

CINNABAR

FOUNDATION

2015 Tawney Opportunity Grant Recipients

Dateline: October 29, 2015

At its October board meeting, the Cinnabar Foundation's board of directors selected two organizations — **Northwest Connections** and the **Park County Environmental Council** — as recipients of their 2015 *Tawney Opportunity Grants*.

The Cinnabar Foundation annually sets aside funds to help organizations meet unpredictable challenges or seize opportunities that, while consistent with the Foundation's goals, arise outside the Foundation's regular granting cycle. These *Tawney Opportunity Grants* provide unanticipated bursts of enabling energy — just as Phil Tawney did.

“This means so much to us as we work towards our merger with the Swan Ecosystem Center, while also continuing all our conservation and education programs,” said Marnie Criley, Northwest Connections' interim executive director. “On behalf of the ‘new’ organization, we look forward to many years of continued strong relationship with Cinnabar.”

The Park County Environmental Council (PCEC) is currently working to ensure that a Canadian mining company's proposed mineral exploration project in Emigrant Gulch near Yellowstone National Park and the historic Chico Hot Springs undergoes a thorough environmental analysis prior to the approval of any action that allows that allows the project to move forward. The mining company proposes to undertake its first year of exploration under a “categorical exclusion” from the National Environmental Policy Act, which would insulate the project's harmful effects from scrutiny. “It is wonderful to have Cinnabar's encouragement for the work that we are doing on the ground in Park County,” said Michelle Uberuaga, PCEC's executive director. “The *Tawney Opportunity Grant* makes a huge difference for us!”

A founding board member of the Cinnabar Foundation, Phil Tawney was one of Montana's most dedicated conservation activists. If anything characterized Phil, it was an eagerness to take on any pressing conservation issue, no matter how daunting the challenge. Whether it concerned trout streams, wildlife habitat, wild land protection, or environmental quality, Phil never would focus on the problem — only the possibility buried in its solution. Montana and the cause of conservation suffered a severe setback when leukemia claimed Phil in 1995. The following year, the Foundation's board created the *Tawney Opportunity Grant* program to honor Phil's service and sustain his memory.