

Flathead County
Board of Commissioners

(406) 758-5503

Joseph D. Brenneman
Gary D. Hall
Dale W. Lauman



December 11, 2008

Mr. Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901.

Dear Robert,


On behalf of the citizens of Flathead County and the community of Bigfork, the Flathead County Board of Commissioners expresses their full support of the Bigfork Stormwater Project.

The commissioners became involved in the project when stormwater flooding and discharge concerns were brought to the attention of Commissioner Joe Brenneman. Bigfork is an unincorporated community, so there is no city government to address stormwater issues. The commissioners appointed the Bigfork Stormwater Advisory Committee (BSAC) in January of 2008 to provide assistance and recommendations in overseeing the work related to the Bigfork Stormwater Project.

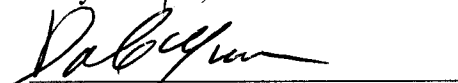
The initial step in the process was to determine current urban stormwater system inadequacies by completing a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). Through a collaborative funding effort, including DNRC, Flathead Basin Commission and DEQ 319, a PER was initiated. We are currently in the process of final revisions of the PER and system upgrades will be implemented through a phased approach. Our initial focus will be on supporting stormwater system installations at the Bigfork schools. Future phases are being discussed and will be determined based on a prioritized list of upgrades as outlined in the PER and Watershed Restoration Plan for the Bigfork Stormwater Project area.

Continued support from DEQ 319 will provide necessary funding to advance the work of the Bigfork Stormwater Project and help improve water quality in Bigfork Bay and Flathead Lake. We hope you will favorably consider allocating funds to help support this very important project.

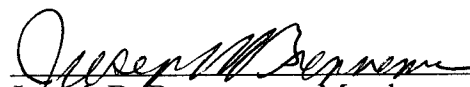
Sincerely,
FLATHEAD COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Gary D. Hall, Chairman



Dale W. Lauman, Member



Joseph D. Brenneman, Member

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

INTERNET:
max@baucus.senate.gov
<http://www.senate.gov/~baucus>

December 18, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901.

Dear Robert,

I am honored to have the opportunity to express my strong support to Flathead County's request for funding to support the Bigfork Stormwater Project to address the stormwater management issues currently facing the community of Bigfork.

The community of Bigfork lacks a fully functional storm drain system which effectively filters storm run off before it directly drains into Bigfork Bay and Flathead Lake. The water runs through downtown Bigfork, crosses parking lots and commercial areas of town, picking up contaminants along the way, only to be deposited into Flathead Lake.

In order to address this issue of pollutants entering Flathead Lake, Flathead County conducted a Preliminary Engineering Report to identify system upgrades and improvements. Based on recommendations outlined in the engineering report, project construction will focus on phase one upgrades to Grand Drive in Bigfork. Adequately sized conveyance pipe will be installed to manage stormwater flow and a filtration devise will be utilized to filter stormwater prior to discharge into Bigfork Bay. Funding for this project will help develop final construction plans and implement system upgrades.

Again, this project carries with it my full support, and I hope you will consider Flathead County's application favorably. Please feel free to contact my office if I can provide any additional information. I also would greatly appreciate if you kept my office informed about the status of this request.

With best personal regards, I am

Sincerely,



MSB/jj

JON TESTER
MONTANA

COMMITTEES:

SMALL BUSINESS
BANKING
INDIAN AFFAIRS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

United States Senate

SENATE RUSSELL BUILDING
SUITE 204
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
202-224-2644

MONTANA TOLL FREE NUMBER
1-866-554-4403

INTERNET:
<http://tester.senate.gov/contact>

November 25, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: Bigfork Stormwater Project

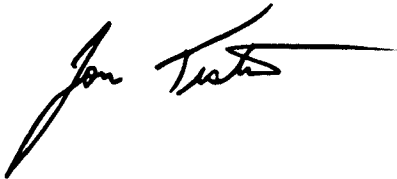
Dear Mr. Ray:

It is my understanding that Flathead County is near completion of engineering studies to identify the extent of deficiencies in the current stormwater facilities in the community of Bigfork. Based on recommendations outlined in the engineering report, project construction will focus on Phase I upgrades to Grand Drive in Bigfork. Funding for this project will help develop final construction plans and implement system upgrades.

I have been working with the Flathead County Commissioners and the Flathead Basin Commission on a variety of water quality issues, and I am pleased to lend my support for these plans. As Flathead County continues to grow, we must provide the infrastructure to maintain clean water in the Flathead and not destroy the very attraction that makes this area a special place to live and visit. The county's application for funds would support those goals.

I applaud the commissioners for their efforts to protect and improve the quality of Flathead Lake waters, and I urge you to give this application your full consideration and support.

Respectfully,



Jon Tester
United States Senator

BOZEMAN
(406) 586-4450

BUTTE
(406) 723-3277

GLENDAVE
(406) 365-2391

GREAT FALLS
(406) 452-9585

HELENA
(406) 449-5401

KALISPELL
(406) 257-3360

BILLINGS
(406) 252-0550

MISSOULA
(406) 728-3003

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 25, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau, Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Robert:

It is a privilege for me to offer my support for Flathead County as they seek funding through the DEQ 319 Program. This money will be used to address the stormwater management issues currently facing the community of Bigfork.

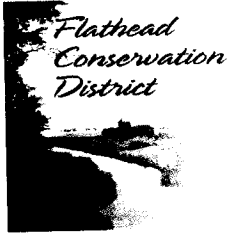
The community of Bigfork lacks a fully functional storm drain system which filters storm run off directly into Bigfork Bay and Flathead Lake. The water currently runs through downtown Bigfork, crosses parking lots and commercial areas of town, picking up contaminants along the way. In order to address this issue, Flathead County conducted a Preliminary Engineering Report to identify system upgrades and improvements. Based on recommendations outlined in that engineering report, project construction will focus on phase one upgrades to Grand Drive in Bigfork. An adequately sized conveyance pipe will be installed to manage stormwater flow and a filtration device will be utilized to filter the water prior to discharge into Bigfork Bay. Funding for this project will help develop final construction plans and implement system upgrades.

Please review the grant package Flathead County has provided. I urge you to give them every consideration as you make your decision. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Denny Rehberg
Montana's Congressman

DRR:ksm



*Flathead Conservation District
133 Interstate Lane, Kalispell, MT 59901*

Phone: 406-752-4220 Fax: 406-752-4077

Web site: www.flatheadcd.org

November 18, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Robert,

On behalf of the Flathead Conservation District and the board of supervisors, we wish to express our full support of the Bigfork Stormwater Project. We believe it is vitally important to protect and restore water quality from the impacts of pollution in order to provide a clean and healthy environment.

Although there is a partial stormwater system in place in downtown Bigfork, the condition, efficiency and functionality of the system is questionable. Of greatest concern is the lack of filtration throughout the system, resulting in stormwater pipes discharging directly into Flathead Lake with minimal or no treatment. Run off in the downtown area of Bigfork crosses many impervious surfaces such as school parking lots, commercially developed areas and residential sections of town and is picking up contaminants and pollutants prior to entry into the Lake.

The extents of the deficiencies are outlined in the Preliminary Engineering study conducted by Morrison Maierle, Inc. This study defines the areas of greatest concern, evaluates suggested solution options and recommends a phased approach to implementing system upgrades.

319 funds will be focused toward on-the-ground water quality restoration efforts such as the installation of stormwater management system components, development of a watershed restoration plan for the Bigfork project area and education and outreach programs. We hope you will favorably consider directing funds to help support this very important and proactive project to improve water quality in Bigfork Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Van Rinsum", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Larry Van Rinsum
Resource Conservationist



Flathead Basin Commission

19 Second Street Suite C
Kalispell, Montana 59901
406.752.0081
flatheadbasincommission.org

Caryn Miske
Executive Director

Clinton Whitney,
Chairman
Citizen Member

Ed Heger,
Vice Chairman
Citizen Member

Dan Bangeman
Flathead Conservation District

Cathy Barbouletos
Flathead National Forest

Joe Brenneman
Flathead County Commissioner

Susan Brueggeman
Lake County Environmental
Health Department

Chas Cartwright
Glacier National Park

Art Compton
Department of Environment
Quality

Julie DalSoglio
U.S. Environmental Protection
Agency

Kathy Eichenberger
British Columbia Liaison
Ministry of Environment

Jon H. Jourdonnais
PP&L Montana

Don Loranger
Citizen Member

Jan Metzmaker
Citizen Member

Rich Moy
Water Management Bureau
MT Department of Natural
Resources & Conservation

Dennis Philmon
Hungry Horse Project

Mark D. Reller
Bonneville Power Administration

Bob Sandman
MT Department of Natural
Resources & Conservation
Northwest Land Office

Jim Satterfield
MT Dept of
Fish Wildlife and Parks

Jim Simpson
Lake County Conservation District

Thompson Smith
Citizen Member

Margaret Sogard
Citizen Member

James Steele, Jr.
Confederated Salish &
Kootenai Tribes

Mike Volesky
Office of the Governor

December 2, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Robert,

The Flathead Basin Commission (FBC) is pleased to offer its support of Flathead County's effort to address stormwater management issues in the Community of Bigfork. It is our understanding that this project, upon completion, will help improve water quality in Bigfork Bay by reducing both sediment and nutrient loading caused by uncontrolled urban Stormwater runoff.

The mission of the FBC is to protect the existing high quality of the Flathead Lake aquatic environment; the waters that flow into, out of, or are tributary to the Lake and; the natural resources and environment of the Flathead Basin. FBC serves as a collaborative partner in this project, offering technical support on water related issues as requested and providing funding to help complete the Preliminary Engineering Report for the Bigfork Stormwater Project.

FBC has been extensively involved in the TMDL process for Flathead Lake and is encouraged that the community of Bigfork is stepping forward to implement solutions to reduce pollutants entering the Lake from inadequately controlled and unfiltered stormwater discharge. This step in the right direction will help meet the nutrient load reduction goals as outlined in the TMDL.

It is our hope that the Bigfork Stormwater management plan that is developed can be used as a model throughout Flathead Basin and we commend the County's efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,



P.O. Box 70 • Polson, MT 59860
406-883-1346
Fax: 406-883-1357
lakers@flatheadlakers.org
www.flatheadlakers.org

Flathead Lakers:
*Working for clean water, a healthy
ecosystem, and lasting quality of
life in the Flathead Watershed.*

November 21, 2008

Robert Ray
Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Robert:

The Flathead Lakers support Flathead County's proposal for DEQ 319 grant funding to address Bigfork stormwater problems and needs.

The Flathead Lakers is a nonprofit organization working to protect water quality in Flathead Lake and its watershed. The Flathead Lakers was founded in 1958 and currently has 1,800 members.

It is our understanding that stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces in the community of Bigfork is increasing and that much of it drains directly into Bigfork Bay of Flathead Lake. Water quality in Flathead Lake has been declining due to nutrient enrichment. As you know, the State of Montana has declared Flathead Lake an impaired water body. Through the TMDL process required by the Clean Water Act, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Flathead Basin Commission determined that at least a 15 percent reduction in nutrient pollution is needed to safeguard clean water in Flathead Lake.

Funding for this project would help improve stormwater management and treatment in Bigfork. Reducing the amount of stormwater runoff reaching the lake and improving its quality will help reduce pollution to Flathead Lake, which will help meet TMDL water quality targets.

The Flathead Lakers applaud Flathead County for taking this step to improve and protect water quality and encourage you to approve their funding request.

Sincerely,

Robin Steinkraus
Executive Director

600 Commerce Street
P.O. Box 188
Bigfork, MT 59911



BIGFORK PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 38

Office of the Superintendent
(406) 837-7400
FAX (406) 837-7407

December 3, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray:

This letter is to offer support for the work of the Bigfork Stormwater Advisory Committee.

As the representative of Bigfork School District No. 38, I have maintained contact with the Stormwater Committee in an effort to coordinate information and activities from the school district perspective. An immediate result of this association has included design changes to our elementary school renovation project that incorporates stormwater control measures.

The efforts of the Advisory Committee to develop a viable program and educate the community are worthy of support. Your assistance in this regard would be appreciated.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Russell H. Kinzer
Superintendent

RHK:sg



November 18, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Robert,

Bigfork County Water and Sewer District supports Flathead County's plan to undertake activities to address stormwater management issues currently facing the community of Bigfork.

It is our understanding that this project, upon completion, will greatly improve water quality in Bigfork Bay and Flathead Lake by reducing both sediment and nutrient loads. Flathead County's efforts are to be commended in developing and initiating a stormwater management plan for Bigfork Village and the surrounding areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Spencer".

Julie Spencer
District Manager

Sue Hanson
Chairman
837-5323
Elva Darow
Vice Chairman
837-1400
Lamont Kinkade
837-7050
Tom Lewis
837-6775
Paul Rana
837-1102
Mike Koopal
862-4327

BIGFORK STORMWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

935 Denver Street
Whitefish, MT 59937
mike@whitefishlake.org

December 3, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dear Mr. Ray,

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners appointed the five-member Bigfork Stormwater Advisory Committee (BSAC) on January 15, 2008, to provide important assistance to the Commissioners in overseeing the work and making recommendations related to the Bigfork Stormwater Project. BSAC's work includes identifying problems, evaluating suggested solutions, reviewing mitigation costs and implementation strategies as well as fostering education and outreach efforts related to water quality and the impacts of stormwater run-off.

Based on the issues identified in the Preliminary Engineering Report, system upgrades and construction will be implemented through a phased approach, beginning with Phase I: Grand Drive Stormwater Conveyance and Filtration. DEQ 319 funds will help provide necessary resources to develop final design plans for system upgrades, project education and outreach efforts, project coordination and a watershed restoration plan.

Stormwater issues are finally coming to the forefront of public awareness in our area. To date, the committee has made great strides in education and outreach programs, including hosting the Living By Waters Community workshop, implementing a storm drain stenciling program, producing and distributing stormwater brochures and developing a public awareness advertising campaign. The Bigfork Stormwater Project is a pilot program for stormwater issues. The Bigfork Stormwater Project model can be adapted and utilized by many lakefront communities faced with addressing similar stormwater issues. We have established a working cooperation with the Flathead Basin Commission, Flathead Lakers, Flathead Conservation District, the Bigfork School District and Bigfork service organizations. We have momentum and rising public awareness for implementing system upgrades to address an out-of-date stormwater system, complicated with the challenges of increased urban development. Additionally, we are researching models for countywide stormwater guidelines.

BSAC and the Bigfork community would appreciate your support in obtaining funds to provide a fully functional storm drain system that effectively filters storm run-off before it directly drains into Flathead Lake.

***Dedicated to protecting local water resources,
Bigfork Stormwater Advisory Committee***



BSAC Chairman

Craig D. Wagner
837-1037
Elna Darrow, Vice Chairman
837-4400
Pat Wagner, Secretary
837-1037
Treasurer
Steve Zabaro
Don Loranger, Past Chairman
837-3771
Paul Rana, Member-at-Large
837-1102
Bruce Solberg Member at
Large
837-1078

Bigfork Steering Committee

P. O. 1864
Bigfork, MT 59911
indnchf@montanasky.net

December 20, 2008

From: Craig D. Wagner
Chairman: Bigfork Steering Committee

To: Robert Ray , Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Development Of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box20091
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray,

On behalf of the Bigfork Steering Committee, it's Executive Board, Bigfork Village and the 175 participating members we wish to express our support for the Bigfork Storm Water Project. We wish to protect and restore water quality from the impact of non-point source pollution in order to maintain a clean and healthy environment.

Even though there is a partial storm water drainage system in place in the village of Bigfork, the overall condition and age of the system needs to be replaced. One of the greatest concerns is lack of filtration in the system, allowing storm water to drain directly into the Swan River and the Bigfork Bay, which directly feeds into Flathead Lake with little or no treatment. The runoff in the village of Bigfork crosses parking lots, commercially developed areas and residential sections and is flushing contaminants, pollutants on its way to the lake. The amount of deficiencies is unknown.

The funds will be used to maintain watershed quality for the restoration of Flathead Lake by supporting the cost of creating a plan of action for a design of a storm water filtration system, initial analysis plan, public education and an outreach information campaign for the Bigfork area.

This project will also help meet the goals as outlined under TMDL to reduce nutrient loading in Flathead Lake.

We sincerely hope that you will strongly consider allocating funds to help this project go forward.

Sincerely,


Craig D. Wagner

John Bourquin
837-0669
Darrel Coverdell
837-2850
Shelley Gonzales
Chairman
837-5346
Charles Gough
837-0771
Paul Guerrant
Vice Chairman
837-2124
Al Johnson
Member at Large
837-3534
Gary Ridderhoff
837-0685

Bigfork Land Use Advisory Committee

P. O. Box 2105
Bigfork, MT 59911
chuygonz@centurytel.net

November 25, 2008

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray,

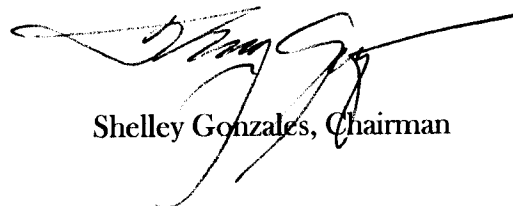
The Bigfork Land Use Advisory Committee (BLUAC) is an elected advisory committee representing the Bigfork Zoning District. The Committee reviews applications regarding zone changes, subdivisions, conditional uses and variances in our district and forwards those recommendations to the Flathead County Planning Board or Flathead County Board of Adjustment. In this capacity, we often encounter questions and decisions regarding storm water drainage.

BLUAC offers wholehearted support to Flathead County's plan to obtain grant funding to address the storm water management issues currently facing the community of Bigfork. We realize the system is antiquated and has caused some flooding problems for property owners in the past. Also of great concern, is the dumping of untreated storm water directly into the Swan River and the Bigfork Bay, which feeds into Flathead Lake.

We have watched with interest and wholehearted support the efforts of the Bigfork Stormwater Advisory Committee. We are impressed with the progress and momentum of the efforts to address this troubling issue in such a short period of time. Since there is no other such project proceeding in Flathead County, we consider this "pilot" project of great importance to both address stormwater pollution and raise awareness through their educational and outreach activities.

BLUAC would appreciate your support in obtaining funds to provide a fully functional storm drain system.

Working together for the betterment of Bigfork,
Bigfork Land Use Advisory Committee



Shelley Gonzales, Chairman



32125 Bio Station Lane
Polson, Montana, U.S.A. 59860-6815
Phone (406) 982-3301
Fax (406) 982-3201
www.umt.edu/flbs

Robert Ray, Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

December 22, 2008

Dear Mr. Ray,

Flathead County is requesting funds to support an urban stormwater quality improvement program for the unincorporated area of Bigfork. The requested funds would be used to develop final construction design, construction implementation, evaluate stormwater impacts through water quality sampling and monitoring and continued education and outreach efforts. This letter is in support of the proposed stormwater improvement project for Bigfork.

For over one hundred years, the Flathead Lake Biological Station has been providing leadership in research on Flathead Lake and its tributaries. It is our mission to provide scientific data and interpretation to help resolve environmental problems and inform public policy, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. In the late 1990s, I sampled storm water in Bigfork and numerous other sites in the Kalispell Valley (see Stanford et al. 1997). The Montana Department of Environmental Quality Water Quality Division has adopted EPA benchmark values that are the pollutant concentrations that when exceeded could impair water quality or affect human health. The primary stormwater site in Bigfork exceeded EPA benchmark values for total suspended solids, total aluminum, total iron, and total zinc. Although there is no EPA standard for fecal coliforms in storm water, the Bigfork site exceeded all other sites in the Flathead Valley, including the largest sites in Kalispell and Whitefish. The fecal coliform value was 2700 organisms per 100 ml of water. This water discharges directly into the Swan River near its mouth at Flathead Lake without any treatment whatsoever. Clearly, water quality degradation is occurring at this site and all untreated stormwater sites throughout the Flathead Basin. These waters flow into Flathead Lake.

I have been studying water quality in Flathead Lake since 1978 and water quality is declining. The Lake is listed as an A-1 waterbody and is on the 303(d) list of impaired waters in Montana. It has been identified as not fully supporting aquatic life as a result of nitrogen, phosphorus and total suspended solids. Due to the downward trend of water quality in Flathead Lake, it is important to address all sources of nutrient and pollutant loads to the Lake, including storm water. Please accept this letter in support of the efforts of Flathead County to reduce pollutant loading to Flathead Lake. I hope you will give this proposal your utmost attention.

Sincerely,

Bonnie K. Ellis, Ph.D.
Research Assistant Professor

Reference:

Stanford, J. A., B. K. Ellis, J. A. Craft and G. C. Poole. 1997. Water Quality Data and Analyses to Aid in the Development of Revised Water Quality Targets for Flathead Lake, Montana. Flathead Lake Biological Station Report #142-97. 154 pp. + appendices.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P. O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
406-444-3186
FAX: 406-444-4952
Ref: DO080-08
March 31, 2008

Flathead County Commissioners Office
800 South Main Street
Kalispell, MT 59901



Dear Commissioners:

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP) strongly supports Flathead County's funding request to improve the stormwater system and treatment in the Bigfork area. Stormwater runoff can carry many pollutants including heavy metals, petroleum based contaminants, pesticides, herbicides, sediments and nutrients from upland sources into State waters. Bigfork's proximity to Flathead Lake allows for a direct discharge of runoff into Flathead Lake.

Flathead Lake is one of the world's largest lakes and today still has relatively pristine water quality. High water quality is of paramount importance to maintaining the area's fish and wildlife resources, economy, and quality of life. However, this water quality is being degraded by human induced changes to the environment, including urbanization of the Flathead Valley. As the Flathead Valley human population increases and threats to water quality rise, not only must additional impacts be mitigated from urban development, but also pollution from existing development must also be reduced.

To successfully protect Flathead Lake, conservation efforts must address diverse impacts. Numerous private groups and government agencies are addressing threats to water quality degradation in the Flathead Valley through private industry's implementation of Best Management Practices, the City of Kalispell's state-of-the-art sewer treatment facility, review of proposed coal mining in British Columbia, and implementation of land and water quality protection statutes by state and local regulatory agencies. Similarly, the Bigfork stormwater project is a collaborative effort by Flathead County, state agencies, Flathead Basin Commission and the Flathead County Conservation District.

The proposed stormwater improvement project is thus an important piece of this collective conservation effort and an opportunity to upgrade an older system with new technologies that will better protect water quality in Flathead Lake. Thank you for your continued interest and efforts to protect the Flathead Valley.

Sincerely,

M. Jeff Hagener
Director

c: MT Congressional Delegation

c: BCC
D. Pierson

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO SAVE FLATHEAD LAKE
PO Box 1834 • Bigfork, Montana 59911 • (406) 881-2300**

November 12, 2008

Robert Ray
Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr Ray:

I am submitting these comments on behalf of the National Organization to Save Flathead Lake (NOSFL). NOSFL is a local, grassroots, and non-profit, non-partisan, volunteer, tax-exempt organization. Our membership includes approximately 1000 property owners, irrigators, business people, recreational users, and environmental advocates. NOSFL's members enjoy, utilize, and depend upon Flathead Lake and its surrounding communities. It is for this reason that NOSFL was created to save Flathead Lake from environmental degradation and economic disruption.

In this instance I am writing to endorse Commissioner Brenneman's plan to help reduce pollutants entering Bigfork Bay, Swan River and Flathead Lake from untreated storm water runoff from Grand Drive and Electric Avenue in Bigfork.

Flathead Lake is considered the "jewel" of Montana. Its surrounding communities are home to many and the destination for thousands if not millions of tourists annually bringing economic security to our communities. A primary attractant of Flathead Lake is its pristine un-polluted waters, indeed, one of the few left in our global community.

The past 10 years have brought rapid growth to Flathead Valley, a growth that has been unprecedented and well documented. With this growth comes great responsibility to protect our natural resources hopefully to preserve them for future generations. One of those responsibilities is found in the much needed updating an antiquated system for handling the untreated storm water runoff in Bigfork village.

As groups and as individuals, Montanan's have willingly spent a great deal of time and energy in trying to protect our lakes and rivers from pollution. This protection can easily be seen in the valley wide phosphorus detergent ban and the current public outcry towards British Columbia's Cline Open Pit Coal Mine, and British Petroleum's exploratory project for methane gas, both which carry the strong potential of heavily polluting Montana's Flathead River and Flathead Lake.

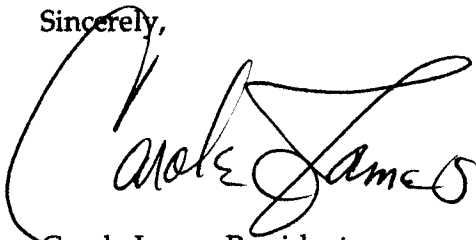
It would seem contradictory if not totally negligent to allow pollutants, such as sediments, fuels, oil, grease, fertilizers and pesticides to be routinely discharged directly into Bigfork Bay and Flathead Lake through an outdated storm drain system while at the same time protesting pollution concerns from the trans-boundary Canadian drilling and mining.

Bigfork village's storm drain system needs to be replaced with repositioned drains that catch run-off flows, then trap the water, treat and filter it before it is allowed to enter Bigfork Bay and ultimately Flathead Lake. What benefits Flathead Lake benefits Flathead Valley, its residents and the state.

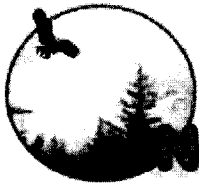
I commend Commissioner Brenneman for taking a pro-active role in this issue and on behalf of the National Organization to Save Flathead Lake, endorse his plan wholeheartedly.

NOSFL appreciates this opportunity to comment on this very important issue and is available to help in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "C" on the left side.

Carole James, President
National Organization to Save Flathead Lake
PO Box 1834
Bigfork, MT 59911
(406) 837-4340 (hm)



"Bringing our four counties together to help create local and regional economic stability."

Northwest Regional RC & D

803 California Ave #1
Libby, Montana 59923
(406) 293-8885 phone
(406) 293-3222 fax
susan.sutherland@mt.usda.gov

November 12, 2008

Robert Ray
Watershed Protection Section Supervisor
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

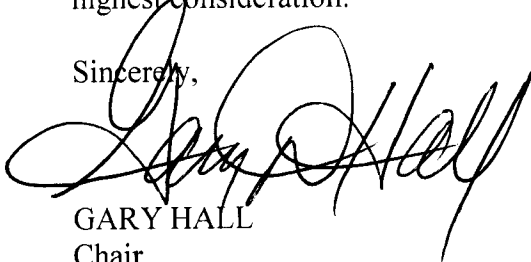
Dear Robert:

Northwest Regional Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is pleased to support the continued efforts of the Bigfork Storm Water Project.

Northwest Regional RC&D is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to assist communities with their natural resource and economic development needs. Water Management and specifically the Protection of Water Quality is one of RC&D's four key elements. Since Flathead Lake is a water quality sensitive area and is listed on the DEQ 2006 Montana 303(d) impaired water list, we are concerned that Bigfork may be unintentionally causing damage to the lake due to an incomplete storm water system. The risk that Bigfork is contributing to the nutrient loading of Flathead Lake is high since their storm water is not filtered or treated.

Northwest Regional RC&D wholeheartedly supports this effort. We trust you will give it your highest consideration.

Sincerely,



GARY HALL
Chair

Serving Flathead, Lake, Lincoln & Sanders Counties

All programs and services of the RC&D Councils are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital or family status, disability or political beliefs.