



Welcome to the River to Lake monthly newsletter.

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue 5 | December 2009

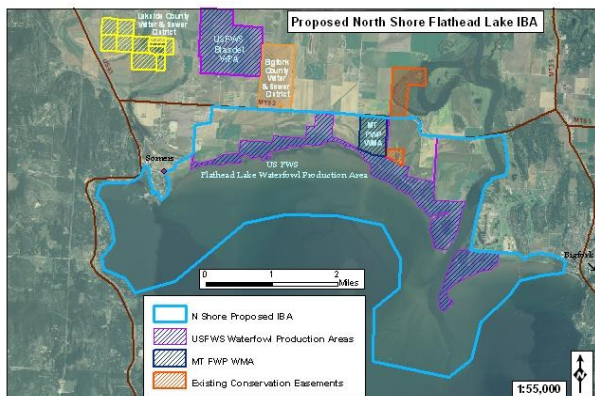
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Land and Water Conservation

Flathead Lake North Shore designated as an "Important Bird Area"

National Audubon Society designated the Flathead Lake North Shore as an "Important Bird Area" (IBA). Important Bird Areas are sites that provide essential habitat for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. The designated area includes most of the north shore of Flathead Lake - about 3,600 acres comprising the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area and adjacent lands. The north shore supports a wide diversity of birds during all seasons and particularly during migration, when the area is heavily used by flocks of waterfowl, waterbirds and shorebirds. About 230 bird species are known to use the north shore. For more information on IBAs visit Audubon's website at www.audubon.org/bird/iba/iba_intro.html.



Riverbank Restoration Planned for Foys Bend

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) have signed a letter of intent to conduct riparian restoration along 2,000 feet of the Flathead River at the Foys Bend Fisheries Conservation Area. Last February, FWP purchased Foys Bend, a 245-acre property along two miles of the Flathead River, for native fisheries conservation using Bonneville Power Administration fisheries mitigation funds. MDOT plans to plant about 20,000 native trees and shrubs along an eroding and unvegetated bank at the Foys Bend property. The restoration work at Foys Bend will provide MDOT with stream mitigation credits that the agency needs to mitigate for impacts to Ashley Creek and Spring Creek by the proposed US93 Kalispell alternative route. The highway project is funded by federal stimulus grants and construction begins December 23.

Meetings and Publications

River to Lake Partners Meeting – Jan. 13

The next River to Lake meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 13 from 9:00 am to noon. For more information contact Constanza, Critical Lands Program Director, Flathead Lakers, at criticallands@flatheadlakers.org

Critical Water Resources Maps Presentation – Jan. 13

The Flathead Lakers, the Flathead Basin Commission and the University of Montana Flathead Lake Biological Station will present a series of Critical Water Quality Resource Maps to the Flathead County Planning Board on January 13, at 6:00 pm with the recommendation that they be integrated into Flathead County's proposed Development Predictability Map. The maps identify important areas for water quality protection and/or restoration, including areas that: a) help maintain or improve water quality and prevent flooding (flood-prone areas, wetlands and riparian areas), b) are vulnerable to contamination such as open water (lakes, streams, sloughs) and shallow groundwater areas, and c) are potential sources of pollution (steep slopes near water bodies). For additional information or to get a copy of the maps contact Constanza at criticallands@flatheadlakers.org or 883-1341.

Montana Wetlands Council Meeting – Jan. 19

The Montana Wetlands Council will meet Tuesday, January 19 at the Department of Environmental Quality in Helena to discuss wetland hydrology, including what activities are needed to restore and maintain high functioning wetlands and to keep water in the watershed. For more information contact Lynda Saul, DEQ's Wetland Program Coordinator at lsaul@mt.gov or 444-6652.

Flathead County River Commission Meeting – Jan. 26

The River Commission will meet on Tuesday, January 26 at 6 p.m. to hear Herrera Environmental Consultants discuss restoration methods the firm proposes to use along the Flathead River to address river bank erosion. The meeting is open to the public. The Commission meets in the Earl Bennett Building at the Flathead County Land Use Planning & Zoning office at 800 South Main Street, Kalispell. Please call Flathead County Commissioner Joe Brenneman at 758-5503 to confirm the time and location.

FWP Workshop on Climate Change

FWP held a workshop in December on the potential impacts of climate change on fish and wildlife and selected terrestrial and aquatic systems. The workshop explored management strategies, monitoring needs and collaborative opportunities to address potential challenges posed by climate change. To read the

presentations or view supporting information online please visit <http://www.nwf-wcr.org/ClimateChangeFWP-12-09.htm>

Climate Change and Wetlands Information

The Association of State Wetland Managers website has links to information and studies on the effect of climate change on wetlands, management considerations and protection strategies. Temperature rise, increased evaporation, reduced precipitation in some areas, and increased intensity of storm events affect freshwater wetlands. Other impacts to wetlands include drying out or lowering surface and ground water levels, reducing the population of temperature sensitive species, and northerly shifts in plant and animal species. For more information and management strategies check the ASWM website at www.aswm.org/science/climate_change/climate_change.htm.

National Wetland Plants Species List Updated

The "National List of Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands" has been revised for the first time since 1988 by panels of botanists and wetland ecologists. The revised list is available for public review and comment. For more information contact NRCS Wetland Team Leader Dr. Norman Melvin via email at norman.melvin@ftw.usda.gov or visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/thisweek/2009/090209/techtip090209.html>



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.