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## Summer 2009

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### New funds coming for local contractors, landowners

Swan Ecosystem Center will be offering additional forest stewardship and restoration cost/share assistance for private landowners through a grant intended to help keep local contractors working.

This economic stimulus grant will be offered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and administered by SEC.

Additional staff will be hired to help SEC's Land and Forest Steward, Mike Palladini, identify projects and work with landowners. The goals are enhancing or restoring private lands, including former Plum Creek lands.

Local contractors, landowners and land managers are invited to suggest project ideas. A contractor's meeting will be scheduled.

### Swan Range trail opening hampered by winter slides

Winter avalanches sent tons of debris onto Swan Range trails, as Swan Ecosystem Center's backcountry ranger Mike Childs discovered in June when he began clearing down-fall on trails leading into the Bob Marshall Wilderness.



**Avalanche debris covering trail to Upper Holland Lake.**  
*Flathead National Forest photo*

Apparently the Christmas storms of 2008 laid down more snow than the steep alpine country could hold during early winter thaws. The avalanches tore out immense trees that blocked the Upper Holland Lake and Gordon Pass trails in five areas, and on the Foothills Trail in two places, one slide was huge. Three avalanches blocked the trail to Lion Pass.

In the Mission Mountains Wilderness, Kari Gunderson and Lucas Lamar reported that a huge slide had crossed the frozen surface of North Hemlock Lake. The avalanche may have lowered the lake's water level by

blowing out some of the logjam at the outlet. But, at least in the Missions, no trails were affected.

On the Swan Range, the Forest

### **Crown of the Continent Conservation and art fundraiser July 24**

Swan Ecosystem Center and Alpine Artisan's Inc. will host the second annual Crown of the Continent Celebration July 24, 2009 to raise funds for conservation in the Swan Valley and the arts in the Swan, Seeley and Blackfoot Valleys.

Music will be provided by the incomparable Drum Brothers.

The proceeds will support the acquisition of land for a Swan Valley community forest and protection of key wildlife habitat for bull trout and other species. It will also benefit cultural arts locally and arts education for our community youth.

A selection of art created by the talented Alpine Artisans members and juried by Brandon Reintjes, director of the Montana Museum of Arts and Culture, will be auctioned by auctioneer Fred Burows.

The juried art will be displayed July 13-23 at First Valley Bank in Seeley Lake and will be available for viewing prior to the auction on the SEC and AAI websites.

The live auction will also include high value outdoor adventure experiences, and a silent auction will feature an array of art by AAI members.

The evening of dinner and dancing will take place in the Swan Valley at the Mercer Ranch on Guest Ranch Road. The Hungry Bear Steakhouse will cater a steak and chicken pitchfork fondue dinner.

For reservations contact Swan Ecosystem Center at 406/754-3137.

Continued page 2

#### **Swan Ecosystem Center**

##### Our Vision

*The Swan Valley is rural and wild. It is a rich environment where people and a natural diversity of native plants and animals thrive. People learn and work together to ensure that the ecosystem's resources are protected, responsibly used, and available for all future generations.*

##### Mission

*Maintain a strong, vital community involved in setting its own destiny through partnerships that encourage sustainable use and care of public and private lands.*

# Swan Ecosystem Center

*Respecting each other.  
Sustaining the land.*

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Chuck Harris

Betsy Spettigue

Swan Valley Ecosystem Management &  
Learning Center, Inc.

Swan Ecosystem Center (SEC) is a non-profit community group working on local ecosystem and education programs.

SEC shares responsibility for the U.S. Forest Service Condon Work Center through partnership agreements with the Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest. This partnership allows the community to maintain an effective working relationship with the federal land managers.

Swan Ecosystem Center  
6887 Highway 83, Condon, MT 59826

406/754-3137

406/754-3138

406/754-2965 (fax)

swanec@blackfoot.net (e-mail)

SwanEcosystemCenter.org (Web)

## Trail opening, continued

Service sent additional crews to help clear trails. As of July 4, hikers and stock parties could reach Upper Holland Lake, but travel over Gordon Pass was not advisable.

On a high note, other than the slides, the rangers have encountered far less blowdown on trails than last year when winter windstorms and a July tornado delayed trail opening.

The backcountry rangers have been chasing the snow up the mountainsides this season, clearing downfall as the snow melts.

Each June, since Mike Laabs died in 2000 from a fall on McDonald Peak, the Laabs family has organized a crew of volunteers to work on the Glacier Lake Trail in the Mission Mountains Wilderness. This June, 39 Laabs family members and friends installed a new hand-rail on the log crossing over Crazy Horse Creek and helped clear the trail.



Laabs family volunteers at Glacier Lake Trailhead in 2008.

*Johnson-Laabs photo*

Swan Ecosystem Center and the Flathead National Forest share funding for the Mission Mountains and Swan Range program. SEC is funded by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Recreation Trials Program and the National Forest Foundation. SEC has requested funding from these

sources for 2010. SEC also receives private donations to care for trails and campsites in the Mission Mountains Wilderness and on the Swan Range.

## VISTA volunteer to help with watershed restoration plan

Swan Ecosystem Center will welcome a VISTA volunteer in July who will help coordinate watershed restoration planning for the Swan Valley.

Allison Vissichelli has a BS degree in Environmental and Political Science from Gettysburg College, PA. A resident of Syosset, New York, Allison has recently returned from a year in Huelva, Spain where she helped instruct English-as-second-language classes.

As watershed restoration planning coordinator, Allison will arrange meetings with local residents and representatives of all the agencies and or-

ganizations involved in the Swan Valley to identify and consolidate existing information and to develop an effective way to work across jurisdictions for effective stewardship and restoration of public and private lands.

VISTA is a national volunteer program initiated in 1964 to help reduce poverty. VISTA volunteers promote literacy, improve health services, create businesses, create housing opportunities or bridge the digital divide. VISTA volunteers were made available to nonprofits such as SEC as part of the economic stimulus program.

## Help protect bears and people

### More resistant garbage cans available



Swan Valley  
Bear Ranger  
Mark Ruby with  
bear resistant  
garbage can.

Problems with Swan Valley bears getting into garbage should be greatly reduced this summer. Swan Ecosystem Center has 70 new 65-gallon bear-resistant garbage cans for people to borrow or purchase, thanks to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Defenders of Wildlife, and American Wild-lands.

Satisfied users report finding their Bear Saver bins knocked over and pushed around but not broken into. All that remains for evidence are muddy paw prints on the sides of the cans.

## Bear Fair

### 2nd annual celebration at Hungry Bear; brats and beer, great presenters

The August 1 Bear Fair at the Hungry Bear Steakhouse, 11 a.m.—3 p.m., is a fun time for families and friends to learn all about bear research, bear management, and living successfully with bears in the Swan Valley.

Tim Manley, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, will give a presentation on bear management. Kids can follow a Bear Aware trail to learn about safe camping and hiking techniques and identify bear sign. The event will feature the Wind River Karelian bear dogs, demonstrations on proper use of bear pepper spray, several other information booths, and a kids table.

The raffle includes a reconditioned **1947 Willys pickup**, a day with Bear Management Specialist Tim Manley, a bear monitoring flight with Bear Ranger Mark Ruby, a bear resistant garbage container, a handmade bear quilt, a tracking class, and four Griz tickets on the UM 45 yard line.

## Bear Resources

### Group helps residents avoid problems

The Swan Valley Bear Resources organized this year to help residents avoid problems with wildlife. The group is available to help landowners make their property safe, including securing bear attractants, setting up electric fencing for stock containment and other assistance. Contact Swan Ecosystem Center or Northwest Connections for help.

## Thank You SEC Volunteers

We honor and appreciate all volunteers. Below are the

Larrine Abolt	Jake Hipkins	Pam Musckett
Russ Abolt	James Hipkins	Harriet Nelson
Karen Anderson	Shari Hirst	Nan Nelson
Kvande Anderson	Leslie Hodgskiss	Rich Nelson
Leita Anderson	Linnea Hodgskiss	Alan Newall
Pat Andrews	Zac Hodgskiss	Colleen Nicholson
John Arias	Ashley Holmes	Mark Nicholson
June Ash	Jessie Hood	Stan Nicholson
Ned Banning	Justin Hood	Susan Novosel
Nefi Bartell	Katie Hood	Pat O'Herren
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Bill Beers	Andy Huppert	Kay Owens
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Havanna Binder	Lucinda Jann	Gary Palm
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Dawn Bishop	Chris Jewett	Danni Parcell
Rick Bishop	Roger Johnson	Mitch Parcell
Lex Blood	Jan Jones	Wrangell Parcell
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Kim Brown	Jared Kesterson	Terry Quinn
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Lily Clarke	Ruth Korn	Sue Rowlands
Paula Clarke	Terry Krebsbach	Turk Rowlands
Will Clarke	Claudia Kux	Mark Ruby
Dale Conley	Marty Kux	Vickie Russell
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Owen Conley	Ona Lake	Seeley Swan High School
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Sue Cushman	Lucas Lamar	Dave Sharbono
Carol Daly	Sharon Lamar	Lynne Shoup
Anne Dahl	Steve Lamar	Grace Siloti
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Susan Dvorack	Adam Lieberg	Lyndee Stevenson
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Denise Hilario	Rich Morgan	Judy Yajko
Betsey Hipkins	Shane Morigeau	Aurora Yates
Emma Hipkins	Jerye Motschman	Issac Yates

# Thank You SEC Supporters

2007-09 financial donors are listed here. Volunteers are listed on page 3. Thank you all.

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## SUMMER EVENTS

406-754-3137 to sign up

[www.swanecosystemcenter.org](http://www.swanecosystemcenter.org) for additional listings

### June 13, Noxious Weeds, 9am-12 noon

Weed identification, treatment, mapping and sprayer calibration.

### June 25, Vegetable Gardening, 7-8:30 pm

Roberta Stroden, vegetable gardening workshop at her home garden.

### July 2, Alaska Trek, 7-8:30 pm

Marty Zajanc will once again share his Alaska wilderness experiences. Sign up deadline June 26. Donations will support Marty's continued programs.

### July 6-10, Y-Camp, 10am-3pm

Seeley Lake YMCA Outreach and SEC offer outdoor activities and crafts at the Condon Work Center. Call 677-3330. Fees to be announced.

### July 10-11 and 18, Forest Stewardship

MSU Extension Forestry Forest Stewardship workshop for private landowners. Call 243-2773 or 754-3137. Early registration deadline: June 29. \$75 per ownership and \$45 per additional family member/partner for workshop manual.

### July 11, Foot Race, 9am start half marathon, 10am start for other races

7<sup>th</sup> annual Celebrate the Swan race, half marathon begins 9am. 10K, 5K, 5K walk & 1 mile walk/run begin 10am. Falls Creek Rd., south end of airstrip on Highway 83, near mile marker 43. \$18/adults, or \$20 race day. T-shirts, prizes, games and snacks.

### July 11, Bears, 7-8:30pm

Bear ranger Mark Ruby will give a presentation on bear management and strategies for living with bears in the Swan Valley. At Holland Lake Beach, bring chairs and mosquito repellent.

### July 23-24, Fish Camp, 10am start, 3pm end

Two days of fishing, fishing techniques, fishing ethics, and camping for kids ages 10-13. Younger students accompanied by parents are welcome. At Van Lake. Suggested fee is \$10/ person or \$20/family.

### July 24, Crown of the Continent Celebration & Art Auction, 5pm

Alpine Artisans and Swan Ecosystem Center will host an evening of music, art and dining at the Mercer Ranch in the Swan Valley. Music by the Drum Brothers. For reservations, Merrily Dunham at 754-3376 or Swan Ecosystem Center at 754-3137.

### July 30, Annual History Night, 7-8:30pm

Bring a story related to your history in the Swan Valley. Sign up by July 27. Donations go to the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society.

### August 6, Fly-fishing, 10am-2:30pm

Les Rutledge will conduct fly fishing instruction at the USFS Condon Work Center and on the Swan River. Class size limited to 12. Sign up deadline: July 31. Suggested fee: \$25/person.

### August 8, Loons, 7-8:30 pm

Donna Love, author and loon advocate, and Mark Ruby, loon ranger, will discuss loons' fascinating natural history, populations and management. At Holland Lake Beach. No sign up necessary. Donations will go to the Loon Society. Bring a chair.

### Sept 19, History Bus Tour, 9:30am – 8pm

Travel from the old Holland Lake guard station to the original ranger station and learn the earliest history of the Forest Service in the Swan Valley. Limit 30 participants. Suggested fee, \$10/person, \$20/family.

## Native Garden Photo Gallery



Above: After School Club field trip to Glacier National Park Nursery.



Volunteers revitalizing the native garden at Swan Ecosystem Center with Terry Divoky, Glacier National Park botanist.

## Fish Camp connects kids with fish and fishing

The ninth annual Fish Camp will be on July 23-24 at Van Lake. This popular program for kids ages 9-13 begins at 10 a.m. and goes until noon on the second day.

Kids will receive instruction on casting, knot tying, fish identification, catch and release, fishing ethics and regulations, and fish anatomy. Expert instruction is provided by U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologists and technicians.

Fish Camp also includes instruction on Leave No Trace camping and use of bear pepper spray.

Meals are included, but participants need to bring their own tent, sleeping bag and other camping equipment.

Contact Swan Ecosystem Center by July 17 to sign up.



**James Hipkins with catch at 2008 Fish Camp.**

## 2009 Budget

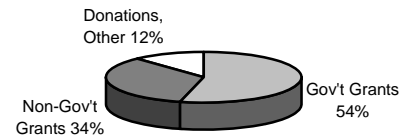
**Projects: \$486,641**

- Bear Aware
- Education
- Firewise and Fuels Reduction Grants
- Foot Race
- Forest Stewardship
- Oral Histories
- Resource Center
- Swan Lands Conservation
- Water Quality Monitoring and Restoration
- Wilderness Caretaking
- Visitor Center

**Operating Expenses: \$59,550**

(Swan Lands and Elk Creek acquisition funding is not shown here.)

### Anticipated Funding Sources



## YES, I can help

*please clip and mail*

Send checks to Swan Ecosystem Center

6887 Highway 83, Condon, MT 59826

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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If you would like to use your credit card to make a donation, please call SEC at 406/754-3137.

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