

RESOLUTION NUMBER 89-029

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE SEELEY LAKE AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AS NOTED IN THE FOLLOWING:

WHEREAS, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners conducted a public hearing on the Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment on February 27, 1989; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula Planning Board conducted a public hearing on the Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment on March 21, 1989, and unanimously recommended that the County Commissioners adopt the Plan as modified; and

WHEREAS, The Missoula Board of County Commissioners conducted a public hearing on a Resolution of Intent to adopt a modified Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan on April 26, 1989; and

WHEREAS, 76-1-604 M.C.A. authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to adopt, revise or reject a master plan or any of its parts; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution of Intent Number 89 - 025 on May 3, 1989 regarding the Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment and, based on public comment, included further modifications to the Plan Amendment as printed in the attached document:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby adopt the Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment including all adopted changes and as printed in the attached document.

PASSED AND ADOPTED May 10, 1989.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Missoula County, Montana

Fern Hart  
Fern Hart, Clerk and Recorder

Barbara Evans  
Barbara Evans, Chairman

Janet Stevens  
Janet Stevens, Commissioner

Ann Mary Dussault  
Ann Mary Dussault, Commissioner

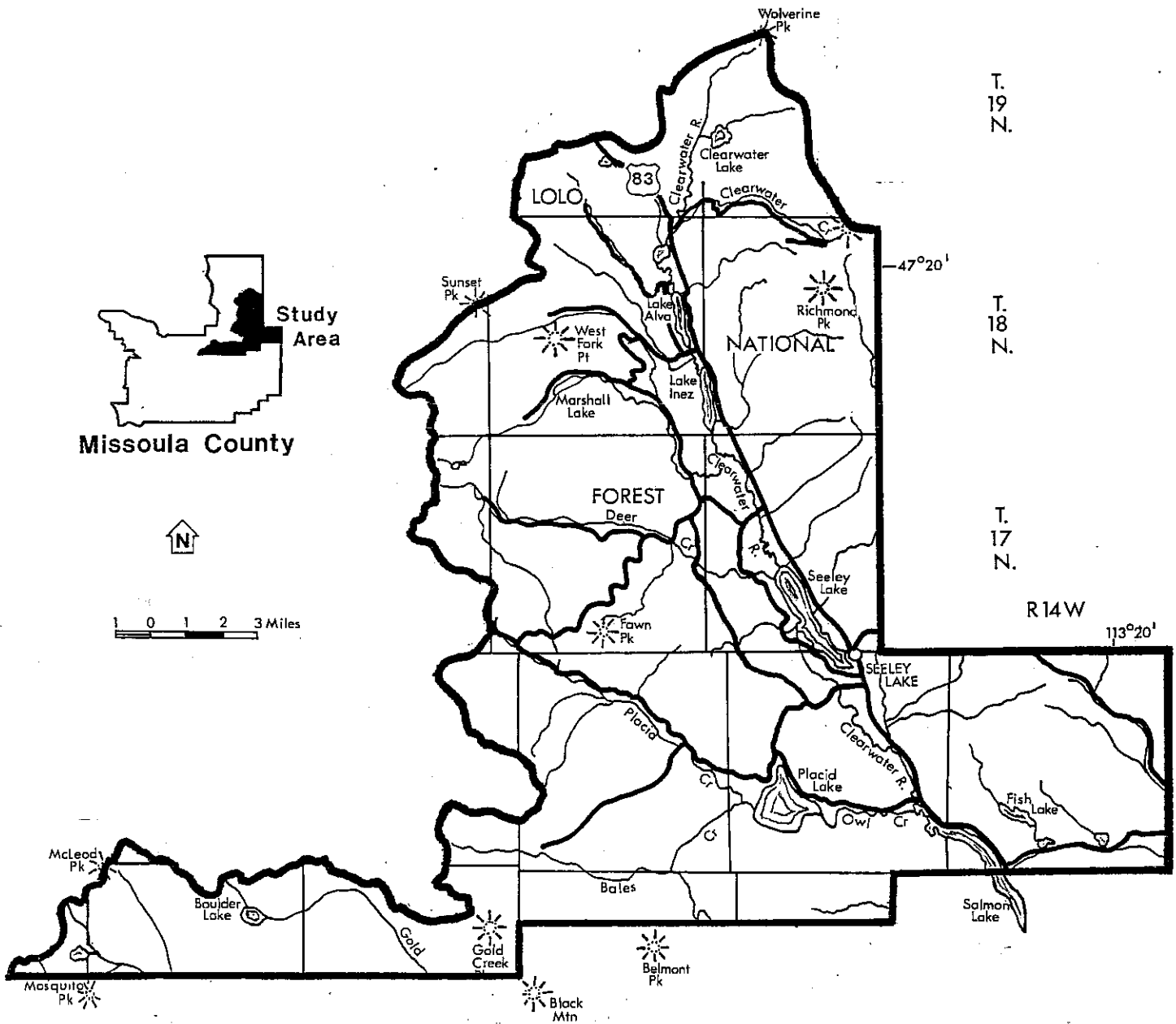
SIGNED THIS 10 DAY OF May, 1989.  
APPROVED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:

Michael W. Schmitt  
County Attorney

# **SEELEY LAKE AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT**

1989

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# Seeley Lake Planning Area 1989

## **SEELEY LAKE AREA 1989 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT**

### **Introduction**

**This Comprehensive Plan is an effort by the people of the Seeley Lake area to outline the direction in which they wish their community to go and to set specific goals for accomplishing the short and long term objectives of the Plan.**

**Some of the goals and objectives can be accomplished through legal requirements placed on the community by law enforcement and other public agencies. However, by far, the majority of the goals must be accomplished on a voluntary basis by individuals, small groups, or by the community as a whole. The uniqueness of this Plan is its method of encouraging people in the community to communicate with each other and to solve their problems by working together on a voluntary basis. While this may seem idealistic to some, it certainly offers more hope than the confrontational approach sometimes taken by other communities.**

**Montanans have been said to spend too much time fighting with each other over special interests rather than working together to accomplish common goals. Working toward common goals does not take away the individual's right to things he or she may consider important, but it does represent a shift in emphasis towards the needs of the community as a whole.**

**It is recognized that there are people who would prefer to maintain the status quo, to hold on to the "good old days". However, time and circumstance bring about changes over which we have no control. History has shown that change is inevitable but progress is not. Whether or not the changes facing our community result in progress depends on whether we deal with those changes in a cooperative and constructive way. This Plan attempts to provide a blueprint with which we can control our future through good planning and which will help us to react in a positive way to changes which are thrust upon us from outside sources.**

**As a first step toward working together for the good of the community, the Seeley Lake Community Council recommends that the people of the Seeley Lake area adopt the Resolution following this Introduction (page 3). The theme of this Resolution is "Working Together Works".**

Once adopted, through this resolution, the Community Council can encourage neighbors, neighborhoods and ultimately the entire community to work together in a constructive way. Neighbors can be encouraged to establish voluntary associations through which they make neighborhood improvements as well as solve problems at the neighborhood level. Neighborhood associations can deal with dog problems, traffic and safety problems, health and housing problems, and can organize Neighborhood Watch programs to protect themselves and their property. Such associations can provide a means by which problems that are recognized at the neighborhood level can be channeled to the Community Council for consideration at the community level.

The Seeley Lake Community Council was established in part to help inform the Missoula County Commissioners about issues within the Seeley Lake Planning Area (Figure One). By working with permanent and part-time residents, state and federal agencies, property owners and visitors, the Council, through this Comprehensive Plan amendment and the "Working Together Works" Resolution, will assist local government in making decisions that benefit all Missoula County residents, property owners and visitors.

**RESOLUTION: WORKING TOGETHER WORKS**

WHEREAS, the people of the Seeley Lake area desire a quality of life which provides a good standard of living and also preserves the natural beauty of the area; and

WHEREAS, many opportunities lie ahead for our people in seeking a better quality of life; and


WHEREAS, better advantage can be taken of these opportunities through communication and cooperation;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the people of the Seeley Lake area hereby adopt the theme "WORKING TOGETHER WORKS" as a means for solving community problems; and

BE IT RESOLVED that working together as a community, we pursue a strong economy based on timber and tourism to the end that a better quality of life will be available for all our people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Chairman of the Seeley Lake Community Council has executed this Resolution this 10th day of May, 1989.

SEELEY LAKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

  
Robert F. "Bud" Johnson, Chairman

Attest:

  
Jeff Macon, Secretary-Treasurer

## **Community Objectives**

This portion of the Plan outlines the broad community objectives that are strongly supported by area residents, property owners and local government. Decisions on land use issues should be based on criteria that help the community attain these objectives.

### **I. Water Quality**

Because water quality is the primary concern of residents, property owners and visitors alike, and because federal requirements are becoming more stringent and water quality is basic to our health, recreation and business activities, the Community Council will assist the Water District in every way possible to accomplish the following goals:

#### **Water Quality Goals**

1. Upgrade water system sources, pumps, purification equipment, storage facilities, delivery lines and metering equipment to ensure that an adequate amount of potable water at an adequate pressure is available to all customers at all times.
2. Establish adequate operating and quality control procedures to ensure continuous service at minimal cost. Prepare plans for twenty-year growth to include district expansion. Conduct a review of all studies past, present and future which pertain to water pollution in this area, including environmental impact statements. Specific areas of concern include septic pollution, commercial use of watersheds for logging, mining, drilling, recreation and agriculture as well as impediments to water flow or the alteration of stream beds.
3. Financing of water system improvements and/or natural water studies may be sought by the Community Council and the Water District through government grants, private foundations, Special Improvement Districts, user fees, property taxes, and/or bonds or other forms of debt.

## **II. Air Quality**

Air quality monitoring for particulate in the Seeley Lake community was last accomplished during part of 1971 and all of 1972. Air quality for that period was considered by the Health Department to be good. The primary sources of pollution identified were open burning, dust from unpaved roads, residential wood burning, and Pyramid Mountain Lumber.

Although Federal standards for particulate were changed last year, the Health Department stated in 1988 that "given the small population size in the airshed and no significant increase in the number of area and point source contributors, air quality levels have not in all likelihood increased over the last 16 years."

Most complaints about pollution involve nuisance open burning and burning during times of restriction. The second greatest number of complaints concern dust from unpaved roads.

Open burning by individuals is regulated by permit except during the period of March and April. Slash burning by public agencies and large private timber companies and loggers is regulated by the Smoke Management Group and such burning is suspended during periods of poor dispersion. Emissions from Pyramid are regulated by County and State administrative rules. Presently there are no restrictions on residential wood burning in Seeley Lake.

### **Air Quality Goals**

1. In order to more accurately determine the status of air quality in the study area, the Community Council, in cooperation with other interested organizations, should seek funding for air quality monitoring.
2. To help avoid potential air quality problems, the Council should meet with the Smoke Management Group to investigate the possibilities of creating a second air-shed management area for Seeley Lake and surrounding communities.
3. To preclude the need for additional regulations, the Community Council should promote an educational program which outlines existing air quality regulations and voluntary methods of protecting air quality within the planning area.



### **III. Timber Management**

The Seeley Lake Community Council supports, recommends and will assist in the following comprehensive forest management plan proposals which shall include Forest Service, State and private lands (including Champion and Plum Creek). The basic philosophy shall be to recognize the role of the people in the community, ensure for caring of the land, provide choices for the future relative to economic uses, recreational uses, and environmental concerns.

#### **Timber Management Economic Goals**

1. The year-round economic livelihood of the Seeley Lake community is timber related. The number one priority is to sustain this economic base. Maintaining a continuous supply of forest products (while addressing the issue of timber exports) to sustain local employment is paramount to this community's needs.
2. Cooperation among Forest Service, State and private land owners and land managers to ensure continuous production in the future is necessary to sustain the economic base of this community.

#### **Timber Management Recreational Goals**

1. To ensure maximum and continuous future recreational opportunities in the valley, there shall be a maintenance of natural and aesthetic landscapes. Maintenance of these landscapes is viewed as a cooperative goal that should be pursued by all land managers and land owners in the study area.
2. Right-of-way access must be provided to public lands. Such access should recognize the rights of private land owners and the mitigation of negative impacts (litter, cut fences, etc.) caused by public access should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

3. Adequate wildlife habitat with abundant forage and cover must be maintained to sustain and increase the number of animals, or, at a minimum, to prevent reductions in wildlife numbers.

4. As important recreational opportunities, community activities that are related to forest management programs should receive continuing support (such as dog sled races, cross-country ski races, hunting, etc.).

5. The Forest Service, State and private land owners and managers should closely work together to promote and initiate the procedure of designating and implementing the adopted Highway 83 Scenic Management Plan.

### **Timber Management Environmental Goals**

1. The year-round timber industry needs to recognize the environmental needs of the land, its flora and fauna and of the community relative to aesthetics and maintenance of our environmental well-being.

2. Forest Service, State and private land owners and managers should work together to balance the timber harvest with environmental and aesthetic concerns.

3. Various agencies (including the Community Council) should work together to inform residents where firewood can be found before the slash is burned in timber sale areas. Those who gather firewood need to act in a respectable and lawful manner while in logging operation areas.

### **IV. Sewage Disposal**

Efficient and effective sewage treatment and disposal are essential for both the health and economy of the Seeley Lake community. Many of the older sewage disposal facilities in the area consist of oil drums, wooden cesspools, old underground car bodies and other makeshift devices.

Newer individual on-site sewer systems approved by the Health Department consist of a septic tank and drainfield. However, in general, central sewer service provides a better level of treatment, particularly in coarse soils, than individual systems. In addition, central sewer service is typically more economical for properties close to existing lines and may be the most cost effective means of providing treatment for large scale commercial facilities requiring main extensions. Rental housing, retirement homes, etc., can often be more conveniently located if sewage disposal is not a limiting on-site factor.

### **Goals for Efficient Treatment of Sewage**

1. It is recommended that the Community Council investigate the feasibility of installing a central sewer system within the community of Seeley Lake. This should be done in cooperation with the Seeley Lake Water District. The purpose of this investigation should be to find a better method of sewage disposal in order to protect the health of our people, to prevent pollution of our lakes and streams, to protect the natural beauty and resources of the area and to make possible the more efficient use of our land for both residential and business purposes.

The Community Council will also attempt to help low and moderate income residents find solutions to problems that adversely impact the health and welfare of area residents and visitors. Funding should be sought through state and federal grant programs, utilizing available county staff when possible.

### **V. Land Use**

Much of the land in the Seeley Lake area is not being used efficiently. Residences in the center of town are squeezed onto lots less than one-fifth acre in size. Other residential neighborhoods are spread so far apart that it is difficult to provide local services on a cost-effective basis. Some of our choicest land along the lake cannot be developed to its highest and best use because of the lack of adequate sewage disposal. Some of our river and lake frontage is being used in ways that threaten public health and water quality. Our business district is spread out too far, leaving unsightly vacant lots between established structures. And our only property designated by existing use for industrial development is concentrated in two areas.

It is recommended that a study be conducted by the Community Council to improve the use of our land in ways that would maintain the rural lifestyle we treasure but at the same time make more efficient use of the land available to us.

Historical use of land in a specific manner (for industrial sites, residential and commercial structures, open space land, etc.) does not mandate that such land uses should be continued. In addition to historical land use, subsequent development of neighboring parcels, changes in technology, awareness of health hazards and changing public values must also be considered when considering allocation of land for future uses.

The following guidelines will direct the Council in their land use study:

### Land Use Goals

1. **Open & Resource Lands:** Areas suitable for agriculture, forestry and recreational use should be identified and measures take to protect such areas. As stated in the 1975 Comprehensive Plan, the meadow bordering Highway 83, adjacent to the Double Arrow Ranch and south of the market/motel complex, is an important amenity because it is an entrance to the community of Seeley Lake and provides the first vista of the Swan and Mission Mountains as one approaches from the south. It is recommended in this Plan that the meadow be maintained as open space.

In order for such open space to be preserved, the Community Council should review options such as purchase, conservation easements, the transfer of development rights and other land preservation programs that provide proper reimbursement to land owners in the area.

Other areas within the boundaries of this plan which are important as open space should be identified by the Community Council and actions taken to preserve their value to the community and to the lands' owners. Special attention should be given to lands identified as important conservation resources in the Inventory of Conservation Resources (see appendix).

All lands, including open and resource lands, are subject to abuse by individuals that fail to recognize the fragility of soils and vegetation. All-terrain vehicles (ATV's) can be especially destructive if care is not taken to prevent soil erosion and the destruction of vegetation. Area residents should work with the Community Council to provide education about, and enforcement of, trespass laws as they relate to the use of ATV's.

**2. Residential Lands:** At present there is an abundance of land for single family residential use. Sizes range from a quarter acre to ten acres. There is little need for additional land in this category particularly in areas adjacent to the town of Seeley Lake. There are, however, some close-in areas adjacent to the Water District that should be considered for use as residential homes, duplexes, apartments, retirement centers, nursing homes, etc. When evaluating land for these types of land use, care should be taken to integrate new structures into the community so that they enhance the value of adjacent lands.

**3. Commercial Lands:** Areas presently utilized as commercial lie mainly along Highway 83. Some developed areas on Seeley Lake (such as the Seeley Lake Motel, the Seeley Lake Ranch and the property formerly known as Freshour's) are also commercial in nature. In addition, some individual lots on the Lake may be used for commercial purposes because of the lack of specific deed restrictions and zoning.

A careful analysis should be made of the needs of the community to minimize the mixing of residential and commercial uses. At the same time, it is important to designate sufficient commercial areas to provide adequate services for residents and to support the development of a healthy tourism industry while improving the health, safety and welfare of residents, property owners and visitors to the area.

**4. Industrial Lands:** Two areas of heavy industrial use were noted in the 1975 Comprehensive Plan. One is along the south side of Boy Scout Road, running from Highway 83 to approximately "C" Street. This land (currently owned by Pyramid Mountain Lumber Company) is partially used by the mill while other portions are undeveloped. The other area noted as heavy industrial is the old Gray's Mill site just south of Lake Inez. This property has been unused since the mill buildings burned some years ago.

Another area that should be considered for heavy industrial use is the land adjacent to the Seeley Lake Refuse Disposal site in Section 33, T. 16 N., R. 14 W.

These lands may well be enough for designation as heavy industrial, but consideration should be given by the Community Council to locating other areas for use as light industrial to provide additional opportunities for a more balanced economic base. In selecting areas for use as light industrial, care should be used to avoid adversely affecting adjacent landowners or the health, safety or welfare of area residents and property owners.

5. **State Lands:** The State of Montana owns land that is being used for home and cabin sites. Lease fees for this land go to the School Trust Fund rather than to the community's tax base. A serious effort should be made to have this land changed to private ownership.

In all areas of land use allocation, please refer to Section V (page 8) which lists issues that must be addressed when studying land use designations.

## **VI. Road Maintenance**

It shall be the Community Council's objective to work with the County Commissioners and the County Surveyor to improve road maintenance, upgrade road standards and identify road hazards through the attainment of the following goals:

### **Road Maintenance Goals**

1. The Council shall seek local citizen input on the need for improvement or upgrading of specific road areas. A consolidation of suggestions shall be incorporated into a plan to be submitted to the County Surveyor for consideration in the County's annual road maintenance program. The plan shall include snow-plowing and winter problems as well as, if and where possible, summer dust control, graveling and the setting of priorities for paving. At this time, funding for paving is limited to money raised through rural Special Improvement Districts and the Council will work with local residents in areas where such districts are desirable.

2. The Council shall make a concerted effort to do an on-site evaluation of road hazards and make suggestions to the County Surveyor for consideration of ways and means of removing or mitigating hazards.

3. The Council shall develop an overall road upgrading and basic standards program to be submitted to the County Surveyor for his consideration. Consideration should be given to the plowing of roads on the basis of need which may change during the winter season due to holidays and long weekends to prevent hazards during periods of high use by area snowmobilers.

The Community Council's upgrading program should be planned for a five to ten year period with citizen input and annual review noting accomplishments and priorities for each year.

4. Highway 83: A concerted effort should be made on the part of the Seeley Lake Community Council, the County Commissioners and County Surveyor and the State Highway Department to coordinate all activities, especially those involving water and sewer expansion. Since Highway 83 is the main traffic route through Seeley Lake, these agencies should work together in the best interests of the community to promote traffic safety and ease of traffic flow.

5. The Community Council will work with Missoula County and area residents to explore options for funding road improvements which are currently limited due to the taxation freeze established by I-105.

## **VII. Appearance and Beautification**

One of the primary reasons for attraction to and pride in our area is the natural beauty of our living and working environment. Many man-made improvements compliment this natural beauty but some conditions exist which detract from it. The Community Council wishes to protect and enhance this beauty by initiating actions to accomplish the following goals:

### **Appearance and Beautification Goals**

1. Efforts should be made to cause the removal or concealment of unsightly junk cars, equipment and buildings, as well as litter and noxious weeds along the Highway 83 Corridor. Similar measures should be taken in residential areas and in those places most likely to be visited by tourists.

2. A campaign should be initiated to encourage residents to engage in the continual beautification of their homes and businesses as well as assisting in the control of weeds.

3. Community and County leaders should develop and support legislation which would enable the County to more effectively control junk cars, unsightly yards, vacant lots and littering.

### **VIII. Recreation and Tourism**

Recreation and tourism have historically been a strong undercurrent in the development of the Clearwater Valley. From the early day development of the Double Arrow Ranch (designed to attract California movie stars and wealthy "dudes") and the Otter (now Wapiti) Resort (designed to attract Missoula area vacationers), our recreation opportunities and pristine environment have always beckoned visitors and their inherently "clean" tourism industry.

The Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with other civic and fraternal organizations, should take action needed to improve tourism and recreation opportunities in the Seeley Lake area. These organizations should pursue the following goals:

#### **Recreation and Tourism Goals**

1. Establishment of a theme which directs all recreation and tourism efforts to underline the theme of a Four Season Recreational Resort area. This theme supports a solid economic industry which enhances the variety of recreational opportunities available in all seasons of the year.

2. The advantages of recreation and tourism are that they promote, encourage and help ensure a clean industry that encourages the protection of natural resources and the aesthetic beauty of the area while creating employment. This resource is only now being fully realized and its inevitable growth should be planned and developed to ensure a high quality of living to residents and to protect the natural heritage of the area.

The following needs of the area should also be addressed in this section of the Plan:

A. Destination Resort. The area lacks a destination resort which would offer convention and meeting rooms, pools, spas and banquet/meals facilities.

B. Downhill Skiing. Study of the feasibility of ski resort construction on Mt. Henry should be pursued.



**C. Snowmobile and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV's).** There should be an effort to properly locate and install additional ATV and snowmobile routes in the area.

**D. Bowling Center.** Residents and visitors would welcome a bowling alley as an opportunity for indoor recreation.

**E. Golf Course.** The area lacks a golf course which could attract many visitors if attention is given to quality and the optimum use of scenic surroundings.

**F. Tour Groups.** This area can offer a variety of western outdoor experiences and these can be packaged to benefit all tourist related businesses. Tour groups are an untapped resource for the Clearwater Valley.

**G. Organized recreational opportunities and instruction** should be provided for local residents. A recreation program, similar to that provided by the Park Department in Missoula, should be established which offers family-oriented programs and facilities such as bikepaths, health-runs, etc.

**H. Low cost recreational projects** (such as skating facilities, picnic area development, passive park systems, etc.) should be promoted as one means of providing low cost recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

## **IX. Law Enforcement**

The Missoula County Sheriff's Department, the Montana Highway Patrol, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and all Federal Officers need to pursue an agreement that will allow more effective cooperation between agencies. The Community Council should develop a plan that will allow the appropriate governing agencies to better enhance effective law enforcement in the Clearwater Valley.

One important objective should be to establish a direct radio communication link between agencies in order to promote more effective and efficient operations. Such a link could be accomplished through direct radio communication with 9-1-1 or by establishing a common radio frequency accessible to all agencies.

The following goals should guide the County and the State as well as the Community Council in seeking enhanced law enforcement in our area:

## **Law Enforcement Goals**

### **1. Missoula County.**

a. It would be desirable to add one sheriff's deputy to the Seeley Lake area as well as to provide space for use by law enforcement officials (for additional information, see "Multiple Use Community Facility", page 16).

b. Roaming dogs are a significant problem in portions of the Seeley Lake community. County animal restrictions (a Health Department responsibility) should be more stringently enforced (see "Wildlife", page 20).

### **2. State of Montana.**

a. It is desirable to increase the public's awareness of the regulations, laws, guidelines and restrictions under which the Highway Patrol and Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks officers must work.

b. Local agencies and members of the public must continue to emphasize to the State the need to reduce the speed limit along the Highway 83 business corridor.

### **3. Federal Agencies.**

The Community Council should solicit ideas and recommendations from federal officers in order to enhance the ability to enforce local codes.

### **4. General Enforcement.**

a. Increase enforcement of all chemical use laws.

b. Increase public awareness of the multitude of services provided by law enforcement. Such awareness could be increased through newspaper articles, biannual officer participation at Community Council meetings and input from businesses and the public.

c. Better communication can be established between agencies with more radio communication through the 9-1-1 system.

d. Increased enforcement of regulations for the control and protection of domestic animals (Health Department) and wildlife (Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks).

e. Increase enforcement of trespass laws on private property (especially as they relate to snowmobile and ATV users).

#### **X. Multiple Use Community Facility**

The lack of a facility to house and provide public services by county boards and agencies to area citizens should be addressed by the Seeley Lake Community Council.

##### **Multiple Use Community Facility Goals**

1. It is recommended that a multi-use community facility be constructed to house the Fire Department and ambulance. This building would also provide space for law enforcement (to use for interviewing people during investigations, as a temporary holding cell, probation visits, etc.), meeting space for local elected boards (i.e., Water District, Fire District, Refuse District, Community Council, etc.), and for County agencies to use for providing routine services to the people of the Seeley Lake area which are currently available only in Missoula (such as automobile licensing, septic permits, and tax bill collections). Particular attention should be paid to technological advances which allow for the provision of services while minimizing costs to service providers.

#### **XI. Economic Base**

The Chamber of Commerce should take action to ensure economic development of the community that benefits new and existing residents and landowners while preserving the health, safety and welfare of visitors and residents alike.

The following goals are of economic importance to the community:

### **Economic Goals**

1. The creation of an effective and efficient sewage disposal facility (or facilities).
2. The use of our natural resources as raw materials.
3. Processing or manufacturing of raw materials for sale as finished products.
4. Provide management and technical assistance to small businesses such as portable saw mill operators, independent loggers, toy makers, individual home builders and others.
5. Encourage retirees and summer residents to become more involved in the economic life of the area through participation in the Community Council, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
6. The development of additional job opportunities for all economic and social classes within the community (please refer to page 13, "Recreation and Tourism"). This goal recognizes that American families are becoming increasingly dependent on two incomes.
7. The improvement of airport facilities, including paving and lighting, to allow better access, increased usage and increased safety for air travelers.
8. The Chamber of Commerce and the Community Council should work together to identify types of businesses (other than timber and tourism) which would be compatible with the area.

### **XII. Health and Human Services**

Health and human services are an important part of the Seeley Lake Comprehensive Plan Amendment since growth and development must occur in an orderly fashion to protect citizens and visitors alike. These services are vital to the area as the nearest large population center (Missoula) is approximately fifty miles to the west. In addition, one prevalent industry in the area (timber harvesting and processing) is subject to accidents which require prompt medical attention. Health services should also be readily available in order to encourage an expanding tourist industry.

Given these economic conditions and the fact that a significant portion (approximately 30%) of the community is composed of senior citizens, the Community Council, acting as a coordinating agency, should initiate actions to develop organizations to accomplish the following goals:

### **Health and Human Services Goals**

1. **Young People.** There is little opportunity for entertainment or participation by young people in civic clubs, local drama, art or other cultural events. Facilities or activities should be developed with the cooperation of youth. The community should encourage active youth groups to participate in identifying their needs in our community.

2. **Senior Citizens.** A nursing home or elderly care facility is needed in the community which will allow families to spend additional time together. The Community Council should take an active roll in assisting in the development of a retirement center.

3. **Cemetery.** A community cemetery is needed. The Community Council should begin a study of the amount of land needed, site requirements for, and the funding necessary to, establish this facility.

4. **Health Care.** The present quality of service and dedication of existing emergency services groups (such as the Quick Response Unit) is recognized and encouraged to continue. The SOS Health Center has served the area with professionalism and quality service in the past but will need to expand medical services as the area grows in population and need. Funding should be sought to monitor the need for a full-time doctor and part-time specialists along with expanded clinical technology, preferably with the cooperation of the SOS Health Center.

5. **Mental health services.** It would be beneficial to have the County's mental health services available on an out-patient basis in Seeley Lake. Funding should be sought by the community through grants, donations, etc.

6. **Library.** Maintain, and expand as needed, an adequate library service.

7. **Pollution.** As a preventative measure in the health care field, a process by which air and water pollution can be monitored should be established. Such a program can emphasize education which prevents problems rather than emphasizing regulation after problems already exist.

8. Disabled. All community projects (including economic growth, tourism, Community Hall construction, etc.) must take into consideration the comfort and mobility of disabled persons.

9. A hospice program should be initiated in the Seeley Lake Planning Area. Local residents may wish to coordinate their efforts with the hospice program in the Condon-Swan Valley planning area.

10. Street lighting. Outdoor lighting should be sought for play areas, walkways and roadways to insure the safety of pedestrians, recreationists and motorists.

### **XIII. Housing**

There is concern in the community about the apparent lack of suitable housing in Seeley Lake for rental homes, affordable homes for younger people who cannot qualify for financing first-home purchases, and for older people in need of nursing or retirement homes. In addition, much of the existing housing appears to be substandard in terms of health, safety, energy efficiency, and aesthetics. While the responsibility for most of these conditions lies with the individual homeowners, perhaps some assistance can be provided through efforts made by the community as a whole.

For low and moderate income residents, alternative sources of funding for housing renovation, other than grant programs, are scarce. Home improvement loans, when they can be obtained, must be paid back at high interest rates which place them beyond the means of these homeowners. The result of this dilemma can be that repairs are done in a manner which aggravates a health hazard and may not correct a building code deficiency.

The Community Council should undertake a program to upgrade our housing by addressing the following goals:

#### **Housing Goals**

1. Some housing on State lands needs to be upgraded. Owners are reluctant to make substantial investments in home improvements because of the uncertainty of their leases. Consequently, steps should be taken to have these lands converted to private ownership.

2. Some residents live in log, frame or mobile homes which are both unsafe and unattractive. While living in a modest home may well be a function of income level, residents should not have to endure living in unsafe dwellings. A program should be organized to instill in homeowners a sense of pride in their surroundings and a feeling of concern about the dangers of unsafe wiring, wood heating installations, and substandard water supplies and sewage disposal. Obtaining safe, affordable and attractive housing for all County residents should be a priority goal.

3. There is a need for community-sponsored programs to provide health, safety and energy upgrades for low income homeowners and renters. The Community Council should seek grants for this purpose from foundations, power companies, and the Community Development Block Grant Program as well as other sources as they are identified. Individual homeowners are encouraged to contact their power company and the District XI Human Resources Council for information on grants and loans for home weatherization.

4. Efforts to upgrade housing in all categories should be coordinated with other efforts outlined in the Comprehensive Plan (such as land use, water quality, economic base, etc.)

#### **XIV. Wildlife**

Living in and visiting areas that support healthy wildlife populations are two of the many advantages found to life in Western Montana. The Seeley Lake Planning Area is home to many wildlife species, including deer, elk, wolf, moose, grizzly and black bears, waterfowl, song birds, and numerous other large and small animals.

By protecting this wildlife, and through the preservation of wildlife habitat, especially elk and deer winter and spring range and grizzly bear habitat, the residents, visitors and property owners of the area will ensure a healthy, vital human community that continues to offer amenities and economic diversity of rural communities such as those in the Seeley Lake Planning Area.

The following goals will help protect wildlife in the planning area while promoting the economic health and welfare of area residents and landowners:

### **Wildlife Goals**

1. Land use development should not occur in areas that have been identified by the appropriate agencies as critical winter range or in areas that provide secure access to this winter range.

2. All efforts should be made by the state and federal agencies to keep the big game winter range data current.

3. Domestic animals such as dogs can have a substantial negative impact on wildlife populations. While the County has dog control regulations, enforcement cannot always be funded at a level that adequately protects wildlife. Consequently, new and existing development adjacent to or within critical wildlife areas should include specific measures to adequately control and/or fund domestic animal control. This recommendation is not intended to encourage development in such areas but rather to reduce the impact of such development if it does occur.

4. Land use developments share the planning area with an abundance of wildlife, including bears. Due to potential bear and human conflicts, measures should be taken to minimize these conflicts in the following ways:

a. Within new residential subdivisions, indoor or bear-proof garbage containers and central trash pickup areas should be encouraged.

b. Homeowners should be encouraged to install indoor or bear-proof garbage containers.

c. Property owners should be encouraged to attend or restrict their fruit orchards, compost piles, pet food and any other outside food sources.

d. Different activities such as the raising of chickens and pigs, operating beehives, etc. should be carefully studied if such activities are planned in bear habitat.



5. A working relationship should be established among landowners, neighborhood groups and wildlife management agencies to establish guidelines and priorities related to wildlife and development. The goal of the group should be to form sound land management and development guidelines which will minimize future confrontations.

6. Enhance existing wildlife habitat through weed control and other appropriate management practices to preserve wildlife carrying capacities.

7. As wildlife travel corridors are identified, development should recognize the need to minimize the clearing of vegetation in these areas and to provide an adequate buffer strip between development and the corridor.

8. Bear-proofing of area landfills and dumps should be coordinated with local, state and federal agencies to protect both wildlife and human inhabitants in the planning area.

#### **XV. Fire Services**

The Community Council supports the Seeley Lake Rural Fire District in their ongoing plan to update the equipment and emergency services of the District.

##### **Goals for Fire and Emergency Services**

1. The Seeley Lake Community Council encourages the Rural Fire District to supply the Council with progress reports on their ability to provide effective and efficient fire and quick response emergency services to the community. The Council will use these reports to advise the community of the ongoing needs of the District, as well as make recommendations on how to meet those needs.

2. Since wildfires are a threat to Seeley Lake and the surrounding area, the Fire District has contingency plans and mutual aid agreements with other departments to address such problems. The Community Council should promote public awareness of the measures area landowners can take to diminish the threat of wildland fires, including the dissemination of brochures on the subject.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As stated in the introduction, this Comprehensive Plan amendment is an effort by the people of the Seeley Lake area to outline the direction in which they wish their community to go and to set specific goals and objectives to be accomplished. Some of these goals and objectives can be accomplished in a relatively short time while others may take many years. Regardless of the time required, the Plan should be approached as in integrated whole rather than on a piecemeal basis. While specific goals may be implemented on an individual basis, each one should be reviewed as part of the overall Plan.

### **Implementation Goals**

1. This Plan will be implemented in a number of ways. The Community Council will conduct hearings in which the people of the Seeley Lake area can participate in discussing how individual goals can best be implemented. Citizen input will always be important in the implementation process.

2. A Citizens Advisory Group will be established to assist the Council with implementation. This group will consist of people in the planning area.

3. Other organizations in the community will be asked to assist in implementing goals that are in their areas of responsibility or expertise.

4. Of primary importance, citizens who wish to implement a portion of the Plan as it applies to their neighborhood may request the assistance of the Community Council as well as the staff of the Missoula Board of County Commissioners. There are many goals that can best be implemented on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis, and it is hoped that people throughout the Planning Area will see this Plan as a means of improving their neighborhoods as well as the community as a whole. Citizens may seek assistance either by written request or by appearing at any regular meeting of the Community Council.

## Appendices

### I. Inventory of Conservation Resources as Amended by the Residents of the Seeley Lake Planning Area

The Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment was prepared by the citizens of the Seeley Lake area in conjunction with the Seeley Lake Community Council and the Missoula County Commissioners. It will serve as an amendment to the 1975 Missoula County Comprehensive Plan.

This document is intended as a guideline to future development as well as an inventory of work and direction the community has elected to take in certain areas such as economic development, housing and health and human services. The Plan recognizes that the resources of the area are of prime importance to future development as well as to existing residences, businesses, landowners and visitors.

The following data is taken from the Inventory of Conservation Resources, Missoula County, Montana (updated in 1988) and is intended to provide background information for all sections of this Comprehensive Plan Amendment. The inclusion of the Inventory reflects the importance of these resources to the quality of life which residents and visitors so highly value.

## **SEELEY LAKE AREA, MONTANA**

### Recreational Character

This lightly populated region provides diverse, high quality, year-round recreational experiences of national significance. The spectacular Mission Mountains and Bob Marshall Wilderness Area draw Montanans, as well as recreationists from all over the country, to hike or ride horseback into this backcountry. This is a headwaters region of lakes and small streams. The valley bottom portion of the region is a moist, forested landscape.

The Clearwater River and its west fork are Class III fisheries along with Owl, Colt and Placid creeks. Class IV fisheries include Marshall, Deer, Finely and Boles creeks. Salmon, Seeley, Inez, Alva, Rainy and Clearwater are the principal lakes located along the Clearwater River. These, along with Placid and Marshall lakes, comprise a regionally-important recreation complex.

Boating, camping, picnicking, hiking and fishing activities are focussed on the Clearwater River/chain of lakes resource. Agency personnel indicate greater access is needed to the Clearwater River between Seeley and Salmon lakes. Public recreation facilities and private interests mingle throughout this area. Facilities are reported to be adequate, but during summer weekends, campgrounds are usually full. The Salmon Lake and Placid Lake State Recreation Areas are particularly popular.

The Seeley-Swan region is the most heavily used snowmobiling area in Missoula County. There are about 2,000 registered snowmobiles in the county, with an estimated 2,000 more unregistered vehicles. Snowmobile use county-wide has leveled off at about 8,500 snowmobile use days per year, but varies with snow and weather conditions. The Seeley Lake area has a trail system consisting of about 250 miles of groomed trails. This system supports approximately 4,520 days annually or 53% of the total number appearing on MDFWP's snowmobile counts for Missoula County sites. This compares with 1,770 days of snowmobile use at Lolo Pass, which is the next most popular area. Current facilities appear sufficient to meet present and projected demands. Cross-country skiing is also popular. Some 26 miles of groomed trails exist northeast of Seeley Lake. The Ovando to Seeley Lake 50-kilometer cross-country ski race takes place in February. The Seeley-Swan area has also become an important location for dog sled racing.

The Seeley-Swan region is a popular hunting area. White-tailed deer is the principal big game species taken, although elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain goat are also successfully hunted. Grizzly bear have been hunted in the past. Trapping of furbearers occurs throughout this region.

The MDFWP and the Forest Service have a keen interest in supporting water-related recreation here. Water access points, campgrounds, boat ramps, and other facilities may need to be expanded as demand rises. The conservation of river and lake corridors is fundamental to providing high quality recreation experiences within this region.

The Seeley Lake-Jocko Road is a three-season recreational travel route linking the Evaro region with Seeley Lake. Many logging roads which wind through the region are similarly used for vehicular recreation.

### Open Space Resources

The spectacular open space qualities of the Seeley-Swan region are characterized by the twin ramparts of the high, glaciated Mission and Swan Ranges which flank each side of a flat, forested valley. The major scenic and non-scenic open space resources of this large region are located in the narrow corridor which parallels Highway 83, the Swan River, and the Clearwater River with its chain of lakes. Much of this region, as viewed from Highway 83, would qualify as Class A - Highest Scenic Value land, using the Bureau of Land Management's Visual Resource Management System (VRM). River corridors, wetlands, land along the Jocko- Seeley Lake road, and the border of the Mission Mountain and Bob Marshall Wilderness areas are other key open space lands.

Highway 83 is a major north-south recreational highway, popular with tourists visiting the Seeley-Swan area, as well as travelers to Flathead Lake and Glacier National Park. This road is part of a favored loop from Missoula to Big Fork and back. The visual open space along Highway 83 is mostly a narrow corridor defined by dense roadside forests. These canyons of trees are broken by vistas across lakes, such as Salmon, Seeley, Inez, and Alva, and by occasional cleared pastures and developed areas. The Highway 83 open space corridor is very visually sensitive. Most of the non-corporate private land in this region is located along this corridor. Where the forest is cut and converted to pasture, scenic vistas are open with views to the spectacular crestinelines of the Mission and Swan Ranges.

The Clearwater and Swan River corridors, including the chain of lakes, are significant scenic and non-scenic resource areas. These rivers and lakes are heavily used by recreationists. The non-scenic value of these riparian corridors in water quality maintenance, flood and erosion control and water supply is shared by all perennial creeks and numerous wetlands in this region.

In this region, the Bob Marshall and Mission Mountain wildernesses, Seeley Lake Game Preserve, Clearwater Game Range, Forest Service campgrounds and recreational facilities, and other public lands serve important open space functions. The boundaries of these areas are also significant as open space buffer zones. Most buffer zones are managed by federal and state agencies for visual retention or partial retention of forest canopy to maintain high scenic quality. Corporate management practices vary.

An estimated 2,943 more people are expected to become residents of the Seeley-Swan and Potomac-Greenough regions by the year 2000. The focal point of subdivision is occurring at Seeley Lake and just south of Condon. Areas also experiencing subdivision activity in this region are Swan River, south of Lake Inez, Placid Lake, Fish Lake and north of Cott Lake.

### Ecological Resources

Forests of the Seeley-Swan Region are unlike those found throughout the rest of the county. This region lies at the border of maritime and continental climates and thus has a mixture of Pacific Coast and Intermountain Forest species. Pacific Coastal Forest trees such as western red cedar and grand fir grow in the valleys along with more familiar species such as Douglas fir, Englemann spruce, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, western larch and white pine. The Pacific Coastal Forest habitat type once extended over most of western Montana but retreated northward with the warming climate. The Swan Valley wetland complex is ideal for Pacific Coast tree species. The Clearwater drainage is similar, although less moist. No natural grasslands exist in the region.

The Seeley Lake Game Preserve was created by the state Fish and Game Commission to protect deer, bear, beaver and water fowl by prohibiting hunting and trapping. Some deer move across the Swan/Clearwater Divide to join other herds who winter on the ridge west of Salmon Lake. As many as 500 deer have been observed in a seven-square-mile area east of this lake. Elk and mule deer winter up-slope and east of the Swan River. Mountain goats winter in or near the Mission-Swan Ranges. Moose reside in riparian areas but may move into the mountains during warmer months.

The threatened grizzly bear is found throughout much of the region. This species was classified as "threatened" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1975 due to the grizzlies' greatly reduced numbers and range. The Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species (CITES) has also recognized the grizzly bear as a threatened species. CITES was established to eliminate the marketing of threatened species and their body parts. The present status of the grizzly bear in Montana is under debate between those who believe numbers are rising and range is expanding and those who either disagree or feel insufficient data exists to make a clear determination.

There are approximately 25 grizzly bears in the Mission Range, several hundred in the Bob Marshall complex, and approximately a dozen in the Seeley Lake vicinity. According to recent research, 40-70 animals are required to sustain a population without excessive inbreeding. Maintenance of a travel corridor for bears between the Mission and Swan ranges is viewed by biologists as extremely important to allow for breeding between those two populations. The primary travel corridor used by grizzlies runs east-west along the Swan/Clearwater Divide. This corridor has been recognized in the Lolo Forest Plan as "land essential to the recovery of the grizzly bear." Several researchers believe continued availability of this corridor with its dense cover and riparian communities may be critical to ensure survival of grizzly bears in the Mission Mountains. The Swan River riparian zone is used by grizzlies in the spring. Riparian corridors from the Missions to the river are key travel zones. Roads and recreation also tend to occur in valley bottoms. Since grizzlies develop a pattern of seasonal habitat use, a change in habitat availability caused by land subdivision and home or road construction is usually detrimental to the bears. However, grizzly bears are not shy of people, as long as cover is available. Confrontations occur when grizzlies are attracted to dwellings by garbage, fruit trees, apiaries, poultry, swine, and other livestock, or processing of meat for human consumption. When individual animals come to rely on such foods, significant problems arise for both people and bears.

Four reliable sightings of the endangered gray wolf have occurred in this region during the last twelve years. Three of these sightings were in the vicinity of Seeley and Placid lakes. Another sighting occurred between Holland and Lindbergh lakes, where biologists speculate many wolf travel corridors exist between the Mission and Swan ranges. The wolverine also roams these forests. Mountain lion, lynx, black bear, and numerous other mammals are found in this forest landscape.

The endangered bald eagle utilizes this region seasonally. An eagle nest may exist at Salmon Lake. Osprey also nest along the Clearwater and its chain of lakes.

The Clearwater River and its lakes has a mixed fishery of numerous species. Kokanee salmon are taken from the lakes. The Clearwater River is a Class III fishery.

The rare white glacier lily grows in the forest surrounding Seeley Lake. Englemann spruce growing in this region's valley bottoms show cone characteristics and chemical composition akin to white spruce which is common to the north in Canada. Spruce hybrids of this region display similarities to both species.

### Agricultural Resources

The agricultural land use pattern in this area is distinguished by small ownerships and the absence of irrigated cropland. Agricultural use is limited by a short frost-free season and deep winter and spring snowpacks. The glacial soils found here are not highly fertile. No prime or important statewide farmland exists.

Many small, non-corporate private land and agricultural land uses are centered along the Swan and Clearwater Rivers. Agricultural productions consists primarily of cattle and horses. Hay crops and pasture consists of "wild" hay. No alfalfa is planted. Corporate and public land is leased as summer pasture and provides woodland grazing. No grain crops are grown due to an abbreviated growing season. Pigs have been raised in places, and operators have experienced periodic problems with grizzly bears. Timber harvest is often used to supplement farm income.

### Historic Resources

An Indian trail east to the buffalo herds once ran from the Jocko Valley down Finley Creek to Placid Lake and then on to the Blackfoot River. Occupation sites and rock tool manufacturing sites exist around many lakes within this region.

In 1853, Governor Stevens sent A.W. Tinkham to survey the valley as a possible railroad route but Tinkham did not recommend the Seeley-Swan valley for such an effort. However, homesteading was encouraged by an Act of Congress in 1906, but it was not until 1911 that homesteading took hold in the area when homesteads of 320 acres were permitted, doubling the original size of 160 acre home sites. This increase was intended to make less productive plots more desirable to early ranchers and farmers in the West. Timber was the first economic base in the valley, supplemented by fur trapping efforts. And while land grants to railroads did not bring significant rail traffic to the area, the timber profits from these lands helped bring settlements into the Seeley Lake area.



## **Appendix II. List of Figures**

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**\* These maps are displayed in the meeting chambers of the Seeley Lake Community Council.**