

Welcome to the Flathead River to Lake Newsletter.

A Quarterly Newsletter

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Conservation and Restoration

New conservation project protects critical north shore wetlands



A new conservation easement project completed this spring protects 45 wetland acres on the North Shore of Flathead Lake. Linda and David Kurfess, in partnership with the Flathead Land Trust, placed a conservation easement on their property along the north shore of Flathead Lake. The property is adjacent to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area and provides vital bird habitat.

River to Lake partners have now conserved 542 acres on the north shore, protecting its unique combination of beauty, birds, wetlands, and water. This projects adds to an existing network of 2,600 acres protected on the north shore through public lands and private conservation easements, including the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area.

Volunteers plant buffers along the Flathead River

Over 30 volunteers planted more than 600 native trees along the Flathead River last April to expand vegetated riparian buffers. These riparian buffers provide habitat for fish and wildlife, help filter pollutants from runoff, reduce

flooding, and stabilize banks.

MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Flathead Lakers, and the Flathead Conservation District, planted an additional 2,100 trees in two other locations along the river with the help of a Montana Conservation Corps crew. Special thanks to MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks Restoration Ecologist Franz Ingelfinger, who lead these restoration efforts, and to our volunteers!

Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Professor of Geology, and Wendy Jeschke, Student Engagement Coordinator at Fathead Valley Community College were presented the Flathead Lakers Volunteer Award at the Lakers annual meeting in July. The educators were honored for their support and dedication for riparian restoration and for encouraging FVCC students to volunteer along with them planting trees over the past five years.

Outreach and Education

Flathead Lake Boat Tour celebrates north shore conservation

More than 120 friends of conservation joined the Flathead Land Trust and the Flathead Lakers to celebrate completion of the newly completed 45-acre conservation



project on the North Shore on a FarWest boat tour. They got a glimpse of this expansive, undeveloped, and beautiful shoreline stretching from Somers to Bigfork and the project area just as the sun broke through light clouds to spotlight the north shore.

The tour helped raise over \$7,700 to help conserve a 155-acre farm along the Flathead River just north of Flathead Lake, with valuable riparian wetland habitat vital for birds, fish and wildlife, and water quality.



If you missed the tour, you still have an opportunity to give to this exceptional project by making a donation to the R2L-North Shore

Conservation Fund dedicated to supporting collaborative River to Lake Initiative conservation projects. Or, contact Paul at 752-8293 or Constanza at 883-1341 for more information.

Succession Planning Workshop a success

Eighteen people participated in a workshop for landowners on ways to involve family members in succession planning to preserve their lands last April.

The workshop, "Ties to the Land: Succession Planning for an Orderly Transition," addressed challenges landowners face when planning for the future of their property and ways they can involve family members to discuss their wishes and plans for the land.

We thank workshop creators and facilitators Madeline and Kirk for generously donating their time to bring the workshop to Kalispell.

The workshop was sponsored by Flathead Lakers, Flathead Land Trust, Montana Land Reliance, and MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, in partnership with Forest Stewardship Foundation and Montana Association of Land Trusts.



Bird tours showcase protected and restored critical lands

There is no shortage of appreciation for birds in the Flathead. Five bird tours offered last spring quickly filled up.



Tours led by the Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Audubon, and other R2L partners, showcased R2L conservation and restoration projects that protect important bird habitat for migratory and resident birds. Learn more about the Flathead Valley's birds by checking the following guides found on our R2L website at www.flatheadriver.org, [Birding Guide to Flathead Valley](#) and [Important Bird Areas](#).

Upcoming Events

August 11, 9:00 am - noon

Explore Owen Sowerwine with Jeannette Oliver

Join retired Biology Professor Jeanette Oliver on Saturday, August 11 for a walk along the Stillwater River at the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area's Big Island to learn about native vegetation and birds. For more information and to sign up contact Jeanette at jopjoliver74@gmail.com or 755-8622. The field trip is cosponsored by Flathead Audubon Society and Montana Audubon.

August 15, 1:00 pm

Wetland Training Webinar: Wetlands in a Watershed at the Landscape Scale

This is the second webinar in a nine-part training series on wetlands developed jointly by the Association of State Wetland Managers and Natural Resources Conservation Service. For more information and to register go to www.aswm.org and click on webinars.

August 16, 5:30 pm

The Land Affair

Join the Flathead Land Trust on Thursday, August 16 at the Cypress Yard in Whitefish for their annual fundraising event to help protect and celebrate open spaces in northwest Montana. Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased online at www.flatheadlandtrust.org or by contacting Paul Travis at 406-752-8293, ptravis@flatheadlandtrust.org.

September 12, 9:00 am - noon

Flathead River to Lake Initiative meeting

Mark your calendars for the next R2L Initiative quarterly meeting on September 12 at the MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks office in Kalispell. For more information, contact Constanza at 883-1341 or criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.

October 6, 5:00 pm

Grand Opening West Valley Bird Viewing Area

Join the Flathead Land Trust and partners to celebrate the conservation of the West Valley Wetlands, the grand opening of the bird viewing area, and see sandhill cranes during the fall migration. For more information contact the Laura Katzman at 406-752-8293 or lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org.

October 10-12

2018 Watershed Symposium

The Montana Watershed Coordination Council is holding the 2018 Watershed Symposium, Advancing Conservation through Effective Communication, on October 10-12 at the Lodge at Whitefish Lake, in Whitefish. For more information go to <http://mtwatersheds.org/app/watershed-symposium>.