

APPENDIX A – GRANT CYCLE

The grant cycle for FY2024 Round 2 will be as follows:

Monday, 2/12/2024 – Issue 2024 Round 2 Call for Applications

Documents can also be accessed through the [DEQ Nonpoint Source Program website](#). Announcements will be made through the [GovDelivery listserv](#), DEQ's social media accounts and an official public notice.

Tuesday, 2/13/2024 until Wednesday, 4/3/2024 at 5:00 pm – DEQ Staff Available for Consultation

Applicants are not required to consult with DEQ staff prior to applying; however, it is highly encouraged. Applicants who work with Nonpoint Source and Wetland Program staff on their application typically have an easier time navigating the application process and frequently outscore their competitors. With sufficient advance notice, DEQ staff can:

- Help determine whether the project is eligible for nonpoint source pollution reduction funding;
- Provide guidance on how to make the proposal more competitive;
- Conduct a site visit and provide technical guidance on restoration techniques;
- Help identify and develop project effectiveness evaluation procedures;
- Share experience gained from years of helping other applicants develop successful applications;
- Answer questions about the application form, scoring sheets, application process, etc.;
- Review draft applications.

Please contact Meagan Gilmore at 406-755-8981 to arrange consultation. After 4/3/2024, DEQ staff may not be available for consultation; however, please feel free to contact Meagan Gilmore with last-minute questions.

Friday, 4/5/2024 at 5:00 pm – Final, Complete, Signed Applications Must Be Received by DEQ

Final, fully signed, completely filled out application forms and all necessary letters of support and other attachments must be received electronically by DEQ. Unsigned applications will be rejected, as will any information submitted after 5:00 pm on Friday, 4/5/2024.

Before you begin filling out your application, please read the entire Call for Applications, paying special attention to the Calendar, the Scoring Sheets, and the example Contract Template.

Application forms are available on the DEQ Nonpoint Source Program website:

<https://deq.mt.gov/water/Programs/nonpoint#accordion1-collapse1>. Alternatively, you can download a copy of the application form(s) using the imbedded links below.

- [On-the-Ground Projects Application Form](#)
- [Supplemental Project Form](#)
- [Capacity Building and Education Outreach Application Form](#)

The application forms are fillable PDFs. Adobe Reader software is required and can be downloaded for free: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Space for answering questions is deliberately limited. Do not change font size to include more information. Do not type “see attached document” into the answer boxes and then attach a separate document with longer answers.

Before submitting your final application, check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on the [DEQ Nonpoint Source Program website](#) to make sure you’re up to date on any clarifying information DEQ has provided to other applicants. DEQ will use the FAQ document to provide answers to questions raised by individual applicants, thereby ensuring all applicants benefit equally from clarifying information DEQ staff offer to other applicants.

Submit all application materials, including attachments, in either PDF or Microsoft Office Suite compatible file format. DO NOT send electronic files through Dropbox, Google Docs, your company FTP site, or any other commercially available file transfer service. Electronic documents smaller than ten megabytes (10 MB) may be delivered via email to Meagan Gilmore: mgilmore@mt.gov. Electronic documents larger than ten megabytes (10 MB) must be delivered using the State of Montana’s File Transfer Service. Signup instructions are available at <https://transfer.mt.gov/Home/Instructions>.

Contact Meagan Gilmore to make sure that all documents were received: mgilmore@mt.gov or 406-755-8918.

Thursday, 4/18/2024 – Agency Review Panel Meeting

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by the Agency Review Panel on Thursday, April 18, 2024, in Helena. The Panel will be chaired by DEQ and will include representatives from various state and federal natural resource agencies. The purpose of the Agency Review Panel is for DEQ to draw upon the knowledge and experience of other natural resource professionals to better inform DEQ’s decisions about which projects to fund.

The Agency Review Panel meeting will consist of two parts. In the morning (and early afternoon if need be), each applicant will be given a set amount of time to respond to questions from the Panel. In the afternoon, the Panel will deliberate and come up with a set of funding recommendations for DEQ’s consideration.

Scoring sheets will be used during the evaluation process. The scoring sheets are included as Attachment A. The scoring sheets are intended to support the Agency Review Panel discussion. **They are not final decision-making matrices.** The Panel will use the scoring sheets to make general recommendations to DEQ regarding funding levels and project quality. Applicants are encouraged to review the scoring sheets and consider how well their application meets these individual criteria. The criteria in the scoring sheets reflect specific DEQ Nonpoint Source Program priorities. If you have questions or would like further clarification regarding these priorities, please contact Meagan Gilmore at 406-755-8918 or mgilmore@mt.gov.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the entire Agency Review Panel meeting if they are available, and to have key project partners and landowners on hand to answer questions during the allotted question and answer time. A remote/phone-in option will be available. To ensure a fair and competitive process, the only time applicants can interact with the Review Panel will be during their allotted question and answer time. DEQ staff will be on hand throughout the meeting to answer additional questions and provide clarification on nonpoint source program requirements. The public is also invited to attend the meeting.

Visit the DEQ Nonpoint Source Project Funding website (<https://deq.mt.gov/water/Programs/nonpoint#accordion1-collapse1>) for potential schedule changes.

Friday, 4/26/2024 by 5:00 pm – Notices of Intent to Award Sent to Successful Applicants

Following the Agency Review Panel meeting, DEQ staff will review the Agency Review Panel's recommendations and issue tentative notices of intent to award to all successful applicants by 4/26/2024. DEQ intends to submit funding recommendations to the EPA and DNRC by June. Final funding decisions will be dependent on EPA and DNRC review and approval.

4/29/2024 through 5/10/24 – Contract Development

Funds are administered as contracts. Contracts are legally binding agreements that identify specific products or work that must be completed prior to receiving reimbursement. Only work done after a contract is signed and before the contract expires can be submitted for reimbursement or reported as match.

If your application is successful, a DEQ project manager will be assigned to work with you to develop a contract based on the information provided in your application and recommendations made by the Agency Review Panel and DEQ Management. Your DEQ project manager will use a template similar to the one found in [Attachment C](#) to prepare a draft scope of work.

The goal is to develop a mutually agreeable scope of work by the beginning of May 2024. DEQ will submit the scope of work to EPA and DNRC for approval in June of 2024. EPA and DNRC have final approval authority over all projects selected by DEQ for funding. EPA reviews the final scopes of work for consistency with the [2017 Montana Nonpoint Source Management Plan](#), consistency with EPA nonpoint source program guidelines, and overall impacts on water quality.

October 2024 – Contract Initiation

Once DEQ receives confirmation of EPA approval and release of funding to states, DEQ will issue contracts to successful applicants. We anticipate having funding available in October. Expenses and match incurred by applicants prior to the signing of a contract CANNOT be applied to the contract.

October 2024 to Approximately September 2027 – Project Implementation, Reporting, and Close-out

Once a contract has been signed by the project sponsor and by DEQ, applicants can begin accruing and reporting expenses and match funds. Payment is made on a **reimbursement** basis. Applicants may request payment no more frequently than monthly and no less frequently than semi-annually. With each payment request, applicants are required to submit a report that includes a description of the work completed and justification for expenses incurred. At a minimum, applicants must submit semi-annual (interim) reports, annual reports, and a final report. Templates and reporting guidance for these reports can be found under "Guidance for Funding Recipients" on the website: <https://deq.mt.gov/water/Programs/nonpoint#accordion1-collapse5>

Projects are expected to be completed within 3 years of the date the contract is signed. Final reports and deliverables (*including all deliverables previously submitted*) must be submitted electronically at

least 15 days prior to the expiration date of each contract. Expenses and match incurred after the expiration date of a contract CANNOT be submitted for reimbursement or reported as match.

Applicants are expected to maintain copies of all deliverables, reports, and correspondence related to the project for a minimum of eight (8) years following the close of the contract.