

Section I: General Information

Project Title FY 2014 Education & Outreach Mini-Grants

Project Sponsor Information

Sponsor Name Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI)

Tax Identification # 23-7096823

County Lewis & Clark

Website www.macdnet.org

DUNS # 805140837

Primary Contact Jan Fontaine

Signatory Jeff Tiberi

Title Administrative Assistant

Title Executive Director

Address 790 Colleen Street

Address 790 Colleen Street

City Helena State Montana Zip Code 59601

City Helena State Montana Zip Code 59601

Phone Number 406-443-5711

Phone Number 406-443-5711

Fax Number 406-443-0174

Fax Number 406-443-0174

E-mail Address mail@macdnet.org

E-mail Address jtiberi@macdnet.org

Signature _____

Signature _____

Project Location

Statewide ☒ *If project is not statewide please complete the rest of this section.*

How is project related to a TMDL? _____

Watershed Name or HUC # _____

TMDL Planning Area _____

Project 1 Name _____

Latitude (1) _____

Longitude (1) _____

Project 2 Name _____

Latitude (2) _____

Longitude (2) _____

Project 3 Name _____

Latitude (3) _____

Longitude (3) _____

Project 4 Name _____

Latitude (4) _____

Longitude (4) _____

Project 5 Name _____

Latitude (5) _____

Longitude (5) _____

Nonpoint Source (NPS) Information

319 Project Category Education and Outreach

Waterbody Type _____

Functional Category Statewide Education/Information Program

Is waterbody on the 2010 Impaired Waters List? ☐

1st Pollution Category Agriculture (Grazing Related Sources)

Percent of Total (%) 50

2nd Pollution Category Hydromodification (Streambank or Shoreline Modification/Destabilization)

Percent of Total (%) 20

3rd Pollution Category Urban Runoff/Stormwater (Residential, e.g., non-commercial automotive/p

Percent of Total (%) 30

4th Pollution Category _____

Percent of Total (%) _____

Project Funding

319 Funds Requested

Does the project sponsor have any open 319 contracts?

Matching Funds

State Match

State In-Kind Match

Local Funds

Other Match

Total Matching Funds

Other Federal Funds

Total Project Budget

Advance Requested* Administrative Fee

**Advances require additional justification and DEQ approval.*

Project Title Education & Outreach Mini-Grants

DEQ Contract Number 211070

319 Award \$30,000.00

Projected Closing Date June 30, 2013

Project Title Education & Outreach Mini-Grants

DEQ Contract Number 212068

319 Award \$25,000.00

Projected Closing Date June 30, 2014

Project Description

Methods: Please describe the specific activities of this project.

This grant would fund education & outreach mini grants for FY2014, as well as management of the mini grant program for the state of Montana. Two calls for mini-grant applications will be completed - one in September 2013 and one in February 2014. Each call will be advertised with press releases in MT newspapers, advertisements through the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD), Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC), and Montana Watercourse list serves. A committee made up of member of the MWCC E & O Committee will review and rank the applications.

Objectives: Please describe the specific/measurable objectives that will ensure the achievement of the project goal(s).

This grant should fund a minimum of ten individual education & outreach mini grants of up to \$2,000 each. Eligible entities include: schools; nonprofit organizations; agencies; and volunteer groups, etc. In the past these mini grants have funded a variety of education and outreach projects, including: start-up for volunteer monitoring; purchasing of equipment for non-point source education; producing educational pamphlets, documents, calendars; water festivals or tours; producing radio, television, billboard, newspaper, magazine messages, etc. Grants awarded under this program may be similar but could include new ideas or programs. Education must be focused on non-point source pollution, or issues dealing with cumulative impacts on water quality.

Overview: Please provide a brief summary of the proposed project.

Two calls for applications will be done, one in September 2013 then another in February 2014 through press releases and e-mails sent to conservation districts, watersheds groups, educators in Montana and the general public. A minimum of ten individual education & outreach mini grants of up to \$2,000 each will be funded. With a quick turn around from the time of the call until funds are available, this program meets local needs and put funding on the ground to assist with non-point source pollution issues.

SWCDMI has been awarded three Section 319 Grants in the past for mini-grants. The first grant had two calls for applications, the first in June 2010 where we received five applications and four were awarded. The second call was in January 2011 where we received eighteen applications and eight were awarded. This grant closed in June 2012. The second grant had two calls for applications, the first in July 2011 where we received eight applications and five were awarded. The second call was in February 2012 where we received ten applications and nine were awarded. The third grant had its first call for applications in August 2012.

Conservation districts, watersheds groups, educators in Montana and the general public have used these 319 funds to support successful volunteer monitoring projects; water festivals or tours; educational pamphlets; and to purchase equipment for non-point source education volunteer monitoring.

A: Statement of Need and Intent

SWCDMI has managed the DEQ 319 Mini Grant program since 2010 and has been awarded three 319 grants to date. This program is a way of funding on the ground small grant amounts focused on non-point source pollution.

We had five calls for applications, one in 2010, two in 2011 and two in 2012.

In July 2010 we received five applications with a total of \$6,750 requested. Of those five, \$6,000 was awarded for a stream bank stabilization project; well water education event; septic system maintenance program; and a soil health seminar. In February 2011 there were eighteen applicants requesting \$26,961. Twelve were funded for \$17,655 for a community engagement event; stream bank re-vegetation project; a high school environmental club event; a elementary school rain garden; “What’s In a Body of Water” event; flood awareness day; “Ebb & Flow: Understanding Streambank Stabilization” event; “Protecting Shields Valley Water Resources” event; “Ruby Valley Welcome to the Neighborhood” event; a outdoor classroom; and alternative beaver management & reintroduction. With a balance remaining in the first grant the Montana Watershed Coordination Council requested and received \$3,300 to fund their fall 2011 training.

Under the second grant there was a call for applications in August 2011. We received eight applications for \$14,847 and funded five at \$9,447 for re-vegetation project; a school rain garden; “After the Floods” workshop; riparian classroom event; and “Water Days” on Crow Indian Reservation. A second call for applications was announced in January 2012. We received ten applications for \$17,090 and funded nine at \$16,590 for a display board; field trip; re-vegetation project; kids river expo; map installation on river walk; volunteer monitoring equipment; creek channel stabilization project; and a river festival.

The third grant had it's first call for applications in August 2012.

This mini grant program helps implement the 2012 NPS Management Plan by focusing education & outreach projects/events on non-point source pollution, the specific means of this implementation depends on the individual applications received.

B: Collaborative Effort

Partner	Role
DEQ	assistance and oversight of the project
MWCC	members make up the committee that will review applications
Conservation districts, watersheds, schools, general public, local government, etc.	those awarded mini grant

Additional Information (Collaborative Effort)

Funding Organization	Award Amount	Project Description	Project Status	Contact Information
BLM	\$25,000 \$25,000 \$20,000	Using mini grants promote conservation of sage grouse with proper range management & education Continuation of above Continuation of above	on going on going on going	Lori Anderson 406.896.5196 landerson@blm.gov
DEQ	\$100,000	Conservation Advisor for Livestock Operations (CALO) - project coordination, farm assessments, and mini grants	on going	Mark Ockey 406.444.5351 mockey@mt.gov
DEQ	\$30,000-YR2011 \$30,000-YR2012 \$25,500_YR2013	Education & Outreach mini grants to conservation districts & other government entities, watersheds, non-profits, and teachers. Same as above Same as above	completed on going on going	Laura Andersen 406.444.0549 landersen3@mt.gov
DEQ	\$20,000-YR2009 \$20,000-YR2010 \$25,000-YR2011	Strengthening watershed communities through education & outreach for the Montana Watershed Coordination Council Same as above Same as above	completed completed on going	Robert Ray 406.444.5319 rray@mt.gov
DEQ	\$100,000	Water Quality Assistance & Support for watersheds and conservation districts to assist in the restoration of water quality and remove the need for a TMDL	on going	Mark Bostrom 406.444.2680 mbostrom@mt.gov

Additional Information (Planning and Management)

DRNC	\$25,000	For the past fifteen plus years SWCDMI has held a 1 11/2 day yearly high school education event called the Montana Envirothon where 150-200 students compete for college scholarships	on going	Laurie Zeller 406.444.6669 lzeller@mt.gov
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Section III: Project Components

A: Education and Outreach: Please briefly describe the education and outreach component of this proposal and the target audience.

A minimum of ten education & outreach mini grants of up to \$2,000 each will be awarded to schools; nonprofit organizations; agencies; and volunteer groups, etc. In the past these mini grants have funded the following education & outreach projects but are not limited to: start-up for volunteer monitoring; purchasing of equipment for non-point source education; producing educational pamphlets, documents, calendars; water festivals or tours; producing radio, television, billboard, newspaper, magazine messages, etc. Education must be focused on non-point source pollution, or issues dealing with cumulative impacts on water quality.

C: Operation and Maintenance

N/A

D: Monitoring: Please briefly describe the monitoring component of this proposal.

Some application requests may include monitoring.

Section IV: Scope of Work

Task 1 Title Mini Grant Awards

Description

A minimum of 10 individual mini-grants for education & outreach activities will be selected using a competitive state-wide process and shall not exceed \$2,000. Potentially eligible entities include: schools; nonprofit organizations; agencies; and volunteer groups. Educational activity types can include but are not limited to: start-up for volunteer monitoring; purchasing of equipment for NPS education; producing educational pamphlets, documents, and calendars; water festivals or tours; producing radio, television, billboard, newspaper, and magazine messages. Education must be focused on NPS pollution, or issues dealing with cumulative impacts on water quality.

Deliverables

ten individual events/projects awarded

Task 1 Funding

319 Funds	<input type="text" value="\$21,000.00"/>
Non-Federal Match	<input type="text" value="\$17,000.00"/>
Other Federal Funds	<input type="text"/>
Total Cost	<input type="text" value="\$38,000.00"/>
Is Match Secured?	<input type="text" value="No"/>

Timeline July 2013 - June 2014

Match Source CDs, watersheds, schools, general public, local gov., etc.

Task 2 Title Promote/management of the mini grant program

Description

An application form and criteria for selection of mini-grant projects will be developed. Promote the mini-grant program; solicit applications through Montana Watershed Coordination (MWCC) Council Education & Outreach Committee and other appropriate forums. Two calls for mini grants will be released, one in September 2013 the other in February 2014. Two grant review committee meetings, using the MWCC E&O Committee, will be organized and held to review grant applications and select the most competitive projects. Grants will be awarded, subject to DEQ approval, and administer contracts.

Deliverables

application, press releases, calls for applications

Task 2 Funding

319 Funds	<input type="text" value="\$2,000.00"/>
Non-Federal Match	<input type="text"/>
Other Federal Funds	<input type="text"/>
Total Cost	<input type="text" value="\$2,000.00"/>
Is Match Secured?	<input type="text"/>

Timeline July 2013 - June 2014

Match Source

Description

SWCDMI will submit quarterly status reports with match statements and requests for reimbursement, annual reports, and a final report.

Deliverables

quarterly, annual and final reports

Task 3 Funding

319 Funds	<input type="text" value="\$2,000.00"/>
Non-Federal Match	<input type="text"/>
Other Federal Funds	<input type="text"/>
Total Cost	<input type="text" value="\$2,000.00"/>
Is Match Secured?	<input type="text"/>

Timeline	<input type="text" value="July 2013 - June 2014"/>	Match Source	<input type="text"/>
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Task 4 Title

Description

Deliverables

Task 4 Funding

319 Funds	<input type="text"/>
Non-Federal Match	<input type="text"/>
Other Federal Funds	<input type="text"/>
Total Cost	<input type="text"/>
Is Match Secured?	<input type="text"/>

Timeline	<input type="text"/>	Match Source	<input type="text"/>
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Section V: Supporting Documents

A: Detailed Project Budget

[illegible]

B: Project Milestone Table: Please complete the following Project Milestone Table by entering task numbers and titles in the left hand column, then check the box(es) for the appropriate quarter(s) and year(s) in which the task will take place.

Milestone	2QT 2013	3QT 2013	4QT 2013	1QT 2014	2QT 2014	3QT 2014	4QT 2014	1QT 2015	2QT 2015	3QT 2015	4QT 2015	1QT 2016
August 2013 - first call for applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
October 2013 - mini grants awarded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
January 2014 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
February 2014 - second call for applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
March 2014 - mini grants awarded	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
April 2014 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
July 2014 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
October 2014 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
January 2015 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
April 2015 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
July 2015 - quarterly report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please ensure that you submit a project map(s) and letters of support along with this Final Application form. If design drawings are available please provide those as well. For on-the-ground work please include copies of the applicable permits.

☐ **C: Project Map**

☒ **D: Letters of Support**

☐ **E: Design Drawings**

☐ **F: Applicable Permits**

G: Comments: Please use the space provided for any additional information that may not have been captured by this application form.

Letter of support attached.

BITTER ROOT Water Forum

PO Box 1247
Hamilton, MT 59840

(406) 375-2272
brwaterforum@
bitterroot.net

www.brwaterforum.org

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September 24, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bitter Root Water Forum (BRWF) is well aware of the direct benefits Montana organizations receive from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI) min-grant program and is in full support of the program being funded again through the 319 program.

BRWF has been a recipient of grant funds from the SWCDMI mini grant program to facilitate on the ground restoration project in the headwaters of the Bitterroot River. These funds have made the difference in being able to restore vegetation along the river, providing shade to the warming stream and preventing excess sediment from reaching the river from the nearby highway. These projects have provided dozens of hours of educational programs for youth and adults on the importance of a healthy riparian area.

We hope to be able to use this program in the future and that Montana Department of Environmental Quality will continue to offer these mini grants through SWCDMI.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather Mullee
Executive Director



Blue Water Task Force, Inc.
PO Box 160513
Big Sky, Montana 59716
www.bluewatertaskforce.org

September 27, 2012

Water Activities Work Group 319 Review Committee
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
1520 E. Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: 319 Grant Application Support Letter

Dear 319 Review Committee:

On behalf of the Blue Water Task Force, a nonprofit watershed group dedicated to promoting the stewardship of the Gallatin River, I would like to express our support for the 319 application from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. ("SWCDMI") for 319 Mini-Grants. As a previous recipient of a 319 grant, we greatly appreciate the opportunity the mini grant funding has afforded our group to conduct a critical educational campaign to address local water quality issues. We strongly believe that an educated community can be one of the best combatants of nonpoint source pollution by engaging local stakeholders to become active involved in planning and implementing water protection strategies.

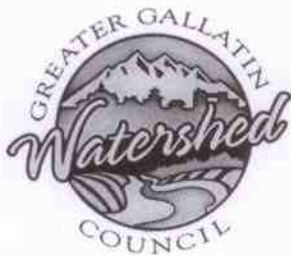
The Blue Water Task Force hopes that other communities will have the same opportunity to access funds from SWCDMI's 319 Mini Grant program for educational and outreach projects and therefore, we offer our enthusiastic support for the 319 application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristin Gardner
Executive Director, Blue Water Task Force

The mission of the Blue Water Task Force is to protect and preserve the health of the
Gallatin River Watershed.



Greater Gallatin Watershed Council, Inc.

PO Box 751, Bozeman, MT 59771

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Watershed Coordinator

info@greatergallatin.org
www.greatergallatin.org
Phone: (406) 551-0804

September 27, 2012

Watershed Protection Services
Water Quality Planning Bureau
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

To Whom It May Concern:

The Greater Gallatin Watershed Council (GGWC) has been a recent recipient of grant funds from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI). The SWCDMI mini grant program allowed GGWC to research and create a watershed map that focuses on non-point source pollution education in the Gallatin Valley. As a small non-profit organization, these funds have made the watershed map/non-point source pollution outreach project a big success. We hope to be able to use this program in the future and that Montana Department of Environmental Quality will continue to offer these mini grants through SWCDMI.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rose Vallor
Board Chair

Promoting conservation and enhancement of our water resources while supporting the traditions of community, agriculture and recreation.

September 20, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

Hyalite Elementary in Bozeman, Montana has been a recipient of grant funds from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI) mini grant program to facilitate the celebration of school's new Riparian Classroom. The Riparian area celebration and accompanying multi-day activities facilitated an awareness of water quality issues in the watershed which led to supporting the stewardship of the area both in the school community and greater community at large. These funds have made the difference in holding/doing this event/project. We hope to be able to use this program in the future and that Montana Department of Environmental Quality will continue to offer these mini grants through SWCDMI.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine O'Shea, First Grade Teacher
Deb Persons, First Grade Teacher
Hyalite Elementary School



Judith Basin Conservation District

Steve Hedstrom, Chairman
Doug Hitch, Treasurer
Greg Grove, Vice Chairman
Teresa Wilhelms, Administrator

Terry Metcalfe, Supervisor
Brett Noland, Supervisor
Melvin Aamold, Urban Supervisor
Stanley Dostal, Urban Supervisor

P.O. Box 386, Stanford MT 59479
406-566-2311 ext. 107 Fax 406-566-2727

September 21, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Judith Basin Conservation District has been a recipient of grant funds from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI) mini grant program to facilitate a local event/project. We have received these funds for a well water project. This project included testing and educating local land owners on the quality of their wells and pin point some areas that may have nitrate issues. The information was also used for other programs currently in progress. We were able to get information to land owners about water quality and visit with their farming practices and possible solutions if there was a concern.

These funds have made the difference in holding/doing this event/project. As a small district, we would not be able to do these events without financial support from programs like this from SWCDMI.

We hope to be able to use this program in the future and that Montana Department of Environmental Quality will continue to offer these mini grants through SWCDMI.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Hedstrom, Chairman
Judith Basin Conservation District



September 20, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Montana 4-H Foundation was the recipient of grant funds from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI) mini grant program to facilitate a water quality project in which students from the Pretty Eagle School in St. Xavier, Montana tested water samples from wells on the Crow Indian Reservation. These funds from SWCDMI were helpful in the promotion and delivery of the program which not only benefited residents, but also provided youth a unique learning experience. We hope to be able to use this program in the future and that Montana Department of Environmental Quality will continue to offer these mini grants through SWCDMI.

I hope you will consider continued funding for the Department of Environmental Quality as these mini-grants are an excellent resource for educational and outreach programs in Montana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SD' followed by a horizontal line.

Stephanie Davison, Coordinator
Citizenship, Sustainable Communities and International Programs



210 Taylor Hall
P.O. Box 173580
Bozeman, MT 59717

Tel (406) 994-3501
Fax (406) 994-5417

www.montana.edu



**Ruby Watershed
Council**

**Ruby Valley
Conservation District**



**Ruby Valley
Conservation
District**

P.O. Box 295
Sheridan, MT 59749
(406) 842-5741

Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

September 25, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Ruby Valley Conservation District (RVCD), I am writing to support full funding of the mini-grant program, and encourage continued funding for this important program.

The RVCD has been a recipient of grant funds from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana, Inc. (SWCDMI) mini grant program to facilitate a local soil health seminar that was hosted by the area conservation districts with assistance from two of our local NRCS field offices. The mini grant program funding helped to make the seminar possible. As a result of that seminar series, we have agricultural producers who are experimenting with no-till methods and cover crop cocktails in our area for the first time, as well as using better management for grazing to improve soil and water quality. This shows that with essential funding, we can educate citizens on how to improve water quality and sustainability of our natural resources, and create real change to have a positive impact and lasting legacy for the generations that will come after us on this land that we love so much.

We hope to be able to use the mini grant program in the future and that Montana Department of Environmental Quality will continue to offer these funding sources through SWCDMI.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Ramsey
Ruby Watershed Coordinator

Sleeping Giant Middle School has been a recipient of grant funds from the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana. (\$1500)

David Pettit, science teacher

Livingston, Montana

Thank you!

Here is a description of our project. On a cool morning this past July, nearly 20 sixth and seventh graders from Sleeping Giant Middle School gathered on the Voyich Ranch in Livingston.

Pettit told them about the creek and the restoration work that helped return a dismal section of ditch into a sinewy stretch of water. After pointing out several species of invasive plants—spotted knapweed, burdock, morning glory, and others—Pettit set them loose with work gloves and trash bags.

The kids ran along the hillside as if they were in a race, they dove under a barbed-wire fence, and they started pulling weeds. The students with the longest knapweed and the most weeds picked would win gift certificates for Blizzards at Dairy Queen.

Fleshman Creek is getting a major facelift. Numerous groups—Livingston School District, Park County, City of Livingston, U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Joe Brooks Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and many more—have pooled their talents, time, and money to restore the degraded creek with an important role.

Fleshman Creek starts near Bozeman Pass, flows roughly parallel to Interstate 90 and then through Livingston before dumping into the Yellowstone River at the end of 9th Street. Some of the water diverts into the lagoon in Sacajawea Park. It then flows behind Sleeping Giant Middle School and East Side Elementary before reaching the river at Mayor's Landing.

The goals of the restoration project are to develop a community resource, create and protect habitat, improve water quality, and reduce the creek's tendency to flood surrounding neighborhoods by restoring it to a more natural state. The creek is a major spawning tributary for Yellowstone cutthroat trout and an important habitat for myriad other species.

Fleshman Creek can be thought of as two distinct pieces of water, according to Todd Wester, curriculum director for the Livingston School District, and Livingston schools have been involved on projects on both sections.

"This is the best city-county-schools partnership I've ever been a part of," Wester says. "It's a really holistic effort."

At Voyich Ranch the middle-schoolers were busy pulling knapweed and Canada thistle along a section where Park High students had planted 2,000 willows the previous spring. And before the high-school students came OASIS Environmental Inc. to engineer and manually reroute the creek.

"The students are gaining ownership of this stream," says Pettit. "They are getting hands-on science skills, learning about different career opportunities, and will think about this creek when issues like dumping oil down a storm drain come up."

In 2004, Sleeping Giant students cleaned up trash and helped revegetate the area around Fleshman Creek at Mayor's Landing. They also did chemical testing on the water. In fact, Livingston students have been involved in water testing all along Fleshman Creek. The project is part of the curriculum in classes at both Sleeping Giant Middle School and Park High, so students participate in it throughout their academic career.

"You can learn a lot of things in the classroom," Pettit says, "but it's great to get the kids out here and apply hands-on science principles in the real world."

On August 4, Park County received a \$2.28 million grant to fund the creek's flood-alleviation and restoration project. It was chosen from among 528 applicants. For more on the school efforts, visit livingston.k12.mt.us.