

Flathead Lake Biological Station

Jack Stanford, Ph.D.

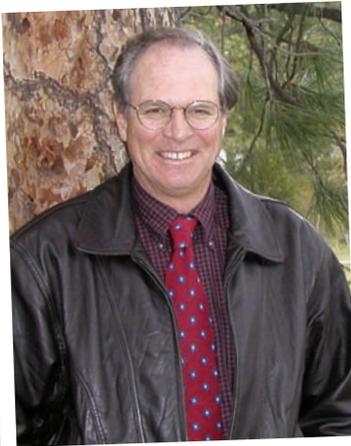
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Professor Morton Elrod and The University of Montana established the Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS) in 1899. Elrod's vision of FLBS was a base of operations for college education and research in the pristine environs of Flathead Lake and Glacier National Park. Elrod and other visionaries of the time (Grinnell, Pinchot) knew that human well being was dependent on a scientific understanding of the natural and cultural attributes and processes of regional ecosystems. Moreover, Elrod recognized the immense educational value of the landscape that he and his colleagues called the Crown of the Continent.



Flathead Lake Biological Station at Yellow Bay



Director, Jack Stanford, 2009

National emphasis on the environment in the 1970s inspired FLBS redevelopment and by the 1990s Elrod's vision of a secure, world-class field station finally was achieved. At the FLBS Centennial Celebration in 1999, the world-renowned scientist Prof. Charles Goldman of the University of California-Davis, stated that FLBS had become "the leading freshwater field research facility in the world." Since then, FLBS has expanded the scope of work to include terrestrial and climate issues. Moreover, FLBS is an important technology center for Montana, producing skilled scientists for local, State and national positions, creating jobs in-

house and stimulating the local economy via \$5M annually in expenditures and investments by staff and faculty members, students and visiting scientists.

The most important function of FLBS is basic and applied ecological research and dissemination of the results and implications of the research to society. This work encompasses many aspects of ecology, but emphasizes ways to sustain the natural goods and services provided by freshwater ecosystems. Research by the 9-member FLBS faculty is continually advancing scientific understanding the complex linkages between atmospheric, terrestrial, aquatic and human components of watershed ecosystems in Montana and around the world.

The research program enlivens formal academic courses in the field setting, just as Elrod intended. The faculty stress broad understanding of ecology, including research design, analysis and reporting, plus practical applications. Enrollment in FLBS courses is limited to 13 students per class and, therefore, student-professor contact is at least 50% higher than typically occurs in the usual university lecture-lab courses. The objective is to produce leadership-oriented graduates with a

robust, field-based understanding of principles and tools that must be applied for conservation of ecosystem goods and services for sustained human well being worldwide.

The facilities at FLBS are first class, with fully equipped ecological research labs, field research gear of all kinds, big and little boats, modern lecture halls, meeting rooms, a dormitory, 40 rustic cabins, family apartments and food services for students and visitors. The setting on the shoreline of beautiful Flathead Lake is especially inviting and provides a serene environment for novel academics and professional interactions.

For complete information see www.umt.edu/flbs.

