

MADISON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

P.O. BOX 278

VIRGINIA CITY, MT 59755

e-mail: madco@madison.mt.gov

www.madison.mt.gov

Phone: (406)843-4277

Fax: (406) 843-5517

Commissioners

David Schulz
Dan A. Happel
James P. Hart

April 30, 2012

Chairman – Senator Jim Keane
& Members of the Legislative Interim Committee
The Environmental Quality Committee
Room 172
State Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Chairman Keane and Members of the Committee:

We are writing in response to a proposal by the State to transfer management of their properties and operations located in Virginia and Nevada Cities and currently under the guidance of the Montana Heritage Commission (a subordinate agency of the Montana Department of Commerce), to the Parks Division of Montana FWP.

Madison County has had significant ongoing dealings with both organizations, and although we have usually had a positive relationship with FWP, we do not feel they would be the right fit for this application. We feel that the State would be better served having FWP focus their attention on largely unmanaged: carnivores, invasive species and the many properties already under their control. We feel that adding responsibilities to an already overextended State agency, is not in the best interests of anyone involved, especially our Madison County historical communities.

Virginia City is the Madison County Seat and as such, is a vibrant, active community having a significant number of continually operating and functioning businesses in addition to the seasonal historical activities of a summer tourist destination. Virginia City and Nevada City are communities **not parks**, and the Department of Commerce is a much better economic fit for the Heritage Commission and for our communities.

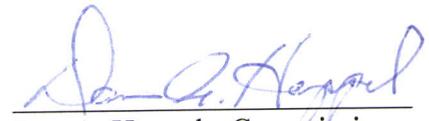
The Madison County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests that our two historical communities remain under the management of a Department of Commerce based Montana Heritage Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Madison County Board of Commissioners


David Schulz – Chairman


James P. Hart – Commissioner


Dan A. Happel - Commissioner

Don't change horses in mid-stream

Dear Editor,

In last week's letter to the editor, Bill Hanley posed an interesting idea on creating a tourism district anchored by Virginia City and Nevada City.

If Fish, Wildlife and Parks continues to pursue the possibility of getting the Montana Heritage Commission assets under their control, then all county residents need to contact their legislative representatives in the state senate and congressional districts and let them know how you feel about the future of these irreplaceable assets.

At this particular time, the MHC seems to be on the right track. Elijah Allen, the new business manager is making great

progress in marketing Virginia City/Nevada City. Because of his communication skills and knowledge of modern technical skills, he has totally changed the dynamics between the MHC and the business owners and the Virginia City Chamber of Commerce. I'm sure the same applies to the private property owners as well, although they are more connected to the town council and the local preservation alliance and the recently reorganized Virginia City/Madison County Historic Preservation Commission.

Also added to the mix is the new executive director of the Virginia City Chamber of Commerce, Rebecca Ramsey. All of these exciting new young

leaders are bringing new hope to the Virginia City community for the future growth of their town.

The last thing we need at this time is to change horses in mid-stream. There are a lot of new or expanded programs being developed at Nevada City that don't need to be disrupted.

Adding the potential of the Cowboy Hall of Fame and Heritage Center to the mix (the selection committee will make their site selection decision at the end of April). Our Madison County Commissioners and Sam Korsmoe of the Madison County Economic Development Council have bent over backwards to bring this project to our county.

Like it or not, politics will

always be a part of the mix and we need a cordial liaison between the MHC and Helena. A search for a new executive director for MHC is underway to fill that need.

Cleaning up and separating the trash from the treasure is a sensitive area with Virginia City and Nevada City residents and decisions on how to address these problems need to be discussed in an honest and open forum.

Mr. Hanley is right, we need to keep the FWP and state parks away from these special places and leave MHC under the Montana Department of Commerce.

*Jack Murphy
Harrison*

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Lisa Morgan - Stagecoach owner
2. Mike Stage coach owner
3. Lloyd Hamilton Stone house Inn
4. Star Bakery Restaurant
5. John W. Hamilton Mt. Hotel & Cabins
6. Billie K. Rancher owner
7. Robert A. James Ranches Dillon
8. George J. Lusk Virginia City, MT.
9. Carol Lee Swager Sheridan MT
10. Karen Swager Sheridan MT
11. Ennis, MT
12. Mark Webb TWIN BRIDGES, MT
13. Karen Brown Virginia City
14. John Ellingsen Virginia City, MT.
15. Jeff Balda Owner KBZM-KKQX-KSCY-Bozeman
16. OWNER Boss Place Virginia City
17. L. James owner Banks Mercantile Virginia City.
18. John A. Benedict Opera House Business Owner/Contractor 38 yrs
19. BUSINESS OWNER - Random Acts of Creativity - Virginia City
20. Ed Francese Archibald KXL7 TV-Butte, MT

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of fish, Wildlife and Parks

1. Donald Shuck 501 S. ST. V.C. MT.
2. [Signature] V.C. Po Box 94
3. Scott Plumer V.C. P.O. Box 364 MT
4. [Signature] V.C. Box 373
5. Thomas A. Jee Box 193 MT.
6. Ray Rossow Box 271 V.C. MT
7. [Signature] Box 275 V.C. MT.
8. Wendy Keyser Box 227 Springfield, NH
9. Janie Edinger Box 244 V.C. MT 59755
10. Sennichustens Rogus Box 363 V.C. MT 59755
11. Ruth Ham Box 117 V.C. 59755
12. Jens of Alvestad BOX 235 V.C. 59755
13. Br LCA Box 532 SHARDAN MT
14. Jeremy Beneset 15 Stiles Nevada City
15. W.D. Lyght PO Box 54 V.C. 59755
16. [Signature] PO Box 54 V.C. 59755
17. SeParison PO Box 22 V.C. 59755
18. [Signature] Box 293 V.C. 59755
19. [Signature] Box 124 V.C. 59755
20. [Signature] Owner - Bldg of Hwy Selma V.C. 59755
- [Signature] V.C. 59755

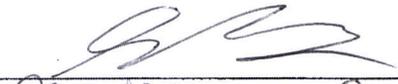
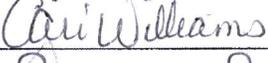
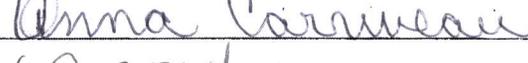
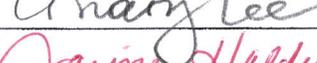
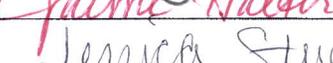
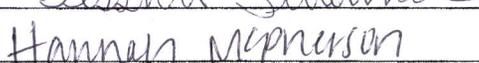
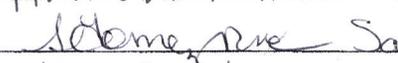
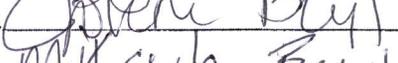
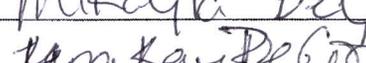
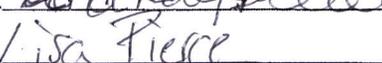
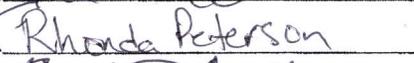
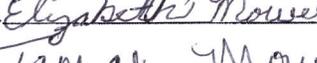
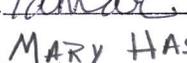
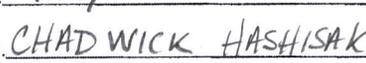
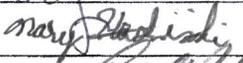
SISTERS OF CHARITY

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to **STAY** with the Department of Commerce and **NOT** be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Vicki M. Johnson - Billings, MT
2. Tina Simpson - Tina Simpson Joliet MT.
3. Steph B - Billings MT
4. Theresa Kirby - Bigs MT
5. Connie Taylor - Billings, MT
6. Zabrina Miller Bigs, MT
7. Jelly K. Kubi - Billings, MT
8. Brandon Justin Gaine - Billings MT
9. Kathryn Wilson Billings MT
10. Michelle Swanson Roberts MT
11. Chrysa Bucary Billings MT
12. Megane M. Otton, Billings, MT
13. Ellen C. Cipe Billings MT
14. Andrew
15. Edward Lee Billings MT
16. Kelly Kitz Billings MT
17. Mary Medley Billings MT.
18. Shirley S. Dyer Billings MT
19. Jean Watts Billings MT
20. Hayne Billings MT.

Faxed 3/21/12

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1.  - Scott Brady Billings MT.
2.  - Carol Williams Billings, MT
3.  Anna Carnevan Billings MT.
4.  Mary Lee Billings, MT
5.  Jaime Halder Billings, MT
6.  Jessica Studiner Absarokee, MT
7.  Hannah McPherson Glendive, MT
8.  Sarah Gomez Billings, MT
9.  Alex Golden Billings, MT
10.  Catherine Beyl Billings, MT
11.  Mikayla Beyl Billings, MT
12.  Karri Kay DeGroot Columbus, MT
13.  Lisa Fierce Park City, MT
14.  Rhonda Peterson Billings, MT
15.  Rick Tabor Breckenridge, MT
16.  Liz Murray Joliet, MT
17.  Elizabeth Mowery Joliet, Montana
18.  Lamar Mowery Joliet, MT.
19. MARY HASHISAKI  BILLINGS MT
20. CHAD WICK HASHISAKI  BILLINGS MT

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to **STAY** with the Department of Commerce and **NOT** be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Kristi Pulley Belgrade MT 3/27/2012
2. Robert Livingston Belgrade 3/27/2012
3. Jim Livingston Belgrade MT 3/27/2012
4. Cameron Ziegler Belgrade MT 3/27/12
5. Kristi Fletcher Three Forks MT 3/27/12
6. Kayla Hunter Belgrade MT 3/27/12
7. Meek Hunter Belgrade MT 3/27/12
8. Debra May Melzer Belgrade MT 3/27/12
9. Shauna R. Chouinard Belgrade MT 3/30/12
10. Jade Pope Belgrade MT 3/31/2012
11. Shila Nelson Belgrade MT 3/31/12
12. Kelsey Hinson Belgrade MT 3/31/12
13. Joe Borwick MT 4/20/2012
14. Phil Wain Belgrade 4/20/2012
15. Tracie Patena Belgrade 4.20.12
16. Jennifer Eagleson 4/20/12
17. Zach Ellison 4/20/12
18. Joe Denton 4/20/12
19. Cal Boyles 4/20/12
20. Bev Illgen 4/20/12

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Heather Howe 20 Penny Lane, Butte, MT 59701 494-5203
2. Scott Becker Butte, MT 59701 498-6861
3. John S. Jinks Butte, MT 59701 498-8618
4. Henry Gonschak 855 W. Quartz Butte, MT 59701 9782-8835
5. Michael Masters, Butte, MT 59701, 406-496-4333
6. Pat Dudley Butte, MT 59701 406-782-3688
7. Patty Crowl Butte, MT 59701 406 565 9622
8. Travis Skappak Butte, MT 59701 406-221-7326
9. Russell Weaver Butte, MT 59701 406-565-6493
10. Alex Harelund Butte, MT 59701 406-498-4275
11. Wesley Sherman Butte MT 59701 406-381-3542
12. * Chandra Vitale Hamilton MT 59840 406-531-1255
13. Charisse Becker Butte MT 59701 490-6597
14. Suzanne Hodge Butte MT 59701 498-8649
15. Kyle McGuire Butte MT 59701
16. Brian [unclear] Butte MT 59701
17. Paul Shea 828 Zarelda St. Butte, MT 59701 565-0966
18. Wally Pette Butte MT 59701
19. Pat [unclear] Butte MT 59701
20. Jan [unclear] Butte MT 59701

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Jeffery C Barney 110 Cedar Park
2. Ernie Jodi 111 Cedar Park
3. Katherine Shaw 113 Cedar Park Anaconda
4. Bob Shea 312 W 4TH ST Anaconda
5. Cody Hobbs 211 N Cedar st
6. Chris Spivey 211 N Cedar st
7. Desiree Harting 211 N Cedar st
8. Meila & Reezomen 10565 Hwy 1 West 3/21/03 ph# 560-5725
- 3-21-12 9. Brooke Lewellen 1040 PLACER ST. BUTTE, MT 59701 ph# 491-0057
10. Alexandro Auna 1738 Lowell Ave. Butte, MT 59701 498-5082
11. Evelyn Markle 470 O'Neill St, Butte, MT 59701
12. Lorraine Gates 20 One Kiln Road - Butte, MT 5970
13. Steve Wilson 407 W Murray Butte, MT 59701
14. Bruce Abraham 630 S. Jackson Apt B Butte, MT 59701
15. Brianne Sutt 23 W. Daly Butte, MT
16. Seth Hogan 108 S. Montana - Butte MT 59701
17. Ashley Husby 1916 Garfield - Butte, MT
18. Cheryl McNamee 2031 Phillips Ave. Butte, MT 59701
19. Debra DeL 1225 West Broadway Rm 304C BUTTE MT 59701
20. Ashlee Houchin 1806 Whitman Butte, MT 59701

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

03-20-12

1. Daniel R. Highley, ~~Anaconda MT~~, 563-7836, highley1975@gmail.com
- 3/20/2012 2. Glory Blue Earth Highley, 211 N. Cedar St apt 114, 563-7836, moegloryblue@yahoo.com
- 3/20/2012 3. Thelma Bowers 211 N. Cedar St. Apt 115 559-0247
4. Michele Luee 211 N. Cedar Street Apt 116 Anaconda, MT. 563-7292
- 3/20/12 5. Julienne Francis 211 N Cedar St #118 Anaconda, MT 59711
6. Charles Massy 211 N Cedar St #211 Anaconda, MT 59711
7. Jerold Moses 211 N. Cedar St #224 Anaconda MT 59711
8. Dennis Seider 220 Cedar St Anaconda 59711
9. ~~Joey~~ 220 Cedar St Anaconda 59711
10. Tanya Jurek 214 Cedar Park Homes 59711
11. Leah Smith 1016 E 5th Anaconda 59711
12. Danny Kang 315 Spruce Anaconda MT 59711
13. Patty Knudler 211 N Cedar apt 217 Anaconda MT 59711
14. H. C. Sillum 1790 S Rocker Rd Butte MT
15. Dick Nyquist 117 Alder, Apt B, Anaconda, MT 59711
16. Kathleen Butler 211 N. Cedar Apt. 201, Anaconda, MT 59711
17. Mary Johnston 211 N. Cedar St. Apt. 102, Anaconda, MT 59711
18. ~~Joey~~ 211 N. Cedar St Apt 104 Anaconda MT 59711
19. ~~Joey~~ 211 N. Cedar St. Apt. 106 Anaconda MT 59711
20. Amber Domitrzech 211 N Cedar St Apt 107 Anaconda

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Sam Haylett Butte, MT
2. Amanda Griffin Butte, MT amandagriffin@yahoosm
3. Deann Jeli Butte, MT dsnyder@mttech.edu
4. John Gshaw Butte, MT gshaw@mttech.edu
5. Sam Jeli Butte, MT
6. Donna M. McNamee Wolf Point, MT
7. Bob Simpson Belgrade, MT
8. John Simpson
9. Keith Necker Bozeman, MT
10. Ben Wells
11. J Stredwick Leona Stredwick Ennis, MT 4/28/12
12. Penny McNeel Penny McNeel Lewiston, MT
13. Anthony St. Anthony ID
14. Cathy Koon St. Anthony, Id cakoon52@cablone.net
15. Jacqueline Marotta Virginia City, MT
16. Robert R Johnson Missoula, MT
17. Susan J. Abbot Missoula, MT
18. Wm M. Abbot Missoula, MT 406 729 2284
19. Jan Fournier Belgrade, MT
20. Trinity Hunt Belgrade, MT
21. Sterling Schmidt Philipsburg, MT
22. Duel Tiger Virginia City, MT
23. John S. Taylor Alder, MT

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Siobhan Barrett Butte, MT 59701 (406) 490-8909
2. Kaylee ~~up the~~
3. Dallas Field Butte MT 59701 406-565-8865
4. Dan Thatcher Butte, MT 59701 406-498-8863
5. Callen Albolt Butte MT 59701 406-533-9367
6. David Ottum Butte MT 59701 406-494-5073
7. ~~Chris~~ Belgrade, MT 59714 406-388-1188
8. Robin Drennan Butte, MT 59701 406-565-1988
9. Bryan Mogen Butte MT 59701 406-723-2196
10. ~~Int. Am~~ Butte MT 59701 406-781-0209
11. Tulu Baylu Butte MT 59701 208 (757-7523)
12. Jennifer Dunes Butte MT 59701 (406) 425-2486
13. ~~Michael Michael~~ Butte, MT
14. Jamie Browning Anaconda, MT 59711 (406)-560-6596
15. ~~MT Fish~~ ~~Butte~~ MT 59701 (406) ~~560-6596~~
218-5320
16. Rick Davis Helena MT 59601 (406) 207-7197
17. ~~Kevin~~ ~~Bynum~~ Divide, MT 59727 406-267-3232
18. ~~John~~ ~~off~~ Butte, MT 59701 954-815-129
19. ~~off~~ Butte, MT 59701 (475) 719-7816
20. ~~Melanie~~ ~~Bauer~~ Butte, MT

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of fish, Wildlife and Parks

1. Christina M M M PO Box 91 Virginia City, MT 59755
2. Faye Ruthenford PO Box 312 V. C., MT 59755
3. Joanne Erdall P.O. Box 311 Virginia City MT 59755
4. Beu Abbe PO Box 202 VC MT 59755
5. Johnathan Baker P.O. Box 166 Alder MT 59710
6. Christine Stader PO BOX 102 VC, MT 59755
7. Christa Jordan PO Box 44 VC, MT 59755
8. Justin Gatewood PO Box 384 VC, MT 59755
9. Stacy Gatewood PO Box 384 VC, MT 59755
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of fish, Wildlife and Parks

1. Karen Fisher Resident & Business owner in Virginia City
2. William J. Koch, RESIDENT / OWNER OPERA HOUSE CONCESSION / VIRGINIA CITY
3. Spencer Ramsey, Resident, Executive Director of the Virginia City Chamber of Commerce
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

The following people are signing this document indicating they would like the Heritage Commission to STAY with the Department of Commerce and NOT be affiliated with the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

1. Lisa Morgan - Stagecoach owner
2. W. Weber Stage coach owner
3. Linda & Hazelton Stone house Inn
4. K. Stewart Star Bakery Restaurant
5. John W. Hamilton N.C. Hotel & Cabins
6. Billie K. Rancher owner
7. Robert A. James Rancher Dillon
8. Charles J. Grady Virginia City, MT.
9. Carol Lee Swager Sheridan MT
10. Karen Swager Sheridan MT
11. Humphrey ENNIS, MT
12. Mark Webb TWIN BRIDGES, MT
13. Karen Brown Virginia City
14. John Ellingsen Virginia City, M.T.
15. Jeff Bailey owner KBZM-KKQX-KSCY-Bozeman
16. [Signature] owner Pot's Place Virginia City
17. L. James owner Rank's Mercantile Virginia City
18. John A. Benedict Opera House Business Owner/Contractor 38 yrs.
19. Ursula Stader / Tourist Rentals / Business owner
20. Michelle L. Benedict, President Virginia City



Virginia City Area Chamber of Commerce . PO Box 218. Virginia City, MT 59755

May 2, 2012

Dear Members of the Environmental Quality Committee,

It is the position of the Virginia City Area Chamber of Commerce that the management of the state properties and operations of Virginia and Nevada Cities should remain with the Montana Heritage Commission (MHC), and that MHC should remain under the umbrella of the Department of Commerce.

We feel that the MHC has had a successful restructuring of their organization, with the right people and positions in place to make them sustainable and successful into the future. Having a strong business development presence, investing dollars wisely into marketing and advertising of Virginia and Nevada Cities, along with dedicated preservation efforts is exactly what the MHC needs, and what it currently has.

The cooperative, unified efforts of the MHC and their communication with, and support of the Virginia City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Virginia City, and Madison County are vital to the health of Virginia City, Nevada City and the surrounding area. Virginia and Nevada Cities are NOT state parks. Virginia City is a living, breathing, vital community. It is driven by commerce. It is the county seat. It is a living treasure within the Treasure State. The businesses drive people to experience the history, and to stay here, supporting the investment of the State of Montana. The history draws people to support the businesses. It is a symbiotic relationship that is beneficial to us all.

If a major change were to occur, it would likely happen in the midst of the 2013 celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Virginia City and the discovery of gold in Alder Gulch. We feel it is essential to let the MHC, and all the partners stay unified and that the MHC remains under a commerce driven state agency during this time, and into the future.

We urge you to take these things, and the viewpoints of over 70 businesses and individuals represented by the Virginia City Area Chamber of Commerce, into consideration as you review your options. We hope you will let us prove to you that we are all working together to make this the best place it can be, and thus, being the best for the investment of the State of Montana.

All the Best,


Rebecca Ramsey, Executive Director