

# FLATHEAD LAKE Monitor

Newsletter of the Flathead Lakers

Flathead Lake, Montana

Fall, 2010

## Lakers Present Stewardship Award to Gov. Schweitzer

by Robin Steinkraus

“Every one of you here pulled together to do something special. It wasn’t me that got this done, it was you. Without your persistence this wouldn’t have happened.”

That was Governor Brian Schweitzer’s response to receiving the Flathead Lakers Stewardship Award for the agreement he and B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell signed banning coal mining and oil and gas development in the North Fork Flathead Watershed, headwaters to Flathead Lake.

Over 200 Flathead Lakers members and friends joined Schweitzer in celebrating this victory for clean water at the Lakers annual meeting in July at the Flathead Lake Biological Station.

The Flathead Lakers honored Governor Schweitzer and Premier Campbell with the 2010 Stewardship Award at the meeting. Schweitzer and Campbell signed the historic agreement last February.

Lakers’ President Larry Ashcraft said that the agreement is the most significant step toward “protecting Flathead waters from impacts of coal development, resolving one of the longest transboundary water disputes along the Canadian – U.S. boundary, and ensuring that our iconic wildlife continue to roam, clean waters continue to flow, and our special Flathead landscapes and way of life are sustained.”

Besides the many individuals and organizations who deserve credit for this achievement, Schweitzer said, “the one person who really deserves the credit is Premier Gordon Campbell” because B.C. is walking away from \$7 billion in royalties from potential North Fork coal development.

Schweitzer talked about the behind-the-scenes diplomacy over several years that it took to reach agreement. He said he walked away from negotiations three times before he and Campbell agreed to try one more time. Schweitzer lauded his staff members, recently retired Chief Policy Advisor Hal Harper and Natural Resources Advisor Mike Volesky, for their tenacity in negotiating an agreement acceptable to both B.C. and Montana.

Although Premier Campbell was not able to be present, Naomi Yamamoto, B.C. Minister of State for Intergovernmental



Governor Schweitzer receives the 2010 Stewardship Award.

Relations, stated in a message read at the meeting that “We are deeply honoured to be named as a recipient of this award and to share this honour with Governor Schweitzer.... We are blessed with a land that deserves preservation, and we have a responsibility to protect it.”

Messages from Senator Max Baucus, Senator Jon Tester and Congressman Denny Rehberg were also presented at the meeting, noting the tremendous progress the agreement represents.

The Flathead Lakers took to heart Governor Schweitzer’s comment about giving credit to all the people over three decades who played a part in reaching this result. Lakers Vice President Dick Siderius thanked over 40 individuals and over 25 organizations, agencies, and other groups that played a significant role in defending Flathead waters from upstream coal proposals, many of whom were in the audience.

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Visit our web site!  
[www.flatheadlakers.org](http://www.flatheadlakers.org)

## DIRECTORY

**Flathead Lakers:** Working for clean water, a healthy ecosystem, and lasting quality of life in the Flathead Watershed.

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The **Board of Directors** meets bimonthly. We encourage members to attend meetings. Please call the office or check the web site for the time and place if you'd like to attend a meeting.

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## Flathead Lake Monitor

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The opinions expressed in the *Monitor* are those of the authors. We welcome comments and submissions. Copyright 2010, Flathead Lakers, all rights reserved.

*Robin Steinkraus, Editor*

## President's Column



### Greetings Fellow Lakers—

It has been almost two years since I first wrote to you as the incoming president of the Flathead Lakers. We are now welcoming another fall and all the beauty that the changing season brings. It amazes me how fast these years have flown. In the next newsletter, we will be welcoming in a new president to lead the Flathead Lakers.

In a short review, your board and staff have had a full plate in pursuing our mission. I feel we have stayed on course, but we certainly have much still to accomplish and many challenges ahead of us.

After some three decades of working to defend Flathead waters from the threat of upstream coal mining, we are elated that an agreement was reached to provide the framework for Montana to work together with British

Columbia in protecting the environmental values of the North Fork of the Flathead River and its watershed. We are forever grateful to Governor Schweitzer, Premier Campbell, Senator Baucus and the many, many others who have been involved in this process. We were honored to give our 2010 Stewardship Award to Governor Schweitzer and Premier Campbell at our annual meeting last July.

We are gratified by the work of Lake County and Flathead County in endorsing clean water in their growth policies and subdivision regulations. We continue our work to ensure that land use and resource management policies include provisions to protect water quality. We also continue to work towards restoring funding for water quality monitoring, preventing the introduction of zebra mussels, protecting critical lands, and informing people about ways they can become better stewards of Flathead lands and waters. The work to improve stormwater management in Bigfork and Polson is just one example of the changes underway to protect water quality.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Lakers' members Bruce Ennis and Margaret Davis for their generosity in creating a wonderful new public park on the lake. Flathead County's newest park, located in Lakeside at the previous site of the Bayshore Motel, opened on August 13. This one-of-a-kind waterfront park is worth \$3 million.

We welcome our newest board member, Roger Smith, who was elected at our annual meeting. We are looking forward to his expertise and contributions.

I mention the volunteer aspect of membership often, and I reiterate that we cannot operate as effectively and efficiently without members stepping forward and giving of their time and effort to better our organization and help achieve our goals. This may be as easy as recruiting a neighbor to become a member. Thank you to our great volunteers!

In these economic times, we all feel the pinch and the Lakers are no exception. Grants are not as plentiful and some donations are not as large. So it is very important that we have a strong membership base. Thank you to all of our generous members and donors, with special thanks to those of you who have been able to contribute a little extra this year!

I again want to convey to you the dedication, intelligence and drive of the Lakers' staff. The help and direction I have received from the entire staff is beyond compare. If you should run into Robin, Constanza, Christi, or Karen, please give them a big thanks for all that they do.

Many of you have had the opportunity to see our beautiful poster of Flathead Lake and the surrounding watershed. I am sure you will want one for your home or for gifts. We are selling the large poster (20"x30") for \$50 and the smaller one for \$35 to help fund our water quality protection programs. It will be for sale on our website in the near future or you can call the office or contact a board member to purchase one.

My time as your president has been a very rewarding experience. I thank you again for all your support. Please maintain your membership and contribute as you can with funds and other support in the days ahead as we strive to protect this jewel, Flathead Lake, its watershed and our quality of life.

— Larry Ashcraft



## A Harvest of North Fork Victories

Here in Montana, August brings us the county fair and farm harvests. And this year we also celebrate a harvest of victories for Glacier National Park, the North Fork Flathead River, and Flathead Lake. In addition to commemorating Glacier's first one hundred years, citizens from across the Montana-British Columbia border, Governor Brian Schweitzer, B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell, and Senators Baucus and Tester did yeoman's work to protect this special place.

The victories began this past winter during the Vancouver Olympics when B.C. Premier Gordon Campbell announced that he would place the Canadian Flathead Valley off-limits to mining and energy development.

Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer's quiet, behind-the-scenes work built a relationship with the Premier that resulted in a

historic agreement that included the ban on mining in the North Fork watershed. After signing the agreement, he said, "I can say of all of the things I've managed to accomplish, there's none I'm more proud of."

Montana's senators have also been working diligently to protect our side of the North Fork. Senator Baucus has championed protection for Glacier and the Flathead's clean waters since he was first elected to Congress, and he has been joined in recent years in an effective and vigorous partnership with Senator Tester.

Together they have worked continuously to build support for legislation to protect Glacier National Park during this centennial year and implement terms of the transboundary agreement. Of special note, they reached out to energy companies holding leases in the North Fork. As a result, they achieved an unprecedented

retirement of over 250,000 acres of leases at no cost to U.S. taxpayers.

Our Senators' hard work continues to pay off. Their legislation to protect the North Fork of the Flathead from energy extraction and hard rock mining (S. 3075) has advanced to the floor of the U.S. Senate. This legislation stands a good chance of becoming law before the end of the year.

And, just last month, the UN report on the visit last year by a science team to evaluate the potential impacts of mining on the Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park was released. It declares how important the transboundary Flathead area is and that coal mining would degrade the Peace Park, a World Heritage Site. The report affirms the importance of the Schweitzer-Campbell agreement and the passage of federal legislation to end oil and gas leasing in the North Fork.

These successes have happened because citizens like you want to protect clean water, Glacier Park, and Flathead Lake. Local businesses, communities, elected officials, and outdoorsmen and women understand that protecting clean water and Glacier make good environmental and economic sense.

However, our job as a community to protect these treasures remains unfinished. It is critical that a U.S. - Canadian agreement to protect the greater Transboundary Flathead region be completed at the federal level.

Our actions today will ensure that future generations have the same opportunity to experience the natural wonders of Glacier National Park, the Flathead River, and Flathead Lake. By working together, we will protect the legacy of the park, our famous waters and wildlife, and special way of life.

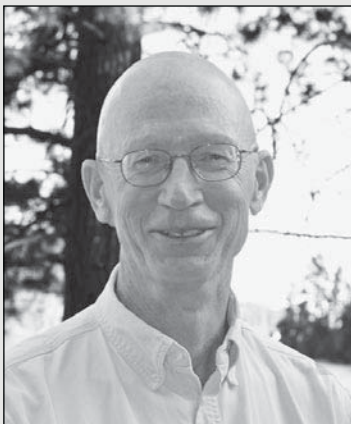
*Dave Hadden is Director of Headwaters Montana; Robin Steinkraus is Executive Director of the Flathead Lakers; Will Hammerquist is Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association's Glacier Field Office. Together these three organizations represent thousands of Flathead Valley residents and visitors. This op-ed appeared in the Daily InterLake and other local newspapers in August.*

### Lakers Welcome Roger Smith

Roger Smith was elected to the Lakers board of directors at our annual meeting and has already become a great asset to the board and organization.

A native of Missoula, Roger currently lives on Flathead Lake at Finley Point, where the family has had property since 1960. He is married to Libby and they have three grown children (two in Missoula, one in California) and two grandchildren.

Roger and Libby moved to



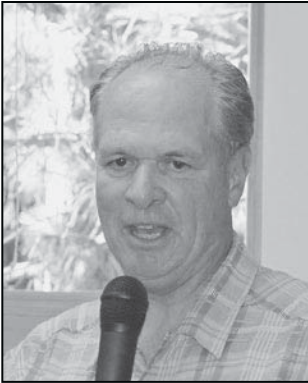
Edmonton, Alberta in 1969 after he completed his Ph.D in Economics at the University of California, Berkeley. Roger enjoyed a long career at the University of Alberta, where he was a professor, dean, and administrator. In addition, he served stints with the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC, Erasmus University in the Netherlands, and at the International Tax Program at Harvard University.

Roger has been active in a variety of community service and other groups over the years. He served as board chair for the Banff School of Advanced Management, Alberta Capital Region United Way, Winspear Foundation, and as a member of the board of the Alberta Science and Research Authority, the Alberta Conservation Association and the Alberta Region of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. He is currently on the boards of the Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative and the Friends of the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Welcome, Roger!

# 2010 State of the Lake Report

## Groundwater Pollution and Aquatic Invaders Threaten Flathead Lake



Dr. Jack Stanford

Although the threat of coal mining in Flathead Lake headwaters has been quelled, there are plenty of other threats to lake quality for the Flathead Lakers to pay attention to. Flathead Lake Biological Station Director Dr. Jack Stanford talked about groundwater pollution as an emerging threat in his annual State of the Lake Report.

now being detected in the Biological Station's water supply. Because this pesticide is "not retained in the soil, it goes straight to the groundwater." Again, the levels "are way below a health trigger," but they are approaching levels that affect aquatic life. There are alternatives to this pesticide, and the Biological Station has been discussing these with local growers. Stanford added that it is important to use less problematic products and apply the minimum amount required.

### Invasive Mussels – A Big Threat

Stanford also discussed the threat of zebra and quagga mussels invading Flathead waters. He showed dramatic photos of infestations in the Great Lakes Watershed, including a shoreline completely coated with the mussels. "This is a problem and we don't want it," he said. Unless we "really step up public education" on ways to prevent the spread of these mussels, there is a high likelihood they will get here.

### Nutrients Still a Concern

Nutrient pollution of the lake also remains a concern. Stanford said the long-term record of monitoring data now shows that primary productivity, the ability of the lake to grow algae, tracks pretty closely with weather patterns over the years. And, although the level of primary productivity has increased, much of that increase is related to how the food web changed with the introduction of *Mysis* shrimp.

However, the lake is at a nutrient threshold, Stanford said. When it gets extra nutrients and hot, calm weather, "the lake will turn green" with algae. Stanford showed a photo of the 2008 algae bloom that coated the surface of the water at Yellow Bay, when the right combination of conditions occurred.

It is important to take care of every source of runoff, Stanford said, such as runoff from parking lots, lawns and farms. "It all matters. It all adds up. The lake is very sensitive to additional nutrients. But it is still the cleanest large lake in temperate areas of the world where people live."

### New Groundwater Research Results Disturbing

A new groundwater study of shallow wells in the Kalispell valley is showing some disturbing results. Stanford said that although pharmaceuticals and other chemical products have been showing up in groundwater studies in downstream areas, "we shouldn't be seeing them here in the headwaters." Some of the chemicals that have been detected are caffeine, DEET, progesterone, and warfarin (a drug that prevents blood clots), as well as numerous volatile organic compounds, many of which are related to plastics.

Stanford assured the audience that the levels found are far below those that trigger a health concern for people.

Because the shallow aquifer is used for domestic supplies and is so closely tied to the Flathead River and Flathead Lake, it is critical to prevent pollution of the groundwater. This is complicated by the fact that the laws treat surface waters and groundwater completely differently. But in a place like the Flathead, Stanford said, where what was surface water a short while ago is now groundwater and then a short time later becomes surface water again, protecting Flathead Lake requires understanding and protecting the quality of the groundwater.

Stanford said one of the new pesticides used in cherry orchards is

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## Concluding Remarks From the Annual Meeting

*A place as special as Flathead Lake and the rivers that feed it is worth all of our efforts to guard its well-being for the future. Our organization works year-round on your behalf to protect Flathead Lake and water quality throughout the watershed. Even though tonight we are celebrating a tremendous achievement in protecting Flathead waters, our work is not done. Many threats remain or will arise in the future that require a vigilant group of citizens to address. And, even on the issue of protecting Flathead headwaters from coal development, work continues in the implementation phase of the Montana-British Columbia agreement and at the federal level. Your continued support is essential to the future of Flathead Lake and clean water.*

–Lakers President Larry Ashcraft

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### Lakers Thank Retiring Webmaster

At the annual meeting, the Lakers paid tribute to James Conner, our long-time web master and original web site developer, computer guru and lake level expert extraordinaire. Jim is retiring from his work for the Lakers this year. The Lakers is a far better organization today because of our association with Jim over the past dozen or more years. We can't thank him enough for all he has done for the Lakers and for clean water.



Members greet Governor Schweitzer.



Socializing by the lake.

## 2010 Annual Meeting

*Flathead Lakers members and guests enjoyed a lovely evening at the Flathead Lake Biological Station in July. Thanks to everyone who came and to everyone who helped make the meeting a success!*



Musical duo Beth Pirrie and Gwen Hensler.

State Representative Janna Taylor, Senator Verdel Jackson and Flathead Basin Commission Executive Director Caryn Miske.



## Summer Spotlight Shines on Volunteers & Poster

The tents are stowed. The signs and banners sit high on a shelf. Boxes of photographs are still stacked in the Lakers' office. These remnants of the Flathead Lakers' exhibits at an Art Festival, Water Festival, and Boat Show in August remind us of the commitment and camaraderie of the many volunteers who dedicated their time on an August weekend to benefit the lake and the Lakers.

Please contact Christi at the Lakers' office if you would like to volunteer with events like these next summer.

### Water Daze Leaves Shoreline Cleaner



Ethan Buffington (center) demonstrates with a watershed model how human activities can cause polluted runoff to enter rivers and lakes. The children looking on later participated in a "Beach Sweep" litter cleanup.

At Polson Bay's Water Daze on Saturday, August 7, swimmers from all over Montana and other western states swam from Salish Point to Boettcher Park. Organized by Mission Valley Aquatics (MVA), the annual swim is a way to raise public awareness about the importance of swimming. MVA is planning, and raising funds for, an indoor aquatic facility in Polson.

The Flathead Lakers participated in the event by leading a hands-on demonstration on water pollution using a watershed model, a "Beach Sweep" litter cleanup, and an exhibit on lake stewardship, water quality protection and aquatic invasive species prevention.

We thank board member Greg McCormick for hauling and setting up the display, CSKT Pesticide Specialist Willie Keenan for loaning the watershed model, and Salish and Kootenai College student Ken Beesaw, in conjunction with Virgil Dupuis, SKC Extension Agent, for providing invasive species education and delicious cherries.

Flathead Lakers Education and Outreach Coordinator Christi Buffington organized the Beach Sweep cleanup as part of the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup.

Working in three teams led by member volunteers Alice Danskin, Brian and Laura Golphene, Steve and Arla Rosso, and Jon DePuy, over 30 volunteers filled two trash bags with 13.3 pounds of trash from the Boettcher Park shoreline, beach and playground. Most of the trash was comprised of cigarette butts, food wrappers, plastic, and balloons. Volunteers counted each item of litter and recorded the data, which the Lakers submitted to the Ocean Conservancy for publication on its website.

Both the Flathead Lakers and MVA commit to keeping Flathead Lake clean and swimmable. Look for the Lakers at the 2011 Polson Bay's Water Daze!

### Art Festival Showcases Watershed Poster

Over a year ago, board member Laney Hanzel had an idea. He envisioned the white capped peaks of the Crown of the Continent, the deep blue of Flathead Lake, and the watershed connecting the peaks to the lake on a living room wall. Working with Dr. William Bowen at the California Geographical Survey who creates computer-generated panoramic aerial images from USGS data, and with his permission, Laney produced a poster of this aerial view of the lake and watershed.

The *Flathead Lake and Surrounding Watershed* poster officially made its debut at the Polson Art Festival on the Courthouse lawn on August 7. Volunteers Dick Siderius, Larry and Dorothy Aschraft, Steve and Arla Rosso, Roger and Libby Smith, and Mary Ellen and John Turmell all took a shift, selling posters and sharing information about the Flathead Lakers with festival visitors. Thanks to these volunteers, the Sandpiper Art Gallery and organizer Margie Hendricks.

Posters will be available for sale soon through our newly revised website. Or you can call the office or any board member.

### Boat Show Celebrates History

The Big Sky Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society hosted the annual Antique and Classic Boat Show at Lakeside on August 21 and 22 with a special theme: "Celebrating the Glacier National Park Centennial & the Historic Wooden Tour Boats."

The Flathead Lakers' display showcased historical photos of Flathead Lake boating during the last century and stewardship actions we can take to protect water quality and lake enjoyment



Board members Jim Hollensteiner and Greg McCormick at the Antique and Classic Boat Show in Lakeside.

for the next century. We also offered hats, maps, and posters for sale. Thanks to the volunteers who staffed the tent: members Mike and Sandy Kones, Dale and Connie Kahlberg, and board members Jim Hollensteiner, Greg McCormick, and Dick Siderius.

—by Christi Buffington

## News From Around the Watershed

### Lake Bottom Log Salvage Approved

DNRC and the state Land Board recently approved the proposal to salvage logs from the bottom of Flathead Lake. The Flathead Lakers and others had raised concerns about the proposal's impacts to water quality, recreation, and fish.

To address these concerns, DNRC, DEQ and the proponent, called North Shore Development, developed a mitigation plan with input from Dr. Mark Lorang, Flathead Lake Biological Station Research Associate Professor, and Dr. Johnnie Moore, UM Professor of GeoSciences.

The proposal calls for removing over 5,000 logs from the lake each operating season for 10 years.

Oversight will be key to preventing harmful impacts. The Flathead Lakers encourage DNRC to provide meaningful oversight for the operation and monitoring, and to post all monitoring data on its website.

### Flathead County Commissioners Say No to Large Tract Rural Zoning

On September 21 the Flathead County Commissioners voted against establishing the proposed Large Tract Rural Zoning District. Initiated over a year ago at the request of the large timber companies that own land in the county, the proposal would have provided significant density bonuses for locating development near a paved road, within a rural fire district, and for preserving open space.

The Flathead Lakers submitted comments and spoke at two hearings on this proposal. Although its intent, to protect traditional natural resource-based uses in rural areas, was good, we believed the latest draft still allowed too high of development densities (up to one unit per acre if all density bonuses were achieved). It did not provide adequate criteria for which kinds of lands are appropriate for supporting high density development and which are appropriate for open space protection, and failed to provide adequate protection for water quality.

### Bigfork Stormwater Workshop Held

A Stormwater Workshop was held in Bigfork in September to share information about strategies to prevent stormwater pollution.

Flathead Lakers Education & Outreach Coordinator Christi Buffington presented "A Drop Of Prevention . . . What Individuals Can Do to Protect Water Quality." Her presentation included tips for healthy household habits that reduce stormwater runoff and protect water quality for vehicle and garage, lawn and garden, home repair and improvement, pet care, swimming pool and spa, and septic system use and maintenance.

Other presenters included Tom Bansak, Flathead Lake Biological Station, on Stormwater History, Trends, and Threats; Tom Martinez, Northwest Concrete Works, on Pervious Pavement; Chad Phillips, a local architect, on Green Architecture; and Dave Martin, DNRC, demonstrated techniques to reduce stormwater runoff with the Rolling Rivers demonstration trailer.

Susan Hanson, Chairwoman of the Bigfork Stormwater Advisory Committee, organized the workshop.

***YES! I want to be a member of the Flathead Lakers!***



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Summer Address (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

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\$100 Patron  \$250 Benefactor  \$500 Protector  \$1,000 Advocate

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*Friends and neighbors  
working for clean water,  
a healthy ecosystem, and  
lasting quality of life in the  
Flathead Lake watershed.*

## ***Give Your Shoreline a Makeover!***

Learn how to landscape for clean water.

Learn about local projects and programs.

Tour a Flathead River restoration site to see how it works.

# **Living by Water Workshop**

**Saturday, October 16**

**10 am to 2 pm**

free workshop & lunch  
door prizes and kids activities

Call 752-4220 to register.

Sponsored by:

Flathead Lakers • Flathead Conservation District  
Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

## **New Website Coming Soon!**

Our new and improved website is launching in October. It will be more up-to-date and easier to navigate. And, you will be able to join, renew or donate, or purchase our poster, maps, and caps on the website! Check it out at [www.flatheadlakers.org](http://www.flatheadlakers.org) in late October.

## **New Book on the Flathead Watershed**

The Flathead Lakers are delighted to announce that a new book about our watershed, *Flathead Watershed Sourcebook: A Guide to an Extraordinary Place*, will be released in October. It discusses the communities, cultures and natural systems that comprise our watershed. It weaves nature and human nature, science and art into an appealing and informative publication.

The book was written by Lori Curtis of Bigfork with assistance from the Flathead Community of Resource Educators Watershed Committee.

Visit our new website in late October for more information.