

2009 Annual Report




Clearwater Resource
Council

Promoting community-based natural resource management

A Message from the Board President

The Clearwater Valley faced numerous challenges and opportunities in 2009. Ailing timber and real estate markets have taken their toll on the Seeley Lake community. At the same time, exciting new opportunities for collaborative forest management, watershed restoration, and biomass utilization have emerged. CRC is working with stakeholders and partners to ensure that Seeley Lake is able to make these possibilities a reality for the benefit of our community.

Despite the numerous challenges our community has faced, CRC had an exciting and productive year in 2009. We continued to build on the momentum established in 2008 by significantly expanding our aquatics, noxious weeds, and forest management programs, forming new partnerships, contributing to community understanding of natural resource issues, and increasing volunteer opportunities. Moving forward, CRC will continue to initiate and coordinate efforts that will enhance and conserve the natural values of the Clearwater River Watershed for present and future generations.

Please join us and help us maintain the quality of our community and further our work on natural resources in the coming years. Thank you for all of your support. We look forward to continued cooperation and investment in the Clearwater.

- Jon Haufler, President of the Clearwater Resource Council

2009 Board of Directors:

Jon Haufler, *President*
Roger Marshall
Bruce Rieman
Scott Tomson
Stan Nicholson
Shannon Connolly
Bill Wall

STAFF:

Megan Birzell, *Project and Development Administrator*

Visit us on the web!

www.crcmt.org

Look for us in the paper!

CRC contributes to the "Eye on the Environment" section of the Seeley-Swan Pathfinder every month. Our articles focus on natural resource issues important to the Valley.

Fuels Mitigation

Fuels Mitigation Task Force work supported

CRC continued its involvement with the Seeley Lake Fuels Mitigation Task Force, helping to implement the Seeley-Swan Community Wildfire Protection Plan. In 2009, this cooperative program involving CRC, USFS, DNRC, Seeley Lake Rural Fire Department, Ecosystem Management Research Institute, several homeowners' associations, and other interested parties continued to acquire funding to assist fuel mitigation on private lands while also helping all parties coordinate fuel mitigation efforts within the Valley.

Aquatic Resources

Watershed planning effort initiated

With funding from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Margaret V. Ping Foundation, CRC has brought stakeholders together to develop a watershed restoration plan for the Clearwater Valley. We are working with DEQ, Forest Service, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Blackfoot Challenge, Plum Creek, Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Missoula County Office of Rural Initiatives, and University of Montana to gather available information about the condition of streams and lakes in the valley to identify potential problems, prioritize restoration actions, and identify remaining information needs. As part of this effort, the University of Montana is conducting a critical analysis of existing information for Seeley and Salmon lakes to help us better understand their status and inform our watershed restoration plan.

Adopt-A-Lake Program expanded

We expanded our Adopt-A-Lake monitoring program. This season, 25 volunteers monitored eight lakes (Alva, Inez, Seeley, Salmon, Placid, Big Sky, Rainy, and Clearwater) from May through October. A preliminary look at the data shows that the lakes are generally in good condition, but the real value of this program will come when we can see any trends that develop over time. There are important changes in water supply and quality that come with human development, and our lakes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of those changes. Monitoring provides a simple warning system as well as a forum for involvement and education of our citizens. The character and condition of the lakes are central to the beauty and economy of our Valley. By developing basic information about our lakes and engaging our citizens in the process and subsequent discussion, we hope to insure their condition well into the future. Support from the Seeley Lake Community Foundation, businesses in the valley, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, the University of Montana, and the University of California-Davis, helped us purchase and maintain equipment and gather additional information that will help continue and refine this work. .

In the last year, our aquatic program supported 3 public meetings and contributed 3 articles to the local newspaper. One of the most important discussions focused on the linkages between water quality, septic systems and ground water contamination, and the local water supply. We believe discussions like these are important to an informed debate as the community struggles with planning for future development and any infrastructure needed to support it and a continued high quality aquatic environment.

We also began some new work on care of stream side areas that influence stream habitats and water quality. We worked with a landowners' association and a local teacher to identify potential demonstration projects that can be used to help students and landowners understand the natural values these areas provide. We have made contacts with other groups that may help with the design and funding for these projects and hope to move them forward in the coming year.



Volunteers used Secchi disks to determine water clarity in Clearwater basin lakes.

Noxious Weeds

200 miles of Clearwater Valley roads mapped for weeds



Volunteers learn the basics of weed identification during the CRC Weed Rally

To determine the most appropriate weed management actions in different areas and for different weeds, the Weed Mitigation Task Force developed, with assistance from the Ecosystem Management Research Institute and the Seeley Lake Community Foundation, a coordinated invasive weed strategy for the entire Clearwater Valley.

In order to implement the strategy, we need a comprehensive inventory of weed distributions in the Valley. Last summer, a weed mapping program was initiated to begin obtaining this information. Over 200 miles of roads and 100 randomly-placed transects in the northern half of the Clearwater valley were mapped. The Task Force is currently seeking funding to continue this program in 2010 as well as funding to begin weed treatments across owner-

ship boundaries. Support for the weed mapping came from the National Forest Foundation, the Missoula County Weed District, and the Ecosystem Management Research Institute. Additional partners included the Double Arrow Landowners' Association, Seeley Lake Ranger District, and Eagle Point Landowners' Association.

Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project

Introduced as part of the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act

2009 was a busy year for the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project. CRC continued to work with our partners to promote the Project to Montana's congressional delegation. Senator Jon Tester heard us and incorporated our Project in his Forest Jobs and Recreation Act, which he introduced in July. The bill also includes two other collaborative projects: the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership and the Three Rivers Challenge.

Since it was introduced, the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act has received extensive support and media coverage. Senator Max Baucus joined the effort as a co-sponsor of the bill in November. In December, CRC joined several other partners in Washington, D.C. to support Senator Tester during the bill's hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources' Sub-Committee on Public Lands and Forests.



Senator Jon Tester introduced the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act on July 17, 2009 at the RY Timber mill in Townsend, MT.

Forestry

CRC launches Coordinated Forest Management Initiative

Strong community interest led CRC to develop the Coordinated Forest Management Initiative (CFM). The Initiative seeks to integrate vegetation management across ownerships and ensure that everyone involved in vegetation management, including state and federal agencies, local businesses, and community members in the Valley, is invited.

Together, landowners, agencies, and organizations have begun coordinating planning, mapping, monitoring, and reporting on forest management, stewardship, and restoration activities. CRC and the Seeley Lake Community Foundation have taken leadership roles in this initiative to help organize, facilitate, and administer this effort.



The Coordinated Forest Management Initiative will ensure that the landscape and the Seeley Lake community maximize the benefits of forest management.

CRC is currently working with partners to develop a collective vision for forest management in the Clearwater Valley that will help guide the Initiative as it moves forward.

CRC joins partners in Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration

In March 2009, the Federal Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA) was signed into law as part of the Omnibus Public Lands bill. The FLRA established a program at the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to carry out collaborative ecological restoration treatments for priority forest landscapes on public land. This program, known as the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), will provide funding to 10 priority landscapes across the country to carry out these treatments.

Recently, CRC began working with the Forest Service, Blackfoot Challenge, Swan Ecosystem Center, Northwest Connections, The Nature Conservancy, Ecosystem Management Research Institute, The Wilderness Society, University of Montana, Montana Community Development Corporation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and other partners to develop a landscape restoration strategy for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent, a landscape encompassing the Clearwater Valley and portions of the Swan and Blackfoot valleys, as part of a proposal for CFLRP funding. If selected, this project would provide up to \$4 million per year for 10 years for stewardship activities across the “Southern Crown” landscape. These activities would bolster Seeley Lake and adjacent communities by creating jobs and supplying wood products to local markets.

CRC has also been exploring various possibilities and potential for development of biomass utilization opportunities in the Valley. The large amounts of biomass currently being produced by fuels mitigation, forest restoration, and commercial forestry operations are not being effectively utilized. With the closure of the Smurfit-Stone mill near Missoula in December 2009, even less biomass is currently being used productively. CRC is helping to highlight this problem and seek solutions.

Collaboration

In addition to the various accomplishments discussed above that have been led by CRC, we have participated in and supported a number of projects important to the Clearwater Watershed and Seeley Lake community.

CRC's Landscape Assessment of the Clearwater Valley was used by the Seeley Lake Community Council to inform their development of a regional land use plan for the Seeley Lake area. In 2009, that plan was submitted to Missoula County and is currently being reviewed for adoption by the Missoula County Board of Commissioners.



CRC continued to support and participate in collaborative efforts that are helping to conserve the Clearwater Valley.

CRC has worked with the Seeley Lake Ranger District, Seeley Lake ATV Club, Ecosystem Management Research Institute, Seeley Lake Community Council, and other interested community members to develop a valley-wide recreational travel plan that respects the diversity of trail uses in the valley.

CRC has continued to coordinate with the Swan Ecosystem Center and the Blackfoot Challenge to integrate our knowledge and data about the Crown of the Continent Ecoregion, which includes the Blackfoot, Clearwater, and Swan watersheds. CRC participated in a conference hosted by these three organizations that addressed collaborative management for the region.

Approximately 7,500 acres of The Nature Conservancy land in the Clearwater Valley was transferred to Forest Service ownership as part of the Montana Legacy Project. CRC assisted The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land in selecting the Plum Creek lands in the Clearwater Valley that were included in this Project. Approximately 22,500 acres of Plum Creek land still await ownership transfer as part of the Montana Legacy Project. CRC is working with TNC, TPL, FWP, and the Seeley Lake community to determine the most suitable ownership for these lands.

Community Involvement

Volunteer activity increases in 2009

CRC's expanded programs attracted over 35 volunteers, a significant increase over past years. Our most popular volunteer programs are the Adopt-A-Lake water quality monitoring program and the Weed Mapping Program.

In addition to volunteer activities, over 100 community members attended CRC's monthly programs over the course of the year. Programs covered a range of natural resource topics of interest to the community, including Coordinated Forest Management, lake water quality, noxious weeds, forest fire, and conservation planning. We produced 11 articles for the local newspaper in conjunction with these programs. We also interfaced with the community at the local farmers' market in the summer, at our annual picnic in July, and at the Loon and Fish Festival in the spring.

Contributors

The following individuals and organizations generously contributed to CRC in 2009

Jim and Judy Hayhurst • Ken and Paula Barber • Mark Hollinger • Duane and Debbie Anderson • Don Bishop • Orville Daniels • Gene and Carla Schade • First Valley Bank • Land Lindbergh • Stan and Colleen Nicholson • Jeff and Pat Aresty • Daniel and Susan Stone • Patrick and Sue Constantinides • National Forest Foundation • Seeley Lake Community Foundation • The Wilderness Society • Rebecca White • Bill Wall and Carol Evans • Missoula County Weed District • Margaret V. Ping Foundation • Pleiades Foundation • Montana Department of Environmental Quality • Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation • Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks • US Forest Service • Rovero's • Pitman Machining • Ecosystem Management Research Institute • University of Montana • Plum Creek Timber Company • Missoula County Office of Rural Initiatives • Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited • Blackfoot Challenge • UM Flathead Biological Station • Dennis Rolston • The University of California at Davis • Patti Bartlett • Dean McGovern

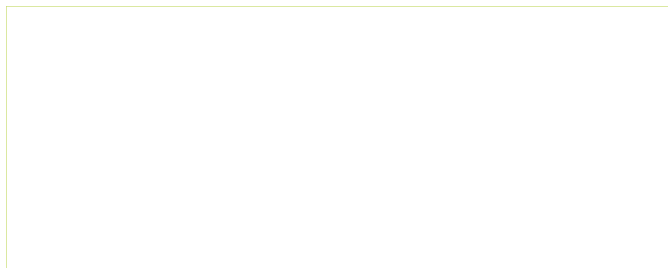
Financials

Statement of Financial Position	
Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2009	
ASSETS	
<i>Current Assets</i>	
Cash	\$ 21,274.79
<i>Fixed Assets</i>	
Furniture and Equipment	\$ 818.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 22,092.79
LIABILITIES	
<i>Current Liabilities</i>	
Payroll	\$ 1.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 1.18

Statement of Activities	
Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2009	
INCOME	
<i>Contributed Support</i>	\$ 43,806.50
<i>Earned Revenues</i>	\$ 5,279.55
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 49,086.05
EXPENSE	
<i>Payroll Expense</i>	\$ 38,256.96
<i>Other Personnel Expense</i>	\$ 11,148.33
<i>Bank Fees</i>	\$ 48.12
<i>Non-personnel Expense</i>	\$ 9,827.18
<i>Occupancy Expense</i>	\$ 7,405.07
<i>Travel and Meeting Expense</i>	\$ 2,767.60
<i>Miscellaneous Expense</i>	\$ 1,990.00
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 71,443.26

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Place
Postage
Here



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