



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.



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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.

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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.

Describe the technical and administrative skills your organization will use to effectively and efficiently complete your proposed project(s).

Budget Form

Please fill out the On-the-Ground 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.

Project Form

A separate Project Form (including providing separate attachments) must be submitted for each project included in your application. y lump and when to split projects.

Splitting Examples (fill out multiple Project Forms)

- Stream restoration work occurring on two separate streams..
- Two projects with significantly different sets of project partners.
- Two projects that address substantially different pollution sources (e.g., one project move a corral off of a streambank, and another removes mine tailings, with both projects being on the same property).

Lumping Examples

- Contiguous stream restoration work spanning multiple land parcels.
- Three projects that address similar sources of pollution on a single land parcel (e.g., moving a corral off a stream, implementing a grazing management plan, and relocating a manure storage facility out of the floodplain, all on the same ranch)

Project Form

A separate Project Form (including providing separate attachments) must be submitted for each project included in your application

Project Name:

Required Attachments in Addition to This Form

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.

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

Project Title: Lower Shields River Riparian Restoration Project									
Instructions	Tasks and Potential Deliverables	Funding Request*	Non-Federal Match**	Other Funding***	Match Source	Match Secured? (Y/N)	Total Project Cost	Additional Information****	
<p>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.</p>	Project Planning								
	Preliminary site investigation data and site maps	\$ 3,200.00					\$ 3,200.00	Surveys, site visits	
	Required Permits	\$ 3,200.00					\$ 3,200.00	Permitting and communications with regulators	
	Draft Project Designs	\$ 1,600.00					\$ 1,600.00	Work with DEQ, Geum and Landowner on draft designs	
	Final Project Designs	\$ 1,600.00					\$ 1,600.00	Work with DEQ, Geum and Landowner on final designs	
	Geum Environmental Consulting Design Support	\$ 3,000.00					\$ 3,000.00	field/design support from Geum Consulting	
	Travel	\$ 85.00					\$ 85.00	5 trips (Federal Rate \$0.70 per mile) - 24 miles round trip	
	Total	\$ 12,685.00	\$ -	\$ -			\$ 12,685.00		
<p>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.</p>	Landowner Agreements								
	Draft Landowner Agreement	\$ 800.00	\$ 64.30		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 864.30	Work with landowner and DEQ on draft landowner agreement, match is estimated landowner time	
	Final Landowner Agreement	\$ 320.00	\$ 64.30		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 384.30	Work with landowner and DEQ on final landowner agreement, match is estimated landowner time	
	Grazing Management Plan	\$ 480.00	\$ 64.30		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 544.30	Work with landowner and DEQ on grazing agreement, match is estimated landowner time	
							\$ -		
	Total	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 192.90	\$ -			\$ 1,792.90		
<p>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.</p>	Effectiveness Monitoring								
	Draft Monitoring Plan	\$ 640.00					\$ 640.00	Work with DEQ to develop draft monitoring plan	
	Final Monitoring Plan	\$ 320.00					\$ 320.00	Work through any edits with DEQ and finalize monitoring plan	
	Written Summary of all Monitoring Activities	\$ 1,280.00					\$ 1,280.00	Analyze and summarize monitoring activities	
	Annual Monitoring Activities	\$ 1,920.00					\$ 1,920.00	Conduct pre and post construction monitoring activities	
	Total	\$ 4,160.00	\$ -	\$ -			\$ 4,160.00		
<p>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.</p>	Project Implementation								
	Plants	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	Match: Harvest 5000 willows at \$2/ea	N/A	\$ 40,000.00	Cost of plants - combination of larger trees 5-7' from local nursery and smaller 175 cubic inch trees from Conservation Seedling Nursery	
	Planting labor	\$ 12,800.00	\$ 9,645.00		volunteer/landowner time to work on plantings, in-kind	N/A	\$ 22,445.00	Staff time to oversee and work with volunteers on planting	
	Construction	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 20,000.00		landowner time & equipment, in-kind	N/A	\$ 70,000.00	Cost to hire heavy equipment operator to dig trenches for project; match provided by landowner's family who can provide some time towards constructing the project using family farm equipment	
	Construction oversight	\$ 6,400.00					\$ 6,400.00	Staff time to oversee heavy equipment/fencing contractors	
	As-built surveys	\$ 1,280.00					\$ 1,280.00	Staff time to complete as-built survey	
	Landowner recommendation letter		\$ 64		landowner time, in-kind	N/A	\$ 64.30	Landowner time to write recommendation letter	
	Geum Environmental Consulting Support	\$ 6,000.00					\$ 6,000.00	Construction oversight support from Geum Consulting	
	Livestock Fencing (Materials & Install)	\$ 18,480.00					\$ 18,480.00	Cost to hire local contractor to install new livestock fencing	
	Planting Enclosures (Browse Protection)	\$ 15,000.00					\$ 15,000.00	7.5-8 ft enclosures installed around plantings to exclude moose/deer, approximately \$6/linear ft	
	Weed Management	\$ 2,400.00					\$ 2,400.00	Contract with local company to manage weeds for up to 2 years post construction	
	MCC Crew	\$ 13,000.00					\$ 13,000.00	4 person MCC crew, 8-day hitch to support planting/fence construction	
		Total	\$ 140,360.00	\$ 39,709.30	\$ -			\$ 169,309.30	
	<p>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.</p>	Education and Outreach							
Event/Tour Planning		\$ 2,400.00					\$ 2,400.00	Staff time for event planning - watershed tour, volunteer plantings, other site tours with CD/Watershed Group members	
Outreach/Publication materials		\$ 1,280.00					\$ 1,280.00	Staff time and materials to produce fliers and social posts and work with JBTU Chapter and Watershed Group to get word out about events/volunteer opportunities	
Staff Time Leading Tours		\$ 1,280.00					\$ 1,280.00	Staff time leading project tours	
							\$ -		
	Total	\$ 4,960.00	\$ -	\$ -			\$ 4,960.00		
<p>Funding applied to Project Administration task must not exceed 10% of the total amount of funding requested per project, or \$12,000, whichever is lower. Project admin includes normal business expenses and reporting requirements.</p>	Administration								
	Mid/Annual/Interim Reports and Billing Statements	\$ 8,000.00					\$ 8,000.00	Staff time for Mid/Annual/Interim Reports and Billing Statements	
	Draft/Final Report and Billing Statement	\$ 2,000.00					\$ 2,000.00	Staff time to Draft/Final Report and Billing Statement	
	Communication with DEQ	\$ 2,000.00					\$ 2,000.00	Staff time for general communications with DEQ	
							\$ -		
	Total	\$ 12,000.00	\$ -	\$ -			\$ 12,000.00		
	Funding Request*	\$ 175,765.00	\$ 39,902.20	\$ -			Total Project Cost		
	Grand Totals						\$ 204,907.20		

*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.)

Lower Shields Riparian Restoration Project

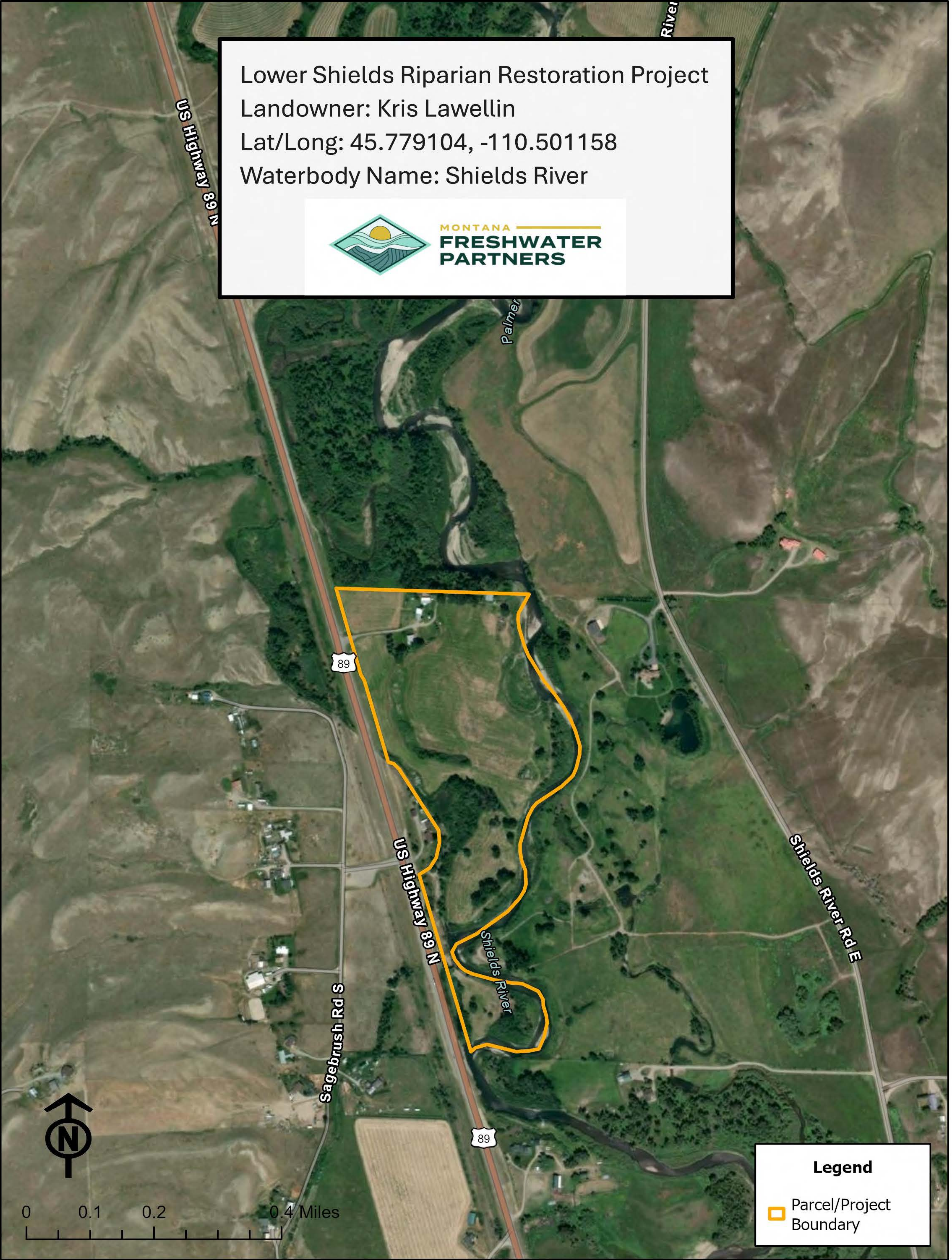
Landowner: Kris Lawellin

Lat/Long: 45.779104, -110.501158

Waterbody Name: Shields River



MONTANA
FRESHWATER
PARTNERS



Legend

-  Parcel/Project Boundary

Initial Project Concept for Lower Shields Riparian Restoration Project





Figure 1: This highlights an area where willows are growing on a bar in the active channel, but the top of bank is completely lacking in riparian vegetation. This is an example location where we are looking at planting larger trees and shrubs to revegetate the riparian corridor and pulling the fencing alignment back to exclude livestock from the plantings.



Figure 2a & 2b: These photos show young cottonwood trees 4-7' tall that were found throughout the property and are being heavily browsed by wildlife. These trees would benefit greatly from browse protection.



Figure 3a & 3b: This is a photo of the thatch from reed canarygrass. This is an area where we will utilize mechanical removal of RCG, follow by scarification of these low terraces and bars to promote natural cottonwood and willow recruitment during flood events.

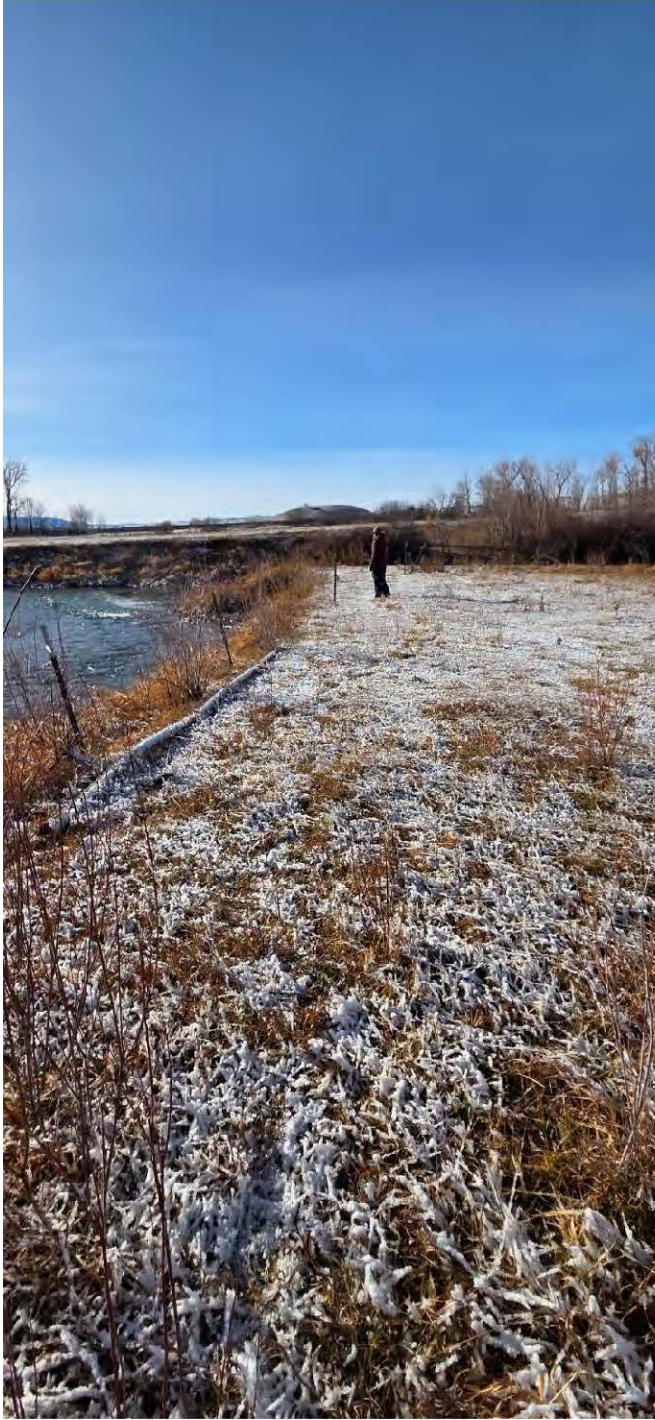


Figure 4: This photo shows one of the locations we are proposing to construct willow trenches behind legacy riprap to improve bank stability, enhance shading, and promote long-term riparian recovery while maintaining flood resilience



Figure 5: Example from the Kootenai River where Geum & partners worked to mechanically remove 18 inches of Reed Canarygrass sod to promote cottonwood and willow recruitment. By lowering the floodplain, they were able to promote more frequent flooding and increase frequency of scour and deposition. This method creates the disturbance needed to promote cottonwood and willow recruitment and they have found it to be much more cost-effective vs direct riparian plantings.



Figure 6: Browse exclusion fencing installed along the Kootenai River after mechanical removal of RCG to protect emerging willow and cottonwood seedlings and allow them to establish.



Common Sense Conservation

39 South
59047

www.parkcd.org

parkcd.310permitting@gmail.com

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 Lawellin Planting 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 support for Montana Freshwater Partner's proposal to improve the riparian and water quality of the Shields River with assistance from the 319 Grant Program. The proposed project will utilize conservation measures and restoration practices that work to improve riparian health and reduce nonpoint source pollution quality while balancing the needs of the landowner.

The Shields River is the backbone of the Shields Valley and suffers from the legacy impacts of overgrazing within the river corridor, active clearing of riparian vegetation, and more. These impacts have led to listed 303(d) impairments including sedimentation and siltation, degraded riparian areas and instream habitat, and altered flow regimes. The implementation of this project will result in an improved riparian corridor which will work to naturally prevent bank erosion and prevent further sediment transport into the stream. Additionally, this project directly addresses the impairment of altered streamside vegetative cover. Overall, this project promotes the ecological health of the Shields River Watershed while also providing sustainable land use solutions to the landowner.

The coordinated efforts between landowners, local communities, and watershed groups is essential to restoring and protecting our rivers and streams for future generations. We believe that this project will benefit not only the Shields River Watershed but also local communities and water users. Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Dustin Homan
Board Chair
Park Conservation District

February 17, 2026

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program
Helena, MT

Dear Review Committee,

My name is Kris Lawellin, and I own property along the Shields River in the lower Shields Valley. I'm writing in support of Montana Freshwater Partners' proposal to complete riparian restoration work along the river on my property.

Over the years, I've noticed fewer young willows and cottonwoods coming back in some areas, and reed canarygrass has spread in places where native plants used to grow. Heavy wildlife browsing also makes it tough for new trees and shrubs to get established. When there isn't enough woody vegetation along the river, banks are more vulnerable and the overall health of the river corridor suffers.

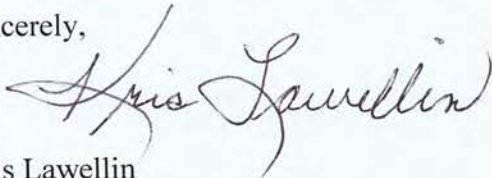
I feel this project is a practical way to improve those conditions. Planting native trees and shrubs, protecting them from browse, managing invasive grasses, adding woody material to the floodplain, and making some fencing improvements to better manage livestock all seem like common-sense steps. This stretch of the Shields floods fairly often, and I believe strengthening the riparian area will help slow and spread high water, trap sediment, and create a more stable and resilient river corridor.

In the long run, I expect this work will improve water quality, support fish and wildlife habitat and benefit the overall health of my property. Keeping the Shields River healthy is important to me.

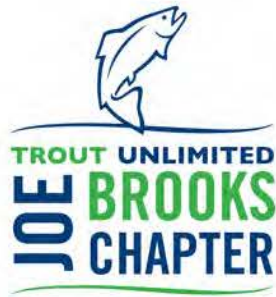
Montana Freshwater Partners has been great to work with and has taken the time to walk the property and talk through options. I am committed to providing access for the work and monitoring, coordinating on fencing and management needs, and helping maintain the project after the grant period ends. I also support using the site for volunteer planting days or tours so others in the valley can see what's possible.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I fully support this effort and appreciate the opportunity to improve this stretch of the Shields River.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kris Lawellin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kris Lawellin
Shields Valley Landowner



Joe Brooks Chapter #025
Trout Unlimited
PO Box 88
Livingston, MT 59047
www.jbtu.org

February 18, 2026

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

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Dear Members of the DEQ Nonpoint Source Funding Review Panel,

The Joe Brooks Chapter of Trout Unlimited is pleased to provide this letter of support for Montana Freshwater Partners' proposed Shields River Riparian Restoration Project in Park County, Montana. As a locally based conservation organization, our chapter supports efforts that improve stream function, water quality, and riparian habitat through collaborative, community-driven restoration.

The Shields River is an important resource for our members and the broader community, providing valuable coldwater fisheries and riparian habitat within the Yellowstone River basin. Healthy riparian corridors are essential for maintaining water quality, stabilizing streambanks, supporting aquatic habitat, and sustaining the long-term resilience of river systems. The proposed project's focus on riparian revegetation and floodplain function aligns well with Trout Unlimited's mission to conserve, protect, and restore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

The Joe Brooks Chapter has agreed to support this project by assisting with volunteer coordination and participation for riparian planting efforts. Our chapter has experience in hands-on restoration activities, and we are committed to mobilizing volunteers to help implement planting components of the project. This volunteer involvement will not only support successful project implementation but also foster local stewardship and long-term investment in the health of the Shields River.

We appreciate Montana Freshwater Partners' collaborative approach and their commitment to engaging local partners in restoration efforts. The Joe Brooks Chapter strongly supports funding for this project and looks forward to contributing volunteer support to help ensure its success.

Sincerely,

John Roseberry
Chapter President
Joe Brooks Trout Unlimited



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) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Shields River Riparian Restoration project.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is pleased to provide this letter of support for Montana Freshwater Partner's proposed riparian restoration project along the Shields River in Park County, Montana. This project represents an opportunity to improve riparian and floodplain habitat conditions within a primary tributary to the Yellowstone River. 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 has recently experienced historic flooding, is a key component to maintaining the fishery and valuable habitat. Historic riparian degradation altered flow regimes, and loss of floodplain connection along portions of the Shields River has reduced riparian vegetation condition, bank stability, and overall habitat resilience over time.

The proposed project fits well with FWP's habitat conservation objectives. Restoration of riparian vegetation and floodplain processes will improve bank stability, sediment retention, hydrologic connectivity, and stream shading, and increase resilient habitat conditions for the fishery. Riparian corridors along the Shields River also serve as important wildlife corridors, providing connectivity, forage, and cover for terrestrial wildlife and birds. Enhancing riparian conditions will provide ecological benefits beyond the immediate project area.

FWP appreciates the project partners' collaborative approach and supports funding for this effort. We believe this riparian restoration will improve valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, as well as improve stream form and function in the Shields River.

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
Region 3 Supervisor