2026 On-the-Ground Project Application Form

General Information

Project Name: Bangtail Creek Restoration Phase Two

Applicant Name: Montana Freshwater Partners

Is your organization registered with the Montana Secretary of State? Y

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)? N

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: Halle Nienhaus | Title: Project Manager

Address: 215 E Lewis St | City: Livingston | State: MT | Zip Code: 59047

Phone Number: 248-798-3246 | Email: halle@freshwaterpartners.org

Signature: Halle Nienhaus

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

Signatory: Wendy Weaver | Title: Executive Director

Address: PO Box 338 | City: Livingston | State: MT | Zip Code: 59047

Phone Number: 406-579-2355 | Email: wweaver@freshwaterpartners.org

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: Clyde Holland

Landowner Signature: DocuSigned by: Clyde Holland 29B65BF45779433...

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.

Your organization's Unique Entity Identifier number (UEI #) | EYCKE24Y6PQ5

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? | Y

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).

Over the past 15 years, Montana Freshwater Partners (MFP) has demonstrated the technical expertise, experience and relationships with partners to take on and lead this project. We have developed credibility across the state of Montana in working with private landowners and agency partners through our compensatory stream and wetland mitigation projects as well as our technical fee-for-service work for various clients including Trout Unlimited, Sacajawea Audubon Society and the Natural Resources Damage Program. Our staff and Board of Directors are a diverse team of highly-skilled and experienced professionals in the fields of project management, hydrology, fluvial geomorphology, fish and wildlife biology, wetland science, accounting, regulations and law, engineering, and policy. Our project managers collectively bring decades of experience in GIS, stream and wetland science, habitat assessment, fish and wildlife biology, restoration, monitoring, stakeholder coordination and regulatory experience. We also have extensive experience managing large, complex budgets and grants. Lastly, MFP has extensive experience with contracting and will work with trusted entities to ensure that projects are carried out according to a very high standard.

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. ¦ăŜ ŭKŜ Ŧ2ff2øλy∃ ŜÈl·ƳǈŀŜă ŭ2 KŜŀǇ ŘŜŭŜℕƳλyŜ øKŜƴ ŭ2 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: Bangtail Creek Restoration Phase Two

Required Attachments in Addition to This Form

- [x] 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)*.
- [x] Letter of support from EACH landowner associated with the proposed project area (*if applicable)*.
- [x] Budget Table (see Microsoft Excel Template).
- [x] **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.

- [x] Project Design Plans/Drawings
- [ ] Preliminary Engineering Reports / Site Evaluations
- [ ] Landowner Agreements / Construction Permits / Floodplain Permits
- [x] Site photos
- [x] Additional Letters of Support
- [x] Other: Fencing example document
- [ ] 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.

Park County

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/

100700030502 - Bangtail Creek

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.

This “Phase Two” project is following a Phase One that was funded by Montana DEQ in the 2025 319 Call for Applications. Thus, this project is tied to the first Phase of work on Bangtail Creek which consists of riparian fencing, hardened water gap installation, and willow plantings. Because some areas of Bangtail Creek on the Hayhook Property are severely degraded, the intention of Phase Two is to address impairments that will not be remedied by riparian fencing and cattle exclusion (e.g. streambank incision and erosion). Additionally, this Phase Two project will extend riparian fencing downstream on Bangtail Creek, improving grazing management techniques on the entirety of Bangtail on Hayhook Ranch.

Trout Unlimited is also currently working with 505 Ventures Ranch to complete similar restoration activities on Canyon and Brackett Creeks, both tributaries to the Shields River north of Bangtail Creek. 505 Ventures also owns several miles of land containing Bangtail Creek upstream of the Hayhook Ranch, and Trout Unlimited (TU) is aiming to implement projects on this property in the future.

In between these two ranches, there is a parcel of state land managed by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). DNRC recently contacted MT Freshwater Partners (MFP) as they are planning to do some forest thinning on and adjacent to state parcels in this area. All three partners (TU, DNRC and MFP) are discussing opportunities to pair forest thinning with instream restoration treatments in Bangtail Creek that could utilize the harvested trees. Thus, there are future plans to implement restoration project(s) on Bangtail Creek above the Hayhook Ranch property, which could result in several miles of combined restoration efforts.

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)*

Shields River - Confluence Consulting / Shields River Watershed Group

Y — 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: Shields River

Probable causes of impairment to be addressed: Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers, physical substrate habitat alterations, sedimentation and siltation

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?
Landowner - Clyde Holland	In-kind match in the form of materials and support of ranch managers' time to contribute labor for riparian fence and water gap installation. Additional in-kind match for time and coordination with MFP to review and complete documents.	☑
Ranch Manager - Tim Niccum	In-kind match in the form of time spend coordinating with MFP and reviewing documents (agreements, grazing plan).	☑
Ranch Manager - Dusty Holland	In-kind match in the form of time spend coordinating with MFP and reviewing documents (agreements, grazing plan).	☐
		☐

Project Partner	Contributions to Project	Letter of Support Attached?
MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MT-FWP)	Stream monitoring (electrofishing), coordination and planning for future instream treatments that coincide with Yellowstone cutthroat trout management.	☑
Shields Valley Watershed Group (SVWG)	The SVWG will be a key pathway to connecting other landowners in the Valley to our projects and work. We plan to showcase this project during future watershed tours, and we plan to partner with the SVWG toinvite landowners out for individually scheduled site visits when appropriate.	☑
Trout Unlimited	TU has plans to conduct restoration work on Bangtail Creek upstream of this project location. MFP is coordinating with TU to make sure our efforts are aligned, and we will work together to implement these projects for maximum ecological benefit. TU is also a key partner for the Shields Valley watershed tour and for riparian planting volunteer coordination.	☑
		☐
		☐

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 *(if relevant)*	☐	☐	☐	☐
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).

Prior to execution of a contract, Montana Freshwater Partners will be working with Hayhook Ranch on a prior DEQ contract, so conversations about Phase Two project timeline, needs, and more will be had.

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

Following execution of a contract, Montana Freshwater Partners will work diligently to:
- Identify an engineering contractor for streambank reconstruction through a competitive bid process
- Conduct a site visit with a contracted engineer to ground-truth a project design
- Coordinate with Hayhook Ranch staff to determine construction timelines and a goal date for completion
- Work with engineering contractor to develop draft and final designs and coordinate with DEQ staff and Hayhook Ranch to seek input and approval
- Coordinate with regulatory agencies, fill out permit applications and acquire for necessary permit approvals in advance of project implementation
- Collect baseline project data (drone imagery, BEHI, etc.)

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:

Sediment input and reduction will be measured using Bank Erosion Hazard Index (BEHI) surveys conducted prior to and after implementation of the project with a goal of reducing sediment input by at least 50% following reconstruction. Additionally, following streambank reconstruction, willow live stakes will be planted with the goal of a 50% survival rate after 3 years. We also plan to set up photopoints throughout the project area to monitor the condition of instream habitat and riparian vegetation. Lastly, using a drone, we plan to collect an aerial orthoimage of the project area before and after project implementation to assess riparian coverage and health.

MFP will work with DEQ staff to refine this monitoring plan and provide more detail. Departure of stream and/or riparian condition from "improving or recovering" conditions will trigger adaptive management of the project. Quantification of departures that trigger adaptive management will be refined during monitoring plan development with DEQ.

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 Stated Forest Service Photo Point Monitoring Handbook".*
    - *[Riparian survey.]*
    - *[Other.]*

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

During the summer of 2025, Montana Freshwater Partners joined Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks in electrofishing Bangtail Creek to observe current trends in fish species presence/absence and assemblage data. We will plan to join FWP in electrofishing Bangtail Creek following Phase Two project implementation to observe changes in fish species presence/absence and/or fish assemblages in the project area.

Project Implementation Task

Provide a d**etailed 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.*

Bangtail Creek is a tributary to the Shields River that drains 13.5 square miles. The creek begins in the Bangtail Mountain Range where its headwaters flow through ~4 miles of National Forest Land. From the Forest, Bangtail Creek flows east through ~9 miles of privately-owned ag pasture before its confluence with the Shields River. In 2020, MT-DEQ listed the entire Shields River in the 303d database of impaired waters. Water quality impairments include alteration in streamside vegetative covers, flow regime modifications, physical substrate habitat alterations, and sedimentation and siltation. Listed sources of these impairments include ag operations, impacts from hydro-structure flow modification and regulation, streambank modifications and destabilization, crop production and irrigation, overgrazing in riparian areas, and silviculture operations. In 2012, the Shields WRP ranked Bangtail Creek as second in the entire Shields River watershed for sediment intensity resulting from hillslope erosion, likely as a result of surrounding agricultural and grazing operations. Additionally, a 2009 U.S. Forest Service report rated three reaches of Bangtail Creek above the Forest boundary as functioning at-risk due to increased bank erosion, loss of sinuosity, channel downcutting, and channel over-widening. The headwaters of Bangtail Creek were extensively logged in the 1980s and 1990s which likely resulted in the changes to the natural hydrologic regime and sediment loading of the Creek. Bangtail Creek has a low gradient (<2.5%) throughout its lower 10 miles. Much of the riparian corridor has been removed throughout these lower reaches as legacy agricultural and grazing operations have encroached right up to the streambanks. Loss of riparian vegetation and reduced bank stability in the lower reaches has resulted in both channel incision and over-widening, contributing to high sediment and embeddedness levels in the creek (USFS, 2009). High sediment delivery into Bangtail Creek ultimately impacts sediment delivery into the mainstem Shields River.

The proposed project site is located on the ~13,800-acre Hayhook ranch that runs along the west side of Highway 89 between Interstate 90 and Clyde Park, MT. The current landowners of Hayhook Ranch are conservation-minded and motivated to improve the condition of water resources on their property. Within the project area (see attached map), legacy impacts from grazing are apparent. Montana Freshwater Partners is currently working with Hayhook Ranch to implement riparian fencing, hardened water gaps, and changes to grazing management on a 1-mile section of Bangtail Creek on the Ranch (Phase One). However, there remain severe impairments such as highly incised and eroding streambanks that would take decades, if not longer, to recover simply through cattle exclusion. Additionally, there is a reach of Bangtail Creek downstream of the Phase One project area that lacks riparian fencing for cattle exclusion. Thus, MFP proposes to 1) extend riparian fencing downstream to exclude cattle from all reaches of Bangtail Creek within the Hayhook Ranch and 2) to treat highly incised streambanks with a combination of soft techniques such as bank re-sloping using heavy equipment, wood/brush toe matrices, and re-vegetating inset floodplain benches with willow stakes. Bank treatments may vary depending on the bank locations and stream channel geometry. Following implementation, Hayhook Ranch will maintain all riparian fencing and Montana Freshwater Partners will ensure success of willow live stakes (and adaptively manage if recruitment is below targets).

This Phase Two project aims to improve instream habitat for fish, improve riparian corridor condition, prevent further bank incision and erosion, and reduce non-point pollution to Bangtail Creek and the downstream Shields River. At the completion of Phase Two, Bangtail Creek will see over 2.5 miles of improved riparian vegetation condition, streambank stability, and grazing management.

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.

In 2024, Montana Freshwater Partners (MFP) hosted the first annual Shields Watershed Tour which showcased various restoration projects to over 25 participants, many of whom were landowners in the valley. This event was successful in engaging landowners in the work that MFP, TU, and other restoration practitioners, such as Trout Unlimited, are carrying out in the Shields Valley. Due to the success of this event, MFP plans to host another Shields Watershed tour in September 2028 which will showcase this project. This tour will include projects such as this Bangtail Creek Restoration Projects, Brackett Creek Restoration (TU), and other projects that partners are conducting in the Shields Valley. This tour will provide an opportunity to connect with other landowners and discuss sustainable agriculture and grazing practices along with water resource stewardship in the Shields Valley.

As requested and appropriate, MFP may also conduct individual landowner site visits at Hayhook to display project. These one-on-one style visits have recently proven to be highly successful in showcasing this work to interested landowners, and the opportunity to do so will be broadcasted at Shields Valley Watershed Group meetings and to the Park County Conservation District Board.

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.

Target audience includes landowners, ranchers, and producers in the Shields Valley. We plan to continue working closely with the Shields Valley Watershed Group, Park Conservation District, and landowners in the Valley that we have working relationships with to help deliver information to the target audience. Showcasing this project (and others) during the 2028 Shields Watershed Tour will increase local capacity and interest in addressing nonpoint source (NPS) pollution by directly demonstrating best management practices and how these interventions contribute to the restoration and protection of water quality while balancing the needs of grazing and ranching operations. This visual learning approach will encourage a deeper understanding of how individual actions can positively impact the local watershed. During the tour, participants will observe the benefits of riparian fencing, streambank restoration, targeted riparian plantings, hardened water gaps/stream crossings, and reduced livestock access to sensitive stream areas, which prevent bank erosion and improve instream water quality. Participants will also have the opportunity to engage with organizations and other landowners/ranch managers who have worked with a DEQ 319 grants, addressing the barrier of leeriness around government funding. Overall, the tour will discuss relevant NPS pollution issues/ impacts in the Shields and how community members can take proactive steps to combat it using readily available solutions such as restoration projects and changes to grazing management practices, which can be accessed via 319 funding.

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

The primary goals of our outreach/education activities are to increase NPS pollution awareness, showcase best management practices, encourage behavioral change, and foster awareness of and engagement with the DEQ 319 program in the local Shields Valley community. Mainly, we hope that the Watershed Tour and/or site visits to this project site will amplify the desire of landowners to utilize 319 funding in the Shields (leading MFP to generate future on-the-ground projects). To evaluate the effectiveness of the Watershed Tour, we will 1) track the number of participants at the tour and site visits and, specifically, the number of participants who are landowners and 2) follow up with participants with a post-tour survey to gauge the impact of the event, and 3) follow up with all landowners who are interested in pursuing a project and track this metric.

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

The Shields River Watershed has experienced decades of legacy impacts from agricultural and grazing activities which have altered natural stream flows, contributed large amounts of sediment to the watershed, and overall threatened the future resilience of the watershed. The Shields Valley includes two small, rural, and underserved agricultural communities-Clyde Park and Wilsall, MT. These communities have had historically limited access to knowledge and resources that work to alleviate the impacts of legacy agriculture and grazing practices throughout the valley, and this lack of knowledge and resources works to perpetuate the impacts of nonpoint source pollution in the Valley. As such, this project and the outreach associated with it will work to provide and showcase sustainable practices and restoration solutions to these rural communities. Additionally, through a recent DEQ 319 contract, MFP identified several barriers to landowner participation in nonpoint source pollution reduction activities in the Shields River Watershed. MFP plans to address these barriers via outreach and education tasks (e.g. small and dispersed rural communities, uncertainty about project outcomes, limited understanding of NPS pollution) to strengthen future interest and participation in the 319 Program amongst Shields Valley landowners. This project, along with others, will be great demonstration projects for site visits/the watershed tour and will ultimately provide tangible examples of restoration outcomes and how they address NPS pollution in the Shields Valley. Bolstered participation in this program would lead to higher water quality and watershed health, ultimately supporting the livelihoods of ranchers and producers in the Shields Valley well into the future.

Letters Of Support

Park Conservation District

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 Bangtail Phase 2 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 water quality and stream condition of Bangtail Creek with assistance from the 319 Grant Program. The proposed project will utilize improved grazing management and streambank restoration practices that work to improve riparian health, stream habitat condition, and reduce nonpoint source pollution 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. Many of these impairments are prevalent in tributaries of the Shields River, including Bangtail Creek, and contribute to sedimentation and siltation within the mainstem Shields River. Maintaining high water and habitat quality in tributaries has direct, downstream benefits to the mainstem Shields River.

The implementation of this project will result in improved streambank stability which will work to address current bank erosion and prevent further sediment transport into the stream. Additionally, this project directly addresses the impairment of altered streamside vegetative cover, extending riparian fencing downstream on Bangtail Creek. 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

MT Department of Environmental Quality

319 Nonpoint Source Program

1520 E. Sixth Avenue

PO Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620

Dear Members of the DEQ Nonpoint Source Funding Review Panel,

I am writing to provide my support for Montana Freshwater Partner's proposal to improve the water quality and streambank condition of Bangtail Creek through a Phase Two Project with assistance from the 319 Grant Program. The portion of Bangtail Creek that flows through our property is impacted by historic overgrazing and legacy impacts from cattle. This has resulted in several highly incised and eroding streambanks that contribute to degraded instream habitat, erosion and sediment input to the stream, and a lack of floodplain connectivity. These water and habitat quality impairments in Bangtail Creek have broader, downstream impacts to the Shields River. The proposed project will address these water and habitat quality issues while balancing the needs of Hayhook Ranch.

We are committed to continuing to restore a more natural condition of Bangtail Creek by reconstructing incised and eroding banks and completing the riparian fencing along Bangtail Creek on our property. These treatments will provide long-term benefits to water quality and fish populations in Bangtail Creek and the downstream Shields River for years to come. In addition to environmental benefits, the project also contributes to long-term sustainability of ranching operations and promotes land stewardship in the Shields Valley. Hayhook Ranch is committed to providing match in the form of staff time, materials, and/or cash match to the project costs.

This project extends upon current work that is being done on Bangtail Creek through the DEQ 319 Program. We look forward to making demonstrable change to the fish habitat, riparian condition, and water quality of Bangtail Creek.

Thank you for considering this request for funding.

Sincerely,

Clyde Holland

Owner of Hayhook Ranch

MT Department of Environmental Quality

319 Nonpoint Source Program

1520 E. Sixth Avenue

PO Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620

Dear Members of the DEQ Nonpoint Source Funding Review Panel,

As the Ranch Manager at Hayhook Ranch, I am writing to express my support for Montana Freshwater Partner's proposal to improve the water quality and streambank condition of Bangtail Creek through a Phase Two Project with assistance from the 319 Grant Program. Bangtail Creek provides important fish habitat and has allowed for the beneficial use of water for irrigation and cattle. However, the portion of Bangtail Creek that flows through our property is impacted by legacy impacts of cattle and overgrazing in and around the Creek. This has resulted severely incised and eroding streambanks that contribute to degraded fish habitat, sediment input to the stream, and more.

We are committed to restoring a more natural condition of Bangtail Creek by fencing out cattle and reconstructing highly incised streambanks, all while balancing the needs of grazing operations at Hayhook Ranch. This project will promote sustainable land-use practices and work to improve water and stream habitat quality in Bangtail Creek, providing benefit to the watershed for years to come. We will be providing match in the form of staff time, materials, and/or labor related to project needs.

Thank you for considering this request for funding. We look forward to the potential to work with Montana DEQ on this project.

Sincerely,

Tim Niccum

Hayhook Ranch Manager

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

February 19, 2025

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

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 Bangtail Creek Restoration Phase II Project, which will improve water quality, instream conditions, and riparian habitats. Bangtail Creek supports an important recreational fishery that includes native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Reducing sediment inputs of eroding banks and maintaining riparian vegetation will improve instream and riparian habitats for this fishery as well as the Shields River downstream. In collaboration with the landowners, the proposed project will utilize improved grazing management and streambank restoration practices that will improve instream and riparian habitats as well as reduce nonpoint source pollution.

FWP supports the funding of this project under the 2026 DEQ 319 funding request. Thank you for your consideration of this project.

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

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

Dear Members of the DEQ Nonpoint Source Funding Review Panel,

Joe Brooks Trout Unlimited (JBTU) is pleased to support the 2026 application from Montana Freshwater Partners' (MFP) to improve the water quality and stream condition of Bangtail Creek with assistance from the 319 Grant Program. We believe these efforts will improve the water quality of Bangtail Creek, enhance instream habitat for fish, and help support the long-term health of the Shields River Watershed.

The Shields River Watershed lies within our chapter's boundaries and Bangtail Creek has the potential to provide improved, valuable stream habitat for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. This proposed Bangtail Creek Project aligns with JBTU's mission to restore and conserve coldwater fisheries within our chapter area. We also recognize the need for on-the-ground restoration and action that improves water quality within the Shield River Watershed. This project will address issues including impaired water quality, instream habitat degradation, unstable and eroding streambank condition, and degraded riparian area.

We are confident that the successful implementation of this project will directly contribute to improved streambank stabilization, reduced erosion and sedimentation, and overall water quality in this project reach and downstream in the Shields River. We recognize the need for this project to work in tandem with upstream projects and improve the water quality of Bangtail Creek and, more broadly, the mainstem Shields River. Additionally, JBTU is pleased to provide support in the form of volunteers for riparian plantings associated with this project.

Thank you for considering this request for funding.

Sincerely,

John Roseberry
Chapter President
Joe Brooks Trout Unlimited

Draft Budget

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

Project Title:								
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	$ 3,000.00					$ 3,000.00	Staff time to cover baseline data collection prior to project implementation
	Required Permits	$ 7,000.00	$ 60.00		Hayhook Ranch, in-kind	Y	$ 7,060.00	310/404/floodplain permitting, 310 site visit, communications with landowner. Some landowner match included for participation in 310 site visit
	Draft Project Designs	$ 5,000.00					$ 5,000.00	Draft designs by MFP
	Final Project Designs	$ 30,000.00					$ 30,000.00	Bank reconstruction design cost
	Ranch Manager and Landowner coordination		$ 900.00		Hayhook Ranch, in-kind	Y	$ 360.00	Time that Ranch Managers + Landowner spend coordinating with MFP, planning for project implementation
							$ -	
	Total	$ 45,000.00	$ 960.00	$ -			$ 45,420.00	
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	$ 700.00	$ 180.00		Hayhook Ranch, in-kind	Y	$ 880.00	Time for MFP to draft landowner agreement and have reviewed by attorney, in-kind match from Hayhook for time spent reviewing document
	Final Landowner Agreement	$ 700.00	$ 180.00		Hayhook Ranch, in-kind	Y	$ 880.00	Time for MFP to finalize landowner agreement, in-kind match from Hayhook for time spent reviewing and signing final doc
	Grazing Management Plan	$ 800.00	$ 180.00		Hayhook Ranch, in-kind	Y	$ 980.00	Time spent for MFP to draft grazing management plan, in-kind match from Hayhook for time spent discussing plan, reviewing, etc.
							$ -	
							$ -	
	Total	$ 2,200.00	$ 540.00	$ -			$ 2,740.00	
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	$ 520.00					$ 520.00	
	Final Monitoring Plan	$ 300.00					$ 300.00	
	Collection of post-project data	$ 2,600.00					$ 2,600.00	Collection of pre-project and post-project monitoring data over 3 years
	MFP Mileage	$ 50.00					$ 50.00	0.70 per mile, 35 miles round trip from Office to Project Site, 2 monitoring events (2 total round trips)
	Written Summary of all Monitoring Activities	$ 1,300.00					$ 1,300.00	
							$ -	
	Total	$ 4,770.00	$ -	$ -			$ 4,770.00	
This tasks 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 - willows, slash, brush for banks, willow cuttings to planting banks after reconstruction		$ 15,000.00		In-kind, volunteer	Y	$ 15,000.00	Willows / brush material for reconstructed benches harvested on-site using volunteer labor, as well as willow cuttings that will be planted in each reconstructed bank bench following construction
	Materials - riparian fence, braces, gates	$ 15,000.00						Riparian fence, brace, and gate material
	Construction Oversight	$ 20,000.00					$ 20,000.00	Construction staging and oversight during bank reconstruction
	As-Built Surveys	$ 1,120.00					$ 1,120.00	
	Photo Documentation	$ 560.00					$ 560.00	
	Seed	$ 1,000.00					$ 1,000.00	Native riparian seed mix + native sage brush steppe seed mix to seed disturbed areas post-construction
	Construction	$ 150,000.00	$ 25,000.00		Hayhook Ranch in-kind + cash match	Y	$ 175,000.00	Cost estimate based on similar projects and scaled based on estimated linear feet of treated bank via this project
	Landowner recommendation letter		$ 260.00		Hayhook Ranch, in-kind	Y	$ 260.00	
	Mileage	$ 784.00					$ 784.00	Mileage for construction oversight
	Volunteer Coordination	$ 5,000.00	$ 600.00		In-kind, volunteer labor	Y	$ 5,600.00	Non-federal match includes volunteer time
							$ -	
	Total	$ 193,464.00	$ 40,860.00	$ -			$ 219,324.00	
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**							
	Planning for site tours and events	$ 1,000.00					$ 1,000.00	
	Outreach and publication materials	$ 2,000.00						
	Staff time for site visits	$ 2,000.00					$ 2,000.00	
							$ -	
							$ -	
	Total	$ 5,000.00	$ -	$ -			$ 3,000.00	
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.	**Administration**							
	Mid/Annual/Interim Reports and Billing Statements	$ 7,000.00					$ 7,000.00	
	Draft/Final Report and Billing Statement	$ 2,000.00					$ 2,000.00	
	Communication with DEQ	$ 2,000.00					$ 2,000.00	
							$ -	
							$ -	
	Total	$ 11,000.00	$ -	$ -			$ 11,000.00	
		Funding Request*	**Non-Federal Match****	**Other Funding*****			**Total Project Cost**	
	Grand Totals	$ 261,434.00	$ 42,360.00	$ -			**$ 286,254.00**	

*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.

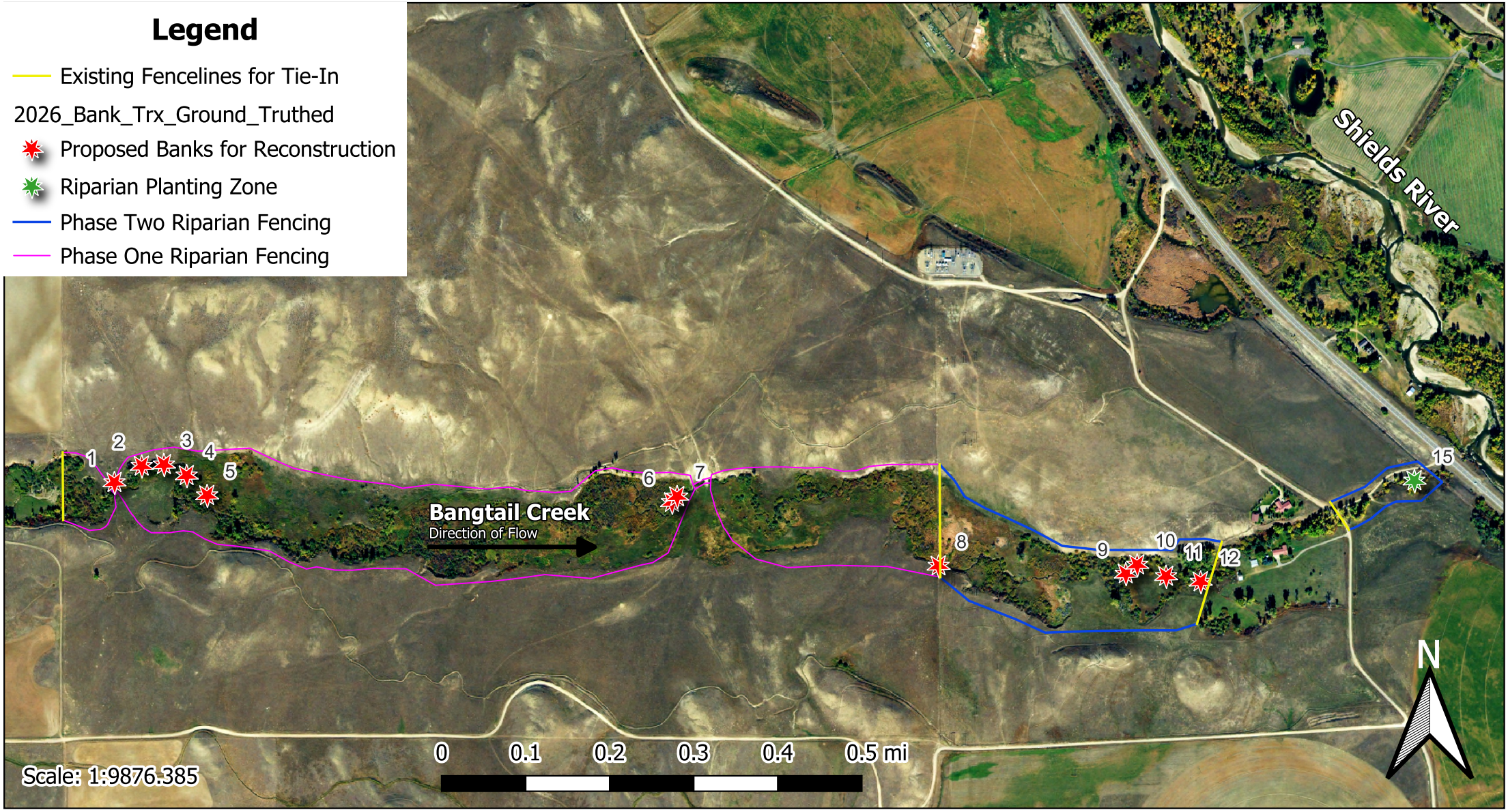
***Other Funding - Include federal match here, or, for example, other funding that is supporting the project but cannot be reported as match on this grant because it is matching another funding source.

****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.)

Additional Attachments

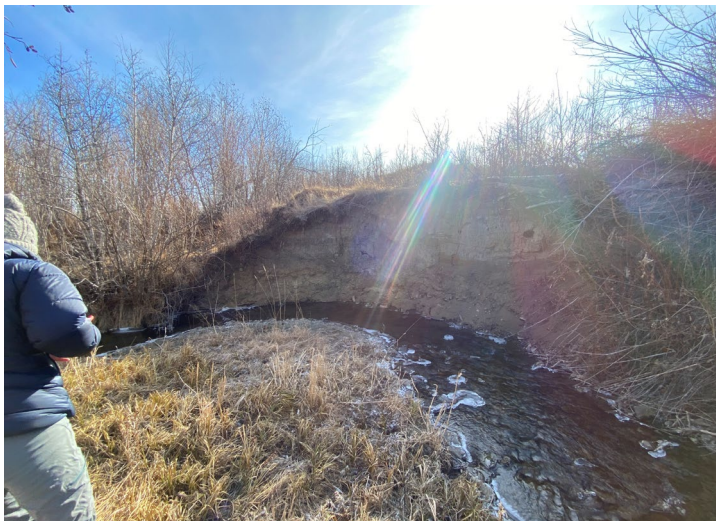
Bangtail Creek Restoration: Phase Two

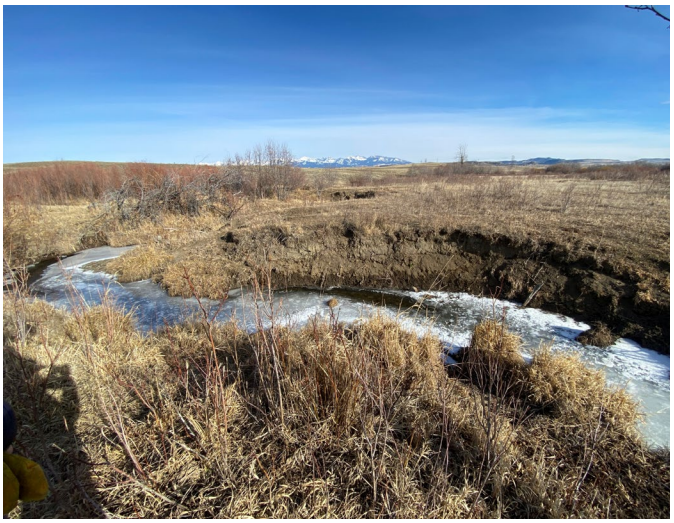
Project Coordinates	Property Information	Design Details:
Upstream extent: 45.81873060, -110.58411630 Downstream extent: 45.81837002, -110.55046716	Landowner: Clyde Holland Property Name: Hayhook Ranch	Phase Two Riparian Fenceline: 12,700 linear feet Estimated Number of Treated Banks: 12 Estimated Linear Feet of Treated Streambank: 1,100 ft

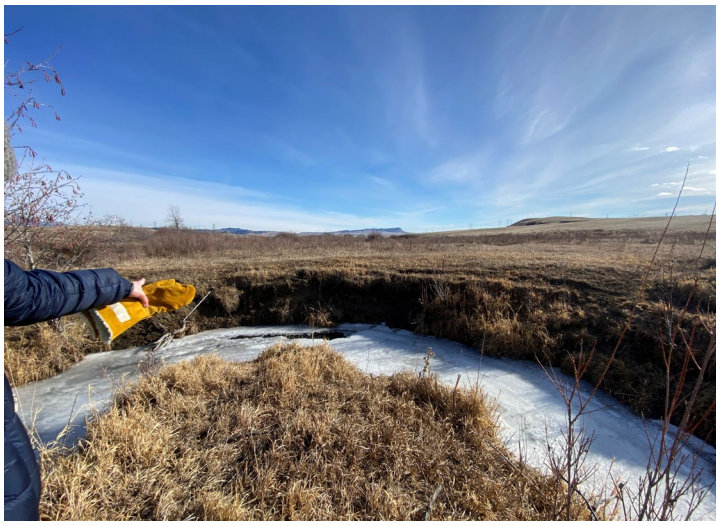


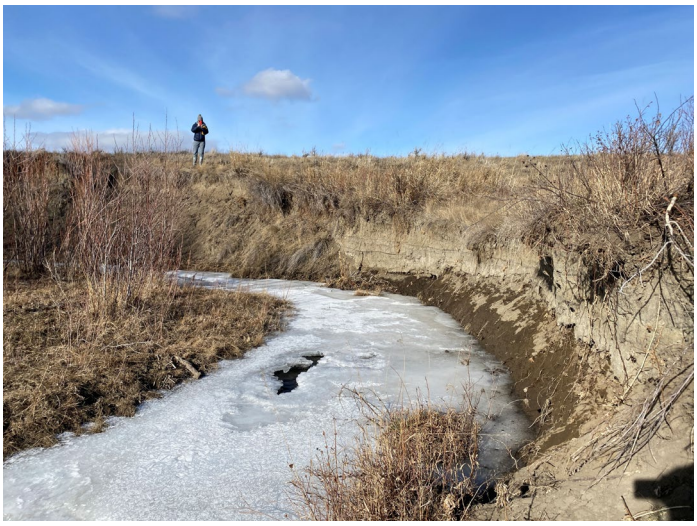
BANGTAIL CREEK PHOTOLOG FOR 319 – JANUARY 2026

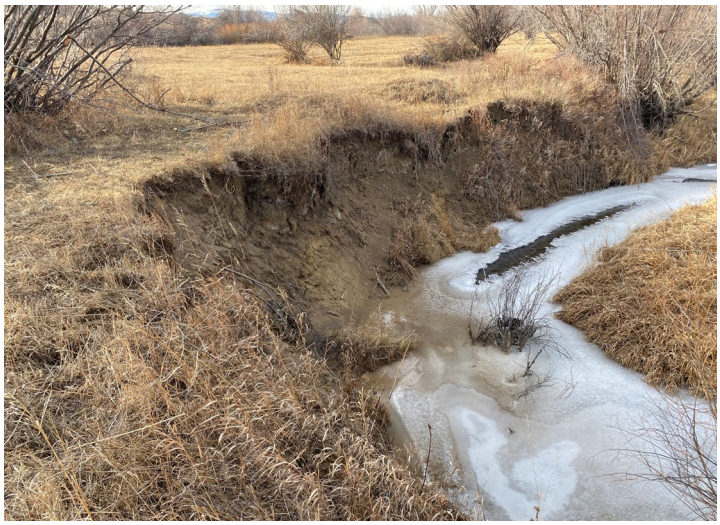
The following photos depict examples of incised and eroding banks along Bangtail Creek on Hayhook Property. These banks show signs of recent and continued erosion which is contributing sediment loads to Bangtail Creek and downstream into the Shields River, which is 303(d) listed as impaired by sediment.

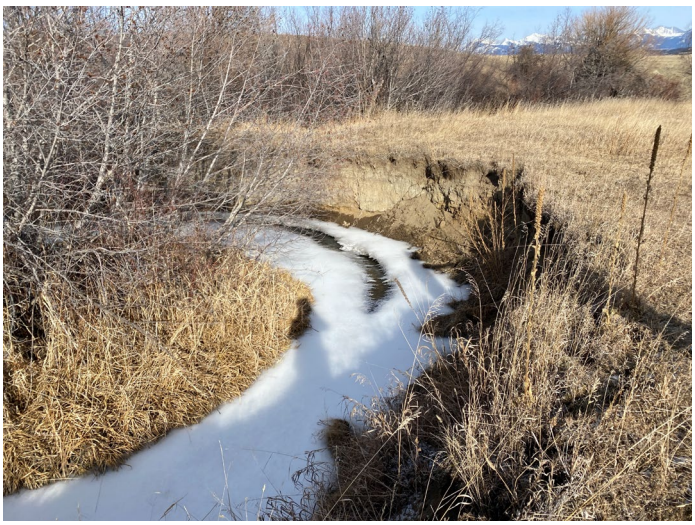








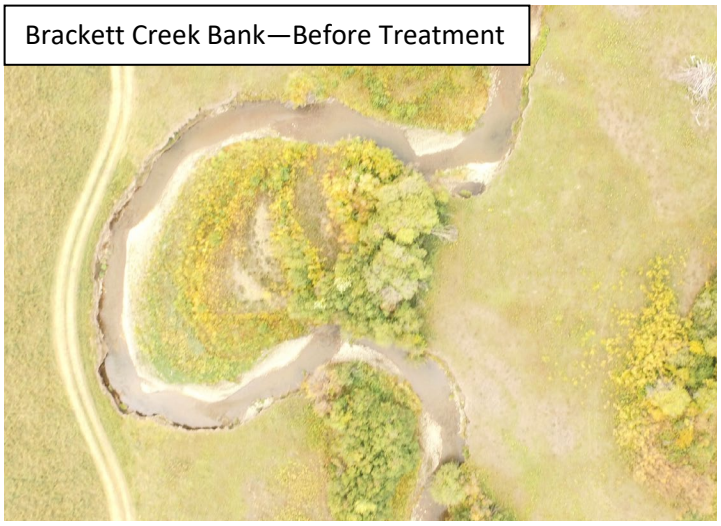




BANGTAIL CREEK PHOTOLOG FOR 319 – JANUARY 2026

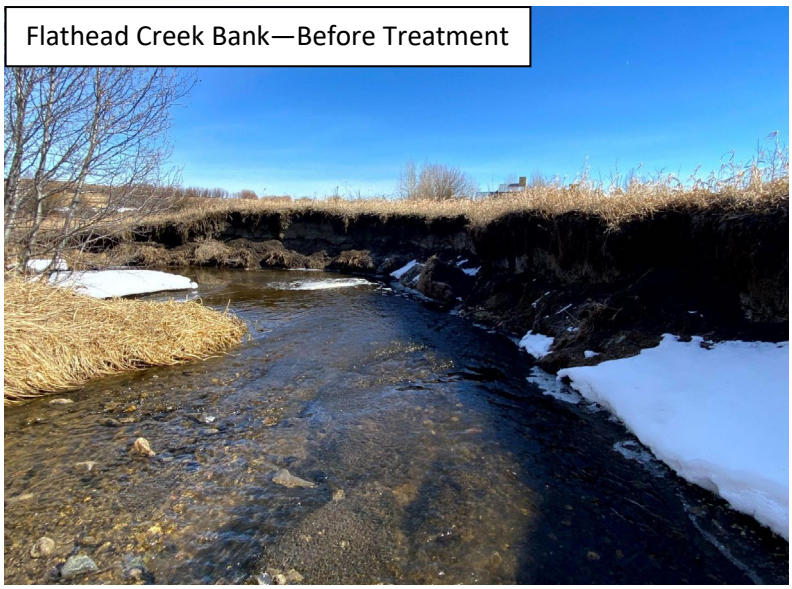
The following photos depict examples of reconstructed streambanks via recently completed projects by Trout Unlimited (Brackett Creek Project, top row) and Montana Freshwater Partners (Flathead Creek, second row). Treatment options on Bangtail Creek would employ very similar soft techniques to create an inset floodplain and stabilized streambank.

Brackett Creek Bank—Before Treatment

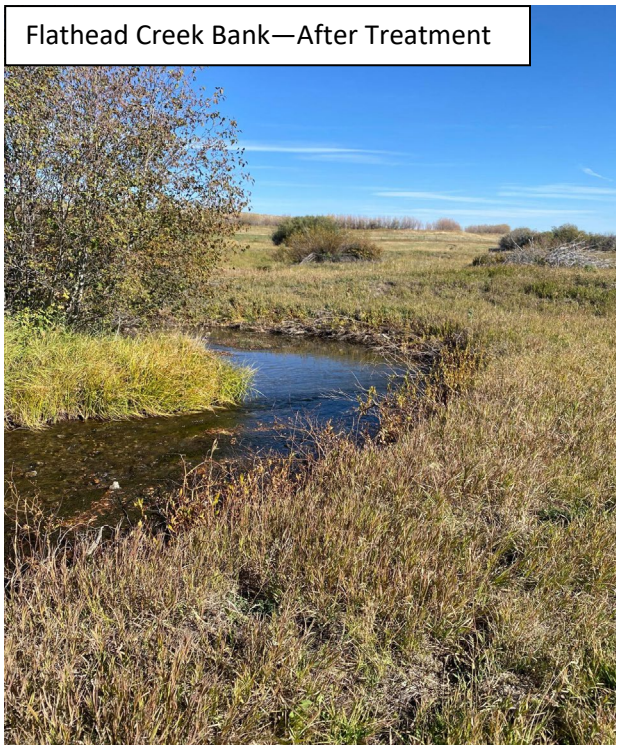


Brackett Creek Bank—After Treatment

Flathead Creek Bank—Before Treatment



Flathead Creek Bank—After Treatment



Fencing Examples on the Hayhook Ranch

*These photos depict examples of fencing utilized on the Hayhook Ranch to meet cattle exclusion needs along with wildlife-friendly design incorporations. For riparian fencing at the Bangtail Creek Project, we will be using a **three-strand** barbed wire design with the following heights: bottom strand: **18 inches** off the ground, middle strand: **30 inches**, top strand: **42 inches**. T-posts will be situated ~15 feet apart with 2 plastic stays in between to allow for movement of the wires when wildlife moves over or under the fencing.*