

VOICE OF THE MISSOURI

Mission Statement

To understand, conserve, and enhance the unique ecological and recreational resources of the Upper Missouri River Watershed.



Board of Directors

Board Chairman

Dr. Alan Shaw
Big Sky, Montana

Vice Chair

Sherry Meador
Helena, Montana

Board Secretary and Treasurer

Gary "Pete" Peterson
Helena, Montana

Executive Committee

Kevin Cumley
Helena, Montana

Pat Hunter
Wolf Creek, Montana

Bill Ryan
Butte, Montana

Bailey Sory
San Francisco, California



UMOWA's First Newsletter

I am Dr. Alan Shaw, Chairman of the Upper Missouri Watershed Alliance. I am thrilled to announce our first newsletter that will provide information, updates, and details about UMOWA's activities and efforts to preserve and protect this wonderful resource that we all treasure: the upper Missouri River.

UMOWA is not strictly about fishing; we are committed to preserving and protecting the watershed now and into the future. As you read this newsletter you will see examples of how we intend to achieve this goal.

UMOWA was conceived with and continues to adhere to the principal that sophisticated science-based research and documentation is critical to the success of our mission. In that regard, we have developed meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (MT FWP), the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MT DEQ), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR), local Conservation districts, and other like-minded organizations such as Trout Unlimited. Additionally, we work with many fishing/outdoor corporations such as Orvis, Simms, Patagonia, Sage, Winston, RO Boats, Adipose boat works, and Yeti to name just a few.

UMOWA's work, as you can imagine, requires great resources, especially money! Please consider joining us by supporting our efforts to protect and enhance this precious watershed that we all cherish. ■



UMOWA Initiates A Major Aquatic Plant Study

River users are concerned with the prolific aquatic plant growth in the Upper Missouri river. In recent years, the water buttercup forms pads too thick to row a boat through. In other years, the pond weed comes to the surface and forms mats so large that the main current of the river can change dramatically.

Currently there is a lack of plant information. In July 2018, UMOWA consulted Peter Rice, a plant biologist with the University of Montana and Andrew Skibo, PhD, a private contractor, to provide an assessment of the changing conditions. Through raking samples, they identified four new plant species and confirmed the existence of Eurasian Watermillfoil and Curlyleaf pondweed which are invasive species. It was evident how little is known about the species, distribution and density of the plant growth.

In June of 2019, Andrew returned and conducted a preliminary side scan study down the river from Holter

Dam to Cascade to determine the extent of early plant growth. He will return later this summer to compare the rate of plant growth and density as part of UMOWA's pilot project.

In 2020, UMOWA will fund a two-year bank to bank scanning and sampling project to map plant growth and density. The data will be analyzed and published in a peer-reviewed publication. Combined with our collected data on insects and water quality, we will begin to understand the Missouri ecosystem leading to sound decisions for the enhancement and protection of the river.

This endeavor will be expensive. For the two-year initial analysis, the cost will exceed \$70,000. Please help us with this critical study and contribute to our Aquatic Plant Study either by donating directly or going to our website: umowa.org. ■

Streambank Restoration Projects Update

One of our top priorities is working with a variety of stakeholders to stabilize riverbanks along the Upper Missouri River. The purpose of these projects is to decrease erosion and the resulting buildup of sediments downriver which negatively impacts both aquatic insects and trout spawning areas. By encouraging the growth of woody plants with deep root systems and narrowing the access points used by livestock, we are improving the overall environmental health of the river for the long term.

Last year we completed restoration of approximately a quarter mile of streambank from the Wolf Creek bridge



down to Little Prickly Pear creek in partnership with the landowner, Northwestern Energy, MT FWP and the Helena area Boy Scouts. The project involved installing over 250 native plants, shrubs and trees to stabilize the bank. In addition, a five-strand barbed wire fence was installed with restricted access points for livestock. We're pleased to report that just one year later the streambank is significantly improved – the plants are thriving, and the bank is now almost completely covered in thick vegetation.



In May of this year we restored over 750 feet of streambank just downstream from the Dearborn river which included removing significant amounts of noxious weeds and planting 80 native shrubs and trees. We were again supported by several other organizations including Montana Audubon, Northwestern Energy, MT FWP, and local Boy Scout troops. The property owner,

Maclin, was thrilled with the outcome and thankful to have her property and section of streambank improved.

We are planning additional restoration projects for the next two years and will need your support, stay tuned for updates! ■



UMOWA Celebrates Fifth Annual Rendezvous

UMOWA celebrated its fifth annual rendezvous at the Craig Firehall on June 22, 2019. We raised a record \$11,200 for ongoing projects! Thank you to Chris Goodman and Rocky Harbour for another delectable supply of ribs and to Sandy Cardinal and Sherri Walls for their tremendous help with food. Thanks also to the musical duo of Mark Dixon and Laurie Zupan for their live performance.

River Trout Shop, Headhunters, Wolf Creek Anglers, and Crosscurrents (and not so local, Big Horn Trout Shop and Bighorn Angler of Fort Smith). We appreciate all your support. And a special thank you to Tom Woolf of MT FWP Aquatic Invasive Species for being available to enlighten us on the ever-present challenges our Montana rivers face.

Dave Brown auctioneered our first ever live auction and generously donated two trips on the Bow River. Other guided trips were donated by Beth Langell and Mike Kuhnert with Whitney Gould donating a private spey casting lesson. We had a selection of beautiful artwork donated by Andrea Atwood, Louis Archambault, Kenton Rowe and Jody Severson Monahan. Elaine Ryan donated a case of UMOWA Merlot, offering superb tastes of the fine vintage. And as always, thanks for the generous donations of our local fly shops: Trout Montana, Missouri

We'd like to give a special thanks also to family and friends who helped out with running the show: Marilyn Alkire, Cathy Fitzgerald, Brianne Lauren, Elaine Ryan, Wanda Cumley, and Kade O'Brien.

The board is forever thankful to the Missouri River community who generously give their time and money to support UMOWA's efforts. Looking forward to seeing you all at next year's event! ■



PO Box 11
Wolf Creek, MT 59648

www.umowa.org

<Smart Addressee>
<Address Line 1>
<Address Line 2>
<City>, <State>, <Postal Code>

The Why Behind UMOWA

As we looked to the future, the Upper Missouri Watershed Alliance (UMOWA) recognized the need to form an organization to monitor events on this section of the Missouri. Thus, UMOWA was organized in 2014. Incidents on other Montana rivers, such as the 2011 oil spill into the Yellowstone river near Laurel, Montana, confirmed the urgent need to establish scientifically documented baseline data in the Upper Missouri watershed. Data on macroinvertebrate life and water quality has been collected for four years and will be utilized to document the present state of health of the river. This will serve as a means with which to measure future deleterious events against our collected historical data.

Your membership, support, and generous contributions have made possible the projects we have undertaken and your continued support will assure our future success. The protection and enhancement of the Upper Missouri River watershed is critical and we thank you for helping make this possible.

Please consider giving to UMOWA by visiting www.umowa.org/get-involved.

Look for Us Online...



umowa.org



facebook.com/umowa.org