

# LakeFront

Quarterly Newsletter of the Whitefish Lake Institute

Winter 2009

## Whitefish Lake Institute Stewardship Award Winners

The Whitefish Lake Institute is pleased to announce the recipients of the first annual Whitefish Lake Institute Stewardship Award. The award recognizes individuals or groups that took extraordinary measures to protect water quality in the Whitefish area in 2008.

### Lifetime Achievement– Bill Leonard

Bill Leonard has retired from three careers—the Army, the railroad, and the Midwest Assistance Program, a non-profit organization that travels to rural communities and helps them set up and finance water and sewer systems.

In 1982, Leonard spearheaded community efforts to establish the Whitefish County Water and Sewer District, the public entity that oversees *(continued on page 2)*



Bill Leonard receives the Lifetime Achievement Award from director Mike Koopal.



All Proceeds  
go to:  
The Frank  
Morrison, Jr.  
Scholarship Fund



Get Your Tickets Today  
@ THE BOAT CLUB  
The Lodge at Whitefish Lake  
and @ [www.whitefishlake.org](http://www.whitefishlake.org)  
**Tickets \$5 Each**

(406) 862-4327

• Must be 21 years old • Need not be present to win • In the event that there are multiple names on the winning date, a draw will be made from those names and the first draw will receive the 50/50 split. • A maximum of \$800 will be awarded to the first prize winner. • All winners will receive a prize! • 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation

## IN THIS ISSUE...

WLI Stewardship Award Winners.....	1
Winter Photos.....	4
Membership.....	5
Become a Member.....	6



Protecting and improving the  
Whitefish, Montana area  
lake resources

501 (c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation

**Whitefish Lake Institute**  
 635 Denver Street  
 Whitefish, MT 59937

Voice: (406) 862-4327  
 info@whitefishlake.org  
 www.whitefishlake.org

Founded in 2005, the Whitefish Lake Institute is committed to acquiring scientific research and engaging the local citizenry to protect and improve the Whitefish area lake resources of today, while providing a collective vision for tomorrow.

### **Board of Directors**

Gene Hedman, *President*  
 Jack Fletcher, *Vice President*  
 Charlie Abell, *Secretary/Treasurer*  
 Greg Lane  
 Bill Leonard  
 Dr. Michael Ricker  
 Karen Reeves  
 Jim Stack  
 Nancy Svenningsen  
 Dan Weinberg

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

Mark Deleray  
 Karin Hilding  
 Tony Nelson  
 Dick Solberg  
 Brian Sugden  
 Wayne Svee

### **Citizens Advisory Committee**

Bayard Dominick  
 Greg Gunderson  
 Susan Fletcher  
 Christine Hensleigh  
 Sue Moll  
 Steve Qunell

### **Staff**

Mike Koopal– Executive Director  
 Chris Ruffatto– Scientist

**LakeFront** is published quarterly by the Whitefish Lake Institute. The opinions expressed in **LakeFront** are those of the authors. We welcome comments and submissions.

### **Mike Koopal, Editor**

Printed on Re-cycled Paper  
 Logo design by Carbery Creative

Cover Photo:  
 WLI Rock Drop Structure  
 Courtesy: Sue Fletcher

(Leonard con't from page 1) water quality for our area. Voters approved creating the district with a 4-1 vote.

Two years later, Leonard helped get funding for the first water quality study of Whitefish Lake. While science and research were the driving force behind the project, Leonard was concerned about the algae growth in the lake.

"It was obvious that the lake was degrading before our eyes" Leonard explained, recalling the colored rocks visible in 8-10 feet deep, crystal-clear waters. "That started fading to gray-green scum. The general consensus was that the lake was going downhill. We had to establish a baseline."

Leonard advocated for a second water quality assessment, which was completed in 2003. His tireless efforts behind the scenes, writing and administering grants and serving on the Whitefish Water and Sewer District since its inception, earned him the respect of those who work close to him.

### **Individual Award– Kristi Whisler**

That a class on scientific research would turn into an award winning science project and a summer of the scientific study of local lakes surprised Whitefish High School senior Kristi Whisler—science was not something she planned to devote an entire summertime. Before that class, Whitefish Lake was just a favored swimming area.

Whisler's study on the effects of fire retardant on the zooplankton in Whitefish Lake earned her the Grand Award 4th Runner Up (5th place overall out of 50 competitors) at the Montana State Science Fair.

In 2008, Whisler signed on as an unpaid intern at the Whitefish Lake Institute and spent countless hours assisting in the collection of water quality samples.

"I'd always loved the lake and wanted to know more about it," Whisler explained. Whisler's introduction to the science of water quality started in her freshman year where she participated in Chris Ruffatto's Project FREFLOW program at the high school. Her high school science learning culminated with her award at the science fair and as a team member of a Whitefish High team that took third place at the Montana Envirothon.

It's the depth and dedication that Whisler employed following the trail of water science that earned her this year's stewardship award. Whisler will take her talents to Northwestern next fall as she starts her collegiate career.



*Kristi Whisler accepts a Stewardship Award for director Mike Koopal.*

### **Individual Award– Kaare Hitland**

For over 52 years, Kaare Hitland has been quietly protecting Whitefish Lake and his property on the lake. This do-it-yourself type of stewardship didn't spring from philosophy or a college degree, rather from a simple and abiding love of his land and the lake.

Hitland is one of the lake's most senior residents, and from his first days on the lake, stewardship has ruled his actions. He and his wife Ruth designed their property to preserve as much natural vegetation as possible in order to protect the lake from surface runoffs and to use the existing plants as a way to filter sediments. (continued on page 3)

Hitland went as far as building around one of his favorite trees, having dug out his foundation by hand. He never used fertilizers; lined the shoreline and storm drains with erosion control grasses and shrubs and reduced runoff from their yard with a steadfast refusal of impervious structures (driveways and sidewalks).

Hitland also carried his beliefs onto the lake—instead of docks, he walked his boat in and out of the native plant shoreline on his property. He believed in shutting off his motor and drifting when he fished—in order to reduce pollution on the lake. He was a stickler when it came to slow/no-wake boating in shoreline areas.

These days, Hitland still maintains his property, steadfastly insisting on clearing pine needles and weeds. His property—originally purchased because it reminded he and his wife of Norwegian fjords—is one of the best preserved on the lake and retains the original beauty that drew Hitland to the area.



(L-R) Kaare Hitland is awarded a Stewardship Award by WLI board member Dan Weinberg.

**Group Award– Whitefish Lakeshore Protection Committee**



For over three decades, the Whitefish Lakeshore Protection Committee has worked diligently year round to ensure that local lakes have the highest quality of water possible.

In 1974, locals Gene Hedman, Charlie Abell, Bob Brown and Frank Morrison traveled to Helena to testify with others for legislation to give local government tools to protect their lake resources. The legislation became Montana state law in 1975.

The committee began work the next year. Since that time, countless citizens have served on the committee to ensure guidelines are followed that protect the natural beauty of the lake and the value of lake-shore property.

The committee, its activities, its individuals, and its successes rarely receive accolades or recognition for the countless hours of time and energy that it takes to give back to the community. The committee

members, past and present, finally deserve a pat on the back.

**Group Award– SunCrest Homeowner’s Association**

The SunCrest Homeowner’s Association’s restoration of a stream bed on their property proves what many stewards have long understood– that the natural state is often the most efficient and aesthetic way to protect water quality.

For years, a little stretch of lakefront property owned by the homeowner’s association gobbled up lots of time for maintenance and mowing crews. Hoping that a purchase of native plants from the state nursery might help matters, Sun Crest’s then-president Rodger Hawkins approached the native landscape company Forestation to help with ensure the native plants thrived.

Forestation assessed the stream bed at the site and found that it was altered some 50 years ago for an apple orchard. They suggested restoring the area with native plantings. SunCrest’s 74 lot owners approved the money—approximately \$4,000—to improve the common area. Dogwood, willow, hawthorn, serviceberry, cottonwood and aspen were among the species planted in the area—

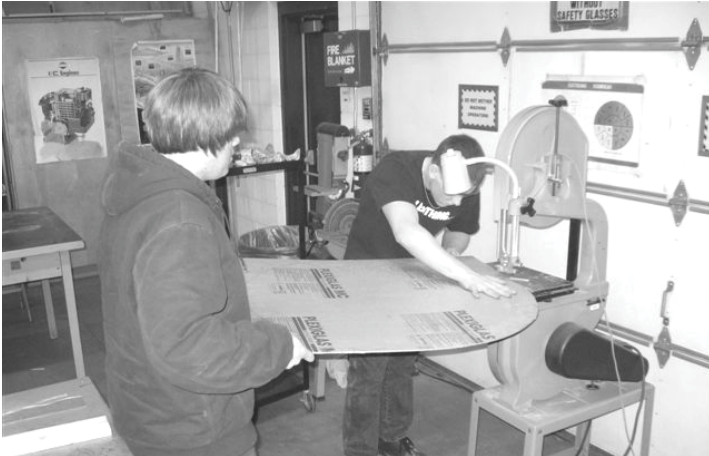
native plants with deep roots systems that bind the soil and consume nutrients, keeping them out of the lake.

SunCrest homeowners can now look forward to a beautiful songbird habitat that acts as a natural filter for the lake- and maintenance crews have far less work to do, saving the association money. The aesthetic, functional and practical advantages of this restoration project earned it this year’s stewardship by group award.



(L-R) Mike Koopal presents the Stewardship Award to SunCrest HOA President Richard Thomas, along with Greg Gunderson from WLI’s Citizen’s Advisory Committee.

❄️ ❄️ ❄️ Winter Photos ❄️ ❄️ ❄️



(L-R) Whitefish High School Students Grady Floyd and Sean Sagen use a band saw to cut out the plexi-glass backing for the WLI Rock Drop logo.



(L-R) Whitefish High School students Meagan Powell and Ann Miller use a programmable plasma cutter to cut the WLI logo out of metal for use in the Rock Drop Fundraiser. They were helped out by Trent Mortensen and Logan Nolan under the supervision of their metals teacher, Ryan Boyle.



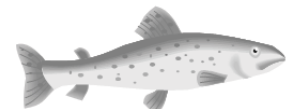
The WLI float displaying "The Rock Drop" during the Winter Carnival Parade.



(L-R) Citizen's Advisory Committee members Steve Qunell and Sue Fletcher along with Mike and Mae Koopal pose for a picture after placing the Rock Drop structure out on Whitefish Lake after the parade.



WLI scientist Chris Ruffatto has fish on his mind during the Winter Carnival Parade.



Mike Koopal makes adjustments to the WLI weather station after bitterly cold weather in December took its toll on the batteries.



Tom Hlavacek volunteers to input data into the WLI database. Tom also spent a weekend in 2008 assisting our sampling efforts. Tom graduated with a degree in chemical engineering from MSU and is looking to start a career in Process Design Engineering.

## Whitefish Lake Institute Membership

### Research Guarantor (\$1,000 and above)

Jim and Jo-Ann Armstrong- Whitefish, MT  
 Rick and Alicia Blake- Whitefish, MT  
 John and Anne Collins- Whitefish, MT  
 Ila Dousman Fund- Whitefish, MT  
 Fidelity National Timber Resources- Whitefish, MT  
 Greg and Susan Fletcher- Whitefish, MT  
 Bill Foley- Whitefish, MT  
 Bill and Ann Jones- Whitefish, MT  
 LaChance Builders- Whitefish, MT  
 Greg Lane- Whitefish, MT  
 Bill and Ruth Leonard- Whitefish, MT  
 Plum Creek Timber Company- Columbia Falls, MT  
 Joe and Beverly Raudabaugh- Lake Forest, IL  
 River Design Group, Inc.- Whitefish, MT  
 Scott and Cindy Schmid- Portland, OR  
 Mike and Marie Shaw- Whitefish, MT  
 Don and Ruth Taylor- Whitefish, MT  
 Dan Weinberg- Whitefish, MT

### Lake Visionary (\$500)

Richard and Carol Atkinson- Whitefish, MT  
 Dick and Sandra Boyce- Portola Valley, CA  
 Mark and Constance Cowett- Bozeman, MT  
 InvesTech Research, Jim and Lisa Stack- Whitefish, MT  
 Lion Mountain Homeowners- Whitefish, MT  
 Lion Mountain, Inc.- Whitefish, MT  
 Lizika Lam- Kamuela, HI  
 Mark Mance and Katherine Callahan- San Francisco, CA  
 Scott and Cindy Schmid- Portland, OR  
 Peter and Christine Stanley- Whitefish, MT  
 Whitefish Credit Union- Whitefish, MT  
 Lee Zignego- Whitefish, MT

### Lake Benefactor (\$250)

Charlie and Susan Abell- Whitefish, MT  
 Dan Averill- Bigfork, MT  
 Sean Averill- Whitefish, MT  
 Nick and Karen Chickering- Nevada City, CA  
 Donald and Sally Clark- Pasadena, CA  
 Jim Colla- Whitefish, MT  
 Joseph and Melanie Eve- Whitefish, MT  
 First Interstate Bank- Whitefish, MT  
 Jack and Florence Fletcher- Whitefish, MT  
 Gene Hedman- Whitefish, MT  
 Bill Hileman and Susan Lacosta- Whitefish, MT  
 Richard and Joanna Hoeffle- Billings, MT  
 Carl Hulick- Pasadena, CA  
 Darcy Kelly- San Diego, CA  
 Harold and Marie Lockhart- Whitefish, MT  
 The Lodge at Whitefish Lake- Whitefish, MT  
 Ed and Cherie Meek- Whitefish, MT  
 Morrison and Frampton, PLLP- Whitefish, MT  
 Dow and Becky Powell- Whitefish, MT  
 Dick and Jane Solberg- Whitefish, MT  
 John and Nancy Streibich- Whitefish, MT  
 Mark and Nancy Svennungsen- Whitefish, MT  
 Third Street Market- Whitefish, MT  
 Watershed Consulting, LLC- Whitefish, MT  
 James and Jackie Woodard- Whitefish, MT

### Lake Leader (\$100)

Anonymous  
 Koel Abell- Portland, OR  
 Tarn and Marybeth Abell- Fairfax, VA  
 Peter and Cheri Aronsson- Whitefish, MT  
 Sharlot Battin- Whitefish, MT  
 Duane and Valerie Bauch- Whitefish, MT  
 Bay Point Country Homes- Whitefish, MT  
 Cameron Blake and Alexander Gray- Whitefish, MT  
 Dr and Mrs. Ronald Boogaard- Lebanon, PA  
 Betty Fay Brown- Whitefish, MT  
 George and Ann Bulkley- Dallas, TX  
 Luther and Dorothy Campbell- Whitefish, MT  
 Doug Chadwick and Karen Reeves- Whitefish, MT  
 Steve and Doreen Christian- Whitefish, MT  
 Diane Conradi Law Office- Whitefish, MT  
 David and Kelly Cravath- Scottsdale, AZ  
 Connie Davis, - Whitefish, MT  
 Will Eckert- Patterson, CA  
 Todd and Susan Flynn- Oro Valley, AZ  
 Friends of Blanchard Lake- Whitefish, MT  
 Friends of the Wisconsin Ave. Wetlands- Whitefish, MT  
 Forestation, Inc. - Whitefish, MT

### Lake Leader (\$100), continued

Getter Properties- Sheridan, WY  
 Charles and Teresa Grenier- Whitefish, MT  
 Les Hardy, Jr.- Whitefish, MT  
 Robert and Cindy James- Great Falls, MT  
 Mike and Barb Jenson- Whitefish, MT  
 Junkermier, Clark, Campanella, Stevens, Kris Fuehrer- Whitefish, MT  
 Leo Keane/North Country Builders- Whitefish, MT  
 Jim and Marion Kibbe- Whitefish, MT  
 John and Maureen King- Whitefish, MT  
 Kintla Copy & Creative- Whitefish, MT  
 Mike and Mae Koopal- Columbia Falls, MT  
 Nancy Krause and Dan Handlin- Marion, MT  
 Joe and Sue Malletta- Whitefish, MT  
 Malmquist Construction- Whitefish, MT  
 Greg and Mary Anne Moffatt- Encinitas, CA  
 John and Janice Moore- Whitefish, MT  
 Nelson Hardware, Inc.- Whitefish, MT  
 Harbor Mountain Properties- Whitefish, MT  
 Michael and Dot Ricker- Whitefish, MT  
 Bill and Linda Sawtelle- Colleyville, TX  
 Marcia Sheffels- Whitefish, MT  
 Tom and Karen Sparby- Whitefish, MT  
 Bruce and Susan Tate- Whitefish, MT  
 David and Jeannine Trousdale- Whitefish, MT  
 Pat and Deb Turski- Madison, WI  
 Ed and Susan Walters- Albuquerque, NM  
 Whitefish Lake Golf Club- Whitefish, MT  
 Whitefish Lake Restaurant, Doug Reed- Whitefish, MT  
 Whitefish Mountain Resort- Whitefish, MT  
 Gary and Veda Whitman- Kalispell, MT  
 Kari Zirkle- Whitefish, MT

### Lake Sponsor (\$40)

Anonymous (2)  
 Dave and Mary Armstrong- Whitefish, MT  
 Joe Brenneman and Nancy Pensa- Kalispell, MT  
 Karen Burke and Donald Feldman- Whitefish, MT  
 Bill and Judith Bruzek- Whitefish, MT  
 Birch Hill Owners- Whitefish, MT  
 Ben and Doreen Cavin- Whitefish, MT  
 Ron Chauner- Aspen, CO  
 Copperleaf Chocolat Company-Susan Schnee- Whitefish, MT  
 Dale and Judy Cockrell- Whitefish, MT  
 Tony Davis- Whitefish, MT  
 Vincent and Sally De Rosa- Whitefish, MT  
 Edwin and Maura Fields- Whitefish, MT  
 Bob and Kate Fletcher- Portland, OR  
 Doug and Ann Follett- Whitefish, MT  
 Judah and Tanya Gersh- Whitefish, MT  
 Will Hammerquist- Whitefish, MT  
 Donald and Giselle Harring- Whitefish, MT  
 Dewey and Sandra Hartman- Whitefish, MT  
 Rollin and Carole Harwood- Whitefish, MT  
 Susan Hauber- Norwalk, IA  
 Stephen and Dru Jackman- Whitefish, MT  
 Dennis and Frankie Johnson- San Antonio, TX  
 Wink Jordan- Whitefish, MT  
 Dan and Betsy Kohnstamm- Whitefish, MT  
 Jack and Betty Koopal- Johnston, IA  
 Mitchell and Gail Linne- Whitefish, MT  
 Marianne Madler- Whitefish, MT  
 Laurence and Barb Magone- Whitefish, MT  
 Curt and Janet McIntyre- Whitefish, MT  
 Pete and Jan Metzmaker- Whitefish, MT  
 John and Janice Moore- Whitefish, MT  
 North Country Builders, Inc- Whitefish, MT  
 Rebecca Norton- Whitefish, MT  
 Nir and Cherie Regev- Whitefish, MT  
 Randy Ristau- Missoula, MT  
 Al and Shirley Ronseth- Whitefish, MT  
 Karl and Elaine Roosa- Deer Lodge, MT  
 Chris Ruffatto- Whitefish, MT  
 Eric and Cami Sawtelle- Whitefish, MT  
 Mike and Timmie Smart- Helena, MT  
 Chuck Stearns- Whitefish, MT  
 Mike and Bonnie Streeter- Whitefish, MT  
 SunCrest Homeowners Association- Whitefish, MT  
 Brith Sutherland- Kalispell, MT  
 Steve Thompson- Whitefish, MT  
 Warren Vaughan- Billings, MT  
 Paul and Colleen Verdon- Colfax, WI  
 Whitefish Animal Hospital- Whitefish, MT  
 Nancy Woodruff- Whitefish, MT

**Sign Me Up! Please enroll my membership in the Whitefish Lake Institute.**

My check is enclosed

Visa       Mastercard

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please check your **Annual Membership** category:

- Research Guarantor \$1,000+
- Lake Visionary \$500
- Lake Benefactor \$250
- Lake Leader \$100
- Lake Sponsor \$40

**Special Giving**

- Endowment Fund (\$500 +)
- Frank Morrison, Jr. Scholarship Fund

*Your Contribution is 100% tax-deductible.*  
501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation

Whitefish Lake Institute · 635 Denver Street · Whitefish, MT 59937

**Visit us at [www.whitefishlake.org](http://www.whitefishlake.org)**

635 Denver Street  
Whitefish, MT 59937

