

**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



1400 So. 19th  
Bozeman, MT 59715

June 24, 1996

TO: Governor's Office, Glenn Marx, Room 204, State Capitol, P.O. 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801  
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620  
Dept. Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office  
Parks Division  
Fisheries Division  
Wildlife Division  
Enforcement Division  
Lands Section  
Design & Construction Bureau  
Legal Unit  
Dennis Flath  
FWP Commissioners

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, POB 201202 Helena, MT 59620-1202  
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103  
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620  
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, POB 595, Helena, MT 59624  
George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624  
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771  
Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624  
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923  
Glen Hockett, 745 Doane Road, Bozeman, MT 59715  
Gallatin County Commissioners, Gallatin County Courthouse, Bozeman, MT 59715

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You recently received a draft Environmental Assessment (E.A.) for a Roadside Zoo and Menagerie permit for an exhibit of venomous and non-venomous snakes in West Yellowstone, Montana. The draft document was not changed after a public review period. Please consider your previous copy to be the final version.

A total of 80 comments were received concerning the permit and all but two favored approval of the action. It is my decision to approve the permit for this exhibit with the conditions listed in the E.A.

I find no significant impacts associated with this action and conclude that an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. The completed E.A. is an appropriate level of analysis.

*Rattler Jack's*

Thank you for your interest and involvement.

Sincerely,

*Stephen L. Lewis*

Stephen L. Lewis  
Regional Supervisor

**Decision Notice  
Rattler Jack's Snake Exhibition**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region 3  
1400 So. 19th  
Bozeman, MT 59715**

**June 24, 1996**

**Description of Proposed Action:**

Howard McDonald applied for a Roadside Zoo and Menagerie permit to open an exhibit of venomous and non-venomous snakes in an existing commercial building at 30 Madison Avenue in West Yellowstone, Montana.

We received 78 comments favoring the exhibit. Of those, 77 were submitted as form letters or signatures from petitions circulated in the West Yellowstone area.

We received two letters in opposition to the exhibit. In those letters, several concerns were mentioned.

1. The possibility of escape.

**Response:** We feel that the issue of escapes has been dealt with in the conditions which will accompany the permit. There are numerous snake exhibits nation-wide. Many of them administered by municipalities and educational institutions. Done correctly, there is no reason to expect escapes. If the exhibit fails to adhere to the conditions, we have the option of revoking their permit.

2. The possibility of a fire.

**Response:** If the building does catch fire, the only plausible way for snakes to escape is to have cages burned open. It is extremely doubtful that any snakes would survive.

3. The possibility of snake bite.

**Response:** Venomous rattlesnakes are found throughout most of Montana including some very remote areas. West Yellowstone has an airport and is within 90 miles of a full service hospital which stocks pit viper antivenin. We don't feel that someone who received a venomous snake bite in West Yellowstone would be in worse circumstances than someone who was bitten elsewhere in Montana.

