



Welcome to the Northwest Montana Lakes Network website.

Citizen scientists have long been part of water quality data collection in the Flathead Basin. One of the first citizen water monitoring programs was created in the early 1990's by the Flathead Basin Commission and the University of Montana Flathead Lake Biological Station on Flathead Lake. In 2008, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) and the Whitefish Lake Institute (WLI) partnered to create the "Whitefish to Eureka Lakes Volunteer Monitoring Program." These two programs were then united as the Northwest Montana Lakes Network (NMLN) with the goal of collecting and analyzing water quality data to evaluate the status and potential threats to these invaluable aquatic resources.

The need to gather information on conditions from Montana's lakes has never been greater. Local, state, and federal agencies as well as private organizations and citizens seek information for a variety of reasons related to early detection of AIS, education, water quality research, planning, and regulatory purposes. Unfortunately, public funding and staffing to carry out water sampling activities have not always kept pace with needs in Northwestern Montana.

To fill the gaps, many states have organized cost-effective programs that train local citizen scientists to monitor the quality of their waterways. Volunteer monitoring programs now provide great value to states by contributing baseline data and highlighting changes that might have otherwise gone unnoticed. This volunteer monitoring program provides a great opportunity to obtain data, engage citizens in long-term stewardship, and build valuable partnerships.

Montana, Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Whitefish Lake Institute thank our current volunteers and welcome new participants to the ever critical work of data collection on our waterways.

Sincerely,

Matt Boyer
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