



As I type this introduction to our newsletter, there is a foot of snow in the yard and the current temperature is -3° F. I am quickly very thankful for central heat and hot coffee. I am also appreciative of this past season's fishing excursions that permitted me to enjoy time with good friends and family on two of our beautiful home waters, the Missouri and Little Blackfoot rivers. As you read through the newsletter, you will find that our chapter has been busy:

- Setting the stage for some projects on the Little Blackfoot River through the Clark Fork Restoration program
- Supporting several projects on the Missouri River
- Expanding our Trout-in-the-Classroom program
- Increasing our financial health

In this coming year, we will be focusing our efforts on:

1. 2014 State legislative activities
2. Improving our fund raising activities in order to support future conservation projects
3. Coordination and planning for potential projects on the Little Blackfoot River

There is one additional critical item that your board of officers and directors could use your assistance with in the coming year. As with all volunteer organizations, the health and ability to accomplish its mission is solely dependent upon the dedication of its volunteer members. Our chapter is no exception and in this regard, we are in need of a Secretary. The Secretary is a member of the board of officers and on average would spend 2 hours per month performing their duties. If you or someone you know would be interested in this position, please contact me either by email (noclearline@hotmail.com) or phone at 406.422.4426.

I truly look forward to working with you this year in our continued efforts to *conserve, restore, and protect* our home waters of the Little Blackfoot, Missouri and Smith rivers.

Sincerely,

Garrett Fawaz, President

Conservation Update



Little Blackfoot River

Throughout much of this past year, the conservation team has been focused on the development and submission of project abstracts for the Little Blackfoot River under the requirements set forth by the Natural Resource Damage Program (NRPD) and under the planning requirements set forth in the Clark Fork Restoration plan. We submitted six proposals of which four were supported and recommended for inclusion into the final plan. These four plans represent approximately \$3.4M in funding requests covering project requirements and timelines from 1 to 10 years. Our abstracts focused on three activities:

1. Flow augmentation-water right purchase, lease or irrigation system efficiency improvement
2. Riparian habit protection and/or improvement-riparian fencing, grazing management, wood plan re-establishment, conservation easement
3. Sediment reduction/Bank stabilization-woody plan re-establishment, streambank reconstruction, road improvements

We anticipate the approval of this plan before the end of the year by the Governor and will certainly keep you informed of its progress.

Missouri River

In coordination with FWP, we have supported and/or will support the following projects:

1. Sterling Ranch riparian fence/offsite water. The project site is located near the town of Craig. This project involves fencing off 5.6 miles of the river and 0.3 mile of Wegner Creek. We provided \$4000 in financial support for this project and this project has been underway since mid-summer. Total cost is \$160,000.
2. Sterling Ranch bank stabilization. There are two small sections near Billings Slough and Lone Tree where the bank is sloughing. The landowner would like assistance stabilizing these sections. We provided \$2,000 in financial support for this project and this project has been underway since early fall.

3. Little Prickly Pear Creek-Nearly half of the rainbow trout and brown trout spawn in this tributary. There is a major channel erosion problem on the BNSF rail line near Sieben flat. We have committed to providing \$2,000 in financial support for this project which is scheduled to begin in early spring of 2013.

Smith River

We continue to monitor the mining effort actions and as this progresses, we are working in coordination with MT TU in determining our approach to interactions with MT DEQ and the EPA.

We also plan to discuss potential projects and the use of the Corridor Enhancement Account (CEA) funds on selected tributary watersheds.

Trout-in-the-Classroom (TIC)

Our TIC program continues to be highly successful, so much so, that we have added another elementary school located in Montana City. This now brings our total locations to 11 for this school year. As the largest and most successful TIC program in the state, we have now set a new standard for the other chapters to achieve. If you ever have a desire to see this program in action, stop by Exploration Works after January and you can readily observe this activity.

Fund Raising and Financial Health

Fund Raising

We had two extremely productive events this past year: Annual Banquet and the Fly-Fishing Film Tour (F3T). The banquet's net revenue was approximately \$10,000 and the F3T was just over \$1,100. We plan to conduct both events again this year so look for future announcements.

Financial Health

Our current balance is just over \$22,000 which represents a 25% increase over last year's budget at this point in time. Compared to the chapter average nationally of \$12,500, we are certainly in excellent standing. This is a direct result of our members and local business exceptional support. Without this dedicated and generous support, we would not be able to accomplish our mission. This is truly appreciated by all of us.