

# **Swan Valley-Condon Comprehensive Plan Amendment**

**Missoula County, Montana**



**Adopted by the Missoula County Commissioners  
December 18, 1996**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This plan, prepared by a committee, and approved by the residents of the Swan Valley establishes community objectives and goals to be used by the Missoula County Office of Planning and Grants and the Board of County Commissioners in guiding future growth in the Swan Valley. The plan includes appendices and references numerous studies that are available at the Swan Valley Community Library.

The Swan Valley Community Club will serve as the liaison between the community, agencies and the County Commissioners on land use issues.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nestled between the Mission Mountain Wilderness area to the west and the Bob Marshall Wilderness area to the east lies the 329,000 +/- acres of the timber and wildlife rich Swan River Valley. Approximately 33,000 acres of this 90 mile-long valley is owned by private non-corporate entities. The balance is owned or managed by the United States Forest Service, Plum Creek Timber Company and the State of Montana. (Pelletier, K.). This Swan Valley Comprehensive Planning Area covers the portion of the Valley located in Missoula County. A description and map showing private, corporate and federal ownership is documented in Appendix A. This planning area is approximately sixteen miles long and includes 244,189 acres.



The heavily forested Swan Valley with spectacular mountain scenery and clear, clean lakes and streams is home to the federally protected grizzly bear, the gray wolf, the bull trout, as well as whitetail deer,

Swan Range (Photo: Zoe Mohesky)

black bear, elk, moose, mountain lion, bald eagle and numerous other sensitive plant and animal species.

Approximately 550 +/- permanent and seasonal residents in Missoula and Lake Counties call the Swan Valley their home. While the forest products industry has been a traditionally important industry for these Swan Valley residents, recent studies indicate that this has changed. However, harvest on Plum Creek Timberlands is projected to be steady into the future. More and more of the current Swan Valley permanent and seasonal residents rely on retirement income as well as home based occupations, cottage industries and small businesses. Recent trends do indicate that newcomers to the valley come for reasons other than economic development (Lambrecht & Jackson, see Appendix C).

As a major land holder in the Swan Valley, Plum Creek's land use actions could have a major impact on the future of the Swan Valley. The company is studying some lands around Lindbergh Lake and along Holland Lake road that may have higher values for non-timber amenities and may sell or exchange some of these lands in the future. Plum Creek has

committed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service that it will share and discuss plans prior to sale or exchange of any lands within the area of the Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement. Plum Creek has also adopted Land Use Principles to guide its activities on these lands (see Appendix B, Plum Creek Land Use Principles). These principles support comprehensive land use planning and require the company to work with other landowners, community members and the county to understand and address land use related issues and potential impacts.

Several studies of the Swan Valley have been completed by various parties with concerns for our area. These studies are on file at the Swan Valley Community Library and are listed in Appendix C. It is recommended that residents and/or visitors interested in the Swan Valley and its land uses, economic development, and social makeup take the time to read and learn about the “Swan” before making their land use decisions.

It is with the combined knowledge of these studies, and the community’s values and desires for the future of the Swan that we, the Swan Valley Community Club Comprehensive Plan Committee, most respectfully submit for review the 1996 draft update of the 1987 Swan Valley-Condon Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

### **Planning in the Swan Valley as part of Missoula County**

Swan Valley residents respect and treasure the rural and wild character of the place they live. Their primary objective is to retain this character for the valley and the goals of this plan reflect this desire.

Throughout the process of this Swan Valley-Condon Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the citizens have made every effort to preserve the valued characteristics of the area. Retention of the rural and wild character of this valley helps to maintain the rich resources of the area and for the entire county.

It is recognized that there is a close connection between development patterns and environmental health. The goals and actions of this planning document provide guidance about how growth should or should not occur and how best to integrate developed lands with the natural resources found in the valley. Carefully planned development and management of the landscape will achieve a sustainable relationship between human activities and natural systems.

This plan attempts to identify for protection the most important environmental resources of the land (e.g., riparian resources, wildlife habitat, scenic lands). In addition, this plan recognizes and respects the rights and concerns of private property owners.

Human resources are as important to the area’s citizens as are the natural resources. Area residents are generally independent people who have significant ties to the land where they live and work. While many people here lead independent lives, there is a great level of community spirit. The residents are dedicated to high quality education for area children, development of learning opportunities for adults, participation in community events, working toward meeting community needs, and lending support to their neighbors. The citizens of the area strive to foster community-building where learning and growing are part of everyday

life. This plan sets forth opportunities to maintain the diversity, integrity, and unique values of this rural area in Missoula County.





## POPULATION AND HOUSING IN THE SWAN VALLEY

The 1990 United States Census figures for the planning region indicate that about 450 people permanently reside in the Missoula County portion of the Swan Valley. Due to boundary changes and restructuring of the Census data collection methods, comparative Census data for the population increase over time in the study area is not easily defined. The population of the valley fluctuates seasonally as people return to their second homes or recreational properties.

An increase in the permanent population of the planning region since the 1990 census is documented through the increase in elementary school enrollment. In the 1990-1991 school year the number of elementary students was 67. By the 1995-1996 school year, 96 elementary students attended the Swan Valley Elementary School (Missoula County Superintendent of Schools). This represents a 43% increase since 1990. Likewise, the number of rented post office boxes at the Swan Valley-Condon Post Office increased from about 220 in 1992 to over 300 by 1995, a 36% increase (United States Postal Service).

A study completed in 1993 provides valuable information on the Swan Valley population. The study was completed by Mark Lambrecht and David Jackson, University of Montana School of Forestry and is titled, *Identifying the Profile of Montana's Swan Valley Community, An Inventory of Its Human Resources and a Summary of Its Preferences for the Future*. This study determined that twenty-seven percent (27%) of the permanent residents and forty-two percent (42%) of seasonal residents in the larger Swan Valley (which includes a portion of Lake County) are retired. Of the valley-wide population, over half of the working permanent residents are self-employed and nineteen percent (19%) rely on timber resources for employment (Lambrecht and Jackson, 1993).

Early settlement patterns of the area focused homesteading on the lower valley bottoms. In addition, land grants to the Northern Pacific Railroad resulted in large tracts of timberlands being removed from homesteading. Today, less than ten percent (10%) of the region is in private, non-corporate ownership. Private lands and homesites are primarily concentrated on the valley floor and lower foothills. A checkerboard pattern of private corporate timber lands and public lands occupy the majority of the foothills up to the wilderness boundaries that form the east and west boundaries of the region. Plum Creek Timber Company owns approximately eighteen percent (18%) of the land (sixty-nine percent (69%) of the private lands) in the region. Approximately seventy-three percent (73%) of the region is United States Forest Service, Flathead National Forest land (Sullivan, Intern, Missoula City/County Office of Planning and Grants, July 1996).

In 1990, the Census reported 328 housing units in the region of which 139 were owner occupied and 34 were renter occupied. The remaining housing units are second homes, used seasonally. Most housing units are single family detached homes located on five to ten acre parcels. Several single family homes are located on parcels greater than ten acres. Recreational properties along lakeshores, such as Lindbergh Lake, generally are an acre or less in size.

This comprehensive planning document has attempted to accommodate more affordable housing consistent with the character of the region. The Swan Valley's ability to provide affordable housing is more limited than in urban areas and even some rural areas. Natural resource considerations and the lack of infrastructure preclude dense housing developments. The Rural Residential Cluster Development and the Alternative Residential land use designations outlined in this plan establish possibilities for more diversity in housing than under previous plans for the region.

### ***Housing Goals***

1. Promote sightly and safe building construction, upkeep and maintenance.
2. Promote a housing base that is diverse in type and market value so as to meet current and emerging needs.

### ***Housing Action Strategies***

1. New subdivisions should incorporate minimum standards through restrictive covenants that promote sightly premises. These standards could prohibit the accumulation of outdoor storage of materials, promote safe construction and establish maintenance standards.
2. Where appropriate, citizens should establish zoning to set minimum standards for the protection of property (see Appendix D).
3. Conservation easements, covenants, no-build areas and other designations for scenic and conservation lands are encouraged. The incorporation of these preservation tools into future development proposals for undeveloped tracts will help maintain the rural character of the planning area.
4. Encourage development proposals to accommodate a variety of housing types and lot sizes.
5. All development proposals should consider the impacts to neighboring properties. These impacts include, but are not limited to: aesthetics, water supply, waste water treatment, road maintenance, screening, lighting and drainage patterns.



## THE SWAN VALLEY ECONOMY

Historically, the economic base of the planning area has been timber related. While timber is still important to the economy of the area, the trend over the past couple of decades has been a decline in forest resource jobs in the Swan Valley, Missoula County and across the state. The forest industry still has a major presence in the valley through logging operations, United States Forest Service workforce and tree planting crews, log home construction businesses and fire suppression.



Logging Operation (photo: courtesy of [Seeley Swan Pathfinder](#))

A large degree of the economy depends on tourism, retirees and income generated from special events. The economy also depends on keeping the land and its resources sustainable for use by present and future generations. Many other businesses provide goods and services to year-round residents, summer residents and tourists. A large portion of the permanent residents are self-employed. Many year-round residents hold more than one job to sustain their livelihood in the valley (Jackson and Lambrecht, 1993).

The economy of the area has strong ties to the surrounding communities such as Swan Lake, Seeley Lake, Kalispell and Missoula. Venture capital, seasonal residents and tourists bring dollars into the Swan area. Swan Valley residents often seek medical, financial and commercial services in the nearby communities.

According to the preference survey of Swan Valley residents, certain potential new business activities were favored over others (Jackson and Lambrecht, 1993). What separated “acceptable” from “unacceptable” businesses for area residents was a matter of scale. Area residents prefer small service and tourist facilities and light manufacturing. Major service and tourism facilities and heavy manufacturing were unacceptable to area residents. (Jackson and Lambrecht, 1993)

This Comprehensive Plan Amendment is a land use planning document and should not be used as an economic development program. *The Economic Diversification Action Plan for the Seeley/Swan Area* should be consulted for goals related to the area economy provided those goals comply with this Comprehensive Plan Amendment. This economic diversification plan also identifies opportunities to improve, diversify and revitalize the local

economy consistent with the desired future condition of the entire Swan Valley (including portions in Lake County) and the Seeley region.

### ***Economic Goals***

1. Encourage opportunities for economic development in the Swan Valley that meet the skills and needs of current residents and their children and which are consistent with the rural and wild character of the Swan.
2. Commercial and light industrial development should be at an appropriate scale and located in areas consistent with the land use designation.

### ***Economic Action Strategies***

1. Continue to implement the Project Objectives outlined in the Seeley/Swan Economic Diversification Plan. Specifically, focus on the activities outlined for the Swan region: Swan Valley Trade Center and the Swan Valley Visitor/Nature Center. Maintain distribution of the brochure, *Seeley/Swan Visitor's Guide* and update the information as necessary.
2. Individually and collectively, develop better markets for resources from, and products created in the valley.
3. Maintain the ability to make a living based out of homesites consistent with the description of Home Based Occupations located in Chapter 5 - Land Use.
4. Natural resources should be extracted at a rate that can be sustained.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE SWAN VALLEY

The Swan Valley is an area endowed with a tremendous variety of wildlife resources, scenic beauty, abundant clean water and clean air, and a quality rural lifestyle.

Inland Maritime is the climatic classification of the Swan Valley. Local terrain has a significant influence on the weather patterns of the area. Average annual precipitation in the lower elevations of the valley is approximately 28 inches per year. Average annual temperature is approximately forty (40) degrees in the valley. Higher mountain areas receive 100-140 inches of average annual precipitation and are ten to twenty degrees cooler than the valley.

The highest point in the planning region is Holland Peak, elevation 9345 feet, located in the Swan Range on the central part of the planning region's east side. Assuming the Swan River is the lowest elevation found in the planning area at approximately 3500 feet, the range of elevation for the region is about 5850 feet. Sedimentary rock is the dominate type of rock in the area. Major mineral deposits are not known to occur in the valley. Glacial till and glacial-fluvial sediments are the primary surface geology covering the valley floor and the steeper side-slopes.



Holland Lake & Holland Peak (Photo: courtesy of [\*Seeley Swan Pathfinder\*](#))

Forests dominate the valley floor and are different from those found in other parts of the County. This region lies at the border of the maritime and continental climates and thus has a mixture of Pacific Coastal Forest and inter-mountain tree species. Western red cedar, grand fir, western hemlock and western larch grow in the valleys, along with more familiar species such as Douglas fir, Englemann spruce, ponderosa pine and lodgepole pine. (Inventory of Conservation Resources for Missoula County, 1992 Update)

Creeks that flow out of the two mountain ranges are the headwaters of a large hydrologic system that eventually flows to the Pacific coast. Waters from the creeks, high mountain lakes and two lakes on the valley bottom (Lindbergh and Holland lakes) form the Swan River. The Swan River is rated a high priority fishery resource (Class II fishery) and flows north to Swan Lake. Bull trout, a species of special concern in Montana and one that has

been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act, are present in the Swan River and many of its tributaries. This hydrologic system is considered some of the best, or substantial, bull trout habitat in the State. Coordinated federal and state recovery programs are underway to preserve spawning grounds and habitat in area waters for the bull trout. Water quality of the lakes, streams and rivers is important to retain the resource for humans, wildlife and fisheries. Bald eagles use the Swan River corridor as a wintering area. Some pond areas in the valley support the threatened Water Howellia. Also found in the region is Howell's gumweed, a plant species of special concern in Montana.

The Swan Valley bottom and the surrounding mountainous terrain sustain a range of animal species. Ungulates include elk, mule deer, white-tail deer and moose. Deer and elk herds are sustained by critical winter range habitats on the lower elevations of the valley. Mountain



Elk on Gordon Ranch (Photo: courtesy of [Seeley Swan Pathfinder](#))

goats find favorable habitats in mountainous terrain. Predators consist of mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, coyote, wolf, fisher, pine marten, wolverine and badger.

Black bear and grizzly bear roam throughout most of the Swan Valley region. All of the Swan Valley is critical habitat for the nationally threatened grizzly bear. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has documented two areas in Missoula County that

provide habitat with low levels of

disturbance to support grizzly movement between the Swan and Mission mountain ranges. These areas are called Grizzly Linkage Zones and are mapped in Appendix E.

Small mammals in the area include beaver, muskrat, otter, mink, skunk, porcupine, weasel and raccoon, among others. Some raptors in the area include bald and golden eagle, red-tailed hawk, osprey, and several species of owl.

### ***Environment Goals***

1. Retain the existing pattern of public land ownership while allowing for exchanges between ownerships.
2. Promote sustainable populations of wildlife and fish.
3. Promote the protection of all listed, endangered species.
4. Maintain non-degradation of the quality, quantity, and sustained flow of groundwater and surface water including the Swan River and all of its tributaries.
5. Encourage sustainable forestry practices on all lands.
6. Maintain a balance between developed, roaded, roadless and wilderness lands in the area.
7. Protect outstanding historical sites.

8. Encourage aesthetic, rustic-type signs that fit into the natural environment and are non-obtrusive.
9. Preserve stands of “Old Growth Witness Trees” to provide future generations with a living history of the area’s flora.
10. Establish a pick-up point or points for recyclable materials and encourage residents and visitors to use these facilities.

### ***Environment Action Strategies***

1. In order to insure a healthy population of wildlife, residents should voluntarily take precautions to avoid potential confrontations with wildlife. The brochure, *Living With Wildlife*, describes ways to limit conflicts with wildlife and is available at the Missoula County Office of Planning and Grants.
2. County agencies, in cooperation with other agencies and the Swan Valley community should continue to collect relevant natural resource data throughout the study area.
3. Protect wildlife habitat and private property rights through conservation easements and other voluntary methods of land conservation.
4. Strengthen coordination of land management activities between the U.S. Forest Service, Plum Creek Timber Company, smaller private landowners, and businesses.



Flathead USFS Work Station shared with Swan Ecosystem Center (Photo: Zoe Mohesky)

5. The County will cooperate with and encourage non-profit organizations, local, state and federal agencies and the public to acquire land for conservation purposes and public access.
6. Various agencies or organizations should provide education to area residents on voluntary land use techniques such as conservation easements, protection of areas of riparian resource and control of noxious weeds.
7. Discourage the use of herbicides and pesticides, except as measures of last resort to solve serious insect, disease, noxious weed, or forestry problems.
8. Designate environmentally acceptable locations for all types of development and land use to support the objectives of the community.



9. Signs should be constructed of materials that fit with the natural environment. They should be limited to fifteen (15) feet in height, should not be flashing or neon lights and the lighting of the sign should not cast beyond the property on which it is placed.
10. Identify, evaluate and develop ways to protect historic sites in the valley. Personnel from the Forest Service, Plum Creek Timber Company, Salish and Kootenai Cultural Committees, and the community as a whole should participate. Once developed the resulting recommendations could be incorporated into this plan or be referred to in response to a proposed development.
11. If cultural resources are uncovered during any earth moving, the Tribal Preservation Office and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) request to be contacted before further disturbance of the site occurs. If the cultural resources that are uncovered are human remains, then the procedures outlined in State Statute would be followed.

Tribal Preservation Office: 406-675-2700

State Historic Preservation Office: 406-444-7715

## SWAN VALLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

### Water and Sanitation

The Swan Valley is distant from many community services and facilities found in more populated areas. Presently, domestic water for households and businesses is supplied through individual wells. Treatment of effluent from these developments is through individual septic systems and drain fields.

Further growth could significantly alter the water quality of the region. A study commissioned by Missoula County has outlined the effects of septic system loading on the quality of the upper mixing zone of groundwater county-wide. The document entitled, *Missoula County Carrying Capacity Study, Effects of Septic System Loading on Groundwater Quality*, looks at the upper mixing zone of the underlying aquifer and defines the number of septic systems that could be installed in an area without exceeding a target nitrate concentration or the “carrying capacity”. The current nitrate target level, or Non-Degradation Standard, set by the State Water Quality Bureau, is 5.0 mg/l. According to the study, some quarter sections in Swan Valley are at or above the baseline nitrate concentration (the non-degradation standard) in the upper mixing zone of the aquifer. This is related to the slow groundwater movement in the area. The study further shows that if the target level were increased to 10.0 mg/l, some portions would still not be able to increase septic densities. The remaining carrying capacity, without exceeding a target level of 5.0 mg/ per quarter section in the valley, varies. Some areas could develop at densities up to approximately one acre per septic system while other quarter sections have no remaining carrying capacity for septic systems.

The study was designed to determine which areas are most sensitive to increased septic systems and not to determine the exact number of septic systems that can be installed in a certain location. Conclusions of the study may be used in the near future by the county to determine the potential impact of proposed developments on water quality. For more information on the study a copy is available for review in the Missoula County Office of Planning and Grants. Residents can help to prevent unnecessary degradation of water quality by routinely inspecting and maintaining in proper working order all septic systems and drainfields. Residents should also consider monitoring their well water on a regular basis for water quality degradation (contact the Missoula City/County Environmental Health Department for more information).

## Sheriff, Fire and Ambulance

Law enforcement, fire and medical response are all locally available services in the Swan Valley. The Missoula County Sheriff's Department provides a resident Deputy Sheriff in the valley year-round. A second Deputy Sheriff is stationed nearby in the Seeley region. Missoula County Sheriff's department coordinates with other law enforcement personnel in the region including United States Forest Service, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Highway Patrol, and Lake and Powell County Sheriff's departments. Through an agreement with the Forest Service, the Missoula County Sheriff patrols area campgrounds and the packer camp located near Holland Lake. Law enforcement personnel may also assist the Missoula County Search and Rescue services dispatched through the Missoula "911" center.

The Swan Valley Volunteer Fire Company primarily responds to fires on private land improvements. Fire equipment and trucks are stored at the Swan Valley Fire Hall at Condon. This volunteer crew, consisting of local residents, responds to fire emergencies between the summit at the south end of the valley northward to about Goat Creek, or the Swan Lake Volunteer Fire District boundary. If the need were to arise, the Swan Valley Volunteer Fire Company would respond to fires outside these boundaries.



Wildland Fire (Photo: courtesy of [Seeley Swan Pathfinder](#))

Wildland fire potential in the forested valley puts many homes at risk in the Swan Valley. A defensible space around homes aids in the home's security from wildfire and protects firefighters. Trees, brush and undergrowth can ignite readily, burn intensely and spread fire rapidly representing the primary hazard to buildings. Clearing of vegetation is necessary not only to reduce structural exposure to flames and heat during a wildfire, but to prevent structural fires from spreading into the wildlands. Overhead transmission and distribution of electricity represent a major source of ignition for wildfires. In addition, falling power lines represent a significant risk to firefighter safety. Distribution lines pose the greatest danger.

Improperly installed propane sources also represent a significant fire source and threat to firefighter safety.

Fire fighters must be able to readily locate a structural fire and have adequate water supplies available. Emergency responders, including fire department and ambulances, must be able to find residences rapidly and access the property to provide emergency services. Improper road identification or difficulty in locating addresses can significantly delay emergency response. Many emergency vehicles are large and heavy. This requires wide, well-constructed roads with sufficient area to turn around.

Fire suppression also requires a dependable source and substantial volume of water over and above domestic use. For example, a 2500 gallon recharge facility, established for a single structure, may enable firefighters to save that home. However, a stubborn fire, one that involves more than one structure or multiple properties threatened by wildfire makes the 2500 gallon recharge facility inadequate. The Swan Valley Volunteer Fire Company has developed equipment and procedures for bringing water to the fire with Water Tenders. However, in the event of large wildfires, these efforts could easily be overcome.

Wildland fire protection is primarily provided by the United States Forest Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. In the case of wildfire, crews are often brought in from other state and federal agencies.



Condon-Swan Valley Quick Response Unit Ambulance

(Photo: courtesy of Seeley Swan Pathfinder)

The Condon-Swan Valley Quick Response Unit (QRU) provides medical response and ambulance services to area residents and homesites. Medical equipment and ambulances are stored at the Swan Valley Fire Hall at Condon. The Condon QRU responds to medical emergencies in the Swan Valley generally between the Summit (near Beaver Creek Road) and the southern edge of the community of Swan Lake. In some cases, when the need arises, the QRU will respond beyond these boundaries. This team is able to transport patients from home to helicopter ambulance (Lifelight or Alert) or to medical facilities in Missoula or Kalispell. The QRU operates entirely with volunteers.

### ***Fire Protection Goals***

1. Improve structural and rural fire protection services.
2. All currently designated county roads serving residential areas should be brought up to county standards to handle increased traffic loads and emergencies.

### ***Fire Protection Action Strategies***

1. All new roads serving individual residences and residential areas should be built to comply with the minimum standards of the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations and the Missoula County Surveyor.
2. Road Signs and house numbers or addresses should be plainly legible from the street or access route fronting a property. Signs that display the road name should be clearly displayed eight feet off the ground and made of metal posts and signs. Personnel in emergency vehicles should be able to read the road name from at least 100 feet away. County road signs are maintained by the county.
3. A defensible space of 30 feet around all residential structures should be maintained. When slopes exceed 10%, the defensible space should be based on slope. For more information, refer to the document, *Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland Residential Interface Development*.
4. All construction should use Class A and Class B roofing materials (as rated by the U.L. and N.F.P.A.).
5. All developers and Realtors should inform purchasing parties of fire protection status.
6. The Swan Valley Volunteer Fire Company should be contacted prior to any new development in the area to provide input on the impact of the development on existing fire protection services and potential mitigation.
7. A viable recruitment and training program needs to be established so a core of volunteer firefighters is available.
8. Current equipment needs to be maintained in a heightened state of readiness.
9. A surplus Department of Natural Resources Wildland Engine (200gal.) should be requested and placed at the fire hall.
10. The U.S. Forest Service and Plum Creek Timber Company should be encouraged to reduce the fire hazard on their respective lands, by reducing the accumulation of fuels. This can be accomplished by the appropriate use of prescribed fire and other treatments, such as product removal and thinning.

## **Schools**

Students residing in the Missoula County portion of the Swan Valley attend Swan Valley Elementary School (Kindergarten - 8th grade) and Seeley/Swan High School (9th - 12th grade). Swan Valley Elementary School District #33 boundaries correspond with the Swan Valley Planning Region boundaries. The Seeley/Swan High School is located in High School District #1.

Enrollment in the Swan Valley Elementary School has steadily increased since 1990. The school facilities are currently near capacity. Any increase in development and residential use

in the district will have implications for the elementary school district. The high school, located in Seeley Lake, has also experienced an increase in enrollment. At the present time, there is capacity for additional students at the high school level.



Children  
at Swan Valley  
Elementary School  
(Photo: courtesy of  
Seeley Swan  
Pathfinder)

Several  
elementary and  
high school  
age students in  
the valley  
receive their

education through avenues other than public schools. A fair number of students receive home schooling. The number of families involved in home schooling appears to be increasing.

Several gifted and talented young women from across the United States and other countries attend the Mission Mountain School, a year-round, accredited, private and independent school located in the valley. Each student has an individual education plan. Enrollment varies at the Mission Mountain School from 26 to 32 students. The school employs up to 20 people.

### ***Education Goals***

1. Continue to maintain the quality facilities and staff for educational excellence at the Swan Valley Elementary School.
2. Continue to provide adult education classes, GED Reading and Computer classes.
3. Request cooperation from any future large developers (residential or commercial) in planning for accommodations for new school enrollment. Since the school operates on funding based on previous year enrollment, a sudden influx of students could mean a lowering of standards of excellence, crowding of class rooms and overloading of teachers beyond present capacity.

### ***Education Action Strategies***

1. Leadership for attaining the Education goals will rest with the elected board of the Swan Valley Elementary School.
2. Continue current practices requiring notification of Swan Valley School Trustees of any and all potential new land divisions as soon as possible.

## Postal Services

Mail service in the early days was through a mail route called the Star Route. A United



States Post Office was first established in the valley in 1952 at the Buckhorn Camp, the older version of the present day Mission Mountains Mercantile. Postal services were provided at this site until 1988 when a new Post Office was built. The Swan Valley-Condon Post Office is located next to the Mission Mountains Mercantile. The United States Postal Service currently provides mail delivery to some area residents (about 140 mail boxes).

Condon Post Office (*Photo: courtesy of Zoe Mohesky*)

Located at the post office are mail services and post office boxes (about 300 active at the present time). The number of rented post office boxes and residential mail delivery are important indicators of community growth or decline. Private parcel delivery companies, mainly United Parcel Service and Federal Express, also serve the area.

## Transportation

Highway 83 is the primary north/south route through the valley. This highway provides the only vehicular access to, through, and out of the region. Highway 83 is a state highway and therefore is controlled and maintained by the Montana Department of Transportation.

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts have been recorded along Highway 83 from the Clearwater Junction to the County line for twenty (20) years. In 1995 the AADT was 1649.

Highway 83 and County roads serve many of the private lands throughout the area. County maintenance of several roads ends a short distance from the main highway where ownership of the roads often changes to the Flathead National Forest or Plum Creek Timber Company. Forest Service roads provide access to various trailheads for the Bob Marshall or Mission Mountain Wilderness areas.

No form of public transportation serves the valley. Public transportation is found about 80 miles away in either Missoula or Kalispell. Commercial airlines and long-distance bus service are located in these two cities and train travel is accessed through Whitefish.

### ***Transportation Goals:***

1. Travel on Highway 83 should be safe and scenic.
2. New subdivisions should be fire truck accessible.

### ***Transportation Action Strategies***

1. The number of new and existing approaches onto Highway 83 should be consolidated or carefully considered in an effort to increase traffic safety.
2. Work with the Montana Department of Transportation for accessible use of the Highway 83 right-of way for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, and snowmobilers.
3. Locate a potential off-road trail system route that connects lands within the valley for non-motorized use.
4. All new roads off of Highway 83 should be built to comply with the minimum standards of the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations.
5. Responsible agencies should upgrade public roads to standards adequate to handle traffic loads and improve the efficiency of maintenance on these roads.
6. Turns need to be designed and hill grades established so that Fire departments are able to access residences with their equipment. Narrow, private roads, while picturesque and inexpensive to build, reduce access and limit the ability of emergency vehicles to respond quickly.
7. Roads are escape routes for residents during emergencies, particularly in the case of wildfire. Roads should be sufficient to allow simultaneous access by emergency vehicles and escape by local residents. Sufficient turnarounds are also needed so that plows, graders and fire engines can maneuver and escape quickly.

## **Utilities and Services**

Electrical service to the planning region is provided by Missoula Electric Cooperative.

Telecommunications services are provided Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative.

Solid waste materials can be transported by residents to a transfer station located in the Seeley Lake area and deposited for a fee. A private, fee based, disposal company out of Seeley Lake will also pickup and transfer solid waste materials.

Natural gas and cable television are not available in the region. Heating is provided through a variety of sources including wood, electric, propane and solar. Satellite systems are used by many residents and some businesses to receive television.

### ***Utility Goals***

1. Continue to improve the safety and efficiency of utility systems in the Valley.

### ***Utility Action Strategies***

1. To reduce the risk of falling powerlines which are a significant source of wildfire ignition, electrical utilities should be placed underground wherever feasible.
2. Propane installation should follow the Uniform Mechanical Code, Uniform Fire Code and the National Fire Protection Agency Standards.

### ***Solid Waste Goal***

1. Develop an improved, wildlife resistant, solid waste disposal system to include:



- a) a transfer site
  - b) a recycle transfer area. This site should contain large covered and mobile bins where recyclable materials can be collected in an organized manner. Plastics, tin, aluminum, magazines and newspapers could be placed in the bins to be hauled by a contractor to a recycle center. There would be no payment for recycle materials at this site.
2. Encourage bear-proof dumpsters at all refuse sites through funding assistance from agencies and organizations.
  3. Encourage all new subdivisions to include adequate wildlife proof waste disposal.

## Parks and Recreation

Organized recreational sporting activities generally take place in two areas in the valley: the Swan Valley Community Ball Park and the Swan Valley Community Center and grounds. The ball park has a baseball field and other improvements developed by the Swan Valley American Legion Post under a Special Use Permit from the United States Forest Service and leased from Missoula County.



Swan Valley Community Ballpark (Photo: courtesy of Seeley Swan Pathfinder)



Community Center (Photo: courtesy of Seeley Swan Pathfinder)

The Community Center and grounds is a central gathering place for meetings, celebrations and other events. Other recreational activities take place at the Swan Valley Elementary School, nearby Forest Service lands, wilderness areas, area lakes, streams and the Swan River.

Veteran's Day Celebration at Swan Valley

## Recreation Goals

1. Further develop recreational opportunities consistent with the needs of Swan Valley residents identified in the Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan.
2. Explore the possibility of a trail system providing access to neighbors and public lands throughout the valley bottom before opportunities for connections disappear.

***Recreation Action Strategies***

1. Complete improvements, as feasible, outlined in Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan adopted January 21, 1997.
2. Identify lands and willing landowners that may be key to developing a trail system that connects lands within the valley for potential land acquisition or easements.
3. New subdivisions should address their part in a trail system.

## **LAND USE IN THE SWAN VALLEY**

Development of the area's land base has historically been related to homesteading, subdivision of homesteads and activities in the forest products industry. Seasonal recreational residents occupy many sites and this type of land development continues to expand. Most private, non-corporate, lands are owned by people who have built or intend to build permanent homes or recreational dwellings in the valley.

Development activities impact wildlife, water, forests, open spaces and similar ingredients essential to achieving the primary objectives of "... retaining the present rural-wild character of the Swan Valley." Retaining this character should be accomplished by maintaining a low

residential density overall in the valley and preserving as open space, timber lands, critical wildlife corridors and habitats. Clustering development, where feasible, is recommended in all the residential land use designations of this plan to further maintain the valley character and protect the area's natural resources. This is particularly important for the grizzly bear's range of movement because the entire valley is considered critical grizzly habitat by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Low residential density is achieved through two residential land use designations recommended by this plan: Rural Residential Cluster Development and Rural Low-Density Residential. A third land use designation is established primarily to preserve open space but allows for residential use consistent with the designation. Limited Commercial and Industrial land uses are also recommended for the planning region provided they fit with the character of the area. Because many residents in the valley depend on their homes as places of employment, Home Based Occupations are specifically recognized as a designated use in the region.

### ***Land Use Goals***

Some of the land use goals reference a certain type of land use designation, illustrated by underlined text. These land use designations are further described in the section following the goals and should be consulted before pursuing development of a parcel.

1. For residential development, apply a Rural-Low Density Residential land use designation for most land throughout the valley.
2. Provide a diversity of housing opportunities in the valley through residential development with a cluster development design consistent with the Rural Residential Cluster Development land use designation.
3. In sensitive habitat areas, apply an Open and Resource Lands land use designation, specifically in Grizzly Linkage Zones and big game winter range.
4. Encourage General Commercial and Light Industrial to develop aesthetically, at an appropriate scale and in appropriate areas.



Chris Goodman Construction: Commercial Use in Valley (Photo: Zoe Mohesky)

5. Accommodate Home Based Occupations.
6. Maintain the integrity of big game winter range. New development and land division should not fragment known winter range.
7. Maintain important Open Space and scenic views.
8. Limit development impacts on areas of riparian resource.



Riparian areas along the Swan River  
(Photo: courtesy of Seeley Swan  
Pathfinder)

9. Minimize impact of land uses in Grizzly Linkage Zones (see Appendix E).

### ***Land Use Designations***

#### **1. Rural Low-Density Residential (1 Dwelling per 10 Acres)**

This designation is applicable to most lands in the Swan Valley planning region. The principle use of these lands is for residential purposes with the allowance of Home Based Occupations. The overall density should not exceed 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres. However, smaller parcels are acceptable when parcels and homesites are grouped together leaving the remainder of the land as open space and the overall density at 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres. Rural Low Density Residential properties should have access to existing road systems and have development sites (for residential structures, accessory structures and access) on terrain where slopes do not exceed 25%.

Development of these parcels should respect the natural resource concerns of the area. Property improvements, such as residences and accessory structures, on individual parcels should be clustered together in a single area of the site and the remainder of the land should be used for grazing, timber needs, wildlife habitat and open space. Such improvements should be sited to limit negative impacts on: water quality and quantity; big game winter range; open space resources; riparian habitat and community types; and threatened, endangered and rare plant and animal species inhabiting (living on) the property. Other measures, such as the storage of garbage or other wildlife attractant sources to limit human/wildlife conflicts, should be incorporated into the use of the site.

This land use designation shall not be applied to lands located in the Grizzly Linkage Zones (defined by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - see Appendix E: “Managing Private Land in Swan Valley Linkage Zones for Grizzly Bears and Other Wildlife).

## **2. Rural Residential Cluster Development (1 Dwelling Per 5 Acres)**

In the past several years, the cost of land in the valley has significantly increased making it difficult for people with ties to the region, either through family or jobs, to be able to locate here. There is a need for areas of higher density residential development (*compared with the standard 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres*) available for purchase or as rental housing. The intent of this rural residential cluster development designation is to allow for development at higher densities while the development considers the character and environmental sensitivity of the area. A clustered development reduces the size of building lots and concentrates homesites together so that the development does not exceed the recommended overall density of one dwelling unit per five acres.

While no lands are specifically identified for this rural residential cluster development, subdivision proposals may be considered by Board of County Commissioners to determine compliance with this plan, specifically using the criteria suggested in Action Strategy for Rural Residential Cluster Development (Land Use Action Strategy number 9, pages 36).

### ***Examples:***

*A 40 acre parcel may have 8 development rights if it meets the action strategies. All eight units may be clustered in an area with 1/2 acre allocated to each lot and the remainder considered common area.*

*For the same 40 acres, another alternative might be seven (7) 1/2 acre lots with the homesites concentrated together and the eighth, or remaining parcel, may have 36 1/2 acres. Development of this remaining parcel should be grouped near the other seven homesites. The large parcel should not be further divided unless future comprehensive plan updates allow higher densities and sewage disposal requirements can be met.*

**Note:** *All development must meet the Subdivision and Sanitation Act which may require a public sewage treatment system and/or public water supply for this type of density.*

## **3. Alternative Residential**

Most land use categories designated by this plan maintain a rural character. It is recognized that maintaining a rural character does not always allow for affordable housing. Typically, affordable housing is developed at a higher density to lower the costs for individual units (e.g., land, road systems, and utility connections). Some development proposed at densities greater than specified in the Rural Residential Cluster Development, 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres, may be appropriate to provide for housing alternatives. The **Alternative Residential** category provides for higher density housing, such as apartments, condominiums, and mobile home parks, in the Rural Residential Cluster Development category.

Housing developed under this category should meet most of the goals and action strategies outlined in this planning document. Alternative Residential housing proposals should substantially meet the action strategies specified for Rural Residential Cluster Development, see page 29 . Proposals should be planned near existing areas of activity areas in the Swan Valley. Areas of activity in the region are around the Swan Valley Community Hall and the Mission Mountains Mercantile. Alternative Residential proposals should be reviewed on a case by case basis under the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations as a Planned Unit Development. (Condominiums and mobile home parks will also need to meet the specific subdivision regulations for these types of developments.)

**4. Open and Resource Lands (1 Dwelling Per 40 Acres)**

Open and Resource Lands likely have environmental constraints, such as areas of natural hazard (i.e. steep slopes and floodways) wildlife habitat or other resources. The Open and Resource designation applies to lands in the Grizzly Linkage Zones (as defined by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) and lands entirely within identified Big Game Winter Range (Missoula County Inventory of Conservation Resources, 1994 computerized data).

While Open and Resource Land is not a residential designation, one dwelling per forty (40) acres would meet the intent of the classification and meet the goals and strategies listed in this plan. Development in these areas should be grouped or clustered near existing facilities, such as a road system, to protect the open and resource designation.

**5. Lindbergh and Cygnet Lakes Zoning District**

The Lindbergh and Cygnet Lakes Zoning District was created in 1968 and was recently amended in 1994. It includes all the private land along the lakeshore for at least 200 feet back from the shoreline. The Zoning limits use to single units and establishes development standards for minimum lot size, width, setbacks and size of docks.

**6. General Commercial**

The general commercial designation is to accommodate the conduct of small scale retail and service enterprises that serve primarily the area residents and visitors to the valley. Possible commercial activity in the valley includes uses such as: retail goods and services, financial institutions, business and professional offices, personal services, food and beverage establishments, lodging facilities and small scale entertainment facilities. Design of new commercial structures should enhance existing rural and wild valley character and be small in terms of scale, be constructed of products characteristic of the valley, be earth tone colors and have limited signage. Access to commercial sites should be from existing roads joining Highway 83 and not require new approach or encroachment permits from the Montana Department of Transportation onto Highway 83 unless it is adjacent to an existing commercial site. Developers should explore access sharing with an adjoining commercial, industrial or public use.

At the present time, there is not a need or desire to have heavy commercial activity in the valley. Examples of heavy commercial activities include but are not limited to: outdoor storage of merchandise or materials; automotive, mobile home, marine, recreational vehicle, and accessories sale; heavy equipment sale and service; wholesale trade; support services to business or industry; businesses which support highway travel such as truck stops or shipping/warehousing; and those business that produce excessive waste, noise, pollution or impact adjacent properties.

There are several existing commercial sites in the valley. Some of the commercial activities presently in the valley include: Wilderness Village restaurant and bar, Nelsons, Liquid Louie's bar, Pathway Pines Cafe, Holland Lake Lodge, Hungry Bear restaurant and bar, Super 8 Motel, Swan Valley Centre gasoline, laundry and convenience store, and a range of businesses between Alpine Products to the Mission Mountains Mercantile, a grocery and gas station. These existing commercial uses are encouraged to be maintained as commercial land uses and nothing in this plan is intended to adversely impact such existing uses. Upgrading properties to meet new standards outlined in this comprehensive plan is encouraged for existing businesses but not required (See section on Non-Complying Uses, page 33).

## **7. Light Industrial**

The light industrial designation is intended to accommodate light manufacturing (predominately from previously prepared materials), processing, fabrication, repairing, assembly of products or materials, packaging and treatment of products or materials, warehousing, storage and transportation facilities.

The anticipated light industrial activity includes uses such as those previously established and operated on a small scale. Examples of those uses include saw shops, mill operations, logging operations, construction businesses and wood products assemblage. Design of new structures used for industrial purposes should be compatible with the existing rural and wild valley character, be small in scale, be constructed of products characteristic in valley, be earth tone colors and have limited signage. Access to industrial sites should be from existing roads joining Highway 83 and not require new approach or encroachment permits from the Montana Department of Transportation onto Highway 83, unless it is adjacent to existing commercial or industrial site.

There are several existing industrial sites in the valley. Industrial activities in the valley include several log home construction businesses and Alpine Products fencing supply. Nothing in this plan is intended to adversely impact such existing uses. Upgrading properties to meet new standards outlined in this comprehensive plan is encouraged for an existing businesses but not required (See section on Non-Complying Uses, page 33).

## **8. Public and Quasi-Public Lands & Facilities**

Public and quasi-public lands and facilities refers to structures or uses such as schools, parks, community buildings, cemeteries and utility facilities. A utility facility is an unoccupied structure or facility, other than buildings, unless those buildings are used as storage incidental to their operation of such structure or facility,

used in connection with the supply of local utility services, including heat, light, power, water, telegraph, telephone, railway and bus service, sewer service and electronic communications.

All new public and quasi-public structures should be designed using the guidelines given for commercial and industrial uses. They should be small in scale, be constructed of products characteristic in the valley, be earth tone colors and have limited signage. Upgrading properties to meet new standards outlined in this comprehensive plan is encouraged for existing public and quasi-public structures but not required (See section on Non-Complying Uses, page 33).



Public, Quasi-Public Use. Swan Valley Community Library (Photo: Zoe Mohesky)

Unoccupied utility facilities are often necessary to service certain areas. These facilities should be screened from public view and blend into the landscape. Utility offices should be treated as commercial land uses.

Access to public and quasi-public facilities designed for public use should be from existing roads joining Highway 83 and not require new approach or encroachment permits from the Montana Department of Transportation onto Highway 83. Developers should explore access sharing with an adjoining commercial, industrial or public use.

## 9. Home Based Occupation

A Home Based Occupation is a use accessory to the primary residential use of the premises. It should not be inconsistent with nor disruptive to normal residential use. It is intended for activities that do not generate traffic, noise, light, odor, parking demand or any exterior activity inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood. Home based occupations should not include businesses that could be a nuisance to or impact others (e.g. feed lots, junk yards). The use should not have displays, advertising, or signs, other than small directional signs. Equipment used by the resident in the occupation should be stored indoors whenever possible.



***Non-Complying Uses and Parcels***

Parcels of land and improvements on these lands that do not meet the recommendations of the plan are considered legal non-complying uses or parcels. For instance, an existing parcel may not be compatible with the uses suggested by the plan. If parcels were legally divided prior to this or previous plans, a single family dwelling and associated accessory buildings may be developed on any non-complying parcel. However, subdivisions proposed of legal non-complying lots of record are discouraged unless such use reflects a gradual change in the development pattern of a neighborhood and can meet the goals of the plan.

Similarly, legal non-complying commercial and industrial land uses are encouraged to be maintained. The use of a structure for these purposes may be changed or replaced by a similar or less intense non-complying use. If a structure which houses a non-complying use is enlarged, increased or extended to occupy a greater area of land than was occupied at the effective date of this plan, complying with the applicable sections of this plan is encouraged.

***Land Use Action Strategies***

1. New development should substantially meet the goals recommended by this planning document.
2. The County will work with neighborhood groups to develop detailed neighborhood planning documents and/or zoning regulations when initiated by citizens of a neighborhood.
3. Divisions of land need to comply with all state and county laws. See Appendix F for public hearing process of the county subdivision review process.
4. Encourage development to be clustered so open spaces are retained.
5. If major subdivisions are proposed, they should be reviewed as a master development plan that is sensitive to the area natural resources.
6. County agencies, in consultation with community members, should continue to monitor land use changes and development throughout the planning region.
7. Begin compiling a record of residential, commercial and industrial land uses within the study area.
8. Develop standards for commercial and industrial development to be applied through floating zones. Standards should be developed that reflect the character of the valley regarding height of buildings, setbacks from roads, access to Highway 83, signage, retention of native vegetation, parking location, and design of structures. Commercial and industrial development should only occur on parcels adjoining Highway 83 outside of Grizzly Linkage Zones (or approximately between Highway 83 mile markers 41.5 and 45.5).

Until such standards are developed, new businesses located along Highway 83 are encouraged to design their facilities based on the following:

- a) Use signs that are rustic in appearance and small in size. Free standing signs should not exceed 15 feet in height. Neon, strobe-lighting and flashing lights are discouraged.

- b) Consider providing parking behind or to the side of the building and incorporate native landscaping in parking design.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c) Set structures back from the highway right-of-way at least 50 feet. Use native vegetation around the building's face (toward the roadway) to help the building blend with the surroundings.
- d) Keep the height of structures to the scale of a home.
- e) Use earth tone colors on the building's outside.

10. Rural Residential Cluster Development at 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres should be designed to meet the following criteria:
- a) Natural Resource Impacts
    - i) Discourage development on lands that have been identified as conservation resource lands. Development of these lands should only occur on those portions where resources are not impacted through a cluster design. The development should not take place in areas identified as:
      - big game winter range
      - grizzly linkage zones
    - ii) Development should be removed far enough from the following areas to protect the resource:
      - areas of riparian habitat and community types
      - wetlands and floodplains
      - endangered and rare plant and animal species inhabiting (living on) the property.
    - iii) Covenants should be developed to apply to the land to limit human/wildlife conflicts, such as the storage of garbage or other wildlife attractant sources.
  - b) Homesites Clustered
    - i) Homesite development should be clustered in suitable areas. Clustering of homesites should occur in areas where:
      - development does not disturb more than 15% of the original parcel
      - development does not impact the natural resource areas (outlined above)
      - development is not on steep slopes (less than 15% slope suggested)
      - grading of the earth is minimized
      - construction of roads, driveways and homesites do not disrupt a natural ridgeline, slope or landform
    - ii) Open Spaces created by a cluster design of homesites should be located to protect areas such as riparian areas, wildlife corridors, and identified open space corridors.
      - stable soils are present
      - geologic hazards are not present
      - State and/or County approval for septic and water can be obtained

- c) Near Existing Services
  - i) There are several county maintained roads in the Swan Valley where the density of 1 dwelling unit per ten acres has been exceeded. If the cluster concept or other higher density development is considered, it should be in areas where higher density already exists. These roads or areas are (from the Summit-Beaver Creek divide north to the Missoula County line):
    - Lindbergh/Cygnet Lake (around existing lake area homes)
    - Holland Lake Road, Hopkins Road and Alpine Drive
    - Rumble Creek (to end of County maintenance)
    - Guest Ranch (includes Scenic, Sky View, Wash Board [Rocky View] and Snowview roads)
    - Cooney Creek (east of Highway 83 & roads to west of Highway 83)
    - Glacier Creek Road (from Swan Center to end of County maintenance: includes Remick and Styler Roads)
    - Charles Road
    - Hollopeter Road
    - Kaufman Road
  - ii) Development along other roads and in other areas will likely encroach on critical wildlife habitat and migration corridors.
  - iii) Near existing utility services or readily accessible to utilities.
- d) Impacts to Neighbors Addressed
  - i) New development should be compatible with surrounding land use and density patterns. Considerations include: height and scale of buildings, noise, lighting, visual screening, and setbacks.
  - ii) New development should acknowledge and consent to surrounding resource activities that are conducted according to law such as timber management and agricultural operations. Considerations include right to farm and right to log covenants.
  - iii) New development should not adversely impact existing air quality, water quality, and drainage patterns.

*Note: This type of development should consider using a public sewage treatment system and/or public water supply to allow for clustering provided such a system meets the Subdivision and Sanitation Act*

## CONCLUSION

Several goals not mentioned under action strategies are intended as guides to our individual and collective actions as area residents work together to achieve the objectives they have set for the Swan Valley-Condon community. People who live in the valley are blessed with the potential for good living now and in the future. These residents are able and willing to help neighbors to the north and south by coordinating efforts with Lake County and the Seeley Lake Planning Area. Such efforts will help maintain and improve the economic and physical health and welfare for both residents of and visitors to the valley. Valley residents will also continue to work with all agencies that have responsibilities for lands in the valley.

New subdivision and land use proposals should meet the applicable goals and action strategies outlined in this plan. The County will be responsible for incorporating the plan's goals into new developments that are reviewed by the County, subject to applicable state and county laws. Implementation of some of the sections of this planning document will require the coordinated efforts of the citizens of the planning region in conjunction with Missoula County. County agencies should also continue to collect relevant natural resource data and monitor land use changes and development throughout the Swan Valley-Condon planning region.

Missoula County and the Swan Valley community should review and amend this document as needed. A formal review and update should occur no later than five years from the date of adoption of this plan, or by the year 2001.

## **APPENDIX A: SWAN VALLEY-CONDON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PLANNING AREA**

All ground within the following recognized boundaries:

From a point located in the Northeast 1/4 of Section 2, Township 18 North, Range 15 West, P.M.M., north along the Missoula/Powell County line to a point located in the Southwest 1/4 of Section 2, Township 21 North, which is the junction of Missoula/Powell/Flathead county. From the Missoula/Powell/Flathead county junction east along the Missoula County line to the boundary of the Flathead National Forest and the Mission Mountain Flathead Reservation located in the Southeast 1/4 of Section 6, Township 21 North, Range 19 West. The boundary then proceeds south following the Flathead National Forest Mission Mountain Wilderness and the Flathead Indian Reservation/Mission Mountain Tribal Reservation boundary to a point located in the Northwest 1/4 of Section 27, Township 21 North, Range 17 West where the Lolo National Forest/Flathead National Forest/Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness meet. The line then is the boundary of the Lolo and Flathead National Forest until the juncture of the Missoula County/Powell County, and Lolo/Flathead National Forest lines.

## **APPENDIX B: PLUM CREEK TIMBER COMPANY - LAND USE PRINCIPLES**



## **APPENDIX C: RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR THE SWAN VALLEY**

The following publications are available as reference materials at the Swan Valley Community Library:

Caywood, Janene, Principal Investigator, Historical Research Associates (Missoula, MT) for the Montana Department of Highways. 1989. *Cultural Resource Survey of Four Projects Along Montana Highway 83, Condon-Clearwater Junction*.

This document provides a description and research on the physical environment and culture of the project area in preparation for Highway 83 upgrades.

Lambrecht, Mark R. and David H. Jackson. 1993. Identifying the Profile of Montana's Swan Valley Community: An Inventory of Its Human Resources and a Summary of Its Preferences for the Future. University of Montana. School of Forestry.  
As its title suggests, this is a compilation of the human resources of the Swan valley and the community preferences for the future.

Missoula County Office of Planning and Grants. 1995. *Missoula County Subdivision Regulations*.

This set of regulations set standards for the subdivision of land to promote public health, safety and welfare.

Montana Department of State Lands, Fire Management Bureau, and Montana Department of Justice, Fire Prevention & Investigation Bureau. 1993. *Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland Residential Interface Development*.

This report establishes voluntary fire protection guidelines for recreational, residential and commercial uses in areas of wildland vegetation.

Pelletier, Kristy and the Swan Valley Linkage Zone Working Group in cooperation with land and wildlife management agencies. 1995. *Managing Private Land in Swan Valley Linkage Zones for Grizzly Bears and Other Wildlife*.

This document was created to help residents and newcomers manage their land in ways that benefit grizzly bears and other wildlife while maintaining quality of life and economic opportunity for humans.

Seeley-Swan Economic Diversification Action Team. 1993. The Economic Diversification Action Plan for the Seeley/Swan Area.

The action plan describes the current economic conditions of the area, the desired future of current residents, diversification opportunities, and implementation methods.

United States Department of Agricultural, Forest Service, Flathead National Forest. 1994. *Swan Valley Wildlife Landscape Evaluation*.

The purpose of this analysis, as stated in the document, is to evaluate cumulative effects of vegetation change and human activity on current conditions, trends and the future outlook of habitat for selected wide-ranging wildlife species within the Swan Valley.

## **APPENDIX D: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS FOR ZONING ACTIONS**

### **1. Zoning Initiated by Petition**

Public Hearings are conducted by the Planning Board on the first Tuesday of the month. Petitions must be received by the Office of Planning and Grants at least 30 days prior to the public hearing and can be initiated by either the County Commissioners OR the Planning Board OR a property owner. In county zoning districts, a group of pre-existing standards exist which would be applied to all lands within the same zoning district on a county-wide basis. Conditions may be imposed on these types of zones to protect health, safety and general welfare.

A second Public Hearing is conducted approximately three weeks later by the County Commissioners.

### **2. Citizen Initiated Zoning**

The first Public Hearing is conducted by the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board. A second Public Hearing is conducted by the Planning and Zoning Commission approximately three (3) weeks later. The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for the final decision on the proposed zoning district.

This zoning differs from standard county zones in that residents of an area at least 40 acres in size write their own standards for the zone (for example, the type of land uses allowed, lot sizes, etc.). The Office of Planning & Grants and the County Attorney's Office review the proposed standards for format, content, and feasibility of enforcement. Sixty percent (60%) of the freeholders\* in the proposed area for zoning must petition for creation of the zoning district. Once the petition is verified as complete, the Office of Planning and Grants will begin the process to adopt the district. Petitions must be complete at least 30 days prior to the public hearing.

All public hearings on zoning actions must be advertised in the Missoulian at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. ALL zoning of land must be subject to the public hearing process. The Swan Valley Community Club has been placed on a mailing list for notification of zoning proposals in the Swan Valley of Missoula County. For additional information on the zoning process, contact:

The Office of Planning and Grants  
Missoula County  
435 Ryman  
Missoula MT 59801  
(406) 523-4657

\* Freeholder is defined as one having title to realty either of inheritance or for life either legal or equitable title.

## **APPENDIX E: MANAGING PRIVATE LAND IN SWAN VALLEY LINKAGE ZONES FOR GRIZZLY BEARS AND OTHER WILDLIFE**

**The entire document will be printed in the final comprehensive plan.  
A copy is available for review in the Swan Valley Community Library.**

## **APPENDIX F: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS FOR SUBDIVISIONS**

### **1. Subdivisions with Six or More Lots or Structures (Major Plats).**

The required public hearing is held by the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board a minimum of 21 days after the proposed subdivision is officially submitted to the Missoula Office of Planning and Grants.

A second public hearing is conducted by the County Commissioners approximately three (3) weeks later.

### **2. Subdivisions with Five or Fewer Lots or Structures (Minor Plats)**

A public hearing is NOT required for subdivisions of five (5) or fewer lots or structures UNLESS the subdivision is breaking a previous minor lot split into new, smaller ones (a re-subdivision). If it is a re-subdivision, a Public Hearing is conducted by the County Commissioners within 60 days after the re-subdivision is submitted to the Office of Planning and Grants for a split totaling five or fewer lots or structures. However, the Board of County Commissioners hears all subdivision proposals at their weekly public meeting. Typically, the Commissioners will hear public comment during these meetings.

All public hearings on subdivisions must be advertised in the Missoulian and a local paper in the Seeley-Swan area at least 15 days prior to the meeting date. However, NOT ALL SUBDIVISIONS ARE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC HEARING (see “Five or Fewer Lots or Structures” above). The Swan Valley Community Club has been placed on a mailing list for notification of subdivisions in the Swan Valley of Missoula County. Property owners adjacent to proposed subdivisions of 6 or more lots and re-subdivision of previous minor lot splits receive notification of the potential division by certified mail.

Processes and timelines are subject to change. For additional information on the subdivision process and timeline, contact:

The Office of Planning and Grants  
Missoula County  
435 Ryman  
Missoula MT 59801  
(406) 523-4657

## **APPENDIX G: RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**