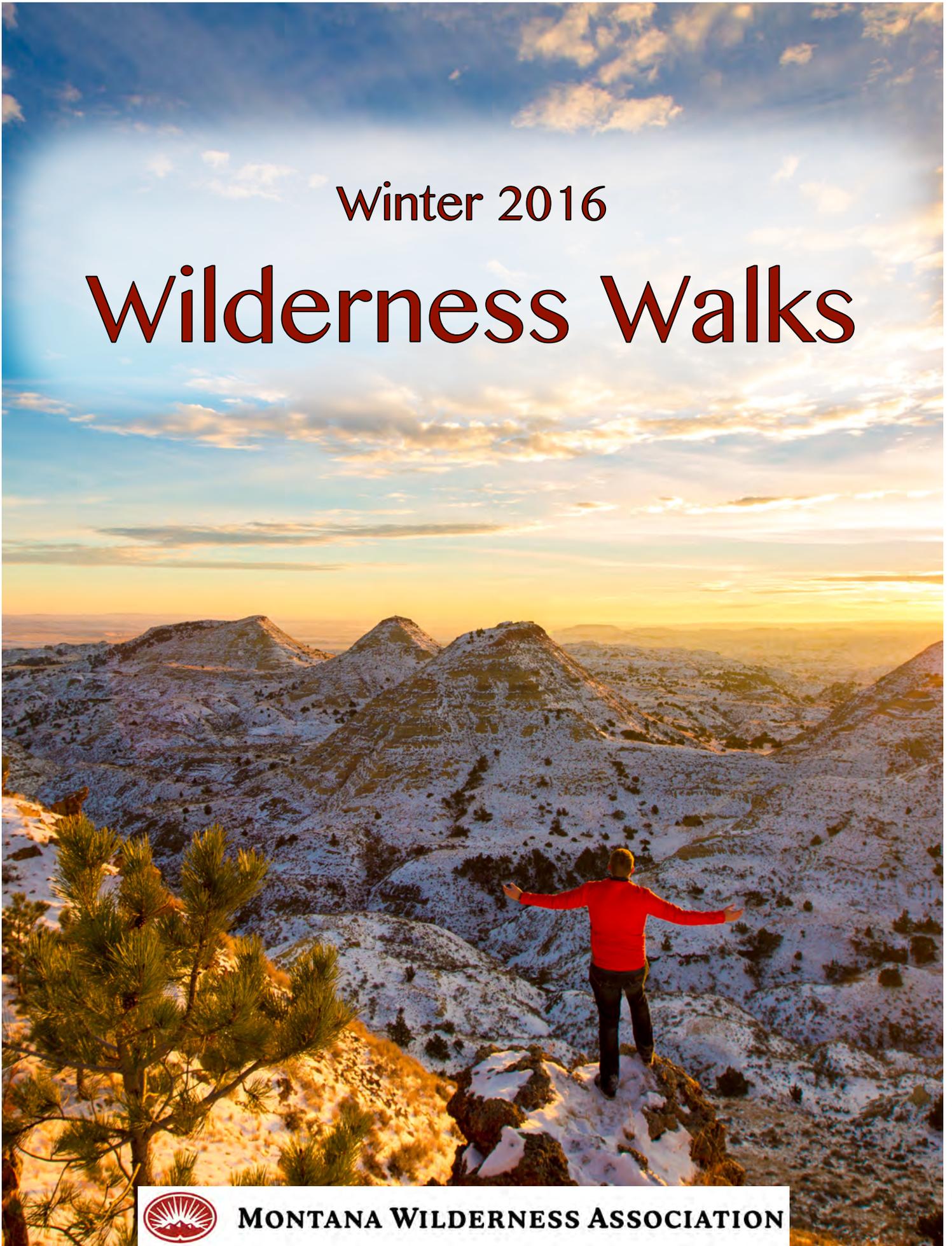


Winter 2016

# Wilderness Walks



**MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION**

## How to Sign Up for a Walk

Registering for walks online will make it easier for walk leaders to keep track of who's going on walks, allow MWA to collect liability waiver information from participants before the walk starts, and protect our walk leaders' personal contact information.

### The process for signing up for a walk is simple.

1. Download the Winter Walks Schedule above; scroll down through the list to find your desired walk. Once you find your walk click on **"Register for this walk."**
2. Fill out the simple online form. The form includes your contact information and a few extra questions that will be helpful to the hike leader. You will also need to read the liability waiver and check the 'yes' box that states that you agree to the waiver. Then click **"Submit."**
3. If you are registering for others you'll need to fill out the same information for each person. Please note: All participants will also need to sign a waiver at the trailhead.
4. An email confirmation will automatically be sent to you with the walk leader's contact information.
5. Once you have registered for a walk the Wilderness Walk leader will contact you within in at least a week of the event.

**Please acknowledge that failure to contact the leader within 24 hours IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL will forfeit your participation in any future Montana Wilderness Association activities, including Wilderness Walks.**

All future communications should be made directly with the walk leader. If you need to cancel please contact the walk leader as soon as possible so they can give your spot to someone else.

If you have any questions about this process or if you don't use email, please contact MWA's Special Project Coordinator, Amanda Hagerty at [ahagerty@wildmontana.org](mailto:ahagerty@wildmontana.org) or (406) 443-7350 ext. 108

### Snowshoe Difficulty Levels:

Each Wilderness Walk description includes a comment about difficulty, elevation gain, and trail mileage. For your safety and that of fellow snowshoers and leaders, please be sure you are aware of these important details and are properly prepared for the walk.

- Easy (3 miles or less; mostly level ground or only slight incline.)
- Moderate (4-6 miles or less; mostly level ground or up to 500 feet of gain.)
- Moderately Strenuous (Distance of 7 - 10 miles with an elevation gain that will generally not exceed 350 feet per mile, with a total elevation gain of no more than 1000 ft.)
- Strenuous (This hike could be 7 - 10 miles in length, but include rocky trail conditions, tricky stream crossings or elevation gain of more than 1000 ft. but less than 2000 ft.)
- Extremely Strenuous (Any hike that is a distance of 10 to 14 miles or with more than 2000 ft. total elevation gain, but no more than 3000 ft.)
- Experts Only (Usually involves distances of more than 14 miles or more than 3000 ft. in elevation gain. There might be very steep/rugged climbs, deep stream crossings, or non-maintained trails.)

## Winter Snowshoe Hike Checklist

- Be sure to ask your walk leader questions when they contact you so you are well informed and assured that the walk matches your abilities.
- Carefully review the descriptions and make your selections of walks based on your physical abilities, general state of health, hiking/snowshoeing experiences, and equipment.
- Children with adult guidance are welcome unless it is noted in the narrative that a hike is not suited for children.
- Each walk has a size limit to guarantee a quiet experience, to protect fragile wildlands, and to comply with the guidelines of the managing land agency.
- All personal gear, food, and water are your responsibility.
- No dogs are permitted, in fairness to fellow hikers and wildlife.
- Please leave all firearms at home.
- Be sure to plan adequate travel time so you are at the meeting place at the appointed hour.
- Do not be a "no show" at the trailhead. It leaves everyone waiting and worrying and denies someone else the chance to hike. If your plans change, you must notify the Walk leader as soon as possible. Failure to do so will prevent you from signing up for future hikes.
- The winter season can bring freezing temperatures, winter storms and avalanche danger. Be well prepared to start your winter adventure.
- Select proper fabrics and layer your clothing to help maintain a constant body temperature.
- Bring plenty of food and water.
- Carry the necessary emergency equipment.
- Let others know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Recognize the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Check the weather before you go.

The Montana Wilderness Association assumes no liability for personal injury or loss of personal property on the Wilderness Walks program. Prior to your walk, you will be asked to sign a waiver and release agreement.

## Eastern Wildlands Chapter Eastern Region

### 1. Pompeys Pillar

**Date:** Saturday, March 4

**Nearest Town:** Billings

**Public Land Management:** Bureau of Land Management

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** 200 ft

**Leaders:** Roger Otstot and Rita Harding

On July 25, 1806, Captain Meriwether Lewis scribed his name upon a large sandstone rock formation he named Pompys Tower. Today known as Pompeys Pillar, this national monument is the site of the only remaining visible evidence of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Accompanied by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff, we will learn about the Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) east of the pillar and its rich cultural and natural history. The winter views of the Yellowstone Valley and the variety of local wildlife are a testament to the work Montana Wilderness Association is doing in eastern Montana in partnership with the BLM and other agencies.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### 2. Pryor Mountains

**Date:** Sunday, March 26

**Nearest Town:** Bridger

**Public Land Management:** Bureau of Land Management

Custer-Gallatin National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 700 ft

**Leaders:** Bernard Quetchenbach and Rita Harding

The Hiker's Haven area is located on the desert side of the Pryor Mountains, a unique area with an almost-southwestern ecology and landscape. Much of the area is free of roads, and it has been proposed as a wilderness area by Montana Wilderness Association. The exact hiking route may vary due to weather, access, or road conditions.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **Flathead-Kootenai Chapter Northwest Region**

### **3. Trails, Tracks, Sign, and Scat**

**Date:** Saturday, January 7

**Nearest Town:** Kila

**Public Land Management:** Flathead National Forest

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Brian Baxter and Greta Gansauer

Join us for a day of exploring the tracks and sign that wildlife leave in the snow, mud, and sand. Our adventure will take us through several different habitats, where we will sharpen our skills of observation as we study mammal and bird winter ecology. Please come prepared with proper layers, good boots, snowshoes (we have a few extra pair), binoculars, and lunch.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **4. Regal Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, January 7

**Nearest Town:** Clark Fork, ID

**Public Land Management:** Panhandle National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 7 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Phil Hough and Deb Hunsicker

Join us on our annual winter tune-up up Regal Creek. Depending on conditions, we will ski, snowshoe, or hike through quiet forest from the end of the county maintained road to the Regal Creek Trailhead and then up the trail to panoramic views of the Lightning Creek Canyon and West Cabinets.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **5. Stanton Lake**

**Date:** Saturday, January 14

**Nearest Town:** West Glacier

**Public Land Management:** Flathead National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Ellen Horowitz and Grete Gansauer

Learn about winter ecology while snowshoeing to Stanton Lake in the Great Bear Wilderness. This outing is geared for novice snowshoers and families with children. Along the way, we'll stop and look for tracks and other wildlife signs and talk about the ways animals cope with cold and snow.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **6. Field Journaling and Sketching**

**Date:** Saturday, January 21

**Nearest Town:** Whitefish

**Public Land Management:** Flathead National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 2 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** 100 ft

**Leaders:** Selena Heck-Vasquez and Grete Gansauer

Grab your favorite pen or pencil and get ready to become a field journaling master.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **7. Animal Tracking and Sign Interpretation**

**Date:** Saturday, January 21

**Nearest Town:** Libby

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Brian Baxter and Amy Robinson

Enjoy a day in the field observing, identifying, and reading the tracks, trails, scat, and sign mammals and birds leave as clues to their winter behaviors. We will investigate several habitats, so please come prepared with proper clothing, good boots, snowshoes (we have some extra), lunch, binoculars, and a tracking book.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **8. Ross Creek Cedars**

**Date:** Saturday, January 21

**Nearest Town:** Troy

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 7 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 800 ft

**Leaders:** Randi Lui and Deb Hunsicker

Take a relaxing snowshoe hike to the beautiful Ross Creek Cedars. Snowshoe up a closed forest road, stopping along the way to enjoy the beautiful views. Once we reach the ancient cedar forest, we'll trek in and find a spot to enjoy lunch (please pack food and water for a full day excursion). After lunch, we'll begin our trek back to the vehicles.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **9. Avalanche Awareness - Turner Mountain**

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Nearest Town:** Libby

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** none

**Leaders:** Jon Jeresek and Terry Crooks

Participants will be provided a free lift ride to the summit of Turner Mountain at 5952 feet. Avalanche awareness topics to be presented are terrain, weather, snowpack, safe travel, beacon search, probing/shoveling tactics, and human factors related to decision making. Three instructors will provide information to rotating groups of participants. After four hours of awareness activities, participants can ride the lift back down or ski/snowshoe 2.7 miles down the jeep road to the parking lot.

*Co-sponsored by Turner Mountain Ski Area.*

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **10. Lost Trail Wolves and Wildlife**

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Nearest Town:** Kalispell

**Public Land Management:** Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge

**Miles (round trip):** 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 300 ft

**Leaders:** Diane Boyd and Ellen Horowitz

What is it about the Lost Trail-Pleasant Valley area that is so attractive to wolves, 500 wintering elk, many other wildlife species, and humans? And how do they all coexist? Join us and find out as we explore this beautiful landscape and look for tracks that reveal wildlife stories. Dress properly for winter conditions and bring lunch, water, camera, and binoculars.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **11. East Fork Blue Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Nearest Town:** Heron

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 300 ft

**Leaders:** Sandy Compton and Golden Canine

This is a snowshoe loop of about six miles through varied terrain following old roads and game trails between the East and West Forks of Blue Creek. It's a walk in the woods with no significant grades and a good opportunity to get out and enjoy winter.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **12. Garry Lookout**

**Date:** Saturday, February 4

**Nearest Town:** West Glacier

**Public Land Management:** Flathead National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 800 ft

**Leaders:** Ellen Horowitz and Bret Luedke

Located between the Great Bear Wilderness and Glacier National Park, Garry Lookout offers spectacular mountain views. Along the trail, learn about winter tracks - from those left by animals to those left by early-day rangers traveling by snowshoes. This outing is geared for novice snowshoers and families with children. Bring water, snacks, lunch, and binoculars.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **13. Animal Tracking and Sign Interpretation**

**Date:** Saturday, February 4

**Nearest Town:** Heron

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Brian Baxter and Sandy Compton

Join us for a day of learning to read animal tracks and signs. We'll start with a morning session in the classroom at Heron Community Center and then transition to the field for some eyes, ears, nose and hands-on tracking experience. This is a rain, snow, or shine event. The field portion is approximately four hours. Dress appropriately. Bring rain gear, lunch, snacks, camera, and binoculars.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **14. Ross Creek Cedars**

**Date:** Monday, February 6

**Nearest Town:** Troy

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 7 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 800 ft

**Leaders:** Chuck Gross and Sandy Compton

Join us for a snowshoe trek up the Ross Creek Cedars road and into one of the best areas for viewing both the Scotchman Peaks and the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness Area. There is a grand view of the Bull River Valley a couple of miles in. The group could opt to snowshoe up some side roads for more valley views or continue onto the Cedars. The goal is the viewpoint of the valley (~4 miles round trip.)

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **15. Veteran's Valentine's Day Venture**

**Date:** Saturday, February 11

**Nearest Town:** Libby

**Public Land Management:** Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Brian Baxter and Greta Gansauer

Get together with veterans and non-veterans alike to enjoy a winter-ecology field day where we'll take it all in. We will focus in on identifying evergreen plants, forest and deciduous trees, mammal and bird tracks, sign, and scat. Please come prepared with proper dress, good boots, snowshoes (we have a few extra), lunch, water, cameras, and binoculars.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **16. Winter Survival Skills**

**Date:** Saturday, February 25

**Nearest Town:** Columbia Falls

**Public Land Management:** F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company

**Miles (round trip):** 2 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** none

**Leaders:** Brett Holmquist and Jennifer Bresee

Our day afield will focus on the basics of self rescue in winter conditions. We'll also do some exploring and include naturalist and ancestral wilderness skills and crafts as time allows. Youth ages 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **17. Wings of Winter, Tracks of Time**

**Date:** Saturday, March 4

**Nearest Town:** Kalispell

**Public Land Management:** Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Brian Baxter and Amy Robinson

Gather with this group of enthusiastic outdoor adventurers as we enjoy a day of combination theme winter birding and tracking, trails, and sign. We will look to the sky for feathers and the surfaces for feet, and observe and identify mammals and birds. Come prepared with boots, snowshoes (we have some extra), lunch, cameras, binoculars, and spotting scopes.

*Co-sponsored by Montana Audubon and Flathead Audubon.*

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **18. Glacier View-Camas Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, March 18

**Nearest Town:** Columbia Falls

**Public Land Management:** Flathead National Forest

Glacier National Park

**Miles (round trip):** 5 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 400 ft

**Leaders:** Diane Boyd and Maria Mantas

We will explore the Glacier View Mountain trail (Flathead National Forest) and the Camas Creek area (Glacier National Park), with our route dictated by weather conditions. These two adjoining areas are wintering grounds for whitetails, mule deer, and several species of predators. We will discuss what comprises a wintering area, how fire affects them, and look for wildlife tracks to interpret their stories. Dress properly for winter conditions and bring lunch, water, camera, and equipment.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **19. Wings of Winter**

**Date:** Saturday, March 25

**Nearest Town:** Kila

**Public Land Management:** Flathead National Forest

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Kootenai National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 300 ft

**Leaders:** Brian Baxter and Greta Gansauer

Winter birding has both its challenges and rewards. We will visit a few different sites and pursue observations and signs of birds of prey, waterfowl, woodpeckers, and songbirds. Please come with proper gear, binoculars, bird books, lunch, good boots, and spotting scopes.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **High Divide Chapter Southwest Region**

## **20. Continental Divide Trail**

**Date:** Friday, January 13

**Nearest Town:** Butte

**Public Land Management:** Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 2 to 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** none

**Leaders:** Sally Cathey and John Todd

Join us for a mellow snowshoe trip on the Continental Divide Trail. We will snowshoe two to four miles along this scenic trail and check out the boulder piles that are part of the Boulder Batholith. Dress warmly and bring a lunch.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## Island Range Chapter North-Central Region

### 21. Highwood Mountains

**Date:** Saturday, January 21

**Nearest Town:** Geysler

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 to 8 miles

**Difficulty:** Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,500 ft

**Leaders:** Julie Demarais and Eric Heidle

Rising high above the surrounding prairie, the Highwood Mountains are one of the many Island Ranges of central Montana. Join us for a snowshoe walk into the heart of these mountains. We will travel through dense forests and open slopes to the saddle of a ridge between Middle and North Peak, where we will enjoy great views of the Big Snowies, Little Belts, and Rocky Mountain Front. Be sure to bring a lunch, plenty of water, and warm layers.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### 22. McGee Coulee

**Date:** Sunday, January 22

**Nearest Town:** Monarch

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6.5 to 8 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,000 ft

**Leaders:** Chuck Jennings and Gerry Jennings

We will hike from a trailhead on the Dry Fork of Belt Creek, about 3 miles east of Monarch. This is essentially an up and back hike. The first 2.5 miles of hiking are very gradual. At the 3 mile mark we have the option of hiking up a steep half mile for great views of Otter Mountain (6683 ft), Sawmill Ridge, and Barker Mountain (8309 ft.). Alternatively, we may turn around at the 3 mile mark and head back by a different route, which would take us by an amazing natural arch, eventually connecting back to our incoming trail.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **23. Middle Fork Judith**

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Nearest Town:** Utica

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 4.5 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Camille Consolvo and Gordon Whirry

Experience the scenic canyon of the Middle Fork of the Judith Wilderness Study Area. Charlie Russell described this backcountry as a “hunter’s paradise,” writing “Nature had surely done her best, and no king of the old times could have claimed a more beautiful and bountiful domain.” Learn about the effort to restore the fishery to a blue ribbon trout stream and protect the wilderness character of this area.

How far we hike down the Middle Fork depends on whether the ice is solid. Bring snowshoes, poles, and hiking boots. We’ll make a decision at the trailhead whether to hike or snowshoe. Also bring a lunch, plenty of water, and layers of clothes. After the hike, we can stop for some hot drinks and the famously big burgers at the Oxen Yoke Inn in Utica.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **24. Paine Gulch**

**Date:** Sunday, January 29

**Nearest Town:** Monarch

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 4 to 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Beth Ihle and Andrew Stucker

This is a gentle uphill climb into a tucked-away valley. Paine Gulch was identified as a Research Natural Area by the Forest Service because of its quiet recreational setting and appearance as a relatively untouched landscape. The Paleozoic era limestone cliff bordering Paine Gulch is capped at its upper end by Servoss Mountain at 7,230 feet. You’ll also see a portion of the forest that was burned in the 2001 Monarch Fire. To help with interpretation, we’ll be joined by a staff person with the Belt Creek Ranger Station. Bring water, a sack lunch, and dress for weather.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## 25. Dry Pole Canyon

**Date:** Saturday, February 11

**Nearest Town:** Lewistown

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Ryan Kuehn and Alana Kuehn

Join us for a winter experience in the wildest, most intact Island Range in central Montana - the Big Snowies. We'll follow a trail that winds through a forested landscape and meanders through meadows surrounded by canyon walls. After some initial elevation gain, the trail levels out and is relatively flat. See for yourself why most of the Big Snowies were designated as a Wilderness Study Area and why they need permanent protection. Bring lunch, snacks, water, and clothing to stay warm when we stop.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## 26. Norwegian Gulch

**Date:** Sunday, February 12

**Nearest Town:** Augusta

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 7 miles

**Difficulty:** Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,600 ft

**Leaders:** Len Kopec and Deva McKnight

Norwegian Gulch is an important winter range and elk migration corridor on the Rocky Mountain Front. This scenic gulch, bounded between a limestone ridge and a windswept slope, is easily accessible from the road but gets very little human traffic in the winter. From the trailhead near the Sun River, we'll steadily climb through foothills, aspen groves, and a young Douglas Fir forest to an open saddle with a great view into Cutreef Creek towards the Scapegoat. Those with a little more energy left can continue along the ridge to a hidden rocky knob with a wonderful view of the Sun Canyon and The Bob.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **27. Uhlhorn Trail**

**Date:** Saturday, February 18

**Nearest Town:** Lewistown

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 5 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Noel Birkland and Sandy Birkland

Adventure in the Snowy Mountains south of Lewistown. We will leave from a trailhead, but then go across country, working our way through the timber until we emerge on Uhlhorn Ridge, where we will have great views of Dagger Rock, Half Moon Creek. We will also see caves across Half Moon Valley. The length of the hike will depend on weather and the will of the hikers. Be sure to layer and prepare for wind. Bring plenty of water, lunch, and snacks.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **28. North Fork Waldron Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, February 25

**Nearest Town:** Choteau

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 7 miles

**Difficulty:** Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,600 ft

**Leaders:** Bill Cunningham and Len Kopec

Protected from the wind, the North Fork of Waldron Creek is rumored to have the best powder snow on the Rocky Mountain Front. At first we will follow a good trail that will lead us toward the upper basin surrounded by some of the loftiest peaks on the Rocky Mountain Front -- part of a recently designated Conservation Management Area. The upper off-trail portion of the walk will take us through dense forests into a spectacular upper bowl. With a well-beaten path, we will retrace our route back down to the ski lodge for relaxation and warm up.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## 29. Sawmill Gulch

**Date:** Saturday, March 4

**Nearest Town:** Monarch

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 2 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** none

**Leaders:** Bonnie Warren and Amy Grisak

This hike follows an old logging road across a gorgeous meadow to our wooded lunch spot. We'll build a fire to warm up and roast s'mores - the hike leaders will provide the makings. Sawmill Creek supports Westslope Cutthroat Trout and American Dippers and as we hike through the snow, we just might see snow fleas, tracks of elk, mountain lions, and other wildlife. The Sawmill Gulch is currently managed as a quiet, non-motorized roadless area. Learn about the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest management plan revision and Montana Wilderness Association's effort to protect the area's wilderness character.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## 30. Limekiln Trail-Burnette Peak

**Date:** Saturday, March 4

**Nearest Town:** Lewistown

**Public Land Management:** Bureau of Land Management

**Miles (round trip):** 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 950 ft

**Leaders:** Dave Mari and Mark Good

Snowshoe through an open forest in a part of the Judith Mountains that sees little human use during the winter months. We will follow Limekiln Trail up to a saddle below Burnette Peak, where we will be rewarded with tremendous views of the Judith Basin and central Montana. Learn about efforts to protect and restore quiet recreation in this portion of the Judith Mountains and the opportunities to help shape the future of this area through the revision of the BLM management plan.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **Madison-Gallatin Chapter**

### **South-Central Region**

#### **31. Cascade Creek to Lava Lake**

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Nearest Town:** Bozeman

**Public Land Management:** Custer-Gallatin National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,600 ft

**Leaders:** Tom Ross and Bob Bayley

This hike in the northern end of Gallatin Canyon will take us on a rocky and sometimes steep, wooded trail into the Lee Metcalf Wilderness Area to a beautiful alpine lake located below Jumbo and Table Mountains. The trail is mostly in the shade, so dress warmly in layers and bring winter hiking boots in case the conditions are not suitable for snowshoes. Bring water and food, and plan on having lunch beside the frozen lake. Round trip from trailhead should take about five hours.

[Register for this walk.](#)

#### **32. Lick Creek Loop**

**Date:** Saturday, February 4

**Nearest Town:** Bozeman

**Public Land Management:** Custer-Gallatin National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 4.5 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 800 ft

**Leaders:** Kenneth Hapner and Ron Brekke

The trailhead for the Lick Creek Loop hike is located 8 miles up the Hyalite Canyon road. The hike snakes mostly east through both open and dense forest on a gradual climb with spectacular views of surrounding mountains. The air will be pristine and permeated with the piney smells of the unperturbed and resting forest. Hopefully, we will see the tracks of passing snowshoe rabbits, weasels, fox, deer, elk and maybe a large cat. It is difficult to predict snow conditions. Come dressed for the weather in layers and bring lunch, water, snacks, sunglasses and a yearning for the smells, sights and sounds of the winter forest.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **33. Mill Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, February 11

**Nearest Town:** Ennis

**Public Land Management:** Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,400 ft

**Leaders:** Bob Bayley and Tom Ross

Our destination is a wild, roadless, and remote parcel of land in the Madison Range. We will access this land from a trailhead near Mill Creek, a tributary of Jack Creek. If conditions are favorable, we will enjoy spectacular views of Lone Peak and Fan Mountain as we climb through moderately steep terrain on a seldom used trail.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **34. Climbing Snowbank**

**Date:** Saturday, February 18

**Nearest Town:** Emigrant

**Public Land Management:** Custer-Gallatin National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 950 ft

**Leaders:** Roger Jenkins and Susie McDonald

A steady but not steep climb above the Mill Creek drainage in the Absaroka Range will offer increasingly sweeping views of the Mill Creek Valley, the Bridger Range, and into the depths of the Absaroka Range. On a clear day, you will want to go further than your legs can carry you, but we will limit our travels to a superb viewpoint.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **35. The Hogback**

**Date:** Saturday, March 18

**Nearest Town:** Livingston

**Public Land Management:** Custer-Gallatin National Forest  
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

**Miles (round trip):** 8 miles

**Difficulty:** Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,000 ft

**Leaders:** Karen Williams and Roger Breeding

This is a hike up to and along the spine of a hogback ridge that runs east and west from the Trail Creek area to the Paradise Valley, with great views of the Gallatins to the west and the Absarokas to the east. Given that the trail is commonly on bedrock, the trail surface is rocky and uneven and not commonly snow-covered. It generally can be hiked (rather than snow-shoed) in from mid to late March. This is a great early spring hike, but with significant elevation gain.

[Preregister for this walk.](#)

### **Shining Mountains Chapter Western Region**

### **36. Sawmill Gulch**

**Date:** Saturday, January 14

**Nearest Town:** Missoula

**Public Land Management:** Lolo National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Dave Robertson and Stephen Schombel

From the Sawmill Gulch trailhead we'll snowshoe up onto the high ridge between Sawmill Gulch and Curry Gulch. From there we'll have great views of that portion of the Rattlesnake Recreation Area. We will return by a different route, making a three-mile loop.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **37. Elk in Winter**

**Date:** Saturday, February 25

**Nearest Town:** Missoula

**Public Land Management:** Lolo National Forest

Rattlesnake National Recreation Area

**Miles (round trip):** 5 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 500 ft

**Leaders:** Bert Lindler and Jay Gore

Join us snowshoeing (or hiking, depending on the snow depth) on hillsides facing Sawmill Gulch and Grant Creek that are the winter home for several hundred elk. We will learn about the challenges and rewards of having a large elk herd wintering on the outskirts of Missoula. Come prepared for the weather and bring water and a lunch.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **Wild Divide Chapter**

#### **Central Region**

### **38. Sweeney Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, January 21

**Nearest Town:** Helena

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** 400 ft

**Leaders:** Bill Hallinan and Tom Pedersen

This is a chance to see firsthand the beauty of Sweeney Creek area under snowfall. This scenic route loops up higher ground then along animal paths. We will discover what wildlife is wintering in the area. Most of the route is protected from the weather but bring layered clothing for the winter conditions. Also bring water, snacks, and lunch.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **39. Ten Mile Environmental Trail**

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Nearest Town:** Helena

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 1 mile

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** 100 ft

**Leaders:** Tom Kreissler and Cara Orban

Grab your snowshoes and get ready to have some family fun! Situated within a forest environment, the Ten-Mile Creek area is rich in cultural and natural features. With abundant wildlife, this area is a great place to see a wide variety of birds and mammals yearlong. We will do a one-mile loop with a gradual short climb in the beginning and then it is all downhill from there. After the snowshoe walk, look forward to a campfire, hot cocoa, roasted marshmallows, and sledding. This hike is for families so bring your lunch and sleds.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **40. Blackhall Meadow**

**Date:** Sunday, January 29

**Nearest Town:** Helena

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 600 ft

**Leaders:** Bill Hallinan and Jon Kesler

Join us on a full-day adventure to the heart of the Lazyman Inventoried Roadless Area south of Helena. The hike wanders through fir trees, aspens, and out onto the open expanse of Blackhall Meadow, located just east of Colorado Mountain. Depending on how close we can get to the trailhead, the hike will be six miles round trip with a 500-foot elevation gain. Be prepared for varying weather conditions and make sure to bring good winter gear. Also bring a lunch, snacks, and something to drink, preferably hot. This is a moderate hike, but could be strenuous depending on the snow conditions.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **41. Rodgers Peak**

**Date:** Saturday, February 11

**Nearest Town:** Lincoln

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 5 miles

**Difficulty:** Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,800 ft

**Leaders:** Katie Kotynski and Tom Kotynski

Referred to as a living museum of the American West, the Continental Divide Trail spans 3,100 miles from Canada to Mexico. Spend the day along a part of the Continental Divide Trail to the top of Rodgers Peak, a short, yet steep snowshoe climb. This hike provides fabulous views of the surrounding mountain ranges along the Rocky Mountain Front. Stops along the way provide opportunities to identify and discuss surrounding wild landscapes. This hike is in grizzly bear country, so bear spray is advised.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **42. Black Mountain**

**Date:** Sunday, February 19

**Nearest Town:** Helena

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 6 to 8 Miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,000 ft

**Leaders:** Doug Powell and Sonia Powell

Explore the Black Mountain proposed wilderness area located just outside of Helena. We will look for wildlife, observe ecological changes in the forest habitat, and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Please dress warm and bring a lunch.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **43. MacDonald Pass**

**Date:** Saturday, February 25

**Nearest Town:** Helena

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 to 4 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Elevation Gain:** 300 ft

**Leaders:** Maryalice Chester and Art Butler

We'll search for the elusive "snow dunes" (cornices) that often form along the east side of the Continental Divide and watch for tracks and other wildlife signs.

[Register for this walk.](#)

### **44. Willard Creek**

**Date:** Saturday, March 4

**Nearest Town:** Helena

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 3 miles

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Elevation Gain:** 300 ft

**Leaders:** Bill Hallinan and Nick Clarke

We will scout the Willard and Maupin Creek area and see how the animals are using the area. From the meadows, we will see the higher elevations and how winter affected wildlife. This is usually an easy snowshoe trek, but depending on the snow conditions, it could be moderately difficult. Expect changing weather conditions and bring layered clothing, water, and lunch.

[Register for this walk.](#)

## **45. Upper Little Blackfoot Full Moon**

**Date:** Saturday, March 11

**Nearest Town:** Elliston

**Public Land Management:** Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest

**Miles (round trip):** 5 miles

**Difficulty:** Moderately Strenuous

**Elevation Gain:** 1,000 ft

**Leaders:** Bill Hallinan and Jon Kesler

Full Moon! Kading Cabin will be the base camp, and snowshoeing will depend on where the snow is. This snowshoe trek offers amazing views of valley bottoms, dense forests, meadows, and barren ridges mixed with streams, rivers, and lakes. We will follow the trail up behind Kading Cabin to the ridge above the Little Blackfoot River. We will see the lay of the land -- open, rolling ridge tops and the Little Blackfoot watershed. Plan on spending the night if you want to view the full moon over the upper Little Blackfoot. We have the cabin rented for Saturday night. The cabin sleeps four, but others can snow camp nearby.

[Register for this walk.](#)