



You may have noticed that blue ribbons and bows are appearing throughout the Flathead Valley. Some adorn mailboxes and posts, others surround tree trunks and fence rails. There's a very important reason for this colorful public display.

The residents of the valley are showing their support for the preservation of our most precious resource. WATER.

“Montana Artesian Water Company” (MAWC) has proposed a water bottling factory in the very heart of our valley. This project has garnered furious opposition and is currently being challenged by the recently formed non-profit “Water for Flathead’s Future.” (WFF) The group was established in the last three months to bring awareness to the people of this County regarding the consequences of allowing industrial factories to set up shop here. Currently, the DNRC is reviewing the numerous valid objections filed and will begin a hearings process slated for July 7th.

Vice Chairman, Sheila Zohrer, states “We are extremely concerned that as of now, we have NO safeguards in place to prevent industrial water extraction from our aquifers. The massive amount of water proposed to be taken from our valley (191 million gallons per year) for sale elsewhere, presents a multitude of dangerous problems that go way beyond the very real possibility of citizens having to drill deeper wells or having to drop well pumps. As the ground water table drops, so will the pothole lakes and wetlands drop along with our property values. The amount of waste water from the proposed operation to be returned to our Flathead River system is estimated to be 30,000 gallons per day. This is water which will be used to rinse the plastic bottles manufactured on site. Although MAWC claims there will be no harmful contaminants in this discharge, and that it will be cooled to the proper temperature before it is returned to the river system, it has yet to be studied in enough detail to satisfy people’s concerns over possible endocrine interrupting chemicals which affect aquatic life as well as other possible environmental hazards. Allowing the first commercial endeavor of this kind sets a precedent for more companies to do the same. Industrial water grabs have been happening all across this country from California to Maine. We are here to sound the alarm! A handful of low paying jobs does not balance the enormous risk this poses to the residents here, who will be left to pick up the pieces when things go wrong. We need to be looking down the road for ways to protect our water for generations to come.”

“We urge all concerned citizens of this valley to prominently display blue ribbons or bows at their homes and businesses to show support for protecting and conserving our water. We encourage you to get creative with your displays by using materials of your choice. We want to see a lot Blue out there!”

For more information and to make a much appreciated donation as we fight a critical legal battle for our water and our valley, please visit our website: waterforflatheadsfuture.org