

Swan Valley Community Council Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2026

Meeting Business

- Call to order: Grace called the meeting to order at 6:01pm
- 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:** Axel made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, Ted 2nd, all in favor. Motion to approve the agenda passes unanimously.
- **Minutes:** Axel made a motion to approve the March Community Council meeting minutes, Ted 2nd, all in favor. Motion to approve March Community Council meeting minutes passes unanimously.

Public Comment on items not on the agenda

- Gary Lazarowski – provides comment and a paper that provides a recap of the Planning Subcommittee work for the past two years in terms of water and septic. Group needs to figure out how to approach the county.
- Grace, we are going to tap into that a little more after.

Treasurer's Report: Ted Morgan

- Current Balance: \$497.89
- Ted received paperwork from county to submit our budgets, he will do the budget for approval at the May meeting and our budget has to be submitted by June.
- Kirsten asks, have you connected with Kyla about the changes and closing the account?
- Ted, no, not yet.
- Grace says she has some information
- Ted continues, he doesn't know why we would have to do a budget if they are doing it that way.
- Kirsten, well we still manage the budget, from my understanding they are switching it and they want you to close that account and all invoices and everything goes through the county, but you would still manage that part of it.
- Ted says he will email Kyla and ask for the paperwork.
- Grace adds, it came up when we were reimbursing her for the Zoom equipment.
- Grace asks, did we pass the Treasurer's Report?
- Axel makes a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, Wyatt 2nd, all in favor. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report passes unanimously.

New Business

- Grace introduces the Swan Valley Community Foundation and John Mercer and his team.
- John Mercer, provides an overview of the Swan Valley Community Foundation and provides handouts. The foundation was started in 2012 and over the years has put a lot of money back into the valley through small grants. Encourages everyone to visit swanvalleyfoundation.org to see the long history of the foundation. Highlights in 2017-2018 the foundation funded an aging services specialist through Missoula County Aging Services who worked half-time here and half-time in Seeley Lake, our agreement was they were going to continue that, but then COVID hit. He highlighted the impact statement and the accomplishments of 2025, and the schedule of events for 2026. He continues, coming up on April 27th the foundation will start accepting community grant applications. Applications are open to any nonprofit group in the Swan Valley, typically they are in the \$1500-\$2500 range, sometimes a little more. Then on May 9, invites Gayle to speak about May 9th.
- Gayle describes a gathering on May 9th, at the Community Hall, celebrating aging in the Swan Valley. 2nd annual aging celebration, with a guest speaker, Angela Miely, local specialist in nutrition and mindfulness. Her talk is titled "Igniting Mind, Body and Spirit." Then a free luncheon provided by the SVCommunity Foundation. Dessert auction will follow the luncheon. There will be door prizes going on throughout the event. And at the end there will be a game of bingo. Door prizes are gift certificates to the Hungry Bear Grill and the Mercantile. Flyers and post on the event will be going up soon.
- John Mercer continues, on May 14th the Foundation will open up nominations for the Community Service Awards to any organized group of the valley can submit a nomination for somebody they would like to see recognized for their community service. He describes the award is for people that quietly do stuff in the background and never really necessarily get acknowledged, that are there and work hard and always be relied on to show up to do something for the community. There is typically a \$100 gift certificate and a plaque that goes with the award. Encourages individuals to go to the website for more information or to submit a nomination.
- John continues, June 1st community grant applications are due. Explains the Foundation has been doing community grants since 2014, over the years given out quite a bit to a variety of different groups, last year giving out \$10,000 to seven different groups. Encourages anyone with a community worthy project to submit for a community grant from the Foundation. Can't guarantee every applicant will receive a grant, budget is limited. Notes the Swan Valley Community Foundation is 100% volunteer driven, no paid employees on the Foundation, all volunteers. Only purpose is for the betterment of the Swan Valley.
- Colleen Harrington, secretary of the Foundation and Jr High teacher at Swan Valley Elementary, been there for 9 years. Explains that last year, the school acquired a designation, National Archery in Schools Program, this is the second year. They went to two tournaments this year, the one in Helena was a qualifier for a National competition. It is 4th – 8th grade, we have about 30+ kids in our school, 9 kids in 6th – 8th grade. So 4th – 8th is about 12 kids, small group of kids. At the tournament in Helena, there were about 277 kids there, 3 of our kids qualified for the

National competition in Utah this weekend. Colleen mentions, Danielle Anderson, the assistant coach, and her two kids who qualified for the National competition, along with one other kid. It is a three day shoot. The school put a call for donations to support the Archery group going to the National competition, not sure how it all shook out, but received quite a bit of community support. The Foundation decided to support them as well, the Foundation decided to support X dollars per kids.

- John Mercer says, the Foundation is funding each kid \$200. Hopefully the Swan Valley will be represented on a continuing basis at the Nationals in Archery.
- Axel asks, is it going to be televised?
- John says, he doesn't know.
- Axel says, it would be fun to watch
- Colleen, she will find out and post it.
- Axel, that is awesome, it is a great sport and it can really help refine a young person
- John, it is a really great thing for our kids to be able to go do that and shine at it
- Axel, it speaks a lot to the tradition here, that it is still alive and well
- John continues, pointing to the community grants page, it talks about the grants that were given out last year. Highlighting grants that were given to support: food and fellowship at the American Legion Post, Alpine Artisans for arts in the school, Upper Swan Valley Historical Society to resurface the museum building, new door for the Condon Library, PTA for a children's theater program, SMAAART after school program, Swan Valley Elementary Library Renovation Project. Encourages everyone to get grant applications in, the applications are due June 1st.
- John adds, June 10th Community Service Award nominations are due. And June 27th, 3rd annual Youth Outdoor Education Rendezvous. He points to the document with a snapshot of last year's YOER event. He describes the event is designed for kids, all kinds of stuff (game meat management and butchering, archery, etc)
- John puts a call out because the event is in need of a BBQer
- Grace offers to BBQ
- John says he thinks they have sourced a BBQ
- Grace adds, her son, Jesse has a BBQ trailer
- John continues, June 30th is the 4th Annual Swan Valley Community Celebration at the Hungry Bear Grill, this is free, we do ask that you RSVP because seating is limited. This is where the Foundation awards scholarships, community grants and the community service award. The evening has live music and a live auction.
- Gayle, July 2nd the Foundation will do a blood drive at the Community Hall. Blood drives stopped with COVID, so the Foundation is revitalizing the blood drives, hoping to have it every year from now on. Flyers will go out that will tell everyone how to sign up. Limited to 27 people.
- John continues, the Foundation has other things planned for later in the year, these are the focus for now. He mentions it takes a lot of people to put these events on and encourages anyone interested in helping out to reach out.
- John's final note, a project the Foundation has been working on and recently submitted a grant from Missoula County for is an 8x12 enclosed trailer. It is called the Swan Valley Events Trailer, in

that trailer will be a large tent, smaller tents, and eventually that trailer will be set up where it is an entire events package in the trailer. And that trailer will be available not just for the Foundation to use, but any organization in the Swan will be able to use that for an event. And eventually where we are headed with this, we are going to approach the fire hall and work with them, we want it to have the capacity to be an emergency shelter for the valley.

- Community member explains how the processing of meat came up as an idea, he explains that processors won't take harvested meat without an appointment, the meat has to be skinned, gutted and deboned, with all the hair off. Otherwise, meat processors won't take it.
- Side conversations.
- Jon Simon says, he volunteers for iRide and mentions a conversation going on in Seeley Lake that makes sure people are able to re-qualify for Medicaid because if we lose them out of the health center and the pharmacy, we lose two community institutions that are located in Seeley but serve our population up too. Asks if the Swan Valley Community Foundation has had any conversation with the Seeley Lake Community Foundation about trying to come up with a system to make sure with this change in the law on Medicaid re-qualification every 6 months, how we could assist elderly or disabled in keeping their benefits.
- John, Yvonne is that something you could reach out and look into?
- Grace comments, when the Swan Valley Aging Services disbanded, she caught, they had already closed down the 501C-3, and got help getting it up and going again for the senior lunch program. Then she says, she found out that they put funds in the care of Missoula County, because they didn't know what to do with the funds that they collected over the years. She only needs enough of those funds to do the senior lunches and there are funds there. It's called the Swan Valley Aging Services, but doesn't want the responsibilities of that.
- Talking over each other.
- Gary adds, there is a group in Seeley working hard to try figure out how seniors can navigate Medicaid, so many people are having trouble.
- Jon Simon, explains the new re-qualification process requires employment or volunteer work hours, so seniors that volunteer in the school needs to figure out how to get documentation from the school. It is a lot of hassles to try to reduce the number of people on Medicaid. Shares what Karen from the pharmacy talk about how much of her revenue comes from Medicaid. And the woman who runs the clinic saying it is 14% of our patient population but 37% of our revenue.
- Grace, we should have a meeting on that.
- Ted says, you have look into the numbers, what are those exact prescriptions, are you dealing with pain pills
- Grace says, I don't care about the numbers, I care about people like my mother, for example, who have no idea this is going on, and our community is primarily older folks that rely on these services.
- Ted says, it will be interesting to see how many are on Medicaid in Condon where the average house is a million dollars, Medicare and Medicaid different things.
- Grace says, it's not about the house

- Kathy Koors says, I think it is a good idea to educate
- Jon, it has already started, the County Health Department is training advocates/facilitators to help people go through this
- Community member, can somebody come and speak to the group?
- Grace, that is what I was thinking
- Jon, the County Health Department is where I would start to try to get somebody to educate us. He hears about it from the seniors that he drives through the iRide program, he thinks it is a June 1st implementation.
- Grace encourages the Foundation to come and update the community more often.

Sarah Canepa: US Forest Service updates

- Prescribed burn today, north of the Condon Work Center. Probably the only prescribed burn of the spring season, look for more opportunities to burn in the Fall.
- Community Member asks, do you have it listed somewhere on the website? We used to get it posted.
- Sarah, explains some of the changes in communications for the agency (use of social media) vs historically how communications of burns with flyers. Talking with communication folks about how to better communicate, notifying adjacent landowners. Appreciates the feedback and will work on better communication of burns in the future.
- Gary asks, did you use the Pathfinder?
- Sarah, doesn't believe the USFS has. One of the changes in the agency is the way in which they can communicate with formal media outlets. USFS is trying to navigate that and get communities the best information possible.
- Grace, it is also really good to come to the community council meetings and if you know ahead, you can give us a heads up.
- Sarah, I do hear that, for folks directly adjacent a letter would be really nice.
- Sarah explains, some of the challenges USFS faces is finding the right combination of conditions to burn, she found out on Monday. She is working on trying to keep people informed, trying to give as much advanced notice as possible, and trying to figure out the best way to do that.
- Peter Guynn probability for rain is like 90% for tomorrow.
- Sarah, exactly, looking for all those stars to align, conditions that we are looking for to have a successful burn, and rainfall to put it to bed.
- Grace and community member both mention posting or sharing post on social media
- Kathy Koors says, she got an email.
- Ted, also got an email.
- Sarah moves on to discuss the Mid-Swan Project, says the USFS formally withdrew the EIS from the federal register. Explains the project was a large, incredibly complex landscape restoration project. A lot of the analysis was done through remote sensing data, and when FS staff went onto the ground and looking at implementing the project, they realized that only 50% of what was analyzed was going to be implementable. Concerns came up about

what FS was going to get out of this project, and because of continually changing conditions the FS had another year of analysis before they could issue a decision. After much discussion within the FS they decided to withdraw that project and move forward with smaller site specific projects that have their own NEPA. One of those projects was released today, the Piper Creek Project, a project that FS is proposing as a categorical exclusion, in the Piper Creek drainage, proposing 2,300 acres of treatment and that is the first project being proposed in that Mid-Swan project area and is FS attempt to move forward with management on that landscape with smaller project areas. Sarah wants to make sure that the community is aware of that.

- Community member, that's why I am here, I live on Piper Creek, right where you are going to do that restoration. He is curious how soon that project might start because the insurance company has doubled his rate because the insurance company says his home is an extremely high risk burn area. He is having trouble getting any insurance company to write that insurance.
- Sarah replies, as far as implementation she would anticipate 2028 probably being their first time for implementation. Sarah suggests getting his information so she can follow up with a more specific date. The Piper Creek project is going to be a combination of commercial treatments that would go out, two timber sales planned at this point in time. But it will also be a lot of non-commercial fuels reduction work, especially on those old Plum Creek lands. Sarah comments, anyone here did not receive information about this project, check in with Alyssa, she is the team leader, please let her know, FS wants to get information out.
- Sarah continues, the way the new NEPA regulations work, this project doesn't have a formal comment period, but the FS is asking for individuals to provide their input in the next couple of weeks. And individuals can continue to provide input into the future, up until a decision is made.
- Community member, do you have any maps of where you are going to be doing the restoration work?
- Sarah, yes we have maps online and she has copies of the map here for anyone to take.
- Alyssa adds, copies of the cover letter are on the entry table and it has the link to the project webpage, which has the maps and her contact information if you want to send an email or submit a comment.
(Piper Creek Project Webpage - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r01/flathead/projects/267907>)
- Community member, so you don't think it will going, this is 2026
- Sarah, so FS is planning the project now, and plan to have a decision by October. But the project gets implemented through sales, she believes Piper Creek sales are not scheduled until 2028, maybe 2027, she will follow up with more details. She understands and if there is any information the FS can provide that shows intent, work planned that can help in that discussion the FS is happy to provide that information. She admits she hasn't engaged in that particular discussion before, but this is the second person today that has talked to her about the trouble they are having with insurance with the wildfire risk.

- Community member adds, with all the blowdown, and already a high fire risk area the insurance company raising rates like crazy.
- Sarah adds, she connected with another Piper Creek resident who was concerned about the road condition and work that could be done to fix the road.
- Community member, he keeps up on the road. Somebody was supposed to grade it from the FS last year, he spoke to someone in Kalispell, Ryan, he said the FS would be out to grade it in a couple weeks, that was 1.5 years ago, didn't happen.
- Sarah, she has a note about the road and is planning to go out and take a look at the road.
- Ted adds, that road is horrible.
- Sarah continues, no update on Rumbling Owl project, it is still caught up in the forest plan litigation that they are trying to work through. Our district is ready to move forward, but we currently don't have a path forward.
- Ted comments, appreciates the Holland Lake Campground improvements, the grills are shiny, nice and new. Is that what you are planning to do similar at Lindbergh, with the small upgrades other than the boat launch? Are you doing anything with grills, per site?
- Sarah replies, we are making improvements to the sites, she doesn't remember exactly what the FS is doing with the grills, going to be reconfiguring the sites to make them more accessible to individuals with disabilities and be able accommodate larger campers. FS put that out for public input in March, working through comments now, hoping to make a decision on the campground in May, so it can go out for contracting. FS heard loud and clear, especially from the residents on the lake and other people, is to make sure FS has good communication about the replacement of the boat launch.
- Ted asks, and the connector trail?
- Sarah, yes, the connector trail between the two, as all of you have noticed, prices are increasing, so the amount of work we initially planned to do, we may not be able to afford. Things like the connector trail we may have opportunities to do in-house or work with partners to get done. Putting it all out there for analysis and comment, and then FS will figure out how to work on it over the next couple of years. Excited for the improvements.
- Sarah notes, FS does have plans in the upper Lindbergh Lake Campground, there is a quite a bit of blowdown and hazard trees down that needs to be removed, that work has not happened, shut down because of the soft road restrictions, working to get that work done this year.
- Gary, any update on the septic system at Holland Lake?
- Sarah, doesn't have specific updates. After two public meetings, received 120+ comments from individuals, if you still have comments please send them, comments are still welcome. What the FS heard loud and clear, the concern that the system seems really big. The FS has taken those comments to heart and the FS is having conversations with the permit holder. As we shared at the public meetings, one of the reasons that it was designed so large had to do with the amount of winter use, needing a bigger holding pond. Trying to have more conversations with realistically how much winter use is there going to be, what could we do to explore ways and make this system smaller, especially the overall size of it. Looking at that

and talking to FS engineers, exploring ideas of what that could look like. She doesn't know exactly when they will be ready to make a decision, but wants the community to know that the FS has heard the concerns about that issue and so the FS is seeing what they can do to still support a functioning business that has opportunity and what can the FS do to shrink that down and address people's concerns about the size. So the FS is considering that.

- Gary, and when you are deciding that, what ever system that the FS puts in, can the FS analyze the system and how it will perform? Some septic systems are good, some drainage systems are good, some are bad, some don't work. How are you looking at that?
- Sarah replies, we certainly didn't ask them to design a bad system.
- Some talking over.
- Sarah continues, the FS has heard loud and clear is their concerns about water and water quality. She explains one of the challenges with that, when the FS started monitoring the ground water they realized they have to raise those ponds quite a bit higher. That is going to result in a lot more fill to make sure there is clear separation between the ground water and the holding ponds, so that is one of the reasons why these ponds will be taller and higher. What the analysis will include is the analysis of effects to the resources, she doesn't know that the FS will be analyzing or comparing multiple effects of multiple systems. The FS set out pretty clear parameters of what the FS priorities were, especially minimizing effects to resources, and asked the firm to design that. She is not sure they will be comparing different types of septic systems in the way you are describing.
- Peter Guynn comments, he looked at a water tank that was 3,000 gallons, somewhere it mentioned there was going to be a holding tank for all the sludge, if business is doing so well for the owner, why is the public having to pay for this extra capacity in the winter, why can't the owner pay just pay to have it pumped, compared to the number of truck that would be required to haul in the gravel and everything else for this system.
- Ted adds, what the argument has been, from what he has heard from Anthony, is that it is part of the forest plan and that it always has been potentially granted all season purpose, Holland Lake Lodge, they just might not have used it before.
- Sarah, exactly, the permit has always allowed for year-round use, our conversations with public have helped us really focus in, drill in on that, and how realistic is that and how does that effect the size of the replacement septic system that needs to be built. That is what the FS is looking at.
- Peter Guynn, a million dollars, this country is in 29 trillion dollars in debt and here we are spending money for somebody else, a private person to make money on it, why can't they just haul out the extra volume that is generated during the winter by trucks.
- Sarah, it has been a public septic system and it does serve the public, that is the FS perspective, and it does have a lifespan of about 25 years, and it was built about 25 years ago. This is the second or third time the FS has replaced the system. It does service the campgrounds, the RV station, and the lodge also services the public. Which is why the permit is granted on public land. The FS sees the lodge as serving the public with a recreation opportunity that otherwise wouldn't be there.

- Ted adds, he thinks where the FS loses the public, both sides want Holland Lake Lodge to be open, he thinks the FS loses the public when the public sees the website advertising \$50,000 for a wedding, how much is it going to be per night, what is the public, is it your average American, your average person from Condon, your average Montanan, when you are looking at that and your ability to actually use that resource.
 - Sarah says, the FS has made it very clear to the permit holder that the FS goal is ultimately the public, all of us, could go and get a beer, spend time at the property, have a burger and be able to enjoy it, that it is not treated as an exclusive location.
 - Ted, the least we could get is a hot dog.
 - Kirsten asks, as you are looking at redesigning it, will there be a period when we will see the design you are considering before you make a decision, whether it is the design that was presented or this after taking comments in?
 - Sarah says, she doesn't know, the FS goal is to move towards a decision so the FS can fix it and get the lodge open, so the feedback the FS got and we heard from a lot of people is that they would like to see something smaller, so that is what the FS is trying to figure out and what that design looks like.
 - Grace says, as a citizen of Condon she is happy that you have sent it back, that is a very special place, and to her it was way to big, and if it leaked like the last one leaked it would be more leakage than before and taking chances on ruining what we have. So she thinks it is great the FS is doing that, thanks them for doing that. She continues, when Sarah and Anthony have a plan to share that they come back and share it with the community.
 - Ted, thanks Sarah for coming so often.
 - Sarah adds, community members can call her and the FS serves that American public. She thinks it is important the community gets to know her and have opportunities to talk.
 - Grace, shares a bit about the importance of communication.
 - Some cross talking.
 - Gary, when the FS did the testing at Holland Lake, he immediately called the Flathead National Forest and asked for a copy of that. He asked how to get the copy, they said that he had to come and get it, he asked if they could send it to him, they said they couldn't do that. In this conversation he was looking for past data, and the FS didn't have any. He expresses in his opinion that is bad work.
 - Sarah replies, through this process the FS has identified a lot of gaps in the system and the FS is looking at what the FS can do to improve the record keeping and monitoring moving forward.
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- Grace moves the meeting on the Subcommittees.
 - Ted add, we aren't going to form them today, right, with the people, are going to open it up for people to join?
 - Grace, we are going to work on our subcommittees, where are we at?
 - Ted, she had a statement to put out to the public.

- Kirsten, that statement has been posted. We put the statement out calling for volunteers, my understanding was we were going to talk about it, start to forming them because I thought we wanted them to start in May.
- Ted, do you think that we want to conclude the sign up, and start them at the May meeting. That might be better to give a couple more weeks for people to potentially join, he doesn't think it is something that is right now needs to be done, 20 days, 30 days from now will be fine.
- Kirsten says, sure, it is whatever we all decide.
- Ted, lets post once a week for the next few weeks to see how much participation.
- Kirsten, did anyone email you that they wanted to volunteer?
- Ted, he says has not checked the email, and says he should have, and says he forgot the computer. He will check it soon and give Wyatt the computer next meeting so he can keep it in the box and have it with everything.
- Grace adds, we have to keep an eye on those emails, making a directory, people are going to start emailing their businesses, nonprofit, services, whatever so we can start compiling them. Along with doing the nonprofits every month, we will have their names in our system.
- Kirsten, asks Grace do you have any names of people for the subcommittees
- Grace says, we are creating the committees: Economic, Water, and Forest Service. Economic, Ted and Grace had interest in being on that committee and whoever else. Kirsten was going to do Water, and Wyatt was going to do Forest Service. And anyone in the public that wants to be on one of those committees.
- Ted, he thinks we could give a little outline on each of them, like Economic is specific towards the local economy.
- Kirsten says, we already did that, we all ready did all that, and we put it out, and we posted it at the post office, it is on the website.
- Ted, it doesn't mean everyone saw it.
- Kirsten, then we need to get people to see it. I have a list of people that want to be on the committees, I thought you might have emails or Grace would have people who expressed interest.
- Kirsten continues, the discussion is who is on the committees, when do they start, how long are they supposed to serve on the committee, is that something we want to say, a least a year, two years. I sent the guidelines, that hopefully you read, if you didn't read it, maybe this discussion needs to be pushed to another meeting, but we originally said we were going to have them start in May. So that's why this discussion should have been a little more prepared.
- Ted adds, he thinks last time we started subcommittees there was a feeling that certain people wanted to serve and they might have been picked. He doesn't want any of that out in the public right now, let's do our best to put it out so nobody can complain that they didn't get the opportunity to join one of these.
- Grace says, that is the whole reason to reopen this meeting, May is next month, she wanted to reopen it now, revisit it, remind herself where we are at, she has been gone, she thinks it is very important. She mentions she thinks Jon Simon wanted to be on Economics, thinks Helene

Michael wants to be on Forest Service, and Gary Lazarowski and Joan McGuire wanted to be on the Water.

- Jon Simon, just for clarity, he hasn't decided which committee he can best contribute to, part of me trying to get a feel for the agendas of the various committees so that community members can say look, that is where they can be most helpful. That should be one of the criteria for volunteers, so he is trying to get a better handle of where he can be most effective. He will contribute.
- Kathy Koors suggests, figure out each committee's purpose is and blast it.
- Kirsten asks Ted, did you ever contact the Pathfinder about putting something in the Pathfinder and what that would cost?
- Ted, Kai would do something for us for free, he's worked with her multiple times, she's okay with us posting. Ted asks Jon, she didn't charge the subcommittee.
- Jon Simon, they were news articles.
- Wyatt, is there anything about having a formal subcommittee with minutes, quorum, etc...that burden, what that offers us in terms of power of what we learn from the subcommittee. He thinks we learned something from the planning committee that it can make things more complicated. He wants to make sure we want to commit to that, all the concerns about who is in, who is out, to him with the Forest Service committee, he doesn't see a downside to having someone come one meeting and not the next. But with a formalized committee there has to be the quorum, we need to take minutes, it is a totally different burden, and he is not sure what we gain.
- Grace says, that is a good point, she thinks we need to, she is trying to refresh her memory and thinks this talk is good. She asks Jon, do you recall with the planning committee about these subcommittees if there were any rules, is there the same rules to them?
- Jon Simon, the recommendation was to create working groups or subcommittees to push implementation of the recommendations of the Neighborhood Plan. To the best of his knowledge, they did not go into the administrative structure or rules of these committees, because it would be subcommittees of the council, not an ad hoc planning committee. He thinks the general sense of the group was to be as inclusive as possible, to open it up to anyone who wants to participate, and to make it as easy as possible to contribute. To have a core of 2-4 people that are going to see it through, some people will come and go, patient people because you are starting over some meetings because a new person shows up. The alternative was having no implementation process and a repeat of the 1996 experience where a beautiful report was written and nothing was done. The downside we saw in 1996, but it is messy and it is costly in terms of time and effort. And he thinks there are some committed people in the community willing to bear that burden even with its inefficiencies.
- Wyatt explains, he thinks the willing people will be there consistently, the core 3-4 will be there regardless, he is concerned that what he feels he learned, when we have a formalized membership of those subcommittees people may feel they are excluded because it is a formalized thing. The Water committee, he can see as a more naturally structured subcommittee, more of a deliverable. He doesn't see the same deliverable on the Forest Service,

and hasn't thought through the Economic committee. Feels unnecessary formal and by doing that could create conflict.

- Jon, why not keep it informal.
- Grace says, that is what she was going to say, she envisioned it during the planning committee these committees being, she can't remember but she doesn't think that the planning committee structured it. She sees it as being more relaxed than that, sees it being ongoing communication and learning, keeping in touch with the FS. Not so formal and not so someone is going to nail your head to the wall if you forgot to write something. This is more something that is going to continue through the future.
- Kirsten shared, she doesn't think that it can be a committee of the council because in the by-laws, if it is a committee of a council it does have to follow these rules.
- Axel, why can't we say we are going to recognize a committee of the community?
- Kirsten says, that is semantics that I don't know the details with the by-laws and how community council is set up. That is something to look into. Because of all the public involvement and rules, she doesn't think that it can be of this council if it is just a working group that doesn't meet those requirements. We have to ask the county.
- Grace, she has three major questions into the county, this is one of them with Ian, wants to revisit it with him, she would like it more relaxed and not so formal
- Ted adds, we might not be able to, the other thing for the Economic committee is starting a Chamber of Commerce.
- Grace says, she did get an email back, but didn't read it because it just came. That is why she wanted to revisit, she forgot about the email that was sent.
- Ted adds, looking at the final goal, is the final goal for Water to do testing? And report to county? Is it to do testing and if certain things are found in the water then they want to create a water district? There needs to be full clarity on everything.
- Grace adds, she pictures the Water committee being educational, picture it as testing, also pictures it as learning and informational.
- Ted, a lot of people around here, don't want the government telling me I am right or wrong, and we technically part of the county government.
- Grace, we are community and we need to educate each other.
- Ted, we saw what happened.
- Gary, particularly about the water stuff, we had a lot of discussions about that, it was talked about and went through looking at the community and how dense it is, how we start to do the water testing, the question is how we come up with the money to do it. If the county can be involved and we can write grants. Basically what we are trying to figure out is, if you go up to the Condon Workstation, he went and looked at all the stuff there, and the last time they did a test there was 0.87, a little under 1. But we don't really know anything until we start to do the testing from the center out to see if there is a problem. Maybe there isn't a problem, maybe there is a partial problem. He wrote up a page to reemphasize the conversation that was had and the planning committee.

- Ted adds, he likes the idea of helping people apply for septic programs that cannot afford it, that is community based. But when he thinks when you start bringing in regulation, he thinks that should be kept out of all subcommittees.
- Wyatt expressed concern, if we formalize it, it can become naturally informal accidentally over time, people talk, we have quorum level conversations but don't take notes, because we are like who cares, then retroactively we think that was actually a formal subcommittee these meeting notes are missing. He thinks we should see that happened before and not sign up for it again unless we want to commit to it and if we do, know anyone who is involved needs to know that is what they are committing to. He feels, thinking about the Forest Service, doesn't feel like it fits the open ended question, ongoing conversation. It was well identified by the Neighborhood Plan as a major bucket of concern, but not sure he has a clear deliverable so he feels the formalized committee might be overkill.
- Ted, until we had Sarah, she is coming every meeting.
- Grace asks Jon, wants to revisit, who on the Neighborhood Plan was, was it Luke, that was handling the Forest Service?
- Jon asks, who wrote that section of it?
- Grace continues, maybe we need that person from the plan.
- Wyatt adds, Luke wants to be on the committee
- Jon adds, the reality is that it is dynamic, 2 years ago the workstation conveyance was a very different issue than the workstation conveyance is now.
- Sarah adds, and it could change again.
- Jon, absolutely, but comment to the council, accept this will be iterative. The Water group will find an opportunity to get subsidized septic maintenance like the Clearwater group did, or learn from Swan Lake community which got a grant to do voluntary testing for community information and also got a grant to put a wash station at the boat launch to try to keep invasive species out of the lake. Those are the kinds of things that the Water committee said we should be capturing those opportunities. Can't say at the time of forming the committee what those opportunities will be, we can learn from neighbors. Has to be flexibility to learn, do we have a problem, if so, how do we want to address it, more important if we don't have a problem, how to communicate we don't have a problem and we have to continue to do A, B, & C so we don't have a problem in the future. He shared flexibility and adaptability are going to be key. Look around the room, there are 4-5 community members and a council and this is an opportunity to vitalize and get some energy from the community, so he would hope these subgroups would report on a regular basis to the community council. The more we can get community participation the better, not a bunch of rules. And it is by definition non-regulatory, this whole show is non-regulatory, council has no authority, don't want to use that word because it creates antibodies in people, there is no regulatory game here at all.
- Wyatt, he thinks ideally it is meant to be dynamic, feels like formalized meeting might not match.
- Kathy adds, historically it is nice to have a record of different groups of the valley, that have notes, that you can go, oh they tried to do this 15 years ago and it didn't work because of A, B, C, D.

- Wyatt, we can take notes even though we aren't required to. If you don't take notes and your required to then it is a problem.
- Ted adds, he thinks if you did take on Forest Service, there are so many little issues along with that, the work being done on down Lindbergh Lake, Title 2 and Title 3 SRS funds that are spent locally on Forest Service or County property, we should have a say in where they are going.
- Wyatt says, action item is to learn what are working groups.
- Kirsten, will send an email to the county to see if there is a designation that doesn't require all of this, and ask what's the difference between a subcommittee and a working group.
- Grace adds, she may have the answer on my computer at home.
- Kirsten adds, she knows that Izzy wanted to come to a meeting.
- Wyatt adds, that would be useful.
- Grace, should I just invite him?
- Kirsten adds, she thinks he wants to come May or June.
- Wyatt, we could have the people who are interested, do the advertisement again, he could tell us what the working group looks like vs subcommittee
- Grace, she is going to put him down for May and see if he will come
- Jon, Izzy has many strengths, but not in the Commissioners Office and the administrative rules of the county are not his forte, he is a technical officer in Planning, so you may need to take advantage what Izzy brings to the discussion, but if you want the nuts and bolts of administrative stuff there are better people.
- Wyatt, would that be Kyla?
- Kirsten adds, it's Kyla or Mattie.
- Grace adds, Izzy usually comes with 3-4 others that are qualified to answer all these different levels.
- Grace will extend an invitation to the County to come to Mays meeting.
- Ted, so are we going to push back the marketing to ask people to join.
- Grace, no we are moving forward with that.
- Ted, can we adjourn
- Kirsten, so for next meeting, we are inviting Izzy and the County and what else
- Grace, we will have a nonprofit.
- Kirsten, and more discussion of subcommittees
- Jon adds, Erik Wenum(FWP Bear Manager) asks Jon to make a comment, we have a bad bear, broken porch windows, tried to get into a garage, they do not believe is Tabish (the bear that was problematic last October/November). Erik stressed the key thing is to get calls to him as quickly as possible so they can try to track the behaviors of this bear so we don't end up with problems of last fall. He also thinks Tabish is back in the area, so we may have two bad bears, Erik is asking for community help and a call two weeks later doesn't help. Trying to get the word out that the community needs to be more responsive to bear conflicts.
- Kathy adds, even if you see a bear not doing anything bad, walking through your property, it takes two seconds to email or call him.
- Kirsten adds, if anyone needs his number call me.

- Kathy adds, started campground clean up over the weekend, encourages if you are out and about at some recreation sites and you notice food storage order violations, remind people about the food storage order. Part of the food storage order is you must remain with your attractants or put them in your hard sided vehicle.
- Kirsten, a lot of the recreation sites have bear bins
- Gary, tells a story of a guy that took meat renderings stored in a cooler he left outside and a bear got into it.
- Community member, another question, he lives up Piper Creek, the gravel pit up there, people just throw stuff in the fire when they get ready to leave, there are mattresses, stuff laying everywhere, it looks like a dump. Is there a way to get any signage that says, "don't leave your garbage."

Axel makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Wyatt 2nd. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm

Swan Valley Community Council Sign in Sheet – Month: 04 Year: 2026

[illegible]



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Swan Lake Ranger District

200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911
406-837-7500

April 21, 2026

Dear Interested Party,

The Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest is proposing the Piper Creek Project to improve forest stand conditions to be more resilient to natural disturbances such as insect and disease outbreaks and wildfire. The project area is located about 10 miles north of Condon, Montana, and is primarily within the Piper Creek watershed.

Preliminary review indicates the proposed project would meet the requirements of the Insect & Disease categorical exclusion, as defined by Section 603 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. § 6591b). Additionally, the proposed project falls within the Emergency Situation Determination under Section 40807 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, as determined by Secretarial Memorandum 1078-006. This document serves as public notice of this authorized emergency action.

Information about the project is available on the Flathead National Forest project webpage here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r01/flathead/projects/267907>

Project documents, including the proposed action, are posted to Pinyon Public here: <https://usfs-public.box.com/s/uv146cqt0oonx7zgji7n3v9usrys3rnX>

Your input on the Piper Creek Project would be most helpful if received by **May 5, 2026**. Please see the instructions below for how to provide input.

Electronic input: Submit via the online comment form (preferred) or via email to comments-northern-flathead-swan-lake@usda.gov, with "Piper Creek Project" in the subject line.

Mail or hand-deliver hardcopy:

U.S. Forest Service, Swan Lake Ranger District
Attn: Sarah Canepa (Piper Creek Project)
200 Ranger Station Road
Bigfork, MT 59911

If you have questions regarding the Piper Creek Project, please contact Alyssa Worsham, Planning Team Lead, by email at alyssa.worsham@usda.gov or by phone at (406) 837-7521. Thank you for taking the time to review the project proposal.

Sincerely,

SARAH CANEPA

Digitally signed by SARAH
CANEPA
Date: 2026.04.21 12:27:22 -06'00'

SARAH CANEPA
Swan Lake District Ranger

