



**Ruby Valley Conservation District** | **Ruby Watershed Council**

P.O. Box 295  
Sheridan, MT 59749  
[www.rvcd.org](http://www.rvcd.org)



November 25, 2009  
Re: Miller Ranch Ruby River Channel Restoration

Water Quality Bureau, DEQ  
Attn: Robert Ray  
PO Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ray,

I am writing in support of the 319 grant application titled Miller Ranch Ruby River Channel Restoration. The Ruby Valley Conservation District (RVCD) and the Ruby Watershed Council (RWC) are committed to uniting agriculture, recreation, conservation & education to "protect the land and preserve our heritage." The Miller family has historically committed to the same concept through their responsible cattle ranching and hay production, as well as management of recreational/working ranchlands in the Ruby Valley. They are known for being outstanding members of the community as citizens, ag producers and conservationists.

Jeremy Miller has been a member of the Ruby Watershed Council for a number of years, and first approached the Council in 2008 to garner support from RWC & RVCD for researching restoration techniques for a straightened, hardened stretch of the Ruby River, which had been done some 60+ years ago in an attempt to make easier work of irrigation. This was a common practice along the lower Ruby below the Ruby Reservoir. The RVCD regularly sees 310 permit applications to repair these riprap sections, as well as for new permits to mitigate the damage done up and downstream from the hardened areas, due to increased velocity of the water, water eroding the soils from the edges of the riprap, increased sediment, etc. The RVCD favors "soft" bank stabilization techniques, and restoring and maintaining natural conditions whenever possible. Thus, we encouraged Jeremy and his family to continue their research into the project. When he came to the RWC/RVCD in 2009 with a complete engineered pre-proposal, we gave the project full support, including authorization for Rebecca Ramsey, Ruby Watershed Coordinator to help identify and apply for funding to assist with the project.

The Ruby River and several of her tributaries have been identified as "impaired" in the completed TMDL for the Ruby Watershed. This section was identified by now retired FWP biologist Dick Oswald for being practically devoid of fish to the lack of vegetation, lack of sinuosity, sediment and warming trends. The restoration plan that the Millers are working on will alleviate these issues. That is why the RWC & RVCD support this project fully, as we apply for assistance with the final design and permitting for this project, as well as in the future for the ultimate construction of this project down the road. We see this as an opportunity for other landowners to be led by example, and ultimately encourage those landowners to do similar projects and ultimately improve the water quality and habitat of the Ruby River for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Gary Giem, chairman, Ruby Valley Conservation District and member of the Ruby Watershed Council