

Haskill Basin Watershed: An Example of Cooperative Multiple Use

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F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. is the oldest family-owned sawmill and forestland management company in Montana. In continuous operation since 1912, Stoltze is an integral part of the Flathead Valley community. As a significant employer in Flathead County, Stoltze directly employs roughly 120 and provides work for over 70 private contractors in woods and mill work. In addition to the sawmill operations, Stoltze owns and manages 38,000 acres of forestland throughout the greater Flathead Valley area. These lands are managed under a comprehensive set of Stewardship Forestry Principals to meet the long term company goals of meeting the needs of the present while maximizing growth for future generations.

The Stoltze timberlands have been certified members of the American Tree Farm system since 1966. In 2009, through the Tree Farm program, all Stoltze lands received third party certification by internationally recognized PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) as sustainably managed forestlands.

These forestlands are the playgrounds, watersheds, view sheds, workplaces and back yards of the Flathead Valley community. Stoltze has a long standing policy of allowing public use of company lands. Our open lands policy provides access for a variety of recreational uses ranging from huckleberry picking to hunting to ATV riding and just about anything in between.

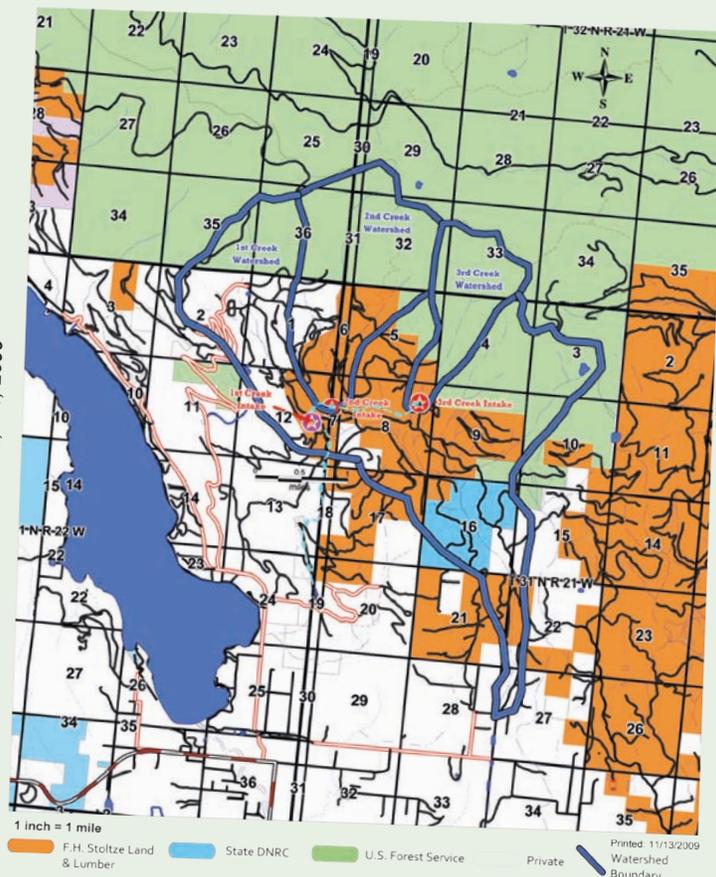
The Haskill Basin area is a prime example of how Stoltze works hard with neighboring communities to provide multiple use amenities from these private forestlands while still meeting long term company ownership objectives. In August of 1912, Stoltze purchased about 3,000 acres in Haskill basin. This watershed is just 2 miles northeast of the town of Whitefish. In 1929, the City of

Whitefish filed for water rights on 1st, 2nd and 3rd Creek tributaries of Haskill Creek for the purpose of municipal water supply. Three water intakes and a pipeline were constructed on these creeks. Small parcels of approximately 1 acre were obtained by the city for the intakes at both 1st and 3rd creek, however when Mr. Stoltze offered to sell an acre for an intake at 2nd creek for the sum of \$12.00 the city fathers thought the price exorbitantly high and refused to purchase the land! The intake and pipeline were built anyway and water from these creeks continues to be the primary source of municipal water for the community of Whitefish yet today.

For the last 97 years, Stoltze has practiced sustainable forestry throughout Haskill ba-

sin. A well designed system of roads was constructed and is carefully maintained in accordance with Montana Best Management Practices (BMP's) to protect water quality. Timber harvests of varying prescriptions have been carried out on nearly every acre within the watershed. By careful planning, adherence to the Montana Stream Side Management Zone law and application of our Stewardship Forestry principals, we are glad to report no negative impacts to water quality. Beginning in the early 1990's Stoltze began monitoring water quality in 2nd and 3rd creek for our own information. We are proud to report no indication of water quality impacts from forest management activities in either watershed. Furthermore, Stoltze participates in the biannual process of BMP audits conducted through the

Source: F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co.
Columbia Falls, MT, 2009



Upper Haskill Basin Watershed Ownership Map

Montana DNRC to ensure compliance and effectiveness of protection to our states water resources.

At the same time, Haskill basin remains open to public recreational use. This is highly unusual for a municipal watershed. However due to the diligence of the recreational users and the protections provided by healthy forest conditions and riparian zones, the recreational use has been allowed to continue without impact to the municipal watershed operations.

The pressures on this area continue to increase. Recreational and residential development on three sides continues to challenge the integrity of the watershed. Declining forest health and increasing fuel loading on the federal lands that comprise the upper reaches of the watershed heighten the concern over wildfire in the watershed. Challenging forest products markets and increasing land development values pressure the viability of continued management of the private and State lands for forest products. That being said, Stoltze, its neighbors, and the community of Whitefish will continue to work together to find innovative ways to protect the integrity of the watershed, allow continued sustainable management for forest products, provide public recreational opportunities and protect the asset value of the land base to Stoltze.

Haskill Basin is a prime example of the partnerships and cooperation necessary between landowners, local, state and federal government and communities to ensure the long term viability of our forested watersheds in Montana. Multiple use management of public and private lands has been extremely successful in meeting the varied demands placed upon our forests. Through continued cooperation and adherence to the concepts of Stewardship, we are confident these success stories will continue far into the future.



F.H. Stoltze
Land & Lumber