

Developing a Framework for Integrating Wetland Considerations into Watershed Restoration Plans

National Priority Area:

1.a.a, 1.a.b & 1.a.d: Wetland Program Planning based on the Four Core Elements; including core elements, 1) Monitoring and Assessment, 2) Regulatory Activities and 3) Voluntary Restoration and Protection

1.b: Regulation (Enhancing Wetland Protection); including, (i) Improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation; (ii) Refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources

1.c: Monitoring and Assessment; including, (ii) Wetland Monitoring Surveys and, (iii) Wetland Mapping

Regional Priority Area:

Evaluation and planning of mitigation in a watershed context, Data Management and Regional Technology and Information Transfer and Facilitation

Name of Applicant:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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Geographic location: 2 Demonstration Watersheds (Western and Eastern Montana)

Total Project Costs: \$135,320

Amount Requested: \$101,490

Abstract:

Integrating wetlands into watershed planning is a demonstration project using the steps outlined by the Center for Watershed Protection to incorporate wetlands into comprehensive watershed restoration plans. It also serves to highlight the contribution of wetlands to the functions of the broader aquatic ecosystem and how wetland restoration can be used to obtain watershed goals and objectives. The goals of the project are: 1) develop two comprehensive watershed restoration plans; 2) increase the capacity of local governments and watershed groups to develop comprehensive watershed restoration plans; 3) demonstrate the steps, techniques and tools necessary for incorporating wetlands into watershed planning; 4) demonstrate how the incorporation of wetlands into watershed restoration plans can contribute to reducing pollutant loads identified in the TMDL planning process; and 5) expand the incorporation of wetlands into other watershed restoration plans through the transfer the knowledge gained in the demonstration watersheds. Montana Department of Environmental Quality's Wetland Program staff, the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership and others would accomplish these goals through: 1) Actively participating in the watershed restoration planning process, 2) providing technical and financial assistance to watershed groups for the incorporation of wetlands into the watershed restoration plan, 3) mapping wetlands to inventory and assess wetland function and condition, for use in prioritizing wetlands for protection and restoration sites to accomplish watershed goals; 4) providing technical trainings to watershed groups; and 5) developing a step-by-step guidance and provide training on the process of incorporating wetlands into watershed restoration plans.

2.a Project Description:

In the State of Montana it is estimated that wetlands make up less than one percent of the landscape. On average mapped wetlands in Montana are also small in stature, measuring approximately two acres in size (USFWS 2008). The small stature and percentage of wetlands in the landscape belies their importance to the health of a watershed. Depending on the landscape position of wetlands, they provide a variety of ecosystem functions including; groundwater recharge/discharge, flood attenuation, flow regulation, nutrient and pollutant removal, and wildlife habitat. The functions wetlands provide are generally not apparent to the eye and often misunderstood. As a result, wetlands, while potentially protected at the federal and state level, are often ascribed less importance at the local level when developing plans for aquatic resource protection. This lack of wetland protection at the local level can lead to indirect impacts to wetlands that cumulatively can greatly affect the health of the watershed. As Capiella et al. (2006) states, “Watershed [restoration] plans effectively direct the application of regulatory and non-regulatory tools for aquatic resource protection at the local level. Wetland protection, however, has historically been delegated to federal or state permitting authorities who have little control over local land use decisions and as a result wetlands can not be effectively managed and protected.” Integrating wetlands into watershed restoration plans is one of the most effective means to protect wetlands from the indirect impacts of urbanization and other land uses and to fill in the gaps in where wetlands fall outside of state or federal jurisdiction.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Watershed Protection Section (WPS) provides technical and financial assistance to groups developing watershed restoration plans using EPA’s Nine Elements of Watershed Plans (USEPA 2008). Currently wetlands are rarely considered in MDEQ’s watershed restoration plans. The Wetland Program at MDEQ and Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership, with support from WPS, are proposing to incorporate wetlands into the watershed restoration planning process for two demonstration watersheds. We propose to accomplish this by using the template the Center for Watershed Protection outlined in “Using local Watershed Plans to Protect Wetlands” (Capiella et al. 2006) which recommends 11 steps necessary for incorporating wetlands into watershed restoration plans. We will work with the demonstration watershed groups, identified partners and the Watershed Protection Section to seamlessly incorporate each of these steps into the current watershed restoration planning process. The final product of this demonstration would be comprehensive watershed restoration plans outlining goals, objectives and implementation strategies for protecting aquatic resources within the watershed. This plan would include specific wetland goals and objectives and how, based on wetland function, they can contribute to the protection, restoration and mitigation of aquatic resources.

While the final products are watershed restoration plans for use by the demonstration watersheds, this project will also build the capacity of wetland and watershed programs at the state and local levels. At the state level, this project will increase the capacity of both the Wetland Program and Watershed Protection Section to further integrate Clean Water Act programs. At the local level, an increase in the capacity to protect wetlands will come from an established framework for incorporating wetlands into watershed restoration plans, a greater understanding of their role in watershed health, tools to monitor and assess aquatic resources, and the ability to more effectively use compensatory wetland mitigation. The increase in the capacity to strategically and systematically protect wetlands extends beyond the demonstration watersheds. The transfer

of knowledge gained during this project, through trainings, will also increase the capacity of watershed groups outside of the demonstration area to protect wetland and aquatic resources.

2.b & c Project Tasks and Milestone Schedule:

Task 1: Build the capacity of the watershed group to gather relevant information, build partnerships, and identify programmatic resources and gaps in the protection of aquatic resources.

Roles and Responsibilities: With technical assistance provided by DEQ Wetland Program staff and Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership coordinator, work with watershed groups to identify available and needed data layers, identify potential partners and build partnerships, and identify possible funding resources and programs through conducting a needs and capabilities assessment and 8 tools audit (Cappiella *et al.* 2006) and other outreach methods. A GIS web-based tool used to compile, house and disseminate currently available data will be developed by MDEQ GIS staff. Included in this tool will be the capability to conduct Level I Landscape Assessments.

Timeline: 7 Months; July 2010 – November 2011

Product(s): 1) Develop and publish a GIS web-based tool that incorporates all spatial datasets available with the capability to compile additional data. 2) A digital database of natural resources within the demonstration watershed. 3) Completed needs and capabilities assessment that helps to organize known programs, funding sources and other resources that can be applied to watershed restoration plans. 4) A list of partners and partnerships. 5) Completed 8 tools audit identifying available regulatory and programmatic tools and weaknesses, gaps and potential improvements for protection of aquatic resources.

Task 2: Develop preliminary watershed goals and objectives that include wetland specific goals and objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities: Watershed group would be responsible for completing this task with assistance provided by DEQ Wetland Program staff and Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership coordinator.

Timeline: 3 months; December 2010 – February 2011

Product(s): 1) A preliminary list of watershed goals and objectives. Including wetland specific goals and objectives and how they address watershed goals and objectives.

Task 3: Map, monitor and assess wetland and other aquatic resources within the watershed and the identification of priority sites for conservation, restoration and/or mitigation

Roles and Responsibilities: Mapping of wetlands within the watershed would be contracted with direction and oversight from the watershed group, DEQ Wetland Program staff and QA/QC from the appropriate federal staff. The monitoring and Level I and II wetlands assessments would be the responsibility of the watershed group with assistance and technical field based trainings in wetland identification and assessment methods provided by DEQ Wetland Program staff. A final list of priority sites would be the responsibility of the watershed group with assistance from Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership coordinator.

Timeline: 18 Months; July 2010 – October 2011

Product(s): 1) Up-to-date spatial dataset of wetland and riparian resources and their associated functions (HGM) mapped to the FDGC standards and submitted for inclusion into National Wetlands Inventory. 2) Maps of historic wetland and riparian resources (if resources are available). 3) Broad-based change detection in wetland area and function to focus further detailed attention with in the watershed (if historic maps are available). 4) Completed

Landscape Level I and II assessments of wetland and riparian areas for demonstration watersheds; including, lists of potential priority wetlands needing added conservation measures, sensitive wetland types, wetland restoration opportunities and potential wetland mitigation sites that address the overall watershed goals and objectives. 5) Field based trainings on wetland identification, wetland rapid assessment methods and wetland functional and conditional assessments. 6) An updated spatial dataset incorporating wetland assessment data, and wetland functional and conditional assessments of potential priority wetlands identified in task 3: product 4. 7) List of priority wetland sites for conservation, restoration and/or mitigation on properties owned by interested landowners.

Task 4: Periodically review and update information collected in Tasks 1 – 3,

Roles and Responsibilities: Watershed group would be responsible for completing this task with assistance provided by Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership coordinator.

Timeline: 17 Months; December 2010- May 2012

Product(s): 1) Periodic formal surveys to create a feedback loop that ensures optimal levels of collaboration are occurring and the process of integrating wetlands into watershed planning is progressing.

Task 5: Develop a final list of prioritized watershed recommendations including priority wetland recommendations that make up a final watershed restoration plan.

Roles and Responsibilities: Watershed group would be responsible for completing this task with assistance provided by MDEQ Wetland Program Staff and Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership coordinator.

Timeline: 7 Months; November 2011- May 2012

Product(s): 1) A finalized watershed restoration plan that incorporates the influence wetlands have on broader aquatic resources and how wetlands will contribute to the overall watershed goals and objectives. This includes, but not limited too, funding recommendations for restoration, mitigation and protection of identified sites, regulatory and non-regulatory measures to protect aquatic resources, how identified priority wetlands will address TMDLs, and the list of priority sites developed in Task 3 Product 7.

Task 6: Develop framework that allows managers in other watersheds to follow specific steps to incorporate wetlands into the watershed planning process.

Roles and Responsibilities: MDEQ Wetland program with assistance from the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership coordinator and review from the Watershed Protection Section will develop the step-by-step framework.

Timeline: 5 Months; December 2011 – April 2012

Product(s): 1) A written framework that outlines the steps and processes necessary for managers in other Montana watersheds to incorporate wetlands in watershed restoration plans.

Task 7: Provide a series of trainings (minimum 2) on using the framework for incorporating wetlands into the watershed planning process.

Roles and Responsibilities: DEQ will lead and coordinate with all groups involved in training interested watersheds for incorporating wetlands in to Watershed Restoration Plans using the framework developed in Task 6.

Timeline: 1 Month; June 2012

Product: 1) A minimum of 2 trainings provided by DEQ Wetland Program staff and project participants to interested parties.

2.d Statement of Need:

It is widely recognized that the health of a watershed is impacted by the land cover and land use practices at a landscape level. At a landscape level, wetlands play a vital role in maintaining the health of a watershed. Yet, in addressing nonpoint source pollutants to our surface waters, solutions put forth typically focus on the stream channel and immediate riparian zones and do not consider how wetland restoration can contribute to reducing pollutant loading into those streams. The wetland restoration and mitigation that is undertaken is generally opportunistic in nature, and does not always address TMDLs or target a reduction of pollutants in our waters. To comprehensively protect the health of a watershed and all aquatic resources, wetlands need to be integrated into the watershed restoration planning process.

2.e National Priority Area:

Descriptions of how priority areas are addressed are presented in 2.f. and 2.e.

1.a.a, 1.a.b & 1.a.d: Wetland Program Planning based on the Four Core Elements; including core elements, 1) Monitoring and Assessment 2) Regulatory Activities and 3) Voluntary Restoration and Protection

1.b: Regulation (Enhancing Wetland Protection); (i) and (ii)

1.c: Monitoring and Assessment; (ii) and, (iii)

Regional Priority Area:

Evaluation and planning of mitigation in a watershed context, Data Management and Regional Technology and Information Transfer and Facilitation

2.f & 2.e Project Goals and Objectives and Outcomes including National and/or Regional Priorities:

Objective One: Develop a comprehensive watershed restoration plan.

Objective One incorporates EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 4, Objective 4.3, sub-objective 4.3.1 by serving as a broad-based watershed restoration plan that integrates the identification, monitoring, and functional assessment of wetlands to aid decision makers in holistically managing aquatic resources under their jurisdiction. Objective one addresses national Wetland Program Planning based on the Four Core Elements; Voluntary Restoration, Regulation (Enhancing Wetland Protection) and Monitoring and Assessment. Regional priorities addressed in this objective include evaluation and planning of mitigation in a watershed context, data management and regional technology and information transfer and facilitation.

Output: The output of this object will be two finalized wetland restoration plans developed using the nine elements of watershed plans outlined in the "Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters" (USEPA 2008). And, incorporating into the nine elements, the 11 step process outlined in "Using Local Watershed Plans to Protect Wetlands" (Cappiella *et al.* 2006). During the writing of the finalized comprehensive wetland restoration plans, outputs will include: the development of partnerships, inventories of aquatic resources, updated wetland maps, GIS web-based tool for compiling watershed information and providing a means for data management, Level I, II and III wetland assessments, lists of prioritized sites for the conservation, restoration and/or mitigation sites and potential funding sources.

Outcome(s): Accomplishing "no-net-loss" of wetland function and acreage through targeted protection, restoration and effectively using compensatory mitigation within the demonstration watersheds; a reduction in the current levels of pollutant loading as identified in TMDLs, and an increased understanding of the importance wetlands in maintaining watershed health.

Objective Two: Increase the capacity of state and local governments and watershed groups to develop comprehensive watershed restoration plans.

Objective two incorporates EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 4, Objective 4.3, sub-objective 4.3.1 through building the capacity of state and local governments and watershed groups by providing information, programmatic tools, step by step framework documents and trainings to develop comprehensive watershed restoration plans that protect all aquatic resources. Objective two addresses regional priority areas Evaluation and planning of mitigation in a watershed context and regional technology and information transfer and facilitation. Restoration planning in a watershed context will occur through the process of integrating wetlands into watershed restoration plans.

Output: Anticipated outputs for objective two include the development, reevaluation and modification of framework documents for incorporating wetlands into watershed restoration plans, trainings on wetland assessments, effectively using framework documents and the use of existing tools to help local decision makers integrate wetland protection into watershed planning.

Outcome(s): An increase in the methods [to] and understanding [of] the importance of protecting wetlands and aquatic resources through the development of a more comprehensive watershed restoration plan.

Objective Three: Demonstrate the steps, techniques and tools necessary for incorporating wetlands into watershed planning.

Objective three incorporates EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 4, Objective 4.3, sub-objective 4.3.1 through providing technical assistance and the tools necessary for incorporating the 11 step process outlined by the CWP into EPA's nine elements of watershed plans. This objective addresses all identified national priorities areas and regional priorities areas.”

Output: The outputs of this objective will be the preliminary development of a framework for incorporating wetlands into watershed restoration plans in Montana. The development a GIS Web-based tool that can be used to summarize, provide digital databases, and update information regarding aquatic resources within the watershed. Training in using the GIS web-based tool for collecting information relevant to watershed restoration plans, including means to manage and update any data collected during the development of the watershed restoration plan. And field based trainings in wetland identification and wetland assessment methods.

Outcome(s): The application of informed approaches to watershed restoration planning through the increased ability to collect, store and update information regarding aquatic resources within a watershed. Increase the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation under the 404 process through the prioritizing wetland function and how it may be used to address pollutant loading.

Objective Four: Demonstrate how the incorporation of wetlands into watershed restoration plans can contribute to reducing pollutant loads identified in the TMDL planning process.

Objective four incorporates EPA's Strategic Plan Goal 4, Objective 4.3, sub-objective 4.3.1 in understanding and effectively using the effect wetlands have on water quality and quantity for a place based ecosystem protection strategy for reducing pollutant loads and achieving TMDLs. This objective addresses parts of all national priority areas and regional priority area, Evaluation and planning mitigation in a watershed context.

Output: The potential output of objective four are lists identifying priority wetlands on lands with interested landowners for conservation, restoration and/or mitigation that will help to reduce pollutant loading in stream, rivers and lakes.

Outcome(s): The outcomes of this objective are the ability to more effectively use wetland protection, restoration and compensatory mitigation as a tool for achieving watershed goals and objectives. And, a potential reduction in the quantity of non-point source pollutants entering our streams and rivers.

Objective Five: Expand the incorporation of wetlands into other watershed restoration plans through targeted trainings on using the framework document and transferring the knowledge gained during the process.

Integrating wetlands into watershed restoration planning is a demonstration project with the goal of developing complete watershed restoration plans that incorporates specific wetland goals and objectives. After completion of the project it is planned to transfer the knowledge gained, tools developed and techniques used to other watershed groups also undertaking the writing of watershed restoration plans. This will be done through the development of trainings and presentations on using the step-by-step framework developed for incorporating wetlands into wetland restoration plans, and an increased capacity in MDEQ's and Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership's ability to provide technical assistance to watershed groups. Objective five addresses regional priority area, Regional techniques and information transfer and facilitation.

Output: The output of this objective will be the development of training and presentation materials that will help transfer the knowledge gained through the demonstration project.

Outcome(s): An increase in knowledge about wetlands and their function within a watershed and the ability of local decision makers and MDEQ staff to use this information in developing comprehensive watershed restoration plans. Also, an increase in the ability of MDEQ Wetland Program staff to provide technical assistance to watershed groups in regards to the incorporation of wetlands into watershed restoration plans.

2.h Planning Project Information

One final product of this demonstration would be comprehensive watershed restoration plans outlining the goals and objectives and implementation strategies for protecting aquatic resources within the demonstration watersheds. These plans would include specific wetland goals and objectives and how, based on wetland function, they can contribute to the protection, restoration and mitigation of aquatic resources within the watershed.

2.i Staffing Information

Staff at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's Wetland Program includes Program Coordinator Lynda Saul, PWS and Wetland Environmental Science Specialist, Stephen M. Carpenedo. The Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership is staffed by Tom Hinz with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP). Please see annotated resumes for experience and qualifications.

2.j Applicant's Experience

The Montana DEQ was asked by EPA Region 8 to take a leadership role in wetland program development and conservation twelve years ago. The DEQ responded by pursuing EPA Wetland Program Development grant funding annually to meet that request and hired a full time Wetland Program Coordinator. The Wetland Program Coordinator develops the Wetland Program and administers Wetland Program Development Grants. MDEQ added a second wetland staff position in part with EPA Region 8 pilot funding. This proposal further develops and refines the Wetland Program development for the State of Montana by focusing on internal MDEQ program integration and promoting wetland protection at the local level.

2.k Partnership Information

The Wetlands Program will partner with the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership, and work to further integrate with the Watershed Protection Section at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Potential demonstration/pilot watersheds (TMDL Planning Areas) discussed to date include: the Upper Big Hole, Beaverhead, Flathead Headwaters, Teton, Sun, and Upper Gallatin. Selection criteria for these and other candidate pilot watersheds will include: 1) Approved or advanced stages of TMDL development; 2) Credible opportunities for wetland conservation, restoration or mitigation based: on availability of major wetland program funding; land values commensurate with program requirements; landscape-scale land ownerships where wetland conservation is compatible with current land use; and depth of partnerships to collaboratively fund wetland projects; 3) An active watershed group; 4) Watersheds with geographic, demographic, hydrologic, economic, and other differences that will enhance transferability of project results to other watersheds in the state; and 5) Availability of diverse mapping resources/products that can be used to detect changes in wetlands and watershed land use over time. In preparation for implementing this project, we propose to meet with representatives of candidate watersheds, discuss the above criteria, and strive for consensus in selecting the most suitable watersheds for this project. This preliminary scoping will be completed before funds emanating from this grant are received. Other potential partners depend upon the make up of land ownership and organizations currently active with in the demonstration watershed.

2.1 Transfer of Results and Outreach

The transfer of the process, knowledge gained, lessons learned, and pitfalls of incorporating wetlands into watershed restoration plans will be accomplished through the development of a step-by-step framework and giving a series of trainings and presentations to other watershed groups in Montana on using the framework.

2.m Quality Assurance/Quality control

All watershed restoration plans in the State of Montana are QA/QC'd by a Project Manager at the Watershed Protection Section. The watershed restoration plans for the demonstration watersheds will be required to follow current requirements. All wetland mapping generated by this project will be submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for QA/QC and subsequent inclusion in their master GeoDatabase.

3. Budget Narrative:

DEQ is requesting a total \$101,490 in Funding from EPA for completion of “Developing a Framework for Integrating Wetland Considerations into Watershed Restoration Plans”. DEQ is requesting \$43,490 in funding from EPA for 0.28 FTE/year for DEQ Wetland Program staff for a 2-year period starting State Fiscal Year 2010 to complete the tasks identified in this proposal and for tool development. DEQ is requesting \$20,000 (\$10,000 per/watershed) from EPA for mapping wetlands within the demonstration watersheds that will be contracted out to an approved organization. These funds will also be used to leverage matching funds from partner organizations. DEQ is requesting \$30,000 in funding from EPA for Montana Wetlands Legacy to complete the tasks identified in this proposal. DEQ is requesting \$8,000 (\$4,000 per/watershed) for covering increased time and resources necessary for watershed groups to incorporate wetlands into watershed restoration plans. A non-federal contribution of \$33,830 will be documented from the MDEQ Wetlands Program. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks will contribute \$11,381, in kind for the Wetland Legacy Partnership coordinator to accomplish tasks in this project.

Watershed Year 1	EPA Request	Match	Watershed Year 2	EPA Request	Match
Personal Services	16,399		Personal Services	12,926	4,309
Consultant	58,000	27,322	Consultant	0	0
Supplies	188		Supplies	1,698	566
Travel	976		Travel	829	276
Other	570		Other	1,208	402
Indirect	5,833		Indirect	2,863	955
Total	81,966	27,322	Total	19,524	6,508

4. Programmatic Past Performance and Environmental Results Past Performance:

Montana DEQ manages numerous EPA Region 8 grants. Specific to 104(b)3 Wetland Program Development Grants, MDEQ has successfully received and completed these grants since 1995 with the aim of building a comprehensive Wetland Program for the State of Montana. As recipient of the proposed grant, DEQ intends to contract with Tom Hinz, Coordinator of the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership to serve as Co-Principal Investigator for this grant. As an employee of MFWP and working on behalf of the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership, Mr. Hinz has served as co-investigator on two EPA WPDGs in the past nine years. During that period, DEQ and MFWP have also collaborated on a three-year EPA Pilot Implementation Grant. DEQ and MFWP, through their collaboration, have met or exceeded grant management expectations, reporting requirements, and results from these three assistance agreements. A list of assistance agreements and the details requested in the RFP are available upon request from DEQ.

References:

- Cappiella, K., A.Kitchell, and T.Schueler. 2006. Using Local Watershed Plans to Protect Wetlands. Center for Watershed Protection, Ellicott, MD. Wetlands and Watersheds Article #2.
- USEPA. 2008. Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters. Office of Water, Nonpoint Source Control Program, Washington D.C. EPA 841-B-08-002.
- USFWS. 2008. National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, Washington D.C.

Annotated Resumes

Stephen M. Carpenedo

Stephen Carpenedo is the Wetlands Environmental Science Specialist for Montana Department of Environmental Quality's Wetland Program. He is currently responsible for a variety of wetland projects that encompass several disciplines; including education, restoration, working with local governments, GIS development, and ecological spatial analysis modeling. Steve is currently the chair of both the Montana Wetlands Council Public Education and Professional Training working group and Assisting Local Governments working group.

Steve has worked on natural resource conservation, threatened and endangered wildlife issues and wildlife research in western states since 1996 when he graduated from Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota. Including, working on incorporating wildlife research into national park management in Western Ukraine for two years. More recently, Steve completed his Masters in Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development at the Odum School of Ecology in Athens, Georgia where he developed a statewide model for identifying priority wetland restoration sites based on wetland function and values.

Thomas C. Hinz

Tom Hinz is Coordinator for the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership. He leads this statewide wetland conservation network to increase collaboration between partners in restoration and enhancement of Montana's wetlands/riparian areas. Tom has headed up the Legacy Partnership since its beginning in May 2000 as a voluntary, incentive-based network of agencies, conservation organizations, and land trusts with resources dedicated to on-the-ground wetland restoration.

Legacy Partnership activity highlights in the nine years since its formation include: creation of a statewide database for tracking net-gain wetland restoration projects by all partners; building a network of over thirty state and federal agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, and land trusts who actively participate in wetland/riparian protection, restoration, and enhancement activities on a continuing basis; and, serving as the primary contact for landowners, public land managers, tribes, community governments, and interested citizens to get in touch with Legacy Partners who assist with financial, personnel, technical, and data resources for completing priority projects. In 2005, Hinz was selected by the Montana Wetland Council to receive the Montana Wetland Stewardship Award for innovation in organizing and leading the Legacy Partnership. This same year, review of the Legacy database showed over 800,000 acres of Montana lands had been entered into the database as having gone into conservation status, with over 27,000 acres of wetlands included as protected, restored, or enhanced and over one thousand miles of riparian corridors likewise conserved. Hinz has also served on the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council for the past three years and is current chair.

Lynda A. Saul

Lynda Saul, PWS, is the State of Montana's Wetland Program Coordinator housed at the Department of Environmental Quality. She leads the state-wide Montana Wetland Council to increase the protection of Montana's wetlands through EPA's core elements of comprehensive state wetlands programs and enhanced coordination. She has built the Wetland Council into an action oriented network involving over 700 participants representing all interests in wetlands issues in Montana. Wetland Program highlights include: mapping, inventory, assessment and net change tracking; coordinated statewide Wetland Program involving federal, state, local, and tribal governments, NGO's and private individuals and businesses; targeted education and outreach to landowners, local decision makers and Realtors; and voluntary and incentive based wetland protection. In 2007, she led the citizens of Montana and the Wetland Council in a year-long strategic planning process to develop a Conservation Strategy for Montana Wetlands. The plan "Priceless Resources: A Strategic Framework for Wetland and Riparian Area Conservation and Restoration in Montana 2008-2012" is supported by the Governor of Montana and the Directors of DNRC, DEQ and DFWP and is being actively implemented in Montana.

In 2006, Saul was appointed to the Governor's Task Force on Riparian Protection and currently serves as Chair. She is the current Vice Chair of the Association of State Wetland Managers and brings a rural western state's perspective to the ASWM board. She serves as MDEQ's representative on the NRCS State Technical Committee, the DFWP Conservation and Restoration Partnership, and numerous other state boards and councils. In 2007 she was a recipient of the Environmental Law Institute National Wetland Award for State, Tribal and Local Program Development for her 10 years of work in building an award winning program in Montana and traveled to Washington DC to receive the award. When in Washington, she discusses wetland protection and management issues with all three of Montana's Congressional Delegation and continues to be active in national policy issues affecting wetlands.

Saul has worked on water issues in Montana since 1986 after completing a B.S. in Geology from Tulane University and a M.S. in Forest Hydrology from the University of Montana. In addition to developing a wetland protection program for Montana, other state-wide work included coordinating the FERC hydropower relicensing of 9 dams on the Madison and Missouri Rivers; negotiating Federal Reserved Water Rights for both Tribal and Federal lands, modeling irrigation use for water supply management, and state-wide watershed planning.

Saul spent 2004 at the EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on a year long job exchange in the Wetland State Strategies and Programs Branch of the Wetlands Division. She returned to her state position in Montana in 2005 as a more effective leader for statewide wetland protection and has doubled the program funding for Montana's Wetland Program.