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Testimony. Senate Bill 244.

I strongly support the SB 244.

For the last 3 years the Bureau of Land Management has given the Missoula County Sheriff's Office a grant to have increased enforcement in the 6 mile section of the Blackfoot Corridor as the problems were becoming unmanageable.

In this 6 mile section of the river when the temperatures would approach 100 degrees 1 to 5 thousand people would descend on the area. The first problem we had to address was parking as we would have vehicles parked on both sides of the road and at best only one way traffic could get though. It was marginal if a fire truck could have responded through the parking problem.

The next problem we had was alcohol. It didn't seem to matter the age as large numbers of people had alcohol. In fact 20 MIP's citations were issued along with 13 warnings. Talking to officers on the scene I was advised that when we tried to get the underage people to come to the bank, they would discard the beer and we would lose our evidence. As you are looking at the glass container citations almost all of those citations were for alcohol in glass containers.

In one of the attached photographs you will see a weekend party where the people came with a tent, sound system and plenty of beverages. These people were of age but we also had to deal with the related alcohol problems.

We had two significant events that Fish Wildlife and Parks helped us on but they were not the lead agency.

The first event was where a group of people who had been partaking in large amounts of alcohol and were using foul language. A parent on a beach asked the group to clean up their language as he was in the area with his young child. One of the group responded by mooning the family and then turning and facing the family and masturbating. The rest of this person's group was egging the flasher on. It was reported and one of our officers confronted the group. The flasher was cited and several members of the group were arrested for obstructing justice because they were issuing threats to the complaining party and were surrounding the officer investigating. Several officers had to be called in to assist and break up the group.

Another case an individual would not comply with officers as he had a bunch of alcohol impairing his judgement. A Taser had to be used to control this person. Again a group of intoxicated individuals surrounded the officers and for a short time it looked like there was going to a large fight between the drunks and cops. This group was of mixed ages.

We also had a group of intoxicated persons wrecking a white water course that a group of Kayak-ers had a permit to set up and use.

Several instances we found underage youths passed out in inner tubes along the bank.

While parking was our number one problem in the Blackfoot Corridor this summer the number 2 problem was alcohol and alcohol related offenses. The alcohol related offense were much more dangerous to the officers. If we can be pro-active have multiple agencies enforcing MIP and related offense the safer it will be for officers and more importantly the community.

While Missoula has a large population and some of the above offense may only be related to Missoula, I can say that the problem is spreading to

other counties. In fact a news account of an event in Ravalli County makes me believe that it will be happening sooner rather than later. In the Ravalli County incident residents at the Poker Joe Fishing Access blocked the road so cars could not get to the fishing access. The reason was because of all of the alcohol related offenses and trashing of the site. I don't know how the issue has been resolved.

In one report that was written by a Missoula County Reserve Deputy he wrote that he goes to this one location on the Blackfoot whenever he wants to catch some one smoking marijuana as they are always there. BLM and FWP officers confirmed that statement. So I know that alcohol is not to the only drug being used on the water ways in State Recreation areas.

The FWP works with a community group and they have a one day clean up of the Blackfoot River. This year they collected 3,994 cans mostly beer and 250 bottles again mostly beer. The group ran out of air for the divers and had to leave.

Willis

BLM Blackfoot Corridor

		Arrests	Notice to Appear
Felony Arrests			
MIP's			20
Illegal poss. Of Dangerous drugs			
Illegal poss. Of drug paraphernalia			
Warrant arrests		13	
Parole violation arrests		1	
DUI's	1	1	
DUI .02			
Moving violations			
Seat belt violations			9
Child Restraints			
Speeding citations			1
Reckless Driving			1
Driver's license violations			1
Driving while supended		2	2
Registration violations			4
Insurance violations			13
Equipment violations			
Illegal possession of tobacco			
Other misc. traffic			2
Kegs seized			
Fake ID's			
Unlawful transactions w/child			1
Other assists/HP and Investigations	30	5	5
Stolen Vehilces			
Glass Containers			7
Parking Violations			60
Other FWP Violations			2
FI Cards Filled Out			
Paid hours	211.5		
Volunteered hours	98		
Total Hours	309.5		
Notice to Appear	128		
Arrests	22		
Warnings	159		
Total citations/arrests/cases filed	150		
Total warnings	159		
Vehicle Break ins	33		