

Seeley Swan

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## Seeley Lake Sewer District

### Hookups Included in \$9.5 Million Estimate

by Nathan Bourne  
Pathfinder

The Seeley Lake Sewer District Board received a new cost estimate for Phase I of the sewer system at its monthly meeting Thursday, Sept. 18. The new estimate from Great West Engineering is \$9.5 million.

The estimate came in \$2.8 million more than previous estimates from 2012. It includes a sequencing batch reactor (SBR) wastewater treatment plant and Phase I of the collection system including hookups.

Phase I of the collection system includes all commercial property on the East side of Highway 83,

See ESTIMATE page 13

## A Look Inside:

- Trailer Fire Near Potomac
- Fracking Documentary Reviews
- Kurt's Polaris Celebrated 25th Anniversary
- Fyfe Releases Fiction Novel
- Meet the Teacher - Pohlman Settles in at Potomac School
- Blackhawks Week in Review



Swan Valley resident and master log home builder Gary Lazarowski (middle) explaining to Montana Conservation Corps crew members how to cut a diamond or v-notch using a chainsaw. This is the main notch used in the Smith Creek Schoolhouse reconstruction project at the Condon Work Station. Volunteer Steve Lamar (right) looks on.

Photo by Colleen Kesterson, Pathfinder

## Historic Smith Creek School Being Rebuilt

Story & photos by Colleen Kesterson  
Pathfinder

Construction of a replica of the Smith Creek School, a one room schoolhouse in Condon, began Sept. 8 at the Condon Work Station with the help of Montana's Conservation Corps (MCC), Flathead National Forest (FNF) staff and community volunteers. Those working on the

project hope the walls will be up before winter and the project will be complete next year.

The Smith Creek School was built in 1918 of larch logs and sited close to the then main road in the Swan Valley near present day Kauffman Road. Children of early Swan Valley residents were educated there until 1932.

See SCHOOLHOUSE page 10

## Warrant Sought for Seeley Lake Burglar

by Andi Bourne  
Pathfinder

Missoula County Sheriff's Deputy Robert Parcell believes he has identified the individual who has burglarized four residences and committed one theft crime including a vehicle and residence in downtown Seeley Lake since the middle of August. The burglar left the state before being apprehended. Deputy Parcell is seeking a warrant for his arrest on burglary and theft charges.

After hours of interviews, Deputy Parcell determined the five crimes spanning from Aug. 15 - Sept. 5

See BURGLARIES page 4



Photo provided

Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Inc. (SFI) recognized the Montana Forest Restoration Committee and two committee members Pyramid Mountain Lumber Inc. and F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber Company with the 2014 SFI President's Conservation Award. Pictured (L-R): Robert Bonnie (Under Secretary USDA), Greg Johnson (President F.H. Stoltze), Kathy Abusow (President, SFI), Dylan Brown (Resource Forester, Pyramid), Andrew de Vries (Vice-President, SFI). Full story page 3.



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**Fracking  
(continued from pg. 5)**

communities need to pass zoning or ordinances that prohibit fracking.

Another attendee asked, “A couple of times in the film there was a fellow in the stream with a shovel, shoveling water. What exactly was he trying to do?”

Troutman explained the scene was a metaphor for futility just as another image of someone walking down a road kicking a can was a metaphor for passing responsibility to another person or agency.

Ken Kronsperger, who prior to retirement had been involved in fracking for 15 years, said, “It sounds to me like the biggest problem is enforcement. Fracking really has nothing to do with the problems you presented in this program. What you’re dealing with is actually non-enforcement of the laws that exist.”

Troutman replied, “Even if all of our laws were enforced to the eleventh degree, on a scale of 1-10, you cannot stop the effects of well casing degradation. You cannot stop the effects of the pressure moving things underground.”

Kronsperger said, “Why do you assume that’s true when it is not?” At that point Pribanic said they should move on and asked for other questions but many people were leaving or had already left.

The documentary was also shown the next day to the 6-8 graders at Seeley Lake Elementary (SLE). School Superintendent, Chris Stout, told the students, “Our purpose here [at SLE] is to create critical thinkers. There is no right or wrong answer to any of this. We want you to take this information home, take an intelligent stance and be critical thinkers.”

Hearing about the school screening, some town residents expressed their opinion that the film was so one-sided that students could not make a reasoned judgment based on it alone.

The Pathfinder subsequently made an attempt to get opinions from some of the adults who had viewed the film the previous evening. Of the two who were willing to comment, both positioned themselves as opposed to fracking and both asked to remain anonymous.

Both said the documentary was too long and was definitely biased

against fracking. One said the presentation “was not fair to both sides.” The other said she felt “they were hitting you over the head with their point of view.” Both agreed that, nonetheless, the documentary presented important information about fracking.

Riverkeeper O’Connell agreed the film would benefit from a tighter focus and a shorter length. He called instances such as the water shoveling imagery “artistic flourishes” and wrote them off to youth and inexperience. O’Connell said, “Most important to me was the information that came across, not the method of delivery.”

O’Connell dismissed Kronsperger’s arguments as based on the vertical drilling of thirty years ago. He said that the chemicals used today are more complex and more toxic. He emphasized that it is irrefutable that people are getting sick, a fact even the companies involved in fracking do not deny. They just deny that they are responsible. He said, “It’s hard to deny causation when the chemicals weren’t there before drilling and are there afterwards.”



*Photo provided by Steve Lamar*  
**Students in front of the Smith Creek School in 1932. Located near present day Kauffman Road, it was built in 1918 and operated until 1932. The cedar shingles were attached to the ridge pole and purlins (roof structure). There was no roofing besides the shingles.**

**Schoolhouse  
(continued from pg. 1)**

According to Upper Swan Valley Historical Society (USVHS) president Steve Lamar, the original schoolhouse had only four-foot long floor planks. He surmised that they were sawed at a local mill and then brought in by pack animal to the school site.

Lamar, who lives on Kauffman Road, said that he could see the Smith Creek School from his front

door until one summer day in 2011, his “phone was ringing off the hook.” People were telling him that the school had been cut in pieces and stacked in a burn pile.

According to FNF Swan Lake Ranger District Ranger Rich Kehr, the building was rotten and falling down. “It was melting into the landscape,” he said.

It was located on former Plum Creek land that the FNF had newly acquired. A contractor for FNF was cleaning up logging slash and because of a communication failure, the building was sawed up and the logs were stacked to be burned.

However, some of the original logs were salvaged from the burn pile and an exhibit at the USVHS museum site will be made from them for the public to view at a later date.

“It was an accident,” said Flathead National Forest (FNF) recreation specialist Michael Downs. “We [FNF]

want to make it right, to mitigate the situation.”

Downs said that the FNF wanted to rebuild the school using MCC, a nonprofit group that employs young people who come to work in Montana’s wild places through the state’s AmeriCorps program.

“We want to make it a collaborative effort with the Swan residents, the MCC and the FNF,” said Downs.

Swan Valley residents Bill Anderson and Dick Wolf supplied enough lodge pole logs to build the structure. Neil Meyer, also from the Swan Valley, provided the use of his skid steer for the project. Lamar, who built his own log home, is offering his assistance.

Gary Lazarowski, a graduate of the Mackie School of Log Building in Prince George, British Columbia, instructed the



**MCC members using draw knives to peel lodgepole pine logs for the Smith Creek School project.**



**Using a cant hook to turn the logs. In the foreground the floor joists are laid.**

workers in the art of log fitting. He taught them how to use calipers to scribe a V notch, a chisel to rough out the notch, an adze, similar to a broad axe, to flatten logs and in the beginning an axe to cut the notch.

“When we found out the MCC members were chain saw certified, we switched to chain saws [to cut the notches]. The work is much faster,” said Lazarowski. “There are no predictions but we hope to be to the top of the six foot walls by the end of the season.”

According to Lazarowski, the construction of the log gable ends



**MCC crew member sawing a rough V-notch (above) and chiseling a rough notch (right). The crew was first taught using only hand tools. They switched to chainsaws to speed up the process.**



**A corner from the original Smith Creek Schoolhouse (left) and a replication done by the MCC crew (above). According to volunteer Steve Lamar the diamond or v-notch is the most difficult part of the construction. This is no longer a common notch. The western saddle notch is more common today. Lamar feels fortunate to have the help of Gary Lazarowski because of education and expertise in this style of log construction.**

and the roof system consisting of purlins and ridgepole will be started at ground level and then lifted in place. The cedar shakes will be placed directly on top of the ridge and purlins as in the original building.

Community volunteers and five members of the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) along with the FNF started working together Sept. 8 to reconstruct the building at the Condon Work Center. MCC worked until Sept. 17 and on Sept. 22, FNF employees took over the job.

The public is invited to visit the site and see the progress.

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**SVCC Sept. 16 Meeting  
Fire Bosses Inform About  
Prescribed Burn**

by Colleen Kesterson  
*Pathfinder*

Assistant Fire Management Officer for the Swan Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest (FNF), Justin Kaber and Engine Captain Brett Pargman spoke to a small group at the Swan Valley Community Hall Tuesday, Sept. 16. Kaber and Pargman spoke about the prescribed burn that was ignited Monday Sept. 15 in the Mission Mountains uplands of the Swan Valley.

About 200 acres were burned Monday. Tuesday the burn was put on hold until the week of Sept. 22. The state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) shut them down due to the air quality from this fire and others in the area.

The 1,036 acre prescribed burn area was mostly located in the Mission Mountain Wilderness with a few roadless acres out of the Wilderness to the east. The fire was started on the east and continued westward, upslope and up drainage. The area consists of clear cuts, heavy dead and down timber, shrubs and grasses. Tuesday, fire crews

were mopping up the edges of the east burn.

Kaber and Pargman responded to questions from the group.

**How much do prescribed burns cost compared to wildfire suppression?**

Funds for prescribed burns are allocated by Congress yearly and come from a different fund than the fire suppression funding. Depending on the duration, precipitation received and how much labor and equipment is used on this prescribed burn, it will cost \$30,000 to \$40,000 as compared to two to four million to suppress a fire of this size.

**Do you let wilderness fires burn?**

We are limited because the Mission Mountain Wilderness is relatively small at 75,000 acres compared to the Bob Marshall Wilderness which is more than one million acres. We can’t let a fire just burn during July as the possibility for spread to the valley is very high.

Prescribed burns like this provide barriers to fire spread, so if a