



2019 Annual Report

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Clearwater Resource Council



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Our Mission

The mission of the Clearwater Resource Council is to engage the community and facilitate efforts that will enhance, conserve, sustain and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Clearwater Watershed for present and future generations.

Our Goals

- Identify common values and facilitate community dialogue to enhance resource protection;
- Build common ground by consensus process, to the degree possible;
- Facilitate timely collection, synthesis and appropriate dissemination of robust information to build community capacity and facilitate informed decision-making; and
- Develop and support responsible resource stewardship programs.

Board Members/Officers

Jon Haufler, President
Mark Williams, Vice President
Carolyn Mehl, Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Wall, Past President
Tom Beers
John Fulton
Cathy Harrits
Doug Anderson
Mary Anderson

Staff

Caryn Miske, Executive Director
Joann Wallenburn, Aquatics Director
McKenzie Schessl, BSWC Member
Rachel Jennings, Bookkeeper/
Grants Administrator
Jeff Harrits, Website Manager Volunteer

Description of Basin

The Clearwater watershed, located in Missoula County, Montana, has unique natural resource values as it forms the southernmost portion of the North Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE), which extends from the Highwood River in Alberta to the Blackfoot River in Montana. The NCDE is also known as the “Crown of the Continent” and encompasses over 10 million acres of some of the most unspoiled lands on the North American continent. Astoundingly, all of the plants and animals which resided here during the expedition of Lewis and Clark in the early 1800s continue to inhabit this region, making it all the more important to conserve these lands for the continued survival of these species. Additionally, the watershed has unique cultural values to both the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Blackfoot Nation who referred to this area as the “backbone of the world.” This region embodies the convergence of natural beauty and cultural heritage.



Photo: Jeff Harrits



Glacial forces shaped the Clearwater valley’s unique topography over two million years ago, and formed the succession of lakes, which from north to south include: Summit Lake, Clearwater Lake, Rainy Lake, Lake Alva, Lake Inez, Seeley Lake, and Salmon Lake, along with Placid and Big Sky Lakes. The economic importance of this chain of lakes is undeniable since the hub of activity here in the Clearwater occurs in close proximity to these bodies of water. They provide

prime recreational opportunities, such as fishing, swimming, and boating, for both residents and tourists.

The Clearwater watershed is still pristine in nature although several of its species (bull trout, Canada lynx, and grizzly bear) are listed under the Endangered Species Act. The complex connectivity of the waterways in this region provides the ideal ecosystem for the threatened bull trout, while the large swaths of uninterrupted forested areas provide habitat for grizzly bears and Canada lynx. Moreover, together with the Swan Lake region and the Lincoln Ranger District, the Clearwater has distinctive landscape connectivity value, linking the Bob Marshall, the Lincoln Scapegoat, and the Mission Mountain Wilderness areas. This landscape connectivity is vital to the survival of many organisms, as habitat fragmentation is one of the most commonly cited threats to both aquatic and terrestrial species survival.

CRC's Program Highlights

Bonneville Environmental Foundation Model Watershed Program

Aquatics Programs

ADOPT-A-STREAM

CRC has continued this program with the assistance of community volunteers and local high school students. In 2019, CRC monitored 28 sites 375 times on the following creeks: Bertha, Blind Canyon, Boles, Camp, Clearwater, Colt, Deer, Finley, Grouse, Morrell, Mountain, Owl, Placid, Rice, Richmond, Second, Seeley, Swamp, Trail, and Uhler. The nutrient monitoring in fire-affected streams has been particularly important in measuring the impacts of the two major fire events which occurred in 2017.

ADOPT-A-LAKE

CRC completed its eleventh year of lake monitoring using basic water quality parameters including temperature and Secchi disc readings. In 2019, with the help of our dedicated volunteers, CRC monitored 15 sites 67 times on the following lakes: Alva, Big Sky, Clearwater, Inez, Placid, Rainy, Salmon, and Seeley. The results from this long-term data set have allowed us to conclude that a heightened investment in water quality monitoring is now needed. In 2020, CRC will undertake dissolved oxygen (DO) and nutrient monitoring on key waterbodies in the basin.

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Since 2011, CRC volunteers and staff have continued to be statewide leaders in creating a model AIS monitoring program by testing our highest risk lakes for the absence/presence of AIS. In 2019, CRC monitored 40 sites on 6 lakes within the Clearwater Valley: Alva, Big Sky, Inez, Placid, Salmon, and Seeley. Each lake was monitored 5 total times during the summer. We are happy to report that all of our samples came back negative for the presence of invasive mussels.

Forest Landscape Restoration

The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) is a program of the U.S. Forest Service that competitively funds collaborative efforts to address fuel mitigation, forest restoration, fish and wildlife habitat improvements, noxious weed treatment and renewable resource management in selected landscapes. The Southwest Crown of the Continent (SWCC) including the Clearwater watershed was one of the first 10 landscapes selected to participate in this program. Comprising approximately 1.5 million acres across three ranger districts in three national forests, the SWCC completed its tenth and final year of federally funded activities in 2019. CRC played a significant role in the initiative including serving on the steering and monitoring committees, as well as the aquatic and wildlife working groups. In 2019, numerous on-the-ground treatments occurred ranging from road restoration to reduce sediment loads to fisheries improvement projects. More specifically, CRC utilized CFLRP funds through our partnership with the USFS to support water quality research and monitoring.



Fuels Mitigation

Fuels mitigation to reduce fire potential around our homes is a top priority for CRC. In 2019, CRC assisted landowners with forest management issues, coordinated fuel mitigation activities, obtained funding for fuel reduction projects, updated the Seeley-Swan Fire Management Plan, and educated the community on creating and maintaining healthy forests. From 2017 through 2019, the Seeley Lake Fuels Mitigation Task Force completed fuel mitigation on 338 acres of private property. We are excited to continue this program in 2020.

Trails

CRC obtained funding for signage for the new trail at the USFS Big Larch campground. The signage project, in partnership with USFS, will be completed in 2020.

Community Outreach

PURE MT TALES

CRC sponsored four outreach events including:

- Lake Missoula and the Great Ice Age Floods;
- Gardening in the Seeley Swan Valley;
- Living with Bears in Seeley Lake; and
- Celebrate the Clearwater.

ADULT EDUCATION: WORKSHOPS

CRC sponsored three workshops on:

- Lake Ecology;
- Aquatic Invasive Species; and
- Fragrant Waterlily.

YOUTH EDUCATION

CRC continues to work with local schools focusing on the hydrology and water quality of Morrell Creek as a hands-on learning opportunity and service project for students at the Seeley Swan High School and Seeley Lake Elementary School. CRC also participated in curricula deployment and work with summer youth crews.

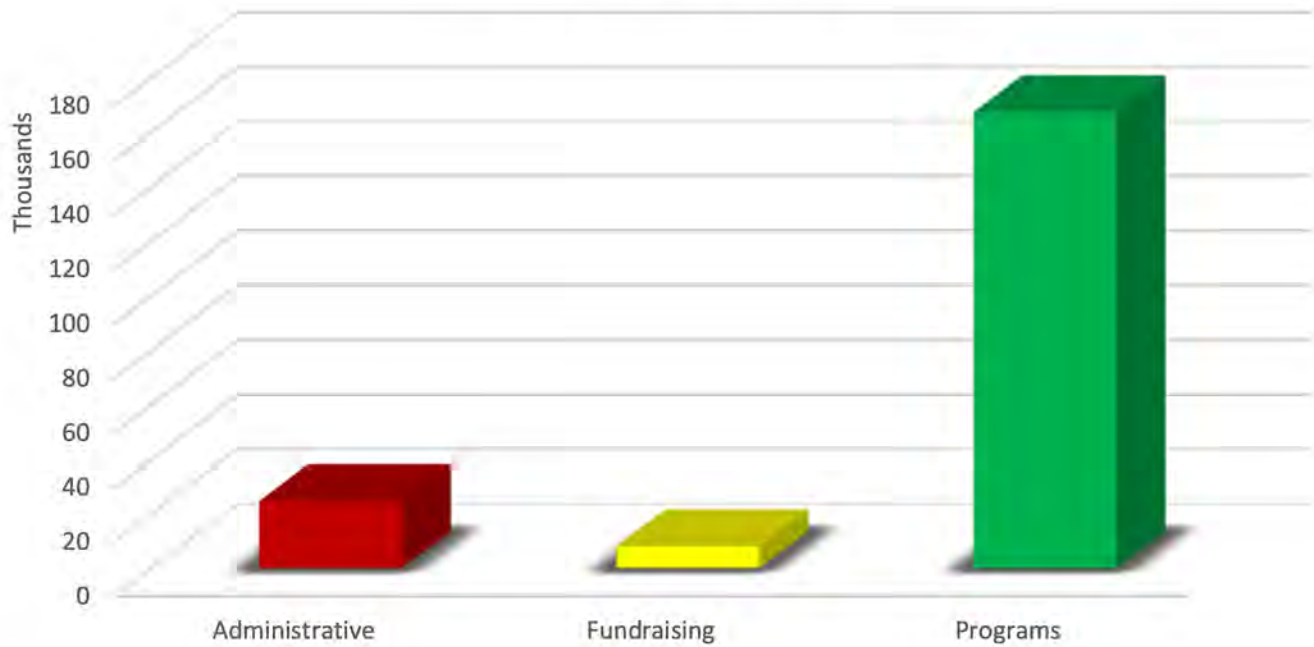
Clearwater Lakes Alliance (CLA)

Based upon initial research and the results of CRC surveys of lakeshore property owners, we commenced planning for our newest pilot project – the Clearwater Lakes Alliance. The CLA will initially be launched in 2020 at Placid Lake to empower lakeshore property owners and communities to take a more proactive role in managing the health of the lake upon which they live.

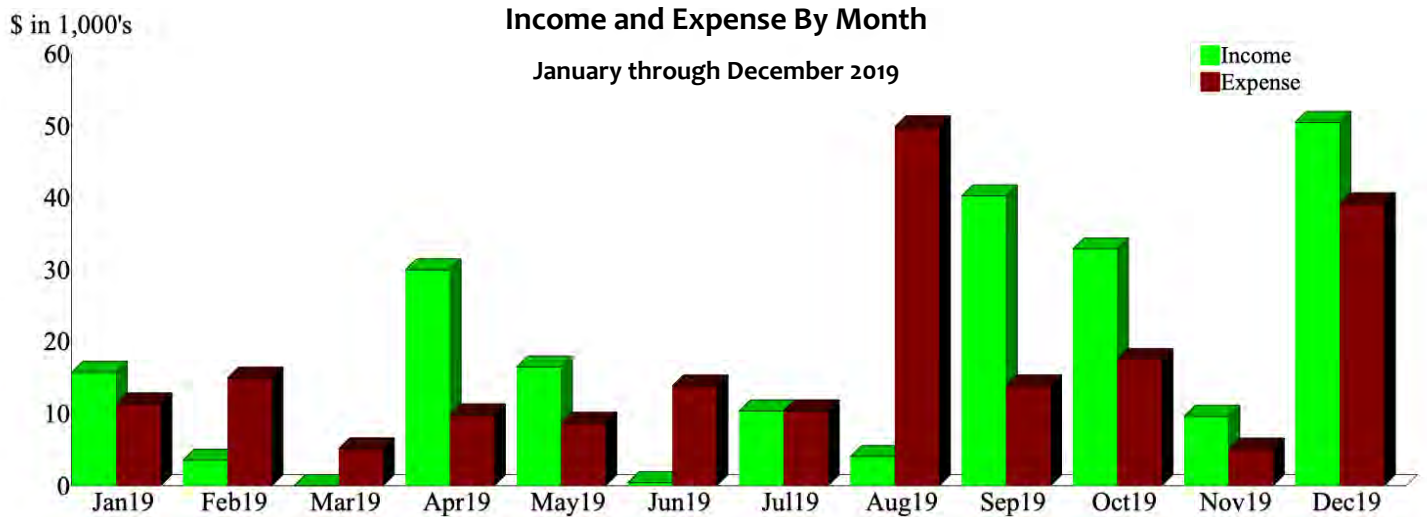


CRC's 2019 Financials

Expenses by Category Fiscal Year 2019

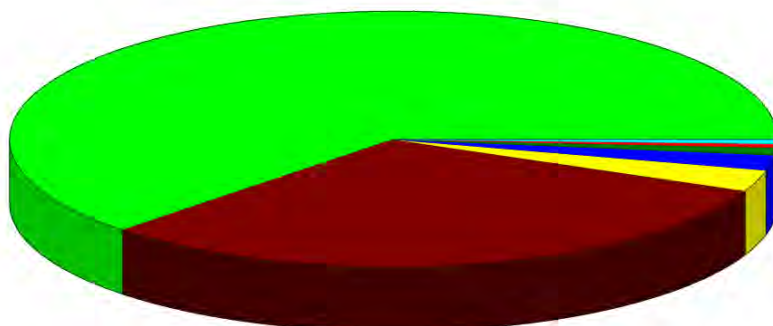


CRC's 2019 expenses broken down into 3 categories: administrative, fundraising, and programs.



Expense Summary

January through December 2019



62000 · Landowner Fuel Mitigation Pmts.	62.63%
60000 · Payroll Expenses	30.88
66000 · Facilities & Equipment	2.78
67000 · Operations	2.05
61000 · General Business Expenses	1.01
64000 · Travel and Meetings	0.61
65000 · Special Event - Direct Benefit	0.05
Total	\$199,758.36