



# Kalispell

MONTANA

**DISCOVERY IN EVERY DIRECTION**

# THE LARGEST LAKE IN THE WEST

Flathead Lake is bigger than any other freshwater lake in the west. Clean and clear, it's fed by glacial waters from the national park. Quaint towns have developed along its northern shores, and modest mansions line the waterfront. But the Flathead Indian Reservation, home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, covers the entire southern half of the lake. This kind of arrangement has, in other places, ignited culture wars. Yet, united under the same goal to preserve the beautiful waters, government agencies, nonprofits, and the First Nation tirelessly preserve a solid partnership to resolve water management issue, sort out water use clashes, and keep the lake a reliable home for the enormous native bull trout and cutthroat trout, as well as non-native lake trout, yellow perch, lake whitefish, and sturgeon. Ice fish in the winter or take a boat out on the endless waters during the summertime.

**FLATHEAD LAKE BIOLOGICAL STATION: (406) 982-3301**

**FLATHEAD LAKE SALMON HATCHERY: (406) 857-3744**

**AABLE FISHING CHARTERS: (406) 257-5214**

# FLY-FISHING: AN UNLIKELY TOOL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Whitney Milhoan is the Executive Director of Casting for Recovery, a nonprofit that coordinates fly-fishing retreats for women with breast cancer. She is from Columbia Falls (a Flathead Valley community), and though the organization is based in Vermont, she organizes one of its most popular retreats near her hometown in Glacier Country, where women fish the Wild & Scenic Flathead River. The gentle, rhythmic motion of fly-casting is therapeutic, as is the opportunity to immerse oneself in nature and form lasting bonds with others who have experienced the same challenges. It provides women with a new life-long outlet for peace, a way to center themselves when the world feels uncertain and scary. In 2015, Casting for Recovery held 40 retreats and served 550 women.

**WHITNEY MILHOAN, Casting for Recovery Executive Director**

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# BRINGING BACK THE BEARS

Historically, the grizzly bear's range covered most of North America, from the plains in the Midwest to the Pacific Ocean, and from central Mexico to Alaska. Today, the grizzly is found in just 2 percent of that original range. One population of grizzlies integral to the survival of the species inhabits an area of the Northern Continental Divide area, in Glacier National Park, and another small group lives in the Cabinet-Yaak area to the west. The Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks department envisions a future with a secure population of grizzlies that number 500 or more—currently, less than 150 bruins reside here. But FWP has a detailed management plan for increasing the numbers of the threatened species, and it's working. Grizzlies were first listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, and populations are on such a swift path to recovery that some wildlife managers are considering delisting the bears, a controversial move.

**NEIL ANDERSON**, Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks Region 1, Wildlife Program Manager

**MARTHA ABBRESCIA**, Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks Region 1 Office Manager

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# CROWN JEWEL OF THE CONTINENT

Some people call it the Crown of the Continent. Others call it the Backbone of the World. Whatever your name for it, there's no denying that the 18 million-acre region of Rocky Mountains has a unique character. It's one of the world's wildest and most diverse ecosystems in a temperate zone, and it includes two United Nations World Heritage Sites, one of which is the Waterton-Glacier National Peace Park. The unbroken ecosystem is a wilderness corridor, and Glacier National Park, which dominates an essential and central part of the region, is known as the Jewel in the Crown. The Continental Divide runs up the spine of the Crown, and the rivers that rush down the mountains feed both the Atlantic and the Pacific, as well as the Hudson. Scattered throughout the jagged peaks are backcountry chalets, which are perfect for hunting expeditions. Find deer, black bear, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain lions, and wolves. Fishermen brave the cold for unmatched winter fishing, or visit during the lush, lively summer months.

**SHEENA PATE, Crown of the Continent Project Coordinator**

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# **BIG GUN—MANUFACTURING BUSINESS IN A SMALL TOWN**

The Flathead Valley is a thriving hub of business in a growing firearms industry. As logging and other traditional livelihoods have faded in the modern era, gunsmithing has flourished. Over 250 people in the small community earn a living making guns or gun parts for high-end and industrial rifles, in particular. This local effort exists on a global stage, with national and international gun manufacturing basing its operations in the Flathead Valley. It's a way of life tied to the land and the rich, historic culture here—even the community college offers a course that teaches students to craft beautiful guns. Many gunsmiths come here because they're genuine outdoorsmen, but now others, like makers of semi-automatic rifles and military weapons, are setting down roots here, drawn to this booming gun-manufacturing mecca.

**NEMO ARMS: (406) 752-6366**

**MONTANA RIFLE COMPANY: (406) 756-4867**

**FALKOR DEFENSE: (406) 752-4253**

**FORTHOFFER GUNSMITHING & KNIFE: (406) 862-2674**

# **PRESERVING THE LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

The Flathead Land Trust began helping private landowners dedicate their lands to conservation in 1985. Since then, the nonprofit has facilitated the protection of over 13,400 acres of land across the Flathead Valley, land in the far rural reached of town as well as parcels right near downtown. The partnership between the trust and community members ensures that the lands will forever remain open, pure fish and wildlife habitat. The valley is home to largest lake west of the Mississippi, and our watershed is at the head of the Columbia River system. The trust, a community-driven nonprofit that runs solely on donations, is determined that the Flathead's natural beauty and ecologically rich lands stay undisturbed by development in the valley. And though the work is tireless, it's made easier by a community that shares the core value of conservation.

**PAUL TRAVIS: Executive Director of Flathead Valley Land Trust**

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# **BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS: A GEM IN PLAIN SIGHT**

Glacier National Park is breathtaking. But it's not unrivaled in its beauty. Just south of the park's boarder, separated by a skinny road, is the sprawling Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, one of the largest wilderness areas in the continental United States. It's home to the same epic grandeur, unspoiled forests, and glacial rivers that make the park so special. And unlike Glacier, hunting is not illegal in "the Bob" like it is in Glacier. Generations of families have operated packing outfitters and hunting camps here, and since the area was established, sportsman have visited for the hunt of a lifetime. Big game opportunities include whitetail, mule deer, elk, moose, wolf, mountain goat, bear, and mountain lion. A nonprofit called the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation is dedicated to maintaining the integrity these vast lands and keeping the access open for people to recreate here for years to come.

**CAROL TREADWELL, Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation Executive Director:**

**(406)-387-3847**

**SALMON FORKS OUTFITTERS: (406) 228-5468**



# DESTINATION FLATHEAD

There's no need to drive over perilous mountain passes, hire a team of guides, charter a bush plane, and trek across miles of remote lands to find pristine nature. Kalispell, the county seat of Flathead County, is Montana's fastest-growing city. It also sits in a valley where one national park, two national forests, and one wilderness area converge. Hundreds of miles of the state's most rugged and untouched lands extend in every direction. Your new secret spot for hunting, fishing, or trapping is just within a short drive from the small metropolis. And even with the development, there's little conflict or worries of commercialization and unchecked expansion. Even as the valley keeps pace with modern advancements, the way of life here will always mesh with sportsmanship and a reverence for nature.

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