



## **Mackinaw Bay Clean-up Complete**

The dredging project in Mackinaw Bay on Whitefish Lake was completed on Monday, June 25, 2012, when the final two lined dumpsters of contaminated sediments were lifted onto a waiting truck and sent to the sediment dewatering facility in the BNSF rail yard in Whitefish.

The two dumpsters represented the last of 450 cubic yards of dredged sediments with residual concentrations of diesel fuel from the July 31, 1989 train derailment where a freight train derailed and three full diesel fuel tankers fell down an embankment into Whitefish Lake. A total of 20,000 to 25,000 gallons of diesel spilled into Mackinaw Bay, midway down the lake's west shore. The initial clean-up effort for the area was conducted in 1989.

In 2009, WLI collected a soil and water samples along the shoreline of Mackinaw Bay and

laboratory results for extractable petroleum hydrocarbons, which indicate diesel contamination, showed high levels.

Based on the data findings, WLI contacted the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and requested that the agencies address the feasibility of further clean-up of the site.

The clean-up project, which began on May 21, 2012 was conducted at the direction and oversight of the EPA and completed before the peak summer recreational season.

Confirmation samples collected following the dredging throughout Mackinaw Bay indicate that the dredging reduced the petroleum concentrations in the sediments by 97.3%.



*1989 photo showing two tanker cars in Mackinaw Bay leaking diesel fuel into Whitefish Lake.*

*Photo courtesy: Charlie Abell*

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***Founded in 2005***

The Whitefish Lake Institute is committed to acquiring scientific research and engaging the local citizenry to protect and improve the Whitefish area lake resources of today, while providing a collective vision for tomorrow.

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***Mike Koopal, Editor***

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*Whitefish Lake—looking towards Northwest shore of the lake*  
 (courtesy: gravityshots.com)

**City Forms Wastewater Committee**

On July 16th, the Whitefish City Council passed a resolution to establish an ad hoc Community Wastewater Committee.

The ad hoc committee was formed to work on options and recommendations in response to WLI's 2012 report: *Investigation of Septic Leachate to the Shoreline Areas of Whitefish Lake*. In this study, WLI used a number of parameters including fluorometry, *e. coli*, and DNA biomarker testing to identify existing and potential septic leachate contamination to the shoreline areas of Whitefish Lake. The study was sponsored by the Whitefish County Water District and funded through a Montana DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program Grant. The full report including all of the map products are available on our website [www.whitefishlake.org](http://www.whitefishlake.org).

The ad hoc committee shall have up to ten voting members, including a member each from the affected sampling areas; Lazy Bay, Lion Mountain, Carver Bay/East Lakeshore, and Point of Pines. In addition, there will be two at-large committee members from the community of Whitefish and its extraterritorial area.

The committee will also have up to nine ex-officio (non-voting) members comprised of technical experts. WLI will serve as the committee's technical facilitator.

**Beaver Lake Eurasion Watermilfoil Update**

On July 18th, a temporary quarantine for Beaver Lake was issued by the Montana Department of Agriculture. The quarantine was issued to prevent mechanical fragmentation of Eurasion Watermilfoil (EWM) from boat use and to allow for management efforts.

The quarantine allowed a diver assisted suction dredging effort to remove EWM from the lake. Additional bottom barriers were also installed on the EWM patch near the boat launch.

During the quarantine, a barrier curtain was installed near the Beaver Creek outlet to prevent EWM fragments from floating down Beaver Creek and into Whitefish Lake.

On August 1st, the temporary quarantine was lifted by the Montana Department of Agriculture. Follow-up surveys have found a few individual plants that will also be suction dredged.

Last fall, EWM was discovered in Beaver Lake. In response to the infestation, a working group formed to determine management solutions, including representatives from; Montana Department of Agriculture, Flathead County Weed District, Flathead County Commissioners, Glacier National Park, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Flathead Basin Commission, Flathead Lakers, City of Whitefish, and the Whitefish Lake Institute.

The Beaver Lake EWM infestation is the only documented occurrence in the Flathead Basin. Further monitoring and management actions will take place on Beaver Lake as approved by the group.



## Intern Reflects on Experience

When I think of my time spent at the Institute and the experience I've gained, it's hard not to observe a sharp clash of contradiction between expectation and reality. Before I started working in May, I expected to be working for an environmental awareness group defending the interests of Whitefish Lake. WLI turned out to be so much more. What WLI lacks in means it makes up for in ambition and I soon discovered myself taking water samples on dozens of lakes in the Flathead whose existence must be unheard of to most. I not only learned about aquatic invertebrates and invasive species, but I found myself helping educate seniors on the very same subjects.

I also found three very determined and industrious people in Mike, Josh, and Lori who work tirelessly to help protect the Flathead and yet find time to crack a few jokes in between.

As I get closer to choosing a career it's becoming more evident to me which careers and agencies actually benefit the society that supports them. At Whitefish Lake Institute, I found a pragmatic approach to environmentalism that truly has a profound impact on the community. Through diligent sampling and research paired with community outreach and education, the institute provides the community and policy makers with the tools and knowledge to make a decision to protect the resources that make Montana great. I know now that when I'm looking for jobs to look for a place like the institute where work and diligence culminate in a deep communal impact.



*Carl Talsma collecting data out on the lake. Carl will be a sophomore at Cornell University this fall.*

## Wetland Wildlife Photos

Recent wildlife photos from three motion sensor cameras in the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve.



49°F 06/10/13 07:56 AM WLI 3



51°F 07/24/12 09:35 AM WLI 2



35°F 04/05/12 07:26 PM WLI 2



85°F 07/10/13 05:07 PM WLI 3



59°F 06/23/12 06:44 AM WETLANDS-1



73°F 07/30/13 09:20 AM WLI 3

### 3rd Annual Whitefish Wine Auction– The Best Yet!

Another successful Whitefish Wine Auction is behind us. And thanks to the generosity of sponsors, volunteers, attendees, and auction participants, there is much work in front of us that will be accomplished on our Interpretive Nature Trail. This was our third annual event, and the first year that tickets for both nights were sold out in advance. Sixty sponsors provided raffle, silent and live auction items this year—from guidebooks for hikers to overnight stays in extravagant places, and from gift baskets to an exquisite Woody Standup Paddleboard.

Thursday night was sponsored by the new Stillwater Fish House, which provided commemorative wine glasses for attendees. Montana distributor/sponsors pulled out all the stops (and the corks!) for the Thursday lakeside tasting under the tent. Fun Beverage, Inc. and Young's Market, George's Distributing and Bottleneck Wine & Spirit Brokers, and Intermountain Distributing Company, along with Ten Spoon Winery and Foley Family Wines poured an amazing array of wines from the northwest and around the world. *Wine Guy* Dan Vogel held a lakeside special tasting where he shared with guests his wine knowledge and some of his favorite wines from participating distributors. Guests were entertained as they strolled the wine tables by local band *Fresh Off The Vine*.

The Friday night sponsor and featured wine sponsor roles were both filled by Foley Family Wines. Foley Family Wines provided tasting wines, cocktail hour wines, auction lots, and all of the wine paired with the Friday evening four-course plated dinner. The Lodge at Whitefish Lake's new executive Chef Wes Coffel served a creative, delicious dinner which featured Montana farmed elk, Terrapin farms produce, Amaltheia goat cheese from Belgrade, MT, bread from Ceres Bakery in Kalispell, MT, and Flathead cherries to all 240 guests. Coffel believes using these products helps sustain the environment, boost the local economy, and provide guests with the freshest, highest quality food possible. And it all made for an excellent wine-paired culinary flight.



*Event sommelier Dan Vogel conducting a lakeside tasting during the Thursday night event.*

WLI was pleased to honor its *Stewardship Award* winners Michael Collins, Tom Cowan, Bill Foley, Scott Schmid, and Bill Yunk from the Point of Pines Communal Septic System project; and to introduce its new *Chris Ruffatto Excellence in Education Award* named after its first recipient for his lifetime dedication to education. Guests Dr. Jack Stanford and Dr. Bonnie Ellis from the Flathead Lake Biological Station spoke briefly about their work, their partnership with WLI, and their current \$1M challenge grant.

Bigvalleyradio.com's Ross Strauser was an entertaining and energetic emcee, and Auctioneer Marc Vessar made the Live Auction particularly lively. Auction spotters for the 21 Live Auction lots included Mayor John Muhlfeld, Past-Mayor Mike Jensen, and Stillwater Fish House owner Jesse Felder.

Proceeds from the 2012 wine auction will assist the Whitefish Lake Institute in fulfilling its mission through: Scientific Research on Whitefish Lake and its tributaries; Community Stewardship of Whitefish water resources; Educational Programs for both school children and adults; and ongoing development of the Interpretive Nature Trail through the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve, which is owned and managed by the Whitefish Lake Institute. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this our best Whitefish Wine Auction to date! And don't forget to mark your calendars for next year, July 25 & 26.



**SAVE THE DATE for Montana's Premier Wine Event  
to support the Whitefish Lake Institute  
July 25-26, 2013    [www.whitefishwineauction.org](http://www.whitefishwineauction.org)**

## Whitefish Lake Institute Membership

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