

Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

14 April 2005

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Dear:

The Environmental Concerns and Land Management Committee of the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (MCAFS) is striving to be more involved with issues that affect aquatic resources in the state of Montana. Currently, we are seeking information on important fisheries and aquatic issues throughout the state. We realize that many issues are of concern to fisheries biologists, but some receive less attention than others. Thus, our committee is soliciting guidance regarding aquatic resource management issues and proposed actions that may warrant further attention.

Since we are a small committee of limited resources, we would like to be able to focus our efforts on the most pertinent topics facing our fisheries and aquatic resources in Montana. These topics include, but are not limited to: 1) state and federal environmental impact statements, 2) land exchanges, 3) policy decisions, and 4) land management activities that may affect aquatic resources. Simply put, we know there are important decisions being made concerning Montana's fisheries and aquatic resources that would benefit from more review and comment by MCAFS, but we need help from you and your agency staff and biologists to focus our efforts on the most critical issues. For example, we feel our comments and involvement in the coalbed methane development EIS helped elevate the importance of protecting Montana's native prairie fishes from the effects of discharge water.

These issues should be directed to the committee co-chairs, Brian Bellgraph (bbellgraph@montana.edu) or Kiza Gates (kgates@montana.edu). We appreciate any contribution you can make to help advance the mission of the MCAFS. We will be sending an email copy of this letter by April 18th to facilitate distribution to the appropriate staff.

Sincerely,

Brian Bellgraph and Kiza Gates
Co-chairs, Environmental Concerns and Land Management Committee, Montana Chapter AFS

cc: Clint Muhlfeld, MCAFS President