

# PROCLAMATION

## MISSOULA COUNTY, MONTANA

**WHEREAS**, Missoula County is located within the homelands of the Confederated Salish, Upper Kalispel and Kootenai Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and Missoula County have a longstanding, mutually respectful and supportive professional and personal relationship; and

**WHEREAS**, Missoula County has long supported community organizations such as the Swan Ecosystem Center and its successor Swan Valley Connections that actively maintain and protect conservation resources for generations of human and wild inhabitants of the County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Swan Ecosystem Center partnered in a unique and challenging purchase of lands important to the partners and to the health of the Swan Valley watershed now known as the Elk Creek Conservation Area; and

**WHEREAS**, this partnership has protected hundreds of acres of valuable ancestral forests, wetlands, riparian and riverine lands that are unique in Missoula County; and

**WHEREAS**, the partnership has placed these lands under a conservation easement that will protect the lands, waters and wildlife habitat in perpetuity; and

**WHEREAS**, the partnership provides valuable local educational opportunities for indigenous and nonindigenous students to learn the history of the land and its value for future generations; and

**WHEREAS**, the partnership provided an opportunity for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Bonneville Power Administration to advance their resident fish protection objectives, as well as to help protect ancestral lands important to the history and future of the Tribes and tribal/federal conservation objectives; and

**WHEREAS**, The Nature Conservancy, Montana Land Reliance, Vital Ground Foundation, United States Forest Service, Clark Fork Coalition, American Public Land Exchange Company and neighboring landowners all support the partnership and its acquisition and stewardship of the Elk Creek Conservation Area and encourage Missoula County to recognize this award-winning project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Missoula County Open Lands Citizen Advisory Committee unanimously recommended that the Missoula County commissioners recognize the outstanding work of the partnership in acquiring and managing the Elk Creek Conservation Area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Elk Creek Conservation Area is truly a community partnership and success story that took years to develop and bring to fruition; and



**WHEREAS**, Elk Creek is typically the single most important bull trout spawning stream in the Swan River Valley; and

**WHEREAS**, the Elk Creek Conservation Area partnership helped launch the Montana Legacy Project, which protected an additional 80,000 acres of land in the Swan Valley; and

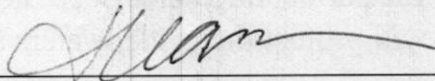
**WHEREAS**, the Elk Creek Conservation Area partnership has helped neighbors protect an additional 1,000 nearby privately owned acres under conservation easement; and


**WHEREAS**, the Elk Creek Conservation Area partnership inspires others to build meaningful and necessary relationships with communities and organizations stewarding this land since time immemorial.

**NOW THEREFORE, WE**, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners, hereby recognize and highly praise the work of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Swan Ecosystem Center and its successor, Swan Valley Connections, for their joint efforts to sustain valuable natural resources in the Swan Valley through their partnership in acquiring and managing the Elk Creek Conservation Area of Missoula County. We further urge all Missoula County residents and visitors to recognize the efforts of the partnership to work together for the benefit of critters large and small to make the Swan Valley a place that future generations will continue to appreciate and treasure.

**DATED THIS 10<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF MAY 2022**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MISSOULA COUNTY**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Juanita Yero, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Josh Slotnick, Commissioner

  
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David Strohmaier, Commissioner

