

My husband and I were excited to build our dream home on a small acreage in the Riverwood Subdivision just outside of Bozeman. We worked closely with the builders on all aspects of construction and moved into our home in late fall of 2021.

Our well was drilled early on in the process. Nobody ever notified us that there was any need to file for water rights... our Realtor was unaware of a requirement as were our builders, the well driller and the developer of our subdivision. That is because there WAS NO requirement to do so. Now, we have learned years later that the rules have changed and that not only do we not have water rights but that we cannot obtain said water rights.

We attended both the local DNRC explanatory meeting in Bozeman and the legislative committee meeting in Helena. We will stream the committee meeting tomorrow, March 26, as we are unable to attend in person.

We went to the DNRC office in Bozeman to file for water rights under the advice of our Realtor after the meetings. We were told "we are no longer accepting applications. All new applications are being denied anyway". How terribly frustrating.

We understand that there are many homeowners and developers statewide that are impacted by this change in procedure and we refuse to believe that there is not an easy and affordable fix. We certainly have no interest in some of the suggestions like installing a community water system as we have already invested tens of thousands of dollars in a perfectly good well.

Every affected property in our neighborhood is currently unsellable and there are homeowners who have lost eligible buyers recently. Grandfathering in those wells that were already drilled under the rules that existed at the time seems to make the most sense.

Thank you for your consideration.

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