

SWAN LANDS UPDATE



VOLUME 3

MAY 2008

No. 1

2007 Conservation Summary

by Mike Palladini, Swan Ecosystem Center

Land conservation efforts in the Swan Valley have continued to make progress. Highlights from the past year include:

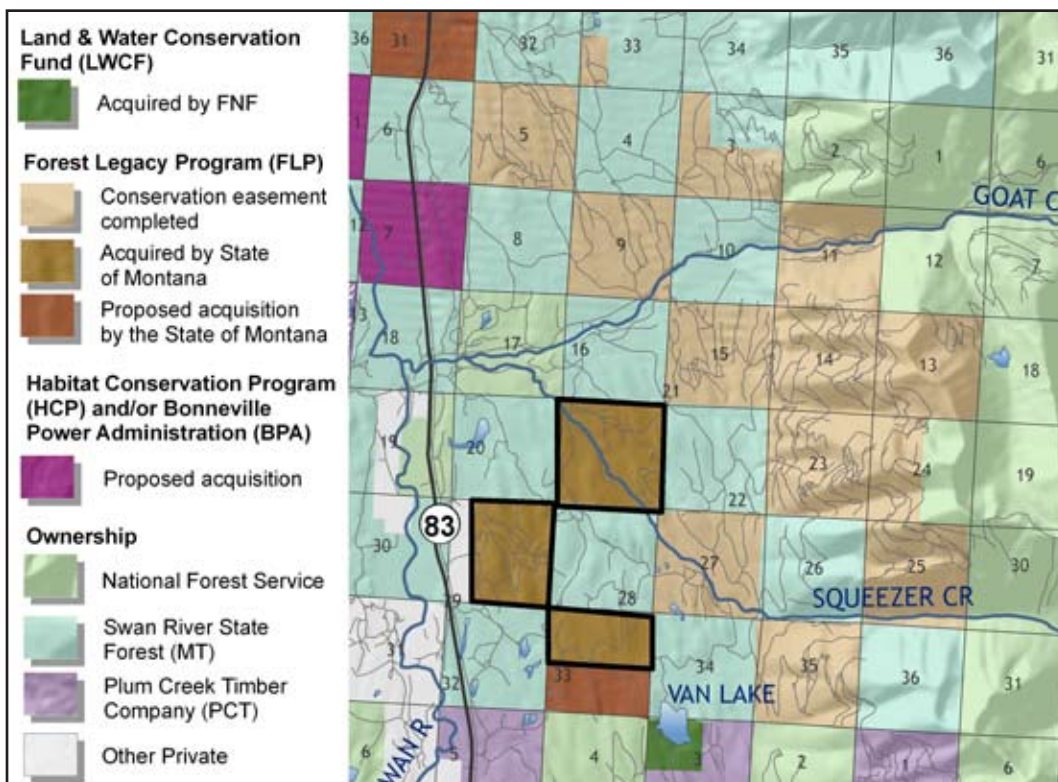
- In several transactions over the year, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) purchased 1,140 acres of Plum Creek Timber (PCT) Land that was then conveyed to Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks (FW&P). Funding from the Forest Legacy Program, the Wyss Foundation and the Bonneville Power Administration made these conservation purchases possible. (see map, right).

- Another 1,480 acres of Plum Creek land were purchased by private landowners during 2007. A 640 acre section of PCT land was purchased in upper Barber Creek, a 440 acre parcel on Owl Loop Road was purchased by TPL and conveyed to a private conservation buyer, and a 400 acre parcel was purchased near Metcalf Lake.

- Private land owners in the valley continued to work with local land trusts like the Vital Ground Foundation and the Montana Land Reliance (MLR) to place conservation easements on their lands. During 2007, 1,324 acres of private land were placed under conservation easement in the Swan Valley. MLR completed a conservation easement on a 294 acre parcel in Salmon Prairie, as well as on the 440 acre Owl Loop Road parcel mentioned above. Vital Ground completed conservation easements

on a 320 acre parcel along Cooney Creek, and an adjoining 110 acre parcel along McKay Creek. Both of these lands were previously owned by Plum Creek Timber Co. Vital Ground also worked with a local family to place a 160 acre parcel along Condon Creek under easement.

Other noteworthy work over the past year included a grassroots partnership to support federal appropriations for the Swan Valley from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Legacy Program for FY08. This included the completion of a brochure on the Flathead National Forest Land and



2007 Conservation Summary, cont'd. from page 1

Water Conservation Fund acquisition plan. In July, a community celebration was held at Holland Lake Lodge to thank partners and acknowledge the collaborative effort to protect the Swan Valley. Efforts continue this year, with a Swan Lands Coordinating Committee meeting scheduled on May 22nd at SEC. §

Elk Creek Conservation Area Update

A five-person team is overseeing activities on the Elk Creek Conservation Area—the square-mile of land at the confluence of Elk Creek and the Swan River that was acquired in 2006 from Plum Creek Timber Co. by Swan Ecosystem Center and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Barry Hansen and Rusty Sydnor represent the Tribes. Mark Vander Meer and Roger Marshall represent Swan Ecosystem Center. The fifth member is Joel Tohtz from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The Chair position will rotate. Vander Meer is the 2008 chairman.

The Elk Creek Management Plan, completed in September 2007, will guide all activities. Input from the public is welcome. People wishing to recommend stewardship or restoration activities for the Conservation Area should provide the management team with a few written paragraphs describing the rationale for the activity and the steps necessary to accomplish it. The team will review the proposal, following the Plan’s decision-making protocol. If the project is deemed appropriate, the team can implement it.

The Elk Creek Management Plan can be found on the SwanEcosystemCenter.com website. §

New Land and Forest Steward at SEC



Mike Palladini is Swan Ecosystem Center’s new Land and Forest Steward, and in a sense he works for all of us. Mike will focus on conservation strategies as well as stewardship and restoration. He will convene and facilitate Swan Lands

Coordinating Committee meetings and lead the activities of the Forest Stewardship Committee.

Mike is an ornithologist with an MS in Wildlife Biology from Humboldt State University. His thesis dealt with the effects of ponderosa pine restoration on Coopers’ Hawks. In 2007, while working at the Avian Science Center in Missoula, Mike conducted research on bird communities in old growth forests in northwestern Montana.

As Swan Lands Coordinator, Mike will work with partners on public information and outreach, including the Swan Lands Update Newsletter, the SwanValleyConservation.org website, community events, GIS maps, and other tools and activities.

As Land Steward, Mike will work with the Flathead National Forest and DNRC on forest stewardship and restoration projects, helping to involve the public by organizing field tours and public meetings. He will enhance SEC’s landowner program and help Swan Valley residents develop stewardship plans for their property.

At his interview, Mike said: “I’m a research scientist by training, but my goal has always been to make a difference. Coordinating conservation strategies and helping landowners with stewardship plans will put my science training to work.” §

Cover, top photos courtesy of:

Left - Allen Branine; Center - Dale Dufour; Right - Steve Ellis

This Swan Lands Update has been brought to you by Northwest Connections, Swan Ecosystem Center and The Trust for Public Land.

To donate to the Swan Valley Conservation effort contact Swan Ecosystem Center 6887 Highway 83 Condon, MT 59826 406 754 3137 or 754 3138 swanec@blackfoot.net

For more information visit our website at www.swanvalleyconservation.org.

NON PROFIT
ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
CONDON, MT
PERMIT #16

Swan Ecosystem Center
U.S. Forest Service Condon Work Center
6887 Highway 83
Condon, MT 59826