

2025 DEQ / Agency Review Panel

Review Summary

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued the 2025 Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Call for Applications on January 17, 2025. Funding for this program comes from the EPA Clean Water Act §319 grant.

On April 18, 2025, DEQ hosted an Agency Review Panel to gather input from state and federal agency representatives to help guide DEQ's selection of which projects to fund. Each applicant was given the opportunity to engage with the Panel in a brief Q&A session. The Panelists scored the applications based on a rubric provided by DEQ and provided their funding recommendations.

Table 1 – Agency Review Panel Members

Member Name	Member Affiliation
Peter Brown	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, <i>Fisheries Habitat Division</i>
Melissa Downing	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, <i>Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program</i>
Brett Heitshusen	United States Department of Agriculture, <i>Sustainable Agriculture</i>
Danika Holmes	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, <i>Planning, Implementation, and Communications Bureau</i>
Austin McCullough	United States Fish and Wildlife Service, <i>Montana Ecological Services</i>
Kyle Milke	Montana Department of Environmental Quality, <i>Total Maximum Daily Load Section</i>
Hannah Riedl	Montana Department of Environmental Quality, <i>Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section</i>
Nikki Sandve	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, <i>Planning, Implementation, and Communications Bureau</i>
Cory Wolfe	United States Department of Agriculture, <i>Natural Resources Conservation Service</i>

Table 2 - Other Agency Review Panel Meeting Attendees

Attendee	Affiliation
Rayelynn Brandl	Clark Fork Watershed Education Program
Ashley Brubaker	Trout Unlimited
Steve Carpenedo	DEQ Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section
Jim Ford	Natural Resource Damage Program
Meagan Gilmore	DEQ Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section
Torie Haraldson	DEQ Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section
Steve Hodgdon	Montana Conservation Corps
Madi Larson	Montana Association of Conservation Districts
Tiffany Lyden	DEQ Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section
Cindy Murray	Evergreen Water and Sewer District
Halle Nienhaus	Freshwater Partners
Mark Ockey	DEQ Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section

Emily O'Connor	Gallatin River Task Force
Jess Olson	Gallatin River Task Force
Connor Parrish	Trout Unlimited
Ron Pierce	Lolo Watershed Group
Adam Switalski	Clark Fork Coalition
Gretchen Watkins	Clark Fork Coalition

The following is a summary of notes, questions and responses from the review process for applications received in response to the '2025 Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Call For Applications'. Blue text denotes a response provided by the applicant to a question posed by the Agency Review Panel. Questions without corresponding blue text were not discussed due to time constraints. The views and opinions expressed below do not necessarily reflect those of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality or its partners, and dialogue was not captured verbatim.

PROJECT NAME: Evergreen Septic Tank Replacement Project

PROJECT SPONSOR: Evergreen Water and Sewer District

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Is total project cost representative? **yes**
- OSG cannot be counted as match. Will this be a problem? **No – might need an extra year (into calendar year 2026) due to high water, but probably an error as we plan to match out of district funds**
- Floodplain permit consultation? **No – she's not aware that septic replacement in current location would require it but will consult engineers.**

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- This project will have an immediate impact on environmental health and reduction of nonpoint source pollutants in low income communities.
- The project does not seem to have a clear connection to restoring natural stream or lake processes, but it will reduce nutrient pollution.

PROJECT NAME: Evergreen Water and Sewer District Education and Outreach Project

PROJECT SPONSOR: Flathead County Water and Sewer District No. 1: Evergreen

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Can you show an example or specs for the septic model? Who will maintain/store? **No concept/design developed yet, got the idea from an E&O center exhibit in Spokane on human water cycle. Follows water through home and septic or WWTP or where it goes when it leaks.**
- Can it be loaned out more broadly? **Yes – intent to make it travel**
- Expand on goal of raising awareness in the non-student population. **Plan to attend community events outside of schools with model that have adult attendance.**
- How will you measure behavior change? Is WSD capable of measuring in a creative way?
- Pre- & post-testing wording – careful as people over-state their knowledge before programming.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- When the mobile exhibit is not in use, how/where will it be stored and who will be responsible for maintenance?
- It is really the parents/homeowners that have the ability to address the nonpoint source issues associated with septic tanks. How are you going to reach them? Not all students will convey what they have learned to their parents.

PROJECT NAME: Central Clark Fork Watershed Restoration Plan Development

PROJECT SPONSOR: Clark Fork Coalition

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- 3 outreach events seems low to get others involved in planning
- How will outcomes of E&O efforts inform development of WRP? 3 outreach events will be big PR events to develop interested parties, then follow-up with them 1:1.
- Is UM grad student employed by DEQ? – provide detail on work plan It's not the current TMDL employee. Student has gone through the draft, elements 1&2, then will work with stakeholders through 3&4, then with funding Gretchen would work on 'nuts & bolts'
 - 1 – Causes/sources of pollution IDed
 - 2—Load reductions
 - 3—NPS measures
 - 4—Technical and financial assistance
 - 5—EO
 - 6—Implementation schedule
 - 7—Milestones
 - 8—Evaluation criteria
 - 9—Monitoring
- Can you provide more match? Yes, working on private funding now.
- Timeline of activities before contract is in place finalize and submit by spring
- Clarify classroom activities in budget (\$500). Not in narrative. Add-on for working with Mineral Co. CD to create these.
- Can you give a criteria metric for gauging success of E&O? metric is people's buy-in to future projects
- Elaborate on participation of diverse partners list. Key players are CDs working with landowners (E&O), most would be technical advisors, data exchange.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Recording attendance at workshops doesn't provide very accurate information about what was learned by the participants or what actions they take based on the new knowledge they have acquired. Have you considered other options for evaluating the effectiveness of your education and outreach efforts?
- The list of project partners doesn't seem to indicate whether most of the partners have been contacted and what role they are committed to playing as a partner.
- As a reminder, activities completed and expenses incurred prior to the signing of a 319 contract cannot be billed against the contract or reported as match.
- Goals could have been more clearly defined; listing them out would have been preferable.
- More emphasis could have put into identifying efforts to reach underserved communities.
- In the "Need & Opportunity" section of the application, the applicant explains how they will set milestones and establish criteria for success, but their narrative in the "Measurement & Sustainability" section doesn't explicitly describe how they will measure the degree to which those criteria have been met (e.g., increased, decreased, or consistent stakeholder attendance at meetings/workshops/trainings over time as one metric for the success of public engagement strategies).
- It's great to read their plans to engage CSKT staff for their perspective and feedback. They should engage the tribe *before* they have a draft plan.
- The budget section seems to describe E&O rather than capacity building/WRP development efforts, and deliverable cost descriptions are scant.

PROJECT NAME: Grant Creek Restoration

PROJECT SPONSOR: Gretchen Watkins, Clark Fork Coalition

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- How much flexibility is there to work with you on designs? Quite a bit. Designs have even been updated since WRP was submitted, once LiDAR was done.
- Have you consulted with County regarding floodplain permit? Yes
- What if DNRC or Future Fisheries funding don't come through? Do funding availability timelines match up? They have had private funding in Grant Creek, these partners can be used if other funding doesn't come through.
- Will impacts in upstream reaches prohibit Grant Creek from delisted? City and County committed to working on temp and sediment below upper reach
- What is a long-term landowner agreement? Something between our standard LOA and an easement? \$9,000 covenants that follow title of the land. Lawyers looking into this.
- Please explain MOU mentioned in letter of support when WRP was put together, Grant Creek working group signed MOU to commit to work together
- Will E&O focus on upstream HOA? They are active in Grant Creek working group. E&O focused all over the watershed. They are partnering on signage in the popular walking area.
- Are floodplain contaminants a concern? Soil sampling could be conducted. Results could influence risk tolerance of designs

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Consider revisiting the designs to look for more cost-effective ways to meet the water quality goals associated with the project.
- Based on a cursory review of available LIDAR and aerial photographs, the sinuosity in the proposed designs doesn't seem to match up with what would exist naturally at the site.

PROJECT NAME: Upper O'Brien Creek Stream Restoration Implementation

PROJECT SPONSOR: Clark Fork Coalition

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Will stream function be self-sustaining after the project? What would trigger adaptive management? What portion of parallel road is being relocated? Goal of project is to be self-sustaining after a few years. A lot of roads in watershed have been addressed, decommissioned, etc. They will be moving road away from creek whenever it is less than 50'. 200' of road moved. Also maintenance for 2 years after for weeds, veg monitoring and watering. Triggers – veg mortality.
- What if Future Fisheries/DNRC funding does not come through? Ability to seek private funding. West Slope TU
- Any USFS support? Only possibly in-kind. They have already done road commissioning about 20 years ago. Burned area treatments. Sediment capture in a tributary.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

PROJECT NAME: Brackett Creek Restoration and Erosion Reduction

PROJECT SPONSOR: Trout Unlimited, Ashley Brubaker

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- What design alternatives did you consider developing these final plans? Yes – plan B includes not treating some of the benches, preferable to passive because currently no beavers to recolonize. Current high banks and lack of veg could lead to erosion with passive approach.
- Is it possible to add more of a buffer next to hay field? They are moving the access road at N edge of hayfield, so have room to include width of current road.

- Why end at the downstream end? Significant degradation ends here. Just downstream has a big cottonwood stand and looks pretty good.
- Confirm that grazing is not here. What was land use? Last year they held cattle there with hotwire fence.
- Without seeing landowner agreement, is it possible to redo if needed to address our requirements? Yes
- Do you have an SOP for drone imagery effectiveness? NDVI? 4-band sensor no, just a drone that takes pictures.
- Would need to cut down on admin and add as-builts—would this be an issue? No
- Will you measure floodplain reconnection? Mostly through high-water imagery. Elevation and inundation monitoring plan – can be worked into monitoring plan.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Were other, more cost-effective design alternatives considered (such as the ones proposed for other creeks within the Shields watershed).

PROJECT NAME: Canyon Creek Stream Restoration and Monitoring Phase 1

PROJECT SPONSOR: Trout Unlimited, Ashley Brubaker

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- How have you coordinated with FWP on status of culvert as a Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout barrier? This is an ongoing conversation. Waiting on genetics data to inform how to proceed. Should have data in April.
- Why not remove bridge first, and how will you ensure integrity of downstream structures? Sediment pulse of bridge removal will be trapped by downstream structures. How will you ensure headcutting won't happen? Can't say too much because it's a later phase, but elevation will be raised in time between implementation of phases.
- Where is fencing planned? Exclusion fence in grazing management plan? Landowner's conservation strategy is for wildlife. They use a lot of hot-wire. Hoping to bring in grazing expert to inform grazing timing and intensity in grazing management plan
- How did you decide on a such a different approach compared to Brackett? Proximity of beavers is a big part of it, and more remote would need to build new roads
- Does creek interact with terraced banks and how will you ensure activities don't perpetuate erosion? Yes, in a couple spots. It is more sloping, not too dramatic. The way this project will decrease erosion is by reducing erosive force.
- How will you gauge effectiveness of art installation? Who is the audience, how will they be reached? Local art showing in community accompanied with information. Proposing monitoring attendance and volunteer sign-up sheet. Open to suggestion. Goal to reach a new audience.
- Likelihood of being able to revise landowner agreement if needed? Importance of adaptive management
- BDAs and PALs trap sediment, channel and fisheries response needs to be studied – TU took it out of scope per feedback from application that included it last year. Working with USGS.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- The project needs to include a grazing management plan.

PROJECT NAME: Trout Unlimited Shields Watershed Capacity

PROJECT SPONSOR: Trout Unlimited, Ashley Brubaker

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Put a timeline to items listed in budget. How many water rights change applications do you plan on submitting as part of this contract? This is a list of all the things they'd like to accomplish.

Funding would be pursuing ideas and moved around due to priorities. Probably ID'ing potential water rights changes. Prioritize culvert and diversion studies in 1 season.

- More detail on project ID plans – how does this go beyond project list provided with FW application? ID'ing instream flow projects, culvert/diversion projects. Don't feel like FW list included all landowners because they weren't aware.
- Clarify why MFP and TU for fisheries surveys takes 2 ppl. TU submits collection permits.
- What can you do with \$200 for EO? (see 1st bullet)

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Will the funds be enough to complete the various activities you mentioned in your activity description?

PROJECT NAME: East Fork Cherry Creek Restoration

PROJECT SPONSOR: Trout Unlimited

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- How will long term maintenance of structures be protected amidst wildlife browse? Will fund TU time for maintenance, but FT and seasonal TEI staff are committed to maintenance. Also, FWP working on beaver relocation program to reintroduce if it doesn't happen naturally. Fencing the potted plants, relying on live stakes in unfenced area. Adaptive management planned if browsing damage is significant.
- Opportunities to lower budget and still implement? Yes
- How will you ensure landowners will relate to the project/ garner interest for project tour? Focus E&O on water storage benefits, focus on lessons applied to cattle-grazed land. Work with Madison CD to connect with landowners, want to quantify water storage. Already established interest and hope to learn from those people.

PROJECT NAME: North Fork Spanish Creek & Wetland Restoration

PROJECT SPONSOR: Trout Unlimited

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Please clarify why \$60k for 319 equipment, but Turner is stated as providing equipment. 60K is for bulldozer to fill in ditches that TEI doesn't have. They have mini-excavator with post pounder attachment.
- Please explain where fencing and clumps of vegetation will go? A lot is TBD when on site. Area has vegetated clumps they want to expand on. Consider fencing as needed on adaptive management. Trying to put in intensive live stakes. Working with bison travel patterns on fence areas.
- Will mobilization for this project be concurrent w/ Cherry Creek project? Yes – potential bulk purchasing, some depends on timing with TEI staff who work world-wide.
- (Austin) Could course material travel and incorp. in lower meadow? Low gradient and slow flow will prevent it from reaching meadow. Also riparian veg and existing fish barrier could catch it.

PROJECT NAME: Bangtail Creek Riparian Restoration Project

PROJECT SPONSOR: Montana Freshwater Partners

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Part of a broader approach to address NPS upstream? At time of WRP, Hayhook was not maintaining riparian corridor historically, similar upstream. Projects ID'd, partners also working along stream corridor.
- Will livestock be excluded from stream reach/grazing plan? Planning to exclude and use water gaps. (Ranch manager speaking on behalf of owner, who is active in balancing ranching and conservation goals)

- Is there opportunity for more comprehensive restoration across Hayhook and State Lands? Private and state land opportunities are being explored. Current project phase IDs potential to tie into existing parcel fencing, downstream more incised. Scale was appropriate as a first step with landowner.
- Have you considered Ranching For Rivers to cover part of this? Not yet, but will explore.
- Is there potential for beaver recolonization?
- Fisheries value noted in application – LoS from FWP? Definitely a possibility. Genetics being studied.
- Please clarify water gaps? Funneling suggested by landowner, could be topo reason.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Great to have the ranch manager call in to the Agency Review Panel meeting.

PROJECT NAME: Lower Shields Project Development

PROJECT SPONSOR: Montana Freshwater Partners

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- How will you entice landowners to participate in tour? Done once in 2024, will replicate. Worked with CD and watershed group. Flyers, etc. Had 25 participants. Scalable with prior experience and Park Co. Water Initiative.
- How will you target landowners and other partners besides project tours? Top down – letting site characteristics direct landowner outreach, rather than landowner interest. What barriers to landowner engagement have you already ID'd? Rural watershed = knowledge and awareness a challenge.
- Have you spoken with more than just the local fisheries biologist? Yes. Attended meeting with more region-wide FWP staff. Also consulting new Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout biologist.
- Please clarify why fisheries data collection would need to continue into 2027? Timeline depends on partnership with FWP staff availability.
- Clarify interim measures of effectiveness in development of new projects participants in events and meeting (Clyde Park and Wilsall meetings planned), # site visits, # fisheries datapoints, # projects added potential projects list

PROJECT NAME: Big Hole Watershed Non-point Source Reduction and Floodplain Connectivity

PROJECT SPONSOR: Montana Conservation Corps

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Why are you focused on these tribes specifically? ID'd by Big Hole Water Committee (BHWC) and USFS as priorities.
- Why is 319 the right fit and not MCC's normal channels? Not really a "normal" channel, always looking for new funding sources. BHWC and USFS at grant carrying capacity.
- How will you mitigate grazing impacts? May need to be discussed, but can expand on plans from one site to other project sites. Long-term plans for structure maintenance? Natural beaver recolonization expected. E&O to generate volunteers for maintenance, and interns.
- What is the impetus for regrading drainage ditches off road? Pedro's designs, not intent to direct sediment to channel.
- Please explain implementation line item in budget. Value of labor vs. actual pay as match accepted by other orgs.
- USFS participation? Yes. Technical expertise.
- Have you considered measuring volume of sediment capture for load reduction? Would not require a SAP like monitoring TSS.
- Is there flexibility to modify complete designs?
- Need to clarify implementation budget

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Need greater detail in the design plans.
- The need for this project and the potential benefits of doing this type of work at the proposed locations are poorly supported.
- The project lacks a long-term maintenance strategy for the 200+ planned structures.
- The project does not appear to include adequate tools for limiting livestock impacts on the proposed structures.

PROJECT NAME: Blacktail Creek Restoration Project

PROJECT SPONSOR: State of Montana, Department of Justice, Natural Resources Damage Program

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Explain protection of the integrity of the sewer pipe if project fails. *Butte-Silverbow would be responsible for sewer line.* Did you explore design alternatives that included relocating it? *Original project concept of reboring sewer line underneath creek, but new development now would require a pumping station and cost prohibitive. This is cost-effective alternative, as headcut still needs to be addressed. Picture shows concrete encasement, but sewer line itself is in good condition.*
- How is Butte Silver Bow contributing to project? *Materials (concrete). Space for project is defined open space under their control. Maintenance is typically taken over by them.*
- Who is providing match? *Funding from Future Fisheries, NRDP, materials from Butte-Silverbow*
- Likelihood of being able to revise landowner agreement? *Timing is good.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- The current design appears to use the sewer line as an integral part of the grade control system, such that it is unprotected or inadequately protected from impacts from the stream. Funding for construction should be contingent on addressing this issue, or funding should be applied to identifying and vetting alternative designs.

PROJECT NAME: Building Capacity for the Lolo Watershed Group

PROJECT SPONSOR: Lolo Watershed Group

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Are you willing to consider other roles for the WSG besides funding an FTE? *Firm up the program...*
- What sort of consultation have you done with groups implementing projects in the Lolo about this proposal? *Kids education, community outreach, connect community to field practitioners*
- What types of projects do you envision accomplishing with your FTE that is not already being accomplished in the watershed? How would the FTE assume work currently done by the board? *Pursue grants and coordinate so board can do social media, education,*
- Has speaker series brought in interested landowners? *(Example of yes provided from recent speaker series)*
- Describe board turnover/longevity *board turnover a constant effort. Typically 4-5 years.*
- Is tribal participation limited to the speaker series? *Sounds like yes, but they would like to expand.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Does the anticipated non-federal match include hours donated by the speaker in the speaker series? If so, will other partners be claiming the same hours as match for their contracts?
- The budget seems a little low for the amount of work to be done; DEQ should fund the project fully or not at all.

PROJECT NAME: Big Sky Water Conservation Program – Marketing Campaign

PROJECT SPONSOR: Jess Olson – Gallatin River Task Force

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Have you been coordinating with one of the other 20 water providers mentioned in the letter of support? [Yes – Big Sky WSD covers 60% of community, but smaller HOAs and Clubs also supportive](#)
- Will your CBSM contractor also be revamping the campaign? If asked to come back next year, would that be detrimental to the momentum [Could move forward with the recommendations at that time.](#)
- Willing to present lessons learned on developing outreach using CBSM? [Yes – already working on information sharing with regional partners but willing to broaden.](#)

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- There was very little discussion about how underserved markets would benefit and how tribal participation and perspectives will be incorporated.
- It was great to see such strong support from the largest stakeholder.
- It seems most appropriate for this application to be re-submitted in a future grant cycle once Action Research has finished their CBSM consultation and funding for a more fleshed out project/set of activities can be applied for.

PROJECT NAME: South Fork Moose Tracks Stream Restoration Project

PROJECT SPONSOR: Gallatin River Task Force

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Will felling trees for instream wood violate SMZ? Is there a plan for future wood recruitment? [No – only applies to commercial forestry projects. Plenty of tree growth, just too young to be falling naturally. Resort is always cutting trees to free up ski areas.](#)
- Why is this a best/logical step in addressing the W Fork Gallatin impairment?
 - Reducing sediment that would be trapped in reservoir. [Lake Levinski is trapping so downstream is actually sediment-starved. Hoping to eventually balance sediment transport.](#)
- All planning tasks are complete and cannot be counted as match. Will this be a problem? [No](#)
- \$10k for landowner agreements. Understand that lawyers may need to be involved, but you provided an example. [Lawsuits in the area means a lot of scrutiny and staff time is going into it.](#)
- Have you considered signage for EO component of project? Would be good for high viz area. [Yes – done in the past w/ Boyne below Lake Levinski and on MFWF Gallatin River.](#)
- Pond at upstream end of drainage – sediment?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- One reviewer really appreciated the low disturbance approach.
- The project has good community support.

PROJECT NAME: The EcosySTEM Project – Community Outreach and Education in the Yellowstone and Clark Fork Watershed

PROJECT SPONSOR: Ripple: The Center for Education and Ecosystem Studies – Montana Technological University

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Can you come up with more match? [yes](#)
- Explain YBRA match—registration?
- What is the next phase of funding? [Scale citizen science projects that come out of the classroom throughout the watersheds](#)

- Can you use existing CBSM resources to save funding? [Yes. Site-specific resources are needed.](#)
- Are target behaviors end-state metrics of behavior change? [This phase was not envisioned to get all the way to end-state behavior change.](#)
- Can you broaden to all schools in Shield and Upper Yellowstone? [Yes, perhaps in a later phase.](#)
- What other grants/funding are you using for summer academy?
- Which grade levels taught? [4-8](#) Will you rely on teachers that have participated before? [Relying on veteran teachers as leaders but some new teachers brought in.](#)
- The travel for partners to the YBRA is only paid for the Clark Fork Partners? Why not other participants also?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Rayelynn did a great job providing clear answers during the Agency Review Panel meeting.
- The activities included with this project are at least a couple of steps removed from activities that will directly reduce nonpoint source pollution. The effort to play the long game to achieve sustainable change is appreciated, though it did make it more difficult to score this project based on DEQ's scoring rubric.

PROJECT NAME: Rolling Rivers Trailers Mini-Grant Program

PROJECT SPONSOR: Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD)

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Why can't this be funded through existing EO minigrant program? Have CDs applied for this type of work? [Yes, but separate to not strain minigrant program, and minigrant program prioritizes new or expanded projects vs maintenance.](#)
- Please provide more detail on types of trailer needs. [Regular trailer maintenance, then also sand, pipes, add-ins for expanded curriculum.](#)
- Would E&O benefits be compromised by pivoting to table models? [Not necessarily. Not sure if smaller scale would make it less interactive.](#)
- Describe typical annual trailer use schedule. [Spring/summer/fall per outside events and safe travel. ~5000 miles annually.](#)
- Concerns about adding new trailers – considered sharing? [Currently there is sharing/loaned. Trailer design and maintenance specs planned to make them standard.](#)
- When used with specific schools, are learning goals and post lessons happening? [Can't say, but thought went into E&O FAQ and updating curriculum documents.](#)
- There are 7 CD's listed and each year they would help 6 trailers? Please explain. [One was stolen](#)
- Are the students receiving pre and post learning/lessons or is this a one shot education piece?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- Consider modifying the application criteria for education and outreach mini-grants to allow some of the mini-grant funding to be used to meet the trailer maintenance needs.
- There is very little mention of tribal participation and perspectives. Do the trailers visit reservations?
- Is there an alternative to constantly having to upkeep on maintenance of these trailers? Are there other ways to get the same kind of outreach that wouldn't require constant maintenance? For example, watershed table models could be used year around and may be more ADA accessible.
- More detail could have been provided regarding the specific nonpoint source prevention behaviors addressed through the rolling rivers program.

PROJECT NAME: Ranching for Rivers Grant Program

PROJECT SPONSOR: Montana Association of Conservation Districts

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- How many projects are in the queue to spend down current contract passthrough (~\$50k)? *Fewer applications in this round, still need to catch up on monitoring due to staff turnover.*
- What are you doing to promote the program? Anything in person? *Include program info with any in-person events. This round plan should push E&O to local CDs to take advantage of landowner relationships.*
- What is the 2nd way CDs will be engaged? *Helping to promote the program and bring in new landowners.*
- How will you train CDs on monitoring? *Provide documents/instructions and piloting small group of CDs for in-person training*
- Have you had to turn down potential projects because of the previous grant amount limit? *Not turning anyone down, but less applications and they SUSPECT it's because of costs*
- Is this program ever an avenue to ID'ing larger scale NPS issues. *No, limited to small scale projects.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- The application materials didn't contain very much information on anticipated projects or on how the projects are selected and implemented.

PROJECT NAME: Water Quality Education and Outreach Mini-Grant Program

PROJECT SPONSOR: Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD)

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- Did anyone from MACD take CBSM workshop? *I don't think so.*
- With increased grant cap, could Rolling Rivers requests be rolled in? *Yes, a possibility, but that is focused on new programs vs. maintenance.*
- Would there be a way to make % (1 grant of 6) for maintenance? *Could consider.*

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- What is the rationale for increasing the funding cap for individual mini-grants from \$4k up to \$8k?
- At \$8k, it's difficult to describe the grants as "mini". Consider dropping the term "mini".
- Information seemed to be missing in various places within the application.

PROJECT NAME: Flathead Lake Buffer and Retention Pond

PROJECT SPONSOR: Flathead Lakers

AGENCY REVIEW PANEL DISCUSSION:

- This application was deemed ineligible prior to the Agency Review Panel meeting and therefore was not reviewed by the panel.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- This application was deemed ineligible due to a missing, required attachment