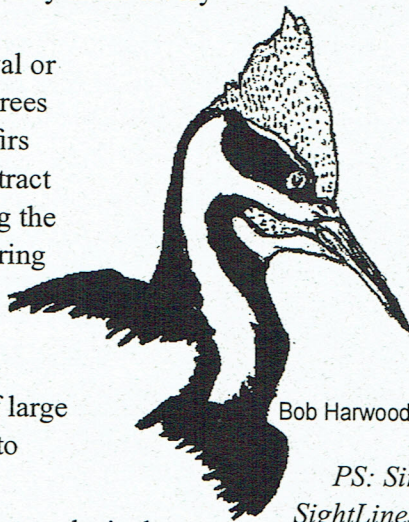
The pileated woodpecker is closely, but not exclusively, associated with old-growth forests. I read that some years ago an innovative Forest Service worker electronically recorded the pileated's call which, when broadcast from roadways in vast forest tracts and then answered from the woods, could indicate areas needing further investigation for old-growth characteristics. This was a rapid method to assist the inventory of old-growth stands.

Undoubtedly the pileated was the species that excited the ornithological community a couple of years ago in an isolated

swampy habitat in Arkansas. It was mistakenly believed to be an ivory-billed woodpecker — a bird of similar size, shape and coloration which is thought to be extinct.

The tree cavities created by pileateds and other woodpeckers may be used as is or enlarged to serve as den sites for flying squirrels, red (spruce or pine) squirrels and marten (weasel relatives) as well as by cavity-nesting birds such as small species of owls. Clearly, pileated woodpeckers are important for maintaining biodiversity in our older forest habitats.

Because of their size and strength, their distinct vigorous hammering sounds make them readily identifiable, even if not seen.



Bob Harwood

PS: Since writing about grape ferns in the last SightLines I've not heard of any readers reporting seeing them. If you'd like to see some, walk along the interpretive trail through the Hanna Flats site a little south of the air strip across from the Priest Lake Ranger Station. This summer I found about twenty specimens in four groups close to that trail, a typical disturbed locale.

ED Message — continued from page 2

I've noticed that the photographer in question often refers to himself as an environmentalist and I'm sure that he believes this. I don't doubt that he appreciates the beauty of nature and wild creatures.

The problem is, however, we can be environmentalists in an embryonic sense in that our appreciation and understanding of nature is purely selfish and immature. We take from nature with little thought about reciprocal responsibilities. If feeding wildlife, for example, leads to the injury, death or detriment of wild creatures, then a more mature understanding should lead us to sacrifice that selfish enjoyment for the greater good.

As Idaho Department of Fish and Game biologist Wakkinen noted, "This is a classic example of the bad that can happen

when people artificially feed wildlife. People were placed at risk and at least one — and perhaps two — grizzly bears will end up removed from an already small population."

While education alone should dissuade well-intentioned people from feeding wildlife, it will probably be necessary for officials to have legal authority to restrict those who refuse to heed warnings. There is, after all, no "right" to endanger protected wildlife or create threats to public safety.

Albeni Falls Dam — Part of the Recovery Puzzle for Bull Trout

by Jerry R. Boggs, Ph.D., SCA board member

Bull trout, listed as threatened in the Endangered Species Act, are a member of the salmon family that have been devastated by the hydropower industry though the construction of a series of dams and the resultant reservoirs in their native habitats. From Lake Pend Oreille to the Canadian border, there are three such dams on the Pend Oreille River. Another two dams exist in Canada before this river re-enters the United States to merge into the Columbia River.

Albeni Falls Dam is the first such barrier to natural bull trout movement and migration for individuals coming out of the East River and/or lake. It is managed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, i.e. a public agency funded by your tax dollars. The problem for bull trout is that there are no facilities for upstream or downstream fish passage. When bull trout get through the turbines (entrainment) and end up below the dam, they cannot get back to their breeding grounds. In the year 2000, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion that required the Corps to accomplish certain tasks, leading to a funding request to Congress in fiscal year 2008 for the actual implementation of whatever process is selected to provide for passage.

The problem is that the Corps has been taking a lot of time to accomplish very little. As a result, SCA has put both the Corps and the Service on notice that this lack of accomplishment is not acceptable. In so doing, SCA has elevated and expanded the awareness in both agencies of this project and now we're working to increase its priority so that it's actually accomplished. We just got going on this issue which is a subset of our work with Seattle City Light on Boundary Dam relicensing. It's all part of a package of work that should, ultimately, provide better management for bull trout throughout a significant part of its historic habitat. We'll keep you informed on progress.



PRIEST LAKE PROJECTS

SCA Victory! IDL Denies Developer's Scheme to Develop East Twin Island

Developer Jeff Weimer's re-hearing application to install 2,500 feet of underwater carrier pipe containing a sewer line, electrical and phone cables along the lakebed of Priest Lake was finally denied by the Idaho Department of Lands.

In a Nov 21 message to SCA Executive Director Mark Sprengel, IDL Director George Bacon stated that his agency has decided to deny the encroachment application after consideration of public comments and the facts of the case.

The development scheme has been condemned by SCA in several letters and public hearings as well as by a number of citizens and lake residents.

Weimer's request for a reconsideration hearing however had kept his project hopes alive despite the widespread opposition to the scheme. The proposal's numerous technical flaws and clear non-compliance with Idaho Rules regarding encroachments upon or in navigable lakes should have made IDL's decision easy.

"It's surprising that it took so long to render a decision on a proposal that was an obvious violation of Idaho's Public Trust Doctrine" said SCA Executive Director Mark Sprengel. "Nevertheless, we are pleased with the decision and hope it will put an end to this extremely ill-advised development scheme."

SCA Display Table at Bonner County Fair

SCA moved its office to Sandpoint last summer with the intention of becoming better known in that part of our area. With this in mind a display table was set up at the Bonner County Fairground in Sandpoint during the three days of the county fair, the last day overlapping with SCA's annual membership meeting. Contact cards and other information were handed out. There was notable public interest but it was clear that more effort is needed to get SCA better known in the region. SCA exhibits at fairs and other public venues should be pursued and volunteers are needed to help run them. Also, SCA members can help by requesting contact cards from the SCA office to hand out to people they know or meet who may be interested in becoming new members.

Meet Our Newest Board Members!

The SCA Board is happy to welcome three new members as of last Spring.



Karin Overbeck

was born in Berlin and spent her school years during WWII under the Nazi regime and later in East Berlin under the Communist government. Those were disrupted times but she graduated in 1954, and spent a few more years in different parts of western Europe before coming to New

York on a temporary job that eventually ended in turning her into a permanent resident and citizen with a degree from the University of Colorado in Business (Accounting). When she and her husband settled north of the Spokane area it was the home and place she'd dreamed of and thirty years later she still hasn't run out of projects. Karin is phenomenal with numbers and she's an avid gardener but it's Malamute dogs that are dear to her heart and, understandably, one of her major concerns has to do with wildlife and wolves.

Many of us know **Bob Harwood** as the artist donating the wonderful fish prints he has contributed as raffle and auction items to past Celebasins. Professionally, as an entomologist, he has had a long international career helping countries, particularly in the Middle East, with agricultural programs using insects to help increase crop yields and to combat agricultural pests. Throughout, he has been a professor and chair of the Entomology Department at WSU. His early school years were spent at Woodstock School in India and he still maintains ties with that institution. His interests are scientific but his passion is fishing. *(photo not available)*

**For additional in-depth articles,
photographs and links,
please go to our website at
www.scawild.org**

Julie Goltz lives in Spokane and summers at Priest Lake at her parent-in-law's place on the east side which they have owned since 1954. Her degrees from Montana State Univ. Bozeman include majors and minors in Agriculture, and Economics. She has worked for both profit and non-profit organizations and now works at the



Center for Justice (a non-profit organization) in Spokane as a business and finance manager. Julie is married, with two children. She has been on the board of the Spokane YWCA as treasurer and vice-president and the Selkirk Nordic Ski organization. She is an athletic outdoor person who runs, skis, hikes, bikes, swims and kayaks, is concerned about the future of Priest Lake and potential development, water quality and water safety, and preservation of Upper Priest Lake from degradation.

As a board member, Julie wants to help preserve the unique quality of Priest Lake and its surrounding environment.

We are sorry to accept the resignation of board member John Stuart, who has been especially active in such programs as leading nature and bird identification hikes and winter hikes to identify animal tracks. John has been an important and valued member of the board for a number of years, and we intend to continue to work closely with him in the future, especially on issues affecting Pend Oreille County.

On a hot sunny day in July, twenty or so people gathered at the Kalispell Bay Boat Launch to learn to identify Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) and to map its presence, from Bear Creek on the east side and Kaniksu on the west. The group was comprised of representatives from the Pend Oreille Basin Commission, ID State Dept. of Agriculture Aquatic Plant Program, Priest Lake

residents, and members of Selkirk Conservation Alliance. Participants had a range of views on how to combat the spread of EWM in Priest Lake, from hand pulling and directly vacuuming up the plant to the use of chemicals (as has been done in both Lake CDA and Lake Pend Oreille).

Fortunately, the level of EWM invasion in Priest Lake is much more localized and, at this point, manageable without the use of chemicals.

The day began with plant identification. We learned that many plant species, including northern watermilfoil, Elodea, and varieties of Pondweed are all native to our northern lakes and they are benign or beneficial to native fish and wildlife. EWM on the other hand is a non-native, highly aggressive aquatic plant that is difficult to control. It grows and spreads quickly, forming dense canopies on the water's surface leading to the degradation and deterioration of water quality and detrimental impacts to native fish and wildlife habitat as well as recreational use. EWM, which was once commonly sold as an aquarium plant, is opportunistic, needing only plant fragments to begin a new infestation.

With the plant ID overview, GPS instructions, and topographical maps in hand, four boats set out to map EWM findings on the lake. Each boat was assigned a specific section of shoreline as EWM typically grows in water depths of 3-14 feet. Our boat began at the southern end of Bear Creek where we immediately sighted several clusters of the plant. While we logged the data on the GPS an EWM-mitigation pontoon arrived. Divers, hired by the state of Idaho, had worked in the Bear Creek area hand pulling EWM a few weeks earlier and they were back to check on their progress. We shared our data with them and watched as they vacuumed up more plants and began laying large, dark panels over these areas to eliminate the sunlight necessary for EWM growth.

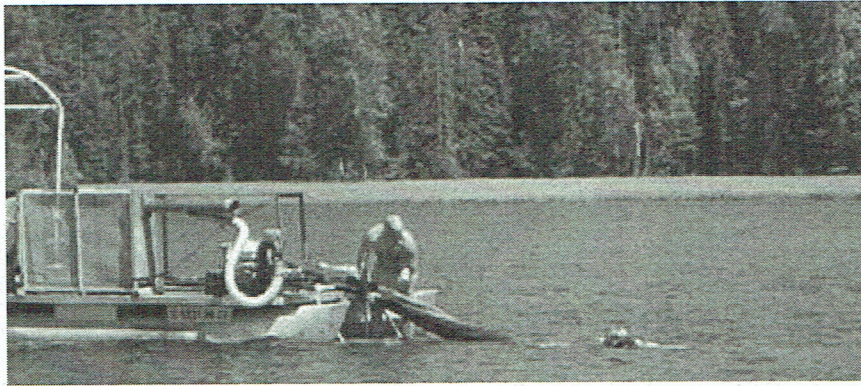
We continued following the shoreline north until rendezvousing with the other boats. The only other EWM sightings were near Kaniksu Resort and Mosquito Bay. This is great news for Priest Lake.

Monitoring and prevention are the most important steps for keeping Eurasian watermilfoil under control. Precautionary

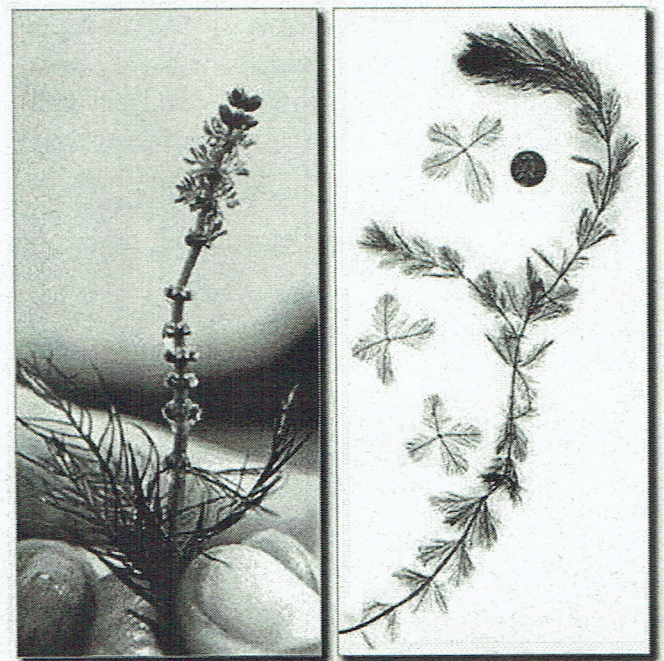
measures, including boat washes and checking all paddles, fishing and diving equipment for aquatic plant material, are critical to keeping our lakes and waterways as pristine as possible. Brad Bluemer, Bonner County Weed Supervisor, said, "It will take all of you working together to keep Priest Lake from having a much larger

and harder to handle EWM problem." He encouraged the group to make an annual EWM survey of Priest.

On a side note, interesting and encouraging testing is being done for EWM biological control with a milfoil weevil that is native to North America. Weevils lay eggs on the plant meristems and the larvae consume the meristem and main stem of the plant. Once exposed to the exotic Eurasian watermilfoil, the weevil prefers Eurasian over its native host northern watermilfoil (*M. sibiricum*).



Divers removing milfoil in Bear Creek area



Celebasin 2007

by Joanne Hirabayashi, Board Chair

Celebasin, the Selkirk Conservation Alliance's annual membership meeting, was held August 17 at the Coolin Grange again this year. Board election results were announced and new board members were introduced. Our range of members has become more diverse, spread like the southern Selkirk Mountains between northeast Washington and north Idaho. We hope by next year to have a board member from the Sandpoint area as well. Mark Kabush was introduced as the new co-chair of SCA. Executive-Director Mark Sprengel presented a summary of SCA activities this past year, including the rationale behind our current move to the Sandpoint office, and suggested future directions the organization might take.

What was special this year? Two things. For our program, member John Elwood performed songs, many of them with an environmental flavor, accompanying himself on several of his own beautiful hand-made instruments such as the dulcimer and others, John plays professionally and gave one of his CDs as an auction offering. The second splendid event was our second annual auction. It was as much fun as the first and included some exceptionally valuable and interesting items, donated by our generous supporters. This has been so successful that we see expanding it in the future. Fortunate bidders left with some very special prizes.

The auction was followed by a wonderful potluck dinner to round out the afternoon. We thank everyone who attended and helped make the day such a success.

We'll meet again next year, as the song says, but "who knows where or when." Please get in touch if you have suggestions.

SCA Ongoing Projects

1. Boundary Dam FERC Relicensing Project
2. Albeni Dam Fish Passage Project
3. Grizzly Bear Access Standards lawsuit
4. Mountain Caribou Project
5. East Twin Island
6. Lakeview-Reeder Fuel Reduction Project
7. Idaho Dept. of Lands Project
8. Priest Lake Milfoil Monitoring Project (ongoing)
9. Selkirk Winter Travel Plan
10. Development Monitoring
11. Federal Lands Monitoring

Join the SCA!

Please support the Selkirk Conservation Alliance by becoming a Member.

Our newsletter, funded entirely by member contributions, keeps you informed of natural resource issues within the Inland Northwest, and offers regular updates on the efforts of the SCA to promote environmental excellence. Now is the time to give to the environment that sustains us all.

Make a contribution and keep *SightLines* coming regularly. Dues and donations are tax-deductible.

Enroll me as a member of the SCA. Enclosed are my dues.

	Individual	Family
Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Limited Income (living lightly)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20
Organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	

To help more, I'm enclosing an additional contribution:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500 ☐ other _____

TSHIRTS & MUGS \$15 each + \$3 shipping/handling

☐ SCA mug ☐ SCA t-shirt

Name(s) _____

Winter address (dates) ____/____/____ to : ____/____/____

phone: _____

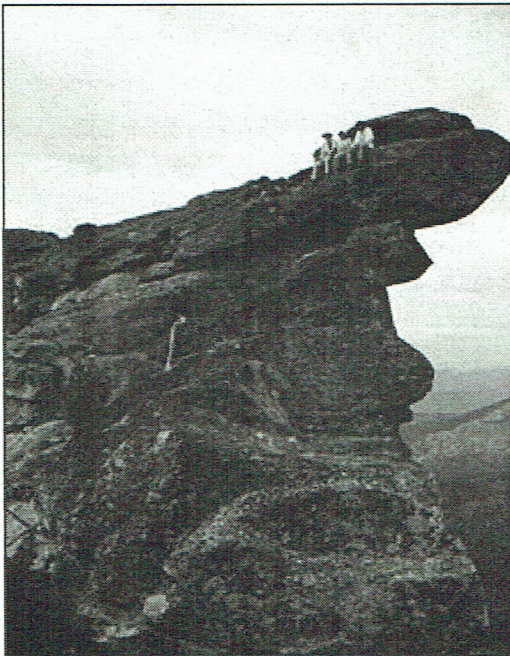
Summer address (dates) ____/____/____ to : ____/____/____

phone: _____

Email address: _____

**Mail to: SELKIRK CONSERVATION ALLIANCE
PO BOX 1809 PRIEST RIVER, IDAHO 83856**





Hiking Program a Summer Success!

Thanks to the hard work of SCA volunteer Mary Smith, our hiking program was even more successful in its second season. Hikes ranged from easy to difficult and introduced SCA members and friends to some of the spectacular scenery and interesting wildlife found in the Selkirk Mountains.

Hikes varied from well-traveled and well-maintained trails to bushwhacking in remote backcountry areas seldom visited by anyone. Next year we hope to have an expanded series of hikes that will accommodate people of varying abilities and tastes. If anyone has suggestions for interesting hikes, please contact the SCA office.

Byrne, Karin and Steve taking a break at the Wigwams. Photo by Maria Fromdahl.



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