



LakeFront

Quarterly Newsletter of the Whitefish Lake Institute

Spring 2019

Montana Watershed Stories

Montana is a special place – blessed with clean water, family farms and ranches, rich wildlife habitat, and people who work together with mutual respect. This heritage helps our state prosper and supports our way of life. But Montana’s landscape is changing, increasing the pressure on our families and communities. Montana watershed groups bring landowners and communities together to find innovative, practical solutions to be better natural resource stewards.

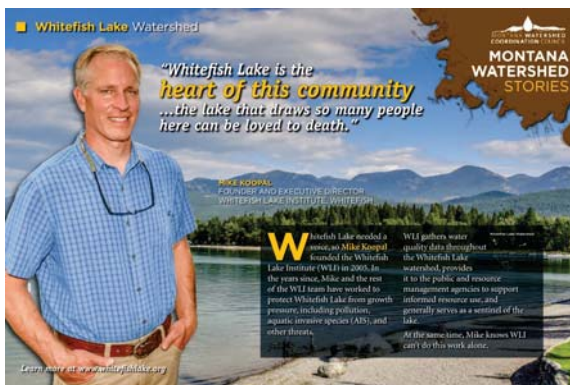
The Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC) shares the commitment and impact of these individuals and organizations through the Watershed Stories Campaign. Watershed Stories shares the personal stories of Montanans committed to preserving our landscapes to inspire us all to support local watershed groups.



MONTANA LAKES CONFERENCE
EMERGING ISSUES IN LAKE SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT

From community presentations to scientific talks, the inaugural Montana Lakes Conference held at The Lodge at Whitefish Lake was a great success. Organized by the Whitefish Lake Institute to assemble the state’s top researchers from nonprofits, government, academia, and business, the conference successfully paired citizens with natural resource scientists and managers. Thirty-five speakers including two keynotes, two plenary sessions, and two community presentations addressed 160 conference attendees.

A binding theme of climate change was addressed from a variety of perspectives. Global climate strategist and keynote speaker, Dr. Edward Cameron delved into the social and economic side of a changing climate in his talk “A just and sustainable world: (continued on Page 2)



Inside this issue of *LakeFront*—

- Montana Watershed Stories..... 1
- Montana Lakes Conference..... 1
- Meet our Summer Intern..... 3
- Spring Photos..... 4
- WLI Supporters..... 5
- Become a WLI Member..... 6

Back issues available at www.whitefishlake.org

MWCC highlighted three Whitefish community members; Mike Koopal, executive director of WLI; John Muhlfeld, Mayor of Whitefish; and Chris Ruffatto, retired Whitefish High School teacher. (continued on Page 3...)



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Founded in 2005

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

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Cover Photo:
Whitefish Lake looking southeast.

Montana Lakes Conference (*continued from Page 1...*)

Building low-carbon, climate resilient and inclusive economies."

Dr. Jim Elser, Director for the Flathead Lake Biological Station and Erich Peitzsch, Physical Scientist from the USGS Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center tag teamed to present a scientific view of our changing climate in *"A glimpse of fading glaciers: Impacts on life in mountain regions,"* a popular community presentation held at the Whitefish Performing Arts Center. This talk addressed the changes in alpine glaciers, snow cover and unfolding landscapes, as well as the impacts these changes have on existing streams and lakes and the creation of new lakes. About 120 people attended the talk.

Plenary speaker Dr. Geoffrey Schladow—Director of the Tahoe Environmental Research Center—addressed *"The meaning of lake restoration in the face of climate change,"* a discussion that drilled down on the stressors that typically reduce the ecological function of lakes and how climate change exacerbates these changes. Looking at the effects of climate change on native trout species, USGS research aquatic ecologist Dr. Clint Muhlfeld discussed their vulnerabilities and projects underway to establish refuges to protect native trout in the region.

Addressing another need for resilience, Glacier National Park Superintendent Jeff Mow discussed for the luncheon keynote, *"Glacier National Park: Challenges and opportunities during uncertain times."* Mow touched on popular citizen concerns including wildfires, extreme visitation, changing visitor expectation, technological innovations, and a changing climate. Jim Elser's plenary talk, *"The state of (some) Montana lakes"* led attendees through a review of Montana lakes' water quality relative to those in other parts of the country.

The conference workshop—*"Lake Ecology 101: How biology, chemistry and physics interact to shape how lakes function"*—presented by Dr. Shawn Devlin was standing room only. We kept bringing in more chairs, but more people kept coming. Devlin, an Assistant Research Professor at the Flathead Lake Biological Station and part-time Aquatic Ecologist for the Whitefish Lake Institute presented core limnological concepts as well key threats to Montana lakes in a way that left attendees with important take-aways.

Whitefish Mayor John Muhlfeld welcomed attendees with a heartfelt account of the degradative changes he saw in his own lake-based hometown community. Governor Bullock also sent a video message to conference participants of welcome and appreciation for all their work in protecting and improving water quality for the state of Montana. In addition to community events, keynotes, plenaries, and two simultaneous conference session tracks with 30 speakers moderated by industry professionals, there were 12 exhibitors and a lively Poster Session with 10 participants including a middle school student, two high school students, and several standard research posters.



Whitefish Mayor, John Muhlfeld.



Retired educator, Chris Ruffatto.

Mike Koopal of WLI recently joined the MWCC board of directors and is excited to offer his support to the nearly 60 watershed groups in Montana. Please visit MWCC at mtwatersheds.org to learn more about the Watershed Stories Campaign and other support they provide to Montana watershed groups.

I am coming to the end of my sophomore year at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There, I study Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, a flexible major which has allowed me to explore many disciplines within the life sciences from human physiology to the biology of the deep sea. The opportunity to take such wide-ranging classes has been a highlight of my college career, and it's also been critical to the development of my interests. Outside of class, I'm heavily involved in



2019 WLI intern Graham Friedman.

environmental efforts, and I serve as an officer for the Harvard College Conservation Society. I am a member of a couple other conservation groups, and at the end of this summer I will be volunteering as a counselor for Camp Kesem. I also work in the Edwards Lab, where I researched lizard scale morphologies this semester. In my free time, I love to hike and backpack, fly fish, and ski, and get outdoors in any other way I can.

A Whitefish native, I attended Muldown Elementary. There, I learned about the Whitefish Lake Institute when Mike Koopal gave a fish dissection presentation, and two years before, I was a student in his wife's second grade class. I'm very excited to work with WLI this summer, and to learn about, and help preserve the environment which was so critical to my development as a naturalist. In particular, I'm looking forward to working in the field and helping to strengthen awareness in the community of the threats that face our natural resources. WLI has an outsized role in the conservation of our local waterways, and I'm thrilled to be a part of their diverse work.

Editors note:

WLI believes in mentoring the next generation of natural resource professionals. The WLI internship experience offers students valuable experiences in scientific field data collection. They also learn about stream and lake ecology and watershed function. Former interns have represented; Brown University (2018), Princeton University (2017), Montana State University (2014), University of Wisconsin–Steven's Point (2013), Cornell University and Westminster College (2012), Middlebury College (2011), Whitman College (2010), Northwestern University and St. Lawrence University (both 2009).



At the Montana Lakes Conference, WLI honored Stewardship Award winners Alan Wood and Kris Tempel from Montana FWP, Lauren Shotnik from the Little Bitterroot Homeowners Association, and Germaine White, recently retired from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Photo Courtesy; Heidi Desch, Whitefish Pilot.

Spring Photos



Dr. Geoffrey Schladow from the University of California Davis, and director of the Tahoe Research Center, gave a plenary presentation on the meaning of lake restoration in the face of climate change: The case of Lake Tahoe, at the Montana Lakes Conference.



Ryan Richardson, WLI Science Advisory Committee member, presented on Tie Channel Geomorphology at a breakout session of the Montana Lakes Conference.



A happy WLI crew pause for a photo after a successful inaugural Montana Lakes Conference.



Science & Education Coordinator Cynthia Ingelfinger and her mother, Joann Fleming, handled conference registration. Over 160 conference attendees shared information during the three day event.



Science & Education Coordinator Cynthia Ingelfinger collecting water quality samples on Whitefish Lake in mid-March.

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