



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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RECEIVED

MAY 15 2003

DEQ
Planning Division

May 9, 2003

Ref: 8EPR-EP

Mr. Art Compton, Director
Planning, Prevention and Assistance Division
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: TMDL Approvals
Big Creek/Sediment

Dear Mr. Compton:

We have completed our review of the total maximum daily load (TMDL) as submitted by your office for sediment in Big Creek located within the North Fork Flathead River Basin. The TMDL is included in the document entitled Watershed Restoration Plan for Big Creek, North Fork of the Flathead River (Montana Department of Environmental Quality) transmitted to us for review and approval in correspondence dated March 26, 2003 and signed by you. Enclosure 1 to this letter provides a summary of the elements of the TMDLs and Enclosure 2 provides details of our review of the TMDLs.

Based on our review, we feel the separate TMDL elements listed in Enclosure 2 adequately address the pollutants of concern, taking into consideration seasonal variation and a margin of safety.

In accordance with the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et. seq.*), we approve all aspects of the TMDL as developed for Big Creek. In approving these TMDLs, EPA affirms that the TMDL has been established at a level necessary to attain and maintain the applicable water quality standards and has the necessary components of an approvable TMDL.

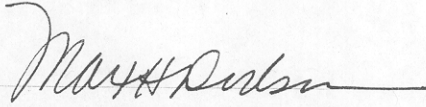
Finally, we wish to inform you that our office has received concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding our biological evaluations of the approval of the Big Creek sediment TMDL. Our biological evaluation was submitted to the Service in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. In our evaluation, we assessed the effects for our approval on the threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species in the area of the TMDLs. Our conclusion was that the TMDL approval would either have no effect or would not likely have an adverse impact on the species of concern. Any effect of the TMDL approvals was seen as either insignificant or beneficial to the species.



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Thank you for your submittal. If you have any questions concerning this approval, feel free to contact Ron Steg in our Helena office at (406) 457-5024.

Sincerely,



Max H. Dodson
Assistant Regional Administrator
Ecosystems Protection and Remediation

Enclosures

cc:

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Flathead National Forest
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Kalispell, MT 59901

ENCLOSURE 1

Table 1. TMDL Summary Information

Water Bodies & Pollutants of Concern	- Big Creek – siltation
Section 303(d)(1) or 303(d)(3) TMDL	- 303(d)(1)
Impaired Beneficial Uses	- Partial support: cold water fishery and aquatic life
Pollutant Sources	- Silviculture and natural
Target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range of 23.77 to 30% substrate fines ≤ 6.35 mm. - The erosion rate of monitored impaired reaches $\leq 125\%$ of monitored reference reaches. - Successful revegetation and/or protection of at least 75% of the identified sediment sources.
TMDL	- The TMDL is expressed as the sum of the load reductions from a performance based allocation plan
Allocation	- Performance based. Restoration treatments are proposed for virtually all of the identified sources.
Restoration Strategies	- A conceptual plan detailing restoration measures for all identified source categories has been proposed.
Margin of Safety	- An implicit margin of safety will be ensured through implementation of a proposed monitoring strategy. An explicit margin of safety was incorporated by decreasing the highest acceptable level of percent fines by 3% from 31.03% to 30%.
Seasonal Considerations	- Sediment production data, problem definition, and all aspects of the TMDL apply to yearly sediment loading and erosion during high runoff periods.



ENCLOSURE 2

EPA REGION VIII MONTANA OFFICE TMDL REVIEW FORM

Document Name:	Watershed Restoration Plan for Big Creek, North Fork of the Flathead River (March 2002)
Submitted by:	MTDEQ
Date Received:	March 26, 2003
Review Date:	April 15, 2003
Reviewer:	Ron Steg
Formal or Informal Review?	FORMAL

This document provides a standard format for the EPA Montana Office to provide comments to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality on TMDL documents provided to the EPA for either official formal, or informal review. All TMDL documents are measured against the following 12 review criteria:

1. Water Quality Impairment Status
2. Water Quality Standards
3. Water Quality Targets
4. Significant Sources
5. Total Maximum Daily Load
6. Allocation
7. Margin of Safety and Seasonality
8. Monitoring Strategy
9. Restoration Strategy
10. Public Participation
11. Technical Analysis
12. Endangered Species Act Compliance

Each of the 12 review criteria are described below to provide the rationale for the review, followed by EPA's comments. This review is intended to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act and also to ensure that the reviewed documents are technically sound and the conclusions are technically defensible. This document review form incorporates, by reference, the summary of TMDL elements presented in Table 1 (See Enclosure 1).