



LakeFront

Quarterly newsletter of the Whitefish Lake Institute

Summer 2007

Montana Legislature Approves \$25,000 to Monitor Whitefish Lake

The Whitefish Lake Institute and The University of Montana, Flathead Lake Biological Station recently signed a Letter of Agreement outlining their partnership to study Whitefish Lake.

Funding for the partnership was approved by the 2007 Montana Legislature. The Whitefish Lake Institute worked with board member, and Senator, Dan Weinberg (D) of Whitefish to submit the funding request.

The money was added to the existing FLBS annual appropriation for Flathead Basin water quality monitoring. The two groups agreed that the money should be used by FLBS to analyze the lake's response to nutrient inputs, mainly through changes in primary productivity at the mid-lake site.

The Whitefish Lake Institute will compliment the FLBS mid-lake response work by concentrating on tributary inputs and by monitoring bays of the lake to pick up trends near shore.

Never before has Whitefish had this type of funding commitment and unique partnership in place to collect long-term consistent data to benefit the resource and the community.

According to Sen. Weinberg, "In the Flathead Valley, our quality of life and our economy depend upon clean and healthy lakes. Working together, the Flathead Lake Biological Station and the Whitefish Lake Institute will assure the future of our lakes. By approving money for Whitefish Lake monitoring, the State of Montana is on record as sharing our environmental values."

Both parties will convey the results of this partnership to the community of Whitefish in June 2009. —mk

Viking Creek Development Gets Final Approval From City Council

As reported in the Spring 2007 issue of LakeFront, the Averill Family has offered to donate 30 acres of wetlands located directly across The Lodge at Whitefish Lake to the Whitefish Lake Institute as part of the Viking Creek Development Project. On July 16th, the Whitefish City Council unanimously granted final approval for the project.

The Viking Creek Development is a result of months of negotiations between the Averills, the Friends of Wisconsin Avenue Wetlands, and the Whitefish Lake Institute. Concerns about the health of the wetlands and previous proposals for developing them were the impetus to our involvement in these negotiations.

The Viking Creek Development includes a 30 unit hotel/spa on the east side of (continued on page 2)

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Protecting and improving the Whitefish, Montana area lake resources

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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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Scientist Chris Ruffatto and high school observer Mike Harrison deploy research equipment from the Institute research boat

(*Viking Creek Development con't*) Wisconsin Avenue directly across from The Lodge at Whitefish Lake. With the new hotel/spa, The Lodge at Whitefish Lake will be able to attract larger convention groups to Whitefish.

The project also calls for 17 single family lots on 6.8 acres on the southern property boundary adjacent to the Crestwood development. Covenants for the 17 lots call for low impact construction techniques. In addition, Each lot owner would contribute \$300 annually to the homeowner's association payable to the Whitefish Lake Institute for management and upkeep of the 30 acre wetland gift.

The Whitefish Lake Institute will preserve this area in perpetuity while allowing limited public access on an interpretive trail network.

The Averill family has also pledged to hold an annual fundraising event to create revenue for the upkeep and maintenance of the wetlands.

In the coming months the Institute will be working with the Averill Family to organize the fundraiser for the wetland area and will work to finalize restoration and community access trail plans in cooperation with the Friends of Wisconsin Avenue Wetlands.

According to escrow instructions, ownership will transfer to the Institute 30 days prior to any construction of any kind, on any part of the property.mk

Scientific Monitoring Update

After a busy spring of purchasing last minute equipment needed for lake monitoring, and prepping the pontoon boat to deploy the scientific equipment, research is finally underway.

The Institute is currently collecting data at two locations on Whitefish Lake and select tributaries to support a computer model of non-point source pollution for the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

The work involves completing depth profiles of the lake to determine temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, turbidity, oxidation reduction potential, photosynthetically active radiation, among others things. We are also collecting water chemistries at various depths.

The same information, in addition to stream flows are being collected for Swift Creek, Lazy Creek and Viking Creek. The information from this study will be used in the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Whitefish Lake for different listed pollutants. The study will continue through 2008.

The Institute has also installed a weather station at the head end of the lake. By the end of the summer, the public will be able to access real time weather data on our website. We are also prepping a bulk precipitation collector to document nutrient loading from both wet and dry precipitation.

On the 4th of July, since boating density was at a high level, we collected additional gasoline constituent samples to compliment our data for the last two years .

For the remainder of the year we plan on completing a Sampling and Analysis Plan for a volunteer lake monitoring effort for the lakes between Whitefish and Eureka. This is a partnership with Montana FWP. We are also scheduled to continue our partnership with the Tally Lake Ranger District to monitor channel stability of some Whitefish area streams.

The Institute's scientific monitoring program is made possible by our members, the City of Whitefish, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Plum Creek, Whitefish Community Foundation, the Viking Creek Development, and PBS&J Consulting.



Recycled Fish Sportsman's Pledge

If you love the outdoors – as an angler, hunter, hiker, biker, paddler, or through any other outdoor pursuit – then chances are that healthy lakes, streams, and wild places are near to your heart, and you want to protect them.

That's the idea behind the Sportsman's Stewardship Pledge, a new



program from Recycled Fish. Recycled Fish is a 501c3 non-profit organization started in 2003 as an education group, opening its doors to membership for the first time right now.

The first 2500 passionate outdoors-men and women who log on to www.RecycledFish.org and take the Sportsman's Stewardship Pledge will get a free Recycled Fish membership. The annual membership includes a packet including free gifts, elite access at Recycled Fish Online and Recycled Fish events, and exclusive deals from Recycled Fish partners.

New members who want to go the extra mile can upgrade to a Premium Membership for a \$25 donation and will receive additional gifts like a free Recycled Fish t-shirt.

New members are also automatically registered for the New Member Sweepstakes. There are two grand prizes, one for those who like to fly fish and one for conventional tackle anglers. Two winners will receive outstanding prizes like a custom, handcrafted rod from Fetha Styx, a subscription to Fly Fusion magazine, camping gear from Coleman, and tackle from Cabela's, FoodSource Lures, Secret Weapon Lures, Hill's Discount Flies, Vertical Lures, The Reel Discount Store, Yakima River Fly Shop, Driftwood Lures, and Vicious Fishing.

Most importantly, Recycled Fish members get information on how to make a positive impact on the fisheries they love through the choices they make both on and off the water. "This will be an empowered group of sportsmen-conservationists, armed with the right information and the right tools to make a difference," says Matt Roberts, Director of Programs and Initiatives.

"The name 'Recycled Fish' speaks to catch and release, one of the most tangible things an angler can do to limit his impact on the fishery," says Executive Director Teeg Stouffer. "But catch and release alone won't solve the problems facing our fisheries. It takes a big-picture view, and anglers have a special passion and understanding for the resource as a motivation."

The mission of Recycled Fish is to create partnerships that will improve troubled fisheries and maintain healthy ones. Partnership with individual anglers through the Sportsman's Stewardship Pledge is one important step in that goal. For more on Recycled Fish, visit www.RecycledFish.org.

Suncrest HOA Makes Investment in Water Quality

Suncrest is a 74 lot subdivision at the base of Big Mountain. The Suncrest Homeowner's Association also owns a three acre lake-front parcel on the north end of Monks Bay. This parcel includes a small stream, which flows through a culvert under East Lakeshore Ave., and along the western edge of the Suncrest property into Whitefish Lake.

Years ago, under previous ownership, the last two hundred feet of this stream had been cleared of all native vegetation and converted to lawn grass, as part of a park area near the lake. More recently, Suncrest homeowners had found this area around the stream difficult to mow and maintain, and as it slowly filled in with weeds, it became more of an eyesore than an asset.

In the spring of 2006, Rodger Hankins of the Suncrest HOA ordered seedling trees and shrubs from the state nursery to plant on the homeowners' common areas. Rodger was not aware of the stream condition at that time, but was interested in pursuing ways to help make Suncrest more environmentally friendly. He hired a Whitefish company, Forestoration, Inc., to do the planting. While planting these initial trees across the subdivision, Forestoration identified the stream as an excellent candidate for a restoration project.

There are multiple benefits to restoring native vegetation in riparian areas. Wildlife and songbirds depend on native shrubs and trees for forage and protective cover. In addition, native vegetation acts as a natural filter for sediments and other man-made pollutants, thereby maintaining the water quality of Whitefish Lake.

This spring, Suncrest invested several thousand dollars into re-vegetating this stream corridor with native trees and shrubs. Native trees that were planted include ponderosa pine, western larch, spruce, quaking aspen, and cottonwood. Native shrubs include dogwood, willows, chokecherry, hawthorn, serviceberry, and rose. Although it will take a few years for the new plants to take over the site, homeowners in Suncrest have enjoyed (*continued pg. 4*)

(Suncrest con't)

witnessing the transformation of the stream into a more natural condition.

Thank you Suncrest for providing wildlife habitat and being committed to improving water quality.

To contact Greg Gunderson of Forestration, call 261-8407 or email greg@forestration.org, Contact Rodger Hankins of Suncrest HOA at rhankins@centurytel.net.



Above– Suncrest stream pre-restoration with potted plants on site, April 16



Right– Post-restoration including native tree and shrub planting, in addition to deer fencing and weed mats, June 25

2nd Grader Speaks His Mind

(reprinted with permission from the Whitefish Pilot and, from Jeffrey and his parents) May 31, 2007 editorial

Dear people of Whitefish,

My name is Jeffrey Hyer and I am eight years old. I am in Mrs. Koopals 2nd grade at Muldown School. Mrs. Koopal takes us on lots of field trips.

We usually walk on the way to are field trips. On the first field trip I notised some thing dixusting on the ground all the way and they where sigerets. I told my partner Colin about what we saw and he thot it was gros to. We desided to we want to count all the sigerets on the way to Super 1 foods. We counted 63 the way there and 75 the way back. I also notest some thing in the river so at the high way we looked down over the bridge and I saw a lot of litter in the river. I even saw 2 golfcubs and lots of bottles and trash there. I am scared because the animals mite have put there heads in there and they mite be stuck and it makes the water dirty for the fish. That was the first trip to Super One. On the next field trip to Whitefish credit unun there were lots of sigerets butts. I counted 56 on the ground with my partner Ethan when we walked there. On last Friday on the next trip to the post offis and kiddy park and art studio I counted 129sigerett butts with my partner Grace. It was dixusting and Grace thot so to. I want pepole to stop littering sigeretts. Please. I am scard the birds and squirlls will try to eat it and get sick and it makes Whitefish look gros. I hope I don't see eney more on the

next trip to a museam and the new hospital. I also saw a sigerett on the muldown school play ground a girl picked it up and threw it in the trash. I don't like sigeretts and litter. I care about the earth. I think I am proud of that. I pretty sure these people in my class agre and try not to litter. Please do not litter and try to stop smocking and spitting and start throwing things in the trash.

Thankyou very much for reading my letter, Jeffrey



Left to Right- Ethan, Grace, Jeffrey and Colin

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 Plum Creek Timber Company- Columbia Falls, MT
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