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Form 990

Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax

OMB No 1545-0047

2017

Open to Public Inspection

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

Information about Form 990 and its instructions is at [www.irs.gov/form990](#)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

A For the 2017 calendar year, or tax year beginning 01-01-2017 , and ending 12-31-2017

B Check if applicable

☐ Address change

☐ Name change

☐ Initial return

☐ Final return/terminated

☐ Amended return

☐ Application pending

C Name of organization

THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION INC

Doing business as

Number and street (or P O box if mail is not delivered to street address)

20 FORT MISSOULA ROAD

Room/suite

City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code

MISSOULA, MT 598047202

F Name and address of principal officer

RYAN LUTEY

20 FORT MISSOULA ROAD

MISSOULA, MT 598047202

H(a) Is this a group return for subordinates?

☐ Yes ☒ No

H(b) Are all subordinates included?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If "No," attach a list (see instructions)

H(c) Group exemption number ▶

D Employer identification number

87-0483446

E Telephone number

(406) 549-8650

G Gross receipts \$ 2,234,635

I Tax-exempt status

☒ 501(c)(3) ☐ 501(c) () ◀(insert no) ☐ 4947(a)(1) or ☐ 527

J Website: ▶ WWW.VITALGROUND.ORG

K Form of organization

☒ Corporation ☐ Trust ☐ Association ☐ Other ▶

L Year of formation 1990

M State of legal domicile UT

Part I Summary

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 ☐ 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)

17

4 Number of independent voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1b)

17

5 Total number of individuals employed in calendar year 2017 (Part V, line 2a)

11

6 Total number of volunteers (estimate if necessary)

29

7a Total unrelated business revenue from Part VIII, column (C), line 12

0

7b Net unrelated business taxable income from Form 990-T, line 34

0

Revenue

8 Contributions and grants (Part VIII, line 1h)

713,485

9 Program service revenue (Part VIII, line 2g)

0

10 Investment income (Part VIII, column (A), lines 3, 4, and 7d)

1,725

11 Other revenue (Part VIII, column (A), lines 5, 6d, 8c, 9c, 10c, and 11e)

-13,948

12 Total revenue—add lines 8 through 11 (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12)

701,262

13 Grants and similar amounts paid (Part IX, column (A), lines 1–3)

55,250

14 Benefits paid to or for members (Part IX, column (A), line 4)

0

15 Salaries, other compensation, employee benefits (Part IX, column (A), lines 5–10)

401,696

16a Professional fundraising fees (Part IX, column (A), line 11e)

0

b Total fundraising expenses (Part IX, column (D), line 25) ▶138,230

17 Other expenses (Part IX, column (A), lines 11a–11d, 11f–24e)

398,697

18 Total expenses Add lines 13–17 (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25)

855,643

19 Revenue less expenses Subtract line 18 from line 12

-154,381

Expenses

20 Total assets (Part X, line 16)

4,884,618

21 Total liabilities (Part X, line 26)

45,107

22 Net assets or fund balances Subtract line 21 from line 20

4,839,511

Net Assets or Fund Balances

Beginning of Current Year

End of Year

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

2018-07-03

Date

RYAN LUTEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Type or print name and title

Paid Preparer Use Only

Print/Type preparer's name

WAYNE R HIETT CPA

Preparer's signature

WAYNE R HIETT CPA

Date

2018-07-03

Check ☐ if self-employed

PTIN

P00159424

Firm's name ▶ WIPFLI LLP

Firm's EIN ▶ 39-0758449

Firm's address ▶ 101 EAST FRONT STREET 301

Phone no (406) 728-1800

MISSOULA, MT 59802

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? (see instructions)

☒ Yes ☐ No

For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the separate instructions.

Cat No 11282Y

Form 990 (2017)

Part III Statement of Program Service AccomplishmentsCheck if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part III ☒**1** Briefly describe the organization's mission

VITAL GROUND HELPS ENSURE THE RECOVERY AND LONG-TERM SURVIVAL OF GRIZZLY BEARS, TOGETHER WITH THE MANY NATIVE SPECIES THAT SHARE THEIR RANGE, THROUGH THE PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF CORE HABITATS AND LANDSCAPE LINKAGES

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 ☒ 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 ☒ 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 \$ 473,249 including grants of \$ 37,000) (Revenue \$ 4,615)
	See Additional Data

4b	(Code) (Expenses \$ 350,640 including grants of \$ 20,825) (Revenue \$ 3,419)
	See Additional Data

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

4e	Total program service expenses ▶ 823,889
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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>	1 Yes	
2 Is the organization required to complete <i>Schedule B, Schedule of Contributors</i> (see instructions)?	2 Yes	
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>	3	No
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>	4	No
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>	5	No
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>	6	No
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>	7 Yes	
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>	8	No
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>	9	No
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>	10 Yes	
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>	11a Yes	
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>	11b Yes	
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>	11c	No
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>	11d	No
e Did the organization report an amount for other liabilities in Part X, line 25? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part X</i>	11e	No
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>	11f Yes	
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>	12a Yes	
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>	12b	No
13 Is the organization a school described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule E</i>	13	No
14a Did the organization maintain an office, employees, or agents outside of the United States?	14a	No
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>	14b	No
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>	15	No
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>	16	No
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> (see instructions)	17	No
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>	18 Yes	
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>	19	No

Part IV Checklist of Required Schedules (continued)

	Yes	No
20a Did the organization operate one or more hospital facilities? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule H</i>		No
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>	Yes	
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
b A family member of a current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV</i>		No
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>		No
29 Did the organization receive more than \$25,000 in non-cash contributions? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule M</i>	Yes	
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>		No
31 Did the organization liquidate, terminate, or dissolve and cease operations? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule N, Part I</i>		No
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>		No
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>		No
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>		No
35a Did the organization have a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)?		No
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>		No
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>		No
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	Yes	

Part V Statements Regarding Other IRS Filings and Tax ComplianceCheck 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	16	
b	Enter the number of Forms W-2G included in line 1a Enter -0- if not applicable	0	
c	Did the organization comply with backup withholding rules for reportable payments to vendors and reportable gaming (gambling) winnings to prize winners?	1c	Yes
2a	Enter the number of employees reported on Form W-3, Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statements, filed for the calendar year ending with or within the year covered by this return	11	
b	If at least one is reported on line 2a, did the organization file all required federal employment tax returns? Note. If the sum of lines 1a and 2a is greater than 250, you may be required to e-file (see instructions)	2b	Yes
3a	Did the organization have unrelated business gross income of \$1,000 or more during the year?	3a	No
b	If "Yes," has it filed a Form 990-T for this year? If "No" to line 3b, provide an explanation in Schedule O	3b	
4a	At any time during the calendar year, did the organization have an interest in, or a signature or other authority over, a financial account in a foreign country (such as a bank account, securities account, or other financial account)?	4a	No
b	If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country See instructions for filing requirements for FinCEN Form 114, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR)		
5a	Was the organization a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction at any time during the tax year?	5a	No
b	Did any taxable party notify the organization that it was or is a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction?	5b	No
c	If "Yes," to line 5a or 5b, did the organization file Form 8886-T?	5c	
6a	Does the organization have annual gross receipts that are normally greater than \$100,000, and did the organization solicit any contributions that were not tax deductible as charitable contributions?	6a	No
b	If "Yes," did the organization include with every solicitation an express statement that such contributions or gifts were not tax deductible?	6b	
7	Organizations that may receive deductible contributions under section 170(c).		
a	Did the organization receive a payment in excess of \$75 made partly as a contribution and partly for goods and services provided to the payor?	7a	No
b	If "Yes," did the organization notify the donor of the value of the goods or services provided?	7b	
c	Did the organization sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of tangible personal property for which it was required to file Form 8282?	7c	No
d	If "Yes," indicate the number of Forms 8282 filed during the year	7d	
e	Did the organization receive any funds, directly or indirectly, to pay premiums on a personal benefit contract?	7e	No
f	Did the organization, during the year, pay premiums, directly or indirectly, on a personal benefit contract?	7f	No
g	If the organization received a contribution of qualified intellectual property, did the organization file Form 8899 as required?	7g	
h	If the organization received a contribution of cars, boats, airplanes, or other vehicles, did the organization file a Form 1098-C?	7h	
8	Sponsoring organizations maintaining donor advised funds. Did a donor advised fund maintained by the sponsoring organization have excess business holdings at any time during the year?	8	
9a	Did the sponsoring organization make any taxable distributions under section 4966?	9a	
b	Did the sponsoring organization make a distribution to a donor, donor advisor, or related person?	9b	
10	Section 501(c)(7) organizations. Enter		
a	Initiation fees and capital contributions included on Part VIII, line 12	10a	
b	Gross receipts, included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12, for public use of club facilities	10b	
11	Section 501(c)(12) organizations. Enter		
a	Gross income from members or shareholders	11a	
b	Gross income from other sources (Do not net amounts due or paid to other sources against amounts due or received from them)	11b	
12a	Section 4947(a)(1) non-exempt charitable trusts. Is the organization filing Form 990 in lieu of Form 1041?	12a	
b	If "Yes," enter the amount of tax-exempt interest received or accrued during the year	12b	
13	Section 501(c)(29) qualified nonprofit health insurance issuers.		
a	Is the organization licensed to issue qualified health plans in more than one state? Note. See the instructions for additional information the organization must report on Schedule O	13a	
b	Enter the amount of reserves the organization is required to maintain by the states in which the organization is licensed to issue qualified health plans	13b	
c	Enter the amount of reserves on hand	13c	
14a	Did the organization receive any payments for indoor tanning services during the tax year?	14a	No
b	If "Yes," has it filed a Form 720 to report these payments? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O	14b	

Part VI Governance, Management, and Disclosure For each "Yes" response to lines 2 through 7b below, and for a "No" response to lines 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. ☒**Section A. Governing Body and Management**

		Yes	No
1a	Enter the number of voting members of the governing body at the end of the tax year		
	If there are material differences in voting rights among members of the governing body, or if the governing body delegated broad authority to an executive committee or similar committee, explain in Schedule O		
1b	Enter the number of voting members included in line 1a, above, who are independent		
2	Did any officer, director, trustee, or key employee have a family relationship or a business relationship with any other officer, director, trustee, or key employee?		No
3	Did the organization delegate control over management duties customarily performed by or under the direct supervision of officers, directors or trustees, or key employees to a management company or other person?		No
4	Did the organization make any significant changes to its governing documents since the prior Form 990 was filed?		No
5	Did the organization become aware during the year of a significant diversion of the organization's assets?		No
6	Did the organization have members or stockholders?		No
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?		No
7b	Are any governance decisions of the organization reserved to (or subject to approval by) members, stockholders, or persons other than the governing body?		No
8	Did the organization contemporaneously document the meetings held or written actions undertaken during the year by the following:		
8a	The governing body?	Yes	
8b	Each committee with authority to act on behalf of the governing body?	Yes	
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.		No

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

		Yes	No
10a	Did the organization have local chapters, branches, or affiliates?		No
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?	Yes	
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.	Yes	
12b	Were officers, directors, or trustees, and key employees required to disclose annually interests that could give rise to conflicts?	Yes	
12c	Did the organization regularly and consistently monitor and enforce compliance with the policy? If "Yes," describe in Schedule O how this was done.	Yes	
13	Did the organization have a written whistleblower policy?	Yes	
14	Did the organization have a written document retention and destruction policy?	Yes	
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?		
15a	The organization's CEO, Executive Director, or top management official.	Yes	
15b	Other officers or key employees of the organization.	Yes	
	If "Yes" to line 15a or 15b, describe the process in Schedule O (see instructions).		
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?		No
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, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, UT, VA, WV, WI, ME, ND, WA**

18 Section 6104 requires an organization to make its Form 1023 (or 1024 if applicable), 990, and 990-T (501(c)(3)s only) available for public inspection. Indicate how you made these available. Check all that apply.
☒ Own website ☐ Another's website ☒ 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 20 FORT MISSOULA ROAD MISSOULA, MT 598047202 (406) 549-8650

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, or 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 dotted 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) STUART STRAHL CHAIRMAN	8.00	X		X				0	0	0
(2) KELLY JOHNSON VICE CHAIRMAN	2.00	X		X				0	0	0
(3) DAVID WESLEY SECRETARY	2.00	X		X				0	0	0
(4) CHARLIE EISEMAN TREASURER	2.00	X		X				0	0	0
(5) WALLY BECKY TRUSTEE	2.00	X						0	0	0
(6) JACK CAPP TRUSTEE	4.00	X						0	0	0
(7) DOUG CHADWICK TRUSTEE	20.00	X						0	0	0
(8) JOHN HECHTEL TRUSTEE	2.00	X						0	0	0
(9) SOU BARRETT TRUSTEE	3.00	X						0	0	0
(10) MAUREEN MAYER TRUSTEE	2.00	X						0	0	0
(11) LYNNE SEUS TRUSTEE	5.00	X						0	0	0
(12) SALLY SMYTH TRUSTEE	5.00	X						0	0	0
(13) DEBI STRONG TRUSTEE	3.00	X						0	0	0
(14) THERESA YOUNG TRUSTEE	1.00	X						0	0	0
(15) MEGGEN WILSON TRUSTEE	1.00	X						0	0	0
(16) ANDREA NASI TRUSTEE	18.00	X						0	0	0
(17) RUSSELL FOX TRUSTEE	2.00	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 dotted 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) RYAN LUTEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	40 00			X				87,925	0	2,400
1b Sub-Total										
c Total from continuation sheets to Part VII, Section A										
d Total (add lines 1b and 1c)								87,925	0	2,400

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 **0**

	Yes	No
3 Did the organization list any former officer, director or trustee, key employee, or highest compensated employee on line 1a? If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such individual		No
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? If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such individual		No
5 Did any person listed on line 1a receive or accrue compensation from any unrelated organization or individual for services rendered to the organization? If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such person		No

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

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 RevenueCheck 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	1a Federated campaigns . . .	1a				
	b Membership dues . . .	1b	33,223			
	c Fundraising events . . .	1c				
	d Related organizations	1d				
	e Government grants (contributions)	1e	49,250			
	f All other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts not included above	1f	1,890,370			
	g Noncash contributions included in lines 1a-1f \$ <u>223,354</u>					
	h Total. Add lines 1a-1f ▶		1,972,843			
Program Service Revenue			Business Code			
	2a _____					
	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) ▶		3,142			3,142
	4 Income from investment of tax-exempt bond proceeds ▶					
	5 Royalties ▶					
			(i) Real	(ii) Personal		
	6a Gross rents					
	b Less rental expenses					
	c Rental income or (loss)					
	d Net rental income or (loss) ▶					
			(i) Securities	(ii) Other		
	7a Gross amount from sales of assets other than inventory		71,727			
	b Less cost or other basis and sales expenses		72,526			
	c Gain or (loss)		-799			
	d Net gain or (loss) ▶		-799			-799
	8a Gross income from fundraising events (not including \$ _____ of contributions reported on line 1c) See Part IV, line 18 a		163,185			
	b Less direct expenses b		125,698			
	c Net income or (loss) from fundraising events . . . ▶		37,487			37,487
	9a Gross income from gaming activities See Part IV, line 19 a					
	b Less direct expenses b					
	c Net income or (loss) from gaming activities . . . ▶					
	10a Gross sales of inventory, less returns and allowances . . . a		15,704			
b Less cost of goods sold . . . b		11,714				
c Net income or (loss) from sales of inventory . . . ▶		3,990			3,990	
Miscellaneous Revenue		Business Code				
11a OTHER REVENUE		900099	8,034	8,034		
b _____						
c _____						
d All other revenue						
e Total. Add lines 11a-11d ▶		8,034				
12 Total revenue. See Instructions ▶		2,024,697	8,034	0	43,820	

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.	57,825	57,825		
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, line 15 and 16.				
4 Benefits paid to or for members.				
5 Compensation of current officers, directors, trustees, and key employees.	90,325	45,163	22,581	22,581
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.	336,725	257,539	33,223	45,963
8 Pension plan accruals and contributions (include section 401 (k) and 403(b) employer contributions).				
9 Other employee benefits.	19,090	14,058	2,194	2,838
10 Payroll taxes.	31,925	22,667	4,150	5,108
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 Schedule O).	65,754	44,335	16,680	4,739
12 Advertising and promotion.	29,535	29,535		
13 Office expenses.	108,797	62,323	12,554	33,920
14 Information technology.				
15 Royalties.				
16 Occupancy.	30,757	15,379	7,689	7,689
17 Travel.	28,243	18,285	1,536	8,422
18 Payments of travel or entertainment expenses for any federal, state, or local public officials.				
19 Conferences, conventions, and meetings.				
20 Interest.	1,040	1,040		
21 Payments to affiliates.				
22 Depreciation, depletion, and amortization.	4,274	1,871	1,468	935
23 Insurance.	10,980	8,947	1,242	791
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 CONSERVATION EASEMENT A	199,999	199,999		
b GIFTS	13,033	10,595	1,594	844
c LICENSES & TAXES	10,760	10,760		
d MEALS & ENTERTAINMENT	10,356	6,531	1,228	2,597
e All other expenses	21,401	17,037	2,561	1,803
25 Total functional expenses. Add lines 1 through 24e.	1,070,819	823,889	108,700	138,230
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 SheetCheck if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part IX ☐

				(A) Beginning of year		(B) End of year
Assets	1	Cash—non-interest-bearing		579,418	1	809,132
	2	Savings and temporary cash investments		0	2	320,686
	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 instructions). Complete Part II of Schedule L			6	
	7	Notes and loans receivable, net			7	
	8	Inventories for sale or use		15,856	8	16,856
	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	3,987,191		
	b	Less: accumulated depreciation	10b	37,585		
				3,330,375	10c	3,949,606
	11	Investments—publicly traded securities			11	
	12	Investments—other securities. See Part IV, line 11		827,353	12	826,683
	13	Investments—program-related. See Part IV, line 11			13	
	14	Intangible assets			14	
15	Other assets. See Part IV, line 11		126,525	15	145,992	
16	Total assets. Add lines 1 through 15 (must equal line 34)		4,884,618	16	6,074,046	
Liabilities	17	Accounts payable and accrued expenses		17,697	17	29,924
	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		27,410	23	151,975
	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		45,107	26	181,899
Net Assets or Fund Balances	Organizations that follow SFAS 117 (ASC 958), check here ☒ and complete lines 27 through 29, and lines 33 and 34.					
	27	Unrestricted net assets		2,208,594	27	2,052,004
	28	Temporarily restricted net assets		1,326,848	28	2,483,269
	29	Permanently restricted net assets		1,304,069	29	1,356,874
	Organizations that do not follow SFAS 117 (ASC 958), check here ☐ 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		4,839,511	33	5,892,147
34	Total liabilities and net assets/fund balances		4,884,618	34	6,074,046	

Part XI Reconciliation of Net AssetsCheck 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	2,024,697
2	Total expenses (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25)	2	1,070,819
3	Revenue less expenses Subtract line 2 from line 1	3	953,878
4	Net assets or fund balances at beginning of year (must equal Part X, line 33, column (A))	4	4,839,511
5	Net unrealized gains (losses) on investments	5	98,758
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	5,892,147

Part XII Financial Statements and ReportingCheck if Schedule O contains a response or note to any line in this Part XII ☒

	Yes	No
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		No
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	Yes	
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	Yes	
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?		No
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		

Additional Data

Software ID:

Software Version:

EIN: 87-0483446

Name: THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION INC

Form 990 (2017)

Form 990, Part III, Line 4a:

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 THROUGH THE VOLUNTARY PLACEMENT OF DONATED OR PURCHASED CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON THE LAND, 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 MANAGING ITS OWN PROJECTS, VITAL GROUND OCCASIONALLY PROVIDES GRANTS TO AGENCIES, GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES AND OTHER NONPROFIT CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS TO ASSIST WITH THEIR EFFORTS TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITAT, OR TO PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND PEOPLE 2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ACQUIRED ONE CONSERVATION EASEMENT TOTALING 142 07 ACRES IN THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER VALLEY TO PERMANENTLY PROTECT ITS WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES AND ELIMINATE THE POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE BOUNDARY OF THE FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST IN MONTANA MONITORED FIFTEEN 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 2017) 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 LAND ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT ACQUIRED SEVEN PROPERTIES TOTALING 25 ACRES IN FEE-TITLE TO PROTECT THEIR WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES AS PART OF THE ORGANIZATION'S CONTINUING WORK TO ADVANCE THE SELKIRK-PURCELL-CABINET LINKAGE INITIATIVE IN NORTHWESTERN MONTANA AND NORTH IDAHO - AN EFFORT TO PERMANENTLY CONSERVE KEY GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT LINKAGES BETWEEN SELKIRK, PURCELL AND CABINET-YAAK ECOSYSTEMS DONATED A KEY, 40-ACRE PROPERTY TO THE LOLO NATIONAL FOREST TO PERMANENTLY PROTECT ITS WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES AND ELIMINATE THE POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AT THE EDGE OF THE CUBE IRON - MOUNT SILCOX INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA (DECEMBER 2017) PROVIDED A \$6,500 GRANT TO THE MONTANA LAND RELIANCE TO ASSIST WITH THE ACQUISITION OF A CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROTECTING AN 836-ACRE WORKING RANCH THAT PROVIDES WILDLIFE HABITAT ALONG THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT IN MONTANA CONTINUED PROMOTING THE GOALS OF THE U S FOREST SERVICE'S COMMUNITY FOREST AND OPEN SPACE PROGRAM THROUGH FOREST STEWARDSHIP ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS' COMMITTEE GUIDING MANAGEMENT OF VITAL GROUND'S ALVORD LAKE COMMUNITY FOREST MONITORED SEVEN FEE-TITLE CONSERVATION PROPERTIES IN IDAHO AND THREE FEE-TITLE CONSERVATION PROPERTIES IN MONTANA (ALL ACQUIRED PRIOR TO 2017) 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:

CONSERVATION EDUCATION VITAL GROUND PROVIDES INFORMATION ABOUT GRIZZLY BEARS, ASSOCIATED WILDLIFE, AND HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES 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 2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE PRODUCED 10,000 COPIES OF VITAL NEWS, THE ORGANIZATION'S BIENNIAL 16-PAGE NEWSLETTER WHICH REPORTS ON GRIZZLY BEAR AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES, PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS PRODUCED TEN ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS THAT WERE DISTRIBUTED TO APPROXIMATELY 3,400 UNIQUE RECIPIENTS (44,000 TOTAL COMMUNICATIONS) THESE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS REPORTED ON GRIZZLY BEAR AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES, EMERGING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES, CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND FUNDING NEEDS PRODUCED OTHER ASSORTED POSTCARDS AND PROMOTIONS THAT REPORTED ON GRIZZLY BEAR AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION ISSUES, EMERGING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES, CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 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 2017, THE WEBSITE RECEIVED 174,000 PAGE VIEWS BY 82,000 UNIQUE VISITORS PROMOTED WILDLIFE HABITAT, GRIZZLY BEAR NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION TOPICS TO A SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE OF 23,000 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 LAND CONSERVATION AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS, VITAL GROUND ALSO PARTICIPATES IN RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF GRIZZLY BEARS AND THEIR HABITAT, PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND HUMANS, AND/OR ENHANCE THE SURVIVAL OF GRIZZLY BEARS 2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS INCLUDE VITAL GROUND PROVIDED A \$5,000 GRANT TO THE BIG HOLE WATERSHED COMMITTEE TO EMPLOY A RANGE RIDER PROGRAM PREVENTING CONFLICTS BETWEEN LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS AND GRIZZLY BEARS ON GRAZING ALLOTMENTS IN THE BIG HOLE VALLEY, MONTANA VITAL GROUND PROVIDED A \$5,000 "COMMUNITY BEAR AWARE" GRANT TO THE SWAN ECOSYSTEM CENTER TO SUPPORT ITS SWAN VALLEY BEAR RESOURCES PROGRAM VITAL GROUND'S CONTRIBUTION WAS USED TO CONTINUE A BEAR-RESISTANT GARBAGE CONTAINER LOANER PROGRAM, ASSIST LANDOWNERS WITH SMALL LIVESTOCK TO ERECT BEAR-PROOF ELECTRIC FENCES, AND ALLOW SVBR'S TRAINED STAFF TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT BEARS AND BEAR SAFETY IN MISSOULA AND LAKE COUNTIES, MONTANA VITAL GROUND PROVIDED A \$5,000 GRANT TO THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES TO STUDY AND PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN SMALL LIVESTOCK (CHICKENS, DUCKS, GOATS, ETC) AND GRIZZLY BEARS IN MONTANA'S MISSION VALLEY

SCHEDULE A

(Form 990 or 990EZ)

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.
▶ Information about Schedule A (Form 990 or 990-EZ) and its instructions is at www.irs.gov/form990.

OMB No 1545-0047

2017

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

☒

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 **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)

(i) Name of supported organization	(ii) EIN	(iii) Type of organization (described on lines 1- 10 above (see instructions))	(iv) Is the organization listed in your governing document?		(v) Amount of monetary support (see instructions)	(vi) Amount of other support (see instructions)
			Yes	No		
Total						

Part II

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

(Complete only if you checked the box on line 5, 7, 8, or 9 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) 2013	(b) 2014	(c) 2015	(d) 2016	(e) 2017	(f) Total
1	Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received (Do not include any "unusual grant ")	1,451,289	1,669,844	1,399,806	713,485	1,972,843	7,207,267
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	1,451,289	1,669,844	1,399,806	713,485	1,972,843	7,207,267
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)						445,036
6	Public support. Subtract line 5 from line 4						6,762,231

Section B. Total Support							
Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ►		(a)2013	(b)2014	(c)2015	(d)2016	(e)2017	(f)Total
7	Amounts from line 4	1,451,289	1,669,844	1,399,806	713,485	1,972,843	7,207,267
8	Gross income from interest, dividends, payments received on securities loans, rents, royalties and income from similar sources	2,793	5,228	1,392	1,700	3,142	14,255
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						7,221,522
12	Gross receipts from related activities, etc (see instructions)					12	192,840
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 ► ☐						

Section C. Computation of Public Support Percentage		
14	Public support percentage for 2017 (line 6, column (f) divided by line 11, column (f))	14 93.640 %
15	Public support percentage for 2016 Schedule A, Part II, line 14	15 89.100 %
16a 33 1/3% support test—2017. 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. ► ☒		
b 33 1/3% support test—2016. 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. ► ☐		
17a 10%-facts-and-circumstances test—2017. 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. ► ☐		
b 10%-facts-and-circumstances test—2016. 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. ► ☐		
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. ► ☐		

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) 2013	(b) 2014	(c) 2015	(d) 2016	(e) 2017	(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) 2013	(b) 2014	(c) 2015	(d) 2016	(e) 2017	(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 2017 (line 8, column (f) divided by line 13, column (f))	15	
16 Public support percentage from 2016 Schedule A, Part III, line 15	16	

Section D. Computation of Investment Income Percentage

17 Investment income percentage for 2017 (line 10c, column (f) divided by line 13, column (f))	17	
18 Investment income percentage from 2016 Schedule A, Part III, line 17	18	

19a 33 1/3% support tests—2017. 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—2016. 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 on line 12 of 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>	1	
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>	2	
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>	3a	
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>	3b	
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>	3c	
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>	4a	
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>	4b	
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>	4c	
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>	5a	
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?	5b	
c Substitutions only. Was the substitution the result of an event beyond the organization's control?	5c	
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>	6	
7 Did the organization provide a grant, loan, compensation, or other similar payment to a substantial contributor (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>	7	
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>	8	
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>	9a	
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>	9b	
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>	9c	
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 line 10b below.</i>	10a	
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>	10b	

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>		
	11a	
	11b	
	11c	

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>		
	1	
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>		
	2	

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>		
	1	

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?		
	1	
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>		
	2	
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>		
	3	

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 ☐ The organization satisfied the Activities Test. Complete line 2 below.		
b ☐ The organization is the parent of each of its supported organizations. Complete line 3 below.		
c ☐ 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>		
	2a	
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>		
	2b	
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>		
	3a	
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>		
	3b	

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)	1		
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			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 ☐ Check here if the current year is the organization's first as a non-functionally-integrated Type III supporting organization (see instructions)			

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 2017 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-2017	(iii) Distributable Amount for 2017
1 Distributable amount for 2017 from Section C, line 6			
2 Underdistributions, if any, for years prior to 2017 (reasonable cause required-- explain in Part VI) See instructions			
3 Excess distributions carryover, if any, to 2017			
a			
b From 2013.			
c From 2014.			
d From 2015.			
e From 2016.			
f Total of lines 3a through e			
g Applied to underdistributions of prior years			
h Applied to 2017 distributable amount			
i Carryover from 2012 not applied (see instructions)			
j Remainder Subtract lines 3g, 3h, and 3i from 3f			
4 Distributions for 2017 from Section D, line 7 \$			
a Applied to underdistributions of prior years			
b Applied to 2017 distributable amount			
c Remainder Subtract lines 4a and 4b from 4			
5 Remaining underdistributions for years prior to 2017, if any Subtract lines 3g and 4a from line 2 If the amount is greater than zero, explain in Part VI See instructions			
6 Remaining underdistributions for 2017 Subtract lines 3h and 4b from line 1 If the amount is greater than zero, explain in Part VI See instructions			
7 Excess distributions carryover to 2018. Add lines 3j and 4c			
8 Breakdown of line 7			
a Excess from 2013.			
b Excess from 2014.			
c Excess from 2015.			
d Excess from 2016.			
e Excess from 2017.			

Part VI **Supplemental Information.** Provide the explanations required by Part II, line 10, Part II, line 17a or 17b, Part III, line 12, Part IV, Section A, lines 1, 2, 3b, 3c, 4b, 4c, 5a, 6, 9a, 9b, 9c, 11a, 11b, and 11c, Part IV, Section B, lines 1 and 2, Part IV, Section C, line 1, Part IV, Section D, lines 2 and 3, Part IV, Section E, lines 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b, Part V, line 1, Part V, Section B, line 1e, Part V Section D, lines 5, 6, and 8, and Part V, Section E, lines 2, 5, and 6. Also complete this part for any additional information. (See instructions)

Facts And Circumstances Test

efile GRAPHIC print - DO NOT PROCESS		As Filed Data -		DLN: 93493198014038	
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. Information about Schedule D (Form 990) and its instructions is at www.irs.gov/form990.			OMB No 1545-0047 2017 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.					
		(a) Donor advised funds		(b) Funds and other accounts	
1		Total number at end of year			
2		Aggregate value of contributions to (during year)			
3		Aggregate value of grants from (during year)			
4		Aggregate value at end of year			
5				Did the organization inform all donors and donor advisors in writing that the assets held in donor advised funds are the organization's property, subject to the organization's exclusive legal control?	
				☐ Yes ☐ No	
6				Did the organization inform all grantees, donors, and donor advisors in writing that grant funds can be used only for charitable purposes and not for the benefit of the donor or donor advisor, or for any other purpose conferring impermissible private benefit?	
				☐ Yes ☐ No	
Part II Conservation Easements. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 7.					
1 Purpose(s) of conservation easements held by the organization (check all that apply)					
☐ Preservation of land for public use (e g , recreation or education) ☐ Preservation of an historically important land area					
☒ Protection of natural habitat ☐ Preservation of a certified historic structure					
☒ Preservation of open space					
2 Complete lines 2a through 2d if the organization held a qualified conservation contribution in the form of a conservation easement on the last day of the tax year					
				Held at the End of the Year	
a		Total number of conservation easements		2a	18
b		Total acreage restricted by conservation easements		2b	1,734 00
c		Number of conservation easements on a certified historic structure included in (a)		2c	
d		Number of conservation easements included in (c) acquired after 8/17/06, and not on a historic structure listed in the National Register		2d	
3 Number of conservation easements modified, transferred, released, extinguished, or terminated by the organization during the tax year ► 0					
4 Number of states where property subject to conservation easement is located ► 2					
5 Does the organization have a written policy regarding the periodic monitoring, inspection, handling of violations, and enforcement of the conservation easements it holds? ☒ Yes ☐ No					
6 Staff and volunteer hours devoted to monitoring, inspecting, handling of violations, and enforcing conservation easements during the year ► 185 00					
7 Amount of expenses incurred in monitoring, inspecting, handling of violations, and enforcing conservation easements during the year ► \$ 6,648					
8 Does each conservation easement reported on line 2(d) above satisfy the requirements of section 170(h)(4)(B)(i) and section 170(h)(4)(B)(ii)? ☐ Yes ☐ No					
9 In Part XIII, describe how the organization reports conservation easements in its revenue and expense statement, and balance sheet, and include, if applicable, the text of the footnote to the organization's financial statements that describes the organization's accounting for conservation easements					
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.					
1a If the organization elected, as permitted under SFAS 116 (ASC 958), not to report in its revenue statement and balance sheet works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets held for public exhibition, education, or research in furtherance of public service, provide, in Part XIII, the text of the footnote to its financial statements that describes these items					
b If the organization elected, as permitted under SFAS 116 (ASC 958), to report in its revenue statement and balance sheet works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets held for public exhibition, education, or research in furtherance of public service, provide the following amounts relating to these items					
(i) Revenue included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 1				► \$	
(ii) Assets included in Form 990, Part X				► \$	
2 If the organization received or held works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets for financial gain, provide the following amounts required to be reported under SFAS 116 (ASC 958) relating to these items					
a Revenue included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 1				► \$	
b Assets included in Form 990, Part X				► \$	
For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 990.					
			Cat No 52283D Schedule D (Form 990) 2017		

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

c

Beginning balance

d

Additions during the year

e

Distributions during the year

f

Ending balance

	Amount
1c	
1d	
1e	
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 in 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	44,169	41,008	6,182	5,796	4,428
b Contributions	45,947		36,618		
c Net investment earnings, gains, and losses	9,746	7,292	-1,792	386	1,368
d Grants or scholarships					
e Other expenditures for facilities and programs					
f Administrative expenses	173	4,131			
g End of year balance	99,689	44,169	41,008	6,182	5,796

2

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

a

Board designated or quasi-endowment ▶

b

Permanent endowment ▶ 86 530 %

c

Temporarily restricted endowment ▶ 13 470 %

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

b

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

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

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		3,943,371		3,943,371
b Buildings				
c Leasehold improvements				
d Equipment		43,820	37,585	6,235
e Other				
Total. Add lines 1a through 1e (Column (d) must equal Form 990, Part X, column (B), line 10(c)) . . . ▶				3,949,606

Schedule D (Form 990) 2017

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	99,689	F
(B) GIFT ANNUITY	32,389	F
(C) STEWARDSHIP & LEGAL DEFENSE FUND	407,042	F
(D) RESERVE FUND	205,549	F
(E) FOREST LEGACY MONITORING FUND	82,014	F
(F)		
(G)		
(H)		
Total. (Column (b) must equal Form 990, Part X, col (B) line 12) ▶	826,683	

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. (Column (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	2,234,596
2	Amounts included on line 1 but not on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12		
a	Net unrealized gains (losses) on investments	2a	98,758
b	Donated services and use of facilities	2b	111,141
c	Recoveries of prior year grants	2c	
d	Other (Describe in Part XIII)	2d	
e	Add lines 2a through 2d	2e	209,899
3	Subtract line 2e from line 1	3	2,024,697
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	2,024,697

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	1,181,960
2	Amounts included on line 1 but not on Form 990, Part IX, line 25		
a	Donated services and use of facilities	2a	111,141
b	Prior year adjustments	2b	
c	Other losses	2c	
d	Other (Describe in Part XIII)	2d	
e	Add lines 2a through 2d	2e	111,141
3	Subtract line 2e from line 1	3	1,070,819
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	1,070,819

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.

Return Reference	Explanation
See Additional Data Table	

Part XIII **Supplemental Information** *(continued)*

Return Reference	Explanation

Additional Data

Software ID:
Software Version:
EIN: 87-0483446
Name: THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION INC

Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
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

Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
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 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

Part II Fundraising Events. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 18, or reported more than \$15,000 of fundraising event contributions and gross income on Form 990-EZ, lines 1 and 6b. List events with gross receipts greater than \$5,000.

		(a) Event #1	(b) Event #2	(c) Other events	(d)
		ECO-TOUR TO KNIGHT INLET (event type)	(event type)	(total number)	Total events (add col (a) through col (c))
Revenue	1 Gross receipts	162,010			162,010
	2 Less Contributions				
	3 Gross income (line 1 minus line 2)	162,010			162,010
Direct Expenses	4 Cash prizes				
	5 Noncash prizes				
	6 Rent/facility costs	13,800			13,800
	7 Food and beverages				
	8 Entertainment				
	9 Other direct expenses	96,334			96,334
	10 Direct expense summary Add lines 4 through 9 in column (d) ▶				110,134
11 Net income summary Subtract line 10 from line 3, column (d) ▶					51,876

Part III Gaming. Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 19, or reported more than \$15,000 on Form 990-EZ, line 6a.

		(a) Bingo	(b) Pull tabs/Instant bingo/progressive bingo	(c) Other gaming	(d) Total gaming (add col (a) through col (c))
Revenue	1 Gross revenue				
	2 Cash prizes				
Direct Expenses	3 Noncash prizes				
	4 Rent/facility costs				
	5 Other direct expenses				
	6 Volunteer labor	☐ Yes _____ % ☐ No	☐ Yes _____ % ☐ No	☐ Yes _____ % ☐ No	
	7 Direct expense summary Add lines 2 through 5 in column (d) ▶				
	8 Net gaming income summary Subtract line 7 from line 1, column (d) ▶				

9 Enter the state(s) in which the organization conducts gaming activities _____

a Is the organization licensed to conduct gaming activities in each of these states?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b If "No," explain _____

10a Were any of the organization's gaming licenses revoked, suspended or terminated during the tax year?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b If "Yes," explain _____

11 Does the organization conduct gaming activities with nonmembers?	☐ Yes ☐ No						
12 Is the organization a grantor, beneficiary or trustee of a trust or a member of a partnership or other entity formed to administer charitable gaming?	☐ Yes ☐ No						
13 Indicate the percentage of gaming activity conducted in:							
a The organization's facility	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%;">13a</td> <td style="width: 80%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13b</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">%</td> </tr> </table>	13a		%	13b		%
13a		%					
13b		%					
b An outside facility							
14 Enter the name and address of the person who prepares the organization's gaming/special events books and records							
Name ►							
Address ►							
15a Does the organization have a contract with a third party from whom the organization receives gaming revenue?	☐ Yes ☐ No						
b If "Yes," enter the amount of gaming revenue received by the organization ► \$ and the amount of gaming revenue retained by the third party ► \$							
c If "Yes," enter name and address of the third party							
Name ►							
Address ►							
16 Gaming manager information							
Name ►							
Gaming manager compensation ► \$							
Description of services provided ►							
☐ Director/officer ☐ Employee ☐ Independent contractor							
17 Mandatory distributions							
a Is the organization required under state law to make charitable distributions from the gaming proceeds to retain the state gaming license?							
☐ Yes ☐ No							
b Enter the amount of distributions required under state law distributed to other exempt organizations or spent in the organization's own exempt activities during the tax year ► \$							

Part IV Supplemental Information. Provide the explanations required by Part I, line 2b, columns (iii) and (v); and Part III, lines 9, 9b, 10b, 15b, 15c, 16, and 17b, as applicable. Also provide any additional information (see instructions).

Return Reference	Explanation
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Schedule I
(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Name of the organization
THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION INC

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.

▶ Information about Schedule I (Form 990) and its instructions is at www.irs.gov/form990.

OMB No 1545-0047

2017

Open to Public Inspection

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

(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
(1) See Additional Data							
(2)							
(3)							
(4)							
(5)							
(6)							
(7)							
(8)							
(9)							
(10)							
(11)							
(12)							

2

Enter total number of section 501(c)(3) and government organizations listed in the line 1 table

3

3

Enter total number of other organizations listed in the line 1 table

2

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 noncash assistance	(e) Method of valuation (book, FMV, appraisal, other)	(f) Description of noncash assistance
(1)					
(2)					
(3)					
(4)					
(5)					
(6)					
(7)					

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

Return Reference	Explanation
PART I, LINE 2	VITAL GROUND REQUIRES A DETAILED PROJECT PROPOSAL AND BUDGET FROM PROSPECTIVE GRANTEEES PRIOR TO APPROVING AND AWARDING GRANTS THE USE OF GRANT FUNDS IS MONITORED BY REQUIRING WRITTEN PROJECT PROGRESS/COMPLETION REPORTS FROM ALL GRANTEEES

Additional Data

Software ID:
Software Version:
EIN: 87-0483446
Name: THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION INC

Form 990, Schedule I, Part II, Grants and Other Assistance to Domestic Organizations and Domestic Governments.

(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 non-cash assistance	(h) Purpose of grant or assistance
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE 26 FORT MISSOULA ROAD MISSOULA, MT 59804	72-0564834	GOVERNMENT ENTITY		30,500	HISTORICAL COST	40 ACRES FOR THE LOLO NATIONAL FOREST	TO PERMANENTLY PROTECT ITS WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SCENIC VALUES AND ELIMINATE THE POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT
THE MONTANA LAND RELIANCE PO BOX 355 HELENA, MT 59624	81-0369262	501(C)(3)	6,500				TO ASSIST WITH THE ACQUISITION OF A CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROTECTING AN 836-ACRE WORKING RANCH THAT PROVIDES WILDLIFE HABITAT ALONG THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT IN MONTANA

Form 990, Schedule I, Part II, Grants and Other Assistance to Domestic Organizations and Domestic Governments.							
(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 non-cash assistance	(h) Purpose of grant or assistance
BIG HOLE WATERSHED COMMITTEE PO BOX 21 DIVIDE, MT 59727	11-3737644	501(C)(3)	5,000				TO EMPLOY A PROGRAM PREVENTING CONFLICTS BETWEEN LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS AND GRIZZLY BEARS
SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS 6887 MT HIGHWAY 83 CONDON, MT 59826	81-0512368	501(C)(3)	5,000				TO CONTINUE A BEAR-RESISTANT GARBAGE CONTAINER LOANER PROGRAM AND ERECT BEAR-PROOF FENCES

Form 990, Schedule I, Part II, Grants and Other Assistance to Domestic Organizations and Domestic Governments.							
(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 non-cash assistance	(h) Purpose of grant or assistance
CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES PO BOX 278 PABLO, MT 59855	81-0230409	GOVERNMENT ENTITY	5,000				TO STUDY AND PREVENT CONFLICTS BETWEEN SMALL LIVESTOCK (CHICKENS, DUCKS, GOATS, ETC) AND GRIZZLY BEARS IN MONTANA'S MISSION VALLEY

SCHEDULE M
(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

Noncash Contributions

►Complete if the organizations answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, lines 29 or 30.
►Attach to Form 990.
►Information about Schedule M (Form 990) and its instructions is at www.irs.gov/form990

OMB No 1545-0047

2017

Open to Public Inspection

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				
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	X	1	200,000	EST FAIR MARKET VALUE
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 ► (<u>GOODS AND EQUIPMENT</u>)	X	9	23,354	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

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 is not required to be used for exempt purposes for the entire holding period?

Yes

No

30a

No

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?

Yes

No

31

32a Does the organization hire or use third parties or related organizations to solicit, process, or sell noncash contributions?

Yes

No

32a

No

b If "Yes," describe in Part II

33 If the organization did not 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.

Return Reference	Explanation
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

Name of the organization
THE VITAL GROUND FOUNDATION INC

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.

▶ Information about Schedule O (Form 990 or 990-EZ) and its instructions is at www.irs.gov/form990.

OMB No 1545-0047

2017

Open to Public Inspection

Employer identification number

87-0483446

990 Schedule O, Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
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)

990 Schedule O, Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
FORM 990, PART VI, SECTION B, LINE 12C	THE "CONFLICTS OF INTEREST" POLICY IS REVIEWED AND SIGNED ANNUALLY BY ALL TRUSTEES AND EMPLOYEES

990 Schedule O, Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
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

990 Schedule O, Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
FORM 990, PART VI, SECTION C, LINE 19	AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND FORM 990 ARE POSTED ON THE ORGANIZATION'S 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

990 Schedule O, Supplemental Information

Return Reference	Explanation
FORM 990, PART XII, LINE 2C	THIS PROCESS HAS NOT CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR