

River 2 Lake News

Photo by Karen Nichols

Welcome to the River to Lake monthly newsletter.

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Land and Water Conservation

Call for public comments on North Shore project

Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking public comments on a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed purchase of a 70-acre property on the north shore of Flathead Lake. The deadline to comment on the EA is July 17. To view the EA please visit fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice_2103.aspx. Comments can be sent to: North Shore-Bigfork Parcel EA, 490 North Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901, or contact Joel Tohtz, (406) 751-4570, <mailto:jtohtz@mt.gov>, or Kris Tempel, (406) 751-4573, <mailto:ktempel@mt.gov>.

Celebrating conservation successes

The Flathead Land Trust recently celebrated the donation by the Johnston family of a conservation easement on nearly 700 acres of wetlands, riparian forests and associated farmlands along the Flathead River last year. This conservation easement donation is a priceless gift of conservation to the valley, and has helped River to Lake partners secure funding for additional conservation projects.

River to Lake projects update

The River to Lake Initiative conservation projects are growing with the purchase of a 160-acre parcel on the North Shore by Montana Fish and Wildlife Parks last December, and the imminent completion of a conservation easement at Church Slough by the Flathead Land Trust.

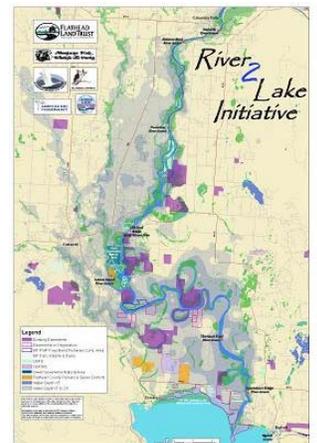
NAWCA and FRPP funding secured

\$1 million NAWCA and \$1.3 million FRPP grants were secured in 2009 to help protect wetlands, riparian areas, and prime agricultural soils along the Flathead River, at the North Shore of Flathead Lake and in the Ninepipe area.

River to Lake Outreach

Updated River to Lake Initiative map available!

The River to Lake Initiative Map is a useful visual tool highlighting important areas for conservation and conservation projects completed. For an electronic copy of the map contact Susannah Casey at the American Bird Conservancy at scasey@abcbirds.org or 756-2681.



North Shore Outreach Plan Initiated

River to Lake partners recently developed a community Outreach Plan with the assistance of Marty Zeller of Conservation Partners. For more information contact Echo Nelson at echo.nelson@gmail.com or 212-1414.

Critical Water Resources Maps completed

The Flathead Lakers, the Flathead Basin Commission and the University of Montana Flathead Lake Biological Station completed a series of Critical Water Quality Resource Maps. These maps were presented to Flathead County Planning and Zoning staff with the recommendation that they be integrated into Flathead County's proposed Development Predictability Map. For additional information or to get a copy of the maps contact Constanza at criticallands@flatheadlakers.org or 883-1341.

Cooperation and Coordination

Flathead County River Commission formed

The Flathead County Commissioners recently established a new commission that will focus attention on protecting and improving water quality in rivers and to better address river-related issues, including erosion and land use planning. The Commission met for the first time in June and will explore solutions to problems, seek grants for protects and provide advice to the County Commissioners.

Meetings, Workshops and Publications

National Wetland Inventory and Remote Sensing Workshop

September 1-2, 2009, 3001 Main Street, Polson. This free workshop will review the NWI and the Riparian Classification systems and the application of these systems to remote sensing and mapping. The workshop will include both classroom and field time. It will be presented by the USGS and the National Wetlands Research Center, and is hosted by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' Wetland Conservation Program. For more information or to register call Dennis Lichtenberg at 883-2888 ext. 7219 or email dennisl@cskt.org.

New Publications

New Field Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill for Fish and Wildlife Conservation by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative in partnership with the Intermountain West Joint Venture. The Flathead Lakers will be holding a meeting (TBD) with Randall Gray, the Intermountain West Joint (IWJV) Farm Bill Coordinator, in August, to discuss opportunities for funding in the Farm Bill. To view the report: <http://www.nabci-us.org/fbguidhome.htm>.

Montana Animal Species of Concern, May 2009, Montana Natural Heritage Program and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. This report also summarized habitat types associated with species of concern. Streams, rivers, lakes

comprised 29% of species, wetlands 20%, riparian forest 6%, and sagebrush/grasslands 14%. To download the report: http://mntnhp.org/Reports/MASOC_2009.pdf

Wetlands of the Flathead Valley: Change and Ecological Functions, Newlon, Karen R. and Meghan D. Burns. February 2009, Montana Natural Heritage Program. To download this publication: http://mntnhp.org/Reports/Flathead_Change.pdf

Capacity Building

New staff and a summer intern at the Flathead Land Trust

Brad Seaman was hired to head Outreach and Development for the Flathead Land Trust. Ryan Hunter will be responsible for monitoring and stewardship of conservation easements, and for new conservation easement contracts outside the River to Lake Initiative area. Echo Nelson, a student intern, is helping with *River to Lake* outreach projects.

Wetland and riparian plants threatened in the Flathead. An opportunity to monitor threats and impacts

The Montana Native Plants Society (MNPS) is looking for volunteers to help assess threats and impacts on a few species listed as federally threatened. In the Flathead Watershed MNPS mentions a few species in need of volunteer monitors, including Columbia crazyweed (*Oxytropis campestris columbiana*) which occurs on the shore of Flathead Lake (two populations have been lost to residential development), Bristly sedge (*Carex comosa*) which is found in a wet meadow at the north end of Flathead Lake and is Montana's only known population, and Columbia wild onion (*Allium columbianum*) which is globally rare and is found between giant ripple marks left by Glacial Lake Missoula south of Flathead Lake. For more information please read the MNPS Spring 2009 Newsletter, www.mtnativeplants.org/filelib/161.pdf, or visit their website at www.mtnativeplants.org/content/index/43.

New monthly River to Lake E-News

Please send news and information that you would like to share via the River to Lake E-News by the first day of each month. Information sent at any other time will be included in the next monthly E-News. If the news are time sensitive you can request that we send an "Action Alert" e-mail.

Your comments and suggestions on content, format, frequency or anything else relating to the River to Lake E-News and ways that we may share information and updates more effectively are greatly appreciated.

To post a message or to unsubscribe send message to criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.