

Summer-2011



Arnica & lupine growing in a natural flower pot
Kathy Koors photo



A total of 128 people participated in our 2011 beetle pheromone program to reduce tree insect infestations. Some infected trees were sold to Pyramid Mountain Lumber and other mills through our forest stewardship cost-share assistance program for private landowners, which has benefited over 100 properties in the Swan Valley.

Please let us know if you wish to receive your newsletter electronically.

Stewardship Assistance

Landowner cost-share available

Forest stewardship, wetland landowner programs continue

Swan Ecosystem Center learned in June that additional funding will be available later this summer to continue helping private landowners in financial need with forest stewardship planning and on-the-ground implementation.

This program, administered by SEC's Forest Steward Roger Marshall, provides cost/share assistance to landowners for approved fuels reduction, forest thinning, and restoration. Landowners and contractors are encouraged to pick up application forms at SEC for participating landowners to fill out.

The funding is made available by Montana DNRC through the federal State and Private Forestry program.

SEC's volunteer wetland restoration program for private landowners will also continue. Aimed at restoring drained wetlands no longer needed for pasture or hay, the goal is to reclaim wetland habitat values and water filtration function.

SEC can also offer comprehensive forest stewardship and restoration planning assistance to landowners on a fee-for-service basis.

Weed assistance — first come, first served

Cost-share funding is available this summer — while it lasts, first come, first served — for Swan Valley landowners in Missoula and Lake Counties, through a grant administered by SEC and the Missoula County Weed District. Landowners can be reimbursed for 50 percent of their costs for approved practices.

To participate, landowners should pick up an application at SEC and submit their completed forms with receipts for approved practices. Contact SEC for more information at 406-754-3137.

This grant from the Montana Weed Trust Fund also supported June weed spraying along Missoula County roads.

Forest stewardship workshop at SEC September 15, 16 & 23

The MSU Extension Forestry will hold the Forest Stewardship Workshop for Private Landowners at Swan Ecosystem Center in September. Registration forms are available at SwanEcosystemCenter.org & www.forestry.umt.eduextensionforestry.

Swan Ecosystem Center

Vision

The Swan Valley is rural and wild. It is integral to the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem, where people and a rich diversity of native plants and animals flourish. People learn from the ecosystem and work to promote its vitality, while maintaining a rural way of life.

Mission

Work to maintain the Swan Valley's unique natural resources and ensure that a vibrant human community can sustain itself within a healthy ecosystem through stewardship, education, economic viability, and conservation on public and private land.



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Swan Valley Ecosystem Management
& Learning Center, Inc.

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

SEC shares responsibility for the U.S. Forest Service Condon Work Center through formal 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 MT Highway 83
Condon, MT 59826 - 9005
406/754-3137
406/754-2965 (Fax)

E-mail—info@swanecosystemcenter.org
Web site—SwanEcosystemCenter.org

Collaboration leads to jobs and stewardship

Swan Ecosystem Center (SEC) and a diverse group of people and organizations joined forces in 2010-11 to bring federal dollars to the Swan, Clearwater and Blackfoot watersheds—with the goal of advancing forest restoration and employment on national forest land.

Known as the Southwestern Crown Collaborative, the project was one of 10 nationwide that qualified for 10 years of federal funding, up to \$4 million annually through the federal Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. The funds are allocated by Congress on a year-by-year basis as part of the federal budget process.

For FY 2011, \$3.5 million was made available for the SW Crown—to be spent, in combination with matching funds, on the Swan Lake, Seeley Lake, and Lincoln Forest Service Districts.

Goals include employing local contractors to improve roads and trails, combat noxious weeds, upgrade stream crossing structures, reduce sedimentation from forest roads, reduce hazardous fuels within the wildland-urban interface (WUI), and re-

store forests outside the WUI.

In the Swan Valley in 2011, this will include fuels slashing and landscape burning on 160 acres in the Smith and Cooney Creek areas, 432 acres of weed treatments in the Holland Pierce project area, nine miles of Condon Loop Road resurfacing, and forest thinning in the WUI on 2,213 acres, and removing 3,840,000 cubic feet of timber to reduce fire hazard and improve stand conditions.

The program was supported by local elected officials in Missoula and Lake Counties and in the U.S. Congress by Sen. Max Baucus, Sen. Jon Tester, and Rep. Denny Rehberg. The Southwestern Crown Collaborative includes Swan Ecosystem Center, Northwest Connections, Clearwater Resources Council, Blackfoot Challenge, Pyramid Mountain Lumber, the Wilderness Society, Missoula County Rural Initiatives, UM, and many others, all working with the Flathead, Lolo and Helena national forests.

Contractors and the public can track the status and location of restoration projects on the website: swcrown.org.

INSPECT, CLEAN & DRY to prevent aquatic invaders

The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Web site is a good place to find information about aquatic invasive species threatening our waterways. Quoting from the FWP Web site:

“Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are organisms that are unintentionally brought into Montana from other places. These include clams, fish, mussels, plants, weeds, and disease-causing pathogens....They overwhelm lakes and rivers, kill fish and plants, and damage the delicate ecosystem.” AIS can be transported in mud and water, on boats and boots.

A collaborative effort involving Missoula County Weed District, FWP,

Swan Ecosystem Center and several other groups and agencies is working proactively to prevent their spread into the Swan, Clearwater and Blackfoot watersheds.

Remembering the mantra, “Inspect, clean and dry,” is a first step. The FWP Web site recommends that you “Inspect...your boat, engine, trailer, anchor, waders, and other fishing and boating gear...and completely remove mud, water and vegetation that could carry aquatics.” Drying in hot sun will kill most invasive species. You can link to the FWP Web site through the SEC Web site home page, SwanEcosystemCenter.org.

Beaver Creek Road BMPs completed

Just before snow blocked access to the high country last fall, a Flathead National Forest contractor completed Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to control runoff from four roads in the Beaver Creek area.

The BMP work consisted of installing new culverts, removing a failing culvert, constructing rolling dips and drain sags, and cleaning ditches, all to prevent erosion and direct the sediment runoff away from streams.



Culvert installation on the Herrick Run Road, 2009. *Beth Gardner photo*

The project was planned by the Water Quality Technical Advisory Group (TAG) made up of representatives from the Flathead National Forest, Swan River State Forest, Montana DEQ, Swan Ecosystem Center, and several other agencies and organizations in the watershed. SEC administered the project with a 319 Water Quality Grant from DEQ and funds from the Flathead National Forest.

The Beaver Creek project was the fourth road restoration project since 2004 jointly planned by the TAG and funded by the Forest Service and SEC. Sections of the Cold Lakes Road, Elk Creek Road, and Herrick Run roads have also been repaired.

This summer, the TAG will complete a road sedimentation survey in the Swan Valley. The preliminary findings indicate BMP work over the last decade by the Forest Service, Swan River State Forest, and Plum Creek Timber Co. have significantly protected water quality. The final report will be available later this year.

Runners brave rainy weather, raise funds

Swan Ecosystem Center's 9th annual half-marathon June 25 was won by Nadine Rispens, Helena (1:44:01). Two Swan Valley women finished in the top four for this event: Lily Clarke, 2nd (1:46:24), and Chantel Thornesberry, 4th (1:50:06).

The fastest and only male half-marathoner, John Anselmo, St Regis, was fifth overall (1:54:18).

Fifty-six people ignored cold, rainy weather to participate in the half-marathon, 10K and 5K runs, and the 5K and 1-mile walks.

Nate Peterson, Columbia Falls, won the 10K(37:38). Christin Morris, Missoula, was the fastest 10K woman (51:58). Other local top runners: include Adam Lieberg 10K (49:59), Mark Ruby 10K (50:54), Will Clarke 5K (23:13), Peter Guynn 5K (27:04), Susan Stone 5K (27:57).

Twenty-three volunteers made the event a success. Funds raised support SEC's Mission Mountains Wilderness and Swan Front trails and campsites program.



Top: Racers start the 10K, 5K and 1-mile running and walking events.

Right: Swan Valley resident Rose Carter at the halfway mark in her first half-marathon. She is already training for next year.

Kathy Koors photo



Visit SwanEcosystemCenter.org for more photos and complete results.

Volunteers plant trees, restore streamside

Volunteers completed a three-year tree planting and habitat protection effort in May aimed at stabilizing a streamside in the Elk Creek Conservation Area near where the creek joins the Swan River. Elk Creek is a critical bull trout stream.

Funded in part by MT FWP, the project began in 2008 with the erection of several fencing "exclosures" designed to prevent deer, elk and moose from over-browsing sprouting deciduous vegetation. In 2008, Native Ideals collected seeds from Swan Valley willows and cottonwoods and propagated them at their nursery in Arlee.

In spring 2009, the seedlings were ready for transplanting to tall pots

where they grew 1-3 feet high in two Swan Valley gardens. In fall 2010, volunteers erected additional fencing and were able to plant half the young trees.

The remaining saplings overwintered on site, in their pots, under a blanket of snow with a surprising 99 percent survival rate. A third volunteer effort in May of this year brought the total number of trees planted to about 600. Taking root, the trees will secure the streamside and reduce sedimentation flowing to the creek. Volunteers included Northwest Connections Landscape and Livelihood students, several energetic resi-

dents, and SEC board and staff.



Newly planted sapling and mature cottonwood trunk.

Thank You SEC Supporters

2009-11 financial donors. Volunteers listed on other side. Thank you all.

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SUMMER PROGRAMS

Sign Up at Swan Ecosystem Center—406-754-3137

July 11-15, Adventure Camp

Five days of outdoor activity—reptile and amphibian surveys, water quality monitoring, hiking and fishing for youth ages 10-13. Limit 12 participants. Sign up by July 5. Suggested donation \$10/person and \$20/family.

July 16, Beavers

Beavers as neighbors, their habitat and life cycles, with trapper Dave Wallace at Holland Lake Beach, 7:00—8:30 pm. Bring a lawn chair and insect repellent.

July 28, History

Annual local history night at the USFS Condon Work Center, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. The theme is the coming of high-way and electricity. Everyone is invited to bring a related story. Sign up is not necessary. Donations will go to the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society.

August 6, Bear Fair

Celebrate bears at the Hungry Bear Steak House, 11:00 am—3:00 pm (free bratwurst noon—1:30 pm; RSVP@754-3137 to reserve your brat). Raffle, bake sale, kids activities. Hosted by Swan Valley Bear Resources.

August 10, Fly-fishing

Fly fishing instruction with Les Rutledge 10:00-2:30 at USFS Condon Work Center and on Swan River. Bring a lunch, water, sunscreen and a hat. Class size limited to 15. Sign up by August 5. Suggested donation is \$25/person.

August 11-12, Fish Camp

Two days of fishing techniques, ethics, fish identification, knot tying and actual fishing for kids ages 10 to 13. Younger children accompanied by parents are welcome. Limit 12 participants. Begins at 10:00 a.m. at Van Lake and ends the next day at noon. Sign up by August 5. The suggested donation is \$15/ person or \$25/family.

August 13, Water

Water quality and management at Swan Lake's annual Huckleberry Festival. Stop by the booth to learn about the bull trout/lake trout issue, water monitoring techniques, road restoration, and more. Great food, music, exhibits and artisans displaying their wares. Located at the Swan Lake boat launch and beach.

Sept. 15-16, 23, Forest Stewardship

An MSU Extension Forestry Workshop for Private Land-owners. Stewardship planning. The more you know about your forest, the better your management decisions will be. For more information and to register call 243-2773 or 754-3137. Registration deadline is Sept 2. Fees are \$75 per ownership and \$45 per additional workshop manual.

Sept 17, History tour

Travel on a Conley Transportation bus to view old home-steads, schools and learn more about Swan Valley history. Leave the USFS Condon Work Center at 9:30 and return by 3:00. More details available in September. Limit 30 participants. Suggested fee, \$15/person and \$25/family.

Thank You 2009-11 SEC Volunteers

We honor and appreciate all volunteers.

Larrine & Russ Abolt	Denise Hilario	Pat O'Herren
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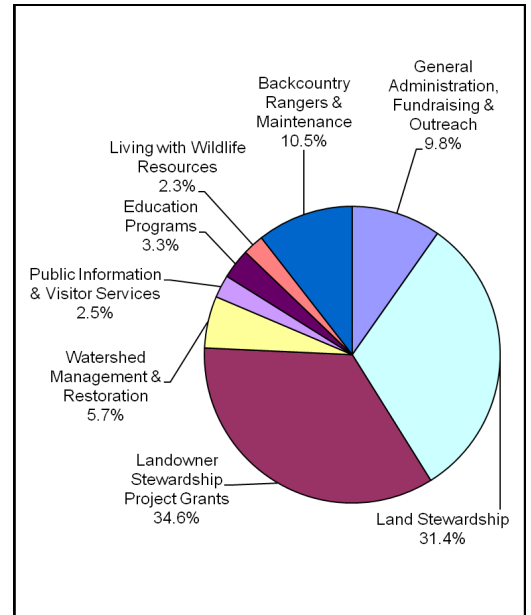
2011 Outdoor Learning
Christian school studies Crown of the Continent

2011
Projected Expenses



In a new program, Swan Ecosystem Center and the students of the Mission Christian School studied the geography, history and natural resources of the Crown of the Continent. They perused maps, noting the area in the Alberta, British Columbia, and the Montana Rockies known as the Crown of the Continent.

A field trip to Lone Pine State Park rendered a 45-mile view of the crest of the Crown. The students constructed crowns that portray the crest and other landmarks of the region such as Holland Lake, Swan Lake and Glacier Park. Products of the project will be on display at Swan Ecosystem Center this fall.



Please clip and mail

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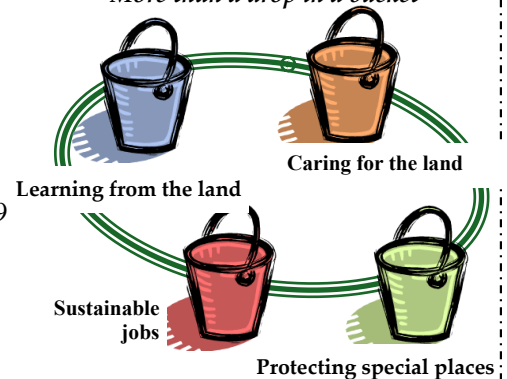
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Send checks to Swan Ecosystem Center, 6887 MT Highway 83, Condon MT 59826.
 If you would like to make a credit card donation please call SEC at 754-3137.

2011-16 Programs

More than a drop in a bucket



Buck in Velvet
 Kathy Koors photo

6887 MT Highway 83, Condon, MT 59826—9005

*Respecting each other.
 Sustaining the land.*



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