

# HAPPENINGS

SPRING 2016



— SWAN VALLEY —  
CONNECTIONS

A CONFLUENCE OF CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION  
[WWW.SWANVALLEYCONNECTIONS.ORG](http://WWW.SWANVALLEYCONNECTIONS.ORG)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am proud of our collective histories, SEC and NwC; Pasts that have much to show for with incredible impact. But now it's time to set a new course and define what will be our lasting legacy. At Swan Valley Connections we are poised to define where and how we can add the greatest value to the future of conservation in the Swan Valley. That vision is being sharpened by our committed and skillful staff. Many organizations offer educational programs in conservation, yet few rival the in-depth experiential learning of the natural world in the programs we offer. We could say our stewardship work was successful by merely counting the forested and wetland acres and miles of streams we have helped restore. Yet every day local landowners and our agency partners come to us seeking assistance to complete even more conservation projects. We have now become the go-to entity in not just the Swan, but throughout the Crown of the Continent in providing skilled, experienced field work in all aspects related to wildlife, forestry, native fish, streams, and wetlands. And when it comes to bringing people together to develop conservation strategies, connect people to the natural world, solve tough environmental problems, few do it as well.



Although we have a great success story behind us, we wish to take our collective energy, intellect, and passionate dedication and have a true and meaningful impact on our natural environment and our rural community. We certainly will continue the great work that brought us here. But a greater mission is forming. One that will make the Swan Valley a leading example of how it can all work.

Please join me in the next chapter of Conservation and Learning in the Swan Valley.

*Maria*

Maria Mantas  
Executive Director



# A CONFLUENCE OF CONSERVATION..



As a place-conservation organization, we are many things to many people. Our “place” the Swan Valley is where we focus our work, and what an incredible place it is. “The Swan” is extraordinarily unique, even for Montana, in that the watershed has the greatest diversity of vegetation types (from mountain hemlock forests to open grown ponderosa pine) and the highest acreage of wetlands of any western Montana valley. This diverse landscape supports the entire suite of native wildlife and fish species known from the Lewis and Clark era.



Here in the Swan, our human community values these resources and wishes to keep the place “as is” while working to make a livelihood that is compatible with this natural environment. At Swan Valley Connections, we strive to help our local residents and agency partners maintain these amazing resources through responsible stewardship of the valley’s forests, waters, and wildlife. We provide grants that assist private landowners to manage forests, treat weeds, and restore wetlands. We secure funding to help our agency partners to clear trails and restore water quality. We provide information for visitors to the valley and hikers in the backcountry. We are involved in just about anything related to caring for our natural environment, and are always looking for more ways to help.

We have become deeply involved in research and monitoring of our natural resources so that we have all the information needed to implement sound stewardship practices. Our skilled staff has the experience and local knowledge that our agency partners count on to help gather data on forest carnivores, grizzly bears, native fish, water quality, and forest conditions. Every year we strengthen our relationships and offer more ways to keep the Swan whole and our community connected to these unique and extraordinary values.



# ...AND LEARNING

In 2016, our innovative college field programs for students from across the country continue to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders and advocates. Our Wildlife in the West program puts students squarely in the middle of emerging issues in endangered species management and recovery, emphasizing species that inarguably affect management of the region's public and private lands: grizzlies, wolves, bull trout and lynx. Landscape and Livelihood asks students to consider conservation from the perspectives of the "triple bottom line:" the economy, ecology and human community of the region. To best accomplish this goal, L&L embeds students in the life of the Swan Valley and the larger Southwest Crown while they study agriculture, forest and watershed management and the rich natural history of the area.



We are reinventing ourselves in the environmental education arena by adapting our college programs to a k-12 student and teacher audience. Building on our successful model of experiential education, our public school programs use active field exploration to encourage critical thinking. Typical of our k-12 programs, summer camp focuses on the intersection of conservation science and adventure. For an adult audience, SVC will continue to bring in local experts to share their knowledge and resources at the Condon Work Center, changing venues during summer to the Holland Lake campground. Adults from around the region also benefit from staff expertise during our annual Animal Tracks and Sign course, where participants learn to read the stories of animals on the landscape from the clues left behind in strings of tracks and other sign left in the forest.

TOP: Mountain goat - Maria Mantas; LEFT: Wildlife in the West student enjoying the view - Ramona Bicandi; Bird nest - Sinclair Welch; Landscape & Livelihood students visit Pyramid Lumber - Stephanie Dunn; Wildlife Explorer Summer Camp participant - Emily Krulc; Attendees at the Swan Valley Bear Resources' Bear Fair - Kathy Koors; RIGHT: Moose calf - Tim Manley; COVER: Landscape - Sinclair Welch; Bluebird - Mark Mesenko; Grizzly sow and cub - Randy Smith



## SAVE-THE-DATES!



The Bear Fair  
Sat., June 4th, 2-6 PM



Shintangle!  
Sat., August 20th, 6-10 PM

For details visit [SwanValleyConnections.org/Events](http://SwanValleyConnections.org/Events)

Our Annual Report is available online at  
[SwanValleyConnections.org/Annual-Report](http://SwanValleyConnections.org/Annual-Report)  
Copies are also available at the SVC office



Wolverine sightings abound!  
For details on how to get your wolverine license plate  
visit [SwanValleyConnections.org/Giving](http://SwanValleyConnections.org/Giving)

## COMING UP:

May 14 - Beck Creek Garden's Volunteer Work Day

May 20-June 29 - Wildlife in the West Field Program

May 24 - Tuesday Toast

5-8PM @ Flathead Lake Brewing Company, Bigfork

May 25 - Owl Creek Restoration Project Tour

June 1 - Volunteer Clean Up Day

9 AM - 2 PM @ Condon Work Center

June 4 - Bear Fair

@ Rocky Mountain Roadhouse, Ferndale

JULY THROUGH AUGUST

Holland Lake Campfire Programs @ Holland Lake Day Use Area

July 16-17 - Animal Tracks & Sign Workshop

July 26-29 - Wildlife Explorers' Summer Camp

August 20 - Shintangle Celebration & Fundraiser

@ 33 Bar Ranch

August 11-12 and 19 - Forest Stewardship Workshop

@ Condon Work Center

For details visit [SwanValleyConnections.org/Events](http://SwanValleyConnections.org/Events)



## Support Swan Valley Connections

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Send donations to: Swan Valley Connections, 6887 MT Hwy 83,  
Condon, MT 59826-9005 or, donate online: [SwanValleyConnections.org](http://SwanValleyConnections.org)

Questions? Contact us at 406.754.3137 or [info@SVConnections.org](mailto:info@SVConnections.org)



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