MONTANA TROUT UNLIMITED
BITTERROOT CHAPTER

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Ravalli County Commissioners

Ravalli County Commissioners
215 South 4th Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear County Commissioners,

The Bitter Root Chapter of Trout Unlimited and our approximately 300 local chapter members appreciate the opportunity to comment on the flood plain regulations that have have been discussed during recent county commision meetings.

During the public comment regarding the flood plain and flood fringe regulations a number of Trout Unlimited members offered testimony. As you are no doubt aware, the bulk of that testimony was for retaining the restrictions that have been in place for the last 20 years. However we also heard Commissioner Iman state that "we can do a better job" than was done 20 years ago. We are interested in seeing this statement realized. Towards that end we respectfully request notification of any and all permits applied for using the recently adopted criteria. As an organization we plan to monitor this process.

Additionally we are interested in ensuring professionals with the needed expertise are on the advisory board. At the minimum we see a need for a hydrologist with experience in river geomorphology as well as a fisheries biologist. A riparian ecologist would also offer valuable advice and help the board understand where historic channels may be indicated by vegetation. Please notify us of the candidates and your process to establish the advisory board.

Again while as an organization we preferred no change to the regulations, we stand ready to help the commission avoid unwise permitting activities in the flood plain and flood fringe to protect the river against degradation and the county taxpayers from damages arising from a future lawsuit.

Respectfully,

Ross Rademacher
Board Chapter President
Montana Trout Unlimited
Bitterroot Chapter

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