

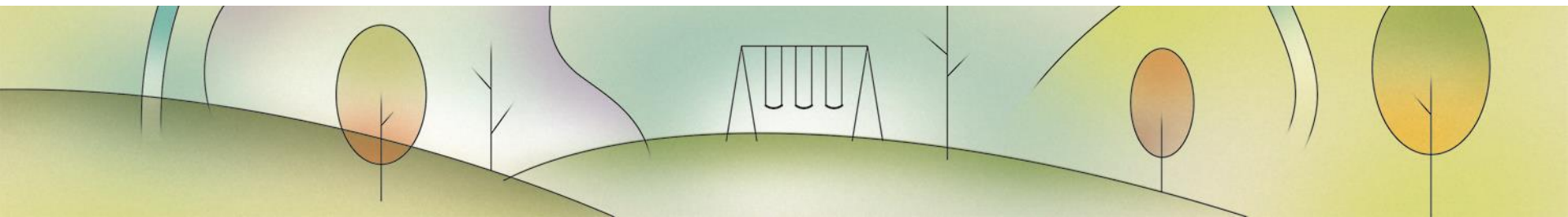


2024 Montana Wetland Council

The State of Montana's Wetlands

...A Local Perspective...

John Muhlfeld
Mayor





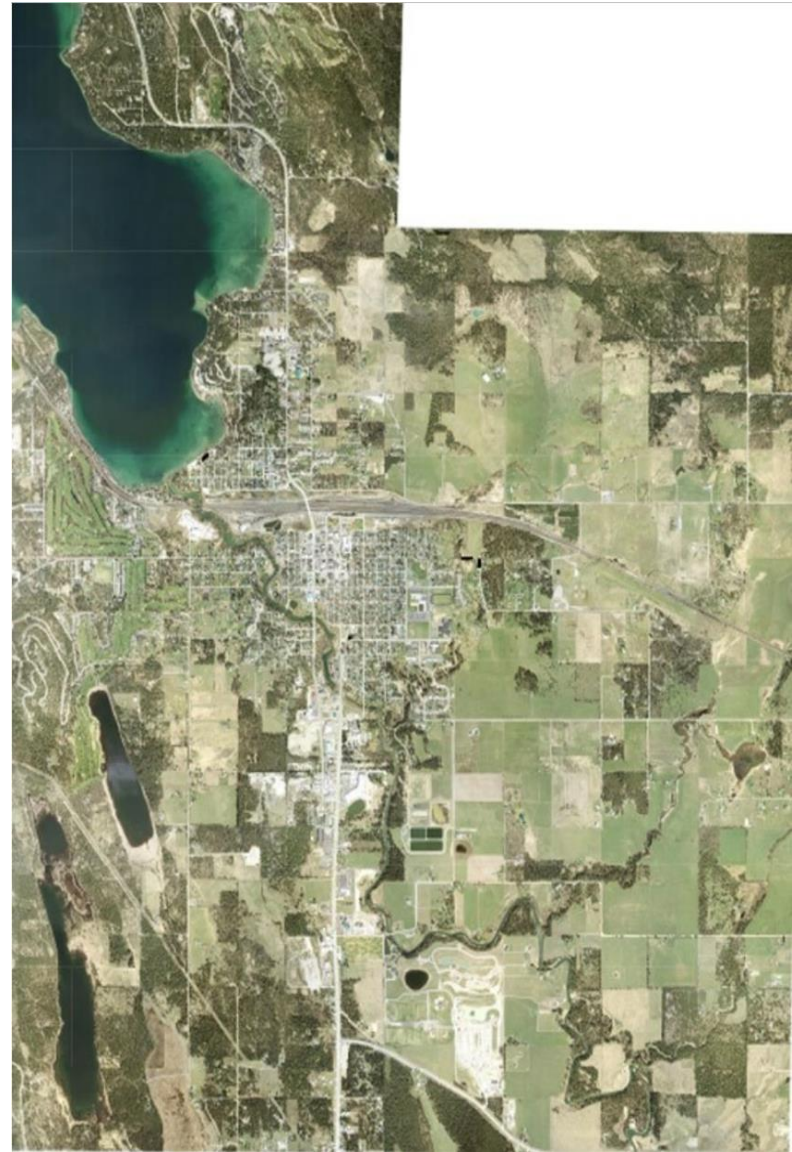
Whitefish Aquatic Resources



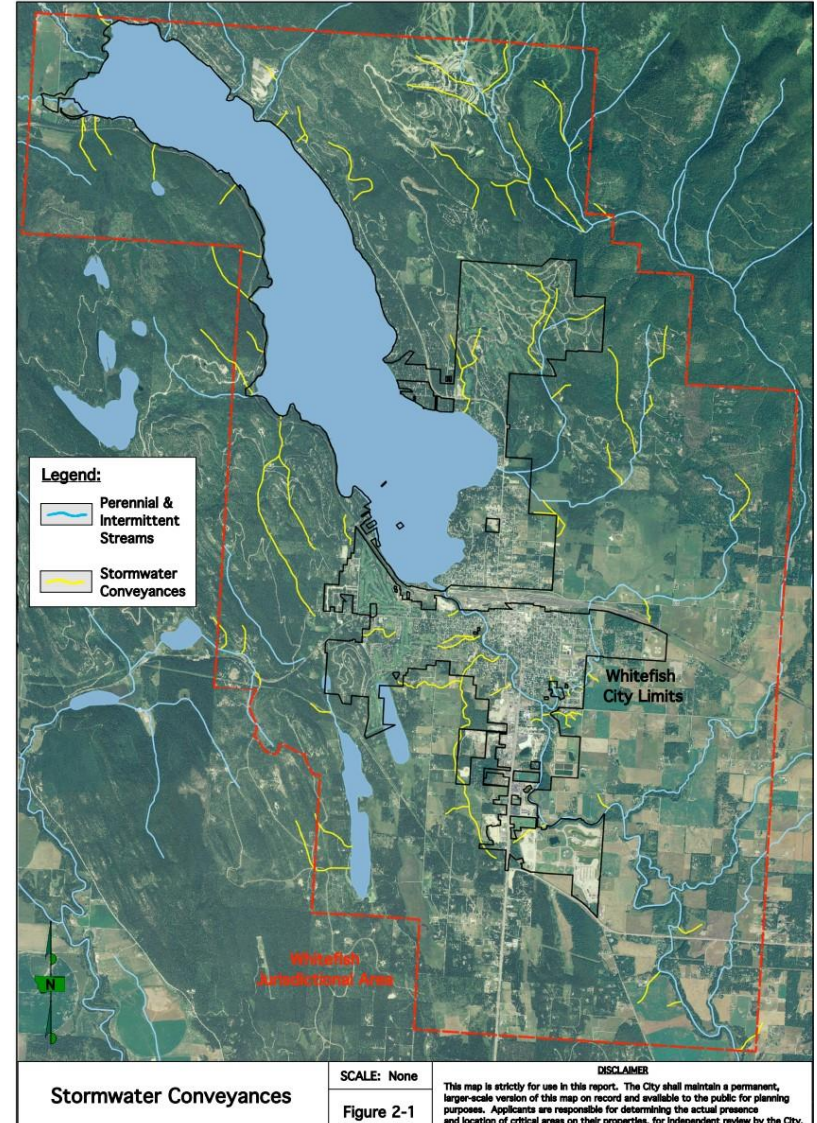
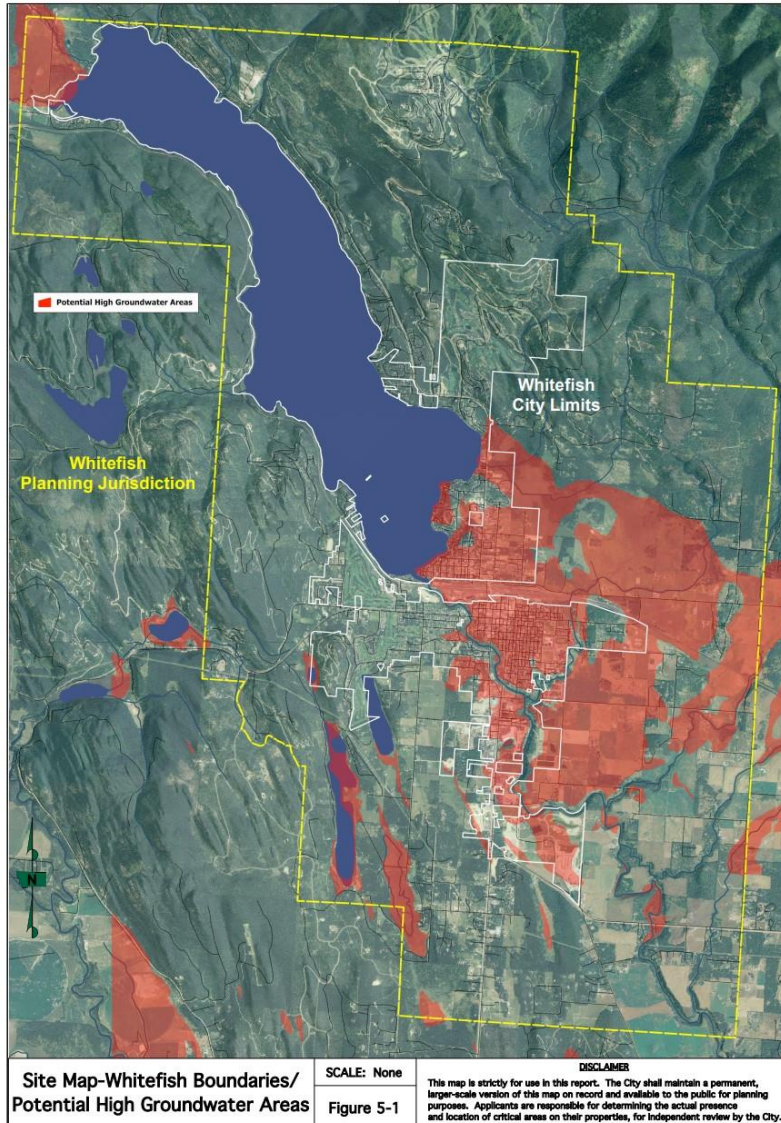
Site Map-Whitefish Boundaries/
Hydrographic Features

SCALE: None
Figure 3-1

DISCLAIMER
This map is strictly for use in this report. The City shall maintain a permanent, larger-scale version of this map on record and available to the public for planning purposes. Applicants are responsible for determining the actual presence and location of critical areas on their properties, for independent review by the City.



Whitefish Aquatic Resources

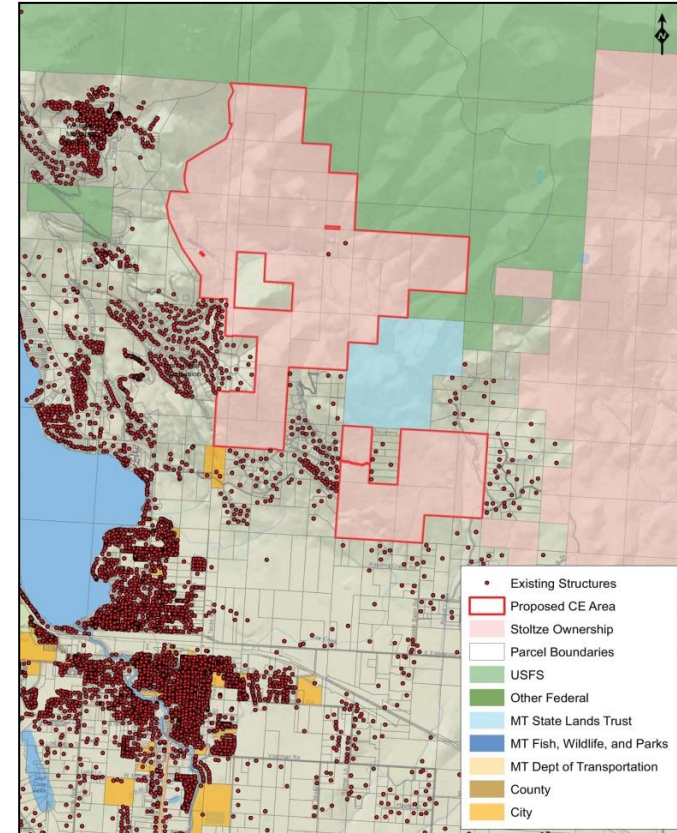


Significant Development in Critical Areas



Whitefish itself is one of the fastest growing resort communities in the Intermountain West.

Significant residential development on steep slopes and adjacent to aquatic resources





Local Geology



Central Avenue Rotational Slope Failure



Whitefish River Rotational Slope Failure



11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance

(originally codified as Critical Areas Ordinance)

Water Quality Protection Plan (WQPP) for All Development within 200-Ft of:

- Streams, Lakes and the Whitefish River
- Critical Stormwater Areas
- Wetlands
- Steep Slopes

Water Quality Protection Areas in Whitefish





11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance

Permit Compliance Requirements

- Existing and proposed improvements
- Location of stormwater conveyances, lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands within 200 feet of development site
- Slopes greater than 10%
- Location of improvements within 200-ft of wetland, river, lake or stream
- Wetland mitigation plan, including required monitoring and performance bond for up to 5-years

11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance

Buffers and Setbacks

Waterbody	Buffer	Setback
Whitefish River	75' or top of bank, whichever is greater	Variable, but no less than 20'
Other perennial streams	100' with 25' increase/decrease for high/low intensity land use	10'
Intermittent streams	50'	10'
Wetlands	100', with 25' increase/decrease for high/low intensity land use	10'
Whitefish Lake	20' with water quality plan to meet performance standard of 75' buffer	10'
Other lakes	75'	10'

11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance





11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance

Wetland Protections and Setbacks

- Apply to isolated wetlands rated as Category I or Category II using the Montana Wetland Assessment Method and are greater than 1,000 square feet
- Includes wetlands characterized by:
 - Forest community of Engelmann spruce/skunk cabbage
 - Plants identified as Species of Concern by Montana Natural Heritage Program
 - Wetlands rated Category 1 and Category 2 using the Montana Wetland Assessment Method



11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance

Wetland Protections and Setbacks

Single Family Developments

- 100-ft.

Multi-Family, Commercial and Industrial Developments

- 125-ft.

Buffer Averaging

- Total area contained in buffer after averaging is no less than that contained within buffer prior to averaging
- Decreases / increases in width based on riparian functions' sensitivity to adjacent land uses
- No net loss in functions
- Narrowest buffer no less than 50% of standard buffer width

11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance



11-7-10: Water Quality Protection Ordinance

Wetland Mitigation Ratios

- Established in consultation with MDEQ and ACOE

Wetland Type	Creation or Re-establishment	Rehabilitation	Enhancement
Fen	Not possible	6:1	10:1
High value wetland	3:1	6:1	20:1
Non-exempt	2:1	4:1	15:1
Exempt	1.5:1	3:1	10:1

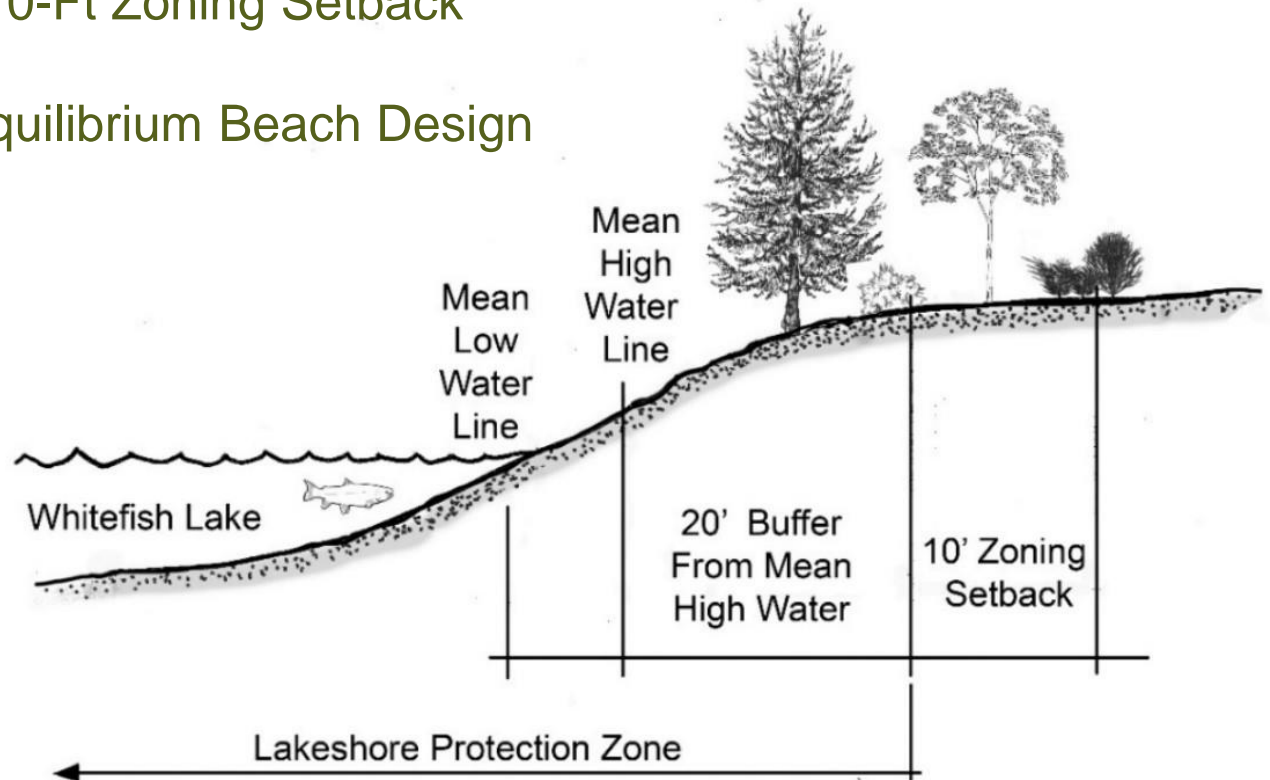
Whitefish Lakeshore & Riparian Protection Regulations Text Amendments

County and City Jurisdiction

20-Ft Lakeshore Protection Zone

Additional 10-Ft Zoning Setback

Dynamic Equilibrium Beach Design



Dynamic Equilibrium Beach

Original Beach - Before

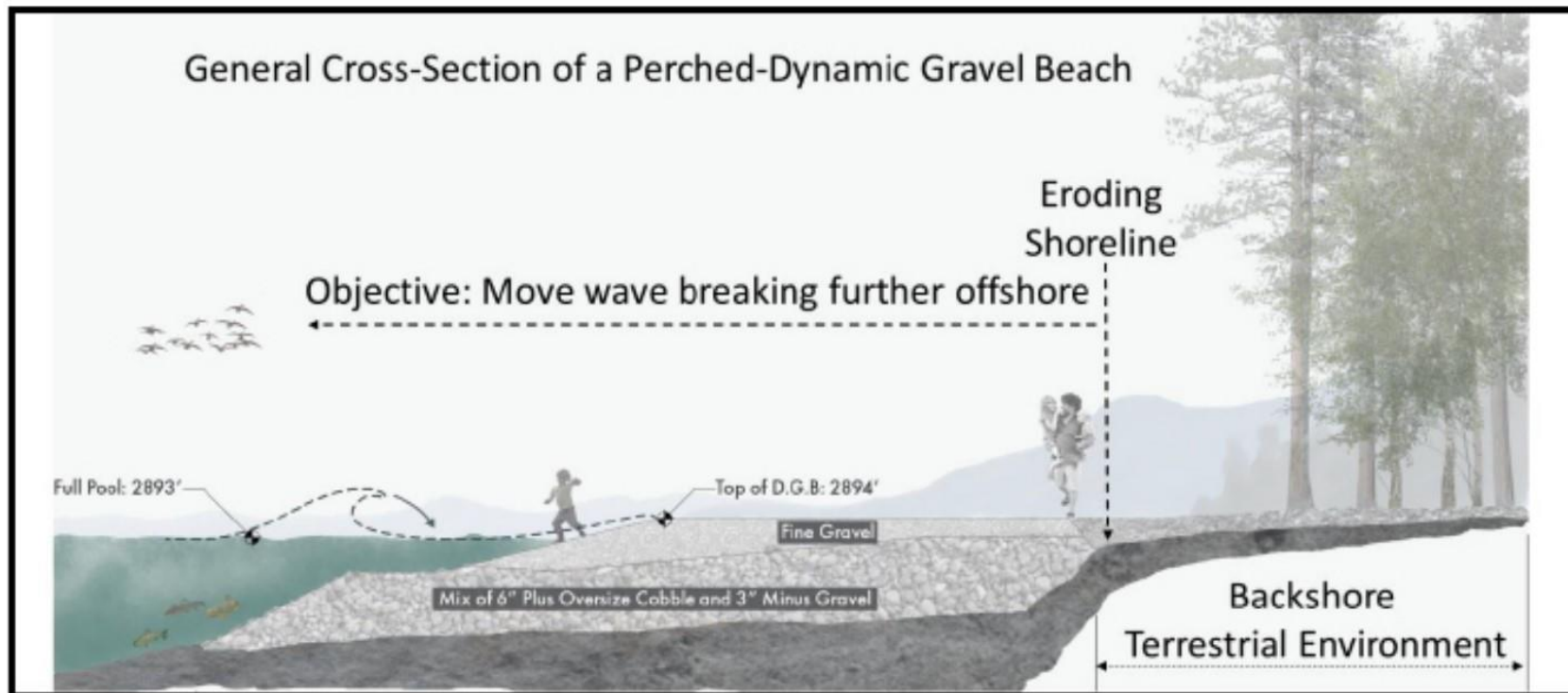


300 SKYLES PLACE
ORIGINAL BEACH

Lakeshore Regulations Text Amendments

13-3-1-O Title 13 Lake and Lakeshore Protection Regulations of City Code:

“Natural shoreline restoration using bioengineering and/or the installation of a dynamic equilibrium beach is the preferred method for lakeshore erosion control.....”

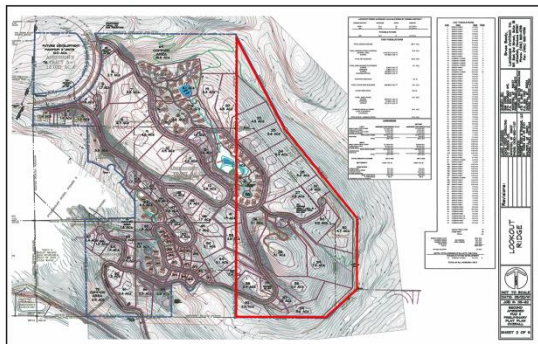
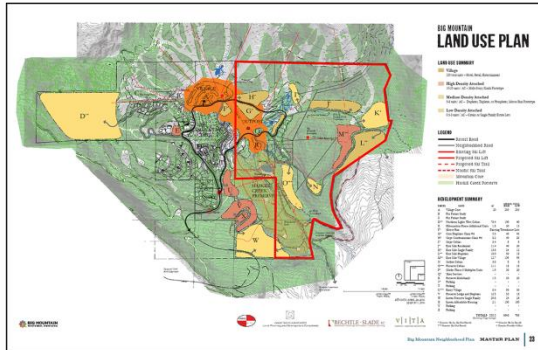


Dynamic Equilibrium Beach

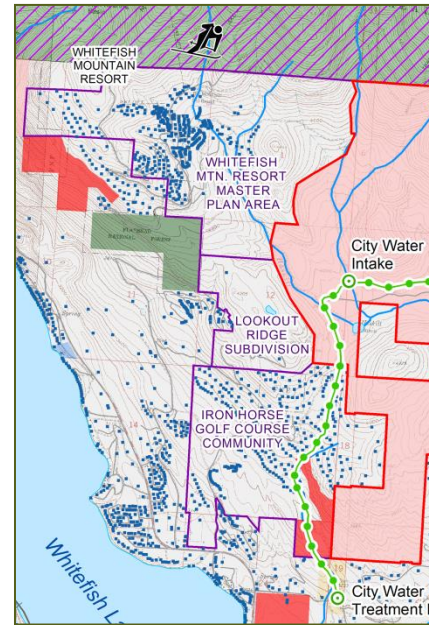
Dynamic Beach - After



Haskill Basin Conservation Easement - 2016

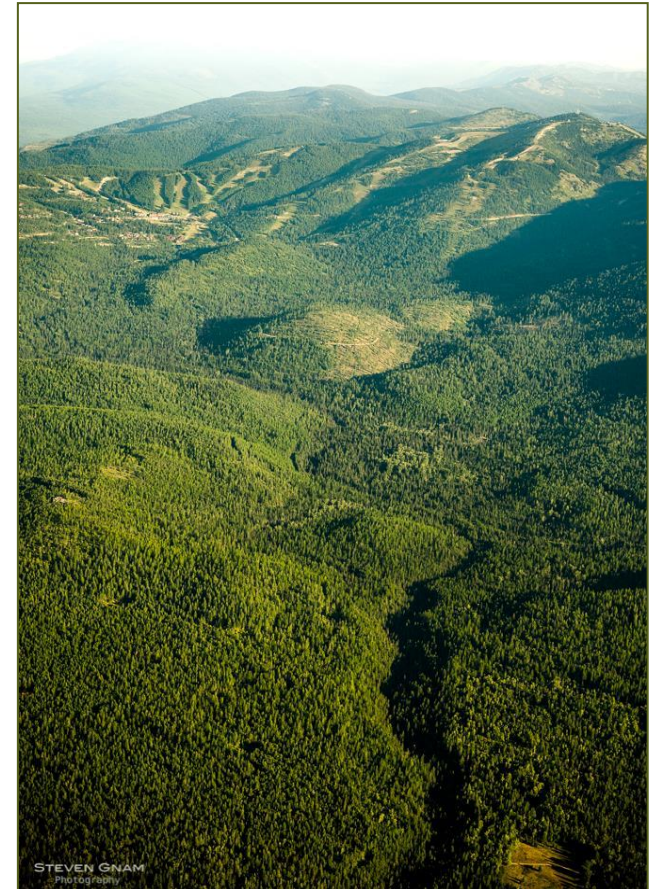
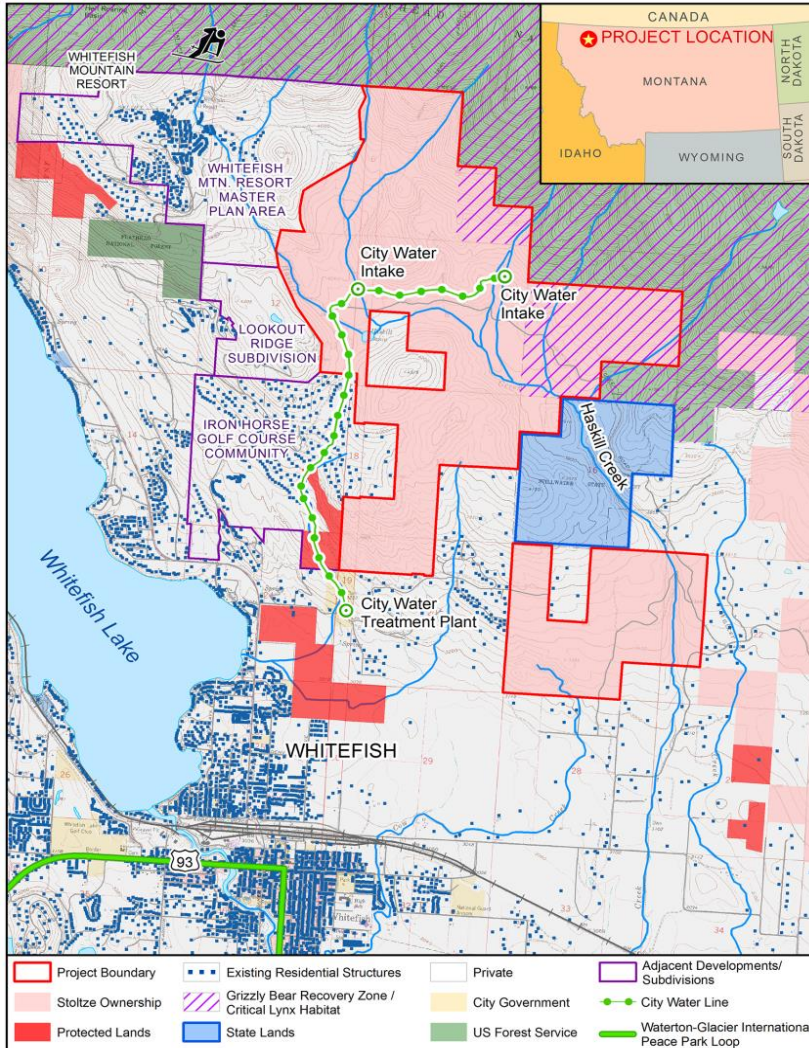


Prior to 2016, Stoltze had sold off almost 1,200 acres for development immediately next door.



More than half of the Whitefish Mountain Resort and the Iron Horse and Lookout Ridge subdivisions consists of former Stoltze-owned lands.

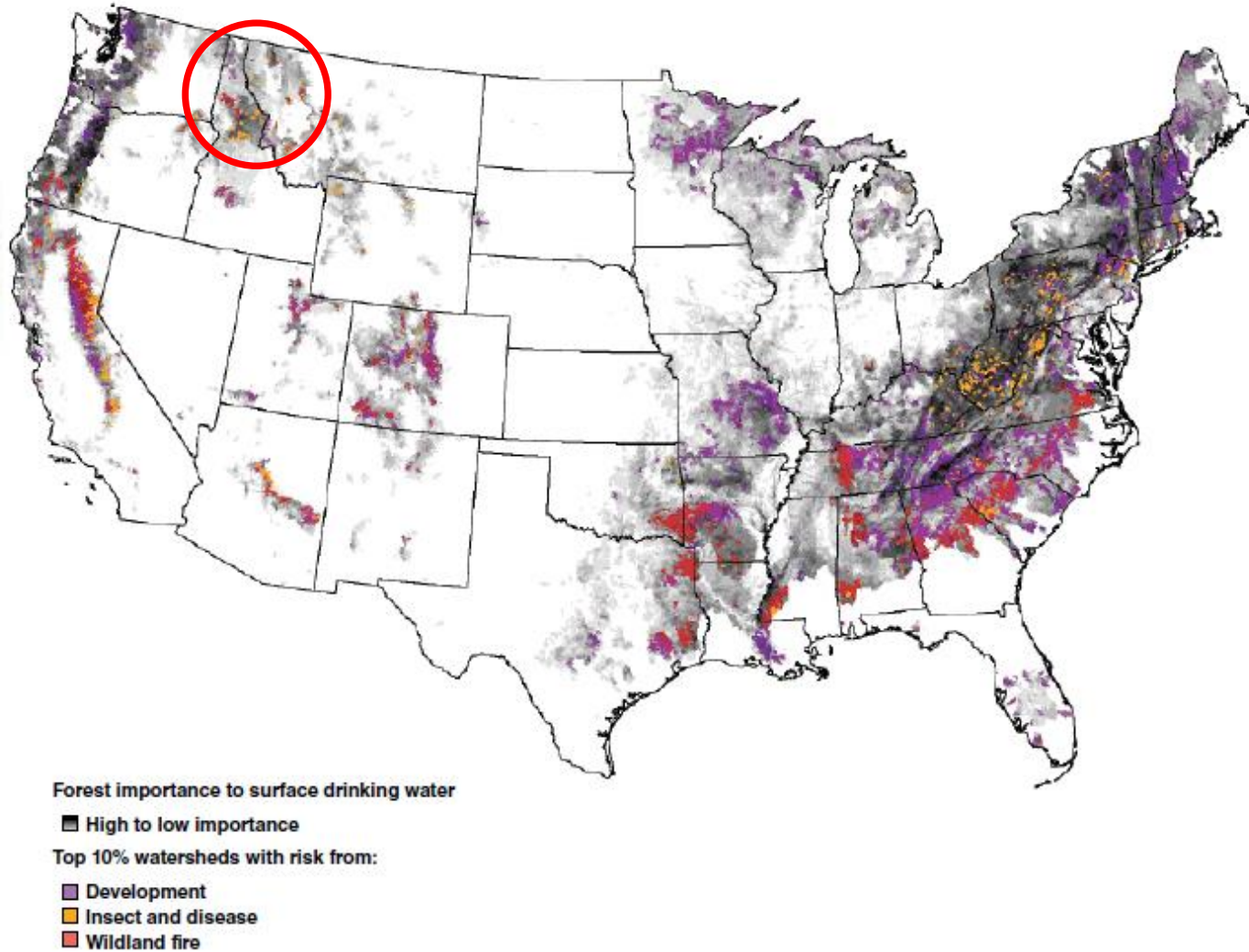
City of Whitefish Municipal Supply Watershed



The City of Whitefish derives more than **90%** of its municipal water supply from the property.

Threats from Development, Wildfire & Disease

FIGURE 4 Forest importance to surface drinking water and watersheds with high risk—top 10%



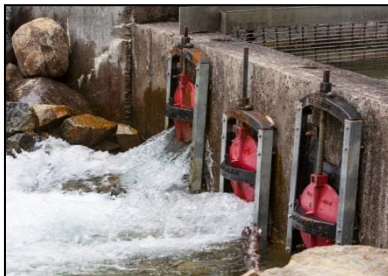
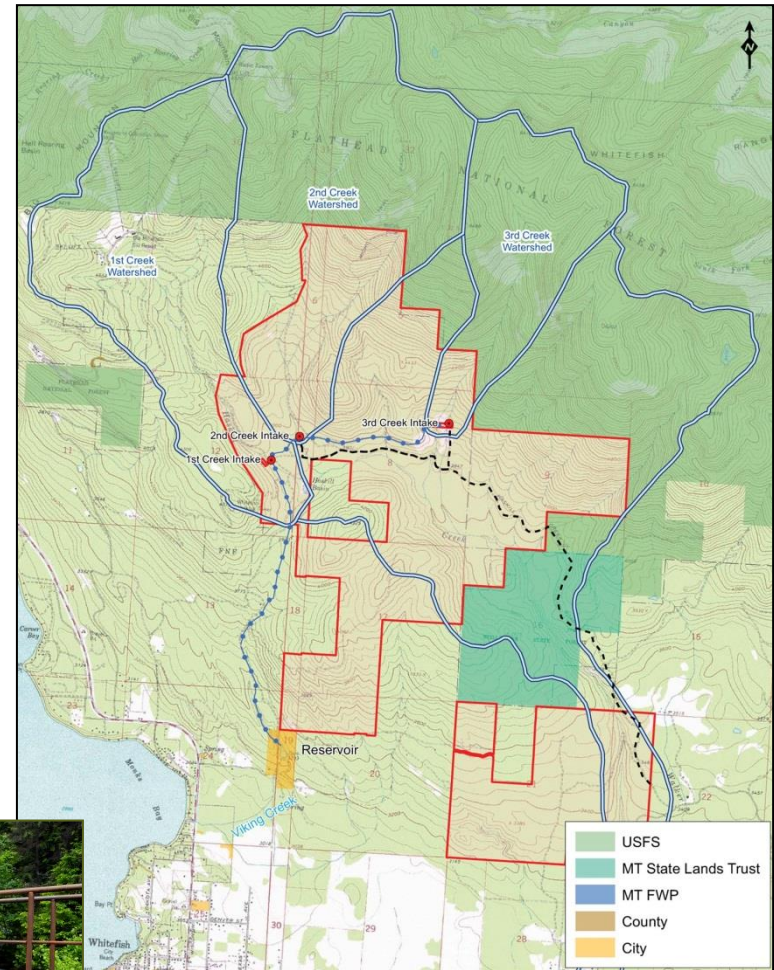
Source: USDA, 2011

Important Community Water Supply Values



The City of Whitefish gets more than **90%** of its municipal water supply from the property.

Yet... despite owning the water, the city had limited legal rights to access the property, pipe water down from it or maintain the existing diversion structures.





Protecting forested watersheds is smart economics for water utilities

“By harnessing forests as “natural infrastructure” to complement “built” infrastructure, water utilities can help keep costs down, reduce future risks to water supply, enhance resilience to climate change, and provide a suite of ancillary benefits for their customers...”



84% Voter Approval at the Polls Easement Closed February 1, 2016



F.H. Stoltze
Land & Lumber



DAILY INTER LAKE www.dailyinterlake.com
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 18, 2016 | \$1.00 | Serving the Flathead Valley since 1889

Historic deal finalized that protects Whitefish watershed

By **SAM WILSON**
Daily Inter Lake

This week will be one of celebration for many Whitefish leaders and residents after the city finalized a deal Tuesday that will safeguard more than 3,000 acres of land providing the bulk of the Whitefish water supply.

The Haskill Basin Project will prevent future development on 3,020 acres of working forestland owned by F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. The basin supplies 75 percent of Whitefish's drinking water, with Whitefish Lake contributing the balance.

Whitefish Mayor John Muhlfeld said Wednesday the massive \$20 million easement has been in the making for about five years, since he began working with the Trust for Public Land on the initial proposal.

"It's not only a relief, but brings a

lot of satisfaction to me that we're able to deliver a conservation project to the city of Whitefish that will protect our water supply in perpetuity," Muhlfeld said. "We don't have to look far down the road to the city of Missoula to see what they're facing, in terms of the challenges they've had to protect their water supply."

The road to conservation has been bumpy at times, particularly when a block of Whitefish residents and business owners opposed the city's proposal last year to raise the resort tax to cover the city's \$7.7 million share of the deal.

Ultimately, voters overwhelmingly supported a 2015 referendum to increase the city's 2-percent resort tax to 3 percent.

In addition to the city's share, Stoltze is contributing \$3.9 million in donated land value, and a pair of feder-

al grants supplied another \$16 million. Under the agreement's terms, Stoltze remains the landowner while Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks holds the easement.

NORTHWEST MONTANA is rich in open spaces, and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks regional conservation manager Alan Wood said the Haskill Basin acreage pales in comparison to other landmark easements along Bull Creek and the Thompson and Fisher rivers.

"The striking thing about this one was the value involved," Wood said. "This is the most expensive project, per acre, that we've ever taken on."

The Haskill Basin easement, brokered by the Trust for Public Land and signed by Whitefish, Stoltze and



THIS AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH shows the expanse of Haskill Basin where the city of Whitefish draws municipal water from Second and Third creeks. (Photo by Steven Gnam)

See **WHITEFISH, A8**



Multi Resource Management Plan



“Status quo” responsible forest management

Liaison Team established to annually review compliance with terms of easement including wetland and stream setbacks

Adaptive management approach to address resource impacts and conflicts



Carbon Sequestration



- Project sequestered approximately 10,000 metric tons of above-ground forest carbon
- Equivalent to 36,677 tons of carbon dioxide, or nearly 10 years of emissions from City of Whitefish municipal operations

Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation and The Whitefish Trail



Economic Impact from the Whitefish Trail

72,966
ANNUAL TRAIL USERS



\$6.4 MILLION
ANNUAL CONSUMER SPENDING
ATTRIBUTED TO THE WHITEFISH TRAIL



68 JOBS
SUPPORTED
BY VISITORS WHO USE
THE WHITEFISH TRAIL



The economic impact of the Whitefish Trail will continue to grow as the community completes their vision.

Spending by people visiting Whitefish for outdoor recreation amounts to \$101M in spending, 1,460 jobs, and \$41.1M in labor income annually

Questions?



Acknowledgements

- City of Whitefish Public Works Department
- City of Whitefish Planning and Building Department
- Critical Areas Ordinance Technical Steering Committee
- Climate Action Plan Technical Steering Committee
- Whitefish Lake Institute
- MFWP, USFS, USFWS, The Trust for Public Land, Stoltze Land & Lumber Company