

# ***H2O-Know***

***April 2012, V4 Issue 4 - Winter***

***The Newsletter of the Grand County Water Information Network***

## ***From the Director – Jane Tollett***



A little late for a Winter newsletter but since it was snowing outside when I drafted this it still feels like winter! We have had the earliest ice-off in years on the Three Lakes, and the rivers have been flowing freely for some time now. Last week we said good bye to Ben Carver, our 2<sup>nd</sup> year VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) who is moving to Denver to pursue employment there. The search is on for a new VISTA, and this year we are actively recruiting in the County and at a number of the State universities and colleges. Our ads generated several outstanding candidates in addition to the candidates

we get from the Western Hardrock Watershed Team, and we will be interviewing and selecting over the next few weeks

## ***Database Update***

The database progress was reviewed at the February 15 Board and members meetings, with a very positive response. Key progress since the last newsletter in November 2011 includes:

- Algae Toxin, Sondes, Air, and Forest Service Stream Temp data added in
- Ability to manage variables (like Temp, depth, etc)
- Improved ability to manage site, source data from administrative end
- Improved data sort function and ability to graph up to 50,000 data points
- Excel 98 download function, useful as CSV (Comma Separated Values) format is hard to work in
- Universal format which is a MAJOR improvement, meaning we can create our own input files

## ***NADP Update***

The NADP program is the National Atmospheric Deposition Program, which monitors precipitation chemistry. Work continues on this project. The Memorandum of Agreement has been signed between GCWIN, the County, and Northern, and we believe installation will be completed in the next few months. Ben completed training Brian Heckman, our main volunteer, as well as Gill Classen, Sarah Hershfelt, and Jane Tollett as the backups. Additionally Ben left us with complete methods

documentation, field checklist, and information for supplies ordering and all that is needed for start-up. Now all we need is the equipment!

## Monitoring

Great news is that Sarah Hershfelt is returning as our Field Technician for 2012. Program updates:

Healthy Headwaters: First sampling was April 16, we're off to a great start.

Secchi Monitoring: First date out on the lakes will be May 16 – earliest ever! Thanks Forest Service!

Stream Temperature: Sensors calibration checked, all were installed on April 25-26.

Temperature and Conductivity: All sensors installed, first field checks this week or next.

Algae Toxin: Scope of Work (SOW) written, sent to County

## OSM/VISTA Stories From the Field – Ben Carver

Shoveling snow off the steps of our office we share with the Grand Lake Area Historical Society gives me the greatest amount of job satisfaction, a privileged way to start the day I've had far too few times this dry winter. Perhaps it's the half-seconds of physical effort required that harken back to my blue-collar heritage, similar to many lives in the community I've dedicated a year of my life to serve here in Grand County. This activity is in stark contrast to the 40 hours I spend each week drafting schedules and budgets in front of a glowing computer screen. Or, perhaps it's that the results of my work with our education programs won't be seen for years after my position finishes, and it's nice to have tangible results of my efforts for once. After wrecking my car, commuting became more than an inconvenience. While hitchhiking frequently gave me the opportunity to share about GCWIN and AmeriCorps, it was hardly ideal, especially the one time I hitched onto a snowmobile. To get around I began to rely heavily on the small community of support I have had the opportunity to be welcomed into. When the staff at the Historical Society heard about my transportation issues and began to drive me home from work, the morning joy of selfless toil lost its luster. With my year of service nearing completion, previously shelved projects began to loom larger on my schedule. Most notably elusive had been Core Goal #4: increasing awareness and understanding of local history and culture. On the way home one afternoon with GLAHS board member Elin Capps, further discouragement was added to this project when I realized that this project would be reinventing the wheel. The Historical Society's published water history of Grand Lake, as well as separate walking tours focused on water and history of the area, had originally carved out a space here for this idea. Continuing the conversation however, Elin commented that their publications seemed to whet the informational appetite of the tourists, and we hammered out some ideas to create a booklet that filled in information where the GLAHS publications fell short. The Grand Lake Water Primer booklet became a success on many levels. It achieved my dictated goals as an AmeriCorps member, my sponsoring organization's goals to neutrally promote awareness and understanding of local water history and culture, and my personal goals to tip an imagined transcendental balance sheet in my favor and give me the same joy as shoveling snow. This horizontal success might not have occurred had I not been forced to fully embrace some of the more culturally drastic poverty lifestyle changes, forced to let go of the privilege of personal transportation and to instead harness the power of community.

## Water Facts – another reason to conserve

Much more fresh water is stored under the ground in aquifers than on the earth's surface. Of all the water on the earth, humans can use only about three tenths of a percent of this water. Such usable water is found in groundwater aquifers, rivers, and freshwater lakes.

