

Glenda Wiles

From: Tom Gagnon <tgagnonmt86@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 8, 2015 12:11 PM
To: Glenda Wiles
Subject: Bitterroot flood plain

To whom it may concern,

My name is Tom Gagnon. I am a fishing guide based out of Missoula who spends much of my guide season (March-October) on the Bitterroot and its tributaries. After the fishing season ends, I spend a lot of time waterfowl hunting in the valley as well. Between gas, shuttles, food, lodging and other expenses, my guests and I spend thousands of dollars in the local economy throughout the valley. I feel that the push to expand construction throughout the river floodplain is irresponsible, uninformed, short-sighted and potentially hazardous to both human life and the fragile and critically important wildlife habitat located within the floodplain. This opinion not only comes from my personal experience from years of first-hand knowledge, but also reflects the professional testimony of experts from several state agencies and non-profit groups such as Montana FWP and Trout Unlimited.

While I respect and honor the individual private property rights of citizens both along the Bitterroot and throughout the state, I am reminded of the quote by Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes that, "your right to swing your fist ends at my nose". Floodplain construction, and its associated costs (rip-rap stream banks, logging etc...) puts too much at risk. Is granting a few prominent landowners the ability to do as they will, regardless of the costs put upon the many worth losing the hundreds of jobs (in my field alone), and compromising if not destroying the beauty and integrity of the Bitterroot River, a place we all hold close and dear regardless of political divide?

Thank you for your time, I hope you reconsider your opinion on this important matter

Tom Gagnon
Sent from my iPhone