



Flathead Lakers 2019 Annual Report

Clean Water Connections

*Flathead Lake serves as a mirror that reflects
how well we are living in balance with
our environment.*

-Dick Wollin, Flathead Lakers President
1988-1994





Dear Lakers Members,

It is my honor to share the highlights of 2019. As you'll read in the stories before you, this past year comprised honors, transitions, conservation achievements, and more. This is made possible by the incredibly dedicated membership base. You should feel proud of your role protecting Flathead Lake this past year. It is mussel-free, blue, and we've seen the clearest waters in some areas in decades.

I was initially drawn to Flathead Lake as an open water swimmer. There are not many places like this in the world where it would be possible to live along the shore of a pristine lake. As the water temperatures rise this spring, I'll be getting my face in the water most days, and I want to swim in the cleanest, most ecologically healthy lake possible. I know you do, too – you were also drawn to this place at some point in your life. Now, you want to ensure that is it there for your family, clean drinking water, to support the businesses we enjoy and for time spent on the water fishing, boating, and paddling.

I want to extend a special thank you to the Lakers' Board of Directors, who have been exceptionally supportive during this transition, and have invested in the organization so that we are poised for growth from our new office. As I carry the banner of the Lakers forward, I'm humbled by the advocacy and stewardship achievements of this over the decades, and on the cusp of this new decade.

The fight to protect Flathead Lake is not over, though, and we're well on our way to protecting more conservation acreage, providing the next generation with an ethic of care and advocacy for stronger protections to keep – or improve – our waters.

I look forward to meeting more of you and inviting more of our friends, neighbors, and community members into our Laker family to keep Flathead Blue for years to come.

Be well,

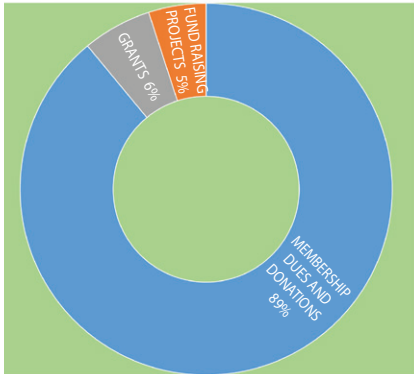
Kate

The Power of Our Community

At the Lakers, we're making a shift in how we communicate our costs. We want to demonstrate that your generous donations are being used wisely toward the protection of the lake, while also reflecting the costs that go towards building strong organizational structure so that we can continue to grow sustainability. In the chart on the left, you'll see that the majority of our income derives from our loyal membership base - thank you! On the right, you'll see that, after Core Mission Support, our expenses are divided evenly among our three program areas. Core Mission Support includes our phenomenal new office space, employee benefits and training, and building a backbone of support so we can protect Flathead Lake for future generations.

INCOME

- MEMBERSHIP DUES AND DONATIONS 89%
- FUND RAISING PROJECTS 5%
- GRANTS 6%



Income - \$267,928.20

EXPENSES

- ADVOCACY PROGRAM DIRECT EXPENSES 39%
- CRITICAL LANDS PROGRAM DIRECT EXPENSES 26%
- EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECT EXPENSES 35%



Expenses - \$260,183.75

In 2019 —

over **1000 members** donated to our cause.

13 sustaining members supported our efforts each month, with an easy, affordable donation.

over **100 volunteers** planted trees, led student activities, monitored water quality on Flathead Lake, helped run our events, and more.

All of Us - made a difference for Flathead Lake's future.

42 new members

joined the Flathead Lakers community and are supporting our work.

100 members

made a donation to the Flathead River Conservation Project to help protect a special place on the river.

75 Students

learned about the complexities of the Flathead watershed, and threats that it faces.

Countless Members

took advantage of our educational opportunities to learn more about science, like Science on Tap!

*All of our achievements begin with your support.
Thank you for being part of our community!*

Our 2019 Achievements

Saving Critical Lands For Two Decades

Over the past year, the Flathead Lakers and Flathead Land Trust raised \$128,000 from private funds needed to qualify for a federal grant of \$500,000 from the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The funds allow us to protect key wetlands, floodplain, and farmlands along the Flathead River, just upstream from the lake, that help sustain our clean water and natural heritage.

With your support, the Flathead Lakers established and sustain the Flathead River to Lake Initiative, a diverse partnership that has conserved 6,000 acres of critical lands along rivers and wetlands upstream of Flathead Lake that help safeguard our clean water for 20 years.

Thank you to all our members who contributed to this project.



Follow our collaborative Flathead River to Lake Initiative conservation work on Facebook or a quarterly R2L E-News. Sign up at www.flatheadrivertolake.org

We are excited to host our community, when the time is right, at our new location in the Salish building in Polson. We have an education room and library to share.



Our Critical Lands Program Director Given Conservation Leadership Award

The Flathead Land Trust presented their Conservation Leadership Award to Constanza von der Pahlen, Flathead Lakers Critical Land Program Director, for her leadership, vision, and support for advancing conservation efforts in the Flathead Watershed. Constanza has led the Lakers' efforts to collaboratively protect and restore lands critical for sustaining water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and other values for the past 20 years.

Constanza was honored along with Gael Bissell for "their unwavering leadership, service, and commitment to conserving our spectacular land and water legacy through community-based conservation," said Paul Travis, Flathead Land Trust executive director.



Our 2019 Achievements

Educating Future Watershed Citizens

Over three days in May, the Flathead Lakers hosted 350 elementary students and 40 teachers and chaperones from 5 local schools for a day of hands-on learning about the beauty and complexities of our watershed.

Thank you to our 15 passionate volunteers inspiring the next generation of watershed citizens. Thank you to the Polson Rotary for their Festival of Youth grant to help update equipment and materials in our program.



Thwarting Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Flathead Lake remains mussel free! With your support, the Flathead Lakers continued our 'Be a Montana Superhero' educational campaign, and community AIS education and outreach around the Flathead Valley.

We also helped bring AIS education to over 400 middle school students from 5 local schools, in partnership with the Flathead Lake Biological Station and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

We hosted five community mussel walks (and beach clean-ups) around the Flathead watershed. No mussels were found!

This May you can participate by taking a DIY Flathead Lake Mussel Walk. Go walk your favorite piece of Flathead Lake shoreline and share your mussel walk results!

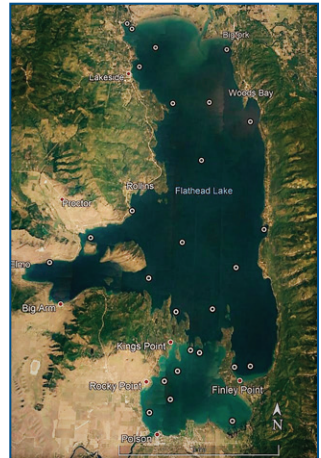


Citizen Scientists Monitor Record Clear Water

Flathead Lake citizen scientists recorded the clearest water in 25 years! Our team of 23 volunteers, and their kids, grandkids, friends, and neighbors, recorded over 60 Secchi disk observations around Flathead Lake this summer.

Thanks to your support and generous funding from the Greater Polson Community Foundation, we are growing community engagement and expanding our program.

Our citizen science program has already contributed to protecting our watershed. Data collected by our citizen scientists encouraged and supported the expansion of the Flathead Lake Monitoring Program (FMP) into Polson Bay.



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Flathead Lakers

Dedicated to protecting clean water, healthy ecosystems and lasting quality of life in the Flathead Watershed.

110 Main St., Suite B
PO Box 70

Polson, MT 59860
406-883-1346

www.flatheadlakers.org

A small, monthly gift can have a big impact on protecting our lake and watershed



Consider becoming a sustaining member of the Flathead Lakers.

Just click on the Join/Donate button at the top of our website to join or renew your membership with an easy and affordable monthly donation.



Photo courtesy of Marty Zajanc

You can leave a lasting legacy
by remembering the Flathead Lakers
in your estate planning.

Visit our website or call the office for more information about ways to make a legacy gift.

Your generosity is a gift to the future.

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Thank You!

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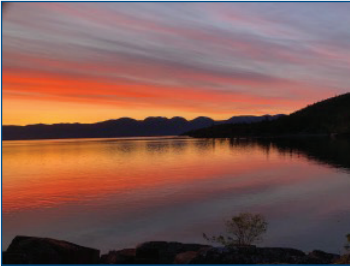
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Stay in Touch!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

Connecting and sharing with our Flathead Lake community. Find up-to-date event schedules.

Science on Tap

Science on Tap is now virtual! Join us August 3rd at 6:30pm via Zoom. To sign up, and find out about the speaker, please visit our website. SOT will take Labor Day off, but continue virtually through 2020, on the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm. Recordings of the presentation will be made available.

3rd Annual Flathead Lake Secchi Disk Dip-in

July 2020 – Become a volunteer citizen scientist.

Help monitor Flathead Lake's beautiful, clear water.

Flathead Lakers Annual Meeting

Thursday, August 13th at 7pm & live-streamed on Zoom.

Details on joining virtually, and about the issues members will be voting on available on our website.

Flathead Lakers Office, Salish Building in Polson

Flathead Lake 5k Run

August 15, Volunteer Park in Lakeside