



## Flathead National Forest

## Media Release

September 10, 2009

Contact: Denise Germann  
(406) 758-5252

### Artist-Wilderness-Connection Showcases Artwork with Reception and Presentation

The Flathead National Forest, Hockaday Museum of Art, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and the Swan Ecosystem Center are hosting a reception and presentation of *Forest Inspirations: An Extension of the Artist-Wilderness-Connection Program* at Flathead Valley Community College on Wednesday, September 23.

The Artist-Wilderness-Connection Program is a cooperative artist-in-residence program that connects Montana artists and local communities with local wild lands. Professional working artists of various disciplines, media and styles spend time in a remote forest cabin on the Flathead National Forest to focus on their art. After completing their residency, artists select a format to share their talents and residency experience with the community and donate a representative piece of their art to the program.

A reception will begin at 5pm on Wednesday, September 23 at the Flathead Valley Community College Arts and Technology Building, with light refreshments followed by a formal presentation featuring the 2008 artists: photographer Larry Blackwood from Bozeman, and writer Scott Friskics and professional violist Jennifer Smith, both from Great Falls.

Blackwood will share his experience at the remote Spotted Bear Ranger Station and the inspiration for his crisp, intimate black and white photographs that capture close-up views of the wilderness. His photos help to convey the idea that the beauty of an area can be found in the views nearer at hand. Through Blackwood's photographs he encourages one to slow down and take a look around.

Friskics and Smith will perform "Bach in the Backcountry: A Triangulation of Meaning" which interweaves words and music created from time spent in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This collaborative piece is considered a conversation between the evocative speech of wilderness, the elegiac or melancholic voice of the solo viola and reflections of the writer.

Much of the artwork created since the program was initiated in 2004 will be on display in the Arts and Technology Building at Flathead Valley Community College September 10 through October 22. Artwork from college students will also be featured during this time.

Program artists include Myni Ferguson (2004), Annick Smith (2004), Janet Sullivan (2005), Karin Connelly (2005), Carol Poppenga (2006), Michael Patterson (2006), Jane Latus Emmert (2006), Bill Knoll (2007), Jane Kleinschmidt (2007), Sally Hickman (2007), in addition to 2008 artists Blackwood, Friskics and Smith. The 2009 artists are painter Rob Akey from Whitefish, art educator and mixed media artist Bobby Tilton from Missoula, and Kalispell painter James Clayborn.

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Flathead National Forest Conservation Education Specialist Teresa Wenum said, “We greatly appreciate Flathead Valley Community College and the arts department for hosting this event and exhibit.” According to Wenum the program partners also appreciate the assistance of the Back Country Horsemen of the Flathead in helping pack several of the artists into the backcountry and of Glacier Association for helping support the event.

For more information about the reception and presentation, and the Artist-Wilderness-Connection Program, contact Teresa Wenum at the Flathead National Forest, 406-758-5218 or Lucy Smith at the Hockaday Museum of Art, 406-755-5268.

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