

**WATER QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE
Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**

PURPOSE

Since 2004, the Water Quality Subcommittee has focused on:

- Reducing sedimentation from roads.
- Monitoring water quality in Swan Lake, the Swan River and its tributaries.
- Water Quality education and outreach for youth and adults.

ACTIVITIES

Road Repair and Upkeep: Best Management Practices (BMPs), including culvert replacements, ditch cleaning, rolling dips, and other erosion control features, have been installed to reduce sedimentation from forest roads—funded by Montana DEQ 319 Water Quality Grants and the Flathead National Forest.

- Cold Lakes Road, 2007
- Elk Creek Road, 2008
- Herrick Run Road, 2009
- Beaver Creek Roads, 2010

Forest Road Assessment: Underway in 2011, this assessment is to determine the effectiveness of BMP road restoration implemented since 2000 by the Water Quality Subcommittee, Flathead National Forest, Swan River State Forest, Plum Creek Timber Co., and The Nature Conservancy.

Lake Monitoring: Water quality monitoring in Swan Lake since 2004 is to establish a baseline of data for later comparison and to determine the cause of oxygen depletion in two deep holes in Swan Lake, which could be natural or caused by development in the watershed.

Stream Monitoring: This includes temperature and morphology (shape of the stream bed) monitoring since 2004 to establish baseline data and determine trends.

Watershed Restoration Plan: The draft watershed restoration plan (*Swan Basin Restoration*) outlines strategies and actions of the six subcommittees of the Swan Lands Coordinating Committee: Conservation Strategies, Forest Stewardship, Native Fish, Water Quality, Wetlands, and Wildlife. For the Water Quality Subcommittee, the plan outlines actions to implement Montana DEQ's 2004 *Water Quality Protection Plan and TMDL for the Swan Lake Watershed* (TMDL = Total Maximum Daily Load).

Education and Outreach: This includes, stream monitoring by students, a water quality display at the Swan Lake Huckleberry Festival, water quality web page at swanecosystemcenter.org, interaction with wilderness and backcountry users about appropriate stock containment, and other outreach.

NEXT STEPS

In winter/spring 2012 the Water Quality Subcommittee will review the results of the 2011 Forest Road Assessment and recent lake and stream monitoring data to develop an action plan for 2012-13.