

Welcome to the Flathead River to Lake Newsletter.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 33 | Spring 2018

In this issue

- West Valley Wetlands Conservation Project
- Volunteers needed to monitor Owen Sowerwine Natural Area
- Ranching for Rivers Funding Opportunity
- New Flathead River to Lake Initiative website

Events

- * Introduction to Conservation Easements for Realtors
- * Waterfowl at the West Valley Ponds Tour
- * Flathead River to Lake Initiative Meeting

- * Volunteer tree planting project
- * Ties to the Land: Succession Planning Workshop for Landowners
- * View Spring arrivals at Smith Lake
- * Wings Above Big Sky Festival
- * US Fish & Wildlife Service public meeting on wildlife refuge management plans
- * North Shore Boat Tour

Conservation, Education & Outreach

West Valley Wetlands Conservation Project

The Flathead Land Trust is completing the much awaited conservation easement to protect the 351-acre farm protecting important West Valley wetlands. Hundreds of Sandhill Cranes stop at the 45-acre wetland and surrounding farmland to rest and refuel for up to two months during their fall migration.



Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks is conducting an environmental assessment and public review process on the proposed public viewing area. The bird viewing area will allow the public to enjoy an amazing bird spectacle. Flathead Audubon is holding a Dessert Auction Fundraiser at the Wings Above Big Sky Bird Festival in June to help fund the bird viewing area. Contact Gail Cleveland at 212-8640 or tanneland239@gmail.com to donate a dessert.

Volunteers needed to monitor Owen Sowerwine Natural Area

Flathead Audubon is seeking volunteers to monitor Owen Sowerwine Natural Area this summer to record

everything from maintenance needs to birds, wildlife and plants. For more information, visit the OSNA volunteer monitoring program website at www.flatheadaudubon.org/protect/owen-sowerwine-natural-area or contact Linda Winnie at 755-1406.

Ranching for Rivers Funding Opportunity

Ranching for Rivers is a cost-share program to help landowners along streams and rivers to build fences, stream crossings, and watering systems for livestock, improve grazing, and protect water quality. Applications for projects are due no later than June 15 and must have an approved Watershed Restoration Plan. For more information or to apply, contact Jessica Makus, Program Manager, Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana, at 406-443-5711, jessica@macdnet.org, or visit their website at swcdmi.org/programs/r4r.



Watch this video about the program on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

New Flathead River to Lake Initiative website

The Flathead River to Lake website has a new look. Please review and send updates, news and events, or recommendations to Constanza at 883-1341 or constanza@flatheadlakers.org.

Events

April 12

Introduction to Conservation Easements for Realtors

Flathead Land Trust will conduct a seminar on conservation easements for realtors on Thursday, April 12, 9:30 to noon at Northwest Montana Association of Realtors' classroom, 110 Cooperative Way, Kalispell. The workshop will help realtors communicate to their clients the implications of buying a property with a conservation easement. For more information and to register visit the [NMAR website](#) or call the Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293.

April 21

Waterfowl at the West Valley Ponds Tour

Flathead Audubon will conduct a bird viewing field trip on Saturday, April 21 from 9 am to noon, visiting several ponds in the West Valley area west of Kalispell during the spring waterfowl migration. For more information and to sign up contact Cory Davis at 471-3314, or piranga99@gmail.com. The field trip is limited to 25 people.

April 25

Flathead River to Lake Initiative meeting

Mark your calendars for the next R2L Initiative quarterly meeting on Wednesday, April 25, from 9:00 am to noon at the MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks office in Kalispell. For more information, contact Constanza at 883-1341 or criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.

April 28

Volunteer tree planting project

Join Flathead River Steward partners to plant native trees along the Flathead River on Saturday, April 28 from 9 am to 2 pm. Learn about riparian planting and river restoration, while enjoying spring. For more information and to RSVP contact Constanza 883-1341 or criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.



April 30

Ties to the Land: Succession Planning Workshop for Landowners

Many small landowners want to preserve their family lands but don't know how to involve family members in considering options for ownership and operation. *Ties to the Land Workshop* is a full-day interactive workshop to assist landowners with succession planning, including discussion of conservation easements. The workshop is on April 30, from 9 am to 5 pm at the MT Fish, Wildlife



and Parks office, 490 North Meridian Rd., Kalispell. Cost of the workshop is \$50 for the first family member and \$10 for each additional family member. For more information and to register call Ed Levert at 406-293 2847 or download the flyer and registration form at www.flatheadrivertolake.org/news-and-events.

May 19

View Spring arrivals at Smith Lake

Join Flathead Audubon Society for a morning of birding west of Kalispell to look for returning sparrows, orioles, warblers, and waterfowl. For more information and to sign up contact Cory Davis at 471-3314 or piranga99@gmail.com. The field trip is limited to 20 people.

June 8-10

Wings Above Big Sky Bird Festival

Montana Audubon is holding its *Wings Above Big Sky Bird Festival* at the Red Lion Inn in Kalispell. For more information and to register for the conference and field trips, visit mtaudubon.org/birding/montana-bird-festival. Field trips include visiting areas conserved by R2L projects along the Flathead River, Smith Lake, and the West Valley.

June 6 & 7

US Fish & Wildlife Service public meeting on wildlife refuge management plans

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is holding public scoping meetings on June 6 at the Red Lion Ridgewater Inn in Polson, and June 7 at the Kalispell Public Library to discuss the development of new management plans for the Bison Range Complex, which includes the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area, Blasdel National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Lost Trail NWR, the Bison Range, and the Ninepipe and Pablo NWR. Public comments submitted last September can be found under 'Documents,' including Flathead Lakers comments (p. 25) and Flathead Audubon comments (p.31). For additional information visit the [National Bison Range planning website](http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/nbrc.php) (www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/refuges/nbrc.php) or call 644-2211.

June 28

North Shore Boat Tour

Join Flathead River to Lake Initiative partners the evening of June 28 aboard the Far West tour boat to celebrate conservation success and learn about projects on the North Shore and the Flathead River. Tickets may be purchased for \$50 by contacting the Flathead Lakers at 883-1341 or Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293.

