



Flathead County Board of Commissioners
800 South Main
Kalispell, MT 59901

March 5, 2007

Dear Commissioners:

Cottage Lane Estates Subdivision comments

The Flathead Audubon Society is a local, active group of people interested in sound stewardship and management of natural resources. For many years Flathead Audubon has been leading annual field trips to Smith Lake Waterfowl Production Area. We know the importance of the Kila wetlands and surrounding habitat for resident and migratory birds. We have become aware of a proposal for the Cottage Lane Estates Subdivision in Kila that would significantly adversely affect a long-existing great blue heron rookery unless adequate mitigation is required and enforced.

The developer, Tungsten Holdings, and MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks personnel have cooperated to develop mitigation measures. We commend the cooperative effort and strongly encourage you to require the mitigation measures including the 3 additional recommendations provided in the MT FWP letter to the developer. Two of the Flathead Audubon Society Board members have also cooperated with Fish, Wildlife and Parks personnel and provided information and on-site assistance thus demonstrating the continued interest of Flathead Audubon.

It is noted that these mitigation measures do not ensure the continued use of the area as a heron rookery, but will serve as an experiment to see if such measures will work. Flathead Audubon will be watching how well the proposed measures succeed and learn more about the adaptability of herons.

Kila residents and families have watched these birds for years and place great value on having a heron rookery nearby. Protecting breeding habitat is critical to having great blue herons in Kila.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lewis Young
Conservation Chair
Flathead Audubon Society
50 Garrison Drive
Eureka, MT 59917