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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Whitefish Legacy Partnership Receives Stewardship Award; Lex Blood Receives Lifetime Achievement Stewardship Award**

WHITEFISH, MT, 6 August 2014 – The Whitefish Lake Institute presented its annual Stewardship Awards to a group that has taken extraordinary measures to protect water quality in the Whitefish area. The awards were presented in front of 270 guests at the August 1<sup>st</sup> Fifth Annual Whitefish Wine Auction, a benefit to support the Whitefish Lake Institute.

**Stewardship Award**

Each year, the *Whitefish Lake Institute Stewardship Awards* recognize individuals or groups that took extraordinary measures to protect water quality in the Whitefish area. Nominations for individuals and groups are accepted annually and presented at the annual Whitefish Wine Auction. This year's stewardship award was given to the group WLI identified as the "Whitefish Legacy Partnership." According to WLI Executive Director Mike Koopal, "For the past 10 years, these partners worked tirelessly to create a community driven and donor supported legacy for the Whitefish area." Describing their work, Koopal noted, "Through their open dialogue and consensus building process, they forged a lasting and innovative solution to protect open space, recreational pursuits, working forests, and water and watershed protection over a broad landscape."

Koopal presented the awards to individuals that made up the partnership, including: Lin Akey: the first WLP Chair and President, of Glacier Bank; John Anderson: WLP Board Vice-Chair, Whitefish City Counselor, and attorney with Conradi Anderson; Diane Conradi: WLP CO-Founder & Legal Consultant, and attorney with Conradi Anderson; Steve Frye, Area Manager for DNRC's northwest land office in Kalispell; Mike Goguen: Community philanthropist and investor, and Sequoia Capital venture capitalist; Fred Jones: WLP Board Chair and retired ski industry executive; Brian Manning, Stillwater Unity Manager for Montana DNRC; John Muhlfeld: President of River Design Group, and City of Whitefish Mayor; Heidi Van Everen: WLP Executive Director. While not all recipients were present, the majority of them were at the event to receive their awards.

## **Lifetime Achievement Stewardship Award**

This year, WLI presented a *Lifetime Achievement Stewardship Award* to Lex Blood for his extraordinary dedication to fostering collaborative partnerships in the Flathead Watershed and Crown of the Continent. Presenting the award, Lori Curtis called out Dr. Blood's amazing accomplishments in "bringing together people that as a group became a whole much greater than its parts," as well as his shining example of "how much can be achieved by one dedicated individual." Curtis attributes much of her late-in-life career change success to Lex's mentoring and friendship. "I am one of many men and women who have benefitted professionally and personally because our paths crossed with Lex Blood's." Lex received a standing ovation by the 270 event attendees. Accepting the award, Dr. Blood recognized his partner Judith Pressmar as well as his best friend and strategic communications expert Ben Long and Ben's wife, photographer Karen Nichols.

The Whitefish Wine Auction supports the scientific and educational programs at the Whitefish Lake Institute, including the management of the Living Wetlands Interpretive Nature Trail located across from The Lodge at Whitefish Lake.

### About Whitefish Lake Institute

Founded in 2005, the Whitefish Lake Institute is a 501 (3)(c) non-profit organization committed to acquiring scientific research, and to educating and engaging the local citizenry to protect the Whitefish area water resources of today, while providing a collective vision for tomorrow.

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