

HB 269
3/8/05
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4/13/04



OUR READERS SPEAK

Disabled veteran needs river access via bridges

I am the chairman of the Laurel Disabled American Veterans Committee Veterans Foreign Wars.

It has come to our attention that the Madison County Commission has refused to enforce the state stream access law in the county where you were elected to, among other duties, enforce the state laws.

The June 2000 attorney general's opinion clearly states, "Use of a county road right of way to gain access to streams and rivers is consistent with and reasonably incidental to the public's right to travel on county roads."

And later, states, "therefore, the public may gain access to streams and rivers by using the bridge, its right-of-way and its abutments."

My question to you is. Where is the access for the disabled veteran at the bridges in your county? We often are unable to move very far up and down the stream, but we would like to fish on the right-of-way at the bridge or be picked up by a friend in a boat at these bridges.

We often are only able to do short floats because of our condition, but we believe we are entitled to enjoy Montana's waterways as much as the law allows.

The Public Land and Water Access Association has provided our committee with pictures of public bridges in your county where there are obstacles that would prevent almost anyone from exercising their access rights. We didn't fight our county's wars only to have our rights taken away by greedy individuals and timid bureaucrats. Do your job as Americans. Insure that reasonable access is available for everyone as the law directs.

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