

NORTHWEST MONTANA LAKES VOLUNTEER MONITORING NETWORK VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Whitefish Lake Institute and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks enjoys the support of a large and diverse base of volunteers for the Northwest Montana Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Network. We are proud to recognize volunteers for their exceptional efforts in this wide-reaching citizen science program.

2019 Barb Hvizdak NWMTLVMN Volunteer, Sophie Lake



Barb has been a dedicated lake volunteer collecting information on Sophie Lake for the NWMTLVMN since 2012. She and her husband Ron live full time on Sophie Lake, where she loyally heads out two or three times a month from as early as March to as late as November to monitor the lake's water quality and keep an eye out for aquatic invasive species. Barb has submitted one hundred and nineteen water quality reports in the last eight years – the highest sampling count of any volunteer in the program's history. In 2015, she sampled seventeen times in a single season. In addition to her dedication to Sophie Lake, Barb enjoys serving on the Lincoln County Library board and quilting.

2018 Lauren Shotnik NWMTLVMN Volunteer, Little Bitterroot Lake



The 2018 Volunteer Service Award honored Lauren Shotnik, a dedicated lake volunteer for seven seasons. She and her husband live full time on Little Bitterroot Lake where they loyally head out in their boat two or three times a month from April through October. She has submitted over seventy water quality reports in the last seven years. She is also involved with the Little Bitterroot Lake Association's water quality program. According to Dan Handlin, president of the association, "There is no better defender of Little Bitterroot Lake than Lauren!" She participates in their Lake Education & Awareness Program (LEAP), which is a collaborative effort between the Marion School District, Little Bitterroot Lake Association, and Water & Environmental Technologies that includes outreach and education, prevention, and early detection monitoring for aquatic invasive plants and mussels.

2017 Carol Blake NWMTLVMN Volunteer, Tetrault Lake



Carol Blake has been monitoring Tetrault Lake in Eureka for ten years. As often as possible Carol jumps in her kayak, paddles out to the study site and records the health of what she describes as "our precious body of water."

"With all the challenges our water sources face these days it is paramount to remain vigilant in regards to pollutants and invasive species," noted Blake in a recent interview. "It feels good to play some small part in the wonderful program the Whitefish Lake Institute designed to keep tabs on many bodies of water in Lincoln, Lake and Flathead Counties. I am profoundly grateful for all their hard work."

2017 Jim Crawford NWMTLVMN Volunteer, Jette Lake



Water quality monitoring in Jette Lake was in place when Jim moved to Polson in 1991. At that time the Flathead Lake Biological Station led the program and they were looking for a resident to check water clarity, temperature and general conditions on a regular basis. "Since I had just retired after 35 years in the corporate world, I volunteered and have been 'the lake guy' for the past 25 years," explained Crawford. "I've proudly watched our lake and surrounding grounds become a recreational jewel, especially after Whitefish Lake Institute took over monitoring and helped us formulate a plan to decrease noxious elements that were in the lake." According to Jim, Jette's clean, clear water and outstanding swimming, boating and fishing for trout and bass are now a primary reason people move to the private subdivision.

2017 Frank Schroeter
NWMTLVMN Volunteer, Flathead Lake



Now in his 24th year as a NWMTLVMN volunteer, Frank Schroeter retired from a 34-year career as a civil engineer with Los Angeles County Road Department (Public Works) in 1990 and moved to Somers, Montana. Schroeter believes that maintaining a high degree of lake water quality and clarity enhances the value of properties in the vicinity of Flathead Lake, including his own.

"So I heeded the 1993 invitation of the Flathead Basin Commission's Mark Holston to volunteers who would be willing to spend a few hours a month measuring and reporting the clarity and temperature of a lake in the area," according to Schroeter. "I am pleased to play a small part in collecting and reporting data that is useful in maintaining a continuous record of water quality in the Flathead, Schroeter notes.