



### What is Happening at Lion Mountain?

Many people have contacted us to inquire as to the progress on cleaning up septic leachate pollution on Whitefish Lake, and specifically about the Lion Mountain neighborhood. First, WLI's key role in the process is to conduct water quality research and provide our analysis to citizens and resource managers so they can make informed decisions. After providing that information through our *Investigation of Septic Leachate to the Shoreline Area of Whitefish Lake* (Curtis & Koopal, 2012), we were tasked with being technical facilitators to the City of Whitefish's ad hoc Whitefish Community Wastewater Management Committee. As technical facilitators, we assisted in the process of developing the *Whitefish Community Wastewater Management Plan*, and later committed to managing the process of conducting Preliminary Engineering Reports (PERs) for neighborhoods identified as having septic leachate pollution on the lake. In addition, WLI developed relationships with funders and community organizations to support the wastewater management clean-up process and to reduce the financial burden to the public.

The first neighborhood PER was conducted for Lion Mountain by Carver Engineering and approved by the Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) and the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP). With the PER complete, project partners had the option of implementing the recommendations of the PER and applying for "construction" funding. Project partners recently decided not to apply for this funding in the 2016 funding cycle. The reason for this decision is that there are a number of goals that need to be

accomplished in addition to the PER, all of which were not yet met. They include the following:

A management infrastructure needs to be in place to support the application for funding—including both administrative and financial capacity; The City of Whitefish needs to have in place a method of addressing the relationship between the city and the homeowners in affected neighborhoods regarding the collection of fees associated with wastewater management projects; There must be a management district in place such as a SID or RSID; And most importantly, a majority of the homeowners of the affected areas need to understand and be supportive of the project.

Given that we have not yet reached these goals, WLI will work with project partners to address the remaining open issues between now and the next funding cycle which is May of 2018. Additionally, WLI is now seeking private funding to spearhead a program for communicating information to the community, in particular the homeowners in the neighborhoods (continued on page 3...)

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**Whitefish Lake Institute**  
550 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street #103  
Whitefish, MT 59937

Voice: 406.862.4327

Fax: 406.862.0686

info@whitefishlake.org

www.whitefishlake.org

***Founded in 2005***

*The Whitefish Lake Institute is committed to science, education, and community stewardship to protect and improve Whitefish Lake and Whitefish area water resources today, while providing a collective vision for tomorrow.*

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Whitefish Lake from the Averill's Viking Creek  
Wetland Preserve

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## New City Watercraft Inspection Station

Ten years after the construction of the Rescue Hovercraft Garage at City Beach, an addition to the building will be constructed this spring to house the city's watercraft inspection station.

In 2013, the City of Whitefish began supporting an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management Plan as recommended by WLI. One component of the plan includes a City Beach Watercraft Inspection Station to help prevent the spread of AIS to Whitefish Lake. But employees staffed to inspect boats are subject to inclement weather conditions (prolonged sun exposure and rain) as they wait for and inspect watercraft. In addition, there is no place to store equipment and forms to support the inspection program.

WLI is facilitating this effort. Like the private donors who paid for the construction costs of the original Rescue Hovercraft Garage, the Joe & Cindy Gregory Family have come forward to pay the construction costs of the watercraft inspection station. In talking with Joe, he is adamant that we keep aquatic invasive species out of Whitefish Lake. He has seen their devastating effect in Tennessee and wants to do everything in his power to protect our beautiful lake and our local economy.

The Gregorlys' aren't the only community members who are donating to the project. Key project players include Chris Hyatt, Andrew Bearinowski of Malmquist Construction, Chad Phillips of Phillips Architecture, and Nick Sramek who is completing a Boy Scouts of America Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge.



*Nick Sramek, who will volunteer and complete a Boy Scouts of America Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge for this project, stands where the addition will be built.*

Upon completion of the building, it will be dedicated to the City of Whitefish. The boat inspection station will be in operation Memorial Day through Labor Day via a cooperative effort between WLI and the City of Whitefish Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department.

## Former Interns— Where Are They Now?

We like to stay in touch with our former interns to see what they are up to and the path they've chosen early in their career. We recently heard from some of them. This is what they had to say-

### **Kristi Whisler, 2008 Intern Northwestern University, Evanston, IL**

Kristi Whisler was an intern with Mary Kohnstamm in the summer of 2008 and helped Mike and the gang with field data collection, analysis and input. After graduating from Whitefish High School in 2009, Kristi attended Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she studied Film and Spanish. With interests in both filmmaking and non-profit work, she focused her studies on documentaries as a medium for both entertainment and social change.



After graduating in 2013, Kristi moved to Los Angeles for a position in the documentary division at Participant Media, an entertainment company that believes a story

well told can change the world. Kristi has worked there since July 2013 and is currently a Creative Executive, focusing on the development of new documentary projects. She uses her weekends to hike and backpack all over California and has learned how to be (mostly) zen while sitting in traffic. Kristi tries to get back to Whitefish as much as possible to visit her parents, Steve and Ardy Whisler, and to take advantage of everything the 'last best place' has to offer. She's proud to be a part of the Whitefish Lake Institute community, even from afar!

### **Mary Kohnstamm, 2008 Intern St. Lawrence University: Canton, NY**

Mary Kohnstamm graduated from St. Lawrence University in 2011. Her senior thesis was on a UN program to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, which allowed her to travel to Cancun for the UN climate talks and intern for a governmental agency reforesting mangroves in Kenya. After graduating, she worked for the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival. Currently she is attending Montana State University to earn her general science teaching certificate.

F.R.E.E.F.L.O.W. and working with WLI were motivating

experiences that demonstrated how science can be taught outside of the classroom. She hopes to use similar experiential learning in her future classes. During the summer she works for Montana Outdoor Science School, leading 6-8th grade camps.

### **Logan Seipel, 2013 Intern University of Wisconsin: Stevens Point, WI**

After my summer in Whitefish I spent two years in the flat lands of Illinois. I graduated in the spring of 2015 with a Masters in Hydrogeology. During my time as a student I finished a thesis studying the impacts of agricultural pumping wells on a shallow aquifer system. I also took some courses that brought me to Oklahoma, New Mexico, and the Guadalupe Mountains in Texas. After graduation I took a job in Minneapolis working as a Staff Scientist for Braun Intertec, a geotechnical and environmental consulting firm. Typically I work outside on contamination remediation projects in the Twin Cities area. In my spare time I like to go running, biking, and hunting in the fall.

### **Other former interns include;**

Dietrich Perchy, 2014 Intern  
Montana State University: Bozeman, MT

Carl Talsma, 2012 Intern  
Cornell University: Ithaca, NY

Meagan Powell, 2012 Intern  
Westminster College: Salt Lake City, UT

Leif Castren, 2011 Intern  
Middlebury College: Middlebury, VT

Michael Harrison, 2010 Intern  
Whitman College: Walla Walla, WA

### *Editors Note:*

Although we don't have a summer intern this year, Sarah Bowman, an AmeriCorps volunteer at the Flathead Conservation District, will be spending time with us during water quality sampling trips and for special projects.

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## **What is Happening at Lion Mountain? (continued from page 1...)**

...affected by septic leachate pollution, and in a manner comprehensible to average citizens. We appreciate your support as we continue working to protect and improve water quality on Whitefish lake. Keep your eye out for our next deliverables.

## Wetland Field Trips

During a busy week in May, WLI hosted over 500 students from throughout the valley at the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve. Each group received age appropriate lessons at various stations. Participating schools included;

Edgerton Kindergarten  
Helena Flats Kindergarten  
Whitefish Muldown 2nd Grade  
Whitefish Central School 5th Grade

In addition, a fish dissection was conducted for the Whitefish Christian School 9th graders at their school. Unfortunately, the Columbia Falls Ruder Elementary 2nd Graders had to cancel their visit due to inclement weather.

Special thanks to Wildwings Recovery Center for providing a raptor station for the 5th graders and to Valerie Kurth and Sarah Bowman at the Flathead Conservation District for lending a hand.



*Whitefish Muldown 2nd Graders are all smiles looking at western toads at the "Critter Station."*



*Edgerton kindergarten students at the wind blown spruce rootwad.*



*Edgerton kindergarten students take a break for lunch.*



*Whitefish Muldown 2nd Graders at the coloring station.*

### Thank You!!!

WLI is fortunate to have so many individuals and businesses that support our mission. Starting with this issue, we highlight those staunch supporters that have consistently provided more than 5 years of financial support and vision to the organization.

In the Summer Issue of *LakeFront*, we will roll out a new membership benefits program. It's our way to say thank you for supporting our work— we can't do it without you! Thank you!!



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550 East 1st Street #103  
Whitefish, MT 59937



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Whitefish Lake Institute ♦ 550 East 1st Street #103 ♦ Whitefish, MT 59937

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