SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES
EXHIBIT NO. 2
DATE 3/4/05
BILL NO. HB 312

House Bill 312
March 4, 2005
Presented by Doug Monger
Senate Natural Resources Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Doug Monger, Administrator of the Parks Division of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

In 1989, the Legislature passed the Smith River Management Act to seek ways to minimize conflicts between river users and private landowners and to protect the integrity of the river waters and canyon resources.

To establish a funding mechanism to protect the river corridor, in 1991 the FWP Commission adopted the Smith River Rules, which direct monies from each commercial and private float into a Corridor Enhancement Account. Today, $50 from commercial floats; 5% of other Smith River fees and donated private money is directed into the Corridor Enhancement Account. The intent of the account when it was created was that it be used to protect the river and the canyon resources and that is still the intent today.

Although FWP has made many improvements within the Smith River canyon such as the recent stream stabilization projects at Camp Baker and Eden Bridge, toilet replacement and road repairs, we have not expended funds from the Corridor Account because we have been trying to get this account to grow to a point that we could do a substantial project. Funding is now at that level and we are asking for spending authority in HB 5 this session.

House Bill 312 clarifies the FWP Commission's intent and puts it into statute. FWP supports HB 312.