

SUMMER
2021

CLEARWATER NEWS

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The Official Newsletter of the Clearwater Resource Council



IN THIS ISSUE

- Seasonal Update
- Forestry News
- Education and Outreach
- Summer Monitoring
- Events



Contact Us at 406-677-0069

CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

CLEARWATER NEWS

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Clearwater Resource Council is to engage the community and facilitate efforts that will enhance, conserve, sustain, and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Clearwater Watershed for present and future generations.

OUR GOALS:

- Build community capacity to resolve issues;
- Create opportunities for interaction among citizens, businesses and agencies;
- Build common ground by consensus process;
- Facilitate timely collection and dissemination of information;
- Enhance the understanding of cumulative effects of land management practices; and
- Develop and support responsible resource stewardship programs.



Caryn Miske,
Executive Director



Jon Haufler, Board of
Directors President
and CRC co-founder

Clearwater Resource Council

P.O. Box 1471, Seeley Lake, MT
59868

For additional information
contact Caryn Miske, email:
caryn@crcmt.org.
by phone: 406-677-0069

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CLEARWATER NEWS

SEASONAL UPDATE

Dear CRC members,

As our days continue to get longer and warmer, we are excited to begin our new summer programs, while continuing the core work which supports the CRC mission. Over the past year, our virtual office protocols have been replaced with bustling staff meetings and preparations, in anticipation of the busy summer season.

With summer comes field work, events, and fun. CRC staff have already begun monitoring efforts on the lakes and streams in the Clearwater Valley. Our calendar is marked with community events, volunteer opportunities, and various celebrations. Sunshine has supplied energy, while rain has brought renewal. This upcoming season has a lot to offer, and we hope you join us as we continue to do what we love, in a place we love. Happy Summer from CRC!



Photo by Emily McGuirt



SUMMER OF FUELS

This summer is shaping up to be a busy time for the fuels mitigation staff at CRC! We are in the process of planning a number of different education and outreach events, so stay tuned for upcoming details. CRC has been invited to attend multiple Homeowner Association Meetings for communities interested in community-wide fuel reduction projects. Homeowners on Big Sky Lake (BSL) came together last summer to work with CRC on an unique project that, upon completion, will protect up to 50 properties in the BSL community! As this exciting project progresses we will keep our website updated. CRC looks forward to working with other groups to increase the safety and resiliency of neighborhoods in our watershed.

CRC also plans to meet regularly with other stakeholder groups in the valley to facilitate collaborative fuels mitigation efforts. For example, CRC, in partnership with the Seeley Lake Ranger District, will host a tour of treated properties in Double Arrow. Also keep an eye out for our CRC booth at the Loon and Fish Festival this August, and for CRC's Campfire and Nature Walk Series (see below).

CRC will also be conducting wildfire preparedness site visits throughout the summer, so if you are interested in a free home assessment with a CRC and/or DNRC employee, contact Julia Schwager at julia.schwag@gmail.com.



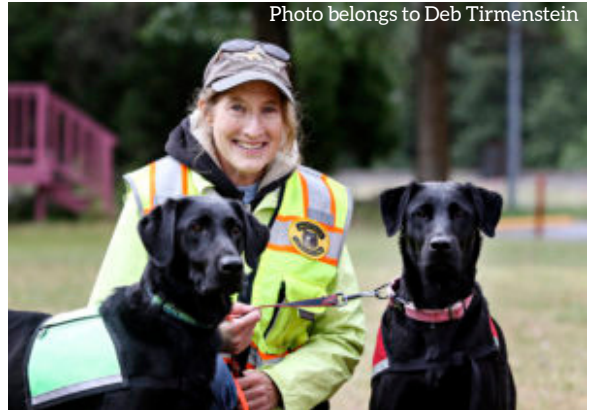
Photo by Emily McGuirt

CLEARWATER NEWS

GROWTH OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

In 2021, two new community education and outreach programs were born within CRC. The first of these is our guided Nature Walk Series. In March, a guided snowshoe walk took place educating participants on animal tracking and winter ecology. The event proved to be a success, with 17 attendees. The second event within this series will be a guided wildflower walk taking place on Saturday, June 19. Steve Shelly, retired

U.S. Forest Service botanist, will serve as the guide and interpreter. Attendance will be limited to 20 people, so registration through our website (crcmt.org) is required. A third guided Nature Walk will be held in the fall, focusing on forest ecology and the role of larch trees in our local forests.



The second new education and outreach program is our Campfire Series which will be kicked off on Thursday, June 10 at 7:00 p.m. at the Placid Lake State Park Campground. CRC staff member Heidi Sedivy will be giving a presentation on aquatic invasive species (AIS). She will review the importance of Clean, Drain, Dry protocols, and will discuss the lesser-known ways humans spread invasive species: the pet trade, live bait, horticulture/decorating, etc. The presentation will also feature Deb Tirmenstein and her two AIS detection dogs Rosebud and Ismay. The dogs will be doing live demonstrations of their mussel detection skills. This event is open to the public and families are encouraged to attend.

Two more Campfire Talks will be given throughout Summer 2021: one in July on fuels mitigation and one in September on the benefit of beavers in aquatic systems. Stay tuned for more details!



CLEARWATER NEWS

SUMMER MONITORING UNDERWAY

CRC's first round of lake monitoring for the spring season was completed during the last few weeks of May. This year, water quality monitoring is taking place on the 6 major lakes in the Valley: Alva, Inez, Seeley, Placid, Big Sky, and Salmon. Our water quality monitoring includes collecting surface and deep water samples for lab analysis of nutrients, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, algae, bacteria and temperature data. This is the first year that nutrient data will systematically be collected for all lakes, and this baseline data will be critical in better informing future management decisions. In addition to lake monitoring, CRC will be conducting stream monitoring on the Clearwater River and Morrell Creek.

To supplement our water quality monitoring efforts, CRC will also be conducting Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) monitoring on the same six lakes. This monitoring will take place every two weeks from July to September. The purpose of our AIS program is to monitor for the absence/presence of zebra and quagga mussel veligers (larvae) in the lakes. While invasive mussels have not yet breached the continental divide, as of May 19, 2021, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks had stopped 21 mussel-fouled boats at various watercraft inspection stations throughout the state. Given the number of fouled boats entering Montana, continued vigilance is necessary as it would only take one contaminated boat to infect our waters here in the Clearwater Valley.

After prevention, early detection and rapid response are the most important courses of action to combat the irreversible impacts associated with zebra and quagga mussels introduction. If you are a homeowner on a lake in the Clearwater Valley, please consider signing up to participate in our new AIS citizen science project. CRC has constructed over 30 substrates to be deployed in local lakes as an early detection tool. These instruments, made of pvc pipes and rope, can be hung off one's dock and only need to be checked once per month. Participants will be provided initial training and a simple data form to be filled out monthly and returned to CRC via email or forms can be mailed to the office. Questions can be directed to Alicia Dixon at crc.watshd.coord@crcmt.org or 443-545-4786. We hope you consider volunteering to protect and preserve our waters!



Photo by Jeff Harris



STAFF UPDATES

THANK YOU, JOANN

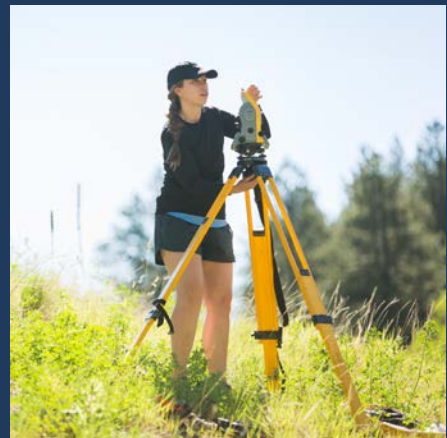
After 13 years of dedicated work for CRC, Joann Wallenburn has decided to step down and retire from her long time position as Aquatics Director. Joann has led and facilitated all of CRC's aquatics programs, including but not limited to Adopt-a-Lake, Adopt-a-Stream, and Students-in-Action. From collecting and analyzing data, to leading citizen science programs, to teaching local students about freshwater science, Joann has been an integral part of CRC. We are excited to continue working with Joann as she volunteers with our Adopt-a-Lake program this summer. Thank you, Joann!



Photo belongs to J. Wallenburn

WELCOME, HAYLIE

Haylie Brown is CRC's new Aquatics Director. Haylie has her master's degree in Fluvial Geomorphology from the University of Northern Colorado; and bachelor's degree in Geoscience, with a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) certificate, from the University of Montana. Haylie has lived in Seeley Lake since 2014.



WELCOME, KRISTJAN

Meet Kristjan, CRC's new summer intern! Kristjan is an Environmental Studies student at the University of Montana in Missoula. He will be aiding in lake and stream monitoring efforts throughout the summer, as well as working on CRC's upcoming pollinator garden project and participating in AIS outreach.



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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Please check our website or call 406-677-0069 for the most up to date information.

June 10

Campfire Talk 1: Aquatic Invasive Species with Heidi Sedivy
7 pm @ Placid Lake Campground and Picnic Area (middle loop)

June 19

Community Wildflower Walk
Guided by Steve Shelly (retired USFS)

June 20

CRC's Summer Solstice Bluegrass Night
Fundraiser, must RSVP to attend

July 10

Make the Dig Invasive Waterlily Removal Event
Volunteer Opportunity

July 15

Campfire Talk 2: Fuels Mitigation with Julia Schwager
7 pm @ local campground TBD

July 31

Make the Cut Invasive Waterlily Removal Contest
Public Event

July (dates TBD)

*Double Arrow Ranch Landowners Association Tour and
Fuels Reduction Chipper Demo*

August 20-21

Alpine Artisans, Inc.'s (AAI) Loon and Fish Art Show and Festival
Seeley Lake Community Foundation Building

August 26

CRC's Annual Meeting (open to public) and Volunteer Thank You Event

September 2

Campfire Talk 3: Beavers with Haylie Brown
7 pm @ local campground TBD