

Rooted

Fall Newsletter



Fall 2022



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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We weathered a hot and dry summer together in the Bitterroot this year. As fall arrives, we can celebrate the transition to cooler days and much welcomed precipitation. With the change in weather, you can find us wrapping up another successful field season of project stewardship, community engagement, and stream health and habitat improvements.

On the cusp of our 30th Anniversary, we're gearing up for even bigger projects, continuing our legacy of success, and achieving even greater conservation impacts for our Valley. With our growing staff and support from our community, we're rising to meet the opportunities and challenges of our changing Valley.

At this time of year we transition into the monitoring reports and data processing that allow us to better understand our impact on the landscape. We get back into classrooms to reach youth with watershed education. And we deepen our relationships with landowners, funders, and other partners that will position us to achieve even more on-the-ground conservation next year.

Your willingness to participate in conservation makes it all possible. Our successes are directly linked to the generosity and commitment of our supporters.



It's remarkable what our collective impact looks like when we come together for our waters. We're so proud to work alongside you for this community we love so dearly and the waters that make it special.

Sincerely,

Heather

Heather Barber
Executive Director



Providing a Clear Pathway to Water-Wise Landscaping

Save water, save money, save wildlife

Reducing the size of your lawn is a trend that's here to stay - and for reasons we can all get behind. That green grass lawn may be brilliant in color, but it's an ecological dead-zone that's responsible for depleting our waterways and polluting them, too.

Homeowners and communities are transitioning away from water-guzzling lawns and toward more eco- and people-friendly landscaping. Replacing sections of your lawn or cultivated plants with native, water-wise plants is one way you can join this movement.

Unlike cultivated plants or lawns, native plants don't need such high volumes of fertilizers, soil amendments, or water.

Offering Water-Wise Plant Packs

This year, the Water Forum proudly partnered with Great Bear Native Plants to offer our community 'Water-Wise Plant Packs', making the transition to water-wise easier and trustworthy.

Each pack includes a curated selection of native species, with a diversity in bloom times, colors, and plant types to quickly turn your yard into a vibrant and thriving habitat.

We're glad to help lead the transition to water-wise landscaping, because less water in your yard means more water in our natural waterways. Stay tuned for our next sale of Water-Wise Plant Packs!

We in the Bitterroot, like the rest of the West, are experiencing longer, more intense droughts in a generally more unreliable water system. Now is the time to ditch your lawn and plant Water-Wise - to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, save our declining pollinator populations, and conserve precious water that our Bitterroot farms, fish, and families need to thrive.

Visit brwaterforum.org/waterwise to learn more.

Updates from the Field

Thanks largely to our volunteer-powered Watershed Enhancement Team (WET), we can sustain the necessary watering, weeding, fencing maintenance, survival and growth monitoring, and other care our restoration projects need to succeed.

This field season WET contributed a tremendous 200 hours across seven of our restoration sites!

John Owen Fishing Access Site

To keep our ~250 plants watered during this particularly hot summer, we installed a passive dripline system fed by large water tanks. With the help of the Stevensville volunteer fire department, MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and WET volunteers, we've been able to keep the tanks full and plants quenched.

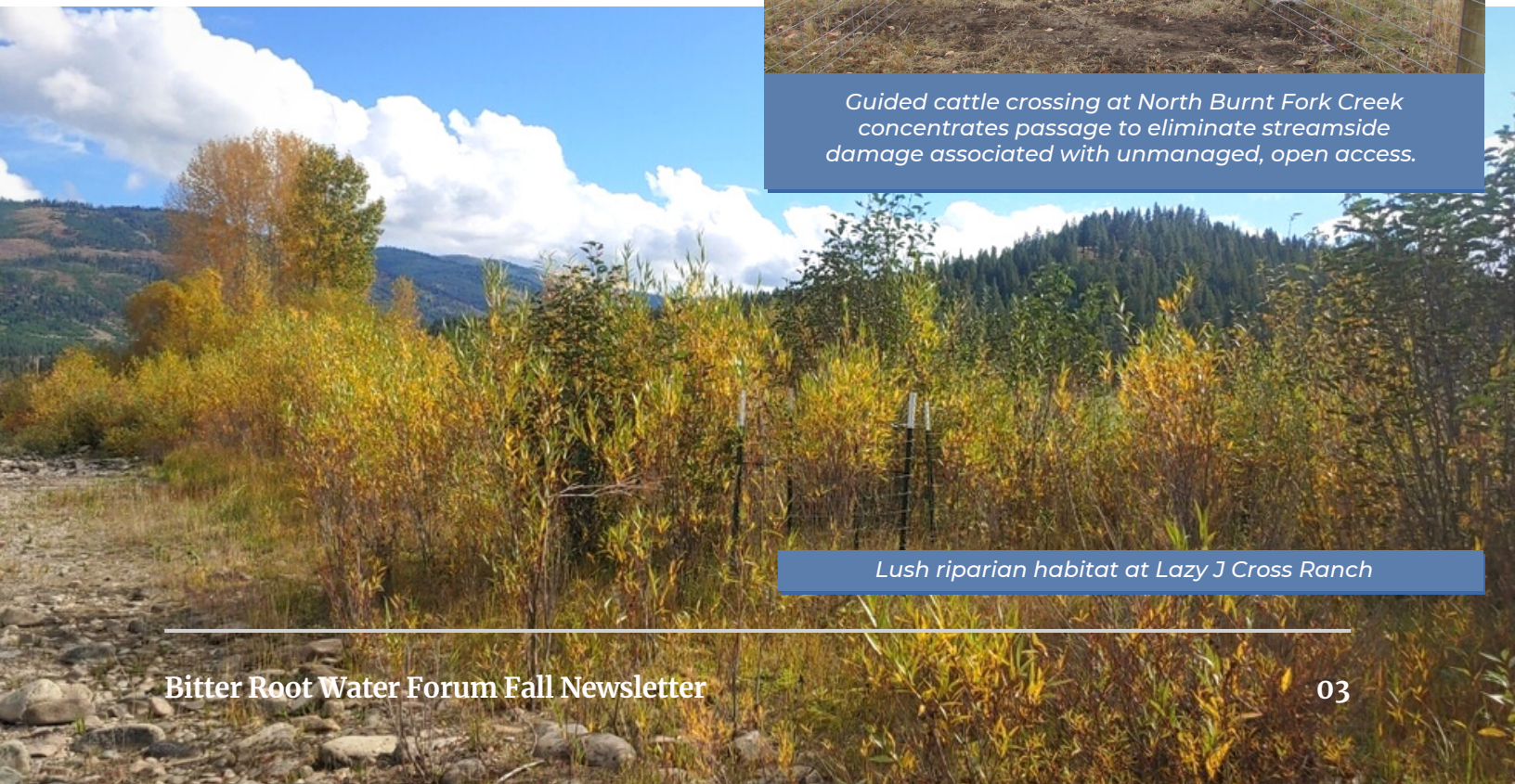
North Burnt Fork Creek

In addition to planting 131 native plants and 300 willow cuttings at Mr. Meyer's ranching property, the Water Forum installed livestock fencing along the Creek, two guided cattle crossings, and an off-stream watering system for cattle. These enhancements will reduce land loss to erosion as well as nutrient and sediment pollution.

Thanks to a wet spring, a handful of native plants established themselves in the protected riparian area. Now, Grey Alder, Douglas Hawthorne, Western Snowberry, and more species grow along the streamside, protecting it and creating critical habitat.



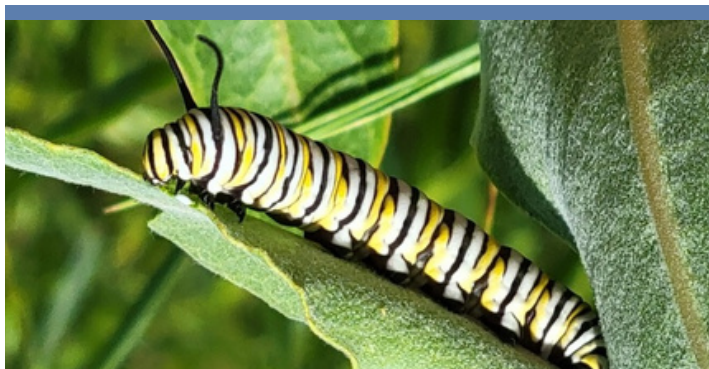
Guided cattle crossing at North Burnt Fork Creek concentrates passage to eliminate streamside damage associated with unmanaged, open access.



Lush riparian habitat at Lazy J Cross Ranch

Miller Creek

Sometimes we see the importance of our restoration work in big ways - like a murky, polluted stream turned clear. Other times, we see it in small but still significant ways - like an endangered species enjoying a healthy, native plant.



Monarch butterfly caterpillar spotted enjoying a native milkweed at our Miller Creek Restoration site this summer. Photo by Frank Reed, WET volunteer.

There is hope yet for recovery of the Monarch - and other threatened species - as countless dedicated conservationists embark on restoration projects at remarkable scales across North America. *Thank you for supporting ours!*

Lazy J Cross Ranch



Thanks to moist soils and WET support, this effort has been phenomenally successful. Protected by our riparian buffer fencing and browse protectors, the number of plants at this site has nearly doubled from the original 450 since 2018 implementation. This season, we were proud to see the beginnings of a lush riparian forest on either side of the River.

Contact Alex@brwaterforum.org with inquiries about joining our Watershed Enhancement Team.

Launching the Bitterroot River Conditions Tool

Sometimes information can go a long way in helping River-lovers make safe and responsible decisions. That's why we're glad to bring our community the Bitterroot River Conditions Tool, specially created for the Bitterroot by our partners at the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Tool displays up-to-date flow and temperature information for the River and streams, as well as conservation targets and other key information regarding water conditions in our Bitterroot River. So, be sure to check the Tool before your next River trip.

Visit brwaterforum.org/riverconditions to check out the Tool!

Our First Evening for the River

Thank you for joining us for this exceptional evening!



Thanks to profound community support, our first-ever Evening for the River surpassed our fundraising and community-building expectations. On September 10, 150 of our closest friends and dedicated supporters gathered to celebrate our successes and prepare for even greater, more collaborative, and inclusive conservation impacts. And, of course, we celebrated with good food, drinks, and music!

This Evening showcased how the Water Forum is driven by a growing coalition of community members who care deeply about protecting our watershed, and the farms, fish, and families who bring it to life. Together, we raised over \$31,000 to advance the restoration and learning impacts of the Water Forum.



These contributions will help us continue to lead local education programs, extend our streamside restoration impacts, and expand the capacity of the Water Forum to lead conservation programs for the benefit of our Valley.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for joining us as supporters, innovators, and friends.

You make this work happen. Will you join us as a monthly Tributary donor to make your contribution most enduring? Visit brwaterforum.org/donate to contribute today.

We accept other giving options like Property or Legacy Gifts.

Call us at 406.375.2272 to discuss what's best for you.





Special Thanks...

2022 Cash for Cutthroats Guides

Next time you or your friends book a trip on the Bitterroot, please consider these guides that have given back to help keep our streams clean, cool, and flowing:

- Tony Reinhardt, Montana Trout Outfitters
- Toby Knapp, Fishs Eddy O Outfitters
- Tim P., Total Outfitters
- Kurt Rausch, Rausch's Top Water Anglers
- Jordan, Freestone Fly Shop
- Joe Loney, Fly Fishing Always
- Jenny West, Go West Outfitters
- Jed Fitzpatrick, Bitterroot River Guides
- Eddie Olwell, Fishs Eddy O Outfitter
- Dave Shobe, Fishs Eddy O Outfitters
- Dan Kimzey, Bitterroot River Guides
- Collin Hohman, Freestone Fly Shop
- Chris Rockhold, Bitterroot River Guides
- Chad Williams, Total Outfitters
- Andrew Hettick, Freestone Fly Shop
- Alex Hibala, Bitterroot River Guides



2022 Business Partners

Our Business Partners are invested in helping us care for the water that our Bitterroot farms, fish, and families need to thrive.

To join us as a Business Partner, please contact info@brwaterforum.org.



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Cody Miller 406.777.1438 | Joshua B. Lovelace 406.383.6945



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- First Security Bank

Thanks for your support!





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to discuss our giving options.*

Or, join us as a Monthly Tributary donor at
brwaterforum.org/donate



Volunteer Spotlight

Hamilton High School Cross Country Team
Thank you for your tremendous support!

Sign up to volunteer at brwaterforum.org/volunteer



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