

FINLEY POINT BREEZE

We get the Point!

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Welcome to the spring edition of the Finley Point Breeze!

Finley Point had a very mild winter. The lawn/meadow never really froze. We finally had some snow in early February which lasted a week, if that. Of course, the way to really know spring has arrived on the Point is the time when the road begins to break up. And believe me, the road is a mine field. Drive slowly and carefully and watch for potholes and more!

Lake levels are certainly not rising as of yet. We are all looking forward to our amazing, sunny, inspiring days on the water. The good news is that the Flathead Drainage is at 90% - 100% of normal. Actually, I love winters like this where the snow does not pile up in the valley, while the mountains receive their allotment.

The real estate market continues to have staggering strength. Smith Team sold a house on the interior of Finley Point listed for \$950,000, which is the highest residential off-lake sale in the Polson area in recent history. If you have considered selling, now is obviously a great time! Reach out to the Smith Team and we can provide you with a no cost, no obligation marketing plan and valuation. I should also add that it is also a good time to buy. Interest rates remain at historic lows. If you have been looking, reach out to us and we can help.

Here is some interesting *national* real estate data, compiled by the Wall Street Journal (I love WSJ, and I love data):

- February 2020 average sale price was \$270,000.00
- February 2021 average sales price was \$313,000.00
- Nationally there is a 2 month inventory of homes for sale, which is low.
- The country has had 108 months of housing appreciation.
- Inventory is down 30% compared to same time last year.

As you can see strong demand, limited inventory.

Thanks for reading our Breeze, now in its 13th year. Would you like to write something for the Breeze? We want to hear from you. Watch for our special action-packed July 4th issue. It will be here before you know it!

**Ric Smith,
Broker/Owner**

Greater Polson Community Foundation

By Sarah Beck

Hello Readers!

One of my commitments outside the real estate world is involvement with the Greater Polson Community Foundation (GPCF) as a Board Member. I joined the Board in 2019 and have been increasingly impressed at the positive impact this foundation has made in our community. They walk the walk, and have been the backbone to helping support countless entities that benefit youth, economic growth, and the well-being of our community at large.

A sampling of the innumerable projects they support are:

- Completion of four regulation-sized soccer fields
- Swimming lessons for all 2nd and 3rd graders
- Development of the first-ever Polson High School swim team (2020)
- Flathead Lake International Cinemafest (FLIC)
- Beautification of downtown Polson
- Polson Boys and Girls Club



Here in the Polson area, including Finley Point, we've seen a massive influx of residents over the past year, many of them full-time. I have learned in my practice that the majority of these new residents want to jump in with both feet and become involved in our community. I would love to have your help in spreading the word about all the good things GPCF is doing in our area. The Foundation has an informative website at www.greaterpolsoncommunityfoundation.org. Check it out and discover for yourself the importance of GPCF in our neighborhood.

GPCF is holding their annual "Passion for Polson Celebration" on August 5th at The Barn at Finley Point. It is always one of the best parties of the year, and a wonderful opportunity to meet residents (full time, part time, newcomers) and mingle with the community!

If you, or anyone you know, would like additional information, or feel you would benefit from a personal visit from one of our Directors, please let me know at sarah@century21bigsky.com.

Thank you. I'm excited about my work with this organization!



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Waves

by Davis Smith

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It was not until I was well into high school that I began running on a semi regular basis. At first I would run around what my family would call the "small loop," starting at my house, running around the Cherry Plant and finishing the run off by taking the dirt road just west of the Cherry Plant back home. After a while I was able to run a little longer and began to do so more frequently. The running felt great and the back-drop of Finley Point made it even better.



A few years ago I began running in other locations due to a variety of reasons which are, for the most part, irrelevant. It was nice to have a change of scenery to distract me from the run and to make such a run a little more interesting. However, at the end of each run, I realized something odd - something that I normally would not expect to associate with running: my left arm was not nearly as tired as it was when I finished running on Finley Point. After a few more runs in various locations I began to hypothesize what the culprit was to such a phenomenon: the lack of waving to and from drivers and passerby.

After a few runs back on Finley Point my hypothesis was confirmed, illuminating to me a special aspect of the Finley Point community: hospitality and kindness to fellow neighbors. In other communities, people do seem to care nearly as much that another person is sharing the road with them. On Finley Point, it is another story. Virtually everyone I pass waves with a genuine smile and I do my best to wave back. Community members are happy to see me and vice-versa, and that never ceases to bring a smile to my face.

In the end, I must admit it does get a little annoying waving at so many cars while running. However, a tired arm at the end of a run and a tiny bit of annoyance is totally worth the positive message that such incessant waving reveals. I am grateful to live in such a friendly and warm community. Thank you all for the waves.

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Flathead Lake Facts

- The Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS) is a year-round University of Montana Center of Excellence that conducts ecological research with an emphasis on fresh water, particularly Flathead Lake and the Flathead watershed. FLBS also provides field ecology courses for college students, natural resource professionals and educators from around the nation; trains graduate students for professional and teaching careers; and provides scientific data, interpretation and outreach to help resolve environmental problems and inform public policy.
- FLBS is one of the oldest active biological stations in the US. It was established in 1899 by Dr. Morton Elrod, the first Biology Professor at the University of Montana. Dr. Elrod was instrumental in the creation of the National Bison Range and Glacier National Park for which he was the first naturalist and wrote its first guide book. FLBS was originally located in Bigfork, but was moved to Yellow Bay in the 1908.
- Flathead Lake is the 79th largest of the natural freshwater lakes in the world, and it is one of the cleanest.
- Flathead Lake's high water quality results from its watershed being mainly National Park, Wilderness and managed forest lands (>60%); having a relatively low human population (~95,000); being dominated by very old, low nutrient geology; receiving high amounts of precipitation (mostly as mountain snow); and rapid flushing of the Lake (about 2.2 years for all the water to be replaced). In contrast, Lake Tahoe's flushing time is about 650 years.
- FLBS serves as the "Sentinel of the Lake", having collected samples and data on Flathead Lake ecology and water quality for over 100 years, and provides insights into ecological conditions and changes over time. Since 1977, FLBS researchers have conducted a rigorous scientific monitoring program, which has shown declining water quality (e.g., increases in algal growth and algal blooms, declines in oxygen in bottom waters). These changes appear to be due to increases in nutrient pollution from human sources, shoreline erosion, changing climate and introduced species (particularly Mysis shrimp); and would have gone unnoticed if FLBS researchers were not conducting long-term monitoring. Currently, FLBS researchers are developing biological and physical models to better understand the influence of increasing nutrients and temperatures plus highly complex community interactions on Flathead Lake's water quality.

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(Flathead Lake Facts, cont'd)

- The Lake level and its outflow are regulated by Kerr Dam, which is located on the Lower Flathead River near Polson. Kerr Dam was completed in 1938 by the Montana Power Company, raised the Lake level 10 feet above its natural level, and generates 194 megawatts of electricity. It is cooperatively operated by PPL Montana and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Regulation by the dam results in the Lake level fluctuating seasonally 10 feet between 2,883 and 2,893 feet above sea level. If snowpack conditions in the mountains do not threaten flooding, lake level is brought to 2,890 feet by the end of May and to full pool by June 15 for summer recreation.
- Due to its large volume and fetch (distance of water across which wind blows), Flathead Lake requires very cold and calm conditions to freeze entirely. Therefore, most winters it does not freeze over, although some bays and margins have ice cover. FLBS historic observations show that the Lake froze over about once each decade, however the Lake has not entirely frozen since 1988-89 (March only) and 1989-90 (January only), perhaps reflecting warmer climatic conditions.
- Public lands around the Lake include a National Wildlife Refuge on the North Shore, six State Parks (including Yellow Bay which is on FLBS property) managed by Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP), and nine Fishing Accesses managed by FWP or the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.
- Wildhorse Island, one of the State Parks, is the largest island in the lake at 2,100 acres, and rises 1,200 feet above the Lake. It is noted for herds of wild horses and Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep. Native grasses and flowers are abundant.
- The first wagon trail (1880s) from Polson to Somers followed the West Shore of the Lake and was steep and hazardous. In places, wagons were lowered by ropes.
- In 1911, work started from the south end of the Lake to build an East Shore road. The road, which was primarily built by convict labor, was not completed until 1946. Until then, FLBS students and researchers arrived by horse or steamboat.
- Economists estimate that Flathead Lake boosts shoreline property values by \$6-\$8 billion, nature based tourism (which depends upon a healthy Flathead Lake-River System) accounts for roughly 20% of the \$7.8 billion annual economy of Flathead and Lake Counties, and ecological services (e.g., water supply and purification, flood and drought mitigation) contribute another \$20+ billion in benefits to human society.



(Flathead Lake Facts, cont'd.)

- Decreases in water quality have led Federal and State agencies to classify Flathead Lake as "Impaired" due to human caused increases in nutrient and sediments, and to work on creating a long-term plan for water quality protection.
- Flathead Lake is currently described as oligotrophic which means lacking in plant nutrients, but FLBS monitoring indicates that nutrient inputs are increasing.
- Flathead Lake is the largest natural freshwater lake in the western US (by surface area) outside of Alaska. Lake Tahoe has more water than Flathead because it is significantly deeper (nearly 1650 ft vs. 380 ft). The Great Salt Lake in Utah is significantly larger than Flathead but is salt, not fresh water. And there are numerous larger man-made reservoirs.
- Average surface temperatures of the Lake range from 2.3°C (36°F) in mid-January to 13.5°C (56°F) in mid-June to 20.3°C (68°F) in mid-August.
- Flathead Lake's biological community is much different today than when FLBS was founded. The Lake originally had 11 native fish species, notably westslope cutthroat trout (Montana State fish) and bull trout (top predator). However, since the late 1800s, fisheries managers have introduced 19 nonnative fishes to "enhance" the Lake and its angling opportunities. These fish introductions, along with the arrival of the nonnative Mysis (opossum) shrimp in the mid-1980s, changed the biological community dramatically. Today, the fish community is more similar to the Great Lakes than Rocky Mountain lakes, as it is dominated by nonnatives, particularly lake trout, lake whitefish and yellow perch.
- Flathead Lake is a remnant of Glacial Lake Missoula, which covered much of Western Montana until roughly 15,000 years ago. Periodic rupturing of the ice dam that created the lake resulted in cataclysmic floods that swept across Washington and Oregon, removing and transporting huge amounts of sediments, creating the scablands of Eastern Washington, and carving out the Columbia River Gorge.
- The Lake's major tributaries are the Flathead and Swan Rivers. There are numerous small streams that flow into the Lake, particularly on the wetter East Shore.
- Maximum river flow in the Flathead generally occurs between May 15 and June 15 during peak snowmelt, creating a sediment plume that can cover the entire lake surface.

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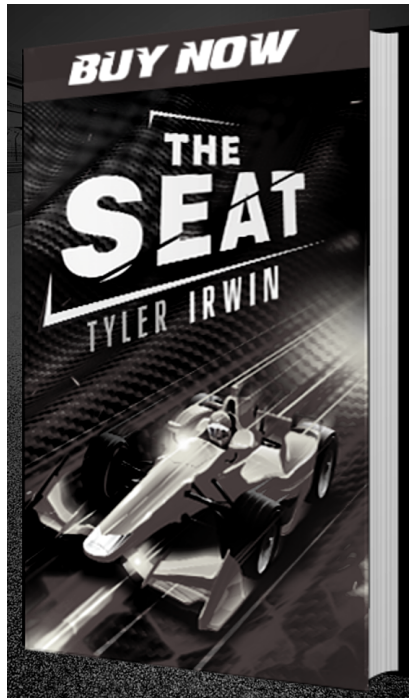


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*Sometimes our greatest contributions come at the highest cost.
But is it worth it?*

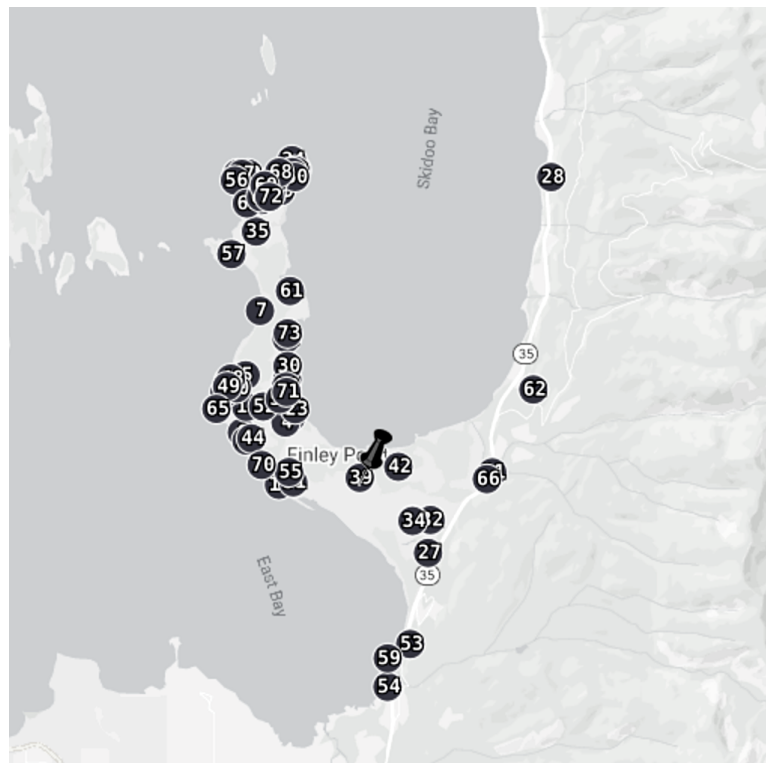


Coming Soon in our 4th of July issue....fabulous information about Finley Point author Tyler Irwin! Tyler grew up on Finley Point and is the author of *The Seat*, a novel set in the world of race car driving. Irwin, a former race car driver, uses plenty of familiar backdrops and neighborhood haunts in his soulful narrative.

Make sure to order *The Seat* NOW on TylerIrwinAuthor.com or Amazon. You'll want to have it ready as you settle onto the dock, deck, boat, lawn chair, or hammock!

Smith Team Finley Point Sales History

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Or Current Resident

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Finley Point Homeowners Association

Check out the local newspapers for upcoming events.

If you are intersted in joining, please fill out the form below and return to Barry Hansen, FPHA President.

Annual fee for Finley Point Property Owners Association membership is \$10.

Name:

Mailing Address:

Finley Point Address:

Mail form and \$10 to Barry Hansen, President, 33668 Lilac Hedge Lane, Polson, MT 59860.

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