



Welcome to the River to Lake monthly newsletter.

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue 7 | March 2010

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Land and Water Conservation

North Shore Ranch settlement

On March 8, Flathead County Commissioners approved a \$1 million settlement of the North Shore Ranch lawsuit, with an amendment that would allow 30 days for the parties to reach an agreement on purchase of the property or a portion of it. The North Shore Ranch lawsuit was filed two years ago by the developer following the denial by the Commissioners of the proposed 286-lot subdivision at the north shore of Flathead Lake near Somers.

The settlement requires the county to build and pay for subdivision roads and two highway turn lanes on Montana 83. The settlement also requires a \$600,000 payment by the county for a public access easement on 150 acres. River to Lake partners continue to work toward purchasing the property from the North Shore Ranch developer to place it in public ownership and protect its outstanding natural assets.

Owen Sowerwine Natural Area lease renewed

Montana Audubon recently renewed its lease with the Department of Natural Resource Conservation to

manage the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area for another 10 years. The renewal allows Montana Audubon and the Flathead Audubon Society to continue jointly managing the Owen Sowerwine Natural Area for bird conservation and education. Owen Sowerwine is located in a highly braided area of the Flathead River west of Kalispell. It encompasses 442 acres and includes some of the best examples of riparian shrub and forest communities in the Flathead Valley. It is a designated Important Bird Area in Montana.



Photo by Brent Mitchell

Cooperation and Coordination

Good-bye and thanks to Stacy. Welcome, Laura, to the Flathead Land Trust staff!

The Flathead Land Trust hired Laura Katzman, a fish and wildlife biologist, to assist with River to Lake conservation projects. Stacy Allan, is leaving her position as Land Protection Specialist for the River to Lake Initiative for a new job with the Forest Service. Stacy helped complete numerous River to Lake conservation projects including the Loudon family farms and Church Slough, and helped secure more than \$2 million dollars in grants. Ryan Hunter, the Flathead Land Trust's Monitoring Land Protection Specialist, will pick up some River to Lake responsibilities.

Funding and Grants

Travelers for Open Land grant

The Flathead Land Trust was among the first grant recipients of a new program that provides funding to protect open lands. Travelers for Open Land is a partnership among tourism businesses, including the Montana Innkeepers Association, Montana Association of Land Trusts, the Montana Community Foundation, Montana Office of Tourism, hotels, dude ranches, outfitters and rafting companies. Participating businesses collect donations from travelers in Montana. The funding is used to fund land trust conservation projects through a competitive grant managed by the Montana Community Foundation. The Flathead Land Trust received \$2,500 which was used on the Loudon Family Farm conservation projects along the Flathead River. For more information go to www.travelersforopenland.org.

Meetings, Workshops & Publications

Little Bitterroot restoration projects field trip - Thursday, March 25

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Non-Point Source Pollution Prevention Program is sponsoring a field trip to share information about two river restoration projects on the Little Bitterroot River on Thursday, March 25. The restoration projects implemented Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce sediment and nutrient loading

from active livestock operations. BMPs include fencing, hydromodification of the river channel, resloping of river banks and planting of native vegetation. Field trip participants will meet at 9 am at the Elmo Community Center in Elmo, about 35 miles south of Kalispell on US-9. For more information or to RSVP contact Lloyd Stevens, Jr. at 883-2888 x 7214 or lloydjsr@cskt.org.

River to Lake meeting - Wednesday, April 14

The next quarterly River to Lake meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14 from 9 am to noon. For more information contact Constanza, Critical Lands Program Director, Flathead Lakers, at criticallands@flatheadlakers.org

Stream Restoration Project Design Symposium - April 22-23

The Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group is offering a symposium on *Stream Restoration Project Design in Northwestern Montana* on April 22 and 23. The symposium is a gathering of stream restoration practitioners to share knowledge on restoration techniques in northwestern Montana. The symposium will be held at the Lakeside Motel & Resort in Trout Creek, Montana. For more information contact Mike Miller, Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group Coordinator at 406-847-5560 or mmiller@blackfoot.net.

New online resource summarizes conservation funding and research studies

Conservation Maven is a new online resource that includes a funding database and profiles conservation research studies. The funding database can be accessed at www.conservationmaven.com/funding-board/. Research summaries can be viewed at www.conservationmaven.com/.

Past copies of the River to Lake News are available at www.flatheadlakers.org/flathead_lake_basin/critical_land/river_to_lake/index.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. To post a message or to unsubscribe send message to: criticallands@flatheadlakers.org.