

Flathead Lake's North Shore: A Vision for a Special Place

Robin Steinkraus, Executive Director
Flathead Lakers

Imagine watching the sun rise over the Swan Mountains while strolling on a North Shore trail, taking in the annual wa-

floodplains along the Flathead River and the North Shore help protect our treasured lake.

acres of surrounding farmland is at risk. Development is changing the face of the Flathead – we need to plan ahead to conserve special places like the North Shore.

North Shore landowners understand the special wildlife and scenic values that are at stake. Many are working with partners to achieve a practical solution that sustains the North Shore's farming tradition, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, hunting heritage and clean water.

Conservation goals include:

- securing financial incentives to provide landowners with choices to help conserve farm lands and open space,
- protecting and restoring critical waterfowl and wildlife habitat,
- protecting water quality,
- enhancing public access and maintaining traditional hunting opportunities,
- providing new public recreational opportunities, and
- connecting local communities and augmenting economic vitality.

Imagine future generations enjoying this landscape and knowing that we had the foresight to conserve the North Shore.

Source: Karen Nichols, 2002



Swans on the North Shore

terfowl migration spectacle from a bird viewing platform, skipping rocks with your grandchildren in the clear blue water on a sandy North Shore beach. This vision brings together land owners, community members and conservation groups to conserve the North Shore's special qualities.

The North Shore of Flathead Lake is a special place. Its wildlife, water and natural beauty are spectacular assets for the Flathead Valley and its communities. Flathead Lake is known as one of the cleanest lakes of its size in the world and contributes an estimated \$10 billion to the local economy.

Scenic Vistas: The North Shore's open fields, shimmering waters and surrounding mountain peaks enthrall longtime residents and visitors alike.

Hunting Heritage: The North Shore is the single most heavily used public hunting area for ducks, geese and pheasants north of the lake. It's a place any family may enjoy Montana's hunting heritage.

Clean Water: Flathead Lake's famous clear water depends on the quality of upstream lands. Healthy wetlands and

Prime Farm Land: The productive soils adjacent to the Flathead Waterfowl Production Area are some of the richest in Montana. Landowners are eager for options that keep their land in farming.

Wildlife: The North Shore's unique combination of wetlands, lakeshore and farm fields is a magnet for birds. This habitat is important for waterfowl and upland bird hunters as well as people who simply thrill at the sight of a bald eagle or tundra swan on the wing.

North Shore Conservation partners are working to conserve the North Shore's special qualities in the area extending from Somers to the Flathead River between Flathead Lake and Highway 82. They hope to pass on this special landscape for future generations to enjoy and appreciate.

While a large part of the area is included in the Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area, over 1,400

Source: Constanza von der Pahlen, 2002



North Shore Field Trip