



Contact Us at 406-677-0069

April 2021

Clearwater

NEWS

Happy Spring!

Nature Walk Success

As a non-profit, CRC wants to involve the community and tourists who enjoy the lakes, streams, and land within the Clearwater Watershed as much as possible. This spring, CRC started a new guided nature walk series in an effort to provide opportunities for people to get outside and learn about the natural resources of the Clearwater Valley.

The first event of the year was a Winter Snowshoe, which took place on Sunday, March 14. This event, which had 17 attendees, was guided by current U.S. Forest Service wildlife biologist Scott Tomson and recently retired wildlife biologist Rachel Feigley. Scott and Rachel taught about wildlife sign and animal track identification, such as what markings to look for and what to measure or record. Snowshoers saw examples of squirrel middens (signs of food stashes), woodpecker holes, and beaver cuttings! Participants also learned about winter ecology, including cold weather adaptations and detection of animal activity in forests and wetlands. Thank you, Scott and Rachel, for sharing your time and knowledge with us!

Save the date for our spring wildflower walk on Saturday June 19! We will meet at the CRC office in the Bison and Bear Center off of Highway 83 at 10 a.m. for Covid-safe carpooling to our hiking location. This event will occur rain or shine and will not allow dogs. Stay tuned for more details through our website, social media, and emails.



Top: USFS wildlife biologist Scott Tomson instructs attendees on how to record and identify animal tracks.

Below: Participants snowshoe along the Clearwater River.

Fuels Mitigation Update

The Clearwater Resource Council was recently awarded a fuels mitigation grant from Missoula County, under a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The funding will be used to perform fuel mitigation activities on private properties in the Shining Shirt and Double Arrow areas. In addition, CRC will undertake home assessments to assist homeowners in creating defensible space in the home ignition zone. The grant also allows for fuels mitigation planning (but not implementation) in other areas of the Clearwater Valley designated as high risk from wildfire. A portion of the funding will be used by CRC to hire a Community Forester to implement fuels mitigation projects and to undertake home assessments and community outreach. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply. (Visit crcmt.org for additional information.)

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Watershed Planning

The Clearwater Resource Council is embarking on a watershed planning process to identify, prioritize, and better coordinate efforts to protect and restore the natural resources of the Clearwater region (from Highway 200 up to Summit Lake). This work is funded by the Bureau of Reclamation and will aid in future on-the-ground activities in the region.

The goal of our watershed plan is to outline baseline conditions for the watershed and develop a prioritized matrix of site-specific improvements that can be undertaken to improve the quality and resiliency of our waters and the upland areas that impact the Clearwater Valley's waters. The watershed plan is designed to facilitate action on-the-ground, with specific actions keyed to specific implementation benchmarks. The plan will be designed to be dynamic in nature, with annual updates to reflect accomplishments and new priorities as they arise.

We want your input! As residents or visitors of the Clearwater region, we want to know what you think are the most critical concerns for the watershed. To more fully understand your concerns, CRC has created a survey to identify community priorities and to assist us in developing a responsive watershed plan. **Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/99HR8NK> to complete an electronic survey. Alternatively, you can pick up a hard copy of the survey at the Clearwater Resource Council's office in the Bison and Bear Center in Seeley Lake. All surveys must be submitted no later than April 8, 2021.** Thank you in advance for your participation!

Volunteer Spotlight

This month, we would like to thank one of our volunteers for his exemplary service: Jeff Holm. Jeff has been an active volunteer with CRC since 2017. He has assisted with both lake and stream monitoring, performing data collection and field assistance. Most recently, Jeff spent an entire day volunteering his time and auger skills to help CRC staff complete winter monitoring on Seeley, Placid, and Salmon Lakes during our first field day of 2021. In his free time, Jeff spends his time snowshoeing, hiking, and fishing. Jeff goes above and beyond and we value all the help he has provided to CRC. Thank you, Jeff!

CRC could not function without our volunteers. Volunteers make our citizen science research programs run smoothly and successfully. If you are interested in volunteering this upcoming field season, please contact Alicia at 443-545-4786 or crc.watshd.coord@crcmt.org.



Above: Jeff assists with lake monitoring and drives CRC staff on his boat (photo: Emily McGuirt)

Right: Jeff augers a hole in Seeley Lake so that CRC staff can collect water samples (photo: Alicia Dixon)



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Picture above: CRC staff collects data from an augered hole on Seeley Lake (photo: Emily McGuirt).

Winter Data Collection

Field season is upon us and monitoring has already begun! On March 8, a team of CRC staff gathered data for dissolved oxygen, conductivity, algae, nutrient, and pH conditions on Seeley, Placid, and Salmon Lakes in order to collect winter baseline data to aid in future water quality analyses. A new addition to the monitoring process this year is a multiparameter water quality monitoring instrument. This new piece of equipment was recently purchased thanks to a Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART grant. It uses sensors to accurately read and record levels of conductivity, algae, and pH as deep as 30 meters (~100 feet) in our lakes. Such data is integral to determining the health of our lakes here in the Clearwater Watershed and can aid in detecting harmful algal blooms and habitat degradation.

Stream monitoring will also be underway shortly, and we are looking for volunteers! If you want to join the fun and “Adopt a Stream”, contact Alicia at 443-545-4786 or crc.watshd.coord@crcmt.org.

Join Us April 22 from 4-6 pm to Celebrate Earth Day

This April, CRC is celebrating Earth Day at the Bison and Bear Center and we want you to join us! With the purchase of a raffle ticket, you will receive a free bowl of homemade chili made with locally sourced meat. In the spirit of Earth Day, please bring your own reusable bowl, cup, and utensil. In addition to chili and raffle tickets, different activities and information stations will be set up in the parking lot. Materials will be offered to create your own native seed sculpture that you can later plant to help increase the number of plant species that provide food sources for pollinators in the Clearwater Valley. Children’s activities will also offer fun and prizes. There will be tables run by other local organizations, including the U.S. Forest Service. Come visit us on Thursday, April 22 from 4-6 pm!

Want to get involved? CRC is lucky to have a wonderful set of volunteers who work with us each year. There are many different volunteer opportunities, so if you would like to be a part of our team and join the fun, please contact us at (443) 545-4786 or crc.watshd.coord@crcmt.org.

Follow us on social media!

We are always looking for fun photos of the region! If you have any photographs you would like to submit for consideration for posting on our social media or website pages, please do so at:

crcmt.org/photo-submissions



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