



August 6, 2013

Dear Lakefront Property Owner,

You are receiving this letter because you own property on one of Whitefish's gorgeous pristine lakes. Whitefish, Lost Coon, and Blanchard lakes are all beautiful resources that the whole community enjoys. Summer is here and this is the time many property owners are considering new docks or other improvements on the lakeshore.

In order to keep our lakes pristine and free from degradation, the City of Whitefish and Flathead County implemented the Lakeshore Protection Program in 1978. Development review is part of that program. Small projects may have minor individual impacts to a lake, but the cumulative sum of projects can add up to major water quality issues. The Lakeshore Protection Regulations, Title 13 of the Whitefish City Code, govern construction of docks, waterlines, stairs, and other structures around the lakes listed above. Development standards have been established that are reviewed through required permits with the oversight of the Lakeshore Protection Committee. The standards apply whenever construction is contemplated within in the riparian zone, which is 20' of the mean high water line¹.

The Lakeshore Protection Committee consists of lakefront property owners and residents of both the City of Whitefish and the surrounding area. The volunteer committee is made up of members appointed by the City of Whitefish or Flathead County, and they carefully weigh the rights of individuals to access and enjoy their lakefront property with the need to protect water quality when reviewing permits.

No construction work may begin within 20' of the mean high water line until a valid lakeshore permit has been issued. Some permits, such as dead tree removal and water line replacement/installation, can be issued by the Planning Department administratively. Permits for docks under 60' in length, buoys, and shore stations are reviewed and approved by the committee. Other permits are forwarded to the city council for final action after Lakeshore Protection Committee review and recommendation. If work is done without a permit, there are substantial penalties as well as much higher after-the-fact application fees. Physical construction in the lakeshore protection zone is prohibited during high water, which typically lasts from April 15 to August 15.

Permits are required for the following, including (but not limited to):

- Construction, additions to or replacement of dock facilities and other structures
- Buoy placement
- Stairways, steps & pathways
- Installation of water lines
- Tree removal
- Placement of fill or gravel
- Repairs to existing structures

¹ The Mean High Water Elevation is as follows: Whitefish Lake 3,000.79' msl (NAVD 1988), Lost Coon Lake 3,104' msl (NGVD1929) and Blanchard Lake 3,144.80 msl (1988 datum) per Whitefish City Code Title 13 Lake and Lakeshore Protection Regulations.

Permit applications are available on the City of Whitefish website, www.whitefish.govoffice.com, in the Planning Department submenu under Applications. The Lakeshore Regulations can be found in Title 13 under Codes and Ordinances.

Note that Whitefish Lake has an additional 10' setback beyond the 20' Lakeshore Protection zone that limits developments that are above grade. The Water Quality Protection Ordinance (11-3-29) requires a stormwater and erosion control plan for development with 75' of Whitefish Lake. Blanchard and Lost Coon Lakes are also governed by the Water Quality Protection Ordinance, which requires a 75' buffer from mean high water along with an additional 10' setback. Any development within 200' of a lake requires a geotechnical letter for building construction on slopes greater than 10%.

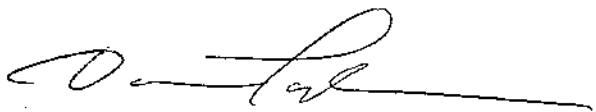
If you are considering a dock or shore station, dock contractors and installers in the area are familiar with the regulations and can help you apply for the needed permits. Before beginning any project, it is highly recommended you contact the Planning Department so we can review the regulations with you and provide answers to any questions you might have.

We hope you also take time to read the additional enclosed information from the Whitefish Lake Institute on the dangers of Aquatic Invasive Species, and what you can do to keep them out of our lakes. As you may know, Eurasian Watermilfoil was recently discovered in Beaver Lake.

The City of Whitefish Planning Department is available to answer your questions regarding the Lakeshore Protection Zone and your property. Should you have any questions, we can be reached at 406-863-2410, or you can email dtaylor@cityofwhitefish.org.

Thank you for doing your part to help protect our pristine Montana lakes.

Sincerely,



Dave Taylor, AICP
Director of Planning and Building