

**MDEQ Quarterly Progress Report
EPA Wetland Development Grant Program
CD 97874701-0 Federal Fiscal Year 2007
Report Date – June 30, 2008
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The Montana Department of Environmental Quality received a Wetland Protection Development Grant from EPA for \$168,000 as stated in the Wetland Protection Assistance Agreement awarded February 25, 2008. A non-federal match of \$56,000 will be met for this grant. This grant provides funding for three Montana wetland program development activities as described in the work plan submitted September 27, 2007 and approved November 30, 2007. This grant was awarded with an expiration date of December 31, 2008. This short project period date (9 months) was a mistake and we are actively seeking an extension to March 31, 2010.

1) Coordinate Wetland Program Development – Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

Summary of Activities

This project includes four major tasks. 1) Lead the Montana Wetland Council to develop an annual work plan from the 5-year Strategic Framework. 2) Research and develop a sustainable finance plan. 3) Hold three statewide Wetland Council meetings in 2008. 4) Administer the Wetland Grant program. Accomplishments/Problems

Work plans are being developed at the Working Group level rather than the full Council level. Working Group chairs inform Council participants at each meeting and through monthly Montana Wetland News e-newsletters. The Program Coordinator attended a grant writing workshop and is developing a strategy for funding wetland, riparian and floodplain mapping. A Wetland Council Technical Session and Habitat Tours was held in Southwestern Montana in early June (summary attached). Nearly 60 people attended the Council meeting's technical session and about 40 attended field tours. Grant administration is on task. Problems include the 07 development grant award was late in arriving (March 2008), delays in requesting an extension, and challenges in retaining DEQ staff.

Schedule

This project is scheduled for the calendar year.

2) Develop Wetland/Riparian Conservation Program – Montana Wetlands Legacy

Summary of Activities

This project includes three major tasks. 1) Develop a comprehensive Conservation Focus Area prioritization process. 2) Develop consensus and deliver year 1 of the Restoration Strategic Direction. 3) Explore potential for creating a wetland, stream, and other aquatic natural resource mitigation crediting program in Montana.

Accomplishments/Problems

This project is just getting started

Schedule

This project was contracted on 6/25/08. This contract will need to be extended to 6/30/09 after the grant has been extended.

3) Channel Migration Zones and Floodplain Inundation Studies for Local Government(s) - Contracted

Summary of Activities

This project includes three major tasks. 1) Identify and select local government desiring science-based information for wetland protection. 2) Develop channel migration zone maps. 3) Provide GIS database for use in decision-making.

Accomplishments/Problems

The Wetland Program Coordinator has canvassed numerous local governments individually and at several events including the Association of Montana Floodplain Managers annual meeting and the No Adverse Impact Riparian Workshop and has received feedback that a slightly different scope of work for Task 2 above would be more valuable. Local governments need approximate Zone A Floodplain maps identifying designated floodplains for decision-making along with conservation area or critical area maps for aquatic resources. Therefore, I would like to revise Task 2 of this project and the associated outputs to develop Zone A Floodplain maps rather than channel migration zone maps. I am working with the Governor's Task Force for Riparian Protection, the Department of Commerce Community Technical Assistance Program, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Montana Riparian and Wetland Mapping Center to ensure the outcome and outputs from this project are useful, that it will act as a pilot for other communities, and that the project develops state-wide consistency.

Schedule

This project has not been contracted. I am seeking concurrence from EPA Region 8 at this time to revise Task 2 as described above. This contract will need to be extended to 12/31/09 after the grant has been extended.