

2025 NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION REDUCTION CALL FOR APPLICATIONS



Upper West Fork Gallatin Nitrogen and Sediment Reduction Project. Post-restoration 2023

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Two-Phase Solicitation Schedule

(See [Appendix A](#) for more scheduling details)

Date	Event
NEW! Draft Application Phase <i>To be eligible for funding, you must submit a draft application for DEQ's review and comment by 3/7/25</i>	
Friday, 1/17/2025	Solicitation opens
1/17/2025 – 3/5/2025, 5:00 pm	Applicants should work with Nonpoint Source and Wetlands (NPSW) program staff to ask questions, receive assistance and discuss draft applications.
Friday 3/7/2025, 5:00 pm	Complete, signed draft applications and all attachments submitted to Meagan Gilmore (Meagan.Gilmore@mt.gov) by 5:00 pm. To be eligible for funding during the final application phase, you must submit a draft application during the draft application phase.
Friday, 3/14/2025	Draft applications and feedback posted to https://deq.mt.gov/water/Programs/nonpoint After this deadline, all questions must be posted to the Q&A Board in eMACS.
Final Application Phase	
Friday, 3/14/2025	Final Solicitation opens. eMACS Q&A Board opens.
Wednesday, 03/26/2025 5:00 pm	eMACS Q&A Board closes.
Friday, 3/28/2025, 5:00 pm	Final, complete, signed applications and all attachments, including required landowner letter of support, submitted to the eMACS by 5:00 pm. Unsigned applications will be rejected, as will any information submitted outside of eMACS.
Thursday – Friday 4/17-4/18/2025	Agency Review Panel meeting (see Appendix A for more details)
Monday, 5/5/2025	Applicants notified of funding decisions
5/5/2025 through 5/23/2025	Contract development (DEQ and successful applicants)
October 2025	Funding becomes available

NPSW Program Contacts

- [Hannah Riedl](#), Section Supervisor – 406-444-0549
- [Mark Ockey](#), Water Quality Specialist – 406-444-5351
- [Meagan Gilmore](#), Water Quality Specialist – 406-755-8981
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- [Stephen Carpenedo](#), Senior Wetland Specialist – 406-444-3527
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- [Tiffany Lyden](#), Education and Outreach Specialist – 406-444-3576

eMACs Online Platform – **New Requirement** All final applications need to be submitted through the state's online platform eMACS (electronic Montana Acquisition and Contracting System). <https://spb.mt.gov/eMACS-Resources>. Applicants should be registered ahead of time in

eMACS. Step-by-step registration instructions: Overview of eMACS [Registration Steps for Nonpoint Source and Wetland Program Partners](#)

Still have questions?

1. emacs@mt.gov or the eMACS Help Desk at 406-444-2575 for the submittal assistance
2. Contact Customer Support 1-800-233-1121 for registration and/or login/access assistance
 - a. Select option 1 for English
 - b. Select option 1 again for Supplier (Vendor)
 - c. Select option 2 for Supplier Support at sciquest.com (URL)
 - d. As soon as you get a representative, explain to them that you are a State of Montana supplier having issues with the vendor portal.

Unanticipated Program Changes

Information in the Call for Applications may be subject to change based on unforeseen changes to DEQ and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) priorities. If changes become necessary, DEQ will post the changes on the [Nonpoint Source Program website](#) and eMACS.

Refer to [Appendix A](#) – Grant Cycle for additional information.

1.0 – PURPOSE

To reduce and prevent nonpoint source pollution
by
restoring and protecting natural processes and conditions.

2.0 – FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Funding for this program comes from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA). DEQ anticipates approximately \$1,000,000 will be available for this Call, to be distributed by October 1, 2025. Funding will be disbursed as follows:

- \$500k to competitive projects located within the selected Focus Watersheds - Lower Gallatin and Shields NWQI Watershed*
- \$500k, plus any unallocated funds from the Focus Watersheds to on-the-ground projects including capacity building and education outreach programs elsewhere in Montana
- No single project may receive more than \$300k, but a single applicant may submit multiple applications if they have multiple projects.

* The Lower Gallatin is the current DEQ Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Program “Focus Watershed.” The Natural Resource Conservation Service’s National Water Quality Initiative watersheds are also considered DEQ Focus Watersheds. These are the Camp Godfrey (contained within the Lower Gallatin) and Shields watersheds: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6e01c2d7ebc04dd08df67f77b7631995/page/National-Water-Quality-Initiative/>

3.0 – MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to meet a minimum 40% non-federal cost share (also known as match) for the project. Match can be from private, state, local, or non-profit sources; contributions from federal sources cannot be counted toward the 40% match requirement. Use the following formula to calculate the amount of non-federal match required for your project. (i.e. – Total cost of 319 project \$166,666.67 with a 319 request of \$100,000, and required match of \$66,666.67)

Calculating Required Match

$[(\text{grant funding requested})/0.60] - (\text{grant funding requested}) = \text{required non-federal match}$

Example: For a project sponsor requesting \$100,000 in 319 funds, the minimum required match would be:

$(\$100,000 \div 0.60) - \$100,000 = \mathbf{\$66,666.67}$

Expenses and match incurred by applicants prior to the signing of a contract, and after the expiration date of the contract, CANNOT be submitted for reimbursement or applied as match.

4.0 – APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

*****NEW!!!***** All applicants must submit draft **and** final applications according to the schedule and instructions described on page 3 and [Appendix A](#). All applicants must register with the state’s online platform eMACS to post questions and view responses and submit final, complete applications.

The following entities may be eligible to receive funding:

- Nonprofit organizations having a tax-exempt declaration of 501(c)(3) from the Internal Revenue Service.
- Governmental entities. A governmental entity is a local, state, federal, or tribal organization that has been established and authorized by law.

Applicants must also meet the following minimum qualifications:

- **Have a current UEI number. Unique Entity Identifier.** Each project applicant is required to have a current UEI number. **The UEI number replaces the old DUNS number.** If your organization had a DUNS number, you should have received a notification from the federal government indicating that your DUNS number has been changed to a UEI number. If you did not receive this notification, or if you never had a DUNS number, you will need to go to the federal government’s System for Award Management (SAM - <https://sam.gov/content/home>) to obtain your UEI number.
- Be registered with the federal System for Award Management (SAM). The SAM registration website is <https://sam.gov/SAM/>.
- Be registered with the Montana Secretary of State. All applicants must be registered with the Montana Secretary of State to do business in the state of Montana. Registration with the

Secretary of State may be completed via the following website:

<https://sosmt.gov/business/start-maintain-grow/>

- Have the necessary liability insurance.
- Comply with the Workers Compensation Act.
- Have sufficient technical and managerial resources available to facilitate completion of the project.

5.0 – PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

This Nonpoint Source Project Application Call supports two types of projects:

- On-the-ground projects
- Capacity building and education outreach projects

5.1 – ON-THE-GROUND PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

On-the-ground projects may include related tasks such as planning, design, permitting, construction, effectiveness evaluation, education outreach, and project administration.

Pass-through mini-grant programs with on-the-ground projects will also be considered in this category. A competitive process must be used to distribute mini-grant funds.

Minimum Funding Request (per project): \$10,000

Maximum Funding Request (per project): \$300,000

Time For Completion: 3 years from the signing of a contract with DEQ, though extensions may be granted for an additional 1.5 years.

Eligibility

These projects must meet all the eligibility requirements listed below to qualify for funding.

- Projects must implement activities or practices identified in a DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plan or an EPA-approved Tribal Nonpoint Source Plan, or that serve disadvantaged communities (with or without a Watershed Restoration Plan or Tribal equivalent). Disadvantaged communities can be identified using established tools (e.g., [CEJST](#)) and justified on the application form. If you do not have a DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plan or an EPA-approved Tribal Nonpoint Source Plan by the application deadline, and your project is not specific to disadvantaged communities, you must submit a draft prior to applying for funding. DEQ staff will review the draft and estimate the likelihood of it being ready prior to October 2025. See DEQ's interactive [Watershed Plan Viewer](#) map for information on existing Watershed Restoration Plans. All the land-owning Montana Tribes currently have an EPA-approved Nonpoint Source Plan (per personal communication from EPA, Region 8).
- All projects must reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution by restoring and protecting natural processes and conditions.
- Projects must address impairments identified on [Montana's 2020 List of Impaired Waters](#) or in an EPA-approved Tribal Nonpoint Source Plan or Watershed Restoration Plan. In some instances, projects on streams that are not listed as impaired may be acceptable. These projects must reduce pollutant loading to an impaired downstream receiving water OR protect existing

uses from becoming impaired. In some instances, funding may be used for projects that protect watersheds that are currently healthy.

- All projects must implement actions consistent with recommendations in the [2017 Montana Nonpoint Source Management Plan](#)
- Applicants must complete the [2025 On-the-Ground Project Application Form](#), the [On-the-Ground Budget Template](#) and where necessary, the [2025 Supplemental Project Form](#).

Ineligible Activities (applicable to on-the-ground project funding only)

The following activities are NOT eligible for on-the-ground project funding:

- Development of a Watershed Restoration Plan or similar type of plan.
- Activities required as a condition of a point source (MDPES) discharge permit.
- Watershed characterization studies.
- Pollutant source identification.
- Water quality monitoring, except for monitoring the effectiveness of funded projects.
- Statewide education outreach campaigns.
- Projects whose primary purpose is to protect infrastructure from stream channel migration.
- Riprap, except in instances where it is necessary to protect a new bridge or culvert designed to restore aquatic organism passage or improve natural stream processes.
- Projects designed to address violations of state and federal law (e.g., projects that stem from a 310 violation or an Army Corps violation).

All projects that include implementation of on-the-ground practices must meet minimum design standards (see below), minimum monitoring requirements, and must enter into a signed agreement with the landowner prior to beginning construction. Additionally, DEQ encourages up to \$5,000 for education outreach efforts to raise awareness about the project and generate additional local efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution. See the [On-the-Ground Application Form](#) for minimum requirements and details.

The proposed solution must meet the following minimum design standards:

- Projects must restore and maintain natural conditions and processes.
- Only native, site-appropriate plant species may be used for revegetation.
- Projects involving riparian or wetland buffer creation must have a minimum buffer width of 35 feet, as measured from the ordinary high-water mark. If the buffer must be less than 35 feet in some places to accommodate bridges, water gaps or other infrastructure, the buffer should be made proportionately wider in other areas.
- Projects must allow for the continued existence and future colonization of beaver.
- Revegetation efforts must include browse protection where necessary.
- Projects addressing stream flow through improved water use efficiency must include reasonable assurance that unused water will remain in the stream (e.g., through a change of use to instream flow, or a signed commitment from the water right holder).
- Projects must not result in a net loss of wetlands or wetland function.
- Projects involving grazing management (e.g., riparian fencing, creation of riparian pastures) must include a grazing management plan as a deliverable.

5.2 CAPACITY BUILDING/EDUCATION OUTREACH PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Funding Request (per project): \$10,000

Maximum Funding Request (per project): \$30,000

Time For Completion: 3 years from the signing of a contract with DEQ, though extensions may be granted for an additional 1.5 years.

Eligibility

DEQ will award funding for projects related to capacity building and education outreach consistent with activities described in the [2017 Montana Nonpoint Source Management Plan](#) and a local Watershed Restoration Plan (or Tribal equivalent), and to projects that serve disadvantaged communities. Disadvantaged communities can be identified using established tools (e.g., [CEJST](#)) and justified on the application form. Projects must address reduction or prevention of nonpoint source pollution and implement actions consistent with an existing tribal Nonpoint Source Management Plan, or the [2017 Montana Nonpoint Source Management Plan](#).

Applicants must complete the [2025 Capacity Building/Education Outreach Application Form](#) and the [Capacity Building/Education and Outreach Budget Template](#).

Ineligible activities for Capacity Building and Education Outreach

- Food and beverage costs
- Re-creation of existing educational lesson plans
 - *Applicants are encouraged to review [the Educational Resources Guide](#) for existing lesson plans that can be implemented as part of proposed activities*
- Statewide education outreach campaigns
- Normal website maintenance

5.2.1 Capacity Building

The intent of supporting capacity building is to increase organizational capacity, aid in watershed planning, and/or lead to a grant application(s) for larger on-the-ground projects.

Eligible activities for Capacity Building include:

- Development of a Watershed Restoration Plan or alternative
- Update to a Tribal Nonpoint Source Management Plan
- Demonstration projects to encourage partnerships with landowners.
- Capacity building to support growth of an organization (trainings and symposiums, monitoring equipment, etc.).
- Nonpoint source pollution reduction projects that invest in/benefit traditionally underserved communities
- Pursuing creative finance partnerships to address match requirements.
- Conducting a water quality investigation to help prioritize the most effective restoration options and build stakeholder buy in (this type of project will likely require a Sampling and Analysis Plan)
- Preliminary data collection on a previously un-assessed waterbody (this type of project will likely require a Sampling and Analysis Plan)
- Cultivating partnerships with landowners and land managers to develop future projects that could be eligible for §319 grant funding.

Minimum Requirements

- Proposed activities will increase the organization’s capacity to plan and carry out projects to reduce nonpoint source pollution.
- Proposed activities are an appropriate next step for the protection or improvement of water quality.
- Clearly describe the capacity you are trying to generate.
- Describe the need for the capacity you are trying to generate.
- Describe how you will generate the desired capacity.
- Describe how you will sustain the capacity over time.
- Demonstrate there is adequate local interest and opportunity to use the increased capacity.
- Include an appropriate method for evaluating the success of your proposed activities.

5.2.2 Education Outreach

DEQ will prioritize education outreach campaigns founded in the community-based social marketing framework ([Appendix D](#)) that promote impactful behaviors. *Applicants are encouraged to review existing resources in the [Educational Resources Guide](#) and [EPA’s Environmental Education Guidelines](#).* Note: smaller projects (under \$4000) may be eligible for funding through [E&O Water Quality mini-grants](#).

Eligible activities for Education Outreach include:

- Develop, implement, and evaluate community-based social marketing strategies ([Appendix D](#)) to promote behaviors that reduce nonpoint source pollution to improve water quality. This may include seeking funding to support the application of any phase of community-based social marketing:
 - Phase One: Behavior Prioritization
 - Phase Two: Barrier/Benefit Research and Strategy Recommendations
 - Phase Three: Strategy Design
 - Phase Four: Pilot Testing
 - Phase Five: Implementation and Evaluation
- Lead project tours to demonstrate potential changes homeowners or landowners could take to improve water quality.
- Host workshops, classes, or trainings that address nonpoint source pollution issues.
- Develop videos, media, or other outreach tools that address nonpoint source pollution.

Minimum Requirements

- Proposed education outreach projects must target behavioral change that will reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution.
- Clearly identify the target behavior and the impact it is having or could be having on nonpoint source pollution.
- Clearly identify the target audience and how the audience will be reached.
- Describe the barriers to that are preventing/discouraging the target audience from making the targeted behavior change.
- Explain how your proposed project will overcome those barriers.
- Describe the behavior, knowledge, skills, or abilities expected to be gained by participants
- Include a reasonable process for determining the extent of the behavioral change achieved because of your project.

5.3 – ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Nonpoint source pollution reduction and prevention projects are part of DEQ’s broader mission to champion a healthy environment for a thriving Montana. The positive impact of these projects often stretches beyond simply improving water quality. The following priorities reflect some of the potential that nonpoint source pollution reduction projects have for serving the greater good. These potential benefits are reflected in the Scoring Sheets.

Environmental Justice

Projects are encouraged to provide equitable access and opportunities to a clean and healthy environment for economically and socially disadvantaged populations and provide meaningful involvement in environmental decision-making processes from all affected stakeholders. DEQ encourages applicants to support projects that take into consideration the protection of public health and the environment.

Climate Change and Resilience

There is strong scientific evidence that the earth’s surface temperatures are warming and precipitation regimes are shifting. A changing climate will have a significant impact on water quality, affecting the timing and quantity of the precipitation and snowmelt that feed rivers, and affecting the temperature of lakes and streams, and nutrient cycling within aquatic environments. Some nonpoint source pollution prevention projects can lessen the impacts of climate change on water quality and quantity.

Impacts to Downstream Communities and Natural Systems

The effects of nonpoint source pollution are often felt by downstream communities and natural systems. Nonpoint source pollution can increase the cost and complexity of treatment for communities that rely on streams as a source of drinking water. It can cause algal growth, limiting recreational opportunities, and can also have negative impacts on human health, food webs, and wildlife health.

6.0 – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources may also be useful in preparing your application:

- [The 2017 Montana Nonpoint Source Management Plan \(NPS Plan\)](#)
- [A map showing watersheds](#) with Watershed Restoration Plans, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and final TMDL documents
- The Clean Water Act Information Center (CWAIC) database is available to help search for information on the impairment and TMDL status of Montana waterbodies. The database can be searched online at www.cwaic.mt.gov

Adobe Reader software is required and can be downloaded for free: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

APPENDICES

[APPENDIX A - GRANT CYCLE](#)

[APPENDIX B - ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS](#)

[APPENDIX C - PROJECT EXAMPLES](#)

[APPENDIX D – COMMUNITY BASED SOCIAL MARKETING FRAMEWORK](#)

[APPENDIX E – SCORING SHEETS](#)

[APPENDIX F – APPLICATION FORMS AND BUDGET TEMPLATES](#)

[F1 – 2025 On the Ground Application Form](#)

[F2 – 2025 Supplemental Project Application Form](#)

[F3 – 2025 On the Ground Project Budget Template](#)

[F4 – 2025 Capacity Building & Education Outreach Application Form](#)

[F5 – 2025 Capacity Building & Education Outreach Budget](#)

[APPENDIX G – EXAMPLE CONTRACT AND SCOPE OF WORK TEMPLATES](#)

These requirements can change prior to contract signature; this example is intended to provide applicants with a rough idea of what to expect. Also, the scope of work template is primarily applicable to on-the-ground projects. Given the variability of mini-grant programs and capacity and planning or education outreach projects, DEQ does not currently have a comparable template for those projects.