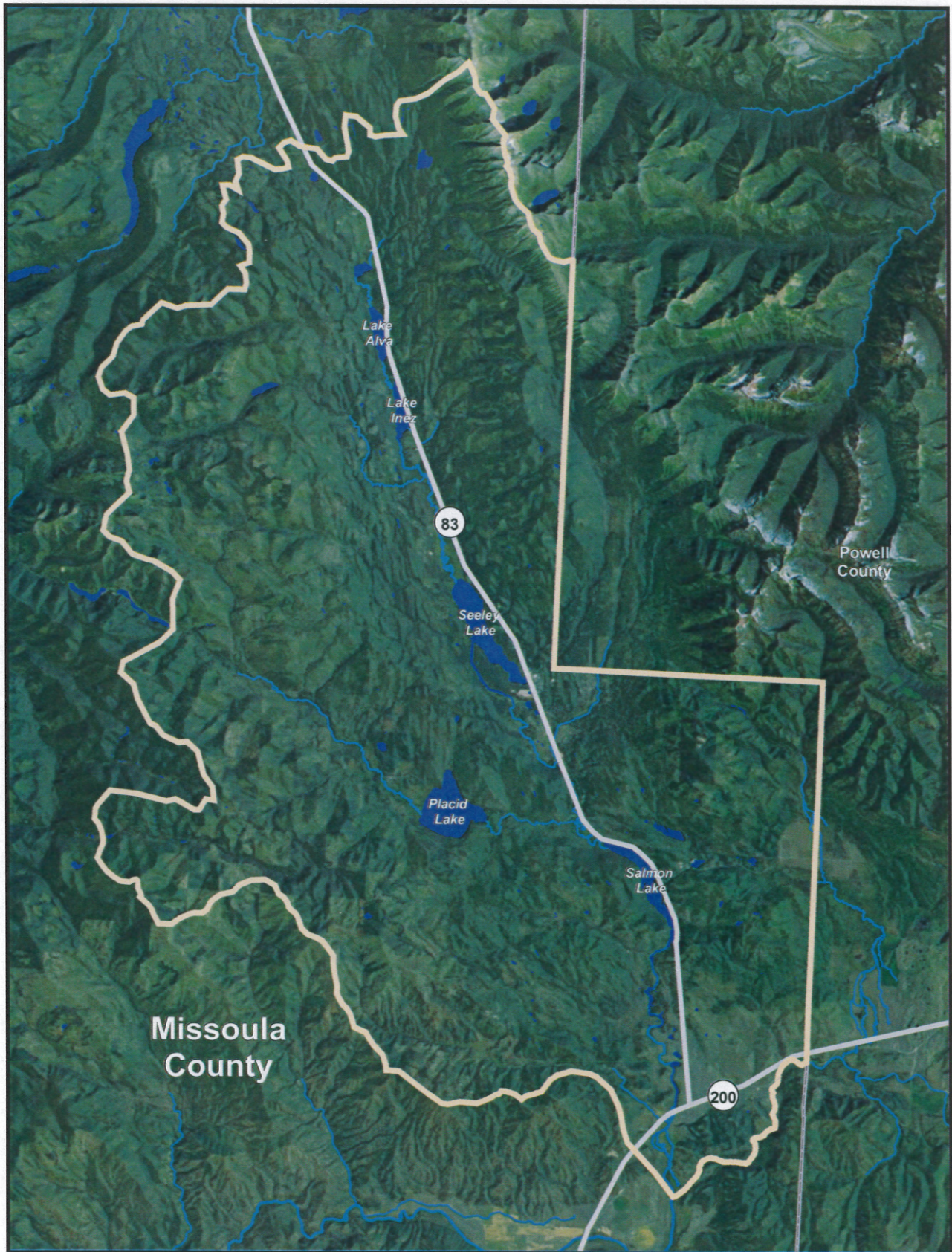


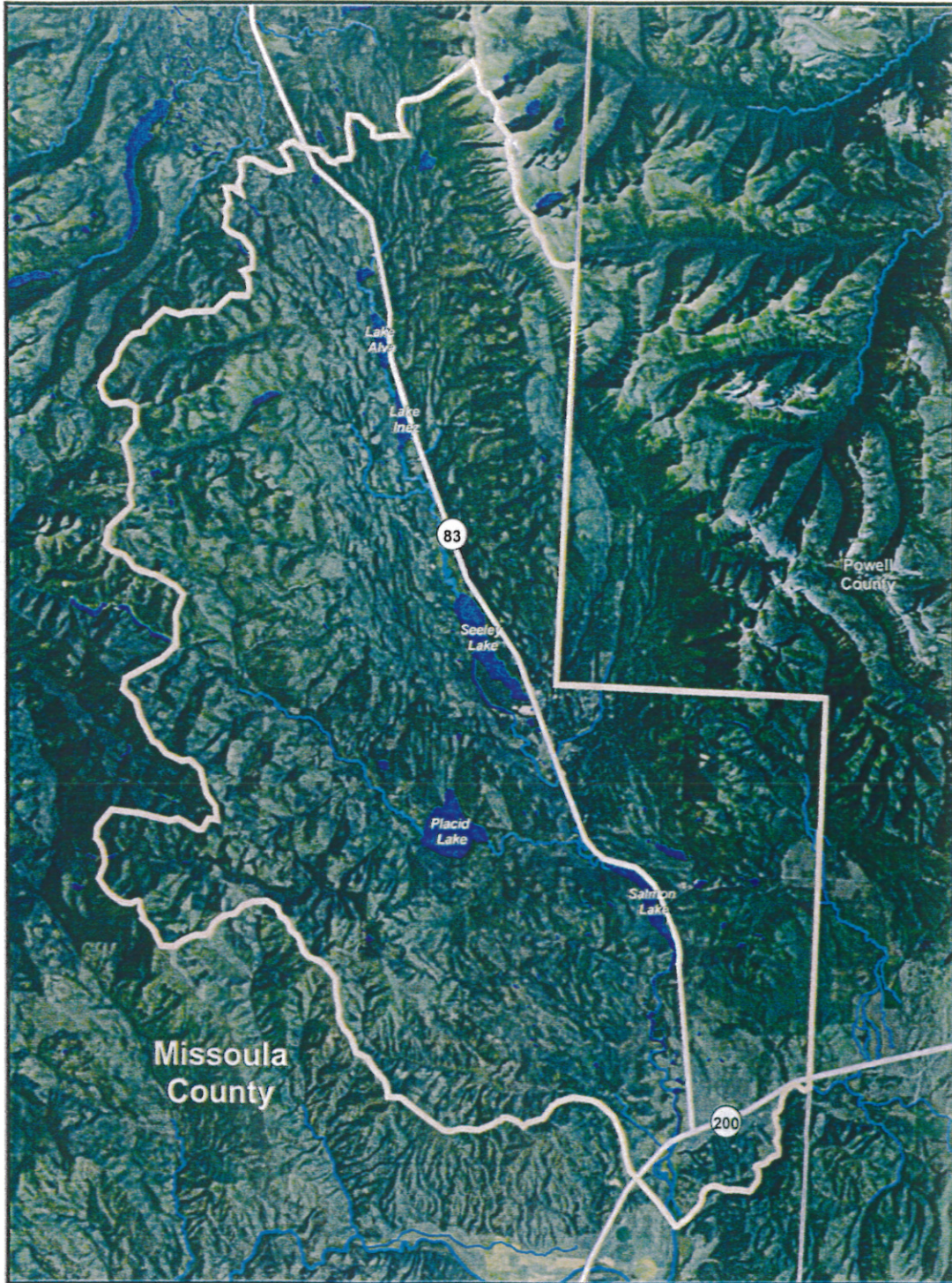
# Seeley Lake Regional Plan



Adopted by Resolution of Intent on October 20, 2010  
By the Missoula Board of County Commissioners

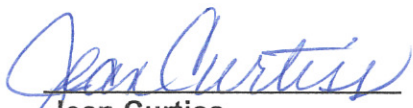


# Seeley Lake Regional Plan

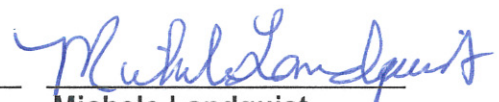


Tuesday, January 4, 2011, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners adopted this Plan by Resolution 2011-002, Resolution to Adopt the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update to the Missoula County Growth Policy 2005 Update.

Further, this Plan replaces the 1989 Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update for the geographic area covered.

  
Jean Curtiss,  
Chair

  
Bill Carey,  
Commissioner

  
Michele Landquist  
Commissioner

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2011-002

**A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE SEELEY LAKE REGIONAL PLAN**

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. § 76-1-604 authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to adopt and revise a Growth Policy; and

WHEREAS, Missoula County adopted the Missoula County Growth Policy 2005 Update by Resolution 2006-079; and

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. § 76-1-601 (4) states that a Growth Policy may include one or more neighborhood plans; and

WHEREAS, the 1989 Seeley Lake Regional Plan, covering a portion of this Plan Area, is included in the 2005 Growth Policy Update; and

WHEREAS, the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update was drafted through a public planning process by the Seeley Lake Community Council; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board reviewed the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update-March 2009 Public Hearing Draft at eight meetings beginning June 16, 2009 and ending October 20, 2009 to hear and consider comments, recommendations, and suggestions; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board recommended by a vote of 7-2 the approval of the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update, with revisions, to the Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Planning Board's revisions were incorporated into the October 2009 Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update Planning Board draft; and

WHEREAS, after public notice in the *Independent, Missoulian*, and *Seeley Lake Pathfinder*, newspapers of general circulation, the Missoula County Board of County Commissioners held public hearings on February 4, February 24, March 3, March 17, March 31, April 21, May 19, June 9, June 16, and July 29, 2010, to consider the recommendation of the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board that the Missoula County Board of County Commissioners adopt the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update as amended, and further accepted written public comment until August 20, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners held final deliberations on the Plan at a public meeting in Seeley Lake on October 20, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners considered and weighed the public comment and made changes where deemed appropriate based on public interest, as is reflected in the public record; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners considered the changing nature of growth and development in the area, the need to maintain and enhance local communities, the necessity to protect and enhance the economic viability of the community, the necessity of protecting resources that economically sustain the area, and the crucial role that the area plays in sustaining conservation resource benefits to the Crown of the Continent; and

WHEREAS, given the intense land use, cultural, and social changes in the area and the tools available to address such changes, the Board of County Commissioners finds that this Growth Policy amendment, as revised, meets the goals for a neighborhood plan; and

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2010 the Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 2010-124, a Resolution of Intent to Adopt the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update to the Missoula County Growth 2005 Update, as amended by the Missoula Consolidated Planning Board, with additional amendments, and with any necessary factual or editorial corrections; and

WHEREAS, a final plan incorporating the Board of County Commissioners revisions has been completed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners hereby adopts this Resolution to Adopt the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update to the Missoula County Growth 2005 Update. Further, this Plan replaces the 1989 Seeley Lake Regional Plan update for the geographic area covered.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 4<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2011.

BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:

Vickie M Zeier  
Vickie Zeier, Clerk and Recorder

MISSOULA COUNTY

Jean Curtiss  
Jean Curtiss, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Dean McCall  
Deputy County Attorney

Michele Landquist  
Michele Landquist, Commissioner

Bill Carey  
Bill Carey, Commissioner



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### Residents of the Plan Area

#### Seeley Lake Community Council (past and current)

Sam Bolton	Jay Kolbe
Ron Cox	Addrien Marx
Carol Evans	Mary Ann Morin
George Frasca	Val Natale
Jack Greenwood	Gary Pelletier
Jon Haufler	Cheryl Thompson
Walt Hill	Diane Weatherman
Steve Johnson	Natalie Wiseheart

#### Missoula Consolidated Planning Board (at time of review)

Don MacArthur (chair)	Heidi Kendall
Jennifer Clary	John DiBari
Tim Ibey	Jonathon Haber
Jerry Petasek	Don Latham
Jerry O'Connell	Tim Skufca
Kelly Durbin	

#### Missoula Board of County Commissioners

Michele Landquist  
Jean Curtiss  
Bill Carey

#### State and Federal Agencies and Large Landowners including:

Seeley Lake Ranger District, Lolo National Forest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, Montana Department of Natural  
Resources and Conservation, Plum Creek Timber Company

#### Missoula County Office of Rural Initiatives

#### Missoula County Departments

#### Numerous Other Plan Participants

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area is primarily located in the Clearwater River watershed, with forested mountain ranges on either side and rivers, streams, and a chain of lakes running through the valley. The area is home to a rich and abundant diversity of plant communities and wildlife. It is also situated at the southern end of the 700 mile-long Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and provides crucial connections for wildlife as they move across their respective habitats. The area offers spectacular views, open spaces, and excellent year-round recreational opportunities that are treasured by its residents. In addition to traditional forest products and agriculture, tourism is increasingly contributing to the economy. Over the last two decades, the Plan Area has experienced increased visitation, recreation, and home construction.

The Seeley Lake Regional Plan is an effort initiated by the Seeley Lake Community Council to outline a vision for the future of the community. That vision must translate into an overall plan to guide land use decisions in a manner that enhances the Seeley Lake area as a place to live, work, and recreate while retaining the area's character and conserving its unique natural resources.

### PURPOSE

The Seeley Lake Regional Plan is a non-regulatory document intended to provide policy guidance on how growth and development should occur in the Plan Area, to inform land use decisions, and to provide specific measures for meeting the community's land use goals. The Plan suggests how best to address land use demands in the Seeley Lake community while protecting its valued characteristics.

The need for an updated Plan and implementation strategy is the result of several factors: growth pressure; recreational pressure; increased housing costs for year-round residents; possible changes from timber management to residential use for large areas; the declining economic role of timber harvest and increasing role of tourists and part time residents to the economy; increased demands for recreational uses; and water quality concerns.

As with any regional planning effort, this Plan functions as an overview of the Plan Area's issues and a general guide for future planning of the area. Additional site specific analyses would be needed for new development.

### PLANNING HISTORY

There is a long history of planning and resident involvement in planning efforts in the Seeley region, dating back to the *1975 Missoula County Comprehensive Plan*, which included a citizen's advisory group from Seeley Lake. The Seeley Lake Community Council was formed in 1987. It worked to define community goals for the *1989 Seeley Lake Area Comprehensive Plan Amendment Regional Plan*, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. At that time the Community Council also adopted a resolution with the theme "Working Together Works" as a means for solving community problems.

In response to increased development in the area, the Seeley Lake Community Council initiated its own planning efforts in 2001. The Council worked intently and extensively to produce the *2002 Community Development Guide*, including a land use map. While not adopted as County policy, this Guide provided a clear articulation of the values and goals of the community. That work contributes to the basis for much of this Regional Plan. In 2006, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners directed Rural Initiatives staff to help the Community Council revise and update a Regional Plan for the Seeley area.

## **PLAN AREA**

The Seeley Lake Community Council boundary corresponds to the Missoula County Elementary School #34 boundary. Previous planning efforts have been focused within this boundary. Since the significant natural resources of the area are best analyzed on a watershed basis, the boundary for this Plan was expanded to cover the entire Clearwater River watershed within Missoula County, extending south to Clearwater Junction and incorporating a portion of the Greenough area. The Plan Area also includes that portion of Missoula County north of Highway 200 that lies east of the Clearwater Valley watershed. (See Map 1.) Neither additional area is currently represented by a separate Community Council. They are located within a portion of the Sunset Hill School District, which serves the community of Greenough. The plan area is approximately 388 sq. miles in size.

The hydrologic divide between the Clearwater and the Swan River drainage basins forms the northern boundary of the Plan Area. The western boundary is the watershed divide along the Mission Mountains. Neighboring Powell County generally constitutes the eastern boundary. The Plan Area reaches to the southern extent of the Clearwater River watershed, including the Clearwater Junction area.

Montana Highway 83 is the major north-south route through the planning area, connecting to the Swan Valley and communities to the north. A portion of Montana Highway 200 runs through the Clearwater Junction portion of the Plan Area. Highway 200 serves as the transportation route connecting Seeley Lake to Missoula and communities to the east, such as Ovando and Lincoln.

Approximately 55% of the land in the Plan Area is publicly owned and managed, primarily by the United States Forest Service, Lolo National Forest. An additional 35% of the land is owned by Plum Creek Timber Company. Private individuals own the remaining 9%. (See Maps 2 and 2A.) Much of the National Forest and Plum Creek land is grouped into large tracts in the Seeley Lake area, rather than the checkerboard pattern commonly seen in other areas of western Montana.<sup>1</sup>

There are currently 7,309 acres of land in the Plan Area under conservation easements. Much of this land is located in the area of the Blackfoot Clearwater Wildlife Management Area and Clearwater Junction. (See Map 2B.)

## **COMMUNITY VALUES**

The values and concerns expressed by the community have been remarkably consistent over the past 30 years, revolving around the natural resources of the valley, rural

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<sup>1</sup> For updated information about ownership or other data referenced in the Plan, please contact the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office.



character, and the desire to balance growth with protection of the qualities that the community values. Year-round residents, seasonal visitors and seasonal residents treasure the forested areas, clean clear streams and lakes, fresh air, fish and wildlife populations, and views. The community also values its natural amenities as economic and recreational resources that need to remain balanced and productive.

Many residents have moved to Seeley Lake in order to enjoy the quality of life found in the valley with a simple lifestyle in a rural environment. The existing small-town lifestyle and rural character are highly valued. Residents of the Seeley Lake area are community-minded and volunteers run most of the boards that oversee activities, schools, and utilities. With a strong spirit of self-reliance, they also value having trustworthy neighbors and helping each other in time of need. Residents do have to travel, often to Missoula, to gain access to certain medical, shopping and other amenities. Residents have expressed a desire to have more of these amenities available closer to home without their construction impacting the rural character of the Plan Area.<sup>2</sup>

Residents wish to identify and preserve their traditional and distinctive quality of life and ensure that human elements of the community complement the natural beauty of the surrounding area. They hope to recognize and share what is special about the valley, with an identity that is easily recognized from the outside and authentically lived on the inside.

The community of Seeley Lake believes that its natural amenities and rural character will continue to drive the growth of the region and that the same growth may present a threat to those resources. Planning efforts in 1975, 1989, 2002 as well as this current effort have all reflected a strong desire to maintain the economic and social health of the region through responsible growth that does not compromise critical resources and amenities.

Demand for primary and secondary homes in the planning region will continue to increase. The community recognizes that growth in the downtown portion of the Plan Area has the potential to revitalize the community, increase the economic opportunities available to residents, allow for increased density, and provide expanded services. With this balance of growth and preservation in mind, the community has examined demographic and development trends, existing infrastructure, natural resources and human needs, and has used this information to develop this plan.

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE**

As of 2006, approximately 2,200 people live year-round in the Plan Area. An additional 1,800 are seasonal residents. Seasonal residents are a fast-growing component of the local population, and over 35% of the houses within the region serve as second homes.

The unincorporated town of Seeley Lake is the primary population center of the Plan Area, with 1,436 residents. It serves as the retail and community services hub for much of the Plan Area, with the exception of a few retail services available at Clearwater Junction.

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<sup>2</sup> Seeley Lake Community Council Community Survey, 2005.

Clearwater Junction, where Highway 83 heads north from Highway 200, serves as the gateway to the Clearwater Valley and a transition area from agricultural lands backed by rolling forested hills to the timbered valleys, chain of lakes, and more residential development further north. In addition to residences on larger lots, there are several commercial operations in the Clearwater Junction area.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Seeley Lake Community Council (SLCC) was established in part to advance and promote the interests and welfare of the residents of the Seeley Lake community. The Council also informs the Missoula County Commissioners and other County departments about issues in the area. By working with permanent and part-time residents, state and federal agencies, property owners and visitors, the Council can advise local government in making decisions that benefit the Seeley Lake area and ultimately Missoula County.

The Council is an advisory arm of the County Commissioners intended to respond to local needs in a timely and efficient manner. The Council conducts community meetings as needed to discuss issues of community concern or conflicts, and provides a local public forum to review proposed developments, county operations, community infrastructure, and other social, cultural, and economic issues.

## **PLAN PROCESS**

Efforts to update a Regional Plan for the Seeley area restarted in 2006. Valuable resources were available in the form of the Clearwater Resource Council's *Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley of Montana* and the *2002 Community Development Guide*. Recommendations made in 2003 by students from the University of Idaho architecture program were also considered. These and other resources were used, along with public comment and a series of council meetings that started in May 2006, to develop a map of draft land use recommendations. An initial draft Plan update was released by Rural Initiatives in February 2007.

In response to agency and public comment, the Council revised the draft and posted revisions in April 2007. After this release, the Council established two subcommittees. One subcommittee worked on issues surrounding resource protection lands in the Plan Area. The other subcommittee worked to refine the higher-density residential and commercial designations for the area around downtown Seeley Lake. The Council released another draft in December 2007. In December 2008, the Council approved its final recommended revisions to the draft Seeley Lake Regional Plan. Missoula County Rural Initiatives prepared the March 2009 Public Hearing Draft after reviewing the SLCC December 2008 Final Draft.

The Planning Board considered the Seeley Lake Regional Plan at eight meetings from June through October 20, 2009 and recommended additional revisions to the Draft Plan. At its October 20, 2009 meeting, the Planning Board voted to recommend that the Plan Update, with Planning Board's additional recommended revisions be adopted by the Missoula Board of County Commissioners. The October 2009 Planning Board Draft was forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for consideration.

The BCC considered the Plan at 10 public hearings from February through July 2010. Written public comment was received through August 20, 2010. On October 20, 2010



the BCC completed their deliberations on the Plan and adopted Resolution 2010-124, a Resolution of Intention to Adopt the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Update with Revisions.

### **GROWTH POLICY CONTEXT**

The *1975 Missoula County Comprehensive Plan* listed County-wide goals and more specific Planning Area objectives. It also included a map of recommended land use designations for all lands within the County. In 1999, the state legislature passed a law requiring that each county adopt a Growth Policy as a basis for future land use decisions.

The County and City adopted the *Missoula County Growth Policy* in 2002, followed by the *2005 Update*. The Growth Policy encourages adoption of detailed plans for neighborhoods, regions, areas and specific issues. This Seeley Lake Regional Plan amends the *Missoula County Growth Policy 2005 Update*. As a regional plan, it augments the County-wide goals and objectives of the Growth Policy by providing more specific guidance for the Plan Area.

### **PLAN CONTENT AND USE**

The Plan outlines policies about future land uses and community growth and development. It suggests ways the character of the Plan Area might be retained, how resources might be protected, how growth can be accommodated, and how infrastructure might be developed to provide for the needs of the community. It builds on and complements the *1989 Seeley Lake Comprehensive Plan Amendment* and the *2002 Community Development Guide*.

The Plan is organized into eight chapters. Chapters 2-6 summarize existing conditions and list goals and action strategies for various elements of the Plan Area. Goals express the overall desires of the community as they pertain to various aspects of development, community interaction, and natural resource protection within the Plan Area. Action strategies are specific actions that can be taken by entities within the County and the Plan Area that will help bring the goals to fruition. Chapter 7 describes land use recommendations and rationales. Chapter 8 describes a general strategy for implementing the Plan.

The Plan will help citizens and local government anticipate and deal constructively with changes occurring in the community. It provides information to assist in integrating ecological, economic, and social objectives in the decision-making process.

The Plan provides the framework to allow the County to adopt implementation tools to guide growth to appropriate areas while maintaining and enhancing the area's natural resources and community character. Overall, the community recommends that developments be coordinated, connected to the larger region and town center, provide their share of infrastructure improvements, and achieve a safe environment. While encouraging development in certain locations, the Plan respects sensitive lands and recommends areas where development should be discouraged.

## CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

### HISTORY

#### Native People

The Plan Area has always been an important part of the aboriginal territory of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people. Today, it remains an important area for the Tribes, who continue to utilize it for traditional cultural purposes. From time immemorial, these tribes fished; hunted large game such as bison, elk and deer; and harvested a variety of berries, roots, and other plant materials. Both tribes moved through their territories with the seasons, following the cyclical bounties of plants and animals. The area contains many traditional Salish-language place names still known to the tribes today. A complex network of trails crisscrossed the area and linked it to more distant regions. For example, one important trail ran from the Jocko Valley down Finley Creek to Placid Lake and then up the Blackfoot River valley, crossing the Continental Divide and continuing on to the buffalo hunting areas east of the mountains. The Seeley area is rich in tribal camping areas, including Morrell Meadows (now known as Double Arrow Ranch) and the top of Morrell Creek Hill. Up through the 1950s, the Salish had fall hunting camps in the Seeley Lake area.

Many other native tribes also traveled through and used the Plan Area. Most were allies of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, such as the Nez Perce. Blackfeet raiders also made forays into the area, and especially in the nineteenth century there were numerous battles in the area between them and the Salish-speaking peoples.

For thousands of years, the Salish and Pend d'Oreille managed the forests and prairies of the area with fire. Large sections of forest, particularly lower elevation ponderosa and western larch regimes, were maintained in an open, park-like condition with controlled burns set on average every few years. Tribal fire management was practiced for many reasons, including revitalizing berry production, providing better game forage, and maintaining easy travel corridors.

The impacts to native people of the area associated with European-American society actually preceded the arrival of non-Indians themselves. Smallpox and other European diseases exacted heavy tolls among the Salish and Pend d'Oreille well before the arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1805-06. Repeated epidemics through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century decimated tribal populations.<sup>1</sup>

#### European Settlement/Homesteaders

European settlement began with Jasper B. and Elmer Seely in 1881.<sup>2</sup> (The current spelling of Seeley Lake is due to a misspelling of the Seely name.) The Seely family built a cabin on the shores of Seeley Lake (then known as Clearwater Lake), at the location of present-day Camp Paxson.<sup>3</sup> William Dilts, a fisherman, settled at Fish Lake (now called Big Sky Lake).

Settlers drew upon the rich natural resources of the region, earning income from timber and fur. Farmers had limited success with agricultural efforts in the Seeley Valley. After

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<sup>1</sup> Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

<sup>2</sup> Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce website.

<sup>3</sup> *Cabin Fever: A Collection of Stories about the Seeley Lake Area*

surveying began in the area in 1883, some settlers purchased inexpensive land deemed unfit for agriculture, often selling it later to timber companies.

Hiram and Libby Blanchard were the first people known to have ranched along the Clearwater River and Placid Lake. In 1889 Libby Blanchard became the first landowner in the Plan Area with a homestead at the mouth of her namesake creek.

Settlement around Ovando began in the late 1870s. The Boyd Ranch northwest of Ovando became one of the largest in the area, much of which is now the Blackfoot Clearwater Wildlife Management Area. Later Seeley Lake settlers traveled via a trail from Ovando to Woodworth and then north above Salmon Lake to Morrell Flats.

Placer mines were active in the area as early as the 1860s producing gold, silver, and copper. In 1898 gold was discovered in a mine in the town of Garnet.

### **Logging**

The first logging near Seeley Lake took place in 1892. Four years later, Gifford Pinchot, who later became the first Chief of the United States Forest Service, visited the area to gather information on the conservation of timber resources. Soon after, he established the Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve (now the Seeley Lake Ranger District, in the Lolo National Forest) with J.B. Seely as the first ranger. In 1896, the Forest Service offered the first timber sale at Seeley Lake, which was purchased by the Big Blackfoot Lumber Company.

Early logging provided timber for the Butte mines. Logs were floated from Seeley Lake to the Big Blackfoot Lumber mill at Bonner until 1911. Later the Big Blackfoot Railroad was built from the Blackfoot Valley to the Woodworth area. Loggers were housed in temporary camps, first on rail cars, later in portable wooden structures near the logging site. As the timber industry grew, milling operations sprang up throughout the area.<sup>4</sup> Remnant evidence of these camps can be seen at the Case Ranch, a few miles east of Potomac on the north side of Highway 200.

As settlement continued in the area, the number of public buildings and associated infrastructure also grew. A schoolhouse was built at Placid Lake in 1904 and a bridge across the Clearwater River was built north of Seeley Lake in 1907. In 1908 the location for the present site of the Seeley Lake Ranger Station was set aside. In 1912 the Corlett Post Office was established near Morrell Creek, south of the present day town of Seeley Lake.

In 1917 Sunset School was built. In 1926 the Hartley General Store opened a post office, which was named Greenough in honor of Paul Greenough, owner of the nearby Sunset Valley Ranch.

World War II increased demand for lumber and spurred the establishment of new sawmill operations. The demand for lumber continued after the war and the number of permanent residents and local businesses in the Plan Area continued to increase.

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<sup>4</sup> Information compiled by local resident Ron Cox.



### **Recreational Use/ Resorts**

In 1921 the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) started the Seeley Lake Campground and constructed Holland Ridge and Morrell Mountain Lookouts. The USFS also began to encourage the use of existing logging roads for recreational activity. In 1915 the USFS started leasing lots near Seeley Lake and by 1926 there were 35 summer cottages on the lake.

The Seeley Lake area's convenient yet secluded location and its abundant resources, including fish, game, and large undeveloped wild areas, combined to make the area desirable for tourism and outdoor recreation. Eventually the Seeley area became a popular summer residence and resort area, supporting the beginning of the tourism and outfitting trades. As transportation facilities improved, the area became a weekend and vacation destination for an ever-widening circle of visitors. Resorts and outfitting prospered during the 1920s-1930s. Tourism also prospered and grew on large ranches in and around the Plan Area.

Following World War II, the area became increasingly popular as a summer vacation spot and second home area for families from Missoula and throughout Montana. That trend continues today, with second home ownership divided evenly among Missoulians, Montanans, and those from out of state. Younger, more mobile retirees help fuel the demand for second homes in the Plan Area.

### **Land Ownership Patterns**

Prior to non-Indian settlement of the area, native peoples occupied and utilized the area, but the idea of land as a commodity that could be owned, bought, and sold was completely foreign to their culture and economy. Land ownership began with non-Indian settlement. Although a railroad was not constructed through the Clearwater Valley, the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) had a great influence on ownership patterns due to the railroad land grant program. At the beginning of the 20th Century, the Northern Pacific Railroad was granted the odd numbered sections of land in the valley resulting in a checkerboard pattern of ownership with the federal government. These grants were intended to financially support railroad construction.

During the 1920s-1930s, NPRR sold some parcels in the lowlands to private individuals. In the 1940s-1950s large USFS tracts in the western portion of the Plan Area were exchanged with NPRR creating a solid block of public land that would later become the Bob Marshall Wilderness. NPRR was merged with other railroads and became Burlington Northern (BN) in 1970.

Plum Creek Timber Company was started in the 1930s by lumberman D.C. Dunham. In 1945, Dunham moved his lumber company from Minnesota to Columbia Falls, Montana and renamed it Plum Creek. After he died in 1966, his family sold the business to Northern Pacific Railroad, which then became part of BN. In 1987, BN spun off its non-railroad holdings, including the Plum Creek mills and timberlands, into a holding company called Burlington Resources. Plum Creek Timber Company, L.P., a publicly traded partnership was established in 1989 and purchased the timberlands and mills from Burlington Resources.<sup>5</sup> Plum Creek converted its organization to a Real Estate Investment Trust in 1999. Today Plum Creek is the largest private landowner in the country, as well as in Missoula County. It owns 35% of the land within the Plan Area. In

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<sup>5</sup> Plum Creek Timber Company website: [www.plumcreek.com](http://www.plumcreek.com)

2008, the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy entered into an agreement to purchase 26,807 acres of Plum Creek land within the Plan Area as part of the Montana Legacy Project. (See Map 2A and Chapter 5.)

### **Recent settlement**

Development in the valley has been fairly consolidated near infrastructure and recreational amenities. Through the years, houses and camps in the valley were concentrated in particular areas. Summer residents dominated Big Sky Lake, Placid Lake, and Lake Inez. The Kozy Korner area changed from a few larger ranch lands to several smaller tracts with permanent residents. The main Seeley townsite was subdivided in the 1950s and the Double Arrow Ranch subdivided in 1974. More homes have been built in the Plan Area in the last 20 years than any other 20 year period, with a majority of the growth on the Double Arrow Ranch. Residential construction has also occurred around Clearwater Junction, including worker housing for Paws Up resort employees. The Clearwater Junction area also includes commercial uses, including a bar and restaurant, with the noted big steer landmark.

### **CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Reminders of Seeley Lake's past are still evident in area archaeological and tribal cultural sites, homesteads, schoolhouses, camps, recreational facilities and logging operations. The historic and cultural resources of the Seeley Lake area contribute to making the area special.

The Seeley Lake Historical Museum and Visitor Center are located at the south end of town in a historic barn, which was formerly used by a local outfitter and guide. The barn was dismantled, moved from the Double Arrow Ranch, and reassembled in its current location over the course of seven years in an effort supported by grants and considerable community volunteer labor.

### **Native American/Archeological & Cultural Sites**

Evidence of early habitation comes from a variety of sites and artifacts such as tool pictographs, stone cairns, scarred trees, tipi rings, hearths, rock quarries, and chipping sites. Approximately 95% of archeological and cultural artifacts in Missoula County have been found along creeks, rivers, and lakes. The first artifacts found in the County are from the Clearwater Junction area and are over 12,000 years old.<sup>6</sup> Sites of current cultural importance also exist. Many of these areas bear ancient Salish-Pend d'Oreille place names, still used by elders and students of the Salish language. The tribes are in the process of finalizing information in this area that will be appropriate for public dissemination.

Projects that disturb the ground can damage or destroy cultural sites. Based on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Missoula County has a policy to include the Tribes as a reviewer on all subdivision projects. One tool for determining the presence of known cultural resources is to request a file search by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This search should be conducted prior to any earth moving activities and may lead to recommendations for further cultural resource identification or treatment efforts. If cultural resources are uncovered during any earth moving, the Confederated Salish and

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<sup>6</sup> *Inventory of Conservation Resources for Missoula County Montana, 1992.*

Kootenai Tribe's Tribal Preservation Office in Pablo and SHPO in Helena should be contacted before further disturbance of the site occurs.

### **Historic Sites**

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official list of the nation's historic buildings and sites that are considered to be worthy of preservation. In the Seeley area, the Camp Paxson Boy Scout Camp is listed as a site on the NRHP. There is a management agreement with Missoula Children's Theater for a restoration of all the buildings. Camp Paxson began in 1924 as a Boy Scout camp and was named in honor of Edgar S. Paxson, a well known early 20<sup>th</sup> century Montana artist. The present camp buildings at Camp Paxson were constructed in 1939 and 1940 with Civilian Conservation Corps labor and Works Progress Administration labor under the direction of a USFS engineer.

### **Historic Buildings and Structures**

A historic building is one that displays architectural characteristics that reflect the history of the time it was built, is associated with significant people or events in the past, or may provide important historical information. A historic building may be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The Register listing provides recognition to the property and can reward landowners for their preservation efforts through access to grants and tax credits. Listing in the Register does not interfere with a landowner's right to paint, remodel, sell, or even demolish the building. Nor does listing require that a building be open to the public.

Recognition that structures are historic does not necessarily mean that historic designation is being pursued. Preservation of historic buildings is encouraged. Retaining unique architectural features and supporting compatible uses for historic property that require minimal alteration of structure, site, and environment are ways to accomplish preservation. The community may identify structures of significant historical value to the community, regardless of whether they are formally listed.

The Double Arrow Fire Lookout is listed in the National Register of Historic Lookouts. It was built in 1932 before a road led to the site. Since 1989 it has been used only on an emergency basis. The USFS and Friends of Double Arrow Lookout have been restoring the lookout and plan to place it in the USFS rental cabin program.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Cultural and Historic Resources**

Goal: Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources in the Plan Area to safeguard the Seeley Lake region's heritage.

Goal: Identify, evaluate, and develop ways to protect historic and cultural sites, structures, and trails in the region.

#### **Action Strategies:**

1. Support historic and architectural surveys of the planning region, multiple properties studies, and archeological/cultural studies of local historical resources and contexts.
2. Consider incentives for historic preservation.
3. Restore the Double Arrow Lookout to preserve its significance in forest fire detection and suppression efforts and maintain its registry on the National Register of Historic Lookouts.



Goal: Encourage the preservation of historic buildings.

Action Strategies:

1. Identify and maintain a list of historic and other cultural sites in the Seeley Lake area.
2. Protect and maintain historic buildings such that they display their historical features.

Goal: Protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.

Action Strategies:

1. If cultural resources are uncovered during any earth moving, contact the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe's Tribal Preservation Office in Pablo and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Helena before further disturbance of the site occurs.
2. Encourage SHPO file searches when appropriate prior to or during project review.

Goal: Provide education on area history and environment.

Action Strategies:

1. Support informational areas such as interpretive sites, community bulletin boards, and historical signs.
2. Support cross-cultural work on cultural, historic, and archeological sites in the area.
3. Encourage sharing of information on area history and environment with tourists as well as local residents.
4. Support the Seeley Lake Historical Museum and Visitor Center.

## CHAPTER 3: NATURAL RESOURCES

The Plan Area forms the southernmost portion of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE), which extends from the Highwood River in Alberta south to the Blackfoot River in Montana. The NCDE is also known as the “Crown of the Continent,” as well as the “backbone of the world” to the Blackfeet people<sup>1</sup>. Because of its rich diversity of habitat and wildlife species, the NCDE has a high global conservation status. The Seeley Lake Plan Area forms an integral part of the NCDE and thus the land use and land management activities have significance extending far beyond the valley.

The following sections on Biological, Geologic, Water and Air Resources summarize some of the key components of the region’s natural resources, especially as they relate to land use planning and decision making. Additional and more detailed information on the area’s resources formed the basis for much of this chapter and can be found in the following documents (see Appendix B):

- *Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley of Montana*, prepared by the Clearwater Resource Council, 2006 (updated in 2008);
- *Biological Data Available in the Seeley Lake Planning Region of Missoula County, Montana: Resource Status and Vulnerability to Human Development Pressures*, prepared by Victoria Edwards, 2006; and
- *Vegetation Communities in the Seeley Lake Plan Area*, prepared by Rural Initiatives (RI) Staff, 2007.<sup>2</sup>

### BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

#### Vegetation

The type and distribution of vegetation within the valley depends on temperature, elevation, aspect, soil type, and the availability of moisture. The Clearwater drainage consists of a wide range of elevations and other physical parameters that lead to diverse plant communities within the Seeley Lake Plan Area. Although approximately 80% of the Plan Area consists of conifer forest, the types of forest vary widely in terms of species and structure. Additional plant communities that are more rare but ecologically important include bunchgrass prairie, sedge dominated wetlands, riparian forest and shrub land, and aquatic submersed vegetation.

#### **Forest Vegetation Communities**

The Seeley Lake Plan Area encompasses a variety of forest vegetation communities, as detailed in the Vegetation Communities report (RI Staff 2007). In general, forests at all elevations provide important wildlife habitat, necessary ecosystem functions, exceptional recreational opportunities, and economic benefits.

Environmental conditions at lower elevations within the region provide for a variety of forest types. Gentle slopes and relatively drier/warmer conditions at lower elevations provide a suitable environment for Douglas-fir forest types found within the region. Of special note are areas within the Douglas-fir forest types that are dominated by ponderosa pine or western larch. These forest types were more common in the valley historically, but many of the areas supporting mature forests of these species were

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<sup>1</sup> *Crown of the Continent: Profile of a Treasured Landscape*, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Extensive footnotes are not provided in this chapter. The reader is referred to these documents for more detailed citations.

logged, lost to residential development, or influenced by the lack of fire that frequently occurred within these forest types. Subalpine fir forest types also occur at lower elevations within the valley and are associated with drainage bottoms where cold air can pool. A few areas at lower elevations also support lodgepole pine forest types, especially in the northern portions of the valley.

At mid-elevations, conditions tend to be cooler and moister, than the lower elevation areas, supporting primarily subalpine fir forest types. Subalpine fir forests support a mix of conifer species including lodgepole pine, larch, Douglas fir, subalpine fir, and Engleman spruce. Various subalpine fir forest types, especially those containing huckleberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), provide critical habitat for grizzly bears, while others provide critical habitat for the Canada lynx.

At the highest elevations, forests are limited due to harsh environmental conditions. Subalpine fir can be found at these elevations, but trees are often diminutive and gnarled. Other conifers found at high elevations within the planning area include a small population of alpine larch near Morrel Mountain and Richmond Saddle, a few mountain hemlock forests on the east and west sides of the valley, and scattered whitebark pine trees. Mountain Hemlock forests, found at elevations around 6000 feet, are significant in the planning area because they are considered imperiled in Montana due to their rarity within the state.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages its lands for multiple uses such as resource conservation, timber production, and recreation. Plum Creek Timber Company has also managed a significant portion of the planning area for timber production. Although much of the Plum Creek land has been altered by timber harvest activities (e.g. canopy cover removal, reduction in large trees and snags), these lands still contain important habitat value and contribute substantially to the resource values of the region. Forests are regenerating on harvested sites over time. Recent wildfires in the Plan Area removed forest cover in some areas, but will also regenerate over time.

### **Grasslands Vegetation Communities**

Although grassland does not make up a large portion of the planning area, its value as habitat should not be understated. Grasslands support a diversity of wildlife species in the Clearwater Valley, and are especially important to elk that rely on these areas for winter grazing.

Glaciers deposited heavy amounts of moraine north of the Blackfoot River leaving behind gentle rolling hills and pockets of wetlands. Bunchgrass plant communities dominate the coarse well-drained loamy soils left behind by the glaciers. Grassland communities are primarily concentrated in the southeastern portion of the planning area but a few can be found just northeast of Seeley Lake. Rough fescue is the dominant bunchgrass; other common native grasses include bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, prairie junegrass and several species of needle grass. Some of these grasslands have been converted for agricultural purposes.

### **Wetland, Riparian, and Aquatic Vegetation Communities**

Riparian communities along creeks and rivers provide a variety of significant ecosystem functions that include water storage, aquifer recharge, streambank stabilization, dissipation of wave energy, and filtering of nutrients, sediment and other pollutants. Some common trees species associated with riparian communities in the planning area

include subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, black cottonwood, and trembling aspen. A variety of willows, alders, and red-osier dogwood dominate the shrub layers. There are ongoing efforts to enhance and restore riparian areas on several creeks in the drainage, including Swamp, Morrell, Trail, Mountain, and Drew creeks.

The Seeley Lake area is well known for its extensive and diverse wetlands, streams, and numerous lakes located in the valley bottom and at higher elevations. Wetlands are lowlands that are covered with either shallow, intermittent, or temporary water. Wetlands within the planning area are generally categorized as fens, marshes, vernal pools, and shallow lakeshores and ponds.

In the Clearwater Valley, wetlands support a diversity of species, and provide important habitat for Species of Concern (Appendix A) including grizzly bear, lynx, bald eagle, bull trout, and common loon. A variety of other vertebrates and invertebrates utilize this habitat for forage and cover. Properly functioning wetlands perform important ecosystem functions such as water quality improvement and floodwater storage.

Aquatic plant communities exist in open water such as streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes and are characterized by sparse, submersed vegetation. Submersed aquatic plants, often called macrophytes, function ecologically to dissipate wave energy, stabilize sediment, ameliorate water quality, and provide cover, habitat and forage for lake fauna.

### **Plant Species of Concern**

The Clearwater Valley supports a number of species of rare plants. There are fourteen vascular plants (ferns, forbs) and four nonvascular plants (mosses, liverworts) listed as Species of Concern within the planning area. (See Appendix A.) Plants on the Species of Concern list are at risk due to their restricted distributions, overall species decline, and/or threats to their habitats. Within the planning area, rare plants occupy a variety of habitats; however, most are associated with wetlands and lakes. Although no federally listed Threatened or Endangered plant species are known to occur in the Plan Area, habitat does exist for two federally Threatened plants, Spaulding's catchfly and water howellia.

### **Fish And Wildlife**

The Clearwater Valley provides habitat for a rich diversity of aquatic and terrestrial species including several species listed as threatened or endangered on the Endangered Species List: the threatened grizzly bear, threatened Canada lynx, endangered gray wolf (transient), and threatened bull trout. Other species include big game such as mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, black bear, and mountain lion. The Plan Area is also home to a variety of waterfowl, songbirds, forest carnivores, raptors, including the recently de-listed bald eagle, amphibians, and numerous other large and small animals. Many of these populations utilize the Plan Area for food, water and shelter on both public and private lands, while others are restricted to specific microhabitats. The southern end of the Plan Area includes a portion of the Blackfoot Clearwater Wildlife Management Area (BCWMA) that supports a high diversity of wildlife. For a number of species, connectivity among seasonal ranges is important for the species' survival. Fish and wildlife corridors also enable species to disperse, migrate, and maintain linkages with other populations that provide population support and genetic exchange and connectivity. Examples of a few of the fish and wildlife species of greatest concern in land use planning are briefly discussed below.



## **Fish**

The Clearwater Valley watershed is important habitat for both adfluvial and fluvial bull trout, a Federally threatened species. It also supports healthy populations of westslope cutthroat trout, a Species of Concern in Montana. Information on bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout in particular streams and lakes in the Plan Area is detailed in the Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley (CRC 2008).

Fish are an indicator species for the overall health and biological integrity of an ecosystem. In addition, fishing is a popular recreational activity on the eight major lakes, along the main stem of the Clearwater River, and in the drainages and subdrainages of creeks within the valley. The spread of exotic species, especially the northern pike released in the Valley in the late 1980s and early 1990s, has profoundly impacted the sport fishery. Since the northern pike introduction, some native fish species' populations have declined locally by 70% to more than 90%. Other recent unauthorized introductions of brook stickleback, central mudminnow, and fathead minnows also threaten native fish populations.

Bull trout are close to extinction in Salmon Lake, and their populations have declined by more than 90% in Inez and Seeley Lakes. Populations have also declined in Rainy, Alva, and Marshall Lakes. Factors influencing the decline of bull trout include habitat degradation and fragmentation, the obstruction of their migratory corridors, degradation of water quality, the introduction of nonnative species, dams and other diversions, road construction and maintenance, stream dewatering, and urban and rural development. More details on bull trout vulnerability to human disturbance or development are summarized by Edwards (2006). Efforts to maintain and restore bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout populations currently are underway in the Clearwater drainage.

## **Wildlife**

### ***Mammals***

The Clearwater Valley is the southernmost range of several threatened mammal populations that are contiguous with Canadian populations. The valley forms an essential linkage for wildlife populations between the Mission Mountains on the west and the Bob Marshall Wilderness on the east side of the planning region. Mammals in the Plan Area include the Federally threatened grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and gray wolf as well as big game species, and furbearing carnivores that include marten, wolverine, coyote, bobcat, red fox, skunk, ermine, fisher, badger, weasel, and mink. Essential to the long-term survival of these species is the conservation of their habitats and the connectivity among seasonal habitats and other populations.

Elk. During the warm months, elk use a wide variety of forest types throughout the Clearwater drainage. During the winter season however, elk migrate to lower elevations where winter forage is available and the snow is not as deep. Adequate elk winter range is a limiting factor for this species in the Plan Area. Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) biologists have designated "Crucial Winter Habitat" areas discussed in the Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley of Montana (CRC 2008).

Maintaining winter and summer ranges as well as connections between seasonal use areas is important to this species' conservation. Development and associated human disturbance can affect elk populations by removing or degrading habitat or changing behavioral patterns, including herd movement patterns and distribution.

Residential development may affect elk movement patterns and distribution, as well as the potential to use hunting as a population management tool. In the Seeley Lake area, elk migration corridors have shifted due to development of areas such as the Double Arrow Ranch. When traditional elk movement corridors are blocked, their ability to travel to and from winter and summer home ranges is diminished.

Grizzly Bear. The grizzly bear is listed as a Threatened species in the lower 48 states under the Endangered Species Act. Grizzly bear populations have declined because of human-caused mortalities and habitat loss. Loss of habitat displaces bears to other areas, increasing their risks of encountering humans or human food attractants. Development and associated human disturbance are among the greatest threats to grizzly bears. Residential and commercial development can eliminate or alter habitats rendering them less usable to bears. Also problematic are the effects of behavioral changes associated with development. With increased development comes greater risk of human attractants (e.g. garbage, fruit trees, pet food) that can lead to habituation of bears, which then often leads to bear mortality, because of human safety concerns. Habitat loss can also displace bears and in some cases increase their risk of encountering humans. Other impacts on grizzly bears are caused by open roads and an associated increase in poaching and accidental shooting by hunters. Bears will use roaded areas, but habitat use may decrease with increases in traffic volume.

Much of the planning area is occupied grizzly bear habitat. The northern portion of the valley has been identified as a movement corridor between the higher elevation areas on either side of the valley. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) designated this area as a Linkage Zone and stated that it should be protected to ensure connectivity between the Mission and Swan mountain ranges. Areas of specific importance to grizzly bears are documented in the Landscape Assessment (CRC 2008) and by Edwards (2006).

Canada Lynx. Canada lynx was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act on March 24, 2000. Lynx are closely tied to dense, moist forests that support high densities of snowshoe hares, and are vulnerable to changes within their habitats. Human alterations of forests, over-harvesting of the species, alteration of historical fire regimes, and loss of population connectivity have adversely affected lynx distribution and abundance across the United States.

Lynx have been thoroughly studied in the Clearwater drainage in the last decade, largely due to the fact that the area supports one of the largest concentrations of lynx anywhere in Montana or in the United States (John Squires, personal communication). Lynx abundance in the Clearwater area is attributed to the abundance of relatively undisturbed cool, moist forests dominated by subalpine fir, spruce, and Douglas fir forest types that support high densities of prey and provide adequate structure for denning. Lynx use of much of the Plan Area is documented in the report by Edwards (2006) and was used for identifying sensitive lands in the Landscape Assessment (CRC 2008).

Because the Clearwater area hosts a rare stronghold of lynx, the continued conservation of habitat and potential habitat for this species in the Clearwater drainage is important. Lynx vulnerability to human disturbance and development is discussed in greater detail in the report by Edwards (2006).

### *Birds*

Significant bird populations reside in the Plan Area including both resident and migratory species. The Plan Area is recognized as one of the best birding areas in the surrounding region. Species present include, but are not limited to, common loons, bald and golden eagles, pileated woodpeckers, olive-sided flycatchers, black-backed woodpeckers, flammulated owls, sandhill cranes, northern waterthrush, and great blue herons. Waterfowl and upland birds use the river and creek corridors as flyways. Woodpeckers and owls utilize a variety of forest types, while numerous songbirds breed and reside in riparian habitats along the lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands. Small upland game species within the Plan Area include ruffed grouse, blue grouse (dusky grouse), and spruce grouse.

Bald eagles are yearlong residents in the Plan Area, and eagle nesting regularly occurs along several of the lakes and rivers in the area. Eagles are sensitive to habitat alteration, especially along waterfronts, and are especially sensitive to human disturbance near their nests from February thru May. Management considerations and recommendations for minimizing and mitigating effects to eagles are detailed in the Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan (1994), and include limiting development near lakes and rivers and avoiding nest areas during the nesting season.

The common loon is listed as a sensitive species that regularly nests in the Plan Area. Loons have specific habitat requirements for both nesting sites and nursery areas and are very sensitive to human encroachment near their nesting areas. Loons rarely seek new nesting sites; therefore, they are extremely vulnerable to habitat loss and disturbance. Development along lakeshores that degrades habitat and disturbance by recreationists during the nesting season are the main threats to loon populations.

### ***Animal Species of Concern***

Additional Species of Concern that have not been previously discussed also reside in the Plan Area (Appendix A), including species such as wolverine, fisher, boreal toads, and other species that are highly sensitive to human disturbance and habitat alteration.

### **Disturbance/Threats to Biological Resources** **Development**

Various threats to the ecological resources of the Plan Area exist, including land use changes from increased development. Threats to ecological integrity and biodiversity occur from inappropriate development through:

- Direct habitat loss;
- The disruption of wildlife linkage zones and habitat connectivity from residential or commercial construction, increased road construction, or increased traffic;
- The direct pressure on animal species from the proximity of homes to and within habitats, recreational activities that degrade habitat, pet harassment and predation of species, and vehicular collisions with wildlife;
- The spread of noxious weeds that can degrade ecosystems;
- The thinning of forests around homes and on adjacent public lands to minimize fire risk, resulting in impairment of habitat for some species;
- An increase in soil erosion on hillsides and within waterways;
- The degradation of water quality associated with point and non-point source pollution; and

- A reduction in air quality from increased traffic and wood burning.

Development in key wildlife habitats and corridors can cause habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and human-wildlife conflicts. Human site development and activities associated with human presence can disrupt and disconnect fish and wildlife corridors and linkage zones by eliminating important habitat and creating barriers that disrupt animal movements. Development on presently undeveloped lands could displace wildlife from areas important to their survival.

Property adjacent to rivers and lakes is a highly sought after real estate commodity. Wetland, riparian, and aquatic communities can be threatened by adjacent development, invasion by weeds, upland forest management practices, contaminated runoff, nutrient loading, impervious surfaces, stream dewatering, and creation of containment structures (e.g. dams, riprap).

Human-wildlife conflicts can be another negative effect of development. For instance, with respect to bears, the availability of attractants including garbage, pet food, and bird feeders increases a bear's risk of mortality by introducing the animal to unnatural food sources. When bears become food conditioned and habituated to people, this often leads to conflicts between people and bears, with wildlife managers eventually euthanizing the animal. Successful management of bear habitat on public lands may be negated if bears are drawn to adjacent private lands where they may need to be killed or removed. These effects can be addressed to some extent by subdivision design; landowner practices (e.g. communal bear resistant containers and enclosures); and homeowner and community education programs that include a variety of strategies such as new homeowner information packages, community newsletters, radio and newspaper ads, public presentations, etc.

Species differ in their ability to withstand impacts from development. Therefore, it is important to assess the vulnerability of numerous species to development at both local and watershed scales to adequately plan for and mitigate potential impacts. Further descriptions of species' vulnerabilities to development are reviewed in Edwards (2006). Two factors, weeds and fire, are discussed below.

### **Weeds**

Weeds are plants that originated in a different region (often on another continent) and were introduced to a new area, typically by human related activities. The term "noxious weed" is a legal designation given by federal, state, or county governments to describe weeds that are injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or any public or private lands. Missoula County Weed District currently list 23 species on their noxious weed list. Some noxious weeds in the planning area include spotted knapweed, St. Johnswort, houndstongue, sulfur cinquefoil, Canada thistle, yellow flag iris, common tansy, leafy spurge, ox-eye daisy, and tall buttercup. It is important to note that there are numerous other weeds, not listed as noxious, that can harm native landscapes. One weed that is especially widespread in the county, but that is not currently listed as noxious is cheatgrass.

Invasive plants are considered to be one of the greatest ecological threats with the potential to have multiple negative effects on the ecosystem. Invasion by noxious and other weeds can significantly reduce native plant diversity, breakdown important ecological relationships, decrease forage production for livestock and wildlife, limit



agricultural productivity, increase soil erosion, and negatively affect human health (e.g. allergies, poison).

Existing state and county regulations mandate control of noxious weeds; however control of noxious weeds remains problematic. Weed control efforts must be coordinated between land ownerships in order to be effective. If noxious weeds are allowed to grow on one property, a seed source is maintained that further threatens the landscape and lessens the effect of adjacent landowners' efforts to control weeds and restore native grasses and wildflowers. Ground disturbance from new roads and/or construction can increase the spread of weeds. Humans can inadvertently spread weeds from seeds attached to clothing, vehicles, and pets. The spread of weeds can also occur naturally through wind or water dispersal.

### **Fire**

Disturbance by fire is an integral part of ecosystem health and is part of the natural disturbance regime in the Clearwater Valley. The frequency and intensity of fires affect forest species composition, structure, and spatial distribution. Some plant communities and organisms require the occurrence of fire for their existence and survival. Fires also impact the non-living components of the ecosystem such as nutrient availability, water quality, and hydrological patterns.

Forest and grassland fire was once commonly used by Native Americans and early settlers to manipulate lands for various purposes. Fire suppression activities over the past 100 years have had significant ecological impacts, including altered natural successional patterns, reduced coverage of some important plant communities, and increased fuel accumulation. Appropriate levels of fire occurrence would help to protect and restore native plant communities and their associated inhabitants in the Clearwater Valley.

The Seeley-Swan Fire Plan<sup>3</sup> identifies a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) where structures or other human development are within the vicinity of forests and other wildlands (Map 5). The purpose for identifying the WUI in the Seeley-Swan Fire Plan was to identify areas that should be targeted for fuels reduction projects and funding. It did not necessarily reflect where the worst fire risk areas are, nor was it intended to suggest where development should or should not occur. The use of the WUI in this Plan is intended to support, but not supercede, the land use designations, which generally encourage future development near locations where it already exists. The Seeley-Swan Fire Plan uses a 1.5 mile buffer around existing structures to delineate the WUI boundary. The Clearwater WUI include 98,000 acres of which over 20,000 acres are high-risk wildfire hazard areas and approximately 41,000 acres are a moderate risk. Some areas are a significant wildfire risk due to the slope of the landscape, human population densities adjacent or within forests, overall fuel hazards, and the accessibility of evacuation routes. The fire plan includes an action plan to address these threats.

Development that would cause further expansion of the WUI is discouraged. By discouraging expansion of the WUI, the community is essentially encouraging development to occur within the area where it already exists. Expanding the WUI causes concerns about providing adequate fire and emergency services to residences in these areas. Additionally, forest fires originating at rural residences can threaten

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<sup>3</sup> Seeley-Swan Fire Plan, May 2008 Update.

adjacent resource lands, as well as other residences. Land management agencies may be required to thin forest lands near housing developments for wildfire protection per the “Healthy Forests Initiative” or state legislation. If the WUI is expanded through expansion of development into forest lands, thinning on additional lands may be required. While perhaps appropriate for fuels reduction, this can have deleterious effects on wildlife species such as lynx and grizzly bears that need dense habitat or hiding cover.

Additional development in WUI areas must be carefully considered to avoid creating unreasonable risks. If development occurs in a WUI or wildfire hazard area, the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations have standards that require access suitable for emergency equipment and a water source. In addition, landowners should use Class A or B fire rated roofing materials, clear a defensible space around buildings, and select landscaping plants that limit or retard fire spread. Vegetation clearing for wildfire prevention should be balanced with protection of significant habitats such as riparian forests.

### **Land Use Recommendations**

To maintain the ecological, social, and economic objectives desired within the Valley, it is essential to maintain forest ecosystem diversity, public access, and recreational opportunities on forest lands, and working forests that provide for forest products. Due to increased public interest in purchasing second homes, previously undeveloped working forest lands and other private lands have become marketable for residential and commercial development. Some forested lands will undoubtedly experience changes in land use unless purchased for working forests or conservation purposes. This Plan recognizes the need for new development in the Plan Area as important and necessary. However, careful planning for the amount and location of that development is essential to maintaining the area’s ecological values.

The following guidelines provide the framework for locating development to conserve the biological integrity of the Plan Area:

- Discourage development in key wildlife range and corridors;
- Maintain connectivity among large blocks of habitat for wildlife species and avoid fragmenting the landscape;
- Concentrate development in areas that already support development or in locations where clustering and other techniques can provide efficiency for maintaining contiguous areas of important wildlife habitat;
- Require noxious weed control plans with new development and address existing noxious weed problems through collaborative efforts with the community and County weed control boards;
- Consider the impacts to wildlife from fire risk mitigation strategies, such as thinning trees adjacent to homes;
- Discourage development that would cause expansion of the WUI, to reduce the need for fuels reduction projects in important habitats for wildlife species that require dense vegetation;
- Reduce the risk of soil erosion by minimizing development on steep slopes and within riparian areas;
- Protect riparian, wetland, and aquatic communities from development related impacts; and

- Consider air quality impacts of new development related to wood stoves and increased vehicular traffic.

Reflecting these objectives, the Plan designates much of the land outside of the developed community of Seeley Lake and surrounding housing areas as Resource Protection Lands (See Chapter 7).

Although lands within the community of Seeley Lake were generally not included within these designations, some areas may still contain important natural resources such as riparian vegetation, wetlands, and fisheries habitat. Development activities must be designed to balance the property rights of landowners with the need to maintain the recreational, natural resource, wildlife and ecological values and community character of the Area. In all cases, site specific analysis must be conducted prior to development to identify a particular site's resources and enable design techniques that balance these interests.

Resource management and protection on relatively smaller parcels require coordination among landowners to protect important habitat and wildlife corridors to avoid habitat fragmentation and/or degradation. Another important component is landowner education on living with wildlife, (e.g., using bear-resistant containers, not feeding wildlife, storing wildlife attractants in sheds, garages, and homes, etc.). Some specific recommendations are listed in brochures available through FWP and the County. These should also be incorporated into homeowner covenants in new developments.

### **General Natural Resources Goals**

Goal: Protect the Plan Area's natural resources and their functions, values, and contributions to the larger Crown of the Continent Ecoregion.

Action Strategies:

1. Further establish and coordinate protection priorities for biodiversity, fish and wildlife habitat, linkage zones, corridors, and specific ecosystems through memorandums of understanding, zoning, or rural development tools.
2. Further establish and coordinate protection priorities for Species of Concern based on current threats.

Goal: Promote conservation of natural amenities, significant habitats, and resources.

Action Strategies:

1. Establish working relationships among landowners, neighborhood groups, and wildlife management agencies to develop guidelines and priorities related to development and wildlife.
2. Provide information to local landowners about conservation easements and other land conservation tools.
3. Encourage native forest, wetland, riparian, and aquatic ecosystem maintenance and restoration.
4. Protect and enhance a diverse forest structure to support wildlife habitat as well as forest products.
5. Restore and maintain healthy viable wildlife and fish populations within the Plan Area.
6. Support funding mechanisms that encourage conservation.
7. Support education on the need for regulatory compliance when impacting streams or wetlands through such programs as:
  - a. Federal Clean Water Act (404 Permit)

- b. Montana Stream Protection Act (SPA 124 Permit)
- c. Storm Water Discharge General Permit
- d. Streamside management Zone Law (SMZ)
- e. Short-term Water Quality Standard for Turbidity (318 Authorization)
- f. DNRC Land Use License for Navigable Waters
- g. Montana Floodplain and Floodway Management Act
- h. Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310 Permit)
- i. Montana Water Use Act
- j. Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES)
- k. NFHCP restrictive deed covenants

Goal: Support land use patterns within the Plan Area that protect and preserve natural resources.

Action Strategies:

- 1. Develop and apply land use guidelines and regulations appropriate for the protection of important natural resources.
- 2. Locate residential and commercial development to minimize impacts on natural resources.
- 3. Explore land use conservation tools such as conservation easements, clustering, transfer of development rights/credits, purchase of development rights, and other similar mechanisms.
- 4. Discourage land use activities that would result in a net increase in open road densities and/or traffic volumes in sensitive resource areas. Encourage policies or cooperative agreements that would minimize and monitor the total amount of open road density in the Plan Area while recognizing various land uses.

### **Biological Resources Goals**

Goal: Protect and enhance biodiversity and significant fish and wildlife habitat, such as important plant communities, key summer and winter ranges, key fish spawning and rearing habitat, and habitat for Species of Concern.

Action Strategies:

- 1. Develop and apply land use guidelines and regulations to protect fish and wildlife habitat and maintain biodiversity.
- 2. Explore and support public acquisition of significant fish and wildlife habitats.
- 3. Protect fish and wildlife habitat through conservation easements and other voluntary methods of land conservation.
- 4. Enhance existing wildlife habitat through weed control and other appropriate management practices.
- 5. Control and actively monitor the introduction of exotic species to avoid adverse ecological impacts.
- 6. Enhance stream habitats through stream protection and restoration.

Goal: Protect and maintain wildlife corridors and crossings deemed significant by professional biologists.

Action Strategies:

- 1. Discourage development that would alter the ability of corridors to provide functional movement paths for wildlife.
- 2. Minimize the clearing of vegetation in wildlife travel corridors including riparian areas and provide adequate buffer strips between development and corridors.
- 3. Provide wildlife crossings on Highway 83 and protect lands adjacent to the crossings.

4. Post known deer and other wildlife crossings along roadways.  
(see also *Roads goals*)

Goal: Protect, maintain, and enhance fish migration corridors which are deemed significant by professional biologists.

Action strategies:

1. Maintain viable riparian buffers along rivers and streams,
2. Minimize stream crossings and ensure that installed crossings follow standards that provide passage for aquatic organisms.
3. Support the restoration of stream connectivity including the removal of fish barriers identified by professional biologists.

Goal: Minimize conflicts between wildlife, humans, and domestic animals.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage no-build areas and buffer areas to protect and minimize impacts on wildlife.
2. Encourage new and existing development adjacent to or within critical wildlife areas to include measures that would reduce conflicts between wildlife and domestic animals.
3. Encourage property owners to voluntarily take precautions to avoid potential conflicts with wildlife, such as:
  - a. installing and using bearproof garbage containers,
  - b. limiting or restricting food attractants such as fruit orchards, bird feeders, barbecue grills, compost piles, pet food, and other outside food sources,
  - c. limiting activities such as raising chickens and pigs and operating beehives in bear habitat.
4. Maintain adequate funding for domestic animal control.

Goal: Reduce risks to human life and property from wild fire impacts.

Action Strategies:

1. Discourage new development that would expand the WUI.
2. Adopt rural development standards to implement appropriate measures to reduce the risk of wildfire impacts.
3. Provide information to landowners about fuel mitigation.

Goal: Reduce the invasion and spread of noxious weeds and reclaim infested areas with desirable native species.

Action Strategies:

1. Minimize site disturbance from construction activities and require revegetation of disturbed areas within a set period of time.
2. Encourage land use practices that prevent the spread of noxious weed infestations.
3. Provide information to local landowners about weed identification, effective control methodologies, and native plant landscaping.

## **GEOLOGIC RESOURCES**

The Clearwater Valley was formed by continental glaciation when the Cordillerian ice sheet moved through Western Montana. The geology of the valley is characterized by



sloping glacial features of undifferentiated glacial drift composed of argillites, siltites, and quartzites.

### **Soils**

Soil characteristics throughout the planning area affect the types of land uses that are suitable for a particular location. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has produced a survey of soil types for Missoula County with mapped units that correspond to specific soil types and characteristics (accurate to within 10 acres). The soil survey provides specific recommendations for agricultural viability, development constraints for foundations and road building, and general erosion potential. Individual parcels of land should be assessed for soil constraints prior to development.

Soils are often associated with their capability to support agricultural production. The Missoula County Conservation District, in collaboration with NRCS, has evaluated the soil productivity of the County and divided it into 3 categories: Prime Farmland, (if irrigated), Farmland of Statewide Importance (if irrigated), and Farmland of Local Importance (if irrigated). Prime farmland has the highest potential for crop yield when managed properly. Factors that are taken into account include soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply.

The Plan Area contains approximately 7,931 acres with important agricultural soils, most of which are located in the southern portion of the planning area near Clearwater Junction (Map 3). Other areas are located in the Woodward Road area, along Owl Creek, on land along Highway 83 west of town, and east of the high school.

Existing agricultural uses are primarily in the Clearwater Junction area for hay and alfalfa production and livestock grazing. Grazing and hay production have also occurred in the Woodward area. In addition to providing a means to earn a living, agricultural lands add to the character of the region and provide open spaces and buffers between residential uses and wildlife habitat. The plan supports continued agricultural use in those areas.

### **Hillsides**

Disturbance of hillside areas for development can result in damage to public and private property or natural systems through erosion, altered or increased drainage patterns, access problems, increased fire hazard, or increased air pollution.

Slopes greater than 25% are generally considered too steep for building purposes. Special requirements apply for the siting of septic systems on slopes greater than 15%. Missoula County Subdivision Regulations require that roads and driveways be constructed at a 10% grade or less. The Subdivision Regulations include Hillside Design Standards that apply to new subdivisions on land greater than 10% slope. Missoula County Zoning Regulations also address hillside development and grading. Landowners are also encouraged to follow these guidelines on unzoned lands as well.

Map 4 shows lands in the planning region on slopes greater than 25%, 15-25%, and less than 15%. Approximately 35% of the Plan Area is located on slopes greater than 25%, mostly on USFS and Plum Creek lands.

Due to the scale of the mapping techniques used, the slope of individual parcels may be more or less than indicated on the map. Generally, land with slopes greater than 25% is not suitable for residential uses.

Areas located at the outlet of small narrow drainages with high gradient gullies may have the potential for mudflow, debris avalanche, and flash floods. Where there is a question of slope stability in a specific area, the site should be examined by a qualified specialist and either not developed or developed in such a manner as to minimize risks associated with potential hazards.

### **Gravel**

Gravel resources are generally located along streams, rivers, and their floodplains. Gravel operations greater than 10,000 cubic yards require an open cut mining permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). In zoned areas, gravel operations may be prohibited in zoning districts determined to be residential by the governing body. In other zoning classifications, conditions may be placed on gravel operations.

There are currently six private and three public gravel operations in the Plan Area that are large enough to require a permit from DEQ. Two are located at Clearwater Junction, four along Highway 83, and one along Tote Lake Road.

### **Scenic Open Space**

Scenic views are highly valued within the community. Federal law considers scenic open spaces to be those areas which contribute to scenic panoramas which can be enjoyed from a park, nature preserve, public road, water body, trail, historic structure or land area, or which provide a visual buffer around important open space features. Visual, not physical access, may be sufficient for the public to appreciate such values.<sup>4</sup> This may include views from public vantage points such as along major travel corridors, major public lands, or public watercourses. Scenic open space in the Plan Area occurs along Highway 200, Highway 83, and Woodworth Road, as well as along the main lakes and waterways<sup>5</sup>.

### **Geologic Resources Goals**

Goal: Protect development from geologic hazards.

Action Strategies:

1. Place new development on stable underlying geology.
2. Assess individual parcels of land for soil constraints prior to development.

Goal: Support agricultural opportunities.

Action Strategies:

1. Support measures to minimize the conversion of important agricultural soils to nonagricultural use. Identify existing agricultural uses on lands with important agricultural soils and monitor changes in use.
2. Support measures that allow continued agricultural land uses, including providing farming landowners with information about marketing, value-added uses, and diversification.

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<sup>4</sup> *Inventory of Conservation Resources, Missoula County Montana, 1992.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

3. Support efforts to link local products with local consumers, such as those by the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition and other groups.
4. Provide information to new landowners about living in areas with existing agriculture and forestry operations.

Goal: Protect hillsides and other areas from erosion.

Action Strategies:

1. Map steep slopes and erosive soils prior to development in order to guide development away from steep slopes and evaluate potential impacts to adjacent development.
2. Follow hillside development, grading, and drainage regulations for new construction.
3. Minimize and mitigate potential erosion resulting from construction activity or other land uses that may affect the landscape and surrounding resources.
4. Discourage construction of roads on slopes greater than 25%.

Goal: Preserve scenic open space qualities.

Action Strategies:

1. Discourage development that impacts viewsheds.
2. Locate new construction such that it does not adversely impact the viewshed along Highway 83 and other important view points from waterways and main travel corridors.
3. Screen gravel operations and industrial uses from rivers and major roads.

## **WATER RESOURCES**

The Plan Area includes the entire Clearwater watershed within Missoula County. The Clearwater River is a tributary of the Blackfoot River that flows for 48 miles from Clearwater Lake to the confluence. The Clearwater River flows through a wide valley with a gentle slope, dropping an average of 10.5 feet per mile. The river has a relatively wide meandering pattern and is somewhat braided in nature. Changes in course, creation of new channels, and abandonment of old channels are common. These changes are influenced by the non-cohesive nature of the river bank soils and historic impacts which include increased sediment load from the upper watershed, constrictions on the floodplain such as bridges and rip rap, and loss of riparian vegetation from development.

Numerous perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral mountain streams drain into the Clearwater River and are an essential source of water to the wetlands, rivers, and lakes below. Perennial streams flowing into the Clearwater River, include Blanchard Creek, Fish Creek, Owl Creek, and Morrell Creek. The Clearwater River and its tributaries connect a series of lakes in the valley including Rainy Lake, Lake Alva, Lake Inez, Seeley Lake, Salmon Lake, Elbow Lake, and Blanchard Lake. Other lakes include Placid Lake, Lake Marshall, Big Sky (Fish) Lake, Tote Lake, Harper's Lake and other small lakes. There are also unique mid-elevation lakes including Colt, Beaver, Crescent, Hidden, and Dinah.

These waterbodies provide groundwater recharge, drinking water, habitat for fish and other aquatic wildlife, optimal conditions for riparian vegetation that supports almost all terrestrial wildlife populations, and recreational opportunities for humans. As noted earlier, the river and several of the lakes and streams support a multi-species fishery and are important for bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.

Streams and their floodplains are active and dynamic, constantly adapting to changes within their watersheds. A natural or human-induced disturbance to a watershed can have effects on downstream resources. Some of these changes can be beneficial, but the larger disturbances can have drastic effects, such as increasing flooding downstream, increasing bank erosion, and destroying fish habitat. Altering one component of a watershed affects other components of the streams within it. Natural stream stability can be impacted by the following:

- Stream Bank Armoring
- Channel Straightening
- Channel Constrictions
- Loss of Flood Storage
- Loss of Riparian Vegetation
- Increased Sediment
- Changes in Vegetation Type.

### **Flood Hazards**

Hazards from flooding occur in many forms. The most commonly recognized type is when streams spill out of their banks onto their floodplain during high spring runoff. However, flood hazards also exist from excessive ground water filling an aquifer and then surfacing, or from stream channels eroding their banks and threatening development that is otherwise well above the height of overbank flooding.

It is not possible to control floods over the long term. Instead of trying to control floods, Missoula County follows measures that minimize flood damages. By recognizing that floods are inevitable, homes, businesses and public infrastructure can be built in locations and with designs meant to ensure that neither property nor human health is damaged, and that alterations to floodplains do not endanger nearby properties or harm natural stream functions. *Missoula County Floodplain Regulations*, adopted in 1975, are meant to achieve these goals but have a limited jurisdictional area.<sup>6</sup>

Although most streams and rivers have a functional floodplain, the regulatory floodplain is delineated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Clearwater River is the only watercourse in the planning area that has a floodplain delineated by FEMA. The river is mapped from just below Boy Scout Road bridge to just above Salmon Lake. Approximately 284 acres are in the floodway and 336 in the mapped floodway fringe (Map 6). Much of this is located on Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) School Trust lands.

The flood hazards of other streams in the area are largely undefined. Given the great topographic relief of the planning area, it is often relatively easy to identify high terraces that are free from surface flooding. However, even the delineated floodplain does not consider flooding caused by ice jams, stream bank erosion, or surfacing groundwater.

Some of the valley bottom land in the planning area lies within the Clearwater River floodplain (both regulatory and non-regulatory) and is subject to high groundwater, especially during spring runoff. High groundwater can result in damage to building foundations and basements and contamination from septic systems. For the purpose of

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<sup>6</sup> See *Missoula County Floodplain Regulations*

granting septic permits, the Missoula City-County Health Department requires that an applicant demonstrate that groundwater is more than six feet below ground surface. There are also areas that present a percolation hazard for septic systems due to low soil permeability or infiltration rates.

### **Floodplain and Setback Recommendations**

The action strategies at the end of this section include measures to address natural stream functioning and floodplain hazards through setbacks, land use designations, limits on development, design requirements, and stream restoration.

#### **Setbacks**

Buffers and setbacks from major watercourses are one means of preventing structure and other property losses by allowing for natural stream channel movement and recharge in times of seasonal high water. In addition to adding security to structures, stream and riverside buffers create wildlife movement corridors and habitat areas in the corresponding riparian zone.

*Missoula County Subdivision Regulations* require that riparian areas be protected during development and that mitigation measures be implemented for impacts that do occur. Regardless of development impacts, landowners are encouraged to maintain and revegetate riparian areas and floodplains to hold soil in place, prevent erosion, and provide for flood and storm water storage.

#### **Development Limitations in Flood Hazard Areas**

New development within flood hazard areas presents a substantial hazard to owners and residents of those structures; increases flood hazards for nearby properties and public infrastructure; and creates an unreasonable burden on the general public which must engage in relief efforts before, during, and after floods.

Flood hazard areas are those that may be inundated by floodwaters. A flood hazard area includes land that meets any of the following criteria:

1. Land in the 100-year floodplain as designated by FEMA or shown to be such by some other reliable information.
2. Land above the 100-year flood elevation that meets one or more of the following criteria:
  - a. Completely surrounded by land in the 100-year floodplain;
  - b. Not accessible by road during a 100-year flood; or,
3. Subject to erosion by changes in a watercourse channel.

Many of these flood hazard areas are not mapped but should be considered during development proposals.

#### **Land Use Designation in FEMA Mapped Floodplain**

Most of the parcels with FEMA-mapped floodplain are on DNRC lands. Some of its parcels are completely within the mapped floodplain. Most of the privately held parcels near the river are outside of the mapped floodplain and none are completely within. The land use map designates land near the Clearwater River in the FEMA mapped 100-year floodway as Floodway. Most land in the mapped 100-year floodway fringe and shaded Zone X (areas that are either subject to shallow 100-year flooding or between the 100 and 500-year flood elevation ) is designated Rural Residential.

### **Shoreline Protection**

Missoula County Shoreline Regulations were adopted in 1997 and apply to all lakes over 20 acres in size. Within the Plan Area, this includes Rainy, Alva, Marshall, Inez, Seeley, Hidden, Placid, Tote Road, Big Sky (Fish), Salmon and Elbow Lakes. The purpose of these regulations is to conserve and protect the natural lakes, ponds, wetlands and shorelines because of their high scenic and resource values; the value of lakeshore property; the water quality of these lakes; and the scenic and recreational value of these lakes for the State's residents and visitors.

A Shoreline Construction Permit issued by the governing body is required prior to any work or landscape modification which alters or disturbs a lake, lakebed, or lakeshore including the land within twenty horizontal feet of the lake's highwater mark.

Approximately fifteen shoreline permits are issued annually with the most common being issued for dock construction and waterline installation.

During planning discussions, the community encouraged the County to review the adequacy of current shoreline protection measures in light of changing recreational technology.

### **Water Quality**

Surface water and groundwater provide drinking water, support habitat, and provide resources for fisheries. Water quality can be degraded from both point sources and non-point sources, such as runoff from residential or agricultural areas. Contaminants from septic systems can move through groundwater into surface water.

Surface water quality in the Clearwater Valley is generally good. Dewatering is a potential concern in the lower three miles of the Clearwater River. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) lists Blanchard Creek as a 303(d) degraded stream due to habitat alteration, siltation, and flow alteration. A TMDL is currently being prepared for the Middle Blackfoot area by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality in cooperation with the Blackfoot Challenge.

Water quality issues are further discussed further in Chapter 6.

### **Water Resources Goals**

Goal: Protect surface water resources by maintaining surface water quality, quantity, and instream flows and groundwater quality and quantity.

Action Strategies:

1. Monitor watershed activities to ensure the protection of public health and environmental integrity.
2. Discourage chemical applications adjacent to stream or rivers.
3. Minimize non-point source runoff by promoting best management practices for timber, agricultural, and construction operations.
4. Coordinate land use planning with a sewer service boundary.
5. Develop programs that emphasize water conservation measures including xeriscaping.

Goal: Promote natural stream function and stability.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage stream restoration efforts that promote naturally stable river systems.



2. Use streambank protection measures that do not cause impacts to other property owners or negatively impact fisheries or other wildlife habitat.
3. Preserve the floodplain for flood attenuation, aquifer recharge, fish and wildlife habitat, buffer for pollutants, and protection of public health and safety.
4. Ensure that gravel operations do not degrade water quality or encourage capture of riparian resources.

Goal: Protect wetland and riparian corridors to buffer water bodies, as well as to provide wildlife habitat and movement areas.

Action Strategies:

1. Ensure that new development is placed an adequate distance from watercourses to protect the watercourse and its associated natural habitat.
2. Adopt setback requirements for development adjacent to areas of wetland or riparian resource, including a vegetative buffer.
3. Promote best management practices for development and construction projects along wetlands and water bodies to reduce impacts to surface water quality and recharge zones.
4. Maintain and revegetate riparian areas and floodplains where necessary to hold soil in place, prevent erosion, and provide for flood and storm water storage.
5. Preserve existing wetlands and restore historic wetlands wherever possible.
6. Minimize vegetation removal in existing riparian and wetland areas.

Goal: Protect development and public infrastructure from flood hazards.

Action Strategies:

1. Do not allow new development of homes, commercial, or industrial buildings in the 100-year floodplain.
2. Where not accurately mapped, require that developers conduct detailed analyses to determine actual flood elevations and flood hazards before development is permitted in or near the designated 100-year or other flood hazard area.
3. Require that all lots in new subdivisions have a buildable area and road access that are naturally outside flood hazard areas, unless mitigation is approved.
4. Require that landowners demonstrate that proposed development will be free from high groundwater hazards.

Goal: Protect and conserve natural waterways and shorelines.

Action Strategies:

1. Explore the need for additional shoreline protection measures or setbacks.
2. Work with state and federal agencies to assess the impacts of wave damage on shorelines from motorized recreational uses on lakes.
3. Require that public infrastructure minimally impacts streams and floodplains.

## **AIR RESOURCES**

Impacts to air quality can occur from road dust, vehicle emissions, residential wood burning, outdoor burning, and industrial sources. Winter temperature inversions that trap pollution are common in Western Montana because of the mountain valley topography. Generally air quality in the Seeley Lake area is better than in the Missoula Valley due to less population and greater potential for stagnant air to move out of the more open valley to the south.

The Missoula County Environmental Health Department has been monitoring particulate levels in the Seeley Lake area. Preliminary results indicate that the particulate levels are

generally below the national ambient air quality standards. Due to new information about the impacts of fine particulates on public health, in September 2006 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tightened federal air quality standards for fine particulate matter.

Smoke from slash burning of timber harvest affects air quality during certain weather conditions and certain times of year. As a result the State and County both have programs in place to reduce the impacts of smoke from outdoor burning. The main air quality considerations with regard to outdoor burning are how much burning takes place, how the burning is conducted, and the dispersion conditions at the time of burning.

Major burners, such as Plum Creek, the USFS, and the Bureau of Land Management, pay a fee to be part of the Montana Idaho Smoke Monitoring Unit, also known as Smoke Management. During spring and fall burning seasons, Smoke Management issues dispersion forecasts and outdoor burning restrictions for its members. Member burners must not only comply with restrictions issued by Smoke Management, but when they are burning in Missoula County, they must also adhere to all County air regulations.

Outdoor burning by private landowners is regulated in all months, with a no-burn period from December through February. From March through November, permits are issued by USFS, DNRC, and Seeley Lake Rural Fire District, depending on which agency has primary fire suppression responsibility. Burners in the Seeley Lake area must call the Northern Missoula Outdoor Burning Hotline after 9 a.m. on the day they wish to burn. The decisions on burning for the Seeley Lake area are made separately from the Missoula urban area, with the recognition that different parts of the County are in different airsheds.

General outdoor burning season runs from March 1 through August 31. Agricultural burning is allowed March 1 through October 31 and prescribed wildland burning is allowed March 1 through November 30. Statewide, outdoor burning is closed for the winter months of December through February, with very few exceptions. In Missoula County permits for wintertime burning must be obtained directly from the Health Department.

Many homes are heated by wood stoves which can contribute to particulate pollution. Residential wood burning can be especially problematic in the valleys during the winter. Throughout the County, the Health Department also encourages residents who choose to heat with solid fuel to use pellet stoves or Class I, EPA wood stoves, rather than the less efficient (and more polluting) stoves.

The Health Department often gets complaints about dust on unpaved roads. Missoula County Subdivision Regulations address paving requirements for subdivisions. While Health Department regulations do not require paving of new roads outside the Air Stagnation Zone, the Health Department encourages paving where feasible. Throughout the County landowners are required to implement practical measures to prevent fugitive dust.

### **Air Quality Goals**

Goal: Maintain and improve existing air quality in the Regional Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Promote land use practices and types of development that minimize impacts to air quality.
2. Promote educational programs which outline existing air quality regulations and voluntary methods of protecting air quality within the planning area.
3. Minimize open burning of slash by encouraging the use of slash as a resource.
4. Control fugitive road dust.

## CHAPTER 4: ECONOMY

The economy of the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area has been traditionally based on timber resources. Logging and lumber mill work still account for approximately 25% of the employment in the region but are currently outweighed by employment in tourism-related sectors such as accommodation and food service, retail trade, and real estate. The timber economy itself has become more broad-based, with timber harvested within the region generally declining, while the local mill processes raw timber purchased from outside the Plan Area.

These major economic changes are significant and are transforming the planning area. In recent history, the region has experienced a shift from an economy based on one natural resource (timber) to a more diverse economy that draws on a wide variety of natural resources and the people who come to the region to experience them. The region is also experiencing a general shift in income sources as employment income is partially replaced by investment and retirement income.

Generally, rural places in the Rocky Mountains with a high level of amenities that are also near cities have become very desirable places to locate<sup>1</sup>. As people retire or are able to derive their income from non-employment sources, they tend to seek out places with a high level of amenities to live, and are not as concerned with proximity to jobs or major commercial centers. Generally, this migration is to mountainous areas in the west<sup>2</sup>. Seeley Lake embodies this national trend toward population growth in the northern Rockies, where the amount of income derived from non-employment sources in the region is much higher than in the rest of Missoula County.

### EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Approximately 67% of the people over the age of 16 who live year-round in the region work full-time for a living. Just over half of the working people in the region are divided evenly between four employment sectors: construction, manufacturing (including mill work), retail trade, and accommodation and food service<sup>3</sup>. Employment for the other half of wage-earners in the region is distributed evenly across sectors such as logging and agriculture, education, public administration, transportation, real estate, finance, and management.

The four largest employment categories in the region are all related either to providing services to residents and tourists or processing timber products. The construction category includes those building new homes and businesses and remodeling existing ones. The expansion of the market for second homes has increased construction as an economic component. The manufacturing category covers those who work in the Pyramid Lumber mill. Those who operate the stores and gas stations are part of the

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Larry Swanson, Center for the Rocky Mountain West, presentation given to the Missoula County Local Government Study Commission, March, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Nonearnings Income Migration in the United States: Anticipating the Geographical Impacts of Baby Boom Retirement*, Peter B. Nelson, 2004 Boston College Center for Retirement research Working Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Employment data from the 2000 U.S. Census produced using: *A Socioeconomic Profile: Missoula County, Montana, Seeley Lake CDP*. Produced by the Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System Community (EPSC), March, 2006.

retail trade category. The Accommodation and Food Service category covers those who work in restaurants and bars.

While timber harvest and production still play an important role in the region's economy, employment opportunities are now more diverse. Within the region, the manufacturing and logging categories taken together add up to less than 25% of the total employment.

Farming and ranching operations currently exist in the southern portion of the Plan Area and in the Woodworth area, as noted in Chapter 3. While these operations do not contribute significantly to the economy in terms of dollars, the presence of open working lands is regionally important.

Most workers in the region commute 20 minutes or less to their jobs. Approximately 5-8% work from home, 2% commute 45 minutes to an hour, and slightly over 10% commute more than an hour to get to work<sup>4</sup>.

### **INCOME LEVELS AND SOURCES**

Around 60% of the income in the region comes from wages, salaries and self-employment income. The remainder of the income in the region comes from investments, retirement funds, social security, and other non-employment sources. This regional characteristic stands in contrast to the rest of the county, state and country, where wages from employment comprise around 80% of all income. This indicates that there are more people in the region who are not dependent on working in the Seeley region.

The working person in the Seeley region makes less on average than the working person in Missoula County. In 1999 individuals working full-time in the region had a median income of approximately \$18,000 for women and \$31,000 for men, compared to \$22,000 and \$32,000 respectively in Missoula County overall.

### **GOODS AND SERVICES**

Current residents of the region have expressed a desire to have more goods and services available locally<sup>5</sup>. The size of the community limits the nature of goods and services available in the area, so that residents may travel, often to Missoula or other cities, to meet some needs. Any goods or services purchased in Missoula by residents of the region are therefore more expensive due to the cost of fuel and vehicle operation. Although many residents of the region do some of their shopping in Missoula, an increased population in the region might support more local retail options in the future. Increases in tourists and recreationists to the area will also help expand local retail options. It should be noted that available goods and services have been increasing in Seeley Lake in recent years with new restaurants, an expanded quilt store, a fitness center, expanded real estate offices, and an expansion to the bank.

### **FOREST PRODUCTS**

The largest single employer in the area is the Pyramid Mountain Lumber Company, an independent mill. Plum Creek Timber Company owns and manages over 80,000 acres

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census, 2000 data, produced using *A Socioeconomic Profile: Missoula County, Montana, Seeley Lake CDP*. Produced by the Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System Community (EPSC), March, 2006

<sup>5</sup> Seeley Lake Community Council Community Survey, 2005.

in the Plan Area. Both companies also employ private contractors to do much of their logging. There are also several small post and pole operations in the Plan Area.

In the Lolo National Forest overall, timber harvests have declined from over 200 million board-feet (MMBF) in 1962, to just over 100 MMBF in 1989, to levels well under 50 MMBF in 2005. In the Seeley Lake Ranger District, timber harvests have declined similarly. Average yearly harvests in the Seeley Lake Ranger District have declined by 80% since the 1970s<sup>6</sup>.

## **RECREATION AND TOURISM**

The Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area has a high degree of year-round recreational appeal with numerous opportunities for fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, water skiing, canoeing, horseback riding, All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) use, and boating. The area has diverse recreational facilities including motorized and non-motorized trail systems, dude ranches, and a golf course. While basically a rural area, the region contains public and private campgrounds, motels, outfitters and other businesses that support visitors to the region. Most of the recreational activities available to visitors and residents are heavily dependent on unique and vast natural resources including clean water, unbroken vistas, large forest tracts, bountiful wildlife, and healthy fish stocks. Public lands provide for substantial recreational opportunities. Plum Creek lands have provided access to public recreation in keeping with the company's open lands policy. Traditional recreational uses in the region have not been dependent on the existence of large commercial resorts. Tourism and the associated real estate market are major components of the local economy.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ECONOMY**

Many people visit and come to live in the region for recreation and a lifestyle based on the myriad natural resources and recreation opportunities the region has to offer. Tourists need places to stay, equipment to rent, and guides to help them enjoy what the region has to offer. As they pass through, they may also purchase gas, food, supplies and local crafts. As new residents move to the region and build homes, they initially need excavation, construction, landscaping, carpentry, and other services. Later, established residents contribute to the local economy through their ongoing purchase of goods and services. Whether they are hunted, extracted, hiked and ridden through or simply enjoyed as vistas, the natural resources offered by the region drive the local economy. For example, elk hunting on the Blackfoot Clearwater Wildlife Management Area in the southern portion of the region brings money into the region each fall at a time when summer visitors are gone and winter recreationists have not begun to arrive.

These natural amenities can be degraded when pollution, noise, and overuse lead to loss of wildlife and loss of habitat. Development in sensitive areas can cause changes in patterns of animal behavior and migration patterns, loss of fish stocks due to increased nutrient loads, loss of recreational opportunities in lakes due to invasive plant species or poor water quality, and loss of critical vistas due to poorly-placed development.

Water resources and particularly the lakes in the Plan Area are of prime economic importance. Lakes in the region are utilized for fishing, paddling, swimming and

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<sup>6</sup> Total harvests averaged 12.4 MMBF per year in the 1970's and 2.4 MMBF per year between 1995 and 2005. Data provided by personal communication from Ellen Fortenberry, Lolo National Forest, August 18, 2006.

motorized recreation. Motorized uses are of some concern, especially as personal watercraft and "wave boat" use increases. Certain intensities of these uses can contribute to increased shoreline erosion, may compromise other recreational uses, as well as have a negative impact on wildlife habitat and water quality.

Overall, the economy of the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area has been and will continue to be dependent on the vast quantity and high quality of the natural resources, recreational opportunities, and desirability of the area for primary and second home development. Goals and Action Strategies related to the economy all lead to sustaining these resources and preserving their value for the long-term benefit of the entire community.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Economy**

Goal: Enhance opportunities in the Plan Area to produce, utilize, and market forest products that benefit the local community and business while maintaining or enhancing forest ecosystems and their diversity in the Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Strengthen and diversify the local forest products economy, encouraging new uses of forest products including small diameter logs and biomass.
2. Encourage local utilization of forest products, when appropriate.
3. Evaluate forest management practices for both their effectiveness in producing forest products and also to maintaining and enhancing forest ecosystems and their diversity, and watershed health.
4. Investigate development of biomass fuels to better utilize current fiber sources, diversify the economy, and contribute to local energy conservation.
5. Support community and small forestry operations.

Goal: Encourage continued sustainable agriculture.

Action Strategies: See Chapter 3.

Goal: Focus on tourism business development that also enhances quality of life in the Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage development of low impact tourism opportunities in the Plan Area that focus on natural amenities.
2. Research and develop ways to encourage appealing and attractive appearance of the town of Seeley Lake to promote tourism.
3. Use the Montana Host program resources where appropriate.

Goal: Maintain and enhance the economy of Seeley Lake to support a healthy environment and year-round economic opportunities for all residents of the Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage the development of business support services, such as communications, equipment, and personnel.
2. Encourage development of new businesses in the commercial core of the Plan Area.
3. Support businesses in the region that employ residents of the region while maintaining the unique character of the Plan Area.
4. Pursue economic diversity of the local economy.
5. Maintain a high quality rural lifestyle and maintain and protect resource values by regulating new development.



6. Recognize that well-situated additional growth in certain areas may be appropriate to improve the viability of existing businesses and to help fund necessary infrastructure improvements.
7. Develop additional job opportunities, especially those providing a livable wage, for all economic and social classes within the community.
8. Support businesses rooted in local culture and tradition that help uphold the uniqueness of the community.
9. Promote small-scale industry and traditional products and services.

## CHAPTER 5: POPULATION AND HOUSING

Approximately 2,200 people live year-round in the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area<sup>1</sup>. That number swells to 4,000 in the summer months. The population of the Plan Area is growing at a moderate rate similar to the rest of Missoula County and just slightly faster than the City of Missoula. New homes have been constructed in the region at a rate exceeding that of population growth, indicating the area's desirability for primary and second homes. More than half of the houses in the Plan Area were built in the last 20 years<sup>2</sup>.

### POPULATION

Between 1990 and 2000, the year-round population of the region grew approximately 3%, (70 people), compared to approximately 2% for the county and 3% for the City of Missoula.<sup>3</sup> The current population of the Plan Area is approximately 2,200 individuals. Generally, the region has a smaller percentage of 20-40 year olds and a larger percentage of 40-70 year olds than Missoula County overall<sup>4</sup>. Montana houses a larger proportion of new residents (those who moved from a different house, county, state or country within the last 5 years) than the rest of the country. Missoula County and the Plan Area follow this statewide trend. Most migration into Montana is from Washington State and California.

### LAND OWNERSHIP

The Plan Area includes 239,718 acres. The public owns 55% of this, Plum Creek Timber owns 35%, and other private entities own 9%.

**Ownership in the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area**

Owner	Acres	%of Total Area
<b>Federal</b>	<b>98,036</b>	<b>41.0%</b>
Lolo National Forest	97,831	40.9%
Bureau of Land Management	204	0.1%
<b>State</b>	<b>32,338</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
DNRC, School Trust	20,131	8.4%
Fish, Wildlife, and Parks	12,148	5.1%
Dept. of Transportation	59	0.0%
<b>Missoula County</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>105,108</b>	<b>43.8%</b>
Plum Creek	83,150	34.7%
Other Private	21,538	9.0%
<b>Water</b>	<b>4,120</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>239,718</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> From US Census data, 2003, combining the estimated 2003 populations of the Seeley Lake and Sunset School District populations. <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html>

<sup>2</sup> Source: CAMA data, updated 12/2006.

<sup>3</sup> Source: 2000 US Census Data produced using: *A Socioeconomic Profile: Missoula County, Montana, Seeley Lake CDP*. Produced by the Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System Community (EPSC), March, 2006. The region is small enough in terms of population that fairly small numeric increases in population have fairly large impacts- adding 200 people, for example, would change the regional population by 10%, where the same addition in Missoula would change the city population by less than 2/10<sup>ths</sup> of 1%.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

There are a total of 105,108 acres of private land within the Regional Plan Area. Plum Creek Timber owns 79% of the private acres in the Plan Area. The other 21% of the acres are owned by other private landowners. Over half of the private, non-corporate lands within the Plan Area are owned by persons who live outside the Plan Area.

In 2008, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) entered an agreement to purchase approximately 310,000 acres from Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc. Of that total, 26,807 acres are in the Plan Area. (See Map 2A.)

TNC and TPL is purchasing the land to protect wildlife, water, working forests, and public access wherever possible. The organizations do not intend to maintain a long term ownership of the land and are currently working out potential public and private ownership scenarios which will meet the goals of the project. Where appropriate, some limited acreage may be sold for private development.

Recognizing the significant natural and social resources of the area, TNC and TPL made acquisition of Plum Creek lands in the Clearwater and Swan River drainages a high priority. Missoula County fully supports these acquisitions from Plum Creek.

The actual transfer of title from Plum Creek to TNC/TPL is scheduled to be completed in three phases by December 2010. The Plan Area includes some Phase II and Phase III lands. Phase II includes 3,881 acres within the Plan Area, located in the "checkerboard" Plum Creek/U.S. Forest Service ownership pattern north and east of Seeley, Inez, and Alva Lakes near the Summit. These will eventually be conveyed from TNC/TPL to the Forest Service through a funding mechanism in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Phase III lands (24,851 acres) in the Plan Area include those in the "Big Block" or "Marshall Block," a large contiguous block of Plum Creek lands in the northwest part of the Plan Area. While TNC/TPL will own these lands as of December 2010, they do not intend long-term ownership of the lands, but rather to convey them to another owner. It is unknown at this point whether that owner will be a state or federal agency or a private entity. However, TNC/TPL intends to convey the lands to an owner who will uphold the goals of the project-- keep sustainable harvesting operations in the forests; conserve access for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and hiking; and preserve vital wildlife habitat and water resources<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Private Land Ownership in the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area**

<b>Owner</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total Private Lands</b>
<b>Plum Creek Timber Company</b>	<b>83,150</b>	<b>79.1%</b>
Plum Creek Non-Legacy Lands	54,419	51.8%
Plum Creek (Legacy Phase 1)	0	0.0%
Plum Creek (Legacy Phase 2)	3,881	3.7%
Plum Creek (Legacy Phase 3)	24,851	23.6%
<b>The Nature Conservancy</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Other Private</b>	<b>21,538</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>105,108</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>5</sup> Montana Legacy Project website, 2009

## **HOUSING**

Development of vacant land and construction of new houses in the region is driven primarily by outside demand for second homes and by demand from the slower-growing year-round population. Reflecting this trend, over 35% of the homes in the region are vacant for some part of the year. The vacancy rate has increased over time.

This high vacancy rate, attributed mostly to the second home ownership, is the major difference between the region and the rest of the county, where vacancy rates are around 3%. Due to the high vacancy rate, the raw number of houses in the region is not indicative of the housing available to year-round residents.

As more housing is constructed in the region, its location in relation to downtown Seeley Lake has an impact on infrastructure and services. In the last two decades, housing construction in the region has generally been focused in Double Arrow Resort, which is contiguous to Highway 83 and downtown Seeley Lake. Development in downtown Seeley Lake has slowed since subdivision of land within the Seeley Lake Water District is limited by water system capacity. Development of lots less than one acre in the same area is also limited by lack of a centralized sewer system.

Undeveloped private lands exist that are far removed from major roads and from existing housing. Generally, housing located further from the sheriff, fire, medical and other critical services stretches these services more thinly and increases response times, reducing effectiveness and increasing costs. Housing located further from town will be adjacent to wildlands and therefore may expand the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) identified in the Seeley-Swan Interagency Fire Plan.

The WUI (Map 5) is the area where wildland fires can move readily into human developments, putting lives and property at risk. Efforts to reduce this risk include fuel mitigation treatments, avoiding development on steep slopes and in fire chimneys, creating defensible space around dwellings and other structures, and by ensuring adequate and safe road access, among others. These treatments, while important to reduce risks to lives and property, are expensive and can impact other natural resources including wildlife habitat. Current costs of fuel mitigation on private, non-industrial lands where commercial timber harvest is not a primary objective have averaged over \$1,000/acre per treatment.

## **HOUSING AVAILABILITY**

Based on 2006 data, there are an estimated 1,797 dwelling units within the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area. Of these, 291 (17%) are mobile homes. Most of the mobile homes are owned by residents of the Plan Area<sup>6</sup>.

The number of houses built within the plan area has increased steadily over the years, with 437 homes built in the Plan Area since 1996. Newer homes are more likely to be located further from the center of town than older homes and are more likely to be assessed at a higher value, suggesting that newer homes may be larger or situated on larger and more expensive parcels of land than older homes.

About half (54%) of the currently inhabited land within the Plan Area, and less than half (43%) of the dwelling units, are owned by residents of the Plan Area. The remainder of

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<sup>6</sup> Based on the address where the property owner receives his tax bill.

the assessed value, parcels, and acres in the Plan Area is split evenly between owners from out of state, owners from out of the county, and owners from the balance of Missoula County that is not within the Plan Area<sup>7</sup>. Residents tend to own homes on smaller parcels than other non-resident homeowners within the Plan Area.

### **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines stipulate that for housing to be considered affordable, it must cost 30% or less of household income, including insurance and utilities. In 2000, a two-person household making the median yearly income for the region (\$35,101) could purchase the median home (\$136,000)<sup>8</sup> in the region with a 20% down-payment and 25% of household income. However, this calculation does not include other housing costs, such as utilities and insurance. Under this scenario, for the home to be considered affordable, the purchasers would have less than \$150 per month to pay their taxes, utilities, and insurance.<sup>9</sup>

A limitation to the above calculation is that the 2000 U.S. Census includes part-time residents of the region in the median income and housing costs calculation. The inclusion of part-time residents in these figures means that persons who can afford a second home and their incomes are included in the median income statistics. It is likely that if second home owners were removed from the analysis, the median household income of the Plan Area would have been lower than \$35,101 in the year 2000.

Between the years 1990 and 2000, median household incomes, adjusted for inflation, in Missoula County rose 10%, while median home values rose 56%.<sup>10</sup> As increases in home prices continue to outpace increases in incomes, housing becomes less affordable county-wide.

As market prices continue to rise, many homes in the Plan Area have become unaffordable by HUD standards. Market prices for homes in the Plan Area vary widely depending on location, acreage, water access and view. Single family homes with little acreage and no view or water access have sold for over \$200,000 in the last few years<sup>11</sup>. The least expensive option listed in the region was a 33 year-old mobile home on Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) lease land listed at \$62,000. Many banks are not willing to finance the purchase of a home on lease land, especially an older mobile home which may not be able to be moved if the lease is not renewed<sup>12</sup>. Bare land, generally in the form of two to three acre lots, was listed for \$30,000 to \$41,000 per acre. Generally, newer houses built in the region are

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<sup>7</sup> Based on parcel data for 2005, Montana Cadastral Data Project.

<sup>8</sup> Adjusted for inflation, this would equate to \$41,073 and \$159,140 in 2006 dollars for income and home price, respectively.

<sup>9</sup> 2000 U.S. Census produced using *A Socioeconomic Profile: Missoula County, Montana, Seeley Lake CDP*. Produced by the Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System Community (EPSC), March, 2006. A 30-year mortgage on a \$136,000 home at 5% interest with a 20% down payment would result in a monthly payment of \$731, 25% of the median monthly income (\$35,101). At 30% of median monthly household income, (\$877) a \$731 mortgage payment leaves \$146 per month to cover these other costs.

<sup>10</sup> Missoula County Growth Policy, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Multiple Listing Service (MLS) listings for the Seeley Lake Region, December 2006 [www.mls.com](http://www.mls.com).

<sup>12</sup> Many mobile home parks will not take mobile home units older than a certain age due to concerns about liability, fire hazard and structural stability.

less likely to be affordable to residents of the region as they are built on larger lots. Diversity of residential lot sizes and residential densities in the Plan Area are intended to provide a variety of housing opportunities.

Families who rented their homes in 2000 paid an average of 20% of their household income toward rent. Fourteen percent of the families who rented in the region in 2000 paid more than 50% of their income toward rent. Median rent, including utilities, was \$516 per month for the region in 2000. Rental costs increased over 20% county-wide between 2000 and 2005<sup>13</sup>.

There are a range of tools available to promote affordable housing including planning and zoning regulations, developer incentives, financial tools, and homeowner and renter assistance programs. Several non-profit Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) promote and develop affordable housing in Missoula County. There are other subsidy programs for first-time homebuyers and a rental voucher program that can be utilized in the unincorporated portions of Missoula County. The Office of Planning and Grants (OPG) conducts an annual needs assessment intended to identify community development projects that can qualify for government assistance. OPG has been engaged with Seeley's water and sewer projects for almost 25 years.

### **EXISTING ZONING**

There are two Zoning Districts (Z.D.) in place within the Plan Area (See Map 7). Both were established under the state law provision that allows for the creation of zoning districts initiated by a petition of citizens (M.C.A. 76-2-1-1, "Part 1" zoning). Z.D. 8, established in 1958, covers approximately 2,560 acres around Placid Lake. Z.D. 8 generally prohibits commercial development, particularly bars, service stations and motels within its boundaries. In October 2008, the Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of County Commissioners adopted amendments to Z.D. 8, which add Subdistrict 8A regulations to Placid Lake shoreline properties and a portion of Owl Creek. The subdistrict standards require a minimum lot size of one acre, minimum lake frontage of 150 feet, and minimum building setback of 50 horizontal feet from the high-water line. Boat marinas and boat ramps are also prohibited.

Z.D. 26, established in 1969 and amended in 2006, covers approximately 547 acres around Lake Inez. Z.D. 26 prohibits all commercial and industrial uses within its boundaries. The 2006 amendment to the Z.D. added a density requirement of one dwelling unit per 10 acres for lots without lake frontage. Lake front lots require a minimum lake frontage of 200 feet for residential development.

### **DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY**

The most comprehensive data on divisions of land available for the Plan Area are based on records of filed plats and Certificates of Survey (COS). There are a total of 2,681 parcels of private, non-corporate land in the Plan Area. As of September 2006 there have been at least 2,100 lots created in the Plan Area, beginning in 1923 (the earliest recorded division). More than half of the lots created and a third of the acres subdivided in the region were created in the last 20 years. As of January 2009, one additional subdivision creating 5 lots on 28 acres had been approved and filed. An additional five subdivisions, creating 49 lots on 199 acres, had been approved but not filed. There are

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<sup>13</sup> Based on fair-market rents as calculated by HUD through surveys and census data.

additional residential lots in the region in the form of DNRC lease lots (260) and U.S. Forest Service lease lots (44).

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Housing**

Goal: Promote housing development that meets the needs of future residents, provides an economically diverse housing stock, respects the capacities of existing and future development of public services, and respects neighborhood character.

#### **Action Strategies:**

1. Encourage smaller, town-sized lots near the center of town when future conditions allow.
2. Encourage private, governmental, and non-profit agencies in their efforts to fund and promote affordable and housing construction and innovative neighborhood design in area(s) appropriate for development.
3. Encourage development that includes a mix of building sizes, footprints, lot sizes, and building types in appropriate areas.
4. Ensure that new development in rural locations is located where impacts to the natural environment can be mitigated and that it pays the cost of extending infrastructure.
5. Encourage new development to be located near existing services and where the WUI will not be further expanded.
6. Encourage a continuing community conversation about the types of affordable housing tools and their applicability and feasibility for the Plan Area. The Seeley Lake Regional Plan encourages the use of inclusionary zoning and/or other methods to provide housing to groups designated as those in need in Chapter 5. The Seeley Lake Regional Plan encourages the use of density bonuses in areas where infrastructure improvements exist. Houses erected through a density bonus program should specifically target groups designated as those in need in Chapter 5.

Goal: Ensure that housing development and upgrades are compatible with other elements of the Seeley Lake Regional Plan.

#### **Action Strategies:**

1. Create and disseminate an information packet explaining development policies and guidelines within the Plan Area including contact information for regulatory agencies, applicable regulations, and an outline of procedures for development within the Plan Area.
2. Adopt development standards applicable to rural development to ensure development respects natural environment, wildlife, and ecological values and community character.

Goal: Provide opportunities for a variety of housing types and locations.

#### **Action Strategies:**

1. Adopt land use implementation tools that can accommodate flexibility and variety in design and location of housing.



## **CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

This chapter addresses infrastructure, community services, and facilities which support the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area. Included are roads, utilities, solid waste, drinking water, sewage, human services, law enforcement, emergency services, fire protection, education, parks, and trails. Plans for modification and expansion of infrastructure are noted, as are potential impacts new development may have on infrastructure needs.

Infrastructure and development are interdependent. New infrastructure encourages new development, and new development can create a need for new or expanded infrastructure. Planning for development prior to infrastructure expansion is critical to ensure that infrastructure expansion does not encourage development in sensitive areas and that new development does not create a costly or unanticipated need for infrastructure within the Plan Area.

In 2005, the Seeley Lake Community Council conducted a Community Needs Assessment Survey with assistance from the Missoula Office of Planning and Grants (OPG). The purpose for conducting the survey was to "gather information from community members to assist the Council in understanding the community's broad needs and priorities in the areas of health care, education, parks and recreation, safety, affordable housing, public facilities, transportation, employment, and economic development".<sup>1</sup>

Council members and volunteers surveyed year-round and seasonal residents about topics ranging from commuting patterns to recreational needs, including topics related to public facilities and services. The survey area encompassed downtown Seeley Lake, Placid Lake, Double Arrow Ranch, and areas to the north and west of Seeley Lake. Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of improving various elements of public facilities and services. Fire planning, police protection, community water supply and quality, surface water quality, road quality, and sewer disposal were ranked very highly by survey respondents.<sup>2</sup>

Improvements to the area's infrastructure have been made in recent years including widening Highway 83 through the downtown area, adding turning lanes, and adding new trails. Improvements are pending to the community water system. The costs of maintaining or improving the existing infrastructure partially depend on a healthy and growing economy. New development is expected to "pay its own way" and contribute to the general improvements to the existing services of the community.

### **ROADS, TRANSPORTATION, AND MAINTENANCE**

Public roads in the Plan Area vary from unimproved rights-of-way to highways operated and maintained by the State of Montana or Missoula County. A significant number of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and private roads are also scattered throughout the region.

With the growth of the Plan Area's residential and visitor population, pressure on state highways, county roads, private roads, and forest roads through lands continues to increase.

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<sup>1</sup> Seeley Lake Community Council Community Survey, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

There are 58.7 miles of state highways within the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area. The Highway 83 corridor is the primary north-south route through the planning region. As of 2003, Average Annual Daily Traffic volume (AADT) for Highway 83 was over 2,000 vehicles per day, approximately 500 more vehicles per day than in 1993. Traffic volumes also fluctuate with the seasons. In July 2003, the daily traffic volume was over 4000 vehicles. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) plans to reconstruct Highway 83 through the planning area. Current plans include a wildlife overpass and underpass just south of Salmon Lake with limited fencing to channel animals to this crossing. A working group and MDT also identified five possible wildlife crossings between Seeley Lake and the Clearwater Divide<sup>3</sup>.

Six miles of Highway 200 run through the Plan Area from east to west. Along with Highway 83, Highway 200 serves as the primary route between the Plan Area and Missoula. Private lands along Highway 200 that have easy access to either highway and provide short drives to both Missoula and Seeley Lake may be under increased development pressure as land and homes closer to Seeley Lake become more expensive.

As density increases in the Plan Area, the need for carpooling and vanpooling will increase. There are also safety concerns for pedestrians and bicyclists along Highway 83. Currently a seniors bus travels from Seeley Lake to Missoula and Kalispell through a grant with MDT, with fluctuating ridership. A public/private partnership could also provide transportation from Missoula or Condon and the Swan Valley for seasonal events. Sports programs at the school also require that teams and fans travel, often long distances. A Transportation Advisory Committee to the Montana Department of Transportation meets quarterly in Seeley Lake.

### **County Roads**

County Roads may be paved, unpaved, County-maintained, or unmaintained. A road's status as a County road does not mean that it will be maintained by the County. The Missoula County Department of Public Works (DPW) and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) maintain roads in County Parks or FWP lands.

The DPW and FWP plan to pave and widen Placid Lake Road outside the entrance to Placid Lake State Park for a distance of about 500 feet. Roads and camping sites within the campground are now paved. This project should enhance traffic safety and help abate dust problems around the park.

### **Private Roads**

There are 576.6 miles of private roads within the Seeley Lake Plan Area which are subject to maintenance by their owners or associations of owners. 465 miles or 80% of the private roads in the region are owned by the Plum Creek Timber Company, which allows recreational use through an open lands policy. Private landowners who need to pass through Plum Creek lands generally are able to do so by entering into access agreements with Plum Creek.

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<sup>3</sup> Animal-Vehicle Collisions and Habitat Connectivity along Montana Highway 83 in the Seeley-Swan Valley, Montana: a Reconnaissance. Western Transportation Institute, Montana State University, MT DOT, Helena, MT. (2006).

### **U.S. Forest Service Roads**

Roads on USFS lands may be open to some motorized uses, closed completely, or open to some motorized uses during some parts of the year. Use by snowmobiles is allowed throughout much of the Plan Area, and contributes a significant recreational use in the valley. Motorized use at other times of the year includes motor vehicles, motorcycles, dirt bikes, and ATV's.

### **Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Roads**

Roads through Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) property in the Plan Area access public land, private land and lands leased from DNRC for agriculture and home sites. DNRC manages property for the purposes of generating revenue for various trusts overseen by the State Land Board. All trust lands are open to walk-in public recreational access with the purchase of a recreational tag. Existing roads have been built primarily for the sole purpose of timber management. Roads through state trust land utilized for access to private property requires authorization from the DNRC in the form of an easement, license, or some sort of cost share agreement. There are roads in the Plan Area that have easements held by MDT, Missoula County, and various private individuals and homeowners associations.

### **Cost Share Roads**

Many roads through resource lands, including some to developments, may cross both private and public lands. Most of these roads have easements and cost share agreements that specify acceptable uses and maintenance responsibilities.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Road Transportation and Maintenance**

Goal: Continue to improve public roads within the Plan Area as needed for public health and safety.

Action Strategies:

1. Require that services and utilities are brought up to standards or extended when new roads are constructed or old roads upgraded.
2. Consider using Rural Special Improvement Districts (RSIDs) to fund upgrades to these services.
3. Require new subdivisions to improve all access roads to anticipated levels of service.
4. Support and seek funding sources for efforts to provide additional multimodal transportation options to serve the Plan Area.

Goal: Promote beautification and enhanced natural resource value of transportation corridors.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage landscaping from the edge of the right-of-way or road surface onto private property and up to existing improvements such as structures and parking areas, where landscaping will not serve as an attractant to animals and increase animal-vehicle collisions.
2. Eliminate noxious weeds along roads.
3. Work with MDT to provide crossings for wildlife as part of the Highway 83 planned improvements.
4. Promote road densities within recommended guidelines for fish and wildlife resources for resource protection areas.
5. Evaluate recreational use of roads and develop strategies to keep uses compatible and safe.

## **AIRPORT**

The Seeley Lake Airport, situated partially within Missoula County and partially within Powell County, is a 3,475 foot grass strip two miles east of Seeley Lake. A phone, outhouse, picnic pavilion, tie-downs, aviation fuel, and overnight camping are available. There are currently 10 single-engine planes and one ultra light plane based at the airport. Aircraft operations amount to an average of 34 flights a week, with under one third of flights being made by the planes kept at the airport and the remaining two thirds by planes passing through the area<sup>4</sup>. The Seeley Lake Flying Club provides support to the airport in the form of volunteer labor and funds, which it uses to promote the airport and air-based tourism in the region.

## **UTILITIES**

Telephone service is provided by the Blackfoot Telephone cooperative. Cellular phone service is available in downtown Seeley Lake as well but is compromised by topography in more remote areas of the planning region. Internet access through a dial-up connection and high speed internet via DSL or cable is also available in some parts of the Plan Area.

Electricity in Seeley Lake is provided by the Missoula Electric Co-op (MEC). MEC has undergone a four year program to improve service capacity and reliability. In wooded areas, MEC is working towards upgrading lines to ensure better service by reducing power outages caused by fallen trees. MEC installs lines underground wherever physically and economically feasible, and is also working to reduce the risk of outages caused by trees falling on above-ground lines by trimming and removing trees near lines.

Natural gas is not available in the region, though propane via tank refill and delivery is available through several local companies. Metered, underground propane delivery is used by over 100 customers in downtown Seeley Lake.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Utilities**

Goal: Ensure that development of utilities minimizes impacts to natural resources and aesthetics.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage careful placement and design, including color and finish, of towers and antennas to blend with the environment.
2. Locate new utility corridors to minimize conflicts between utilities, wildlife habitat, and human development.
3. Continue to place electrical utilities underground wherever feasible. New development should construct electric and communication utilities underground.

## **SOLID WASTE**

Solid waste in the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area can be brought to the Solid Waste Transfer Site or can be collected by Larson Disposal and Transport, LLC for a fee. The transfer site is operated by the Seeley Lake Refuse District. Residents in the Refuse District pay for the use of the transfer station as a part of their property taxes. The transfer station is equipped with electric fences and covered containers to minimize bear attraction. Waste from the transfer site is transported by Allied Waste to their facility in

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Airnav.com. <http://www.airnav.com> (2006).

Missoula for disposal. Waste disposal is also a concern in the central part of the Plan Area, where higher concentrations of people and businesses are located. There are no consistently installed municipal waste containers, although some are put out during special events. Private businesses find their dumpsters being utilized by both tourists and locals unwilling to take appropriate disposal measures.

The level of tourism, especially during the summer, can add to solid waste problems. Many of these visitors bring their refuse to the downtown area for disposal causing an undue financial burden on businesses.

A recycling program has been initiated as part of the transfer station operations.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Solid Waste**

Goal: The Refuse District should maintain an adequate local facility for the disposal of refuse that is convenient, affordable, aesthetic, and safe for the environment.

Action Strategies:

1. Maintain and expand recycling collection facilities.
2. Prevent all solid waste disposal sites from becoming an attractant to wildlife, especially bears.
3. Ensure accessibility to residents by maintaining or increasing hours of operation.
4. Evaluate and plan for future solid waste disposal needs.

Goal: Address seasonal waste disposal issues in downtown Seeley Lake.

Action Strategies:

1. Explore the possibility of installing municipal waste containers in areas with high rates of litter in summer months.
2. Encourage local businesses that produce waste to provide their customers with convenient disposal facilities.

## **DRINKING WATER**

### **Current Use**

Drinking water in the Seeley Planning Region outside of the Water District is obtained primarily through private wells. Metered, municipal distribution is provided within the boundaries of the Seeley Lake Water District. (See Map 8.) The district serves 540 active lots with structures, of which approximately 85% are residential and 15% are commercial. Of those 540 lots, about 108 or 20% are seasonal homes where water service is turned off in the winter.

### **Capacity**

The district also contains 190 more lots which are undeveloped. Of these, 90 cannot currently be developed due to septic or other constraints, and 12 are large enough that they could be subdivided into multiple-lot developments. Developable lots within the region tend to be developed at a rate of 5-10 lots per year.

The Water District obtains all of its water from Seeley Lake and owns a water right to withdraw 350 acre-feet of water per year from the lake. Current demand is about 200 acre-feet per year. All of those currently within the water district could be served using the existing water rights. If the water district were expanded, the purchase of additional water rights would likely be required. The development of the downtown plan as presented within this land use plan requires significant additional water rights in order to be implemented.

The Water District has difficulties delivering consistent water quantity due to undersize mains and limited water storage capacity. There are several places in the district that lose water pressure entirely when fire hydrants are utilized. Pressure in fire hydrants within the district is generally at 1/3 or less than the state recommended minimum pressure for fire protection. Water system upgrades including a much larger transmission line, a 500,000 gallon storage tank, and an ultraviolet disinfection system are being added in 2009-2010 .

### **Source and Quality**

Water is pumped from the north end of Seeley Lake and filtered and chlorinated prior to distribution. This treatment is legally required because the water comes from a surface source. In spring and fall especially, the thermal layers in the lake "turn over," resulting in turbidity levels that must be addressed through filtration. Nitrate and phosphate levels in Seeley Lake are slowly rising as evidenced by increased vegetation growth in the lake each summer. Nitrate and phosphate levels from water sampled from groundwater test wells in the Water District are close to state limits. The same test wells have also shown elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria, which is indicative of failed septic systems within the district.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Drinking Water**

Goal: Provide clean, sustainable drinking water to all residents within the Seeley Lake Water District, and ensure water quality is maintained in other areas.

Action Strategies:

1. Ensure that water quality is maintained for all residents of the Plan Area.
2. Regularly monitor water sources, adequacy of storage facilities, and the distribution system within the Seeley Lake Water District.
3. Expand existing water supply capabilities in downtown Seeley Lake.
4. Upgrade delivery lines and storage capacity within the Seeley Lake Water District.
5. Encourage water conservation and xeriscaping.

### **SEWAGE**

Sewage in the Plan Area is treated through on-site septic systems. New systems must be approved by the Missoula County Health Department. Single-family homes not utilizing community systems typically must be situated on lots of at least one acre to accommodate septic systems. Even one acre lots, when concentrated together, may not adequately prevent sewage seepage into ground or surface waters, depending on site characteristics. Septic systems and particularly those that have failed may be the major source of pollutants in ground water in the Plan Area<sup>5</sup>.

The Seeley Lake Sewer District is studying the need and feasibility of a centralized sewer system. The current proposed Phase I service area would serve 108 parcels, 61 of which contain dwelling units. (See Map 8.) Sewer service in the District would allow construction on about 100 lots that are currently too small to support individual septic systems and, along with adequate municipal water supply, would allow for the subdivision of several larger lots within the district. The primary impediment to constructing a sewage system in Seeley is the lack of funding, with estimates over \$13,000,000. Currently, \$2,500,000 in state funds is available to be utilized on the project.

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<sup>5</sup> Conversation with Vince Chappelle, Manager, Seeley Lake Water District, October 2006.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Efficient Treatment of Sewage**

Goal: Ensure sewage disposal that prevents pollution of lakes, streams, and groundwater.

Action Strategies:

1. Require sewage disposal in the Plan Area that minimizes adverse impacts to water quality and other natural resource values.
2. Encourage upgrading of out-of-date or failing septic systems.
3. Find sewage disposal methods that allow more efficient use of land within the water and sewer districts.
4. Identify and evaluate alternative sewage disposal methods that are appropriate for small-scale applications.
5. Continue to investigate the feasibility of installing a central sewer system within the community of Seeley Lake.
6. Continue water quality and degradation studies.

### **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Local health and human services in Seeley Lake Planning Region include health care facilities, as well as facilities and services dedicated to counseling and other human services. Health services include: the Seeley Swan Medical Center, which is affiliated with Saint Patrick's Hospital in Missoula, physical therapists, chiropractor, fitness center, and a YMCA youth and adult fitness program. Human services include a senior center and child care services. The area is served by the Seeley-Swan Food Pantry. Seeley Lake also is served by a Crime Victim Advocate (CVA) program and local office, which provided advocacy services to 559 victims in rural parts of Missoula County during Fiscal Year (FY) 2006.<sup>6</sup>

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Health and Human Services**

Goal: Enhance and improve health and human services within the plan area.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage and support agencies that work with Plan Area residents regarding issues of mental and physical health.
2. Investigate the feasibility of locating a nursing home or assisted care facility in the community to allow families to spend additional time together.
3. Encourage coordination among health and human service providers.
4. Enhance public awareness of health and human issues and services.
5. Support the efforts of the Senior Citizen Center to obtain and operate a van to provide transportation to residents.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

A number of agencies are involved in law enforcement in the Seeley Lake area, including Missoula County Sheriffs Department, the Montana Highway Patrol, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officers. The Sheriff's Department has traditionally maintained two resident deputies in the vicinity, one of whom resides in Seeley Lake. These officers provide numerous overtime-hours to respond to emergency needs in the valley, and are on-call whenever they are off-duty. They are assisted by a part time officer, funded by the County, and can request backup or extra personnel from Missoula when needed. Additional personnel include volunteer Reserve Officers and a 12 member volunteer Search and Rescue squad.

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<sup>6</sup> Missoula County CVA Report, August, 2006.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Law Enforcement**

Goal: Ensure the community's safety and well-being through effective cooperation between law enforcement agencies and public education.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage citizen participation through programs such as 1-800-TIP-MONT, the Seeley Swan Talk, Education, and Protection (SSTEP) program, other hotlines, and monthly coffee meetings with the Sheriff.
2. Maintain the current resident, full-time deputy sheriff in the Planning Area.

### **FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The Seeley Lake Fire District encompasses approximately 58 square miles including the unincorporated community of Seeley Lake. (See Map 9.) This includes most of the residential areas in the valley as well as areas around Placid Lake, Elbow Lake, and Cozy Corner. A five-member Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration of the District. While the District employs two full-time and one part-time personnel, fires and emergency medical calls are handled primarily by volunteers. Fire and emergency medical calls now exceed 250 per year and are reaching levels where a full-time, paid staff is necessary<sup>7</sup>. The Greenough and Potomac Volunteer Fire Department cover the southern portion of the Plan Area including the area around Clearwater Junction. This all-volunteer department depends on having members live in many of the areas it covers in order to provide faster response times.

Since wildfires are a threat to Seeley Lake and the surrounding area, the Fire District has contingency plans and mutual aid agreements with other departments to address such problems. In addition to the Seeley Lake Fire District, other entities, such as the USFS Seeley Lake Ranger District and the DNRC Clearwater Unit, have fire protection responsibilities in the region. The Seeley Lake Ranger District routinely responds to initial attack wildland fires and prescribed natural fires within their boundaries and also provides support to other agencies. The DNRC Clearwater Unit is responsible for wildland fire protection on its forested lands in the area. It also serves other lands within its protection boundaries, including ranches and recreational properties. Emergency medical services within the region are provided by volunteer rescue squads in Seeley Lake and Greenough.

Development in remote forested areas outside the existing defined wildland urban interface (see Map 5) further increases the potential of residential structures being threatened by wildland fire. This type of development pattern spreads resources available to fight wildland fire, increases response times, reduces response effectiveness, and requires significant additional funding and technical support for fuel mitigation efforts

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Fire and Emergency Services**

Goal: Encourage new development and redevelopment in the Plan Area to minimize impacts to the level and distribution of fire and emergency services.

Action Strategies:

1. Discourage development that would further expand the currently defined Wildland Urban Interface.

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<sup>7</sup> As reported by the chief of the Seeley Lake Rural Fire District to the Seeley Lake Infrastructure Committee, 2004.



2. Encourage development standards for the location, design, and maintenance of structures to reduce flammability and to create a defensible space (firescaping) to reduce wildfire danger.
3. Require adequate road and driveway widths for fire suppression and emergency response vehicles.
4. Encourage residents to post County-issued addresses on their properties to assist fire and emergency services.
5. Assist local community efforts to reduce fuels in the WUI, including support of the Seeley Lake Fuels Mitigation Task Force.
6. Fully implement the Seeley/Swan Fire Plan, and update this plan every 5 years.

## **EDUCATION**

Public education in the Plan Area consists of two grade schools (District 34 in Seeley and a portion of the Sunset School District in Greenough) and a high school (District 1) operated by Missoula County. (See Map 10.) As of October, 2005 there were 351 students enrolled in the Seeley Lake public schools, up from 323 in October 2000. There is additional capacity remaining in both the elementary and high schools. A number of elementary and high school age students receive their education through avenues other than public schools such as home schooling. A rising number of students receive home schooling, which has increased 62% in Missoula County since 1990.<sup>8</sup>

In October 1988, a branch of the Missoula Public Library (MPL) was opened in Seeley Lake. The branch library is located in the high school library and is staffed for ten hours per week by a MPL employee. The Seeley Lake High School librarian provides library service to the public during school hours.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Education**

Goal: Provide the best possible educational opportunities for all residents of the Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Support the efforts of the public schools to provide a quality education to each student.
2. Support lifelong learning opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and interests.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Parks and recreation opportunities abound in Seeley Lake. In addition to designated County parks and common areas, other areas are often used for recreational purposes in the region. Land managed by the USFS provides numerous recreational opportunities such as several campgrounds, the Clearwater Canoe Trail, Seeley Lake Ski Trails, and access to the many lakes, trails and forested areas throughout the region. Major lakes in the region include Seeley, Alva, Inez, Placid, Elbow and Salmon. FWP manages two state parks in the region: Salmon Lake State Park and Placid Lake State Park. Harper's Lake State Fishing Access is located north of Clearwater Junction. (See Map 11A.) Plum Creek Timber Company manages its forest resources in the area yet recognizes the recreational value of their lands. While there are some restrictions on Plum Creek lands, generally they allow significant public use through an open lands policy.

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<sup>8</sup> From the web site of the Missoula County Office of the Superintendent of Schools, October, 2006. <http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/supschools/Enrollment%202006.pdf>

Three County parks are located in the Seeley Lake Plan Area. (See Map 11.) Clearwater Park, located northwest of the elementary school, has a small pond and wetlands area on 3.3 acres. The Lion's Club maintains the park, which offers excellent opportunities for enjoying the natural, riparian habitat in a quiet but centrally located site. Ice skating is also available in season.

Priority Park is a 5 acre park located about one-and-a-half miles east of the Seeley Lake town site.

The third County park is the 40 acre Drew Creek conservation park on the outskirts of the Double Arrow Ranch Subdivision that includes a riparian area along a creek and dense forest.

A fourth property used by the community as a park, the 10-acre Seeley Lake Community Park, is located on the elementary school grounds and owned by School District 34. It contains a ball field, tennis courts, restrooms, and other play equipment. Eagle's Nest, a new playground on the site, was completed with the help of over 100 volunteers in spring of 2006.

Other park, recreation, and conservation lands include common areas, which have been set aside to meet the needs of residents of a subdivision and are managed by Homeowners' Associations. Many of these are found in the Double Arrow subdivisions.

Some community members have expressed interest in developing a "Community Gathering Area" that would be centrally located and would provide space for farmers' markets, town band performances and other community gatherings. A parcel on Seeley Lake and near downtown Seeley Lake would be preferable for this area.

The YMCA sponsors many recreational programs offered through the schools including soccer, basketball, baseball, gymnastics and others. They also have a few limited adult programs.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Parks**

Goal: Enhance and expand parks facilities within the Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Maintain and enhance the Seeley Lake Community Park.
2. Provide additional recreational facilities in County Parks within the Plan Area.
3. Locate and develop additional lands for sports fields.
4. Explore the use of lands contiguous to the Seeley-Swan High School for additional recreation available to the community.
5. Work with other agencies and private land owners to develop new opportunities for recreation including, but not limited to, horse riding trails, ice skating/rollerblading rinks, picnic areas and recreational complexes.
6. Encourage new parks, including pocket parks and conservation parkland as part of new development throughout the region. Lands for neighborhood and pocket parks should be dedicated as subdivisions are approved.
7. Acquire lands dedicated for commercial recreation events (snow cross, festivals, concerts, arts & crafts fairs, flea markets, etc.).

Goal: Expand recreational opportunities.

Action Strategies:

1. Provide year-round organized recreational opportunities and instruction for local residents.
2. Encourage indoor recreational opportunities such as bowling alleys, theaters, teen centers, family dance/activity centers and swimming pools.
3. Promote low cost and low impact recreational projects (such as skating facilities, picnic area development, passive park systems, etc.)
4. Encourage and support special activities such as craft fairs sponsored by local businesses, groups, and artisans.
5. Evaluate future recreational demands and plan for these needs.
6. Promote, maintain, and enhance public access to lands for recreational use.

## **TRAILS**

Trails are an important recreational resource within the Seeley Lake Plan Area. Recreational use of trails, especially snow trails, is a significant economic contributor to Seeley Lake. Highway 83 is on a popular long distance bicycling route. The Great Divide Mountain Bike Route from Canada to Mexico traverses the area. A subcommittee of the Seeley Lake Community Council has been working to plan trail connections around the lake and between downtown Seeley and outlying areas. Trails issues include conflicts between motorized and non-motorized uses, conflicts with private landowners, enforcement difficulties, access control, and the need to provide adequate linkage between some parts of the Plan Area.

Well-located trails will provide opportunities to connect the Seeley Plan Area with adjacent communities. North and south trail connections along Highway 83 could help address safety concerns for off road travel along Highway 83.

### **Goals and Action Strategies for Trails**

Goal: Enhance trail connectivity within the Plan Area.

Action Strategies:

1. Continue to develop trail systems that connect neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and open spaces around Seeley Lake and throughout the Plan Area.
2. Continue to develop trail systems for a variety of users including walkers, cyclists and motorized users.
3. Encourage new developments in the Plan Area to provide connections to existing trail systems and opportunities to connect to trail systems through future adjacent development.
4. Provide, map, and clearly mark routes that provide ingress and egress to developed areas of the Plan Area from surrounding public lands.
5. Keep motorized trails away from critical habitat.
6. Review and update trail design standards in the "Connecting the Community" trail guide.
7. Continue to develop trail systems that provide the opportunity to connect the Seeley Plan Area with adjacent communities and surrounding public lands.

### **General Goals and Action Strategies for Infrastructure**

Goal: Provide adequate, safe, and affordable services and infrastructure for all residents.

Action Strategies:

1. Seek funding through state and federal grant programs to assist low and moderate-income residents with upgrades to home infrastructure such as septic systems, waste disposal and water supply.
2. Ensure that new development pays its share of the costs of infrastructure needed by that development.
3. Promote coordination between different entities to maximize the efficiency of infrastructure projects.
4. Continue to monitor growth and development to ensure infrastructure needs are adequately met.

Goal: Involve the public in discussions about infrastructure projects and strategy.

Action Strategies:

1. Encourage and help entities to provide public forums concerning major infrastructure projects and planning. The Community Council should hold (at a minimum) yearly public meetings to obtain citizen input on project needs for 5 to 10 year programs. Suggestions should be submitted to Missoula County for consideration in the County's annual road maintenance program and scheduled through the Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Establish and maintain an infrastructure committee of the Community Council that includes chairs of appropriate Boards and that meets regularly in open meetings to review plans and progress.

## **CHAPTER 7: LAND USE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the land use types that appear on the land use maps accompanying the Plan (Maps 12A through 12F). The land use maps are visual representations of the policies of the Seeley Lake Regional Plan. They are graphical depictions of the base land uses and densities that are recommended, given factors such as: proximity to existing or planned services, slope of the land, floodplain, open space values, wildlife habitat, and other constraints. The maps and the policies they represent are intended to be the general foundation for land use decisions and implementation. Land use designation boundaries are approximate and may be changed upon closer evaluation at the time of implementation.

Public agencies or private individuals seeking information about land development objectives of the community and County should consult these maps and the policies of each land use category. The designated boundaries on the maps are approximations. Decisions and implementation based on these designations should include consideration of the entire Regional Plan and site-specific conditions. Since the land use designations cover broad areas in many cases, more detailed site-specific analyses are recommended or may be required during development design and review.

The Seeley Lake Plan Area includes some existing lots that are smaller than recommended by the land use designations. There are also some existing commercial and industrial uses in locations that do not correspond with the uses described in the land use designations.

During the development of this Plan, community members expressed serious concerns about existing lots, uses, and structures that could be considered non-conforming if the Plan were implemented through zoning. The community stated that it would not support implementation of the Plan's land use designations unless non-conforming lots, structures, and uses were allowed to continue, rebuild, and expand.

The Seeley Lake Community Council recommended that Plan implementation through a zoning ordinance include a section on nonconforming uses that allows: 1.) the building, rebuilding and/or expansion of a nonconforming structure that exists at the time of the adoption of the zoning; and 2.) the continuance of any home businesses, home industries, commercial uses and industrial uses existing at the time of the adoption of this plan.

If this plan is implemented through zoning, existing lots that do not meet minimum lot size or density requirements will still be allowed to have permitted uses and structures. Existing uses that do not meet zoning requirements will be allowed to continue. This includes existing home businesses, home industries, commercial uses, and industrial uses. Existing structures that do not meet zoning requirements will be allowed to remain. Limits on rebuilding and expansion of structures, expansion of existing uses, and time limits should be permissive but the details should be addressed during the public process around Plan implementation such as development of zoning for the area.

The land use types are grouped into seven categories: Resource-based, Residential, Commercial, Gateway, Industrial, Parks, and Public/Quasi Public. The description of each land use type includes information about intent, appropriate location, kinds of uses, and recommended density. Development Guidelines are included for each land use type.

Density recommendations quantify potential gross base density on a parcel but do not establish minimum lot sizes. Density can be clustered within a parcel and within a land use density designation, but clustering across land use designations would require separate review and approval. At the time of zoning or project review, it may be desirable to consider setting a maximum number of units within an area in order to balance resource protection, community character, and economic goals. The maximum gross density designated on the land use maps may not be achievable on every parcel due to other land constraints.

The location and density of development ultimately approved by the Board of County Commissioners may also be based on the provision of adequate services for public health and safety. Missoula County may not be able to provide services to all new development, especially in remote locations with high fire hazard.

Density recommendations are not equivalent to zoning rights until and unless zoning is implemented. Montana statutes require that zoning regulations be “made in accordance with an adopted growth policy.” Zoning districts could have different names from the land use classifications used in the Plan, could consolidate land use classifications, include different densities from the land use classification, or include a different level of detail and still be in accordance with this Plan. Any of the land use designations may be adjusted to account for the development and implementation of a Transfer of Development Right/Credit (TDR/TDC) program. The County recognizes that TDR/TDCs are a viable tool.

Some of the recommended land use designations are based on the availability of infrastructure such as sewer. If the existing sewer district boundaries are expanded, additional density may be considered in certain areas, where appropriate, based on other constraints. This includes Montana Department of Conservations and Resources (DNRC) lands in Sections 4 and 10 along the Seeley Lake outlet and Clearwater River.

Accomplishing the overarching goals of this Plan to maintain and enhance the recreational, natural environment, wildlife and ecological values and community character will require a variety of implementation tools including regulatory and non-regulatory measures and incentives.

The land use designations are intended to meet the goals and policies articulated throughout this Plan. Several factors were considered and balanced when designating a land use for a particular area, including:

- strong community goals of large landscape resource preservation;
- wildlife and resource vulnerabilities;
- land capability, including resource constraints (such as floodplain and slope) and health regulations;
- resource values;
- infrastructure;

- public safety;
- housing needs;
- economic concerns;
- private property rights;
- community values and input; and
- existing land uses and development patterns.

The analysis provided in the Clearwater Resource Council's (CRC) *Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley of Montana* also provided information on resource values and other development limitations. The CRC assessment spatially identified areas of high resource concentrations, as well as areas with development limitations. As such, this assessment was one of the primary resources that provided the framework for discussions about which areas should have land use designations to provide resource protection.

In land use designations that specify a range of densities, development density should be evaluated based on the criteria below:

1. Life safety: Is there appropriate or access to ingress/egress? Can the parcel be feasibly protected during a forest fire? Does the development of the parcel create other imminent threats to the safety of the future residents or those protecting the future residents or property?
2. Physical environment: Topography - slope greater than 25% (very limited to no development potential), slope greater than 15% (limited development potential); Floodplain- 100-year floodplain (very limited to no development potential), 500-year floodplain (limited development potential); wetlands.
3. Resource protection: Are there significant resource protection issues for the parcel? Goals include:
  - Maintenance of wildlife connectivity, conservation/protection of important plant/animal communities and habitat, protection of endangered species;
  - Minimizing encroachment on water bodies and vegetated buffers;
  - Protection of surface and ground water quality, and riparian resources;
  - Protection of air quality;
  - Protection of historical resources;
  - Protection of agricultural land; and
  - Protection of viewsheds.
4. Community design: What is the proximity of the parcel to the town of Seeley Lake, or other existing developed areas (such as Placid Lake, Kozy Korner, Lake Inez)? What is the proximity to state highways and other arterials? What is the proximity to commercial nodes such as Clearwater Junction? Is the parcel served by public right of way? Is the parcel served by a municipal or community sewer and/or water system, and within the fire district? Is the parcel served by or does it create appropriate infrastructure including sewer and/or water system, roads and non-motorized transportation system? Town infrastructure (roads, sewer,

water – environmental health and safety): Are there town services available (sheriff, medical – personal health and safety)? Does the proposed development of the parcel create orderly and efficient development patterns?

5. Social and community services: Does the development proposal create necessary and desirable social and community services? This includes: affordable housing, workforce housing, medical facilities, facilities supportive of elderly living, etc. Maximize the critical services available to the community within the plan region and maintain diversity of population.

Criteria 1 through 4 would be evaluated additively and are related to the characteristics of the specific parcel. Criterion 5 may be used to consider the high end of allowable density, based on community need and good, independent of findings from Criteria 1-4.

## **1. RESOURCE PROTECTION LAND USES**

This land use classification is intended to protect important resource land and areas of natural hazard. The primary objectives are conserving the ecological integrity of the Plan Area; preserving natural resources; protecting wildlife and fisheries habitat; minimizing open road density; maintaining wildlife corridors and buffer zones; allowing continued production of timber and agriculture; protecting open spaces and viewsheds; preserving access for recreation; as well as limiting development in areas with hazards, such as floodplains and steep hillsides; areas far from community services; and areas where development would result in expansion of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

To achieve these objectives for Resource Protection lands, several strategies must be employed. Limiting residential development is one means to protect resources. Lower densities will generally reduce the need for open roads in sensitive resource areas. Even if homesites are clustered, higher densities will lead to higher traffic volumes, which cause more disturbance and greater risks of wildlife-vehicle collisions and other negative effects of motorized travel. Lower densities can also reduce the net loss of habitat, and decrease the risk of negative wildlife human-interactions. Even if dwelling units are clustered and other covenants or agreements are in place to mitigate potential impacts to resources, not all impacts can be mitigated. In highly resource rich areas, density reductions offer more certainty that negative impacts will be minimized.

Low densities are not the only tool that must be employed to achieve resource protection goals. In Resource Protection areas, development and land management guidelines are also needed to ensure resource protection. The guidelines listed on page 65 should be implemented.

While residential development is allowed on this land, it is not encouraged, especially in Resource Protection Lands 1. Uses that are encouraged include, but are not limited to, preservation of natural resources, managed production of timber and agriculture, and outdoor recreation. Recommended allowable development densities are generally inversely proportional to the sensitivity of natural resources present in the area while also factoring in additional considerations. Development clustering is encouraged to minimize the impact of growth on natural resources and to respect the physical limitations of the land.



### **A. Resource Protection Lands 1 (RP1)**

Resource protection land designations within the Seeley Lake Land Use plan update are “tiered” in terms of their value to wildlife and fisheries at a landscape level and the ability to maintain those resources at that level while concurrently providing for appropriate residential values on private lands.

The RP1 designation is intended to provide the greatest potential resource protection on lands with the highest values for biodiversity, fish and wildlife habitat, forest production, recreation, wetlands, and other resources. Because of the high values for natural resources, recommended allowable development densities are extremely low, consisting of one dwelling unit per 160 acres. Density in RP1 lands is recommended to be transferred to a receiving area or cluster development standards should be developed to handle additional density outside of RP1 areas in places that are allowed to receive that level of density. The transfer of development rights/credits (TDR/TDCs) is recognized as a potentially valuable voluntary tool. However, TDR/TDCs are not required in order to meet the minimum base densities.

The creation of incentives to keep RP1 lands undeveloped is recommended. Lands with this designation should receive the highest priority with the greatest incentive for using any available conservation incentive program. Development regulations are also recommended that would ensure that any development that does occur is located where it minimizes impacts to natural resources through the use of building envelopes.

In the Plan Area, lands designated RP1 provide important overall ecosystem functions and support a significant amount of biodiversity. A variety of plant communities and habitat types provide vital ecosystem functions that help support and sustain some of the highest valued fish and wildlife habitat found in this region. Additionally, these lands support timber production and provide excellent recreational opportunities. The large contiguous nature of these lands helps to sustain many of the important ecological processes that might not otherwise be supported by lands fragmented by development.

Resource values associated with these lands consist of habitat for a number of fish and wildlife species, including species listed under the Endangered Species Act, Species of Concern to Federal and/or State agencies, species of special interest to the public, and indicator species (e.g., fish, amphibians, and stoneflies) that reveal broader environmental concerns. In the Plan Area, these populations include but are not limited to grizzly bear, Canada lynx, wolverine, marten, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, elk, mule deer, common loon, bald eagle, western toad, olive-sided flycatcher, wolves, and mountain lion. Needs of these species include their primary habitat requirements (i.e., food, security, shelter, and water), as well as environments for them to move within and among seasonal habitats via corridors and linkage zones. Lands designated Resource Protection Lands 1 also support critical winter range for big game.

These lands may also support movement of species through the Plan Area. Many of the species listed above require specific nesting, denning, or spawning habitats that are crucial for their continued existence. These species are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss, fragmentation of travel corridors, and overall displacement due to human disturbances (i.e., human presence, vehicle travel, pets and livestock, etc.). Keeping

these lands in relatively unfragmented state is important to maintaining their ecological value.

Important and sensitive plant communities within these resource lands include low elevation ponderosa pine, low and mid-elevation larch, old growth forests, wetland and riparian areas. Species of Special Concern include beak water marigold, Howell's gumweed, buckler fern, beaked sedge, and cliff toothwort. In addition to providing fish and wildlife habitat, the vegetative structure of these lands helps maintain water quality and quantity within the valley. Furthermore, these lands provide working forests that supply timber and fiber for the forest products industry.

Within the Plan Area, lands with this designation are generally currently undeveloped and have limited access. Development in these areas would expand the WUI and would require extension of public services.

Within the RP1 designations, the Plan specifically recognizes the exceptional resource value of lands in upper Vaughn Creek, Game Ridge, the migration corridor northeast of Placid Lake/southwest of Highway 83, the "Non-Legacy Marshall Block" and the "Checkerboard" ownership west of Placid Lake as shown on Map 12F. Lands within these areas are extremely valuable for conservation purposes. The Plan's intent is to encourage efforts to acquire public ownership on these blocks of contiguous habitat.

Consequently, every effort should be made to provide a conservation outcome (easements, purchase, deed restrictions, TDR/TDCs, land exchanges, etc.) on these lands. Development in these areas can pose a threat to ecosystem wide resource values and should be mitigated to the greatest extent possible if development is proposed.

Plum Creek Timber, Inc., the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Lolo National Forest, and Missoula County recognize that a concerted partnership between agencies and other parties is both necessary and valuable to protecting these lands. Low density residential uses at 1 unit per 160 acres may be adequate to protect the resources but all parties agree that a conservation outcome is more desirable. Consequently, all parties agree that such efforts to prioritize these lands for funding a conservation outcome should be pursued at the earliest opportunity.

Lands shown with the RP1 designation include:

1. An area covering much of the northern most portion of the planning area. Most of these lands are owned by USFS or Plum Creek. This area also includes one section of DNRC land and private land along Highway 83 north of Rainy Lake. Many of these lands are being transferred to The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land through the Montana Legacy Project. It also includes the "Non-Legacy Marshall Block." The majority of this area provides linkage between the Bob Marshall Wilderness to the east and the Mission Mountain Wilderness and protected Tribal lands to the west. These lands support primary and seasonal habitats for a number of species. Maintaining these lands in a relatively undisturbed state is essential for maintaining sustainable and connected populations of the species listed above. By applying this designation across the valley and across the highway in the northernmost part of the Plan Area, the intention is to maintain landscape scale habitat connectivity and protect important movement areas between the northern lakes (Inez, Alva, and Rainy).

2. An area covering the westernmost portion of the planning area including lands that are in a checkerboard ownership with the USFS, Upper Vaughan Creek, and Game Ridge. Lands in this area hold a high ecological value, as evidenced by the inclusion of these land in the home ranges of lynx, the presence of bull trout in several streams, and other indicators of ecological importance specified in the Landscape Assessment (CRC 2006). Past forest management as well as recent wildfires have affected the forest condition and potential for these lands to provide habitat for mature forest-associated species in the short term, but the long-term potential for these relatively unfragmented lands to provide contiguous habitat for numerous wildlife and plant species is very high.
3. An area west of Highway 83 between Seeley and Placid Lakes and the Highway 83 Migration Corridor. These lands are a mixture of USFS, DNRC, Plum Creek Timber Company, and other private lands. The landscape provides a crucial, seasonal migratory route for elk, deer, black and grizzly bear, and other wildlife traveling to-and-from the Blackfoot Clearwater Wildlife Management Area (BCWMA). Without this important corridor and habitat, the movements of these species between northern parts of the valley and the BCWMA would be compromised. The southeastern portion of this area also supports a small year-round population of elk. FWP and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) have identified a well used and established wildlife crossing across Highway 83 on the most southeastern tip of these designated lands. Wolves have been observed in this area, but a resident population is not known to occur.
4. An area east of Highway 83 and south of the Double Arrow, adjacent to Powell County, known generally as the Horseshoe Hills area. The USFS owns most of this land, but it does encompass DNRC parcels as well. As part of a larger 89,000 acre purchase, the Nature Conservancy purchased multiple sections in the Horseshoe Hills area from Plum Creek Timber Company and then resold these lands to the USFS. This land exchange resulted in crucial habitat protection in order to connect the BCWMA with the Swan Mountain Range and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. These lands provide important habitat connectivity between large and small blocks of crucial environments for elk, mule deer, mountain lion, and bear. In addition, biologists have found that the Horseshoe Hills area is an important use area for Canada lynx. These resource lands also contribute to forest ecosystem diversity by supporting some of the drier forest types within the Clearwater Valley.
5. Most of the BCWMA located in the southeast portion of the planning area. This area is managed by FWP, and covers land owned by FWP, DNRC, USFS, and Plum Creek Timber. The BCWMA provides winter range for elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer and habitat for a high diversity of wildlife species, including grizzly bear, mountain lion, golden eagle, as well as a diversity of other birds, amphibians, and other wildlife.

#### **B. Resource Protection Lands 2 (RP2)**

This designation is intended for lands that contain high resource values but may be less sensitive than the RP1 designation and thus could sustain slightly higher densities if development design includes careful consideration for resources and does not substantially affect resource values. The recommended allowable maximum density is one dwelling unit per 80 acres. It is recommended that development occur in a manner

that minimizes impacts to natural resources by limiting building envelopes to the less sensitive areas of a parcel.

Some of the lands with this designation support important habitat for many of the wildlife species of the Valley, such as elk, mule deer, mountain lions, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and black bear. These lands can support grizzly bears, and to a lesser extent Canada lynx, but they are not as critical as Resource Protection Lands 1 for these species. In some of the areas, lands with this designation provides crucial winter habitat for elk and mule deer. In addition, some lands encompass important riparian and wetland areas, and also support ecosystem diversity with the potential to contribute to productive forest lands.

Lands shown with this designation include:

1. An area around Clearwater Junction north and south of Highway 200. These lands include a mixture of private and DNRC ownership, as well one FWP parcel. These lands support important summer range and critical winter range habitat for elk and mule deer. In addition, there are two important elk migratory routes crossing through this landscape that provide important linkage zones connecting the Mission Mountains with the BCWMA and lower elevation lands to the south. It also provides for movements of species between the more protected resource lands to the north, with areas to the south that include the Garnet Mountains. The habitat supports populations of mountain lions, black bear, golden eagle, osprey, and westslope cutthroat trout. These lands have been important as productive forest lands. Accessibility and development in these lands is currently limited especially in the headwaters of the drainages; development of some areas could further expand the WUI and the need for services.
2. An area on Woodworth Road in the eastern portion of the planning area. These lands are all in private, non-corporate ownership. The lands provide a linkage zone for elk, mule deer, and other species among the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the Horseshoe Hills area, the BCWMA, and lower elevation lands to the south. The area also provides habitat and a movement corridor for grizzly bear, black bear, and mountain lion, but it is not considered crucial for the survival of these species.

In the Woodworth area, landowners, Five Valleys Land Trust and Missoula County sponsored a cooperative effort to develop resource protection measures that concurrently allow for limited development complementing the character of the community. This effort, as described in the Woodworth Meadows Conservation and Growth Options document, (available through Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office, provides the opportunity for a unique community conservation and growth option. It should result in limited development in highly clustered areas with the majority of the area left in working farming, ranching and timber operations with conservation easements on large and small parcels where possible. Wildlife concerns rank high in the community and diversity of land use is an integral part of the area. The effort may result in an overall density for the entire area higher than that suggested by the RP3 designation.

### **C. Resource Protection Lands 3**

This designation is intended for lands containing resource values, but of less critical concern than Resource Protection Lands 1 and 2. Recommended allowable density is

one dwelling per 40 acres. Lands with this designation support productive forest lands, riparian areas, wetlands, and other ecosystem types. They support habitat for a wide diversity of species and provide linkage zones for wildlife movements. Still, these lands may be less sensitive to development, if done responsibly, than Resource Protection Lands 1 or 2.

Lands with this designation include:

1. An area along Highway 83 and northwest of Seeley Lake, between Seeley Lake and Lake Inez. The majority of these lands are privately owned with some USFS ownership interspersed. These lands are on the fringe of important habitat for grizzly bear, Canada lynx, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, marten, and a number of other species including elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, and many others. This area currently supports movement of wildlife connecting the east and west sides of the valley, and could continue to provide moderately important corridors and habitat with properly situated low density development
2. An area east of Seeley Lake owned by the USFS. This land has important recreational value and well managed mature larch stands.
3. An area within the Placid Block. This land includes slightly drier forest habitat that is somewhat less essential for species such as lynx, fisher, and grizzly bear. While the land does not provide as critical habitat as other resource lands, maintaining connectivity is still very important to consider.

In the Placid Block, the Plan recognizes that a careful low density mix of residential and resource conservation values may help protect natural resources values across the planning region. Moving densities from resource sensitive areas to less resource sensitive areas is encouraged throughout the plan. Clustering within the Placid Lake Block is encouraged but neither mandated nor rewarded with increases in densities (density bonuses). The total density values calculated from the mapped land use designations are the maximum permitted and additional densities from outside the Placid Block cannot be moved into the Placid Block. However, densities within the Block may be moved or “shifted” within the Block as long as no single section (640 +/- acres) of land can receive more than a 33% increase in density.

The transfer of development rights/credits (TDR/TDCs) is recognized as a potentially valuable voluntary tool. However, TDR/TDCs are not required in order to meet the minimum base densities.

4. The Blanchard Block, an area comprising primarily Plum Creek land. These lands support important summer range and critical winter range habitat for elk and mule deer. In addition, there are two important elk migratory routes crossing through this landscape that provide important linkage zones connecting the Mission Mountains with the BCWMA and lower elevation lands to the south. It also provides for movement of species between the more protected resource lands to the north, with areas to the south that include the Garnet Mountains. The habitat supports populations of mountain lion, black bear, golden eagle, osprey, and westslope cutthroat trout. These lands are important as productive forest lands. Accessibility and development in these lands is currently limited

especially in the headwaters of the drainages; development of some areas could further expand the WUI and the need for services.

It also includes approximately 600 acres of private land that has supported agricultural uses for the past 80 years.

#### **D. Residential Resource**

The Residential Resource designation provides an opportunity to accommodate appropriate limited to moderate growth at one dwelling unit per 20 acres on average, which will not compromise wildlife and fishery resources on a landscape level. However, because such lands do contain valuable resources, mitigation measures must be taken that do not compromise the ability of the planning area to continue to support the region wide natural resources so valuable to residents and visitors alike. This designation is applied in the Placid Block.

#### **E. Floodway**

The Floodway designation reflects FEMA mapped floodway areas on the Clearwater River. Agricultural structures or other uses not subject to flood damage or not likely to cause impacts to other properties may be permitted in the floodway. Otherwise no development is recommended in these areas. This designation could be implemented through a zoning district overlay.

The area of Floodway designation is located along the Clearwater River between Seeley and Salmon Lakes. This occurs primarily on lands managed by DNRC, as well as some private lands.

Additionally no development is recommended for lands in the 100-year floodplain as designated by FEMA or shown to be flood prone by other reliable information. Land above the 100-year floodplain that is completely surrounded by land in the 100-year floodplain or that is not accessible by road during a 100-year flood or is subject to erosion by changes in a watercourse channel should not be developed.

Some of the state lands as well as the private lands currently have homes located in the floodway fringe. Most land in the mapped 100-year floodway fringe and shaded Zone X (areas that are either subject to shallow 100-year flooding or between the 100 and 500-year flood elevation) is designated Rural Residential.

#### ***Development Guidelines for Resource Protection Lands***

Development occurring on resource protection lands should comply with the following guidelines:

- Encourage cluster development and/or conservation design guidelines in order to enhance preservation of significant resource areas.
- Discourage encroachment into important natural resource areas with roadways, driveways, and structures.
- Minimize site disturbance by encouraging roads and driveways to follow existing contours; minimizing disturbances from the construction of roads, basins, grading, and other improvements; and implementing weed control measures.
- Minimize visual impacts from development if feasible, and if resource or fire concerns are not created.

- Use native plants for landscaping around new development and encourage restoration with native plants.
- Discourage disruption of natural ridgelines or steep slopes.
- Locate development in areas with stable soils and where geologic hazards are not present.
- Encourage maintenance of open space areas to protect riparian, wildlife and open space corridors.
- Minimize open road densities by clustering development near existing open roads and using other design techniques.
- Minimize total road densities by utilizing existing roads as much as possible to minimize the need for new road construction.

## **2. RESIDENTIAL LAND USES**

This plan identifies three main residential types, Rural Residential, Residential, and Town Residential, each designed to provide for particular residential uses and densities.

- Rural Residential land use types (approximately one dwelling unit per 10 acres and approximately one dwelling unit per 5 acres) are intended to retain rural character and be a buffer between developed and resource protection lands.
- Residential land use designations (approximately one dwelling unit per 2 acres and approximately one dwelling unit per acre) are primarily located in areas that are currently developed.
- Town Residential designations (approximately 4 dwelling units per acre) allow for greater density if community water or sewer is available.

Senior and Disabled Housing uses are encouraged in areas such as land currently owned by the Seeley Swan Hospital District with appropriate services and after review of project proposals. Such uses should recognize the unique needs of senior citizens and disabled adults. Appropriate areas are near essential services and amenities required by senior citizens and disabled adults, including medical services. Examples of housing that would qualify for these individuals include rentals, cooperatively owned spaces, individually owned condominiums, or other fee-simple arrangements. The buildings may be multi-family homes, attached single-family homes, and detached single-family homes, facilities that provide ambulatory care or facilities that provide congregate care or hospice care. These may be uses different from what is allowed in the underlying land use designation and may result in different densities.

### **A. Rural Residential**

Rural Residential land use types are intended to retain rural character. These designations also function as transitional areas between increased development and Resource Protection Lands. These designations are also based on distance to services. Continued use of these areas for agricultural or other resource based purposes is encouraged. The recommended gross density can be flexibly applied to result in a variety of lot sizes, with the ultimate goal of retaining some larger parcels for resource preservation or agricultural uses. Two different Rural Residential densities, approximately one dwelling unit per 10 acres and approximately one dwelling unit per 5 acres, are delineated.

#### **A.1. Very Low Density Rural Residential**

This designation recommends approximately one dwelling unit per 10 acres. The Very Low Density Residential classification is used when lands have development limitations

beyond the availability of community services. Often streams, rivers, or wetlands and associated high groundwater and resource values place constraints on development. In other cases, steep slopes can be a limiting factor to development. Access is generally available by adequate roads. These lands are generally removed from the more concentrated populations and are not appropriate for more density at this time.

It is especially important that development of these parcels respect the natural resource concerns of the area. Property improvements, such as residences and accessory structures, should be clustered together in a single area of the site, and the remainder of the land should be used for grazing, timber needs, wildlife habitat, or other open space. Improvements should be sited to limit negative impacts on: water quality and quantity; winter range; open space resources; riparian habitat and community types; and threatened endangered and rare plant and animal species utilizing the property. Other measures, such as storing garbage or other wildlife attractant sources to limit human/wildlife conflicts, should be incorporated into the use of the site.

Lands shown with this designation include: areas around the southern portion of Lake Inez; in Section 17 north of Seeley Lake; west of Seeley Lake; east of the northern portion of Seeley Lake; Big Sky Lake; Tote Lake; in portions of the Placid Block; and near Clearwater Junction.

#### **A.2. Low Density Rural Residential**

This land use designation recommends approximately one dwelling unit per five acres of land. The Low Density Residential land use classification is used for areas that already have some development. Limitations to further development due to the lack of services, distance from the concentrated population center, and water quality protection are usually the main reasons lands receive this designation and the associated density.

This designation is similar to Very Low Density Residential in that natural resources need to be considered when developing in the Low Density Residential category. Property improvements, such as residences and accessory structures, should be clustered together in a single area of the site, and the remainder of the land should be used for grazing, timber needs, wildlife habitat, or other open space. Improvements should be situated to limit negative impacts on: water quality and quantity; winter range; open space resources; riparian habitat and community types; and threatened, endangered and rare plant and animal species living on the property. Other measures, such as storing garbage or other wildlife attractant sources to limit human/wildlife conflicts, should be incorporated into the use of the site.

Waterfront property (lakefront, streamside) is more sensitive than other lands for a number of reasons. A primary concern is the need to have an approved septic system and associated drainfield that can maintain the quality of water resources. Additional concerns are the need to protect shorelines, maintain wildlife habitat, and linkage zones that these areas provide. Therefore, the land use density for all unplatted properties adjacent to natural water is recommended at approximately one dwelling unit per five acres. Higher densities on a lakeshore or streamside may be appropriate with consideration for shoreline protection, protection of wildlife habitat and linkage zones, aesthetics, and sewage treatment. In some shoreline areas with high numbers of existing smaller lots, the Residential (approximately one dwelling unit per acre) land use was designated.



The Low Density Residential land use designation has been applied to some of the land in the Double Arrow Ranch subdivision. The Double Arrow Ranch subdivision was platted in several phases in the 1970s. The Ranch covers over 3100 acres including common areas and a golf course, representing a significant area near the town of Seeley Lake. Land use designations for the Double Arrow acknowledge the existing lot sizes and covenants with respect to lot size. In addition to Low Density Rural Residential, designations on the Ranch include Residential (approximately one dwelling unit per acre), and Residential (approximately one dwelling unit per two acres).

The Low Density Rural Residential designation has also been applied to lands north of Seeley Lake in portions of Sections 17 and 18; west of Seeley Lake; east and west of the Clearwater River; west of school in the town of Seeley Lake; and portions of lands in the Placid Lake area.

#### ***Development Guidelines for All Rural Residential Lands***

- Use conservation design guidelines in resource areas.
- Development sites should have access to existing road systems.
- Locate structures on slopes that do not exceed 25%.
- Locate buildings at the edge of open fields and timberlands.
- Pathways and connections should be established to provide for a variety of uses (pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian).

#### **B. Residential**

The Residential designations are suggested primarily for areas that are currently developed. These lands are generally not limited by slope, and in some cases, high ground water is not a concern. Roads are often in place to serve these areas. Many are served by municipal water service, are within the Seeley Lake Sewer District, or are adjacent to the boundaries of these districts. Densities in the Residential designations are recommended for approximately one dwelling unit per acre or approximately one dwelling unit per two acres.

Future road systems to serve new developments in this land use class should be designed to connect to existing roads and provide more than one access point. (Cul-de-sacs are not recommended because of fire suppression activities). Undeveloped areas in this land use designation should design the placement of structures to allow for future divisions if and when additional services are available. Development plans should consider the presence of parks for properties located near or on a trail or a creek, river, or lakeshore.

##### **B.1. Residential (approximately one dwelling units per 2 acres)**

Lands shown with this designation include the area east of downtown Seeley Lake around the Canyon Loop Road area and portions of the Double Arrow Ranch.

##### **B.2. Residential (approximately one dwelling unit per acre)**

Lands shown with this designation include lands north of Downtown and east of Spring Ridge Road; between Seeley Lake High School and Trail Creek; around Morrell Creek and Black Bear Roads; along the south shore of Seeley Lake; south of Seeley Lake around Cub Drive and Grizzly Drive; portions of Double Arrow Ranch, some areas around the golf course at Double Arrow Ranch; and lakeshore properties around Placid Lake. Because of the existing density of homes along the Placid Lake shoreline, that area was designated Residential (one dwelling unit per acre), rather than the lower

density generally recommended along waterfronts.

### ***Development Guidelines for All Residential Lands***

- Pathways or sidewalks should be constructed at the time of development.
- Depending on the size of the development, parks should be located at the center of a neighborhood, within approximately 0.25 miles of new housing.
- On lots one acre and larger, building footprints should be located to one side of a lot allowing further lot divisions when, and if, community water and sewer becomes available.
- Accesses to individual lots should be shared when possible.

### **C. Town Residential**

Lands in the Town Residential designation are primarily within or adjacent to the boundaries of the existing community water and sewer districts. Densities are generally recommended at approximately 4 dwelling units per acre. This density cannot be achieved without the development of community sewer services. Generally, lands within Town Residential I and II, designations are recommended for higher density development due to their proximity to schools, stores, offices, main roads and other amenities within the Plan Area.

#### **C.1.Town Residential I**

Within this area, residential structures are recommended at a density of approximately 4 dwelling units per acre if connected to sewer. This designation does not allow attached, multifamily dwelling units, but is instead designed for single-family homes on small lots. Structures are limited to a maximum height of approximately 35 feet.

Lands with this designation include: areas around Spruce, Willow, and Juniper Drives; east of Tamarack including Sequoia Court; southeast of the high school; and along Riverview Drive and Daisy Lane.

#### **C.2 Town Residential II**

Within this designation, residential development is recommended at a density of approximately 4 dwelling units per acre. Attached, multifamily structures are allowed. Density may be increased by 50% (approximately 6 dwelling units per acre) in this designation if the proposed development is on at least one acre.

Lands Designated Town Residential II are close to the core of the community of Seeley Lake and are within the water and sewer districts. This includes: areas north and south of Cedar Lane; south of School Lane between Juniper Drive and Tamarack Drive.

### ***Development Guidelines for All Town Residential***

- Development should include appropriate infrastructure such as sidewalks, curb and gutter, streetlights and motorized and non-motorized transportation connections.
- Buildings should be located within established setbacks or follow the prevailing pattern of adjacent building setbacks.
- Buildings should be oriented to the public street with windows, entries and porches facing and visible from the street and sidewalks.
- New development and road rights-of-way should be designed to accommodate future transit services.

- Building height is limited to a maximum height of approximately 35 feet for Town Residential I and approximately 50 feet for Town Residential II.
- Depending on the size of the development, parks should be located at the center of a neighborhood within approximately 0.25 miles of new housing.

### **3. COMMERCIAL LAND USES**

There are 98 commercially-taxed parcels in the Plan Area covering over 822 acres. Of these, 67% are within one mile of the center of town and 85% are within two miles of the center of town. Businesses in Seeley Lake serve full and part-time residents, short-term visitors, and travelers who pass through the area. Commercial uses in the Plan Area include hardware stores, hotels, restaurants, offices, gas stations, grocery stores, medical services, and small retail operations.

The commercial designations identified in this plan are located near significant existing infrastructure to help minimize the need for new or expanded infrastructures to accommodate future commercial uses. This plan identifies three different commercial land use designations, each designed to provide for particular commercial uses and intensities.

The General Commercial designation is designed to allow for larger commercial uses and commercial uses that primarily serve those who are passing through the region. It covers lands to the north and south of the Town Commercial designation along Highway 83 as well as lands at Clearwater Junction.

The Town Commercial designation encourages development of a pedestrian and community-scale commercial area concentrated at the center of Downtown Seeley Lake.

The Mixed-Use designation would allow the same uses as the Town Commercial designation but would limit them to a smaller scale and require them to be combined with residential uses. The Mixed Use designation also allows for residential uses at the density of approximately 4 dwelling units per acre without the commercial component. This designation is applied to an area between the Town Commercial and Town Residential designated areas.

#### **A. General Commercial**

The community of Seeley Lake recognizes that residents and visitors alike need access to commercial services that generate traffic or that require structures, lighting, parking lots, and signage. These types of commercial uses can be located in the General Commercial designation. This designation is not designed to accommodate commercial uses that are out of character or scale with the area, such as large warehouses, "big-box" stores, or high-volume gas stations.

General Commercial uses are typically accessed from major highways and include uses that involve outdoor storage of merchandise or materials; building material, hardware and equipment sale, storage, and service; limited wholesale trade; support services to business or industry, and businesses that support highway travel such as motels. While this plan accommodates General Commercial uses, the community encourages the less intensive Town Commercial uses to occur in the General Commercial designation as well. Residential uses that are combined with commercial structures are allowed within the boundaries of this designation at a density of one dwelling unit per acre. Residential

development that is not combined with commercial uses may be considered at densities comparable to the designations in adjacent areas.

Lands designated General Commercial are located on both sides of Highway 83 north (from Morrell Creek Rd for a distance of about ½ mile) and south (from Boy Scout Rd on the west and Redwood on the east, to just south of Whitetail Dr) of the Town Commercial designation. It is also applied to an existing gravel operation south of the town of Seeley Lake. The General Commercial designation is also applied along Highway 200 at the Clearwater Junction and one isolated parcel west of Clearwater Junction.

#### ***Development Guidelines for General Commercial***

- Structures within the General Commercial designation should have a footprint of no greater than approximately 15,000 square feet and a height of no greater than approximately 50 feet.
- General Commercial development should provide a pleasing introduction to the region and the community of Seeley Lake. Structures and site design should reflect the unique characteristics of the area (architectural character, community theme, geographic uniqueness, etc.) and should be rustic in character. Natural materials, such as wood or stone, should be used for building facades and signs. Where natural materials are not used, building and sign colors should reflect natural materials
- Any permitted residential uses should be part of commercial structures and should not dominate those structures. Residential portions of structures should not dominate the front or first floor of structures within the General Commercial designation.
- The majority of the parking area for larger commercial structures should be located beside or behind the structures, out of view to passing motorists. Vehicle access in and out of business should be easy and safe. Adjacent businesses should consider shared parking areas and pedestrian connections where practical to eliminate unnecessary highway traffic.
- Structures should not block the scenic vistas in the Plan Area.
- Lighting should be directed downward and kept within the property.

#### **B. Town Commercial**

This plan establishes three Town Commercial designations at the center of Downtown Seeley Lake. The Town Commercial designations provide a center for the community where residents and visitors may access multiple businesses without driving between each one and where small businesses may benefit from their proximity to one another. A public parking area, public spaces, benches, green spaces, and public art would be attractive amenities to the area. A theme for the area would also be beneficial. Larger retail stores, gas stations and lodging facilities providing more than approximately 25 rooms are not compatible with the Town Commercial designations and would be more compatible in the General Commercial designation. The Town Commercial designation also allows for residential uses combined with commercial structures. The goal of this designation is to help provide more affordable housing in the community by allowing for commercial and residential uses to share the base costs of property in portions of town that are located near infrastructure and other services.

##### **B.1. Town Commercial I**

The Town Commercial I designation accommodates pedestrian-oriented small retail and

commercial service businesses. Allowed uses include: retail goods and services, financial institutions, business and professional offices, personal services, food and beverage establishments, lodging facilities, small scale entertainment facilities, bakeries, small grocery stores, delis, fitness centers, boutiques, art galleries, antique stores, and similar types of uses.

Residential uses are allowed in this designation at a density of approximately four dwelling units per one acre but should not dominate the area. Residential uses are allowed at the back or on the upper floors of commercial structures. Lodging facilities in this designation should not exceed approximately 25 rooms.

The Town Commercial I designation is found in the heart of downtown Seeley Lake (between Redwood St on the south and Morrell Creek Rd on the north) as designated on the land use maps. This designation generally covers businesses on Highway 83 and areas on both sides of Pine Drive, where development is encouraged to allow Pine Drive to become the eventual "Main Street" for the town of Seeley Lake. Street, sidewalk and lighting improvements are especially encouraged along Pine Drive within the boundaries of this designation. This Plan acknowledges existing residential uses on Pine Drive, which may continue. Two parcels in the Double Arrow area also include this designation.

## **B.2. Town Commercial II**

Town Commercial II allows for high-density housing in addition to Town Commercial I uses. Maximum residential densities are allowed at approximately 12 dwelling units per acre, with up to approximately 16 units per acre if appropriately designed. Residential uses at this density should accommodate all residential parking onsite. Structures should be set back approximately 10 feet from lot lines on all sides. Lodging facilities in this designation should not exceed approximately 25 rooms.

The area designated Town Commercial II is east of the downtown center shown on the map. Land with this designation includes an area east of Pine Drive and the Town Commercial I designation as shown on the land use maps.

### ***Development Guidelines for Town Commercial I and II***

- Structures in Town Commercial I should have a footprint of no more than approximately 10,000 square feet on a single lot or approximately 15,000 if located on more than one lot.
- Structures should not exceed approximately 50 feet in height.
- Pitched roofs on the main roof areas of structures are recommended.
- Structures should provide building frontage with street level windows, window displays, doorways and building entries.
- Primary entries should be oriented to street frontages with secondary entries such as service and delivery entries open to the interior of blocks or parking lots.
- Structures should be rustic in character. Natural material such as wood or stone should be used for building facades and signs. Where natural materials are not used, building and sign colors should reflect natural materials. Signs in the Town Commercial designation should be small and rustic in character.
- Access and parking areas should be shared between multiple structures when possible.
- New buildings should include lighting that is similar in scale and level to lighting of surrounding structures.

- Streets and walkways between businesses should create a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Town Commercial uses can be mixed with residential uses on upper floors or structures integrated into the design of the site.

### **B.3. Town Commercial III**

The Town Commercial III designation covers some lands in the center and north of the Town of Seeley Lake that generally abut Highway 83 and/or the Lake itself. Primary concerns for the community in this area are viewshed to the lake, public access, and protection of the natural resources of the lake. This designation allows commercial uses if the design guidelines below are followed. Residential uses are allowed at a density of approximately two dwelling units per acre. There is a strong community desire to offer incentives to developers who are willing to create deeded, perpetual, public access to the Lake through their lots and a density bonus for doing so is recommended.

The Town Commercial III designation covers lands in the center and north of the Town of Seeley Lake that generally abuts Highway 83 and/or the Lake itself as designated on the land use maps.

Lands with this designation include areas: west of Highway 83 south of Rice Ridge Road; west of Highway 83 and the General Commercial designation along Hemlock Drive; and along Seeley Lake west of the Town Commercial I designation.

#### ***Development Guidelines for Town Commercial III***

Development Guidelines for Town Commercial follow those listed above for Town Commercial I and II except for the following additional guidelines related to building height and setback.

- Structures should not exceed approximately 35 feet in height as measured from the tallest portion of the building to the grade at the midpoint of the slope where the structure is sited.
- Commercial structures are set back approximately 75 feet from the lake's mean high water mark. Residential structures should be set back approximately 20 feet. If no lake frontage, structures should be set back approximately 15 feet from the rear lot line. The side yard setback should be approximately 15 feet.

### **C. Mixed Use**

The Mixed Use designation recommends the same commercial uses as the Town Commercial designation, but at a smaller scale. Businesses should be combined with living quarters and should be no larger than residences.

The Mixed Use designation, located adjacent to the Town Commercial and Town Residential designations, allows small commercial development or residential development at a density of approximately 4 dwelling units per acre. There are existing small businesses within its boundaries and the area can continue to serve as a transition area between Town Commercial and Town Residential lands. This designation also allows for development that combines residential and commercial uses to enable business owners to live where they work or to supplement commercial income with rental income. Encouraging a combination of uses may create opportunities for rental or ownership housing that is more affordable by allowing businesses and residents to share the high costs of developable land in the region. The same Guidelines for Town Commercial apply.

This land use designation is applied to an area south of School Lane and west of Juniper Drive between Town Commercial 1 and Town Residential II designations.

#### **D. Home Based Businesses**

Many home based businesses exist in and around the Seeley Lake Plan Area. This Plan encourages the continuation of home based businesses where appropriate.

Two forms of Home Based Businesses are described but are not specifically designated on the land use map. This classification is intended to provide criteria for development of home based businesses as accessory to residential uses. (It is not intended to address uses considered to be accessory to agriculture or forestry.)

##### **D.1 Home Occupation**

A Home Occupation is a use accessory to the primary residential use of the premises. It should not be inconsistent with or disruptive to, normal residential use. It is intended for activities that do not generate traffic, noise, light, odor, parking demand or any exterior activity inconsistent with the character of the neighborhood. Home occupations typically take up a small area of the main residence. This use should not include businesses that could be a nuisance to or impact others (e.g. feed lots, junk yards).

The use should not have displays, advertising, or signs, other than small directional signs. Equipment used by the resident in the occupation should be stored indoors, whenever possible, or out of sight.

A home based business that meets or is consistent with these concerns may be permitted in Residential land use designations, unless prohibited by protective covenants. Home Occupation uses in Resource Protection designations should additionally ensure that no impacts occur to the resource being protected and that no additional traffic is generated.

##### **D.2 Home Industry**

Home Industry is a use accessory to the primary residential use of a property that is more intensive than Home Occupation. It describes small, individually owned businesses that function without altering the residential character of the area yet typically include a workshop outside the residence and may generate more noise or dust than typical home occupations. Examples of uses that are considered Home Industry include cabinet making or arts and crafts studios. This use does not include businesses that could be a nuisance to or impact others (e.g. feed lots, junk yards). It may be allowed in Resource Protection 2 and 3 and residential designations. On lots approximately 20 acres or smaller, Home Industry uses should be required to undergo a review and approval process. One tool might be to implement a conditional use permit system with an administrative review process. There are a number of existing uses in the Plan Area that could be considered under the Home Industry designation that may continue.

Regulation of Home Industry should address factors that may affect neighboring properties, such as outside storage, signage, screening and buffering, scale of accessory structures, lighting, and intensity of use.

### **E. Specialized Recreational Commercial**

This classification of commercial use is intended to provide criteria for outdoor uses that provide accommodations, such as day camps, campgrounds, R.V. parks, dude ranches, other destination resorts or conference centers, and for guest facilities, such as bed and breakfasts<sup>1</sup> or guest houses. The designation would allow recreation and tourism that is compatible with rural character and that does not negatively impact environmental quality or surrounding uses, while also meeting the Plan recreation and economic goals and policies. Specialized Recreational Commercial facilities need specific description and development guidelines because they do not readily fit within other land use designations. The structures and facilities associated with Specialized Recreational Commercial uses are considered incompatible with Resource Protection 1 lands. The associated recreational activities themselves, such as hiking, hunting, horseback riding, and other outdoor activities, are certainly compatible and valued opportunities in RP1 lands.

The intent of this classification is to acknowledge the possibility of additional uses within some Residential and Resource Protection lands. These uses are allowed in Commercial areas but are generally not considered compatible in Industrial areas. The types of uses that could be considered within each land use designation are described below. No specific areas are designated on the land use map as being appropriate for this type of use. Projects would be reviewed on a case by case basis, based on the guidelines below and on the scale and intensity of the use. Small-scale Specialized Recreational Commercial uses need very little supporting infrastructure beyond that normally used by a rural residence or agricultural operation, whereas large-scale Specialized Recreational Commercial uses do generally require additional infrastructure.

Projects that include development of an R.V. park, or the addition of a unit to a property, trigger subdivision review. Campgrounds are subject to County Health Department review.

#### **In Resource Protection**

The guiding principles for allowing Specialized Recreational Commercial uses within Resource Protection Lands are that the primary use remains open and resource; impacts to natural resources and rural character are minimized and mitigated; and impacts to adjacent uses are negligible. Uses should be low intensity and resource related and should not compromise the resource. The types of uses that could be considered include: bed and breakfast, guest house, dude ranch, campground, or R.V. park.

#### **In Rural Residential**

The guiding principles for allowing recreational commercial uses within Rural Residential areas are that the primary use remains rural residential; impacts to rural character and natural resources are minimized and mitigated; and impacts to adjacent uses are negligible. Uses that could be considered include: bed and breakfast, guest houses or other small-scale low intensity uses. Guest ranches could be considered on parcels approximately 40 acres in size or greater. Campgrounds or R.V. parks could be

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<sup>1</sup> A bed and breakfast is defined as a single owner-occupied dwelling where there are no more than four rooms for rent to the traveling or vacationing public, whether regularly, seasonally, or occasionally and where breakfast may or may not be served to overnight guests only.



considered in some locations on main travel corridors if impacts to rural residential character are minimized and adequate buffering and other mitigation measures are included.

### **In Residential/Town Residential**

Bed and breakfasts or guest houses may be appropriate in Residential/Town Residential areas if there are no impacts to adjacent residential uses. R.V. parks may be suitable if located along a main travel corridor, close to urban services, and designed to mitigate impacts to existing residential uses or be located on a large undeveloped parcel where a spatial buffer is provided from existing residential uses.

### ***Specialized Recreational Development Guidelines***

Recreational Commercial uses should be designed to meet the following criteria:

- Locate facilities outside of environmentally sensitive areas, such as significant wildlife habitat, riparian areas and wetlands, and steep hillsides.
- Cluster development in order to preserve significant resource areas.
- Minimize and mitigate impacts to natural resources.
- Provide for land management and resource protection.
- Decrease scale and intensity of use as distance from a highway or main road increases.
- Mitigate traffic impacts.
- Ensure that emergency services can be provided.
- Focus accessory uses, such as dining or laundry facilities, to serve only the on-site users of the Recreational Commercial use.
- Minimize impacts to rural character in Rural Residential and Resource Protection Lands areas through considerations of scale and intensity of use as well as site design and buffering.
- Design the use to be compatible with adjacent land uses.
- Design the use to include appropriate landscaping, buffering, sign and lighting limitations, and adequate parking. Extensive visual buffering may be needed along main roads.

## **4. GATEWAY**

Lands designated Gateway are lands that visitors pass through on their way into and out of Seeley Lake. The community recognizes that these lands are critical because they provide visitors with a "first impression" as they drive toward downtown Seeley Lake. These lands provide views of the mountains from Highway 83 and also create a transition from rural residential lands to the more commercial lands at the center of the Plan Area. While the community has expressed a desire to allow some small, limited commercial uses within the Gateway designation, these uses cannot occur at the expense of the critical viewshed resource these lands provide. If the Plan Area is zoned, the Gateway designations could be implemented through an overlay district.

### **A. Gateway Residential**

The Residential Gateway designation extends along the west side of Highway 83 from a quarter mile south of its junction with Double Arrow Road and on both sides of Highway 83 from the Double Arrow Road north to the General Commercial designation. The designation allows for residential uses at approximately one dwelling unit per twenty acres. Commercial uses are limited to light-intensity uses that only require small structures and parking areas, and must be set back from the highway to protect views.

## **B. Gateway Commercial**

The Gateway Commercial designation north of the town of Seeley Lake on Highway 83 allows for residential densities of approximately one dwelling unit per five acres and also allows commercial uses. Commercial uses allowed in this area north of town include the same types of uses allowed in the Town Commercial designation: retail goods and services, financial institutions, business and professional offices, personal services, food and beverage establishments, lodging facilities, small scale entertainment facilities, bakeries, small grocery stores, delis, fitness centers, local banks, professional offices, boutiques, art galleries, and antique stores. While these uses could be allowed in this designation, uses such as farm stands, small art and craft galleries, ice cream stands and other uses that only require small structures and minimal parking are recommended.

## **5. INDUSTRIAL**

The Industrial land use designation allows the types of Industrial uses currently ongoing in the Plan Area. While the community recognizes the importance of industrial operations to the community, this Plan only addresses mining and mill operations. Current industrial activity in the Plan Area includes lumber mill operations, log home construction facilities, gravel mining and processing operations, and post and pole operations.

For lumber mills, the Industrial designation accommodates the manufacturing, processing, fabrication, repairing, and assembly of wood products or materials, and packaging and treatment of those products or materials where that work currently takes place.

For gravel operations, this designation would cover lands in use as mines and processing facilities of related materials. Where applied to an area, the designation allows continued use as mines and processing facilities for extraction and refinement of foundation, sewer, road and construction materials.

In general, the Industrial designation is not intended to allow for other types of industrial uses such as rendering plants, paper mills, food processing facilities, or manufacturing. This limits future industrial uses to ones that are similar to what is in existence today. A major change in the land use of the areas covered by this designation would require public process and an amendment to this Plan. Reclamation of all industrial sites will be as required by the DEQ or other governing agencies.

The only lands with the Industrial designation are the sites of Pyramid Lumber west of Highway 83 and the Roundwood West post and pole operation south of Lake Inez. For other lands with the existing Industrial uses, but not an Industrial land use designation, the underlying land use designation would generally apply. If the current use ends, similar equal or less intensive uses could also be considered. A change to any other non-similar use on these lands would require public process and amendment to this Plan.

Timber related land uses that are accessory to primary forest products industries such as Pyramid Mountain Lumber are encouraged in appropriate areas of the Plan. Such uses can be necessary to the continued functioning of the social, cultural, and economic systems in the region and include post and pole yards, value added products whose base produce is wood related, and forest restoration and timber harvest related businesses. These timber related uses could be considered as conditional uses in certain areas, including in RP3 areas with historic uses and/or infrastructure.

There may be areas where other Industrial uses could be placed with additional review to mitigate impacts.

Missoula County recognizes the need for efficient utilization of forest products, including small diameter trees, which are also known as woody “biomass.” There are many local uses of woody biomass that can provide energy, fuel, and value added to traditional wood products such that rural communities achieve a higher level of ecological and economic sustainability.

This planning document encourages the use of such resources within the region. Such utilization can have the additional advantages of reducing dependence on distant energy sources, offsetting the costs of forest restoration and hazardous fuels reduction activities, reducing carbon emissions, and improving the health of local forests.

The location of facilities integral to the use of biomass should be sensitive to the needs of residents, adjacent land uses and the unique character of the natural resources found in the planning region. While no specific locations are designated for this emerging use of wood products, the intent of the Plan is to group industrial and commercial uses in areas that are compatible with existing land use patterns and conservation resources, or to provide a review such as a conditional use permit to allow for these uses to mix with others in a way that minimizes negative impacts.

## **6. PARKS**

The Parks and Open Space designation may be used for park areas that are within public ownership, conservation lands that indicate a partnership between a public group and the private landowner, and trail corridors.

This designation may be applied to parkland and common areas created at the time a subdivision is created. Parkland is dedicated to the county at the time of a subdivision plat filing and is generally owned and managed by the county in perpetuity. Common areas are created with subdivisions but transferred to and managed by a homeowners association.

Trail Corridors can be as short as connecting two streets by a pathway or as long as a pathway paralleling Highway 83 to fulfill transportation needs and commuter trails connecting subdivisions to community services. Trails may also be recreational such as accessing the lakeshore, circling a lake, or providing access to other recreational opportunities.

Lands with this designation include the three County Parks in the Plan Area. While common areas are not shown with this designation, they may be addressed as such if the Plan is implemented through zoning.

## **7. PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC**

Public and quasi-public lands and facilities refer to structures or uses such as schools, parks, any state or federal lands dedicated to public access, community buildings, churches, cemeteries, and utility facilities. A utility facility is an unoccupied structure or facility, other than buildings, (unless those buildings are used as storage incidental to the operation of such structure or facility), used in connection with the supply of local utility services, including heat, light, power, water, telegraph, telephone, railway and

bus/van service, sewer service, and electronic communications.

All new public and quasi-public structures should be designed using the guidelines given for commercial and industrial uses. They should be in scale to surrounding structures, be constructed of products characteristic of the valley, be earth tone colors, use native landscaping, and have limited signage. Upgrading properties to meet new standards outlined in this Regional Plan is encouraged for existing public and quasi-public structures but not required. Unoccupied utility facilities are often necessary to service certain areas. These facilities should be screened from public view and blend into the landscape. Utility offices should be treated as commercial land uses.

Lands with this designation include: school lands, airport land, County land adjacent to the airport, the Seeley Lake Historical Museum site, and a Montana Department of Transportation parcel.

### ***Development Guidelines***

- Design new public and quasi-public structures using the guidelines for commercial and industrial uses.
- Facilities should be in scale to surrounding structures, be constructed of products characteristic of the valley, use native landscaping, and have limited signage.
- Unoccupied utility structures or substations should be screened with landscaping.
- Incorporate local artwork into public places. Ensure that public art is incorporated into the building design or on the site particularly when public funds or grants are used to develop the structure or site. Local artists should be encouraged to submit ideas of their artwork characteristic of the Plan area.
- Share access with adjoining commercial, industrial or public uses.

### **LAND USE SUMMARY**

The Plan recommends locating additional development outside of sensitive resource areas and near existing infrastructure. Most of the Residential and Commercial uses are designated in the valley floor in and around the town of Seeley Lake. There are additional Rural Residential lands south of Lake Inez, north of the town of Seeley Lake, and around Big Sky Lake. The area around Clearwater Junction includes some Rural Residential and Commercial designations as well. (See Maps 12-12F.)

Table 7-1 summarizes the total number of acres within each land use designation by owner. Most (67%) of the Resource Protection 1 designations are located on public lands. Most (79%) of the Residential and Commercial designations are located on private lands.

Public lands, which make up well over half of the Plan Area, primarily have Resource Protection land use designations. Approximately 95% of USFS lands are designated Resource Protection 1. Approximately 84% of DNRC lands in the Plan Area have a Resource Protection 1 or 2 designation (Figure 7-3).

Plum Creek Timber Company is the major private landowner in the Plan Area, with 79% of the private land. After the completion of the Montana Legacy Project, Plum Creek will still own approximately 52% of the private land in the Plan Area. At this time, it is

unknown whether the long-term owner of most of the Legacy lands will be a state or federal agency or private entity. Before the Montana Legacy Project, 68% of Plum Creek lands have Resource Protection 1 designations (Figure 7-1). After the completion of the Legacy project, 50% of Plum Creek lands will have RP1 designations (Figure 7-2).

Of the remaining private land, 20% is designated Resource Protection 1; 22% is designated RP2, 14 % is designated RP 3 or Resource Residential, and 44% has Residential or Commercial designations (Figure 7-4).

If all lands in the Plan Area were built out to the maximum residential density in each land use designation, the total number of dwelling units would be 9,472. (Note: this estimate does not account for the possibility of density bonuses associated with density transfer or other potential programs.) Based on 2006 data, there were an estimated 1,797 dwelling units in the Plan Area. In 2008 there were an estimated 1,842 dwelling units in the Plan Area. The Plan thus allows for a potential increase of 7,630 dwelling units on all lands. This number decreases to 6,489 if it assumed that development will not occur on Forest Service, FWP, Montana Legacy, or Nature Conservancy lands. Since additional dwelling units would likely be for primary as well as secondary recreational residences, it is difficult to estimate how many years of growth this would accommodate. However, given that approximately 437 dwellings were constructed in the ten years between 1996 and 2006, the Plan would accommodate the number of dwelling units needed for many years. The allocation of new dwelling units in terms of both location and demographic target will determine whether the goals of this Plan are realized.

**Table 7-1 Land Ownership by Designation within the Seeley Lake Regional Plan Area**

**Acres Owned by Land Use Designation\***

Owner			Federal Govt		State & Local Govt.				Plum Creek				Other Private		TOTAL
			USFS	BLM	FWP	DNRC	MDT	MC	PC 1	(PC 2)	(PC 3)	(PC4)	TNC	Other	
<b>Resource Protection</b>	RP1	1:160	93,142	201	11,744	16,076	0	0	55,452	3,568	24,767	27,117	420	4,274	181,309
	RP2	1:80	0	0	367	850	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,720	5,937
	RP3	1:40	3,105	0	0	1,768	0	0	24,363	259	0	24,104	0	2,275	31,511
	Resi. Res.	1:20	251	0	0	0	0	0	1,994	0	0	1,994	0	538	2,783
	Flood	n/a	7	0	0	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49	96
<b>Residential</b>	Gateway Res.	1:20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	354	354
	V. Low Dens. Rural	1:10	1,316	0	0	900	0	16	1,149	0	0	1,149	0	3,342	6,723
	Low Density Rural	1:5	80	0	1	332	2	0	16	0	0	16	0	1,245	1,676
	Res. 1	1:1	0	0	26	138	0	0	44	0	0	44	0	1,878	2,086
	Res. 2	1:2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,338	1,338
	Town 1	4:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	465	465
	Town 2	4:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	107
<b>Commercial</b>	Gateway	1:5	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	114	142
	Mix Use	4:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	14
	Town 1	4:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	122	122
	Town 2	6:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12
	Town 3	2:1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	124	124
	General	1:1	0	0	1	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	358	379
	Industry	Indus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	140	140
<b>Other</b>	Pub./Quasi Pub	Pub	0	0	0	0	21	70	0	0	0	0	0	2	93
	Parks	Parks	0	0	0	0	0	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	44
<b>Total</b>			97,929	201	12,139	20,104	43	130	83,018	3,827	24,767	54,424	420	21,471	235,455

PC 1 - Total PC lands as of March 2009

PC 2 - Future TNC/TPL lands (Phase 2)

PC 3 - Future TNC/TPL lands (Phase 3)

PC 4 - Remaining PC lands (not part of Legacy project)

\* Water bodies are not included in this calculation.

Due to mapping irregularities, acreages are approximate.

Figure 7-1. Proportion of all Plum Creek lands in various land use designations (represents “pre-Legacy” conditions).

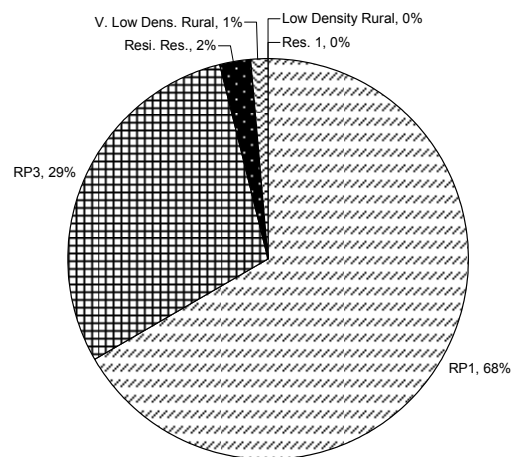


Figure 7-2. Proportion of remaining Plum Creek lands in various land use designations (represents "post-Legacy" conditions for Plum Creek)

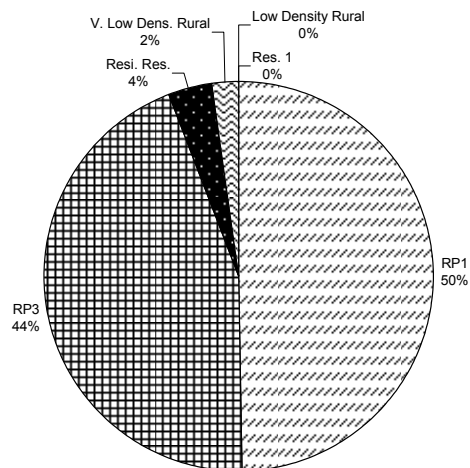


Figure 7-3. Proportion of all DNRC lands in various land use designations.

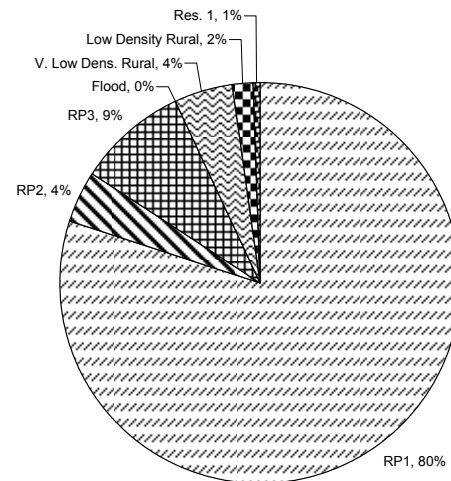
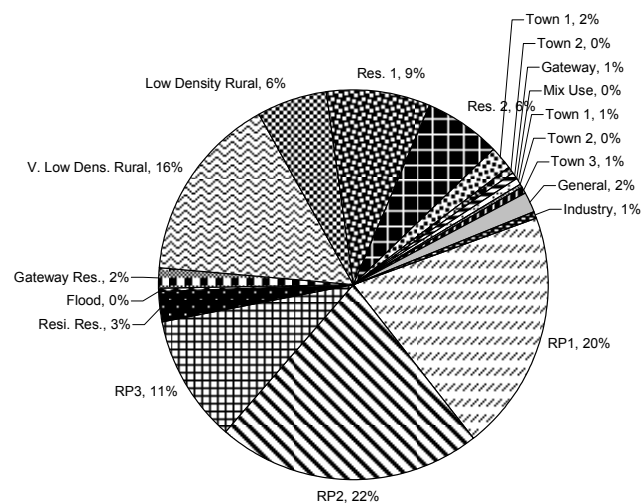


Figure 7-4. Proportion of Other Private lands in various land use designations (represents all non-PC, non-TNC/TPL private lands in Plan Area).



## CHAPTER 8: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A comprehensive plan or growth policy is a non-regulatory document providing guidance for different types of development in an area. The *Seeley Lake Regional Plan* is an amendment to the *Missoula County Growth Policy 2005 Update*. It reflects goals important to citizens in the Seeley Region and also describes how general County-wide policies and objectives can be applied or achieved more specifically in this area of the County.

This Plan will be implemented through the actions and decisions of those vested in realizing the goals of the Plan. Ultimately, Plan implementation is achieved only if there is a sustained and cooperative effort to carry out the goals and action strategies of the Plan by area residents, governing authorities, public agencies, service providers, landowners and developers.

Each chapter of this Plan contains action strategies for implementing the goals of that chapter. (See Table 8-1 Action Strategies, included as Appendix C.) The action strategies fall into these general categories:

- Data acquisition and research
- Education
- Facilities planning and improvements
- Restoration and conservation activities
- Economic development
- Partnership measures
- Voluntary measures
- Regulatory measures

Some implementation strategies are employed most effectively by the community through public or private partnerships that combine funding and program initiatives in creative ways. Other strategies rely entirely on choices made by individual landowners or on actions taken by public or private agencies.

Missoula County plays a key role in both using and implementing the Plan. State law (Montana Code Annotated Section 76-1-605) requires that the Board of County Commissioners shall "be guided by and give consideration to the general policy and pattern of development set out in the growth policy in the:

1. authorization, construction, alteration, or abandonment of public ways, public places, public structures, or public utilities;
2. authorization, acceptance, or construction of water mains, sewers, connections, facilities, or utilities;
3. adoption of subdivision controls; and
4. adoption of zoning ordinances or resolutions."

The Board of County Commissioners can play a role in Plan implementation by adopting capital improvement plans, supporting grant requests, or making budget allocations to achieve Plan goals. The governing body can use the Plan to make administrative and facility decisions, such as reviewing and approving development proposals, considering zoning or re-zoning requests, accepting dedications of parkland, providing sewer service, obtaining rights-of-way and making road improvements, or when making any of



the other infrastructure or land use decisions that come before them. Using the Plan to demonstrate community interests, the Plan can also be used to advocate on behalf of the region before state and federal government agencies, other elected officials, and not-for-profit organizations.

### **LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION**

Specific land use, density, and design guidelines are described in Chapter 7's land use designations. Implementation of this Plan's land use goals occurs if action strategies are carried out and the land use designations are followed. Implementation can be best achieved through a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory tools which mix mandatory requirements with incentives.

Having a variety of land use planning tools available will be key to successfully achieving the Plan's resource goals, including permanent protection of open space. Tools to be considered in implementation include, but are not limited to:

1. Traditional and flexible zoning regulations
2. Development Design Standards
3. Density/Development Rights Transfer Regulations
4. Purchase of Development Rights Programs
5. Conservation Easement Incentives

Development tools that provide flexibility or incentives may be considered in Plan implementation including clustering, density bonuses, and planned unit developments. During the planning process the community discussed some of these tools in more detail.

### **Regulatory Measures**

The most effective strategy for implementing a comprehensive land use plan is to adopt regulations designed to achieve its goals and objectives. On behalf of the community, the governing body can implement the Plan by adopting specific standards in subdivision, zoning, floodplain and other land-use regulations to be used in shaping and reviewing development projects.

### **Subdivision**

Though decisions on subdivision proposals cannot under current state law be denied based solely on whether or not they comply with an adopted Growth Policy or Area Plan, the Plan can be used to inform such decisions. A subdivision proposal can be reviewed for compliance with the Plan and developers can be encouraged to design their projects in conformance with the Plan.

Subdivision regulations can also be enacted and used to implement certain specific goals of a Plan. For example, subdivision regulations could address setbacks from watercourses, specify mitigation measures for impacts to various resources, or require certain infrastructure improvements. Regulations can also address design elements such as conservation design.

### **Zoning**

Active implementation of the Plan can best be achieved if the Plan Area is zoned in conformance with the Plan. Zoning is the best and essentially only tool available to Montana counties to guide development and address cumulative impacts on a

landscape basis. A zoning regulation that identifies key resource objectives and utilizes density averaging rather than minimum lot sizes may be the best type of zoning for implementation of this Plan.

Under state law, the governing body may initiate the creation of zoning districts (M.C.A. 76-2-201, "Part 2" zoning), of any size, on behalf of communities or landowners. Montana law requires that local government zoning be in conformance with an adopted Growth Policy. The current County zoning resolution contains a number districts and rural special districts in use in other parts of the County.

State law also provides for the creation of zoning districts, forty acres or larger in size, initiated by a petition of citizens (M.C.A. 76-2-1-1, "Part 1" zoning). (Although Part 1 zoning is commonly referred to as citizen-initiated zoning, citizens also can request zoning under Part 2 zoning.) As described previously, there are two existing Part 1 districts currently in place in the Plan Area.

In either case, citizen-initiated or government-initiated, zoning district proposals may be defeated if their establishment is protested by a sufficient number of freeholders. Though not required to conform to an adopted Growth Policy, as in the case of government-initiated zoning, citizen-initiated Part 1 zoning is less likely to meet with community disapproval if it conforms substantially to the goals, objectives and policies of an adopted area Plan.

This Plan describes land use designations that could be implemented through the establishment of corresponding zoning districts. It should be noted that zoning districts could have different names from those in this Plan. An initial set of zoning regulations that meets the intent of the land use designation but does not include all of the specific design guidelines may be considered in conformance with this Plan.

A zoning regulation that identifies key resource objectives and is based on density rather than minimum lots sizes may be the best type of zoning for Plan implementation. This Plan recommends land use density zoning as a primary implementation tool. The objective of this tool is help preserve high value resource lands while focusing future development into areas more suitable for these land uses and densities. Zoning could also be adopted that includes design standards or other factors not expressly considered, so long as they are consistent with the goals of this Plan.

### **Transfer of Development Rights/Credits**

Providing incentives to transfer density from areas of high resource values to areas of less significant resource values is one way to accomplish this goal. The Seeley Lake Community Council, landowners, and other participants in the planning process examined a variety of such mechanisms, most notably a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program<sup>1</sup>. A traditional TDR program allows landowners in a "sending" area to sell their development rights to landowners within a "receiving" area. Landowners in the "sending" areas who sell their rights agree to forgo development opportunities while landowners in the "receiving" areas who purchase such development rights are allowed to build at higher densities than allowed by the base densities. If

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<sup>1</sup> In this Plan, Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) both refer to programs where residential density could be transferred from a "sending area" to a "receiving area."

zoning and market conditions provide landowners in the receiving areas adequate density as a matter of right, there is no incentive for the landowners to purchase more development rights. Conversely, if zoning and market conditions are such that landowners in the “receiving” areas desire additional density, there is an incentive for landowners to purchase additional development rights. In such cases, lands within the “sending” areas are preserved for long-term conservation because the development rights are transferred for use in a more appropriate area. TDRs may be viable upon the establishment of appropriate sending and receiving areas.

Discussions among the planning process participants raised a number of concerns regarding the implementation of a TDR program for the Plan area, including:

- Effective TDR programs create demand for the purchase of development rights based upon a developer’s willingness to pay for additional density. Due to land ownership patterns, the densities proposed in the downtown area and the inadequacy of infrastructure in the town of Seeley Lake to accommodate higher density development resulted in the determination that it would be very difficult to generate a “receiving” area in this area where higher levels of development have been identified as appropriate. However, the proposed base densities within the downtown area are adequate to meet market demand without the purchase of TDR’s. Adjustments of these base densities to restrict development potential to create a TDR market would negatively affect the ability to provide affordable housing options, a major consideration for the downtown area.
- Effective TDR programs require “receiving” areas to accept the development rights from “sending” areas. In the Seeley Lake Planning Region, because of the high ecological values associated with this region, large numbers of “sending” areas were identified. Few lands could be identified as being appropriate for “receiving” areas, effectively capping the conservation benefits which might result from a TDR program, and reducing the incentive and demand.
- The TDR program that was considered for the Seeley Lake Planning Region would primarily have operated for one landowner as both the seller and purchaser of TDRs. This complicates the normal market-driven process envisioned for use of TDRs. In the Seeley Lake Planning Region, this was especially the case as one landowner has the potential to successfully protest zoning of the Plan Area under Montana Law, and thus could place considerable influence on the specifics of the markets being considered. (The potential for zoning protest exists regardless of whether TDRs are included in a zoning proposal for the Plan Area.)

In order for a TDR program to work that would include this Plan Area, it appears that conditions would need to change. For example, if suitable “receiving” areas were available in other locations outside of the Seeley Lake Planning Region, the opportunities for a TDR style program could be reconsidered under this Plan. The use of Transfer of Development Rights/ Transfer of Development Credits/ Purchase of Development Credits programs should be considered County-wide. Using the appropriate public process, identifying suitable “sending” and “receiving” areas that are not limited to one specific planning region is desirable.

### **Cluster Development**

Clustering of development is encouraged. Clustering options exist in current subdivision regulations and could also be allowed or required in zoning. Clustering is intended to protect sensitive resources or community character by encouraging the use of

conservation design techniques and land conservation measures. A cluster development reduces the size of building lots and concentrates home sites together, resulting in increased areas of contiguous conservation land. Clustering can minimize fragmentation of natural resources and place development in the most appropriate locations. Consolidating lots establishes open areas for wildlife habitat and corridors and visual relief along main travel corridors. Cluster development also lessens infrastructure costs.

When possible, development should be sited based upon clearly defined performance based criteria that would direct development away from sensitive areas, such as wetlands and steep slopes.

The following represents some of the criteria that should be considered when using clustering:

- Access to existing infrastructure.
- Preservation of rural character.
- Fire protection.
- Preservation of important natural resource areas including floodplains, floodway fringe areas, riparian areas, wildlife corridors, and steep hillsides.
- Preservation of significant habitats, forested areas, and intact or re-established grasslands.
- Minimal site disturbance.
- Preservation of lands of agrarian importance.
- Preservation of significant geologic landforms and sensitive soil areas.

Development should be encouraged to meet resource protection goals in the Plan and to follow development guidelines and “Conservation Design Guidelines” available from the County. Extensive linear arrangements of building sites along main transportation corridors are discouraged. Linear arrangements along rivers and streams are also discouraged.

An agreement limiting significant alteration of lot size and future divisions should be filed with Missoula County upon final plat approval of a development which utilizes clustering. Such agreement should run with the land.

Clustering can be further encouraged through the use of incentives such as density bonuses. However, cluster bonuses are difficult to apply effectively across the range of land use density categories included in this Plan, and to keep total development in various areas at the desired levels. Cluster bonuses are not specifically recommended in this land use plan at this time, but may be a tool to consider in the future if overall goals of the Plan can be met.

### **Project Review**

One of the most common uses of the Growth Policy and its associated area or specific plans is as a guide for review of subdivision and zoning requests, though no land use decisions can be denied based solely on compliance with the growth policy or area plans. Some implementation strategies are most appropriately employed at the time of development. Landowners and developers can advance Plan goals through their projects by proposing either development or preservation of the land in ways that are consistent with the Plan.

### **Enforcement**

The plan is a policy guide and therefore not subject to regulatory enforcement on its own; however, regulations adopted to implement the Plan may be subject to enforcement provisions. Plan recommendations and guidelines can be considered during subdivision review or adopted into zoning regulations. If a development does not involve a subdivision and is on unzoned land there is generally no trigger for review. The type, magnitude, and compatibility of a project are not considered. Under these conditions, development may occur contrary to the recommendations of the Plan. Once that happens, there is little that can be done to ensure that the Plan's recommendations are followed.

Zoning regulations adopted in accordance with the Plan are enforceable. Where zoning exists, projects must comply with zoning. Issuance of a Zoning Compliance Permit is triggered by a building permit application. Enforcement is also possible through legal action if a violation is discovered after project completion.

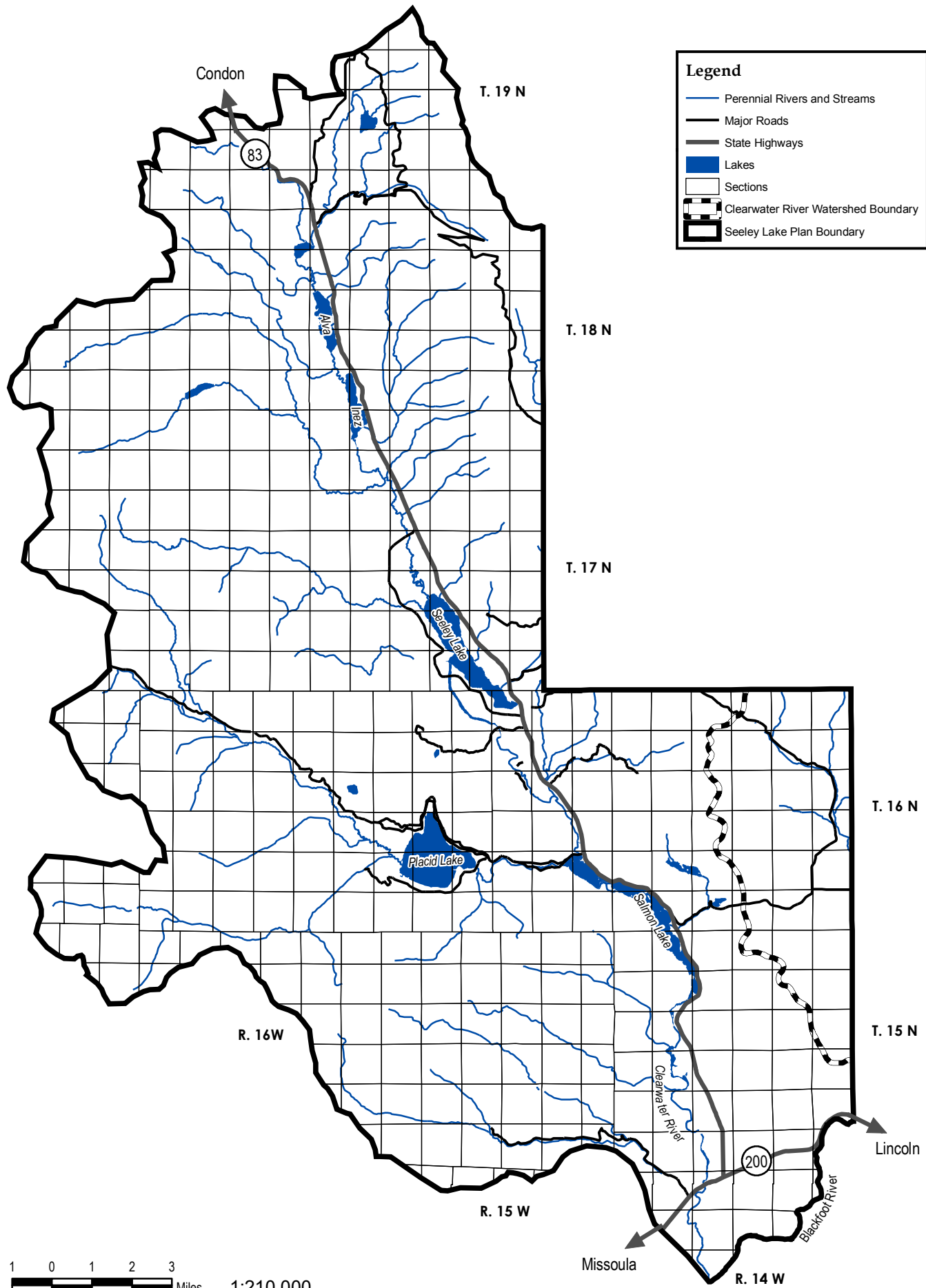
### **STRATEGY FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Given the options available to the Commissioners and area residents interested in protecting and enhancing the values found in the Seeley Lake area, zoning the Plan Area in accordance with this Plan is a priority for implementation. An initial round of zoning may primarily address use and density.

Another next step is to refine an Implementation Strategy by setting priorities among the Plan's action strategies, determining lead responsibilities, and establishing timelines as appropriate.

## **MAPS**

1. Plan Area Boundaries
2. Land Ownership
- 2A. Land Ownership with Montana Legacy Lands
- 2B. Land Ownership with Conservation Easements
3. Agricultural Soils
4. Steep Slopes
5. Wildland Urban Interface
6. Floodplain
7. Existing zoning districts
8. Water District and Sewer District
9. Fire District
10. School District
11. County Parks
- 11A. Recreation Sites
12. Land Use Designations-Plan Area
- 12A. Land Use Designations-North Seeley
- 12B. Land Use Designations-Downtown Seeley Lake
- 12C. Land Use Designations-Placid Lake
- 12D. Land Use Designations-Clearwater Junction
- 12E. Land Use Designations and Ownership
- 12F. Land Use Designations and Special Blocks

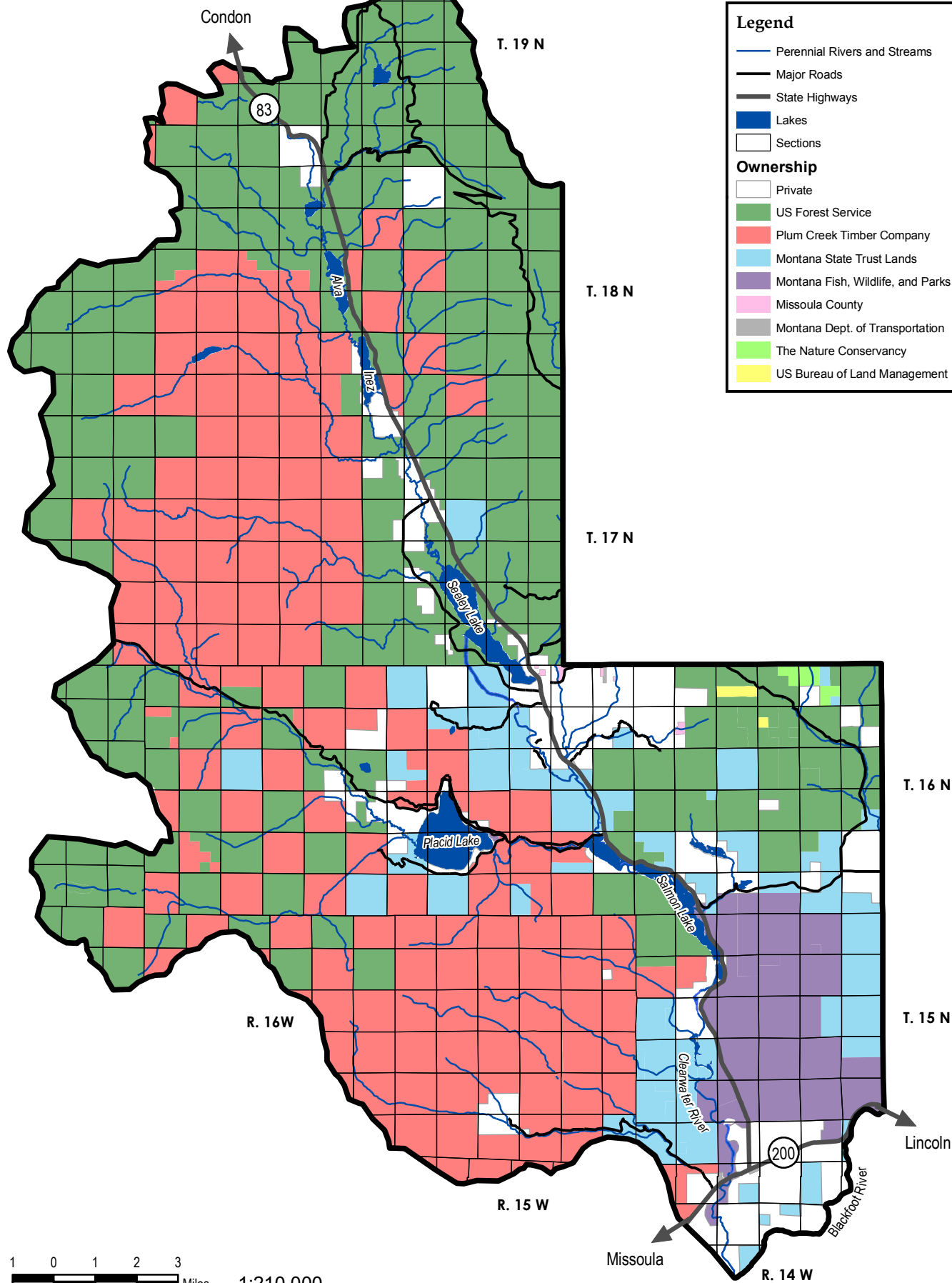


Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan PLAN AREA MAP 1





1 0 1 2 3  
Miles

1:210,000

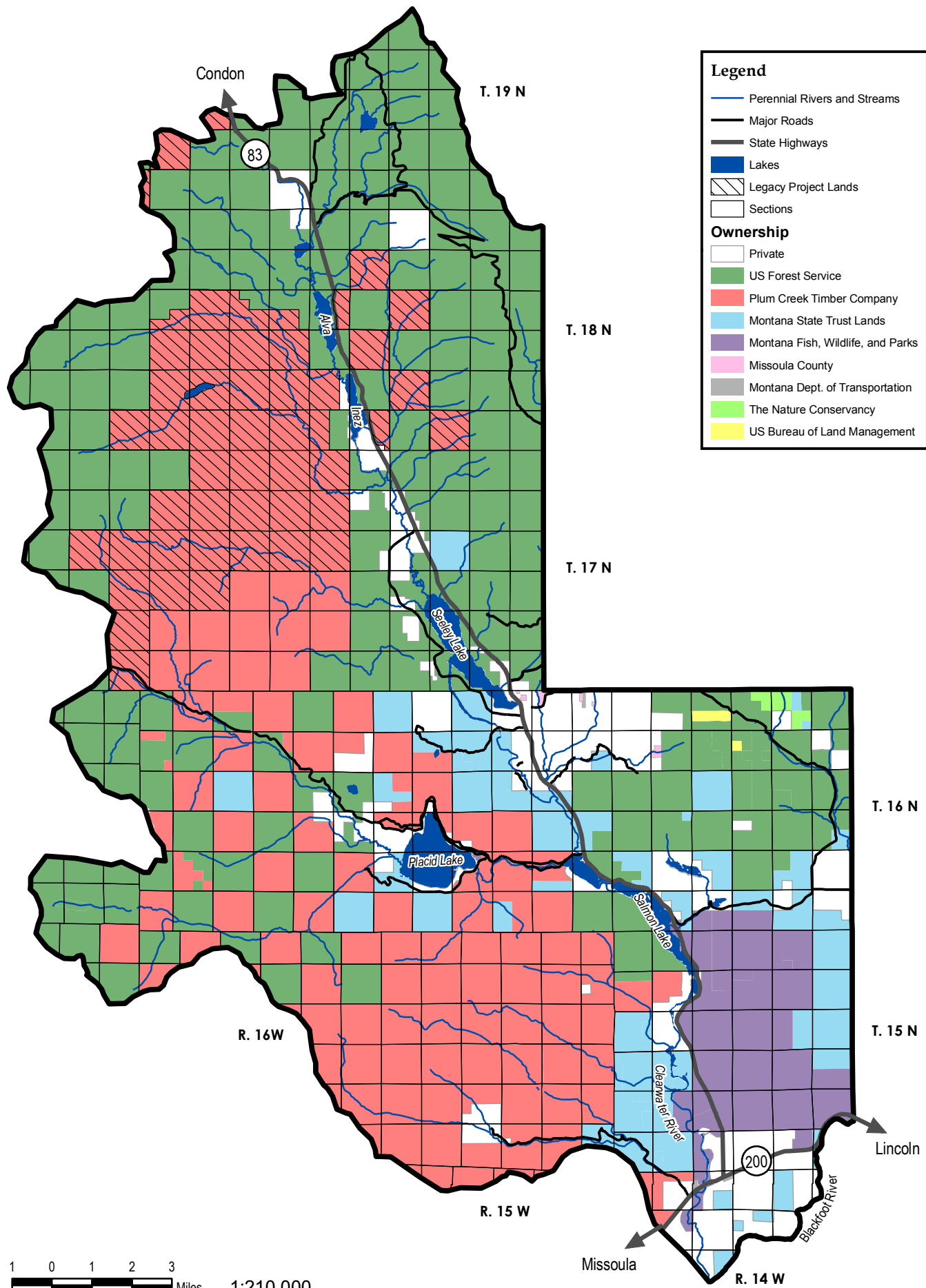
Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Ownership from Montana State Cadastral Data as of  
03/2009

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

## Seeley Lake Regional Plan LAND OWNERSHIP MAP 2







1 0 1 2 3  
Miles

1:210,000

Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Ownership from Montana State Cadastral Data as of  
03/2009

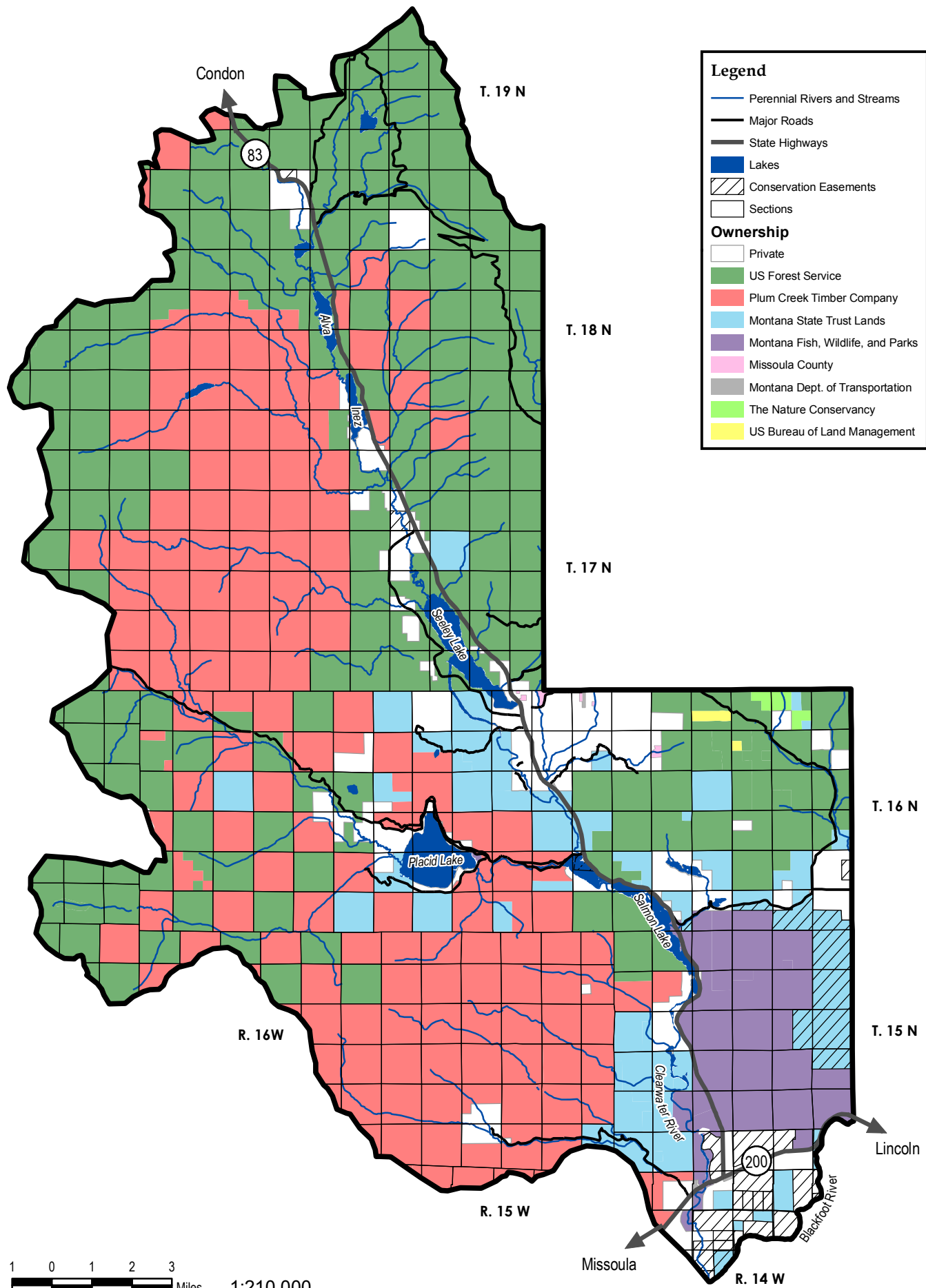
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan

## LAND OWNERSHIP WITH LEGACY LANDS

### MAP 2A





1 0 1 2 3  
Miles

1:210,000

Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Ownership from Montana State Cadastral Data as of  
03/2009

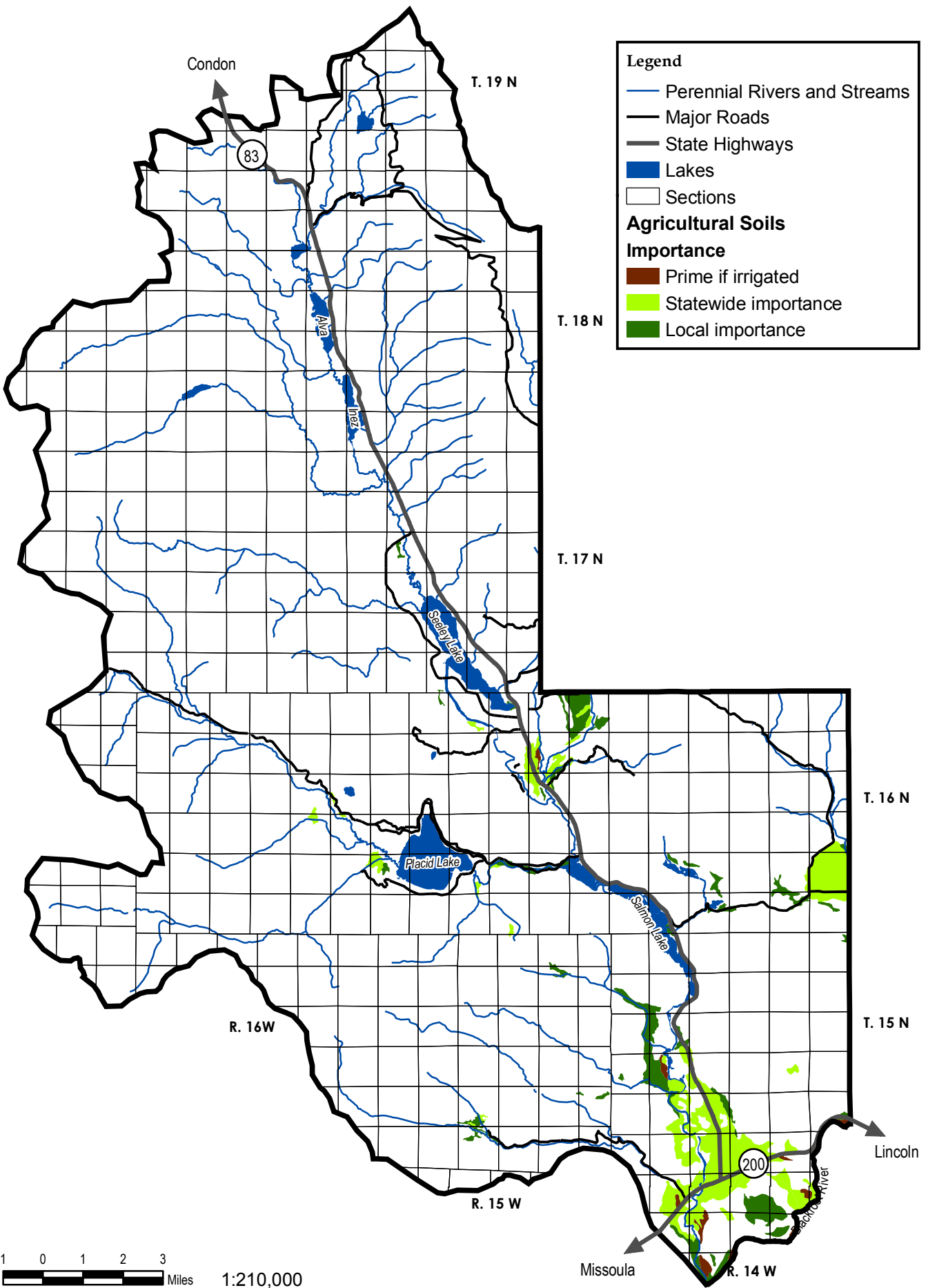
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

## Seeley Lake Regional Plan

### LAND OWNERSHIP WITH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

#### MAP 2B





Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Important Agricultural Soils as mapped by USDA  
Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS)

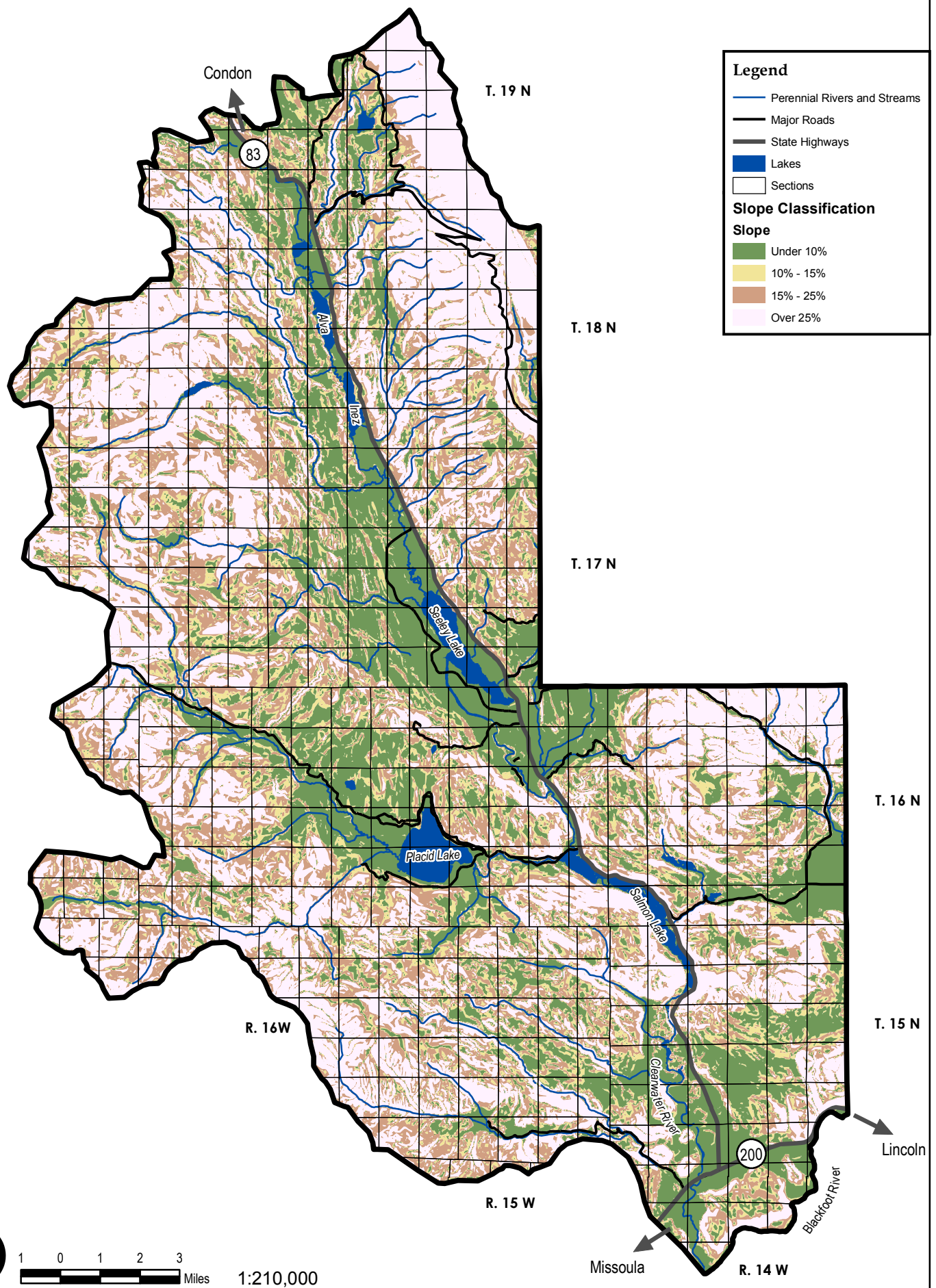
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan

## IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL SOILS

### MAP 3





Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

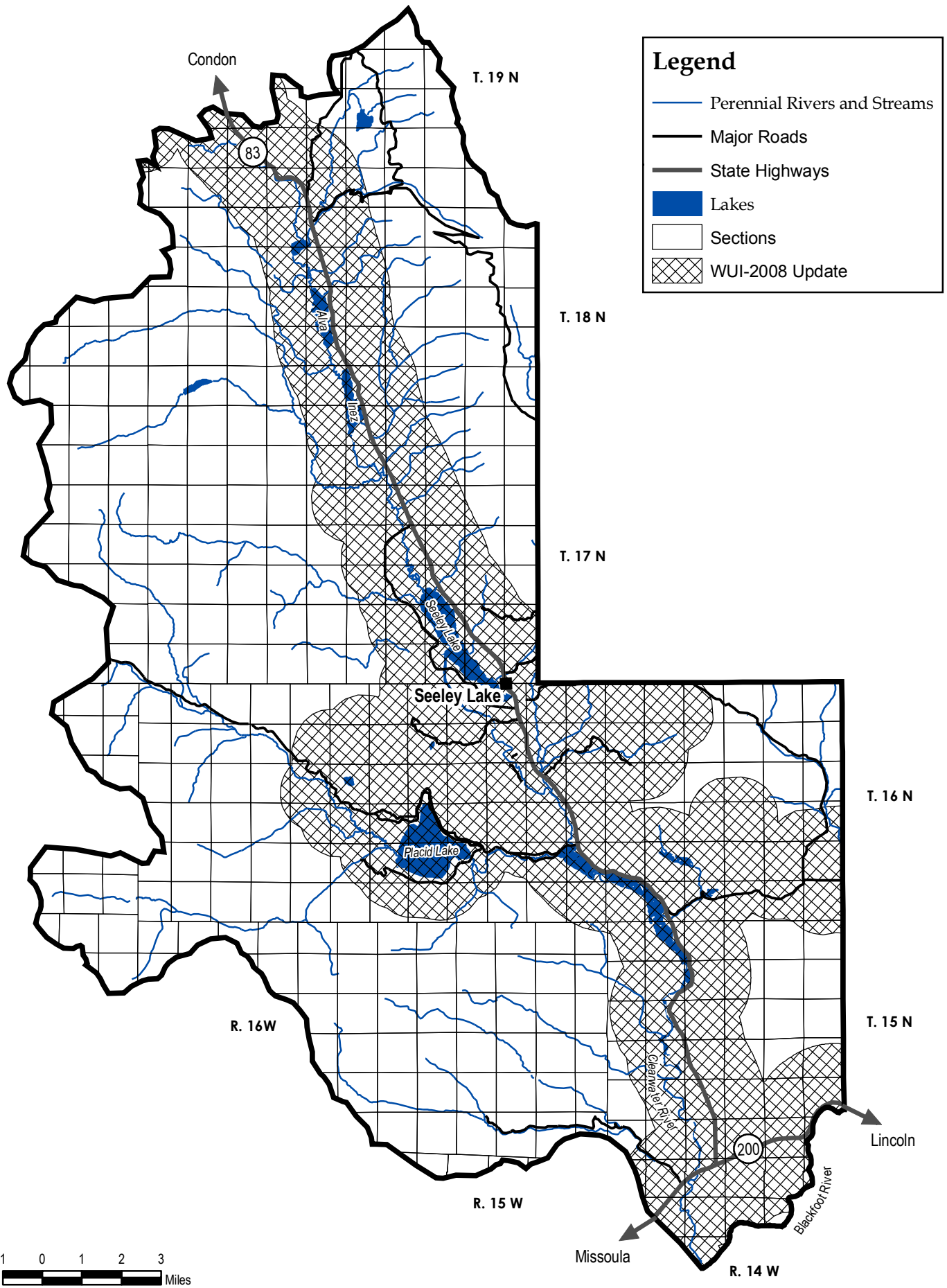
# Seeley Lake Regional Plan

## STEEP SLOPES

### MAP 4



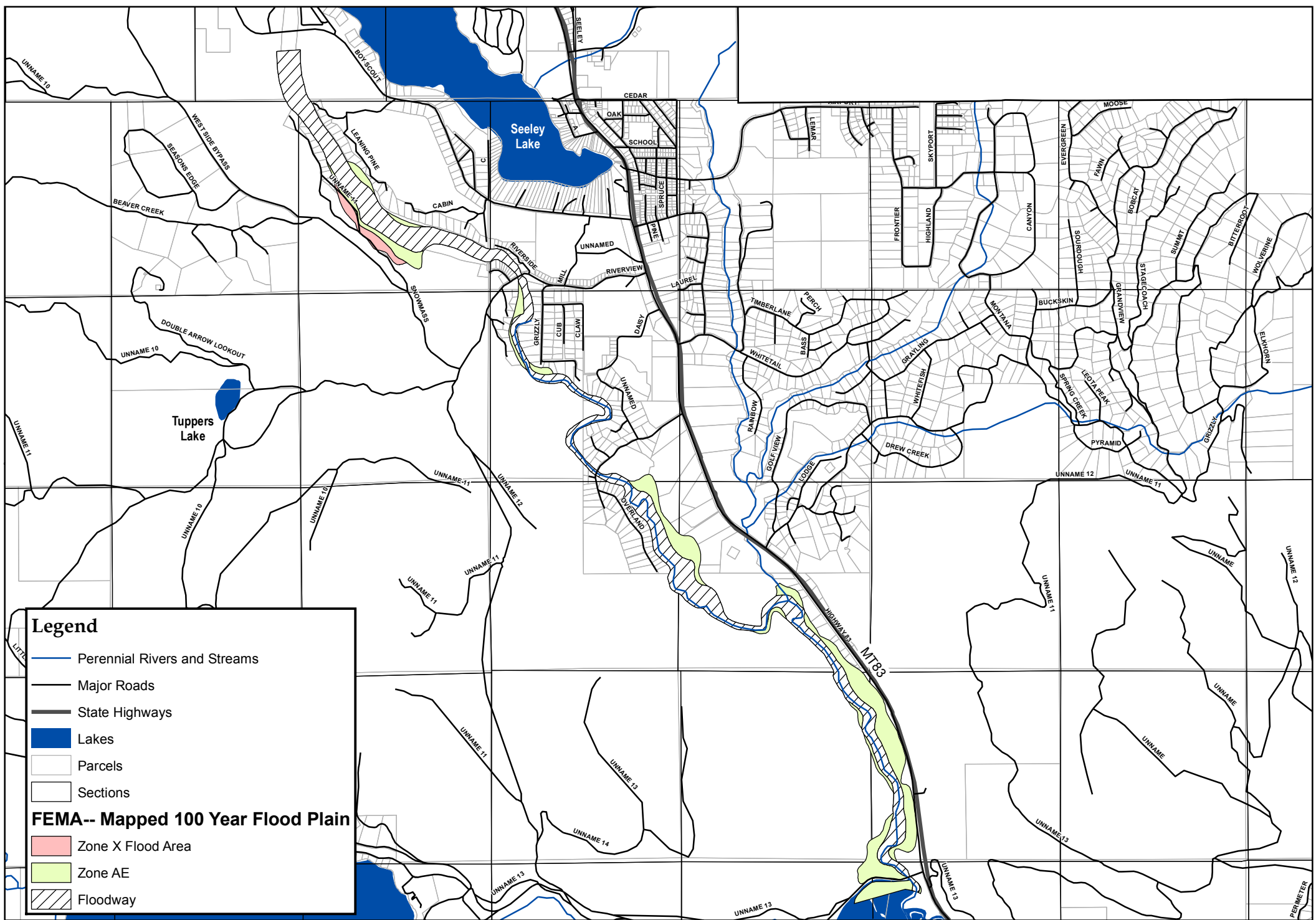




Source:  
 Seeley-Swan Fire Plan-2008 Update  
 Blackfoot Fire Plan  
 Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
 October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan **WILDLAND -URBAN INTERFACE** **MAP 5**





Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
 FEMA-Mapped Floodplain Current as of 1/31/2007

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
 October 20, 2010





0 0.5 1 Miles

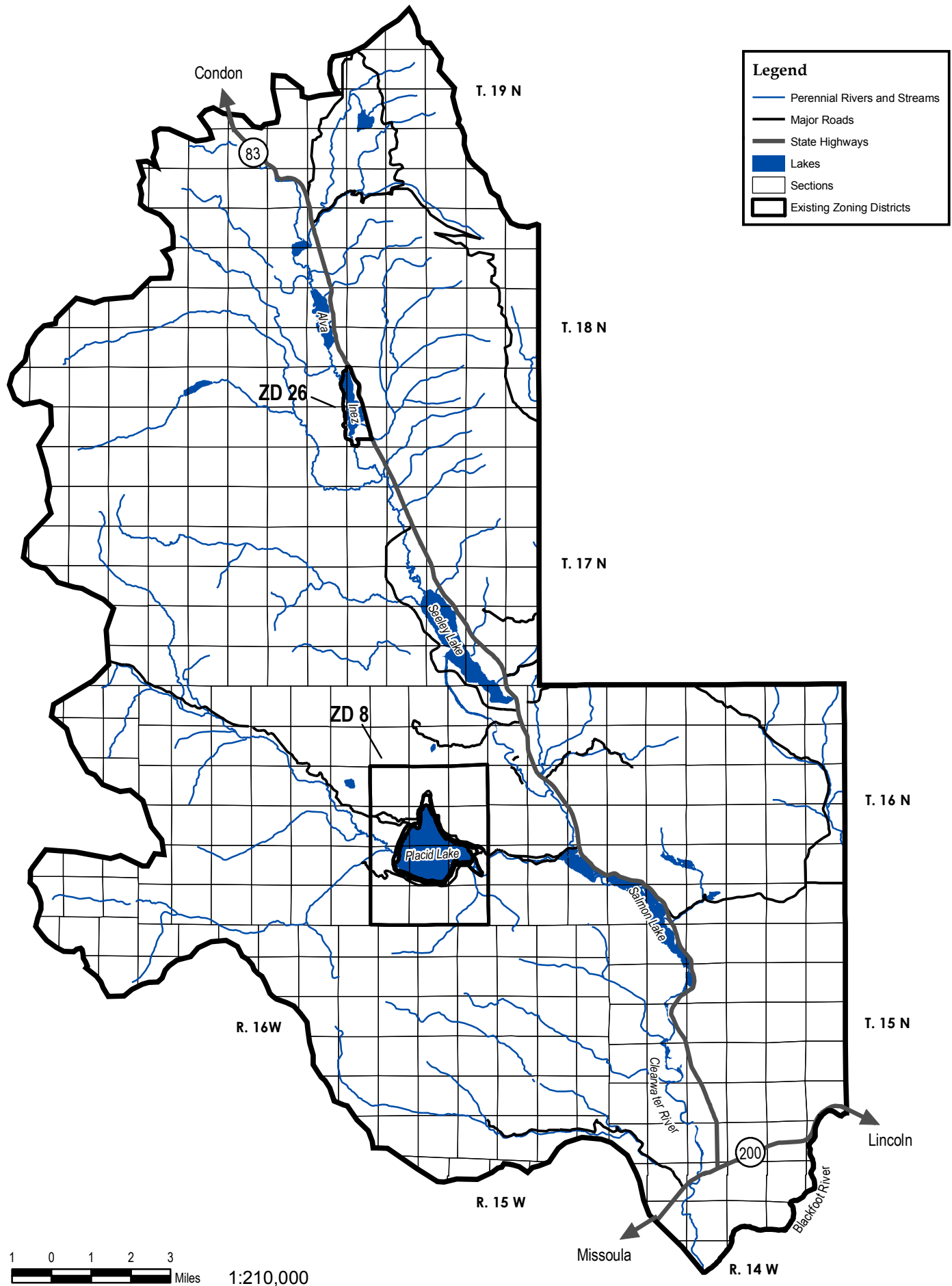
Seeley Lake Regional Plan

**FEMA-MAPPED FLOODPLAIN**

**MAP 6**

1:40,000

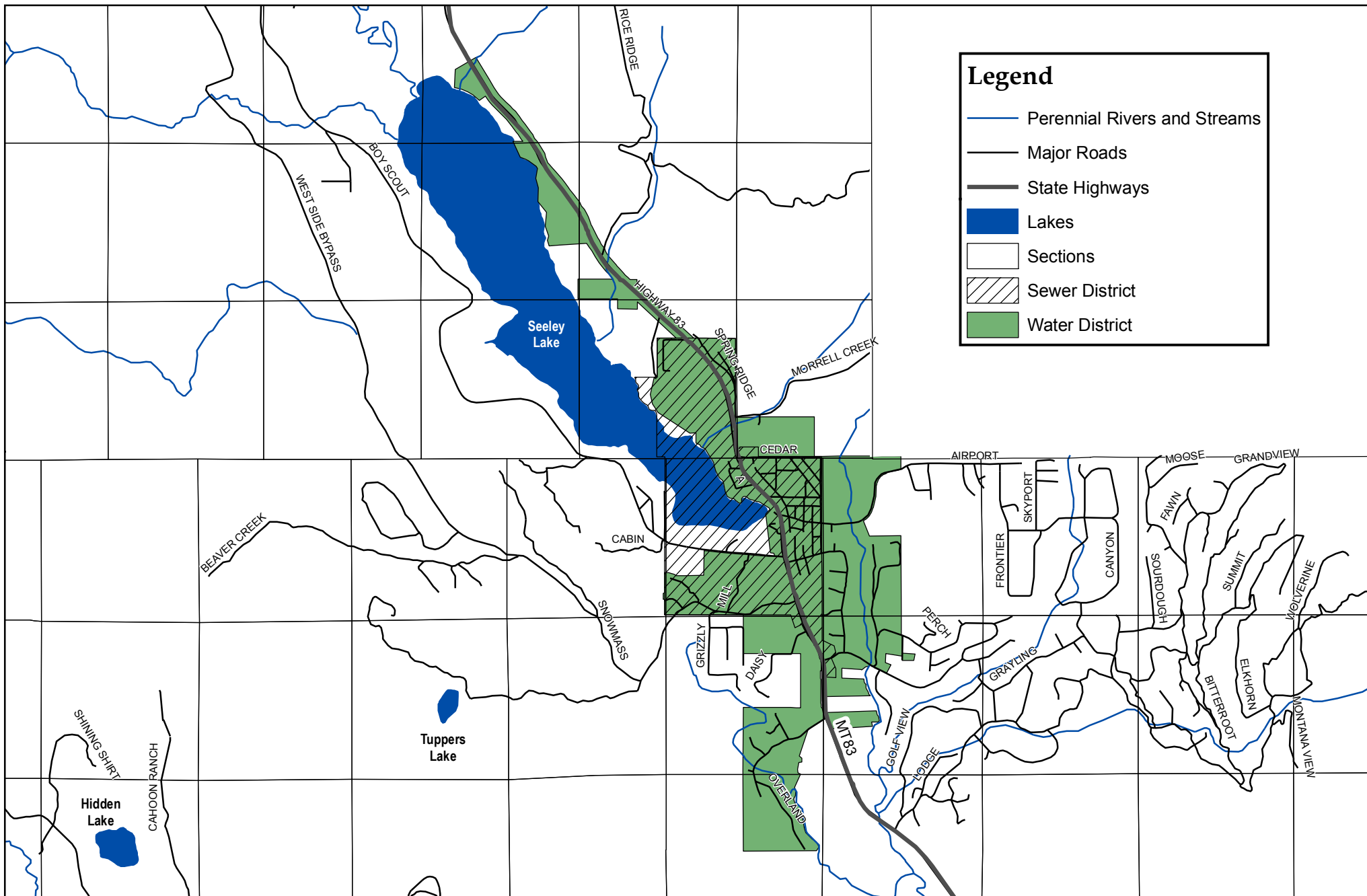




Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS MAP 7





Source: Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office

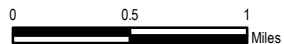
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010



Seeley Lake Regional Plan

**WATER AND SEWER DISTRICTS**

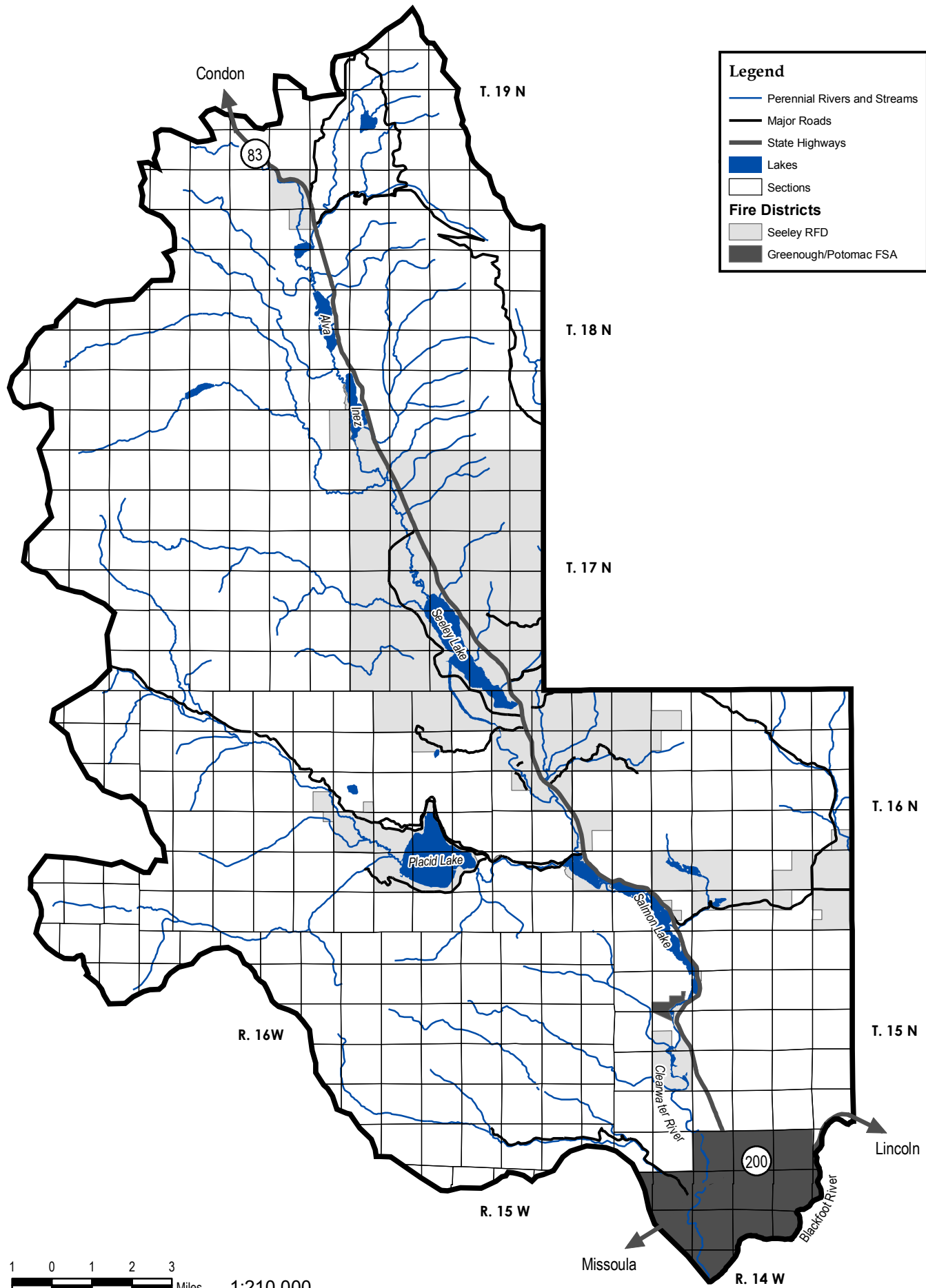
**MAP 8**



1:52,000





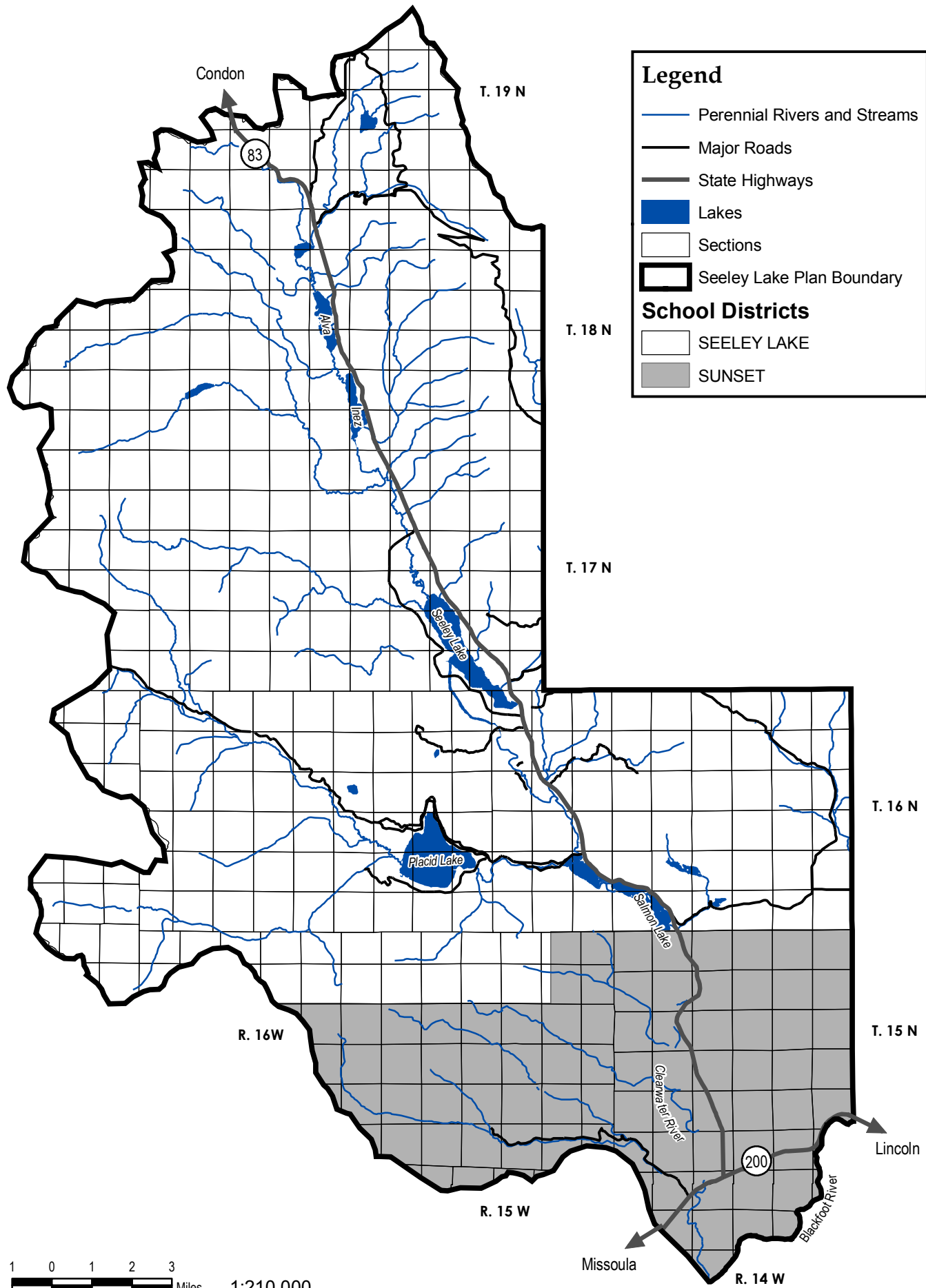


Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan FIRE DISTRICTS MAP 9





1 0 1 2 3 Miles

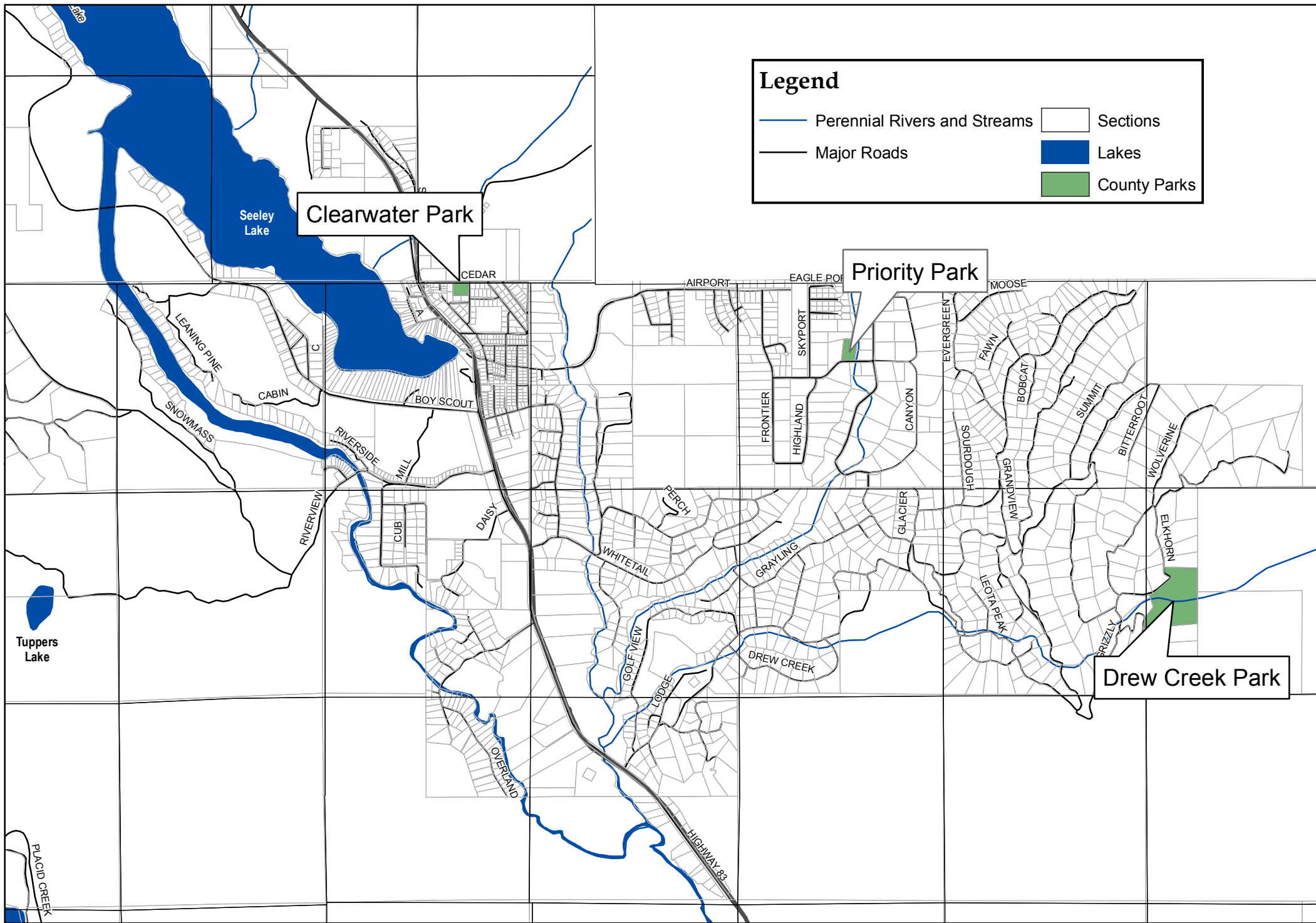
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Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

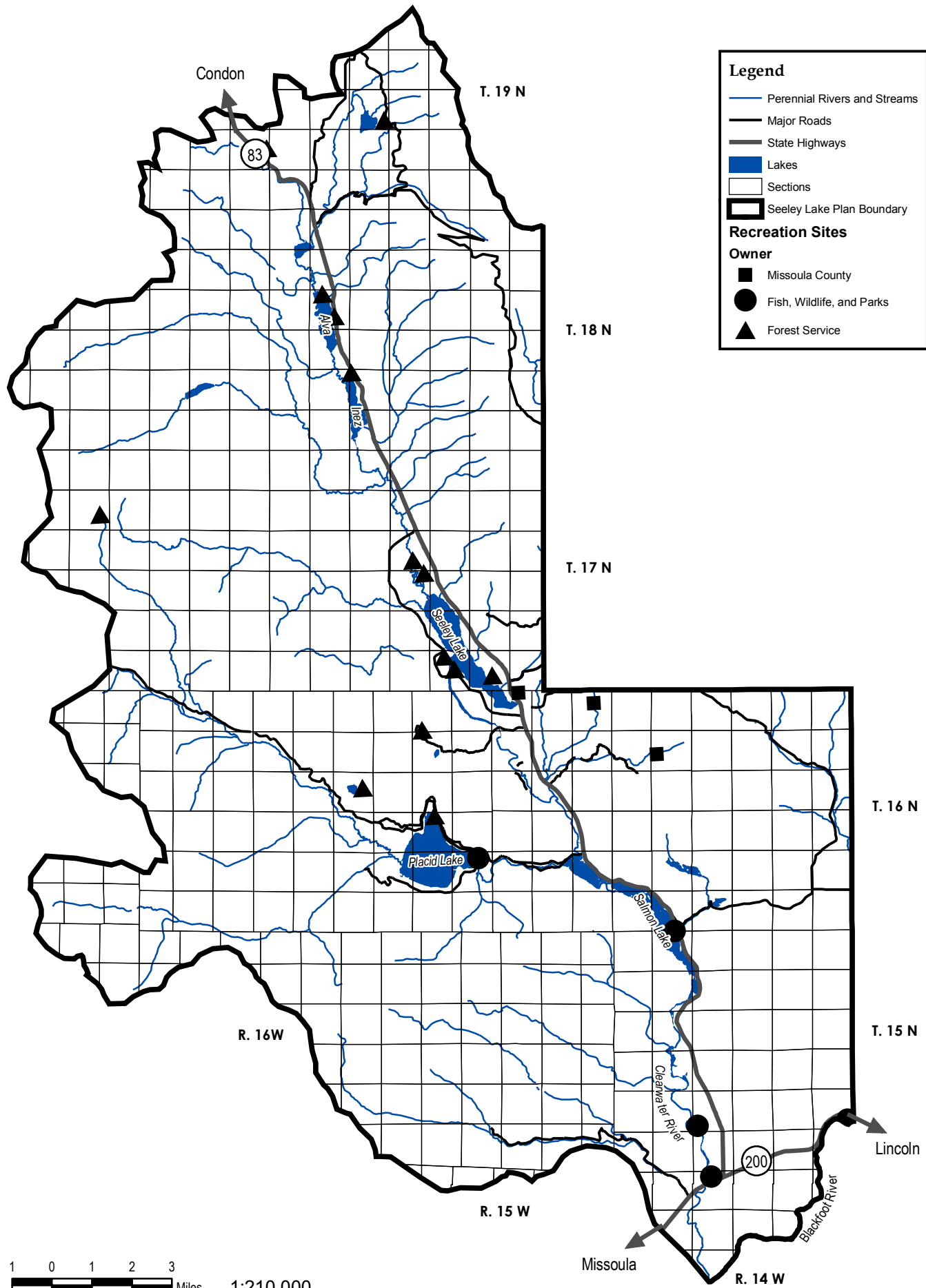
# Seeley Lake Regional Plan SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAP 10





**Legend**

- Perennial Rivers and Streams
- Major Roads
- Sections
- Lakes
- County Parks



1 0 1 2 3 Miles

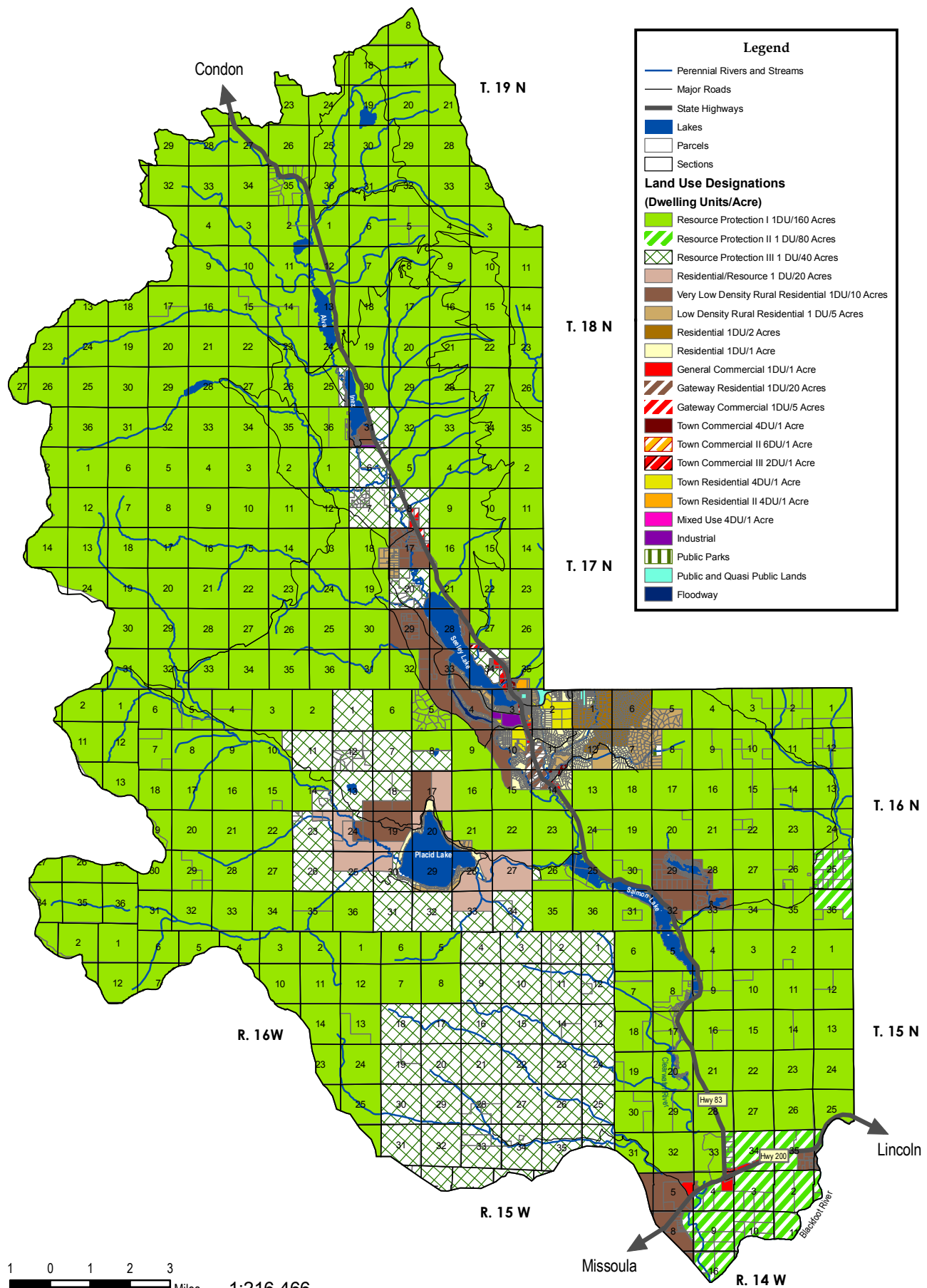
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Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

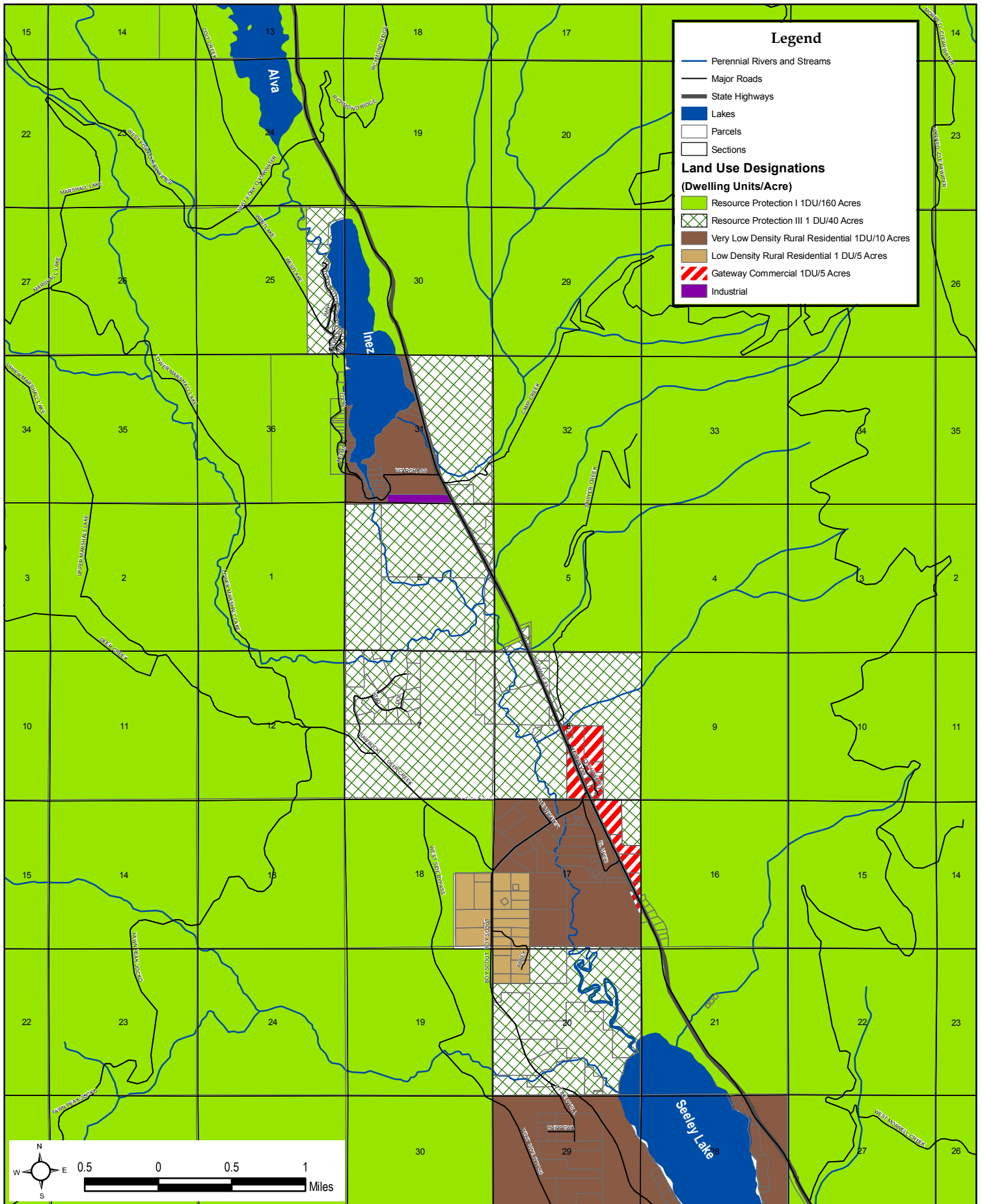
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan RECREATION SITES MAP 11A









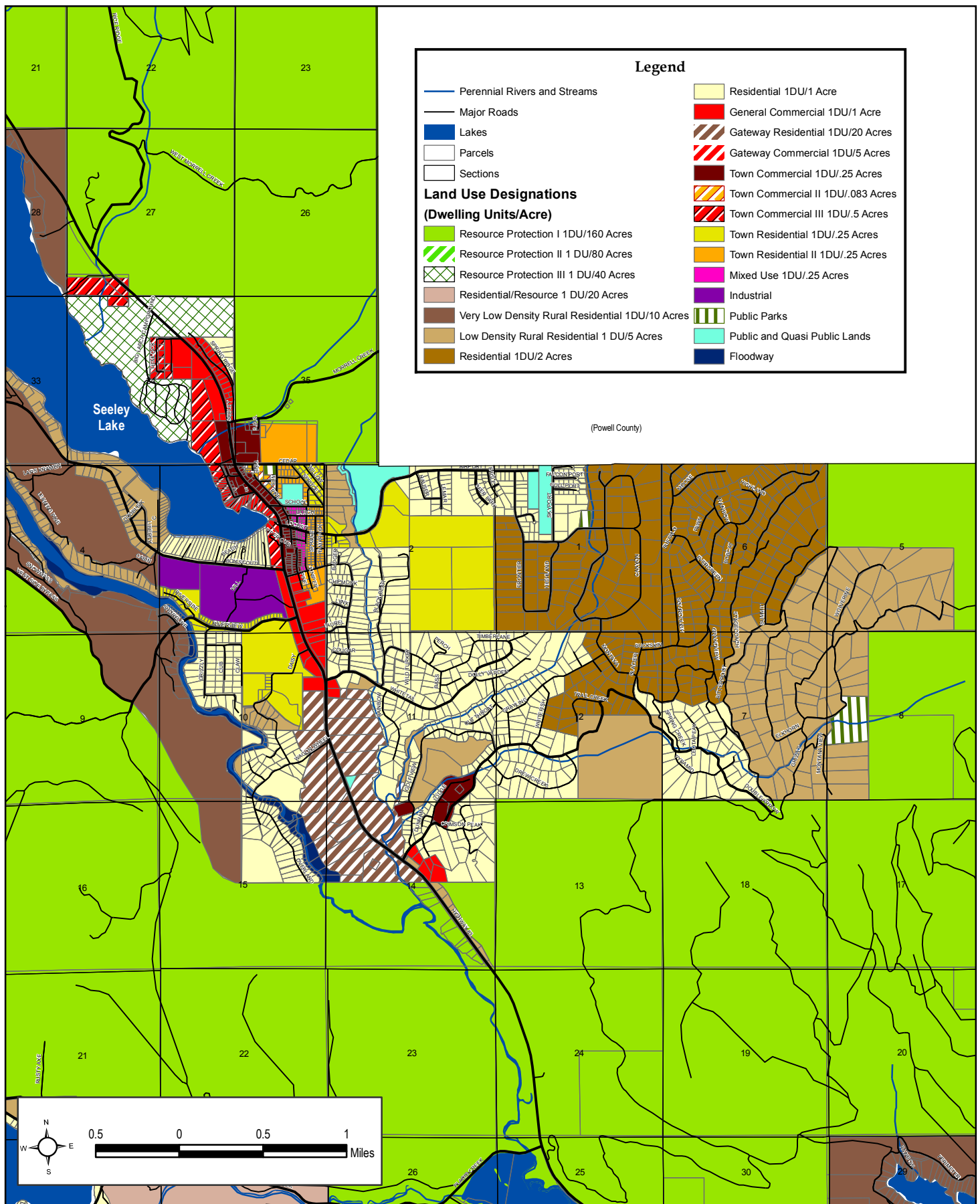
Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Ownership from Montana State Cadastral Data as of 08/2008.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

1:53,742

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan **LAND USE DESIGNATIONS-NORTH SEELEY** **MAP 12A**





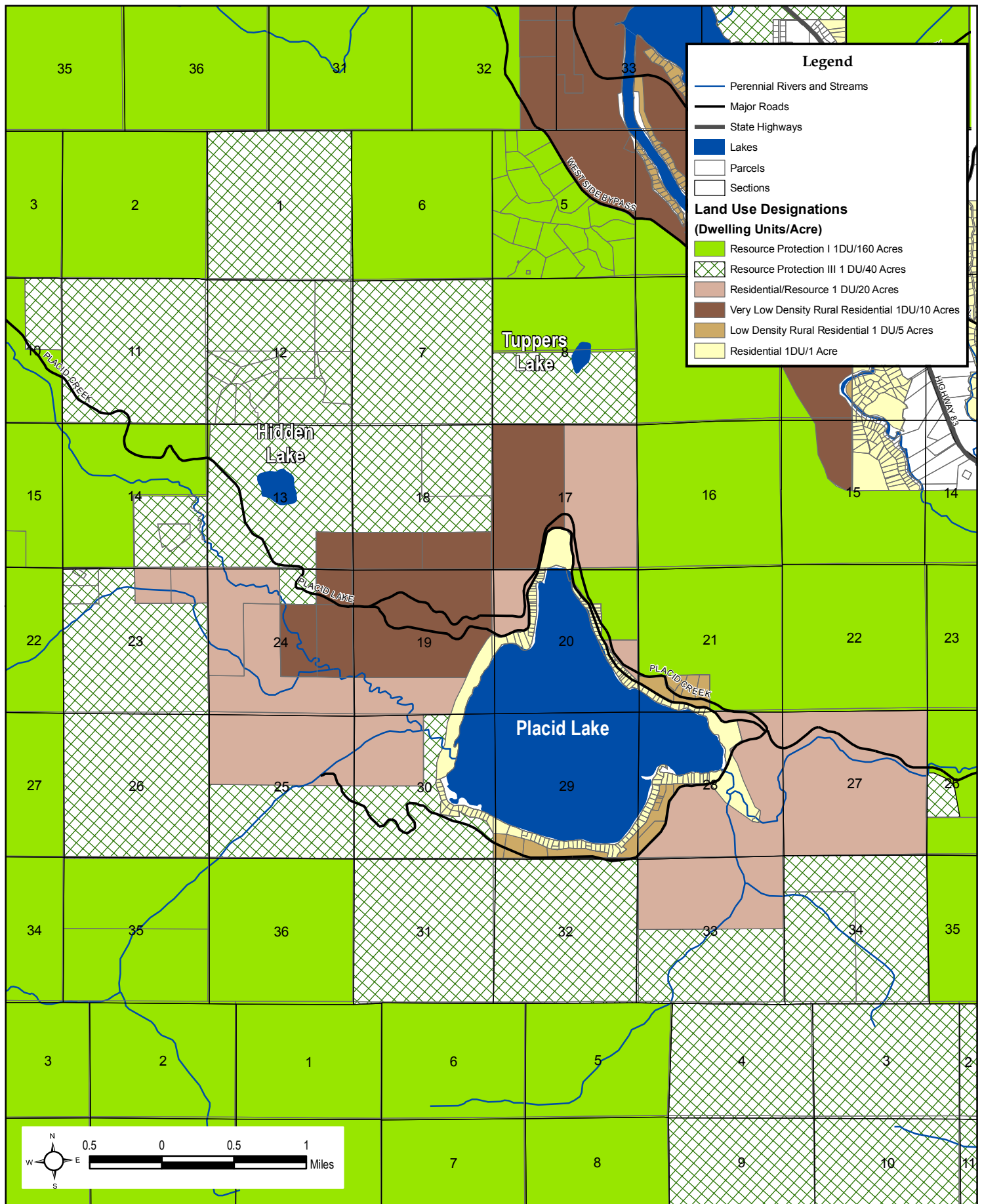
Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

1:48,609

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan **LAND USE DESIGNATIONS-- DOWNTOWN AREA** **MAP 12B**





Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

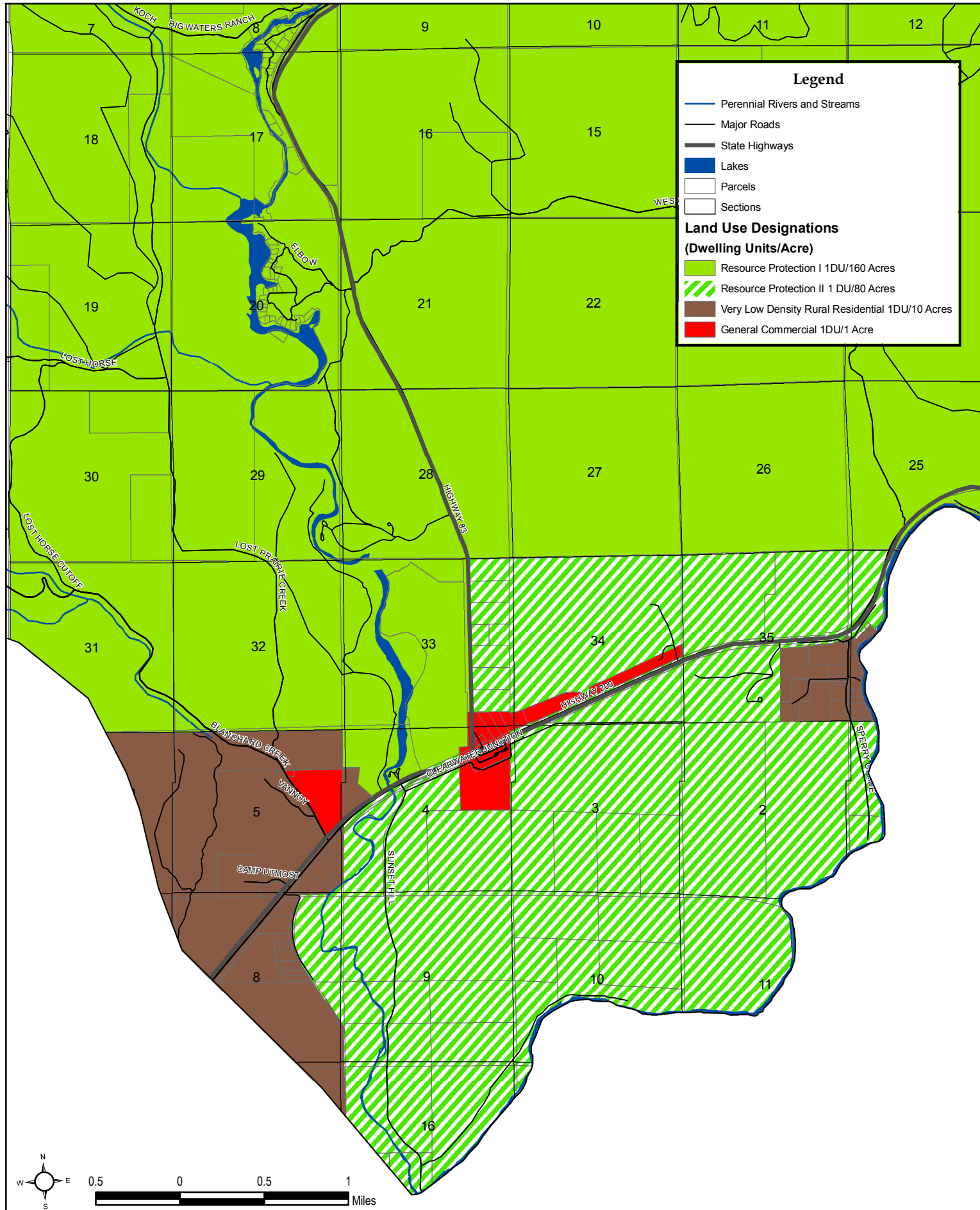
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

1:55,225

Seeley Lake Regional Plan  
**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS-- PLACID LAKE AREA**  
**MAP 12C**







Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.

Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

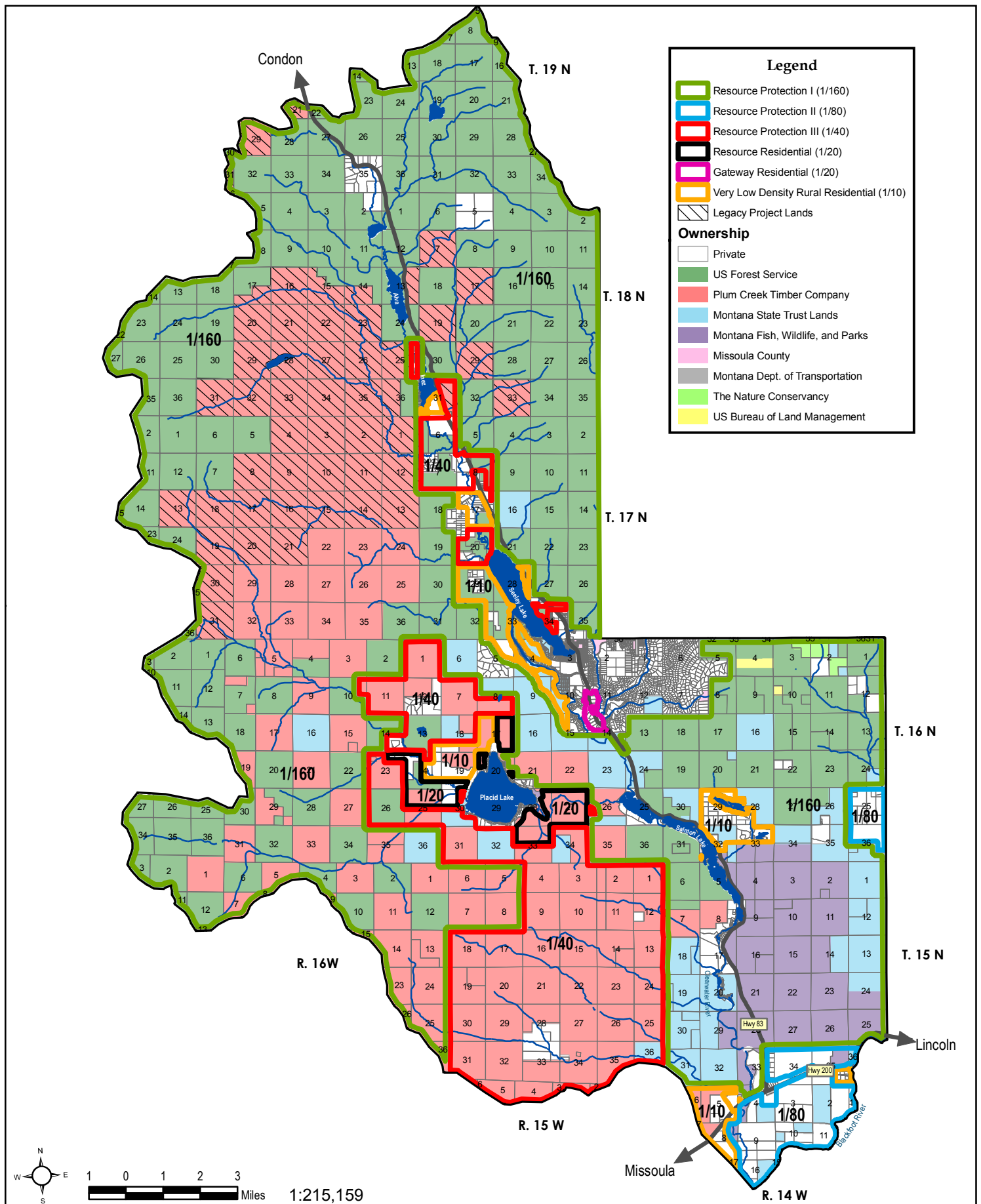
1:46,229

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan

## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS-- CLEARWATER JCT AREA

### MAP 12D





Source:  
Missoula OPG and Missoula County Surveyor's Office.  
Ownership from Montana State Cadastral Data as of 03/2009.  
This Map only Depicts Land Use Designations and Ownerships  
Outside of the Seeley Lake Downtown Area.

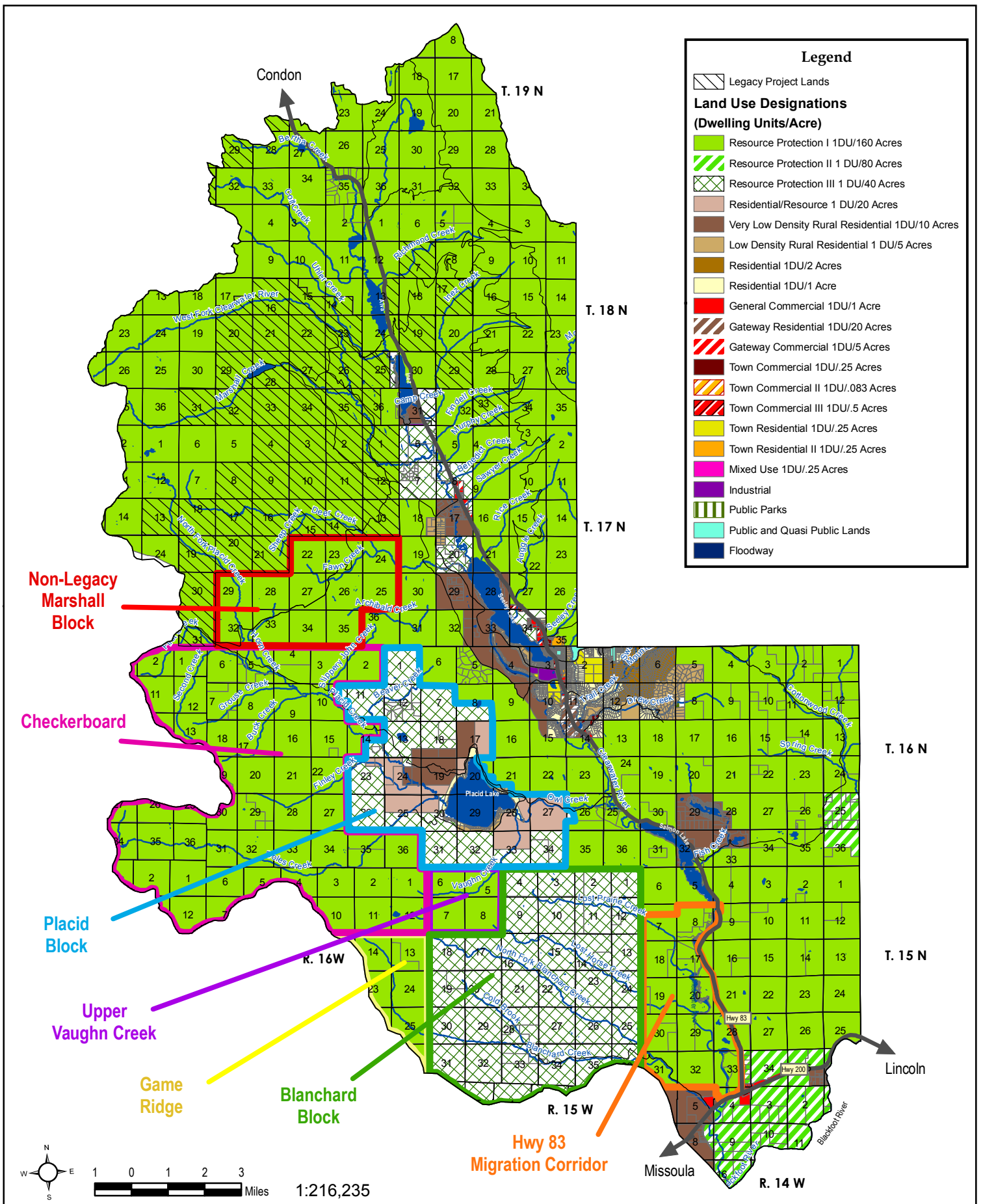
Montana State Plane, NAD 83, Feet  
October 20, 2010

# Seeley Lake Regional Plan

## LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND OWNERSHIP

### MAP 12 E





Seeley Lake Regional Plan  
**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND SPECIAL BLOCKS**  
**MAP 12F**



## APPENDIX A SPECIES OF CONCERN IN THE SEELEY PLAN AREA

### MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM SPECIES OF CONCERN

The term "species of concern" includes taxa that are at-risk or potentially at-risk due to rarity, restricted distribution, habitat loss, and/or other factors. The term also encompasses species that have a special designation by organizations or land management agencies in Montana, including: Bureau of Land Management Special Status and Watch species; U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and Watch species; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered and Candidate species.

### HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS (GLOBAL AND STATE)

Taxa are evaluated and ranked by the Heritage Program on the basis of their global (range-wide) status, and their state-wide status according to a standardized procedure used by all Natural Heritage Programs. These ranks are used to determine protection and data collection priorities, and are revised as new information becomes available.

For each level of distribution—global and state—species are assigned a numeric rank ranging from 1 (greatest concern) to 5 (least concern). This reflects the species relative endangerment and is based primarily on the number of occurrences of that species globally or within the state. However, other information such as date of collection, degree of habitat threat, geographic distribution patterns and population size and trends is considered when assigning a rank, and the number of occurrences listed below are suggestions, not absolute criteria.

For example, Clustered lady's slipper (*Cypripedium fasciculatum*) is ranked G4 S2. Globally the species is apparently secure, while in Montana it is imperiled because of rarity, or because of other factors making it demonstrably vulnerable to extirpation.

1	Critically imperiled because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences, or very few remaining individuals), or because of some factor of its biology making it especially vulnerable to extinction.
2	Imperiled because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences) or because of other factors demonstrably making it vulnerable to extinction throughout its range.
3	Either very rare and local throughout its range, or found locally (even abundantly at some of its locations) in a restricted range, or vulnerable to extinction throughout its range because of other factors; in the range of 21 to 100 occurrences.
4	Apparently secure, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
5	Demonstrably secure, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
U	Possibly imperiled, but status uncertain; more information needed.
H	Historically known; may be rediscovered.
X	Believed to be extinct; historical records only.

### Other Heritage Codes

G#G# S#S#	Numeric range rank: A range between two of the numeric ranks. Denotes range of uncertainty about the exact rarity of the species.
--------------	---

### Subrank

T	Rank for subspecific taxon (subspecies, variety, or population); appended to the global rank for the full species, e.g. G4T3
---	--

## Qualifiers

A	Accidental in the state; including species (usually birds or butterflies) recorded very infrequently, hundreds or thousands of miles outside their usual range.
B	Breeding status of a migratory species. Example: S1B, SZN - breeding occurrences for the species are ranked S1 (critically imperiled) in the state, nonbreeding occurrences are not ranked in the state.
E	An exotic established in the state; may be native in nearby regions.
HYB	Element represents a hybrid of species
N	Non-breeding status of a migratory species. Example: S1B, SZN - breeding occurrences for the species are ranked S1 (critically imperiled) in the state, nonbreeding occurrences are not ranked in the state.
P	Indicates the element may potentially occur in the state.
Q	Taxonomic questions or problems involved, more information needed; appended to the global rank.
R	Reported in the state; but lacking documentation which would provide a basis for either accepting or rejecting the report.
T	Rank for subspecific taxon (subspecies, variety, or population); appended to the global rank for the full species.
Z	Ranking not applicable.
#	A modifier to SX or SH; the species has been reintroduced but the population is not yet established.
?	Inexact or uncertain; for numeric ranks, denotes

<b>BLM Status</b>	
Sensitive or Special Status	Special Status animals or Sensitive plant species: proven to be imperiled in at least part of its range and documented to occur on BLM lands.
Watch	Watch species: either known to be imperiled and suspected to occur on BLM lands; suspected to be imperiled and documented on BLM lands; or needing further study for other reasons.
<b>USFS Status</b>	
Threatened	Listed as Threatened (LT) or Endangered (LE) under the Endangered Species Act or proposed for listing (P); and known or suspected to occur on national forests.
Sensitive	Sensitive species, subspecies, or variety for which the Regional Forester has determined there is a concern for population viability rangewide or in the region.
<b>USFWS-ESA Status</b>	
Listed endangered	Listed as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act.
Listed threatened	Listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.
Proposed delisting	Proposed for delisting as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.
Proposed endangered	Proposed for listing as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act.
Proposed threatened	Proposed for listing as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.
Candidate	Candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.
Proposed Critical Habitat	Specific geographic areas, whether occupied by a listed species or not, that are essential for its conservation and that are proposed for formal designation.

BLM = Bureau of Land Management  
 USFS= U.S. Forest Service  
 USFWS-ESA = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Endangered Species Act

Source: Montana Natural Heritage Program, Natural Resource Information System, Montana State Library

Scientific Name	Common Name	MTNHP Global Rank	MTNHP State Rank	BLM Status	USFS Status	USFWS- ESA Status
<b>ANIMALS</b>						
<i>Bufo boreas</i>	Western Toad	G4	S2	Sensitive	Sensitive	
<i>Canis lupus</i>	Gray Wolf	G4	S3	Special Status	Threatened	Listed Endangered
<i>Gulo gulo luscus</i>	Wolverine	G4T4	S3	Sensitive	Sensitive	
<i>Lynx Canadensis</i>	Canada Lynx	G5	S3	Special Status	Threatened	Listed Threatened
<i>Martes pennanti</i>	Fisher	G5	S3	Sensitive	Sensitive	
<i>Prophysaon humile</i>	Smoky Taildroper	G1G2	S1S2			
<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>	Grizzly Bear	G4T3T4	S3	Special Status	Threatened	Listed Threatened
<b>BIRDS</b>						
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper Sparrow	G5	S3B			
<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	Olive-sided Flycatcher	G4	S3B			
<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	Bobolink	G5	S2B			
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon	G5	S2B	Sensitive	Sensitive	
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	G4	S3	Special Status	Sensitive	Delisted
<i>Lagopus leucura</i>	White-tailed Ptarmigan	G5	S3			
<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	Lewis's Woodpecker	G4	S2B			
<i>Numenius americanus</i>	Long-billed Curlew	G5	S2B			
<i>Otus flammeolus</i>	Flammulated Owl	G4	S3B	Sensitive	Sensitive	
<i>Picoides arcticus</i>	Black-backed Woodpecker	G5	S2	Sensitive	Sensitive	
<i>Strix nebulosa</i>	Great Gray Owl	G5	S3	Sensitive		
<b>FISH</b>						
<i>Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi</i>	Westslope Cutthroat Trout	G4T3	S2	Sensitive		
<i>Salvelinus confluentus pop 2</i>	Bull Trout - Columbia River	G3T2Q	SNA			Listed Threatened Proposed Critical Habitat
<b>PLANTS</b>						
<i>Alium fibrillum</i>	Fringed Onion	G4	S3			
<i>Bidens beckii</i>	Beck Water-marigold	G4	S2		Sensitive	
<i>Botrychium crenulatum</i>	Wavy Moonwort	G3	S2		Sensitive	
<i>Brasenia schreberi</i>	Watershield	G5	S2		Sensitive	



<i>Cardamine rupicola</i>	Cliff toothwort	G3	S3			
<i>Carex rostrata</i>	Beaked Sedge	G5	S1		Sensitive	
<i>Castilleja cervina</i>	Deer Indian Paintbrush	G4	S1			
<i>Drosera anglica</i>	English Sundew	G5	S2		Sensitive	
<i>Dryopteris cristata</i>	Buckler Fern	G5	S2		Sensitive	
<i>Grindelia howellii</i>	Howell's Gum-weed	G3	S2S3		Sensitive	
<i>Nymphaea tetragona</i> <i>ssp leibergii</i>	Pygmy Water-lily	G5	S1			
<i>Kalmia polifolia</i>	Pale laurel	G5	S1		Sensitive	
<i>Ophioglossum</i> <i>pusillum</i>	Adder's Tongue	G5	S2		Sensitive	
<i>Potamogeton</i> <i>obtusifolius</i>	Blunt-leaved Pondweed	G5	S2		Sensitive	
<i>Scirpus subterminalis</i>	Water Bulrush	G4G5	S2		Sensitive	
<b>OTHER BOTANICAL</b>						
Peatland	Other (Botanical)			Z		SNR

## **APPENDIX B SUPPORTING RESOURCE ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTS**

*Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley of Montana*, prepared by the Clearwater Resource Council, December 2008 Update.

<http://www.crcmt.org>

*Biological Data Available in the Seeley Lake Planning Region of Missoula County, Montana: Resource Status and Vulnerability to Human Development Pressures*, prepared by Victoria Edwards. Ecosystem Management Services, LLC, October 2006.

[ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/MC\\_Bio\\_Rpt\\_1106.pdf](ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/MC_Bio_Rpt_1106.pdf)

Hard copy available at the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office, 317 Woody, Missoula.

*Vegetation Communities in the Seeley Lake Plan Area*, prepared by Rural Initiatives staff, January 2007.

[ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/VegCom\\_0107.pdf](ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/VegCom_0107.pdf)

Hard copy available at the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office, 317 Woody, Missoula.



## APPENDIX C

**Table 8-1 Action Strategies**

This table lists the goals of from each chapter of the Plan, the action strategies that are intended to achieve these goals, and the anticipated implementation category for each. As the plan is implemented some of the categories may shift, for example a particular strategy may be determined by the community to be more suitable as a voluntary measure rather than a regulatory measure.

The responsibility for carrying out the action strategies outlined in the Plan lies with a wide range of groups.

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Cultural and Historic Resources	Goal: Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources in the Plan Area to safeguard the Seeley Lake region's heritage. Goal: Identify, evaluate and develop ways to protect historic and cultural sites, structures and trails in the region.	Support historic and architectural surveys of the planning region, multiple properties studies and archeological/cultural studies of local historical resources and contexts.	X	X				X		
		Consider incentives for historic preservation.							X	X
		Restore Double Arrow Lookout to preserve its significance in forest fire detection and suppression efforts and maintain its registry on the National Register of Historic Lookouts.				X		X		
	Goal: Encourage the preservation of historic buildings.	Identify and maintain a list of historical and other cultural sites in the Seeley Lake area.	X							
		Protect and maintain historical buildings such that they display their historical features.				X				

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Cultural and Historic Resources	Goal: Protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.	If cultural resources are uncovered during earth moving, contact the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe's Tribal Preservation Office in Pablo and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Helena before further disturbance of the site occurs.		X				X		
		Encourage SHPO file searches when appropriate prior to or during project review.		X					X	X
	Goal: Provide education on area history and environment.	Support informational areas such as interpretive sites, community bulletin boards, and historical signs.		X				X		
		Support cross-cultural work on cultural, historic and archeological sites in the area.		X				X		
		Encourage sharing of information on area history/environment with tourists as well as local residents.		X				X		
		Support the Seeley Lake Historical Museum and Visitor Center.		X						
Natural Resources - General	Goal: Protect the Plan Area's natural resources and their functions and values, and contributions to the larger Crown of the Continent ecosystem.	Further establish and coordinate protection priorities for biodiversity, fish and wildlife habitat, linkage zones, corridors, and specific ecosystems through memoranda of understanding, zoning, or rural development tools.	X					X		X
		Further establish and coordinate protection priorities for Species of Concern based on current threats.	X					X		
	Goal: Promote conservation of natural amenities, significant habitat and resources.	Establish working relationships among landowners, neighborhood groups and wildlife management agencies to develop guidelines and priorities related to development and wildlife.						X		
		Provide information to local landowners about conservation easements and other land conservation tools.		X						

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - General	Goal: Promote conservation of natural amenities, significant habitat and resources.	Encourage native forest, wetland, riparian, and aquatic ecosystem maintenance and restoration.		X		X		X	X	
		Protect and enhance a diverse forest structure to support wildlife habitat as well as forest products.		X		X		X		
		Restore and maintain healthy viable wildlife and fish populations within the Plan Area.				X				
		Support funding mechanisms that encourage conservation.				X		X		
		Support education on the need for regulatory compliance when impacting streams or wetlands.		X						
	Goal: Support land use patterns within the Plan Area that protect and preserve natural resources.	Develop and apply land use guidelines and regulations appropriate for the protection of important natural resources.							X	X
		Locate residential and commercial development to minimize impacts on natural resources.							X	X
		Explore land use conservation tools such as conservation easements, clustering, transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, and other similar mechanisms.	X							
		Discourage land use activities that would result in a net increase in open road densities and/or traffic volumes in sensitive resource areas. Encourage policies or cooperative agreements that would minimize and monitor the total amount of open road density in the Plan Area while recognizing various land uses.	X							

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - Biological Resources	Goal: Protect and enhance biodiversity and significant fish and wildlife habitat, such as important plant communities, key summer and winter ranges, key fish spawning and rearing habitat, and habitat for Species of Concern.	Develop and apply land use designations and regulations to protect fish and wildlife habitat and maintain biodiversity.								X
		Explore and support public acquisition of significant wildlife habits.				X		X		
		Protect fish and wildlife habitat through conservation easements and other voluntary methods of land conservation.				X			X	
		Enhance existing wildlife habitat through weed control and other appropriate management practices.				X				
		Control and actively monitor the introduction of exotic species to avoid adverse ecological impacts.	X	X						
		Enhance stream habitats through stream protection and restoration.		X		X		X	X	X
		Discourage development that would alter the ability of corridors to provide functional movement paths for wildlife.				X			X	X
	Goal: Protect and maintain critical wildlife corridors and crossings deemed significant by professional biologists.	Minimize the clearing of vegetation in wildlife travel corridors including riparian areas and provide adequate buffer strips between development and corridors.				X			X	X
		Provide wildlife crossings on Highway 83 and protect lands adjacent to the crossings.			X			X		X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - Biological Resources	Goal: Protect and maintain critical wildlife corridors and crossings deemed significant by professional biologists.	Post known deer and other wildlife crossings along roadways.		X	X					
	Goal: Protect, maintain, and enhance fish migration corridors which are deemed significant by professional wildlife biologists.	Maintain viable riparian buffers along rivers and streams. Minimize stream crossings and ensure that installed crossings follow standards that provide passage for aquatic organisms.			X	X			X	X
		Support the restoration of stream connectivity including the removal of fish barriers identified by professional biologists.				X				
	Goal: Minimize conflicts between wildlife, humans and domestic animals.	Encourage no-build areas and buffers in residential areas to protect and minimize impacts on wildlife.		X		X			X	X
		Encourage new and existing development adjacent to or within critical wildlife areas to include measures to reduce conflicts between wildlife and domestic animals.		X		X			X	X
		Encourage property owners to voluntarily take precautions to avoid potential conflicts with wildlife, such as: installing bear proof garbage containers, limiting or restricting food attractants such as fruit orchards, compost piles, pet food and other outside food sources, limiting activities such as raising chickens and pigs and operating beehives in bear habitat.		X					X	
		Maintain adequate funding for domestic animal control.						X		

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - Biological Resources	Goal: Reduce risks to human life and property from wildfire impacts.	Discourage new development that would expand the WUI.		X					X	X
		Adopt rural development standards to implement appropriate measure to reduce the risk of wildfire impacts.								X
		Provide information to landowners about fuel mitigation.		X						
	Goal: Reduce the invasion and proliferation of noxious weeds and reclaim infested areas with acceptable species.	Minimize site disturbance from construction activities and require revegetation of disturbed areas.								X
		Encourage land use practices that prevent the spread of noxious weed infestations. Provide information to local landowners about conservation easements and other land conservation tools.		X		X				
Natural Resources - Geologic Resources	Goal: Protect development from geologic hazards.	Place new development on stable underlying geology.								X
		Assess individual parcels of land for soil constraints prior to development.								X
	Goal: Support agricultural opportunities.	Support measures to minimize the conversion of important agricultural soils to non-agricultural use. Identify existing agricultural uses on lands with important agricultural soils and monitor changes in use.	X			X		X	X	X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - Geologic Resources	Goal: Support agricultural opportunities.	Support measures that allow continued agricultural land uses, including providing farming landowners with information about marketing, value-added uses, and diversification.		X				X	X	
		Support efforts to link local products with local consumers, such as the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition and other groups.						X		
		Provide information to new landowners about living in areas with existing agriculture and forestry operations.		X						
	Goal: Protect hillsides and other areas from erosion.	Map steep slopes and erosive soils prior to development in order to guide development away from steep slopes and evaluate potential impacts to adjacent development.	X							X
		Follow hillside development, grading and drainage regulations for new construction.								X
		Minimize and mitigate potential erosion resulting from construction activity or other land uses that may affect the landscape and surrounding resources.								X
		Discourage construction of roads on slopes greater than 25%.		X					X	X
	Goal: Preserve scenic open space qualities.	Discourage development that impacts viewsheds.		X					X	X
		Locate new construction such that it does not adversely impact the viewshed along Highway 83 and other important view points from waterways and main travel corridors.							X	X
		Screen gravel operations and industrial uses from rivers and major roads.								X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - Water Resources	Goal: Protect surface water resources by maintaining surface water quality, quantity and instream flows and groundwater quality and quantity.	Monitor watershed activities to ensure the protection of public health and environmental integrity.	X					X		
		Discourage chemical applications adjacent to stream or rivers.		X					X	
		Minimize non-point source runoff by requiring best management practices for timber, agricultural and construction operations.							X	X
		Coordinate land use planning with sewer service boundary.			X					X
		Develop programs that emphasize water conservation measures including xeriscaping.		X						
	Goal: Promote natural stream function and stability.	Encourage stream restoration efforts that promote naturally stable river systems.		X		X		X		
		Use streambank protection measures that do not cause impacts to other property owners or negatively impact fisheries or other wildlife habitat.		X					X	X
		Preserve the floodplain for flood attenuation, aquifer recharge, fish and wildlife habitat, buffer for pollutants and protection of public health and safety.				X				X
		Ensure that gravel operations do not degrade water quality or encourage capture of riparian resources.								X
		Ensure that new development is placed an adequate distance from watercourses to protect the watercourse and its associated natural habitat.								X
	Goal: Protect wetland and riparian corridors to buffer water bodies as well as provide wildlife habitat and movement areas.									



SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Natural Resources - Water Resources	Goal: Protect wetland and riparian corridors to buffer water bodies as well as provide wildlife habitat and movement areas.	Adopt setback requirements for development adjacent to areas of wetland or riparian resource, including a vegetative buffer.								X
		Promote best management practices for development and construction projects along wetlands and water bodies to reduce impacts to surface water quality and recharge zones.		X						
		Maintain and revegetate riparian areas and floodplains where necessary to hold soil in place, prevent erosion and provide for flood and storm water storage.				X				
		Preserve existing wetlands and restore historic wetlands wherever possible.				X				
		Minimize vegetation removal in existing riparian and wetland areas.				X				
	Goal: Protect development and public infrastructure from flood hazards.	Do not allow new development of homes, commercial or industrial buildings in the 100-year floodplain.								X
		Require that developers conduct detailed analyses to determine actual flood elevations and flood hazards before development is permitted in or near the designated 100-year or 500-year floodplain or other flood hazard area.								X
		Require that all lots in new subdivisions have a buildable area and road access that are naturally outside flood hazard areas, unless mitigation is approved.								X

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Natural Resources - Water Resources	Goal: Protect development and public infrastructure from flood hazards.	Require that landowners demonstrate that proposed development will be free from high groundwater hazards.								X
	Goal: Protect and conserve natural waterways and shorelines.	Explore the need for additional shoreline protection measures or setbacks.	X							X
		Work with state and federal agencies to assess the impacts of wave damage on shorelines from motorized recreational uses on lakes.	X							
		Require that public infrastructure minimally impacts streams and floodplains.								X
Natural Resources - Air Quality	Goal: Maintain and improve existing air quality in the Plan Area.	Promote land use practices and types of development that minimize impacts on air quality.		X					X	X
		Promote educational programs which outline existing air quality regulations and voluntary methods of protecting air quality within the Plan Area.		X						
		Minimize open burning of slash by encouraging the use of slash as a resource.		X			X			
		Control fugitive road dust.			X				X	X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Economy	Goal: Enhance opportunities in the Plan Area to produce, utilize and market forest products that benefit the local community and business while maintaining or enhancing forest ecosystems and their diversity in the Plan Area.	Strengthen and diversify the local forest products economy, encouraging new uses of forest products including small diameter logs and biomass.					X			
		Encourage local utilization of forest products, when appropriate.		X			X		X	
		Evaluate forest management practices for both their effectiveness in producing forest products and also to maintaining and enhancing forest ecosystems and their diversity, and watershed health.	X			X				
		Investigate development of biomass fuels to better utilize current fiber sources, diversify the economy and contribute to local energy conservation.	X							
		Support community and small forestry operations.					X	X		
		Goal: Encourage continued sustainable agriculture.								
	Goal: Focus on tourism business development that also enhances quality of life in the Plan Area.	Encourage development of low impact tourism opportunities in the Plan Area that focus on natural amenities.		X			X	X	X	
		Research and develop ways to encourage appealing and attractive appearance of the town of Seeley Lake to promote tourism.	X	X				X	X	
		Use the Montana Host program resources where appropriate.		X				X		

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Economy	Goal: Maintain and enhance the economy of Seeley Lake to support the healthy environment and year-round economic opportunities for all residents of the Plan Area.	Encourage the development of business support services, such as communications, equipment and personnel.					X	X		
		Encourage development new businesses in the commercial core of the Plan Area.					X			
		Support businesses in the region that employ residents of the region while maintaining the unique character of the Plan Area.					X			
		Pursue economic diversity of the local economy.					X			
		Maintain a high quality of rural lifestyle and maintain and protect resource values by regulating new development.								X
		Recognize that well-situated additional growth in certain areas may be appropriate to develop the viability of existing businesses and to help fund necessary infrastructure improvements.		X					X	X
		Develop additional job opportunities, especially those providing a livable wage, for all economic and social classes within the community.					X			
		Support businesses rooted in local culture and tradition that help uphold the uniqueness of the community.					X			
		Promote small-scale industry and traditional products and services.		X			X			

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Housing	Goal: Promote housing development that meets the needs of future residents, provides an economically diverse housing stock, respects the capacities of existing and future development of public services and respects neighborhood character.	Encourage smaller, town-sized lots near the center of town when future conditions allow.			X				X	X
		Encourage private, governmental and non-profit agencies in their efforts to promote affordable housing construction and innovative neighborhood design in area(s) appropriate for development.		X			X	X		
		Encourage development that includes a mix of building sizes, footprints, lot sizes and building types in appropriate areas.		X				X		
		Ensure that new development in rural locations is located where impacts to the natural environment can be mitigated and that it pays the cost of extending infrastructure.								X
		Encourage new development to be located near existing services and where the WUI will not be further expanded.		X						X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Housing	Goal: Promote housing development that meets the needs of future residents, provides an economically diverse housing stock, respects the capacities of existing and future development of public services and respects neighborhood character.	Encourage a continuing community conversation about the types of affordable housing tools and their applicability and feasibility for the Plan Area. The Seeley Lake Regional Plan encourages the use of inclusionary zoning and/or other methods to provide housing to groups designated as those in need in Chapter 5. The Seeley Lake Regional Plan encourages the use of density bonuses in areas where infrastructure improvements exist. Houses erected through a density bonus program should specifically target groups designated as those in need in Chapter 5.		X				X		X
	Goal: Ensure that housing development and upgrades are compatible with other elements of the Seeley Lake Regional Plan.	Create and disseminate an information packet explaining development policies and guidelines within the Plan Area including contact information for all regulatory agencies, all applicable laws and an outline of procedures for development within the Plan Area.		X						
		Adopt development standards applicable to rural development to ensure that development respects natural environment, wildlife, and ecological values and community character.								X
	Goal: Provide opportunities for a variety of housing types and locations.	Adopt land use implementation tools that accommodate flexibility and variety in design and location of housing.								X
Community Services and Facilities - Road Transportation and Maintenance	Goal: Continue to improve public roads within the Plan Area as needed for public health and safety.	Require that services and utilities are brought up to standards or extended when new roads are constructed or old roads are upgraded.			X					X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Community Services and Facilities - Road Transportation	Goal: Continue to improve public roads within the Plan Area as needed for public health and safety.	Consider using Rural Special Improvement Districts (RSIDs) to fund the upgrading of these services. Require new subdivisions to improve all access roads to anticipated levels of service.			X					X
		Support and seek funding sources for efforts to provide additional multimodal transportation options to serve the Plan Area.			X					X
	Goal: Promote beautification and enhanced natural resource value of transportation corridors.	Encourage landscaping from the edge of the right-of-way or road surface onto private property and up to existing improvements such as structures and parking areas, where landscaping will not serve as an attractant to animals and increase animal-vehicle collisions.								
		Eliminate noxious weeds along roads.			X				X	X
		Work with MDT to provide crossings for wildlife as part of the Highway 83 planned improvements.				X		X		
		Promote road densities within recommended guidelines for fish and wildlife resources for resource protection areas.				X		X		
		Evaluate recreational use of roads and develop strategies to keep uses compatible and safe.	X			X				
Community Services and Facilities - Utilities	Goal: Ensure that development of utilities minimizes impacts to natural resources and aesthetics.	Encourage careful placement and design, including color and finish, of towers and antennas to blend with the environment.			X					X
		Locate new utility corridors to minimize conflicts between utilities, wildlife habitat and human development.			X					X
		Continue to place electrical utilities underground wherever feasible. New development should construct electric and communication utilities underground.								
					X					X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Community Services and Facilities - Solid Waste	Goal: Maintain an adequate local facility for the disposal of refuse that is convenient, affordable, aesthetic and safe for the environment.	Maintain and expand recycling collection facilities.			X					
		Prevent all solid waste disposal sites from becoming an attractant to wildlife, especially bears.			X					
		Ensure accessibility to residents by increasing hours of operation.			X					
		Evaluate and plan for future solid waste disposal needs.	X		X					
	Goal: Address seasonal waste disposal issues in downtown Seeley Lake.	Explore the possibility of installing municipal waste containers in areas with high rates of litter in summer months.			X					
		Encourage local businesses that produce waste to provide their customers with convenient disposal facilities.		X	X				X	



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Community Services and Facilities - Drinking Water	Goal: Provide clean, sustainable drinking water to all residents within the Seeley Lake Water District and ensure that water quality is maintained in other areas.	Ensure that water quality is maintained for all residents of the Plan Area.			X					
		Regularly monitor water sources, adequacy of storage facilities and the distribution system within the Seeley Lake Water District.	X		X					
		Expand existing water supply capabilities to the town of Seeley Lake.			X					
		Upgrade delivery lines and storage capacity within the Seeley Lake Water District.			X					
		Encourage water conservation and xeriscaping.		X					X	
Community Services and Facilities - Efficient Treatment of Sewage	Goal: Ensure sewage disposal that prevents pollution of lakes, streams and groundwater.	Require sewage disposal in the Plan Area that minimizes adverse impacts to water quality and other natural resource values.			X					X
		Encourage upgrading of out-of-date or failing septic systems.		X	X				X	
		Find sewage disposal methods that allow more efficient use of land within the water and sewer districts.	X		X					
		Identify and evaluate alternative sewage disposal methods that are appropriate for small-scale applications.	X		X					
		Continue to investigate the feasibility of installing a central sewer system within the community of Seeley Lake.	X		X					
		Continue water quality and degradation studies.	X		X					

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Community Services and Facilities - Health and Human Services	Goal: Enhance and improve health and human services within the Plan Area.	Encourage and support agencies that work with Plan Area residents regarding issues of mental and physical health.		X				X		
		Investigate the feasibility of locating a nursing home or assisted care facility in the community to allow families to spend additional time together.	X							
		Encourage coordination among health and human service providers.		X				X		
		Enhance public awareness of health and human issues and services.		X						
		Support the efforts of the Senior Citizen Center to obtain and operate a van to provide transportation to residents.						X		
Community Services and Facilities - Law Enforcement	Goal: Ensure the community's safety and well being through effective cooperation between law enforcement agencies and public education.	Encourage citizen participation through programs such as 1-800-TIP-MONT, the Seeley Swan Talk, Education and Protection (STTEP) program, other hotlines and monthly coffee meetings with the Sheriff.		X				X	X	
		Maintain the current resident, full-time deputy sheriff in the Plan Area.						X		
Community Services and Facilities - Fire and Emergency Services	Goal: Encourage new development and redevelopment in the Plan area to minimize impacts to the level and distribution of fire and emergency services.	Discourage development that would further expand the currently defined Wildland Urban Interface.		X					X	X
		Encourage development standards for the location, design, and maintenance of structures to reduce flammability and to create a defensible space (firescaping) to reduce wildfire danger.							X	X

SUBJECT	GOAL	ACTION STRATEGY	Data Acquisition and Research	Education	Facilities Planning and Improvements	Restoration and Conservation Activities	Economic Development	Partnership Measures	Voluntary Measures	Regulatory Measures
Community Services and Facilities - Fire and Emergency Services	Goal: Encourage new development and redevelopment in the Plan area to minimize impacts to the level and distribution of fire and emergency services.	Require adequate road and driveway widths for fire suppression and emergency response vehicles.								X
		Encourage residents to put County-issued address on their property to assist fire and emergency services.		X					X	
		Assist local community efforts to reduce fuels in the WUI, including support of the Seeley Lake Fuels Mitigation Task Force.						X		
		Fully implement the Seeley/Swan Fire Plan, and update this plan every five years.						X		
Community Services and Facilities - Education	Goal: Provide the best possible educational opportunities for all residents of the Plan Area.	Support the efforts of the public schools to provide a quality education to each student.		X				X		
		Support lifelong learning opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and interests.		X				X		
Community Services and Facilities - Parks	Goal: Enhance and expand parks facilities within the Plan Area.	Maintain and enhance the Seeley Lake Community Park.						X		
		Provide additional recreational facilities in County Parks within the Seeley Lake Plan Area.			X					
		Locate and develop additional lands for sports fields.			X					
		Explore the use of lands contiguous to the Seeley-Swan High School for additional recreation available to the community.			X					

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Community Services and Facilities - Parks	Goal: Enhance and expand parks facilities within the Plan Area.	Work with other agencies and private landowners to develop new opportunities for recreation including, but not limited to, horse riding trails, ice skating/rollerblading rinks, picnic areas and recreational complexes.						X		
		Encourage new parks, including pocket parks and conservation parkland as part of new development throughout the region. Lands for neighborhood and pocket parks should be dedicated as subdivisions are approved.							X	X
		Acquire lands dedicated for commercial recreation events (snow cross, festivals, concerts, arts & crafts fairs, flea markets, etc.).			X					
	Goal: Expand recreational opportunities.	Provide year-round organized recreational opportunities and instruction for local residents.						X		
		Encourage indoor recreational opportunities such as bowling alleys, theaters, teen centers, family dance/activity centers and swimming pools.						X		
		Promote low cost and low impact recreational projects (such as skating facilities, picnic area development, passive park systems, etc.)			X			X		
		Encourage and support special activities such as craft fairs sponsored by local businesses, groups and artisans.		X				X		
		Promote, maintain, and enhance public access to lands for recreational use.		X				X		
	Goal: Enhance trail connectivity within the Plan Area.	Continue to develop trail systems that connect neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and open spaces around Seeley Lake and through the Plan Area.			X					
		Continue to develop trail systems for a variety of users including walkers, cyclists and motorized users.			X					

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Community Services and Facilities - Trails	Goal: Enhance trail connectivity within the Plan Area.	Encourage new developments in the Plan Area to provide connections to existing trail systems and opportunities to connect to trial systems through future adjacent development.			X				X	X
		Provide, map and clearly mark routes that provide ingress and egress to developed areas of the Plan area from surrounding public lands.	X		X					
		Keep motorized trails away from critical habitat.			X	X				
		Review and update trail design standards in the "Connecting the Community" trail guide.			X					
		Continue to develop trail systems that provide the opportunity to connect the Seeley Plan Area with adjacent communities and surrounding public lands.			X					
Community Services and Facilities - General Infrastructure	Goal: Provide adequate, safe and affordable services and infrastructure for all residents.	Seek funding through state and federal grant programs to assist low and moderate-income residents to upgrade home infrastructure such as septic systems, waste disposal and water supply.			X			X		
		Ensure that new development pays the full cost of infrastructure needed by that development.			X					X
		Promote coordination between different entities to maximize the efficiency of infrastructure projects.			X			X		
		Continue to monitor growth and development to ensure infrastructure needs are adequately met.	X		X					
	Goal: Involve the public in discussions about infrastructure projects and strategy.	Encourage and help entities to provide public forums concerning major infrastructure projects and planning. The Community Council should hold (at minimum) yearly public meetings to obtain citizen input on project needs for 5 to 10 year programs. Suggestions should be submitted to Missoula County for consideration in the County's annual road maintenance program and scheduled through the Capital Improvement Plan.		X	X			X		

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>GOAL</b>	<b>ACTION STRATEGY</b>	<b>Data Acquisition and Research</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Facilities Planning and Improvements</b>	<b>Restoration and Conservation Activities</b>	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Partnership Measures</b>	<b>Voluntary Measures</b>	<b>Regulatory Measures</b>
Community Services and Facilities - General Infrastructure	Goal: Involve the public in discussions about infrastructure projects and strategy.	Establish and maintain an infrastructure committee of the Community Council that includes chairs of appropriate Boards and that meets regularly in open meetings to review plans and progress.			X			X		

## RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

### For More Information:

#### **Planning Documents**

*Missoula County Growth Policy 2005 Update*. Available at  
<ftp://www.co.missoula.mt.us/opg2/Documents/RegionalPlans/GrowthPolicy>

*1989 Seeley Lake Regional Plan Amendment*. Available at  
<ftp://www.co.missoula.mt.us/opg2/Documents/CompPlans/SeeleyLake>

*Seeley Lake Community Council 2002 Community Development Guide*

#### **History and Culture**

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Salish/Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee.  
PO Box 550, St. Ignatius, Montana 59865  
website: <http://www.cskt.org/salishculture.htm>

*Missoula County Inventory of Conservation Resources*. 1992. Available at  
<ftp://www.co.missoula.mt.us/opg2/Documents/LRCounty/InventoryResources>

*Cabin Fever: A Centennial Collection of Stories About the Seeley Lake Area*. Seeley Lake Writer's Club, Susan Vernon, ed. 1990.

Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce website:  
<http://www.virtualmontana.com/montanadirectory/montanalistings/GC/montana435.htm>

#### **Natural Resources**

*Crown of the Continent; Profile of a Treasured Landscape*. Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Consortium. Available at <http://www.crownofthecontinent.org/preface.htm>

*Landscape Assessment for the Clearwater Valley of Montana*. Prepared by Clearwater Resource Council, December 2008 Update. Available at <http://www.crcmt.org>

*Biological Data Available in the Seeley Lake Planning Region of Missoula Montana: Resource Status and Vulnerability to Human Development Pressures*. Prepared by Victoria Edwards, Ecosystem Management Services, LLC, October 2006.  
Available at the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office and at  
[ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/MC\\_Bio\\_Rpt\\_1106.pdf](ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/MC_Bio_Rpt_1106.pdf)

*Vegetation Communities in the Seeley Lake Plan Area*, prepared by Rural Initiatives staff.

Available at the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office and at  
[ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/VegCom\\_0107.pdf](ftp://co.missoula.mt.us/ruralftp/SeeleyLakeRegionalPlan/VegCom_0107.pdf)

*Missoula County Community Wildfire Protection Plan*, 2005. Available at  
<http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/oes>

*Seeley-Swan Fire Plan*. May 2008 Update. Available through Ecosystem Management Research Institute at <http://www.emri.org>

*Missoula County Floodplain Regulations*, 2004. Available at <ftp://www.co.missoula.mt.us/opgftp/Documents/CurrentRegulations/CoFloodplain/CoFloodplainRegs2004.pdf>

**Economy, Population and Housing, Community Services and Facilities**

*Missoula County Growth Policy 2005 Update*. Available at <ftp://www.co.missoula.mt.us/opg2/Documents/RegionalPlans/GrowthPolicy>

*The North American Rocky Mountain West: Growth and Change in the Region's Economy*. Prepared by Dr. Larry Swanson, O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West, March, 2006. Website: <http://crmw.org>

2000 U.S. Census Data. Available at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>

*A Socioeconomic Profile: Missoula County, Montana, Seeley Lake CDP*. Produced by the Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System Community (EPSC), March, 2006  
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