



OUR LAKE OUR FUTURE

Whitefish Lake | Aquatic Invasive Species
Management Program



Program Update

In an effort to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to Whitefish Lake and the Whitefish Lake Watershed, WLI developed enhancements to the Whitefish AIS program in 2017. In partnership with the City of Whitefish and the state of Montana, the program now includes a more comprehensive watercraft inspection and decontamination process, increased watercraft inspection hours and staffing, an inspection station was added at Whitefish Lake State Park, and a decontamination station was set up. Most watercraft users launching at Whitefish City Beach and Whitefish State Park have not only been patient as the new program settles out, but have expressed appreciation to staff for efforts to protect the lake.



Photo courtesy Nicky Ouellet,
Montana Public Radio.

Recent program modifications better align the Whitefish program with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) state-level protocols. "This update to the AIS plan for Whitefish Lake will extend the reach of our AIS prevention program, (continued on Page 3)..."

WLI is proud to once again be participating in the Great Fish Community Challenge fundraiser sponsored by the Whitefish Community Foundation. Your past support of WLI helped fund research to help us understand our lake and watershed, education programs for our youth, and community stewardship efforts for our citizens. Your generosity continues to shape WLI as we address the changing challenges of our lake-based community. We hope you'll continue to help us protect and improve Whitefish area water resources by participating in the Great Fish Community Challenge **between July 20th and September 15th**. To donate, please go to: <http://www.greatfishchallenge.org/>. WLI will be notified of your donation, and all of the donation funds will come directly to us. (continued on page 3)...

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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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Cover Photo:

*Whitefish Lake as viewed from
Iron Horse looking southwest.*

Courtesy of gravityshots.com

Summer Help Reflect on Experiences

Editor's Note: Barret Gray spent the summer interning for WLI and will be a sophomore at Princeton University. Keegan Siebenaler completed a summer job shadow experience with WLI and will be a senior at Glacier High School.

Barret Gray- My summer experience at Whitefish Lake Institute has been a memorable one. Mike and Lori have not only taught me a great deal about the importance of protecting and caring for Whitefish Lake and surrounding water, but also about the roller coaster of running a nonprofit, which is something that can only be learned from experiences like this one.

My job duties were far and wide, which gave me experience in many different areas. In the field, I helped collect baseline samples from the lake and surrounding tributaries, did maintenance at the Viking Creek Wetlands, and worked as a fill-in boat inspector. Inside the office, I helped with organization, performed data entry, researched facts on septic leachate, and am currently writing a research report on the effects of fireworks on water quality. Mike and Lori always made sure I was adequately caffeinated by keeping the fridge stocked with coffee and with frequent office trips to Coffee Traders.

The passion Mike and Lori have for the work that they do is remarkable, and something I aspire to have in whatever field I find myself working in. I have had the amazing experience of watching them create an AIS inspection and decontamination program for Whitefish that I believe is the best in the state. They were a joy to work with, and I am grateful to have been a part of this incredible organization.

Keegan Siebenaler- Throughout this summer, I have had the opportunity to volunteer with WLI. The conservation of Whitefish Lake has always been important to me- my family owns a house on the lake and I often spend summer days on the dock with friends.

This experience has been valuable to me because I realize the time and effort that is invested into conservation and natural resource management. Whether collecting samples in the field or writing reports in the office, it is clear to me that protecting a popular watershed like Whitefish is not easy. However, it is incredibly valuable- I am convinced that Whitefish Lake is the best-protected waterbody in the state.

This summer, I have helped with field data collection, AIS data analysis, and drafting a report on the impact of ballast boats on Whitefish Lake. The real-world experience that I have gained is valuable because I now feel that I am familiar with the realities of working in the field of natural resource management and conservation. The combination of classroom knowledge and field experience is tremendously beneficial.

Staff Appointed to New State Commission

Executive Director Mike Koopal and Science & Education Director Lori Curtis were both appointed by Governor Bullock to the newly formed Upper Columbia Conservation Commission. Koopal will serve as the Member-at-Large on the Commission, and Curtis—a Flathead Conservation District Supervisor—will serve as the representative for Montana's Conservation Districts.

The purpose of the commission is to protect the aquatic environment in tributaries to the Columbia River from the threat of invasive species. In doing so, the Commission has responsibility for monitoring the condition of aquatic resources in the tributaries to the Columbia River and—in cooperation with all water management agencies—develop an annual monitoring plan; encourage close cooperation and coordination between federal, state, regional, tribal and local water resource managers in establishing comprehensive monitoring, data collection, and interpretation; encourage and work for international cooperation between the Canadian Province of British Columbia and the State of Montana; develop and implement a Upper Columbia River Basin Montana-specific invasive species education & outreach strategy; encourage economic development by reducing threats from invasive species and conducting restoration and infestation control measures; provide an annual report to the Governor, the Director of the DNRC, and the Environmental Control Council to include information gathered in fulfillment of its duties, information on monitoring activities, and accounting of all money received and expended by source and purpose.

There are nine voting members on the Commission which also includes representatives from the hydropower utility industry, electric cooperatives, recreation organizations, private industry, private landowners, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, and the Invasive Species Council. The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate will coordinate two non-voting bipartisan appointees to the Commission.

The Commission will also seek input from the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the Northwest Power & Conservation Council. This Commission is entitled to make recommendations to the governor and to federal, state, tribal, provincial, regional, and local agencies.

(Program Update continued from Page 1...)

aligns the plan with state protocols and addresses local needs," said Thomas Woolf, FWP AIS bureau chief. "We're grateful for the partnership with WLI and the city of Whitefish." Current rules include:

- All watercraft MUST be inspected prior to launching in Whitefish Lake
- All high-risk watercraft MUST be decontaminated prior to launch in Whitefish Lake. This includes boats:
 - with ballast tanks or bags that have not been out of the water for 30 days,
 - with standing water that have not been out of the water for 30 days,
 - that have been in mussel infested waterways in the last 30 days,
 - that inspectors deem too dirty to inspect,
- There is no fee for decontamination. Donations to support the Whitefish AIS program are accepted at the decontamination station,
- Watercraft presenting with an unbroken inspection or decontamination seal from the state of Montana, or other agencies or groups are subject only to a brief inspection interview at the inspection stations,
- Watercraft found to be mussel fouled will be turned over to FWP and not allowed to launch on Whitefish Lake.

Special thanks to program partners: City of Whitefish, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation, Flathead Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Flathead Conservation District, Joe & Cindy Gregory Family, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana State Parks, The Lodge at Whitefish Lake, Whitefish Community Foundation, Whitefish County Water & Sewer District, Whitefish Lake Institute Members, and Whitefish Marine & Powersports; and to all watercraft users for helping us to protect Whitefish Lake.

(Great Fish Community Challenge continued from Page 1)...

Fish 5k Color Run/Walk

Also, join us on September 10th at depot park to celebrate the challenge that is helping our community run! As part of the Challenge, you can register to walk or run in the Great Fish 5K Color Run on September 10th starting at 10:00 AM.

Community Fair

Visit WLI's and other nonprofit booths at the Community Fair. Participating nonprofits will have entertaining and interactive tents where you can learn more about their mission and how they benefit the Whitefish Community. There will be great entertainment from 9 AM - Noon!!!

Summer Photos



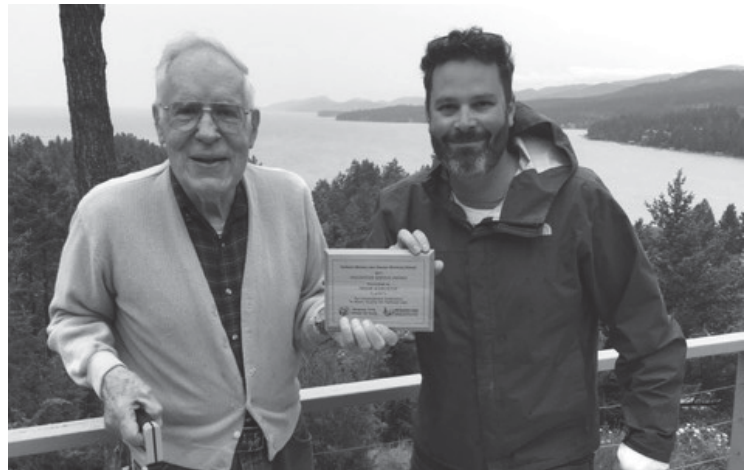
Summer Intern Barrett Gray takes water quality measurements on Whitefish lake.



High school job shadow student Keegan Siebenaler prepares to process water quality samples from Whitefish Lake.



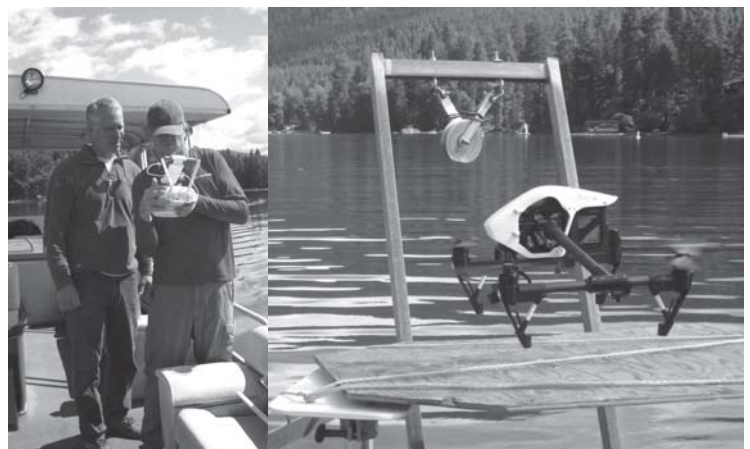
Jim Crawford accepts a Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network Volunteer Service Award from John Wachsmuth of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). Jim has been as citizen scientist on Jette Lake for 25 years. WLI partners with FWP to keep the program going on 40+ lakes in northwest Montana.



Frank Schroeter accepts a Volunteer Service Award from Josh Gubits of AquaTerra Solutions. Frank is in his 24th year as a citizen scientist on Flathead Lake. WLI contracts with Josh to coordinate and train volunteers. Beyond water quality data collection, volunteers are trained in early detection for aquatic invasive species.



Summer intern Barrett Gray and high school job shadow student Keegan Siebenaler prepare water quality samples from a Whitefish stream to send to the lab.



WLI and Quadrocopter conducted an experimental pilot drone flight utilizing a Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) camera to determine the feasibility of locating areas of seeps and groundwater movement along the shoreline of the lake.

—Past Issues of LakeFront are available on our website www.whitefishlake.org—

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