

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES  
EXHIBIT NO. 9  
DATE 1/21/2005  
BILL NO. SB210

Senate Bill 210  
January 21, 2005  
Presented by Jeff Hagener  
Senate Natural Resources Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Jeff Hagener, Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

FWP has been designated the state's lead agency for recreation. As such, we not only manage the 50 state parks and 320 fishing access sites across the state we also manage recreational grants programs. One of the grant programs we manage is the National Recreation Trails Program. NRTP is a federally funded program that allows FWP to pass trail dollars to local projects. Allocation of these funds has citizen oversight by the State Trails Advisory Committee. Typical trail projects include fencing, weed control, property boundary signing to prevent trespass, trail sign funding, trail head facilities such as outhouses, trail maintenance and patrol to prevent litter, vandalism and trespass and other trail support. Funding from NRTP would fit very nicely with the project anticipated by SB 210.

While no one wants to lose good rail service to Montana producers, converting railroads that are no longer economically viable to trails has had a very positive local economic impact on other western states. The Ma Dah Hey trail in North Dakota and the Route of the Hiawatha in Idaho have each created new jobs, significant local economic impacts as well as allowing new small business opportunities at trail heads and in small communities along the trail. Bike rental shops, trail side ice cream parlors, coffee shops and other small family businesses appear to meet the needs of trail users.

One other positive affect of this Corridor proposal is that FWP currently owns public fishing access sites along the Missouri with no legal public access. This trail corridor would allow the public legal non-motorized public access to their lands. I am sure other private landowners would reap the same benefits.

FWP is willing to assist any way we can to assist the Corridor of Discovery for the benefit of landowners, trail users and our guest as you the legislature deems appropriate.