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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Whitefish Lake Institute announces Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network “volunteer service award” recipients**

WHITEFISH, MT, May 22, 2017 – The Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) honors three long-time Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network (NWMTLVMN) volunteers with Volunteer Service Awards; Carol Blake, Jim Crawford, and Frank Schroeter.

Carol Blake, Tetrault Lake

Carol Blake has been monitoring Tetrault Lake in Eureka for ten years. As often as possible Carol jumps in her kayak, paddles out to the study site and records the health of what she describes as “our precious body of water.”

“With all the challenges our water sources face these days it is paramount to remain vigilant in regards to pollutants and invasive species,” noted Blake in a recent interview. “It feels good to play some small part in the wonderful program the Whitefish Lake Institute designed to keep tabs on many bodies of water in Lincoln, Lake and Flathead Counties. I am profoundly grateful for all their hard work.”

Jim Crawford, Jette Lake

Water quality monitoring in Jette Lake was in place when Jim moved to Polson in 1991. At that time the Flathead Lake Biological Station led the program and they were looking for a resident to check water clarity, temperature and general conditions on a regular basis.

“Since I had just retired after 35 years in the corporate world, I volunteered and have been ‘the lake guy’ for the past 25 years,” explained Crawford. “I’ve proudly watched our lake and surrounding grounds become a recreational jewel, especially after Whitefish Lake Institute took over monitoring and helped us formulate a plan to decrease noxious elements that were in the lake.”

According to Jim, Jette’s clean, clear water and outstanding swimming, boating and fishing for trout and bass are now a primary reason people move to the private subdivision.

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## Frank Schroeter, Flathead Lake

Now in his 24th year as a NWMTLVMN volunteer, Frank Schroeter retired from a 34-year career as a civil engineer with Los Angeles County Road Department (Public Works) in 1990 and moved to Somers, Montana. Schroeter believes that maintaining a high degree of lake water quality and clarity enhances the value of properties in the vicinity of Flathead Lake, including his own.

“So I heeded the 1993 invitation of the Flathead Basin Commission's Mark Holston to volunteers who would be willing to spend a few hours a month measuring and reporting the clarity and temperature of a lake in the area,” according to Schroeter. “I am pleased to play a small part in collecting and reporting data that is useful in maintaining a continuous record of water quality in the Flathead, Schroeter notes.

## About Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network

The Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network (NWMTLVMN) is a partnership between Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Whitefish Lake Institute. Our mission is to recruit and train citizen scientist volunteers to monitor water quality, identify and report Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and promote watershed stewardship in Northwest Montana.

This citizen science program grew out of two monitoring programs previously underway at the Flathead Basin Commission (FBC) and the Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI). The Flathead Basin Commission, in cooperation with the University of Montana Flathead Lake Biological Station, coordinated the Volunteer Lakes Monitoring Program (VLMP) from 1992-2010. The VLMP trained, equipped and supported local volunteers who collected data and reported on over three dozen lakes in the Flathead Basin.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and FBC programs were the baseline models for the Whitefish to Eureka Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) which was initiated in 2007 by WLI in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP). The Program was established to provide local residents an opportunity to collect baseline data that to help determine the trophic status of lakes and implement early Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) detection and prevention in Northwest Montana. In 2010, the Whitefish to Eureka VLMP combined with the FBC VLMP to form the NWMTLVMN. The NWMTLVMN currently has more than fifty-five volunteers that monitor a total of fifty locations on forty-one lakes in Flathead, Lake, Lincoln and Missoula counties. The lakes in the Program represent diversity in public use, accessibility and morphology.

## About Whitefish Lake Institute

Founded in 2005, the Whitefish Lake Institute is a 501 (3)(c) non-profit organization 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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