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Welcome to the Flathead River to Lake Newsletter.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 21 | April 2014

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Conservation and Restoration

Flathead Lake North Shore property protected



Darryl Worm chose to sell his 189 acres at the north shore to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to conserve its many values.

“My hope for this unique

property has been that it could be preserved for the people of Montana to enjoy and that its historic character could be protected,” he told the Bigfork Eagle. Worm also restored the historic barn, built by the original homesteaders of the property.

This project helps protect Flathead Lake’s water quality and critical wetlands used by tens of thousands of migratory birds in the spring on their long journey from wintering grounds in Mexico to their breeding grounds in Canada.

The property is surrounded by other protected lands,

including state and federal land, and other private land protected by conservation easements. A grant from the Bonneville Power Administration funded the project. To read more about this project on our website [click here](#).

Conservation easement to protect Smith Valley critical lands

Flathead Land Trust was recently awarded two grants, a Small North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant and a Travelers for Open Lands grant, to purchase a conservation easement on nearly 50 acres around Smith Lake west of Kalispell.



The project will protect bird habitat at this significant wetland complex that is used by tens of thousands of migratory birds that depend on wetlands for nesting and feeding.

Smith Lake is also a popular stop for people coming to observe the ducks, geese, swans, and other migratory waterfowl that arrive in the wetlands scattered throughout the valley’s farm fields and at Flathead Lake's north shore.

Critical Lands – the place to see birds!

Twenty-six people joined bird expert Dan Casey on a birding tour in March to observe migratory waterfowl and other birds that use the Smith Lake and West Valley wetlands during their migratory stops between Canada and Mexico.



Landowner Pete Wade, who is working with the Flathead Land Trust to place 50 acres in a conservation easement around the Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area, talked about his efforts to help protect the property's excellent soil and wetlands.



Bird enthusiasts were able to enjoy a close view of many birds thanks to several experts joining the tour and sharing their knowledge and spotting scopes.

Thank you to everyone who joined the tour and helped make it a success!

To view a map and guide to birding in the Flathead Valley [click here](#).

Spring Events

April 23

Flathead Land Trust Conservation Plan review

Flathead River to Lake Initiative partners are invited to provide input on FLT's 5-year Conservation Plan on Wednesday, April 23 at 9:30 am at Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Conference Room. For more information please contact Ryan Hunter, Land Protection Specialist, Flathead Land Trust, at (406) 752-8293.

Volunteer opportunities

Looking for opportunities to volunteer?

Flathead River Steward Aaron Clausen is helping organize a number of restoration work days. Work dates include April 22, 23, 25, 29, and May 3.

Join Aaron to help restore several riparian areas along the Flathead River. You can help install weed mats,

build fences, plant native trees and shrubs, weed, or monitor plants. To learn more contact Aaron at (406) 752-4242 extension 109 or riversteward13@gmail.com.

May 3

Spring Tree Planting

Join River to Lake Initiative partners on Thursday, May 3 to plant willow trees at the [Foys Bend Fisheries Conservation Area](#) near Kalispell. You will learn about our river restoration efforts while restoring a vegetated riparian buffer that will help protect water quality and provide habitat.

For more information or to sign up, contact Brandy at brandysingleton90@gmail.com or (904) 599-8571. To read about last year's restoration work at Foys Bend [click here](#).



SPRING TREE PLANTING EVENT



May 17

Flathead Valley Bike and Bird Tour

Join River to Lake Initiative partners and the BIKE SATURDAYS group on a bike and bird tour exploring the back roads from Church Slough to Somers Bay Café. Learn about birds that use the wetlands and surrounding uplands and about conservation efforts to protect bird habitat, farm soils, clean water, and recreation opportunities. Visit our website, <http://www.flatheadrivertolake.org>, soon for more information or contact Laura Katzman, Land Protection Specialist, Flathead Land Trust, at (406) 752-8293.

In the News

Flathead residents remember the 1964 flood

Local Flathead residents tell their memories of the flood 50 years ago and efforts to save neighbors, animals, and themselves. "There was so much in the river that shouldn't have been there ... Once you see something like that, you realize the power of water and how it can change people's lives in an instant," Bruce Young told Justin Franz with Flathead Living Magazine. [Click here](#) to read the story.



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