



LakeFront

Quarterly Newsletter of the Whitefish Lake Institute

Winter 2023

WLI Welcomes New Board Member

Todd H. Votteler, Ph.D. is President of Collaborative Water Resolution LLC. He is a co-founder and the Editor-in-Chief of the *Texas Water Journal*, and Editor-in-Chief of *Texas+Water*. Votteler is a Fellow of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment at Texas State University.

Previously, Votteler was Executive Manager of Science, Intergovernmental Relations, and Policy at the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority. He also served as the Chairman of the Guadalupe Basin Coalition.

Votteler was appointed by Senior U.S. District Court Judge Lucius Bunton as the Federal Special Master for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) litigation, *Sierra Club v. San Antonio*.

Prior to that he assisted a Federal Court Monitor during the landmark ESA litigation over the Edwards Aquifer, *Sierra Club v. Babbitt*. In 2013, he was part of a group awarded the Partners for Conservation Award by

the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell for work that resolved a water dispute over the Texas Edwards Aquifer. In addition, Votteler negotiated an agreement to resolve a dispute over surface water and the endangered whooping crane. His previous experience also includes Research (continued on Page 3...)

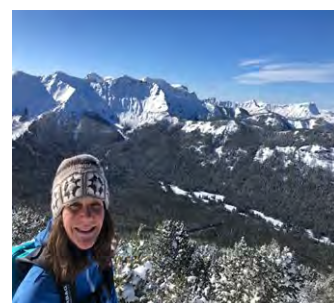


Todd Votteler, Ph.D

WLI Hires Program Coordinator

Durae Belcer joined the Whitefish Lake Institute at the start of 2023.

Prior to this she spent 20 years working for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks protecting and monitoring native trout populations on the Flathead River and Yellowstone River watersheds. Most recently she worked with the wildlife division monitoring sensitive species of amphibians, reptiles, and birds. Durae holds a degree in Environmental Science from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. (continued on Page 3...)



Durae Belcer

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Back issues of *LakeFront* available at www.whitefishlake.org



A 501 (c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation



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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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Whitefish Lake Institute

Cover Photo:
*Aerial view of a past Whitefish Winter Carnival
Penguin Plunge at City Beach
Courtesy: gravityshots.com*



Montana Lakes Conference Announced



Building upon the success of the inaugural Montana Lakes Conference in 2019, the Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) is pleased to again organize and host the Montana Lakes Conference October 18th-20th, 2023. The theme for the 2023 Montana Lakes Conference is "Montana Lakes at Risk; Challenges and Opportunities." The conference will gather participants from academic, nonprofit, government, business organizations, and the public to discuss scientific and applied studies relevant to Montana's Lakes. The conference will also highlight solutions and success stories brought about through best management practices, policy, and citizen led conservation efforts.

The conference will be held at The Lodge at Whitefish Lake. Developed to exchange knowledge, ideas and experiences, and to introduce new approaches to help manage and protect our lakes, the conference will celebrate Montana's lakes and the people who work to understand and protect them. Attendees will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in innovative, practical, and applied lake management techniques and current research. Networking opportunities will allow attendees with varied experiences to compare notes and collaborate on important lake management issues.

The conference will kick-off on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 18th with a workshop on the topic of water conflict management and transformation led by Aaron Woolf, a professor at Oregon State University, and Todd Votteler, WLI's newest board member. Aaron and Todd are water mitigation experts from fourworlds.org and the four hour workshop will provide continuing education credits for professionals.

The workshop will be followed by a student poster session "Why We Love Whitefish Lake" and our Science Quencher highlighting lightening talks from select conference speakers on the evening of Wednesday, October 18th, both of which are free and open to the public.

Thursday and Friday will feature keynote and plenary speakers along with break-out sessions covering various lake management projects and issues. Included, will be presentations from community led lake conservation efforts and citizen science programs.

Join WLI at one of Montana's premier conference and lodging facilities—the award-winning Lodge at Whitefish Lake—for a forum that will strengthen Montana's lake resource management. For more information, please visit www.whitefishlake.org and click on the banner on the home page. Conference registration opens April 1st. We hope to see you there!

(WLI Welcomes New Board Member), *continued from Page 1*...Scientist for the Battelle – Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, in Washington, D.C., Executive Director of the Guadalupe-Blanco River Trust, a 501(c)3 land and water trust, and Chairman of the Texas Land Trust Council.

Todd has a B.S. in Natural Resources from The University of the South, an M.S. in Natural Resources from The University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in Environmental Geography from Texas State University.

(WLI Hires Program Coordinator), *continued from Page 1*...She has also attended classes at the Flathead Lake Biological Station in stream and aquatic ecology to further diversify her knowledge on the importance of water quality in and around the Flathead Valley.

Durae looks forward to supporting the long-term monitoring and protection of the Whitefish Lake watershed through citizen science programs, and community outreach and education. As one of her main duties, she will be coordinating the Northwest Montana Lakes Network which engages volunteers to monitor water quality and conduct early detection surveys for aquatic invasive species on 41 lakes in northwestern Montana. The program is a partnership with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

In her free time, Durae can be found on skis, bike, or foot exploring the mountains and lakes in the northwest with her adventurous husband and trusty horse.

Ripple Effect Scholarship

WLI offers three types of scholarship opportunities to qualified students. The scholarship program can award students in three categories including 1) a \$500 scholarship for tuition to a high school student as they enter college, 2) an internship (see below) for an undergraduate student in the summer after their sophomore or junior year, and 3) WLI's support of a graduate thesis or dissertation. Appropriate courses of study for consideration in the scholarship program include: biology, ecology, environmental science/studies, hydrology, or other fields related to water quality as approved by WLI staff. For more information, see our website www.whitefishlake.org under *Education Programs*. The deadline for applications is April 15.

Summer Internship Opportunity

One of the most important aspects of WLI's educational programming is to encourage and mentor students. WLI has hosted college interns dating back to 2007. Thanks to our Ripple Effect Scholarship Fund, a \$2,500 stipend towards tuition is awarded to an undergraduate university student who completes a successful summer internship with WLI.

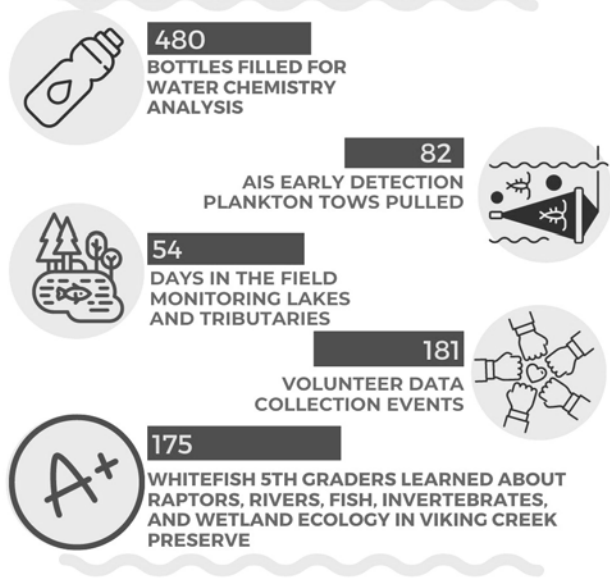
WLI interns learn about streams, rivers and lakes, watershed processes, limnological data collection, and data processing and analysis. The intern also learns about—and participates in—the daily functioning of a small non-profit corporation. WLI attempts to match the intern with special projects that are in their interest area. One intern can be accepted each summer. Internship applications are due March 15. To learn more about the internship and application process, please visit www.whitefishlake.org.

Wetland Trail— Seasonal Closure

We hope you are enjoying your treks at the Living Wetlands Interpretive Nature Trail in the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve! Please remember we are nearing the annual *March 15 to May 1 trail closure*. This closure will help maintain the structural integrity of the trail, protect native vegetation, and avoid potential spring wildlife/human conflicts. Until then, enjoy your winter walks along the trail.

In late May, WLI will host all 5th graders from Whitefish and Kalispell at the wetlands. Students will have an opportunity to engage with natural resource professionals at various learning stations to learn more about the processes, organisms, and management of the natural world.

WLI ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NUMBERS-2022



Winter Photos

The trail cameras in the Averill's Viking Creek Wetland Preserve continue to demonstrate the importance of protecting this area in the wildland-urban interface. The area is rich in biodiversity with many species using the wetland habitat the entire year.



Pine martens are skilled climbers but seen here hunting on the ground for rodents. They also eat fruits and insects.



A mountain lion is captured moving swiftly through the preserve. These felines have excellent hearing and vision.



Great horned owls are rarely seen due to their nocturnal habits and excellent camouflage. Their short wide wing span allow them to maneuver among the trees of the forest.



Elk are typically seen grazing in large open meadows, but this young bull elk is seen browsing on shrubs and other plants in the preserve's mixed coniferous forest.



A white-tail buck surveys the forest looking for a mate during breeding season. The trail cameras are always full of deer photos.



In preparation for the Montana Lakes Conference, WLI staff conducted a walk through at The Lodge at Whitefish Lake. They stopped for an official staff photo at the Valentine's Day photo booth!

Whitefish Lake Institute Supporters

Active Members who have donated for 10+ years since 2005.
Active Members who have donated for 5-9 years since 2005.

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