



Welcome to the River to Lake newsletter.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 13 | Jan 2012

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Conservation and Restoration

Another beautiful river property protected

Diamond B Ranch owners Jerry and Aileen Brosten closed on a conservation easement in December that will protect their beautiful 192-acre property along 1½ miles of the Flathead River.



Located east of Church Slough, the Diamond B Ranch provides a beautiful spot along the river for wedding celebrations. River to Lake Initiative partners appreciate the long-term commitment the Brosten family has made to the Flathead Valley – a gift of conservation that protects valuable farm land and builds on the network of conservation stewardship along the river.

Diamond B Ranch includes seasonal wetlands and sensitive riparian areas, providing natural habitat for native plants, fish, and wildlife, including native bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.

The conservation easement was completed with the assistance of the Flathead Land Trust, which holds the easement, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, which helped secure funding and is helping the landowners improve the river corridor for native fish. Funding for the project included grants from the Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the Bonneville Power Administration.

Important farmland and wetlands protected in Creston

Jack and Judy Moses donated a conservation easement on their property, 121 acres in the agriculturally important Creston area. The easement protects prime agricultural soils, scenic views from Hwy 35, and an incredible range of wildlife habitat – forested areas, open meadows and wetlands, including a plant community listed as “Imperiled” by the Montana Natural Heritage Program that contains Engelmann spruce and skunk cabbage. While this conservation project is outside the River to Lake Initiative focus area, it is another gem in the Flathead landscape, protecting some of the most important farming soils in the state and adding protection to a significant wildlife corridor between the valley and the river.



Stream Bank Restoration Projects

Restoration moved ahead smoothly last summer, including two projects on the Flathead River east of Church Slough, funded by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) and Bonneville Power Administration grants. Fencing on one project near Church Slough was so successful in preventing deer from browsing that native plants are regenerating without the need for planting. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is monitoring this project to ensure its success.

River to Lake partners helped Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Natural Resources Conservation Service protect large cottonwood trees on a second project, at the Diamond B Ranch on the Flathead River. Protective fences were placed around large trees (as shown in photo) to protect them from beavers and deer. Restoration next summer will include planting new trees and shrubs in other areas along the river banks. [Click here to read more.](#)



America Great Outdoors to support Crown of the Continent Initiative projects

The Crown of the Continent area was selected as one of two Montana priority areas by the American Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative along with the Fort Missoula Regional Park in Missoula. Over 100 projects were selected across the United States to advance AGO's goals to increase youth access to the outdoors, create and enhance urban parks, renew and restore rivers, and conserve large, rural landscapes. Read the final report at: [50-State America's Great Outdoors Report.](#)

Outreach

Follow River Otter on Facebook - Friend of river and lake stewards

No one knows the rivers and lakes of the Flathead Basin better than the Flathead River Otter. He knows the secrets and wants to share. You can hear what River Otter has to say by following him on Facebook. The new *River to Lake Initiative* mascot will keep you posted on a stream of river and lake issues and fun facts, from videos to news about fish, clean water, ice skating, and much more. You can simply check River Otter's postings on his Facebook page, or click the "like" button to receive his weekly postings and updates. If you would like to share a fun river or lake event or fact with River Otter and his Friends, email Ben Long at ben@resource-media.org.



New Waterfront Landscapes Brochure

Learn how to keep your view plus a whole lot more with the new Waterfront Landscapes brochure. The brochure shows how landowners can create beautiful landscapes with native plants while also protecting clean water and wildlife habitat, and adding value to their property. To view the brochure check out [Publications & Maps](#) in the River to Lake website or visit the Flathead Conservation District (752-4220) or Flathead Lakers (883-1341) to get a hard copy.



Plan Now for Spring Planting

Thinking about a spring restoration or planting project along your river banks? The Flathead Conservation District is now taking orders for spring delivery of trees

and shrubs from the Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery. For more information or to place an order, visit the Conservation District's [website](#) under Conservation Tree and Shrub Planting. See the nurseries' plant selection at www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery, or contact Patti Mason, Watershed Coordinator, at 752-4220 for more information.

Events

February 14

River to Lake Restoration Planning Meeting

River to Lake partners will meet to review current restoration projects and plan future projects. Criteria for identifying and selecting projects will also be discussed. For more information contact Constanza von der Pahlen, Critical Lands Program Director, Flathead Lakers, at 883-1341 or criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.

March 14

River to Lake Initiative Meeting

The next River to Lake Initiative quarterly partner meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 14 from 9:00 to noon in Kalispell. For more information contact Constanza von der Pahlen, Critical Lands Program Director, Flathead Lakers, at 883-1341 or criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.

April 10-12

Montana Stormwater Conference

Construction professionals, land use planners waterfront landowners, and everyone interested in protecting water quality can attend the Montana Stormwater Conference held in Kalispell this April to sharpen their stormwater pollution prevention knowledge and skills and/or become certified Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Administrator. *Weathering the Storm – Strategies and Solutions for Managing Storm Water* will be held on April 10-12 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kalispell. For more information about the conference visit the [Montana Watercourse](#) website or contact Janet Bender-Keigley at 994-6671, jkeigley@montana.edu. The conference is cosponsored by River to Lake Partner, the Flathead Lakers.

June 8-10

Montana Audubon's Annual Bird Festival

Montana Audubon and the Flathead Audubon Society are hosting the *Wings Across the Big Sky Bird Festival* at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kalispell. The festival offers several workshops and field trips on Friday June 8 from 8 am to 2 pm, including a *River to Lake Initiative* field trip that highlights conservation projects along the Flathead River and the North Shore of Flathead Lake. For more information about the festival visit <http://www.mtaudubon.org/birdwatching/festival.html> or contact Larissa Berry at 443-3949, lberry@mtaudubon.org.