



WESTERN MONTANA
**Conservation
Commission**



The New Kid on the Block

Casey Lewis
Executive Director
Casey.Lewis@mt.gov
406-241-7475

WMCC acknowledges that we live and work in the traditional territories of the Salish, Kalispel, and Kootenai people.

We honor the path they have always shown us in caring for these landscapes for generations to come.



WESTERN MONTANA
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The New Kid...

But with a long history...



1983 - 2023

Area: Flathead Watershed

Mission: Protect natural resources; focus on water quality and nonpoint source pollution (i.e. stormwater, septic leachate, etc.)

UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION



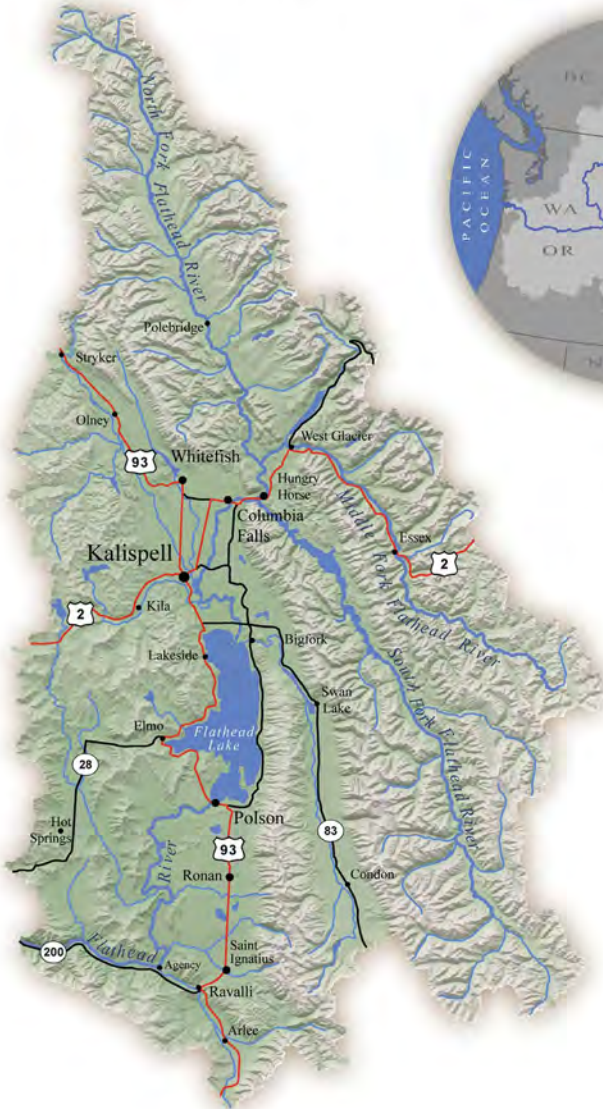
2017 - 2023

Area: Upper Columbia Watershed
(west of continental divide)

Mission: Protect aquatic environment from aquatic invasive species



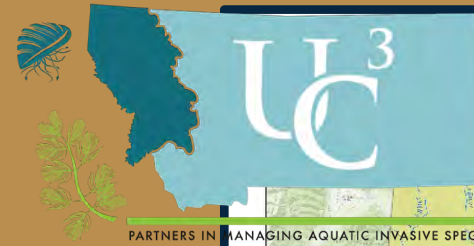
Flathead Watershed



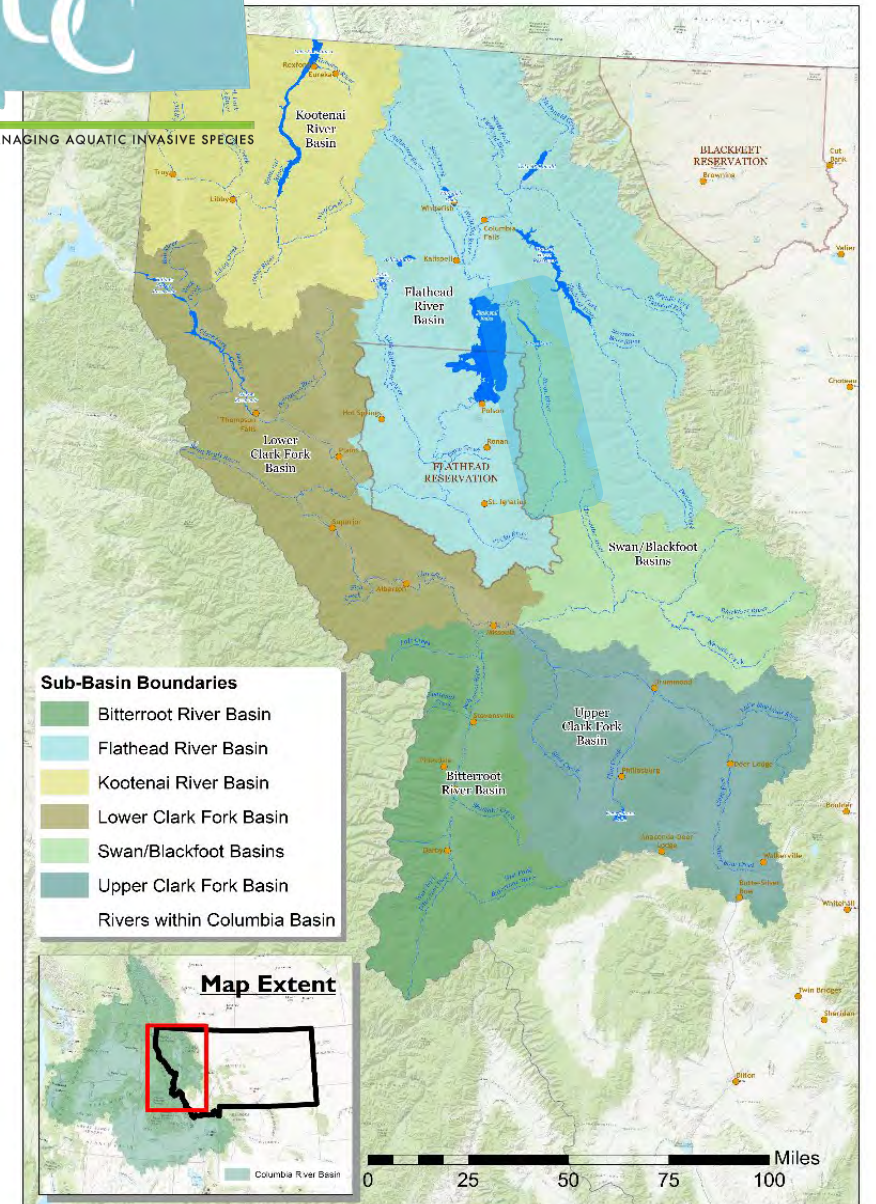
Flathead Watershed



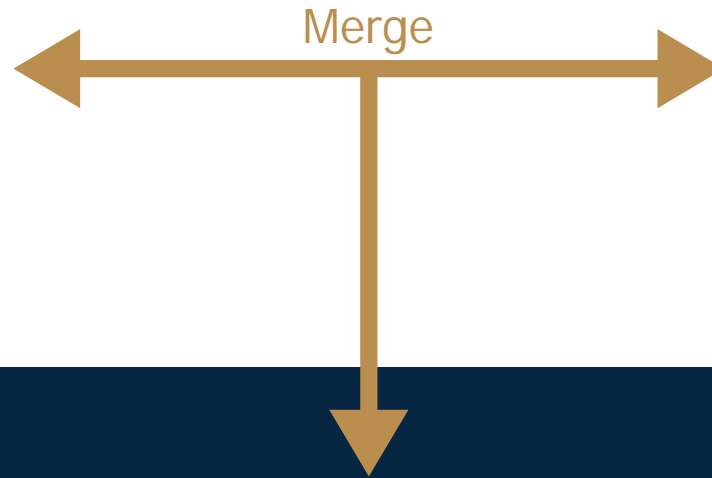
Columbia River Basin



Columbia River Basin in Montana



Senate Bill 83 – Create Western Montana Conservation Commission



UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION



WESTERN MONTANA
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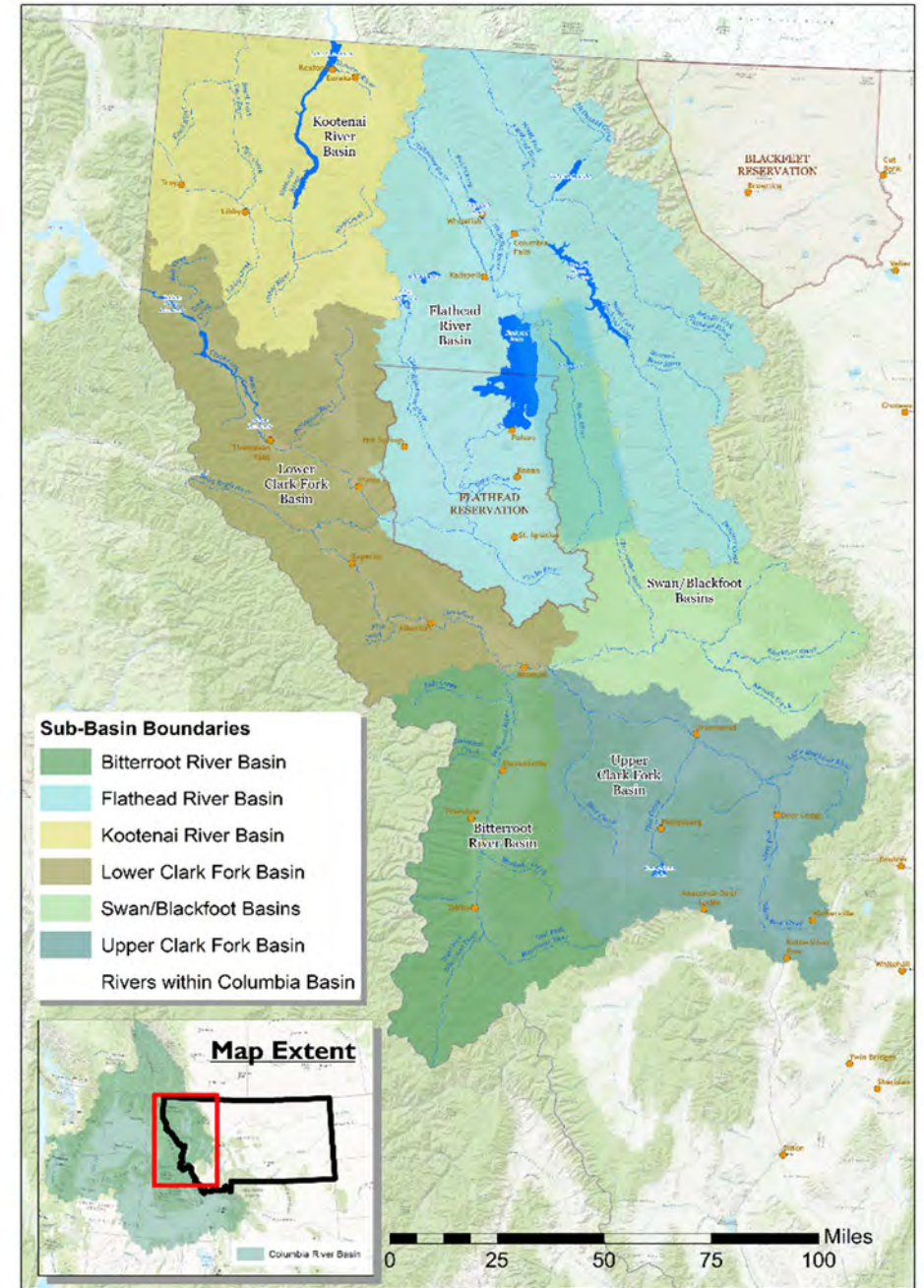
Area: Upper Columbia Watershed (west of continental divide)

Mission: Combined = Protect natural resources/aquatic environment; focus includes aquatic invasive species and water quality (nonpoint source pollution, stormwater, septic leachate, etc.)



WESTERN MONTANA Conservation Commission

Area: Upper Columbia
Watershed (west of
continental divide)



Who is WMCC?



WESTERN MONTANA Conservation Commission

UPPER COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMISSION



ESTABLISHED

July 1, 2023

MISSION

Water quality protection +
AIS mitigation & prevention

WHERE WE SERVE



Who are the staff?



Casey Lewis

Executive
Director



Emilie Henry

Program
Coordinator



Kelly Hendrix

Program
Coordinator



Stephanie
Murphy

Communications
Coordinator



Katie Lynch-
Dombroski

Big Sky
Watershed Corps
Member



WESTERN MONTANA
Conservation
Commission

Who are the Commissioners?

Total = 34

Voting = 16

Governor-Appointed (9)

- Hydropower utility
- Electric cooperative
- Private landowner (member of irrigation district or water users' association)
- Private citizen at large
- Private industry
- Natural resource, conservation, or recreation organization
 - Clark Fork River Basin upstream from Missoula, including Blackfoot River Basin
 - Clark Fork Basin downstream from Missoula, including the Bitterroot River Basin
 - Kootenai River Basin
 - Flathead River Basin

Who are the Commissioners?

Total = 34

Voting = 16

Other Voting (7)

- 2 county commissioners
 - Appointed by MT Association of Counties
 - 1 from > 100,000 population
 - 1 from < 100,000 population
- 2 conservation district representatives
 - Appointed by MT Association of Conservation Districts
- 2 representatives of wastewater or stormwater utilities
 - 1 from > 20,000 population appointed by MT league of cities and towns
 - 1 from < 20,000 population appointed by MT rural water
- CSKT natural resource department
 - Appointed by Tribal Council

Who are the Commissioners?

Total = 34

Nonvoting/Advisory = 18

Nonvoting State (12)

- 4 Legislators
 - 2 appointed by Speaker of the House (majority and minority party)
 - 2 appointed by President of the Senate (majority and minority party)
- Department of Environmental Quality
- Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
- Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- MT Department of Transportation
- Department of Commerce
- University of MT
- MT Bureau of Mines and Geology
- CSKT Tribal Council

Nonvoting Federal (6)

- Environmental Protection Agency
- US Forest Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Geological Survey
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Bonneville Power Administration

Purpose

Protect the existing high quality of western Montana's aquatic resources



WESTERN MONTANA
**Conservation
Commission**

Duties of the Commission

1. **Monitor** existing condition of natural resources
 - Coordinate development of 5-year monitoring strategy
2. Support, promote, & ensure continuation of comprehensive **aquatic invasive species (AIS)** prevention program
3. Encourage **cooperation & coordination** between federal, state, provincial, tribal, & local resource managers
4. Encourage & work for **international** coordination
5. Provide focused support & **programming to the Flathead River Basin** given its economic, cultural, & natural resource importance
6. Support economic development & use of resources without compromising the aquatic resources
7. Undertake **investigations** of resource use & hold public hearings concerning their condition
8. Use the result of the duties performed to **create public-private partnerships** that:
 - Reduce point & nonpoint source pollution
 - Prevent spread of invasive species
 - Maintain, enhance, restore, expand, or benefit the aquatic resources of western MT
9. Administer **grants & loans** within western MT
10. Submit biennial report to the governor, environmental quality council, & water policy interim committee
11. Meet at least semiannually

Past & Current Work

What have we been up to?

AIS



**Septic
Leachate**



**Stormwater
Pollution**



**Education &
Outreach**





Aquatic Invasive Species

AIS Monitoring: BOR Grant supporting Upper Columbia Lakes Network

Events: Invasive Species Day at the Capitol, Workshops, MISC, etc.

Big Sky Watershed Corps: Co-host with Missoula Department of Ecology – Industry Outreach Project

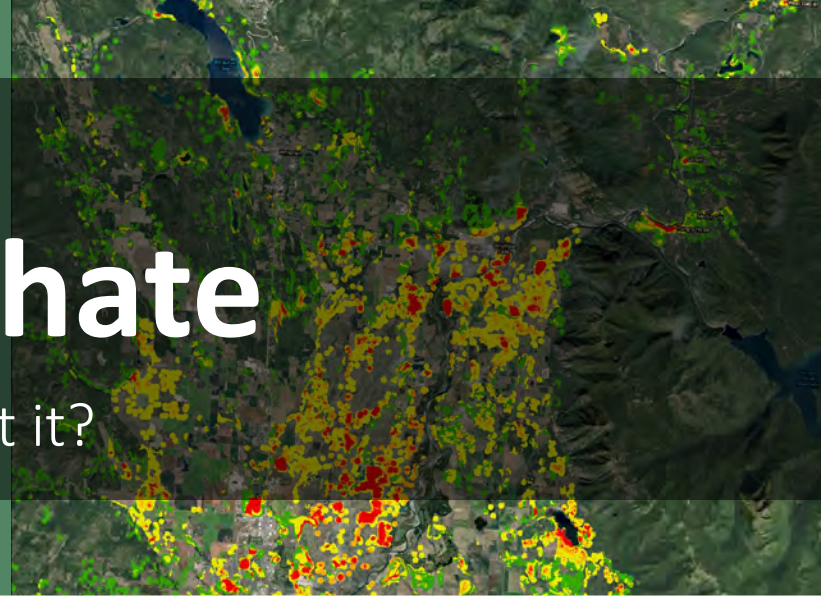
Augmenting FWP's AIS Ads: Magazines, newspapers, etc.

AIS Video Production: 1) Citizen science monitoring training video, 2) Industry 'AIS 101' video, 3) Wade angler targeted PSA



Septic Leachate

What are we dooing about it?



Flathead Septic Risk Assessment & Online Tool

Final Report – IN PROGRESS

Publicly-accessible online septic risk GIS tool – COMPLETE



Synthetic DNA Study

2022 - Whitefish Lake & Lake Mary Ronan

All 6 tracers that functioned properly were detected at some time/quantity throughout the study

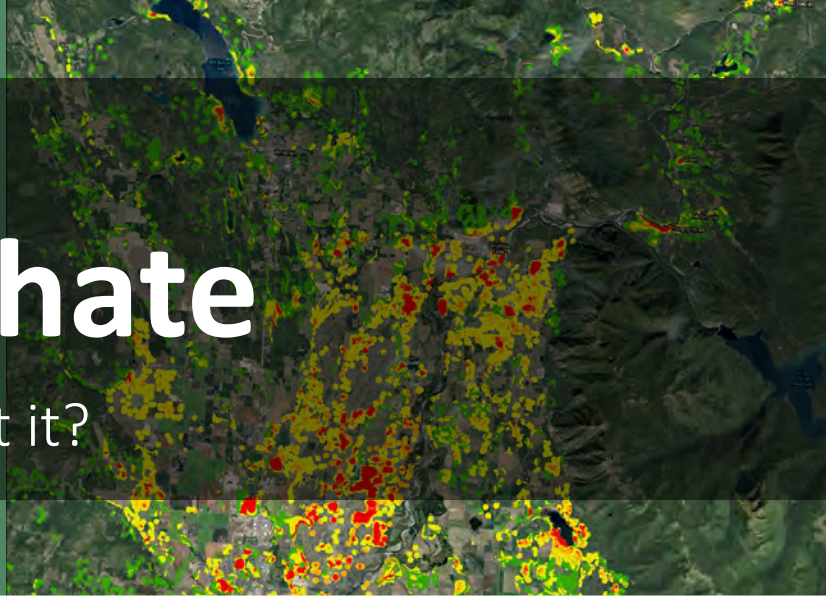
Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program

Flathead Watershed

50% reimbursement – up to \$200 per septic system

Septic Leachate

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Septic Maintenance Reimbursement Program

Flathead Watershed

50% reimbursement – up to \$200 per septic system



For more info, check out the On-Site Wastewater Treatment panel – Friday @ 10:40 AM



Stormwater Pollution

Flathead Rain Garden Initiative: Program support, co-hosting workshops/events, helping build gardens!

Adopt-a-Drain: Program development, support, and expansion

Big Sky Watershed Corps: Co-host with City of Kalispell - Continuing, expanding, and growing past projects and programs



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For more info, check out the **Collaboration-Based Stormwater Management in Flathead County** session – Friday @ 2:05 PM



Education & Outreach

Montana Waters: Clearly Connected Campaign

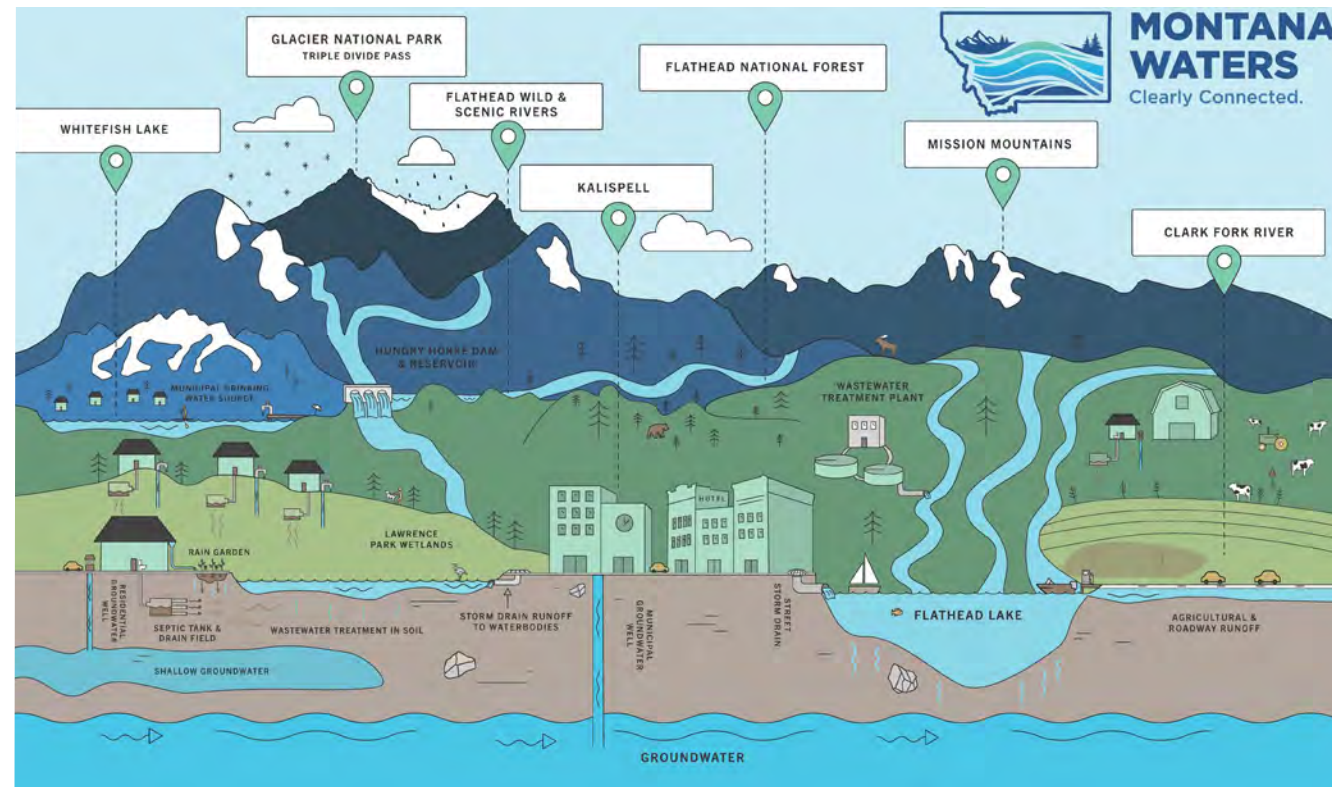
Products

- Infographic
- Brochures
- Popup displays
- Rack cards
- Brand Book & Communications Guide
- PSA videos
- And more!

Events & Collaboration

- River clean-up bags
- Living in the Flathead guide

Website & Social Media



Education & Outreach

Montana Waters: Clearly Connected Campaign

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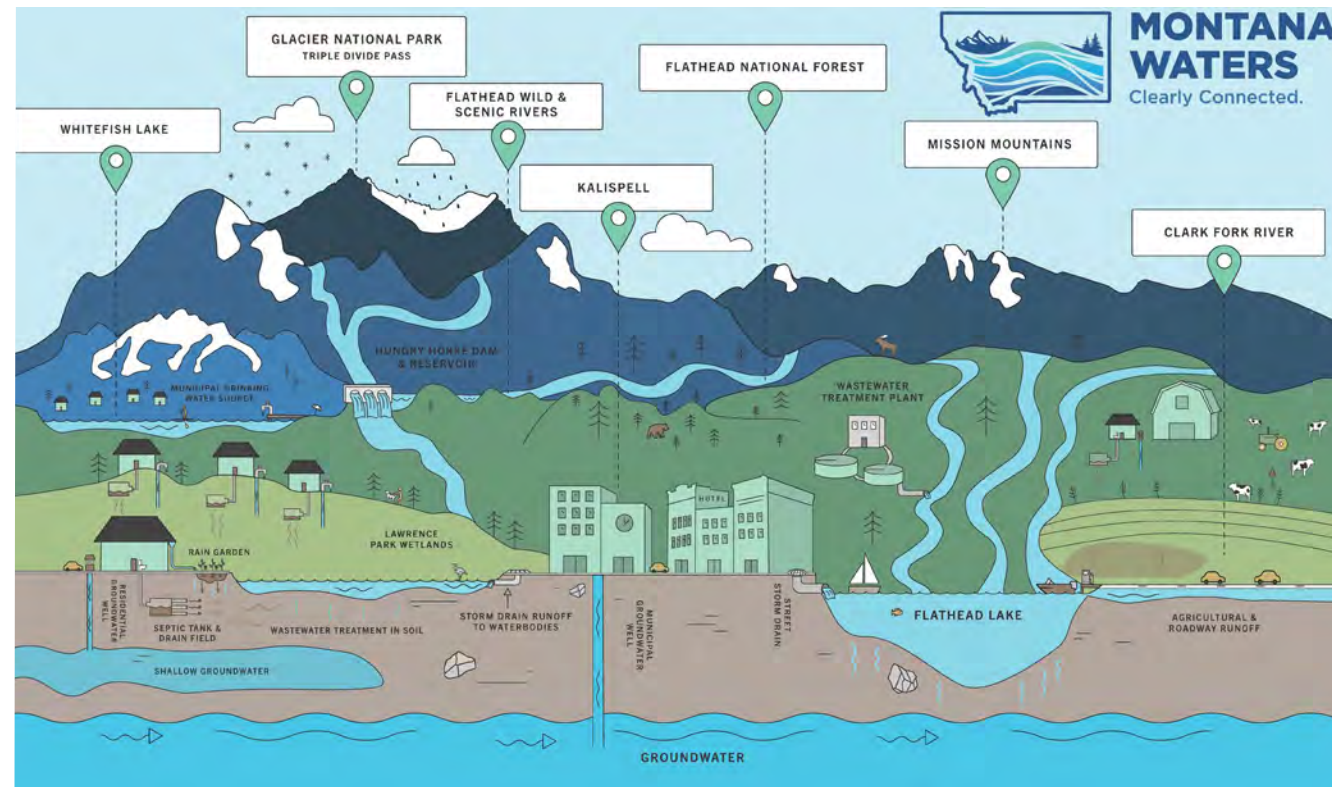
Events & Collaboration

- River clean-up bags
- Living in the Flathead guide

Website & Social Media



For more info, check out the Montana Waters session – Friday @ 1:35 PM





What's Next?

BIG NEWS

EPA Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Lead Grant

- \$7 Million over 6 years
- Stormwater, septic leachate, and education & outreach
- 3 additional staff – We're hiring!

MEET & GREET

- Many new partners!
- Learn, brainstorm, & collaborate

FIRST MEETING

- November 2 & 3
- Missoula



WESTERN MONTANA
**Conservation
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Questions?

Western Montana Conservation Commission	Who Appoints?	Voting	Commissioner	Term End Date	Title
Natural Resource, Conservation or Recreation - Upper CF & Blackfoot	Governor	Y	Onno Wieringa	July 1, 2026	
Natural Resource, Conservation or Recreation - Lower CF & Bitterroot	Governor	Y	Not filled yet	July 1, 2025	
Natural Resource, Conservation or Recreation - Kootenai river basin	Governor	Y	Lech Naumovich	July 1, 2024	
Natural Resource, Conservation or Recreation - Flathead river basin	Governor	Y	Mike Koopal	July 1, 2027	Executive Director, Whitefish Lake Institute
Hydropower utility industry	Governor	Y	Arthur Potts	July 1, 2025	Terrestrial Program Manager, Avista
Electric Cooperative	Governor	Y	Duane Braaten	July 1, 2024	Flathead Electric CO-OP Trustee
Private Industry	Governor	Y	Sandy Beder-Miller	July 1, 2025	
Private Landowner (Irrigation District or water users' association)	Governor	Y	Matt Peterson	July 1, 2027	Civil Engineer, NewFields
Private Citizen - at Large	Governor	Y	Phil Matson	July 1, 2025	Research Specialist - GIS/AIS, Flathead Lake Biological Station
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Nat. Resources Dept.	Tribal Council	Y	Rich Janssen	July 1, 2027	Department Head of Natural Resources, CSKT
County Commissioner, Pop. > 100,000	MT Association of Counties	Y	Flathead: Randy Brodehl	July 1, 2024	Flathead County Commissioner
County Commissioner, Pop. < 100,000	MT Association of Counties	Y	Lincoln: Josh Letcher	July 1, 2026	Lincoln County Commissioner
Conservation District 1	MT Association of CDs	Y	Scott Rumsey	July 1, 2024	Flathead Conservation District Supervisor
Conservation District 2	MT Association of CDs	Y	Rae Lynn Hays	July 1, 2026	Lincoln Conservation District
Municipality Water/Wastewater/Stormwater Pop. > 20,000	MT League of Cities and Towns	Y	Tracy Campbell	July 1, 2027	Superintendent, Stormwater Department of Public Works & Mobility City of Missoula
Local Water & Sewer District	MT Rural Water Association	Y	Julie Spencer	July 1, 2026	District Manger, Bigfork Water & Sewer District
<i>State members that <u>may</u> be appointed</i>					
Senator - Republican	Senate President	N	Senator Cuffe		Senator Mike Cuffe
Senator - Democrat	Senate President	N	Senator Ellis		Senator Janet Ellis
Representative - Republican	Speaker of House	N	Representative Duram		REPRESENTATIVE NEIL DURAM
Representative - Democrat	Speaker of House	N	Representative France		REPRESENTATIVE TOM FRANCE
Department of Environmental Quality	DEQ Director	N	Lindsey Krywaruchka		Water Quality Division Administrator, DEQ
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation	DNRC Director	N	Jim Ferch		Regional Manager, Water Resources
Fish, Wildlife, and Parks	FWP Director	N	Tom Woolf		Bureau Chief, AIS, FWP
					Bureau Chief, Environmental Services Bureau, MDT
Department of Transportation	DOT Director	N	Tom Martin		
Department of Commerce	DOC Director	N	Galen Steffens		Community MT Division Administrator, DOC
University of Montana	U of M President	N	Dr. Jim Elser		Director, Flathead Lake Biological Station
					Assistant Research Hydrogeologist
Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology	MBMG Director	N	Sara Edinberg		Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	CSKT Council	N	Martin Charlo		CSKT Tribal Council
<i>Federal members that <u>may</u> be appointed</i>					
					Regional Hazmat & IPM Coordinator, Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region 9, US Bureau of Reclamation
USDOI Bureau of Reclamation	Regional Administrator	N - Advisory	Heidi McMaster		
					R1 Invasive Species Program Manager
USDA National Forest Service	R1 Regional Forester	N - Advisory	Michelle Cox *Chris Savage		*Renewable Resource Mngt Director, Northern Region, Forest Service
					U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
US Environmental Protection Agency R8	Region 8 Director	N - Advisory	Peter Brumm		Region 8, Montana Office
					Senior Fishery Biologist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDOD Army Corps of Engineers	NW Division	N - Advisory	Greg Hoffman		
					Montana Liaison, Intergovernmental Affairs, Bonneville Power Administration
USDOE Bonneville Power Administration	BPA Administrator	N - Advisory	Kate Wilson		
					Groundwater & Water Quality Studies Chief, USGS, Wyoming-Montana Water Science Center
USDOI US Geological Survey	USGS Director	N - Advisory	Melissa Schaar		