

December 7, 2011
Swan Lands Coordinating Committee
Swan Valley Community Hall
Meeting notes

Participants included Representatives from:

Condon Community Council , Swan Valley Growth Policy Committee, Pyramid Mountain Lumber, MT Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, Swan Lake Ranger District (FNF), Seeley Lake Ranger District (LNF), US Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Land Reliance, Trust for Public Lands, Vital Ground, Montana Wilderness Association, The Wilderness Society, Northwest Connections, Swan Ecosystem Center, Northfork Interlocal and many Swan Valley Community Members.

***72 individuals attended.**

NOTES FROM FLIP CHARTS INCLUDING PARKING LOT ISSUES, RECOMMENDATIONS, COMMENTS, QUESTIONS

WATER QUALITY

Magnesium Chloride

Investigate the effects of magnesium chloride used for dust abatement and highway thawing. Is there a more environmentally friendly substance? What are the impacts of magnesium chloride on water quality?

ACTION: Coordinate among the Clearwater Resources Council, the Seeley Lake Community Council and Swan Valley Community Council on this issue.

WILDLIFE:

Bears

Can we better explain variations in reported population numbers for grizzly bears in Northwest Montana—explain the difference between known population numbers and estimates?

Garbage

Can we do a better job of managing waste when it is in bear resistant containers?

Is there a better place for waste? Some residents need a central site because the Allied Waste Trucks are too large for some roads.

Find out whether and how Allied Waste might provide funding assistance for fencing around waste sites.

ACTION: Coordinate more between the Wildlife Subcommittee with the Waste Management Committee of the Community Council on waste management.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP:

Seeley Swan Fire Plan

Make the Fire Risk Assessment Map available.

Prescribed Burning

Alert the Swan Valley Community Council a month in advance about upcoming prescribed fires and other activities that would affect the community.

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES:

GeoData Mapping

Continue beyond 2011 the GeoData Mapping web site where people can find interactive maps of the Swan Valley. Find funding for this.

Mapping for Kids

Continue providing opportunities for youth to experience Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.

Conservation Easements

Funding assistance is available for Missoula County residents through the Missoula County Bond Fund for approved conservation easements.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is applying for funding to support conservation easements through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) program.

WETLANDS:

How are our wetlands faring? Are they drying or filling? Were they used by trumpeter swans historically? Are they suitable for trumpeter reintroduction?

Duck Stamp

Find out more about potential funding available for wetland restoration from the Duck Stamp program. If funding is based on biological needs, how is the Swan watershed faring in ongoing biological assessments?

NATIVE FISH:

Cutthroat Trout

Have more discussions on maintaining native fish populations and how to deal with non-natives.

Can naïve cutthroat from local streams be raised in hatcheries and returned to their original stream?

Is removing limits on fishing for non-native cuts a solution if it is difficult to distinguish between cutthroat trout and other species?

Would a fish tournament in Swan and/or Lindbergh Lakes be an effective way to reduce lake trout and raise funds for mitigation?

Is it safe to drink water or eat fish after lake poisoning? We need better safety information.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION:

- Enlarge the “language” to better include people and community in natural resource issues; include language describing how people and natural resources are interdependent. Balance the concerns of both.
- Work on easy solutions first (areas of agreement) rather than trying to tackle controversial issues.
- The Swan Valley Community Council could sponsor this Swan Lands Coordinating Committee forum twice annually.
- Encourage back-and-forth interaction. The community members should be proactive not passive in discussions with natural resource agencies.
- Follow the example of the US Fish & Wildlife Service 2011 presentation to the Swan Valley Community Council.
- Determine questions for forum discussions two months in advance so all participants can be prepared for the discussions.

Survey s

- Consider surveying every household, one vote per household
- Have landowners finance the surveys.
- Surveys don’t work for everyone. The Grown Policy Committee is developing a 4-question survey to take to workshops and groups.
 - What do you love and treasure about the Swan Valley?
 - What are your concerns for the SV?
 - What changes do you want to see in the SV?
 - What do you want the future of the SV to look like?

Agency Involvement

- Forest Service and other agencies representatives are encouraged to attend Swan Valley Growth Policy Committee meetings.

National Attention

- Due to the President’s America’s Great Outdoors program, the Swan Valley has gotten attention in Washington DC as an area where effective community/natural resource problem solving is

occurring. Take advantage of this attention to continue developing a viable model and achieve goals.

Septic Systems

- Investigate the best affordable septic systems that will work in the Swan Valley—as fundamental to determining the limits of development.

*****AVAILABLE SEPARATELY ARE THE ONE PAGE HANDOUTS FROM THE 6 SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SWAN LANDS COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE REPORT FROM THE CONDON COMMUNITY COUNCIL.**