

This is our New Year MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION Newsletter No. 1



**Please PRIORIZE a Brief Moment and READ THIS NEWSLETTER!**

**\*\*\*Learn about your Lake Association\*\*\***

**JOIN/RENEW your Membership-Make your 2023 Tax Deductible CONTRIBUTION**

*A Message from Your LBLA Board President*

Greetings Lake Friends,

Together we are making a difference.

*Founded in 1988, Little Bitterroot Lake Association’s purpose is to ensure our lake is protected and remains pristine for future generations. The association is a non-profit and consists of a Board of Directors, but most importantly it is made up of members of our lake community just like YOU.*

Our job, like the Big Sign at the “Y” says is to – Keep Little Bitterroot Lake (LBL) Pristine for Future Generations. With your generous contributions, our active Board of Directors (BOD) and Great Volunteers - A lot is happening. There is great NEWS! But there are MANY Challenges!

I get many calls each month on the goings-on at LBL. You are concerned about the safety and health of our lake. You CARE! That is terrific. You are making a difference. Together we are defending our lake. Taking care of our lake is a complex and serious endeavor.

On page three of this NEWSLETTER is a list of Serious Threats to Our Lake, your current LBLA Responses, NEW Programs we hope to launch, and current ACTIVE Initiatives.

We are all very busy with our lives and what we do boils down to what our priorities are...As you know there are some priorities that you MUST make time for – your Little Bitterroot Lake is one of them. Let’s all take care of our lake, not just use it! We MUST be GUARDIANS of our lake and thus protect the Investment we have all made... Please – Join and Contribute to LBLA.

Capt Dan - President LBLA

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***If you are not a member, PLEASE JOIN NOW***

***If you are a member, PLEASE MAKE YOUR 2023 CONTRIBUTION***

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## **“NEW” LBLA 2023 Membership and Contribution Campaign**

### **We are commencing a “NEW” membership drive!**

Our goal is to add 50 “NEW” members to our Association.

We have strength in numbers – **PLEASE JOIN TODAY!**



**WE WANT YOU!**

**Our Contribution Campaign needs everyone’s support.  
Will you all help us launch these new programs?**



We need to expand our effort to save our lake and keep it pristine. We have 6 key  
\*NEW\*investments for 2023. Your support is needed to fund them:

- 1) Prizes for a NEW Youth LAKE Education and Awareness Fishing Derby - \$500
- 2) An expanded weekly lake cleanup program - \$10/hr. x 5 hr. per week x 10 weeks = \$500
- 3) New Signs educating all about Noise/Wake/Pollution - \$250
- 4) School Sponsorship and Grants to educate kids - \$450
- 5) LBLA T-Shirt Program for Members - \$15/shirt x 100 shirts = \$1500
- 6) Expanded lake sampling for Septic Leachate - \$650

## **Some of our serious Threats and Challenges:**

- Invasive Water Species
- Septic System Age and Viability
- Increasing public use and abuse entering the lake from the south and north
- Water Quality
- Lake Level Challenges
- Transient Camping
- Noxious Weeds
- Algae
- Shoreline Erosion
- Lot over use
- The threat to Home Values should Pollution or AIS affect our Lake (SEE Article Below)

## **How LBLA is battling our Challenges:**

- Expanded Lake Water Sampling to determine the health of our lake
- \*NEW\*Septic Education and Awareness Program (SEAP)
- Summer Boat Launch Volunteers Program
- Stop Aquatic Invasive Species Initiative
- \*New\* Algae/Bacteria Septic Source Sampling
- Grade School Grant and Support Initiative
- 200 FT No Wake Initiative
- \*NEW\*Youth Fishing Derby
- Noise Problems Addressed with Signs and Newsletter
- Weed Control Education and Management Newsletter
- Monitoring VRBO/Airbnb Conditional Use Permits
- \*NEW\*Expanded Clean Up Heroes – Picking up Trash and Investigating Contamination
- Lake Etiquette and Safety Initiatives
- Lake Education and Awareness – Road Signs, Newsletters and Community Events
- Loon Education and Awareness Program
- Bass Research
- Maintaining Key Contacts/Relationships with ALL the Organizations that Affect our Lake
- Actively fielding your many calls and working diligently on your concerns
- Full on Rehabilitation and Reorganization of our 35 years of LBLA's Paperwork and Historical Docs

## What are the top 10 things you can do to ensure our lake remains healthy and pristine?

- 1) Support the Little Bitterroot Lake Association.
- 2) Do your part to keep a look out for problems and report them to the association board.
- 3) Don't use Fertilizers or Pesticides near the lake.
- 4) Have your septic system health checked. *Pump it!*
- 5) Pickup garbage before it gets into our lake
- 6) Work as a volunteer at the boat launch.
- 7) Check for AIS on any boat BEFORE it enters the lake
- 8) Ask your neighbor to join LBLA—Be a Board Member, it's your turn to serve.
- 9) Checkout our website --- [www.littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org](http://www.littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org)
- 10) Be a good neighbor

# Threats (Pollution and AIS) to Lake Water Quality and Home Values

## Nutrient Pollution

Of concern is the shift in trophic state of many U.S. lakes with the number of oligotrophic lakes declining and the number of eutrophic or hypereutrophic increasing **due to excessive nutrient inputs**. Trophic state is a typical method for categorizing the biological productivity of a lake and is one of several indicators used in the National Lakes Assessment (NLA) in evaluating the condition of lakes across the nation (U.S. EPA, 2016).

Oligotrophic lakes have low concentrations of nutrients and low rates of productivity and thus appear very clear. Eutrophic lakes have high nutrient levels and high rates of plant productivity resulting in reduced water clarity from suspended algae. Mesotrophic lakes fall between these two states. All three trophic states occur naturally; however, lakes that are considered highly disturbed from excessive nutrient inputs are classified as hypereutrophic.

**The “greening” of lakes from surplus nutrients is prevalent in the U.S. with 40% of lakes having excessive total phosphorus concentrations and 35% having excessive total nitrogen** (U.S. EPA, 2016). Elevated nutrient concentrations increase suspended algal biomass, which often results in a host of undesirable effects such as nuisance algae, murky water, decreased levels of dissolved oxygen, odor, and fish kills. Runoff from urban areas and agricultural operations, leaking septic systems, wastewater discharge, and the burning of fossil fuels are the primary sources of excess nutrients in lakes and rivers (U.S. EPA, 2016).

***Of particular concern in the Flathead River Basin (Little Bitterroot Lake) is septic leachate from poorly maintained and failing onsite septic systems. This nonpoint source of excess nutrients is a major threat to water quality and a public health issue.***

According to the Flathead County Health Department, *pre-1990 septic systems generally last 15 to 20 years*, and post-1990 systems can last up to 30 years depending on soil quality and site suitability (Flathead County Health Department, 2012). Approximately 2,900 septic systems (1 in 4) in Lake County and over 15,780 septic systems **(2 in 5) in Flathead County are over 50 years old**. Aging infrastructure coupled with increased demand for onsite wastewater treatment highlights the importance of quantifying the potential costs of failing to address future degradation from excess nutrients.

## Aquatic Invasive Species

**In addition to nutrient pollution, Western Mountain lakes are increasingly subject to invasive plant and animal infestations.** *Invasive species often have no natural competitors and/or predators in these new environments, allowing them to outcompete native species.*

Once established invasive species can fundamentally change the natural processes of the ecosystem. The net result is a *loss in water quality* and in the diversity of native plants and animals as invasive species rapidly multiply and take over ecosystems.

Many U.S. waterbodies have been dramatically altered due to aquatic invasive species, particularly dreissenid mussels. These **tiny mussels have huge appetites** for microscopic plants and animals, they reproduce rapidly, and can severely alter their adopted environment **by reducing the food supply for native species and by enhancing conditions for the rapid growth of blue-green algae** and aquatic vegetation. This results in decreasing water quality and substantial ecological and economic damage.

Although not currently present in Montana, the potential economic damages to the state should dreissenid mussels be introduced and become established ranged from \$96 to \$234 million annually in mitigation costs and lost revenue and an **additional \$288 to \$497 million in property value loss**.

### **Effect of Lake Proximity and Shoreline on Sale Price** (Studied Examples of Flathead and Whitefish Lakes)

As expected, a lakefront home on Flathead or Whitefish sold for considerably more than the same home that was 2 km or more from the lake.

*Homes on Whitefish Lake commanded a **price premium of 254%** on average whilst homes on Flathead Lake had a price premium of 114% on average. The dollar values of these premiums were roughly \$1.3 and \$0.5 million per house for Whitefish and Flathead, respectively.*

Evidence of a price premium for lakefront homes can be seen in the considerable difference in the mean sale price of homes on the lake versus homes not on the lake. The percent increase in price for a home on Whitefish Lake was larger in part because the lake is considerably smaller than Flathead Lake and it is in the exclusive resort town of Whitefish. This difference in price premiums is also reflected in the mean sale price of lakefront homes for Whitefish Lake compared to Flathead Lake, \$1.86 million compared to \$0.95 million, respectively. The length of shoreline can also contribute to a home's value.

The effect of Whitefish Lake on home values diminished the further the property was from the waterfront. Homes within 500 m of the lake sold for 11% more than homes that were 2 km from the lake. The price premium ranged from 5% to 29% for the remaining three distance categories.

Property values were also influenced by access to the water. For homes not on the lake, we estimated a price premium of 30% and 33% for homes that have deeded access to Flathead or Whitefish, respectively, compared to homes without access to the water. The lake access premiums were likely the result of limited public access for both lakes.

Information from: Estimating the Real Estate Price Premium of Two Northwest Montana Lakes – Flathead Lake and Whitefish Lake. by Nanette Nelson, Flathead Lake Biological Station, Polson, MT Lori Curtis, Whitefish Lake Institute, Whitefish, MT Diane Whited, Flathead Lake Biological Station, Polson, MT Linus Meier, Flathead Lake Biological Station, Polson, MT

**Your Membership and Contribution in LBLA directly  
help PROTECT your Property Investment**

# We must all “ACTIVELY” serve to protect our Lake and Investment

*A Message from your LBLA Board of Directors*

It is “Active” member support that makes everything possible. Thank you for your continued donations and for keeping your eyes and ears open to issues concerning Little Bitterroot Lake. Please continue to report any issues you discover (*CaptainDanNWA@centurytel.net* or 612 251-3778).

For those that have not yet joined the association please take the time to think about what your support would provide everyone, including yourself, who enjoys our beautiful lake now and in the future. Every tax-free donation helps. If you are not a member it is time to join! Your membership makes a statement about our community. It says, “WE CARE.”

Participation by current members is outstanding. You care about our lake enough to call us when ANY issues of concern arise. Members last year called (and we worked) many issues: lake levels, septic, trash, noise, and much more...Today we have record setting membership numbers – over 100 lake shore households so far. That is more than twice what it was 4 years ago! Strength in numbers gets good things done and keeps bad things from happening. Please join if you are not a member.

LBLA does many things for our lake. Let’s discuss a few in detail.

We give our lake an in-depth “physical exam” every year. Lake water testing (begun almost 30 years ago) shows we have a measured visibility of over 50 ft, using the Secchi Disk. - the clearest in the area. However, our nutrients are increasing (algae growth) and our septic systems are getting very old in some places (possible lake pollution). Your BOD recently added Aquatic Invasive Species testing, E Coli testing and has contracted for a septic system analysis. Your contributions have also enabled us to have the ability to hire an LSU Natural Resource/Environmental/Management Graduate and Marion resident (Kate Thomas) to oversee our Septic Education and Awareness Program (SEAP). She will assist homeowners of older septic systems to ensure they operate safely.

The Association manages many programs. Many have been built within the last four years. To name a few: The Lake Education and Awareness Program (LEAP), the Septic Education and Awareness Program (SEAP), the Weed Education and Awareness Program (WEAP) and more...You get approach – We are into Education and Awareness!

Via our Lake Education and Awareness Program (LEAP), we talk to boaters at the boat launches on the weekends during the summer. We kindly ask for help to keep an eye out for our lake. We ask local boaters and recreators to be “ACTIVE” boaters and recreators. People really appreciate our friendly approach and request for their help in saving the lake from (out of state) AIS infection.

Please volunteer to “work” the boat launches this summer. Primarily weekends from 1030am to 230pm (flexible hours OK!). Working at the North and South launches is FUN. We train you how to “kindly” ask people to be “ACTIVE” boaters and watch out for boats from outside of our area. How to talk to the

boaters, and make sure that they have safe boats (no aquatic invasive species imported from out of state), if you notice a probable infected boat call 1-800 TIP-MONT and report it!

Wouldn't it be a crime to hurt our lake? It is. Have you heard of the program "Crimestoppers"? Guess what, there is a program to stop abuse of our lake...Just call 1 800 TIP-MONT to report what you see.

This Newsletter asks for your new, or continued support, and reporting. Thank you so much for calling in or emailing concerns. It is all our duty and responsibility as good stewards of this amazing lake.

Thank you for your support!

All the best,

Your LBLA Board of Directors

## Concerns, Comments and Suggestions

Your BOD is all voluntary, and endeavor to represent you in the best ways that we can. We had some excellent and important problem reporting by concerned citizens last year.

ACTION WAS TAKEN.

We are always open to your concerns, comments, and suggestions - Please provide them to us:

### List of Board Members with email addresses below

|                     |                     |  |
|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| Dan Handlin         | President/Treasurer | <a href="mailto:dhandlin@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">dhandlin@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a>     |
| Rob Torgerson       | Vice President      | <a href="mailto:rtorgerson@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">rtorgerson@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a> |
| Buck Measure        | Secretary           | <a href="mailto:bmeasure@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">bmeasure@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a>     |
| Tonia & Tyler Apgar | Members at Large    | <a href="mailto:tgardner@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">tgardner@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a>     |
| Grant Syth          | Member at Large     | <a href="mailto:gsyth@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">gsyth@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a>           |
| Mike LaRoi          | Member at Large     | <a href="mailto:mlaroi@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">mlaroi@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a>         |
| Ken Crippen         | Member at Large     | <a href="mailto:kcrippen@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org">kcrippen@littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org</a>     |

LBLA P.O 1003 Marion, Mt 59925 / [CaptainDanNWA@centurytel.net](mailto:CaptainDanNWA@centurytel.net) <http://www.littlebitterrootlakeassoc.org>

### INTERESTING TAX FACT

Contribution to the Economy: In Montana, local government and school district tax collections arise almost entirely from property taxes (96%). Bitterroot Lake residents are the primary source of property tax collection for Marion.