

MAY 2023

CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL

Seeley Lake, MT



AWARDED GRANTS FOR THE 2023 SEASON

For the following sampling season, we have thankfully received funds from the Seeley Lake Community Foundation, Monitoring Montana Waters, and Montana Invasive Species Council. The Seeley Lake Community Foundation grant will be dedicated to staffing. Monitoring Montana Waters granted funds towards water quality monitoring, specifically focusing on nutrient monitoring, ranging from coliform (E.coli) presence/levels as well as Soluble Reactive Phosphorus (SRP), Total Nitrogen (TN), and Total Phosphorus (TP). Lastly, for our efforts sampling for the presence of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), Montana Invasive Species Council awarded us funds to monitor six lakes. For all monitoring, we will be sampling Lake Alva, Lake Inez, Placid Lake, Big Sky Lake, Seeley Lake, and Salmon Lake.



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FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS CONTINUE IN THE SEELEY-SWAN VALLEY

The fuels reduction program at CRC was very busy in 2022 and early 2023. The program completed a major project at Big Sky Lake where 42 landowners contracted grants with CRC to complete fuel mitigation work on their properties. With several additional property owners tackling fuel mitigation work on their own, a high percentage of the properties around the lake were treated. This will greatly enhance the safety of the homeowners and firefighters, and will reduce the risk of homes being lost in the event of a wildfire. CRC also recently wrapped up a Western States fuel grant that treated the lands of 22 different landowners in the valley totaling 384 acres. We are grateful for the assistance we have received from all of these community members in reducing the risks from wildfire and helping keep our community as safe as possible. We have also conducted many home assessments that identify potential risks to homes should a fire happen. We will be offering this free service again this summer to any interested homeowners.

CRC has an application in for new grant funding to assist landowners with fuels reduction projects. We expect to have these monies available in the near future. While we have a list of applicants seeking funding, we are always interested in adding additional properties. We also have a list of contractors that are interested in booking out their schedules. If you are interested in a fuels reduction project on your land, submit an application via snail mail to PO Box 1471, Seeley Lake, MT 59868-1471, or by email to our Community Forester: Ryan Bell at: commforester@crcmt.org. Applications can be found at <http://crcmt.org/fuels>.

PROWLING FOR OWLS

On Saturday, March 4th, the CRC hosted an Owl Prowl led by wildlife biologist Rachel Fiegley. The evening began with an explanation of owl behavior, identification of the Montana owl species, and was followed by a moonlit owl survey through the forest at River Point Campground.

Throughout the educational seminar, Fiegley reviewed the major points of owl identification: presence/absence of ear tufts, plumage coloring/distinct markings, body size, eye/bill coloring, time the owl was observed, predatory nature, habitat, and vocalization. The presentation included demonstrations of various calls as well as images to aid in identification. Several taxidermized owls were also on display, as well as several owl pellets that were available for dissection! Montana is home to fifteen of the nineteen American owl species. Of the fifteen, western screech, northern saw-whet, boreal, northern pygmy, great grey, barred and great horned owls are most likely to be found in the Seeley area. Following the presentation, Fiegley led the group through the forest at a nearby location to demonstrate a “call-back” survey. Such surveys are carried out by Forest Service biologists to detect owl presence.



After walking approximately half a mile into the loop, the group remained silent for three minutes, searching the treetops for owls. Calls of a great grey owl were then played, followed by another three minutes of silent observation. This was repeated once more before hiking another half mile to repeat the process. While no owls were observed, spirits remained high. We thank all participants for joining us in our prowling for owls, especially Rachel Fiegley for leading the efforts!

The CRC hopes to lead more nature events as the season progresses. The Owl Prowl marks our sixth nature walk since initiating efforts in 2020.



WELCOME LAURIE KVAMME - BOOKKEEPER/GRANTS MANAGER

Greetings Friends & Part-time Neighbors!

My name is Laurie Kvamme and I was recently hired as the part time bookkeeper and grants manager for the Clearwater Resources Council. I so look forward to my participation (even if it is just working with numbers) in the very important efforts to conserve and sustain the incredible Clearwater region. It is my goal to use my experience as the Business Manager/District Clerk within Montana’s public-school systems to quickly align with the grant sourced business functions of the CRC. Wish me luck!

On a personal note, my husband, Phil and I call Seeley Lake our home but still work in Billings much of the time. We have a combined family of 8 children and 14 really adorable grandchildren. I am an avid golfer, love to fish, canoe, knit and watch whatever events the grands are participating in.



WELCOME DAVE TORRELL - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am very excited to join the Clearwater Resource Council team of dedicated and talented staff and volunteers. I strongly believe in the mission of this great organization and plan to move to Seeley Lake as soon as I can find a place to live. I feel my love for conserving natural resources, work experience and education have prepared me to excel as the Executive Director. I look forward to meeting community leaders and passionate citizens of the community who share in their desire to make sure the Seeley Lake area preserves the natural ecosystem so loved by those who live and visit this wonderful place. I invite anyone in the community to come to our office and learn more about the things we are doing to ensure economic viability and cultural vitality in harmony with conserving, restoring, and enhancing the pristine conditions of the landscape surrounding Seeley Lake and the Chain of Lakes watershed for both present and future generations of people to enjoy,

CRC’S NEW BIG SKY WATERSHED CORPS MEMBER

McKenzie Mallory is our newest Big Sky Watershed Corps member serving the Clearwater Resource Council here in Seeley Lake. McKenzie grew up in St. George, Virginia and attended the University of Virginia, majoring in Biology. Living in such close proximity to the Appalachian mountains, she developed a love for the natural world.

Having grown up in such a small town, she finds comfort in seeing that same atmosphere mirrored in her new home. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, fishing, reading, and baking. McKenzie looks forward to serving her new community in as many ways as she can while she absorbs all that Montana has to offer!

