



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

General Information

Project Name

Applicant Name

Is your organization registered with the Montana Secretary of State?

Explanation: Each applicant must be registered with the Montana Secretary of State to do business in the state of Montana. Registration with the Secretary of State may be completed via the following website: <https://sosmt.gov/business/>

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

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

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

Explanation: Each applicant is required to have a current UEI number. The UEI number replaces the old DUNS number. If your organization had a DUNS number, you should have received a notification from the federal government indicating that your DUNS number has been changed to a UEI number. If you did not receive this notification, or if you never had a DUNS number, you will need to go to the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM - <https://sam.gov/content/home>) to obtain your UEI number. DEQ recommends starting this process early as it is very time-consuming, requires providing documentation-sometimes with follow-up requests for additional information, and can take up to 2 months to complete. If you need assistance, you may contact the federal help desk at 866-606-8220 Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m. EST.

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

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

Primary Contact Title

Address City State Zip Code

Phone Number Email

Signature Digitally signed by Ashley Brubaker
Date: 2026.02.10 11:59:50 -07'00'

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 Digitally signed by Casey Hackathorn
Date: 2026.02.20 10:01:46 -07'00'

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

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

Project Form

Project Type

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

Capacity Building Project

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

Required Attachments in Addition to This Form

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

Activity Location

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

Shields River Watershed

Activity Description

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

The goal of this proposal is to accelerate the pace of water quality and quantity projects in the Shields basin while it is a focus watershed. The identification, coordination, planning, and monitoring of any high-quality non-point source pollution reduction project takes a concerted effort and a significant amount of time. Thanks to such efforts, Trout Unlimited (TU) currently has two ongoing and two planned on-the-ground projects, plus three current instream flow leases and one in preparation for change authorizations in the Shields basin. This proven ability to identify, manage, and implement projects, plus the combination of instream flow specialists and restoration project managers makes TU uniquely suited to convert capacity funding into successful on-the-ground projects in the Shields Valley. Using the momentum gained through current and planned projects, TU will continue to identify and implement future projects leading to a reduction of non-point source pollution for a greater watershed scale benefit. TU staff who would use these capacity funds include project managers, instream flow specialists, and summer technicians. No new staff would be hired based on these capacity funds, but this funding will allow TU staff to dedicate significant time and capacity towards project development, education, and outreach in the Shields basin while it is the focus watershed. Over the past year, TU has put 319 capacity funds to use in various ways including conducting stream and fish surveys; attending meetings and coordinating with landowners, the USFS, Montana FWP staff, the Conservation District, the Shields Valley Watershed Group, and other water resource professionals; working with the CD and local producers to design and host a riparian grazing management workshop; begin development and coordination of a culvert and diversion survey program; apply for and secure additional funding for non-point source projects in the Shields valley; host project tours, and conduct desktop and roadside project identification. Additional capacity funding will build on these efforts resulting in additional stream, fish and habitat surveys; continued coordination; increased surveys of culverts and diversions; future workshops and educational opportunities; and increased secured funding for NPS pollution reduction projects (Attachment A).

Budget Form

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

Capacity Building Projects

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

Need and Opportunity

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

TU staff are primarily funded through project-based funding. Whereas diverse funding sources will support restoration project implementation, funding for staff capacity to identify, plan, and scope projects and secure landowner and partner cooperation is much harder to come by but is essential to build future projects. By identifying high quality, on-the-ground and outreach and education projects, TU staff will be able to leverage these capacity funds into substantially greater amounts to cover project management, designs, construction, materials, and monitoring.

Through the recent focus watershed nomination and selection process, the Shields River Watershed demonstrated the high amount of local interest and momentum in identifying and implementing non-point source pollution reduction projects. TU works closely with state and federal agencies and local organizations who share the goal of improving watershed health. TU's demonstrated ability to collaborate and successfully implement projects highlights the community support for stream restoration projects, and the vital role TU plays in this community.

Measurement and Sustainability

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

This capacity funding will be used to support current employees of TU (including an annual seasonal technician) to accelerate the pace of projects in the Shields watershed. No new staff will be hired using this funding, but it will allow current staff to dedicate focused time to developing NPS projects in the Shields basin. The measure of increased capacity through this proposal will be the following:

- Number of culvert and diversion surveys completed
- Number of stream, fish, beaver, or habitat surveys completed
- Number of meetings attended for coordination or outreach
- Amount of project-specific funding generated for future implementation.

Timeline

Describe your anticipated project timeline

This funding will be used in the fall and winter 2026/2027 for coordination and desktop based project development, and will be used for those and field based activities through the 2027 field season. Additional coordination; survey data organization, analysis, and reporting; and outreach activities will continue beyond the end of the field season.

Education and Outreach Projects

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

Behavioral Change

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

Barriers

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

Evaluation

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

Timeline

Describe your anticipated timeline

Project Partners and Roles

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

TU works closely with many different partners to identify, develop, and implement NPS projects. Important project partners include:

- The Park County Conservation District and Shield Valley Watershed Group - the CD and SVWG are important groups for landowner coordination and communication, and recently TU partnered with the CD to host a Grazing Strategies for Riparian Management workshop. Additionally, projects needing a 310 permit are approved by the CD.
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks - TU works closely with the FWP fisheries staff to further conservation and restoration of Montana's wild trout populations; in the Shields basin, this work often focuses on the conservation of native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Many NPS projects have a fisheries co-benefit (and vice-versa), and this coordination with the local FWP biologists is essential for identifying and implementing fisheries conservation work.
- The Park County Water Initiative - TU works with the PCWI group to host annual project tours and coordinates with members about projects and ongoing water related work in Park County.
- Montana Freshwater Partners - TU works closely with MFP staff to ensure projects create a combined watershed impact.
- Joe Brooks Trout Unlimited - JBTU shares project updates and recruits volunteers for project work.
- The Custer Gallatin National Forest - TU works closely with CGNF staff to identify and develop projects on National Forest.

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.

TU's work in the Shields basin benefits many aspects of the watershed and local community. Co-benefits from TU projects often include benefits to the fishery, specifically to native Yellowstone cutthroat trout, through identification of barriers that may be protecting a non-hybridized population upstream, or identification of a structure creating a barrier that can be removed or replaced to allow passage for migratory fish. Reducing fine sediment input to streams also benefits fish through maintaining clean spawning gravel and healthy invertebrate populations. TU's projects also benefit working lands through increasing floodplain connection for healthy pastures and increasing resilience to flood and droughts.

Project Administration

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

Report Format:

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

Reporting Schedule:

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

Additional Information

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

Trout Unlimited has a decades long history of involvement with fisheries and water quality work in the Shields River basin. Over the past 15 years, TU has collected baseline data, engaged with partners, and successfully identified and implemented a suite of projects directly improving water quality and quantity. This experience, combined with an organizational structure designed to support identification, development, and implementation of high-quality on-the-ground projects over time leads to real improvement in water quality and aquatic habitat. Partnerships developed within the Shields community and with agencies and local organizations have set the stage for accelerated non-point source project delivery.

TU has a proven track record through projects including the Rattlesnake Dam removal, Ninemile Creek restoration, Phase I and II of Dry Creek Restoration, and the Reese Creek instream flow project. TU's Upper Yellowstone and Shields River Project Manager will leverage this organizational expertise, plus her 10-plus years working in stream restoration and fisheries research to achieve project objectives and improve stream function and water quality in the Shields River valley.

BUDGET

2026 Nonpoint Source Pollution Reduction Application - Capacity Building Education & Outreach Budget Template

Project Title:		Funding Request*	Non-Federal Match**	Other Funding***	Match Source	Match Secured? (Y/N)	Total Project Cost	Additional Information****
<p>Project and Program Development</p> <p>This task may include the initial stages of, for example, developing the Plan, demonstration project, outreach program, educational materials or planning project tours. Please include anticipated deliverables and a detailed budget.</p>	Project and Program Development							
	Culvert and diversion survey planning, prioritization, and landowner coordination	\$ 3,000.00				TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 3,000.00	
	Attending meetings and general coordination	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00				\$ 1,000.00	
	Outreach materials creation (e.g. flyers, presentations, etc.)	\$ 500.00					\$ 500.00	
	Funding opportunity identification and application for NPS projects	\$ 3,000.00					\$ 3,000.00	
							\$ -	
							\$ -	
							\$ -	
	Total	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -			\$ 7,500.00	
	<p>Implementation</p> <p>This task would include, for example, the time getting stakeholder involvement and writing the Plan, leading the project tours or outreach program, and coordinating volunteers. Please include anticipated deliverables and a detailed budget.</p>	Implementation						
Culvert and diversion surveys		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,000.00			TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 7,000.00	
Fish, beaver, and aquatic habitat surveys		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 2,000.00			TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 7,000.00	
							\$ -	
Pre-project monitoring and data collection (e.g. fish surveys, habitat surveys, BHEI surveys)		\$ 2,000.00	\$ 500.00			TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 2,500.00	
Hosting and/or attending trainings and workshops (e.g. riparian grazing management workshop)		\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00			TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 2,500.00	
Desktop and field-based NPS project identification		\$ 2,500.00					\$ 2,500.00	
Total		\$ 16,000.00	\$ 5,500.00	\$ -			\$ 21,500.00	
<p>Effectiveness Monitoring</p> <p>This task includes costs for evaluating the success of your project or program. This may include surveys, community readiness factors, landowner buy in for projects, completion of a Plan, etc. Please include anticipated deliverables and a detailed budget.</p>	Effectiveness Monitoring							
	Culvert and diversion survey data compilation, water rights analysis where applicable, and mapping	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 200.00			TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 2,200.00	
	Fish, beaver, and aquatic habitat survey and desktop and field-based NPS project identification data compilation/organization, analysis, report compilation and landowner follow-up	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 200.00			TU staff time, other contributions	\$ 2,200.00	
							\$ -	
	Total	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 400.00	\$ -			\$ 4,400.00	
<p>Administration</p> <p>Funding applied to Project Administration must not exceed 10% of the total amount of nonpoint funding requested, or \$3,000, per project whichever is lower. Project includes normal business expenses and reporting requirements.</p>	Administration							
	Mid/Annual/Interim Reports and Billing Statements	\$ 1,500.00					\$ 1,500.00	
	Draft/Final Report and Billing Statements	\$ 1,500.00					\$ 1,500.00	
	Communication with DEC						\$ -	
							\$ -	
							\$ -	
	Total	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -			\$ 3,000.00	
Grand Totals	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 6,400.00	\$ -			\$ 36,400.00		

*Funding Request - Must not exceed \$30,000
 **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 to
 ****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.)

**LETTERS
OF
SUPPORT**



Local, Common Sense Conservation

5242 Highway 89 South
Livingston, MT 59047

(406) 223-1048

www.parkcd.org

parkcd.310permitting@gmail.com

January 15th, 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 Capacity Funding

Dear Montana DEQ staff,

The Park County Conservation District and Shields Valley Watershed Group would like to extend support for Trout Unlimited's DEQ 319 funding proposal to fund staff capacity for ongoing project development, training, data collection, and landowner and community coordination. Through the 310 permitting process, project site visits, watershed group meetings, CD meetings, and general coordination the CD has seen TU's ability to effectively identify, develop, and implement stream restoration, fisheries conservation, and non-point source pollution reduction projects. Additionally, the CD is collaborating with TU to host a Grazing Strategies for Riparian Management workshop for restoration practitioners and land managers, and looks forward to possible future collaborations of this nature.

The Conservation District has worked with TU on other projects throughout Park County and has found they have the capacity and technical expertise to plan and execute effective on the ground stream restoration projects that benefit the fish, the watershed, and the local community. Thank you for your ongoing support of non-point source reduction projects in the Shields River Valley.

Sincerely,

Dustin Homan
Board Chair
Park Conservation District

OTHER ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A. Potential and previous uses of 319 funds leading to on-the-ground non-point source pollution reduction projects and community engagement and education

Activity: Culvert and diversion surveys, including planning; landowner coordination; surveying; and post-survey mapping, structure analysis, water rights analysis, and follow-up conversations/coordination with landowners and agency staff.

Did this activity use 2025 capacity funds: Yes

Status: In Development. The desktop site identification and mapping portion of this project is largely complete. Prioritization through conversations with FWP and landowners is underway. On the ground surveys will begin in field season 2026.

Proposed actions for 2026 capacity funds: 2025 funding was intended to take this project from inception through a small number of on the ground surveys in 2026, but is not enough for a comprehensive survey effort. 2026 capacity funding will be used to continue survey efforts including ongoing landowner coordination; on the ground surveys; data compilation, organization, and reporting; landowner follow-up; water rights analysis as needed.

Activity: Fish, beaver, aquatic habitat, and stream surveys and observations

Did this activity use 2025 capacity funds: Yes

Status: Ongoing Observations gained from spending time walking streams is critical for identifying and developing future projects. In 2026 TU staff conducted surveys over five different stream segments in the Shields basin.

Proposed actions for 2026 capacity funds: TU will continue to conduct stream surveys for fish, beaver, and aquatic habitat in the 2027 field season to identify and inform potential non-point source projects. TU staff will collect observations of channel and bank conditions and potential for non-point source pollution reduction and habitat improvement.

Activity: Desktop and field-based project identification, prioritization, and development

Did this activity use 2025 capacity funds: Yes

Status: Ongoing

Proposed actions for 2026 capacity funds: Desktop and field-based project identification, prioritization and development is an ongoing task to build future projects and will continue indefinitely. This effort is spread across wider working areas, but 319 funding dedicated to the Shields basin allows staff to focus concerted efforts on project identification and development within the Shields River Watershed.



Activity: Landowner coordination and meeting attendance, creation of outreach materials, presentations, project tours, and volunteer coordination and training

Did this activity use 2025 capacity funds: Yes

Status: Ongoing

Proposed actions for 2026 capacity funds: TU staff will continue to present projects at local TU meetings, and to coordinate and train volunteers for project participation such as weed control, revegetation, and beaver dam analog construction. Site tours are a useful way of communicating project objectives and details, TU will continue to both host and attend site tours to provide outreach and to learn about what others are doing in the watershed to decrease non-point source pollution. Site tours may be formal or informal, such as meeting with a landowner to see how they manage grazing in their riparian area. As is the case with project development, these efforts are spread across wider working areas, but 319 funding dedicated to the Shields basin allows staff to focus concerted efforts on landowner coordination, meeting attendance, project tours, volunteer engagement, and outreach within the Shields River Watershed.

Activity: Funding identification and application

Did this activity use 2025 capacity funds: Yes

Status: Ongoing TU has secured \$12,500 towards non-point source projects in the Shields basin and is currently seeking an additional \$407,085 from a total for four different sources.

Proposed actions for 2026 capacity funds: TU will continue to seek funding for non-point source pollution reduction projects from 319 and other sources.

Activity: Developing and attending trainings and workshops

Did this activity use 2025 capacity funds: Yes

Status: Ongoing In February 2026 TU worked with the Park Conservation District to develop and host a riparian grazing workshop for stream restoration practitioners and land managers. This workshop was well attended and brought together local producers and stream restoration practitioners to discuss techniques and considerations for stream restoration on working lands. TU staff will continue to work with the CD to promote open discussions and future workshops to find solutions for stream function improvements on working lands.

Proposed actions for 2026 capacity funds: TU will work with the CD and other community members to identify topics and host future meetings and workshops. TU staff will also seek out opportunities to attend similar workshops hosted by other entities.

Trout Unlimited: America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization

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