

Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006

Part V: Springdale to Gardiner

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Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory--2006 Preface

The Significance of the Yellowstone River

The Yellowstone River has a long history of serving human needs. Native Americans named it the Elk River because of its importance as a hunting environment. William Clark explored much of the river in the spring of 1806 and found it teeming with beavers. By 1906, the US Bureau of Reclamation was sponsoring diversion projects that tapped the river as a source of irrigation waters. The river then enabled “twentieth-century progress” and today it supports many nearby agricultural, recreational and industrial activities, as well as many activities on the Missouri River.

Management of the shared resources of the Yellowstone River is complicated work. Federal and state interests compete with one another, and they compete with local and private endeavors. Legal rights to the water are sometimes in conflict with newly defined needs, and, by Montana law, the public is guaranteed access to the river even though 84 percent of the riverbank is privately owned.

Interestingly, in spite of the many services it provides, the Yellowstone River in 2006 remains relatively free-flowing. This fact captures the imaginations of many people who consider its free-flowing character an important link between contemporary life and the unspoiled landscapes of the Great American West. As a provider, as a symbol of progress, as a shared resource, as a management challenge, and as a symbol of our American heritage, the Yellowstone River is important.

Purpose

The Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006 documents the variety and intensity of different perspectives and values held by people who share the Yellowstone River. Between May and November of 2006, a total of 313 individuals participated in the study. They represented agricultural, civic, recreational, or residential interest groups. Also, individuals from the Crow and the Northern Cheyenne tribes were included.

There are three particular goals associated with the investigation. The first goal is to document how the people of the Yellowstone River describe the physical character of the river and how they think the physical processes, such as floods and erosion, should be managed. Within this goal, efforts have been made to document participants’ views regarding the many different bank stabilization techniques employed by landowners. The second goal is to document the degree to which the riparian zone associated with the river is recognized and valued by the participants. The third goal is to document concerns regarding the management of the river’s resources. Special attention is given to the ways

in which residents from diverse geographical settings and diverse interest groups view river management and uses. The results illustrate the commonalities of thought and the complexities of concerns expressed by those who share the resources of the Yellowstone River.

Identification of Geographic Segments

The Yellowstone River is over 670 miles in length. It flows northerly from Yellowstone Lake near the center of Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. After exiting the park, the river enters Montana and flows through Paradise Valley toward Livingston, Montana, where it turns eastward. It then follows a northeasterly path across Montana to its confluence with the Missouri River in the northwestern corner of North Dakota.

Five geographic segments along the river are delineated for purposes of organizing the inventory. These five segments capture the length of the river after it exits Yellowstone National Park and as it flows through eleven counties in Montana and one county in North Dakota. The geographic delineations are reflective of collaborations with members of the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council and members of the Technical Advisory Committee and the Resources Advisory Committee.

Working from the confluence with the Missouri River towards the west, the first geographic segment is defined as Missouri River to Powder River. This geographic segment includes some of the least populated regions of the entire United States. This segment is dominated by a broad, relatively slow-moving river that serves an expansive farming community whose interests blend with those folks living along the seventeen miles of the Yellowstone River that traverse North Dakota. Here the Yellowstone River is also important as a habitat for paddlefish and Pallid sturgeon. At the confluence with the Missouri River, the size of the channel, significant flow and substantial sediment carried by the Yellowstone River makes its importance obvious to even the most casual of observers. Prairie, Dawson and Richland Counties of Montana are included in this segment, as well as McKenzie County, North Dakota.

The second geographic segment, Powder River to Big Horn River, is delineated to include the inflows of the Big Horn and Tongue Rivers as major tributaries to the Yellowstone River and to include the characteristics of the warm-water fisheries. This segment is delineated to recognize the significant agricultural activities of the area and the historical significance of the high plains cowboy culture. This segment includes Treasure, Rosebud and Custer Counties.

The third geographic segment, Big Horn River to Laurel, essentially includes only Yellowstone County, but it is a complex area. To begin, important out-takes near Laurel divert water to irrigations projects further east. Additionally, it is the one county along the length of the river with a sizable urban population. Billings is known as a regional center for agriculture, business, healthcare and tourism. This area is notable for its loss of agricultural bottomlands to urban development. Irrigation projects are important east of Billings, especially in the communities of Shepherd, Huntley and Worden. These

communities and Laurel also serve as bedroom communities to Montana's largest city, Billings. It is in Yellowstone County that the river begins its transition to a warm-water fishery.

The fourth segment, Laurel to Springdale, ends at the northeastern edge of Park County, Montana. The river in this area is fast-moving and it supports coldwater fisheries. While there is little urban development in this segment, there are some rather obvious transformations occurring as agricultural lands near the river are being converted to home sites for retirees and vacationers. The geographic segment includes Sweet Grass, Stillwater, and Carbon Counties.

The last geographic segment is defined as Springdale to the boundary with Yellowstone National Park at Gardiner, Montana and is within the boundaries of Park County. The river leaves Yellowstone National Park and enters Montana at Gardiner. It flows in a northerly direction through Paradise Valley and is fast-moving. It supports a cold-water fishery that is well-known for its fly fishing potential. Near Livingston, Montana, the river turns easterly and broadens somewhat thus losing some of its energy. However, severe floods occurred in 1996 and 1997, and local groups have since spent many hours in public debates concerning river management.

Recruitment of Native Americans

Native Americans also have interests in the Yellowstone River. They are active in maintaining the cultural linkages between their histories and the local landscapes. For the purposes of this study a number of Native Americans from the Crow tribe and the Northern Cheyenne tribe were included. Native Americans were recruited by means of professional and personal contacts, either as referrals from state agency personnel, from Resource Advisory Committee members of the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council, or from other project participants.

Recruitment of Geographic Specific Interest Group Participants

The participants represent a volunteer sample of full-time residents of the towns and areas between the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers in North Dakota and the town of Gardiner, Montana at the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park. Participants were recruited from four major interest groups: agriculturalists, local civic leaders, recreationalists, and residentialists living near the river. A database of names, addresses and contact information was constructed for recruitment purposes. Nearly 800 entries were listed in the database, representing a relatively even contribution across the four major interest groups.

Individuals representing agriculture interests, including farmers and ranchers, were identified and recruited from referrals provided by the local Conservation Districts, the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council and the Montana Office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Individuals holding civic leadership positions, including city mayors, city council members, county commissioners, flood plain managers, city/county planners, and public works managers, were identified and recruited through public records.

Individuals who use the Yellowstone River for recreational purposes, including hunters, fishers, boaters, floaters, campers, hikers, bird watchers, rock hunters, photographers, and others who use the river for relaxation and serenity, were identified and recruited from referrals provided by members of the Resource Advisory Committee. Participants were also identified and recruited by contacting various non-governmental organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, the Audubon Society and by contacting local outfitting businesses.

The names of property owners holding 20 acres or less of land bordering the Yellowstone River, or within 500 feet of the bank, were obtained through a GIS search of public land ownership records. Twenty acres was used as a screening threshold to separate people who lived along the river corridor but whose incomes were from something other than agricultural practices (residentialists) from those who were predominantly farmers or ranchers (agriculturalists). The names were sorted by county and randomized. Recruitment proceeded from the county lists. Other people living very near the river and whose primary incomes were not generated by agriculture were also recruited. These additional participants may not have had property that technically bordered the river and/or they may have owned more than 20 acres. In all cases, the recruits did not consider agricultural as their main source of income.

Participants were recruited by telephone and individual appointments were scheduled at times and meeting places convenient for them. Many interviews were conducted in the early morning hours and the late evening hours as a means of accommodating the participants' work schedules.

Participants in Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
AGRICULTURAL	22	22	16	12	14	86
CIVIC	14	14	18	14	8	68
RECREATIONAL	15	16	16	13	16	76
RESIDENTIAL	15	11	16	15	19	76
GEOGRAPHIC SEGMENT TOTAL	66	63	66	54	57	
NATIVE AMERICAN						7
PROJECT TOTAL						313

A total of 313 people participated in the project, including 86 representatives from agriculture, 68 representatives in local civic roles, 76 representatives of recreational interests, 76 residentialists and seven Native Americans. A relatively equal representation was achieved in each geographic segment for each interest group.

Description of Interviews and Collection of Participant Comments

A master protocol was designed from questions provided by the US Army Corps of Engineers and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB approval # 0710-0001; see example in the appendix to this volume). Questions were selected that would encourage participants to describe the local environs, their personal observations of changes in the river, their uses of the river and any concerns they may have had about the future of the river as a shared resource. Open-ended questions were used as a means of encouraging participants to speak conversationally.

The questions were adapted to the participants' interest groups. For instance, interviews with agriculturalists began with the question, "How many years have you been in operation here?" while local civic leaders were asked, "How many years have you lived in this community?" Similarly, agriculturalists were asked, "Are there any problems associated with having property this close to the river?" and local civic leaders were asked, "Are there any problems associated with having private or public properties close to the river?" The overriding objective of the approach was to engage the participants in conversations about the river, its importance and their specific concerns.

Participants were promised confidentiality, and open-ended questions were asked as a means of encouraging the residents to talk about the river, the local environs and their personal observations and concerns in their own words. All respondents were interested in talking about their perspectives, and they represented a variety of views of the river, including: farming, ranching, agricultural science, commercial development, recreation, civic infrastructure, environmental activism, historical views and entrepreneurial interests.

With only three exceptions, the interviews were audio-recorded and verbatim transcripts were produced as records of the interviews. In the other three cases, hand-written notes were taken and later typed into an electronic format. The total resulting interview data totaled approximately 2,700 pages of interview text.

Steps of Data Analysis

The content of the interview texts was distilled by way of analytical steps that would retain geographical and interest group integrity.

Segment-Specific Interest Group Analyses: Taking all audio-recordings, transcripts, and field notes as the complete data set, the research group first set out to determine the primary values and concerns for each geographic segment-specific interest group. The team began with the four interest groups from the segment Springdale to Laurel. Team

members read individual interview transcripts and determined a core set of values and concerns for the individuals represented. As a team, notes were compared and a combined outline of values and concerns was constructed for each interest group in the geographic segment. Quotes were then taken from each transcript in the set to illustrate the particular values and concerns.

Outlines of the interest group analyses for the Springdale to Laurel segment were then used as aids in constructing the interest group analyses in all other geographic segments. Care was taken to adapt the interest group analyses to highlight if, and when, the core values and concerns were different in each geographic segment. The Native American perspective was addressed as an individual analysis with attention to the specifics of those perspectives. Each of the 21 segment-specific interest group analyses was then illustrated with quotes from interviews.

21 Segment-Specific Interest Group Analyses

	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
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Segment-Specific Geographic Summaries: A summary of the values and concerns for each geographic segment was constructed using the sets of four geographic-specific interest group analyses. Geographic summaries were written to reflect the concerns that crossed all interests groups of the segment, either as points of agreement or disagreement, and were illustrated with quotes from the four relevant interest group analyses.

5 Segment-Specific Geographic Summaries						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
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River-Length Interest Group Summaries: River-length interest group summaries were constructed for each of the four primary interest groups. For example, agricultural concerns from the five geographic segments were compared and quotes were taken from the segment-specific interest group reports to illustrate commonalities and differences. Similar reports were constructed for local civic leaders, recreationalists and residentialists.

4 River-Length Interest Group Summaries						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
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Organization of the Reports

Overall Summary of the Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006: An overall summary of the inventory was written as a means of highlighting the values and concerns that cross interest groups and geographic segments. The segment-specific geographic summaries and the river-length interest group summaries were used as the bases for the overall summary. This report is by no means comprehensive. Rather, it is written to encourage further reading in the reports of each geographic segment and in the interest group reports.

Part I: Missouri River to Powder River: This volume includes the geographic summary for Missouri River to Powder River and the four relevant interest group reports: agricultural, civic leader, recreational, and residential.

Part II: Powder River to Big Horn River: This volume includes the geographic summary for Powder River to Big Horn River and the four relevant interest group reports: agricultural, civic leader, recreational, and residential.

Part III: Big Horn River to Laurel: This volume includes the geographic summary for Big Horn River to Laurel and the four relevant interest group reports: agricultural, civic leader, recreational, and residential.

Part IV: Laurel to Springdale: This volume includes the geographic summary for Laurel to Springdale and the four relevant interest group reports: agricultural, civic leader, recreational, and residential.

Part V: Springdale to Gardiner: This volume includes the geographic summary for Springdale to the boundary with Yellowstone National Park and the four relevant interest group reports: agricultural, civic leader, recreational, and residential.

Research Team and Support Staff

The project was directed by Dr. Susan J. Gilbertz, Montana State University—Billings. She was aided in data collection and data analyses by Cristi Horton, Tarleton State University and Damon Hall, Texas A&M University. Support staff included: Amanda Skinner, Amber Gamsby, Beth Oswald, Nancy Heald, Beth Quiroz, Jolene Burdge, and John Weikel, all of Billings, Montana.

Springdale to Gardiner: Geographic Segment Overview

Interviews in the geographic segment Springdale to Gardiner were conducted October 1-6, 2006. A total of 57 interviews were conducted, including individuals with agricultural, civic, recreational, or residential interests as their primary concern.

Participants in Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
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Springdale to Gardiner: Geographic Segment Summary

The most important thing is to be proactive and not assume that problems will solve themselves. The only thing that happens with that passage of time is the two sides of the issues become more concrete in their positions and less willing to look at the common elements of interest. (Park County Local Civic Leader)

Introduction

This segment, defined as Springdale to Gardiner, essentially takes in the river as it flows through Park County. A review of the interview data for Park County suggests that people in this area engage in five primary discussions when asked about the Yellowstone River. First, they seldom speak only of the river, as they are likely to broaden the conversation to a discussion of the changes that are occurring in Paradise Valley. They see their valley as changing rapidly. Second, the floods of 1996 and 1997 left lasting impressions on the people of Park County. Even newcomers are aware of those events and of the devastations visited upon locals. Third, many people in Park County are vocal participants in public deliberations concerning the management of the river. The 1997-2003 Task Force created a legacy that continues to define discussions of the river and its resources. Fourth, then, are the particular topics that continue to generate discussions in the wake of the Task Force. These include debates about rip-rap, setbacks and Mill Creek. Finally, a set of observations emerge as the Park County residents both reflect on the Task Force and move forward. These observations are shaping community members' concerns about the river, the role of governing agencies and local commitments to future public processes.

Paradise in Flux

Virtually everyone who lives in Park County appreciates the beauty of their surroundings. They all agree that the area south of Livingston, Paradise Valley, is aptly named and that perceptions linking the area with Yellowstone National Park are important in establishing broad recognitions of the special beauty in which they live:

I feel real fortunate to live here. I mean, they call it Paradise Valley and it is.
(Park County Residentialist)

The word Yellowstone is a very magical word. But ...when [the] Yellowstone is threatened there is an incredible rally worldwide. When you talk to people from elsewhere it means the last free-flowing [river], the last preserved river. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

It is a place of unbelievable beauty....Tremendous beauty....[This area] is very pristine and clean, and wonderful air and light, and very clean compared to other parts of the country. Fantastic wildlife. The weather changes all the time. It is entertaining just to watch the weather. It is really beautiful. I don't tell other people that. I just tell them I enjoy it and leave it at that. No sense advertising too much. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Whenever you mention the Yellowstone River to anybody, anywhere in the country, their eyes kind of light up and they kind of perk up. Because anybody who's an outdoorsman knows about the Yellowstone River. This is one of the wildest rivers in the world, and the fishing is unbelievable. It came from the Park and it kind of reminds you of the Park, and to say that we're along the Yellowstone River that's kind of a feather in our cap. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Many people of Park County articulate strong senses of personal connection to the land and the river:

There is a relationship that forms working with the land. You learn to love it, and it becomes part of you. It becomes part of your character. It has some very formative influences on who you are. It becomes part of your soul. I think of the legacy and the heritage. Our kids understand that formative influence on their character. This place defines who they are. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The Yellowstone [River] is my cathedral, that's my church, that's my spirituality, ...it's where I charge my batteries. It's my connection to the natural world. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The mountains have a...type of impact on the individual, even if that individual doesn't acknowledge it....The river has an impact as well. Without the river, the mountains have too much power and actually impact your ego. The river provides a balance,...a healing,...a strengthening of your ego. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[People are drawn to the river for]...the surrounding beauty and the river itself. People like to be on it and look at it. They like to fish it. They like to sit and contemplate life. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

However, the valley is undergoing obvious change as many agricultural areas are converted to residential areas. The shift both reflects and reifies a shifting economic base in which agricultural activities are much less lucrative than real estate development. An obvious dynamic is that farm and ranch families sell their marginally profitable agricultural lands to residential developers who invent landscapes that are attractive to wealthy outsiders:

It looks to me like the agricultural lifestyle is going by the wayside. This community was an agricultural community at one time, and I think it's migrating

the river, to a more recreational community. I think and feel there is some miscommunication between what the ranchers have to offer in this field of recreation. There are a lot of ranchers involved in recreation as well, and it just seems to me like there needs to be some education as to what everyone can offer. So it can work for everyone. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We're sitting on a gold mine and starving to death. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We have CEO's from big companies...that fly in with their jets and helicopters. They will spend a day, or a few days, and then they are out of here. The rest of the year we are taking care of it. We worry about weeds and roads...[while] they have one little ranch manager whose authority is limited to keeping people out....We don't want to be a rich man's Disneyland. They come, they go....We are trying to maintain something and still be progressive. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I'm expecting to see more recreational ranches more houses on the river, more houses in the mountains....more of the high income, non-resident, second home people that don't rely on this county to provide their income....The people that can afford to have a second home can afford more recreational activities. They tend to use the recreation harder than what was done 20 years ago when the majority of the land was owned by Ag people. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Montana [has] always been an agricultural state. In the Paradise Valley...there's still a lot of agriculture there, but a lot of that Ag land is [where] houses [are] built now...with part-time residents that are here for a few months out of the summer. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Most of the ranchers are looking down the road and thinking, if they get in trouble, they can subdivide. From what I am hearing, the price of the lots on subdivisions is going down. They aren't selling like they were. (*Park County Residentialist*)

This new dynamic is regarded by most as a simple reality, but it does not occur without a sense of loss among the residents who have lived in Park County for many years. Some residents even anticipate that the attractiveness of the valley will be ruined by those seeking to share it:

When I was a kid, agriculture, and particularly livestock, was far and away what everybody was engaged in. They were all working farms and ranches. Recreation was interesting, but it was way down there [in terms of economic importance]. Now everybody that has any land out there has either sold it or is waiting to sell it. [There is] hardly any livestock....A lot of ranches exist in name, and maybe in area, but they are purchased by absentee owners or part-timers, and they don't have any interest in livestock. It has been a whole different slant on the vegetative

and ecological part....The farm ground is worth so much...they can't afford to not sell. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

That's like the population growth that's going on all over the world, there's just no way to stop it. I mean we can try to slow it down, maybe control it to a certain extent. Sure it would be great if there was no more houses ever allowed, here...draw the line. But we can't do that. There's too many individual rights that you're violating when you try and do something like that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

You know, that's progress, and I can understand that, [but] I don't like that. I would prefer that people held onto it and kept it in a big block of land, and used it for agriculture. But I can understand why that doesn't happen. I mean money seems to be what drives everything. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Say someone is 18 [years-old], when they turn 30 they would love to have a summer place in Montana. Fine. They have to wait until one comes up for sale. It [should be] like wanting a real Class-A apartment in New York City. Nobody is going to build you one, you have to wait until the next one comes available, [and] there might be a two-year waiting list....Let's take the 100 homes that are [within] a ten or twenty mile distance along the river and make them really prime property because nobody else is going to build right next door....You're going to have to wait until one comes up for sale. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Ag lands contribute to the beauty of the area, the open space of the area....I like the conservation easements....The conservation easements are controversial, but I see them as protecting us from developers. Do we want open space or do we want houses? And the other side of that is, ...if you see the beauty of the Paradise Valley, a lot of the beauty is [in] the open space the ranchers are protecting....Which people don't even see, especially environmental groups, which really aggravate me. That's why you have wildlife on those fields and birds. If you had houses there, you're going to have a groomed lawn and too many horses. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The real-estate developers...know it's wide open...there's no constraints on developers and I think that's holding a knife to the heart of the Yellowstone...there's no plan. The county planning commission is populated by real estate developers... I see a very deep connection to the river of all of the people here, but nothing that says, 'Wait a minute this is a real gem and let's keep this at least like it is, without further degradation.' (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The real estate developers have a huge amount of power both in the property and the way they market them and how they are organized....We have this huge issue between these people that can't see the change and are unwilling to accept the adverse change and the people who say it is going on other places and we need to

stop it right now. Both sides have these real knee jerk reactions. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The development is just unreal....At night...I used to drive around and see a dozen lights in the old days, and now there are just hundreds of them, thousands of them, literally. So a lot of the ranches have been chopped up. But it's dollars....They can make more selling it for a house site than they could making hay. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Developers...go and dangle two million dollars in front of somebody's little ranch....[The ranchers] are going to take it. And that's happened a lot. So you're actually losing some of the rural people....[This began in the] late '70s. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Thus "local development" is a primary topic of discussion in Park County, and many people express regrets concerning the ways it changes their landscapes. However, at least a few openly recognize that the community also benefits from having influxes of new people and new money:

It's kind of a good/bad thing because...the tax dollars still roll into those places, but yet the people are only here for a small part of a year. So the population, in a sense, is down, but it's still the tax dollars....it's a good/bad thing. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The Floods of 1996 and 1997

The communities of Park County were greatly impacted by floods in 1996 and 1997. Those events were devastating to more than a few families with homes near the river. As well, some productive lands were also, at least temporarily, put out of commission. At least one local official is convinced that flooding will, inevitably, happen again:

The flood of '96 changed my property....The island broke in half and...when it broke the force of that came over and hit that island and doubled back. My neighbor had very poor rip-rap and [the water] found the weak link and just kept coming to my house....I lost 100 feet [of property]...and part of the house. (*Park County Residentialist*)

In 1996 we lost quite a little bit [of land]....We lost quite a bit this year....We recently...got it re-surveyed and found out that there isn't, and never has been since we've owned it, as much land as we've been paying taxes on. We've been trying to obtain two titles on this property....Once we get that done we will take it to the county treasurer and see what we can do about that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

If it does come out of the banks, it goes onto us. It floods some of our hay meadows. So be it. We can clean up after the water goes back down. It's just...basically nature taking its course. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We've had what you call sheet flooding, but we were never in any trouble. That's where it comes—it doesn't cut, and it's not fast—but it spreads out. Once it gets to a certain height in the flood plain it just flows through the flood plain. And actually it gave us about two inches of new sediment, [which] cut the grass for two years from production, and then after that we really benefited from that amount of sediment. So, in a way, that's the way the system works. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

[The] flood issue is always a problem....We have an affidavit that shows, back to 1865, that this property has never been under water. But in 1996 and 1997 it came [and we had] one or two inches of breaching back here. We sand-bagged portions of it. Of course, when a river is that big, you can't stop much....We didn't flood but a lot of people did. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Armstrong and DePuy and Nelson spring creeks....are a valuable asset...[that] brings a lot of money into the economy and they are a unique fishing experience....[At the] campground fishing access, the river eats directly into the gravel. This fills up the river bottom with gravel and it spreads out. It elevates the flood plain. It damages the spring creeks on the east side of the river in that area....These last two high water years really devastated the spring creeks. Nothing has been done as far as I know. No one wants to acknowledge that it is a problem, but it is....They don't know how to deal with it....When you get these large floods and especially if the river is pushed out of its channel, it tends to go down those channels and the spring creeks are located along the western edge of the low lands. (*Park County Residentialist*)

With respect to the river, I am not panicked about the river in the next ten years. I feel pretty good about where we are going with the Corps of Engineer's works and that they will come up with some measures that will prevent big floods. I have also lived around rivers enough to know that sometimes a river will just jump. Unless you have 14-foot flood retaining walls, there may come a time...despite the best efforts...[when the river] will jump. That is somewhat incumbent on living by a river. I certainly realize it is something that we may have to go through. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

In the aftermath of the floods, the number of applications for bank stabilization permits soared. Conservation and environmental groups began to pressure river officials to consider the cumulative effects of such projects, and many Park County residents became vocal participants in arguing for, or against, stricter controls.

As management authorities shifted away from automatic approvals of permit applications, the community entered a difficult period. In addition, complications regarding flood plain designations surfaced as exasperating problems for local officials:

1996 and 1997 were historical record flood years and...conversations have really been stark because of those two major floods....I think people got scared about protecting their properties and some properties were lost. And so with the protection of property and living on the river, there's controversy. And I think, before the [floods, the] controversy probably wasn't as strong....I think we can be good stewards to the water and the river ways but also [we can] protect our homes....Somehow we have to come up with a balance instead of just saying, 'Oh, you can't do this, and you can't do that.' Somehow we have to work together to come up with what is the best thing for the river and [the people]. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[After the flood was over] I said, 'Couldn't we move some of the rocks so the river would go back where it was?' [The Commissioner] said, 'The fishermen wouldn't like that.' I said, 'What is more important?' and he said, 'Around here, the fish.' Can you believe that? (*Park County Residentialist*)

The flood of 1996 took out Armstrong's Spring Creek. I was the one that said they couldn't do what they wanted to do. It was bad...Then it hit the press and they finally brought in experts. The landowner spent \$800,000 [on rip-rap] and it washed down the river in four days. I lost a lot of business because I stepped on the fishermen toes. They wanted it back at any cost. My family has been involved in stuff a long time and people hurt, because it was \$100 a day to fish the spring creeks. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have flood plain issues that are dealt with on a continuing basis....They are actually completing a study in the valley trying to re-establish the actual flood plain. It has been fairly controversial....[One set of designations affected] a lot more land area than what they had anticipated....The elevations weren't right and so it kicked a lot [of property]...into the flood plain and....nobody really wants to be in the flood plain very bad because you can't do any building or anything....On the flip-side, [an area] above Emigrant was in the flood plain [before] and when they redid [the designation] it was out of the flood plain....So, which one do you go by....Trying to get flood insurance is a problem....They used the wrong formula...[but] they haven't really come back yet with anything new....The DEQ is involved, and the Corps, and FEMA as an insurance part....The interesting thing is the Corps of Engineers and the Montana State definitions of the flood plain are different....The boundaries...aren't the same....We don't really know [when they will make the final determinations]. It is still pending. I would guess within the next two to four years....Not having a flood plain [defined]...we have no idea what to expect from year to year, especially since we have been in a seven- to nine-year drought in this area. Water flows are much lower than normal and we don't have the flows like we used to

have in the '70's and '80's. In '96 and '97 there were back-to-back flood years. That was a 100-year and a 500-year flood....The biggest issue is the flood issue not being resolved. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

In the fall of 1997, then-Governor Marc Racicot, appointed a Task Force for the purpose of providing an official local forum for the deliberation of issues concerning the management of the river:

The Governor's Task Force...came together [because] we had seen a lot of bank stabilization projects without a lot of planning in my view. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Task Force worked for six years and submitted its final recommendations in the fall of 2003. The Task Force and its legacy continue to evoke much discussion in the local community.

An Involved Community—The Task Force and Its Legacy

Membership in the 1997-2003 Task Force varied somewhat over the years in terms of the particular people who served; however, local landowners and people with interests in the recreational resources of the river were involved throughout the years. Agency representatives also worked with the group. Opinions now vary as to the degree to which membership was representative of local interests and the degree to which the efforts of the Task Force were productive:

The Yellowstone River Task Force was formed because the local people here...are pretty recreational-minded. Fishing's a pretty big deal here in Livingston. They were trying to figure out, after the flood, what was the cause of the loss of the fish... That's how it all started, and then of course there was a lot of sentiment about building next to the bank, and there was a house that was too tall here, and they wanted to change the channels and stuff like that. And they were just trying to get a hold on the thing. They were just trying to prevent some of the things that have happened, which is not all bad. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It seemed like there were a lot of different interests [on the Task Force]. Maybe [they needed] a tighter agenda. They had people coming from all different walks and concerns. You have people that make money from it and guides and developers and you get the people that actually live there and have lived here for years. It got quite dicey at times and it got hard to stay focused on what the job was....Everybody had a different perspective. Very strong opinions and all different opinions. You can't put a label on anybody. There were ranchers, sportsmen, developers, environmentalists. They all had very different ideas. Their meetings would go until 2:00 in the morning. Everybody had to say what they had to say and they would go on and on and on. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We've become a minority anymore it seems, and it's pretty tough. We don't have near the money that these other organizations can put together, and some of these battles get kind of tough. I know that when that Task Force deal was going, there were things said....They said, 'Well, the ranchers are on the way out, deal with it.'... I guess we're not ready to hear that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The governor ordered a river study. One of our former commissioners was a member of that task group....They spent six years on it....They came out with a stack of stuff that deep....They talk about protecting this resource....They didn't want to armor banks and stuff like that. They want the Yellowstone to be free-flowing and let it meander where it wants. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The time I spent on the Task Force, I enjoyed. Some [of the information] was way over my head and my education level. I have a whole stack of material, and I don't think there is a human being alive that could take that stack and make sense of it....They were all experts in their field, but we didn't have a person that took that information and put it into any kind of program.... It just wasn't gathered up...I don't know if there was anybody that could do it... When I listened to all the experts...nobody put the thing together, and they still haven't. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

[The task force] was a waste of money. They told us where the ripples are, and...told us where the river floods. Anybody who's lived here for more than two years could figure that out without a PhD....I guess what bothers me about the task force is it comes back to the ranches should be the buffer zone....just let it flood over the ranch....Ag should not be the whipping boy....The sacrifices should not be borne by just the agricultural properties on the river, it should be borne by all, including the highways....Do we need to build a highway right along the river?...Or should we move the highway over a little bit [so we don't have to rip-rap it]. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The Governor's Task Force...did focus a lot of attention on the riparian zones...[They brought attention to questions such as]...What are the alternatives of grazing management? And, what are the implications for riparian zones? What are the effects that riparian zones have on avian productivity?...[On] diversity and preservation of fish habitat?...There is more public awareness...than there was say ten years ago. There's an awareness that a lot of what we've done to the river is to diminish the productivity of the riparian zones. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[The Task Force] was helpful because it opened people's eyes....Any publicity [showing] that we need to protect the river is useful. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I did go to some of the meetings. I just thought they weren't really getting anywhere in the meetings....They weren't allowing the professionals to be a

participant and a voting party, so basically they had task force members, but a lot of the scientists and people that have the expertise, I felt, were not part of the equation. I mean, they came and they presented things, but [the professionals] weren't a voting mass....The scientists and the professionals...need to be participants in the Task Force, not just presenters. Because they are the people that know, and they should be the people that are helping this balance that needs to be met here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There were tons of recommendations [from the Governor's Task Force] but I don't see where any of their recommendations were followed at all....The people...on there...did a good job....It's a sad thing because there's a lot of good-meaning people put a lot of time into that and really cared about what they were doing. Then to see nothing happen out of it is kind of discouraging. (*Park County Residentialist*)

You know, [the Task Force] didn't hurt....I know several of the people that were on it and some of them came away with a better feeling, some of them came away with a worse feeling....[The one's that thought it helped] felt they did some good and that the government was honest with them. The other group...[says] it's the old conspiracy theory, 'They used us.' (*Park County Residentialist*)

[Regarding the Task Force] I think...[they made good decision about] the flood plain and how the rip-rap was done to prevent erosion. Overall, there was a lot of good, sound thinking and they reached compromises. The health of the river came first and will be maintained. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Complications Near the River: Rip-rap, Setbacks, Mill Creek

In the wake of the engaged and prolonged conversations of the Task Force, residents of Park County offer a great diversity of opinions regarding the use of rip-rap as a method of bank stabilization. The diversity appears across and within interest groups. For instance, consider the differences of opinions offered by agriculturalists:

You need to use big rocks. You don't want to put in small stuff or it will wash away. It has to be done according to soil conservation specifications and all that. Big rocks on a bank are the best way. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Something that will work is hard rip-rap and barbs...None of that [soft rip-rap] has ever worked on the Yellowstone. I can see where it might work on a river or stream that is not as violent. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think every time man decides he's going to manage nature, he normally screws it up royally. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Erosion [happens] on the banks...which is too bad....You hate to lose areas of the ranch, but [if you] put structures in the river, and try to push the river over, you effect somebody else. So it's a no-win deal, really. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I just think that there needs to be some careful planning...when stream bank stabilization is done to make sure that you are protecting your property but not jeopardizing someone else's. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

They have almost shut down any bank stabilization...I should do some bank stabilization but I don't know if I have it in me to take the guff that it is going to take to get it done. It is tough to have to do battle....I just dread it. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

All my father-in-law used to do is talk to the [Conservation District] and the Army Corps. They used to design the project for you, but they don't anymore. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Well, it's going to take some time and you have to kind of get ahead of the curve. If you've got a certain time schedule...you have to get started, [but] like I said, we found them very reasonable. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The banks have to be stabilized, and we have had to do quite a little of that since we've been here—thirty-seven years. But we've always had good cooperation from the Bureau of Army Engineers and the...Fish and Game and those [in the] conservation services. I think they've treated us fairly....We've always left some riparian area there along the river. We never graze that real hard. There's always a lot of grass and brush and things like that, and I think that's probably one reason we've always been able to get along with the Fish and Game and the Bureau of the Army of Engineers because we've always tried to leave the riparian area there next to the river. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We had to haul rock in, probably 85 percent [of what we used]....Maybe even more than that, maybe 90 percent. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We counted them. There were thirty-one different representatives from different agencies [involved in our project]....We had an engineer that should have known we had to re-apply, and he didn't even know. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Local civic officials and residentialists also offer a variety of opinions regarding rip-rap:

You do have to be careful when you rip-rap because you may protect yourself but you are pushing it to someone else....[and] pretty soon you would have a big channel if everybody rip-raps. Once you let one person do it, you start the problem. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I don't know that there is a whole lot you can do [about erosion]. The river starts to move and...you can plant trees. That is probably what is holding the dike together right now. Tree roots are a great thing. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

There is only a certain amount of [stabilization trees will] do. You try and get willows started in a sand bar...sometimes that works and sometimes it doesn't. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

If one person rip-raps, the next one does, all the way down. It speeds up [the river]. They don't want that constriction....On the flip-side you have the landowners...that are subject to the whims of the river and that is their property that is being washed into the river when it creates a meander. It was kind of ironic during the course of that study that there was a house that was on a 100-foot high bluff, about 500 feet back, and during the major floods it undercut the bank so much they torched that house before it went in [the river]. It was pretty dramatic. It was even more dramatic the way the banks fell off....[The house] was on a big gravel slope....The river was so high it kept washing away that bench. It just gradually eroded that thing back hundreds of feet. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I would like to see some better science on the effects of hard armoring and rip-rap on the...fish production...[and] habitat areas [such as those created in] flood stage....We've lost a lot of that. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I don't know, at this point, what you can do other than encourage responsible planning...and really being careful if you allow somebody to rip-rap. You have to think about the consequences...Some of the biggest problems here are these old bridges that constrict the river. They need to redesign those bridges, of course it would be millions and millions of dollars. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

After the flood, they built concrete all across the front of the house up to this floor. Then they put the huge rocks in....It is [a] concrete wall...[and] there is the barb. I am pretty safe. It was nothing like this before....They are saying you shouldn't rip-rap, but this is my home. The engineers will allow me to repair this....If anything happens, they will let me fix it. I am grandfathered-in. They will let me do that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[Rip-rap] can divert water. It can shift the problems up or down....The reason that I probably might not do the rip-rap is I'd lose ten years of vegetation that's out there since the last flood and the vegetation is as good or better than hard rip-rap...[and] once I talked to some people who explained that to me, I don't really want to tear it up to put some rock in...but [the information] didn't come from any of the [government agencies.] (*Park County Residentialist*)

I was interested in one technique [to prevent erosion.] I saw on a ranch that used root balls along the river to start collecting rocks to start building the bank up

again....It is a natural form of rip-rap. I saw some of that and was interested in that although when you call somebody that does that natural stuff it costs a lot of money. I don't know if I have that much to put on the bank of the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The recreationalists are the most uniform in their concerns regarding rip-rap. They typically view erosion as a natural process, and they regard the free-flowing character of the river, along with flooding, as serving important riparian functions:

We have a little erosion every year...There always will be some erosion inevitably. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The '96 and '97 [floods] were so refreshing, in many respects, because the river was just huge and nobody had ever seen it like that. And it was rampaging all over the place and doing wholesale channel changes down there in Livingston. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

There was a time when a property owner was at a loss but to just accept the influence of the river and they just accepted it....I guess there is a certain communion with owning the land and understanding how it works and knowing you take the good with the bad. The river changed course and I lost that bottomland but at some point I will regain it. It might not be my generation; it might be through my kids. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Do you rip-rap the south bank and leave the north bank natural? It is a slippery slope. Once you go there it exacerbates itself and it changes the ecosystem and there is no going back. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

One of the saddest things about the Yellowstone is you go down between Hysham and Forsyth and there are some of the most incredible cottonwood forests you have ever seen. I would assume it was here too. That is the problem with rip-rap: you get the floods coming over the top and they don't get re-seeded. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's not great for riparian areas when you have a rip-rap bank. That wrecks it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

When you channelize the river, it takes away its wild characteristics....but every time you stabilize that bank, you tame the river more.... the Yellowstone isn't allowed to spread out...it stays in one channel and it just digs a big deep trench over the years....a lot of people think [rip-rap] provides great habitats for fish [but]...the fish studies that have been done have documented that surprisingly the [smaller] fish aren't there like they thought they would be. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Yellowstone left to its own devices would take care of itself because it is a wild river, but if you continue to rip-rap it...it can't handle that amount of rip-rap. The river goes where it needs to go, and when you change it, it doesn't just affect the flow, it affects many, many things ...It reaches a saturation point. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The topic of setbacks also comes up regularly amongst the people of Park County. Again, opinions vary:

About four or five years ago [some people] wanted to have a 500-foot setback. That got everybody's attention in a hurry. So we soon shot that one down. [With that setback] you couldn't have done any rip-rap, and you couldn't have done any stream stabilization, and you couldn't do any capital improvements unless you [had] the approval of the group. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

People have wanted to put setbacks in place on the Yellowstone to keep development away from the Yellowstone River. I think they talked [about setback of] up to 300 feet, maybe, from the Yellowstone River. I think the setback now might be 100 feet. But that's one issue that has come up that people bristled-up a little bit over. I think the landowners themselves would probably be most content with no regulations, but people who float the river, maybe they want some regulation. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I feel strongly, if I'm in harm's way, it's my fault and I'll have to deal with it. If they want to pull my insurance that's fine. I have the means to survive somehow. But I think if you do live in harm's way, regardless of wherever you are, you have to be smart. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

[Set-backs can function as] a public safety component, and there's also a river health component. You don't want to be in situation where you see...concrete sides and sedimentation runoffs in the river? So far, this river system has been fairly resilient....there is a fair amount of seasonal rehabilitation that the river does for itself, but that's limited in terms of capability, and it's hard to know what the limits are without bumping up against them. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We will listen...and advise....We look at hydrology, [to see] if it is...in a hazard area. We have regulations about altering the flood flow or armoring the banks or putting fill in. We look at all these things. The best thing we can tell them is, 'If you get near the river, you will get your feet wet.' (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

From a recreational stand point, how many houses do you really want to see sitting on the river bank as you go floating by?...That is a resource quality that we take for granted, but it's not necessarily going to be here 20 years from now. We're seeing an awful lot of development right along the river and...I think that

effects property values long term, it degrades property values. And it certainly degrades the marketability of the fishing experience for a lot of the river guides. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

If we're not careful it's going to look like a bunch of squatters all the way down [Highway] 89. All the way along the river, it's going to be ugly. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

These people have built beautiful homes. They're not junky. They're beautiful but there are too many, too close to the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have a cabin here that we rent to people. And every once in a while my husband will say we should build a couple more and I say, 'I will not....that's more sewage on this small plot.' That's not being a good steward of the land that we've been given. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Have those homes set back from the river...this was the last best place in Montana and it's been discovered, so you've got to have rules. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

This county is going to be subdivided. There's not any way of stopping that, but I think we should have 200 foot setbacks on the river both for the houses and for the septic tanks and drain fields. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

How do you set an arbitrary 300 or 500 feet? It has no bearing on the river. We have a 300 now....These arbitrary lines don't make sense...They have a 500 foot in Madison Valley but they seem to give exceptions all the time...If you think of how different rivers are, you need to do it by reach tide. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[Setbacks,]...That should be an easy answer but it isn't....we are concerned with the function before the aesthetic wants....Knowing that in some areas there may not need to be a setback at all. In other areas there may need to be 500 feet or half a mile depending on what you want to maintain. As you come to the lower end it meanders a lot more. At the upper it is naturally armored and doesn't meander as much. Since we are heavily dependent on tourism the aesthetic qualities are very important for the floater and the fisher people. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We need to be looking pretty seriously at why we're still allowing homes to be built on the river. And...I'm kind of speaking out of two ends here because I do live on the river, but I do think that since the floods we need to look more seriously at what we are allowing....Each place wants to protect their property....Are we all going to be able to do that and still allow the river to be healthy? (*Park County Residentialist*)

It will put more people on the river. It will impact the visual aspects of the river. I think there should be setbacks from the river, for aesthetic problems and pollution from septic tanks. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The latest the efforts have been a lot about growth....They've been trying to work on the growth policy and the subdivision regulations....So that there are setbacks from the river. And Park County Environmental Council is definitely behind setbacks, and I agree. I agree that new building needs to be different than the old....It shouldn't be that we say, 'Well, you live like that so why not [the next?]'....You know, things change. We need to be better stewards because there are a lot of us. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We're going to get more regulations....And, of course, you have all sides....You get the guys that say, 'They are taking our property rights.' I try to tell people that what you do [on one side of] the road sometimes does affect the other side of the road. They don't like to hear that, of course, but we have to be honest....It's the conspiracy theory, the government's-got-too-much-control theory. I get a lot of that here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Another concern involves water rights and the seasonal conflict in late summer between irrigation needs and recreational resource needs. Some of the participants from Park County wanted to discuss concerns about Mill Creek:

Mill Creek...has a significant drainage area. Through the Conservation District, they've developed a lot of pivots and irrigation systems...[and the farmers] have taken quite a bit of water. The fisherman and the recreationalists are upset because generally that creek will run dry in the lower end, below where the big head gate is, [in] mid-summer....Fish and Game want to restore the cutthroat fishery, and they don't know quite how to do it. They can buy the water, [but] at what cost? I don't know what they arrive at, but there's a conflict [between] recreationalists—the new second-home people that moved up there—and some of the older, traditional agricultural water users—primarily ranchers, and alfalfa [growers who]...use the water for their livelihood. I understand the need for maintaining some water flow...[and] there is another approach....That lower section is just going to run dry at certain times of the year....When...the small fish get to a certain size [upstream], they'll flush [the creek] for three or four days....Open that up and blow all those little fish into the river. But that's expensive, they have to pay for that water, and there's some concern about fire [in late summer]....Having that water is pretty nice...when you're worried about fires. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We're going to have a leasing meeting over on Mill Creek with the watershed group next week, and a lot of people are feeling that they're coming up short because [one guy is] leasing his water rights [to provide for the fish in the creek]. It is going to effect me, but we have a law that says, if it's beneficial use, you can do that....Fish and Wildlife is beneficial according to our legislature,

now....And, let's face it, I'll be the first to say, that sometimes the fish in that creek are worth more than the hay I'm raising....[Most people] got their irrigation systems put in by the government—not totally free, but with lots of grant money—that was ten years ago....[Now, with this guy leasing his water, another] says, 'It's not fair.' Well, it may not be fair, but you did get a new pivot...for half-cost....So, I don't know. It's tough. I mean, that's going to be a real contentious meeting....We have water rights, but we dry up Emigrant Creek every year. So I can see both sides. But sometimes I [ask about the] outfitters and how much money they make on the Yellowstone River—it's tremendous. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Observations from the Veteran Community

Because they have gone through prolonged discussions of how best to manage the river's resources, many of the participants from Park County see themselves as veterans. The local deliberations have not necessarily resulted in consensus decisions about what should be done, yet many of the Park County participants offered advice concerning how communities should approach complex issues. For instance, even though particular individuals may feel threatened by change, taken as a whole the community understands that traditional activities will have to be balanced against new demands. A new type of stewardship is emerging:

I think you're always going to have your contrast between people whose interest is progress, and those that want to save [the valley as it is]. It's an on-going thing. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Part of our stewardship is to make sure....I mean, let them come, let them see, but [don't ruin the valley]....There's a rancher-gentleman in the valley...that made the statement, 'In twenty years, US Highway 89 [will] be solid strip malls.'....That's his fear. He's lived here [and] he's managed the same ranch for twenty-some years. His father managed it for thirty years prior to that. They have been in this valley for a long, long time, and that's their fear. That is their tremendous fear. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

What resonates from both sides...is water quality....[But what is] water quality? Is it simply the chemical analysis?...Or is water quality [connected to] the system?...If you started from water quality, and worked gently outward...describing the mountains that create water quality, then there may be an incremental way to bring people into consensus. They [need to]...fundamentally understand why this water is good and why it is bad. Start from why is water so important to us. It may sound elementary. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think there are some people that want to see the agriculture survive just for the benefits for wildlife. They could see the handwriting on the wall, that there are

going to be more and more homes built, and habitat for wildlife would become a premium. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think in the long run it would be better to support Ag, even from [the newcomer's] standpoint. Ag is what the people like about the valley now. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

My big thing is the public access and the public's right to use the resources and enjoy the wildlife....Most of us live here because of what the outdoors has to offer....We just really need to safeguard that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think the river is threatened. We have rules, but we are only [a few] eyes up and down the valley. If it weren't for a lot of caring people, and a lot of snitches...[we couldn't do our job]....We need to update our regulations. We need to look at them and revisit them, and make more people mad at us. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

As is true with many Montanans, Park County participants are certain they do not want too much governmental oversight, especially if it comes in the form of arbitrary rules:

I don't like legislation because it seems to be arbitrary. I don't see any flexibility, either you do or you don't. It's like this house. We were grandfathered in, and we're living where they lived for almost a hundred years, and yet there are a lot of people who object to our living over here. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It isn't that we have to change it or protect it to death. We need to maintain it and respect it. I hate to say it, but the usage is going to have to be limited. You can't just send 200 boats a day down that river. There has to come a point, like with the Smith River, it will have to be limited or on a permit basis....You will have to be a resident, and they will give out so many non-resident permits....I don't know what the answer is, but we have to do something to change or we can forget it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The public, and myself included, we need to have some available information....We [weren't] really good stewards when we moved here. We've done some rock work along our bank, and there wasn't anyone there [to advise us]...unless we could have paid for professionals....But at the time we couldn't afford it....If there's some kind of grants that may be available so you can hire a professional—if those professionals really have the answer—that's a question...I have. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Don't be too hard on the people that live on the river. I don't have the money to make big changes....I had a bunch of cottonwoods growing and the beavers came and ate every one of them. There went my stabilizing....[The beavers] are really destructive. I am trying to keep this place,...[even though] the moose come and

they eat everything they see and...I am not going anywhere. I am going to stay here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Private property rights are considered very important, even when this means letting people make mistakes:

I think that people have to understand that private property needs to be protected. Without any property rights protection, agriculture as we know it is going to fail, big time....There are areas on the river where the river has a solid bank and no amount of high water is ever going to erode it...[In other places] I think that...people have to be first. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

You do the best you can. People have the right to live where they want to live. I think there is a growing awareness that [rules sometimes] change. It is tough to deal with, but just making the people...more aware of the problems that we all face, and having them taking some responsibility...[will] help make that change positive instead of negative. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It's difficult to save people from themselves, so I think that one of the most important things a governmental entity has to do is persuade rather than demand. And I think that's where the involvement in the decision making process is critical....You have to be open and receptive to public comment—you have to be empathetic without necessarily having to agree. And I think in the instances when we don't agree, you have to convey [that you are] understanding without necessarily being in agreement....The Corps, in the past, has not been as sensitive as they might have been in terms of conveying to the public that they are listening, not necessarily agreeing....[With] set-backs, you're trying to save people from themselves—it's a very hard sell. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Private property rights are always an issue along the river. They often are trampled on by regulation and then those regulations cost the private property owners along the river money....There is always a balance and to find that balance and for everyone to be responsible along the river...I think that's done through education not through regulation. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It is certainly true in Park County that a call for public participation is not ignored. Those who participate in and who organize such efforts find themselves involved in intense conversations. The outcomes are seen as potentially negative and positive:

[In this] culture...nobody sweetens their tea. It's the attitudes. It is a very self-reliant culture...[an] everybody-takes-care-of-their-own type of culture. The view of government out here is not just suspicious. It is flat out distrust. If government is involved, something is wrong....In other communities they at least give you a chance to screw up. Here they assume you already have and they haven't found out about it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You can't impose your ideas. You need to involve everybody and all sides. The difficulty is...all sides feel threatened....A good process has to be inclusive and usually that is tedious and difficult to do....The hard part is paring away the rhetoric and getting down to what it is you actually value, and what threatens that. Not your fears, but the reality. It's really hard to...trust people enough so you can actually talk about the real issue. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The squeaky wheel gets the grease. If you want to have something done you've got to make some noise. It's good to think about doing it the right way. It's good to understand the process. I just think your average person doesn't understand the process. They don't know how to go through it. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Some of these people don't take no for an answer. Now, developers come and bring a staff of lawyers, hydrologists, engineers....They will come to the planning board meetings with their attorneys. They will set up their own sound systems so they can record everything. This is a kind of intimidation where they will sue you if you don't do something they want, 'We are recording every word that you are saying.' They have a whole entourage of people working for them, and you are one person, trying to do the best for the county, and you have to face their staff. That is how they are now....They will hire their own stenographers for meetings. They will go to the commissioners meetings when it is their turn to decide something. They intimidate....First they will try and schmooze you. They will put on a luncheon. If that doesn't work, they will get tighter and angry. Then come the lawyers. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

All too frequently we are ready to find the differences...I think in my mind there is a bond between the ranchers and the environmentalists but socially they can't find it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Montana is interesting to me in that it goes beyond public information and public comment to public decision making. Folks don't just expect to know what is going on or have access, or be able to make comments, they expect to be seated at the table with the ability to put their hand in the air and cast a vote. I appreciate the interest that people have. It can present challenges if a lot of people feel like there has to be a consensus before a decision can be made. That can be difficult. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The largest input should be from the local people and what they want...because each county here has different circumstances....Even though you have a lot of similarities, each one has their own uniqueness. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I would like to feel like somebody's listening to me because I live here....I care about it and...I want to see it still be here for my grandchildren and generations to come....God gave me this [to me] and he made me the caretaker and this is my job. I don't do it for money. I do it because this is my job. (*Park County Residentialist*)

One consequence of lengthy deliberations is that the role of government is both appreciated and decried:

Everybody's a little leery about some [governmental] program that's going to leave an agency being married to them. So that's one fear that certainly a lot of us have. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The ranching community has had an aversion to any zoning or control and I think that mindset has prevented a lot of these things from happening. I think that is changing but they just don't want any more regulation. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I wouldn't have found out [about the new flood plain maps] if a landowner hadn't contacted me about what they had come up with. You know they didn't send those flood plain revision maps out to us. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It is amazing [that] only one-half the county is zoned. You might buy a piece of property and create a nice place...but your neighbor could create a gravel pit. You get a lot of conflicting land use because there is no zoning. People fight [zoning] because they want freedom to do what they want with their property. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

When something happens out there and they come and say, 'Can't you do something about it?' And we say, 'We have no regulations.' We just need to balance regulations and rights....Right now [the community is] so anti-regulation...[but] we need more effective regulation. We need rules...that have some teeth. The things that are in place...we need help enforcing. You are talking 2700 square miles, 14,000 people, and [a very few people to watch] the rivers, subdivisions, and drainages....If we didn't know people as well as we do, we would have a hard time. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

People complain about their neighbors, and we referee....Sometimes they can get a lawyer and sue. There are not a lot of regulations, and we can't go out and wing it....We refer to the County Attorney to see if it is something we can pursue. We can't make up our own rules. We try and do the best with the rules we have...[We try to] not appear to be heavy handed, but not appear to do nothing. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Our old maps are terrible to use and the new maps with elevations and overlays on aerial photos are so wonderful to use. What little we have been able to use them has been very helpful....[The maps] have to be accepted by the commissioners, and then they go to DNRC...then to FEMA, and then they have to review and put them on a rate map to drive the flood insurance. Some of the meetings that are scheduled for approval are [scheduled] for 2008....It has gotten political. They have talked about moving the flood plain and it is a big financial burden on those people. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I think at some point the government is going to have to be willing to step in and help the landowners along the river. That land has value, but it has value for many different possibilities, not the least of which is wetlands. The flood plain is what lets the river spread out during these floods. I think that there is going to have to be some programs where the landowners get some compensation [if they] allow the river to go where it wants to....And it has to be in the same context as if they are raising a crop. It has to be a long term agreement [with] the landowner, be it a rancher or a farmer or someone who bought in for aesthetic purposes. They need to be compensated. I don't know any other way to do it. The local landowners...don't have the means or the money to just donate that. That is what they are being asked to do now. That isn't right. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[Our former] planner....noticed the local people don't like the local people telling them what the regulations are, but if it comes from the state or the federal government they are fine with that. They don't want a local official bossing them. They feel [the local official] could be more biased than a state or federal agency....We get it constantly....If I can say, 'I have to administer [this way]...it's from FEMA and I don't have a choice' ...then they say, 'Oh, okay.' (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Yet, in spite of not always generating consensus and in spite of the many complications and disagreements that public forums generate, many people from Park County accept and engage public deliberation as an important right. Of late, some people are involved in the watershed groups sponsored by the Park County Conservation District, others are more generally committed:

I'm involved in the Upper Valley Watershed, and they're trying to do some stuff with ranchers. They have education for the people that are involved in it, and yet everybody that's in that watershed are all in the same group. So everybody is welcome to come to those. They get to hear from both sides a lot of times. I think there has been a lot of good that comes out of those watershed groups. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Not everybody sees things the way I do. But...it's good to have different opinions too, because that's how you get problems solved. You can't have everybody agree on everything. You need to be able to have good healthy arguments about things and hash out the details. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The most important thing is to be proactive and not assume that problems will solve themselves. The only thing that happens with that passage of time is the two sides of the issues become more concrete in their positions and less willing to look at the common elements of interest. So if I were to talk to someone in a county that's maybe twenty years behind where we are in terms of growth...[I'd say] start from the perspective of trying to determine what values are generally

held in common by the whole community. Work with those commonalities and keep the focus on the commonalities...It won't [necessarily] prevent the polarization, but it will certainly keep people focused on avenues to solutions that recognize commonalities. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[We need] some common ground where people could realize that the river is the most important....Hopefully it doesn't take something really bad to make people realize, 'Hey we need to help this river.' Usually by the time things are bad, they're really, really bad...[and] can't be helped, so hopefully it doesn't ever get to that point. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

In sum, conversations from Park County suggest that in a few short years a community can learn a lot about how the river works and about what is at stake when authorities impose rules and regulations that impede the actions of private citizens beyond the customary limits. It is obvious that such community engagements do not necessarily engender consensus opinions about the rules. Nor is the work of the community ever truly completed. New problems and evolving situations will constantly require the development of new information, new management strategies and new commitments from the people of Park County.

Springdale to Gardiner: Agricultural Interest Group Overview

Interviews were conducted with fourteen individuals representing agricultural interests, including farmers and ranchers. Participants were recruited from referrals provided by the local Conservation Districts, the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council and the Montana Office of Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Participants in Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
AGRICULTURAL	22	22	16	12	14	86
CIVIC	14	14	18	14	8	68
RECREATIONAL	15	16	16	13	16	76
RESIDENTIAL	15	11	16	15	19	76
GEOGRAPHIC SEGMENT TOTAL	66	63	66	54	57	
NATIVE AMERICAN						7
PROJECT TOTAL						313

Springdale to Gardiner: Agricultural Interest Group Analysis

I. Specifics of An Agricultural Perspective

A. Lifestyle and Way-of-Life

Our family likes this lifestyle. And I can keep my kids out of trouble by providing wholesome activities and a lot of good hard work for them. It's what I do. I've always farmed and ranched, and this is what I like to do. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The lifestyle—the view and the freedom—is what keeps me here. I've been self-employed my entire life, and I hope to always be that way. I couldn't be any other way. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

There is a relationship that forms working with the land. You learn to love it, and it becomes part of you. It becomes part of your character. It has some very formative influences on who you are. It becomes part of your soul. I think of the legacy and the heritage. Our kids understand that formative influence on their character. This place defines who they are. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Part of the reason for locating here was the river. I like rural areas. I like the outdoors. And I like this area of Montana and have the means to live here. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Some of the people have told me, 'You are never going to win against the river,' and I think that is probably true. As an agriculturalist, I don't deny that that is going to happen. Mother Nature is cruel, tough, and hard. If I didn't do anything because I was afraid my crop would freeze or flood then nothing would get done. You gather up and do the best you can, and you might fail. She might cut you down. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I value the people who live here. I value the natural beauty of this area. I love the river and the recreational opportunities, less so then when I was younger. It's a nice place to raise kids. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

B. Rural Ideals

If it weren't for the farmers and ranchers, this valley wouldn't be so beautiful. It's the river that keeps the valley beautiful because it subsidizes the farmers and ranchers by supplying the water. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Agriculture keeps the land out of development. For one thing, Ag is a big contributor to our economy in the state and the country. I'm real pro-Ag because I think this country is

founded on natural resource based productivity: mining, timber and agriculture. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think it's important to be able to continue to use the water from the Yellowstone. Our livelihood depends on our water rights from the Yellowstone River. That's a pretty important issue to me. Then I think keeping the wide open spaces is important. Because without cropland, we'd be out of business here....Instead of mowing hay, we'd be mowing lawns. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The river is a beautiful resource and I really value nature. I value the animals. I value the birds—we love to see the birds. But they are all impacted by people. You know, we tend to love things to death. And there's just a hell of a lot of people that have moved here and enjoy those things, but it changes—you don't find solitude on the river anymore. And that's an important word I should put in there. I value the ability to go down and be in the woods and sort of get away from the maddening crowds. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I don't think we should say, 'Ok, Joe, Sally, and Alice own four miles of the river so we have to let them do what they want.' No we don't. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

On this place, I love it here. And I would never do anything to hurt it. It is my job to be a good steward. And I don't need some conservation easement to encourage that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I do have an obligation, there's stewardship in ownership. You never really own anything on the river. I do believe strongly in private property rights, but in terms of ownership it's a fleeting thing, it just changes hands. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

My sister and brother-in-law, it seems with impunity, sold that place next door. They never worked it. They always hired help. That relationship with the land can't happen unless you become physically involved in it. It is not just ownership, it is actually working it. When they sold it, it broke my father-in-law's heart. We brought him up here and he looked at those buildings and you could see the tears rolling down his face. It broke his heart. He had worked so hard all his life to give a precious gift to his children. What an insult that was. They have no soul. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Agriculture is such an important fundamental industry in the world for us today. There are people who talk about production agriculture as a thing of the past. What a crazy notion. I can't see how we would become more vulnerable. That weakens our security. The safety of our food supply is in jeopardy if we depend on foreign agriculture. Listen to people squawk now about foreign fuel. This is an industry that is so vital to our security that I think there needs to be public responsibility to keep it healthy rather than challenging it and making it more and more difficult for us to make money. I don't take a dime off this ranch. I am living on my retirement because I am trying to see this ranch survive. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

C. Individual Rights are Important

I don't really feel like being told what to do by a bunch of fishing guides. The reason we're here is because we like the independence, the open space, and the freedom. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think that people have to understand that private property needs to be protected. Without any property rights protection, agriculture as we know it is going to fail, big time....There are areas on the river where the river has a solid bank and no amount of high water is ever going to erode it...[In other places] I think that...people have to be first. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

D. Water Conservation—Water Quantity

I think there are some things that could be done, not particularly to the Yellowstone, but to the tributaries of the Yellowstone to conserve water so less water would need to be taken out of the Yellowstone. We have several streams on us, [and] if we were allowed to dam up the stream to build up a reservoir...there would be less water drawn from the Yellowstone....Most of [our] water would be [drawn from] the reservoirs [that] would fill up during run-off time. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We need some off-stream storage. We need to preserve some of this water. There's times when this river runs [very high]. And the climate is changing, we know that. And the run-off is coming a lot quicker than it used to. It used to be the river held up until August, as it is [now] it starts to go way down in the first of May, June and July. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think that we're going to...use water more intelligently. Pivots are very effective, and they don't use the amount of water that we used to use with ditches. But when we flooded these valleys with flood irrigation, that charged the aquifer and the system. There were some advantages to that and we're loosing out. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

People don't realize how important it is to [flood irrigate]. I mean, you can figure that as water storage, too. Of course, [whatever] help [was gained is gone now] because they wanted us to...economize the uses of water [by using] sprinklers. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

They [might] need this water for a municipality, or to put a coal-fire generator plant down here at Roundup....Every gallon of ethanol...takes two gallons of water. So the usage of water is going to change. That's going to have a big bearing on who sells out and who is forced to sell out. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The only thing I really want to stress is that somewhere along the line they're going to have to take steps to increase our supply of water....When we had that oil embargo back in 1973, and you know how panicky everyone got when we didn't have a supply of oil,

what would it be like if we had a lack of water to grow our own foodstuff and we have to depend on some third-world country for our foodstuff. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

II. Agriculture's Viability in a Developing Area

A. Threats to the Viability of Agriculture and the Choice to Sell

It's becoming harder for agriculture because land is worth so much, [and] the tax values are so high, and yet the production doesn't go up. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Property along the Yellowstone River, in dollars and cents, is worth ten- to thirty-thousand dollars an acre. That is not an agricultural value. I have three miles of Yellowstone River frontage. It is covered with cottonwood trees and brush. The value that I put on it is that I use it in winter for cover for stock. In spring, it gives the calves some protection from spring storms. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The agricultural value is anywhere from \$150 to maybe worth \$500 to \$1500 an acre [for] irrigated ground. It is amazing. We just went through an appraisal for IRS. In going through an IRS appraisal you look at a highest and best use. It isn't agriculture. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We've looked at our inputs, such as fertilizer and fuel going up a third or more in one year. That's a pretty big hit for a small business. We don't have anyone to pass that along to. Our prices are pretty much set. We sell at what the market offers us. And in a business where the margins are pretty slim, it makes a big impact. I don't know how long Ag will be viable. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We're sitting on a gold mine and starving to death. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

There is no financial reason to ever not sell. Working seven days a week...that isn't what makes somebody's day. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

You got grassland here that takes forty acres for one cow. It doesn't take long to realize that there's not very much money in it. Some people struggle as long as they can and then sell their property....It's just economics. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

This land won't sustain. You can't buy land and raise cattle on it—nothing on the river bottom, unless you're grandfathered. So viable agriculture will not be what it is. There are areas further east toward, Glendive and Miles City, those are still viable areas. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Real estate agents, greedy real estate agents, people looking for money, are responsible [for subdividing the land]. You usually don't see the farmers selling directly for a subdivision. They will sell to someone else and [the new owner] will subdivide it. It winds up being sold to a developer. Most of the local farmers and ranchers won't subdivide. Someone else is doing that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

B. The Changes Associated with Development

There used to be sixty-five or more different ranches in this valley. Now there are probably fifteen, and the population along the river here has increased dramatically. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

What is happening here, along the river, and the influx of people that are here, is what happened in Colorado one hundred years ago. And it happened in Texas two hundred years ago. That's what I think is the most precious thing about the river, there's not much of this part of the world left. Very little of it. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We've done some projects where people objected to what we were doing. They didn't like to see our equipment parked in their view. They didn't like the dust or the noise created by farm operations. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

It's getting harder and harder just to move your equipment up and down the road. We've got a 70 miles-per-hour highway out here that we [use to] move a lot of equipment from one farm to another, and it's getting hard to transport equipment. It's getting harder to move cattle. It's getting to be a busy area. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

Moving cattle on the highway...we don't do too much of that, but we help neighbors and that has noticeably become more of a problem. It used to be that people that came up would visit and slow down...[Now] we get people that get mad, and we have had some close calls. That has noticeably changed in fourteen years. Now we have a flagger in front and behind, and flashers. It has kind of become dangerous. There is more traffic than there used to be. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

There are some silly, thoughtless things. I see little ponds and things impacting the areas. I've seen people put ponds where there's no reason to put them. It's their rights to do it, but I don't have to like it. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

When they start subdividing, all this land that was...flood irrigated at one time, you're taking the storage capacity out of that aquifer. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We've become a minority anymore it seems, and it's pretty tough. We don't have near the money that these other organizations can put together, and some of these battles get kind of tough. I know that when that Task Force deal was going, there were things said...They said, 'Well, the ranchers are on the way out, deal with it.'... I guess we're not ready to hear that. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

C. Outsiders Have Obvious Wealth and Different Values

There is a very wealthy man who lives up the valley....He called us and said anytime we are ready to sell the ranch, he had a blank check in his desk drawer. It was an insult. It was just money. They knew nothing of the heritage. Nothing of the lifestyle... You can't sell who you are. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

Absentee owners litter the land with houses, and then they don't use them. I don't have a problem with [a new house] if it's being used, they're not using it. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think with the number of outsiders moving in and buying property does change the political culture here. They have more money...[and] more time....They seem to be able to organize more readily than ranchers do. A lot of the newcomers bring their ideas with them. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

A lot of those homes, I'd say quite a few of them, are second homes. I think that the people that live in them don't have the ties to the community and so there is, to some degree, a little resentment. I don't think it's class, it's a wealth issue. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

As more homes spring up, we have to be careful with high powered rifles—that's a liability. We want to thin out the deer....[There are] too many [new owners that] don't allow hunting, and I've got irrigated alfalfa, so we'll have fifty, sixty deer out there. And so that is a problem. As people move onto smaller plots, how do you get control of the habitat, [the] deer and game? Some of the people...don't approve of hunting. That's a conflict. Locals, they tend to want to go everywhere and be able to hunt. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We're in the process of selling a little chunk of ground in Sweet Grass County....It was a good piece of grass—pasture, and all that....And the fellow that's buying it...all he's interested is how many fish are in the creek on that property. He didn't care how many cattle it would run or anything like that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

If you've been in a ranching family, like people who've been here a long time, you've got a different attitude about the land than [incoming people] do. A lot of them have made a lot of money someplace else. They don't want to speculate on stock anymore so they put it in the land. They're not as uptight about what's going to happen as we are....They don't have to pin-point their rights to make a living. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Development brings a lot of people in. [We get] more taxes, and more people on the roads, versus you used to be able to drive the roads and there was no one. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Agriculture is getting wiped out with more people. More people that probably like the land, but they want the city. They want everything they had in the city. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It's changing....even in these environments. Park High [school] and the smaller towns...[have problems with] drugs, and there's all kinds of opportunities for a kid to get lost or pulled astray. So it's changing. It's common everywhere. It's no longer sort of a small, isolated, little community. That's for sure. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

D. Ideas About Managing Development

That's like the population growth that's going on all over the world, there's just no way to stop it. I mean we can try to slow it down, maybe control it to a certain extent. Sure it would be great if there was no more houses ever allowed, here...draw the line. But we can't do that. There's too many individual rights that you're violating when you try and do something like that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Take [the] new gallery up the valley—what a beautiful addition to the valley. It's gorgeous. It's another commercial place where people can stop and bring money into the valley, but how beautifully well done. That, most certainly, is not a strip-mall. It's gorgeous. Then there's another place they just built that says commercial spaces will be for lease. It's intrusive, it looks like a big shop. It just looks like a metal building right on the highway. It doesn't blend in real well. Most places will build log home or a log cabin so it really blends in well. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Part of our stewardship is to make sure....I mean, let them come, let them see, but [don't ruin the valley]....There's a rancher-gentleman in the valley...that made the statement, 'In twenty years, US Highway 89 [will] be solid strip malls.'....That's his fear. He's lived here [and] he's managed the same ranch for twenty-some years. His father managed it for thirty years prior to that. They have been in this valley for a long, long time, and that's their fear. That is their tremendous fear. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Stop developing the valley. You're not going to keep people out because there's plenty of homes and plenty of places here already. I'm sorry, yes, the rich are going to get it over the poor, but your poor can stay in the RV parks. Stop developing it. Leave it for everybody. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think Paradise Valley, in general, is going to continue to develop. It seems to be pulling people from all over that want to own a home in a rural setting. There are a lot of subdivisions that...[are] starting to fill up. I hope that this place stays the same. In ten years [I hope] it's still growing hay and grain and cattle. I like the wide open spaces here. I'd like to see some planning done, and some thought put into the development of the area. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

You know, that's progress, and I can understand that, [but] I don't like that. I would prefer that people held onto it and kept it in a big block of land, and used it for agriculture. But I can understand why that doesn't happen. I mean money seems to be what drives everything. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think you're always going to have your contrast between people whose interest is progress, and those that want to save [the valley as it is]. It's an on-going thing. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Some [locals] bought [a large ranch] and do not want to develop it. They don't want to sell it. It is a group of wealthy locals, [from] within a 150-mile radius....[They] don't

want to see it developed, no matter what. They came together in a conglomerate and bought it for \$4.2 million just to make sure it wasn't developed. I know of two other very wealthy people in the area that were approached and [who] said, 'If you guys can't get it together and buy it, then, yes, we'll go in with you. We have to stop this development.' (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

My preference would be that there was a campground somewhere....Down there at the river bend, they can really crowd a lot of people in there...[but they keep it] so neat and clean—and when the season's over, they're gone. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Say someone is 18 [years-old], when they turn 30 they would love to have a summer place in Montana. Fine. They have to wait until one comes up for sale. It [should be] like wanting a real Class-A apartment in New York City. Nobody is going to build you one, you have to wait until the next one comes available, [and] there might be a two-year waiting list....Let's take the 100 homes that are [within] a ten or twenty mile distance along the river and make them really prime property because nobody else is going to build right next door....You're going to have to wait until one comes up for sale. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think [we should be] educating these new people....They should do all they can to support Ag. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think the Yellowstone has been improved because of the awareness of the flood plain. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

E. Setbacks

About four or five years ago [some people] wanted to have a 500-foot setback. That got everybody's attention in a hurry. So we soon shot that one down. [With that setback] you couldn't have done any rip-rap, and you couldn't have done any stream stabilization, and you couldn't do any capital improvements unless you [had] the approval of the group. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

People have wanted to put setbacks in place on the Yellowstone to keep development away from the Yellowstone River. I think they talked [about setback of] up to 300 feet, maybe, from the Yellowstone River. I think the setback now might be 100 feet. But that's one issue that has come up that people bristled-up a little bit over. I think the landowners themselves would probably be most content with no regulations, but people who float the river, maybe they want some regulation. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I feel strongly, if I'm in harm's way, it's my fault and I'll have to deal with it. If they want to pull my insurance that's fine. I have the means to survive somehow. But I think if you do live in harm's way, regardless of wherever you are, you have to be smart. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

F. Water Rights

Your water right isn't as secure as you think it is. They're saying now a water right isn't a water right, it's a privilege. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We are getting a lot of new people moving in from California and New York, and they want water in the creek and don't understand at all...when you explain the water rights. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Down the road a ways, I think our water rights are going to be jeopardized. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Now they're trying to pass this bill [concerning] the government...and the 'takings.' ...What do you have if they take your water away from you? (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

G. Tourism and Its Effects

Yes, of course the summer traffic is annoying. But those people are getting to see something that they'll take back to their other world, and it will make them stronger and richer—not monetarily but in more important ways. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think we should shoot our buffalo coming out of the Park with licensed hunters. People say that we [would] lose our tourism because of that. I think, 'Yeah, cool. It will make it easier to for me to haul my equipment back and forth on the highway.' (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

This is still a rural, Ag, community. But there is a group of people that think that tourism and development would be a better use for this area than agriculture. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

H. Increased Recreation Pressures the River and Agriculturalists

I don't object to [recreation]. People enjoy the river, and I think they should. It's just [that] we love things to death....There are a lot of guides, a lot of people that want to float the river. *A River Runs Through It* made it very, very popular. It's a beautiful book, and he's a nice guy that wrote it—great guy. But I think we've seen a growth in that industry. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We are almost a bedroom community to Bozeman. And as fishing becomes more popular, we'll see twenty, thirty boats go past here in a day, at least. That's a lot. And fishing is [meant to help people] get away from crowds....[They] don't want to play bumper boats. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

There are some conflicts....If [the recreationalists] respect the people who live along the river, and they don't sneak in with a rifle and shoot deer when they're not invited, we allow hunting, but we want to know who's in here. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

III. *Living with the Yellowstone River*

A. *The Famous Yellowstone River—A Feather in our Cap*

Whenever you mention the Yellowstone River to anybody, anywhere in the country, their eyes kind of light up and they kind of perk up. Because anybody who's an outdoorsman knows about the Yellowstone River. This is one of the wildest rivers in the world, and the fishing is unbelievable. It came from the Park and it kind of reminds you of the Park, and to say that we're along the Yellowstone River that's kind of a feather in our cap. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It's the heart, it's the heart of the valley. To me, it's the heart of Yellowstone National Park. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The river is a fishermen's paradise. A lot of people fish the river. That is the main reason why it is a tourist country. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

B. *Yellowstone River is Big, Powerful, and Abundant*

That river can do hell. The culvert there could blow tomorrow, and then we'd really be in trouble. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Well, it's what creates all life. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I don't encourage a good description. We don't want people to be on the Yellowstone. I don't understand why people want to own property on the banks of the Yellowstone because it is not the best place to live. It is nice to access it, but not to live on it...I went through the floods as part of the Conservation District. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We had a fairly decent run-off this spring, and it did eat the bank away, and it actually washed out one of our fences. We had to move our fence and put a new fence in there. It happens. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I'd say we've lost...about a half a section....I'll bet we've lost seven acres, at least, from that little pretty bottom area down there....probably six acres. It was only aesthetically valuable, agriculturally it didn't cost anything. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

If it does come out of the banks, it goes onto us. It floods some of our hay meadows. So be it. We can clean up after the water goes back down. It's just...basically nature taking its course. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We've had what you call sheet flooding, but we were never in any trouble. That's where it comes—it doesn't cut, and it's not fast—but it spreads out. Once it gets to a certain height in the flood plain it just flows through the flood plain. And actually it gave us about two inches of new sediment, [which] cut the grass for two years from production, and then after that we really benefited from that amount of sediment. So, in a way, that's the way the system works. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

IV. *Life-forms of the River*

A. *Wildlife*

It's a great wildlife habitat. We have a lot of fox, and just a real diverse wildlife population. There has been elk in there, [but] that's kind of rare. We'll see a moose every once in a while. There's rock-chucks, lots of birds, owls, we have a few ospreys, it's a place where bald eagles winter. They come in from the high lands, and winter along the Yellowstone. They have a nest down in there. I guess it's our little piece of paradise here. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

Last night was hard to sleep because the elk were so vocal. We had the wolf people out the other day because we had a wolf that was down in the pastures...[The wolf] kept trying to get to road-kill...a beautiful, big, grey wolf. I mean, you can't ask for anything more. I mean, you really can't. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We had a gentleman drive up here one day [and it] turns out he was from Calgary, Canada. He and his partner were fishing down on the Yellowstone. They were here on vacation—he did not have his cell phone with him. They walked out to one of the islands on the river and they were fishing on that, and they happened to see an eagle on the side in the water, very distressed. Long story short, he came over here to ask us to help. We called the game warden, the game warden came down, and we finally caught the eagle. The eagle went to the Montana Raptors Center...they think [it was suffering from] lead poisoning. [The eagle] has completely recovered, and out of the kindness of their hearts they called us when they were ready to release it so we were able to be there and they released it at the same spot. That is the heart of the Yellowstone—it is. That is what it brings out in people. For that gentleman to quit his holiday enjoyment and just care...He didn't even know [what type of eagle it was]. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We have [about] 250 mama-cows. They spend their summers elsewhere so that we can [put up] hay. We do not run them on the mountain. There's 7,000 acres up there we could run them on, but [the ranch owner] likes to save that for the wildlife. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We do have wolves on this quite a bit. That's fine until they go from their wild state and get into the cattle. We've, so far, not had any problems. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

One guy saw a couple of wolves...They didn't cause any problems. We haven't had any losses. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We work with a neighbor who is a hay producer and two years ago he had to fence off his haystacks....In the last four or five years we have had elk problems. Last year, over here, we had 300 head of elk in there. Once they learn where the alfalfa fields are, they come back every year. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

B. Fishery Conservation: Mill Creek and the Cutthroat Trout

Mill Creek...has a significant drainage area. Through the Conservation District, they've developed a lot of pivots and irrigation systems...[and the farmers] have taken quite a bit of water. The fisherman and the recreationalists are upset because generally that creek will run dry in the lower end, below where the big head gate is, [in] mid-summer....Fish and Game want to restore the cutthroat fishery, and they don't know quite how to do it. They can buy the water, [but] at what cost? I don't know what they arrive at, but there's a conflict [between] recreationalists—the new second-home people that moved up there—and some of the older, traditional agricultural water users—primarily ranchers, and alfalfa [growers who]...use the water for their livelihood. I understand the need for maintaining some water flow...[and] there is another approach....That lower section is just going to run dry at certain times of the year....When...the small fish get to a certain size [upstream], they'll flush [the creek] for three or four days....Open that up and blow all those little fish into the river. But that's expensive, they have to pay for that water, and there's some concern about fire [in late summer]....Having that water is pretty nice...when you're worried about fires. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

C. Cottonwoods

You could see all this downed cottonwood as you drove in here. Cottonwood is a sloppy tree, and we're always chopping it, and cleaning it out, and using it for firewood. Its marginal firewood, but this generation of cottonwood is starting to die and they are always self-pruning. They blow down, they snap off, they're sort of a weedy, big old tree. I love them, but they make a mess and so we have undergrowth building up right here, near us, that concerns me. Fire is always a concern in certain areas where you've got an accumulation. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

D. Noxious Weed Management

Weed control becomes an issue...because when the floods come, we get the weed seeds [coming from the National Park]. Even fishermen who use the river on a regular basis are bringing weeds along with them from wherever they have been. I would like to see the fishermen that park on the islands for lunch go pull weeds and share in the responsibility. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The task force didn't want to use chemicals along the river so we end up with a weed patch. Big time. They have come out with a new chemical called Milestone, and you are supposed to be able to use it around...waterways, and it is not supposed to be harmful. It is quite expensive but it does show some promise. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

V. Controlling the River with Rip-rap

A. Rip-rap Seems to Work in Some Places

You need to use big rocks. You don't want to put in small stuff or it will wash away. It has to be done according to soil conservation specifications and all that. Big rocks on a bank are the best way. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Something that will work is hard rip-rap and barbs...None of that [soft rip-rap] has ever worked on the Yellowstone. I can see where it might work on a river or stream that is not as violent. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think every time man decides he's going to manage nature, he normally screws it up royally. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

B. Rip-rap and the Potential for Shifting the Problem Elsewhere

Erosion [happens] on the banks...which is too bad....You hate to lose areas of the ranch, but [if you] put structures in the river, and try to push the river over, you effect somebody else. So it's a no-win deal, really. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I just think that there needs to be some careful planning....when stream bank stabilization is done to make sure that you are protecting your property but not jeopardizing someone else's. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Some of it was rip-rapped before we came. I know it is a controversial thing. You rip-rap here, and the water hits it and sends it across the river, and it does more damage to the guy that lives next door. You are sending the problem further down the river. I am slowly learning that...[but when] you see your own land disappearing, it is hard. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

C. Rip-rap and Difficulties Getting Permits

They have almost shut down any bank stabilization....I should do some bank stabilization but I don't know if I have it in me to take the guff that it is going to take to get it done. It is tough to have to do battle....I just dread it. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

All my father-in-law used to do is talk to the [Conservation District] and the Army Corps. They used to design the project for you, but they don't anymore. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Well, it's going to take some time and you have to kind of get ahead of the curve. If you've got a certain time schedule....you have to get started, [but] like I said, we found them very reasonable. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The banks have to be stabilized, and we have had to do quite a little of that since we've been here—thirty-seven years. But we've always had good cooperation from the Bureau of Army Engineers and the...Fish and Game and those [in the] conservation services. I think they've treated us fairly....We've always left some riparian area there along the river. We never graze that real hard. There's always a lot of grass and brush and things like that, and I think that's probably one reason we've always been able to get along with the Fish and Game and the Bureau of the Army of Engineers because we've always tried to leave the riparian area there next to the river. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We had to haul rock in, probably 85 percent [of what we used]....Maybe even more than that, maybe 90 percent. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We counted them. There were thirty-one different representatives from different agencies [involved in our project]....We had an engineer that should have known we had to re-apply, and he didn't even know. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

D. Natural Techniques of Bank Stabilization

I think good riparian management is probably the major way that we keep erosion down. There is a lot of shrubs and grass. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

They have some new things they are trying. It's a blanket thing, and they plant willow trees in it. [It is] working on small streams, but it won't work on the Yellowstone. The beavers come along and eat the willows off that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

People would say that in order to be environmentally sound I need to let that river come rip-roaring through my property and it will be fine in 500 years. I don't have 500 years. There is benefit to man being here. We do good things here. Man does need to manage, but he needs to manage softly. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Our attitude is that we'd be more than willing to move the fence ten feet than screw with the river. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

When I was in grade school they talked about you shouldn't do things that cause erosion. Yet, here is the river running rampant and many are opposed to trying to prevent it. And for the life of me, I can't understand how allowing the banks to erode and cut away adds anything valuable to the river. All it does is add sediment. I am a little confused about that direction. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

If there are some artificial ways that we can replicate the positive impacts of flooding, but still be able to mitigate the damage, then I'll try to implement them. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

VI. Visions of the Future and Collective Management

A. Visions of Change

There will be more development in rural sites, homes....We're becoming a bedroom community for Bozeman almost. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I don't think this valley will be near as attractive if it's completely full of houses as it is now. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I don't think my sons will go into agriculture. This place wouldn't support them anyway. Potentially they'll sell it. I'd like to see it stay as it is, but realistically, being near the interstate...[they may sell]. The flood plain probably won't be developed because of regulations, but the upper bench land will probably have a bunch of homes sitting up there. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

One of the reasons tourism is good here is because of the way the land is. People want to see the wild, wide open spaces. I don't know that they'll want to come here to see the river flowing through a big development. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think there's a movement toward eliminating any kind of activity on those flood plain areas. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It probably never will get balanced. It will be majority rules. The property along the river is eventually going to lose. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

B. Management Priorities

There needs to be a way to keep agriculture viable and keep the ranchers paying fair taxes. You can't pay taxes based on subdivision values on farmland for very long – you'll go broke. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

There's a subdivision right next to us, and I guess if the money is important to you, then you know [what] to do....But there's wide open space, which is kind of what makes Montana as far as I'm concerned. I think that has some value to it, too. There's a lot of this open space, that's still open, that ought to be kept open. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The watershed group has a purpose....As we try to encompass the entire valley maybe some of this can be controlled...You have to look at the whole. When you start breaking it into pieces, you are like these tunnel-vision groups that don't want to look at the big picture and how an area can survive. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think the most important thing to me is to protect the river from pollutants, from fouling it in any way. I think a magnificent job has been done about the fishing [with the] catch

and release [rules]....The only problem that I'm aware of is the lead with the eagles. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Somebody has to come to the forefront and...we have to start providing ourselves with some water....Climatic changes, population growth, and industry are coming, and we will need more water. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

So there's a lot of concern about fires. I worry about it. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We actually have a water right to 750 inches off the Yellowstone, [but] rather than withdraw the water directly from the Yellowstone, we actually take it out of the sumps [that draw] from the groundwater. Hopefully, [by not taking water from the river directly,] it sustains the fish in the Yellowstone. I would like to see other ranchers do that, especially during spawning seasons. It would save a lot of work of having to maintain that ditch every year. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

In the cattle business today, a good year is a break-even year. With those narrow margins, you are probably going to be buying food and clothes for the family rather than putting money into environmental projects. There is not a rancher I know that wouldn't do it if he had the money to do it. If environmental sensitivity is important to the public, then maybe the public needs to help to support those programs financially....I don't know how you show people that the margins aren't there. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We [were recognized because] we preserve [acreage in the mountains] for cattle, [and] also it's preserved for wildlife. The award system is called Undaunted Stewardship. It is an exciting program that began in 2002. There have been over eighty ranchers that have been awarded for environmentally sensitive practices. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

C. Government and their Management Techniques are Questioned

I don't like legislation because it seems to be arbitrary. I don't see any flexibility, either you do or you don't. It's like this house. We were grandfathered in, and we're living where they lived for almost a hundred years, and yet there are a lot of people who object to our living over here. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Everybody's a little leery about some [governmental] program that's going to leave an agency being married to them. So that's one fear that certainly a lot of us have. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

When [my project was] washed [away], I was pretty upset because I put in a lot of work and it cost a terrible amount of money. Along in June one of the agency personnel showed up and said, 'How did that project work out?' I came apart. He said, 'I could have told you that wouldn't work.' I said, 'Why didn't you?' He said [the Army Corps of Engineers] wouldn't let him talk. There was an, 'agency difference of opinion.' (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

[During] the last bank stabilization project...it got kind of tough, and [there were] a lot of inspections, and it raises the expense, and you have to go for public review. I don't want to be a public person. All I wanted to do is ranch and do my thing. I had no idea I would become a public figure and be in the New York Times. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

It's the people's river. So, that is what got me on the Task Force in the first place...If my dog goes over on the neighbor's, and causes difficulty, it is my responsibility. If that is the people's river, it is their responsibility to keep it within the bounds. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

D. The Governor's Upper Yellowstone River Task Force

The Yellowstone River Task Force was formed because the local people here...are pretty recreational-minded. Fishing's a pretty big deal here in Livingston. They were trying to figure out, after the flood, what was the cause of the loss of the fish... That's how it all started, and then of course there was a lot of sentiment about building next to the bank, and there was a house that was too tall here, and they wanted to change the channels and stuff like that. And they were just trying to get a hold on the thing. They were just trying to prevent some of the things that have happened, which is not all bad. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I abandoned it when...they started talking about the morphology of the cottonwood trees and all that baloney, which I consider baloney, and maybe it isn't, but anyway. Then when the fish numbers came back, and it had nothing to do with the stream bank stabilization project? Hell...There was an agenda for a while that was going to blame the ranch for about everything. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

A lot of the older, rural ranchers thought the make up of that Task Force was a stacked deck. There was a feeling that those with agricultural interests were not as well represented as they could be. I sat in on a few meetings. I wasn't totally comfortable with the make up of it. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

A lot of the very active people on the Task Force probably have a different view of private property and things than I do. Though it wasn't expressed, I felt that a lot of the people would like to see tighter regulations...[I have a] more lassie-faire view. I understand the need for intelligent regulation, but I don't want to see government grow to the extent that we probably couldn't build here [on our property] if we tore down the old house. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I think the majority of the people would like to see more legislation or regulation along the river flood plain area. And I think that in this study the state conducted...they put a hell of a lot of land in the floodway and the flood plain. It encompassed a huge area, and I think that their numbers were jaded. They used a method of finding elevations which I think was sort of arbitrary. I don't think it was scientific and accurate. I mean, we should be underneath the Yellowstone according to their maps, [but] we've never had water flowing through here. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I know they did a lot of surveying, and they tried to maybe understand how this river flows, and what happens when the water gets high. I don't really know what its goal was, or what it accomplished, if anything. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I wouldn't have found out [about the new flood plain maps] if a landowner hadn't contacted me about what they had come up with. You know they didn't send those flood plain revision maps out to us. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

The time I spent on the Task Force, I enjoyed. Some [of the information] was way over my head and my education level. I have a whole stack of material, and I don't think there is a human being alive that could take that stack and make sense of it....They were all experts in their field, but we didn't have a person that took that information and put it into any kind of program.... It just wasn't gathered up...I don't know if there was anybody that could do it... When I listened to all the experts...nobody put the thing together, and they still haven't. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

E. A Promising Gathering in The Upper Yellowstone Valley Watershed

The Upper Yellowstone Watershed Basin group, they're amazing really. Because they handle all issues. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I'm involved in the Upper Valley Watershed, and they're trying to do some stuff with ranchers. They have education for the people that are involved in it, and yet everybody that's in that watershed are all in the same group. So everybody is welcome to come to those. They get to hear from both sides a lot of times. I think there has been a lot of good that comes out of those watershed groups. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

They get together, brainstorm, and come up with ideas for fighting weeds, and conserving water, and helping the fish in the streams. They get together, and they try to bring down grant money from the government and stuff like that. And they're effective. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

We were involved in a pretty good-sized range fire and the watershed group worked to get some funds for fencing and range rehabilitation. [The group] has been pretty active....[and it includes] twenty-acre and ten-acre people. We have a weed fair, and they get educated on what weeds are bad, and what works, and what doesn't work. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

F. Other Local Non-Profit Organizations

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition, they're looking over your shoulder all the time trying to find something the matter with the rancher or the farmer. That's my sentiment, exactly. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Trout Unlimited...all these green organizations, you know they're all looking down your shoulder. You know that. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

I was surprised that there wasn't ranchers [at the water symposium], because it's a ranching community. The sub-dividers were there, and the planner that was having all those problems was there. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

We have numerous environmental organizations in the county that are very active. I don't think they have a total grasp on what they are trying to do....DNRC came in with a conservation program that was totally unrealistic and so it failed. It might have worked down around Eastern Montana, but it was so far out of kilter here. They didn't believe what the value of the land was here....I think they had a valuation of \$700 or \$800 an acre. I knew of some property that sold at...\$10,000 per acre....From here to Sweet Grass County and [their program] just wasn't realistic....It was just too confining. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

G. Possible Partnerships

What is encouraging to me is that a lot of environmental groups also recognize the value of having ranches and farms because they guarantee open space. I think they are more willing to listen to us, [but] they still have more power, more influence, and more dollars. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

It's just part of life around here....There's so much wildlife....You have to be not-too involved, but you have to be in communication with [wildlife organizations and authorities]. You have to be available to them so that they are available to you when you need it. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

It looks to me like the agricultural lifestyle is going by the wayside. This community was an agricultural community at one time, and I think it's migrating the river, to a more recreational community. I think and feel there is some miscommunication between what the ranchers have to offer in this field of recreation. There are a lot of ranchers involved in recreation as well, and it just seems to me like there needs to be some education as to what everyone can offer. So it can work for everyone. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

There's also a pretty big sentiment [among the newcomers] to keep the ranchers...to keep it open....Some of these people...buy a big ranch, and they don't want a big subdivision next to them. Some of them are [saying], 'Well, let's protect this guy because we want to protect our view of the scenery.'...So, we've got to the point now where a lot of them will help us, especially up in the Shields Valley. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

I think that we need to have a voice so that people understand why we're doing what we're doing. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

I think there are some people that want to see the agriculture survive just for the benefits for wildlife. They could see the handwriting on the wall, that there are going to be more and more homes built, and habitat for wildlife would become a premium. *(Park County Agriculturalist)*

I think in the long run it would be better to support Ag, even from [the newcomer's] standpoint. Ag is what the people like about the valley now. (*Park County Agriculturalist*)

Springdale to Gardiner: Local Civic Leaders Overview

Interviews were conducted with eight individuals holding civic leadership positions, including city commission members, county commissioners, flood plain managers, and city/county planners. Participants were identified through public records.

Participants in Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
AGRICULTURAL	22	22	16	12	14	86
CIVIC	14	14	18	14	8	68
RECREATIONAL	15	16	16	13	16	76
RESIDENTIAL	15	11	16	15	19	76
GEOGRAPHIC SEGMENT TOTAL	66	63	66	54	57	
NATIVE AMERICAN						7
PROJECT TOTAL						313

Springdale to Gardiner: Local Civic Leaders Analysis

I. *Park County is Growing and Changing*

A. *The Allure of Paradise Valley*

It is the last undammed river in the U.S. and that has a certain allure. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It is easy to describe because people have a picture of what Yellowstone Park is even if they have never been there. I describe it as an extension of Yellowstone [Park]. You attach things like the fishing culture, the hiking, the outdoor mountain recreation. I don't think anyone gets a sense until they have been there. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It is a place of unbelievable beauty....Tremendous beauty....[This area] is very pristine and clean, and wonderful air and light, and very clean compared to other parts of the country. Fantastic wildlife. The weather changes all the time. It is entertaining just to watch the weather. It is really beautiful. I don't tell other people that. I just tell them I enjoy it and leave it at that. No sense advertising too much. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[People are drawn to the river for]...the surrounding beauty and the river itself. People like to be on it and look at it. They like to fish it. They like to sit and contemplate life. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[The Yellowstone River] is the lifeblood as far as Ag and recreation goes. It is what draws people here....It is the main artery through Paradise Valley for sure. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[The Yellowstone River] is an integral part of a greater thing...the Absaroka Mountain Range...Yellowstone Park itself and the massive volcano that Yellowstone Park is. All of that taken together is what makes this area what it is. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I don't think there is a whole lot you can do [about population growth]. Unless you can build a wall around western Montana....[Or maybe] if they would just stop them at Billings and not let them come this way. I would sacrifice Billings....[Or] if they would just ban all movies like *A River Runs Through It*. We had more damn fly fishermen show up after that movie came out. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It is also one of the few western rivers, or eastern rivers either for that matter, that has spring water year round coming from those huge underground springs under Yellowstone

Lake...[And] there are spring creeks that run into it, too. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I have floated all the way down the river. It is amazing the diversity. The birds are incredible. You see warm water and cold water fish. I went clear to North Dakota. I went around the diversion dams. I watched them catch the paddlefish. The people that are into it, are into it...I love that country down there. I could move down there. East of Billings down is fabulous country. It is a neat float. You have these stretches that are like floating on a lake. There are not very many runs [with rapids]. Here you have one every quarter mile or so. There you have stretches that go for a mile. It is the only way to see the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It's a picturesque valley...It's obviously...a great place to fish and a great place to just view...This fall is especially colorful. It doesn't always happen this way, sometimes it freezes and the leaves just fall off...I'm not a big fisherman, but it is kind of nice to be within three or four miles of a blue ribbon trout stream. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

B. The Transition from Agriculture to Recreation—A Rich Man's Disneyland

It's changing....There is a lot more houses than there used to be....It is just a reflection of the whole transition from an agricultural based economy...to a tourist and recreation area. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We have CEO's from big companies...that fly in with their jets and helicopters. They will spend a day, or a few days, and then they are out of here. The rest of the year we are taking care of it. We worry about weeds and roads...[while] they have one little ranch manager whose authority is limited to keeping people out....We don't want to be a rich man's Disneyland. They come, they go....We are trying to maintain something and still be progressive. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The land prices are high, at least agricultural lands. It's being influenced by recreational ranch buyers. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We have seen such a change as far as industry and development. We used to be a logging [community]. We used to have a railroad going through here. Those are just about defunct in this area. We have a lot of people that have moved here recently and a lot of natives had to move out although the numbers may not show that in population. We do have a lot of new people with new ideas. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

When I was a kid, agriculture, and particularly livestock, was far and away what everybody was engaged in. They were all working farms and ranches. Recreation was interesting, but it was way down there [in terms of economic importance]. Now everybody that has any land out there has either sold it or is waiting to sell it. [There is] hardly any livestock....A lot of ranches exist in name, and maybe in area, but they are purchased by absentee owners or part-timers, and they don't have any interest in

livestock. It has been a whole different slant on the vegetative and ecological part....The farm ground is worth so much...they can't afford to not sell. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I think it's a more diverse economy than people realize. I think there's the perception that we're a tourism based economy, and we are to a point and in a sense, but it's not the typical t-shirt and motel curve. A lot of it's based on...guided fly fishing and a lot of outfitting....It's a fairly diversified economy based on manufacturing, commercial, motel, certain products...and agriculture, although it's a very, very small part....It's very eclectic. We have a lot of artists, writers, musicians, and a lot of creative folks. And we have a fairly high seasonal element of residences, although...we're starting to see more people that are living here full-time. That's more true of the town than it is of the valley. The valley still has a very large seasonal component to residents. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Livingston is going to be more economically diverse ten years from now. Not quite so heavily dependent on tourism for economic livelihood....[I also] I think Livingston will be someplace that continues to place a high emphasis on quality of life. By that I mean recreational programs, homegrown restaurants, a strong downtown, and all those types of things. We don't have a diverse economy right now. We are developing quality of life issues. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

When I was growing up, that whole valley was agriculture. You had people raising cattle, raising pigs and sheep. They brought all that to town and sold it in town. They brought their crops in. They supported the local businesses in town. We had clothing stores. We had grocery stores on about every block. The people were in here buying machinery. Everything is changed. Now we have 22 art galleries. You can't buy a pair of shoes or a white shirt in this town....All of that money is going out of town. We had a Penney's and a Montgomery Wards, we had two men's stores and two or three ladies stores...above and beyond Penney's and Hennessey's and The Bon. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[In the past] everybody knew everybody. Now you are lucky if you go downtown and know anybody. We used to have cohesiveness and support for sports and things like the county fair. Now, with this new breed of people, they want galleries. They want lounges, not little hometown bars. They want classy eating establishments, not hometown cafes. They expect services like where they came from and we are not equipped to handle it. There is a lot of misinterpretation of expectations. This used to be an eight-to-five community. There were ten or fifteen bars. People went downtown all nights of the week. Now you go downtown at 10:30 and it is all rolled up. The events that you used to look forward to, like the rodeo and the fair...have all been diluted and changed. The fair is barely hanging on. The new rancher doesn't have four or five kids in 4-H. They are flying in and out, and their kids are going to private schools....The base of the community has changed. You don't have third and fourth generation families. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

There is a certain attachment to this land...The other thing is the feeling of community...although that is waning. I don't know many of my neighbors anymore. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

No one knows their neighbor is anymore. It has lost the cohesiveness. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

When I first moved here I enjoyed the culture. It was very unique to this part of the world. It was a working-person's town, the blue-collar worker. It was a tightly knit community. It had its definite own culture....That is going away rapidly right now. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It's a conservation-oriented Commission who is faced with some very big decisions. We just looked at another potential development east of the river....Between that and another development across the highway, those two developments will double the footprint of Livingston, not necessarily in terms of population—it would add another about 2000 people—[but] the spatial foot print would double. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

C. Wide Open Spaces Aren't Wide Open Anymore

People come out to Montana and they are enthralled by the views and the attitudes of the people and....They settle in here and they want to have it all, but by some of their actions they are responsible for destroying the things that they admire....They want their big castle back in the trees, or up on a ridge, or right next to the river. They have destroyed what made it beautiful....The wide open spaces aren't wide open anymore. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You see the new people that are decked out in waders and a \$700 fly rod and their \$5000 boat....The locals go out with their old bamboo rod in their tennis shoes....The local guy gets upset when [the new guys] pull in...to [the local guy's] fishing hole. And the [new] guy gets upset when [the local guy] throws rocks....These things go on every day. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

In the last 20 years it has changed so much....I live on the west side of the valley and...when I was a kid, growing up, if you had a yard light you were lucky. You would look across the valley and it was black. If you go in that valley now it looks like suburbia—it is just incredible the number of lights. For the most part it is concentrated very near the river which puts more pressure on the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

When I first was growing up here, you could drive to a high point in the valley at night and you could look down and say there is Feldman's ranch over there, there is this ranch and that ranch. Now it is awash with lights. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I look for more people. We have a beautiful way of life here, and we have everything...and we aren't hidden or obscure anymore. They came to Aspen and Jackson

Hole. They came to Whitefish, Big Sky, and they will be here. They will come and develop it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I don't want any more [people] to come. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We are in kind of a boom and we are becoming a bedroom community for Bozeman. These people are used to driving hours in five lane traffic, with solid traffic. It isn't a big deal for them to drive 20 minutes with beautiful scenery. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Twenty years ago, a lot of ranches were saved by the ability to sell ten acres to some guy from Florida....Now the cost of splitting-off ten acres is pretty major so you're going to see developers come in here and buy whole ranches and subdivide them....A developer...has to spend \$200,000 to just get it ready for marketing and the typical rancher [doesn't have the money]....On the other hand, there's the guy that can come in here and buy a ranch and has the money to run the ranch with long term investment in mind. It'll be either one of those because the land values have been [increasing at] 15 to 20 percent in a year, which is way better than the stock market. So it's a good investment. [The new ranches vary in size] from 160 to 10,000 acres....Some new ranches...cluster housing and then [create a] homeowner group....They still call it a ranch, yeah. [They are not the people] with five-million dollars....[who] want to buy an....8,000-acre ranch....Typically [they] want to put a buffer around themselves. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Ag lands contribute to the beauty of the area, the open space of the area....I like the conservation easements....The conservation easements are controversial, but I see them as protecting us from developers. Do we want open space or do we want houses? And the other side of that is, ...if you see the beauty of the Paradise Valley, a lot of the beauty is [in] the open space the ranchers are protecting....Which people don't even see, especially environmental groups, which really aggravate me. That's why you have wildlife on those fields and birds. If you had houses there, you're going to have a groomed lawn and too many horses. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

D. A Crowded River, But Let's Not Protect it to Death

I'm expecting to see more recreational ranches more houses on the river, more houses in the mountains....more of the high income, non-resident, second home people that don't rely on this county to provide their income....The people that can afford to have a second home can afford more recreational activities. They tend to use the recreation harder than what was done 20 years ago when the majority of the land was owned by Ag people. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

A future issue is how much traffic that river can stand. When I was a kid we never thought much about the river as far as floating it. Nobody even thought about it until the '70's....[Some of us] floated it in inner-tubes. There wasn't any guides, now you have hundreds of them. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It used to be you put your boat in the river, and you would see two or three boats all day. Now it is bumper boats. I used to float it twice a week, at least, and now I do it twice a summer, at most....Now there are fifteen cars at every access and they are all out-of-county plates. They come to take care of the fishing for us. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I won't float [above Livingston]...because the etiquette of a lot of people is not very good. If you are standing there fishing they will run you over with a boat. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[Fish, Wildlife and Parks has] done less than a stellar job of controlling people....Those fishing accesses are typically acquired [where there is] private land on both sides. The fishermen tend to walk up the river, which is their legal right if they stay below the high water mark, but what is the high water mark? Is it the 100-year flood or the 500-year flood, or the typical high water mark in an average year? So you have landowner-fisherman conflicts. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You have a lot of complaints on access sites that aren't well kept....People pull in and have a campfire, or walk their dogs to take care of nature's call....Some have restrooms, some don't. You get a lot of complaints of people going to the bathroom along the side of the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It seems to me like Fish and Game could be a little more landowner-friendly by putting up outhouses....You see these guys going in the bushes....And then the dogs, there's a lot of dogs on those boats, and [when they pull off onto the] bank, the dog runs all over. And they wouldn't tolerate that if you stopped on their front lawn and turned your dog loose....They've got to be more cognizant of courtesy, and the guides may be the worst. To me the typical guide doesn't care about the river, he doesn't....We've got islands on the river that are full of knapweed, and some guides will pull some weeds here and there and fiddle around, but the other guys just sit in their boat and wait for their client to get tired of fishing. They're goal is to get their 300 bucks or 400 bucks and go. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You're trying to graze cattle along the river and some fisherman is out there whooping and hollering—the conflicts are there. And then the boaters, you consistently see boaters, floaters. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It isn't that we have to change it or protect it to death. We need to maintain it and respect it. I hate to say it, but the usage is going to have to be limited. You can't just send 200 boats a day down that river. There has to come a point, like with the Smith River, it will have to be limited or on a permit basis....You will have to be a resident, and they will give out so many non-resident permits....I don't know what the answer is, but we have to do something to change or we can forget it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

II. Resource Concerns

A. Fisheries and the Ecosystem

[As fishers] we used to follow the Salmon Fly hatches from...Laurel to here. Now you can't find any [hatches] here....They are real sporadic until Yankee Jim Canyon. I don't know if it is pesticides or traffic or what. You don't have the aquatic insects that you used to. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

With regard to pesticides, there is very little agricultural activity up there. There are a few that spray alfalfa, but very few. They spray some for bud worm on the mountains....I always thought the fires in Yellowstone might have had something to do with the insects, too. I don't know. When I was a kid there were billions of them. Now you are lucky to see one. There are still some from Carbella up...once in awhile....You still get the Mayfly and the Cadis Fly. I thought it was the railroad for awhile but I saw them disappear up further. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I worry about is all the catch and release. They say, 'Oh, it doesn't hurt the fish.' I don't believe that for a minute. You don't put a barb through an animal's mouth and...drag it through the water. I don't believe for a minute it doesn't hurt the fish. The fact that they might come in and unload something from their tackle box that comes from a different area that might be a disease that you are entering into the ecosystem. And the weeds. There are invasive species of plants and animals that might get in the water. You worry about the biological stuff that might go on. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

From a fishery point of view [we must] maintain the quality and quantity of the water....This section of the river is heavily impacted by the National Park, of which we have no control over. The Park Service continually says, 'We aren't a ranch and we shouldn't manage our wildlife like a rancher manages cows.' However, buffalo and cows eat the same thing. And it concerns me when people get all excited about saving the buffalo when in reality they don't understand the long term impact that the buffalo, or the elk, are having on the range grass ecosystem up there. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

My biggest concern is if this drought keeps up....When you don't have a drought, the Yellowstone has tremendous flushing systems. There is a tremendous amount of water every year that we haven't been having lately. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The Governor's Task Force...did focus a lot of attention on the riparian zones...[They brought attention to questions such as]...What are the alternatives of grazing management? And, what are the implications for riparian zones? What are the effects that riparian zones have on avian productivity?...[On] diversity and preservation of fish habitat?...There is more public awareness...than there was say ten years ago. There's an awareness that a lot of what we've done to the river is to diminish the productivity of the riparian zones. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We haven't seen the leafy spurge infestation that some parts of the state to the west have, but we do have it here. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[Set-backs can function as] a public safety component, and there's also a river health component. You don't want to be in situation where you see...concrete sides and sedimentation runoffs in the river? So far, this river system has been fairly resilient....there is a fair amount of seasonal rehabilitation that the river does for itself, but that's limited in terms of capability, and it's hard to know what the limits are without bumping up against them.

The Governor has proposed spending a sack load of money on new public access. What is typically not in those acquisition dollars is maintenance dollars. And Fish, Wildlife and Parks has always been short of maintenance dollars. It's easy for them to get federal money or grant money to buy land, but they don't take care of the weeds, they don't take care of the trees, they don't take care of the whole ecosystem, if you want to talk about that....I continually say that the tree-huggers, or whatever you want to call them, don't give enough credit to private landowners...They'd like to see the whole valley owned by the government, but the government can't take care of what they've got. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

B. Agricultural Uses and Practices

We used to drill nitrogen every year [as fertilizer]. I haven't seen anyone doing that....There is some pretty shocking things about nitrogen....If you have a hard rain it goes down and it sits down at four feet. There is an unbelievable amount of nitrogen just sitting there. There are no plants to absorb it [when it is that deep]. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The river is obviously a major source of irrigation water....There's several operations that use the river to supplement their ranching income....Agricultural producers...divert water out of the river at a relatively low cost and use the water to produce crops. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

People come in and buy a ranch and they have the choice of...letting the property sit idle, employing the use of a ranch manager, or leasing it out to a neighbor. Typically those [new owners] are...profit motivated so they don't like it to sit idle. They want to generate some income so typically they either employ a ranch manager or lease it out....[Their choice can depend on] who they meet. If their realtor happens to introduce them to a neighbor and they build a trust, then it will be leased. If the realtor happens to suggest a ranch manager then it will be managed. A lot depends on the size [of the ranch], but even [with] the small size [ranch]...a buyer will employ a manager so he can have control....verses [the owner who says] 'I just want to show up and know the place is relatively safe.' (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

C. Drought—A Semi-Arid Place Pushing Arid

If you go by average annual rainfall in most of Montana, and you compare that to what constitutes the definition of desert, this place should look like the badlands of Nevada. But it doesn't, and the water in that river is why. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

We used to be semi-arid and now we are pushing arid. We used to get 17 inches [annually] but our average is way down....We have had eight inches this year so far [October]. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

We're going to see more de-watering because of climate change. There's a lot of irrigation in the valley....As agricultural land is being converted to residential subdivision development [it will] probably will create fewer demands on the river itself, [but] probably more demands on groundwater, which will impact the river in a secondary way. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

D. Water Rights and Impacts on Neighbors

The more people that you have moving in, the more problems you have with water rights and underground water. There has been a tremendous amount of water identified in parts of the valley. If you put a subdivision, here, you could drain the guys down below you....For the most part, the west side of the valley has a problem with water. On the west side of the river there are definitely places where there are problems finding water. On the east side there is a huge aquifer up against the mountains. They figure there are 800 feet of gravels there that store water. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

[We deal with] subdivisions that are on the Yellowstone and water quality issues. The sanitarian [is in charge of] permitting septic systems....[The permits] have to be looked at and signed off by the DEQ and our local sanitarian. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

It is amazing [that] only one-half the county is zoned. You might buy a piece of property and create a nice place...but your neighbor could create a gravel pit. You get a lot of conflicting land use because there is no zoning. People fight [zoning] because they want freedom to do what they want with their property. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

People complain about their neighbors, and we referee....Sometimes they can get a lawyer and sue. There are not a lot of regulations, and we can't go out and wing it....We refer to the County Attorney to see if it is something we can pursue. We can't make up our own rules. We try and do the best with the rules we have...[We try to] not appear to be heavy handed, but not appear to do nothing. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

III. Dealing With A Growing Community

A. Problems with an Undefined Flood Plain

We will listen...and advise....We look at hydrology, [to see] if it is...in a hazard area. We have regulations about altering the flood flow or armoring the banks or putting fill in. We look at all these things. The best thing we can tell them is, 'If you get near the river, you will get your feet wet.' (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The floodwall that we have is supposedly at risk because it has trees growing in it. It has all kinds of mitigation problems. At the same time, since it was built...the dike has not given way. [The dike] doesn't [pass inspection] in terms of 100-year flood protection, but it has withstood two 100-year floods in the past decade. So you look at it and say, 'What is up with that?' (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We have flood plain issues that are dealt with on a continuing basis....They are actually completing a study in the valley trying to re-establish the actual flood plain. It has been fairly controversial....[One set of designations affected] a lot more land area than what they had anticipated....The elevations weren't right and so it kicked a lot [of property]...into the flood plain and....nobody really wants to be in the flood plain very bad because you can't do any building or anything....On the flip-side, [an area] above Emigrant was in the flood plain [before] and when they redid [the designation] it was out of the flood plain....So, which one do you go by.....Trying to get flood insurance is a problem....They used the wrong formula...[but] they haven't really come back yet with anything new....The DEQ is involved, and the Corps, and FEMA as an insurance part....The interesting thing is the Corps of Engineers and the Montana State definitions of the flood plain are different....The boundaries...aren't the same....We don't really know [when they will make the final determinations]. It is still pending. I would guess within the next two to four years....Not having a flood plain [defined]...we have no idea what to expect from year to year, especially since we have been in a seven- to nine-year drought in this area. Water flows are much lower than normal and we don't have the flows like we used to have in the '70's and '80's. In '96 and '97 there were back-to-back flood years. That was a 100-year and a 500-year flood....The biggest issue is the flood issue not being resolved. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The Corps of Engineers is determining the integrity of the levy. We have a levy that is questionable at best....[The levy] withstood two back-to-back 100-year floods, [but] they still question whether the integrity is there. If they cannot establish and guarantee the levy, it changes this whole end of town....[it] puts the whole end of town in a flood plain. There are a lot of houses involved. You can't build or rebuild in the flood plain. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Our old maps are terrible to use and the new maps with elevations and overlays on aerial photos are so wonderful to use. What little we have been able to use them has been very helpful....[The maps] have to be accepted by the commissioners, and then they go to DNRC...then to FEMA, and then they have to review and put them on a rate map to

drive the flood insurance. Some of the meetings that are scheduled for approval are [scheduled] for 2008....It has gotten political. They have talked about moving the flood plain and it is a big financial burden on those people. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

With respect to the river, I am not panicked about the river in the next ten years. I feel pretty good about where we are going with the Corps of Engineer's works and that they will come up with some measures that will prevent big floods. I have also lived around rivers enough to know that sometimes a river will just jump. Unless you have 14-foot flood retaining walls, there may come a time...despite the best efforts...[when the river] will jump. That is somewhat incumbent on living by a river. I certainly realize it is something that we may have to go through. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The City Commission's involvement in river issues is situational rather than long-term or programmatic. I guess our involvement with river issues is somewhat reactive because we get involved if there are problems, like the '96-'97 floods. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I'm really hoping we get something in the way of creative solutions, something beyond the floodwall. I think the floodwall was the reactive solution to the situation—it's sort of a 1950's solution. And we know better now, we know more about rivers...[and] I don't think the existing levy gives much in the way of real flood protection. I think we're going to have to have some kind of engineering solution....In a perfect world [the solution will] involve some kind of service step-back, designated floodway, and flood plain area, versus trying to build a structure that would require a fair amount of maintenance on the City's part, and [that would] also be fairly destructive of the resources we have in terms of recreation...trails [and] amenities along the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

B. The Value of the Flood Plain and a Meandering River—Who Should Pay

I think at some point the government is going to have to be willing to step in and help the landowners along the river. That land has value, but it has value for many different possibilities, not the least of which is wetlands. The flood plain is what lets the river spread out during these floods. I think that there is going to have to be some programs where the landowners get some compensation [if they] allow the river to go where it wants to....And it has to be in the same context as if they are raising a crop. It has to be a long term agreement [with] the landowner, be it a rancher or a farmer or someone who bought in for aesthetic purposes. They need to be compensated. I don't know any other way to do it. The local landowners...don't have the means or the money to just donate that. That is what they are being asked to do now. That isn't right. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The governor ordered a river study. One of our former commissioners was a member of that task group....They spent six years on it....They came out with a stack of stuff that deep....They talk about protecting this resource....They didn't want to armor banks and stuff like that. They want the Yellowstone to be free-flowing and let it meander where it wants. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You try to protect [the river] as much as you can through setbacks and trying to maintain water quality, making sure it is used right....It is not just the river itself, but all the animals and the birds that depend on [the river]. And its watershed...[including] all of the streams. There are a tremendous amount of streams that enter it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You have to be careful...as far as setbacks and stuff like that. People living there don't want to see these big setbacks....Right now it is 150 feet. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

You get these people that are taxed as agriculture and it isn't fair because they aren't using the land for agriculture. They should be taxed as residential. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[The task force] was a waste of money. They told us where the ripples are, and...told us where the river floods. Anybody who's lived here for more than two years could figure that out without a PhD....I guess what bothers me about the task force is it comes back to the ranches should be the buffer zone....just let it flood over the ranch....Ag should not be the whipping boy....The sacrifices should not be borne by just the agricultural properties on the river, it should be borne by all, including the highways....Do we need to build a highway right along the river?...Or should we move the highway over a little bit [so we don't have to rip-rap it]. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

C. Dealing With Erosion—You Do Have To Be Careful

You do have to be careful when you rip-rap because you may protect yourself but you are pushing it to someone else....[and] pretty soon you would have a big channel if everybody rip-raps. Once you let one person do it, you start the problem. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I don't know that there is a whole lot you can do [about erosion]. The river starts to move and...you can plant trees. That is probably what is holding the dike together right now. Tree roots are a great thing. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

There is only a certain amount of [stabilization trees will] do. You try and get willows started in a sand bar...sometimes that works and sometimes it doesn't. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[People] have to actually apply for a 310 permit. Once they apply, the District Conservation Board will go out and observe, and look at the project and make recommendations, and either pass or ask for more details and a better plan....They try to re-vegetate everything now. They used to throw a bunch of rock over the edge. Now they are actually putting rip-rap on the bank. They aren't allowed to put it into the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

If one person rip-raps, the next one does, all the way down. It speeds up [the river]. They don't want that constriction....On the flip-side you have the landowners...that are subject to the whims of the river and that is their property that is being washed into the river when it creates a meander. It was kind of ironic during the course of that study that there was a house that was on a 100-foot high bluff, about 500 feet back, and during the major floods it undercut the bank so much they torched that house before it went in [the river]. It was pretty dramatic. It was even more dramatic the way the banks fell off....[The house] was on a big gravel slope....The river was so high it kept washing away that bench. It just gradually eroded that thing back hundreds of feet. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[The river] usually takes from one place and deposits it somewhere else. That is one of the things about living on the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I would armor the banks only in extreme cases of emergency....Otherwise we will be like the rivers in Oregon where it is armored all the way, on both sides. It is bad....I am against modifying the banks in any way except in extreme cases like to protect a bridge or somebody's house. I think that is the way it should be done. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I think the river is threatened. We have rules, but we are only [a few] eyes up and down the valley. If it weren't for a lot of caring people, and a lot of snitches...[we couldn't do our job]....We need to update our regulations. We need to look at them and revisit them, and make more people mad at us. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I would like to see some better science on the effects of hard armoring and rip-rap on the...fish production...[and] habitat areas [such as those created in] flood stage....We've lost a lot of that. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Bank erosion is concern to the agriculture producer because it's taking away land. And then the free-flowing river advocates say the agricultural land should be a buffer...so the river can go where it wants to. But...different parts of the river have different erosion factors....The erosion is not really a big issue until you get below Pine Creek Bridge. Where the river tends to be flatter and it tends to erode, and if I had land on the river, I'd be very concerned about it and I'd want to protect my property...[People use] rip-rap or the hard facing...Soft facing is where you lay the cottonwood logs down and bury the cottonwoods so the roots face out upstream. That typically doesn't work here in a major flood. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

IV. Managing Resources—You Do the Best You Can

A. Make People Aware, But It's Difficult to Save People from Themselves

You do the best you can. People have the right to live where they want to live. I think there is a growing awareness that [rules sometimes] change. It is tough to deal with, but just making the people...more aware of the problems that we all face, and having them

taking some responsibility...[will] help make that change positive instead of negative.
(*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It's difficult to save people from themselves, so I think that one of the most important things a governmental entity has to do is persuade rather than demand. And I think that's where the involvement in the decision making process is critical....You have to be open and receptive to public comment—you have to be empathetic without necessarily having to agree. And I think in the instances when we don't agree, you have to convey [that you are] understanding without necessarily being in agreement....The Corps, in the past, has not been as sensitive as they might have been in terms of conveying to the public that they are listening, not necessarily agreeing....[With] set-backs, you're trying to save people from themselves—it's a very hard sell. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It's a real tussle sometimes between property rights and community values and who owns community resources. The river, like it or not, is fundamentally and primarily a community resource with very private sector edges, and that dynamic is not going to go away. The problems there and the conflicts are only going to intensify....I saw a really different dynamic when I worked in Colorado....They don't have the stream access law that we do....At least [in Montana]...there's a little bit more power held by the public than there would be in other places. The problem is how do you mobilize the public support for valuing the public aspects of this resource. I think there's not that realization that things could be different. And people have always lived within this environment in terms of river ownership, the public ownership of river rights, not understanding that it's not the common situation, it's very exceptional. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

To some degree the Corps has been maybe to quick to grant the permits for hard armoring without...necessarily educating land owners that there are alternatives. And I'd like to see that. There are certainly a lot of soft armoring techniques that are quite feasible and, in the long run, have lower maintenance [costs]. I think a lot of landowners, if they were aware of those options, might choose those [soft] options....I think we need to look at alternatives. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The new people—whether they've bought five acres or 5,000—see the river as a beauty...They're more concerned with the overall beauty of the area and not so concerned about the natural resources...[such as] what grasses are growing there or what weeds are growing there....One of my goals, and I don't know if it's ever going to happen, is to bring their level of education up so that they can look out in a leased field and say, 'Yeah, this is good.' One of the goals on the flip-side is the cattle owner who needs to do a better job of ...monitoring the range....Ag Production 101, so to speak....[For some people] time is the most precious commodity....So if you're going to do a range management class for a recreational ranch buyer, it's got to be July 10th, but you wouldn't dare have [a class in July] for the natives...Then, [if you schedule a July class for the seasonal residents]...you get the natives saying you're being exclusionary.
(*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It takes some persuasion and education in terms of the public. The public is so used to thinking of the river as being something you need protection from and I think we need to understand that it is a dynamic resource, and we need to learn to live with that dynamism in a way that doesn't degrade the river in terms of fish productivity...aesthetics...natural functions...[or] seasonal changes. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[The Task Force] was helpful because it opened people's eyes....Any publicity [showing] that we need to protect the river is useful. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

B. It's a Battle of Engineers—Go With the Winners

Every time you armor the bank it deflects the water to the other side. That has been going on for a long time. To tell people they can't do that is hard because it is hard to stop somebody from protecting their property. We do have some limits and recommendations to keep a handle on it. That is our flood plain regulations again. You can't excavate in the flood plain without a permit. We try and watch that. It is a battle of the engineers. We turn it over and let them fight it out and we go with the winners. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[We might want to assume] people are rational actors, that they process things and they act in rational ways. Well, they don't always. A lot of times people will act in ways that are not only not maximizing their profit, but...they act contrary to those ways because...[their] biases and heuristics and rules of thumb...systematically, and very predictably, distort their perception....[For instance] someone buys property right on the river for the accessibility of fishing...then he puts a bunch of rip-rap down there to save his property....[The rip-rap] is damaging the resource in very predictable ways and diminishing his property values....[If] he'd built back, say 150 feet, [he would have] maintained the productivity of the river along that reach. So I think that's the heuristic that's based on ignorance of how the resource works, how the system works. So to that extent, education is helpful, but you also need persuasion in terms of the credibility of the argument. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I don't know, at this point, what you can do other than encourage responsible planning...and really being careful if you allow somebody to rip-rap. You have to think about the consequences...Some of the biggest problems here are these old bridges that constrict the river. They need to redesign those bridges, of course it would be millions and millions of dollars. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The models [are helpful]....They have this thing set up on a trailer and you...can put your house [in the model], and release the water, and see how well you did at protecting it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

C. Nobody Sweetens Their Tea—A Community of Strong People

[In this] culture...nobody sweetens their tea. It's the attitudes. It is a very self-reliant culture....[an] everybody-takes-care-of-their-own type of culture. The view of

government out here is not just suspicious. It is flat out distrust. If government is involved, something is wrong....In other communities they at least give you a chance to screw up. Here they assume you already have and they haven't found out about it. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Some of these people don't take no for an answer. Now, developers come and bring a staff of lawyers, hydrologists, engineers....They will come to the planning board meetings with their attorneys. They will set up their own sound systems so they can record everything. This is a kind of intimidation where they will sue you if you don't do something they want, 'We are recording every word that you are saying.' They have a whole entourage of people working for them, and you are one person, trying to do the best for the county, and you have to face their staff. That is how they are now....They will hire their own stenographers for meetings. They will go to the commissioners meetings when it is their turn to decide something. They intimidate....First they will try and schmooze you. They will put on a luncheon. If that doesn't work, they will get tighter and angry. Then come the lawyers. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[Our former] planner....noticed the local people don't like the local people telling them what the regulations are, but if it comes from the state or the federal government they are fine with that. They don't want a local official bossing them. They feel [the local official] could be more biased than a state or federal agency....We get it constantly....If I can say, 'I have to administer [this way]...it's from FEMA and I don't have a choice'...then they say, 'Oh, okay.' (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Montana is interesting to me in that it goes beyond public information and public comment to public decision making. Folks don't just expect to know what is going on or have access, or be able to make comments, they expect to be seated at the table with the ability to put their hand in the air and cast a vote. I appreciate the interest that people have. It can present challenges if a lot of people feel like there has to be a consensus before a decision can be made. That can be difficult. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

This City Commission is a strange combination of being a very conservation-oriented commission, a very progressive commission, but also a very libertarian commission in that we don't take a leadership role in terms of development. We feel that [development] is an issue that should come from the community itself. And I think we act more as supporters and facilitators than we do as initiators. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

To some extent...irreconcilable situations occur when ideologies start from a position....and therefore [the person] only admits the evidence that applies to that position. I think that's the danger. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We have a wide variety of land. We have wetlands, rock, high desert, whatever. We have it all. We look at access and all the different things that would go into making a piece of land livable. We review all the regulations, and someone comes in with an idea and we look at it and analyze it....It goes through the planning board and the commissioners and they get an approval....We enforce zoning regulations. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

We hand out the permits to develop along the river. We use the flood plain regulations. We see what kind of flood zone they are in. If we have a section of allowed uses in the flood plain...if it fits, they are eligible to apply for a permit. If it doesn't fit they can't apply for a permit. They can apply for a variance. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

There's a culture of property rights and courts and so I think that the County Commission is certainly faced with a difficult balancing act in making decisions regarding things like set-backs. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

Both [newcomers and long-time residents] are very protective of their property and they feel it is very valuable. Maybe the people that come lately are more staunch and have high expectations. Then again, the people that have been here a long time are set in their ways. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

County commissioners have a say. The planning people, but what it really takes is the people that actually live there to organize and protect what they have through zoning. The community leaders who are willing to get up and do something. That usually ends up a small group of people. Unless the people really have a strong feeling for starting zoning it takes strong people to get it all the way through. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

D. The Role of Development

From a recreational stand point, how many houses do you really want to see sitting on the river bank as you go floating by?...That is a resource quality that we take for granted, but it's not necessarily going to be here 20 years from now. We're seeing an awful lot of development right along the river and...I think that effects property values long term, it degrades property values. And it certainly degrades the marketability of the fishing experience for a lot of the river guides. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

Real estate agents...influence people. They want to have more lots to sell, and they encourage people to buy a lot that they can't afford and they say you can subdivide and the land will pay for itself. If you buy these forty acres you can pay for the five you want to keep by subdividing. They encourage development. They encourage people to sell their property. I think we have seen a feeding frenzy of these people that want to make a killing in land development and I think the real estate people have a lot to do with it. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

Some [real estate agents] support what I would call good planning. Some of them want to see a good community come out of all of this. They would support parks, or trails...the schools, [and] community building, as well as making money for themselves. A lot of them don't, though, and they only see the profit margin. That is one thing I like about some of the real estate agents is they do want to see a good community to leave behind.... I would say we have three or four local companies that do the majority of the business. *(Park County Local Civic Leader)*

Some of them don't think about the community. They only see the big money sign and that is what they are driven by....A lot of them are hit and run. They come and buy a piece of land and develop it and if it is shabby they are gone to somewhere else to do the same thing....That is what we try to fight....A lot of developers want to be cheap about everything they do. A lot even flaunt what they do...and think it is funny, 'We got one over on the county. I don't care about the future residents, I got my money and I am gone.' It is very tiring. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Enlightened development...not only protects the river but that protects property values as well....There are other interests in the county, some real estate development interests...that have taken an opposite position and been fairly hard-line in saying that private property rights are, not only the most important consideration, but the only consideration....[But] we have a common interest—it's in maintaining the resource base we have here in terms of the river. The river is an amenity and it's an economic driver. I think that everybody realizes that at some level. And I think the only difference that we have is in terms of who owns that value....There's the side that places more [emphasis] on personal...[and the side that emphasizes] public--That's always the dynamic. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

E. If I Don't Do This, Who Would?

Maybe I would like to do something else. But...the thought goes through my mind, 'If I don't do this, who would?' There isn't anybody else....Other people [are now] working and learning...and thank, God. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I feel I am a bastion of rationale in the midst of what is going on. I am trying to protect the area. I am trying to keep it clean and safe and see that the locals aren't run over. I believe in keeping the river clean and safe. It isn't for the money or the glory. I can affect some changes and protect some things. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It is hard to change regulations. That is a hard thing to do. We talk about rewriting the regulations, but that is a scary thing. People go ballistic. Not because of logical reasoning, it is because they don't want anymore regulations from the government. It ends up in the same kind of fight. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

When something happens out there and they come and say, 'Can't you do something about it?' And we say, 'We have no regulations.' We just need to balance regulations and rights....Right now [the community is] so anti-regulation....[but] we need more effective regulation. We need rules...that have some teeth. The things that are in place...we need help enforcing. You are talking 2700 square miles, 14,000 people, and [a very few people to watch] the rivers, subdivisions, and drainages....If we didn't know people as well as we do, we would have a hard time. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

As anywhere, [we have] a very complex stew of interests. I think the County Commission that has a lot of power that they are reluctant to use because [they are] balancing interests. I think you've got some fairly enlightened folks on the County Commission, I think that

they're only now gaining enough confidence as a commission to take steps to protect the river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[Agriculture needed a voice on] the Yellowstone River Task Force...[Also, with] county commission meetings and subdivision boards, an agricultural entity needs to be on the board. Obviously the Conservation District [includes] agricultural people...[I] even suggest that they become members of environmental groups to know what they are doing. Or, at least go to their website once in a while and look at their mission. You know, Trout Unlimited, Montana Water Trust, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and Park County Environmental Council...[Agriculturalists] are not really receptive [to the suggestion]. They're nervous about it. It takes a lot of time, obviously, and...typically it's only the larger operations that have employees or family members to pick up the slack. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

F. Comments and Lessons For Non-local Regulators

The state and federal government input needs to be sensitive to the local commercial economic needs...[and] the concerns of residents, especially on the east side of town that are currently at risk of either flood damage or having to leave their homes. And one of the options in that 205 study is a buy-out...I think that those kind of options certainly need to be discussed in a way the community is comfortable with...We've seen cases in which there were decisions made at the federal and state level that appears to be made at the city level. The city government takes a lot of heat for things that have actually occurred in a different level of decision making...I think it needs to be a process by which there's not just a public meeting, it needs to be a neighborhood by neighborhood communication [process]...Convey [information about the risks] in a way that's understandable and a way that allows participation...both directions, from the residents to the governmental agency, and vice versa. I think that all too often the government agency does the research and makes a decision on their own, and then conveys their decision to the public. There doesn't seem to be a lot of opportunity for public participation in terms of understanding. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

The most important thing is to be proactive and not assume that problems will solve themselves. The only thing that happens with that passage of time is the two sides of the issues become more concrete in their positions and less willing to look at the common elements of interest. So if I were to talk to someone in a county that's maybe twenty years behind where we are in terms of growth...[I'd say] start from the perspective of trying to determine what values are generally held in common by the whole community. Work with those commonalities and keep the focus on the commonalities...It won't [necessarily] prevent the polarization, but it will certainly keep people focused on avenues to solutions that recognize commonalities. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Local government builds roads, hires the police and fire department, and provides water systems. In my opinion local government has a narrow scope of activity. Then it has a scope of what I call cheerleading and encouragement of private sector development and issues. There is no escaping the river and the big part of what the city is. We just simply

do not have the resources and the funding and the expertise to become river management agencies. I feel like that is one of the expectations that some of these groups have. There was one group in here not too long ago and they wanted a best management practice...on how the culverts would go in [a local creek to see] if a fish could swim through....To me that goes beyond the normal expertise that you should expect in local government. We don't really even have a storm water system. To start on one end, and say we should have best management practices about the pipes that are going into that creek, when we don't even have a storm management system...[makes no sense]. When it rains, it starts at the hill and runs down. I am still struggling with the idea that local government should be involved with the environmental issues to a greater scope...because we honestly don't have the time or the expertise or the resources to do that. To put that burden on the local government of 7,000 people or a county of 17,000 is extremely unrealistic. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Sometimes the information that comes from public agencies, governmental agencies, is suspect. At least that's the perception. And I think that there is also a perception that the best practices benefit the public at large, but they may not benefit me personally from an economic standpoint. And I think that's where the persuasion comes in, demonstrating how those incentives really work on a personal level....People know what they know, and how do you get through that. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I think that [the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council] has a lot of opportunity. The thing that they have to avoid is looking like they're a gorilla....[Avoid] breeding defensive reactions....Work at a community level and genuinely engaged people. It sounds like such a simple thing, but it's all too rare that an agency genuinely appears to show concern for folks....Encourage people to define goals and force some rationality that wouldn't otherwise be there....offer guidance in terms of what works mechanically and what works within the framework of the river as a river. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

One of [the local groups] is Concerned Citizens of Park County. That group traditionally hounds the city more than the county. They tend to show up on a lot of different issues....They are loyal to their community, but they are 'opposed.' Whatever the issues are, they are 'opposed.'...[Then] you have a definite environmental group. There is the Park County environmental group that gets real involved in those types of issues....I think they are helpful in the sense that they create a perspective.....The other group that shows up is not organized and doesn't have a membership list, but would be what I would call the 'Native Montanan' group. The first two groups include native Montanans, but they also include folks that aren't....That third group tends to be the people that have lived here year-in and year-out for decades. They tend to be tied back to the railroad, and they tend to be the don't-get-in-my-way-I-won't-get-in-your-way sort of folks. They aren't hyper-environmentalists or hyper-development people. Their families have ridden the waves for generations in Livingston. There is a stark contrast between those that have been here for generations and those that haven't....They tend to be more in the middle. They would be the folks that wouldn't want to see you cut down all the trees for the sake of cutting down all the trees, but they might have family members that work in the timber

industry. They kind of have this balanced approach, whereas a lot of times the ones that you hear from are on the extremes: you shouldn't cut down any trees, or you should give me a license and a chainsaw and let me cut down whatever I want. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It goes beyond, 'I want to know and I want to be able to see the documents.' It's, 'Well, we haven't had much public participation on this,' [even though] we have had three public forums. There is a redefinition here about how far the public should be able to insert themselves into a decision. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

They definitely know each other. They don't tend to fight with each other that much but they also don't seem to have any informal alliances...Even on an issue of common interest, they tend to come and take their own position, not hook up with somebody else and form a coalition. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

I think development gets a bad rap. I think that a lot of things get blamed on development when [those things are the results of] the river. Rivers are what they are. They change, they move. If you take an area around Livingston and develop away from the river, that doesn't leave you with a whole lot of land...[The Corps wants a] safe-zone around rivers where nobody can develop in and no activity can occur, and I find that very unrealistic....Groups like FEMA and the Corps, and the outside groups,...are willing to cooperate as long as they get their way. They come with such an agenda that I don't trust. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

It seemed like there were a lot of different interests [on the Task Force]. Maybe [they needed] a tighter agenda. They had people coming from all different walks and concerns. You have people that make money from it and guides and developers and you get the people that actually live there and have lived here for years. It got quite dicey at times and it got hard to stay focused on what the job was....Everybody had a different perspective. Very strong opinions and all different opinions. You can't put a label on anybody. There were ranchers, sportsmen, developers, environmentalists. They all had very different ideas. Their meetings would go until 2:00 in the morning. Everybody had to say what they had to say and they would go on and on and on. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

[Non-locals should] remember that at the same time that all of these decisions are being made about management of the river, that there is a community here—a community that gets up everyday and goes to work, lights that have to get turned on and off. Don't get so overwhelmed with the issues of the river that you forget that there are people that live next to the river. Some depend on it for economics. Some of them don't. (*Park County Local Civic Leader*)

Springdale to Gardiner: Recreational Interest Group Overview

Interviews were conducted with sixteen individuals in the Springdale to Gardiner are who use the Yellowstone River for recreational purposes, including hunters, fishers, boaters, floaters, campers, hikers, bird watchers, rock hunters, photographers, guides and outfitters who use the river for relaxation and serenity. Participants were recruited from referrals provided by members of the Resource Advisory Committee of the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council. Participants were also identified and recruited by contacting various organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, and the Audubon Society and by contacting local outfitting businesses.

Participants in Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
AGRICULTURAL	22	22	16	12	14	86
CIVIC	14	14	18	14	8	68
RECREATIONAL	15	16	16	13	16	76
RESIDENTIAL	15	11	16	15	19	76
GEOGRAPHIC SEGMENT TOTAL	66	63	66	54	57	
NATIVE AMERICAN						7
PROJECT TOTAL						313

Springdale to Gardiner: Recreational Interest Group Analysis

I. Valuing the Yellowstone River

A. The “Magical” Yellowstone River

The word Yellowstone is a very magical word. But ...when [the] Yellowstone is threatened there is an incredible rally worldwide. When you talk to people from elsewhere it means the last free-flowing [river], the last preserved river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Little slice of heaven. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The river itself is a big freestone river that can be extremely moody. Sometimes the fishing can be productive and sometimes it can be tough. You think you can be a smart fisherman and sometimes it doesn't work that way and the river teaches you a lesson. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We [can] live in a small rural type environment...still have frontage on one of the major fly fishing rivers and the Yellowstone obviously is one of the prime Blue Ribbon streams...[and have].. Just more large ranches, more open country...more of a ranching character...It's a good place to have your coffee in the morning. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[It is a] good place to start your day. If you can't be happy looking at that, you just don't deserve to be....It's a good place to get old. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's always changing because it's a wild un-dammed river...And it's beautiful of course, I mean it's gorgeous, especially I'd have to say...around Springdale [and on towards the] east is my favorite because it's not developed. You can still float through that area...it's all big ranches, it's not a bunch of houses on the river so it still looks like maybe it did 100 years ago. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

If you live on the banks of the river, it's a jewel, it's a free river...take care of it...it may be a little battered a little worn, but it still deserves a little TLC. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

One of the few [rivers] that flows north in the world. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Hopefully into the future, this river will throw a flood every now and then and will astonish everyone with its power. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[The Yellowstone River is] temperamental. You can go out there today and just have an incredible day, 60 fish a day, go out there tomorrow, [into]...seemingly the exact conditions, use the same fly, and you'd think there wasn't a trout in the Yellowstone. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

B. *The River as a Refuge*

First and foremost probably the fishing, the quiet, and some days the hunting, some days just sitting on a rock,...it's just a wonderful beautiful place to be and...I'd have to say just the quiet natural beauty of the place is what draws me to the Yellowstone. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It is a totally spiritual connection....[There is] nothing better than being able to be down at the river...I don't go to church, but I definitely go fishing....I'm not a heathen or anything...But yeah...every day you spend fishing you add a day to your life; so I'm doing all right. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

When I got into fly fishing that's when the whole catch and release really hit....It's more about the whole process rather than just catching fish; just being in the mountains; seeing wildlife...One of my favorite quotes is, 'Some go to church and think about fishing, others go fishing and think about God.' (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's a pleasure [to live by the river], I don't even like to go on long vacations. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I've been all over the world, and this place is about as good as any, I love the peace and the quietness, and close to Yellowstone Park. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Not just the fishing, people come just to float, to walk by it. We have a bench down there by the river, they come down and sit and just look at the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The scenic beauty of it is dominant, and you can see that with the gold and yellow colors and the acreage that we have along the river we try to keep it as quiet and peaceful and be the best stewards for the Bed and Breakfast guests and the tourist guests that we have...they too have the tranquility and the beauty of the river, and the peace of mind. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Yellowstone [River] is my cathedral, that's my church, that's my spirituality, ...it's where I charge my batteries. It's my connection to the natural world. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

C. *Free-Flowing and Natural*

It is the longest free-flowing river in the United States and it should be maintained as that. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's the longest flowing river in the United States without a dam on it...when it's clean, it's clear, it is a beautiful river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I describe it as the longest free-flowing river in the United States. It is pristine. It is clear. It is fast flowing and the surrounding areas are beautiful. I say we're in Paradise Valley and that's aptly named. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

One of the things that is going to be one of the most difficult hurdles to get over is recognizing that even with landowners that have a vested interest that there will be situations that allowing the river to function in a somewhat normal or natural way is still important. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

This Yellowstone River is the longest remaining free-flowing river in the lower 48 states. It's...unique in that sense. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

D. The River's Resources

Superb trout fishing...and none of those fish are bred in a hatchery... Every fish is wild, stream bred, wily and smart. They've made their living there since they were an egg...they don't fool easily... And there's a huge difference in wild fish and hatchery fish, just no comparison....The fly fishing paternity generally refers to hatchery trout as rubber trout. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have deer, whitetails, muleys, an occasional moose, occasional bear....Lots of eagles, lots of ospreys; ...the river holds all that here...it's kind of a nature preserve right there that keeps a lot of game close by...An unofficial nature preserve. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Yellowstone...[is] famous for its hatches of bugs. The caddisfly hatch in late April early May is called Mother's Day hatch and it's world famous...and also the salmon fly hatch. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I do feel like we have a fairly healthy river system. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The river corridor is basically the river and its surrounding lands, the whole riparian area...it's not just the river, it's the trees,...animals,...insects,...birds, the worms,...the dead leaves that fall on the ground.... 90 percent of Montana's nesting birds use riparian areas, close to 60 percent actually lay their eggs there....If you fly over in a airplane, you look down at the Yellowstone River, you see this big green lush strip running through the countryside. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Tourism is I believe the second biggest industry in Montana....tourism relates to the beauty of that river out there and the fish in it. And people come here and spend their money going fishing and hiking and camping. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have three osprey nests...and they have three young ones every year...We have eagles all year long.... Without the river, we wouldn't have the osprey, we wouldn't have the eagles, and we wouldn't have a lot of things. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

They know it's a world class, classic fly fishing area. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think the Yellowstone River is...the center of this valley...if the Yellowstone isn't in good condition, this valley is going to deteriorate very quickly. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Open space is so important along the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The river corridor is exciting. I often get excited seeing a family of river otters or the deer getting a drink...I think clients get excited and remember that as much as the fish. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

This river is a tremendous resource for this state, for all the local people here...for people who don't have money; who aren't the lucky people who own a piece along the river...that's the message. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We try and keep a little control on the beavers; put chicken wire around some of our favorite trees. Those cottonwoods along the river are very important. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

E. Human-River Connection

It's spiritual...speaking from a fly fisher's standpoint...fly fishing is definitely a challenging way to catch fish. You need to be a weather man;...be an angler; ...an entomologist; ...a water chemist; ...a little bit of everything so you're in tune with your surroundings...People...that fly fish are informed...and probably lean pretty heavy toward the conservation side of things....There's a lot of people that practice catch and release...[they] tend to put a lot of their own time volunteering for conservation programs [and] for education programs. A lot of their money also goes back into preserving those places too. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

When I'm fly fishing, ...you seem more connected...especially with entomology because you have to know...what the fish are eating. You have to look in the water, look under rocks and it's all about...matching the hatch....The quality of life in the river, it all starts with the plants, the tiny bugs eat the plants and microorganisms, fish eat the flies and bugs that eat them. It's just that big huge food web. I think fly fishermen tend to have more of a sense of connection with that web. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We're on the river a lot with our students whether it be fourth graders or eighth graders...teaching them about the river...if they get out of one of those lessons that water quality effects...the bugs and bugs effect the fish...if they're somehow connected to the fish in Montana, somewhere for the rest of their lives they'll be more apt to join a

conservation program...or even just recycling to make the water clean. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

People tend to know here they are connected by the water. (*Park County Recreationalist*)
It's a privilege to share it [the river] with others, we enjoy the cabin over here and a cabin here...we have tourist homes and the quality of people we get, it's so rare that you get a lemon. Makes you believe in the world. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

You're dealing with a raw force of nature...this river...it won't tell its secrets...you turn those rocks over;...you find those nymphs; ...you watch the river year round...You put it all together and after three or four years of study, the river might just give you a trout or two...but...by then it becomes not a matter of catching fish, it becomes a matter of you're...one with the river... it has different character around every bend...it acts different in the spring than it does in late summer, it's different in the winter, it's an incredibly complex ecosystem, that if one person in their lifetime can figure out a little bit of it, it's quite an accomplishment and that's what transcends the actual fishing. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

II. Shifting Scenery: Development Along the Riverbanks

A. Homes on the Riverbank

If we're not careful it's going to look like a bunch of squatters all the way down [Highway] 89. All the way along the river, it's going to be ugly. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

These people have built beautiful homes. They're not junky. They're beautiful but there are too many, too close to the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think one of the things that we see more is encroachment of development in the river corridor....Now you see a big house on the skyline instead of a natural habitat. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

In the long run I think that it is not the Ag community that is detrimental to the river. It is the development along the river. That is why I felt like we needed to band the ranchers and the environmentalists together. That way we preserve the open spaces. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Back in 1968, there was a big effort to dam the river...three guys...stood up against some real moneyed interests...But one of the ways that they decided in the aftermath of that battle that the Corps of Engineers wouldn't be able to revisit that plan is to bring people in; get some houses down there. There's a lot of ranches. Get some houses down there because that will increase property values and help make it financially preventative for anyone to say, 'Ok we're going to dam the river.' So I think we're starting to become a victim of that success....I've...seen more and more development right on the banks. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The land values are such that...It makes that river corridor the domain of the upper class. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I keep telling people...in the early 70s the dam was really proposed.... and this is where you make the tradeoffs in life. You only had to buy about seven ranches and you had most of the land under the area where they wanted the dam. We need more people out there. Do I prefer more ranchland than people? Yeah, otherwise we might not have the river. I decided that we needed more people out there because they won't dam it. It would cost so much. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

From the overlook...20 years ago there was a small handful of lights from the valley floor at night. That is not the case anymore. It is no longer a farmstead here and a farmstead there. It is a community today. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

B. Housing Developments Threaten Water Quality

Of course you've got septic tanks and lawn fertilizers and the cutting down of the trees. I think that development is probably one of the biggest things [and] one of the main problems...on the Yellowstone. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Development brings sewage...my neighbor...[has] the sprinkling system, [he] waters that five acres every night and then he puts chemicals on there to keep the dandelions down...and all of that is just going right back into the river eventually and into our aquifers. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have a cabin here that we rent to people. And every once in a while my husband will say we should build a couple more and I say, 'I will not....that's more sewage on this small plot.' That's not being a good steward of the land that we've been given. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's not great for the riparian area where someone has cleared the vegetation of the river down to the cobble of the riverbank and then mows their lawn down to that point. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

People say they are polluting badly but I don't have any proof of that. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

C. Setbacks: Benefits and Impediment

Have those homes set back from the river...this was the last best place in Montana and it's been discovered, so you've got to have rules. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

This county is going to be subdivided. There's not any way of stopping that, but I think we should have 200 foot setbacks on the river both for the houses and for the septic tanks and drain fields. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

How do you set an arbitrary 300 or 500 feet? It has no bearing on the river. We have a 300 now....These arbitrary lines don't make sense...They have a 500 foot in Madison Valley but they seem to give exceptions all the time...If you think of how different rivers are, you need to do it by reach tide. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[Setbacks,]...That should be an easy answer but it isn't....we are concerned with the function before the aesthetic wants....Knowing that in some areas there may not need to be a setback at all. In other areas there may need to be 500 feet or half a mile depending on what you want to maintain. As you come to the lower end it meanders a lot more. At the upper it is naturally armored and doesn't meander as much. Since we are heavily dependent on tourism the aesthetic qualities are very important for the floater and the fisher people. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We [are] recognizing that a pretty big part of the economy is based on real estate. The one thing that would be nice [is] to...get people to recognize...that...as we deal with private property rights, ...if we are able to preserve something of the valley, property owners are not going to be on the losing end... It is a lot nicer to float through stretches where...someone isn't riding the lawnmower around the lawn ten feet from the river.... If we are able to preserve some natural character those property values will go up and not down. We need to get people over the social hurdle and they realize that is true. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

D. Growth Policies: Benefits and Impediments

The real-estate developers...know it's wide open...there's no constraints on developers and I think that's holding a knife to the heart of the Yellowstone...there's no plan. The county planning commission is populated by real estate developers... I see a very deep connection to the river of all of the people here, but nothing that says, 'Wait a minute this is a real gem and let's keep this at least like it is, without further degradation.' (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The real estate developers have a huge amount of power both in the property and the way they market them and how they are organized....We have this huge issue between these people that can't see the change and are unwilling to accept the adverse change and the people who say it is going on other places and we need to stop it right now. Both sides have these real knee jerk reactions. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Part of the draw for being here is you want to be in a rural ranch type community, so the goal of this thing [growth policy] is obviously not to put the ranchers out of business and not to regulate to the fact that they can't make a living. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It was a classic case of public participation. A bunch of the landowners didn't participate and then they saw it and went bananas and they got it repealed... It is a tough one. You have these landowners....They can't make a living ranching and we are asking an awful lot of them to not cut it up. If somebody wanted to buy my business we would sell it for as much as we can. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I was on the growth policy committee...the discussions came down to when it was all said and done, property rights...not the general good, but what should happen in Park County to keep it afloat. Do we admit that most of the dollars here come from tourism? Do we admit...that the people moving into those properties with bazillion dollars...don't have much concern for the local economy...? The schools suffer,...the whole structure is tricky, and the ranchers know that... And so...to protect the river,...the open space... You're asking them to admit to something that is hard to do, that it's no longer an agrarian society because it truly isn't for very many people, and that's the good and bad news. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

Personal property rights, ...Every thing begins and ends with it. And it's part of the western independence that got everyone here in the first place, the rugged individualism that we all applaud, and the inability to let go of any little bit of power that people feel they still have. When you think about it, if you were one of the families that fought Indians and put up with all the hardships that settling a place like this took in its very recent history...it would be awfully hard to let somebody from Seattle come in and [they] say, 'Well by God nobody's telling me [what to do].' And I understand that, but it just doesn't work. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

Private property rights are very important to these people and I can understand that but I think my property will be de-valued if the next guy doesn't take care of his property. So it's not just a one person street, the whole community has to get together on that. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

And the big ranchers are going to sell out anyway, because there's too much money to be made if there aren't some kind of restrictions on what can [be] buil[t]. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

If development is left without checks and balances, it could totally ruin...the river, not only aesthetically, but also biologically. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

It took three years at least of really difficult meetings to come up with a plan for Park County that was a comprehensive plan...the only way they were brave enough to approve it was to specifically preclude any zoning...it was all about private property rights...there's many people who don't like planning, think its sort of a communist plot; it is breaching their private property rights. Well I also own private property...I see it as...a balancing between my rights and my neighbors rights, and...if the neighbor does something that is really obnoxious to me, do I have any recourse?...So I view it as protection of private property rights...and others view it as an infringement. It's a fundamental difference in outlook. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

Growth is going to happen and it should be done in a smart, well-planned manner...If we had done that it would be a different footprint here today. *(Park County Recreationalist)*

What is the viewshed? Is it to the mountain top? We haven't defined the viewshed. It is different through town. You have a high bluff and cottonwoods and the viewshed is right

there...I would like not to see houses...The conservation easements are a way. We have been trying for years to get the viewshed bought over across from Livingston and now it is being subdivided...there is no money for viewsheds. The viewshed is more social in my mind. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Anytime the public makes a decision that affects a private person's right, the private person is going to bear 90 percent of the burden and the public gets 90 percent of the benefit. That is tricky....Hopefully you get progressive landowners or you do it by fiat. I think you just kind of muddle along and hope that you get landowners that are willing to sacrifice a little to promote the well being of this area. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think it is still in danger because there is no zoning whatsoever. I don't think most people realize that Wal-Mart could buy a chunk of land down here and there isn't anything we can do about it....I am not someone who likes to see a whole pile of regulations but I think there has to be some regulation with development. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

People...on the growth policy did not want even to mention those words [conservation easements]...they say, 'They're telling me what to do with my property.' But I can't tell them what to do with their property. A conservation easement is all voluntary..., we [should] suggest to people that that is an important thing. We have a conservation easement across the river from us. That's what sold us on our property because no one is going to build over there. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[The] lights that are on all night long [distract from the beauty of the valley]...we need to have night sky here. It's part of the beauty of being out here. And again that goes back to the private property rights. People don't feel that they should adhere to that. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

III. Access Dilemmas: Demands, Limits and Controls

A. Increasing Uses and Overcrowding

The proximity of other users of the river...doesn't affect us that much, but it's always a factor living along a free body of water like this. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's busier. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

People complain about overcrowding on the river. I just smile because it is more friends of the river....They only come when it is hot. The rest of the year we have it to ourselves. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It is not just all the Bozeman people coming over to fish our water, it is now the inner tubers and the kayakers and the canoeist, it really becomes impractical to try and fish. You can't expect a fish to eat a dry fly if they have just been run over by 50 drunk college kids in inner tubes. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The fishing is as good....The quality of the experience has degraded. We see a lot more people on the river than we used to.... It is good for businesses like ours that are in the fishing business but it doesn't make it as much fun. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

B. The Importance of Public Access Laws

I know that there are some disagreements...with fishing along private property when they [guides are] fishing along. But actually in Montana you have a right to be on up to the high water mark. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Having all of these access points is a good thing...you don't have to be the monied gentry to get to the river and enjoy it. And our stream access law allows...you [to] walk up and down that bank a little bit and you can fish and that's a great thing. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I have been involved in the fly fishing industry all my life....those access points are crucial to my business and my soul. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[Ranchers] have sold...the hunting and fishing rights to corporations or private concerns and so only those people can hunt and fish on their property...it's harder for my husband now to find a place to hunt. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

C. Decorum: Respecting Others and the Resources

I have a lot of respect for our river guides, almost all of them are stewards of the river, the land...They pass that along to the fishermen as well. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

There was a motor boat that came screaming up the river and that really put a burr under my saddle...they...just totally put all the fish down and it was so loud and that's the last thing you want to hear...you know the river's not mine...it's not anybody's really...I think they should be able to use the river...as long as they're responsible while they're out there and courteous of other people. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think we're very fortunate here that we cannot have motorized boats. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I don't see fishermen leaving trash. Once in a while you'll see some, but basically your guides are good; your fishermen are good caretakers. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I've seen many times where a guide will stop his boat and jump out and pull a beer can off the bottom. You know it's a small gesture, but you don't see tin cans on the side of the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Lot of landowners have a problem with [stream access laws] and it's because some of the public is thoughtless and abuse...the river and therefore are abusing the landowner who

abuts the river, and that's a little flaw in human nature that's pretty much a constant. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

IV. Ideas About Erosion and Rip-rap

A. Erosion is Not Necessarily a Problem

There was a time when a property owner was at a loss but to just accept the influence of the river and they just accepted it...I guess there is a certain communion with owning the land and understanding how it works and knowing you take the good with the bad. The river changed course and I lost that bottomland but at some point I will regain it. It might not be my generation; it might be through my kids. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have a little erosion every year...There always will be some erosion inevitably. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

B. Rip-rap and Its Effects

Do you rip-rap the south bank and leave the north bank natural? It is a slippery slope. Once you go there it exacerbates itself and it changes the ecosystem and there is no going back. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

One of the saddest things about the Yellowstone is you go down between Hysham and Forsyth and there are some of the most incredible cottonwood forests you have ever seen. I would assume it was here too. That is the problem with rip-rap: you get the floods coming over the top and they don't get re-seeded. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It's not great for riparian areas when you have a rip-rap bank. That wrecks it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

When you channelize the river, it takes away its wild characteristics...but every time you stabilize that bank, you tame the river more... the Yellowstone isn't allowed to spread out...it stays in one channel and it just digs a big deep trench over the years...a lot of people think [rip-rap] provides great habitats for fish [but]...the fish studies that have been done have documented that surprisingly the [smaller] fish aren't there like they thought they would be. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[They] put the rock in and forced the river to come over to our side. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

You armor these banks, you lose some of that wildness, and it has predictable effects... the water ricochets to the other side...and usually increases the speed. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The full force of the river came straight into that area and came over the banks and basically washed into the creeks...the sediment...silted in the spawning habitat, a lot of

the macro-habitat...their good...aquatic plants, a lot of that stuff got washed...out...and it took quite a while for that to regenerate....They decided to reinforce the banks so that the river couldn't do that again...they really armored the banks with huge boulders the size of Volkswagens and they are trying to keep the water out of there. And there was a lot of animosity from people both ways from people who want to protect it [and those who oppose rip-rap]...but the spring creeks...bring a lot of money into Livingston. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

In terms of long term health of those spring creeks...any time we clean the gravel no matter how we do it, the fish respond, the insects respond and the fishing is better....What would be nice is if we could mimic the natural flooding and wash all the silt out and that appears to be the natural cycle on a spring creek. Instead we have armored the banks and done everything possible to keep the river out. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The flood of 1996 took out Armstrong's Spring Creek. I was the one that said they couldn't do what they wanted to do. It was bad...Then it hit the press and they finally brought in experts. The landowner spent \$800,000 [on rip-rap] and it washed down the river in four days. I lost a lot of business because I stepped on the fishermen toes. They wanted it back at any cost. My family has been involved in stuff a long time and people hurt, because it was \$100 a day to fish the spring creeks. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Yellowstone left to its own devices would take care of itself because it is a wild river, but if you continue to rip-rap it...it can't handle that amount of rip-rap. The river goes where it needs to go, and when you change it, it doesn't just affect the flow, it affects many, many things ...It reaches a saturation point. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

C. Alternatives to Rip-rap

So what's our puny little efforts to control the river and keep it from your house? Your house should not be built in those flood plains, or if you're going to build it there, you have to be willing to let it go. And letting it go has some consequences too because you're putting all that stuff in the river if your house goes downstream, besides being expensive and stupid. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

My preference would be that it would be nice if we didn't have it [rip-rap.] (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I kept throwing at ranchers...that conservation is nice...[It is nice] to do as little as humanly possible and to be economically conservative as well as environmentally conservative, [to] not immediately thinking you need to throw rock at the river to solve the problem. If we are able to preserve some natural character those property values will go up and not down. We need to get people over the social hurdle and they realize that is true. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Up here they are putting in 40 foot barbs....they could be much shorter.... they become a navigation hazard [and]....They are certainly ruining good fishing banks. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Try to use natural solutions first as far as planting things.... Layering the bank, anchoring root wads in the bank. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I'm just glad they finally decided not to use car bodies anymore [for rip-rap]. You still see a few of them when you go down...We just have to learn that this river will not stay pristine unless we take care of it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

D. Governor's Task Force

The Governor's Task Force...came together [because] we had seen a lot of bank stabilization projects without a lot of planning in my view. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think you need to try your best to go way out of your way to make sure the public is brought into the process as much as possible. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I suppose there's...more awareness...about stewardship of the river....We've gone to a few of the meetings down there, watershed meetings and you'll always get a few diehards that are not open to change. It doesn't seem like they've progressed very far. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I thought it was interesting when they talked about the studies of the cottonwoods and you could see where the river was by where the cottonwoods are....it was good conversation between groups: environmental groups, government groups, the Corps [of Army Engineers], ranchers. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

My sense was that we were going to try and move toward some kind of census on how the management of the river would take place. I had hoped we would move towards that and I don't think we ever got over the polarization of the reality community, and some of the bigger ranchers...primarily because they are concerned how private property rights are to be handled....I think it boiled down to the fishing community and the environmentalist community..... It was a little disappointing to go through that long of process and not have much common ground. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We got a lot of data and a lot of discussion. If we have another flood we will be light years ahead. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think we funded a lot of good research...and the findings will be useful. At least there is better information than those kinds of polarized conversations. There is more information for those on either side. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The Corps of Engineers...is the ultimate arbitrator on the Yellowstone....when we brought people here from Omaha and floated them down the river. 'Oh my God, there are

big boulders in the river.’ Most of the rivers in Omaha have a sand bar. It doesn’t take very long to see where poor decisions get made. They had no idea. ...It is based on old science ideas and it is difficult to get them to change...They went, ‘Oh when we talk about the Yellowstone, we need to use different criteria.’ (*Park County Recreationalist*)

V. Comprehensive River Management

A. Common Ground

What resonates from both sides...is water quality....[But what is] water quality? Is it simply the chemical analysis?...Or is water quality [connected to] the system?...If you started from water quality, and worked gently outward...describing the mountains that create water quality, then there may be an incremental way to bring people into consensus. They [need to]...fundamentally understand why this water is good and why it is bad. Start from why is water so important to us. It may sound elementary. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[We need] some common ground where people could realize that the river is the most important....Hopefully it doesn’t take something really bad to make people realize, ‘Hey we need to help this river.’ Usually by the time things are bad, they’re really, really bad...[and] can’t be helped, so hopefully it doesn’t ever get to that point. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

You can’t impose your ideas. You need to involve everybody and all sides. The difficulty is...all sides feel threatened....A good process has to be inclusive and usually that is tedious and difficult to do....The hard part is paring away the rhetoric and getting down to what it is you actually value, and what threatens that. Not your fears, but the reality. It’s really hard to...trust people enough so you can actually talk about the real issue. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It is just like you see in southeastern Montana, nobody gives a damn in Park County about Yellowstone County. There is no cohesive council or management process. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

All too frequently we are ready to find the differences...I think in my mind there is a bond between the ranchers and the environmentalists but socially they can’t find it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We worked with the ranchers and we worked with the state to come up with this [blocking] system and it’s been pretty successful, and the ranchers are happy with it. It’s saving them a lot of money... I think it was monumental in that we were able to get the two sides to actually work together although it was mandated by the feds and the state, but it happened...and it’s made progress. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

[The] River Recreation Advisory Council...tried to have the different user groups represented, some landowners, some recreational paddlers, recreational fisherman,

commercial paddlers, commercial fishermen, representatives, two people from the legislature...[they] had a good facilitator...she was firm...she'd look us all over, 'Now do we agree on this?' If you have a problem you need to tell us now'...one of the things that she kept emphasizing is... to honor these other people's concerns. If the builder wants to build, you have to hear that then. If the landowner wants to protect his private property rights and doesn't want these fishermen walking up on the banks, well then you have to honor that. And where there really is a conflict, then we have to figure out, 'Is there a way we can honor this person's concern and still go there with this guy's thing?' (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It ends up not always being an issue based decision...the Ag community finds their identity with being opposed to the environmental community, whether it restricts the water or property rights...A lot of the time I am disappointed with the environmental community as well for always having a ready opponent. Whatever the issue is they feel like there is always a scapegoat on the other side of the fence...I have been trying to teach my students [that] you may never find common ground. In some cases, that is what comes to the table. Here is an issue that I feel this way and you feel this way and we are going to set it aside because it won't do us any good to yell at each other. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

How do you bridge that gap?...it takes time...generations some times...it's well known in recent years that tourism whips extractive industries in Montana, but when you go up to Helena, or in the Legislative session, the old power bases are still based on mining, lumbering, ranching...even though they are a ghost of what they once were. People as you know, politically are very reluctant to give up power...will it be quickly enough to maybe have some kind of a flood plain zoning or buildingfor the river? I don't know, I'd like to think so. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think one group that is woefully uninvolved is the fishing guides...I think the ranchers need to be involved. Every time I was in one of these groups...they made it clear that they weren't going to change a thing. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

B. Control: Local Versus State

I think local control is always going to be a good idea as long as local control isn't a cover for the fact that we want to keep things the way we have always done them. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think it needs to go on record, [the violation of dredging the channel] was not solved locally, we had to go to the state, and you could not depend on local law to enforce anything. And that's understandable in a small community too because it pits neighbor against neighbor and you know. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Without good environmental policies this river isn't going to be worth coming out to see. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Yellowstone River has all of the protections in place that it needs to have, the laws are in place...so...see to it that the laws in fact that are in place to protect the Yellowstone River are enforced equally and unilaterally across the board, not selectively. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Initiative 54...says that if anyone has zoned and the government or anybody wants to come in...[and] change...we have to pay those private property owners....It is well documented that...the government doesn't have money to pay them. Consequently, the zoning doesn't do any good...we just have to have some laws from the top down that stick. We can't have loop holes all over the place. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think the river deserves a designation...if not wild and scenic then certainly a state designation...[that] protects the river from certain developments. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

State regulation would have a better opportunity to retain or at least discourage local conflict.... It seems like if there was a state orchestrated process then perhaps more generally accepted scientific principles could be applied...Within a...local community, science gets tossed out and it becomes neighbor against neighbor and an emotional type thing. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

C. Managers of the River

If they do not articulate a vision, it is an invalid process. They should spend as much time as possible formulating a vision for the future....If there is not a vision, not a goal to obtain, it is an invalid process. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Make sure the people...that are making those decisions are educated to make good management choices so you can have preservation and conservation. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Decision makers need to know that...the river's important, agriculture is important, to some degree you've got to have some kind of development, as long as it's done responsibly....The decision makers...need to make decisions where the river will not be sacrificed; where the river will be preserved and conserved. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

They broke it up in seven different types of river...You have to manage by type.... It has to be tied to the reach tide. The river responds differently. If the river is entrenched, it doesn't move. Other places it is moving all over the place. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

What does keeping it in good shape mean? It means protecting the riparian area and it means protecting the wild nature of this river....you ought to have effective flood plain regulations and enforce them. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The thing that people really dislike the most is regulation and restriction...but there are other things that you can do besides restricting people from the river, or you know requiring a license or a permit,...it was harder to come up with the things that you can do. But we did come up with a mini-list of voluntary things people could do, but I mean it was instructive to say, 'It's not all or nothing.....Can't we get more creative?' (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I have sat through several meetings in that ranchers like to say that they are the original stewards of the land. In a lot of ways that is correct. In a lot of ways they are not. I have seen BMP mentioned and they [the Council] needs to mention best managements practices are there for a reason. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

This Council got going to protect their interest. My only problem with them is they are not inclusive enough....My hat is off to them. They took a lead and somebody needed to....[They]...need to break that [river] thing up. It is too big. You have cold water, warm water; you have urban, all different sets of issues... they talk a different language and the issues are different because it is a different river...It is a major undertaking. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think they [the Council] could have a pretty persuasive effect on planning along the Yellowstone as long as they adopt an approach that is more ecologically sensitive than economically sensitive. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I don't think they are getting enough input. One of the things is the public wants to be heard. They have no place to be heard. It is astounding if they got heard. They feel better. You go to the local council meetings and they cut you off. They cut the newspaper guy off. I wouldn't cut the press off ever. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

D. Education

Madison County has written a little booklet that is entitled "Code of the New West" and they make suggestions that down lighting only, setbacks from the river, large plots of land, conservation easements, it's very good. I may be Pollyanna, but I really do think that people moving in, if you point these things out to them, most of them will say, 'Oh, I never thought of that. That's a good idea.' (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Short of regulations and restrictions...is public education. I mean people might not realize they are being bone heads....people might not realize that it's really a bad thing to park exactly in the place where you have to back your boat down to get boat access.... Every now and then, somebody will build a fire on the beach...which by itself isn't so bad, but leaving all that charcoal is bad, you shouldn't do that...so unless someone comes along and picks that stuff up...it's going to stay there and diminish the beach. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

VI. Sympathies and Concerns

A. Agriculture, Economies and Land Prices

The power base that's here, and the fact that it appears that Ag really has the hand on the throttle as far as the power base in this valley, and it may always..... Things are changing rapidly, and we hope it will remain basically an agriculture and rancher community. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Land values are such now that landowners want to make sure the river is healthy. The cows aren't worth as much. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Agriculture does not necessarily mean good stewardship, and environmental concerns for ranchers and Ag folks are not necessarily the same environmental concerns as the general populace might have. And I think therein is the stumbling block...Personal property rights, period, nothing else, nothing else beyond their property. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

To be fair environmental concerns have put them [Ag] in a heck of a bind, they have the BLM land that is sometimes closed to them and limited in terms of what they can do with it, and then they have the river constraints, keeping cattle fenced out, and the irrigation stuff that might be more limited. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Montana [has] always been an agricultural state. In the Paradise Valley...there's still a lot of agriculture there, but a lot of that Ag land is [where] houses [are] built now...with part-time residents that are here for a few months out of the summer. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I have no problem with irrigation; I just want them to do it right. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Theoretically ranchers should be the greatest environmentalists in the world because they are taking care of that land, [but] economics say they can't make a living. Consequently, their thought is subdivide and get out. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

B. Local Values

[It's the] way of life. People don't live here because of what they are paid. I mean it is the amenities...of the outdoors [that] are very important...Rivers are a very important part of that. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

People get along at least on the face of it...it's just part of the culture here. ...87 years old, as far right-winged as you can get and me and him are great buddies, but we're very careful about what we talk about. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It depends on which way you are looking from....People who look from the river out... see a different world and have an appreciation for some of the natural intrinsic values of the river and often not revel in its violent activity but would understand why that violent activity occurs...as opposed to people looking from outside at the river....From the landowner looking at the river they often see it as an enemy...an infringement on their property rights....People who appreciate the intrinsic values of the river will be much more receptive to management of its own benefits as opposed to someone who sees the river as a varmint that you have to constantly watch. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I took his [blocking system] plan to the irrigators and said look here's a plan that you need to think outside the box you've been doing this thing the same way for 80 years now, and it's pretty well demonstrated that it's not working real good. Try to think outside the box....we got state funding to fund the project, we got state grants to fund it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Whenever you move into a small rural area, there's so much cohesion...and [it's] isolated. So you can't go in with the idea that you're going to change a lot of things, and that wasn't ever our intent anyway, I guess living next to the Yellowstone, you get such a loyalty to it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

It was pretty intense [when we were dealing with dredging of the channel] because we came off as hating ranchers and not wanting them to get water, and that wasn't ever the case, it was just equality before the law, you have to have that. As it turns out though, it resolved itself in a fairly positive manner. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I thought everyone recognized that [planning] was the one thing that was missing. They were granting permits on a landowner by landowner basis and we needed to look at a bigger picture. That was the failure in the permitting process...I remember having these discussions...that if I were a landowner on the Yellowstone I would be really concerned about what the guy upstream was able to do. That was a lot of the problem....because a permit on a neighbors place created a problem for the other neighbor. Any time I tried to get that [discussion] going...a landowner was more willing to deal with damage on his own property rather than say that the guy had to be responsible for what he had done because that meant he would be next. That thinking scares me. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I think there would be an awful lot of distrust for any kind of program to compensate them [Ag] when they would rather do it all themselves. It is not so much how profitable the ranch operation is going to be but that they want to do it their way and not the way that someone else wants them. Like the wolf issue...the rest of the people want to see the wolves. So they will just compensate them for the calf that they lose. There are other intangible issues. Some governmental boy is going to tell them how much they are going to be paid for their cows ? It becomes more of a control issue. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We've got a new group of people coming to town. Livingston is changing very, very quickly....in Livingston they'll tell you real quick, 'You know a nail that sticks up is going to get pounded down fast.' But there are a lot of new nails sticking up in town, and they can't pound them all down. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

But the wedge issues are continuing to be played. The farmer versus the angler and several others...then there's the old western thing of, 'I'm going to do with my God damn land exactly what I want to do and there ain't no God damn body going to tell me different'. Well that's what built the west, but it's starting to hurt it. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

C. Concern: Water Quality

Preservation is important...If our water is unhealthy, we're unhealthy. That's been kind of an environmental little cliché...And [the health of the river] could be documented through fish population studies and all the macro-invertebrate studies and all the water quality studies that they have. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We have a special thing on our well, it's an ultraviolet light that keeps the water in good shape in flood time....the way the water table is here, we have quite a shallow well, it's legal, but it's quite shallow. And we were always concerned about that because we really do need to make sure our water is safe...[because] it fluctuates with the level of the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Raw sewage was being dumped [at] Gardiner, Montana...It's when the electrical power goes off, they don't have a shut off valve, so the raw sewage...goes right into the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I mean that's often the assumption...you know a little bit of pollution here won't matter because the river...disperses it so much that it makes it insignificant. If you lived out in Glendive... at the receiving end of all that, maybe it does become significant. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I've seen...very little if any movement to try to mitigate....the amount of pesticides that go into the river from ranching. And there are more and more folks moving in down the valley and...they've got lawns...and there's a lot of nitrates now going into the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I remember the flood of 96 and 97 very clearly...after those two flood years, we had a salmon fly hatch in town, it's the triple cheeseburger of a bug to a trout...The warden...told me he couldn't remember one being for 20 years...he said...the volume of the water...was huge...[and] washed out all the heavy metals and the phosphates...and the pesticides, and it gave the bugs a chance... that was the only hatch because the nitrates and stuff were still being pumped in...it should have served as a heads up...When do you start saying this is a finite resource...it can't look out for itself. It can't handle that load of pesticides. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

D. Concern: Water Quantity and Water Rights

We basically don't have a water quantity problem, we're the headwater....But I'll tell you there is a quantity problem as this river is used more and more for industry...[and] city water uses, and agriculture, and then compromised [by] coalbed methane....Quantity is an issue down in the eastern part of the state. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

We've had three or four subdivisions that have gone in, from Emigrant towards Livingston...where they subdivided [the land into] twenty, ten- to five-acre plots. I don't know where all that groundwater is going to come from. We have so many homes up above us...and we know that a lot of the wells are not very productive up above...We've had sufficient water here, [but] it doesn't mean it's going to be that way ten years, twenty years from now. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

You've got the ranchers with irrigation, and then you've got the recreational users, and water in the west is tricky. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

On the other end of this, there's a diversion where the canal comes off. [It] goes all the way through Paradise Valley and irrigates all of the alfalfa growing in the whole valley.... By the state [accounts] it is a natural channel...but a lot of the local people and the irrigators claim, 'No, we dug this channel and this is our channel.' [It has been] a big bone of contention....So, this is a very unique situation we have living along this particular piece of the river. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

E. Concern: Fish Populations

Whirling disease...effects cutthroat trout and rainbow trout. It's a parasite that basically burrows into the...skin and pries...into their vertebrae....It eats away, causing their vertebrae to bend....and so when they swim it causes them to spin or whirl which is whirling disease... It eventually kills the fish. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Hopefully the Yellowstone cutthroat can...get their populations up...They...just keep going down more and more every year due to habitat loss...to the whirling disease...[and] to the inner breeding of rainbow and cutthroat making a hybrid called a cutbow. Some people call them that for lack of a better name. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

When push comes to shove between the Yellowstone and other uses...the trout are way down in the hierarchy. I mean...there's...never talk about restricting irrigation in an extremely low water year to keep a minimum stream flow. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The cutthroat population is headed in a not very positive direction. They have talked about listing the cutthroat [as endangered]. I am not sure if that is necessary, yet, but I would think it will be at some point. I would like to stem the tide before they have to be listed. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

F. Concern: Invasive Species

You know invasive species, like the noxious weeds...[well] the New Zealand mud snails are another invasive that's a problem...and there's an algae called Didymo. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Development brings weeds. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

I'm very upset with our government...To control knapweed, we need to spray every single year....We pay mega-bucks...to a professional...and yet our land borders state land, and it's nothing but a dump full of knapweed....Then we have a neighbor on the other side of us, from New York, who never sprays....[Knapweed] ruins all vegetation of grasslands. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Noxious weeds along the banks are...an important issue....I don't think anyone in the county would argue on that one. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The darn beaver...I hate to say this, but they are so destructive. They'll cut down these trees that are hundreds of years old and then there's nothing left. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

A tree deserves to live longer than any beaver in Montana....A tree is light, it is oxygen, it is air, and it gives much more than any dirty rotten beaver does. We have to preserve and save...the tree, which saves our lives. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

G. Concern: Ice Jams and Floods

[The] flood issue is always a problem....We have an affidavit that shows, back to 1865, that this property has never been under water. But in 1996 and 1997 it came [and we had] one or two inches of breaching back here. We sand-bagged portions of it. Of course, when a river is that big, you can't stop much....We didn't flood but a lot of people did. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

The '96 and '97 [floods] were so refreshing, in many respects, because the river was just huge and nobody had ever seen it like that. And it was rampaging all over the place and doing wholesale channel changes down there in Livingston. (*Park County Recreationalist*)

Springdale to Gardiner: Residential Interest Group Overview

Nineteen interviews were conducted with property owners holding 20 acres or less of land bordering the Yellowstone River, or within 500 feet of the bank. Names were obtained through a GIS search of public land ownership records. These names were randomized within counties. Other people living very near the river and whose primary incomes are not generated by agriculture were also recruited.

Participants in Yellowstone River Cultural Inventory—2006						
	GEO SEG I: Missouri River to Powder River	GEO SEG II: Powder River to Big Horn River	GEO SEG III: Big Horn River to Laurel	GEO SEG IV: Laurel to Springdale	GEO SEG V: Springdale to Gardiner	TOTAL IN GROUP
AGRICULTURAL	22	22	16	12	14	86
CIVIC	14	14	18	14	8	68
RECREATIONAL	15	16	16	13	16	76
RESIDENTIAL	15	11	16	15	19	76
GEOGRAPHIC SEGMENT TOTAL	66	63	66	54	57	
NATIVE AMERICAN						7
PROJECT TOTAL						313

Springdale to Gardiner: Residential Interest Group Analysis

I. *Living Near the River*

A. *They Call it Paradise Valley and It Is*

I feel real fortunate to live here. I mean, they call it Paradise Valley and it is. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It's very peaceful at times, most times, not all the time...[and we like] to see the changes of the river. But probably most [importantly we like] it because it's close to the water....We're pretty active water people. We fish a little, but we mostly just enjoy being around the water. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[I enjoy] the serenity of being here along the river and all the mountain views and snow....I just love all this natural beauty. And we all live in this plastic cement world today so it's just wonderful to be able to get away from that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The river is actually magical. I made the mistake of actually taking relatives on the river and now they want to come back every year. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I like living by the river....It is extremely pleasant in the summertime. We have two creeks. We are almost on a peninsula. The sound of the water is awesome. I like to go and sit by the river and look at the mountains. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[Our home] is a haven. We consider it a haven....It is almost like you are living alone, 50 miles from town. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The river...has a personality. It's different everyday. Sometimes it's your friend, sometimes it ain't your friend. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It is a free-flowing stream that is clear except during the high water until you get to the Billings area. It is very beautiful from Billings on to its headwaters....It is part of the community. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[The river] certainly is a focal point....It's a great resource for the people who live along the river, for agricultural purposes and ground water purposes. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It can have a water cooler existence....'Hey, what's the river doing today? River's running high. River's running low.'...[It's] a conversation piece. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It's just a real benefit to be able to go down and chill out and relax, very calming and soothing....[It is] spiritually seductive. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The mountains have a...type of impact on the individual, even if that individual doesn't acknowledge it....The river has an impact as well. Without the river, the mountains have too much power and actually impact your ego. The river provides a balance,...a healing,...a strengthening of your ego. (*Park County Residentialist*)

You could be an atheist and still appreciate what the mountain and the river have to offer, because it doesn't attach itself to any type of philosophy or train of thought, but it still reminds people that there is something bigger than them....People come and go. The mountain is still going to be here; the river is still going to be here....That's the constant of its existence; that's what attracts people to something like the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The river [provides] spiritual unity....Water is a calming influence on people....We consider this as sacred ground. The river does play a role in it in distributing that sacred essence down to the...rural communities....We actually use the river as a conduit for prayers and a conduit for spirituality. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It was a way to get away from the traffic....[We're] close enough to town where we could work in town and not have to drive so far and still enjoy some of the nature. (*Park County Residentialist*)

What we have is about perfect. We would like some more access like a walking path along the river. Maybe some day they could maybe have a trail all the way into town. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It's part of your body, not your physical body, but it's part of your awareness. So if the rivers' being traumatized, by whatever, it hurts....During high water and things are just washing out and the river is recharged, vibrant and alive, you feel nourished. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. Fish, Wildlife and Habitat are Important

We have a lot of mule deer who always give birth to their young on the island and that's right at the time...the spring run off comes so I think they feel very safe by giving birth on the islands....There were 12 here this morning and it's neat to see last year's young and then this year's young. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We're in the elk migration route. They've been migrating from Yellowstone down here for 10,000 years....They migrate off that flat up there on the top and come down here to the lower lands and...and they feed in that big grass field across the river....[and] they...come across the river to the islands....I just enjoy watching them. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I was down there one day and I heard a mountain lion roar and he came running through there. He was roaring and raising hell. That kind of surprised me. I don't know what he was fussing about but he ran right through there....I heard him raising hell and that is what caught my attention....I didn't get close to him, and he didn't get close to me. He moved on out. Something had disturbed him. I don't know what it was. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We...even [had] a black bear last week, right in the yard....My son was sitting across from me and he said, 'There is a black bear,' and I thought he was being funny. I said, 'Yeah, sure.' He said, 'There is a black bear!' And sure enough there it was. The dog saw it and when it barked it took off. We haven't seen it since. We keep anticipating it will come back. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It's hard to believe but,...about two months ago,...way up on the top of the hill, there...[was] a mountain goat [and] I went out on the porch one day and a pronghorn was walking down the road and looked at us, and a moose. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It has wildlife...ducks,...osprey,...deer,...antelope,...raccoons, elk and skunks,...swans...just a lot of different birds, especially after...bugs hatch there's a lot of activity down by the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

In '96 and '97 they had a tremendous flood....It brought down a lot of beavers. And they cut down probably somewhere in the neighborhood of at least 200 trees that were on these islands which was really kind of sad. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Occasionally [we see] a bear....There have been sightings of cats. (*Park County Residentialist*)

One of the positive things that have happened since I was small is the abundance of game. I can remember when I saw my first deer in the river bottom and now they are everywhere. Whitetails were almost unheard of and the only time we saw a goose was during migration season. No raccoons. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It is not like when my father was small. There...[were] a lot of native cutthroat. He told me he would ride along the river and fish would get trapped along there. There was that many there. I think the introduction of the brown trout and the rainbows probably had more to do with ruining that than the actual fishing. (*Park County Residentialist*)

They've had trouble...with whirling disease...here on the Yellowstone River. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. Recreational Uses, Needs and Pressures

We're not all rich people that can buy ranches and have our own private...hunting and fishing....I think we have the highest per capita participants in hunting and fishing that live in Montana compared to other states and part of the reason is...the

opportunities...we have. It's still good for the average person....They can have as good of access to hunting and fishing as the rich people do and that's real important to keep it that way. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Our grandson walks down and goes fishing....He just loves it here. He is going to be eight. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The outfitters and fishermen are probably the main recreational users...and when I say fishermen, it doesn't have to be clients. [They can be] locals, too. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The increase of traffic along the river...I think tourists are finding out this is a great spot and I think it is increasing. Every year there seems to be a little bit more of an increase in how many people float the river...and fish. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I really do believe that at these fishing access should have one of these portable toilets...and...keep them clean....I think that's a real need for the people...coming down the river and also for the people who live on the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[More people on the river causes] over fishing,...more risk involved for people,...maybe rafting in places where it may not be still enough....I see people not wearing life jackets, [and I see] people drinking....It seems like once or twice a year somebody goes in the river and doesn't come out of the river, which I suspect would be a problem for someone. (*Park County Residentialist*)

When I lived in Billings, we came up here every weekend and floated the river. Now that I live here, I go three or four times a year. You get to taking it for granted. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We have seen...the increase of fishermen on the river and I'm not so sure for many of us folks that live so directly here on the river...really appreciate it to the degree that it is. Some...use language that's not so desirable. They're very loud. They don't seem to have any regard for the wildlife. They get their dogs in the boat...then [the] dog is out there chasing these deer who have just given birth to their young. (*Park County Residentialist*)

A neighbor...has small children and she said, 'It's to a point now that so many of these fishermen are so rude and it's getting so bad I don't want my children exposed to that.' She has moved....Human consideration—...it's missing. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There is just boat after boat after boat coming out to the valley so there is a lot of traffic on the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We enjoy going out by the river,...walking around, sitting out there fishing and watching the otters....We spent a lot of time out there. We never thought about it as money thing....It's more entertainment. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I don't fish. I don't boat....Early on, I had a healthy respect for the river as far as high water and getting into trouble....I was raised on a ranch south of Livingston along the river. I never swam in the river....Once you see the river in high water and see a cottonwood coming downstream with the leaves on it and all of the sudden it goes under water for a few hundred yards, it is kind of scary. These logs along the stream, you can't run fast enough to keep up with them. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I live next to the fishing access....I went out there with a garbage bag...and filled it in nothing flat with garbage....They take our signs down. They've got trails through our property....People are really rude....They don't respect other people's property. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think that you've got outfitters that want to see things for their clients, and their decisions are largely based on money....Their income depends on what kinds of experiences their clients have on the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Growing up on the river we fished it,...just watching the wildlife and floating the river. I used to guide raft trips on the rivers too, and we'd get a lot of fishermen. I have three younger brothers and we all have been avid outdoorsmen and it was a pretty piece of property. (*Park County Residentialist*)

D. The River is Public, Trespassing is a Problem for Some

I am trying to remember if people that have been trashing my property, but I don't believe they have. It is clean down there around the river....They can get down there through a gate on my property. They have kept it clean and haven't messed it up. I don't care if they go down there and have their picnics. It is fine with me. I like for them to enjoy the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I'd like to see public access maintained. I'm a real believer in the stream access law....Let's use the resources. I'd like to see sensible use of it. I don't want to see wildlife adversely affected by or during a drought year. I want to see enough water maintained to keep the fisheries stable and in good condition, if that's possible. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We have a lot of rafters that float by. A lot of fishermen. I enjoy that the river is being used. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Last year there was a guy that had a great big canoe and he spent the night there on the sand bar....We don't know who owns that. Lots of times they will spend the whole day with the family. (*Park County Residentialist*)

One year we had a flood and there were tremendous waves down here. The kayakers found out about it and they [came] in—some of them were changing clothes right on people's property and they were trashing the properties....We did have a problem when

we first moved here. People would drive down here and I had to post the property. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Trespassing can be a problem along the river. We have people go across our property to get to the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

II. Floods of 1996 and 1997 Precipitate Public Debates

A. The Floods Changed Everything

The flood of '96 changed my property....The island broke in half and...when it broke the force of that came over and hit that island and doubled back. My neighbor had very poor rip-rap and [the water] found the weak link and just kept coming to my house....I lost 100 feet [of property]...and part of the house. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[After the flood was over] I said, 'Couldn't we move some of the rocks so the river would go back where it was?' [The Commissioner] said, 'The fishermen wouldn't like that.' I said, 'What is more important?' and he said, 'Around here, the fish.' Can you believe that? (*Park County Residentialist*)

The reporter for the Park County paper said, 'You were the hardest hit in the flood so I am doing a story.'...[They took pictures and the story explained that we not living in the house]...so then [thieves] took our stuff....They didn't get an awful lot...but they got all the stuff we had put in boxes—all kinds of pictures. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I got a letter from the County telling me that I couldn't rebuild because I lost more than half my house and if I decide to move it nobody could use [the property for a home]. They were going to take my place away....My brother-in-law said, 'Let's go see that [county] woman—we haven't lost half of your house.' So, she [came] and walked around, 'Oh, you haven't lost half of your house. You can rebuild.' (*Park County Residentialist*)

After the flood, they built concrete all across the front of the house up to this floor. Then they put the huge rocks in....It is [a] concrete wall...[and] there is the barb. I am pretty safe. It was nothing like this before....They are saying you shouldn't rip-rap, but this is my home. The engineers will allow me to repair this....If anything happens, they will let me fix it. I am grandfathered-in. They will let me do that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

See, no one is supposed to build here [now] because it is a floodway. The house next door that was the last one built on the island. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. Need for Balance, Information and Assistance

1996 and 1997 were historical record flood years and...conversations have really been stark because of those two major floods....I think people got scared about protecting their properties and some properties were lost. And so with the protection of property and

living on the river, there's controversy. And I think, before the [floods, the] controversy probably wasn't as strong....I think we can be good stewards to the water and the river ways but also [we can] protect our homes....Somehow we have to come up with a balance instead of just saying, 'Oh, you can't do this, and you can't do that.' Somehow we have to work together to come up with what is the best thing for the river and [the people]. (*Park County Residentialist*)

In 1996 we lost quite a little bit [of land]....We lost quite a bit this year....We recently...got it re-surveyed and found out that there isn't, and never has been since we've owned it, as much land as we've been paying taxes on. We've been trying to obtain two titles on this property....Once we get that done we will take it to the county treasurer and see what we can do about that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Initially I didn't really know what to do and I was looking for advice [on the permit process]. None of those people give you advice, not the Conservation District, not the flood plain people, and not the Corps of Engineers....I just talked to people. (*Park County Residentialist*)

None of [the users] should be allowed to overtax the facility. Every once in a while you will see maybe six or eight guides with fishermen out. I am sure that they get on each others' nerves. The common sense thing you mentioned,...you know people are basically greedy by nature. (*Park County Residentialist*)

When we first moved here and we knew we had problems with our banks just because of, well, poor management. So we called up several different professionals....We wanted a conversation about what would be the best thing for us and the river. And we didn't get a lot of good information. In fact, very little. And I think that's one of the things that is missing....There's not a lot of people that can afford a major study on how to protect their lands....Somehow we have to have that information available and be willing to work with people on the river so they don't do something that's going to damage someone else, or damage the river, or straighten the river....This is a meandering river. It's great. It should stay that way. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The public, and myself included, we need to have some available information....We [weren't] really good stewards when we moved here. We've done some rock work along our bank, and there wasn't anyone there [to advise us]...unless we could have paid for professionals....But at the time we couldn't afford it....If there's some kind of grants that may be available so you can hire a professional—if those professionals really have the answer—that's a question...I have. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. Ideas About Erosion and Stabilizing the Banks

We did have a flood those two years '96 and '97....It did tear away a lot of my bank....The topsoil that is gone....It's done so much damage to our property out there in those two years of floods we haven't been able to get picked back up again....We're not millionaires; we couldn't get it all done. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think you have to have rocks. If you do it right with vegetation, I think you could do a pretty fair job. I could show you on our place...one place where it has worked very well with vegetative growth, but [it doesn't work] in every place....I think vegetation with rock would be a great way to go, so long as it's done in a way that you're not going to cause damage downstream from you. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The Conservation District encourages people to put the barbs out....The barbs seem to be working pretty good, and then plant vegetation there....I think [those methods] cause less impact down stream. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Don't be too hard on the people that live on the river. I don't have the money to make big changes....I had a bunch of cottonwoods growing and the beavers came and ate every one of them. There went my stabilizing....[The beavers] are really destructive. I am trying to keep this place,...[even though] the moose come and they eat everything they see and...I am not going anywhere. I am going to stay here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

A man down the road here...made a berm out in the river....It caused that river to go right into our property. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We've never experienced any [erosion] here because we have a lot of willows on the river bank right here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I haven't really seen any noticeable [erosion] change at all. And we had a lot of water through here in the spring. (*Park County Residentialist*)

When they put in that rest stop, they put a rock barrier along there....The people in the cabin felt...it diverted the water, pushed it over to their side, and they've almost lost the cabin. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Vegetation is one of the key factors [in helping with erosion,] if it's done...right. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I have seen the river deepening the channels and cut the riverbank....[There are] on the places on the river bank [that were] four or feet high when I was young...[and now they are] 10 or 12 feet high. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Our bank changed....The rocks used to go way out in the river. The main force used to be on the other side. We lost at least two feet in one area of bank. That changed the whole flow of the river. Now it comes around the bend and comes at us and then swings out the other way....It changed dramatically with the flood. You don't notice a flow change as much. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[Rip-Rap] can divert water. It can shift the problems up or down....The reason that I probably might not do the rip-rap is I'd lose ten years of vegetation that's out there since the last flood and the vegetation is as good or better than hard rip-rap...[and] once I talked to some people who explained that to me, I don't really want to tear it up to put

some rock in...but [the information] didn't come from any of the [government agencies.]
(*Park County Residentialist*)

I was interested in one technique [to prevent erosion.] I saw on a ranch that used root balls along the river to start collecting rocks to start building the bank up again....It is a natural form of rip-rap. I saw some of that and was interested in that although when you call somebody that does that natural stuff it costs a lot of money. I don't know if I have that much to put on the bank of the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

D. Concerns About Spring Creeks

The Armstrong and DePuy and Nelson spring creeks....are a valuable asset...[that] brings a lot of money into the economy and they are a unique fishing experience....[At the] campground fishing access, the river eats directly into the gravel. This fills up the river bottom with gravel and it spreads out. It elevates the flood plain. It damages the spring creeks on the east side of the river in that area....These last two high water years really devastated the spring creeks. Nothing has been done as far as I know. No one wants to acknowledge that it is a problem, but it is....They don't know how to deal with it....When you get these large floods and especially if the river is pushed out of its channel, it tends to go down those channels and the spring creeks are located along the western edge of the low lands. (*Park County Residentialist*)

III. Growth in Livingston and Paradise Valley

A. Growth Changes the Physical Landscape

The development is just unreal....At night...I used to drive around and see a dozen lights in the old days, and now there are just hundreds of them, thousands of them, literally. So a lot of the ranches have been chopped up. But it's dollars....They can make more selling it for a house site than they could making hay. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It isn't the houses so much as the people that are coming with the houses. They change what we need. I don't need Wal-Mart; I don't need to be going 100 miles an hour all the time. When my kids were little we would walk out here, they would ride bikes. There used to be a single lane wooden bridge out here. They had to upgrade that and now there is a 35-mile an hour speed limit and nobody pays attention to that. There is all the strip mall development. Pretty soon we will have all that development along there I guess. Maybe that is good for some people. I don't know. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Developers...go and dangle two million dollars in front of somebody's little ranch....[The ranchers] are going to take it. And that's happened a lot. So you're actually losing some of the rural people....[This began in the] late '70s. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Everyone is dividing [the land] up and selling it off because they can't seem to make as much money keeping it as they do with the people [coming in] that are willing to pay.
(*Park County Residentialist*)

I wish that people that moved here, would move here...just for the beauty of Montana and...to get away from the city....[But] it seems everybody that moves here has to put in an...outside light and I'm thinking, 'Why? Are you scared the bears are going to get you at night? Why are you ruining this beautiful night vision of the stars?'...They want to bring the city with them. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Paradise Valley...may change quite a bit. Yankee Jim [Canyon]...won't change a whole lot because of the Forest Service and the Park. But in Paradise Valley, as land prices go up and people start seeing...money, people will start selling their ranches. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think [change in Paradise Valley] would still be minimal because you still have some expansion of Bozeman that will happen, maybe some from Livingston to Bozeman, but,...once you get into Paradise Valley, I don't see [it] over the next ten years. (*Park County Residentialist*)

What the real estate agents saying is that...[it will] be the next boom....Bozeman's in a boom right now. Once that...reaches a homeostasis, then Livingston, which is already experiencing it, then possibly the Emigrant area will experience the boom. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. Results of Development and Change

It's kind of a good/bad thing because...the tax dollars still roll into those places, but yet the people are only here for a small part of a year. So the population, in a sense, is down, but it's still the tax dollars....it's a good/bad thing. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There's an influx of people in the summer, of course, because most of the people aren't here in the winter....Everybody has their own viewpoints on that. I think it doesn't tax our system as much as the people living here [all of the time]....If they're paying their property taxes, I think we're getting a benefit that isn't causing us a lot of problems. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[My kids] will be lucky to afford to live here, I'm afraid. We're lucky we bought our property when we did because we couldn't afford it today....We just got a new law passed by Congress on conservation easements that's a lot more user-friendly. Before, the only people that could use those conservation easements were multi-millionaires, basically. And this new one, in fact I was reading about it this morning, you can defer this for, like, 16 years, where before you had to take your tax deductions in six years. So there are some positives there, although you mention conservation easements to some people and they think they are wicked. I think it will help me for estate planning to be able to pass our place on to the kids easier. (*Park County Residentialist*)

If I could stop the influx of people, I would....Properties [are] gone. I look at my grandkids and I don't see how...they're going to be able to buy a home. I mean, wages just haven't kept up with the prices of homes....We're pushing our own kids out of the

state....How in the world are they going [to] live here unless they get a piece of land and build their own little house? (*Park County Residentialist*)

Livingston has turned into nothing but a tourist town, nothing but art....There's nothing. We have to go to Bozeman to get almost anything. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Most of the ranchers are looking down the road and thinking, if they get in trouble, they can subdivide. From what I am hearing, the price of the lots on subdivisions is going down. They aren't selling like they were. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. Responsible Development

Some [developers] are doing a good job, and some of them are just looking for the quick buck, I'll be quite honest....A guy from Wisconsin did a subdivision down here by Mill Creek, and he did a really nice job....[But there are] not a lot of local people doing development because you're talking high dollars now to buy these ranches and develop them. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think that most of the property owners recognize the importance of the river so any type of development that may go on will...[be] responsible....They [will try to] blend...with the natural scene of the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We actually did a little development on our ranch....We did the 20-acre tract thing because it was easy to do. But we also went through the planning office and county sanitarian and tried to do everything that they suggested. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think what their plans are...to develop...a...cluster development so...it leaves a lot of wild open spaces....People buying there will be able to enjoy the beauty, and the people traveling through the valley will still be able to enjoy it....That would be a great thing. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Paradise Valley doesn't have much good farming ground in it. It is a large gravel bar. It isn't like the Gallatin Valley, which is really being raped....If they keep the subdivisions over on the gravelly parts, it isn't going to hurt somebody. That is probably good use of the ground. Billings used up all the good land for miles....They could go [away from]...the irrigated ground and build forever, but they choose to build on the good ground....People can come here and should be able to if they choose to live here in a responsible manner. I would have the same right if I wanted to move somewhere else. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[The canal] was first built in 1890 by the Armstrong family. It is an important part of the valley for agriculture. It furnishes water to both sides of the valley....[We need to educate the public about] the economic benefits of it to the community [and that] irrigation...takes a lot of floodwaters out of the streams, especially the small streams and lets it back into the groundwater system....They are entirely dependent on the recharge. It

isn't important as far as the Yellowstone but it is important along the rivers. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We think that [when] people have bare land there has to be some thought as to what goes on there. Some planning. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I do want to see a good growth policy plan....I certainly don't blame the ranchers for selling their property and making money because that's all they had and you know they can make enough to retire on so you can't blame them. But on the other hand people have got to kind of plan for the future because I just think that these are kind of the good old days. We aren't going to have less and less people. We are going to have more and more people and change is going to happen whether we like it or not. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think it's important to have the planning....You have to have those discussions....I live in Montana not to make money, but because I enjoy the outdoors....We have to protect the environment....I do think that you have to grandfather in [the] people...here before those decisions, especially local people. We don't make a lot of money...and everything that we own is tied up in this property....We could sell this and make a profit but I couldn't buy property anywhere else. It's just gotten so high. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There needs to be a direct growth policy from a diverse group of people. You can't have one special interest trying to dictate. It's got to be give and take. You're not going to stop them from coming in here. You can stop them putting raw sewage in the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

D. Irresponsible Development and Changes

The subdivision regulations [were written] by the professional planners for Park County and they actually did a pretty good job....Now we have citizens, [and] I think a lot of them are developers or people working with developers, that are trying to oppose the growth policy that was established....[The policy] is very broad, but they just want to see subdivision regulations thrown out....It's the old, 'Don't tell me what I can do. I can do anything and if you don't like what I'm doing then you have to buy it.' That's the attitude....There are a lot of local developers that are really outspoken....They may be leaving soon after they develop, I don't know. But they are local....I know one [who] will be out of here once they develop and sell their property. (*Park County Residentialist*)

You'd like to see it stay as wild as possible, but...common sense tells you that that's...not going to happen....Development here is just absolutely the major thing....When the County tries to do anything,...[the developers] say, 'We're going to sue you for this' and the County thinks, 'Well geez.' They've got all these lawsuits. They can't afford to fight all that. These people that are developing, they're making millions of bucks so they have the money to threaten. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Some of the developers are wanting services yesterday and not wanting to pay for them until tomorrow. Of course they said, ‘Oh, bring in three more planners. We just want this system to work fast. We’ll pay more.’ Of course, soon as the County raised the rates, they squawked. I think there’s three lawsuits against the county right now because of some of those problems. (*Park County Residentialist*)

You have developers that obviously want to be able to build right up to the riverbank and build big trophy homes to sell...I’ve been a contractor for most of my life and in the construction business around here. So I can see certain points, but I sure don’t want to give up what’s good about Montana just for the sake of [my] job as a contractor. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We’ve been fighting this road project now for the last five years....This is a country road...[and] people built here...because they wanted the serenity....[The proposal to make it a State highway will create] a hazard because people are going to fly....[and] people are not going to pay any attention to [the debris-falling signs]. People are going to die on this road because you’re going to create this speedway....The County’s saying they can’t afford to maintain it...[and] the State will not listen to the people that live here and pay taxes here. They’re more concerned about the people coming in and visiting for two weeks then they are about the people who live here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It depends on how the lands along the river sell as to what happens. It is zoned [as] agriculture lands and they are putting subdivisions in on ground that has less value. The biggest danger I see is...the string of houses along the roads with no open space. I think that is the biggest challenge is to preserve open space so it isn’t one subdivision after another. (*Park County Residentialist*)

One man [is developing] a gated community....He’s doing some appropriate things—he’s doing a lot of studies and spending a huge amount of money. It’s going to be second homes—and very, very expensive. He’s calling it a Private National Park....He wants to buy two sections of State land, and I oppose that. I’ve been writing letters...[because] public land is basically being sold for privatization and development. It’s happening, but whether it should is a whole other question. (*Park County Residentialist*)

IV. Observations Regarding the Governor’s Task Force

A. They Could Have Done Better

I did go to some of the meetings. I just thought they weren’t really getting anywhere in the meetings....They weren’t allowing the professionals to be a participant and a voting party, so basically they had task force members, but a lot of the scientists and people that have the expertise, I felt, were not part of the equation. I mean, they came and they presented things, but [the professionals] weren’t a voting mass....The scientists and the professionals...need to be participants in the Task Force, not just presenters. Because they are the people that know, and they should be the people that are helping this balance that needs to be met here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There were tons of recommendations [from the Governor's Task Force] but I don't see where any of their recommendations were followed at all....The people...on there...did a good job....It's a sad thing because there's a lot of good-meaning people put a lot of time into that and really cared about what they were doing. Then to see nothing happen out of it is kind of discouraging. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. They Did A Pretty Good Job—They Didn't Hurt Anything

You know, [the Task Force] didn't hurt....I know several of the people that were on it and some of them came away with a better feeling, some of them came away with a worse feeling....[The one's that thought it helped] felt they did some good and that the government was honest with them. The other group...[says] it's the old conspiracy theory, 'They used us.' (*Park County Residentialist*)

[Regarding the Task Force] I think...[they made good decision about] the flood plain and how the rip-rap was done to prevent erosion. Overall, there was a lot of good, sound thinking and they reached compromises. The health of the river came first and will be maintained. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. When Groups Fight, Bad Decisions Follow

I don't think [the various groups] really work well together....I'll give you an example: After the floods of '97, our bridge, that is right up stream from us, is called Carter's Bridge. [It] was determined...dangerous, and that it needed to have some major repairs....During those floods [the bridge] was creating a dam situation....[But they never considered] changing...the bridge so that the bridge would work better during major floods because of its historical [value]. Never; it didn't even come up. Wasn't even a part of the equation....I've asked several times [for information concerning] how much money was spent on repairing that bridge—and I know it was phenomenal....I know it was a historical bridge, fine. They could have kept the historical aspect [but] there are a lot of problems with that bridge....[And] they did damage to the river when they did the construction....They started bulldozing the island at five o'clock on a Sunday morning and I got on the phone to everyone I could possibly [think of] to get it stopped....They did some pretty major damage. In fact, they did some channel changes by doing that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

V. Other Concerns

A. Water Quality and Industrial Uses

The sewage overflow...[at] the plant...in Gardiner....If we have an outage, they didn't have a switch that would cut it over to emergency generator to keep it going...until...the guy...working part-time get[s] there to start the generator....The concern that I have is Yellowstone Park should have their own facility and not be using Park County's facility. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Gardiner sewage was going into the river....Gallons of raw sewage. It was so sad. (*Park County Residentialist*)

In the last two years, in the spring run off...the river turns...orange and...it's coating over the rocks and everything....So there's run-off that's coming from somewhere. (*Park County Residentialist*)

If you have a major industry setting up somewhere downstream,...just putting a burden on the whole ecosystem, that has ramifications all over the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think people treat the river with more respect than they used to. It used to be that the place to get rid of the trash was right on the river. When I was a boy there were all kinds of old tires on the river. Gardiner would just roll them down the hill into the river. If you wanted a big fish, they fed on the sewage. I don't think they were especially good eating. Those things have been cleaned up. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. Weeds

We're involved...with weed control and have an...early summer project every year on different ways to control noxious weeds....I would go there and hand-pull...a lot of noxious weeds on the island, and it's getting to the point here where it's beyond that...and the State doesn't do anything about it. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We have had some problems with weed control....I noticed Fish and Game...spraying the weeds but in the past they were doing the moth thing, ...which never worked. We pumped thousands of dollars into spraying knapweed. (*Park County Residentialist*)

When you float the river you notice there is a lot of knapweed. We have a lot here. We see a lot of it and it runs off everything else. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. Cottonwoods

The cottonwoods...are dying here....There are trees...right along the water, getting plenty of water, and you'll see...a branch that will die and next year will be another one and another one....And...the canopy does a lot of things. It's a great thing for wildlife...when we have heavy rains, it keeps the silt run off and all these things....And I really don't see a response from the state or the federal government really trying to figure out exactly what's happening. (*Park County Residentialist*)

VI. Changes in Management and Controls

A. It's Tough When Things Change—Water Rights

We're going to have a leasing meeting over on Mill Creek with the watershed group next week, and a lot of people are feeling that they're coming up short because [one guy is]

leasing his water rights [to provide for the fish in the creek]. It is going to effect me, but we have a law that says, if it's beneficial use, you can do that....Fish and Wildlife is beneficial according to our legislature, now....And, let's face it, I'll be the first to say, that sometimes the fish in that creek are worth more than the hay I'm raising....[Most people] got their irrigation systems put in by the government—not totally free, but with lots of grant money—that was ten years ago....[Now, with this guy leasing his water, another] says, 'It's not fair.' Well, it may not be fair, but you did get a new pivot...for half-cost....So, I don't know. It's tough. I mean, that's going to be a real contentious meeting....We have water rights, but we dry up Emigrant Creek every year. So I can see both sides. But sometimes I [ask about the] outfitters and how much money they make on the Yellowstone River—it's tremendous. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. Stop Building Near the River

We need to be looking pretty seriously at why we're still allowing homes to be built on the river. And...I'm kind of speaking out of two ends here because I do live on the river, but I do think that since the floods we need to look more seriously at what we are allowing....Each place wants to protect their property....Are we all going to be able to do that and still allow the river to be healthy? (*Park County Residentialist*)

It will put more people on the river. It will impact the visual aspects of the river. I think there should be setbacks from the river, for aesthetic problems and pollution from septic tanks. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. Need for Consistency in Controls

During the '96 flood they started losing bank along Highway 89, and they went into panic mode. The Park Service, the State, came here and brought trucks loads of rock....During the major part of the flood they were dumping truck loads of rock along 89. And they were losing tons of money, but they felt like they had to do it. But it was interesting to me that they can do that, but if you have a homeowner...[who] starts to do that, you would probably be handcuffed....Even if it is the highway [department], I mean, still....[Whether] it's the Department of Transportation [or] it's a homeowner....Are we all going to work together? Because, if we don't, we're just going to continue to have problems. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I often feel that the State and the Federal government are far more lackadaisical and do not implement rules....We were told by the county when we built here, 'You better not let a pebble go into the river while you're building'....[But] I've watched...when part of the bluffs falls down, they just plow it...right into the river....They don't abide by the same rules and regulations. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The Army Corps of Engineers [said] the levy in Livingston...does not follow specifications. If you were to walk that levy, you couldn't believe it would ever break, but I understand the standards....[This means] those people on the Northeast side of Livingston [will be affected]...and that's not a real high income area. Being told that you

can't do changes to your property, that's going to be a hardship....We'll see what happens with all of that. Not to say they need to not be concerned [about flooding]. They do. But I think it's kind of a funny deal. They're allowing building in other places...that flooded [in the past]. They know it. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think the local decisions can be made as far as growth policy and planning....But I think the State needs to be in charge of the resources and the wildlife....Access to public lands— that needs to be a state controlled thing. It's best managed that way. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[The State] is following all the rules. The Legislature makes rules. Sometimes they are knee-jerk rules and State agencies have to follow those because that's what the law says. It's not necessarily that they agree with it all the time....But Legislature is influenced by special interest groups....It's a nasty, dirty process [and] probably the least favorite thing that I've ever had to deal with [was] go up there and talk to those guys....There's also the bureaucratic thing:...one person [is] not willing to stick their neck out and make a decision and they pass the buck to the next person....So you end up talking to half a dozen people before you get somebody to that has the guts to make a decision. (*Park County Residentialist*)

D. Policies Need to Change as Demands Grow

The latest the efforts have been a lot about growth....They've been trying to work on the growth policy and the subdivision regulations....So that there are setbacks from the river. And Park County Environmental Council is definitely behind setbacks, and I agree. I agree that new building needs to be different than the old....It shouldn't be that we say, 'Well, you live like that so why not [the next?]'....You know, things change. We need to be better stewards because there are a lot of us. (*Park County Residentialist*)

We're going to get more regulations....And, of course, you have all sides....You get the guys that say, 'They are taking our property rights.' I try to tell people that what you do [on one side of] the road sometimes does affect the other side of the road. They don't like to hear that, of course, but we have to be honest....It's the conspiracy theory, the government's-got-too-much-control theory. I get a lot of that here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

It was so important then that the Park County Environmental Council and myself worked on trying to get a growth policy and subdivision regulations that were going to be thinking about smart growth, thinking about if this area is going to be developed, [do it] in a manner that's best for the landscape and the residents. (*Park County Residentialist*)

E. Listen to Locals

The largest input should be from the local people and what they want...because each county here has different circumstances....Even though you have a lot of similarities, each one has their own uniqueness. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The people that live here and ranch here and have businesses here,...they have a lot of concerns about regulations...because it might effect their property and their values....A good example of that is the rest of the United States wanted wolves in the west, but...they don't have to live with them....I have friends where they've killed their sheep,...their cows,...their horses....The people that live here have to deal with this and everybody else just thinks it's wonderful...and there's a big concern about the buffalo...and the brucellosis. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I would like to feel like somebody's listening to me because I live here....I care about it and...I want to see it still be here for my grandchildren and generations to come....God gave me this [to me] and he made me the caretaker and this is my job. I don't do it for money. I do it because this is my job. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[The Chair of the County Commission] he said we want to have a growth policy committee with members of the community...and have [the plan] percolate from the bottom up...I attended meetings with the Livingston group...for five or six months and the county hired...a facilitator and...each of the 13 [geographic] parts of the county met and presented [their thoughts] to the planning board....[Then the plan] was adapted...by the planning office and the County Commissioner....Our concerns were totally nullified....What really got me was [that we put in] a concerted effort....They said they had 34 statements from individuals...[and that] if you have a certain number of letters that say the same thing they get the same weight as a bunch of people that sit in a room and bang heads for five months. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There was a bridge...that we had to have removed. During high water we were worried about it creating a log jam in that channel behind the house. It was very hard to get the State to do that. We almost had to threaten [them]....Their fishing access actually crosses our property and...my neighbor's property. So if they weren't going to pull that bridge we were going to shut their access off....It had to come to...that to get them to do something....They just passed the buck, you know....Typical bureaucratic bullshit. (*Park County Residentialist*)

VII. We All Need to Get Along

A. We're So Polarized But We Have to Accept Controls

We all need to get along and see each other's side—and that just doesn't happen because we're all so polarized anymore. It's a really fine line...when you're in business....I try to walk that line all the time and try not to upset too many people, but sometimes you have to. (*Park County Residentialist*)

My boys were...out on the river fishing...and [the neighbor] down the road calls the Sheriff on them every time. They fish off the bank....Now, these boys grew up here. Their grandpa has worked really hard on stream access laws. They know what they can legally do. He calls the Sheriff on them every time and the [Sheriff] can't do anything

about it. [The neighbor is] the one who would like to see no one on his riverbank fishing. He thinks it's his river bank and it isn't. (*Park County Residentialist*)

There is a segment of the population that thinks there shouldn't be any irrigation water taken out of the river, which is entirely against my upbringing. I was on the Board of Directors for the Park Ranch Canal for many years. It was a constant hassle with environmental regulations as far as getting the water out of the river. It was quite an expense to the canal company to try and get the water out....I am not on the board anymore. It was a headache. (*Park County Residentialist*)

You have people that come here from other areas....There are tents laid on the islands and they've got bonfires going. And it would just be devastating if it...got out of control....I just think that there needs to be some policy set....We all like the freedoms and don't really like the federal government...telling us what to do, but...you have to look at the overall protection of something that's beautiful here. (*Park County Residentialist*)

They just don't want [zoning]. I was raised on a ranch and I lived in town for awhile and the townspeople gave up the right to zoning. They just exchanged one right for another. I wouldn't live in town without zoning....When there isn't any zoning, they can't tell you what to do, but when you have zoning you have the right to stop a big farm next to you, for example. You give up one right and acquire another one. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The high school...was built on right on an old channel. I mean, some of those mistakes were made a long time ago...[and] they have to determine how they're going to live with it. I think Livingston...[and] Paradise Valley...[have] a lot of concerns....I'm not saying you shouldn't be allowed to build along the river; I just think there needs to be certain setbacks. (*Park County Residentialist*)

B. Private Property Rights Are Important

Private property rights are always an issue along the river. They often are trampled on by regulation and then those regulations cost the private property owners along the river money....There is always a balance and to find that balance and for everyone to be responsible along the river....I think that's done through education not through regulation. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Conservation easements, for a lot of ranchers,...[mean] you are giving up rights to your ground. Once they are gone, they are gone. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The ranching community has had an aversion to any zoning or control and I think that mindset has prevented a lot of these things from happening. I think that is changing but they just don't want any more regulation. (*Park County Residentialist*)

[In our subdivision] there are 13 lots and 60 acres on the entire island. We have the largest lot and ours is 3.17 acres. The common ground belongs to everybody. Everybody

in the subdivision has access. We have a liability insurance problem if they just open it up. (*Park County Residentialist*)

C. Stewardship—Private and Among Agencies

I think [we need] to be good stewards of the river and to the environment. I think that's probably the most important thing that we need to be right now. (*Park County Residentialist*)

If you want to protect your property, try to get some information, if you can,...[about what's] going to be the most appropriate thing for the river and your property....If you're going to buy on the river, then you need to be somewhat responsible in what you're doing, especially because the river is the most vital thing we've got probably. Water is going to be the biggest issue in the next decade, especially after a fire season like the one we just had. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The Army Corps of Engineers...needs to look very seriously at the roads that are in proximity to the river and the bridges. If bridges are dams, they need to be repaired and they need to be looked at....[The Army Corps of Engineers needs] to be [a] good steward because they are the ones that really have the say on what is going to happen....And if they're asking us to be good stewards, then they should be too. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I don't anticipate any changes for our place. I have two sons...and I'd like to leave it just like it is for them. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The most painful...[thought is to] treat the river as an object...that's up for negotiation and that can be abused....That would really hurt because you couldn't have a relationship with the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

D. Why Get Involved

I'm on the watershed group...I'm on the local fire board here, and I'm on the electrical Co-op Board...[and I] used to be on the refuge board, but not anymore. So, yeah, I'm pretty active in the community....You know, you can't complain about things if you're not trying to help solve the problems....And there's pros and cons....I get more public input than anybody else because I am out in the public all the time. (*Park County Residentialist*)

A few of us just got to kicking around ideas [about] what we could do and maybe there was some grant money out there to help do things better....[We got involved with the watershed group] and it is kind of Ag oriented, I'll say....[We're trying to keep] the Ag producers in the area profitable....We have a wheat grant...and we have a cottonwood grant [so] that we can plant cottonwoods along the river....Anyone that owns property from Livingston to Gardiner [can join] the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group....We encourage that, especially the 20-acre tract people...that don't know knapweed is a weed.

They think it's a pretty flower and they're watering it. [They don't know] we have bugs that we released [to kill the knapweed]....One of our grants, two years ago, [provided money for us to] release bugs on seven sites along the river. (*Park County Residentialist*)

A lot of these new people come in here and buy these big ranches and the first thing they want to do is close off access on a previously used county road....We as citizens need to fight for...our access to the public lands because these people make no bones about it, they're trying to fence off their own little piece of heaven. (*Park County Residentialist*)

My big thing is the public access and the public's right to use the resources and enjoy the wildlife....Most of us live here because of what the outdoors has to offer....We just really need to safeguard that. (*Park County Residentialist*)

The squeaky wheel gets the grease. If you want to have something done you've got to make some noise. It's good to think about doing it the right way. It's good to understand the process. I just think your average person doesn't understand the process. They don't know how to go through it. (*Park County Residentialist*)

Not everybody sees things the way I do. But...it's good to have different opinions too, because that's how you get problems solved. You can't have everybody agree on everything. You need to be able to have good healthy arguments about things and hash out the details. (*Park County Residentialist*)

I think your typical person isn't up-to-date....[They] usually...don't want to be bothered with things...until it actually affects their pocketbook....People are not really proactive....So...residents do get left behind to a certain extent. They're not going to get involved until all of a sudden their well gets contaminated and they have to drill a new well and then they're fined. (*Park County Residentialist*)