February 7, 2007

Mike Kress
Missoula City-County Office of Planning and Grants
435 Ryman
Missoula, MT 59802

Dear Mr. Kress:

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the environmental review of a western bypass as described at the February 5 public meeting. We would like you to be aware of the Clark Fork River-Grass Valley Important Bird Area (IBA) that encompasses the cottonwood bottomlands and adjoining wetlands near Reserve Street to almost Huson. The IBA program is an international conservation effort aimed at calling attention to areas that are critical for the conservation of birds and to encourage voluntary conservation efforts. Within the United States, the National Audubon Society administers the program. This IBA was approved last April based on evaluation of scientific data submitted by the Five Valleys Audubon Society. It is classified as a Continental Level IBA. Earlier this year we submitted a digital map of the area to Zack Brandt and I believe it resides as a layer in the County GIS data base. It is considered as a Cornerstone area in the city open space plan More information about the IBA can be found on the National Audubon website at http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba. Also enclosed is a brochure that describes the IBA.

Because of the critical habitat in this area for species of conservation concern we believe the area would be greatly negatively impacted by a roadway. Please keep us informed of future discussions on this issue.

Sincerely,

Jim Brown, President

Enclosure