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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

WHITEFISH, MT, May 20, 2020 – The Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) honors long-time Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network (NWMTLVMN) volunteer, Barb Hvizdak, with a Volunteer Service Award.

The 2019 Volunteer Service Award honors Barb Hvizdak who has been a dedicated lake volunteer collecting information on Sophie Lake for the NWMTLVMN since 2012. She and her husband Ron live full time on Sophie Lake, where she loyally heads out two or three times a month from as early as March to as late as November to monitor the lake’s water quality and keep an eye out for aquatic invasive species (including sending photos of suspicious plants). Barb has submitted one hundred and nineteen water quality reports in the last eight years. This is the highest sampling count of any volunteer in the history of the program. In 2015, she sampled seventeen times in a single season. In addition to her dedication to Sophie Lake, Barb enjoys serving on the Lincoln County Library board and quilting.

**About the Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network**

The Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network is a citizen science program funded by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and managed by WLI. Through this program, WLI trains "citizen scientists" to monitor 40 lakes in Flathead, Lincoln, Lake, and Missoula Counties by collecting basic limnological measurements that establish lake trend data over time, and to monitor for the presence of AIS. The partnership enables WLI to extend its monitoring reach while involving community members in understanding and protecting their natural resources. The NWMTLVMN website allows volunteers to access information, report data, and stay abreast of AIS issues. Volunteers contribute nearly 1000 hours to the program annually.

**About the 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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