



2026 On-the-Ground Project Application Form

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.

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, signatory and landowner must sign the application. Signatures must be either signed electronically, or wet-signed, scanned and sent electronically.

Landowner Name

Landowner Signature

Landowner Name

Landowner Signature

Landowner Name

Landowner Signature

Explanation: Landowner signatures are required. **Signing the application does not obligate the landowner to implement a project.** Instead, it is an indication that the landowner has read the application and agrees, in principle, with the project concept and goals.

Supplemental Project Form

A separate Project Form (including providing separate attachments) must be submitted for each project included in your application. When submitting your final application, use the "Supplier's Attachments Page" in eMACS.

Project Name

Applicant Name

Required Attachments

Letter of support from the organization that created or sponsored the creation of the DEQ-accepted Watershed Restoration Plan or the Tribe that created the EPA-approved Tribal Nonpoint Source Management Plan (if applicable).

Letter of support from EACH landowner associated with the proposed project area (if applicable).

Budget Table (see Microsoft Excel Template).

Detailed Project site map(s) Attach a map or set of maps showing the location and size of proposed activity if a site has been predetermined. The map scale must be between 1:1,000 and 1:12,500. The map(s) must have an aerial photo background (e.g., USDA NAIP photography, Google Earth imagery, etc.). The map(s) must show the latitude, longitude, site name, and landowner for the activity site. The map(s) should also identify waterbodies affected by the pollution that the activity is designed to address. *(This is in addition to adding points of the project location to the website on page 4).*

Optional Attachments

Attach additional items and information that could help reviewers better understand your project. Information could describe public health risks, opportunities to leverage other funding sources, etc. However, application reviewers may have limited time available, and excessively long, optional attachments might not get reviewed. Do not attach copies of TMDL documents, TMDL implementation evaluations, Watershed Restoration Plans, Tribal Nonpoint Source Plans, or large comprehensive studies. The following attachments may be included. Please no more than 20 pages.

Project Design Plans/Drawings

Preliminary Engineering Reports / Site Evaluations

Landowner Agreements / Construction Permits / Floodplain Permits

Site photos

Additional Letters of Support

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Project Area

Please provide as detailed a description of the project area as possible.

List the counties in which the project will be located.

List the 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs), sometimes referred to as Sixth Code HUCs, in which the project will take place. Use the following link to help assist you in determining the HUCs: <https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/>

Project Location Map

In addition to providing your own project site map, please go to the following website and follow the instructions to add your project location to the map.

<https://gis.mtdeq.us/portal/apps/storymaps/stories/42f4a668285c4ef6aa94b1623f10df57>

Connection to a Previous or Ongoing Project

Is this project tied to a previous or ongoing project? If so, please describe the connection.

Project Purpose

Select the watershed restoration plan or tribal nonpoint source plan that your project will help implement (please type in if missing from list) (Not required for HAB reduction projects)

Letter of support from author, or if the author was contracted, the author sponsor, attached? (If no, explain why below.)

IMPAIRMENT LISTINGS: Projects that address water quality impairments on Montana's 2020 List of Impaired Waters are preferred though not a requirement. Funding may be used for projects that protect waterbodies that are demonstrated to be healthy.

Waterbody name from the 2020 List of Impaired Waters

Probable causes of impairment to be addressed

Waterbody name from the 2020 List of Impaired Waters

Probable causes of impairment to be addressed

HEALTHY WATERSHEDS: While project funding is prioritized to addressing known impairments, funding can be used to protect healthy waters from becoming impaired.

Name of healthy waterbody to be protected

Description of identified threat

Name of healthy waterbody to be protected

Description of identified threat

Project Partners

Identify each of the project partners and describe their contribution to the project. Include landowners, land managers, project designers, funders, and your own organization. Indicate whether each partner, other than your organization, has provided a letter of support. *(Note: each landowner must provide a letter of support if project site(s) have been predetermined.)*

Landowner

Contributions to Project

Letter of
Support
Attached?

Project Partner

Contributions to Project

Letter of
Support
Attached?

Project Coordination and Planning Task

This task would include completion of all applicable planning tasks from the list below, as well as coordination and oversight of the efforts of all project partners.

Identify the status of the following project planning tasks, where applicable.

	Completed?	Copy Attached?	To Be Completed Pre-Contract (Oct 2026)?	To Be Completed as Contract Deliverable?
*Draft Project Designs				
*Final Project Designs				
Consultation With Potential Regulators				
Necessary Permits				
Cultural Resources Inventory <i>(if relevant)</i>				
Other:				
Other:				
Other:				

***See Call for Applications Section 5.1 for minimum design standards.*

Describe any additional project planning that will have been completed prior to execution of a contract (October 2026).

Describe any additional project planning and coordination that will need to be completed after the execution of a contract (October 2026).

Landowner Agreement Task

DEQ includes the following language in every nonpoint source contract involving on-the-ground activities:

Contractor shall submit signed landowner agreement(s) verifying that Contractor and DEQ staff may access the project site, at reasonable times and with prior notification, for the purposes of project planning, implementation, and post-implementation monitoring. The agreement(s) must ensure appropriate operation and maintenance of all structures, vegetation, and management measures for the life of the project (typically 10 years). If grazing will be allowed within the project area, the agreement(s) must include a sustainable management plan for livestock grazing, designed to protect and enhance riparian function. If a signed landowner agreement does not meet the above-stated minimum requirements, Contractor shall negotiate an amended agreement with the landowner that ensures appropriate operation and maintenance of all structures, vegetation, management measures, and includes a sustainable management plan for any livestock grazing for the life of the project (typically 10 years).

Identify the status of the following landowner agreement tasks, where applicable.

	Completed?	Copy Attached?	To Be Completed Pre-Contract (Oct 2026)?	To Be Completed as Contract Deliverable?
Draft Landowner Agreement(s)				
Final Landowner Agreement(s)				
Grazing Management Plan				
Other:				
Other:				

Project Effectiveness Monitoring Task

If you will be conducting any on-the-ground implementation work, you will be required to complete the monitoring activities described in the task language below, as applicable. Describe below how you plan to determine the effectiveness of your project. Project effectiveness success criteria should be time-bound and assess each project objective quantitatively. Success criteria should clearly define adaptive management thresholds. Examples may include: a minimum 25% decrease in sediment/nitrogen/phosphorus load within 2 years; a 70% survival rate of containerized plantings after one year.

If you are applying for nonpoint source grant funding for project design only, and not for project implementation, you may either skip this task, or describe below which parts of this task you intend to complete:

Example Task Language

Contractor shall, in consultation with the DEQ Project Manager, develop a reasonable method or set of methods for evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the project in addressing water quality issues. Contractor shall complete a monitoring plan to guide monitoring activities. Contractor shall complete the following monitoring activities:

- *Estimate the sediment load reductions (tons/year) achieved through implementation of the proposed restoration activities and management practices.*
- *Estimate the nitrogen load reductions (pounds/year) achieved through implementation of the proposed restoration activities and management practices.*
- *Estimate the phosphorus load reductions (pounds/year) achieved through implementation of the proposed restoration activities and management practices.*
- *For projects designed to address pollution from pollutants other than nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the project in addressing water quality issues.*
- *Contractor shall collect data, as directed by the DEQ Project Manager, to be used in estimating sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus load reductions (and for harmful algal bloom reduction projects, carbon sequestration/emissions reductions) achieved through implementation of restoration activities and management practices designed to address these pollutants.*
- *Use the following measures to evaluate the sustainability of restoration activities and management practices:*
 - *[Vegetation mortality rate.]*
 - *Pre- and post-construction photo point monitoring consistent with the “Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Guide to Photo Monitoring” methodologies, or a similar published photo point monitoring method accepted by DEQ. The U.S. Forest Service provides additional photo point monitoring guidance in the “United States Forest Service Photo Point Monitoring Handbook”.*
 - *[Riparian survey.]*
 - *[Other.]*

Please describe any additional monitoring you intend to do as part of the project.

Project Implementation Task

Provide a **detailed description of the solution you are proposing** to implement to address a nonpoint source pollution problem.

- Describe the practices you intend to design and/or implement to solve the problem (what, where, when, how much or how many).
- Describe the anticipated maintenance needs (what, where, who, how long).
- Refer to the minimum design standards in the Call for Applications.
 - *Please fill out this section to the best of your ability, even if you are only seeking funding for project design.*

Education, Outreach and Training Task

To get good projects on the ground, trained staff and board members and educated, enthusiastic landowners are required. To promote the development of future projects, DEQ encourages project sponsors to use up to \$5,000 per project of funding to support training and conduct education and outreach. Example training topics might include: project management, public procurement, technical writing, GIS, water quality monitoring, web design, public speaking, human resource management, photo journalism, UAV (drone) piloting, financial management, and restoration techniques. Education and outreach activities might include targeted landowner outreach, conducting project site tours for local landowners, tabling at community events, holding a watershed festival, providing stipends and travel reimbursements for speakers and participants to attend a nonpoint source pollution prevention workshop, or generating articles for social media. The primary requirement for training and outreach is clearly explaining how the activity generates behavior change to address nonpoint source pollution. Funding may not be used to pay for food and beverages, or for honorariums and gifts.

Describe the education and outreach activities or training you will complete to promote behaviors or facilitate future efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Additionally, identify the goals of the training/education and outreach activities.

Identify the specific target audience and method of delivery. Additionally, describe how the proposed training and/or education and outreach will increase local capacity and interest for addressing/promoting behavior change to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Describe how you will evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed activities.

Project Administration Task

Please use the task description below as a guide when calculating your budget for project administration. DEQ typically includes these requirements in every nonpoint source grant contract, with only minor variation. Funding applied to the Project Administration Task on each project must not exceed 10% of the total amount of funding requested, or \$12,000, whichever is lower.

Example Task Language

Contractor shall oversee and be accountable for the completion of all tasks. Contractor shall maintain regular contact with the DEQ project manager. Contractor shall prepare and submit Status Reports, Final Reports and Attachment B Billing Statements according to the format and schedule described below.

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, and each time an Attachment B Billing Statement is submitted.*
- *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.*

Project Timeline

4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q 4Q 1Q 2Q 3Q
2026 2027 2027 2027 2027 2028 2028 2028 2028 2029 2029 2029

Project Coordination and Planning Task

Landowner Agreement Task

Project Effectiveness Monitoring Task

Project Implementation Task

Education, Outreach and Training Task

Project Administration Task

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.

TECHNICAL MEMO: JOHNSTONE RANCH STREAMBANK RESTORATION

Prepared for the Johnstone family by Montana Freshwater Partners



Project Site Land Use and Phased Restoration Approach

The project site is located on a privately-owned working cattle ranch where current land use consists primarily of livestock grazing and irrigated pasture adjacent to the Shields River. Native riparian vegetation removal and suppression resulting from a legacy of cattle ranching adjacent to the river created an opportunity for the natural process of meander migration to surpass what can be considered natural. Instead, once the river began migrating into the compromised area, the speed and extent of bank erosion was intensified and caused substantial disequilibrium. The proposed design goal is not intended to prevent all channel migration, but to identify a stabilization strategy that restores riparian function, reduces significant nonpoint source sediment inputs, and provides a more sustainable equilibrium between natural channel processes and adjacent land use. Potential design elements may include a combination of structural toe treatments, bioengineered bank stabilization, and floodplain or bank regrading measures that reduce near-bank shear stress while allowing the river to maintain its natural sediment transport and planform adjustment processes without the river incurring significant sediment inputs. The design phase will also evaluate opportunities to improve long-term riparian protection and vegetation establishment, including potential livestock management measures where appropriate.

While this initial project focuses on approximately 300 feet of actively eroding bank, Montana Freshwater Partners (MFP), the Natural Resource and Conservation Service (NRCS) and the landowner are evaluating the broader property holistically for restoration and grazing management opportunities. The Johnstone Ranch includes several miles of stream corridor along the mainstem Shields River as well as Indian and Little Indian Creeks. The landowner is working with MFP and NRCS to identify additional restoration opportunities across the property that may include low-tech process-based restoration, targeted riparian plantings, grazing management or cattle exclusion fencing, and infrastructure upgrades such as replacing undersized culverts with more floodplain-compatible bridges. Because the Shields River represents one of the last genetically diverse strongholds for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Montana, MFP is also coordinating with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to conduct baseline fish monitoring on Indian and Little Indian during the upcoming 2026 field season to help inform future restoration actions.

This project will focus on a single high-priority bank to allow restoration on the Johnstone Ranch to proceed in a phased and manageable manner while building landowner confidence in the proposed restoration approach. Beginning with a focused design effort at a location identified by the landowner provides an opportunity to develop a proof-of-concept project that can demonstrate the effectiveness of bioengineered stabilization approaches as an alternative to

traditional riprap-only treatments. Successful implementation at this site is expected to build trust and momentum for additional restoration work both upstream and downstream on the Johnstone property and on other properties throughout the watershed.

Project Map



Figure 1 Location of the proposed project.

Sediment Loading Rates

The Shields River is listed as impaired for sediment/siltation on the MT Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) list. The project will result in a significant reduction in sediment load to the Shields River. MFP estimated an annual average sediment loading into the Shields River using channel area lost over the past 8 years (measured from aerial imagery, see figure 2 below) multiplied by the portion of the bank profile that is comprised of fine sediment (6-ft) to get a volume and dividing by 8 years to get an annual average. Annually, unnatural rates of erosion from this bank have contributed 741 cubic yards (593 tons) of fine sediment into the Shields.



Figure 2 Aerial imagery comparison of project location from May 2017 versus May 2025, showing unnatural erosion rates due to altered riparian condition at the project site.

Project Photos



Figure 3 Looking upstream at eroding bank along Shields River (December 2025)



Figure 4 Looking downstream at eroding bank along Shields River (December 2025)

Next steps

Montana Freshwater Partners (MFP) is currently seeking grant funding to support project design and permitting. If funding is secured, MFP and Allied Engineering will hold a kickoff meeting with the landowner to initiate the project and Allied Engineering will complete a topographic survey and geomorphic assessment. They will also conduct 2D hydraulic modeling to inform the design, and develop project designs through 30%, 60%, and final design stages, with landowner meetings at each milestone. Throughout this process, MFP will support fieldwork, coordinate between the landowner and engineering team, and lead the completion of all required project permits to set the project up for implementation.

2026 Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Application - On-the-Ground Project Budget Template

Project Title: Shields River Streambank Restoration Design								
Instructions	Tasks and Potential Deliverables	Funding Request*	Non-Federal Match**	Other Funding***	Match Source	Match Secured? (Y/N)	Total Project Cost	Additional Information****
This task includes completion of all planning tasks and coordination and oversight of the efforts of all project partners. Provide a detailed budget and add a row if needed.	Project Planning							
	Preliminary site investigation data and site maps	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 64.30		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 3,264.30	MFP staff time
	Required Permits	\$ 6,400.00	\$ 64.30		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 6,464.30	MFP staff time
	Draft Project Designs	\$ 30,200.00	\$ 257.20		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 30,457.20	Estimate for engineer to complete 60% designs
	Final Project Designs	\$ 10,800.00	\$ 257.20		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 11,057.20	Estimate for engineer to complete final designs
	Encroachment Analysis for Floodplain Permit	\$ 6,000.00					\$ 6,000.00	Includes 2D model using design
	Total	\$ 56,600.00	\$ 643.00	\$ -			\$ 57,243.00	
This task includes costs for developing and managing landowner agreements and developing grazing management plans as applicable. Provide a detailed budget and add a row if needed.	Landowner Agreements							
	Draft Landowner Agreement						\$ -	
	Final Landowner Agreement						\$ -	
	Grazing Management Plan						\$ -	
	Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	
This task includes costs for developing and implementing a monitoring plan to evaluate effectiveness to reduce nonpoint source pollution. See example contract template or application instructions for required monitoring activities. Provide a detailed budget and add a row if needed.	Effectiveness Monitoring							
	Draft Monitoring Plan						\$ -	
	Final Monitoring Plan						\$ -	
	Written Summary of all Monitoring Activities						\$ -	
	Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	
This task includes all costs for implementation of the plans developed in the Project Planning task. If you are requesting funding for design only, leave this task blank. Provide a detailed budget and add a row if needed.	Project Implementation							
	Materials						\$ -	
	Labor						\$ -	
	Equipment costs						\$ -	
	Construction oversight						\$ -	
	As-built surveys						\$ -	
	Photo documentation						\$ -	
	Landowner recommendation letter						\$ -	
							\$ -	
	Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			\$ -	
This task includes costs to develop and improve organizational capacity and to incorporate education and outreach into each on-the ground projects. Provide a detailed budget and add a row if needed.	Education and Outreach							
	Volunteer Coordination						\$ -	
	Event/Tour Planning						\$ -	
	Outreach/Publication materials						\$ -	
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			\$ -		
Funding applied to Project Administration task per project must not exceed 10% of the total amount of funding requested, or \$12,000, whichever is lower. Project includes normal business expenses and reporting requirements.	Administration							
	Mid/Annual/Interim Reports and Billing Statements	\$ 1,920.00					\$ 1,920.00	
	Draft/Final Report and Billing Statements	\$ 960.00					\$ 960.00	
	Communication with DEQ	\$ 1,920.00					\$ 1,920.00	
	Total	\$ 4,800.00	\$ -	\$ -			\$ 4,800.00	
Grand Totals	Funding Request*	\$ 61,400.00	Non-Federal Match**	\$ 643.00	Other Funding***	\$ -	Total Project Cost	\$ 62,043.00


*Funding Request - Must not exceed \$300,000 and must be at least \$125,000 for harmful algal bloom reduction projects

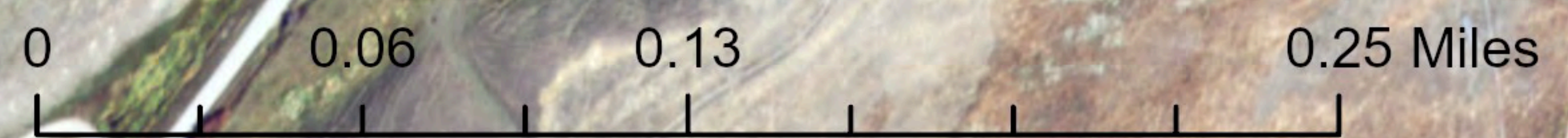
**Non-Federal Match - Can include in-kind materials.
 ***Other Funding - Include federal match here, or, for example, other funding that is supporting the project but cannot be reported as match on this grant because it is matching another funding source.

****Additional Information - Use to specify non-federal match and other funding sources, or use to justify cost if needed (e.g., hourly rates, rental costs, etc.)

Shields River Streambank Restoration Design
Landowner: Alan Johnstone, Johnstone
Ranch LLC
Lat/Long: 45.962566, -110.633726
Waterbody: Shields River



 project location - eroding streambank





Local, Common Sense Conservation

5242 Highway 89 South
Livingston, MT 59047

(406) 223-1048

www.parkcd.org

parkcd.310permitting@gmail.com

January 29th, 2026

MT Department of Environmental Quality
319 Nonpoint Source Program
1520 E. Sixth Avenue
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

Re: 319 Grant Program Proposal- Letter of Support for Shields Streambank Restoration Design for Johnstone project

Dear Members of the DEQ Nonpoint Source Funding Review Panel,

On behalf of the Park County Conservation District, I am writing to express our strong support for Montana Freshwater Partners' (MFP) DEQ 319 grant application for the Shields Streambank Restoration Design project on the Shields River at the Johnstone Ranch in Park County, Montana.

This project addresses a long, actively eroding streambank along a sweeping meander of the Shields River that currently lacks riparian vegetation and root structure to stabilize the bank. Continued erosion is resulting in the loss of productive pastureland for the landowner and contributing fine sediment to the Shields River, which is a documented water quality concern in the watershed. Addressing this site is important for improving stream stability, reducing sediment loading, and supporting long-term river and floodplain function.

The Park County Conservation District supports MFP's phased approach to this work, beginning with the completion of final project design under the 2026 DEQ 319 funding request. Advancing the project through design is a critical step that will position the project for permitting, construction, and monitoring in a future funding cycle. We appreciate the focus on thoughtful planning, technical rigor, and coordination with landowners and regulatory agencies.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. The Park County Conservation District strongly supports this proposal and looks forward to continued collaboration with MFP on conservation efforts within the Shields River watershed.

Sincerely,

Dustin Homan
Board Chair
Park Conservation District

February 17, 2026

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Nonpoint Source Program

Dear Review Committee,

My name is Alan Johnstone. My family and I own the property along the Shields River near Wilsall where Montana Freshwater Partners is proposing to complete design and permitting work to address a section of eroding riverbank. We operate as Johnstone Ranch LLC.

I am writing to fully support this project and to confirm that I am committed to working with Montana Freshwater Partners throughout this process.

Over the years, about 300 feet of riverbank on my property has been steadily eroding, especially during high water in the spring and early summer. As the river pushes against the outside bend, it continues to eat away at the bank, carrying soil downstream and reducing the amount of usable pasture. The area has very little healthy streamside vegetation left to help hold the bank in place, and without a better long-term solution, the problem will only continue. Over the last 20 plus years it has probably pushed the bank back 100 feet and created a 6 foot tall cut that will continue to erode even in moderately high water.

As a former chair and active member of the Shields Valley Watershed Group, I strongly believe in practical, locally led solutions that work for both agriculture and the river. I also saw many successful (and few that weren't) projects like this while I served on the Future Fisheries Advisory Board. I see this project as an opportunity to demonstrate a streambank restoration approach for landowners who are facing similar challenges and want to support the health of the river and improve water quality.

I understand that this grant request is only for the design and permitting phase, and that Montana Freshwater Partners would pursue funding for construction later. I support this step-by-step approach and agree that careful planning and engineering should come first.

Thank you for considering this application. I appreciate the opportunity to work together on a project that supports both working lands and the long-term health of the Shields River.

Sincerely,

Johnstone Ranch LLC by Alan Johnstone

Alan Johnstone for Johnstone Ranch LLC

Landowner

Wilsall, Montana



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 3 Headquarters
1400 South 19th Street
Bozeman, MT 59715

February 18, 2025

MT Department of Environmental Quality
319 Nonpoint Source Program
1520 E. Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620

RE: 319 Grant Program Proposal – Letter of Support for Shields River Riparian Restoration Project

Dear Members of the DEQ Nonpoint Source Funding Review Panel,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is pleased to provide this letter of support for Montana Freshwater Partners' proposal to fund the design of a Shields Streambank Restoration Project (Johnstone) in Park County, Montana.

This request for design funding will be the first step in developing a project to address a long, actively eroding streambank along the Shields River that lacks riparian vegetation and root structure to stabilize the bank. Continued erosion is resulting in the loss of land and contributing fine sediments to the Shields River, which is a documented water quality concern in the watershed. Addressing this site will improve stream form and function, reduce sediment loading, and improve floodplain function. The Shields River supports a popular sport fishery that includes brown, rainbow, and native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Maintaining riparian and floodplain function in this dynamic system, which recently experienced historic flooding, is a key component to maintaining the fishery and valuable habitat.

FWP supports the completion of a final project design under the 2026 DEQ 319 funding request. MFP has had similar successful projects in the Shields River basin, and we look forward to reviewing their final design.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

For questions or concerns, please reach out to the following FWP personnel:

Scott Opitz, fisheries biologist (406-223-3951, sopitz@mt.gov)
Jen Smitham, Region 3 comment coordinator (406-495-3262, jsmitham@mt.gov)

Sincerely,

Kelly Proffitt
Kelly Proffitt
Region 3 Supervisor