



Welcome to the River to Lake monthly newsletter.

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue 8 | April 2010

In this issue:

- Church Slough Project completed
- North Shore Ranch negotiations fail
- Ducks Unlimited and Fish, Wildlife and Parks complete Ninepipe wetland restoration projects
- NRCS accepting Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program applications
- NRCS accepting proposals for the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
- Montana Wetlands Council Meeting to focus on invasive plants in wetlands and aquatic areas
- Stormwater and Erosion Education Class for construction professionals
- Living by Water Workshop
- Wetland Program Capacity Building Workshop

Land and Water Conservation

Church Slough conservation project completed

The Flathead Land Trust recently closed on a conservation easement on an additional 60 acres around Church Slough. This adds to an existing network of conservation easements along the Flathead River and around Church Slough which keep prime agricultural soils in production and protect wetlands and riparian areas for fish, wildlife and water quality. A Natural



*Aerial view of Church Slough and adjacent protected areas.
Photo by Gael Bissell*

Resource Conservation Service Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program grant helped fund for the project. River to Lake partners thank Ben and Maureen Louden for their contribution to protect this special place.

North Shore Ranch negotiations fail

Negotiations to purchase the 367-acre property on Flathead Lake's North Shore near Somers failed this April, as the Flathead Land Trust and the North Shore Ranch developers were unable to agree on a price. This leaves the settlement agreement approved by the Flathead County Commissioners and the developers in effect. The settlement allows a 286-lot subdivision on the property, requires an easement on 150 acres for public access, and requires the county to build and pay for subdivision roads and two highway turn lanes on Montana 83. This is a setback for the North Shore conservation vision. However, partners continue to discuss conservation options with other landowners to build a network of conservation of lands critical for clean water, fish, and wildlife, farming and recreation. Thanks to the Flathead Land Trust and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks for their efforts to negotiate the purchase of this North Shore property.

Ducks Unlimited and Fish, Wildlife and Parks complete Ninepipe wetland restoration projects

Ducks Unlimited and Fish, Wildlife and Parks completed restoration of over 100 acres of wetlands in the Ninepipe Wildlife Management Area. In the Mission Valley south of Flathead Lake, the Ninepipe WMA extends over 3,000 acres of pothole wetlands resulting from the last glaciation in a grassland environment. As a result of this high density of small wetlands, the area is critical stopover habitat for a host of waterfowl species that migrate through the valleys of western Montana every fall. The restore wetlands will provide valuable breeding and migration habitat. The MT FWP migratory bird stamp program and a "Glaciated Valleys of Northwest Montana" North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant, secured by River to Lake partners, helped fund the project.

Funding and Grants

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) accepting Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program proposals

NRCS is accepting proposals to improve wetlands conservation. WREP provides assistance to landowners to protect, restore and enhance wetlands and improve wildlife habitat. State and local governments, Indian tribes and nongovernmental organizations are eligible to submit proposals and enter into agreements with NRCS. Proposals must be submitted by May 24. For more information contact Garry Lee, Acting Director of the Easement Programs Division at 202-720-0907 or visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-8143.htm>.

NRCS accepting proposals for the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

NRCS is accepting proposals for water enhancement projects that help farmers conserve surface and ground water and improve water quality. Eligible applicants include Indian Tribes, state and local governments, and nongovernment organizations with experience working with agricultural producers. For more information visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-7515.pdf>.

Meetings and Workshops

Montana Wetlands Council Meeting to focus on invasive plants in wetlands and aquatic areas

The Montana Wetland Council meeting will be held Wednesday May 5, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, at the

Department of Public Health and Human Services Auditorium, 111 Sanders, Helena.

The meeting includes presentations about wetland weeds, how weeds are introduced, and management and restoration strategies. For more information contact Lynda Saul, DEQ Wetland Program Coordinator at (406)444-6652 or lsaul@mt.gov or go to deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/wetlands/default.mcpix.

Stormwater and Erosion Education Class

The first Flathead Stormwater Erosion Education Program (SEEP) class will take place in Kalispell May 18 and 19. This class for construction professionals will focus on the fundamentals of erosion and sediment control planning and practices to prevent water pollution. The training includes topics such as site assessment and planning, BMP installation, inspection and maintenance, regulatory requirements, and riparian buffers and bank stabilization. Participants have the option to become certified. For more information contact Susie Turner, Stormwater Manager, City of Kalispell at (406) 758-7852 or sturner@kalispell.com.

Living by Water Workshop

The Flathead Lakers, the Flathead Conservation District and the Department of Natural Resource Conservation are offering the Living by Water workshop and a tour of a restoration project for landowners on Saturday, June 5 in Kalispell. Participants will learn about the importance of riparian areas in maintaining the quality of streams, rivers and lakes and actions they can take to keep these areas healthy. For more information contact Patti Mason, Flathead Conservation District office at 752-4220.

Wetland Program Capacity Building Workshop

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency are hosting a workshop to build the capacity of States and Tribes to protect and restore wetlands and riparian areas. The workshop will be held in Bozeman September 21-24. For more information visit deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/Wetlands/2010capacitybldghome.mcpix or call Lynda Saul, Wetland Program Coordinator, DEQ, at 406-444-6652.

Please send news and information that you would like to share via the River to Lake E-News the first week of each month. If your information or request is time sensitive, you can request that we send an "Action Alert" e-mail. To post a message or to unsubscribe send message to: criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.