



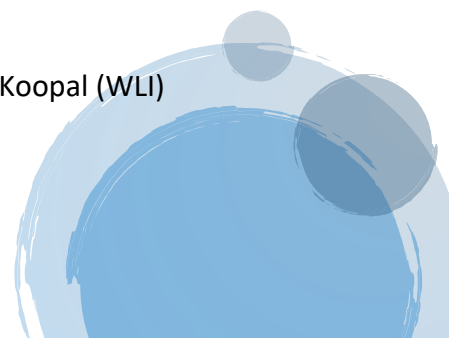
Location: Grouse Mtn Lodge
(2 Fairway Drive, Whitefish, MT)
Date: May 11, 2022
Time: 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM




FLATHEAD BASIN COMMISSION 5/11/22 Meeting Agenda

- I. **12:00 pm: Social/networking with partners** (light lunch provided)
- II. **12:45 pm: Call to order/Welcome & Introductions**
– Rich Janssen, Chair; Kate Wilson, Commission Administrator; All (name/organization or affiliation)
- III. **1:00 pm: Public Comment**
- IV. **1:15 pm: Commission Business** – Kate Wilson; Cassidy Bender
 - Staff Presentation: Activities, Projects, Committees and Programs
 - ACTION: Review/Approve FBC Minutes (3/2/22) + FY23 Budget (inc. partner proposals)
 - Montana Waters Campaign plan and launch
 - Strategic Planning Approach – session to be held 5/12/22
- V. **1:45 pm: PANEL: Watershed & Conservation Groups in the Basin**
 - Overview/current organizational priorities & project (5 min each)

Friends of Echo Lake	Lake County Conservation District
Flathead Conservation District	Little Bitterroot Lake Association
Flathead Lakers	Swan Lakers
Flathead Lake Biological Station	Trout Unlimited – Flathead Chapter
Flathead River Alliance	Whitefish Lake Institute
Friends of Lake Mary Ronan	

- VI. **2:45 pm BREAK**
- VII. **3:00 pm: PANEL – facilitated questions**
- VIII. **3:30 pm: Agency Reflections & Input on Flathead Basin Priorities (2022-2025)**
– State: DNRC, DEQ, FWP, Governor’s Office; Federal: BOR, BPA, EPA, NPS, USFS
- IX. **3:45 pm: WRAP UP, NEXT STEPS & NEXT MTG MTG** – Kate Wilson
- X. **3:50 pm: PUBLIC COMMENT**
- XI. **4:00 pm: ADJOURN & FIELD TRIP: Viking Creek Wetlands Tour** - Led by Mike Koopal (WLI)
- XII. **5:00 pm: Social! Networking at the Lodge at Whitefish Lake (lounge)**



 **Location:** Grouse Mtn Lodge
(2 Fairway Drive, Whitefish, MT)
 **Date:** May 12, 2022
 **Time:** 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

FLATHEAD BASIN COMMISSION

5/12/22 Meeting Agenda

- I. **8:30 am: Call to order** (breakfast provided)
– Rich Janssen, Chair; Kate Wilson, Commission Administrator
- II. **8:35 am: Introduction, Intention + Discussion** - Kate Wilson
 - 2018-2021 Strategic Priority Review + Discussion
 - Survey results
 - Staff reflections + recommendations
- III. **9:00 am: Discussion + exercise** – Kate Wilson
 - Setting of priorities – approach
 - Meeting/facing of new challenges
 - FBC evolution/future
 - Exercise
- IV. **10:00 am: Break**
- V. **10:15 am: Strategies and actions to address/move to priorities**
 - Actionable, measurable, attainable
 - Metrics
- VI. **11:10 am: Wrap up + next steps**
- VII. **11:20 am: Public Comment**
- VIII. **11:30 am: Adjourn**

NOTE: This agenda for 5/12 session is a general outline and will be flexible/fluid

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/ Project Name:	Flathead Basin Commission		
Date of Meeting:	May 11 th 2022	Time:	12:00pm-4:00pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Cassidy Bender	Location:	Grouse Mountain Lodge, Whitefish & Zoom

List of Acronyms

AIS	Aquatic invasive species	FBC	Flathead Basin Commission
BOR	US Bureau of Reclamation	FLBS	Flathead Lake Biological Station
BPA	Bonneville Power Administration	FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
BSWC	Big Sky Watershed Corps (AmeriCorps)	GNP	Glacier National Park
CEMIST	Central Eastern MT Invasive Species Team	MCWD	Missoula County Weed District
CFC	Clark Fork Coalition	NPS	National Park Service
CRB	Columbia River Basin	NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
CRC	Clearwater Resource Council	UC ³	Upper Columbia Conservation Commission
CSKT	Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	UCLN	Upper Columbia Lakes Network
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality	USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
DNRC	Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation	USFS	US Forest Service
eDNA	Environmental DNA	USFWS	US Fish & Wildlife Service
E & O	Education & Outreach	WLI	Whitefish Lake Institute
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency	WRDA	Water Resources Development Act
EQC	Environmental Quality Council (Interim)	WRP	Western Regional Panel

1. Welcome and Introductions

Rich Janssen (Chair)	Opened the meeting. Confirmed quorum present (for voting purposes).
Welcome & Introductions (Roundtable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each participant introduced themselves including name and organization/interest that they are representing. The Flathead Basin Commission acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. Today, we honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.

2. Attendees

FBC (voting members underlined): Rich Janssen (Chair, CSKT), Casey Lewis (Vice Chair, City of Kalispell), Sandy Beder-Miller (Governor-appointed), Lech Naumovich (Flathead Conservation District), Kate Hammond (acting superintendent Glacier National Park), Kurt Steele (USFS), Mark Bostrom (DNRC Helena), Kate Wilson (FBC Commission Administrator), Cassidy Bender (FBC Commission Coordinator), Emilie Henry (FBC Nonpoint Source Coordinator), Jack Potter (Governor-appointed), Michael Freeman (Governor's Office), Randy Brodehl (Flathead County Commission)

Virtual members: Peter Brumm (EPA), Steve Stanley (Lake County Commissioner), Mark Reller (BPA), Myla Kelly (DEQ), **Absent members:** Kathy Olsen (DNRC Kalispell), Jim Williams (FWP), Jasmine Courville-Brown (CSKT), Jim Simpson (Lake County Conservation District), Bill Dykes (BOR), Brian Hughes (Governor appointed)

Public/Other: Sam Bourret (FWP), Mike Koopal (WLI), Claire Kirk (FLBS/MMW BSWC), Saige Jibben (Lake County CD BSWC), Heidi Fleury (Lake CD), Kate Sheridan (Flathead Lakers), Wade Fredenberg (TU Flathead Chapter), Matt Church (FLBS), Tom Bansak (FLBS), Captain Dan Handlin (Little Bitterroot Lake Association), Mark Suppelsa (Echo Lake), Nannette Nelson (FLBS), Meagan Gilmore (DEQ), Onno Wieringa (Flathead Lakers/UC³), Keely Larson (UM graduate student), Sheena Pate (Flathead Rivers Alliance), Jim Baker (Friends of Lake Mary Ronan), Constanza von der Pahlen (Flathead Lakers), Eric Trum (DEQ), Pat Klever (citizen), Lynda Saul (citizen), Demi Blythe (DNRC), Brett Slaughter (Senator Daines Office), Jim Elser (FLBS), Asta Bowen (WLI intern), Dan Jessop (Matt Rosendale Office), Bernie Azure (Char-Koosta News), Rickey Schultz (HDR), Sarah Halvorson (UM, FLBS), Sarah Dakin, Liz Lodman (MISC), Tom Woolf

(FWP), Carol Treadwell (WLI), Jeff Kemp (Swan Lakers), Lauren Shotnik (Bitterroot Lake), Cynthia Ingelfinger (WLI), Ryan Richardson (RDG)

3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues

Presenter	Topic/Discussion
<p>Kate Wilson, Commission Administrator</p> <p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>Public Comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Agenda: ACTION: Approve 3/2/22 Minutes & FY23 budget, Staff Report (activities, budget, grants, projects, MT Waters campaign launch, strategic planning process, etc.), Watershed & Conservation Groups in the Basin: Panel Presentation, Agency Reflections, wrap up, next steps, next meeting topics, public comment & adjourn. Field trip and social to follow. • Thank you to previous FBC commissioners: Kathy Olsen (accepted new position as DNRC Regional Operations Manager out of Helena) and Jim Williams (retiring from FWP, joining Heart of Rockies Initiative). • Public Comment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Onno Wieringa (Flathead Lakers/UC³)- After hearing from/participating in groups working on water quality and understanding the threats to Flathead Lake that everyone plays a part in (AIS, climate change, NPS pollution, increased development, etc.), we've realized we are lacking a visual representation of the current status/challenges to our environment. We want to put together a map pinpointing the threats to the basin, the successes we have already accomplished, and include some of the solutions/what can be done. The Flathead Lakers board likes the idea and maybe a map project like this is a partnership opportunity with FBC and CSKT. It is difficult to talk about each issue separately when they all affect each other; we need to show them together in order to find collective solutions for all these issues. • Motion to approve minutes from 3/2/22 meeting (Sandy). Second (Lech). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i>
<p>Staff Updates</p> <p>Kate Wilson, Commission Administrator</p> <p>Cassidy Bender, Commission Coordinator</p>	<p>Staff Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The FBC Executive Committee meets every other Tuesday at 11:15am, meetings are open to everyone, and allow us to conduct business between quarterly meetings. If you are interested in attending, please let staff know. ○ Notable staff activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate and Cassidy split their time 50/50 with FBC and UC³. Emilie is the only full time FBC staffer. • Meeting follow up and planning • Executive Committee planning and participation (bi-weekly) • Grant & Budget management (writing/reporting/tracking) • Monitoring Flathead Basin natural resource issues and projects • Flathead Basin Wastewater Partnership • Septic leachate committee and tech subcommittee support- GIS Risk Map, Synthetic DNA Study, etc. • Stormwater projects support (MT Stormwater Conference- FBC panel) • Education & Outreach committee- Montana Waters campaign development and launch, new FBC website. • Outreach, events & presentations: Center for Watershed Protection Conference, MT Stormwater Conference, Forestry Expo, etc. • Legislative & Committee Tracking • DNRC agency assistance & support • Crown Managers Partnership steering committee (represent both Commissions) • North American Invasive Species Management Association (Kate- president)

<p>Budget Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient standards working group • Western Regional Panel • BC Columbia River Basin Steering Committee (member) • Pend Oreille Basin Commission (Ex-officio, MT upstream rep) • Upper Columbia Conservation Commission & AIS support (50% of Kate and Cassidy's time) • County Assist Team (CAT) Public Information Officer & Liaison Officer (Kate) • Graduate School- MPA Certificate (Kate) • Graphic Design specialization professional development (Cassidy) <p>Sources of Funding FY22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State fiscal year = July 1- June 30 ○ Natural Resources Operating Fund FY22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$127,000- base budget & OTO now permanent (operating) ○ Natural Resources Operating Fund FY21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20,000- accrual from FY21 to Windfall contract • Accrual is a carry forward of money to the next year, the spendable amount is increased but does not change the base budget amount. ○ Federal: EPA Multipurpose State & Tribal Assistance Grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In progress \$26,191- EPA grant 2 (septic leachate GIS mapping; synthetic DNA study) - \$8,000 Expended/\$18,191 (2 years) <p>Existing Contracts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. River Design Group—septic leachate risk mapping & additional technical support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$37,516/\$39,800 (<u>Balance</u>: \$2,283) • Amended June 2021 (added \$15k & one year) • EPA grant (8k) • FBC operating (7k) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Windfall—website, water quality campaign development, reports & publications, graphic design, advertising, etc. ○ \$10,332/\$35,000 (<u>Balance</u>: \$24,668) ○ Amended June 2021 (added \$20,000 from FBC operating & one year) ○ Cornell University- Synthetic DNA tracer project ○ Tracer development, lab analysis and report ○ \$0/\$23,550 (to be expended upon billing) ○ \$14,898 EPA grant; \$8,652 operating funds <p>FY22 Line-Item Budget (approved 9/8/21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Red is amount expended to date (5/11/22). ○ \$35,000/66,000 FBC Nonpoint Source Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build capacity for FBC through DNRC modified FTE. • Due to Kate's acting assignment, we had a savings in personnel, and we will only pull \$35k from operations in FY22 for this line item. ○ \$15,550/20,000 Nonpoint source projects & support ○ Septic Leachate contract (to date), study and/or water quality monitoring to verify model, report generation (\$15,000) ○ Stormwater monitoring & outreach (\$5,000) ○ \$3,400/20,000 Education & Outreach: Water Quality Campaign, outreach materials, website ○ \$8,500/8,500 Member travel/meetings & sponsorships ○ \$3,500/3,500 Conference/meeting sponsorships
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**Budget Updates
continued**

- Prioritize MT-based events. Examples: CMP, NALMS, NAISMA, PNWER, MT Stormwater Conference, etc.
- **\$4,000/4,000** Staff supplies/Travel
 - E.g., virtual meeting equipment, hot spot, cell phone, printing, training, travel on FBC-related business, etc.
- **\$5,000/5,000** Other/Contingency funds
- **TOTAL: \$74,950/127,000 operating- \$52,050 remaining**
- Because of Kate's acting assignment, we had a savings in personnel and will only spend half of NPS position amount (\$35k).

Proposed Remaining FY22 Budget Expenditures (\$52,050)

- **\$7,000-** Flathead Lakers project support request for the 'Living in the Flathead Guide'
 - Seeking \$7k contribution toward the production and development of a physical homeowner's guide and website focusing on how to live sustainably in the Flathead Watershed.
 - FBC staff has already assisted with leading and coordinating the Living by Water section of the guide.
 - We have created a 'Project Funding Request Form' for situations such as these, so any partners could request funding or participation from FBC. It will be posted on our website and when filled out will go to the executive committee and/or full commission for approval.
- **\$24,000-** contribution to continue the Flathead Wastewater Partnership septic cost share program

Discussion:

- Discover Kalispell is a partner in the guide production, and they are talking to the Northwest Montana Association of Realtors. Explore funding from realtor associations. The North Fork landowners and preservation association is working on their own materials, and we should collaborate.
- The Little Bitterroot Newsletter received \$100 each from businesses to have their name and phone number in their newsletter. Include industry/businesses in the guide.
- Distribution plan: website and physical handbook, through partner organizations, newsletter, sites.
- Ensure tribal involvement in the guide with the differences of living on the south vs. north end of the lake. Many people do not understand that tribal land is private land.
- Mike Derglow from the Salish culture committee has committed to reviewing every section and contributing their own section.
- **Action:** Constanza to reach out to Rich Janssen to connect with another CSKT representative on the Flathead Guide.
- How can we measure the effectiveness and success of the Flathead Guide? Include a coupon with a follow up survey, narrative responses will help gauge success of the guide.
- **Motion** to approve the proposed remaining FY22 budget expenditures (Casey). Second (Jack). All in favor. *Motion passes.*

Upcoming Events:

- NSF Septic Leachate Workshop- June 9-10 Flathead Lake Bio Station (invite only)
 - June 8th @ 6:00pm- public Septic Seminar at FLBS
- Upper Columbia Conservation Commission Meeting- June 15th FLBS
- 2022 Flathead Waters Clean Up- August 13th
- MWCC Fall Watershed Tour Sept 14-16th
- North American Invasive Species Management Association– Nov 7-11 Sanibel, Florida
- North American Lakes Management Society (NALMS)– Nov 14-17 Minnesota

**Budget Updates
continued**

- *Always happy to cover registration and travel for FBC members for meetings and conferences, if you would like to attend, please let staff know.*
- FY23 Sponsorships**
- TIER 1 = MT-based org/event in MT addressing relevant natural resource issues (Up to \$5k)
- TIER 2 = Outside MT but priority content (Up to \$2,500)
- Recap of FY22 Sponsorships: \$3,745 total
 - NALMS 2021 (virtual) \$2,500
 - MWCC Watershed Tour \$1,000
 - MWCC Annual Membership \$245
- FY23 Sponsorships: \$2,500
 - NALMS 2022 (virtual/MN) \$1,000
 - Governor’s Conference on Tourism + Recreation \$1,000
 - MWCC Annual membership + tour \$1,500
 - Other spring 2023 events/conferences?
 - Events to share Montana Waters Campaign
- FY23 Proposed Line-Item Budget for Approval**
- **\$66,000** FBC Nonpoint Source Coordinator
 - Comes out of operations until we can get FTE then move to ‘personnel’
 - Nonpoint source monitoring, tracking, project management and partnerships in the basin; outreach and education; Onsite Wastewater Treatment Committee; Technical Committee; administrative support
- **\$21,250** Water quality projects- nonpoint source mitigation & support may include:
 - BSWC member (\$6,250)
 - Stormwater mitigation and outreach (\$5,000)
 - Synthetic DNA study (\$8,652)
 - Septic leachate risk map – south basin
 - Build layer of state-owned/managed lands and facilities
 - Additional studies (drones, thermal studies, nearshore monitoring, etc.)
 - Digitization of electronic permit databases
 - Monitoring for target pollutants via automated or general grab samples, etc.
 - **\$21,250** Education & Outreach- Water Quality Campaign, outreach materials, websites, events, etc.
 - Includes: launch of Water Quality campaign and associated materials; materials for FBC tabling, events, activities; building new website at flatheadbasincommission.com; assist Flathead Wastewater Partnership with education & outreach; biennial report FY23
- **\$7,000** Member travel/meetings
- **\$2,500** Conference/meeting sponsorships
 - Prioritize MT-based events. Examples: CMP, NALMS, NAISMA, PNWER, MT Stormwater Conference, etc.
- **\$4,000** Staff supplies/Travel
 - E.g., hot spot, cell phone, printing, training, travel on FBC-related business, etc.
- **\$5,000** Other/Contingency funds
 - Associated project costs, materials, training, etc. (as needed)
- **TOTAL: \$127,000 operating**
- Additional FY21 \$20,000 accrued from savings (personnel/operating) to Windfall contract (website, E&O campaign, etc.)
- Discussion:**

Committee & Project Updates

- **Motion** to approve FY23 proposed budget (Lech). Second (Jack). All in favor. *Motion passes.*
- Grants: EPA multipurpose grant half expended, no response on the last submitted EPA grant (septic reimbursement). Future grant opportunities with America the Beautiful Act and the bipartisan infrastructure bill, possibility for FBC to get involved with these.

Current Committee Membership

- **Executive Committee:** *Rich Janssen (Chair), Casey Lewis (Vice Chair), DNRC representative (vacant), Jasmine Courville-Brown, Sandy Beder-Miller (member-at-large), FBC staff*
- **Onsite Wastewater Treatment Committee:** *Mike Koopal (Chair), Ryan Richardson (Vice Chair-River Design Group), Casey Lewis (City of Kalispell/FBC), Abigail St Lawrence, Andy Crites, Tom Bansak (FLBS), Dean Sirucek, Craig Kendall (USFS), Diana Luke (Lake County), Eric Bryson (MACO), Eric Regensburger (DEQ), Eric Trum/Meagan Gilmore (DEQ), Sam Sill/Erica Wirtala (MT Association of Realtors), Evan Smith (CSKT), Rep. Dave Fern, Samantha Tappenbeck (Flathead CD), Hilary Devlin (Flathead Lakers), Kate Sheridan (Flathead Lakers), Lamont Kincaide, Roger Noble (Flathead Health), Steve Rosso (Flathead Lakers), Susie Turner (Kalispell Public Works), Tim Burton (LCT), Tom Cowan, Tom Cox (Flathead Lakers), Daniel Congdon (DEQ), Peter Brumm (EPA), Sam Bourret (FWP), Jeff Tuttle (Flathead Lakers), Heidi Fleury (Lake Co CD), Kristal Kiel (Flathead Health Dept.), others?*
- **Education & Outreach Steering Committee:** *Casey Lewis (co-chair), Lech Naumovich (co-chair), Tom Bansak (FLBS), Ian Withrow (FLBS), Samantha Tappenbeck (FCD), Hilary Devlin (Flathead Lakers), Cynthia Ingelfinger (WLI), Sheena Pate (FRA), Evan Smith (CSKT), Eric Trum/Meagan Gilmore/Anna Le (DEQ), FBC staff*
- **Technical Committee Core Team:** *Mike Koopal (Chair); Myla Kelly (DEQ); Ryan Richardson (RDG); Tom Bansak (FLBS); Rachel Malison (FLBS); Sam Bourret (FWP); CSKT – TBD; FBC staff*
 - Supplemental Members (based on project/need): Septic leachate project(s); Stormwater project(s); Monitoring (potential)

Stormwater Projects Update

- Emilie (NPS Coordinator) presented stormwater projects at the Center for Watershed Protection Conference (April) and the Montana Stormwater Conference (May).
- She will be working to build on the recommendations from Phase II, to be discussed during strategic planning session
- Ongoing stormwater education & outreach projects include:
 - Rain Garden Initiative
 - Adopt-a-Drain Program
 - Montana Waters: Clearly Connected stormwater messaging
 - **2022 Flathead Waterways Clean Up- August 13th**

Septic Leachate Projects Update

- EPA Grant- \$26k for septic leachate work
 - \$8k to RDG Contract + \$15k to synthetic DNA project
- Septic Leachate GIS/Risk Mapping Project & Final Report
 - Internal Peer Review (technical committee) **Complete**
 - External Peer Review (March 2022) **In Progress**
 - Unpermitted Systems Analysis- **Complete**
 - Launch of publicly available GIS ‘Hub’ on new FBC website **Summer 2022**
 - Road show and/or webinar sharing model with planning departments, local gov, partners, etc.
- Synthetic DNA study (Whitefish & Lake Mary Ronan)
 - Tracer deployment (April 2022)- **Initiated**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling (June-October 2022)- In progress • Data Analysis (June-November 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flathead Basin Wastewater Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saige Jibben - BSWC (Lake CD) • ~\$9,600 left for ~50 reimbursements in 2022 • FBC proposing financial support to continue project • Education & Outreach on septic cost-share program: realtors workshop, poster, sidewalk signs, events. etc. ○ UM Graduate Project: Socio-economic impacts of septic leachate ○ UM/FLBS National Science Foundation Proposal (based on synthetic DNA project) – Septic Workshop June 9-10 @ FLBS is invite only but there will be a public septic seminar June 8th from 6-8pm @ FLBS. <p>Education & Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New FBC website (2022) in development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ About the Commission & Projects (septic & stormwater hubs) ○ Montana Waters vanity address & landing page • Montana Waters: Clearly Connected Campaign & Website Launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Products/site in development ○ Launch via website, events, and publications in 2022 • Collaboration Efforts & Partner Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flathead Living Guide (Flathead Lakers, FCD, DEQ, FWP, etc.) assisting with Living by Water section ○ Flathead Rain Garden Initiative ○ Adopt a Drain campaign ○ Flathead Waterways Clean Up ○ Events/Meetings: Septic workshop, Septic Risk Map Road Show, Flathead Waters Clean Up 2022, NALMs, etc. <p>FBC Strategic Planning Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FBC strategic planning session to set strategic priorities for the next three years (2022-2025) is tomorrow May 12th at same location (Grouse Mountain Lodge). • Previous Strategic Priorities 2019-2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water quality – non-point source pollution ○ Conservation planning ○ ‘Orphan issues’ = emerging threats
<p>Watershed & Conservation Groups in the Basin Panel Presentations</p>	<p>Friends of Echo Lake – Mark Suppelsa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Echo Lake is a small group of local volunteers that conduct weekend boat inspection shifts at local launch, partnering with FWP ranger. Third year of existence with 3 board members. Echo Lake is a lot of leased land/public access and private, there is one large development proposed they are aware of. Need bigger parking lot at launch. <p>Flathead Conservation District- Lech Naumovich</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCD, established in 1945, supports locally-led conservation and works with private landowners, state/federal agencies, and other organizations to promote resource conservation throughout the Flathead Valley. • Their main programs include education programs, stream permits, landowner assistance, and watershed restoration. Currently working on a Flathead River Erosion Study, secured funding to complete project (starting next month). <p>Flathead Lakers- Kate Sheridan</p>

Watershed & Conservation Groups in the Basin Panel Presentations

- The Flathead Lakers are a 501 c(3) Nonprofit organization located in Polson. They have a board of directors, an executive director, and 4 staff. Funding comes from membership dues, donations & fundraising, and grants.
- Key priorities are water quality issues specifically aquatic invasive species (AIS) and septic leachate with key areas of focus being advocacy, conservation, and education.
- Accomplishments include being an early advocate with CSKT to protect Flathead Lake from AIS, banning phosphate detergent in Flathead and Lake Counties, protected 6000+ acres of land, adding to a network of 12,000 acres (private + public) with the River to Lake Initiative, educating and providing best practices/resources to membership of 1,500+, and educate thousands of students through Watershed Citizen Science program.

Flathead Lake Biological Station- Matt Church

- FLBS is the 2nd oldest field station in the U.S. and was initiated for research and education on ecosystems in NW Montana.
- Water quality monitoring research dates back to early 1900s with routine monitoring since 1977 for nutrients, algae, and zooplankton (15 trips/year sampling lakes and tributaries). FLBS has been monitoring Whitefish Lake since 2001.
- Funding is a mix of philanthropic, WLI, and state allocation (originally funded with EPA and state funds, with additional support from CSKT and Flathead Lakers), and includes \$225k/year for Flathead Lake and tributaries and \$35k/year for Whitefish Lake. Expanding to international research and development through grants and other opportunities.
- Key priorities- nutrients (sources and cycling), AIS, plankton community structure, algal biomass and productivity, septic leachate, mercury in food webs.

Flathead River Alliance- Sheena Pate

- FRA mission is to support and enhance the outstanding and remarkable Three Forks of the Flathead River
- The FRA was formed in 2019, officially became a 501 c(3) nonprofit in 2020, launched a pilot River Ambassador Program in 2021, and launched a pilot River Recreation Monitoring Program in 2022.

Friends of Lake Mary Ronan- Jim Baker

- Initiated to object to a developer's proposal variance request and won, they are a 100% volunteer 501 c(3) organization, with board members and president but no paid staff.
- Key initiatives include participating in the Northwest Montana Lakes Monitoring Network monitoring 2 sites on the lake using a hydro-lab/nitrogen sensor, participating in the FBC Synthetic DNA study in 2022, and will be defining an AIS initiative soon. Do not have staff to monitor boat launches but could get involved with E&O.
- Developer owns and plans to develop 50% of east side of lake. Involved with Dayton elementary school activities, and Lake County planning board presentations. Previously completed an intensive 2-year DEQ supported water quality study, results are currently being analyzed. FLMR and DEQ will be defining a restoration program from the results of that study.

Lake County Conservation District- Heidi Fleury

- Soil and water conservation projects, promoting wise use of natural resources. Projects include issuing 310 permits, education and outreach, and landowner cost share programs.
- FCD does 100 310 permits a year, Lake CD does about 10. They have no jurisdiction on CSKT land, just Lake County outside of tribal land.
- Education and Outreach activities include a living with wildlife workshop with CSKT, a realtor workshop with realtors in Lake County (wildlife and septic issue), outreach for

Watershed & Conservation Groups in the Basin Panel Presentations

the septic reimbursement program, cover crop cost share, fuels hazard reduction cost share, and pollinator initiative.

- BSWC member put together septic maintenance reimbursement program in 2021 (\$20,000 spent in \$200 increments in short amount of time). BSWC member this year to continue the project with remaining funds and FBC contribution.
- Recent customer applied with a septic system that was already failing and unable to be pumped and we are helping with DNRC septic replacement. Program provides opportunities to identify bigger issues.

Little Bitterroot Lake Association- Dan Handlin

- LB Lake Association was created in 1988 and WET (Butte) has been sampling the lake since 1999. Little Bitterroot Lake is 3,000 sq. Ft. and 215 ft. deep.
- Priority issues include AIS, septic leachate, and more. Activities include membership expansion, newsletters, educational signage, partnering with school, volunteer boat inspections, asking boaters to become active boaters- mobilizing locals to protect lakes.

Swan Lakers- Jeff Kemp

- The Swan Lakers are a volunteer, 501 c(3) organization that has been protecting water quality in Swan Lake and the Swan watershed since 2005. The organization started with landowners that opposed an overly aggressive development project and were successful. Swan watershed headwaters are Grey Wolf Lake in Mission Mountains, flows south to north and pauses in Swan Lake, then into Flathead Lake at Bigfork. Tom Bansak (FLBS) is on the board, sampling and testing is done four times a year at 2 sites. Volunteers have been inspecting boats at Swan Lake launch, since 2014-15. Refer folks to LCD for septic reimbursement and fire program.

Trout Unlimited – Flathead Chapter- Wade Fredenberg

- Montana Trout Unlimited has ~4,500 members, Flathead Chapter has ~400 members.
- Board is run by interest, and all are volunteer’s, funding source is locally raised at events like the Flathead Valley TU Auction and regularly partner with agencies (Flathead Land Trust, etc.).
- Focus: native trout (especially bull trout), non-native species and human impacts on the resource (climate change).

Whitefish Lake Institute- Mike Koopal

- Established in 2005, focused on science, education, and aquatic resource initiatives.
- Science activities include water quality monitoring at 2 sites on Whitefish Lake and streams (with DEQ and FLBS) and the creation and management of two citizen science groups, the Northwest Montana Lakes Network, and Upper Columbia Lakes Network.
- Education activities include K-12 programs and college internships.
- Other activities include running two watercraft inspection stations at Whitefish City Beach and Whitefish Lake State Park, septic leachate work starting with a septic study locating septic pollution/presence in Whitefish Lake and now with FBC’s septic risk map/synthetic DNA study.

Facilitated Questions:

What do you see as the most urgent challenges or threats to the Flathead Basin?

- Development & Population Increases:
 - Nutrient input into waterways due to development.
 - Pressure on planning boards and commissioners to approve things that are not ready to approve.
 - Year-round recreational impacts of highly trafficked Airbnb’s and increased population.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Influx of people wanting to live here, GNP has had to address with the ticketing system. There needs to be a shift in how people interact and relate to resources. ○ Jewel Basin example, 10 cars 10 years ago now there is 100 cars in a very limited infrastructure location. Number of people coming to the state, on the internet Echo Lake shows up as top 3 best places to swim in Montana. We need to make people better stewards, manage, control influx of people. ● FCD supporting agricultural producers and landowners proves challenging, there is less connection with the farmer, more distance between them, and less community feel. ● Additions of species of fish have potential to devastate ecosystems. Potential for catastrophic event, train derailment or truck into the river/lake. Continue to put focus on that possibility. <p><i>What do you see as the most urgent threats to water quality (generally)?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train derailment, AIS, and septic leachate. ● Drought conditions in the future and over allocation of water rights. ● People knowing or unknowingly polluting lakes. FWP developed a knowledge base among the public in 5 years with AIS, we need to bring the knowledge up to speed on all these other pollutants topic. ● Water conservation. ● Educating people on septic leachate and other nonpoint source issues- How do you show that to people who don't live on the lake, river, or water? ● Converting science to state law. We need a legislative champion, partnerships with DEQ/other state agencies, and accurate statistics on hand showing leachate in our water and the negative effects of it for the session. <p><i>Is there anything in particular that you would like to see the FBC address in the next 1-3 years?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Materials for local organizations to use in educating the public (stickers, top 10 threats to water quality brochure, septic leachate info, etc.). ● Boat launch focus groups on knowledge of these issues. ● Monitoring is a huge portion of a solution to the issue, FLBS near shore monitoring includes 2 annual long-term sites every year and 20 sites every other year looking for algal growth on rocks. FLBS does not have the funding for near shore monitoring (remote sensing) and it could be something that FBC looks into/provides. ● We know there are active gaps in water quality monitoring, we need to identify those gaps, compile existing data, and analyze/summarize in a visual way to educate the public. DEQ EQUUS database is where all of the monitoring exists. ● Housing crisis statewide, only way to fix is development. Include development communities in these discussions, work with them, bring together both sides of the debate/issue.
<p>Agency Reflections & Input on Flathead Basin Priorities (2022-2025)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mark Bostrom, DNRC- With the influx of ARPA money, there are opportunities for FBC to get more heavily involved with grant funding. Irrigation infrastructure in Montana is generally old and not measured or serviced. Septics is the other issue, could FBC be a grantor for local community septic projects or provide a similar service to make progress on these water quality issues. ● Eric Trum, DEQ- Updated Flathead Watershed Model identifies sources of pollution throughout the watershed, monitoring assessment program working on a lakes assessment for impairment (Abbie Ebert is leading this) and the volunteer monitoring program is active at FLBS. Nonpoint source systems are not accountable for their affects, it is a voluntary system and requires action from responsible parties to prevent nonpoint source pollution. DEQ cannot obtain voluntary action from the public, it requires local awareness that partners like FBC can bring to the issue.

Agency Reflections & Input on Flathead Basin Priorities (2022-2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kurt Steele, USFS- Caring for the land and serving the people is the USFS motto. Wildfire crisis and increased visitor use are the biggest issues the USFS is facing. Listen to locals but think of the whole nation at federal level. Be curious of all sides of the issues. • Kate Hammond, NPS- Climate change, increased visitation, AIS, nutrient enrichment in park waters, impacts on nonnative fish, and wildfire (post fire impacts to environmental quality) are all increasing dramatically and are the National Park Service’s priorities. • Sam Bourret, FWP- FWP is focused on legal fish introductions, fisherman moving fish around, aquaculture, and their impacts to ecosystems. Increase in people means increase in angling and we are focusing on how this is affecting fish populations. • Tom Woolf, FWP – Local groups’ passion and enabling the local groups to do this work is incredibly important. Local involvement is higher here in MT than it was in Idaho. • Mike Freeman, Governor’s Office- It is the Governor’s Office priority to be present at these meetings to hear what challenges local organizations are facing. Challenges need to be overcome; threats need to be neutralized. AIS issue is visual and understandable, NPS issues are not as easily described or understood. Addressing things on a community level is important (this is our problem and our responsibility), when things are left/managed by the government people lose ownership and empowerment.
Wrap Up & Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next Meeting (Fall 2022) topic ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Future Flathead” panel - planned development in the basin in the next 5 years ○ FWP Conservation Areas Presentation: protected areas over the last 20 years ○ Overlay planned development areas + septic leachate risk map ☺ ○ Water Compact update ○ DEQ Narrative Standards- nutrient working group update ○ Flathead Basin projects updates/field trips? (Dam tour? Conservation easement? ARPA project? Etc.)
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion to adjourn (Sandy). Second (Jack). All in favor. <i>Motion passes.</i> Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.

4. Action Items				
Action		Assigned	Due Date	Status
1	Send out draft minutes	Cassidy Bender	6/01/22	Complete
2	Constanza to reach out to Rich Janssen to connect with another CSKT representative on the Flathead Guide.	Constanza van der Pahlen	None	
EXISTING ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS				
3	Myla will invite Jim Dunnegan to jointly present on the selenium topic.	Myla Kelly	On Hold	On Hold
4	Kate to reach out to Erin Sexton at the FLBS on transboundary issues and filling the BC vacancy on FBC.	Kate Wilson		In progress
5	Reach out to other groups in basin for discussion on priority issues and potential partnerships	Kate Wilson, Cassidy Bender	On-going	On-going
6	Check with EPA and Lake/Flathead Conservation Districts (have watershed restoration plans to address TMDLs)	Kate Wilson	On-going	On-going
7	Address BC rep vacancy (ex-officio)	Kate Wilson	On-going	On-going

Flathead Basin Commission Strategic Planning Session

Grouse Mountain Lodge, Whitefish

May 12th, 2022

Attendance:

Rich Janssen (Chair, CSKT), Casey Lewis (Vice Chair, City of Kalispell), Sandy Beder-Miller (Governor-appointed), Lech Naumovich (Flathead Conservation District), Kate Hammond (acting superintendent Glacier National Park), Kurt Steele (USFS), Mark Bostrom (DNRC Helena), Kate Wilson (FBC Commission Administrator), Cassidy Bender (FBC Commission Coordinator), Emilie Henry (FBC Nonpoint Source Coordinator) Jack Potter (Governor-appointed), Michael Freeman (Governor's Office), Peter Brumm (EPA), Mike Koopal (WLI), Meagan Gilmore (DEQ), Hailey Graf (DNRC), Demi Blythe (DNRC), Eric Trum (DEQ), Sam Bourret (FWP)

Top 3 priorities:

- Mitigating nonpoint source pollution
- Education & outreach
- Explore options to increase funding opportunities and incentives to address NPS pollution issues.

General Discussion:

- Commission would like increased communication during the lull between meetings, possibly spotlight an issue once a month in our bulletin or keep commissioners up to date on one issue we have been working on.
- Panel yesterday was great, having groups here was powerful. Seems to be a lot of duplication of efforts, FBC could be the clearinghouse and facilitate getting information to groups.
 - 'How to' information on our website, consistent messaging (example of Little Bitterroot Lake Association flyer), provide more materials, etc.
 - We should be strategic about what the role of the FBC is that we can be additive/complementary of our partners efforts.
- ARPA infrastructure and irrigation funds are available for a lot of the projects we are working on/could be working on (connecting mobile home communities to sewer and/or upgrading septic systems).
 - If we have an excess of funds in our budget or have opportunity to be a grantor, how would we do that? Let's go to our partners and ask what amount of money would help them achieve their goals.
 - They all have their individual groups, but FBC could bring them all together, support them, and then take on bigger picture to identify data gaps, analyze, and visually present data and information fast.
 - Capacity is important too, we have the money and capacity to work with Kalispell but if we had more funds/capacity we could work with Whitefish, Bigfork, Polson, Ronan, Pablo... everywhere in the basin.
 - If we give local groups money, they have to clearly define the goals/deliverables and all of that needs to be applicable to the whole basin/state + match FBC's priorities.

- How would partners use that money effectively if they don't have a staff person to use/allocate that money?
- Could develop more landowner stewardship programs to help promote sustainable decision making among the public. Targeted AIS examples, you come here to see this beautiful pristine environment. If you have a mussel, etc. you won't see that anymore. Scary but makes people care.
 - Pinch point in NPS is how do you compel/encourage private landowners to take voluntary action in something that doesn't show immediate benefit to them. Build momentum/local forums like yesterday, this is needed to tip the scales on this issue.
 - Empower the locals to do the work, locally led conservation priorities. Process of continuous improvement, moving the needle. Take pride in the community (what does it mean to be a Montanan). There is no next best place.
- Create measurable goals:
 - Contacts are a measurable goal (i.e., 50% percent of landowners have been contacted/know about the program/guide).
 - Look into measurable E&O goals with social indicators and measuring outputs versus outcomes, we reached these people... but what was the outcome.
 - DEQ NPS management plan indicates goals in social deliverables, community readiness assessment... they hire a consultant and assess how ready/aware a community is to take on an issues.
 - We could create a guide/handbook or a training session for creating/achieving measurable results (i.e., here are 3 methods that can help you quantitatively provide outcomes).
- GIS Septic Risk Map:
 - Develop instructions with publicly available septic risk map: how to use, how to zoom in to your area, etc.
 - Get synthetic DNA/septic GIS risk map in the newspaper 10 times, create success stories with septic ambassadors, really broadcast this tool.
 - Create local champions of people moving here are a different type of people, lots of them have some capacity to volunteer and many are looking for a more community-oriented home.

Walking Pair Activity Debrief:

- Peter Brumm, EPA- Septics and stormwater in the agency world are seen as local issues, so these are perfect things for FBC/DNRC to take on. Climate change and environmental justice are an EPA focus recently as well, so keep that in mind when looking at acquiring EPA funding.
- Rich/Mark- CSKT gets 55k from EPA for NPS with an emphasis on septic systems. Drought will be a thing on everyone's mind, a NPS catch all category with opportunity to expand/zoom in is appropriate for our main strategic priority.
- Lech/Sam- Keep NPS strategic priority with focus on local septic issue, focused on Flathead Basin research, report, and inform locally led conservation.
 - On the ground projects, FBC to maintain a leadership role
 - Tying development discussions to NPS pollution, septic systems, and stormwater as a whole to create discussions around sustainable development.

- FBC strategic priority to be an umbrella over all with reporting out on all those items.
- Sandy/Jack- WQ is our mission, groups yesterday are laser focused on lakes. How do we branch out and reach the people that don't live on the lake and are affecting Water Quality? What are we going to leave to our kids and grandkids? How do you hook people/make it personal?
 - Personal care products.
- Randy- One focus/priority but we can assist in other areas, support legislation (ad hoc legislative committee).
 - If we want to be seen as a convener in the basin, we need to invite media/legislators/get the word out (Chris? used to attend...).
- Eric/Kurt- Septic systems are meant to leach, meant to go back into lakes, they are designed to treat like that (this is not something the public realizes, general understanding of how these things work is lacking). We need to educate and let the public know at what scale the leaching/pollution is harmful/negative/matters. Will get more buy in this way.
 - Another topic lacking education natural erosion vs. unnatural (flood after fire).
 - Explain agriculture and stormwater as/how they are nonpoint source.
- Sam- Fish/habitat rely on WQ, FWP does not have means to conduct E&O.
 - Social media presence, informing about septic systems (educate people moving here that are coming here, incentivize realtors to care).
- Info/testing wells and septic system inspections are usually in the offer to purchase a property. Flathead Guide provided to realtors, CEU for realtors to include this information... NPS/septic focused opportunity for them to learn.
 - Possible product for FBC to create- realtor talking points, present campaign, and Flathead Guide at realtors' associations.
 - Need industry buy in with the Flathead Living Guide, ... having their logo/information in the guide and to have copies in their office. Realtors paid \$100 each to have names/ads included in publication.
 - Need to distribute guide to Title companies, verbal outreach to property owners/realtors... distribute pamphlets to title companies to give to realtors/homeowners.
- Casey/Mike- Synthesis of all the data that other groups have collected, where it is/how do we use it or show it (we could contract this out). There is a lack of visual representation of this monitoring data, and we could use this as a communication tool for the public and partners.
 - Then we could use the data to inform general direction and water quality project implementation and inform how to distribute possible future funds.
 - This would provide a technical aspect to feed the education and outreach component.
 - DEQ updating subdivision review rules, role for FBC to engage in that process. Engaging with the county more broadly.
 - No conversation on stormwater at our panel yesterday was really telling: the City of Kalispell and partnership with FBC is the **only work** being done on stormwater in the basin, we need to push the envelope now on making changes to prevent pollution with this increased flow and pollutant potential. Not work retroactively.
- Hailey G/Demi- FBC has wide view and we could send an invite to all the groups in the basin to host spring training (i.e., here are all the facts, the latest news and data, standardized data collection, create a survey for data collection with monitoring work being done, location, we

talked to this many people, about these topics, etc.) to train local groups on how to talk to the public on these issues. Additionally, have a fall/post season gathering (compile all reports and data from field season, reflect on season, challenges, successes and coordinate with all the groups). Empowering all of these local groups to do the work that they want to do.

- For future FBC meeting:
 - **Action:** Research counties and their rule making process/interaction with legislators (i.e., making more stringent rules), future meeting speaker topic.
 - Data from municipalities in the basin on where development is occurring before next meeting panel on a map, then overlay our septic map.
 - Planning boards and feedback from them on how subdivision review works, lake shore protection regs, sustainable development, and implications to/process on how changes to those rules happens and other rules in general work/if we had feedback or desired changes.
- FBC – 5 series of videos (similar to CRC AIS PSAs) each one specifically addressing one NPS issue. With one collective one addressing living/moving/recreating here responsibly (MT Waters campaign overview). Tie in fish/water/pristine environment to make people care, hammer home the connection element.
 - Seasonal concept to videos- spring run-off, winter recreating responsibility, etc.

Action Items:

- **Action:** Send email update to commissioners (once a month) on the status on the projects, events, and other relevant updates.
- **Action:** Research counties and their rule making process/interaction with legislators (i.e., making more stringent rules), future meeting speaker topic.
- **Action:** Compile planning session notes and develop 2022-2025 FBC strategic plan.