

From the Executive Director

What a tremendously wet fall we're having here in the Bitterroot! Beautiful leaves changing to bright reds and yellows have always made this my favorite time of year, and after a seriously dry summer the wet days are increasing my usual enjoyment.

Unfortunately the rainy days of October will not be enough to shake the feelings of summer, yet another season of drought in our community. Enjoying crisp, cool, fall days in a light rain jacket does not mean that I, or anyone at the Bitter Root Water Forum, will stop thinking of the inevitability of spring and summers different than we're used to. Snowpack melting sooner, runoff coming earlier, and summers with lower moisture are becoming the "new normal".

I promise that BRWF will continue to work with our community to prepare for whatever the changing seasons bring. We plan to talk to you and your neighbors about what 'drought resiliency' means to you, and what you think we can do to help our community thrive in the coming years. While we can't change the weather, we can work together for the best possible outcomes for the Bitterroot.

We're all in this together. Thankfully I couldn't be more proud of the board, staff, and community we have working for our future.

Thanks for all you do.

Heather

Heather Barber



BRWF Staff & AmeriCorps - left to right Heather Barber, Katie Vennie, and Stephanie Adams

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All photos by BRWF Staff unless otherwise noted

Watershed Enhancement Team



The Watershed Enhancement Team (WET) was formed this spring to help Bitter Root Water Forum better assess and manage restoration projects. The team of community volunteers are passionate about the conservation of our waters. Members include long-time BRWF friends and folks new to the organization.

June through October, WET joined us in the field to weed, water, remove browse protectors, and complete tasks to ensure the health of our projects.

Through community stewardship we can practice adaptive management that will keep our projects thriving into the future.

"I really enjoyed being a part of WET this year, and not just because of restoration—the people made WET work days the highlight of my time here. The people you meet while working outdoors are always the best people. There's always something to learn from someone, they work great as a team, are inventive when short on supplies or tools, and have a great sense of humor and positivity even when the weather turns against us!"

- Steph, BRWF's 2016 AmeriCorps Member





2016 MEMBERS:
Bill Jones - Dave Schultz - Frank Pelfrey - Nancy Graham - Ron Evans - Sherry Ritter - Sandra Kochis - Theresa Duncan - Mike McCall

Watershed Improvement Project

Done but not Over!

Thanks to supporters like you on, August 2nd we completed the implementation phase of our Watershed Improvement Project (WIP) in the headwaters of Sleeping Child and Rye Creeks. This project will drastically reduce sediment delivery to high mountain, cold water streams that provide critical habitat for Westslope Cutthroat trout and Bull trout.

WIP would not have been possible without the support of Bitterroot National Forest, Bitterroot Trout Unlimited, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Fish Wildlife and Parks (Future Fisheries Program), Montana Trout Unlimited and individual donations from supporters like you.

Although implementation is complete, the project is not over! Monitoring and sampling will continue throughout the next two field seasons.







By decompacting, reshaping, and revegetating abandoned and deteriorating roads, water infiltration is improved and erosion is reduced. Excess sediment from erosion covers the bottom of streams filling in deep pools trout use to over-winter, smothering eggs, and choking aquatic insects they rely on for food.

Restored

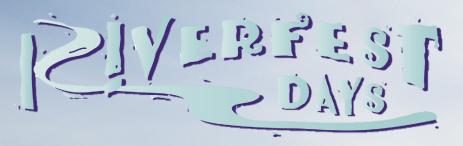
20 miles

of abandoned and deteriorating roads

Removed

42 crossing culverts

eliminating a potential fish barrier and possibility of future blowouts



It's a run, a clean up, and a party to celebrate our river.

Party with a Purpose!







Bitter Root Water Forum was proud to bring the 6th annual Riverfest Days to Hamilton this August. Featuring fun and educational activities for kids and adults, 450 people enjoyed this chance for the community to celebrate our river.





Nearly 80 volunteers pulled 1,580 pounds of trash out of the **Bitterroot River during** the River Clean Up.



Tim and Shelley Hunter, pictured to the left, pulled an old car frame from the river and tied for "Best Trash" with Estelle Shuttleworth, Phil Romans, and Dick Ellis who pulled out a whole arm chair, pictured to the right.



Thank event sponsors by supporting local businesses!































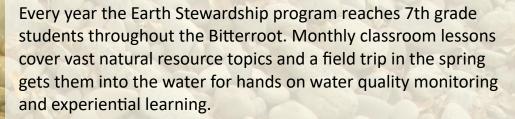
John D Greef, Attorney - Evans Ace Hardware - Kinetico

Iron Horse Athletic Club - Bitterroot Disposal - Pigman Builders - American Rivers - Higherground Brewing Runner's Edge - Hamilton Marketplace - Chuck Stranahan's Flies & Guides - Anglers Roost - MOMS Rentals

Inspiring the next generation of Watershed Stewards

IN THE CLASSROOM





This collaborative program brings in natural resource professionals from *Bitterroot National Forest, Bitterroot Backcountry Horsemen, Fish Wildlife & Parks, Ravalli County Weed District, and Bitterroot Off-Highway Vehicle User Group.*



"Students enjoy interacting with scientists and learning about what they do for a living and how to pursue a career in science.

- David Chimo, 7th Grade Teacher - Corvallis









AND IN THE FIELD



"These students will be the future caretakers of our natural world so a basic understanding of what is here will hopefully help them to be better stewards."

- Leslie Nyce, Conservation Technician - MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Donor Spotlight

Donna and Jay Haglund have been BRWF supporters for years and became Drainage Sustainers this year by donating monthly to BRWF! They show true enthusiasm for the organization and clean water as both donors and dedicated volunteers. I sat down with Donna in September to discuss what clean water means to her and what role BRWF has played during her time in the Bitterroot.

"I would find myself laying in the middle of river on a big rock and think, I can't do this in L.A."



Photo courtesy of Donna and Jay Haglund

Donna moved to the Bitterroot Valley 13 years ago from Los Angeles after falling in love with the river and local fly fishing opportunities. Soon after, she met her husband Jay and

"Fly fishing is what attracted us to the Bitter Root Water Forum, for us clean water means healthy fish and good fishing, it's our passion." they have taken advantage of all the glorious fly fishing the Bitterroot has to offer. They're also avid about keeping it healthy.

Not only have Donna and Jay been long time donors of the Water Forum, they also find time to actively engage in the community by helping with Trout Unlimited's Bitterroot Buggers program and volunteering each year for the Bitterroot River Clean Up.

"We've been volunteering for the River Clean Up every year, even before it was in the hands of the Water Forum. The need to volunteer is in your heart – you just feel like you need to keep this river clean, and it seems like things are getting better."

Donna shows support and enthusiasm for what BRWF does for the community, particularly for the restoration projects such as the Watershed Improvement Project. The Haglund's continuing volunteerism and infectious positivity are true examples of earth stewardship and passion for angling.

"I am impressed with the people involved with BRWF, they're young, enthusiastic, follow through, and they have passion. Jay and I enjoy being involved with the organization because everyone is so friendly and we really feel like we're a part of it."

Thank you Donna and Jay for all you do for clean water and healthy fishing in the Bitterroot Valley!

– Contributed by Stephanie Adams, BRWF's 2016 AmeriCorps Member







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