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Welcome to the Flathead River to Lake Newsletter.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 22 | August 2014

In this issue

- \$1 Million Grant Approved for Conserving Migratory Bird Habitat
- Over 2,000 trees and shrubs planted this summer along the Flathead River
- 150 people gather to learn about and celebrate North Shore conservation
- Bike and Bird Tour a great success
- Welcome new Flathead Land Trust Executive Director Paul Travis
- Welcome new Flathead Conservation District Resource Conservationist Valerie Kurth
- Events:
 - * Flathead River to Lake Initiative quarterly meeting
 - * Montana Wetland Council meeting
 - * Montana Wetland and Riparian Maps Workshop
 - * Riparian Restoration Projects Tour
 - * Flathead Land Trust Conservation Plan meeting

Conservation and Restoration

\$1 Million Grant Approved for Conserving Migratory Bird Habitat



Flathead Land Trust and Flathead River to Lake Initiative partners were awarded a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) \$1 million grant to

conserve wetlands and agricultural lands and restore wetlands, contingent on continued federal funding for this grant program.

R2L partners will work with several landowners to complete five projects. Projects include important wetlands and surrounding uplands used by thousands of migratory birds on the north shore of Flathead Lake, around the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area west of Kalispell, near the Flathead River in Columbia Falls, and near the Mission Mountains and the National Bison Range. Lands protected and restored are part of a network of critical lands that help maintain water quality, healthy river function, abundant fish and wildlife, important agricultural soils, and scenic views.

This is the third large NAWCA grant partners have been awarded for conservation work in the past 10 years.

[Click here](#) to read the full story.

Over 2,000 trees and shrubs planted this summer along the Flathead River

Aaron Clausen, Flathead River Steward for the *Flathead River to Lake Initiative*, led planting crews and volunteers in implementing restoration projects this Spring on four properties along the Flathead River and the north shore of Flathead Lake, including: MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Foys Bend Fisheries Conservation Area and North Shore Wildlife Management Area, the Diamond B Ranch, and a property on Egan Slough. Over 2,000 willows, dogwood, chokecherry and other native riparian plants were planted with the help of professional crews and volunteers, including MT Conservation Corps, Flathead Valley Community College and Salish & Kootenai College faculty and students, and others.

Funding for these projects was provided by MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the River Steward Program managed by the Flathead Lakers. To learn more about riparian restoration opportunities or to volunteer next spring, contact Aaron Clausen at 406-752-4242 extension 109, or riversteward13@gmail.com.

Education & Outreach

150 people gather to learn about and celebrate North Shore conservation

Community members, partners, funders, and volunteers gathered on August 21 to celebrate local natural and cultural heritage and inaugurate a 189-acre addition to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) Wildlife Management Area.



People gathered to hear Donetta McClarty Antonotich tell stories about her great-grandparents who homesteaded the property. Laura Katzman, Flathead Land Trust Land Protection Specialist, discussed how the property came to be protected, and Gael Bissell, FWP biologist, discussed its future management. Darrell Worm chose to sell the property to FWP for the enjoyment of future generations. He gave tours of the McClarty Barn which he restored. [Click here](#) to read more about this great conservation project. *Thank you Somers Bay Café for donating a delicious dinner!*

Bike and Bird Tour a great success

Thirty-six people joined River to Lake partners last May on a biking tour to view birds, wetlands, and conservation projects. The group stopped at several protected wetlands and riparian areas, including a property with a conservation easement where the landowners invited tour participants to a delicious taste of their homemade wine and cheese. Participants were enthusiastic about our conservation projects that help protect water quality and scenic views in addition to habitat that allows birds and other wildlife to thrive.



Welcome new Flathead Land Trust Executive Director Paul Travis

Paul Travis joined the Flathead Land Trust as Executive Director in July. Paul has 14 years of experience working for nonprofit organizations, including the Montana Environmental Information Center, the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, National Audubon Society, and Glacier National Park Conservancy. R2L partners look forward to working with you, Paul.

Welcome new Flathead Conservation District Resource Conservationist Valerie Kurth

Valerie Kurth began working as the Resource Conservationist at the Flathead Conservation District in July. Valerie's background is in forest ecology and soils, and she has led research projects in western Montana, northern Arizona, and Minnesota. R2L partners look forward to working with you, Valerie.

Events

September 17

Flathead River to Lake Initiative quarterly meeting

The next Flathead River to Lake Initiative partners quarterly meeting is Wednesday, September 17 from 9:00 am to noon at MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks in Kalispell. For more information contact Constanza von der Pahlen, Critical Lands Program Director, Flathead Lakers, at 883-1341 or criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.

October 1

Montana Wetland Council meeting

The Montana Wetland Council will meet Thursday, October 1 from 9 am to 4 pm in Helena. For more information contact Lynda Saul, Wetland Program Coordinator, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, (406) 444-6652 or lsaul@mt.gov.

October 8

Montana Wetland and Riparian Maps Workshop

Montana Natural Heritage Program is providing a workshop on October 8 from 9:30-11:30 am at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kalispell to provide training on wetland maps and their potential applications. For more information and to register contact Levia Shoutis, Wetland Scientist, Environmental Resources Management, (406) 222-7600 x229 or levia.shoutis@erm.com.

2nd week of October - date to be determined

Riparian Restoration Projects Tour

Flathead River to Lake Initiative partners will conduct a tour of riparian restoration projects to showcase local projects and discuss what makes projects successful. For more information contact Kris Tempel, Resource Specialist, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (406) 751-4573 or ktempel@mt.gov.

October 16

Flathead Land Trust Conservation Plan meeting

Flathead Land Trust is holding a public meeting to solicit input on the update of its Conservation Plan on Wednesday, October 15 at 7pm at Central School Museum (124 2nd Ave E) in Kalispell. For more information contact Ryan Hunter, Land Protection Specialist, Flathead Land Trust, (406) 752-8293 or rhunter@bigsky.net. RSVP by Oct. 1.

Visit our website at www.flatheadrivertolake.org.