

Swan Valley Community Council Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2026

Meeting Business

- Call to order: Grace called the meeting to order at 6:00pm
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Roll Call
- Council members present: Grace Siloti, Ted Morgan, Wyatt Trull, Axel Hazlerig, and Kirsten Frazer
Community members present: see attached sign-in sheet

Council Business

- **Agenda:** Ted made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, Axel 2nd, all in favor. Motion to approve the agenda passes unanimously.
- **Minutes:** Ted made a motion to approve the February Community Council meeting minutes, Axel 2nd, all in favor. Motion to approve February Community Council meeting minutes passes unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Ted Morgan

- Ted explains he has no Treasurer's report because he didn't have time to call the bank for the most current balance.
- Discussion of previous balance being \$649.74 minus \$151.85 that was paid to Grace at last meeting. So at the next meeting Ted will confirm the current balance with bank and report back.

Grace puts Ted and Wyatt in charge of handling the zoom link for the meetings.

Wyatt asks about the zoom account from the county. There should be a way to use the same link for every meeting.

Ted adds you can schedule it for that, it's the personal meeting ID

Wyatt continues, then we are trying to trade unique IDs every time, so he will look into that.

Grace asks Wyatt to send it to her so it can be posted with the agenda.

Public Comment on items not on the agenda

- None

New Business

- Grace starts by reminding everyone we are having a nonprofit every month until all the nonprofits have been heard, so our community knows who is out there, then we will be going to the small businesses. Today we are having Swan Valley Connections do a quick presentation on what they do and who they are.

Nonprofit Presenting: Swan Valley Connections – Sara Lamar & Luke Lamar

- Sara Lamar, one of the co-managers of Swan Valley Connections, starts by stating Swan Valley Connections mission to inspire conservation and expand stewardship in the Swan Valley and beyond. She talks a little about the history and merging of Swan Ecosystem Center and Northwest Connections. Both organizations starting in the late 90s with really similar goals so they merged.
- Sara talks about the education programs, through education programs we inspire conservation. Right now the youth education program is in the Swan Valley School once a month, a 2 hr outdoor program covering topics like wildfire, wildlife and water, getting the kids outside and working in education. Bigfork Elementary comes and camps on the Swan Legacy Forest and host other ad hoc youth programs that want to come. And we partner with Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes and Salish Kootenai College to host the Mission Mountain Youth Crew, which is high school students from the reservation who come and work on this side of the Missions doing various projects across Forest Service lands, like a conservation core like crew.
- Sara continues discussing college programming, in partnership with the University of Montana, students receive college credits to come here, everything from a week-long course to a six-week course. Students study everything from wildlife ecology to more complex natural resource questions. How do we have a thriving rural community in a place surrounded by public lands? What is it like to live alongside grizzly bears and wildfire? And as people who live here have some of the cost and benefits of that, and what is that like and how do we balance that?
- Sara then talks about adult education programs, lots of education for landowner, Luke will talk more about that, host Master Naturalist programs, and wildlife tracking used in conservations science and a way for humans to connect with wild neighbors.
- Sara also talks about Swan Valley Connections visitor center, providing information and resources for visitors. Visitors driving through the valley and want information about trails and camping, selling maps, encourage and education on leave no trace and recreating safely in bear county. Teach and do bear spray training and sell bear spray. With a full time person staffing the visitor center. SVC's one year anniversary in the new location is April 16th, our new signs were installed late in the summer so excited to see how highway frontage and signage attracts a lot more visitors stopping in and education.
- Sara explains a little about her role overseeing the education, that Luke and Sara split the executive director position, but education is her area of expertise.
- Luke Lamar adds, we have 9 full time employees, one of whom is Kirsten, our office manager.
- Luke continues to explain he oversees our conservation programs, several different programs that work with private landowners, helping them steward their forests, and public land management agencies like the Forest Service, working with agencies to help expand their capacity to steward their lands as well. One of those programs, we have a forest stewardship program, we get fuel reduction cost share grants for landowners to do fuel reduction around homes and property. Encourages community members to come talk to SVC if they have interest in that, Mike is the full time staff forester to help with those programs. SVC works with US Fish & Wildlife Service in wetland and stream restoration in the valley. Helped FWS do the largest

wetland restoration project in Montana's history on the Swan Refuge a couple of years ago, and 100s of acres of restoration on private land here in the valley.

- Luke continues to discuss working with bears, helping get landowners bear resistant trash cans, building electric fences around chickens, orchard trees, and other bear attractants. Encourages community members to talk to SVC about that if they are interested. And adds, SVC services are free, SVC independently fundraisers for staff time. SVC will come help build electric fence at no cost to the landowner. Bear resistant trash cans are free.
- Luke continues mentioning the outreach and educational events associated with bears. Spring Bear Wake-Up Social in the community hall on April 1st where Erik Wenum the FWP bear management specialist will be here to give updates on bears. Encourages community members to contact FWP if they start to have bear problems around homes. Bears will be emerging from hibernation any day.
- Luke adds, there are a lot of other workshops related to forest stewardship and forest management.
- Luke continues to talk about the 29 year long partnership with the Forest Service to help fundraise for services for backcountry rangers, to help clear the trails in the Swan Front and Mission Mountains, last year over 90 miles of trails were cleared, lots of campsite cleanup, pack out garbage, bury human waste, and a lot of leave no trace visitor education at campsites and along the trails.
- Luke then discusses the winter Rare Carnivore Monitoring, monitoring for rare species like wolverine and lynx, surveying the Southwest Crown of the Continent landscape for the past 15 years to learn about how many wolverine and lynx we have on the landscape and how they are distributed and how that changes over time.
- Luke adds, to check out Swan Valley Connections website for more information on anything that was just talked about. <https://www.swanvalleyconnections.org/> As a nonprofit we rely heavily on private donations.
- Luke also adds, one cool event coming up soon is Public Lands Clean-Up Day, organizing volunteers to keep our valley beautiful, pick up garbage at trailheads, gated roads, dispersed campsites, common dumping spots. That is April 22, Earth Day, if anyone is interested in volunteering for that.
- Sara adds, we have found refrigerators, tvs, all kinds of things, the Forest Service is going to help us dispose of that stuff. If you have any hot spots, please let us know because we will be sending crews out to go to those spots.
- Sara also mentions, a small community science program, right now we are helping do some work to help understand what our owl population is. Our volunteers go out and put up recording devices that listen to sound at night. Then the Owl Research Institute processes that and they are able to identify different owl species by their calls. The particular interest is Great Grey Owls and where they are nesting and learning more about that. We have also been working with the Forest Service on a program, also for about 2 decades, monitoring water temperature in the streams, particularly bull trout spawning streams across the upper watershed. Sara adds, our services do go watershed wide, from the summit to Bigfork.

- Grace comments that she has owl recordings to share, that she listens to them from her window.
- Sara, that's great, in that part of the valley they have heard a lot of Great Horned, Long-eared Owls, which is cool because they aren't everywhere.
- Ted asks, what is on our road?
- Sara replies, Great Grey Owls
- Ted says, we hear them almost every night.
- Sara adds, she hasn't heard the Great Horned this year, but we usually have those too.
- Grace asks, will you know with my recording?
- Sara says yes, please do
- Marcia Tapp comments, how fortunate we are to have SVC in our valley and it is an incredible asset, and also really impressed with the work SVC is doing with SMAAART with the kids on Fridays. Doing incredible things with them and stimulating their brains.
- Sara adds, that SVC was invited to be a part of the SMAAART group and help teach some science clubs on Fridays.
- Grace moves the meeting to the next item on the agenda.

Update from US Forest Service – Anthony Botello – Forest Supervisor & Sarah Canepa – Swan Lake District Ranger

- Sarah Canepa updates:
 - Forest Service put out a proposed action for the Lindbergh Lake Campground improvements today. A number of improvements at the Lindbergh Lake Campground are proposed. Including replacing and putting in a better boat ramp, the term that is used in recreation is "harden sites" so that they are more accessible for a variety of people and there is less resource damage. So also included is putting in trails between the loops and better access to the lake, overnight capacity will not be increasing. These are improvements with the existing capacity. The proposed action is on the website, hard copies here, no formal comment period, but we are asking for public input by the end of the month, to get feedback and goal is to come up with a good plan, put it out for contracting to use a certain amount of Great American Outdoors Act funding that has been received for this project, work could start as early as this summer. Forest Service is in communication with the HOA at Lindbergh Lake about the boat ramp. Comments should be sent to Sarah.
 - Moving into spring burning season, usually start around April 1st, and there are some areas planned in the Swan. FS will have to wait for fuel conditions to get to a point where they can burn, but we do have some areas planned for prescribed burning in the Swan and we determine those areas are ready to go, FS will distribute information, using Swan Valley Connections and the council to spread information about when and where FS will be burning.
- Ted asks, have you chosen a contractor that will be doing the work on the Condon Work Center that was discussed last month?

- Sarah says, that contract was awarded to a contractor out of Bigfork, he has started that work. Planning the contract to run between March 15 – May 15, 2026. That work will be doing some Sheetrock replacement in House 3 and painting in the dorms. FS is in conversation with the community to think about how to work together to use that work center again. Having FS presence there and community uses, so we are renew those conversations which is super exciting.
- Sarah continues by acknowledging the two major blowdown events and encourages the community to continue to call and let the Forest Service know what you are seeing, FS is doing their best to get out and assess it, but aware that there are a lot of trees down on the FS roads and FS trails and any info that the community can give to help decide where to prioritize FS resources is really helpful.
- Sarah continues, planning on getting three temporary recreation employees on this year, so it will be nice to have a workforce getting out into the valley and working on FS rec sites.
- Ted asks, with the wind capacity we have seen over the past two years, is this going to create more areas that attract fire, or speed up, fuels? Does it add more fuels to the fire?
- Sarah, some of that is situational dependent, remembers the March 2020 storm, the district refers to it as March Madness, when that happened, in particular areas of concern, it was stacking logs on top of each other adjacent to private property, it was a huge fuels concern. This December storm unfortunately took out some of the very large trees, but flattened many of them straight down to the ground, so we have large debris laying on the ground which has the ability to decompose. So what FS is looking at evaluating is, how is this affecting access and recreation? Can we capture value for the wood? One of the challenges is a lot of the trees lost were Ponderosa Pine and there is no great outlet for that wood since the closing of Pyramid Lumber. FS is talking with local loggers to figure out if there is an outlet for this wood. And also evaluating fuels, is this a fuels priority? FS is looking at the amount of fine fuels, is it down on the ground, what is the likelihood of decomposing without adding to the fire risk, or is it stacked fuels we are concerned about? That is some of the criteria that FS uses when assessing blowdown. First and foremost being access for recreation or roads that people are using. Getting those roads opened up, then market value and addressing fuels.
- Ted asks, Glacier Creek bridge that is under the jurisdiction of Missoula County, but have you seen anything that worries you about the precipitation that could potential raise our rivers and make that an issue this coming spring.
- Sarah replies, she doesn't know about this coming spring, she explains that we were fortunate than our neighbors on the Kootenai who faced flooding and immediate concerns, but FS is paying attention to that. The Glacier Creek bridge is on the FS radar and has been on a list of potential projects and opportunities to bolster that bridge. And she often writes letter of support for county bridges as the county applies for grants for funding these bridge projects. As spring breakup continues let FS know if you are seeing concerning things so we can come down and take a look ourselves and figure out what our options or what do we need to do for the next year.
- Ted comments, we are going to get one of these grants, one of these years

- Dr. John Tapp comments that for a number of years Swan Valley Emergency Services has been communicating with the Forest Service about putting in a boat ramp at Holland Lake for water rescue, spent a lot of time talking and finding a place to put a boat ramp specifically for water rescue and Swan Valley Emergency Services, not for the public, on the north side off of the camping area where it was going to be done. For injuries on the lake, what happens on the lake when someone gets injured on the lake and we can't get a boat on the water, so we have to flag someone with a boat and ask to borrow the boat to help the person. And also people hiking to Holland Falls get injured so instead of having to take them all the way to the trailhead it is nice to take them down to the lake, put them on the boat and take them across the lake to the swim area and put them on the ambulance there. It has been talked about a lot, not much lately, but to do it a cement picnic table and tree stump would need to come out, and a locked gate that only Swan Valley Emergency Services would have a key to, so if they needed to get a boat in the lake. And a sign that says "don't park in front of the gate." It might eliminate one camping spot, but it was thought that the camping spot could be relocated. Never been any funds for it.
- Sarah asks, are you my best point of contact for that?
- John says, he just recently retired from being president of Swan Valley Emergency Services, was president for 8 years and was involved in this particular project.
- Sara Lamar offers to connect Sarah Canepa with the right person.
- Sarah says, she will get the contact information and look into what has happened and why those conversations have paused.
- Marcia asks, will the day use fee at Lindbergh Lake increase because of the improvements>
- Sarah, is there a day use fee?
- Ted says, there is no day use fee, only overnight fee of \$5, he thinks.
- Sarah, doesn't know the long-term plan for fees and potential increases, she will look into it.
- Ted says, with the mention of emergency services for Holland Lake, if we are going to see larger numbers at Lindbergh Lake because of the improvements you might want to think about emergency services boat ramp there or if the new one is adequate.
- John adds, we have looked at that in the past and the concern was not the boat ramp but the road to Lindbergh Lake being so bad that the ambulance has to drive so slow. Swan Valley Emergency Services wrote a letter to the Forest Service requesting prep of the road so it was more suitable for driving the ambulance.
- Grace mentions we can revisit this as a topic for the council if we need to, the emergency services.
- Sarah agrees.
- Community member asks for an explanation on the clearing of the forest, the way you do it, why take out healthy trees, leaving old rotten giant Ponderosas, with years of wet soil and high wind and big giant trees standing by themselves, it is only common sense what is going to happen and that is exactly what did happen, the big trees fall down.
- Sarah replies, might be more of a conversation, the FS relies on certified silviculturists to make recommendations for a particular stand
- Community member, so someone that went to school for this

- Sarah continues, the goals for the unit, whether it is fuels reduction, forest resiliency, insects and disease, growth and regeneration, so for each stand FS is trying to take a close look. It is really unfortunate when our large beautiful seed trees come down. FS is constantly adapting and learning from experiences like this to figure out what makes sense the next project.
- Grace moves us along to the next topic
- Anthony Botello (Forest Supervisor) starts with a recap of the meeting and the proposed action for the Holland Lake Wastewater Treatment System. He gives a quick overview of reason for the wastewater treatment system failure, the process and how the new system will work. With the help of a 3rd party engineering firm, the FS engineers, and the DEQ the design was developed. March 2 the notice of proposed action was sent out and posted, the week prior the engineering design was posted on the website. The proposed action summarizes that engineering design and that is what the FS is looking for public comment on. Really no comment period, but looking for comments any time to help shape the decision. The FS is in the middle of the analysis, the internal specialist are in the middle of the analysis and public comment is most helpful as soon as possible. Looking to take questions to inform your public comments. Not taking comments now.
- Community member asks, is there a large quantity of material needs to be trucked in?
- Anthony replies, the reconstruction of those two ponds is going to take a fair bit of excavation, part of the project is to decommission those, remove all of that and replace those with two new ponds. There will be a fair bit of excavation, material hauled in to build those lagoons.
- Sarah adds, the purpose is to increase the distance between to lagoons and the ground water. Recent testing has lead the FS to believe that there is inadequate distance.
- Community member expresses concerns about the highway, the highway can't handle that much traffic, where would it come from?
- Anthony, it would come from one of our pits, the FS is trying to find out if there is the capacity, there is a pit by Owl Packer Camp and he thinks the majority of the material would come from, at least that is the plan.
- Ted asks, don't you have the Barber Creek pit
- Sarah replies, we are looking at available pits because transportation cost is one of the highest costs, evaluating the source of gravel that they need, it is her understanding that there is a specific type of gravel material and what is available.
- Ted comments that the Barber Creek pit is not opened yet due to the county still doing the required groundwater testing. Ted asks about how long water testing takes and wondering when that pit might be open so material doesn't have to be trucked in from far away.
- Anthony, the closer we can get the material the better for the project, for the economics of the project, we don't want to haul it from any greater distance than we need to. Recognizes the questions and comments about the gravel road, from pavement to the site, and how truck traffic would affect that road, so would we treat that for dust abatement. FS would likely include that as a contract provision. And would we consider dates of work vs not, the FS has done that in the past, like restricting work on weekends because that is the time when the public is out there. FS will likely have some stipulations in the decision that add for treating the road for dust

abatement and the integrity of the road, and limiting the construction to weekdays and certain times of the day to not disrupt the public as much as we can.

- Community Member says, he is not a computer guy and doesn't have a cell phone, so he doesn't know how to keep up with all the information the FS has posted, why do you need to increase the volume of the ponds? They aren't adequate? Raise the walls for a more functional larger pond, why does it need to be larger?
- Anthony replies, couple factors, one of the requirements that FS is abiding by is the state of Montana and working with the DEQ requires 4ft of separation from the bottom of the lagoon liner and the high groundwater.
- Some talking over each other, the community member asks, so the pond itself isn't going to be bigger
- Anthony continues, they are going to be bigger for one primary reason. The design parameters and the variables that were given to the engineering firm with consideration of the max number people at one time, employees, what the kitchen can do.
- Community members, is that going up?
- Anthony, no, it is what the current permit allows. Year round use with some design criteria. If you look at the engineering report, that is what that whole thing was built for.
- Community member, he thought what he read was that the permit for the new guy was keeping it exactly the way it was, and that's not full year.
- Anthony, yes sir, the previous permit that Christian had, is the same permit that was issued to the new owner, same terms and conditions, same authorized structures, same permit. And the previous owner also had the ability to operate year-round, and historically there was some, a fair bit of winter use, but in the last 5 - 10 years there was almost none. It might feel like a change from recent past, but the permit always allowed for year-round use.
- Community member, so is it mainly considered year-round because he lives there?
- Anthony, no they rented rooms and cooked meals, and did little winter public use.
- Marcia Tapp comments, has a real concern about variance he was granted, he knew what he was getting into when he bought the place, and then he cries false, saying it is not going to work, she understands where he is coming from, he wants to make a living, he's got a big investment, she understands that, but we are extremely protective of our environment here, we are extremely protective of our water and she is extremely worried that he is not going to abide by the rules that were set. Someone has to check on that daily, do you have the people to do that?
- Anthony, the variance is between the permit holder and the county, he requested and was granted a variance in county regulations. Those are not things the FS permits, we are not in the business of permitting things with the county permits. That was a process that the permit holder went through with Missoula County. And they do this all across the county and they grant these variances when it is determined they meet these criteria. The variance that was granted, to his understanding, has a whole bunch of conditions. Conditions were the permit holder can use this tank temporarily if it doesn't leak, if you do this and that, those are all things that he is on the hook for and that Missoula County is the regulatory agency for those because just like you, the Forest Service is very protective of the water, very protective of the soil, the FS does not want

any of that stuff to leak into any body of water, let alone the soil. So the FS isn't going to let him, even if he got a variance, if it is determined that tank leaks, FS would not authorize the use of that tank.

- Marcia, but somebody will be checking, right? We can't just go on somebody else's word that it is not leaking, look what happened at the Potomac River
- Anthony, his understanding is through the variance process the permit holder has to go through all those conditions in coordination with Missoula County. Their regulators will be there to make sure all those conditions are met.
- Community member, are you in contact with Missoula County?
- Anthony, yeah the FS has a relationship with Missoula County.
- Community member, in terms of this specifically, as far as meeting their variance?
- Anthony, yes, the FS will make sure those conditions in the variance are met before we let them operate. So we will work with Missoula County to make sure, reminding everyone that those are not FS conditions.
- Community member comments, it seems like you are the only teeth in this.
- Anthony continues, the permit holder has to get the kitchen to pass inspection, there are a lot of things the owner has to do to get operational and a lot of it has to do with the county.
- Community member, asks the original pond, how long has the liner been there?
- Anthony, 25 years
- Community member, do they guarantee it for X amount of years? Do they guarantee those? What about the new one?
- Anthony, no, they have a predicted useful life and the one that failed in 23/24 had about a 20-25 useful life.
- Community member, and what about this new plan?
- Anthony, it will be different material with a longer life, plus the way it was designed it will have material on top so it will not have the sun/UV deterioration, the new one will probably have a 30-35 useful life.
- Grace asks, two things from the last meeting. One, the usage said 10% camp, 90% lodge for the new system.
- Anthony, that came up in the meeting, not sure FS engineering report made that determination.
- David Roberts, yeah it does, I can show that if you want to talk about it.
- Anthony, Grace wants to talk about it.
- Grace, it is one of the two things, the other one that is mind boggling, is it 15,000 trucks?
- Many say, 1500 trucks not 15,000
- Anthony, 1500 trucks was an interpretation by David, not by our report. And like was said at the meeting, there are different types of dump trucks. There is going to be truck traffic.
- Community member, on the pavement, the rock quarry is not near here, still using the highway?
- Anthony, the Owl Packer is up the hill into the woods and wouldn't take the highway
- Community member, but there is going to be super heavy vehicles on that highway that other people are going to have to pay for.

- Anthony, it is a state highway, built for that kind of traffic. All construction, highway vehicles would be used.
- Ted, one problem with the testing for leakage is that the owner of Holland Lake Lodge will be able to choose anyone to do the testing, it's not done by the FS or the county. It is done by someone he would hire to do the testing.
- Anthony, what testing?
- Ted, for the leakage
- Anthony, for his part of the system?
- Anthony continues, the way he understands it, the owner is required to assure the county that it doesn't leak, so that is done by a professional. Yes, he would pay for it, so it can be a contractor of his choosing, but they would have to commit to it and Missoula County is the regulatory agency overseeing it.
- Ted, we are talking about road potential issues, is there any county roads that they will using to get to that? Is it a county road, Holland Lake Road? Up to a certain point? And then back there up towards the cabins, is that FS?
- Anthony, he thinks beyond the pavement is FS, even from the highway
- Sarah Canepa, no actually there is a portion that is county, past the private property and then it turns into FS
- Ted, expresses peoples concerns about the amount of traffic and what it could do to county roads, suggests contacting the county to see what roads affected and get a jump start on it before people says look what this project did to my road. For better relations with FS and the community.
- Grace, the FS is proposing building two lagoons with tax payers money, why is the owner of Holland Lake Lodge paying for and why are we counting on him to look over our investment?
- Anthony, the construction costs of the facility has come up a lot, it is a fair question, that treatment system has always been owned and operated by the FS, he thinks you would want FS to operate that, more than a private entity. So we do, we own and operate it. So when it fails, we have to replace it.
- Anthony continues, a lot of comments at the public meeting, there is a business benefiting from tax payer dollars, the way the FS looks at it, the campground and the lodge delivers FS recreation mission, they are important parts of the recreation we deliver to the public, the public enjoys it, the public wants it. Both of them are operating under a special use permit, the campground has a concessionaire, that make money off serving the public, and they use that system, yes to a lesser degree. The lodge is a special use permit holder who operates the lodge to serve the American people in recreation. And yes, they make money off the national forest land that it sits on and that facility that treats the wastewater. That is the way our recreation program is mostly set up, there are many other places like that, where the FS provides part of the facility that helps that business operate so they can deliver that service.
- Anthony continues, FS budget is going to replace that system because we own and operate it and it has been 25 years.

- Anthony continues, FS will operate the system, the FS will charge a fee, there will be an agreement the concessionaire that operates the campground and the permit holder who operates the lodge will pay into that agreement to help with operation and maintenance of the system, but FS will be the ones that oversee it because it is FS. FS will have an operator.
- Sarah Canepa, one part that might be getting confused, the part that the lodge operator oversees is the tank and the lift station adjacent to the lodge. The way the system works is when water leaves the lodge and the cabins it goes into that tank and is pumped up to the system that we need to upgrade. That tank is his property, but it needs to meet the requirements of DEQ and Missoula County. And that is the tank that is the focus of the variance, that needs to be determined if it leaks and needs to be tested. That test will be signed off by Missoula County if it meets their standards or he will be required to replace that portion of the tanks.
- Grace, in the plans, you are doing away with those tanks?
- Anthony, as Sarah mentioned, there is a tank and lift station next to the lodge within the permit boundary, there are also two septic tanks nearer to the lagoons those are going away, there are also two septic tanks associated with the campgrounds those are not going away.
- Community member, you are still monitoring the big ponds?
- Anthony, yes, that will be FS
- Grace reads, **see attached notes**
- Anthony, couple comments, not going to speak to the variance. Anecdotal information is fine but it may not be altogether factual. The comment about CE excludes public involvement is not true, a Categorical Exclusion (CE) is a way the FS documents a decision when they have a category to do that. It requires a proposal that we bring to the public, it gives an opportunity for the public to engage, multiple times, it allows the public to help inform a decision, it takes as long as it takes, it is nothing less than, it is just a different way to document it, so he just wants the community to know, they are an environment review that the FS has to do and are required by law to do, and in a lot of places they allow FS to be as efficient as they can.
- David Roberts, explains he has been involved since the original PowdR proposal came up and got involved when the old lagoons were leaking, and part of the original group Save Holland Lake. He says, not against the lodge reopening, wants to see the lodge reopen, sooner than later. Want to see Holland Lake Lodge there but looks as it as it was, the nostalgic look. Shares some of the numbers of the existing and proposed lagoons, concerned the new system allows PowdR size expansion. Explains that part of that is the size is driven by winter use, the proposal built around 365 days, which creates everything out of summer season becomes winter, it can't be irrigated and it builds up in the ponds with precipitation.
- David continues, options with the math he's done, to support the historic lodge use the rebuild would need to be about half the size of what is being proposed and about half the cost. Way less than half the lagoon size, but half the cost. His personal opinion would be to support that size rebuild the most. The rebuild as proposed would support PowdR type expansion, where someone could come in very easily and do that level of use, right off the bat. Option 3, would be to do what is being done at Lindbergh where the campground goes to vault toilets, there is a

holding tank for the host site, holding tank for the RV dump and the lodge ends up needing to do their own system, whether that is on site or up the hill.

- David continues, he has worked out cost estimates, says cost for rebuild like historic lodge use \$1.7-\$1.9 million, the rebuild as proposed \$3.5-\$3.8 million, rebuild with vaulted toilets/holding tanks \$500K. Concerns: size being proposed allows a huge expansion, cost for a private business is being paid with tax dollars, construction disruption is going to be major (Truck traffic and roller compactors, dust cloud), risks the lagoons failed twice and leaked for a long time, material is the same but thicker, less control of waste with the removal of the two septic tanks near the lagoons, environmental impact, concerned pumping past with no septic tanks the lagoons become a bear attractant, the seismic design (example of minor earthquake causing failure to similar lagoons).
- David continues to shows some pictures showing the scope of size comparing existing lagoons and proposed lagoons.
- Community member, asks for clarification, he asked the FS and heard that it's really not going to be a bigger lagoon, FS just has to get it above ground because of some law. His numbers say that pond is going to be a whole lot bigger. Did you make a mistake or did I hear it wrong?
- Anthony, no, you are over simplifying. The design is different, we are going to elevate to get away from the groundwater, and it is going to be larger to accommodate the permitted use.
- Community member, so you told me that it is not going to be any bigger, but it is going to be made to hold more stuff, in my mind that means there is more stuff, so that means you are making a plan for down the road PowdR program.
- David shows where there would be a berm.
- Some side conversations and talking over each other
- Grace gets the meeting back on track
- Grace says, we are here for a meeting on this, so we can solve this and everyone can get accurate information, they have not made the decision, they are in the decision making process, so we have to let them know how you feel and what you think and do it respectfully.
- Anthony, suggests community members read the information before you make your comments. David and Anthony have been talking about this for 2 years. Cautions the anecdotal interpretations that folks have when they read this plan, we employed a firm that does this for a living, to say anecdotally here is what the sidewalls should be, we are not wastewater engineers, so please read the document and if you have questions about that, let him know. Anybody can have any comments on any of our projects, most helpful comments are using facts of what is being proposed.
- Community member says, I was trying to give you a comment
- Some inaudible comments.
- Wyatt, sizing for winter use makes sense, curious to speak to the PowdR concern, it is bigger for year-round use, not for bigger for bigger use year-round.
- Anthony says, there is no proposal for any expansion, much less a PowdR like expansion, that is in no part of any of the design factors we gave the engineers, we gave them what is authorized by the current permit and that is the way the engineering firm designed this facility.

- David, can we clarify, it actually is more gallons of winter use than PowdR proposed.
- Anthony, he is not concerned with what PowdR proposed
- David, that is everyone's frame of reference on this whole project. By taking it as a 200 day winter season, PowdR only looked at it as a 90 day winter season. So the gallons of use was less.
- Anthony reiterated, the current permit with no change, the Christian permit, has an authorized use of year-round, have they ever done year-round, no, but that was the bookend that the designer used to design the facility that could facilitate the existing use now, no expansion, no increase to anything, if the permit was fully executed, they designed the system to accommodate that.
- David, they used 54 overnight guests year-round, there were never 54 guests. Christian's capacity was about 40
- Anthony, we have documentation from the 90s that talked about 50 people at one time, and a change in the upstairs of the gift shop which added 4. And continues with explaining where the FS got the # 54.
- David, does the FS feel obligated to provide utilities, in this case sewer, at the max of a special use permit for every private business on the FS
- Anthony replies, we are talking about every private business on the FS, we are talking about Holland Lake Lodge, so specifically, is the permit a contract, it is not a contract, but it is a legally binding document, if FS has a permit holder that is authorized to do a certain level of use and we are doing reconstruction to a facility we have to consider that legal authorized use. FS has already authorized Holland Lake Lodge to do that level of use, is that what we expect, probably not, but is it something that they could currently do according to their current permit, so that is where that bookend was.
- David, seems crazy that taxpayer dollars pay for a maximum use that has never occurred. No one has ever run that year-round, as far as he can find. No opposed to some winter use, but winter use was 18 occupancy of the lodge not 54 people.
- Sarah Canepa, it is important to remember that we are in a public comment period, so it is reasonable for FS to say here is the potential maximum size give us your feedback, you are giving us your feedback to figure out, where is within there, that is the conversation the FS is having.
- David, that is what some people would like to understand, say we give you this feedback, and you get consistent feedback that says we aren't opposed to the lodge but this is crazy big. But you have already done the full engineering, is it realistic the FS would step back and do this 50% smaller because that is what the public will support and what the lodge has done. Will the FS look back and see the feedback and go back to the engineering firm and have them scale it back.
- David continues, winter use makes all the difference in the world in the size, and doesn't limit your summer use.
- Sarah, you keep saying PowdR, we are not running PowdR's volume through it, we have a different owner that we are working with
- David, expresses concern a few years from now if the current owner wants to put permit back up for sale, PowdR could pick it back up.

- Anthony, if and when any owner proposes an expansion we will go through this again and you will have public comment, what we are doing now is we are surmising, speculating, guessing on what may happen and we have to replace the wastewater treatment system. And your question about do your comments matter and will they help influence the decision, absolutely, send information. The arbitrary that will get the FS in a pickle, just deciding 50%, so then someone asks where did you come up with. I have no basis to do that, and then I have to limit the permit holder to less than the permit authorizes now. Comments matter but he cannot arbitrarily reduce the authorized use of the permit.
- David, say Eric decides to sell it in a few years, and has potential for growth, and sells it for more because of the bigger wastewater treatment system. That is to David, the taxpayer dollars underwriting private profit. The FS spends extra \$2 million system so he can sell for more.
- Anthony, we are not spending an extra \$2 million so he can sell anything for more, we are building a wastewater treatment system that is designed for the use that we could likely expect from the current permit. It is a proposal not a decision.
- Marcia, you are probably hearing and feeling the attitude, we are justifiably suspicious because we got burned by the FS with PowdR, they decided they didn't need to check the animal impact, there was money and favors passing hands, we got burned and we are suspicious of the FS, that is unfortunate, we want to get back there and we want to be able to trust the FS.
- Anthony, how do I do that? If this isn't it, how do I do that? I've been talking to David for 2 years, I have been talking to Grace, I come every time you invite me, I don't shy away from a single question, I don't mind hard conversations, I've dealt with them for 38 years doing this. How can I do that?
- Marcia, she understands and thinks he is making a very honest effort to be forthright with us. Just wants him to remember where the crowd is coming from.
- Anthony says, he understands the suspicion. But the suspicion based on the past doesn't necessarily determine what is happening in the future. And we he stands in front and looks you in the eye and says there is no PowdR level expansion plan that he knows about, there is no PowdR level expansion plan that he knows about.
- David says, I don't even believe that.
- Anthony, well then stop bringing it up. What is does, is it creates that tension. If you don't believe that is happening then stop bringing it up. We are working backwards instead of working forward. Grace keeps telling me, "just do it right", tell me what right looks like. If its some arbitrary just do it to 2/3 or 50%, that's going to be tough for me. Tell me what right looks like with your comments and you can help me get there. It cannot be just because "I think its too big," "I think you are going to approve an expansion plan," "I think PowdR is going to buy it in 4 years." Anthony continues, he cannot base his decision on any of that because it is not factual, he can't hang my hat on that, there is no foundation for that.
- David, what happens if Eric says, the max I will run in the winter time is X. Does that impact your decision?

- Anthony, of course it does, if the FS was to amend the permit to have tighter restrictions on the timing of use, then of course. He would never build something that is excess to our needs, wouldn't want it, wouldn't want to spend the money on it.
- David, sounds like there are a lot of other places that money can go.
- Kirsten asks, have you asked Eric what his winter usage might look like?
- Anthony, no, Eric has never operated the lodge a day, Anthony is trying to get the lodge back open, he wants to normalize recreation at Holland Lake Lodge again, it is a very popular place. David and all the other folks in the group start by saying, "I don't want to close down the lodge, but." Anthony wants to see public use back at the lodge period. To get a wastewater treatment system that will handle that at the campground and the RV dump station is the process he has in front of him. FS talks with all the permit holders, some are better equipped to think about the future than others. Somebody like the current owners, who have never operated it, might not have a great frame of reference on what could come forward in 5 years at this point, so Anthony is not asking because they don't have a master development plan, he hasn't asked them for one. He says, he doesn't think they have a clear concept of where they want to go. He hasn't talked to them at length about the future.
- Kirsten asks, is there a way with the new flow meters described by the FS engineer to monitor the flow coming in so that the larger system is not abused by one permit holder?
- David comments, there are separate flow meters
- Kirsten, so you can tell how much is coming from each source of wastewater.
- Anthony, there are two collection systems one from the campground/RV dump and one from the lodge, and those are two systems that go into the treatment system, there will be flow meters to determine how much comes from the lodge vs the campground/RV dump.
- Sarah adds, unfortunately FS did not have good flow meters in the past so we don't have the best data from the past, so we are very excited to actually see what is the flow the lodge produces.
- Grace asks, can you do me a favor, when you come to April's meeting to give updates, can you bring the information on the 10% vs 90%?
- Kirsten says, thinks it is because the lodge is going year-round, and campground and RV dump will remain seasonal. That is why you get a big difference in the percentage change from what is happening now to what was given in the specs to the engineering firm.
- David explains, it is in the design report, the design report took the annual averages of the lodge and the campground since 2005, totaled them up and averaged them. 132,000 gals for the campground and 134,000 gals for the lodge. The design report puts all the additional volume into the lodge, so that is the 90/10.
- Anthony, reiterated it is based on the variables we gave them about what is permitted.
- Axel, can you follow up with him and ask those questions?
- Anthony, ask which questions?
- Axel, about his usage?
- Ted, but he doesn't know anything yet.

- Axel, if it changes this expenditure it is worth asking a few questions. Seeing what he thinking, we don't want to go well above and beyond if he is going to be shut down half the year, is he going to be here all year operating?
- Anthony replies, he certainly could, thinks it is appropriate to have those conversations, but wonders how productive that would be to inform a design like this, he could say he is only operating half the year, and then at some point he could choose to do more or less. FS could have these conversations.
- Peter Guynn, is this assuming that the winter use is so much higher because he is going to be offering more entertainment or recreational option during the winter. That is what scares him about it, does that mean helicopters flying to the Swan dropping skiers off?
- Anthony, no helicopters are proposed, the design was built on much more winter use than has currently happened recently, and that is just how the design was built because that is what the permit allows, could allow, but FS doesn't anticipate that.
- Peter, it doesn't mean that it is not going to happen.
- Anthony, that's the point.
- Community members, does this design consider risk of over-sizing, is there more risk of UV deterioration if there is not the volume that is proposed.
- Anthony, the way he understands it the liner is buried, it is under material so it doesn't have sun exposure, but yes you are right, if there was less wastewater in there more of that would be exposed.
- Anthony, the other question that came up, part of the increase to the size of the lagoons is to accommodate for rain and snow. The bigger you build something, the more rain and snow you are going to catch. That is a really good question about exposure if it is oversized and we don't get that level of wastewater in there, we will write that down and ask that question of our engineers.
- Community members, does the aerator stop it from freezing?
- Anthony, the aerator to his understanding works year-round.
- David, they are putting a top on it
- Community member, oh they are putting a lid on it?
- Anthony, yes, we cannot sprinkle in the winter that is why the storage lagoon is bigger.
- Community member, so the critter attraction is only what you spray? If it is sealed off with a lid, its not going to attract bears, right?
- David, the lid vents so you will still get all the smells.
- Grace ask for any other questions.
- Grace reads email on Citizens for a Better Flathead, it is on the Flathead Lake/Yellowstone Club dock proposal. The highlighted part reading, "Judge Wilson granted plaintiff an injunction against Flathead County. In joining, prohibiting further works under February 2026 dock variance decision by Flathead County. Judge Wilson's decision reflected his conclusion that the county's decision making process for the February 2026 variance decision violated public participation and environmental review mandates plainly required under the Lakeshore Protections Act specifically...At its most basic, Judge Wilson found that the Lakeshore Protection

Act requires Flathead County to perform specific public process and an environmental review upon receipt of an application for a variance. And the county acted illegally circumventing such process for the dock.” It goes on and on, basically it is saying that the people were not heard and didn’t get their voice heard. So the meeting tonight to have Anthony and Sarah come back again, they were here last week and did a really awesome presentation, David was there. Grace was hoping this meeting would bring people to light, pay attention, and if Anthony and Sarah are full of poo, we are going to know. We have brought it very clear to their attention that we mean business, yeah we are tired and we will fight another 10 years and we are teaching our kids in the grade school to fight to preserve this place where we live, its our home. But we also have to stop and put ourselves in other people’s shoes, we have to put ourselves in Anthony’s and Sarah’s shoes, they have to answer to their bosses and keep food on their tables, and there are certain things they deal with that we have no idea what that is. Flathead National Forest is a big place and we are one of the many problems.

- Anthony adds, you are not a problem.
- Grace continues, that being said, we have Eric Jacobsen who has purchased Holland Lake Lodge, unfortunately there are things he has said that contradict his own sayings, so that was his own doing, nobody did it for him, its on public tapes and everything else. So we can just hope that his intentions are right. And as far as David, who has done his homework, he is an engineer, he is very smart, Grace trusts things he says, she trust what he brings to the table, she also trusts that he wants to see the lodge open. But with what this article said, with government, it is unfortunate the public has lost faith in our government. Grace is hoping our little Condon community can be groundbreaking and show others how you treat each other and how you act, make a difference and do it right. Get it right. So fearful and so afraid of getting it wrong. The damage will be irreplaceable, so we are asking the FS please look at this closely.
- Marcia, can you get the person who approved the variance up here to answer questions from the community? They should not be anonymous, they made a very big decision.
- Ted says, it was a board
- Marcia said, then bring the whole board up
- Grace says, she was late and the 18th was the deadline and with her computer skills she couldn’t get her thoughts in. Tells story of speaking to Sharon about submitting her comments. And heard from many that there was a problem with submitting comments on the variance. Public was mad at the process and that their voices were not heard, and Grace believes the decision was made before all the public comments were put in. And that is where the government distrust came in again. Wants to try to correct that.
- Marcia adds, invite them up here and see what they have to say because the public has the right to know.
- Grace thanks Anthony, Sarah and David for all their work and passion.
- Ted adds, knows this is a very important step in the process that could potentially lead to an expansion that nobody wants. He thinks we need to put our attention towards our community relationship with Eric Jacobsen, maybe having him come once every two months to give an update. Make him feel that we are asking these questions, make him feel that we want to be

part of the next step because the real thing that is going to kill us is whatever he submits as a master development plan. This isn't going to kill us, it what comes up, it leads to that.

- Community member, any way FS can have some of your people fix some of the signs, like the one at Rumble Creek, it has been rotten and kicked over
- Sarah, she will look into it.

Kirsten makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ted 2nd. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm

Swan Valley Community Council Mtg

March 17, 2026

Marisa Japp
John Japp
Berene Munro
David Rinker
Peter Gwynn
Karen Rink
Rocky Feller
Bob Hall
Du J. Macdonald

Luke Lamar
Sara Lamar

Kathy Koors —
JOHN WOTILES

1. The first step in the process of identifying a problem is to recognize that a problem exists. This involves gathering information about the situation and identifying the specific issue that needs to be addressed.

FW: <No Subject>

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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Journal of Management Education 36(7) 809-824

What about Rumbling Owl? With all these windstorms and loss of vegetation is this being taken into account?

[illegible]

#5

The Forest Service has an obligation to their permit holders, They also have an obligation to the public. Where is that line drawn with the permit holder vrs. the people that is what it has evolved into. A permit holder knows he or she is purchasing a business that is to serve all people equally, they have made a choice to invest their money and time into serving the public and profiting from the ALL public. The public has spoken loud and clear for 4 to 5 yrs. Similar to the Yellowstone club on Flathead Lake it is another example of people tired of no trust in any form or color of Government. This is not a competition with people vrs. Forest Service this is a trust issue and the public feeling violated. How does a Forest Service see neighborhood plans and local zoning? Do they honor it?

I feel this proposal leaves too much opportunity for a large growth in the future the Swan Valley should be a place with minimal growth and preservation. Our water is pure our forests are healthy, and wildlife still has a balance but this is all ever so fragile. So please let's get this right and be an example for the rest of the country that is being reactive to getting it wrong. Please keep it to the scale that our community and nature can handle this proposal is just 50% to big.