



Lauren Kearns

THE CONFLUENCE



—SWAN VALLEY—
CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2018

FROM THE BOARD



As we wait for Spring to slowly emerge from under this winter's blanket of snow, we are grateful for the moisture that nourishes our forests and fills our creeks, ponds, lakes and river with that crystal clear essence of our valley.

It was not as cold though as the winters that I remember from my childhood in Billings or even here when our children were growing up. There were usually two to three weeks of 20 to 30 below zero temperatures in January, but those were beautiful days with the crisp air and the bluest sky. We lived in Oregon for many years, and I admit the green grass all year was more colorful, but it also meant driving two or three hours to play in the snow. There is nothing better than putting your skis or snowshoes on right outside your house to head out for a walk or

ski in the forest. As a native Montanan I cherish the changing seasons of the year.

So now we are looking forward to the changing of spring. I've ordered garden seeds and Joe is planning outside projects. Swan Valley Connections is also changing. We have a new Executive Director, Rebecca, with her enthusiasm and excitement for the future. We have a new Education Director, Jonathan, who is making sure we meet accreditation standards for our college level classes. Both Rebecca and Jonathan are advocates for experiential learning and exposing students to all sides of important issues so that they learn to listen with an open, inquisitive mind and ask meaningful questions. Rebecca will be leading their orientation with lessons learned from her Leadership Montana experience, which is focused on civil communication and collaboration.

The organization has seen many new faces come as 2017 came to a close and 2018 opened. Laura Cannon has not only been finishing archeology project work, but has also stepped into the role of Financial Assistant when Grace retired. Mike Mayernik joined the team in December as the Conservation & Stewardship Associate, as John Ingebretson retired and Adam Lieberg moved back to Oregon. In March, we welcomed Sean Costello as the Recruiting & Marketing Associate to focus on maximizing our enrollment and service to those college students, and he will be working on capturing new imagery to tell our organization's story. In April, we will welcome Rob Rich as a Field Program Coordinator who will be helping to reach out more into our community with citizen science opportunities as well as teaching in our programs. And, we are in the process of hiring a new Aquatic Programs Coordinator to round out a stellar team of passionate professionals. We wish all of our parting employees the best in their new endeavors, and are excited to welcome new faces to our Valley.

In addition to our new staff, we have also welcomed two new dedicated Board members in February. Casey Ryan and Kathleen Richardson are bringing expertise and diversity to our team, and we are looking ahead at 2019 to two seats which will open. Please let us know if you are interested in joining us in our mission of conserving the intact ecosystems within and surrounding the Swan Valley & strengthening the connection between people and the natural world through collaboration and experiential learning. We believe that our natural and cultural resources are second to none and are thrilled to look toward our future of working together to celebrate them.

Barbara Raible
Chair, SVC Board of Directors

Swan Valley Connections

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The Confluence is published by Swan Valley Connections, a non-profit organization situated in Montana's scenic Swan Valley. Our mission is to conserve the intact ecosystems within and surrounding the Swan Valley and to strengthen the connection between people and the natural world through collaboration and experiential learning. Images by Swan Valley Connections' staff, students or volunteers unless otherwise noted. All rights reserved to Swan Valley Connections. Change service requested.

SwanValleyConnections.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

CASEY RYAN

Casey is a native Montanan and a member of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. He currently serves as a hydrologist with the CSKT Natural Resources Department. He attended the University of Montana and received a B.S. in Geography and a M.S. in Forestry. Prior to accepting a position with the CSKT, Casey began his hydrology career with the United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

In his spare time, he enjoys volunteering for various non-profit organizations and being an engaged member of the community. Casey also loves spending time in the mountains where he enjoys backpacking, skiing, fly fishing, and trail running.



KATHLEEN RICHARDSON

Kathleen retired after 30 years of law practice in Havre, Montana. She has been an annual visitor to the Swan Valley since 1972, and purchased property on Kraft Creek Road in 1994. She and husband Bruce retired to the Swan Valley in 2013, where they enjoy attending classes and seminars on forest management. Kathleen has served on multiple non-profit boards of directors.



STAFF:

SEAN COSTELLO

RECRUITING & MARKETING ASSOCIATE

Sean came to Montana from Washington, DC. After spending 7 years working at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National Gallery of Art, he decided to make a change and eight weeks later he was in Montana. After three seasons of working trails for the Montana Conservation Corp and the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation followed by a winter dog handling at the Wolf's Den Kennel in Cantwell, AK he decided to fully devote his time to Montana. Sean is coming to Swan Valley Connections from the Western Montana Growers Cooperative, a farmer owned cooperative dedicated to providing the western Montana region with fresh, quality produce through sustainable local farms and local economic growth. Sean has a passion for working for organizations that serve his community at the local, national and international levels, and looking forward to becoming part of the Swan Valley.



MIKE MAYERNIK

CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATE

A Lewistown, Montana native, Mike has a passion for hunting, fishing and exploring wild places. Mike has a bachelor's degree in Fish and Wildlife Management from Montana State University. Seasonal work for the U.S. Forest Service brought him to the Seeley Lake Ranger District in 2010 where he stayed for eight years. His time with the Forest Service included various work for the wildlife, fire, and recreation programs supporting many land and forest management projects. Mike is very interested in fire ecology and managing forest communities. He has enjoyed studying various wildlife species such as Canada lynx and wolverine across western Montana. During this time, he developed a deep love for the Swan Valley and became a resident in 2013.



BEAR

Wake-up Social

April 12th
6-9 pm

Swan Valley Community Hall

Hwy 83, MM 42.5
Condon



Join Swan Valley Bear Resources for a “Spring Bear Wake-up Social” on Thurs., Apr. 12th, 6-9 pm at Swan Valley Community Hall, Highway 83, MM 42.5 in Condon.

This community event will help people learn about grizzly bear behavior, biology, and conflict management. Grizzly bear specialists Tim Manley (Fish, Wildlife & Parks) and Stacy Courville (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes) will be giving presentations about living in bear country.

“We at Swan Valley Bear Resources are excited to host this year’s Spring Bear Wake-up Social for our neighbors,” says Luke Lamar, member of Swan Valley Bear Resources and Conservation Director at Swan Valley Connections. “This event has become a great tradition that provides both entertainment and education about living in bear country to communities throughout the Swan River watershed and serves as an annual reminder for residents to contain their attractants as bears emerge from hibernation.”

The Bear Wake-up Social is free and open to all. Complimentary snacks and beverages will be available ‘till gone. Bear pepper-spray will also be available for purchase. Visit SwanValleyConnections.org for more information or contact info@svconnections.org or (406) 754-3137.

Swan Valley Bear Resources offers resources, experience, and expertise to help prevent bear conflicts on private and public properties in the Swan Valley.



LISTEN. LEARN. LEAD. - LEADERSHIP MONTANA

A shout-out to our very own Rebecca Ramsey who has been participating in the 2018 class of Leadership Montana since September. Leadership Montana is a unique, curated educational program comprised of leaders from across the state of Montana. Each class is comprised of a diverse group of leaders from business, labor, healthcare, education, nonprofit, and government who come together to gain a deeper awareness of issues affecting Montana, all while building powerful and personal connections with their classmates and the network of committed alumni. There have been more than 500 graduates through the program so far! The program is based on the concepts of “Listen. Learn. Lead.” Participants spend three days submerged in a Montana community learning from the people in that region, as well as learning how to lead through civil dialogue and collaboration while fostering personal growth and reflection. A total of seven sessions within eight months are spent in these eleven communities: Big Sky, Billings, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Polson, Sidney, Three Forks, and Whitefish. Rebecca will be graduating from the program in April 2018.

PEOPLE, POTLUCKS, AND PLACE-BASED CONNECTIONS

Connectivity has become a buzzword in discussions of the natural world while fragmentation has reached a similar level of use when regarding the social world of humans. Unfortunately, regarding the natural world as inherently interconnected and the human world as inherently fragmented only contributes to the widening rift between the two. Swan Valley Connections (it's even in the name) strives to narrow this rift through conservation, education, communication, and monthly community potlucks.

We are fortunate to live, work, and play in the Swan Valley. Here in Condon, it's hard to miss the concepts of connectivity when a herd of elk uses your backyard as winter range or when the chickadees, jays, and ravens of winter are suddenly accompanied by a host of seasonal-resident birds bringing a welcome addition to the morning chorus. The benefits of living in the Crown of the Continent are easy to recognize.

The benefits of living in the Crown of the Continent are also easily overlooked. The piles of snow, cords of wood, freezers of game meat, cans of preserves, power outages, frozen pipes, and dark winter days can make even the most cold-blooded of us grow weary. But this too is proof of connectivity – one existing between the human and natural world and made evident by the hardships involved.

Unfortunately, in the rural landscape, the concepts of fragmentation can also be hard to miss. Flocks of ravens with the occasional eagle occupying the red stained shoulders of highway 83 are a good reminder of fragmented wildlife travel

corridors that can come from our own efforts towards increased human connectivity. Other evidence can come from things like a new forest management plan; aside from debates within the community, a plan seeks to fragment a landscape into individual management areas. This type of action has special significance to rural communities whose economies and lifestyles often are directly connected to the natural resources of the local area.

These examples of connectivity and fragmentation are worth talking about, ideally while rubbing elbows with neighbors and sharing a meal together. The monthly potlucks, held on the first Wednesday of each month, are held to bring together members of the community to learn, discuss, eat, and enjoy each other's company. In this way, we hope to honor the rural heritage and natural beauty of the Swan Valley while celebrating the inherent connectivity that comes from sharing the landscape. Anyone who has an interest in the Swan Valley and its surrounding landscapes, or those who require occasional food intake for survival are welcome and encouraged to attend. We gather to enjoy company and learn from each other, we hope you will join your neighbors at the next potluck – the 1st Wednesday of the month at the Swan Valley Community Hall from 5:30 – 8:30.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK SCHEDULE

January 3: Flathead NF Management Plan
February 7: Crown of the Continent
March 7: Bark Beetle Repellants for Fir and Pine
April 4: Carnivore Survey Results
May 2: Amphibians and Reptiles of the Swan
June 6: Recreational Trails
July 4: No Potluck, Happy 4th!
August 1: Forests and Fires
September 5: Bears and Berries
October 3: History of Schools in the Swan
November 7: Avalanche Awareness
December 5: Live Music & Year End Celebration



CAMPFIRE TALKS AT HOLLAND LAKE BEACH

Swan Valley Connections is happy to announce that we will be resuming our Holland Lake Campfire talks this summer. The Swan Valley in the summer is loved by locals and visitors alike. Join us on each **Friday of July from 8-9 PM at the Holland Lake Beach** to learn a little about what makes the Swan Valley such a special place.

July 6: Aquatic Invasive Species
July 13: Native Fish of the Swan
July 20: Wildlife Safety in Bear Country
July 27: TBD

WETLANDS RESTORATION PROGRAM

SVC continues to partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program to restore degraded or manipulated wetlands and streams on private lands in the Swan Valley. In 2017, SVC worked to restore a 48 acre wetland in the Kraft Creek area, one of the largest ditched and drained wetlands in the Swan. SVC has now partnered with private landowners to restore over 140 acres of wetland, stream, and riparian habitat in the Swan Valley. SVC works to restore degraded wetlands for the benefit of wetland and riparian dependent wildlife, such as grizzly bears and trumpeter swans. Wetland restoration can also lead to improved water quality and quantity, which can benefit both native fish (bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout) and people!



Matthews Brothers Construction installing water control structure at outlet of ditched and drained wetland

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Since 2004, SVC has worked cooperatively with private landowners and local contractors on over 235 projects to help reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire and improve forest resiliency in the Swan Valley, treating over 2,300 acres! SVC has worked with 18 local contractors and their employees during this timeframe, and sent 1,318 truck loads of wood fiber to local mills. Cost-share funding is still available for landowners interested in reducing wildfire risk, increasing fire-fighter safety and effectiveness, and improving forest health.



Luke Lamar offering forest stewardship advice to landowner and contractor

BUBBLE CAPS PROGRAM

SVC also helps landowners combat forest insect infestations by annually selling 'bubble caps,' which are packets of pheromones that repel mountain pine beetles and Douglas-fir beetles from prized trees. Every year we gather interested landowners and place one bulk order of bubble caps. By doing so, we can offer bubble caps at a reduced price compared to the competition, passing the savings on to local residents. For ordering convenience, we've added an online payment option.

WEEDS PROGRAM

SVC partners with the Missoula County Weed District to secure funds for landowners to treat weed infestations on their properties. We have passed funding directly on to 123 landowners to spray weeds on 2,834 acres since 2009. **Funds are currently available. Contact us for more information at (406) 754-3137 or email Leanna at leanna@svconnections.org.**

SWAN VALLEY BEAR RESOURCES

Swan Valley Bear Resources (SVBR), a collaborative group consisting of SVC, U.S. Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and other entities, has been providing place-based solutions to human/bear conflicts for over a decade. SVBR administers a Bear-Resistant Garbage Container Loaner Program within the Swan Valley. The program allows community members to check out bear-resistant garbage cans for free and on an indefinite basis, with a suggested donation. SVBR has distributed 217 bear-resistant garbage cans and 28 dumpsters to local residents' and businesses, helping secure garbage from bears so they don't become habituated to unnatural food sources. SVBR has adapted over time to assist residents with the bear conflict mitigation needs that have arisen. SVBR first began assisting residents in 2010 with electric fencing to secure goats and chickens from bears, preventing further conflict. Since that time, SVBR has assisted residents to build 15 permanent electric fences to exclude bears from various attractants. SVBR assists with the entire fence building process including site identification, fence design, technical specifications, help to secure funding sources, purchase of materials, and final hands-on fence construction. Attractants that have been secured by these electric fence projects are: chickens, turkeys, ducks, goats, sheep, pigs, rabbits, miniature horses, bees, outside chest freezers, livestock grain, compost, orchard trees, and gardens. Every year SVBR partners with various agencies and organizations to provide educational events aimed at promoting human-bear coexistence. **Don't miss the Spring Wake-Up Social at the Swan Valley Community Hall in Condon from 6-9pm on Thursday, April 12th and the Bear Fair at the Swan River Community Hall in Ferndale/Bigfork on Saturday, June 9th.**

RARE CARNIVORE MONITORING

SVC continues to monitor the distribution and relative abundance of rare carnivores such as lynx and wolverine in the Southwestern Crown of the Continent, a project that initially began in 2012. For the third consecutive year, SVC has partnered with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to monitor rare carnivores on the Clearwater/

Blackfoot Project area lands. Results from this work are helping inform management decisions by agencies and TNC as we continue to learn about some of the rarest, least known species using our landscape. **To learn more about this project, please join us for a presentation and game camera videos of these rare animals at our Community Potluck on Wednesday, April 4th!**

SWAN LANDS COORDINATING NETWORK

SVC annually brings together management agencies, organizations, and groups to report out on natural resource management issues in the Swan Valley. The goal of the Swan Lands Coordinating Network meeting is to provide agencies, organizations and civic groups working in the Swan Valley a venue for coordinating with one another, and to provide a flow of information with interested members of the community. **This year's meeting is tentatively planned for Wednesday, June 6th. Stay tuned for more information!**

ELK CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

SVC owns the west half of Section 35 (T21, R17) and continues to manage that property and entire section in coordination with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes under the guidance of the Elk Creek Conservation Area management plan. Elk Creek is a vital corridor for many wildlife species. It has consistently been ranked the highest and best in every category biologists catalog and is core habitat for bull trout production.



Mike Mayernik measuring the stride of family group of 3 lynx for the carnivore monitoring project

WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

SVC continues to coordinate and lead the Swan Lands Water Quality Technical Advisory Group and has secured a 319 grant through the Department of Environmental Quality to help the DNRC conduct restoration projects on former Plum Creek timber company lands with the goal of helping to improve water quality in the Swan Watershed. SVC also continues to place water temperature sensors in the Swan River and many streams with the goal of providing valuable long-term climate change data that will help inform native fish management actions over time.

NATIVE FISH PROGRAM

SVC continues to coordinate the Swan Lands Native Fish Committee, which works to inform the conservation strategies which will best protect and restore westslope cutthroat in the Swan basin. SVC has also been an active participant in the Swan Valley Bull Trout Working Group, which has been working to conserve bull trout and suppress the invasive lake trout population in the Swan system.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PROGRAM

SVC has started an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Program that is focused on prevention and monitoring of AIS in the Swan Watershed. If invasive species establish colonies in our lakes they can bring harm to our native species by out-competing them for food and habitat, and by introducing disease. In particular, invasive mussels can completely cover lake bottoms and shorelines, making it dangerous to walk with their knife-edge shells. They can damage equipment (hydroelectric dams, water intake systems, irrigation pipes, boat engines, etc.) by coating and clogging pipes. Invasive mussels could ultimately destroy local economies that rely on pristine lake ecosystems for tourism/recreation revenue. In 2017, SVC sampled Holland, Lindbergh, Van, and Swan Lakes to monitor for AIS species, as well as provide outreach and education about the potential hazards of AIS and will continue that work in 2018 and beyond.



Completed electric bear fences containing bear attractants

If you are interested in learning more about any of SVC's conservation programs, please contact us for assistance!

ICY-HOT HYDRATION BOTTLE

Double-walled, vacuum-insulated, 18/8 stainless steel hydration bottle. 18-ounce bottle in crater blue with 3-finger grip lid in black. Keeps drinks icy or hot all day! BPA-free. (\$25 + shipping and handling)

EXPLORE MONTANA'S SWAN VALLEY MAP AND GUIDE

Our Swan Valley Map and Guide contains interpretive narratives accompanied by historic photos, watercolor artwork, and professional landscape and wildlife photos to showcase the valley's glacial legacy, its rich human history and culture, and the natural values that make it so special today. Experience and learn about what makes this place so special. (\$7 + shipping and handling)

TRUCKER CAP

Six panel trucker-style cap in charcoal gray chino twill with white mesh back and snap closure. Custom cut, sewn and assembled in the USA. (\$20 + shipping and handling)



SUPPORT CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION IN MONTANA'S WILD AND SCENIC SWAN VALLEY

The Swan Valley license plate features a spectacular painting of a wolverine in its natural habitat by renowned artist Ron Ukrainetz. For details on how to purchase a license plate from your County's Motor Vehicle Division office visit SwanValleyConnections.org/swan-valley-license-plate.



SPECIALTY SAMPLE LICENSE PLATE

Specialty "SWAN" and "GULO" sample license plates are also available at our online store. Give them as gifts or hang on your wall. Sample plates are not for legal use on a vehicle. (\$45 + shipping and handling)



THANK YOU 2017 SUPPORTERS!

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Swan Valley Connections
Summary Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2017

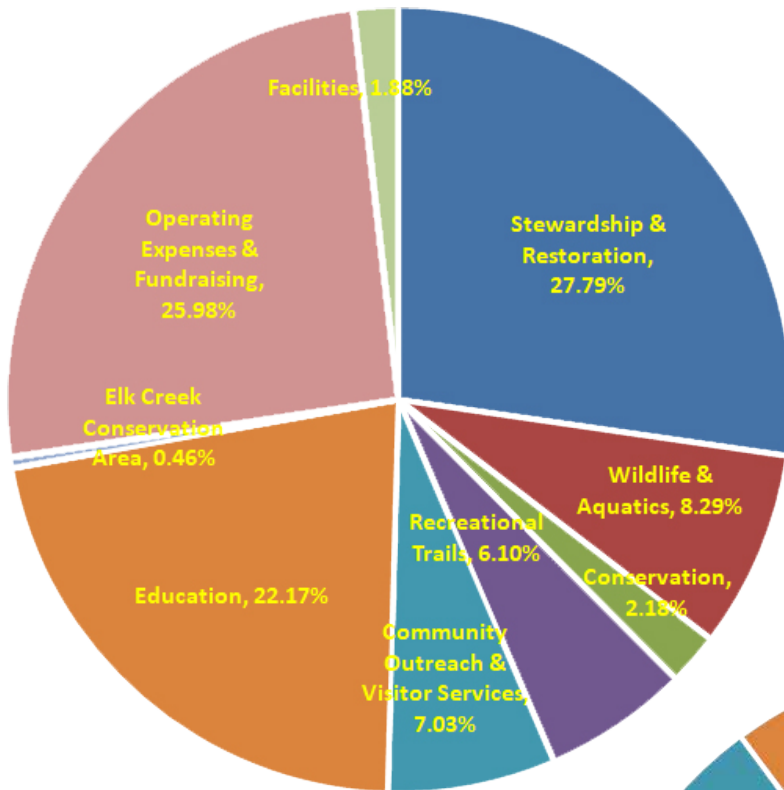
ASSETS	Dec-17
Current Assets	
Cash	124,104
Accounts Receivable	38,917
Inventory	3,758
Prepaid Expenses	3,771
Total Current Assets	170,550
Fixed Assets	
Vehicle	24,047
Land - Elk Creek Conservation Area	32,000
Accumulated Depreciation	(5,622)
Total Fixed Assets	50,425
Investments	336,078
TOTAL ASSETS	557,053
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	22,519
Payroll Liabilities	55,927
Tuition Deposits for 2017	3,700
Total Current Liabilities	82,146
Total Liabilities	82,146
Net Assets	
Unrestricted Net Assets	22,069
Restricted Net Assets (Incl. Land)	17,777
Board Designated Net Assets	435,061
Total Net Assets	474,907
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	557,053

Summary Profit & Loss 2017

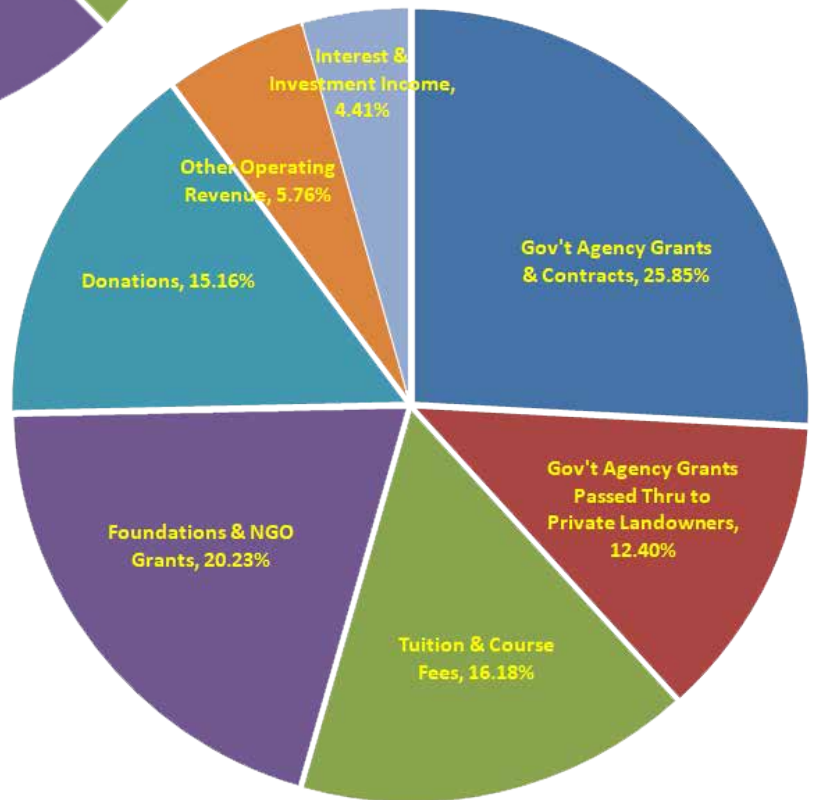
Revenue:	2017
Government Agency Grants & Contracts	317,563
Tuition & Course Fees	134,300
Private Foundation & NGO Grants	167,883
Donations	125,864
Program Services, Events & Other	48,942
Total Operating Revenue	794,552
Expenses:	
Stewardship & Restoration	246,564
Education	196,647
Wildlife & Aquatics	73,532
Recreational Trails	54,105
Conservation	19,341
Public Info & Visitor Services	21,230
Outreach & Communications	41,092
Elk Creek Conservation Area	4,103
Total Program Expenses	656,614
Facilities	16,656
Administration & Fundraising	213,834
Total Expenses	887,104
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(92,552)

Swan Valley Connections Executive Committee oversees the fiscal management of assets, balancing long term financial stability with current operational needs. The executive committee provides oversight for investment (through a professional investment manager) of fiscal assets to provide long term growth as well as current income within a balanced and appropriately conservative investment portfolio. In addition, the executive committee recommends for approval by the entire board of directors an annual operating budget and the strategic allocation of unrestricted and board designated net assets to support the continuing mission of Swan Valley Connections.

2017 Revenue



2017 Expenses



When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates to SVC!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Swan Valley Connections every time you shop, at no cost to you! When you shop at <http://smile.amazon.com>, you'll find the exact same selection as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization - that's us! Consider signing up, it only takes a few clicks.



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



COMING UP

Community Potluck Dinner
Presentation: Carnivore Survey Results
April 4th

Spring Bear Wake-up Social, Condon
April 12th

Community Potluck Dinner
Presentation: Amphibians and Reptiles of the Swan
May 2nd

MT DNRC Forest Insects & Disease Workshop
May 16th

Wildlife in the West
May 21st through June 30th

Community Potluck Dinner
Presentation: Recreational Trails
June 6th

Swan Valley Bear Resources' Bear Fair, Ferndale/Bigfork
June 9th

For details visit
SwanValleyConnections.org/Events

Support Swan Valley Connections

Make your check out to "SVC" and send to:
Swan Valley Connections, 6887 MT Hwy 83, Condon, MT 59826-9005
or, donate online: SwanValleyConnections.org

Swan Valley Connections is a 501(c)3 non profit - all gifts are tax deductible
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Thank you for your support!

Name: _____

Address: _____

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New address? Check here. Keep my donation anonymous.