



LakeFront

Quarterly Newsletter of the Whitefish Lake Institute

Spring 2021

City Council Passes Fireworks Ordinance

On April 19th, the Whitefish City Council passed a fireworks ordinance that addressed the sale and discharge of fireworks, among other items, in city limits.

Citing a 2019 Whitefish Lake Institute *whitepaper*, the Whitefish City Council now requires operators of public displays, such as the Fourth of July fireworks over Whitefish Lake, to phase out fireworks with perchlorates—a type of highly water-soluble compound known to pose health threats to people and wildlife. By 2025, half of the fireworks used in displays must be perchlorate free and use more eco-friendly products.



*Fourth of July fireworks show viewed from City Beach.
Courtesy Heidi Desch, Whitefish Pilot*

In the *whitepaper*, WLI cited scientific research revealing negative health effects to people and the aquatic ecosystem. Of particular concern is Whitefish youth who pack the City Beach swimming area in the days after the fireworks display. The Centers *(continued on Page 2...)*

Carol Treadwell, Ph.D joins WLI Team

Carol Treadwell, Ph.D., has held faculty positions at Middlebury College, Green Mountain College, and the State University of New York (SUNY) where she taught geology, geomorphology, and Environmental Science. She has 15 years experience in not-for-profit leadership and has served as Executive Director for both the Ausable River *(continued on Page 3...)*



(L-R) WLI Science & Education Director Lori Curtis with Finance & Grants Manager Carol Treadwell-Steltz.

Inside this issue of *LakeFront*—

- City Council Passes Fireworks Ordinance.....1
- Carol Treadwell, Ph.D Joins WLI Team.....1
- Aquatic Invasive Species Update.....2
- April Science Quencher Recap.....3
- Ripple Effect Scholarship Awardees.....3
- Spring Photos.....4
- WLI Supporters.....5
- Become a WLI Member.....6

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Founded in 2005

Mission Statement

The Whitefish Lake Institute is committed to science, education, and aquatic resource initiatives to protect and improve Whitefish Lake and Whitefish area water resources today, while providing a collective community vision for tomorrow.

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LakeFront is published quarterly by the
Whitefish Lake Institute

Cover Photo:
*Aerial view of Whitefish Lake looking toward
Big Mountain.*

Aquatic Invasive Species Update

As of early May 7th, 18 mussel fouled boats have been intercepted at watercraft inspection stations in the state of Montana. To date, 7,000 watercraft have been inspected statewide, around 1,000 more compared to this time in 2020. To get weekly updated information on AIS, visit the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) AIS Dashboard at fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species.

INVASIVE MUSSELS FOUND IN AQUARIUM MOSS BALLS

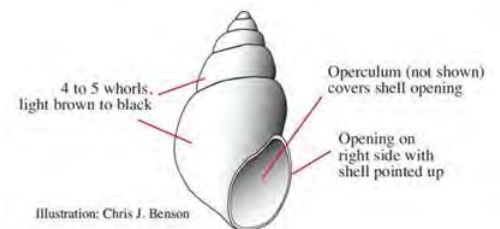
According to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, invasive Zebra Mussels have **been found in "moss balls" destined for aquariums throughout Montana and the rest of the nation.** A species of green algae, these moss balls were imported from Ukraine to a California distributor that shipped them throughout the nation. FWP AIS staff were notified of the issue and rapidly visited all pet stores in Montana. Mussel infested moss balls were identified and removed from multiple locations.

It is important to remember that aquarium water, plants or pets should never be dumped into waterways. In addition to being illegal, aquarium pets can wreak havoc with natural systems and carry harmful pathogens and diseases. Unwanted aquarium animals should be found a new home or returned to the pet store; plants should be dried and disposed of in the garbage; and water should be released onto dry ground away from all waterways. Please refer questions to the Aquatic Invasive Species hotline 406.444.2440.

FAUCET SNAILS FOUND IN LOST LOON LAKE

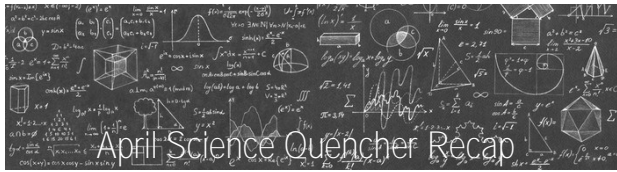
FWP announced that faucet snails have been found in Smith Lake near Kalispell and Lost Loon Lake near Whitefish. This small invader can threaten waterfowl, food webs, and may clog water intakes. They out-compete native snails and can host three intestinal flukes that can kill scaup, coots, and other waterfowl that consume them. They can spread by attaching to aquatic plants, boats, anchors and other recreational equipment. Faucet snails can close their shells allowing them to survive out of water for days. Eradicating infestations is nearly impossible.

If you see or suspect a new infestation of an invasive plant or animal, save the specimen if possible and include details on the location where you found it and contact FWP.



(City Council Passes Fireworks Ordinance, continued from Page 1...) for Disease Control and Prevention warns perchlorates can cause thyroid damage in humans, posing heightened risk to infants, children, pregnant women and fetuses, people with preexisting thyroid deficiencies and those with iodine-deficient diets.

Currently, the pyrotechnic contractor to the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce cannot find non-perchlorate fireworks on the market via their suppliers. The Whitefish Chamber of Commerce and WLI will continue research to procure non-perchlorate fireworks for the annual display.



Ripple Effect Scholarship Awardees

Summer Intern—
Molly Schmit

WLI has hosted Science Quenchers since late 2019, addressing a variety of topics by natural resource professionals in the Flathead Valley. At our most recent Science Quencher, on April 16th via Zoom, we took advantage of our virtual platform to engage past WLI interns and their young professional peers who are working in faraway places and are just starting out in their natural resource careers. Our four scientists included:

Zach Cook (former WLI intern), a Researcher and Biocultural Stewardship Technician for the Forest Service Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry and Kupu AmeriCorps; *Maya Greenhill*, a biocultural restoration and education fellow at the Akaka Foundation for Tropical Forests and a Fulbright research fellow for Chile; *Will Haddock*, a Starlink Product Engineer at SpaceX; and *Barrett Gray (former WLI intern)*, a Restoration Technician with EarthCorps in Seattle, who presented her work on habitat sensitivities of bird communities in the Mahamavo region of Madagascar.

We thank all of our past Science Quencher speakers and participants and look forward to having our next Science Quencher in person at the Lodge at Whitefish Lake on Friday, October 15th!

(Carol Treadwell-Steitz, Ph.D joins WLI Team, continued from Page 1...) Association and Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. Currently a certified grant writer, she employs the power of the pen to gain support for conservation of wild places. She enjoys telling stories about rocks, glaciers, and mountains. Her hobbies are recreating anywhere and **anyhow in America's great outdoors.** **Carol lives in Kalispell, Montana** with her husband John, a herd of 25 award winning merino sheep, and a llama named Teddy Roosevelt.

Many regions of the world do not have adequate supplies of fresh clean water. Preserving water quality has been one of **Carol's career passions.** **While at the Ausable River Association**, she started a citizen science water quality monitoring network, worked to bring watershed citizens together to agree upon best practices to preserve water quality, conducted watershed wide studies on fish passage, wetlands, and stream bank erosion. During her career, she has raised millions of dollars to support conservation causes using strengths in grant writing and fund development. Carol is excited to join WLI as the Finance and Grants Manager.

Currently, I'm finishing my classes at Flathead Valley Community College and preparing to transfer to the University of Montana in the fall. I'm excited to continue my degree in environmental science, with an emphasis on water resources.

My interest in water began from a young age. As a child, I remember frequenting a stream near my home, and wading through its icy waters until my feet were numb. Memories such as these inspired me to pursue my degree, where I've had many opportunities to explore my interests. I've taken a wide variety of classes such as botany, soil science, ArcGIS, and forest insects and diseases.



2021 Summer Intern
Molly Schmit

In the summer of 2018, I was a crew member with the Montana Conservation Corps. In addition to trail maintenance and building, I learned the importance of working as a team and encouraging people to use outdoor spaces responsibly. Outside of school, I enjoy hiking, playing tennis, and practicing yoga. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with Whitefish Lake Institute. I look forward to furthering their incredible mission by helping with data collection, community engagement, and the overall conservation of the Whitefish Lake Watershed.

High School Senior Scholarship Recipient—
Luca Pepe Welle

Each year, WLI offers a \$500 scholarship for tuition to a high school student as they enter college. Applicants for the scholarship must express their intent to major in a field related to water quality, such as biology, ecology, environmental science/ studies, hydrology, limnology, or other approved by WLI. This year, WLI is proud to award a scholarship to Luca Pepe Welle and wish him the best of luck on his educational journey. Luca will attend The University of Montana and plans to major in Environmental Studies.

Applications for the Ripple Effect Scholarship are due April 15th and the WLI Science Advisory Committee makes recipient recommendations. The high school recipient receives their scholarship at the annual Whitefish High School Awards Ceremony in late May.

Spring Photos



Whitefish High School Project FREEFLOW students, led by science teacher Eric Sawtelle, had a field trip day hosted by The Lodge at Whitefish Lake where students cycled through three stations; on the lake with WLI, a fish dissection led by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and a swiftwater rescue station.



WLI Science & Education Coordinator, Cynthia Ingelfinger shows Whitefish High School Project FREEFLOW students zooplankton samples from Whitefish Lake. **Students learned about WLI's water quality sampling methods, Whitefish Lake ecology, and had a conversation about water quality issues.**



Whitefish High School student Josie Schneider, and advanced chemistry student uses the WLI Hydrolab for winter water quality sampling on Haskill Creek. WLI assists Whitefish High School teachers and students by providing technical advice or equipment to complete individual research projects.



WLI Science & Education Director Lori Curtis, WLI Executive Director Mike Kooval, and volunteer Walt Curtis make improvements to the Living Wetlands Interpretive Nature Trail in the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve. The trail reopened May 1st after the annual spring closure March 15-April 30 to protect the trail during wet conditions.



WLI Science & Education Director Lori Curtis checks a trail camera in the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve, which is owned and managed by WLI. This year, WLI will complete minor trail repairs and upgrades and remove some hazardous trees along the trail alignment. The trail is free and open to the public and is wheelchair friendly.



Northwest Montana Lakes Network (NMLN) volunteer Joann Fleming takes water quality measurements on Skyles Lake outside of Whitefish. Volunteers in the program monitor 41 lakes in four counties in northwest Montana. In addition to collecting water quality information, these citizen scientists are also trained to be on the lookout for aquatic invasive species.

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