

Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax
Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)

▶ Do not enter social security numbers on this form as it may be made public.
▶ Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for instructions and the latest information.

A For the **2018** calendar year, or tax year beginning and ending

B Check if applicable: <input type="checkbox"/> Address change <input type="checkbox"/> Name change <input type="checkbox"/> Initial return <input type="checkbox"/> Final return/terminated <input type="checkbox"/> Amended return <input type="checkbox"/> Application pending	C Name of organization THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.		D Employer identification number 87-0483446
	Doing business as		E Telephone number 406-549-8650
	Number and street (or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address)	Room/suite	G Gross receipts \$ 2,831,016.
	20 FORT MISSOULA ROAD		H(a) Is this a group return for subordinates? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code MISSOULA, MT 59804-7202		H(b) Are all subordinates included? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
F Name and address of principal officer: RYAN LUTEY SAME AS C ABOVE		If "No," attach a list. (see instructions)	
I Tax-exempt status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 501(c)(3) <input type="checkbox"/> 501(c) () ◀ (insert no.) <input type="checkbox"/> 4947(a)(1) or <input type="checkbox"/> 527			
J Website: ▶ WWW.VITALGROUND.ORG			
K Form of organization: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Trust <input type="checkbox"/> Association <input type="checkbox"/> Other ▶		L Year of formation: 1990	M State of legal domicile: UT

Part I Summary		Prior Year	Current Year
Activities & Governance	1 Briefly describe the organization's mission or most significant activities: PROTECT AND RESTORE NORTH AMERICA'S GRIZZLY BEAR POPULATIONS BY CONSERVING WILDLIFE HABITAT.		
	2 Check this box <input type="checkbox"/> if the organization discontinued its operations or disposed of more than 25% of its net assets.		
	3 Number of voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1a)	3	19
	4 Number of independent voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1b)	4	19
	5 Total number of individuals employed in calendar year 2018 (Part V, line 2a)	5	11
	6 Total number of volunteers (estimate if necessary)	6	28
	7 a Total unrelated business revenue from Part VIII, column (C), line 12	7a	0.
b Net unrelated business taxable income from Form 990-T, line 38	7b	0.	
Revenue	8 Contributions and grants (Part VIII, line 1h)	1,972,843.	2,784,128.
	9 Program service revenue (Part VIII, line 2g)	0.	0.
	10 Investment income (Part VIII, column (A), lines 3, 4, and 7d)	2,343.	4,749.
	11 Other revenue (Part VIII, column (A), lines 5, 6d, 8c, 9c, 10c, and 11e)	49,511.	43.
	12 Total revenue - add lines 8 through 11 (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12)	2,024,697.	2,788,920.
Expenses	13 Grants and similar amounts paid (Part IX, column (A), lines 1-3)	57,825.	51,250.
	14 Benefits paid to or for members (Part IX, column (A), line 4)	0.	0.
	15 Salaries, other compensation, employee benefits (Part IX, column (A), lines 5-10)	478,065.	537,033.
	16a Professional fundraising fees (Part IX, column (A), line 11e)	0.	0.
	b Total fundraising expenses (Part IX, column (D), line 25) ▶ 150,415.		
	17 Other expenses (Part IX, column (A), lines 11a-11d, 11f-24e)	534,929.	380,081.
	18 Total expenses. Add lines 13-17 (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25)	1,070,819.	968,364.
19 Revenue less expenses. Subtract line 18 from line 12	953,878.	1,820,556.	
Net Assets or Fund Balances	20 Total assets (Part X, line 16)	Beginning of Current Year 6,074,046.	End of Year 7,826,580.
	21 Total liabilities (Part X, line 26)	181,899.	131,913.
	22 Net assets or fund balances. Subtract line 21 from line 20	5,892,147.	7,694,667.

Part II Signature Block

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

Sign Here	Signature of officer	Date			
	RYAN LUTEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Type or print name and title				
Paid Preparer Use Only	Print/Type preparer's name PHILIP L. YASENAK, CPA	Preparer's signature PHILIP L. YASENAK, C	Date 05/13/19	Check if self-employed <input type="checkbox"/>	PTIN P01248379
	Firm's name ▶ WIPFLI LLP	Firm's EIN ▶ 39-0758449	Phone no. 406.728.1800		
Firm's address ▶ 101 EAST FRONT STREET #301		MISSOULA, MT 59802			

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? (see instructions) Yes No

Part III Statement of Program Service Accomplishments

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part III [X]

1 Briefly describe the organization's mission: VITAL GROUND WORKS TO ENSURE THE RECOVERY AND LONG-TERM SURVIVAL OF GRIZZLY BEARS AND THE MANY NATIVE SPECIES THAT SHARE THEIR RANGE THROUGH THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF WILDLIFE HABITAT AND LANDSCAPE LINKAGES, AND BY SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS THAT

2 Did the organization undertake any significant program services during the year which were not listed on the prior Form 990 or 990-EZ? [] Yes [X] No If "Yes," describe these new services on Schedule O.

3 Did the organization cease conducting, or make significant changes in how it conducts, any program services? [] Yes [X] No If "Yes," describe these changes on Schedule O.

4 Describe the organization's program service accomplishments for each of its three largest program services, as measured by expenses. Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations are required to report the amount of grants and allocations to others, the total expenses, and revenue, if any, for each program service reported.

4a (Code:) (Expenses \$ 295,574. including grants of \$) (Revenue \$ 2,159.) LAND CONSERVATION:

VITAL GROUND IDENTIFIES CRUCIAL GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT ON PRIVATE LAND AND WORKS WITH WILLING LANDOWNERS TO PROTECT THE LAND'S CONSERVATION VALUES. THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED BY ACQUIRING CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON THE LAND THROUGH DONATION OR BARGAIN PURCHASE, OR BY PURCHASING LAND IN FEE TITLE THEN MANAGING IT TO BENEFIT WILDLIFE AND THE PUBLIC. VITAL GROUND HAS A PERPETUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO MONITOR THE LANDS ON WHICH IT HOLDS CONSERVATION EASEMENTS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE CONSERVATION EASEMENTS. VITAL GROUND HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO RESTORE AND MANAGE THE LAND IT OWNS TO PROVIDE QUALITY HABITAT FOR THE BENEFIT OF GRIZZLY BEARS AND OTHER WILDLIFE. IN ADDITION TO DEVELOPING AND

4b (Code:) (Expenses \$ 429,582. including grants of \$ 51,250.) (Revenue \$ 3,138.) CONSERVATION EDUCATION:

VITAL GROUND PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT GRIZZLY BEARS, ASSOCIATED WILDLIFE AND HABITAT CONSERVATION THROUGH ITS PUBLICATIONS, SPECIAL MAILERS, WEBSITE, EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA, LIVE PRESENTATIONS, VIDEOS AND OTHER MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES. THE ORGANIZATION ALSO PARTICIPATES IN COLLABORATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF GRIZZLY BEARS AND THEIR HABITAT, PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND HUMANS AND ENHANCE THE SURVIVAL OF GRIZZLY BEARS.

4c (Code:) (Expenses \$ including grants of \$) (Revenue \$)

4d Other program services (Describe in Schedule O.) (Expenses \$ including grants of \$) (Revenue \$)

4e Total program service expenses 725,156.

Part IV Checklist of Required Schedules

	Yes	No
1 Is the organization described in section 501(c)(3) or 4947(a)(1) (other than a private foundation)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule A</i>	X	
2 Is the organization required to complete <i>Schedule B, Schedule of Contributors</i> ?	X	
3 Did the organization engage in direct or indirect political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part I</i>		X
4 Section 501(c)(3) organizations. Did the organization engage in lobbying activities, or have a section 501(h) election in effect during the tax year? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part II</i>		X
5 Is the organization a section 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), or 501(c)(6) organization that receives membership dues, assessments, or similar amounts as defined in Revenue Procedure 98-19? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part III</i>		X
6 Did the organization maintain any donor advised funds or any similar funds or accounts for which donors have the right to provide advice on the distribution or investment of amounts in such funds or accounts? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part I</i>		X
7 Did the organization receive or hold a conservation easement, including easements to preserve open space, the environment, historic land areas, or historic structures? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part II</i>	X	
8 Did the organization maintain collections of works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part III</i>		X
9 Did the organization report an amount in Part X, line 21, for escrow or custodial account liability, serve as a custodian for amounts not listed in Part X; or provide credit counseling, debt management, credit repair, or debt negotiation services? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part IV</i>		X
10 Did the organization, directly or through a related organization, hold assets in temporarily restricted endowments, permanent endowments, or quasi-endowments? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part V</i>	X	
11 If the organization's answer to any of the following questions is "Yes," then complete Schedule D, Parts VI, VII, VIII, IX, or X as applicable.		
a Did the organization report an amount for land, buildings, and equipment in Part X, line 10? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part VI</i>	X	
b Did the organization report an amount for investments - other securities in Part X, line 12 that is 5% or more of its total assets reported in Part X, line 16? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part VII</i>	X	
c Did the organization report an amount for investments - program related in Part X, line 13 that is 5% or more of its total assets reported in Part X, line 16? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part VIII</i>		X
d Did the organization report an amount for other assets in Part X, line 15 that is 5% or more of its total assets reported in Part X, line 16? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part IX</i>		X
e Did the organization report an amount for other liabilities in Part X, line 25? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part X</i>		X
f Did the organization's separate or consolidated financial statements for the tax year include a footnote that addresses the organization's liability for uncertain tax positions under FIN 48 (ASC 740)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part X</i>	X	
12a Did the organization obtain separate, independent audited financial statements for the tax year? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Parts XI and XII</i>	X	
b Was the organization included in consolidated, independent audited financial statements for the tax year? <i>If "Yes," and if the organization answered "No" to line 12a, then completing Schedule D, Parts XI and XII is optional</i>		X
13 Is the organization a school described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule E</i>		X
14a Did the organization maintain an office, employees, or agents outside of the United States?		X
b Did the organization have aggregate revenues or expenses of more than \$10,000 from grantmaking, fundraising, business, investment, and program service activities outside the United States, or aggregate foreign investments valued at \$100,000 or more? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule F, Parts I and IV</i>		X
15 Did the organization report on Part IX, column (A), line 3, more than \$5,000 of grants or other assistance to or for any foreign organization? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule F, Parts II and IV</i>		X
16 Did the organization report on Part IX, column (A), line 3, more than \$5,000 of aggregate grants or other assistance to or for foreign individuals? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule F, Parts III and IV</i>		X
17 Did the organization report a total of more than \$15,000 of expenses for professional fundraising services on Part IX, column (A), lines 6 and 11e? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule G, Part I</i>		X
18 Did the organization report more than \$15,000 total of fundraising event gross income and contributions on Part VIII, lines 1c and 8a? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule G, Part II</i>		X
19 Did the organization report more than \$15,000 of gross income from gaming activities on Part VIII, line 9a? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule G, Part III</i>		X
20a Did the organization operate one or more hospital facilities? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule H</i>		X
b If "Yes" to line 20a, did the organization attach a copy of its audited financial statements to this return?		
21 Did the organization report more than \$5,000 of grants or other assistance to any domestic organization or domestic government on Part IX, column (A), line 1? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule I, Parts I and II</i>	X	

Part IV Checklist of Required Schedules (continued)

	Yes	No
22 Did the organization report more than \$5,000 of grants or other assistance to or for domestic individuals on Part IX, column (A), line 2? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule I, Parts I and III</i>		X
23 Did the organization answer "Yes" to Part VII, Section A, line 3, 4, or 5 about compensation of the organization's current and former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, and highest compensated employees? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule J</i>		X
24a Did the organization have a tax-exempt bond issue with an outstanding principal amount of more than \$100,000 as of the last day of the year, that was issued after December 31, 2002? <i>If "Yes," answer lines 24b through 24d and complete Schedule K. If "No," go to line 25a</i>		X
b Did the organization invest any proceeds of tax-exempt bonds beyond a temporary period exception?		
c Did the organization maintain an escrow account other than a refunding escrow at any time during the year to defease any tax-exempt bonds?		
d Did the organization act as an "on behalf of" issuer for bonds outstanding at any time during the year?		
25a Section 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and 501(c)(29) organizations. Did the organization engage in an excess benefit transaction with a disqualified person during the year? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I</i>		X
b Is the organization aware that it engaged in an excess benefit transaction with a disqualified person in a prior year, and that the transaction has not been reported on any of the organization's prior Forms 990 or 990-EZ? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I</i>		X
26 Did the organization report any amount on Part X, line 5, 6, or 22 for receivables from or payables to any current or former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, highest compensated employees, or disqualified persons? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part II</i>		X
27 Did the organization provide a grant or other assistance to an officer, director, trustee, key employee, substantial contributor or employee thereof, a grant selection committee member, or to a 35% controlled entity or family member of any of these persons? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part III</i>		X
28 Was the organization a party to a business transaction with one of the following parties (see Schedule L, Part IV instructions for applicable filing thresholds, conditions, and exceptions):		
a A current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV</i>		X
b A family member of a current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV</i>		X
c An entity of which a current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee (or a family member thereof) was an officer, director, trustee, or direct or indirect owner? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV</i>		X
29 Did the organization receive more than \$25,000 in non-cash contributions? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule M</i>	X	
30 Did the organization receive contributions of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets, or qualified conservation contributions? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule M</i>		X
31 Did the organization liquidate, terminate, or dissolve and cease operations? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule N, Part I</i>		X
32 Did the organization sell, exchange, dispose of, or transfer more than 25% of its net assets? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule N, Part II</i>		X
33 Did the organization own 100% of an entity disregarded as separate from the organization under Regulations sections 301.7701-2 and 301.7701-3? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part I</i>		X
34 Was the organization related to any tax-exempt or taxable entity? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part II, III, or IV, and Part V, line 1</i>		X
35a Did the organization have a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)?		X
b If "Yes" to line 35a, did the organization receive any payment from or engage in any transaction with a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part V, line 2</i>		
36 Section 501(c)(3) organizations. Did the organization make any transfers to an exempt non-charitable related organization? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part V, line 2</i>		X
37 Did the organization conduct more than 5% of its activities through an entity that is not a related organization and that is treated as a partnership for federal income tax purposes? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part VI</i>		X
38 Did the organization complete Schedule O and provide explanations in Schedule O for Part VI, lines 11b and 19? Note. All Form 990 filers are required to complete Schedule O	X	

Part V Statements Regarding Other IRS Filings and Tax Compliance

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part V

	Yes	No
1a Enter the number reported in Box 3 of Form 1096. Enter -0- if not applicable		
b Enter the number of Forms W-2G included in line 1a. Enter -0- if not applicable		
c Did the organization comply with backup withholding rules for reportable payments to vendors and reportable gaming (gambling) winnings to prize winners?	X	

Part V Statements Regarding Other IRS Filings and Tax Compliance (continued)

Table with columns for question number, question text, and Yes/No response boxes. Includes questions 2a through 16 regarding employee counts, tax returns, unrelated business income, foreign accounts, prohibited transactions, and charitable contributions.

Part VI Governance, Management, and Disclosure For each "Yes" response to lines 2 through 7b below, and for a "No" response to line 8a, 8b, or 10b below, describe the circumstances, processes, or changes in Schedule O. See instructions.

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part VI [X]

Section A. Governing Body and Management

Table with 3 columns: Question, Yes, No. Rows include: 1a Enter the number of voting members... 19; 1b Enter the number of voting members included... 19; 2 Did any officer, director, trustee, or key employee have a family relationship... X; 3 Did the organization delegate control over management duties... X; 4 Did the organization make any significant changes to its governing documents... X; 5 Did the organization become aware during the year of a significant diversion of the organization's assets... X; 6 Did the organization have members or stockholders... X; 7a Did the organization have members, stockholders, or other persons who had the power to elect or appoint one or more members of the governing body... X; 7b Are any governance decisions of the organization reserved to (or subject to approval by) members, stockholders, or persons other than the governing body... X; 8 Did the organization contemporaneously document the meetings held or written actions undertaken during the year by the following: a The governing body? X; b Each committee with authority to act on behalf of the governing body? X; 9 Is there any officer, director, trustee, or key employee listed in Part VII, Section A, who cannot be reached at the organization's mailing address? If "Yes," provide the names and addresses in Schedule O... X

Section B. Policies (This Section B requests information about policies not required by the Internal Revenue Code.)

Table with 3 columns: Question, Yes, No. Rows include: 10a Did the organization have local chapters, branches, or affiliates? X; 10b If "Yes," did the organization have written policies and procedures governing the activities of such chapters, affiliates, and branches to ensure their operations are consistent with the organization's exempt purposes?; 11a Has the organization provided a complete copy of this Form 990 to all members of its governing body before filing the form? X; 11b Describe in Schedule O the process, if any, used by the organization to review this Form 990.; 12a Did the organization have a written conflict of interest policy? If "No," go to line 13 X; 12b Were officers, directors, or trustees, and key employees required to disclose annually interests that could give rise to conflicts? X; 12c Did the organization regularly and consistently monitor and enforce compliance with the policy? If "Yes," describe in Schedule O how this was done X; 13 Did the organization have a written whistleblower policy? X; 14 Did the organization have a written document retention and destruction policy? X; 15 Did the process for determining compensation of the following persons include a review and approval by independent persons, comparability data, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision? a The organization's CEO, Executive Director, or top management official X; b Other officers or key employees of the organization X; 16a Did the organization invest in, contribute assets to, or participate in a joint venture or similar arrangement with a taxable entity during the year? X; 16b If "Yes," did the organization follow a written policy or procedure requiring the organization to evaluate its participation in joint venture arrangements under applicable federal tax law, and take steps to safeguard the organization's exempt status with respect to such arrangements?

Section C. Disclosure

- 17 List the states with which a copy of this Form 990 is required to be filed AL, AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, KS, KY
18 Section 6104 requires an organization to make its Forms 1023 (1024 or 1024-A if applicable), 990, and 990-T (Section 501(c)(3)s only) available for public inspection. Indicate how you made these available. Check all that apply. [X] Own website [] Another's website [X] Upon request [] Other (explain in Schedule O)
19 Describe in Schedule O whether (and if so, how) the organization made its governing documents, conflict of interest policy, and financial statements available to the public during the tax year.
20 State the name, address, and telephone number of the person who possesses the organization's books and records RYAN LUTEY - 406-549-8650 20 FORT MISSOULA ROAD, MISSOULA, MT 59804-7202

Part VII Compensation of Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, Highest Compensated Employees, and Independent Contractors

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part VII

Section A. Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees

1a Complete this table for all persons required to be listed. Report compensation for the calendar year ending with or within the organization's tax year.

- List all of the organization's **current** officers, directors, trustees (whether individuals or organizations), regardless of amount of compensation. Enter -0- in columns (D), (E), and (F) if no compensation was paid.
- List all of the organization's **current** key employees, if any. See instructions for definition of "key employee."
- List the organization's five **current** highest compensated employees (other than an officer, director, trustee, or key employee) who received reportable compensation (Box 5 of Form W-2 and/or Box 7 of Form 1099-MISC) of more than \$100,000 from the organization and any related organizations.
- List all of the organization's **former** officers, key employees, and highest compensated employees who received more than \$100,000 of reportable compensation from the organization and any related organizations.
- List all of the organization's **former directors or trustees** that received, in the capacity as a former director or trustee of the organization, more than \$10,000 of reportable compensation from the organization and any related organizations.

List persons in the following order: individual trustees or directors; institutional trustees; officers; key employees; highest compensated employees; and former such persons.

Check this box if neither the organization nor any related organization compensated any current officer, director, or trustee.

(A) Name and Title	(B) Average hours per week (list any hours for related organizations below line)	(C) Position (do not check more than one box, unless person is both an officer and a director/trustee)						(D) Reportable compensation from the organization (W-2/1099-MISC)	(E) Reportable compensation from related organizations (W-2/1099-MISC)	(F) Estimated amount of other compensation from the organization and related organizations
		Individual trustee or director	Institutional trustee	Officer	Key employee	Highest compensated employee	Former			
(1) KELLY JOHNSON CHAIRMAN	2.00	X		X			0.	0.	0.	
(2) WALLY BECKY VICE CHAIRMAN	3.00	X		X			0.	0.	0.	
(3) DAVID WESLEY SECRETARY	1.00	X		X			0.	0.	0.	
(4) TIM POLICH TREASURER	2.00	X		X			0.	0.	0.	
(5) JACK CAPP TRUSTEE	6.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(6) DOUG CHADWICK TRUSTEE	7.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(7) JOHN HECHTEL TRUSTEE	2.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(8) SOU BARRETT TRUSTEE	5.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(9) MAUREEN MAYER TRUSTEE	1.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(10) LYNNE SEUS TRUSTEE	7.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(11) SALLY SMYTH TRUSTEE	6.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(12) DEBI STRONG TRUSTEE	1.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(13) THERESA YOUNG TRUSTEE	1.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(14) MEGGEN WILSON TRUSTEE	1.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(15) ANDREA NASI TRUSTEE	20.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(16) RUSSELL FOX TRUSTEE	2.00	X					0.	0.	0.	
(17) TOMAS FEY TRUSTEE	1.00	X					0.	0.	0.	

Part VII Section A. Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees (continued)

(A) Name and title	(B) Average hours per week (list any hours for related organizations below line)	(C) Position (do not check more than one box, unless person is both an officer and a director/trustee)						(D) Reportable compensation from the organization (W-2/1099-MISC)	(E) Reportable compensation from related organizations (W-2/1099-MISC)	(F) Estimated amount of other compensation from the organization and related organizations
		Individual trustee or director	Institutional trustee	Officer	Key employee	Highest compensated employee	Former			
(18) JO LOWE TRUSTEE	2.00	X						0.	0.	0.
(19) DANIEL TURNER TRUSTEE	3.00	X						0.	0.	0.
(20) RYAN LUTEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	40.00			X				111,108.	0.	1,200.
1b Sub-total								111,108.	0.	1,200.
c Total from continuation sheets to Part VII, Section A								0.	0.	0.
d Total (add lines 1b and 1c)								111,108.	0.	1,200.

2 Total number of individuals (including but not limited to those listed above) who received more than \$100,000 of reportable compensation from the organization **1**

	Yes	No
3 Did the organization list any former officer, director, or trustee, key employee, or highest compensated employee on line 1a? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such individual</i>		X
4 For any individual listed on line 1a, is the sum of reportable compensation and other compensation from the organization and related organizations greater than \$150,000? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such individual</i>		X
5 Did any person listed on line 1a receive or accrue compensation from any unrelated organization or individual for services rendered to the organization? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such person</i>		X

Section B. Independent Contractors

1 Complete this table for your five highest compensated independent contractors that received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. Report compensation for the calendar year ending with or within the organization's tax year.

(A) Name and business address	(B) Description of services	(C) Compensation
NONE		

2 Total number of independent contractors (including but not limited to those listed above) who received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization **0**

Part VIII Statement of Revenue

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part VIII

		(A) Total revenue	(B) Related or exempt function revenue	(C) Unrelated business revenue	(D) Revenue excluded from tax under sections 512 - 514	
Contributions, Gifts, Grants and Other Similar Amounts	1 a Federated campaigns	1a				
	b Membership dues	1b 41,588.				
	c Fundraising events	1c				
	d Related organizations	1d				
	e Government grants (contributions)	1e 72,700.				
	f All other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts not included above	1f 2,669,840.				
	g Noncash contributions included in lines 1a-1f: \$	44,286.				
	h Total. Add lines 1a-1f	▶ 2,784,128.				
Program Service Revenue	2 a _____	Business Code				
	b _____					
	c _____					
	d _____					
	e _____					
	f All other program service revenue					
	g Total. Add lines 2a-2f	▶				
Other Revenue	3 Investment income (including dividends, interest, and other similar amounts)	▶ 4,903.			4,903.	
	4 Income from investment of tax-exempt bond proceeds	▶				
	5 Royalties	▶				
	6 a Gross rents	(i) Real				
		(ii) Personal				
		b Less: rental expenses				
		c Rental income or (loss)				
	d Net rental income or (loss)	▶				
	7 a Gross amount from sales of assets other than inventory	(i) Securities	26,009.			
		(ii) Other				
		b Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses	26,163.			
		c Gain or (loss)	-154.			
	d Net gain or (loss)	▶ -154.			-154.	
	8 a Gross income from fundraising events (not including \$ _____ of contributions reported on line 1c). See Part IV, line 18	a 1,623.				
		b Less: direct expenses	b 9,490.			
c Net income or (loss) from fundraising events		▶ -7,867.			-7,867.	
9 a Gross income from gaming activities. See Part IV, line 19	a					
	b Less: direct expenses	b				
	c Net income or (loss) from gaming activities	▶				
10 a Gross sales of inventory, less returns and allowances	a 9,056.					
	b Less: cost of goods sold	b 6,443.				
	c Net income or (loss) from sales of inventory	▶ 2,613.			2,613.	
Miscellaneous Revenue		Business Code				
11 a OTHER REVENUE	900099	5,297.	5,297.			
	b _____					
	c _____					
	d All other revenue					
	e Total. Add lines 11a-11d	▶ 5,297.				
12 Total revenue. See instructions	▶ 2,788,920.	5,297.	0.	-505.		

Part IX Statement of Functional Expenses

Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations must complete all columns. All other organizations must complete column (A).

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part IX

Do not include amounts reported on lines 6b, 7b, 8b, 9b, and 10b of Part VIII.	(A) Total expenses	(B) Program service expenses	(C) Management and general expenses	(D) Fundraising expenses
1 Grants and other assistance to domestic organizations and domestic governments. See Part IV, line 21 ...	51,250.	51,250.		
2 Grants and other assistance to domestic individuals. See Part IV, line 22				
3 Grants and other assistance to foreign organizations, foreign governments, and foreign individuals. See Part IV, lines 15 and 16				
4 Benefits paid to or for members				
5 Compensation of current officers, directors, trustees, and key employees	112,308.	56,154.	28,077.	28,077.
6 Compensation not included above, to disqualified persons (as defined under section 4958(f)(1)) and persons described in section 4958(c)(3)(B)				
7 Other salaries and wages	360,805.	281,962.	28,336.	50,507.
8 Pension plan accruals and contributions (include section 401(k) and 403(b) employer contributions)				
9 Other employee benefits	23,594.	20,302.	1,077.	2,215.
10 Payroll taxes	40,326.	28,630.	4,840.	6,856.
11 Fees for services (non-employees):				
a Management				
b Legal				
c Accounting				
d Lobbying				
e Professional fundraising services. See Part IV, line 17				
f Investment management fees				
g Other. (If line 11g amount exceeds 10% of line 25, column (A) amount, list line 11g expenses on Sch. O.)	93,001.	85,627.	3,495.	3,879.
12 Advertising and promotion	18,206.	18,206.		
13 Office expenses	121,547.	71,510.	9,841.	40,196.
14 Information technology				
15 Royalties				
16 Occupancy	32,832.	16,416.	8,208.	8,208.
17 Travel	27,753.	26,214.	681.	858.
18 Payments of travel or entertainment expenses for any federal, state, or local public officials ...				
19 Conferences, conventions, and meetings				
20 Interest	2,270.	2,270.		
21 Payments to affiliates				
22 Depreciation, depletion, and amortization	4,106.	1,919.	1,227.	960.
23 Insurance	13,038.	11,540.	884.	614.
24 Other expenses. Itemize expenses not covered above. (List miscellaneous expenses in line 24e. If line 24e amount exceeds 10% of line 25, column (A) amount, list line 24e expenses on Schedule O.)				
a MEALS & ENTERTAINMENT	16,686.	14,423.	518.	1,745.
b LICENSES & TAXES	14,209.	14,209.		
c CRAT RECEIVABLE IMPAIRM	12,469.	6,235.	3,117.	3,117.
d DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	9,153.	7,251.	588.	1,314.
e All other expenses	14,811.	11,038.	1,904.	1,869.
25 Total functional expenses. Add lines 1 through 24e	968,364.	725,156.	92,793.	150,415.
26 Joint costs. Complete this line only if the organization reported in column (B) joint costs from a combined educational campaign and fundraising solicitation.				

Check here if following SOP 98-2 (ASC 958-720)

Part X Balance Sheet

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part X

		(A) Beginning of year		(B) End of year
Assets	1 Cash - non-interest-bearing	809,132.	1	1,011,404.
	2 Savings and temporary cash investments	320,686.	2	309,957.
	3 Pledges and grants receivable, net		3	
	4 Accounts receivable, net		4	
	5 Loans and other receivables from current and former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, and highest compensated employees. Complete Part II of Schedule L		5	
	6 Loans and other receivables from other disqualified persons (as defined under section 4958(f)(1)), persons described in section 4958(c)(3)(B), and contributing employers and sponsoring organizations of section 501(c)(9) voluntary employees' beneficiary organizations (see instr). Complete Part II of Sch L		6	
	7 Notes and loans receivable, net		7	
	8 Inventories for sale or use	16,856.	8	17,023.
	9 Prepaid expenses and deferred charges	5,091.	9	5,091.
	10a Land, buildings, and equipment: cost or other basis. Complete Part VI of Schedule D	10a 5,379,816.		
	b Less: accumulated depreciation	10b 41,424.	3,949,606.	10c 5,338,392.
	11 Investments - publicly traded securities		11	
	12 Investments - other securities. See Part IV, line 11	826,683.	12	830,913.
	13 Investments - program-related. See Part IV, line 11		13	
	14 Intangible assets		14	
	15 Other assets. See Part IV, line 11	145,992.	15	313,800.
16 Total assets. Add lines 1 through 15 (must equal line 34)	6,074,046.	16	7,826,580.	
Liabilities	17 Accounts payable and accrued expenses	29,924.	17	30,888.
	18 Grants payable		18	
	19 Deferred revenue		19	
	20 Tax-exempt bond liabilities		20	
	21 Escrow or custodial account liability. Complete Part IV of Schedule D		21	
	22 Loans and other payables to current and former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, highest compensated employees, and disqualified persons. Complete Part II of Schedule L		22	
	23 Secured mortgages and notes payable to unrelated third parties	151,975.	23	101,025.
	24 Unsecured notes and loans payable to unrelated third parties		24	
	25 Other liabilities (including federal income tax, payables to related third parties, and other liabilities not included on lines 17-24). Complete Part X of Schedule D		25	
	26 Total liabilities. Add lines 17 through 25	181,899.	26	131,913.
Net Assets or Fund Balances	Organizations that follow SFAS 117 (ASC 958), check here <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and complete lines 27 through 29, and lines 33 and 34.			
	27 Unrestricted net assets	2,052,004.	27	1,348,058.
	28 Temporarily restricted net assets	2,483,269.	28	4,992,572.
	29 Permanently restricted net assets	1,356,874.	29	1,354,037.
	Organizations that do not follow SFAS 117 (ASC 958), check here <input type="checkbox"/> and complete lines 30 through 34.			
	30 Capital stock or trust principal, or current funds		30	
	31 Paid-in or capital surplus, or land, building, or equipment fund		31	
	32 Retained earnings, endowment, accumulated income, or other funds		32	
33 Total net assets or fund balances	5,892,147.	33	7,694,667.	
34 Total liabilities and net assets/fund balances	6,074,046.	34	7,826,580.	

Part XI Reconciliation of Net Assets

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part XI

1	Total revenue (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12)	1	2,788,920.
2	Total expenses (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25)	2	968,364.
3	Revenue less expenses. Subtract line 2 from line 1	3	1,820,556.
4	Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (must equal Part X, line 33, column (A))	4	5,892,147.
5	Net unrealized gains (losses) on investments	5	-18,036.
6	Donated services and use of facilities	6	
7	Investment expenses	7	
8	Prior period adjustments	8	
9	Other changes in net assets or fund balances (explain in Schedule O)	9	0.
10	Net assets or fund balances at end of year. Combine lines 3 through 9 (must equal Part X, line 33, column (B))	10	7,694,667.

Part XII Financial Statements and Reporting

Check if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part XII

- 1** Accounting method used to prepare the Form 990: Cash Accrual Other _____
If the organization changed its method of accounting from a prior year or checked "Other," explain in Schedule O.
- 2a** Were the organization's financial statements compiled or reviewed by an independent accountant? _____
If "Yes," check a box below to indicate whether the financial statements for the year were compiled or reviewed on a separate basis, consolidated basis, or both:
 Separate basis Consolidated basis Both consolidated and separate basis
- b** Were the organization's financial statements audited by an independent accountant? _____
If "Yes," check a box below to indicate whether the financial statements for the year were audited on a separate basis, consolidated basis, or both:
 Separate basis Consolidated basis Both consolidated and separate basis
- c** If "Yes" to line 2a or 2b, does the organization have a committee that assumes responsibility for oversight of the audit, review, or compilation of its financial statements and selection of an independent accountant? _____
If the organization changed either its oversight process or selection process during the tax year, explain in Schedule O.
- 3a** As a result of a federal award, was the organization required to undergo an audit or audits as set forth in the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133? _____
- b** If "Yes," did the organization undergo the required audit or audits? If the organization did not undergo the required audit or audits, explain why in Schedule O and describe any steps taken to undergo such audits _____

	Yes	No
2a		X
2b	X	
2c	X	
3a		X
3b		

SCHEDULE A
(Form 990 or 990-EZ)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Public Charity Status and Public Support

Complete if the organization is a section 501(c)(3) organization or a section 4947(a)(1) nonexempt charitable trust.

Attach to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ.

Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for instructions and the latest information.

OMB No. 1545-0047

2018

Open to Public Inspection

Name of the organization

THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.

Employer identification number

87-0483446

Part I Reason for Public Charity Status (All organizations must complete this part.) See instructions.

The organization is not a private foundation because it is: (For lines 1 through 12, check only one box.)

- 1 [] A church, convention of churches, or association of churches described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).
2 [] A school described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii). (Attach Schedule E (Form 990 or 990-EZ).)
3 [] A hospital or a cooperative hospital service organization described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii).
4 [] A medical research organization operated in conjunction with a hospital described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii). Enter the hospital's name, city, and state:
5 [] An organization operated for the benefit of a college or university owned or operated by a governmental unit described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(iv). (Complete Part II.)
6 [] A federal, state, or local government or governmental unit described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(v).
7 [X] An organization that normally receives a substantial part of its support from a governmental unit or from the general public described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). (Complete Part II.)
8 [] A community trust described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). (Complete Part II.)
9 [] An agricultural research organization described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ix) operated in conjunction with a land-grant college or university or a non-land-grant college of agriculture (see instructions). Enter the name, city, and state of the college or university:
10 [] An organization that normally receives: (1) more than 33 1/3% of its support from contributions, membership fees, and gross receipts from activities related to its exempt functions - subject to certain exceptions, and (2) no more than 33 1/3% of its support from gross investment income and unrelated business taxable income (less section 511 tax) from businesses acquired by the organization after June 30, 1975. See section 509(a)(2). (Complete Part III.)
11 [] An organization organized and operated exclusively to test for public safety. See section 509(a)(4).
12 [] An organization organized and operated exclusively for the benefit of, to perform the functions of, or to carry out the purposes of one or more publicly supported organizations described in section 509(a)(1) or section 509(a)(2). See section 509(a)(3). Check the box in lines 12a through 12d that describes the type of supporting organization and complete lines 12e, 12f, and 12g.
a [] Type I. A supporting organization operated, supervised, or controlled by its supported organization(s), typically by giving the supported organization(s) the power to regularly appoint or elect a majority of the directors or trustees of the supporting organization. You must complete Part IV, Sections A and B.
b [] Type II. A supporting organization supervised or controlled in connection with its supported organization(s), by having control or management of the supporting organization vested in the same persons that control or manage the supported organization(s). You must complete Part IV, Sections A and C.
c [] Type III functionally integrated. A supporting organization operated in connection with, and functionally integrated with, its supported organization(s) (see instructions). You must complete Part IV, Sections A, D, and E.
d [] Type III non-functionally integrated. A supporting organization operated in connection with its supported organization(s) that is not functionally integrated. The organization generally must satisfy a distribution requirement and an attentiveness requirement (see instructions). You must complete Part IV, Sections A and D, and Part V.
e [] Check this box if the organization received a written determination from the IRS that it is a Type I, Type II, Type III functionally integrated, or Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organization.
f Enter the number of supported organizations
g Provide the following information about the supported organization(s).

Table with 6 columns: (i) Name of supported organization, (ii) EIN, (iii) Type of organization, (iv) Is the organization listed in your governing document?, (v) Amount of monetary support, (vi) Amount of other support. Includes a Total row at the bottom.

Part II Support Schedule for Organizations Described in Sections 170(b)(1)(A)(iv) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)

(Complete only if you checked the box on line 5, 7, or 8 of Part I or if the organization failed to qualify under Part III. If the organization fails to qualify under the tests listed below, please complete Part III.)

Section A. Public Support

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ▶	(a) 2014	(b) 2015	(c) 2016	(d) 2017	(e) 2018	(f) Total
1 Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received. (Do not include any "unusual grants.")	1669844.	1399806.	713,485.	1972843.	2784128.	8540106.
2 Tax revenues levied for the organization's benefit and either paid to or expended on its behalf						
3 The value of services or facilities furnished by a governmental unit to the organization without charge						
4 Total. Add lines 1 through 3	1669844.	1399806.	713,485.	1972843.	2784128.	8540106.
5 The portion of total contributions by each person (other than a governmental unit or publicly supported organization) included on line 1 that exceeds 2% of the amount shown on line 11, column (f)						1238340.
6 Public support. Subtract line 5 from line 4.						7301766.

Section B. Total Support

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ▶	(a) 2014	(b) 2015	(c) 2016	(d) 2017	(e) 2018	(f) Total
7 Amounts from line 4	1669844.	1399806.	713,485.	1972843.	2784128.	8540106.
8 Gross income from interest, dividends, payments received on securities loans, rents, royalties, and income from similar sources	5,228.	1,392.	1,700.	3,142.	4,903.	16,365.
9 Net income from unrelated business activities, whether or not the business is regularly carried on						
10 Other income. Do not include gain or loss from the sale of capital assets (Explain in Part VI.)						
11 Total support. Add lines 7 through 10						8556471.
12 Gross receipts from related activities, etc. (see instructions)					12	203,519.
13 First five years. If the Form 990 is for the organization's first, second, third, fourth, or fifth tax year as a section 501(c)(3) organization, check this box and stop here						<input type="checkbox"/>

Section C. Computation of Public Support Percentage

14 Public support percentage for 2018 (line 6, column (f) divided by line 11, column (f))	14	85.34 %
15 Public support percentage from 2017 Schedule A, Part II, line 14	15	93.64 %
16a 33 1/3% support test - 2018. If the organization did not check the box on line 13, and line 14 is 33 1/3% or more, check this box and stop here. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b 33 1/3% support test - 2017. If the organization did not check a box on line 13 or 16a, and line 15 is 33 1/3% or more, check this box and stop here. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17a 10% -facts-and-circumstances test - 2018. If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, or 16b, and line 14 is 10% or more, and if the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test, check this box and stop here. Explain in Part VI how the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b 10% -facts-and-circumstances test - 2017. If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, 16b, or 17a, and line 15 is 10% or more, and if the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test, check this box and stop here. Explain in Part VI how the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18 Private foundation. If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, 16b, 17a, or 17b, check this box and see instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Part III Support Schedule for Organizations Described in Section 509(a)(2)

(Complete only if you checked the box on line 10 of Part I or if the organization failed to qualify under Part II. If the organization fails to qualify under the tests listed below, please complete Part II.)

Section A. Public Support

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ►	(a) 2014	(b) 2015	(c) 2016	(d) 2017	(e) 2018	(f) Total
1 Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received. (Do not include any "unusual grants.")						
2 Gross receipts from admissions, merchandise sold or services performed, or facilities furnished in any activity that is related to the organization's tax-exempt purpose						
3 Gross receipts from activities that are not an unrelated trade or business under section 513						
4 Tax revenues levied for the organization's benefit and either paid to or expended on its behalf						
5 The value of services or facilities furnished by a governmental unit to the organization without charge						
6 Total. Add lines 1 through 5						
7a Amounts included on lines 1, 2, and 3 received from disqualified persons						
b Amounts included on lines 2 and 3 received from other than disqualified persons that exceed the greater of \$5,000 or 1% of the amount on line 13 for the year						
c Add lines 7a and 7b						
8 Public support. (Subtract line 7c from line 6.)						

Section B. Total Support

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ►	(a) 2014	(b) 2015	(c) 2016	(d) 2017	(e) 2018	(f) Total
9 Amounts from line 6						
10a Gross income from interest, dividends, payments received on securities loans, rents, royalties, and income from similar sources						
b Unrelated business taxable income (less section 511 taxes) from businesses acquired after June 30, 1975						
c Add lines 10a and 10b						
11 Net income from unrelated business activities not included in line 10b, whether or not the business is regularly carried on						
12 Other income. Do not include gain or loss from the sale of capital assets (Explain in Part VI.)						
13 Total support. (Add lines 9, 10c, 11, and 12.)						

14 First five years. If the Form 990 is for the organization's first, second, third, fourth, or fifth tax year as a section 501(c)(3) organization, check this box and **stop here** ►

Section C. Computation of Public Support Percentage

15 Public support percentage for 2018 (line 8, column (f), divided by line 13, column (f))	15	%
16 Public support percentage from 2017 Schedule A, Part III, line 15	16	%

Section D. Computation of Investment Income Percentage

17 Investment income percentage for 2018 (line 10c, column (f), divided by line 13, column (f))	17	%
18 Investment income percentage from 2017 Schedule A, Part III, line 17	18	%

19a 33 1/3% support tests - 2018. If the organization did not check the box on line 14, and line 15 is more than 33 1/3%, and line 17 is not more than 33 1/3%, check this box and **stop here**. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization ►

b 33 1/3% support tests - 2017. If the organization did not check a box on line 14 or line 19a, and line 16 is more than 33 1/3%, and line 18 is not more than 33 1/3%, check this box and **stop here**. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization ►

20 Private foundation. If the organization did not check a box on line 14, 19a, or 19b, check this box and see instructions ►

Part IV Supporting Organizations

(Complete only if you checked a box in line 12 on Part I. If you checked 12a of Part I, complete Sections A and B. If you checked 12b of Part I, complete Sections A and C. If you checked 12c of Part I, complete Sections A, D, and E. If you checked 12d of Part I, complete Sections A and D, and complete Part V.)

Section A. All Supporting Organizations

	Yes	No
1 Are all of the organization's supported organizations listed by name in the organization's governing documents? <i>If "No," describe in Part VI how the supported organizations are designated. If designated by class or purpose, describe the designation. If historic and continuing relationship, explain.</i>		
2 Did the organization have any supported organization that does not have an IRS determination of status under section 509(a)(1) or (2)? <i>If "Yes," explain in Part VI how the organization determined that the supported organization was described in section 509(a)(1) or (2).</i>		
3a Did the organization have a supported organization described in section 501(c)(4), (5), or (6)? <i>If "Yes," answer (b) and (c) below.</i>		
b Did the organization confirm that each supported organization qualified under section 501(c)(4), (5), or (6) and satisfied the public support tests under section 509(a)(2)? <i>If "Yes," describe in Part VI when and how the organization made the determination.</i>		
c Did the organization ensure that all support to such organizations was used exclusively for section 170(c)(2)(B) purposes? <i>If "Yes," explain in Part VI what controls the organization put in place to ensure such use.</i>		
4a Was any supported organization not organized in the United States ("foreign supported organization")? <i>If "Yes," and if you checked 12a or 12b in Part I, answer (b) and (c) below.</i>		
b Did the organization have ultimate control and discretion in deciding whether to make grants to the foreign supported organization? <i>If "Yes," describe in Part VI how the organization had such control and discretion despite being controlled or supervised by or in connection with its supported organizations.</i>		
c Did the organization support any foreign supported organization that does not have an IRS determination under sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1) or (2)? <i>If "Yes," explain in Part VI what controls the organization used to ensure that all support to the foreign supported organization was used exclusively for section 170(c)(2)(B) purposes.</i>		
5a Did the organization add, substitute, or remove any supported organizations during the tax year? <i>If "Yes," answer (b) and (c) below (if applicable). Also, provide detail in Part VI, including (i) the names and EIN numbers of the supported organizations added, substituted, or removed; (ii) the reasons for each such action; (iii) the authority under the organization's organizing document authorizing such action; and (iv) how the action was accomplished (such as by amendment to the organizing document).</i>		
b Type I or Type II only. Was any added or substituted supported organization part of a class already designated in the organization's organizing document?		
c Substitutions only. Was the substitution the result of an event beyond the organization's control?		
6 Did the organization provide support (whether in the form of grants or the provision of services or facilities) to anyone other than (i) its supported organizations, (ii) individuals that are part of the charitable class benefited by one or more of its supported organizations, or (iii) other supporting organizations that also support or benefit one or more of the filing organization's supported organizations? <i>If "Yes," provide detail in Part VI.</i>		
7 Did the organization provide a grant, loan, compensation, or other similar payment to a substantial contributor (as defined in section 4958(c)(3)(C)), a family member of a substantial contributor, or a 35% controlled entity with regard to a substantial contributor? <i>If "Yes," complete Part I of Schedule L (Form 990 or 990-EZ).</i>		
8 Did the organization make a loan to a disqualified person (as defined in section 4958) not described in line 7? <i>If "Yes," complete Part I of Schedule L (Form 990 or 990-EZ).</i>		
9a Was the organization controlled directly or indirectly at any time during the tax year by one or more disqualified persons as defined in section 4946 (other than foundation managers and organizations described in section 509(a)(1) or (2))? <i>If "Yes," provide detail in Part VI.</i>		
b Did one or more disqualified persons (as defined in line 9a) hold a controlling interest in any entity in which the supporting organization had an interest? <i>If "Yes," provide detail in Part VI.</i>		
c Did a disqualified person (as defined in line 9a) have an ownership interest in, or derive any personal benefit from, assets in which the supporting organization also had an interest? <i>If "Yes," provide detail in Part VI.</i>		
10a Was the organization subject to the excess business holdings rules of section 4943 because of section 4943(f) (regarding certain Type II supporting organizations, and all Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organizations)? <i>If "Yes," answer 10b below.</i>		
b Did the organization have any excess business holdings in the tax year? <i>(Use Schedule C, Form 4720, to determine whether the organization had excess business holdings.)</i>		

Part IV Supporting Organizations (continued)

	Yes	No
11 Has the organization accepted a gift or contribution from any of the following persons?		
a A person who directly or indirectly controls, either alone or together with persons described in (b) and (c) below, the governing body of a supported organization?		
b A family member of a person described in (a) above?		
c A 35% controlled entity of a person described in (a) or (b) above? <i>If "Yes" to a, b, or c, provide detail in Part VI.</i>		

Section B. Type I Supporting Organizations

	Yes	No
1 Did the directors, trustees, or membership of one or more supported organizations have the power to regularly appoint or elect at least a majority of the organization's directors or trustees at all times during the tax year? <i>If "No," describe in Part VI how the supported organization(s) effectively operated, supervised, or controlled the organization's activities. If the organization had more than one supported organization, describe how the powers to appoint and/or remove directors or trustees were allocated among the supported organizations and what conditions or restrictions, if any, applied to such powers during the tax year.</i>		
2 Did the organization operate for the benefit of any supported organization other than the supported organization(s) that operated, supervised, or controlled the supporting organization? <i>If "Yes," explain in Part VI how providing such benefit carried out the purposes of the supported organization(s) that operated, supervised, or controlled the supporting organization.</i>		

Section C. Type II Supporting Organizations

	Yes	No
1 Were a majority of the organization's directors or trustees during the tax year also a majority of the directors or trustees of each of the organization's supported organization(s)? <i>If "No," describe in Part VI how control or management of the supporting organization was vested in the same persons that controlled or managed the supported organization(s).</i>		

Section D. All Type III Supporting Organizations

	Yes	No
1 Did the organization provide to each of its supported organizations, by the last day of the fifth month of the organization's tax year, (i) a written notice describing the type and amount of support provided during the prior tax year, (ii) a copy of the Form 990 that was most recently filed as of the date of notification, and (iii) copies of the organization's governing documents in effect on the date of notification, to the extent not previously provided?		
2 Were any of the organization's officers, directors, or trustees either (i) appointed or elected by the supported organization(s) or (ii) serving on the governing body of a supported organization? <i>If "No," explain in Part VI how the organization maintained a close and continuous working relationship with the supported organization(s).</i>		
3 By reason of the relationship described in (2), did the organization's supported organizations have a significant voice in the organization's investment policies and in directing the use of the organization's income or assets at all times during the tax year? <i>If "Yes," describe in Part VI the role the organization's supported organizations played in this regard.</i>		

Section E. Type III Functionally Integrated Supporting Organizations

1 Check the box next to the method that the organization used to satisfy the Integral Part Test during the year (see instructions).		
a <input type="checkbox"/> The organization satisfied the Activities Test. Complete line 2 below.		
b <input type="checkbox"/> The organization is the parent of each of its supported organizations. Complete line 3 below.		
c <input type="checkbox"/> The organization supported a governmental entity. Describe in Part VI how you supported a government entity (see instructions).		
2 Activities Test. Answer (a) and (b) below.		
a Did substantially all of the organization's activities during the tax year directly further the exempt purposes of the supported organization(s) to which the organization was responsive? <i>If "Yes," then in Part VI identify those supported organizations and explain how these activities directly furthered their exempt purposes, how the organization was responsive to those supported organizations, and how the organization determined that these activities constituted substantially all of its activities.</i>		
b Did the activities described in (a) constitute activities that, but for the organization's involvement, one or more of the organization's supported organization(s) would have been engaged in? <i>If "Yes," explain in Part VI the reasons for the organization's position that its supported organization(s) would have engaged in these activities but for the organization's involvement.</i>		
3 Parent of Supported Organizations. Answer (a) and (b) below.		
a Did the organization have the power to regularly appoint or elect a majority of the officers, directors, or trustees of each of the supported organizations? <i>Provide details in Part VI.</i>		
b Did the organization exercise a substantial degree of direction over the policies, programs, and activities of each of its supported organizations? <i>If "Yes," describe in Part VI the role played by the organization in this regard.</i>		

Part V Type III Non-Functionally Integrated 509(a)(3) Supporting Organizations

- 1 Check here if the organization satisfied the Integral Part Test as a qualifying trust on Nov. 20, 1970 (explain in Part VI.) **See instructions.** All other Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organizations must complete Sections A through E.

Section A - Adjusted Net Income		(A) Prior Year	(B) Current Year (optional)
1	Net short-term capital gain	1	
2	Recoveries of prior-year distributions	2	
3	Other gross income (see instructions)	3	
4	Add lines 1 through 3	4	
5	Depreciation and depletion	5	
6	Portion of operating expenses paid or incurred for production or collection of gross income or for management, conservation, or maintenance of property held for production of income (see instructions)	6	
7	Other expenses (see instructions)	7	
8	Adjusted Net Income (subtract lines 5, 6, and 7 from line 4)	8	

Section B - Minimum Asset Amount		(A) Prior Year	(B) Current Year (optional)
1	Aggregate fair market value of all non-exempt-use assets (see instructions for short tax year or assets held for part of year):		
a	Average monthly value of securities	1a	
b	Average monthly cash balances	1b	
c	Fair market value of other non-exempt-use assets	1c	
d	Total (add lines 1a, 1b, and 1c)	1d	
e	Discount claimed for blockage or other factors (explain in detail in Part VI):		
2	Acquisition indebtedness applicable to non-exempt-use assets	2	
3	Subtract line 2 from line 1d	3	
4	Cash deemed held for exempt use. Enter 1-1/2% of line 3 (for greater amount, see instructions)	4	
5	Net value of non-exempt-use assets (subtract line 4 from line 3)	5	
6	Multiply line 5 by .035	6	
7	Recoveries of prior-year distributions	7	
8	Minimum Asset Amount (add line 7 to line 6)	8	

Section C - Distributable Amount		(A) Prior Year	Current Year
1	Adjusted net income for prior year (from Section A, line 8, Column A)	1	
2	Enter 85% of line 1	2	
3	Minimum asset amount for prior year (from Section B, line 8, Column A)	3	
4	Enter greater of line 2 or line 3	4	
5	Income tax imposed in prior year	5	
6	Distributable Amount. Subtract line 5 from line 4, unless subject to emergency temporary reduction (see instructions)	6	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if the current year is the organization's first as a non-functionally integrated Type III supporting organization (see instructions).		

Schedule A (Form 990 or 990-EZ) 2018

Part V Type III Non-Functionally Integrated 509(a)(3) Supporting Organizations (continued)

Section D - Distributions	Current Year
1 Amounts paid to supported organizations to accomplish exempt purposes	
2 Amounts paid to perform activity that directly furthers exempt purposes of supported organizations, in excess of income from activity	
3 Administrative expenses paid to accomplish exempt purposes of supported organizations	
4 Amounts paid to acquire exempt-use assets	
5 Qualified set-aside amounts (prior IRS approval required)	
6 Other distributions (describe in Part VI). See instructions.	
7 Total annual distributions. Add lines 1 through 6.	
8 Distributions to attentive supported organizations to which the organization is responsive (provide details in Part VI). See instructions.	
9 Distributable amount for 2018 from Section C, line 6	
10 Line 8 amount divided by line 9 amount	

Section E - Distribution Allocations (see instructions)	(i) Excess Distributions	(ii) Underdistributions Pre-2018	(iii) Distributable Amount for 2018
1 Distributable amount for 2018 from Section C, line 6			
2 Underdistributions, if any, for years prior to 2018 (reasonable cause required- explain in Part VI). See instructions.			
3 Excess distributions carryover, if any, to 2018			
a From 2013			
b From 2014			
c From 2015			
d From 2016			
e From 2017			
f Total of lines 3a through e			
g Applied to underdistributions of prior years			
h Applied to 2018 distributable amount			
i Carryover from 2013 not applied (see instructions)			
j Remainder. Subtract lines 3g, 3h, and 3i from 3f.			
4 Distributions for 2018 from Section D, line 7: \$			
a Applied to underdistributions of prior years			
b Applied to 2018 distributable amount			
c Remainder. Subtract lines 4a and 4b from 4.			
5 Remaining underdistributions for years prior to 2018, if any. Subtract lines 3g and 4a from line 2. For result greater than zero, explain in Part VI . See instructions.			
6 Remaining underdistributions for 2018. Subtract lines 3h and 4b from line 1. For result greater than zero, explain in Part VI . See instructions.			
7 Excess distributions carryover to 2019. Add lines 3j and 4c.			
8 Breakdown of line 7:			
a Excess from 2014			
b Excess from 2015			
c Excess from 2016			
d Excess from 2017			
e Excess from 2018			

SCHEDULE D (Form 990)

Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

Supplemental Financial Statements

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d, 11e, 11f, 12a, or 12b. Attach to Form 990.

Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for instructions and the latest information.

OMB No. 1545-0047

2018

Open to Public Inspection

Name of the organization THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC. Employer identification number 87-0483446

Part I Organizations Maintaining Donor Advised Funds or Other Similar Funds or Accounts. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 6.

Table with 3 columns: Question, (a) Donor advised funds, (b) Funds and other accounts. Rows include total number at end of year, aggregate value of contributions, grants, and end of year, and two Yes/No questions regarding donor property and grant fund usage.

Part II Conservation Easements. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 7.

Form with multiple sections: 1. Purpose(s) of conservation easements (checkboxes for land, habitat, open space, historic area, historic structure). 2. Conservation contribution details (table with 2a-2d). 3. Number of easements modified. 4. Number of states. 5. Written policy question. 6. Staff and volunteer hours. 7. Expenses incurred. 8. Section 170(h)(4)(B) requirements. 9. Reporting requirements.

Part III Organizations Maintaining Collections of Art, Historical Treasures, or Other Similar Assets. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 8.

Form with sections 1a and 1b regarding reporting of art and historical treasures, and section 2 regarding financial gain reporting. Includes revenue and asset amounts.

Part III Organizations Maintaining Collections of Art, Historical Treasures, or Other Similar Assets (continued)

3 Using the organization's acquisition, accession, and other records, check any of the following that are a significant use of its collection items (check all that apply):

- a Public exhibition
- b Scholarly research
- c Preservation for future generations
- d Loan or exchange programs
- e Other _____

4 Provide a description of the organization's collections and explain how they further the organization's exempt purpose in Part XIII.

5 During the year, did the organization solicit or receive donations of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets to be sold to raise funds rather than to be maintained as part of the organization's collection? Yes No

Part IV Escrow and Custodial Arrangements. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 9, or reported an amount on Form 990, Part X, line 21.

1a Is the organization an agent, trustee, custodian or other intermediary for contributions or other assets not included on Form 990, Part X? Yes No

b If "Yes," explain the arrangement in Part XIII and complete the following table:

	Amount
c Beginning balance	1c
d Additions during the year	1d
e Distributions during the year	1e
f Ending balance	1f

2a Did the organization include an amount on Form 990, Part X, line 21, for escrow or custodial account liability? Yes No

b If "Yes," explain the arrangement in Part XIII. Check here if the explanation has been provided on Part XIII

Part V Endowment Funds. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 10.

	(a) Current year	(b) Prior year	(c) Two years back	(d) Three years back	(e) Four years back
1a Beginning of year balance	99,689.	44,169.	41,008.	6,182.	5,796.
b Contributions		45,947.		36,618.	
c Net investment earnings, gains, and losses	11,199.	9,746.	7,292.	-1,792.	386.
d Grants or scholarships					
e Other expenditures for facilities and programs					
f Administrative expenses	14,051.	173.	4,131.		
g End of year balance	96,837.	99,689.	44,169.	41,008.	6,182.

2 Provide the estimated percentage of the current year end balance (line 1g, column (a)) held as:

- a Board designated or quasi-endowment 10.70 %
- b Permanent endowment 89.30 %
- c Temporarily restricted endowment _____ %

The percentages on lines 2a, 2b, and 2c should equal 100%.

3a Are there endowment funds not in the possession of the organization that are held and administered for the organization by:

- (i) unrelated organizations
- (ii) related organizations

	Yes	No
3a(i)		X
3a(ii)		X
3b		

b If "Yes" on line 3a(ii), are the related organizations listed as required on Schedule R?

4 Describe in Part XIII the intended uses of the organization's endowment funds.

Part VI Land, Buildings, and Equipment.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 11a. See Form 990, Part X, line 10.

Description of property	(a) Cost or other basis (investment)	(b) Cost or other basis (other)	(c) Accumulated depreciation	(d) Book value
1a Land		5,335,996.		5,335,996.
b Buildings		43,820.	41,424.	2,396.
c Leasehold improvements				
d Equipment				
e Other				

Total. Add lines 1a through 1e. (Column (d) must equal Form 990, Part X, column (B), line 10c.) 5,338,392.

Part VII Investments - Other Securities.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 11b. See Form 990, Part X, line 12.

(a) Description of security or category (including name of security)	(b) Book value	(c) Method of valuation: Cost or end-of-year market value
(1) Financial derivatives		
(2) Closely-held equity interests		
(3) Other		
(A) ENDOWMENT FUND	96,837.	END-OF-YEAR MARKET VALUE
(B) GIFT ANNUITY	29,852.	END-OF-YEAR MARKET VALUE
(C) STEWARDSHIP & LEGAL		
(D) DEFENSE FUND	394,569.	END-OF-YEAR MARKET VALUE
(E) RESERVE FUND	208,628.	END-OF-YEAR MARKET VALUE
(F) FOREST LEGACY MONITORING		
(G) FUND	77,382.	END-OF-YEAR MARKET VALUE
(H) MARKETABLE SECURITIES	23,645.	END-OF-YEAR MARKET VALUE
Total. (Col. (b) must equal Form 990, Part X, col. (B) line 12.)	830,913.	

Part VIII Investments - Program Related.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 11c. See Form 990, Part X, line 13.

(a) Description of investment	(b) Book value	(c) Method of valuation: Cost or end-of-year market value
(1)		
(2)		
(3)		
(4)		
(5)		
(6)		
(7)		
(8)		
(9)		
Total. (Col. (b) must equal Form 990, Part X, col. (B) line 13.)		

Part IX Other Assets.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 11d. See Form 990, Part X, line 15.

(a) Description	(b) Book value
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
(4)	
(5)	
(6)	
(7)	
(8)	
(9)	
Total. (Column (b) must equal Form 990, Part X, col. (B) line 15.)	

Part X Other Liabilities.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 11e or 11f. See Form 990, Part X, line 25.

1. (a) Description of liability	(b) Book value
(1) Federal income taxes	
(2)	
(3)	
(4)	
(5)	
(6)	
(7)	
(8)	
(9)	
Total. (Column (b) must equal Form 990, Part X, col. (B) line 25.)	

2. Liability for uncertain tax positions. In Part XIII, provide the text of the footnote to the organization's financial statements that reports the organization's liability for uncertain tax positions under FIN 48 (ASC 740). Check here if the text of the footnote has been provided in Part XIII

Part XI Reconciliation of Revenue per Audited Financial Statements With Revenue per Return.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 12a.

1	Total revenue, gains, and other support per audited financial statements	1	2,862,923.
2	Amounts included on line 1 but not on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12:		
a	Net unrealized gains (losses) on investments	2a	-18,036.
b	Donated services and use of facilities	2b	92,039.
c	Recoveries of prior year grants	2c	
d	Other (Describe in Part XIII.)	2d	
e	Add lines 2a through 2d	2e	74,003.
3	Subtract line 2e from line 1	3	2,788,920.
4	Amounts included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12, but not on line 1:		
a	Investment expenses not included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 7b	4a	
b	Other (Describe in Part XIII.)	4b	
c	Add lines 4a and 4b	4c	0.
5	Total revenue. Add lines 3 and 4c . (This must equal Form 990, Part I, line 12.)	5	2,788,920.

Part XII Reconciliation of Expenses per Audited Financial Statements With Expenses per Return.

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 12a.

1	Total expenses and losses per audited financial statements	1	1,060,403.
2	Amounts included on line 1 but not on Form 990, Part IX, line 25:		
a	Donated services and use of facilities	2a	92,039.
b	Prior year adjustments	2b	
c	Other losses	2c	
d	Other (Describe in Part XIII.)	2d	
e	Add lines 2a through 2d	2e	92,039.
3	Subtract line 2e from line 1	3	968,364.
4	Amounts included on Form 990, Part IX, line 25, but not on line 1:		
a	Investment expenses not included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 7b	4a	
b	Other (Describe in Part XIII.)	4b	
c	Add lines 4a and 4b	4c	0.
5	Total expenses. Add lines 3 and 4c . (This must equal Form 990, Part I, line 18.)	5	968,364.

Part XIII Supplemental Information.

Provide the descriptions required for Part II, lines 3, 5, and 9; Part III, lines 1a and 4; Part IV, lines 1b and 2b; Part V, line 4; Part X, line 2; Part XI, lines 2d and 4b; and Part XII, lines 2d and 4b. Also complete this part to provide any additional information.

PART II, LINE 9:

THE ORGANIZATION REPORTS THE DONATED VALUE OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN REVENUE IN THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY. THE DONATED VALUE OF THE EASEMENT LESS \$1, THE AMOUNT RECORDED IN THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR EACH CONSERVATION EASEMENT, IS RECORDED IN THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY AS A PROGRAM EXPENSE. THE COST OF THE CONSERVATION EASEMENT TO THE ORGANIZATION IS RECORDED IN THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY AS A PROGRAM EXPENSE.

PART X, LINE 2:

VITAL GROUND IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION AND IS EXEMPT FROM FEDERAL AND STATE INCOME TAXES UNDER SECTION 501(C)(3) OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.

Part XIII Supplemental Information *(continued)*

VITAL GROUND APPLIES GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES FOR RECOGNITION OF UNCERTAINTY IN INCOME TAXES AND PRESCRIBING A RECOGNITION THRESHOLD AND MEASUREMENT ATTRIBUTE FOR THE RECOGNITION AND MEASUREMENT OF A TAX POSITION TAKEN OR EXPECTED TO BE TAKEN IN A TAX RETURN. IN THE COURSE OF ITS ASSESSMENT, VITAL GROUND HAS DETERMINED THAT IT IS SUBJECT TO EXAMINATION FOR INCOME TAX FILINGS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE PRIOR THREE TAX YEARS. IN THE EVENT THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS ASSESSED PENALTIES AND OR INTEREST, PENALTIES WILL BE CHARGED TO PENALTIES EXPENSE AND INTEREST WILL BE CHARGED TO INTEREST EXPENSE.

**SCHEDULE I
(Form 990)**

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

**Grants and Other Assistance to Organizations,
Governments, and Individuals in the United States**
Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 21 or 22.

▶ **Attach to Form 990.**

▶ **Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for the latest information.**

OMB No. 1545-0047

2018

**Open to Public
Inspection**

Name of the organization **THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.** Employer identification number **87-0483446**

Part I General Information on Grants and Assistance

- 1** Does the organization maintain records to substantiate the amount of the grants or assistance, the grantees' eligibility for the grants or assistance, and the selection criteria used to award the grants or assistance? **Yes** **No**
- 2** Describe in Part IV the organization's procedures for monitoring the use of grant funds in the United States.

Part II Grants and Other Assistance to Domestic Organizations and Domestic Governments. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 21, for any recipient that received more than \$5,000. Part II can be duplicated if additional space is needed.

1 (a) Name and address of organization or government	(b) EIN	(c) IRC section (if applicable)	(d) Amount of cash grant	(e) Amount of non-cash assistance	(f) Method of valuation (book, FMV, appraisal, other)	(g) Description of noncash assistance	(h) Purpose of grant or assistance
MADISON VALLEY RANGLANDS GROUP 2 HOT SPRINGS LOOP ENNIS, MT 59729	31-1646307	501(C)3	7,500.	0.			REDUCING CONFLICTS THROUGH CARCASS MANAGEMENT IN THE MADISON VALLEY
PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES 104 E. MAINT ST. SUITE 307 BOZEMAN, MT 59715	81-0482646	501(C)3	7,000.	0.			UPPER MADISON VALLEY SANITATION/SAFETY PROJECT
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS 514 S FRONT STREET SUITE C CONRAD, MT 59425	81-0302402	MFWP	5,555.	0.			SUPPORT OF THE CONFLICT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES SPECIFIED IN THE GRANTEE'S PROPOSAL
GREAT BEAR FOUNDATION PO BOX 9383 MISSOULA, MT 59807	81-0405765	501(C)3	5,000.	0.			BEARS AND APPLES
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE 4426 VT ROUTE 215 N CABOT, VT 05647	53-0196629	501(C)3	5,000.	0.			SOUTHWEST MONTANA BEAR SAFETY EDUCATION EXPANSION PROJECT

- 2** Enter total number of section 501(c)(3) and government organizations listed in the line 1 table ▶ _____
- 3** Enter total number of other organizations listed in the line 1 table ▶ _____

LHA For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 990.

Schedule I (Form 990) (2018)

Part III Grants and Other Assistance to Domestic Individuals. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 22. Part III can be duplicated if additional space is needed.

(a) Type of grant or assistance	(b) Number of recipients	(c) Amount of cash grant	(d) Amount of non-cash assistance	(e) Method of valuation (book, FMV, appraisal, other)	(f) Description of noncash assistance

Part IV Supplemental Information. Provide the information required in Part I, line 2; Part III, column (b); and any other additional information.

PART I, LINE 2:

VITAL GROUND REQUIRES A DETAILED PROJECT PROPOSAL AND BUDGET FROM PROSPECTIVE GRANTEES PRIOR TO APPROVING AND AWARDED GRANTS. THE USE OF GRANT FUNDS IS MONITORED BY REQUIRING WRITTEN PROJECT PROGRESS/COMPLETION REPORTS FROM ALL GRANTEES.

**SCHEDULE M
(Form 990)**

Noncash Contributions

OMB No. 1545-0047

2018

Open to Public Inspection

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

- ▶ Complete if the organizations answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, lines 29 or 30.
- ▶ Attach to Form 990.
- ▶ Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for instructions and the latest information.

Name of the organization **THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.** Employer identification number **87-0483446**

Part I Types of Property

	(a) Check if applicable	(b) Number of contributions or items contributed	(c) Noncash contribution amounts reported on Form 990, Part VIII, line 1g	(d) Method of determining noncash contribution amounts
1 Art - Works of art				
2 Art - Historical treasures				
3 Art - Fractional interests				
4 Books and publications				
5 Clothing and household goods				
6 Cars and other vehicles				
7 Boats and planes				
8 Intellectual property				
9 Securities - Publicly traded	X	5	40,039.	FAIR MARKET VALUE
10 Securities - Closely held stock				
11 Securities - Partnership, LLC, or trust interests				
12 Securities - Miscellaneous				
13 Qualified conservation contribution - Historic structures				
14 Qualified conservation contribution - Other				
15 Real estate - Residential				
16 Real estate - Commercial				
17 Real estate - Other				
18 Collectibles				
19 Food inventory				
20 Drugs and medical supplies				
21 Taxidermy				
22 Historical artifacts				
23 Scientific specimens				
24 Archeological artifacts				
25 Other (GOODS AND EQU)	X	7	4,247.	EST. COST FROM DONOR
26 Other ()				
27 Other ()				
28 Other ()				

29 Number of Forms 8283 received by the organization during the tax year for contributions for which the organization completed Form 8283, Part IV, Donee Acknowledgement **29**

	Yes	No
30a During the year, did the organization receive by contribution any property reported in Part I, lines 1 through 28, that it must hold for at least three years from the date of the initial contribution, and which isn't required to be used for exempt purposes for the entire holding period?		X
b If "Yes," describe the arrangement in Part II.		
31 Does the organization have a gift acceptance policy that requires the review of any nonstandard contributions?	X	
32a Does the organization hire or use third parties or related organizations to solicit, process, or sell noncash contributions?		X
b If "Yes," describe in Part II.		
33 If the organization didn't report an amount in column (c) for a type of property for which column (a) is checked, describe in Part II.		

Part II **Supplemental Information.** Provide the information required by Part I, lines 30b, 32b, and 33, and whether the organization is reporting in Part I, column (b), the number of contributions, the number of items received, or a combination of both. Also complete this part for any additional information.

SCHEDULE M, PART I, COLUMN (B):

THE ORGANIZATION IS REPORTING THE NUMBER OF ITEMS CONTRIBUTED.

SCHEDULE O
(Form 990 or 990-EZ)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Supplemental Information to Form 990 or 990-EZ

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on
Form 990 or 990-EZ or to provide any additional information.

▶ Attach to Form 990 or 990-EZ.

▶ Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for the latest information.

OMB No. 1545-0047

2018

Open to Public
Inspection

Name of the organization

THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.

Employer identification number

87-0483446

FORM 990, PART III, LINE 1, DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION MISSION:

PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE.

FORM 990, PART III, LINE 4A, PROGRAM SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

MANAGING ITS OWN PROJECTS, VITAL GROUND STRATEGICALLY PROVIDES GRANTS

TO AGENCIES, GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES AND OTHER NONPROFIT CONSERVATION

ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSIST THEIR EFFORTS TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE IMPORTANT

WILDLIFE HABITAT OR PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND PEOPLE.

2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE:

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:

MONITORED 16 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS HELD BY VITAL GROUND IN MONTANA,

TWO CONSERVATION EASEMENTS HELD BY VITAL GROUND IN IDAHO, AND FOUR

FOREST LEGACY PROGRAM CONSERVATION EASEMENTS HELD BY THE IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS IN IDAHO (ALL ACQUIRED PRIOR TO 2018).

CONTINUED WORKING TO ADVANCE THE SWAN VALLEY GRIZZLY BEAR CONSERVATION

INITIATIVE, AN EFFORT TO CONSERVE KEY GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT AND LINKAGES

BETWEEN THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS AND MISSION MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS

AREAS IN MISSOULA AND LAKE COUNTIES, MONTANA.

EXPANDED EFFORTS TO CONSERVE PRIVATE WORKING LANDS ON THE ROCKY

MOUNTAIN FRONT OF MONTANA BY COLLABORATING WITH LANDOWNERS AND STATE

AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO INITIATE NEW CONSERVATION PROJECTS.

Name of the organization

THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.

Employer identification number

87-0483446

LAND ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT:

ACQUIRED FIVE PROPERTIES TOTALING 17.5 ACRES IN FEE-TITLE TO PROTECT THEIR WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES-PART OF THE ORGANIZATION'S SELKIRK-PURCELL-CABINET LINKAGE INITIATIVE IN NORTHWESTERN MONTANA AND NORTH IDAHO, AN EFFORT TO PERMANENTLY CONSERVE KEY GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT LINKAGES BETWEEN THE SELKIRK, PURCELL AND CABINET-YAAK ECOSYSTEMS.

ACQUIRED ONE PROPERTY TOTALING 455 ACRES IN FEE-TITLE TO PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES, PART OF THE BISMARK MEADOWS PROJECT AND THE ORGANIZATION'S ONGOING EFFORTS IN NORTHWESTERN IDAHO.

ACQUIRED ONE PROPERTY TOTALING 52 ACRES IN FEE-TITLE TO PROMOTE WILDLIFE LINKAGE BY PROTECTING IMPORTANT RIPARIAN HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES AS PART OF THE ORGANIZATION'S ONGOING EFFORTS IN WESTERN MONTANA UNDER THE BRIDGE TO THE BITTERROOTS PROJECT.

CONTINUED PROMOTING THE GOALS OF THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE'S COMMUNITY FOREST AND OPEN SPACE PROGRAM THROUGH FOREST STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES AT VITAL GROUND'S ALVORD LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST, CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS' COMMITTEE THAT GUIDES MANAGEMENT OF THE FOREST.

MONITORED SEVEN FEE-TITLE CONSERVATION PROPERTIES IN IDAHO AND FOUR FEE-TITLE CONSERVATION PROPERTIES IN MONTANA (ALL ACQUIRED PRIOR TO 2018).

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CONDUCTED HABITAT ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITIES ON PROPERTIES HELD FOR THE BENEFIT OF WILDLIFE IN BONNER AND BOUNDARY COUNTIES, IDAHO, AND IN LINCOLN AND MISSOULA COUNTIES, MONTANA.

FORM 990, PART III, LINE 4B, PROGRAM SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE:

PRODUCED 10,000 COPIES OF VITAL NEWS, THE ORGANIZATION'S BIENNIAL 16-PAGE NEWSLETTER THAT REPORTS ON GRIZZLY BEAR AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES AS WELL AS PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

PRODUCED 10 ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS THAT WERE DISTRIBUTED TO APPROXIMATELY 4,200 UNIQUE RECIPIENTS (42,000 TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS). THESE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS REPORTED ON GRIZZLY BEAR AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES, EMERGING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES, CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CONSERVATION AND BUSINESS PARTNERS, AND FUNDING NEEDS.

PRODUCED OTHER ASSORTED POSTCARDS AND PROMOTIONS THAT REPORTED ON GRIZZLY BEAR AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES, EMERGING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES, CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CONSERVATION AND BUSINESS PARTNERS AND FUNDING NEEDS.

MAINTAINED A WEBSITE (WWW.VITALGROUND.ORG) PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC ABOUT GRIZZLY BEARS, WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES, CURRENT GRIZZLY BEAR CONSERVATION CHALLENGES AND PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS. DURING 2018, THE WEBSITE RECEIVED 118,000 PAGE

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VIEWS BY 44,000 UNIQUE VISITORS.

PROMOTED WILDLIFE HABITAT, GRIZZLY BEAR NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION TOPICS TO A SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE OF MORE THAN 60,000.

CONTINUED WORKING TO ADVANCE VITAL GROUND'S GRIZZLY BEAR CONSERVATION EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY AT THE BROOKFIELD ZOO'S GREAT BEAR WILDERNESS EXHIBIT.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION GRANTS AWARDED (\$1,000):

VITAL GROUND PROVIDED A \$1,000 GRANT TO PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES TO ADDRESS WILDLIFE CONFLICTS STEMMING FROM UNSECURED ATTRACTANTS IN THE MADISON VALLEY.

OTHER:

IN ADDITION TO ITS HABITAT CONSERVATION AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS, THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION ALSO PARTNERS WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND TRIBAL AGENCIES, OTHER NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS TO SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND PEOPLE. THROUGH ITS 2018 CONSERVATION PARTNERS GRANT PROGRAM, THE ORGANIZATION AWARDED \$50,250 TO 13 ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING: BE BEAR AWARE, BIG HOLE WATERSHED COMMITTEE, DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE, FLATHEAD LAND TRUST, GREAT BEAR FOUNDATION, HEART OF THE ROCKIES, MADISON VALLEY RANGLANDS GROUP, MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS, NINE MILE COMMUNITY CENTER, PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES, TREGO RANGE RIDER COLLABORATIVE,

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE AND YAAK VALLEY FOREST COUNCIL.

FORM 990, PART VI, SECTION B, LINE 11B:

THE 990 IS PREPARED BY THE ORGANIZATION'S ACCOUNTING FIRM, REVIEWED BY THE ORGANIZATION'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PROVIDED TO THE ORGANIZATION'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT, AND THEN APPROVED BY THE ORGANIZATION'S AUDIT COMMITTEE (A COMMITTEE OF THE ORGANIZATION'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES).

FORM 990, PART VI, SECTION B, LINE 12C:

THE "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST" POLICY IS REVIEWED AND SIGNED ANNUALLY BY ALL TRUSTEES AND EMPLOYEES.

FORM 990, PART VI, SECTION B, LINE 15:

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMPENSATION IS REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. THE TOTAL EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION BUDGET IS REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AS PART OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS. EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION (OTHER THAN THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR) IS NOT INDIVIDUALLY REVIEWED BY THE BOARD, BUT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. PUBLISHED SALARY SURVEYS (LAND TRUST ALLIANCE AND TRAINING RESOURCES FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY) ARE USED TO PROVIDE COMPARATIVE COMPENSATION GUIDELINES.

FORM 990, PART VI, LINE 17, LIST OF STATES RECEIVING COPY OF FORM 990:

AL, AK, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, HI, IL, KS, KY, MD, MA, ME, MI, MN, MS, MO, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND
OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, WA, WI, WV

FORM 990, PART VI, SECTION C, LINE 19:

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND FORM 990 ARE POSTED ON THE ORGANIZATION'S

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WEBSITE. OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS (FORM 1023, IRS LETTER OF DETERMINATION, ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION, BYLAWS, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY, AND OTHER GOVERNING POLICIES) ARE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST.

FORM 990, PART XII, LINE 2C

THIS PROCESS HAS NOT CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service (99)

▶ **Go to www.irs.gov/Form4562 for instructions and the latest information.**

▶ **Attach to your tax return.**

Name(s) shown on return

Business or activity to which this form relates

Identifying number

THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION, INC.

FORM 990 PAGE 10

87-0483446

Part I Election To Expense Certain Property Under Section 179 Note: If you have any listed property, complete Part V before you complete Part I.

1	Maximum amount (see instructions)	1	1,000,000.
2	Total cost of section 179 property placed in service (see instructions)	2	
3	Threshold cost of section 179 property before reduction in limitation	3	2,500,000.
4	Reduction in limitation. Subtract line 3 from line 2. If zero or less, enter -0-	4	
5	Dollar limitation for tax year. Subtract line 4 from line 1. If zero or less, enter -0-. If married filing separately, see instructions	5	
6	(a) Description of property	(b) Cost (business use only)	(c) Elected cost
7	Listed property. Enter the amount from line 29	7	
8	Total elected cost of section 179 property. Add amounts in column (c), lines 6 and 7	8	
9	Tentative deduction. Enter the smaller of line 5 or line 8	9	
10	Carryover of disallowed deduction from line 13 of your 2017 Form 4562	10	
11	Business income limitation. Enter the smaller of business income (not less than zero) or line 5	11	
12	Section 179 expense deduction. Add lines 9 and 10, but don't enter more than line 11	12	
13	Carryover of disallowed deduction to 2019. Add lines 9 and 10, less line 12	13	

Note: Don't use Part II or Part III below for listed property. Instead, use Part V.

Part II Special Depreciation Allowance and Other Depreciation (Don't include listed property.)

14	Special depreciation allowance for qualified property (other than listed property) placed in service during the tax year	14	
15	Property subject to section 168(f)(1) election	15	
16	Other depreciation (including ACRS)	16	3,839.

Part III MACRS Depreciation (Don't include listed property. See instructions.)

Section A

17	MACRS deductions for assets placed in service in tax years beginning before 2018	17	
18	If you are electing to group any assets placed in service during the tax year into one or more general asset accounts, check here		<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B - Assets Placed in Service During 2018 Tax Year Using the General Depreciation System

(a) Classification of property	(b) Month and year placed in service	(c) Basis for depreciation (business/investment use only - see instructions)	(d) Recovery period	(e) Convention	(f) Method	(g) Depreciation deduction
19a 3-year property						
b 5-year property						
c 7-year property						
d 10-year property						
e 15-year property						
f 20-year property						
g 25-year property			25 yrs.		S/L	
h Residential rental property	/		27.5 yrs.	MM	S/L	
	/		27.5 yrs.	MM	S/L	
i Nonresidential real property	/		39 yrs.	MM	S/L	
	/			MM	S/L	

Section C - Assets Placed in Service During 2018 Tax Year Using the Alternative Depreciation System

20a Class life					S/L	
b 12-year			12 yrs.		S/L	
c 30-year	/		30 yrs.	MM	S/L	
d 40-year	/		40 yrs.	MM	S/L	

Part IV Summary (See instructions.)

21	Listed property. Enter amount from line 28	21	
22	Total. Add amounts from line 12, lines 14 through 17, lines 19 and 20 in column (g), and line 21. Enter here and on the appropriate lines of your return. Partnerships and S corporations - see instr.	22	3,839.
23	For assets shown above and placed in service during the current year, enter the portion of the basis attributable to section 263A costs	23	

Part V Listed Property (Include automobiles, certain other vehicles, certain aircraft, and property used for entertainment, recreation, or amusement.)

Note: For any vehicle for which you are using the standard mileage rate or deducting lease expense, complete only 24a, 24b, columns (a) through (c) of Section A, all of Section B, and Section C if applicable.

Section A - Depreciation and Other Information (Caution: See the instructions for limits for passenger automobiles.)

24a Do you have evidence to support the business/investment use claimed? Yes No 24b If "Yes," is the evidence written? Yes No

Table with 9 columns: (a) Type of property, (b) Date placed in service, (c) Business/investment use percentage, (d) Cost or other basis, (e) Basis for depreciation, (f) Recovery period, (g) Method/Convention, (h) Depreciation deduction, (i) Elected section 179 cost.

25 Special depreciation allowance for qualified listed property placed in service during the tax year and used more than 50% in a qualified business use 25

26 Property used more than 50% in a qualified business use: Table with 9 columns for property details and percentages.

27 Property used 50% or less in a qualified business use: Table with 9 columns for property details and percentages.

28 Add amounts in column (h), lines 25 through 27. Enter here and on line 21, page 1 28

29 Add amounts in column (i), line 26. Enter here and on line 7, page 1 29

Section B - Information on Use of Vehicles

Complete this section for vehicles used by a sole proprietor, partner, or other "more than 5% owner," or related person. If you provided vehicles to your employees, first answer the questions in Section C to see if you meet an exception to completing this section for those vehicles.

Table for Section B with 6 main rows (30-36) and 12 columns for vehicle-specific data (a-f) and personal use availability (Yes/No).

Section C - Questions for Employers Who Provide Vehicles for Use by Their Employees

Answer these questions to determine if you meet an exception to completing Section B for vehicles used by employees who aren't more than 5% owners or related persons.

Table for Section C with 5 rows (37-41) and 3 columns (Yes, No, and a shaded area).

Note: If your answer to 37, 38, 39, 40, or 41 is "Yes," don't complete Section B for the covered vehicles.

Part VI Amortization

Table for Section C with 6 columns: (a) Description of costs, (b) Date amortization begins, (c) Amortizable amount, (d) Code section, (e) Amortization period or percentage, (f) Amortization for this year.

42 Amortization of costs that begins during your 2018 tax year: Table with 6 columns for amortization details.

43 Amortization of costs that began before your 2018 tax year 43 267.

44 Total. Add amounts in column (f). See the instructions for where to report 44 267.