

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	5
Background.....	5
Partnership: Swan Ecosystem Center and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.....	5
Legal Framework.....	5
Property Description.....	7
Mission and Goals.....	9
Collaboration and Participation with Stakeholders.....	9
Conformance with BPA Standard Planning Process.....	10
Chapter 2. Biological and Physical Characteristics.....	11
Overview of the Valley Bottom Ecosystem.....	11
Vital Natural Resources of the Elk Creek Drainage.....	13
Inventory and Analysis of the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	14
Soils.....	14
Ponds.....	14
Streams and Riparian Habitats.....	15
Wildlife.....	19
Threatened and Sensitive Plant and Animal Species.....	20
Disturbances.....	20
Fire.....	20
Logging.....	22
Upland and Riparian Vegetation Units.....	22
Chapter 3. Cultural History.....	38
Elk Creek Drainage.....	38
Native American Sites and Uses.....	38
Early Homesteading.....	41
Recent Access to and Use of the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	42
Chapter 4. Guiding Principles.....	45
Mission.....	45
Goal 1.....	45
Goal 2.....	46
Goal 3.....	46
Goal 4.....	47
Chapter 5. Stewardship Process.....	48
Decision-Making Process.....	48
Introduction.....	48

Defining a proposal.....	48
Example.....	50
Management Committee.....	51
Technical Advisors.....	52
Chapter 6. Current Management Issues.....	53
Weed control.....	53
Coordination with neighbors and the public.....	54
Fire.....	54
Insects and disease.....	54
Stream habitat and fish studies.....	55
Harvests.....	55
Public Access.....	56
Monitoring Ecological Processes.....	56
Historic and Cultural Artifacts and Sites.....	57
Wildlife.....	57
References.....	58
Appendix 1. Memorandum of Agreement between SEC, CSKT, MFWP and BPA.....	59
Appendix 2. Deed of Conservation Easement.....	71
Appendix 3. Public meetings, management group meetings, and field days.....	76
Appendix 4. Soils map from Missoula County Soil Survey.....	77
Appendix 5. Riparian vegetation plot data.....	78
Appendix 6. Federal and State species ranking codes.....	81
Appendix 7. Fire regime condition classes: history and evolution.....	85
Appendix 8. Record of logging, by year, on the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	99
Appendix 9. Plot data for vegetative unit A.....	122
Appendix 10. History of the Elk Creek School, nearby roads and trails, and recreational use.....	130
Appendix 11. List of patented and relinquished homesteads in the vicinity of Section 35.....	134

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1. Elk Creek Conservation Area (section 35) within larger proposed Elk Creek Community Forest (sections 35, 3 and 9).....	6
Figure 2. Topographic map of the Elk Creek Conservation Area (Section 35) in relation to Highway 83, Condon, the Swan River, and surrounding lands.....	8
Figure 3. Upper Swan Valley Ecosystems Map.....	12
Figure 4. Aerial photo showing ponds and wetlands.....	16
Figure 5. Riparian vegetation transects begun in summer 2007.....	18
Figure 6. Roads within the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	23
Figure 7. Vegetative units on the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	24
Figure 8. Lodgepole pine stand within Unit C.....	30
Figure 9. View toward the west within Unit D along logging road.....	30
Figure 10. View toward the northeast in Unit E, showing extensive weed infestation along logging road and clearing.....	31
Figure 11. View within Unit F on a high nob, viewing toward northeast.....	31
Figure 12. Natural wet meadow inside Unit H.....	33
Figure 13. Aerial photo of Section 35 and adjoining properties, taken in 1934.....	34
Figure 14. Aerial photo (June 2007), at the confluence of Elk Creek and the Swan River.....	35
Figure 15. Eroded bank near confluence of Elk Creek and the Swan River.....	35
Figure 16. Pond at the edge of Units L and J. View looking northeast.....	37
Figure 17. Remains of outhouse walls from Elk Creek School.....	42
Figure 18. Elk Creek School in 1918.....	42
Figure 19. Elk Creek Bridge, 1918	42
Figure 20. The Elk Creek Conservation Area (Section 35) in relation to other ownership parcels, Highway 83, and the Swan Ecosystem Center.....	44
Figure 21. Decision tree for management actions on the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	49

List of Tables

Table 1. Habitat/community types and cover types for the Elk Creek and Swan River riparian zones within the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	17
Table 2. Species of concern report for Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	21
Table 3. Summary of characteristics for vegetative units on the Elk Creek Conservation Area.....	25