

Appendix A

List of Plants and Animals

MAMMALS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Castor canadensis</i>	Beaver
<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	Big Brown Bat
<i>Ursus americanus</i>	Black Bear
<i>Lynx rufus</i>	Bobcat
<i>Neotoma cinerea</i>	Bushy-tailed Woodrat
<i>Myotis californicus</i>	California Myotis
<i>Lynx canadensis</i> *T	Canada Lynx
<i>Spermophilus columbianus</i>	Columbian Ground Squirrel
<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	Deer Mouse
<i>Sorex monticolus</i>	Dusky or Montane Shrew
<i>Martes pennanti</i> *	Fisher
<i>Myotis thysanodes</i> *	Fringed Myotis
<i>Spermophilus lateralis</i>	Golden-mantled Ground Squirrel
<i>Canis lupus</i> *E	Gray Wolf
<i>Ursus arctos</i> *T	Grizzly Bear
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i> *	Hoary Bat
<i>Marmota caligata</i>	Hoary Marmot
<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>	Little Brown Myotis
<i>Myotis evotis</i>	Long-eared Myotis
<i>Myotis volans</i>	Long-legged Myotis
<i>Martes americana</i>	Marten
<i>Sorex cinereus</i>	Masked Shrew
<i>Microtus pennsylvanicus</i>	Meadow Vole
<i>Puma concolor</i>	Mountain Lion
<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	Muskrat
<i>Lontra canadensis</i>	Northern River Otter
<i>Ochotona princeps</i>	Pika
<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	Red Squirrel
<i>Tamias ruficaudus</i>	Red-tailed Chipmunk
<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Short-tailed Weasel
<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i> **	Silver-haired Bat
<i>Lepus americanus</i>	Snowshoe Hare
<i>Myodes gapperi</i>	Southern Red-backed Vole

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i> *	Townsend's Big-eared Bat
<i>Sorex vagrans</i>	Vagrant Shrew
<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Water Shrew
<i>Microtus richardsoni</i>	Water Vole
<i>Zapus princeps</i>	Western Jumping Mouse
<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>	Western Small-footed Myotis
<i>Gulo gulo</i> *	Wolverine
<i>Tamias amoenus</i>	Yellow-pine Chipmunk
<i>Myotis yumanensis</i> **	Yuma Myotis

BIRDS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	American Avocet
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i> *	American Bittern
<i>Fulica americana</i>	American Coot
<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	American Crow
<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>	American Dipper
<i>Spinus tristis</i>	American Goldfinch
<i>Falco sparverius</i>	American Kestrel
<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	American Redstart
<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	American Robin
<i>Picoides dorsalis</i>	American Three-toed Woodpecker
<i>Anas americana</i>	American Wigeon
<i>Dendroica coronata auduboni</i>	Audubon's Warbler
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> *	Bald Eagle
<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>	Band-tailed Pigeon
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	Bank Swallow
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Barn Swallow
<i>Strix varia</i>	Barred Owl
<i>Bucephala islandica</i> **	Barrow's Goldeneye
<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	Belted Kingfisher
<i>Cypseloides niger</i> *	Black Swift
<i>Chlidonias niger</i> *	Black Tern
<i>Picoides arcticus</i> *	Black-backed Woodpecker
<i>Pica hudsonia</i>	Black-billed Magpie
<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>	Black-capped Chickadee
<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	Black-chinned Hummingbird
<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	Black-headed Grosbeak
<i>Amphispiza bilineata</i>	Black-throated Sparrow
<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>	Blue Jay
<i>Anas discors</i>	Blue-winged Teal
<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i> *	Bobolink
<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>	Bohemian Waxwing

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Poecile hudsonicus</i> *	Boreal Chickadee
<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	Boreal Owl
<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Brambling
<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	Brewer's Blackbird
<i>Spizella breweri</i> *	Brewer's Sparrow
<i>Certhia americana</i> *	Brown Creeper
<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Brown-headed Cowbird
<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	Bufflehead
<i>Icterus bullockii</i>	Bullock's Oriole
<i>Stellula calliope</i>	Calliope Hummingbird
<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Canada Goose
<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>	Canyon Wren
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i> *	Caspian Tern
<i>Carpodacus cassinii</i> *	Cassin's Finch
<i>Vireo cassinii</i>	Cassin's Vireo
<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	Cedar Waxwing
<i>Poecile rufescens</i>	Chestnut-backed Chickadee
<i>Spizella passerina</i>	Chipping Sparrow
<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>	Cinnamon Teal
<i>Nucifraga columbiana</i> *	Clark's Nutcracker
<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	Cliff Swallow
<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Common Goldeneye
<i>Gavia immer</i> *	Common Loon
<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Common Merganser
<i>Chordeiles minor</i>	Common Nighthawk
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Common Raven
<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	Common Redpoll
<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	Common Yellowthroat
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Cooper's Hawk
<i>Empidonax occidentalis</i>	Cordilleran Flycatcher
<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Dark-eyed Junco
<i>Junco hyemalis montanus</i>	Dark-eyed Junco (Montana Junco)
<i>Junco hyemalis hyemalis / cismontanus</i>	Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)
<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	Downy Woodpecker
<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>	Dusky Flycatcher
<i>Dendragapus obscurus</i>	Dusky Grouse
<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	Eastern Kingbird
<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	Eastern Phoebe
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> ***	European Starling
<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>	Evening Grosbeak
<i>Spizella pusilla</i>	Field Sparrow
<i>Otus flammeolus</i> *	Flammulated Owl
<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	Fox Sparrow

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Anas strepera</i>	Gadwall
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> *	Golden Eagle
<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	Golden-crowned Kinglet
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i> *	Grasshopper Sparrow
<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	Gray Catbird
<i>Perisoreus canadensis</i>	Gray Jay
<i>Leucosticte tephrocotis</i> *	Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
<i>Ardea herodias</i> *	Great Blue Heron
<i>Ardea alba</i>	Great Egret
<i>Strix nebulosa</i> *	Great Gray Owl
<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	Great Horned Owl
<i>Pipilo chlorurus</i>	Green-tailed Towhee
<i>Anas crecca</i>	Green-winged Teal
<i>Picoides villosus</i>	Hairy Woodpecker
<i>Empidonax hammondi</i>	Hammond's Flycatcher
<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i> *	Harlequin Duck
<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	Hermit Thrush
<i>Acanthis hornemanni</i>	Hoary Redpoll
<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i> **	Hooded Merganser
<i>Passer domesticus</i> ***	House Sparrow
<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	House Wren
<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	Killdeer
<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	Lark Sparrow
<i>Passerina amoena</i>	Lazuli Bunting
<i>Ammodramus leconteii</i> *	Le Conte's Sparrow
<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	Least Flycatcher
<i>Aythya affinis</i>	Lesser Scaup
<i>Melanerpes lewis</i> *	Lewis' woodpecker
<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	Lincoln's Sparrow
<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>	MacGillivray's Warbler
<i>Dendroica magnolia</i>	Magnolia Warbler
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard
<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	Marsh Wren
<i>Sialia currucoides</i>	Mountain Bluebird
<i>Poecile gambeli</i>	Mountain Chickadee
<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Mourning Dove
<i>Dendroica coronata coronata</i>	Myrtle Warbler
<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>	Nashville Warbler
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Northern Flicker
<i>Colaptes auratus cafer</i>	Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i> *	Northern Goshawk
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern Harrier
<i>Surnia ulula</i> **	Northern Hawk Owl

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Anas acuta</i>	Northern Pintail
<i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>	Northern Pygmy-Owl
<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
<i>Aegolius acadicus</i>	Northern Saw-whet Owl
<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Northern Shrike
<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	Northern Waterthrush
<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	Olive-sided Flycatcher
<i>Vermivora celata</i>	Orange-crowned Warbler
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey
<i>Gavia pacifica</i>	Pacific Loon
<i>Falco peregrinus*</i>	Peregrine Falcon
<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	Pied-billed Grebe
<i>Dryocopus pileatus*</i>	Pileated Woodpecker
<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>	Pine Grosbeak
<i>Spinus pinus</i>	Pine Siskin
<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Prairie Falcon
<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>	Pygmy Nuthatch
<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Red Crossbill
<i>Sitta canadensis</i>	Red-breasted Nuthatch
<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>	Red-eyed Vireo
<i>Sphyrapicus nuchalis</i>	Red-naped Sapsucker
<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	Red-necked Grebe
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Red-tailed Hawk
<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Red-winged Blackbird
<i>Aythya americana</i>	Redhead
<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	Ring-billed Gull
<i>Aythya collaris</i>	Ring-necked Duck
<i>Columba livia***</i>	Rock Pigeon
<i>Salpinctes obsoletus</i>	Rock Wren
<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Rough-legged Hawk
<i>Regulus calendula</i>	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	Ruddy Duck
<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	Ruffed Grouse
<i>Selasphorus rufus**</i>	Rufous Hummingbird
<i>Grus canadensis</i>	Sandhill Crane
<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Savannah Sparrow
<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Say's Phoebe
<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Sharp-shinned Hawk
<i>Asio flammeus**</i>	Short-eared Owl
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Snow Bunting
<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	Solitary Sandpiper
<i>Vireo solitarius</i>	Solitary Vireo
<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Song Sparrow

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Porzana carolina</i>	Sora
<i>Actitis macularius</i>	Spotted Sandpiper
<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	Spotted Towhee
<i>Falcipennis canadensis</i>	Spruce Grouse
<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	Steller's Jay
<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	Swainson's Thrush
<i>Vermivora peregrina</i> **	Tennessee Warbler
<i>Myadestes townsendi</i>	Townsend's Solitaire
<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>	Townsend's Warbler
<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	Tree Swallow
<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Turkey Vulture
<i>Ixoreus naevius</i>	Varied Thrush
<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	Vaux's Swift
<i>Catharus fuscescens</i> *	Veery
<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>	Vesper Sparrow
<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	Violet-green Swallow
<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	Warbling Vireo
<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	Western Kingbird
<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>	Western Meadowlark
<i>Megascops kennicottii</i> **	Western Screech-Owl
<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	Western Tanager
<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	Western Wood-Pewee
<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	White-breasted Nuthatch
<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	White-crowned Sparrow
<i>Lagopus leucura</i> *	White-tailed Ptarmigan
<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	White-throated Swift
<i>Loxia leucoptera</i>	White-winged Crossbill
<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i> ***	Wild Turkey
<i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>	Williamson's Sapsucker
<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Willow Flycatcher
<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>	Wilson's Phalarope
<i>Gallinago delicata</i>	Wilson's Snipe
<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Wilson's Warbler
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> *	Winter Wren
<i>Aix sponsa</i>	Wood Duck
<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	Yellow Warbler
<i>Icteria virens</i>	Yellow-breasted Chat
<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	Yellow-headed Blackbird
<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	Yellow-rumped Warbler

*Species of Concern

**Potential Species of Concern

***Exotic Species (not native to Montana)

REPTILES

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>	Common Garter snake
<i>Elgaria coerulea*</i>	Northern Alligator Lizard
<i>Chrysemys picta</i>	Painted Turtle
<i>Charina bottae</i>	Rubber Boa
<i>Thamnophis elegans</i>	Terrestrial Garter snake

AMPHIBIANS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Rana luteiventris</i>	Columbia Spotted Frog
<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum</i>	Long-toed Salamander
<i>Rana pipiens*</i>	Northern Leopard Frog
<i>Ascaphus montanus</i>	Rocky Mountain Tailed Frog
<i>Bufo boreas*</i>	Western Toad

FISH

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Salvelinus confluentus*T</i>	Bull Trout
<i>Culaea inconstans**</i>	Brook Stickleback
<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	Longnose Sucker
<i>Cottus bairdi</i>	Mottled Sculpin
<i>Ptychocheilus oregonensis</i>	Northern Pikeminnow

INVERTEBRATES

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Hydropsyche confusa</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Lepidostoma unicolor</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Dicosmoecus gilvipes</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Arctopsyche grandis</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Neophylax rickeri</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Neophylax splendens</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Micrasema bactro</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Brachycentrus americanus</i>	A Caddisfly
<i>Serratella tibialis</i>	A Mayfly
<i>Ephemerella excrucians</i>	A Mayfly
<i>Baetis tricaudatus</i>	A Mayfly
<i>Epeorus longimanus</i>	A Mayfly
<i>Drunella coloradensis</i>	A Mayfly
<i>Drunella spinifera</i>	A Mayfly
<i>Ergodesmus compactus</i>	A Millipede
<i>Endopus parvipes*</i>	A Millipede
<i>Rhyacophila narvae</i>	A Rhyacophilan Caddisfly

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Zaitzevia parvula</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Heterlimnius corpulentus</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Cleptelmis addenda</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Lara avara</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Narpus concolor</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Optioservus quadrimaculatus</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Ordobrevia nubifera</i>	A Riffle Beetle
<i>Zapada cinctipes</i>	A Stonefly
<i>Zapada oregonensis</i>	A Stonefly
<i>Doroneuria theodora</i>	A Stonefly
<i>Hesperoperla pacifica</i>	A Stonefly
<i>Erynnis afranius</i>	Afranius Duskywing
<i>Rhyacophila alexanderi</i> *	Alexander's Rhyacophilan Caddisfly
<i>Oreohelix alpina</i> *	Alpine Mountainsnail
<i>Nesovitrea electrina</i>	Amber Glass
<i>Cordulia shurtleffi</i>	American Emerald
<i>Agapetus montanus</i> **	An Agapetus Caddisfly
<i>Plebejus glandon</i>	Arctic Blue
<i>Anguispira kochi</i>	Banded Tigersnail
<i>Nesovitrea binneyana</i>	Blue Glass
<i>Euconulus fulvus</i>	Brown Hive
<i>Aeshna canadensis</i>	Canada Darner
<i>Oreohelix elrodi</i> *	Carinate Mountainsnail
<i>Ladona julia</i> **	Chalk-fronted Corporal
<i>Sympetrum internum</i>	Cherry-faced Meadowhawk
<i>Arion rufus</i>	Chocolate Arion
<i>Cryptomastix mullani</i>	Coeur d'Alene Oregonian
<i>Plathemis lydia</i>	Common Whitetail
<i>Vertigo modesta</i>	Cross Vertigo
<i>Oreohelix strigosa depressa</i>	Depressed Rocky Mountainsnail
<i>Leucorrhinia intacta</i>	Dot-tailed Whiteface
<i>Eubbranchipus serratus</i>	Ethologist Fairy Shrimp
<i>Radiodiscus abietum</i> **	Fir Pinwheel
<i>Discus whitneyi</i>	Forest Disc
<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	Four-spotted Skimmer
<i>Polygona faunus</i>	Green Comma
<i>Dipheter hageni</i>	Hagen's Small Minnow Mayfly
<i>Discus brunsoni</i> *	Lake Disc
<i>Limenitis lorquini</i>	Lorquin's Admiral
<i>Somatochlora semicircularis</i> **	Mountain Emerald
<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	Mourning Cloak
<i>Chlosyne palla</i>	Northern Checkerspot
<i>Goereilla baumannii</i> *	Northern Rocky Mountains Refugium Caddisfly

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Caudatella edmundsi</i> **	Northern Rocky Mountains Refugium Mayfly
<i>Arion fasciatus</i> ***	Orange-banded Arion
<i>Cordulegaster dorsalis</i>	Pacific Spiketail
<i>Aeshna palmata</i>	Paddle-tailed Darner
<i>Zonitoides arboreus</i>	Quick Gloss
<i>Platyprepia virginalis</i>	Ranchman's Tiger Moth
<i>Punctum californicum</i>	Ribbed Spot
<i>Calopteryx aequabilis</i>	River Jewelwing
<i>Oreohelix strigosa</i>	Rocky Mountainsnail
<i>Polites sabuleti</i>	Sandhill Skipper
<i>Pristiloma wascoense</i> *	Shiny Tightcoil
<i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i>	Signal Crayfish
<i>Vallonia cyclophorella</i>	Silky Vallonia
<i>Ophiogomphus occidentis</i> **	Sinuuous Snaketail
<i>Prophyaon humile</i> *	Smoky Taildropper
<i>Microphysula ingersolli</i>	Spruce Snail
<i>Discus shimekii</i> *	Striate Disc
<i>Oreohelix subrudis</i>	Subalpine Mountainsnail
<i>Vertigo elatior</i>	Tapered Vertigo
<i>Libellula pulchella</i>	Twelve-spotted Skimmer
<i>Aeshna interrupta</i>	Variable Darner
<i>Vitrina pellucida</i>	Western Glass-snail
<i>Margaritifera falcata</i> *	Western Pearlshell

VASCULAR PLANTS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Ophioglossum pusillum</i> *	Adder's Tongue
<i>Eleocharis rostellata</i> *	Beaked Spikerush
<i>Bidens beckii</i> *	Beck Water-marigold
<i>Potamogeton obtusifolius</i> *	Blunt-leaved Pondweed
<i>Cardamine rupicola</i> *	Cliff Toothwort
<i>Cypripedium fasciculatum</i> *	Clustered Lady's-slipper
<i>Dryopteris cristata</i> *	Crested Shieldfern
<i>Drosera anglica</i> *	English Sundew
<i>Epipactis gigantea</i> *	Giant Helleborine
<i>Carex rostrata</i> *	Glaucus Beaked Sedge
<i>Grindelia howellii</i> *	Howell's Gumweed
<i>Carex lacustris</i> *	Lake-bank Sedge
<i>Botrychium lineare</i> *	Linearleaf Moonwort
<i>Liparis loeselii</i> *	Loesel's Twayblade
<i>Phacelia lyallii</i>	Lyall Phacelia
<i>Botrychium minganense</i> **	Mingan Island Moonwort
<i>Synthyris canbyi</i> *	Mission Mountain kittentails

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Botrychium lunaria</i> **	Moonwort Grape-fern
<i>Botrychium montanum</i> *	Mountain Moonwort
<i>Lycopodium inundatum</i> *	Northern Bog Clubmoss
<i>Botrychium pinnatum</i> ****	Northern Moonwort
<i>Carex livida</i> **	Pale Sedge
<i>Scheuchzeria palustris</i> *	Pod Grass
<i>Amerorchis rotundifolia</i> *	Round-leaved Orchis
<i>Mimulus breviflorus</i> *	Short-flowered Monkeyflower
<i>Eriophorum gracile</i> *	Slender Cottongrass
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i> **	Small Yellow Lady's-slipper
<i>Cypripedium passerinum</i> *	Sparrow's-egg Lady's-slipper
<i>Botrychium spathulatum</i> *	Spoon-leaf Moonwort
<i>Mimulus ampliatus</i> *	Stalk-leaved Monkeyflower
<i>Botrychium pedunculosum</i> *	Stalked Moonwort
<i>Mimulus hymenophyllus</i> ****	Thinsepal monkeyflower
<i>Trichophorum cespitosum</i> *	Tufted Club-rush
<i>Botrychium ascendens</i> *	Upward-lobed Moonwort
<i>Schoenoplectus subterminalis</i> *	Water Bulrush
<i>Howellia aquatilis</i> *T	Water Howellia
<i>Botrychium crenulatum</i> *	Wavy Moonwort
<i>Botrychium hesperium</i> *	Western Moonwort

NONVASCULAR PLANTS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Eurhynchium pulchellum</i> var. <i>barnesii</i> ****	
<i>Brigantiaea praeternissa</i> **	Brick-spored Firedot Lichen
<i>Bryum calobryoides</i>	Bryum moss
<i>Solorina bispora</i> *	Chocolate Chip Lichen
<i>Neckera douglasii</i> *	Douglas' neckera moss
<i>Lobaria hallii</i> *	Gray Lungwort Lichen
<i>Ramalina obtusata</i> *	Hooded Ramalina Lichen
<i>Collema curtisporum</i> *	Jelly Lichen
<i>Parmeliella triptophylla</i> *	Lead Lichen
<i>Sphagnum magellanicum</i> *	Magellan's Peatmoss
<i>Evernia divaricata</i> **	Mountain Oakmoss Lichen
<i>Pseudocyphellaria anomala</i> *	Netted Specklebelly Lichen
<i>Ramalina pollinaria</i> *	Powdery Twig Lichen
<i>Verrucaria kootenaica</i> *	Speck Lichen

*Species of Concern

**Potential Species of Concern

***Exotic Species (not native to Montana)

****Status Under Review

E Endangered—listed in the Federal Register as being in danger of extinction.

T Threatened—listed in the Federal Register as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

Appendix B

List of Endangered and Threatened Species

MAMMALS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Lynx canadensis</i> (T)	Canada Lynx
<i>Canis lupus</i> (E)	Gray Wolf
<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i> (T)	Grizzly Bear

FISH

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i> (T)	Bull Trout

PLANTS

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<i>Howellia aquatilis</i> (T)	Water Howellia

(E) Endangered—listed in the Federal Register as being in danger of extinction

(T) Threatened—listed in the Federal Register as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future

Appendix C

List of Preparers and Reviewers

<i>Author's Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Work Unit</i>
Kathleen Burchett	Project leader	USFWS, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Great Falls, MT
Mark Ely	Geographic information system (GIS) specialist	USFWS, Region 6, Division of Refuge Planning, Lakewood, CO
Vanessa Fields	Wildlife biologist	USFWS, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Great Falls, MT
Randy Gazda	Wildlife biologist	USFWS, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Great Falls, MT
Toni Griffin	Planning team leader	USFWS, Region 6, Division of Refuge Planning, Lakewood, CO
Bob Johnson	Deputy refuge manager	USFWS, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Great Falls, MT
Greg Neudecker	Assistant Montana State Coordinator	USFWS, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Ovando, MT
Jim Stutzman	Montana State Coordinator	USFWS, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Great Falls, MT
Jason Steigert	Economist	BBC Research & Consulting, Denver, CO
<i>Reviewer's Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Work Unit</i>
Laurel Bowen	Writer-editor	TBC Solutions, Clinton, TN
David Lucas	Chief of planning	USFWS, Region 6, Division of Refuge Planning, Lakewood, CO

Appendix D

Finding of No Significant Impact

**U.S. Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Region 6, Denver, Colorado**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Swan Valley Conservation Area
Missoula and Lake counties, Montana**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed the Land Protection Plan and Environmental Assessment, Swan Valley Conservation Area. The Environmental Assessment evaluates two alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, and the subsequent environmental consequences of establishing the Swan Valley Conservation Area.

Alternative B, the preferred alternative, was selected for implementation because it best meets the Service's objective to maintain the continued presence of the large expanse of intact habitat in the Swan Valley. The Swan Valley Conservation Area has been proposed to help protect the Swan Valley from being drastically changed by widespread, unplanned residential or commercial development. This proposal also would benefit the American public by protecting wildlife, water quality, and open space. The following is a summary of anticipated environmental effects from implementation of the preferred alternative:

1. Establishing the Swan Valley Conservation Area would provide for the conservation of up to 10,000 conservation easement acres of important habitat on private land, and includes the fee-title purchase of up to 1,000 acres immediately adjacent to Swan River National Wildlife Refuge. This project would help maintain the uniqueness of the Swan Valley region and complement other conservation efforts by The Nature Conservancy, The Montana Land Reliance, Swan Valley Ecosystem Center, and other state and federal agencies.
2. Conservation easements and fee-title purchases within the Swan Valley Conservation Area would help alleviate habitat fragmentation issues. Maintaining key biological linkages would facilitate wildlife movement and provide for wildlife habitat requirements for species such as the grizzly bear, Canada lynx, wolverine, and gray wolf. The potential for human-wildlife conflicts would be greatly reduced.
3. Compatible agricultural practices such as livestock grazing or haying would continue, while sodbusting (breaking of native rangeland) would be prohibited. Easements would maximize the connectivity with other protected grasslands and decrease the negative impacts of habitat fragmentation on wildlife species.
4. Water resources on 11,000 acres would be protected from increased non-point source pollution from residential subdivision, commercial development, and draining of wetlands, which are prohibited under the proposed easement program and would not occur on fee-title property. This project will help reduce the demand for potable water associated with new subdivisions and the challenges to water rights that may follow.
5. The location and distribution, but not rate or density, of human population growth would be affected. Positive effects may occur from increased wildlife dependent public use such as wildlife viewing, photography, environmental education, interpretation, fishing, and hunting opportunities on fee-title

lands. Open space also may enhance property values on adjoining lands as people begin to seek out undeveloped lands in the future.

6. The Service, within the approved project boundary, would create no additional land-use regulations. The purchase of an easement would not result in a transfer of land title, and private landowners would continue to pay property taxes. Preventing subdivision and development could decrease future tax revenues in certain market areas. Minimal changes to the tax base are anticipated for fee-title lands which will not exceed 1,000 acres in the project area. Purchased fee-title lands will be subject to the Revenue Sharing Act (16 USC 715s) which requires revenue sharing payments to counties for purchase of the land. The amount is based on the greatest of (1) $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 percent of the market value, (2) 25 percent of the net receipts, or (3) 75 cents per acre. Open space could actually provide a net savings to local governments when compared to the revenues generated and costs of services associated with residential development.

7. Oil and gas exploration or development on private land would not be precluded. Typically, conservation easements do not affect subsurface estates (oil and gas deposits) because the Service only acquires rights associated with surface ownership. In many places where the subsurface estate has been severed from surface ownership, including those in the Swan Valley, the landowner does not own the subsurface rights; this means that the easement that the Service acquires from the landowner is junior to the subsurface rights. In instances where a landowner owns both the surface and the subsurface estate, the Service would treat oil and gas development as a permitted use and provide for such development in the easement document. Easements contain reasonable surface stipulations for such actions as revegetation of disturbed areas, access, and site reclamation.

8. Wind development within the Swan Valley Conservation Area would not occur on conservation easements which reduces fragmentation within the Valley from the placement of towers and associated infrastructure development. This improves wildlife corridors' integrity throughout the Valley. Restricting wind towers also prevents mortality from direct strikes of towers by migratory birds and other avian wildlife species.

9. Conservation easements purchased on private tracts would not change the landowner's right to manage public access to their property. Private landowners would retain full control over their property access rights, including allowing or restricting hunting and fishing on their lands, under the proposed easement program. Lands purchased in fee-title would be managed as part of the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge, which provides public use. Wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities at the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge include hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, interpretation, and environmental education. Fee-title acquisition would provide additional recreational opportunities on the refuge.

10. The long term biological productivity of approximately 11,000 acres of grassland, riparian, forest and tundra ecosystems, including increased protection of endangered and threatened species and maintenance of biological diversity by preserving a large intact functioning system would occur. The nation would gain the protection of species for future generations of Americans. The public would gain long term opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreational activities from the continued presence of wildlife in the Valley.

11. Protection of the Swan Valley will build resiliency and resistance to disturbances in the natural system from stressors which will help the ecological system absorb changes from climate change. The

Swan Valley CA will accomplish this by maintaining intact, interconnected landscapes, and restoring fragmented or degraded habitats.

As part of the public scoping process associated with this action, comments were solicited from the public through news releases and public meetings. Two public open houses were held in Condon, Montana on May 18 and June 2, 2010. Public comments were taken to identify issues to be analyzed for the proposed project. Approximately thirty-six landowners, citizens, and elected representatives attended the meetings, and most expressed positive support for the project. In addition, the Service's field staff contacted local government officials, other public agencies, and conservation groups, all of which have expressed an interest in and a desire to protect the Swan Valley from the pressures brought about by rural subdivisions.

Thus, this EA has taken a hard look at the environmental impacts to inform the public and ourselves about the consequences of the proposed action. Environmental consequences will be beneficial to wildlife habitat, endangered species, migratory birds, water quality, and native fish. While the proposal to establish the Swan Valley Conservation Area will largely preserve the current state of the natural environment and prevent degradation, there may be some reduction in energy development requiring surface occupancy, that would otherwise occur, but for the easements proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Substantive conflict is not apparent over these land use issues; the vast majority of verbal and written comments received during scoping meetings and on the environmental assessment were in favor of the establishment of the Swan Valley Conservation Area through the use of voluntary conservation easements and limited fee-title purchase.

In determining whether this project is a major action significantly¹ affecting the quality of the human environment, we looked at both the context and intensity of the action (40 CFR § 1508.27, 40 CFR § 1508.14) as required by NEPA. The project will be implemented over time dependent upon the Fish and Wildlife Service's ability to obtain the funding needed for easement and fee-title acquisitions. Of the 187,400 acres of habitat within the boundary area, 10,000 acres may be entered into voluntary easements with the Service, on a strictly voluntary basis with willing sellers only, and up to 1,000 acres may be purchased in fee-title from willing sellers only.

Because the human environment² is interpreted by the National Environmental Policy Act to mean the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment (40 CFR § 1508.14), in addition to our thorough analysis of physical environmental effects, we carefully assessed the manner in which the local people relate to the environment in the Swan Valley. Economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require the preparation an environmental impact statement (40 CFR § 1508.14). The location of the proposed action is largely rural and dominated by agricultural industries, mainly ranching. The vast majorities of commentators on the Swan Valley Conservation Area project supported the proposed action indicating in various comments that it would help them to relate to their natural and physical environment in much the same way they do now. Those who are interested in pursuing other economic development opportunities, such as wind energy, will not be precluded from doing so because the proposed action involves easements acquired on a voluntary basis only.

Therefore, in consideration of the fact that the Fish and Wildlife Service's conservation easement approach has a proven track record of effectiveness and minimal controversy due to its fundamental basis of voluntary participation to accomplish mutual goals of the Service and landowners, the compelling science in support of the project, and my review and evaluation of the information contained in the supporting reference, I have determined that establishing the boundary for the Swan Valley

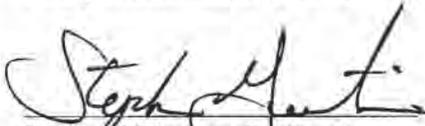
Conservation Area is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

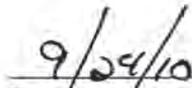
The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and supporting Environmental Assessment will be available to the public. Copies of the Environmental Assessment are available for all affected landowners, agencies, private groups, and other interested parties.

The FONSI, Environmental Assessment, and other supporting documents are on file at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Refuges, Division of Planning, P.O. Box 25486-DFC, Denver, Colorado 80225. They are available for public inspection upon request.

Supporting Reference

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. *Land Protection Plan and Environmental Assessment, Swan Valley Conservation Area*, Denver, Colorado.


Regional Director, Region 6
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service


Date

¹ 40 CFR § 1508.27 "Significantly" as used in NEPA requires considerations of both context and intensity: (a) Context. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant; and (b) Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action.

² 40 CFR § 1508.14 "Human environment" shall be interpreted comprehensively to include the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment. (See the definition of "effects" (40 CFR § 1508.8).) This means that economic or social effects are not intended by themselves to require preparation of an environmental impact statement. When an environmental impact statement is prepared and economic or social and natural or physical environmental effects are interrelated, then the environmental impact statement will discuss all of these effects on the human environment.

Appendix E

Environmental Action Statement

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 6
Denver, Colorado

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined that the action of establishing the executive boundary of the Swan Valley Conservation Area:

- is a categorical exclusion as provided by 516 DM 2, Appendices 1 and 2, and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1. No further documentation will be made.
- is found not to have significant environmental effects as determined by the attached Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment.
- is found to have special environmental conditions as described in the attached environmental assessment. The attached Finding of No Significant Impact will not be final nor any actions taken pending a 30-day period for public review [40CFR 1501.4(e)(2)].
- is found to have significant effects and, therefore, a notice of intent will be published in the *Federal Register* to prepare an environmental impact statement before the project is considered further.
- is denied because of environmental damage, Service policy, or mandate.
- is an emergency situation. Only those actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency will be taken. Other related actions remain subject to NEPA review.

Other supporting document:

Draft Environmental Assessment and Land Protection Plan, Swan Valley Conservation Area



Assistant Regional Director
National Wildlife Refuge System, Region 6

9/24/10

Date



Regional Director, Region 6
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

9/24/10

Date

Appendix F

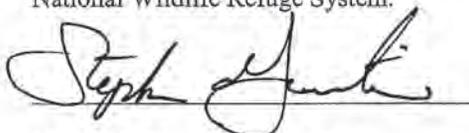
Environmental Compliance Certificate

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, REGION 6 ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE

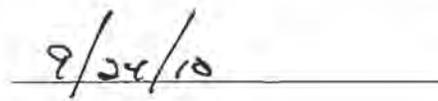
PROJECT: Swan Valley Conservation Area
STATE: Montana

ACTION (indicate if not applicable)	DATE
NEPA (NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT)	
Categorical Exclusion.....	N/A
Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact.....	9/24/10
Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision.....	N/A
Executive Order 11593, Protection of Historical, Archaeological, and Scientific Properties.....	8/28/10
Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management.....	8/28/10
Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands.....	8/28/10
Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.....	8/28/10
Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations.....	8/28/10
Executive Order 12996, Management and General Public Use of the National Wildlife Refuge System.....	8/28/10
Endangered Species Act, Section 7.....	9/07/10
Coastal Zone Management Act, Section 307.....	N/A
Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act.....	9/17/10
Level I Contaminants and Hazardous Waste (Secretarial Order 3127: 602DM2).....	8/28/10

I hereby certify that all requirements of the law, rules, and Service regulations or policies applicable to planning for the above project have met with compliance. I approve the establishment of the executive boundary for the Swan Valley Conservation Area to be administered and managed as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.



Regional Director, Region 6
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Date

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The following Executive Orders and legislative acts have been reviewed as they apply to the establishment of the executive boundary of the Swan Valley Conservation Area:

1. **Executive Order 11593. Protection of Historical, Archaeological, and Scientific Properties.** The regional archaeologist determined that the acquisition of easements within the Swan Valley Conservation Area is not an undertaking under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In fact, the project has the potential to protect cultural resources. If, in the future, the Service grants a special permit for the landowner under the easement, section 106 may be relevant at that time. If so, the Service will take the necessary steps to address any historical or archaeological issues.
2. **Executive Order 11988. Floodplain Management.** No structures that could be damaged by or that would significantly influence the movement of floodwater are planned for construction by the Fish and Wildlife Service on easements acquired as part of this project.
3. **Executive Order 11990. Protection of Wetlands.** This action is consistent with protection of existing wetland resources from incompatible activities and thereby complies with this executive order.
4. **Executive Order 12372. Intergovernmental Review.** The Service has discussed the proposal to establish the Swan Valley Conservation Area with landowners; conservation organizations; other federal agencies; state, and county commissioners; and other interested groups and individuals. At the federal level, the Service staff has briefed Senators Baucus and Tester, as well as the congressional delegation, and coordinated with representatives from other federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. At the state level, Governor Schweitzer's staff, along with the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks was briefed on the project.
5. **Executive Order 12898. Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations.** Establishing the Swan Valley Conservation Area will not have a disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effect on minority or low-income populations. Therefore, this action complies with this Executive Order.
6. **Executive Order 12996. Management and General Public Use of the National Wildlife Refuge System.** The public has been invited to participate in the planning process and has been very engaged. The Service held two public open houses to seek input from the public regarding the proposed establishment of the conservation area, and to identify the issues that needed to be addressed in the planning process. Approximately thirty-three written comments have been received from the public. The public's issues and comments have been incorporated into the Environmental Assessment and a copy of the final document will be sent to all interested landowners, agencies, private groups, and other parties. For conservation easement acquisition, the Service will not manage or have control over public access to the protected lands; this right will remain with the private landowner. For fee-title acquisition a compatibility determination will be conducted for proposed uses on lands within the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge.

7. **Endangered Species Act, section 7.** An internal section 7 consultation concluded the proposed action would have a 'May affect, but is not likely to adversely affect species/modify critical habitat' on listed species within the acquisition project area.
8. **Coastal Zone Management Act.** Due to the location of the project area, compliance of this Act was determined to be not applicable.
9. **Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act.** Applicable provisions of P.L. 91-646 will be applied to ownerships as they become available for purchase. Any landowner would be eligible for reimbursement of incidental expenses (recording fee, etc) incurred as a result of a sale to the United States.
10. **Secretarial Order 3127. Contaminants and Hazardous Waste.** A Level 1 pre-acquisition contaminant survey will be completed prior to the purchase of any easement.

I hereby certify that the Service has complied with all requirements of law, rules, or regulations applicable to pre-acquisition planning for the above project. I approve the establishment of the executive boundary of the Swan Valley Conservation Area and the subsequent acquisition of up to 10,000 acres of easements from willing sellers, and up to 1,000 acres of fee-title lands adjacent to the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge:

Regional Director, Region 6
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date

9/24/10

Appendix G

Section 7 Biological Evaluation

INTRA-SERVICE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SECTION 7 EVALUATION FORM

Originating Persons: Kathleen A. Burchett, Project Leader, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex and Toni Griffin, Refuges, Division of Planning, Denver Regional Office

Telephone Number: 406/727-7400

Date: 8/26/10

I. Region: Region 6

II. Service Activity: Establishment of the Swan Valley Conservation Area

III. Pertinent Species and Habitat

A. Listed species and/or their critical habitat within the 3 county action area:

LAKE COUNTY		
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	E
Bull Trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	T
Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>	T
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	T
Water Howellia	<i>Howellia aquatilis</i>	T
MISSOULA COUNTY		
Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>	E
Bull Trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	T
Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>	T
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	T
Water Howellia	<i>Howellia aquatilis</i>	T

C - Candidate
T - Threatened
E - Endangered

B. Proposed species and/or their proposed critical habitat within the county / action area:

Mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) listed as proposed threatened species in

Missoula County.

C. Candidate species within the county / action area:

Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) is a candidate species in Missoula County.

IV. Geographic Area/Action

This Intra Section 7 covers the establishment of the Swan Valley Conservation Area in portions of 2 counties in Montana; Lake and Missoula counties.

V. Location

The proposed boundary (see attached map):

- State of Montana
 - A. Counties: Lake, Missoula.
- Description of project boundary for the Swan Valley Conservation Area:

The Swan Valley is located on the western edge of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, approximately 30 miles southeast of Kalispell, Montana. The Bob Marshall Wilderness and Glacier National Park mark the eastern boundary, with the Mission Mountains Wilderness and Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribal lands on the western boundary, and the Blackfoot River Valley flanking the southern side of the watershed. The project area encompasses an 187,400-acre Swan River watershed. The watershed contains approximately 332,000 acres in protected public ownership.

VI. Description of the Proposed Action

The Swan Valley Conservation Area is a landscape conservation strategy to protect one of the last undeveloped, low elevation coniferous forest ecosystems in western Montana. Swan Valley is situated between the roadless areas of the Glacier National Park, Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, the Mission Mountains Wilderness, and the Bitterroot/Selway Wilderness Complex to the southwest. As such, it provides an avenue of connectivity between the Canadian Rockies and the Central Rockies of Idaho and Wyoming.

This proposal focuses on the strategic purchase of 10,000 acres of conservation easements on private lands nestled between the Bob Marshall Wilderness and the Mission Mountain Wilderness. This proposal also includes the purchase of up to 1,000 acres immediately adjacent to Swan River National Wildlife Refuge.

VII. Determination of Effects

At the federal level, five species are listed as threatened or endangered, including the gray wolf, grizzly bear, Canada lynx, water howellia, and bull trout.

The proposed establishment of the Swan Valley Conservation Area will have a beneficial effect on species listed in Section III. One of the purposes for the establishment of the Swan Valley Conservation Area is to support the recovery and protection of threatened and endangered species, and to reduce the likelihood of future listings under the Endangered Species Act.

Establishing the Swan Valley Conservation Area would provide for the conservation of up to 11,000 acres of important habitat on private land. This program would help maintain the uniqueness of the Swan Valley and complement conservation efforts of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Montana Land Reliance, Vital Ground, Swan Valley Ecosystem Center, and other federal and state agencies.

Conservation easements within the Swan Valley would help alleviate habitat fragmentation issues. Key biological linkages would facilitate wildlife movement and provide for wildlife habitat requirements. The potential for human-wildlife conflicts would be greatly reduced.

Compatible agricultural practices such as livestock grazing or haying would continue, while sodbusting (breaking of native rangeland) would be prohibited. Easements would maximize the connectivity with other protected grasslands and decrease the negative impacts of habitat fragmentation on grassland birds.

Water resources on 11,000 acres of conservation easements and fee-title acquisitions would be protected from increased non-point source pollution from residential subdivision, commercial development, and draining of wetlands, all of which are prohibited under the proposed easement program. This is particularly important for water howellia that depends exclusively on small, shallow, depressional wetlands scattered across the Valley floor. The Swan Valley is believed to contain the world's greatest density of water howellia.

For listing purposes, the Service divided the range of bull trout into distinct population segments, and twenty-seven recovery units. Swan River Valley falls within the Clark Fork River Recovery Unit, and the Upper Clark Fork Recovery Subunit. Within this subunit, the watershed has been identified as a core recovery area. The Swan Lake bull trout population has remained strong. The Swan Lake population is stable, because fish can access about 150 miles of high quality tributary spawning habitat. Most bull trout populations are declining, because of habitat degradation, but many of Swan Valley's tributary streams are in good to excellent condition. The Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Park's bull trout redd counts indicate that the total adult population is likely over 2,500 adult bull trout. The conservation easement program and strategic fee-title purchase will help preserve these important habitats.

The Swan Valley watershed is the southern boundary for the Northern Continental Divide grizzly bear recovery zone. The Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan includes all of Swan River watershed as suitable or occupied habitat. The USGS Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project confirmed the presence of forty-five grizzly bears in the Swan Valley in 2003-2004. The Swan Valley is believed to be the key linkage zone to the Bitterroot/Selway Wilderness Complex to the southwest providing an avenue of connectivity between the Canadian Rockies and the Central Rockies of Idaho and Wyoming. Conservation easements and fee-title purchases will help protect significant corridors.

The Northern Rocky Mountain Gray Wolf Recovery Plan established three recovery zones in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. The Swan River watershed is in the Northwest Montana Recovery Area. In August 2010, the USFWS relisted the gray wolf as endangered species in the western Great Lakes, the northern Rocky Mountain states of Idaho and Montana and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Utah. As of 2009, MFWP has confirmed the presence of three resident wolf packs and estimates that at least fifteen to twenty-five wolves inhabit the watershed. Additional protection through conservation easements and fee-title will continue to protect habitat for the gray wolf.

The Swan River watershed is located within the Northwestern Montana/Northeastern Idaho Core Area for Canada lynx. The watershed is a stronghold for the Canada lynx in the northern Rocky Mountains. Based on ongoing research in the Blackfoot and Swan watersheds, lynx populations appear stable, although low reproductive rates are characteristic of this population. Since 1998, over eighty lynx have been monitored in this area, providing information on habitat use, reproduction, mortality, and movement. This research has shown that the Swan and Blackfoot watersheds contain some of the best remaining habitat for lynx in the continental United States. Large, intact spruce/subalpine fir forests above 4,000 feet in this area provide high quality habitat for lynx and for snowshoe hares, the primary lynx food source. Regenerating forest stands are often used as foraging habitat during the snow-free months while older, multi-storied stands serve as denning and year-round habitat. Conservation easements protecting critical forested/wetland habitats including ponderosa pine, cedar/hemlock and Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir communities on the valley floor as well as riparian areas will have long lasting benefits for the Canada lynx.

Conserving native land cover is an important component of maintaining ecosystem structure and function. Under the proposed action, native forest habitats would remain intact, continuing to provide ecosystem goods and services to landowners and local communities. Ecosystem services include: soil erosion control, water supply, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.

VIII. Effects Determination and Response Requested

A. Listed Species / designed critical habitat

No Effect / no adverse modification

X Concurrence

May affect, but is not likely to adversely affect species / modify critical habitat

X Concurrence

May affect, and is likely to adversely affect species / modify critical habitat

____ Formal Consultation

B. Proposed Species / proposed critical habitat

No effect on proposed species / no adverse modification of proposed critical habitat (species: mountain plover)

X Concurrence

Is likely to jeopardize proposed species or adversely
modify proposed critical habitat
(species: mountain plover)

_____Concurrence



Kathleen A. Burchett, Project Leader
Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex
National Wildlife Refuge System
Region 6

IX. Reviewing ESO Evaluation

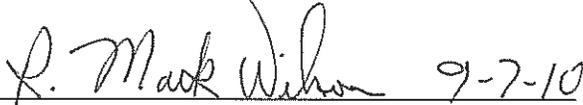
Concurrence

_____Non-Concurrence

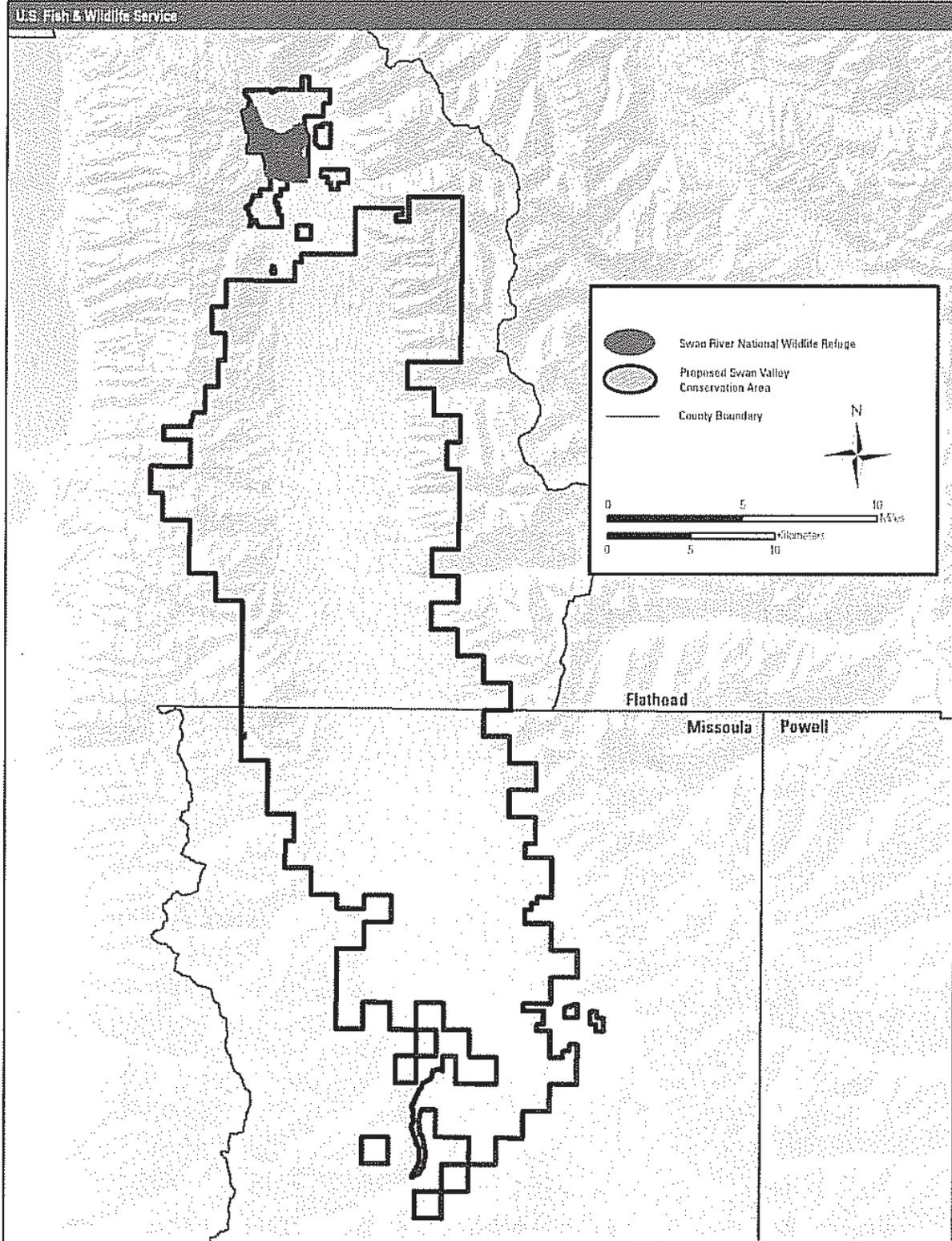
_____Formal Consultation Required

_____Conference Required

_____Informal Conference Required



Mark Wilson, Field Office Supervisor,
Ecological Services Montana Field Office
Region 6



Appendix H

Director's Approval to Establish the Swan Valley Conservation Area



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:
ANRS-CPP /DTS 046495

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region 6

From: Deputy Director *Casey Aske*

Subject: Approval to Proceed with Publication and Distribution of the Final Planning Documents for the Creation of Swan Valley Conservation Area, Montana

I concur with your September 27, 2010 request to authorize the creation of the Swan Valley Conservation Area (MT) as a new unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Congratulations on a thorough job with your Environmental Assessment and FONSI for this new unit. I am extremely excited about projects such as this that strive to protect large areas for the conservation of fish and wildlife.

You have proposed a new acquisition project that defines the principles of Strategic Habitat Conservation. Prior to land acquisition, pursuant to the Land Protection Plan, please link your priority areas to spatially explicit data. As these data become available, please ensure that you pursue priority tracts that will provide measurable outcomes related to population goals or the conservation of important habitats.

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IN AMERICA 



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region



MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 25486, DFC
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

SEP 27 2010

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Regional Director, Region 6

Subject: Transmittal of Decision Document—Crown of the Continent: Establishing the Swan Valley Conservation Area

The Decision Document to establish the Swan Valley Conservation Area, in western Montana has been approved. With the approval of this project, the Service, in cooperation with our partners, will be able to conserve up to 11,000 acres of native habitat.

In order to strategically conserve habitat within the Swan Valley, the Service focused on the threatened grizzly bear and bull trout. High priority grizzly bear habitat was identified using a spatially-explicit model of key linkage zones. For the bull trout, critical habitat has been designated and explicitly mapped in each recovery unit (RU) by the Service. There are approximately 36,000 acres of private land in the proposed Swan Valley CA. A total of 117 miles of bull trout critical habitat and 10,000 acres of grizzly linkage zones occur on private land. With the current levels of development and fragmentation within the Swan Valley, bull trout populations appear stable; however, the pressure of human-cause mortality on grizzly bears is higher than acceptable for recovery. How much more fragmentation or development could occur, yet still keep bull trout populations stable, and not significantly add to grizzly mortality, is unknown. Given that conserving all remaining private land with easements to prevent additional development is not a reasonable or desired goal, the Service has set a goal to protect 11,000 acres of private land. Long-term monitoring of grizzly bears and bull trout will be conducted and the goal of 11,000 acres and acquisition priority will be periodically re-evaluated, as additional scientific information is obtained collaboratively with Service partners and the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

Attached are the following documents, in accordance with land acquisition planning requirements, submitted for the Director's concurrence.

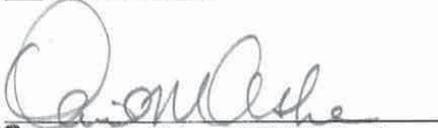
1. Environmental Assessment
2. Environmental Compliance Certificate
3. Environmental Action Statement
4. Finding of No Significant Impact
5. Land Protection Plan
6. Realty Feasibility Report

All fee-title purchases will become part of the Swan River National Wildlife Refuge. For fee-title purchases, an Engineering Assessment will be completed on a case-by-case basis as we proceed

with the pre-acquisition process with willing sellers. The refuge is currently engaged in the Comprehensive Conservation Planning (CCP) process. The management of the additional fee-title acquisitions will be subject to the management recommendations of the Final CCP. As such, a Conceptual Management Plan will not be completed.

Concurrence

Non-concurrence



ACTING Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5.18.2011
Date

Attachments

Appendix I

Public Involvement

Public involvement was initiated for the proposed establishment of a conservation easement project in the Swan Valley in May 2010. A media contact list was compiled and news releases and factsheets were developed and distributed to media outlets, local organizations, elected officials, and interested parties. The news releases and factsheets described the proposed expansion of the conservation easement project, and announced an open house to gather input from the public. Personal outreach efforts were made with county commissioners and other persons of interest.

Scoping was conducted during two public open houses on May 18, 2010; 4–6 p.m., and June 2, 2010; 4–6 p.m., at the Swan Valley Community Center in Condon, Montana. The purpose of scoping was to seek input from the public regarding the establishment of the conservation easement project, and to identify the issues that needed to be addressed in the planning process. Thirty-six people attended the open houses. Twenty-three individuals, three agencies, and one organization provided written comments during the scoping period. Comments identified biological, social, and economic concerns regarding the proposed conservation easement project. The issues raised and comments received helped the planning team to develop the alternatives presented in the draft environmental assessment and land protection plan (EA/LPP). Key issues are described in Chapter 1 of the draft EA/LPP, under “Issues Identified and Selected for Analysis.”

The draft EA/LPP was presented to the public July 26, 2010 for a 30-day comment period. Six written comments were received during the comment period on the draft EA/LPP.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following issues, concerns, and comments are a compilation of those expressed during public scoping, and during the July–August 2010 comment period for the draft EA/LPP. Comments were provided by local and county governments, state agencies, private organizations, and individuals concerned about the natural resources of the Swan Valley. Comments were received verbally at meetings, via email, and in writing.

The refuge staff recognizes and appreciates all input received from the public. To address this input, several clarifications and some changes are reflected in the final environmental assessment and land protection plan.

The issues, comments and concerns are presented as received, followed by responses from the Service. Comments about editorial and presentation corrections were addressed in the production of the final EA/LPP, and are not detailed here.

Comment 1. *I am writing in support of the US Fish & Wildlife Service proposal to use Land and Water Conservation money to purchase easements in 3 areas of Montana, the Blackfoot Valley, Rocky Mountain Front and Swan Valley.*

During the last 40 years I have recreated in each of the areas in question and I value the relatively uncluttered space there greatly. What better way to spend tax dollars than to preserve a landscape that can be enjoyed by everyone in perpetuity.

I would like to continue hunting, fishing, camping and sightseeing in these areas. By purchasing these easements, we can keep the private lands a viable source of income for the owners and at the same time keep the landscape unchanged for visitors like me.

Response 1. Thank you for your comments. The goals of the conservation easement project are to protect fish and wildlife resources while concurrently maintaining the rural character of the area. Implementation of the expansion will support your values of preserving a landscape in perpetuity, keep private lands a viable source of income for the owners, and keep the landscape relatively unchanged for visitors to the Swan Valley.

Comment 2. *I just gave the draft EA for the Swan Valley Conservation Area a read. It sounds all good to me. I liked how the idea is pitched as a part of a much bigger conservation effort. My only concerns are:*

- *Some landowner might be alarmed to find their property suddenly in a “conservation area.”*
- *The easements don’t preclude logging and other timber management practices.*

I have considered pell-mell real estate development a huge threat to the Swan. I'm delighted to hear that there could be more conservation easements here.

Response 2. Thank you for your comments. The Service agrees that a regional landscape conservation strategy will be critical to the conservation of the wildlife and habitats within the Crown of the Continent ecosystem. The Swan Valley lies at the western edge of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem, which is the last remaining ecosystem that still supports a full assemblage of large mammalian predators including grizzly bears, gray wolves, wolverine, and Canada lynx. The three proposed conservation areas help provide landscape-scale protection for wide-roaming species and ecological processes.

Response 2.1. It is Service policy to seek easements from willing sellers only. Participation in the conservation easement project is strictly voluntary.

Response 2.2. Although the conservation easements do not preclude logging and other timber management practices on easement properties, a timber management plan must be submitted by the landowner and approved by the Service prior to the harvesting of any timber, or other timber management practice occurring on lands with a conservation easement.

Comment 3. *I am very concerned about future easements in the Swan Valley. My in-depth study on land currently in private hands without easements is a very low 17,000 acres. We are surrounded by 3.8 million acres of protected lands (wilderness and multiple use types). The economy of the valley is so low that our school has 27 students, grades 1 thru 8. People used to come to the area to work and raise a family—now—they are mostly high end (\$.s) retired folk. I am a Councilman for the Swan Valley Community Council, Vice President of the local AARP [American Association of Retired Persons] Chapter, Election Judge & Poll Manager, and member of the Montana Board of Crime Control. The valley is concerned about if there can be economic development, especially if we lose even more land to conservation easements that will strangle any possibility of this. Please do not act on this expansion of conservation easements in the Swan Valley.*

Response 3. Thank you for your comments. Service data indicates there are currently approximately 36,000 acres of private land in the proposed Swan Valley Conservation Area. Within this area, 117 miles of bull trout critical habitat and 10,000 acres of grizzly linkage zones occur on private lands. With current levels of development and fragmentation within the Swan Valley; bull trout populations appear stable, however, the pressure of human-cause mortality on grizzly bears is higher than acceptable for recovery. How much more fragmentation or

development could occur, yet still keep bull trout populations stable, and not significantly add to grizzly mortality, is unknown. Given that conserving all remaining private land with easements to prevent additional development is not a reasonable or desired goal, especially around the existing population centers of Condon and Salmon Prairie, the Service has set a goal to protect 11,000 acres of existing private lands. Long-term monitoring of grizzly bears and bull trout will be conducted and the goal of 11,000 acres will be periodically reevaluated.

The issue regarding the impacts of conservation easements on local community centers and their ability to grow was also identified during public scoping meetings in Condon on May 18, and on June 2, 2010. The Service agrees the proposed conservation easement project in the Swan Valley should address the need for local rural communities to be able to grow. The final environmental assessment and final land protection plan have been modified to include the following statement, "The Service will work individually with local communities within the Swan Valley Conservation Area to determine the configuration of a community buffer to facilitate economic development adjacent to local communities."

Comment 4. *I am writing in response to your article published in the Seeley Swan Pathfinder of August 5, 2010. I am totally opposed to the government tying up any more land under conservation easements for a number of reasons. First, it is well known that most parcels of land that are presently under conservation easement by one of the several groups that facilitate them has been greatly ignored and is very mismanaged and the level of production has been diminished significantly. When the government is controlling anything, there are substantial cost over runs and the care taken is minimal as best. What has happened to the American dream of private ownership of the land and the dedication of the owners to be the best land stewards possible? I am in a position to be a victim of the US Fish and Wildlife Service in two areas. We have a family ranch on the east front of the Rocky Mountains and also have land in the Swan Valley. I would like to respectfully request that you do NOT attempt to occupy these lands and turn them into government run disaster areas where there is no local involvement other than the vocal special interest environmental groups that have nothing to lose if some citizen chooses to give up their rights to property.*

Response 4. The Service respects private property rights and, as such, will acquire conservation easements only from willing sellers. Landowner's choice whether or not to participate in the project is a tangible example of respect for personal property rights.

The easement project endorses best management practices. Ranchers and landowners currently on the

landscape successfully manage their areas to ensure economic viability. The Service does not endorse management practices that degrade resources or production. For example, cattlemen are successful at determining their land's carrying capacity and being good stewards of their land which includes determining the number of cattle to graze. The Service does not control their economic production. We do restrict draining wetlands, development for residential and commercial operations, and conversion of native grasslands. The lands with conservation easements remain in private ownership and are maintained by the private landowner. The Service provides management suggestions at the landowner's request.

Limited fee-title purchase (less than 1,000 acres) from willing sellers only is proposed adjacent to Swan River National Wildlife Refuge. Under fee-title ownership, refuge staff is responsible for management and maintenance of the area. Fee-title ownership offers the Service the option of additional wildlife-dependent recreational opportunity when compatible with the purpose for which the parcel was acquired. The Service works with local individuals, community groups, county commissioners as well as special interest conservation groups.

Comment 5. *I hope every landowner that wants a CE [conservation easement] could get one.*

Response 5. The Service has established priority acquisition areas because annual appropriated congressional funding (Land and Water Conservation Fund) is generally less than demand. As funding increases, the ability to purchase easements likewise increases.

Comment 6. *The Swan Valley is still one of the few accessible unique areas in the US that is not yet overpopulated. We should educate people to desire to keep it this way.*

Response 6. Thank you for your comments. Conservation easement projects assist with keeping landownership in private hands, while limiting residential and commercial development which often alters the unique attributes of rural lifestyle.

Comment 7. *I own 20 acres, bordered by (now) USFS [U.S. Forest Service], and a 200 acre ranch in a conservation easement. There are also 3 nearby properties in c.e.s [conservation easements]. I have a large wetland on my property, and there are numerous wetlands nearby. Heavy wildlife population. I want to pass the place on to my children. We have a flat, very buildable corner of our property that is separated from where we live by a small road. We have thought if [our] financial situation becomes desperate, we could sell it. I'd rather be paid for a conservation easement!!! I do not want someone living there, but may have no choice. Thank you.*

Response 7. Thank you for your comments. Many participants in our successful easement projects elsewhere in Montana felt similarly when they decided to place their land under conservation easement. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service attributes are protected in perpetuity and the private landowner receives financial compensation accordingly.

Comment 8. *The proposed USFWS [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service] conservation easement program will bring additional resources to private land conservation efforts in the Swan. It will be imperative for USFWS staff to coordinate closely with the NGOs [nongovernment organizations] that have a long history of conservation work in the Swan (MLR [Montana Land Reliance], TNC [The Nature Conservancy], Vital Ground, TPL [The Trust for Public Land], SEC [Swan Ecosystem Center], etc).*

Response 8. Thank you for your comments. The Service strongly agrees with your request to coordinate closely with nongovernmental organizations who have historically worked in the Swan Valley. We hope to continue working with our existing partners and develop new partnerships to address conservation needs of the Swan Valley.

Comment 9. *Great project. We need to have many different levels of protection.*

Response 9. Thank you for your comments. The Service easement project offers financial alternatives to private landowners. Participation in the easement project is voluntary and it is a decision made exclusively by the landowner.

Comment 10. *I applaud this effort—one more tool in the toolbox will help!*

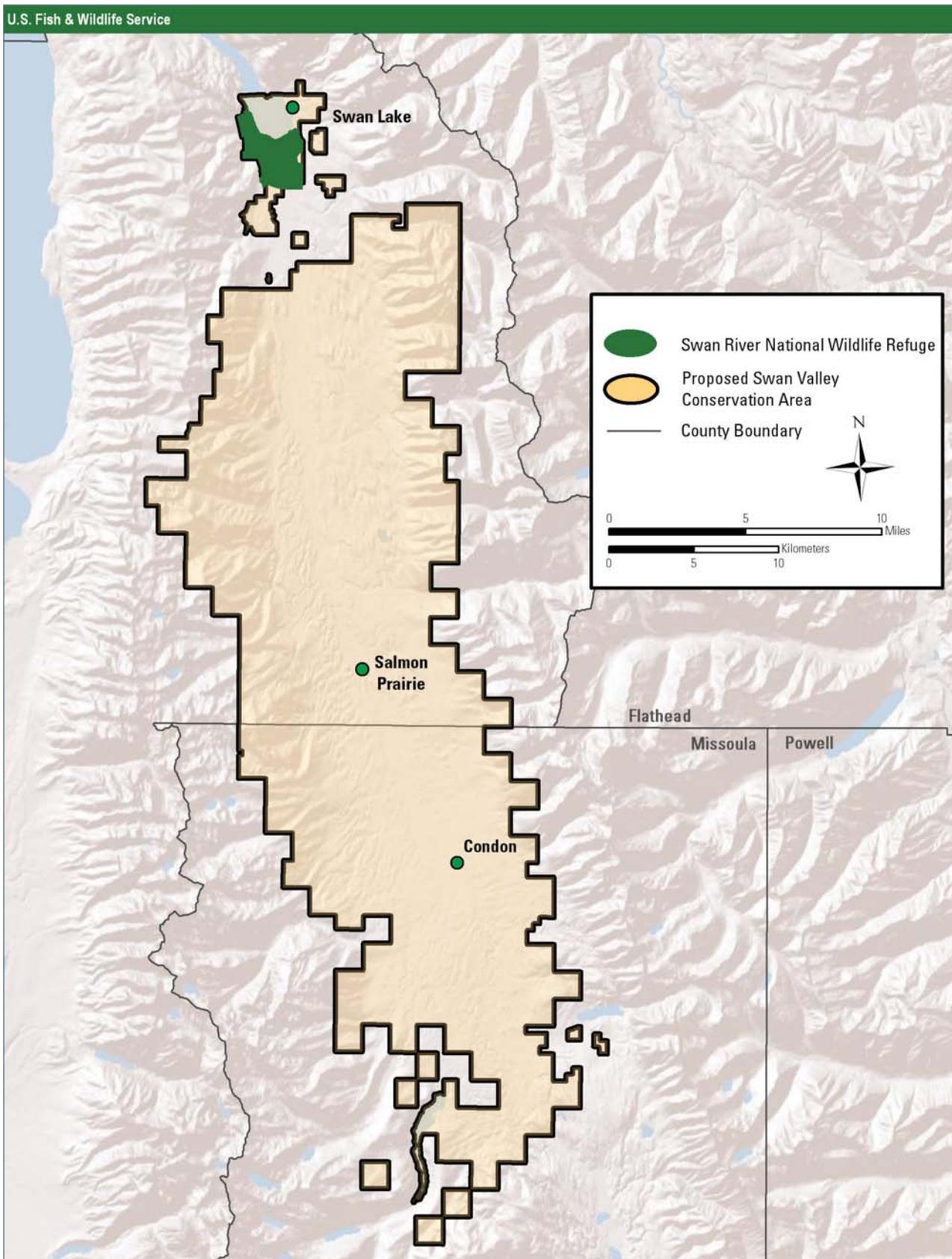
Response 10. Thank you for your comment. The Service can offer landowners an additional option for fish and wildlife protection.

Comment 11. *Large private parcels purchased by wealthy seasonal residents and lower income generations are being priced out of the valley.*

Response 11. Thank you for your comment. Easement project payments can occasionally assist private landowners in remaining on the landscape which they otherwise may not be able to afford.

Comment 12. *Expand boundary to south—Upper Clearwater?? Need purchased easement program in the Swan.*

Response 12. Portions of the Clearwater area are included in the expansion of the Blackfoot Valley Conservation Area (see map). This may include the area of your inquiry.



Response 12 map.

Comment 13. *My main concern is the numerous “Gated Road.” The gated areas deny the public access to hundreds of thousands of acres of public land, most of which have no direct impact on critters except in the spring and winter and should only be gated during that time.*

Response 13. Because easement property remains in private ownership, ingress and egress remains the right of the private landowner. Fee-title purchases that are proposed adjacent to Swan River National Wildlife Refuge may be open to the public for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational use.

Comment 14. *Thank you for: 1) This excellent, professional brochure. Well done. Impressed. 2) For a very effective G.I.S. [Geographic Information System] map for having enough context to make sense, and not cookie-cuttering to the exact boundary. Good job all. Thanks.*

Response 14. Thank you for your comments.

Comment 15. *As I understand what’s being considered, I support USFWS effort in CE program and in restoration.*

Response 15. Thank you for your comment.

Comment 16. *I definitely support conservation easements for the Swan Valley.*

Response 16. Thank you for your comment.

Comment 17. *I am in full support of conservation easements in the Swan.*

Response 17. Thank you for your comment.

Comment 18. *I support this endeavor wholeheartedly. Let’s get this done during the Obama Administration.*

Response 18. Thank you for your comments.

Comment 19. *Consider parcels smaller than 160 acres, especially if there are opportunities for connected easements. Few properties in the Swan are 160 acres or larger.*

Response 19. The Service agrees, and the following language was included in the draft EA and LPP, Chapter 2—Alternatives, Page 7, Alternative B (Proposed Action), “The Service generally focuses on parcels greater than 160 acres, however parcels less than 160 acres may be considered for conservation easements if unique biological values exist.” A similar statement is also included in the final land protection plan under the “Priority Areas” section.

AGENCY, ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMERCIAL CORPORATION COMMENTS

Agency and organization comments include the original letter received and our responses.

Comment 20. *I will be unable to attend the upcoming meetings regarding easements. I do want to express my support for the easement expansion along the Front and in the Blackfoot. I also support establishment of an easement program in the Seeley/Swan region. As you know, there are significant amounts of state trust land in all the areas which we manage in cooperation with neighboring landowners. Maintaining these working lands for habitat and open space as well as livestock and timber productivity is critical for the state and local communities.*

Thank you for this opportunity to support conservation easements as a vital tool for maintaining working lands in these important areas of Montana.

*Mary Sexton, Director
DNRC [State of Montana, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation]*

Response 20. Thank you for your comments. The Service will continue to maintain close communications and implement collaborative conservation efforts with Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation in the future.

Comment 21. *It was nice meeting you guys this morning. The county appreciates you taking your time to meet face to face and explain what you are proposing to do in the Swan Valley. As you most likely gleaned from the conversation, the cost the local government incurs to provide services to properties in the southern Swan Valley is not commensurate with the tax base and because of the large amount of land in the county that is owned by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, every tax dollar is that much more precious. Therefore, while generally supportive of your program objectives regarding the conservation easement program, the county doesn’t really want more land going into a tax exempt status when it comes to the land around the Swan River Wildlife Refuge. Hopefully the “Transfer of Development Rights” exception in the Lake County Density Map and Regulations can help both parties achieve their objectives. The map and regulations are available on our website: http://lakecounty-mt.org/planning/Lake_County_Density_Map.html note: the regulations are in a link on the left side of the screen.*

Again, thanks for coming to meet with us and if you have any questions about the Density Regulations, please feel free to contact us.

Response 21. Thank you for your comments. We support the Lake County TDR [Transfer of Development Rights] program, and will explore the Service's ability to participate in this type of transaction to ensure that development occurs in the most appropriate areas for growth.

Letter # 22

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATION

BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR

1625 ELEVENTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074
FAX: (406) 444-2684PO BOX 201601
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

August 24, 2010

Kathy Burchett
Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge
922 Bootlegger Trail
Great Falls, Montana 59404

Dear Ms. Burchett:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Land Protection Plan for the Swan Valley Conservation Area. We offer the following comments regarding the proposed action and draft EA.

As you note on page 33, Chapter 6 in the Draft Land Protection Plan, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) owns and manages a sizable portion of land within the proposed 187,400 conservation area (CA). Within the proposed CA, DNRC manages 39,700 acres of forest land (21% of the CA) for the purpose of revenue generation to support school trust beneficiaries. DNRC has had a long history of being a cooperater of conservation efforts in the Swan Valley including: 1) Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Conservation Agreement with the USFWS, USFS, and Plum Creek Timber Company, 2) Swan Valley Grizzly Bear Ranger Program; and 3) DNRC/Swan Ecosystem Center MOU to help provide support and funding for other local projects to help minimize conflicts between humans and grizzly bears. Additionally, DNRC has worked for the last seven years with the USFWS to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) covering forest management activities across 550,000 acres in western Montana, including the Swan River State Forest. Given our agency's stake in the Swan Valley we hope to engage with you more often as this project develops.

We offer our support of a logical delineation of a CA which would facilitate the acquisition of conservation easements on private lands in the Swan Valley. We ask that the Service keep in mind DNRC's responsibility to generate revenue on state trust lands and actively manage forests as conservation easements on private lands are considered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Sexton".

Mary Sexton
Director

Response

Response 22. Thank you for your comments.

Letter # 23



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
200 W BROADWAY ST
MISSOULA MT 59802-4292

PHONE: (406) 258-4877
FAX: (406) 721-4043

BCC 2010-187
August 12, 2010

Toni Griffin, Planning Team Leader
Division of Refuge Planning
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, DFC
Denver, CO 80225

RE: Blackfoot Valley and Swan Valley Conservation Easement Programs

Dear Toni:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion of the Blackfoot Valley conservation easement program, and creation of the Swan Valley Conservation easement program. The Missoula Board of County Commissioners supports and encourages efforts to improve land and resource management of public and private lands located within Missoula County. Accordingly, we strongly support both of these conservation easement programs.

We appreciate the continued presence of conservation partners such as USFWS. We are especially pleased with the Forest Service landscape scale approach to protecting the globally important Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

The continued and expanded availability of different funding sources will also support and complement other ongoing efforts in the County. In 2006, Missoula County voters approved a \$10 million open space bond. Of the nine projects approved for the use of bond funds, five projects, covering almost 4,700 acres, have been approved in the Potomac, Greenough, and Swan Valley areas.

In addition to our support, we reiterate the following suggestions made by the Open Lands Citizen Advisory Committee, in their June 21, 2010 letter, for your consideration:

- Reduce the minimum parcel size to less than 160 acres. There are landowners with smaller holdings in key areas that would be able to benefit from the program.

Response

Response 23. Thank you for your comments.

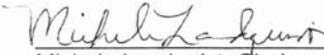
Response 23.1 The Service agrees. See Response 19.

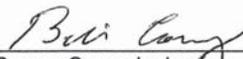
Letter # 23

- Allow land trusts or other state or federal agencies, besides USFWS, to hold the easements. This would allow a landowner more choice in who he or she might be working with, as well as free up agency time spent monitoring easements.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or our Rural Initiatives staff (406-258-3432) at your convenience.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Michele Landquist, Chair


Bill Carey, Commissioner


Jean Curtiss, Commissioner

BCC/ppr

cc: Pat O'Herren, Missoula County Rural Initiatives
Greg Neudecker, USFWS
Dennis Iverson, Missoula County Open Land Citizen Advisory Committee
Nancy Heil, Missoula County Rural Initiatives

Toni Griffin, USFWS – August 12, 2010

2

Response

Response 23.2 Current policy does not permit Service interests to be managed by other agencies or organizations. There are a variety of agencies and land trusts that offer conservation easements in the Swan Valley, and landowners are free to pursue a conservation easement with the agency or organization that best meet their individual needs.

Letter # 24

Toni Griffin
Division of Refuge Planning
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, DFC
Denver, CO 80255

June 21, 2010

Re: Proposed Expansion of Conservation Easement Program in the Blackfoot Valley
Proposed Conservation Easement Program in the Swan Valley

Dear Ms. Griffin,

The Missoula County Open Lands Citizens Advisory Committee (OLC) heard a presentation at our June meeting from Kevin Ertl and Greg Neudecker regarding the USFWS proposed conservation easement programs in the Blackfoot and Swan Valleys. We are writing to offer our strong support of both these programs.

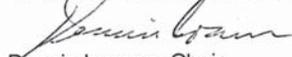
In 2006 Missoula County voters approved a \$10 million bond for the purpose of preserving open space. OLC reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners about the use of these funds in rural areas of the County. Bond funds have been approved to support 9 conservation easements covering over 5,814 acres in the County, with significant other funding matches. Five of these projects covering almost 4,700 acres have been approved in the Potomac, Greenough, and Swan Valley areas.

We support and encourage the continued presence of conservation partners and the availability of different funding sources. In particular, we applaud the USFWS landscape scale approach to protecting the Crown of the Continent, an ecosystem of global importance.

In addition to our support, we offer the following suggestions for your consideration as you expand the USFWS program:

- Reduce the minimum parcel size to less than 160 acres. There are landowners with smaller holdings in key areas that would be able to benefit from the program.
- Allow land trusts or other third parties besides USFWS to hold the easements. This would allow a landowner more choice in who he or she might be working with, as well as free up agency time spent monitoring easements.

Thank you for your consideration.



Dennis Iverson, Chair
Missoula County Open Lands Citizens Advisory Council
c/o Missoula County Rural Initiatives
200 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

Cc: Greg Neudecker, USFWS
Nancy Heil, Missoula County Rural Initiatives
Missoula Board of County Commissioners

Response

Response 24. Thank you for your comments.

Response 24.1 See Response 19.

Response 24.2 See Response 23.2.

Letter # 25

THE
TRUST
for PUBLIC
LAND



CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE
Montana Legacy Project Office
32 South Ewing Street
Room 302
Helena, MT 59601

T. 406-495-2269

www.tpl.org

June 14, 2010

Greg Neudecker
Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
US Fish & Wildlife Service
PO Box 66
Ovando, Montana 59854

Kathy Burchett
US Fish & Wildlife Service
Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge
922 Bootlegger Trail
Great Falls, Montana 59404

Subject: Proposed Conservation Easement Program in the Swan Valley

Dear Greg & Kathy:

Thank you for holding two meetings in Condon regarding the proposed U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS) Conservation Easement Program in the Swan Valley. I believe there is positive local community support for the proposed program and hope that useful comments were provided.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has been working with the Swan Valley community for over a decade, identifying important resource values, developing appropriate land conservation strategies, and implementing those strategies. The valley is an important piece of the regional ecologic framework, and many of these efforts have been directed toward the checkerboard ownership pattern of Plum Creek Timber Company lands and public lands (principally USFS and DNRC). More recently, the Montana Legacy Project included the remaining Plum Creek lands within the valley, most of which have been conveyed to the Flathead National Forest (FNF). While these projects have addressed many threats to habitat fragmentation, other resource values in the Swan Valley still remain at risk.

I believe the Conservation Easement Program proposed by the USF&WS can provide additional tools to conserve important natural resource values associated with private lands in the Swan Valley. The program would be very complementary to past and current efforts, providing expertise and resources to private landowners who wish to conserve certain values on their properties. A few comments:

- The programmatic area (187,400 acres) contains much public land (FNF) and could be reduced to focus on private land. (The boundary may have been drafted prior to the donation of about 45,000 acres to the FNF in March 2010.)
- Many private land ownerships in the valley are smaller (<160 acres), so the program should provide flexibility to address natural resource values that may be present on such lands.
- The total acreage of conservation easement authority (11,000 acres) seems feasible, but could even be enlarged, given the presence of natural resource values in the valley.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the scoping of this program.

Sincerely,

Robert Rasmussen, Field Representative

cc: Toni Griffin, USF&WS

Response

Response 25. Thank you for your comments.

Response 25.1 The Service is aware of the Montana Legacy Project, which is mentioned on page 14 of the draft EA/LPP. The proposed project area boundary was selected based on the biological needs of the focal species identified in the draft land protection plan, and generally follows the valley floor of the Swan watershed. We acknowledge other agency lands exist within the proposed project boundary, however, the planning team felt it would be difficult to create a contiguous boundary that included only private lands within the Swan Valley. However, the Service conservation easement project will focus on the approximately 36,000 acres of private land within the conservation area.

Response 25.2 See Response 19.

Response 25.3 Initial projections included 11,000 acres as feasible acquisitions. The project is expected to take 15 years to complete. Conservation goals and objectives will be evaluated throughout the process and if project area changes are necessary the Service may seek to request a boundary expansion.