

## **Chris Taggart**

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**From:** Naomi Gary <naomigary406@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:03 AM  
**To:** Greg Chilcott; Jeff Burrows; Chris A. Hoffman; Chris Taggart  
**Cc:** Kori Anderson  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Skalkaho Bend Park

To the Ravalli County Commissioners:

Good Morning! I am unable to attend the meeting, but I would like to make a public comment. Please read and record this email as such at the meeting of the Ravalli County Commissioners on 7/1/20. Thank you!

My name is Naomi Gary. I am writing to reiterate how important I believe the Skalkaho Bend Park is to our community and the ecosystem. I put forth comments last fall, so some of this is redundant but I feel it is important to consider.

My family and I live in Hamilton, within walking distance to the Skalkaho Bend Park. Since this beautiful extension to the park, we have enjoyed extending our walks and enjoyment of the public parks in Hamilton. We have seen multiple moose, deer and so many bird species in the new section.

I am writing today to say the Skalkaho Bend Park is an amazing addition to the River Park and to the Hamilton community. The best and most desirable cities and towns in the world have ample open spaces, contributing to the overall health of people (both physical and mental), the wildlife and the environment in general. I am thrilled for Hamilton to move in this direction. Ultimately, I would love to see further expansion of protected riverfront if at all possible.

My husband, Robert, is a fly fishing outfitter. His livelihood, and that of the guides he hires, depends on the river. Protection of lands such as the Skalkaho Bend Park (over a mile of protected riverfront) is imperative to the overall health of the river and its ecosystem, and subsequently, to those who rely on it to support their families through the tourism industry.

As a Realtor, I love showing new residents natural amenities close to home, which illustrate the quality of life we are afforded here. Riverfront properties for sale are scarce and out of financial comfort for most people, but a community asset such as Skalkaho Bend Park allows everyone to take advantage of the river and riparian areas, which are the natural assets of the Bitterroot Valley and a major reason many people move here and vacation here. Thousands of Bitterroot residents live within a mile or two of this park and have the opportunity to directly benefit from it. The social and economic benefits to parks and wild areas in close proximity to the urban interface are well documented and worth considering.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Cheers,

**Naomi**

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