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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Whitefish Lake Institute honors Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes educator and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks scientists for education and conservation excellence at inaugural Montana Lakes Conference

WHITEFISH, MT, March 20, 2019 – The Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) presented the *Chris Ruffatto Excellence in Education Award* to **Germaine White** who recently retired from her position as Information and Education Specialist & AIS Program Manager for the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) working in the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation, Natural Resources Department.

Prior to her last position, White worked as Cultural Resource Program Manager, Public Programs Manager, and held positions with The People's Center, Salish Kootenai College, National Park Service, and finally focused on environmental education and implementing outreach programs for diverse audiences. White also developed and supervised the CSKT Aquatic Invasive Species program including inspection stations, and education and outreach.

“Germaine coordinated diverse public involvement activities associated with the management of fish, wildlife and recreation; developed, produced and disseminated extraordinary educational materials; and represented her organization in numerous forms of media with brilliance and grace,” said Lori Curtis, Science & Education Director for the Whitefish Lake Institute in presenting the award.

The *Annual Stewardship Award* was presented by longtime Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Region 1 wildlife biologist, wildlife program manager, and Patagonia sponsored author of *Path of the Puma*, Jim Williams. Williams joined WLI in honoring **Kris Tempel**, Habitat Conservation Biologist, and **Alan Wood**, Science Program Supervisor who worked together with the Trust for Public Land and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to complete the final phase of the Whitefish Lake Watershed Project.

Williams said the award recognized “their passionate and tireless work conserving fish and wildlife habitat and connectivity corridors at a landscape level in northwestern Montana – work that has been instrumental in the protection of the Whitefish Lake Watershed.”

The years-long collaborative conservation effort completes the conservation of 13,398 total acres of privately owned timber land adding it to the Stillwater State Forest as public land to be sustainably managed by DNRC, and protects important fish and wildlife habitat, community water resources, public access and recreational opportunities while promoting sustainable forest management. It protects local aquatic resources including important native bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout habitat, and large areas of Swift and Lazy Creek watersheds.

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About the Montana Lakes Conference

The inaugural Montana Lakes Conference was held March 13-15, 2019 at The Lodge at Whitefish Lake. Hosted by the Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI), the conference drew over 160 attendees from academia, research, nonprofits, government, business, and the public to discuss improving Montana's lake and reservoir health through science and monitoring activities, watershed restoration, policy innovation, and collaborative stakeholder involvement. Twelve exhibitors and eleven posters were set up throughout the conference which offered 30 session presenters, two plenary sessions, two conference keynotes, a public Lake Limnology workshop, and a public presentation the evening before the conference. Presentations and conference summary information will be available on the WLI website www.whitefishlake.org on April 1st.

About Whitefish Lake Institute

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