



# SWAN VALLEY BEAR RESOURCES YEAR IN REVIEW

Several Swan Valley Connections staff are members of Swan Valley Bear Resources (SVBR), a collaborative group that also involves the U.S. Forest Service. SVBR offers resources that help minimize bear conflicts on both private and public properties in fulfillment of its mission to promote human/bear coexistence in the Swan Valley. Resources available through SVBR include a bear-resistant garbage container loaner program, electric fencing assistance, property consultations, educational materials, informational events, and the Swan Valley Bear Ranger program.



**Luke Lamar (SVBR) building an electric fence**

2017 has been a busy year for SVBR, particularly with the demand for electric fencing to secure bear attractants. SVBR works with private landowners on fence design and specifications, helps secure funding sources, purchases materials, and ultimately helps to construct a permanent electric fence for the landowner. The SVBR team has already built three permanent electric fences in the Swan Valley this year, as well as upgraded another existing fence to meet necessary specifications to exclude grizzly bears. SVBR has now built 15 permanent electric fences in the Swan Valley, securing chickens, turkeys, rabbits, goats, sheep, pigs, bees, livestock grain, outside chest freezers, orchards, and gardens from bears.

Local resident Sheri Burden summed up her personal experience with bears and attractants in the Swan Valley: "SVBR helped us build an electric fence around the garden and apple trees several years ago after a grizzly and cubs destroyed one of our apple trees. The electric fence has worked fine since then. We just this morning watched a small black bear, dark brown in color, walk around our garden at least two times without an attempt at getting our apples. He was obviously interested. Thank you Swan Valley Bear Resources!"



**Adam Lieberg (SVBR) discussing electric fencing with local resident**

In addition to providing direct assistance to private landowners, SVBR partners with various agencies and organizations each year to provide educational events aimed at promoting human-bear coexistence. SVBR hosted a Spring Bear Wake-Up Social at the Swan River community hall in April that featured presentations by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks grizzly bear management specialists Tim Manley and Mike Madel. The event serves as an annual reminder for residents to contain their bear attractants as bears emerge from hibernation. This was the first Spring Bear Wake Up Social in the greater Ferndale area, and was well attended by an estimated 75 local residents.

In June, SVBR hosted its popular summer event, the Bear Fair, at the Condon community hall. The event brought together regional bear experts, organizations, and companies to share information about bear ecology, behavior, research, conservation, conflict management, and different resources available to secure bear attractants. Special thanks to the Swan Valley Cafe for providing mouthwatering pizza, and Big Sky Brewing for donating great beer. Presenters were Lori Roberts (Research Biologist, FWP), Jennifer Fortin-Noreus (Grizzly Bear Recovery Office, FWS), and Tim Manley (Bear Management Specialist, FWP), who gave informative talks on the most up-to-date grizzly bear research, recreation management, and conflict management. The Vital Ground Foundation, a primary supporter of SVBR's work, participated in the Fair, as did Counter Assault, Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation, Center for Wildlife Information, Defenders of Wildlife (another SVBR supporter), Montana Land Reliance, and CHS. All offered informative displays, educational materials, and demonstrations about bear pepper spray use and effectiveness, bear-resistant trash cans, electric fencing, habitat linkage zones, conservation easements, and how to live in bear country. Approximately 150 people attended the event throughout the day.



**Tim Manley (FWP), Luke Lamar (SVBR), and Landowner standing in front of the completed electric fence to secure chickens and garden**

To learn more about how Swan Valley Bear Resources can help you, please visit our webpage at <https://SwanValleyConnections.org/swan-valley-bear-resources/> or contact us at 406.754.3137.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR BEAR FAIR!



Chuck Bartlebaugh from Center for Wildlife Information (CWI) offering advice about how to live in bear country



Chuck Bartlebaugh (CWI) demonstrating how to properly deploy bear pepper spray



Lori Roberts (FWP) giving a presentation on grizzly bear research



Youngsters checking out bear hides



Tim Manley (FWP) giving a presentation showing a slide of grizzly bear points within a 5 mile radius of the Swan Valley Community Hall



The SVBR team de-briefing after the event

### **Bear Troubles? Contact:**

To report grizzly bear conflicts you can contact Tim Manley at 406.250.1265 or [tmanley@mt.gov](mailto:tmanley@mt.gov)

If you want more information on living in bear country you can visit the MT FWP website at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/beBearAware/default.html>

Swan Valley Bear Resources at: <http://www.SwanValleyConnections.org/swan-valley-bear-resources>

Defenders of Wildlife can also assist with electric fencing and they can be contacted at: <http://www.defenders.org/got-grizzlies>