PROPOSED RIVER, STREAM, AND WETLAND SETBACKS 09/17/07

Dear Ravalli County Commissioners;

I own 20 acres on the east fork of the Bitterroot River off Serenity Lane in Conner. The proposed river setbacks would destroy the value of my property. This property is 557' wide along the river and only has one building site approximately 150' to 190' from the water. The rest of the acreage is ridgeline and runs through two other properties. I currently have a well and septic in place. Both have never been used since new. The septic is approximately 250'+ from the water and the well 190'. I would have to go through two other properties, up hundreds of feet and back hundreds of feet, spend thousands of dollars on a new well (300'-400'+ in depth) and spend thousands of dollars on endless tractor grading work which I don't have the money for. I have always done the right thing for this property and for Ravalli County.

First this property is in the 2000 fires burn area. When first bought I hired a forester Rodger Ziesak to complete a report on the whole 20 acres to control erosion runoff into the river. The report completed I hired Rodger put erosion control measures in place and no runoff occurred. Second I hired Rodger to help me plant over 4000 small trees over the entire plant able acreage, approximately 18 acres. These trees were purchased from the state nursery in Missoula. These trees were propagated from local elevation correct seed and consisted of Ponderosa pine, Doug fir, Western larch, and aspen. This work and more was done through a federal grant through B.I.R.T. and out of my pocket. Unfortunately for the majority of the trees the elk and deer enjoyed eating them.

I have also had a topo-survey done making sure all was thorough and correct by county standards near a water source. I hired a heavy equipment operator to clear all remaining dead stumps, logs, and dead brush and debris to remove chance of another fire hazard. I have tried to do the right thing by everyone involved and have spent thousands of dollars in the local economy of the Bitterroot.

I don't understand the emergency here. My particular subdivision has covenants in place to control density. We are allowed ONE address no matter what the size of the property and our subdivision does not allow any of us to sub-divide our properties which would increase density. I believe this is pure discrimination halting current owners from building while others have houses, lawns, and out buildings right up to the rivers edge.

I currently live in California where environmental standards are very high and my wife is the Environmental Manager for Storm Water Pollution Control for Lennar Corporation so we are sensitive to all environmental concerns. If the proposed setback rules are put in place as currently written this will be a slap in the face to all of us who purchased our properties under one set of rules and then had the proverbial rug pulled from under our feet. I urge you to reconsider and make decisions that are "RIGHT" for everyone involved without destroying either side.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bruce
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SEP 18 2007
Ravalli County Commissioners

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