



Welcome to the Flathead River to Lake Newsletter.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 30 | April 2017

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## Conservation and Restoration

### *West Valley Wetlands Tour showcases conservation project*

Despite the cold and some ice on the ponds, 25 participants enjoyed an early spring tour on April 2 to observe migratory waterfowl at the West Valley Wetlands conservation project – a 396-acre conservation project in progress that will include a public bird viewing area.



We saw more than 25 species, including common goldeneye, bufflehead, redhead, mallard, green-winged teal, canvasback, lesser scaup, northern pintail, western meadowlark, and mountain bluebird. We were treated with the sight of three sandhill cranes in addition to a bald eagle and rough-legged hawk interacting in flight. Flathead Land Trust, Flathead Audubon, and the West Valley Naturalist's Association sponsored the tour. A big thanks to Cory Davis, Gael Bissell, Rick Mace, and Bob Rost of Flathead Audubon for their bird expertise and help with the tour!

These partners will lead another birding tour on Saturday, May 13 during more spring-like conditions (see details under Events on page 2).

The Flathead Land Trust is still fundraising for the West Valley Wetlands conservation project. For more information, contact Laura Katzman, Land Protection

Specialist, Flathead Land Trust, at 752-8293 or [lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org](mailto:lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org) or visit their website at [www.flatheadlandtrust.org](http://www.flatheadlandtrust.org).

### *Welcome new Big Sky Watershed Corps member*

Tiffany Martin joined the Flathead River to Lake Initiative at the beginning of the year to help continue and expand our Flathead River Steward Program. This is the fifth year the Flathead Lakers are hosting a Big Sky Watershed Corps member to help initiative partners and interested landowners improve and restore riparian and wetland areas along Flathead rivers and lakes.

Tiffany will be assisting landowners and partners plan and implement restoration projects, such as riparian fencing, planting, and weeding. She will also help coordinate volunteers to help with river restoration and education projects. She will work closely with Franz Ingelfinger, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Restoration Ecologist, who is exploring new ways to expand and scale up riparian restoration.

Tiffany has a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science from Northern Michigan University, field experience in prairie restoration, and loves working outside. She can be contacted at 752-4242 ext.109, [flatheadriversteward@gmail.com](mailto:flatheadriversteward@gmail.com).  
Welcome, Tiffany!



## Education & Outreach

### *On the Shoulder of Giants film premiere a big hit*



What better to do when spring fever hits than to watch an inspiring film with stunning photography of beautiful Montana landscapes? Over 150 people came out in March to see *On the Shoulder of Giants: The Story of Montana Private Land Conservation*, in Whitefish.

The film showcases how private land conservation over the last 40 years helped protect special Montana places. Thanks to Flathead Land Trust, Montana Land Reliance, Vital Ground Foundation, Jim Watson, and the Great Northern Brewery for sponsoring this great evening. Contact the Flathead Land Trust at 752-8293 to learn about additional showings.

### *New video showcases River Steward Program planting projects*

Check out this new video if you are not among the 2,000 who already viewed it! Flathead River Steward Program partners produced this video showcasing riparian restoration work. The short video features landowner Dick Siderius, who planted hundreds of native trees and shrubs on his property along Ashley Creek with help from River Steward Program partners and Flathead Valley Community College volunteers.



The Flathead Lakers coordinated and funded the video with help from a Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana mini-grant. The video can be viewed on the [Flathead Lakers](#) and the [Flathead Conservation District](#)'s websites. Please consider answering a quick [survey](#) ([www.surveymonkey.com/r/YVHRLMQ](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YVHRLMQ)) to help us evaluate the video. Thank you to Dick Siderius, Melissa Lanza (narrator), River Steward Program partners, Montana Conservation Corps crew, and Paul Neff with White Cliff Productions, local video producer in Kalispell for your support for this project.

## Events

### April 22

#### *River Stewardship Workshop*

Interested in honing your waterfront landscaping skills? Lake County Conservation District and partners are offering a workshop on Sunday, April 22 from 9 am to 3 pm to help landowners understand best stewardship

practices for riparian areas. After a free lunch, participants will visit a troubled Swan River access site to plant some riparian plants to help improve this site. For more information and to sign up contact Heidi Fleury, Conservation Coordinator, Lake County Conservation District, at 676-2841 ext. 102 or [lakecountycd@ronan.net](mailto:lakecountycd@ronan.net). Space is limited!

### *Celebrate Earth Day*

Join the Earth Day celebration event and activities on Sunday, April 22, from 11 am until 3 pm at the Whitefish Middle School (600 East 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Whitefish). [Citizens for a Better Flathead](#) and Glacier National Park Lodges are hosting this event.



You can listen to music and guest speakers, taste local foods, have a go at the bike rodeo (kid only; must bring own bike and helmet), and learn about local green businesses and what they offer. You can also recycle your old electronics at the E-Waste truck (please call Matt at 407-1246 with questions about what you can recycle). To host a booth contact Allison Batch, Outreach Coordinator, at 756-8993 or [allison@flatheadcitizens.org](mailto:allison@flatheadcitizens.org).

### May 13

#### *West Valley Wetlands Bike and Bird Tour*

Join Flathead Land Trust and partners on a bike and bird tour exploring the West Valley Wetlands on Saturday, May 13 from 9 am to noon. Learn about birds that use the wetlands and surrounding uplands and about conservation efforts to protect bird habitat, farm soils, and create a public bird viewing area. For more information and to reserve a space contact Laura Katzman, Land Protection Specialist, Flathead Land Trust, at 752-8293 or [lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org](mailto:lkatzman@flatheadlandtrust.org).

### May 14

#### *Spring Arrivals in the Smith Lake Area*

Smith Lake is a beautiful wetland complex teeming with birds and wildlife, especially on an early spring morning. Join Flathead Audubon bird experts Paul Rossi and Cory Davis on Sunday, May 14 from 8 am to noon to view recently arrived orioles, warblers, and numerous waterfowl. For more information contact Paul Rossi, bird expert, Flathead Audubon, at 253-7193.

### July 12

#### *Flathead River to Lake Initiative meeting*

Mark your calendars for the next R2L Initiative meeting on Wednesday, July 12, from 9:00 am to noon at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks in Kalispell. For more information, contact Constanza von der Pahlen, Critical Lands Program Director, Flathead Lakers, at 883-1341 or [criticallands@flatheadlakers.org](mailto:criticallands@flatheadlakers.org).