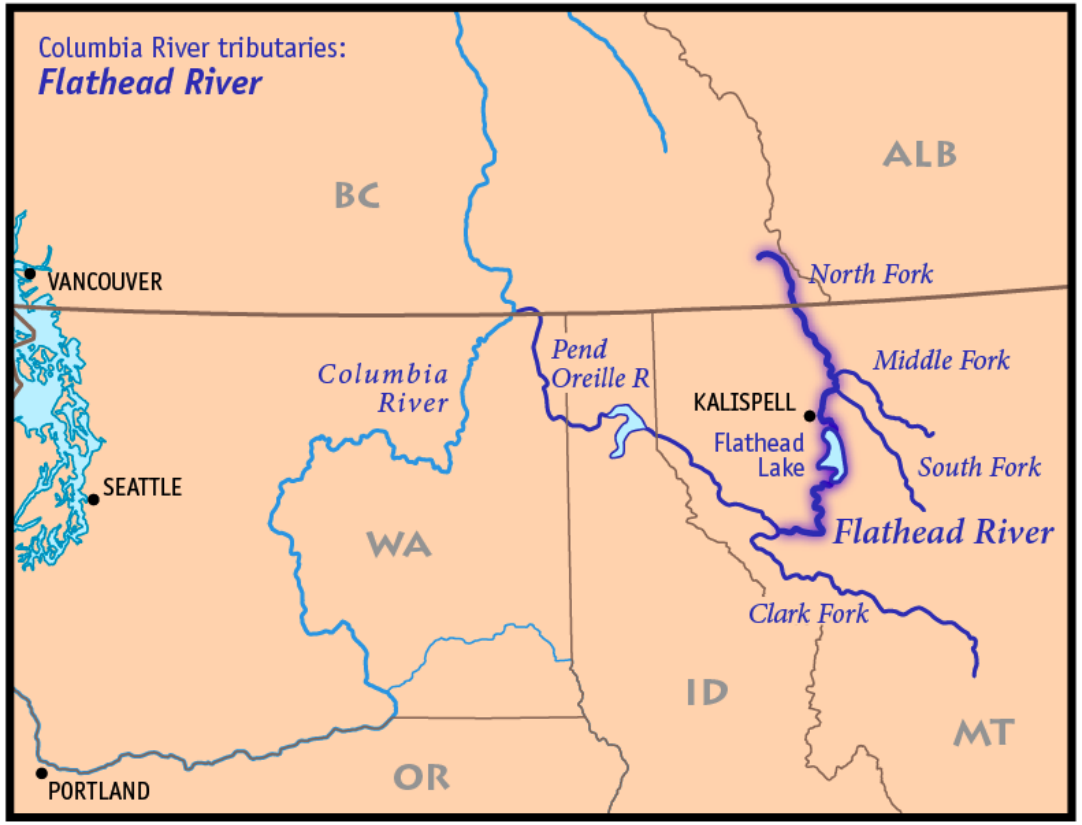
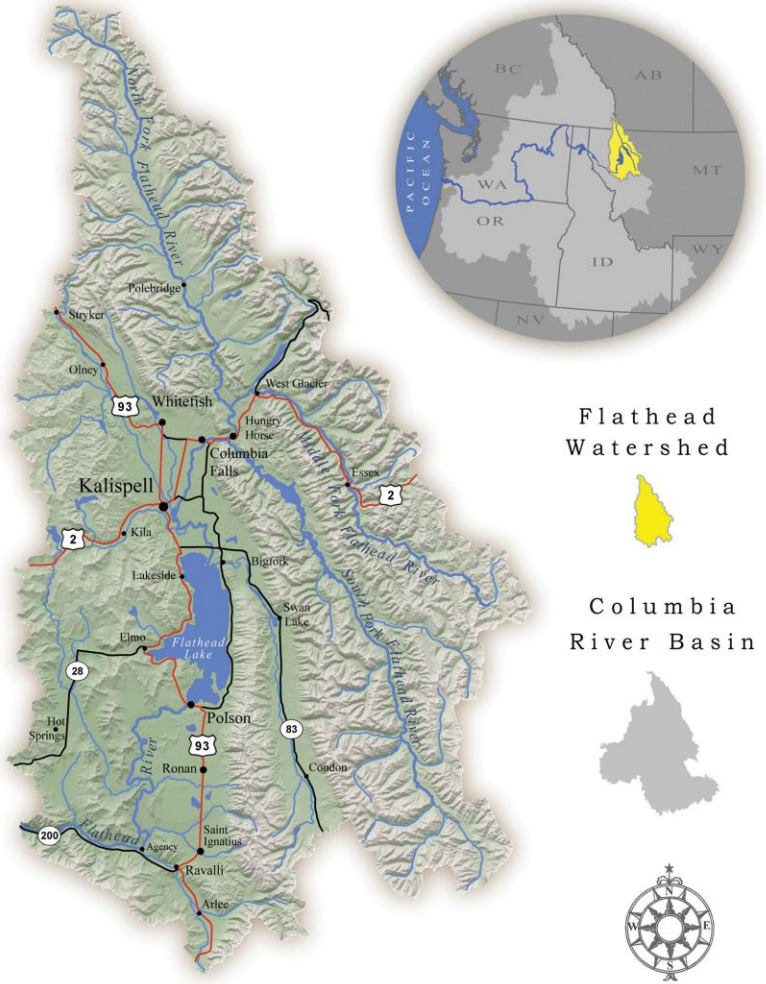
A Resolution for Change?

The Story of SJ28: A Resolution for the Study of Erosion on the Flathead River



Flathead Watershed























MONTANA
ASSOCIATION *of*
CONSERVATION
DISTRICTS

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF EROSION ALONG THE FLATHEAD RIVER.

67th Legislature SJ 28

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF EROSION ALONG THE FLATHEAD RIVER.

WHEREAS, the Flathead River originates in the MacDonald Range in southeastern British Columbia before flowing south to Montana and emptying first into Flathead Lake and eventually into the Clark Fork River; and

WHEREAS, the three forks of the Flathead River and other tributaries comprise the Flathead River basin watershed, which drains 8,587 square miles; and

WHEREAS, the Flathead River is important for the natural and economic life of the Flathead Valley; and

WHEREAS, economists estimate significant fiscal impacts associated with the Flathead River and Flathead Lake, including shoreline property values of $6 billion to $8 billion, nature-based tourism that comprises roughly 20% of the $7.8 billion local economy, and ecological services, such as water supply and purification and flood and drought mitigation, that contribute more than $20 billion in benefits to human society; and

WHEREAS, the lower Flathead River in Flathead County is bordered by private lands of agricultural, ecological, and economic importance; and

WHEREAS, the Flathead Lake Biological Station lists erosion as negatively impacting water quality on Flathead Lake; and

WHEREAS, the total maximum daily load report for Flathead Lake identifies suspended sediments, caused by streambank erosion, to be a major contributor to phosphorus and nitrogen loading of Flathead Lake; and

WHEREAS, the Flathead-Stillwater watershed restoration plan identifies streambank erosion as a


Conservation Districts
Grant Program Guidelines
2022-2023
Updated: 8/15/2022
Garfield County
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program
Watershed Management Grant
Program Guidance
The Watershed Management Grant program supports watershed related planning and capacity building activities that conserve, develop, manage, or preserve state natural resources.
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation






Collaboration

JEFF WELBORN
RHONDA KNUDSEN
MARTY MALONE
BOB PHALEN

FINAL agenda

Water Policy Interim Committee

Sept. 20-21, 2022
Room 137
Agenda times are approximate

Tuesday, Sept. 20

1 p.m. Call to order
- Roll call
- Meeting overview—Mr. Mohr

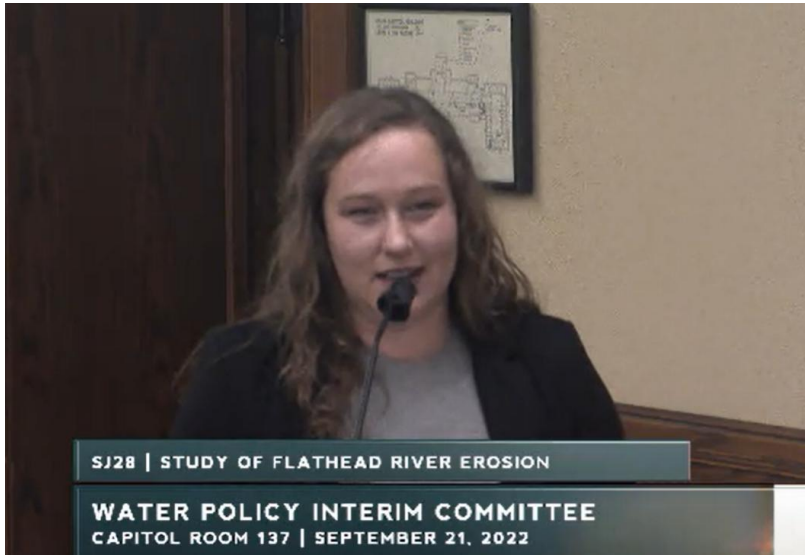
1:05 p.m. Agency rulemaking update
- Mr. Carroll
- Public comment
- Committee discussion and action, if any



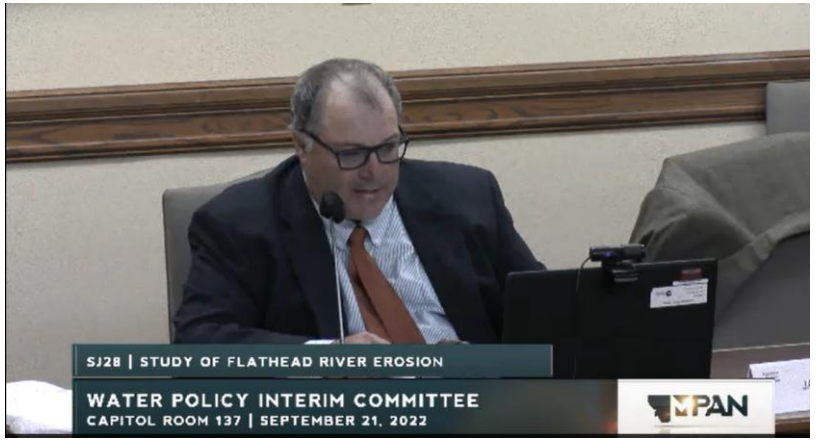
Water Policy Interim Committee

2021 - 2022

FINAL Work Plan



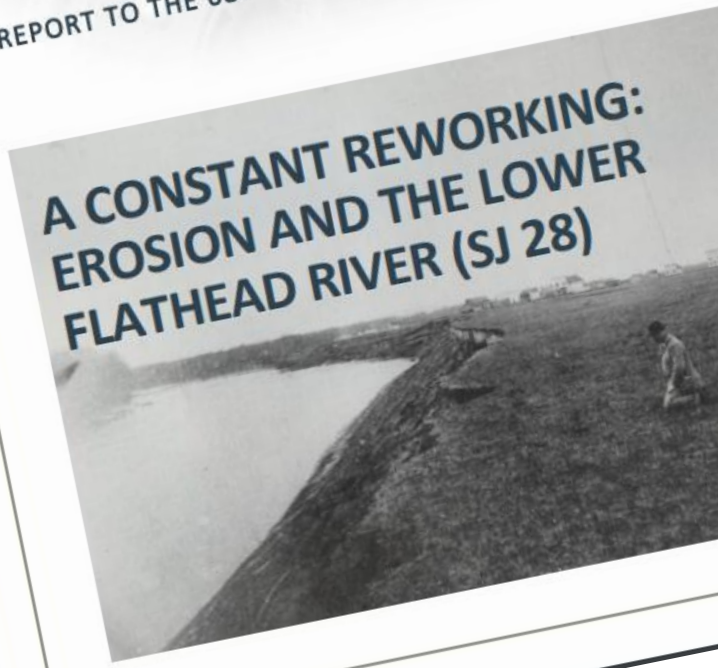




September 2022
Water Policy Interim Committee

REPORT TO THE 68TH MONTANA LEGISLATURE

A CONSTANT REWORKING: EROSION AND THE LOWER FLATHEAD RIVER (SJ 28)



List of Solutions

Policy solutions to help mitigation erosion along the lower Flathead River are somewhat limited. Policy will not be able to control exception flood or storm events or alter the meanderings of an alluvial river on a "flat land."

The first solution may reside with landowners who decide or are forced to take matters into their own hands and install armored or bioengineered methods of erosion control.

Policy options include the following:

- Expand education and outreach efforts on causes and effects of erosion.
- Develop a landowner incentive program for installation of certain bank stabilization methods.
- Establish a no-wake zone for certain types of boating. This could be imposed by either the Montana Legislature or the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission.
- Designate the lower Flathead River as lakeshore, effectively creating a no-wake zone for all sections of river less than 200 feet from shore.
- Create land use regulations through the Flathead County Commission or the Flathead Conservation District to reduce accelerated runoff into the affected watershed.
- Appeal to federal authorities to revise Qlipse' Dam operational requirements, perhaps reducing the summertime lake pool elevation.



WATER POLICY INTERIM COMMITTEE MEMBERS AT LAKE HELENA. (STAFF PHOTO)

As of June 23, 2022, the committee had not made a recommendation related to SJ 28.

Thank you!

MONTANA ASSOCIATION of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

LEWIS & CLARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES OF THE FLATHEAD RESERVATION

MONTANA DNRC

MONTANA TROUT UNLIMITED

FLATHEAD LAKERS
DEFENDERS OF THE WATERSHED

FLATHEAD LAKE BIO STATION
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

FLATHEAD RIVERS ALLIANCE

CDB CONSERVATION DISTRICT BUREAU

Flathead Basin Commission

FLATHEAD CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Flathead River Commission

