

Institute honors water monitoring volunteers

The Whitefish Lake Institute is honoring three long-time Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network volunteers with Volunteer Service Awards.

The volunteers are Carol Blake, Jim Crawford and Frank Schroeter.

The monitoring network is a partnership between Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Whitefish Lake Institute. Its mission is to recruit and train citizen scientist volunteers to monitor water quality, identify and report aquatic invasive species and promote watershed stewardship in Northwest Montana.

Carol Blake has been monitoring Tetrault Lake in Eureka for 10 years. As often as possible Blake 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," Blake said. "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."

Water quality monitoring in Jette Lake was in place when **Jim Crawford** 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," Crawford said. "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 Crawford, 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.

Now in his 24th year as a 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 where he monitors Flathead Lake. 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," Schroeter said. "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.

The Whitefish Lake Institute is a nonprofit 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.