



2026 Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Application - Capacity Building/Education Outreach Projects

General Information

Project Name

Applicant Name

Is your organization registered with the Montana Secretary of State?

Explanation: Each applicant 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/>

Is your organization registered with the federal System for Award Management (SAM)?

Explanation: Each applicant is required to register with SAM. To register or check your organization's status, go to <https://sam.gov/content/home>. If you get an "Unsupported Browser" error, copy, and paste the link into a Google Chrome browser window.

Your organization's Unique Entity Identifier number (UEI #)

Explanation: Each 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. DEQ recommends starting this process early as it is very time-consuming, requires providing documentation-sometimes with follow-up requests for additional information, and can take up to 2 months to complete. If you need assistance, you may contact the federal help desk at 866-606-8220 Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m. EST.

Does your organization have adequate liability insurance for the risks associated with your project?

Explanation: Each applicant must have or obtain liability insurance coverage meeting the requirements stated in the Draft Sample Contract and/or requirements negotiated based on the appropriate level of risk associated with the project.

Primary Contact Title

Address City State Zip Code

Phone Number Email

Signature

Explanation: This is the person who DEQ would routinely contact to discuss project progress, billing, etc.

Signatory Title

Address City State Zip Code

Phone Number Email

Signature

Explanation: This is the person who can legally sign contracts and other binding documents on behalf of the applicant (e.g., a board chair)

Note: The primary contact and the signatory must both sign the application. Signatures must be either signed electronically, or wet-signed, scanned and emailed.

Project Form

Project Type

Is this a Capacity Building Project, or is it an Education and Outreach Project?

Capacity Building Project

Explanation: DEQ supports education and outreach efforts that focus on changes in behavior that will prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution. Our goal is to encourage adoption of Community Based Social Marketing concepts to produce measurable, sustainable change. We also want to support activities that improve local capacity to develop and implement on-the-ground projects to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution. In so doing, we are making a distinction between capacity building projects, and education and outreach projects. The selection you make above will be used to determine which questions on the Scoring Sheet reviewers will use to evaluate your project.

Required Attachments in Addition to This Form

- Letter of support or from each organization critical to the project (*if applicable*)
- Letter of support from each landowner associated with any on-the-ground component of the project (*if applicable*)
- Budget Table (see Microsoft Excel Template)

Activity Location

List the watershed(s) where your proposed work will happen.

Lake Helena Watershed Group

Activity Description

Describe your project goals, proposed activities and how the project will make progress towards addressing nonpoint source pollution. Explain why the proposed work is an appropriate next step towards preventing or reducing nonpoint source pollution.

The Lake Helena Watershed Group has a mission for “Improving the health of our watershed to benefit our communities and increase the enjoyment of our resources.” They accomplish that by working as an interdisciplinary and invested volunteer board working in four main goals connected to water availability, water quality, land use, and watershed health. The Water Quality Protection District (WQPD) is a team at Lewis and Clark Public Health (LCPH) who provides fiscal responsibilities for the Lake Helena Watershed Group and helps coordinate and collaborate on projects and goals. LCPH will be the grant recipient. Water Restoration Plans (WRPs) are essential tools for improving water quality by guiding local investment toward data-driven, high-priority actions that address nonpoint source pollution. The WQPD and the Lake Helena Watershed Group implemented a WRP from 2016–2023. Much of the data is more than ten years old, projects have been completed, and priorities have changed, therefore making this plan outdated and not reflective of current conditions and unusable for the group. A new plan will incorporate current data, strategically align with current watershed conditions, engage new stakeholders, reinvigorate current partners, and incorporate projects such as ones for HABs. A new plan is needed for the group to move forward on projects for biggest impact to the watershed.

The project goal is to have an updated WRP that outlines a clear, collaborative, and data-driven roadmap for preventing or reducing nonpoint source pollution. A successful WRP can provide multiple co-benefits, including reduced land loss, enhanced wildlife habitat, increased crop and forage productivity, and expanded recreational opportunities.

The updated WRP will incorporate current data, document progress made to date, engage stakeholders for input, and establish new priorities. Approach and Work Plan will follow these steps: 1. Project and Data Review. 2. Assessment of Assessment of Changes and Challenges. 3. Stakeholder Engagement. 4. Project Prioritization. 5. Plan Development and Review.

Budget Form

Please fill out the Capacity Building and/or Education Outreach Project Budget Template (Excel file). Cells highlighted in yellow may be edited to fit the needs of your particular project. DEQ uses a template to construct nonpoint source grant contracts. The Budget Template contains tasks and typical deliverables that match up with the grant contract template. Please see the Example Contract and Scope of Work template for a more detailed look at typical task requirements and deliverables.

Capacity Building Projects

(only complete this page if you selected "Capacity Building Project" on the top of page 2; otherwise, leave this page blank)

Need and Opportunity

Describe your organization's need for increased capacity, and how the proposed project activities will help you meet those needs. Describe the local interest and opportunities for using the capacity you create to prevent or reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Over 70,000 people live in Lake Helena watershed in a basin that ranges from the top of Elkhorn Peak to its outlet of Lake Helena. Over 150 years of human activity ranging from mining to agriculture and burgeoning residential development have impacted many streams in the watershed. Currently, twenty-four streams or portions of streams in this watershed have been identified as having one or more pollutants that negatively impact beneficial uses of segments of rivers, streams or lakes (waterbodies), including aquatic life, agriculture, and drinking water. To restore these streams to ensure that they can fully support these beneficial uses, an active Water Restoration Plan is needed. Water Restoration Plans (WRPs) are a critical tool for ensuring that communities work collectively to prevent and reduce nonpoint source pollution. An expired WRP presents several challenges. First, the data informing the plan is more than ten years old and no longer reflects current water quality conditions, emerging issues, or trends. Second, the community input that shaped the plan is outdated, resulting in reduced engagement and investment from current stakeholders and residents. Third, many of the plan's identified priorities have either been completed or are no longer relevant, leaving the community without clear, data-driven guidance for future actions. Lewis and Clark Public Health (LCPH) via the Water Quality Protection District is committed to updating the WRP through a meaningful and inclusive process that incorporates current data collection, community and stakeholder feedback, prioritization exercises, and community awareness efforts. However, existing staff capacity limits the ability to conduct this work in a timely and strategic manner. Grant funding would allow LCPH to partner with a qualified consultant to design and facilitate a comprehensive planning process, maintain project momentum, integrate feedback throughout development, and deliver an updated WRP to the Water Quality Protection District that is both actionable and impactful.

Measurement and Sustainability

Describe how you will measure an increase in capacity and how you would sustain this in to the future

At the end of the funding opportunity, one updated and ready to execute WRP would be completed that would not be possible without the help of this funding opportunity. The Lake Helena Watershed Group is already active, engaged, and wanting to work together on projects that meet the community needs. The capacity gap lies in not being able to update the plan to help guide the direction of the group. The group will participate in providing guidance, direction, and feedback to the consultant to ensure the plan meets their goals and needs. In the end, this funding opportunity would provide an actionable plan that the group could sustain and take and use as their action plan for the future.

Timeline

Describe your anticipated project timeline

It will take 1-3 months to get the contract signed. Therefore, we are starting this timeline in January 2027, but if the award and signors happen quicker, then these will be moved up.
Jan 2027-March 2027: Procure a consultant and contracts signed.
April 2027-June 2027: Review of the past plan, updating key data points, and researching changes or challenges to water quality that have changed in the past ten years.
July 2027-Sept 2027: Stakeholder involvement 4-6 interviews and/or focus groups.
Oct 2027-Dec 2027: Board prioritization exercises.
Jan 2028-March 2028: Write and edits to plan. Final Report shared with the board and community by March 31, 2028.

Education and Outreach Projects

(only complete this page if you selected "Education and Outreach Project" on the top of page 2; otherwise, leave this page blank)

Behavioral Change

Identify the behavior change you are targeting and the target audience. From a nonpoint source pollution perspective, why is the change in behavior important and what impact would it have?

Barriers

What are the existing barriers to changing the behavior? How will your proposed activities address the identified barriers and lead to behavior change?

Evaluation

How will you measure the extent of the behavioral change achieved because of your project?

Timeline

Describe your anticipated timeline

Project Partners and Roles

Identify the partners that will be working on the project, and their roles.

Successful development and implementation of the WRP will rely on strong collaboration among local, state, federal and community partners. LCPH will be the recipient of the grant funds to provide financial and programmatic guidance for the project. Jennifer McBroom, WQPD Supervisor, will be the liaison who will ensure the grant deliverables, reporting, and finances are being spent appropriately. In-kind time from the LCPH Finance Specialist and Epidemiologist to help with data connected to environmental conditions that affect human health.

The WQPD and the Lake Helena Watershed Group will be the leads for the project. They will be responsible for directing the consultant and will lead implementation.

Lewis and Clark and Jefferson County are key partners in the development of the WRP because the identified impairment affects the entire watershed, crossing county boundaries and impacting resources, communities, and downstream waters in both jurisdictions.

MT DEQ will play a key role in development of the WRP by providing data and reports to help identify data gaps, offer technical guidance to ensure alignment with EPA nine-element watershed plan criteria, and recommending best management practices.

Private landowners and agricultural producers are essential voluntary partners in water restoration and will be critical to implementing on-the-ground conservation practices.

Co-Benefit Considerations

DEQ is committed to carrying out nonpoint source pollution reduction projects within engaged communities where the impact stretches beyond improving water quality. DEQ will award additional points in the scoring form where co-benefits extend beyond the project. Below are a few examples of how projects might exemplify co-benefits.

- Project will reduce economic hardship such as from livestock mortalities, cost and energy needs to treat municipal drinking and wastewater treatment, or loss of income from recreation
- Project will benefit underserved markets
- Project will improve or create equitable access to a clean and healthy environment
- Project planning included consultation with Tribal Nations
- Project will improve flood and drought resilience of the landscape
- Project impacts will benefit a downstream community and other natural systems (e.g., drinking water sources, human health, wildlife habitat, etc)

Please use this section to highlight co-benefits your project may have.

This watershed area is considered disadvantaged Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool provided by DEQ because it meets more than 1 burden threshold and the associated socioeconomic threshold. Nonpoint source pollution originating in the Tenmile and Prickly Pear Creek headwaters contributes sediment, nutrients, and metals to the Lake Helena watershed and downstream Missouri River system. These pollutant loads threaten designated beneficial uses, including public drinking water supplies, aquatic life support and overall water quality. Protecting and restoring these headwaters areas will be achieved by updating the existing Water Restoration Plan (WRP), which will help guide stakeholders in preventing and reducing nonpoint source pollution. Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) are becoming increasingly common along beaches on the Missouri river, raising human health concerns along with limiting recreational opportunities and harming aquatic ecosystems. Financial losses occur when areas close or are heavily impacted due to HABs – Log Gulch on Holter Lake, Black and Sandy campground beaches, fishing along the Causeway and Hauser Lake. Because Lake Helena serves as a collection point for the watershed, any improvements with water quality made anywhere upstream multiply in benefit as water moves downstream. A coordinated plan ensures that restoration efforts are strategic, measurable, making sure to maximize local and regional impact.

Project Administration

Each contract will have a Project Administration Task. Take the requirements (listed below) into consideration when planning logistics and budget for your project. Project administration includes bookkeeping, invoicing, interim/annual/final report preparation, office supplies, rent, communications, etc. Nonpoint source funding applied to this task on each project must not exceed 10% of the total amount of funding requested, or \$3,000, whichever is lower. Like all other tasks, payment is by reimbursement for actual expenses incurred.

Report Format:

- *Contractor shall submit each Attachment B Billing Statement, Status Report and Final Report using the most current reporting guidance and templates provided by the DEQ project manager.*
- *Contractor shall ensure each Status Report and Final Report contains adequate documentation to justify accompanying reimbursement requests and match reporting, to the satisfaction of the DEQ project manager.*
- *Contractor shall ensure that the Final Report is a standalone document describing all contract activities and containing copies of all contract deliverables (even if the deliverables were previously submitted).*

Reporting Schedule:

- *Status Reports: Due June 15th and December 15th of each year the Contract is in effect.*
- *Draft Final Report: Contractor shall submit a complete draft Final Report for DEQ review and comment at least 15 days prior to the contract expiration date.*
- *Final Report: Contractor shall submit a Final Report, addressing DEQ comments on the draft Final Report, on or before the Contract expiration date.*
- *Attachment B Billing Statements: Contractor shall submit an Attachment B Billing Statement with each Status Report, or Final Report submitted to DEQ while the Contract is in effect. To maintain cash flow, Contractor may submit interim Attachment B Billing Statements as frequently as monthly during the term of the Contract. However, each interim Attachment B Billing Statement must be accompanied by an Interim Report.*

Additional Information

Use the space below to include anything additional for the review panel to consider. Attach additional items and information that could help reviewers better understand your project. Please be conscious of reviewers' time, as they may not have time to read lengthy studies and reports. Please do not attach copies of TMDL documents or watershed restoration plans. Please no more than 20 pages.

Please also see the attached Letters of Support (2).

BUDGET

**LETTERS
OF
SUPPORT**



1930 9th Ave
Helena, MT 59601

February 17, 2026

Meagan Gilmore, Water Quality Specialist
Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section/Water Quality Planning Bureau
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
1520 E 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59601

Dear Ms. Gilmore and Members of the Grant Review Committee:

On behalf of the Lake Helena Watershed Group, I am writing to express our support for the MT Department of Environmental Quality Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Capacity Building/Education Outreach application.

Nonpoint source pollution originating in the Tenmile and Prickly Pear Creek headwaters contributes sediment, nutrients, and metals to the Lake Helena watershed and downstream Missouri River system. These pollutant loads threaten designated beneficial uses, including public drinking water supplies, aquatic life support and overall water quality. Protecting and restoring these headwaters areas will be achieved by updating the existing Water Restoration Plan (WRP), which will help guide stakeholders in preventing and reducing nonpoint source pollution.

The Lake Helena Watershed Group is an active and engaged coalition committed to working collaboratively on projects that address community needs. Updating the WRP will provide a clear, strategic action plan to guide the group's efforts, ensuring coordinated, effective implementation of priority projects.

We respectfully request your consideration and support in funding this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Ferrell", with a long, sweeping underline.

Matt Ferrell
LHWG, Chair



March 10, 2026

Meagan Gilmore, Water Quality Specialist
Nonpoint Source and Wetlands Section/Water Quality Planning Bureau
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
1520 E 6th Ave., Helena, MT 59601

Dear Ms. Gilmore and Members of the Grant Review Committee:

On behalf of Prickly Pear Land Trust, I am writing to express our support for the MT Department of Environmental Quality Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Capacity Building/Education Outreach application.

Nonpoint source pollution originating in the Tenmile and Prickly Pear Creek headwaters contributes sediment, nutrients, and metals to the Lake Helena watershed and downstream Missouri River system. These pollutant loads threaten designated beneficial uses, including public drinking water supplies, aquatic life support, and overall water quality. Protecting and restoring these headwaters areas will be achieved by updating the existing Water Restoration Plan (WRP), which will help guide stakeholders in preventing and reducing nonpoint source pollution.

The Lake Helena Watershed Group is an active and engaged coalition committed to working collaboratively on projects that address community needs. Prickly Pear Land Trust has worked with this group to develop healthy riparian zones and reduce pollution. Updating the WRP will provide a clear, strategic action plan to guide the group's efforts, ensuring coordinated, effective implementation of priority projects.

We respectfully request your consideration and support in funding this important initiative.

For land and people,

Audra Shropshire

Prickly Pear Land Trust Education Coordinator

OTHER ATTACHMENTS