

Voices of Our Volunteers



Janelle Kuechle

‘It was easy for me to choose to volunteer for the Flathead Lakers. I love the lake, and happily volunteer where needed to support our mission to keep the lake clean.

But now my motivation comes from having experienced working with the Lakers staff and other volunteers. The camaraderie, the laughter, and the ease of working with people towards a common goal is exhilarating. Volunteering with the Lakers is highly recommended! I thoroughly enjoy being a part of the Flathead Lakers' community.’

Janelle volunteers in many ways: Poker Paddle, figurine painting for Watershed Education Trunks, Adopt-a-Hwy clean-up, envelop stuffing, annual meetings, information booths at events, and photography.



Anita Ho

For the past few years, Dean and I have volunteered, along with some of my students from FVCC, with the willow planting project that the River to Lake Initiative (R2L) organizes. It was an easy choice for us to make, as we believe in and support the work the R2L

partners do in protecting clean water and healthy ecosystems in the Flathead. In addition, all of the logistics have been taken care of, and the projects have been in parts of the valley we hadn't seen up-close. All we had to do was show up on a spring weekend day—and, as a bonus, grungy clothes were totally acceptable!

I believe students should be informed citizens, involved in and connected with their community, and this project has been an easy way to introduce them to some practical, “real-life” science and restoration projects in the Flathead Valley. It might also help connect them with people, agencies and information that may be useful later on in their academic careers or personal lives. I think they also come away from the experience with a first-hand understanding of how a lot of science is really about the *people*, and how positive things happen when people work together. Most of them will agree it's actually pretty fun work. The willow planting is mainly manual labor, but our many hands make light work, which is made even better by knowing it's for a common goal.

Ron and Marilyn Roberts



Ron and I moved back to my native Montana over 10 years ago. It seemed a natural fit for both of us to become members of the Flathead Lakers, since we have both been involved in environmental issues throughout our lives. The mission of the Lakers to protect the quality of the lake ensures an important economic future for the Flathead and Mission Valleys; additionally, it is of vital significance for the quality of life for us, and future generations as well.

A simple way to participate in our community is the semi-annual highway cleanup. We help the Lakers on Hwy. 35, and also care for a stretch in the Big Arm area along Hwy. 93. For just a few hours work twice a year, it is so rewarding to keep our highways clean (and no, we haven't found anything of value yet)!



Kelly Mildenberger

“If you just communicate, you can get by. But if you communicate skillfully, you can work miracles.” -*Jim Rohn*

When it comes to solving environmental problems, communication is key. Whether trying to inspire people to reduce their carbon footprints or check their boats for aquatic invasive species, they must care enough about the issue at hand to take action. And in order for people to care, they must first understand, and that understanding requires effective communication.

I started volunteering with the Flathead Lakers as their Facebook page manager in September. I have a very soft place in my heart for environmental non-profits as a conservationist, a lover of all things outdoors, and a non-profit worker myself. Coming on board with the Lakers was a no-brainer for me, and it has been so rewarding helping build our Facebook presence and communicating our mission.

If you haven't checked out our Facebook page yet, now's your chance! [Here!](#)

When it comes to spreading the message about the awesome work the Lakers do, social media is one of the fastest and most effective ways. You can help spread the message too by simply liking and sharing our posts with your friends. It's up to me to post the stories and photos, but it's up to you to share them! Spread the word, folks, and the lake will benefit!