



Jean Ramer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
10 West 15th Street, Suite 2200
Helena, MT 59626

April 6, 2005

Dear Ms. Ramer,

The Flathead Audubon Society is a local, active group of people interested in sound stewardship and management of natural resources. We recently submitted comments opposing the approval of the proposal by Flathead Properties LLC (Corps application number: 2003-90-010) to fill 2.8 acres of wetlands and 1.5 acres of Flathead Lake itself near Bigfork. Now we learn there is another, related, proposal to build a 2,850 foot-long seawall (Corps application number: 2005-90-137) at the same location.

Flathead Audubon Society is strongly opposed to both proposed activities. The existing wetlands are of a type that cannot be replaced "in kind" somewhere else. The north shore wetlands involved in the proposal are unique to the north shore of Flathead Lake and cannot be reproduced at some other location away from the lake. The existing wetlands have ecological benefits to water quality and wildlife habitat that would be destroyed by filling.

It is also noted that Flathead County Lake and Lakeshore Protection Regulations specifically prohibit filling of wetlands adjacent to a lake.

Construction of a seawall would further break the connectivity of the wetlands to the lake itself and further accelerate erosion of the remaining natural shoreline. Adjacent wetlands, wildlife habitat, and the Flathead Waterfowl Production Area would be subjected to increased erosion and loss. A dangerous precedent would be established for an endless string of additional structures that could eventually eliminate the largest wetland complex on Flathead Lake. Alternatives to a seawall exist and have been successfully demonstrated on the west side of the Flathead River delta.

A public meeting should be held to allow all interested parties to make their thoughts and concerns known before any decision is made regarding the applications.

Yours truly,

Lewis Young
Conservation Committee Chair
50 Garrison Drive
Eureka, MT 59917
406-889-3492

cc to: Flathead County Commissioners
Senator Conrad Burns
Senator Max Baucus
Representative Dennis Rehberg
Governor Schweitzer