



# 2024 319 Application Form - Mini-grant Programs

## General Information

Program Name	Building Local Capacity to Improve Water Quality through the Big Sky Watershed Corps Program		
Sponsor Name	Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC)		
Registered with the Secretary of State?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Registered with SAM?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
UEI #	078805000	Does your organization have liability insurance?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Primary Contact	Terri Nichols		
Title	Watershed Programs Manager		
Address	PO Box 1416		
City	Helena	State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M Zip Code 59801
Phone Number	(406) 210-1217		
Email Address	terri@mtwatersheds.org		
Signature	Terri Nichols <small>Digitally signed by Terri Nichols Date: 2023.10.06 15:37:37 -06'00'</small>		
Signatory	Amy Seaman		
Title	Executive Director		
Address	PO Box 1416		
City	Helena	State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M Zip Code 59801
Phone Number	(406) 475-1420		
Email Address	director@mtwatersheds.org		
Signature	Amy Seaman <small>Digitally signed by Amy Seaman Date: 2023.10.06 15:11:25 -06'00'</small>		

## Technical and Administrative Qualifications

Terri Nichols will manage this grant for MWCC. Since 2018, when Terri began managing the MWCC Watershed Fund (See Attachment A), the Fund has awarded more than \$1.1 million in small grants (\$100-\$30,000) from 11 separate public and private funders, including more than \$375,000 in 319 funding to support NPS pollution reduction and prevention through the Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) program. (See Attachment B.) Terri also sits on the Steering Committee that provides direction for the BSWC program, along with the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) and Montana Conservation Corps (MCC). Terri has an Associate's Degree in Natural Resource Management, a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, and a Master's Degree in Environmental Studies. Prior to joining MWCC, she worked with the U.S. Forest Service and Montana Natural Heritage Program on stream and wetland monitoring.

For reviewing mini-grant proposals and making awards under this program, MWCC relies on the expertise of our Watershed Fund Reviewers as well as the DEQ contract manager. Our Watershed Fund Reviewers are:

- Jordan Tollefson, a water quality scientist with NorthWestern Energy who runs the water quality programs for NorthWestern's 11 hydroelectric facilities. Jordan has a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology and serves on the MWCC Board of Directors.
- Torie Haraldson, a water quality specialist with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality who holds a Master's Degree in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University. Torie is a former MWCC Board member.
- Brenna Rietmann, a program manager at the Montana Association of Conservation Districts. Brenna manages MACD's small grants program and holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and a graduate certificate in Natural Resource Conflict Resolution.

## Budget

	319 Funding Request	Non-Federal Match	Other Funding	Total Cost
<b>Program Development, Marketing and Solicitation</b> <i>(Includes development and deployment of application process, marketing the program to the target audience, receipt and evaluation of project proposals, and writing and executing mini-grant contracts.)</i>				
<b>Mini-grant Implementation and Oversight</b> <i>(Includes funding provided in the mini-grants and the costs of managing the mini-grant contracts. May also include correspondence, site visits, training, and problem resolution.)</i>				
<b>Program Evaluation</b> <i>(Includes evaluation of the impact of individual mini-grants and the program as a whole on nonpoint source pollution. For on-the-ground projects designed to address nitrogen, phosphorus or sediment, task may include gathering information necessary for DEQ to evaluate pollutant load reductions achieved from project implementation.)</i>				
<b>Project Administration</b> <i>(Includes reporting, invoicing, office expenses, transportation, etc. 319 funding applied to this task must not exceed 10% of the total amount of 319 funding requested, or \$12,000, whichever is lower.)</i>				
<b>Other</b> <i>(specify)</i>				

**Other** *(specify)*

**Other** *(specify)*

**Total**

Match Source	Non-federal (cash and in-kind)	Match Secured?	Letter of Support Attached?
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## Program Description

Describe the types of projects or activities you will fund.

How much money will each mini-grant recipient receive?  
(provide a range or an exact dollar amount)

How many mini-grants will you distribute?

## Target Audience

Who is the target audience (potential recipients) for the mini-grant program?

Describe the target audience's potential to have meaningful impact on NPS pollution.

How will you market the program to the target audience?

Is there adequate interest to ensure full use of requested funding within a 3-year period? Please explain.

Are there other, similar grant programs available to potential recipients, and if so, how will your program fill a unique niche?

How will the program increase local capacity or interest for addressing NPS pollution?

How will the program create **long-lasting change** in social norms or attitudes toward addressing NPS pollution?

## **Program Implementation and Evaluation**

Describe the application submittal, evaluation and contracting processes you will use.

Describe the project oversight you will provide to mini-grant recipients.

List the metrics you will use to quantify the effects of individual mini-grant projects or activities.

List the metrics you will use for evaluating the effectiveness of your mini-grant program as a whole.



## Community Participation and Support

Partner

### Contribution to the Program

Letter of Support Attached?

### ***Other Supporters***

Entity

Letter of Support Attached?

# Program Timeline

Task Description	3Q 2023	4Q 2023	1Q 2024	2Q 2024	3Q 2024	4Q 2024	1Q 2025	2Q 2025	3Q 2025	4Q 2025	1Q 2026	2Q 2026
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## **Bigger Picture Considerations**

### **Environmental Justice (EJ)**

Explain how your project incorporates disadvantaged community populations and priorities, Tribal and community leader engagement, or socioeconomic barriers in the context of equal protection and access to a healthy environment.

### **Climate Change/Resilience**

How will your project improve climate change resilience for communities, native plants, wildlife, or ecosystems?

### **Impacts to Downstream Human, Plant and Animal Communities**

What sort of an impact will your project have on downstream human, plant or animal communities?

## **Additional Attachments**

Attach additional items that could help reviewers better understand your project. Items could include site photos, design drawings, site evaluations, permits, etc. Please be conscious of reviewers' time, as they may not have time to read lengthy studies and reports. List all additional attachments below.

Additional information that could assist reviewers in evaluating the project's potential impact on NPS pollution.

# **MAPS/ DESIGNS**

# LETTERS OF SUPPORT



**MONTANA**  
ASSOCIATION *of*  
CONSERVATION  
DISTRICTS

CONTACT

OFFICE ADDRESS

(406) 443-5711 1101 11th Ave  
mail@macdnet.org Helena, MT 59601

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October 6, 2023

Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Attn: Mark Ockey  
1520 E 6th Ave  
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Montana Watershed Coordination Council 319 Funding Application

Dear Mark,

On behalf of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), I am writing to extend our support for the Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC) application for 319 funding to support Big Sky Watershed Corp (BSWC) host sites. As you will know, MACD, MWCC, and MCC collaborate on the BSWC program. MWCC has been a valued partner and an essential resource for the watershed community, as well as conservation districts across the state.

MWCC has been an integral partner in the success of the BSWC program, and that is a direct result of the funding and support that they provide to BSWC host sites through the 319 funding they secure. These funds help build capacity in organizations that desperately need it, allowing them to successfully implement Watershed Restoration Plans for their area and complete projects they would not otherwise be able to accomplish.

The BSWC host site support provided through these funds allows watershed organizations and conservation districts to implement projects that effectively mitigate nonpoint source pollution, increase capacity and training for technical assistance, and expand their reach and opportunity for future project development.

MACD supports MWCC's application as it will provide essential funding to organizations that support conservation on the ground and protect Montana's watersheds. Thank you for your consideration of MWCC's application.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Boslough-King  
MACD Executive Director



**MONTANA  
CONSERVATION  
CORPS**

*Igniting Potential*

301 N Willson Ave., Bozeman, MT 59715  
(406) 587-4475 | [www.mtcorps.org](http://www.mtcorps.org)

Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Attn: Mark Ockey  
Watershed Protection Bureau  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620  
Re: Montana Watershed Coordination Council 319 Funding Application

10/3/2023

Dear Mark,

I am writing on behalf of the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) to express my full support of the Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC) and their local 319 funding request. MWCC provides a vital service to Montana's watersheds and local communities and is a key partner in successfully implementing the Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) program. Their community-based initiatives are incredibly effective and efficient and they are unwavering in their efforts to be inclusive and thoughtful in every enterprise they undertake.

319 funding provided by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and administered by MWCC has played a positive role in the success of partner organizations and ultimately the success of our BSWC AmeriCorps members. In providing this funding, MWCC has not only been able to successfully meet its mission, but has also provided invaluable resources to local Montana watersheds and communities resulting in a measurable and lasting on-the-ground impact that will benefit future generations. The projects implemented as a result of the funding were efficient and effective in mitigating nonpoint source pollution, the professional development opportunities were highly revered and impactful and the cost share support allowed small, yet ever important, watershed organizations to better establish a community presence, build capacity and greatly improve Montana's most precious resource, water.

MWCC has formed sustainable and resilient partnerships and has led the way in creating new and innovative approaches to properly address critical watershed related issues.

Montanans will all greatly benefit from the services of MWCC and I strongly urge you to award full funding support to the organization.

Best Regards,

Bryan N. Wilson  
Director-Individual Placement Programs  
Montana Conservation Corps  
Office- (406).587.4475 x107  
Email- [bryan@mtcorps.org](mailto:bryan@mtcorps.org)



AmeriCorps





October 1, 2023

Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Attn: Mark Ockey  
Watershed Protection Bureau  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Letter of support for the Montana Watershed Coordination Council

Dear Mr. Ockey,

The Yaak Valley Forest Council (YVFC) wishes to convey its utmost support for the 319 grant application submitted by Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC). This funding has been instrumental in the work of many small watershed groups, including YVFC. Without the technical and financial support of MWCC, our work within the Yaak and Kootenai watersheds simply could not happen. As advocates for environmental conservation, we believe that taking action to mitigate non-point source pollution (NPS) and addressing other watershed needs is essential for the health of our ecosystems, the quality of our water resources, and the well-being of our community.

The 319 funding that MWCC has awarded to YVFC has provided our organization with three successive Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) members and two member-led impaired waterway restoration projects. Significantly building on our long-term capacity. Through non-point source (319) funding administered by MWCC, we are able to have BSWC members help with tasks such as education, social media, restoration projects, and providing a watershed voice in the community in a collaborative way. We depend on this funding to make this work possible. The funding provided in the past has greatly helped advance YVFC's efforts to work with more private landowners to reduce and prevent nonpoint source pollution.

Our BSWC member also works on sediment analysis on forest service roads. These metrics are what helps prove the benefit of road closures on Forest Service Lands. For several years, we have been doing these assessments and have led field trips on these restoration sites to demonstrate the impacts of sediment and how these impacts can be reduced. Our members have been working with agencies and other non-profits on Forest Service Lands to restore connectivity of the stream and floodplain.

In summary, the Yaak Valley Forest Council depends on MWCC funding and 319 support to carry out the work to restore the watershed. The ongoing efforts to engage stakeholders, conduct research, and promote best management practices are instrumental in making a positive impact on our environment. We appreciate the resources MWCC makes available. By supporting the Montana Watershed Coordination Council, we are supporting the vital work of developing and implementing innovative solutions that protect our natural resources and safeguard the health of our community. We thank you for funding past efforts and strongly urge you to fund MWCC's proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony South". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anthony" being more prominent than the last name "South".

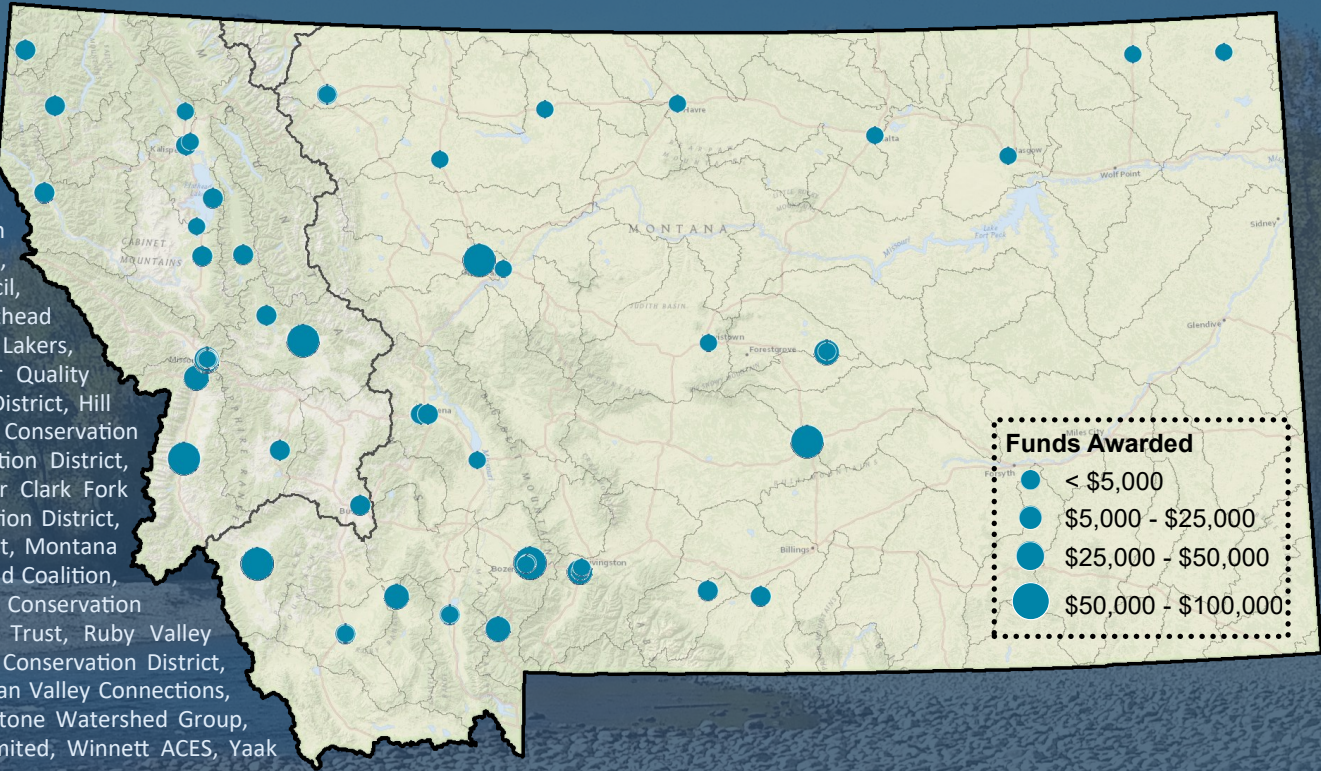
Anthony South  
Headwaters Program Manager  
Yaak Valley Forest Council

# OTHER ATTACHMENTS



# ORGANIZATIONS FUNDED

Beaverhead Conservation District, Beaverhead Watershed Committee, Big Hole Watershed Committee, Bitter Root Water Forum, Blackfeet Nation Agricultural Resource Management Program, Blackfeet Nation Fish and Wildlife, Blackfoot Challenge, Broadwater Conservation District, Carbon Conservation District, Cascade Conservation District, City of Kalispell & Flathead Basin Commission, City of Missoula Stormwater Utility, Clark Fork Coalition, Clark Fork Watershed Education Program, Clearwater Resource Council, Daniels County Conservation District, Fergus Conservation District, Flathead Conservation District, Flathead Lake Biological Station, Flathead Lakers, Flathead Rivers Alliance, Gallatin River Task Force, Gallatin Water Quality District, Gallatin Watershed Council, Green Mountain Conservation District, Hill County Conservation District, Kootenai River Network, Lake County Conservation District, Lake Helena Watershed Group, Lewis and Clark Conservation District, Liberty County Conservation District, Lolo Watershed Group, Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group, Madison Conservation District, McCone Conservation District, Milk River Watershed Alliance, Missoula Valley Water Quality District, Montana Freshwater Partners, Montana Trout Unlimited, Musselshell Watershed Coalition, Park Conservation District, Petroleum Conservation District, Phillips Conservation District, Pondera County Conservation District, Prickly Pear Land Trust, Ruby Valley Conservation District, Sacajawea Audubon Society, Sheridan County Conservation District, Stillwater Valley Watershed Council, Sun River Watershed Group, Swan Valley Connections, The Watershed Education Network, Trout Unlimited, Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group, Valley County Conservation District, WestSlope Chapter Trout Unlimited, Winnett ACES, Yaak Valley Forest Council



SINCE 2018, THE MWCC WATERSHED FUND HAS DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN **\$1 MILLION** IN GRANTS TO COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION GROUPS FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ON-THE-GROUND PROJECTS. THANKS TO THE INVESTMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR SUPPORTERS, THESE LOCAL PARTNERS ARE ACHIEVING THEIR NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOALS

## \$1 Million+ Awarded

- \$453,670 INVESTED IN CAPACITY-BUILDING
- \$554,714 INVESTED IN ON-THE-GROUND PROJECTS
- \$890,000 LEVERAGED BY GRANTEES

## Conservation Impacts Supported

- 1,477 MILES OF STREAM AND LAKESHORE IMPROVED
- 23,590 ACRES IMPROVED
- 336 CONSERVATION PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED
- 13,168 COMMUNITY PARTNERS ENGAGED

THANK YOU TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION, MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, CINNABAR FOUNDATION, MOSAIC, HIGH STAKES FOUNDATION, KENDED A FUND, ARTHUR M. BLANK FOUNDATION, TURNER FOUNDATION AND WILBURFORCE FOUNDATION FOR SUPPORTING THE WATERSHED FUND AND INVESTING IN MONTANA'S WATERSHED COMMUNITIES.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## BIG SKY WATERSHED CORPS

The BSWC is a partnership between three statewide conservation-based organizations.

Please contact us for more information!



*Building and Uniting  
Watershed Communities*

[www.mtwatersheds.org](http://www.mtwatersheds.org)

**Terri Nichols**  
Watershed Programs  
Coordinator  
406.475.1420  
[terri@mtwatersheds.org](mailto:terri@mtwatersheds.org)



*Local Common Sense Conservation*

[www.macdnet.org](http://www.macdnet.org)

**Rebecca Boslough**  
Executive Director  
406.443.5711  
[rebecca@macdnet.org](mailto:rebecca@macdnet.org)



*Tools for Living,  
Experience for Life*

[www.mtcorps.org](http://www.mtcorps.org)

**Bryan Wilson**  
Director  
406.587.4475  
[bryan@mtcorps.org](mailto:bryan@mtcorps.org)

The Big Sky Watershed Corps (BSWC) will assist watershed communities to make a measurable difference in local conservation efforts while strengthening the experience of young professionals.

AmeriCorps members will focus on watershed research, planning and project implementation, watershed education, outreach, and community engagement.

A collaborative effort of the Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC), the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), and the Montana Conservation Corps (MCC), the BSWC will recruit, train and support 46 AmeriCorps members selected by qualifying organizations in Montana and surrounding states.

### **BENEFITS**

#### **What are the benefits of being a host site?**

Host sites will gain the assistance of a highly motivated college graduate (multiple members per site is possible) to assist with project implementation and program capacity building. Host supervisors will also benefit from training sessions provided by the program.

#### **What are the benefits of being a corps member?**

While in service, a corps member will receive student loan forbearance (for qualified loans), health insurance and a bi weekly living stipend of \$1,040. Members are also eligible to receive an education award of \$6,895 upon successful completion of the program.

### **PROGRAM LOGISTICS**

#### **Who is administering the Big Sky Watershed Corps?**

MCC will disburse corps member stipends, health insurance and benefits and will conduct programmatic monitoring and evaluation.

#### **When will the member start and end their term of service with the host site?**

Corps members will complete 1700 hours between January and the end of November

#### **Who will pay for the member's health insurance?**

MCC will provide health insurance during the corps member's 10.5 months of service.

#### **What is the frequency and duration of mandatory trainings during a member's service?**

Four training events will be provided. There will be three 3-day events and one 2-day event. These include orientation (January), education and outreach skills training (February), technical skills training (May), and a graduation celebration of service (November).

#### **Who covers the cost of the trainings?**

Corps member transportation, food, and lodging will be provided by the program for mandatory BSWC training events.

**Are trainings included in the 1700 hours that a member will serve?** Yes.

# BSWC: Frequently Asked Questions

## **Is vacation and sick leave included in the 1700 hours that a member will serve?**

Yes. Corps members receive 5 days of vacation. Hosts determine the timing of vacation/sick leave/holidays.

## **Who will recruit corps members?**

MCC will manage recruiting, however, host sites are encouraged to recommend local individuals for consideration.

## **Will the host site be involved in the interview process?**

Yes. Host sites are responsible for contacting and interviewing candidates that have passed an initial screening by the BSWC, and make all final decisions. If requested, MCC may place members without host site review.

## **What happens if a member needs to leave the program early?**

A corps member can be replaced if less than 30% of the term has been completed [510 hours].

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **How much does it cost to host a Big Sky Watershed Corps Member?**

Host sites are responsible for a cash cost share of \$14,500 per member. In addition, hosts will provide a vehicle with gas or reimburse corps members for work-related travel.

### **Is there any funding assistance available to lower the cost share?**

Yes, program partners have secured some financial resources to assist host sites that are unable to meet the full match requirement and are committed to identifying other sources of support.

### **Does the entire cost share need to be paid up front?**

No. Half of the cost share is required initially and the second half within the first 6 months. MCC will work with organizations to create an appropriate payment schedule that meets both programmatic and host site needs.

### **How much supervisory support needs to be provided to a member?**

A minimum of 5 hours per week but hosts are encouraged to provide ongoing supervision.

### **What equipment needs to be provided to a member?**

Corps members need suitable office space with a telephone, computer, and internet access.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **Can a member be used strictly for daily office tasks?**

Activities such as answering the phone, making copies, typing, and filing may be necessary but should not form the focus of a corps member's work.

### **What objectives must host sites meet?**

Corps member activities must help meet core programmatic goals of watershed health and protection, education and outreach, member development, and volunteer generation. Projects that meet all 4 goals will better compete for limited member slots.

### **What are sample deliverables for program objectives?**

Corps member deliverables will include: the number of volunteers recruited, trained, and retained that assist with watershed improvement efforts; the number of miles of waterways improved; the number of data sets collected; and the development and delivery of educational materials/individuals educated, workshops, and events with students and community members.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
BRYAN WILSON, DIRECTOR-INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT PROGRAMS  
406.587.4475 OR [BRYAN@MTCORPS.ORG](mailto:BRYAN@MTCORPS.ORG)**

The Big Sky Watershed Corps supports local efforts for healthy watershed communities.

## **2024 BSWC Host Site Cost Share Support Request for Proposals and Funding Application Questions**

The MWCC [Watershed Fund](#) has funding from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help local watershed organizations reduce and prevent nonpoint source pollution by implementing DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plans (WRPs) by hosting a [Big Sky Watershed Corps](#) (BSWC) member in 2024. A total of \$36,000 is available. Up to \$7,2000 may be awarded to each qualifying organization for either: 1) offsetting the \$14,500 cost share payment for hosting a BSWC member, 2) assisting your member with housing costs, or 3) a combination of the two.

**Before applying for funding, please read this entire Request for Proposals thoroughly. It includes several updates and clarifications that are different from previous years' BSWC Cost Share Support funding.**

Award decisions will be based in part on what percentage of your member's *total service hours* working for your organization will be dedicated to implementing DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plans and to reducing and preventing nonpoint source pollution. (*Find information on all local WRPs at DEQ's [Nonpoint Source Program website](#) by scrolling down to Watershed Restoration Plans.*) Additional funding proposal review criteria are listed below. There is a non-federal, 1:1 match requirement that can be met through cash or in-kind contributions. Because this funding comes from federal Clean Water Act funding, all match funding must come from non-federal sources.

Proposals are due by 5 pm on Monday, August 21, 2023. Details on how to apply are below. Funding decisions will be made the week of September 4, so applicants will know whether they have received funding prior to committing to hosting a BSWC member for 2024. BSWC Program Host Site Applications are due in early September (date TBD), and host site selection will occur soon after this date.

### **The purpose of this funding opportunity is to:**

- Provide local watershed organizations with the resources necessary to implement DEQ-accepted WRPs and reduce nonpoint source pollution in their watersheds.
- Increase the capacity of local watershed communities to achieve long-term conservation goals related to improving water quality.
- Build the next generation of conservation leaders in Montana.
- Allow young conservation professionals with less financial means the ability to serve with the BSWC AmeriCorps program by offsetting their housing costs.

### **Eligibility**

Local watershed organizations are eligible to apply for this funding if they plan to host a BSWC member in 2024 and if that member will spend 25% or more of their *total service hours* working on WRP implementation related to preventing or reducing nonpoint source pollution. The greater the percentage of total service hours a member will spend on these activities, the

greater the amount of funding the host site is eligible for, up to the \$7,200 maximum. *Federal agencies, state agencies, and for-profit entities are not eligible.*

### **Requirements**

BSWC members supported with this funding will be required to submit one interim and one final report on their WRP-implementation activities, in late May 2024 and early November 2024, respectively. Reporting will be based on the work plan you outline in your online funding application form. (Details below.) There is a non-federal, 1:1 match requirement that can be met through cash or in-kind contributions. Because this funding comes from federal Clean Water Act funding, all match funding must come from non-federal sources.

### **Qualifying Activities**

Activities that qualify for this funding are those that implement a DEQ-accepted WRP, help to reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution, and employ the [Watershed Approach](#) to conservation. Qualifying activities include, but are not limited to:

- Work on restoration and pollution-prevention projects
- Post-restoration maintenance and monitoring
- Monitoring required by a DEQ-approved Sampling and Analysis Plan
- Community outreach
- Volunteer recruitment, management, and retention
- Education
- Creation of education and outreach materials

### **The following activities do not qualify for this funding:**

- Establishing or updating WRPs
- Monitoring not required by a DEQ-approved Sampling and Analysis Plan
- Work on aspects of a WRP that do not prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution
- BSWC members' time working on the same task within the same watershed, unless the members will be working together as part of a joint program or project. If this is the case and you are coordinating with another BSWC host site on joint member activities, please include a letter of support from that organization and be clear about how much time you anticipate each member contributing. If that organization is also applying for Watershed Fund BSWC Cost Share Support funding, please also provide a letter of support for their application and make sure they are also clear about how much time they anticipate their member contributing.

### **A note on potential overlaps between MWCC Watershed Fund BSWC Cost Share and Project Support Funding**

In February 2024, MWCC will announce an additional funding opportunity for BSWC member-led, on-the-ground projects to reduce and prevent nonpoint source pollution. Up to \$7,000 may be awarded for these competitive project grants, and a total of \$28,000 will be available. Members must apply for this funding themselves, with help from their host site supervisors as needed.



Here is a break-down of what each grant can and cannot support in terms of members' contributions to on-the-ground projects:

- **BSWC Cost Share grants CAN be used to pay for:**
  - Members' time applying for project funding, including Watershed Fund BSWC Project Support funding
  - Members' time managing, administering, or reporting on project grants, including a Watershed Fund BSWC Project Support grant
  - Members' time planning and permitting projects
  - Members' time implementing projects
  - Any other time a BSWC member may spend on tasks related to project implementation
- **BSWC Cost Share grants CANNOT be used to pay for:**
  - Host site staff time working with the member on a project
  - Materials and equipment for project implementation
  - Travel
  - Education and outreach materials
  - Contracting and professional fees
- **Project Support grants CAN be used to pay for:**
  - Host site staff time working with the member on a project
  - Materials and equipment for project implementation
  - Travel
  - Education and outreach materials
  - Contracting and professional fees
- **Project Support grants CANNOT be used to pay for:**
  - Members' time applying for project funding, including Watershed Fund BSWC Project Support funding
  - Members' time managing, administering, or reporting on project grants, including a Watershed Fund BSWC Project Support grant
  - Members' time planning and permitting projects
  - Members' time implementing projects
  - Any other time a BSWC member may spend on tasks related to project implementation

Additionally, if a member receives a BSWC Project Support grant, all deliverables related to that project must be included in their Project Support grant reporting; those same deliverables cannot be included in members' Cost Share grant reporting. For this reason, please refrain from including in your Cost Share funding proposal any deliverables related to project implementation that may potentially be funded by a BSWC Project Support grant. Members can always add additional deliverables to their Cost Share reporting if they work on projects that reduce and prevent NPS but are not funded by Watershed Fund BSWC Project Support funding. Also refrain from including in your Cost Share funding proposal any deliverables related to project implementation that is being funded by a DEQ 319 grant. If you have questions about these distinctions or the details below, please contact:

- Before June 1 or after August 7: Terri Nichols, [terri@mtwatersheds.org](mailto:terri@mtwatersheds.org), (406) 210-1217

- Between June 1 and August 7: Meagan Gilmore, [meagan.gilmore@mt.gov](mailto:meagan.gilmore@mt.gov)

### **How to Apply for BSWC Host Site Cost Share Support Funding**

BSWC Cost Share Support proposals are due by 5 pm on Monday, August 21, 2023. They must be submitted via this online form in Submittable. This Word document should not be used to apply for funding. *If at all possible, the person who submits your Cost Share funding proposal should be the person who will be working most closely with the BSWC member. In most cases, this will be the proposed host site supervisor.*

Please use your organization's existing [Submittable account](#) to fill out the online application form. If you do not yet have a Submittable account, please set one up under your organization's name, not under your personal name. If you're new to Submittable, here's a link explaining [how to get started as a submitter](#).

Funding decisions will be made the week of September 4, so applicants will know whether they have received funding prior to committing to hosting a BSWC member for 2024. BSWC Program Host Site Applications are due in early September (date TBD), and host site selection will occur soon after this date.

### **Timeline**

- August 21, 2023 - Funding proposals due
- Week of September 4, 2023 - Funding decisions made
- October-November 2023 - Funding agreements written and signed
- December 2023 - Funding mailed to recipients
- May 2024 - BSWC members' interim grant reports due
- November 2024 - BSWC members' final grant reports due

### **Funding Proposal Review Criteria**

- Proposed member activities will directly implement a DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plan.
- Proposed member activities fall within the qualifying activities for this funding.
- Proposed member activities will reduce and/or prevent nonpoint source pollution.
- Proposed deliverables are reasonable and in alignment with proposed activities.
- Proposed nonfederal match is reasonable.
- The BSWC member's work will increase the host site organization's capacity to implement a DEQ-accepted WRP and to reduce nonpoint source pollution.
- Hosting a BSWC member will bring additional benefits to the organization.
- If applicable, coordination between BSWC host sites and members working on the same task or tasks in the same watershed is documented with Letters of Support.

For more information, contact MWCC Watershed Programs Coordinator Terri Nichols at [terri@mtwatersheds.org](mailto:terri@mtwatersheds.org) or (406) 210.1217.

### Questions in the Online Application Form

1. Proposed Host Site Organization
  - a. Name of the organization that will be applying to host a BSWC member in 2024.
2. Name of Proposed BSWC Host Site Supervisor
  - a. Name of the person who will work most closely with the member. In general, this should be the same person filling out this form.
3. Organization Tax ID Number
4. Signatory name and title
  - a. Name and title of the person authorized to sign funding agreements for your organization
5. Proposed Host Site Supervisor Phone Number
6. Proposed Host Site Supervisor Email Address
7. Proposed Host Site Mailing Address
8. How much total cost share funding are you requesting? (Max \$7,200)
9. How much of this funding, if any, do you expect to go toward helping your member pay for housing? (Blind question that Watershed Fund reviewers will not see.)
  - a. We recognize that you may not know the answer to this question until after you hire a BSWC member. If that's the case, please say so here and we can determine the final funding split at that time.
  - b. Whether or not you choose to use some of this funding for member housing costs will not impact how much total funding you receive.
10. Name of Task 1
  - a. A brief title for the first WRP-implementation Task the BSWC member will work on.
11. WRP Section and Page Number Task 1 Will Help Implement
12. Percentage of member's *total service hours* to be spent on Task 1
  - a. Percentage of the member's *total service hours* for the entire 11 months they will be serving with your organization.
13. Task 1 Activities *400-word limit*
  - a. Bulleted list of activities the BSWC member will work on to accomplish this Task, including dates and locations of any specific events, where applicable.
  - b. \*\*\**Activities are actions and should start with a verb.*
14. Task 1 Deliverables *300-word limit*
  - a. Bulleted list of specific, quantifiable deliverables you expect as part of your member's activities under this task. *Do not include deliverables you expect to be part of a BSWC member-led project that may be funded by a Watershed Fund Project Support grant.*
  - b. Examples may include Stream and Lakeshore Miles Improved, Number of Community Members Engaged, Number of Events Hosted, Number of Students Reached, Number of Volunteers Recruited, Number of Newsletters Produced, etc.
  - c. \*\*\**Deliverables are concrete products, achievements, or quantifiable numbers. They should not include a verb.*
15. Task 1 Nonfederal Match Funding

- a. Bulleted list of anticipated nonfederal match funding sources and approximate amounts that will also support this task, specifically
  - b. This list does not have to be exact, but it will provide a basis for your member's reporting on actual match funding, so provide as much detail as you're able to. Also feel free to indicate which match funding sources are secured or not yet certain, again in service of providing your member with as much reporting information as possible.
  - c. Match can come from nonfederal cash or nonfederal in-kind sources
  - d. *You do not need to have nonfederal match funding for every task, as long as the total match for all tasks is equal to the total amount of Watershed Fund funding received.*
- 16. Name of Task 2 ... opportunity to add up to 5 tasks total, using the same format as for Task 1 above.**
17. Letters of Support (optional)
- a. Please upload letters of support from any other potential host site organizations whose member(s) may be working with your member on the above tasks.
18. Briefly describe how you expect a BSWC Member to increase your organization's capacity to implement your WRP and reduce nonpoint source pollution. *300-word limit*
19. Describe any additional benefits you anticipate from hosting a BSWC member. (Optional) *300-word limit*



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## Funding Opportunity for BSWC Member-Led Projects to Reduce and Prevent Nonpoint Source Pollution 2023 Request for Proposals

The MWCC Watershed Fund, in partnership with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), has funding to assist local watershed conservation organizations currently hosting BSWC members with completing nonpoint source pollution-reduction projects. Proposed projects must impact water bodies listed as impaired on Montana's [2020 List of Impaired Waters](#) (303d list) and included in a [DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plan \(WRP\)](#). (Scroll down to "Watershed Restoration Plans" to find your basin's WRP on this page.) Projects occurring on or along tributaries of impaired water bodies are also eligible if the proposed project addresses a pollutant listed as an impairment for the downstream water body.

*The organization's current BSWC member must submit the proposal for funding, play a lead role in implementing the project, and complete interim and final project reports (with their host site supervisor's help, of course!).* **Proposals are due by 5 pm on Wednesday, March 22**, and funding decisions will be made the week of April 3. **Funding agreements are typically finalized by late May, allowing members to begin project work in June.** Details on how to apply and the full funding timeline are below.

Up to \$7,000 may be awarded to each recipient. A total of \$28,000 is available for 2023. There is a 60:40 non-federal match funding requirement that can be met through state, local, and private dollars or through state, local, and private in-kind contributions. To come up with your match requirement, use this formula:  $(319 \text{ funds requested} / 0.6) - 319 \text{ funds requested} = \text{minimum match requirement}$ . Project dollars are awarded on a reimbursement basis, with reimbursement occurring after receipt of interim and final reports in August and November 2023. Projects must be completed by November 1, 2023.

**MWCC and Montana DEQ will host a webinar about this funding on Thursday, February 23 from 2-3 pm. [Register here.](#)**

### Purpose

The purpose of this funding is to help local watershed organizations accomplish projects to reduce and prevent nonpoint source pollution (NPS) as outlined in local WRPs. Additional goals of this funding include:

- Supporting projects that align with local watershed priorities
- Measurably improving natural resources
- Increasing local capacity to reduce and prevent NPS
- Providing professional development experience for BSWC members

### Who Qualifies?

Watershed conservation organizations that are increasing the capacity of local communities to advance conservation using the [Watershed Approach](#) and are hosting a BSWC member in 2023 are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Qualifying organizations include:



- Watershed groups
- Conservation, irrigation, water quality, and other special districts
- Tribal entities and tribal government agencies
- Non-profits
- Forest collaboratives

*Federal agencies, state agencies, individuals, and for-profit entities are not eligible.*

Additionally, applying organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Implementing a DEQ-approved WRP with their BSWC member's help. **The BSWC member must be the one to apply for this funding, lead the project, and manage the grant and all reporting.**
- Supporting community-based conservation efforts in Montana
- Be registered with the Montana Secretary of State to do business in the state of Montana
- Have the necessary liability insurance, and be in compliance with the Workers Compensation Act

**Eligible Projects. Projects must be consistent with a local WRP and must address an impairment identified on [Montana's 2020 List of Impaired Waters](#).**

- Willow planting
- Other riparian vegetation projects
- Livestock fencing projects
- Development of grazing plans
- Maintenance of riparian fencing and/or vegetation
- Browse protection for riparian vegetation
- Low-tech, process-based restoration, including beaver mimicry and/or beaver management
- Off-stream water for livestock
- **Other projects that fit the purpose and goals of this funding will be considered**

## Restrictions

This funding cannot be used for the following:

- Programs for which the main activities are education and outreach. *Education and outreach directly related to the project being implemented, such as project tours and videos, may be supported if costs do not exceed 10% of the total funding request.*
- Purchase of equipment that is not directly related to the project or that exceeds 20% of the project budget.
- Food
- Administrative costs
- BSWC members' time cannot be covered by this funding or counted as match. However, time spent by host site staff assisting the member with the project may be covered under personnel expenses, and time spent on the project by host site staff and board members may count as match.

## What Is Required of BSWC Members Who Receive Funding?

Members who receive funding will be expected to report to MWCC on:

- Project implementation and deliverables
- Total project budget, including the required nonfederal match funding
  - Notes on Match funding: Nonfederal cash match may include any funding that does not come from federal government agencies. Nonfederal in-kind match can include volunteer time, host site staff time, board member time, donations of materials or equipment use, etc., as long as these in-kind donations don't come from federal government agencies.
- How the project is building host site capacity and BSWC member skills
- How the member and/or host site plan to use the project in future outreach and communications
- There is no monitoring requirement for funded projects

Projects supported by this funding must secure an agreement between the watershed organization and the landowner on whose property the project is occurring – regardless of whether that landowner is a private individual, organization, or government entity. Landowner agreements shall address operation and maintenance of the project as well as site access for maintenance and post-implementation monitoring. MWCC has sample landowner agreements available to use as templates if your organization does not already have a template that includes these elements.

Projects occurring on private land must also provide a description of the project activities and a description of the specific area that may be affected by the project (land use, habitat type, etc.) This information will be used by DEQ and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine how to reduce or eliminate any potential effects of a project on endangered species.

For projects that address nutrient (total nitrogen and total phosphorus) and sediment pollutants, members who receive funding must provide sufficient information to allow DEQ to estimate pollutant load reductions for the project. MWCC and DEQ will provide a list of information needed from each funded project and will work with the member on this requirement prior to signing a funding agreement.

## Timeline

- **Thursday, February 23 from 2-3 pm:** MWCC and Montana DEQ will host a webinar about this funding, including funding purpose, eligibility, restrictions, funding and reporting requirements, and how to apply. [Register here](#).
- **Wednesday, March 22 at 5 pm:** Deadline to submit project proposals.
- If you would like to submit a draft project proposal for review and feedback before the final deadline, please do so by **Monday, March 13 at 5 pm**. *To submit a draft proposal, use the Word version of the Project Support Application Form Questions. Do not submit draft proposals in the online form used for final proposals (details below).*
- **Week of April 3:** MWCC will notify applicants whether they have been awarded funding.
- **Month of April:**
  - Funded members will secure agreements with project landowners.
  - DEQ and USFWS will determine how to reduce or eliminate any potential effects of projects on endangered species and share that information with MWCC and members.

- o DEQ will determine what information they will need to provide to determine pollutant load reductions for projects that address nutrient (total nitrogen and total phosphorus) and sediment pollutants and share that information with MWCC and members.
- **Month of May:** MWCC will work with members and host sites to draft, finalize, and sign funding agreements.
- **Month of June:** Project work begins!
- **Friday, August 18:** Interim reporting forms due to MWCC
- **Wednesday, Nov. 1:** Projects complete
- **Monday, November 6:** Final reporting forms due to MWCC

## How to Apply

Submit a project proposal by **Wednesday, March 22, at 5 pm**, via the [2023 BSWC Nonpoint Source Project Support Proposal Form](#).<sup>\*</sup> Optionally, you may also submit a draft proposal, using the Word document attached at the bottom of this page, by Monday, March 13 at 5 pm, to receive feedback before your final proposal is due.

*\*The MWCC Watershed Fund uses the online platform [Submittable](#) for all our funding. Check to see if your host site organization has an existing Submittable account. If so, please ensure that you are logged into that same account before clicking on this link or filling out this proposal form. Do not create a new Submittable account or submit proposals using another account. This helps hugely with Watershed Fund tracking, and we appreciate your attention to this detail. To learn more about how to use Submittable, check out this [two-minute video](#).*

### Proposals must include:

- A project map(s) that clearly shows the location(s) of proposed project activities
- Location coordinates *in decimal degrees*
- A description of how the project implements Best Management Practices from your local WRP
- A completed spreadsheet of project tasks, deliverables, and timeline for completion, available for download at the bottom of this page and in the Submittable application
- A proposed project budget spreadsheet, including anticipated nonfederal match and explanations of anticipated expenses, available for download at the bottom of this page and in the Submittable application.
- Letters of support from key project partners are optional but encouraged.

## Review Criteria

MWCC Watershed Fund Reviewers will review all applications based on the following criteria:

- Proposed project implements recommendations from a local WRP
- Proposed project addresses an impaired water body on Montana's 2020 list of impaired waters
- Proposed project directly addresses non-point source pollution in the watershed.
- Proposed project provides additional natural resource or conservation benefits.
- Details of project implementation included in project map and in tasks, deliverables, and timeline spreadsheet align with stated project goals for reducing nonpoint source pollution and providing other benefits.
- Project budget is clear and reasonable for the success of the project.



- Project can reasonably be completed by November 1, 2023, taking into consideration the BSWC member's time, the project location, landowner involvement, member and host site expertise, and other factors.
- Project includes a clear plan for evaluating project effectiveness in meeting the WRP, NPS, and other outcomes.
- Project demonstrates an appropriate level of community engagement
- Project builds the capacity of the host site to implement more NPS projects in the future and/or to meet other WRP goals.
- Role of BSWC member in the project is appropriate for both the project and for the member's professional development.
- Project partners and partner expectations are clearly defined.
- Partner support demonstrated through letters of support.

## Questions?

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact Terri Nichols with project ideas and questions. Terri will also review and provide feedback on draft proposals submitted by Monday, March 13 at 5 pm using the Word version of the proposal form questions provided below. Including with your draft proposal a draft budget using the BSWC NPS Project Proposal Budget Template is strongly encouraged.

Terri Nichols

[terri@mtwatersheds.org](mailto:terri@mtwatersheds.org)

(406) 210-1217

## Example of a past successful BSWC Project Support funding proposal

Click on the links below to see all aspects of a successful 2022 BSWC Project Support proposal.