

319 Grant

Agency Review Panel Meeting Summary

October 23, 2011

8:00 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Room 111, Metcalf Building
1520 E. Sixth Ave, Helena, MT

Panel Members: Robert Ray, DEQ; Alice Stanley for Dave Martin, DNRC; Rick Mulder, MDA; Jim Darling, FWP Lakeitha (Rene) Ruffin for Denise Wiedenheft, NRCS; Peter Ismert, EPA; Jeff Ryan, DEQ; Dean Yashan, DEQ.

DEQ Staff Members: Laura Andersen, DEQ; Mark Ockey, DEQ; Elena Evans, DEQ; Ann McCauley, DEQ; Stephanie Crider, DEQ;

Public Present: Jan Fontaine, MACD; Ann Schwend, DNRC/MWCC; Karl Christians, DNRC; Heidi Crum, DNRC; Sierra Harris, Greater Gallatin Watershed Council; Rose Vallor, Greater Gallatin Watershed Council; Sally Heiser, Teton River Watershed Group; Alan Rollo (by phone), Teton River Watershed Group;

Introductions

The meeting started at 8:05 am and introductions were made.

Proposal Presentations

- *Effective Watershed Communication* – Ann Schwend, MWCC/DNRC
 - The Montana Watershed Coordination Council is asking for \$9,000 to provide technical information and communication to the various watersheds across Montana. They are looking to fund/hire a coordinator to do watershed education and outreach, including weekly watershed news, website updates, and help grow the MWCC membership database. The ultimate goal is to hire a contractor to coordinate resources for local watershed protection and improvement. MWCC is working to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Ann stated that they would be able to move forward with their project with partial funding.
- *FY2014 Education & Outreach Mini-Grants* – Jan Fontaine, MACD
 - This is MACD's 4th time requesting money to fund the Mini-Grant program for the Department of Environmental Quality. The Mini-Grant program has helped fund watershed festivals, small monitoring projects, and other educational projects through watershed groups, conservation districts, and schools/teachers. The grant application is short (four pages) with a quick turnaround from the decision board (usually within two weeks of the deadline). There are two calls for the grant applications, one in the fall and the other in late winter (January/February).
- *North American Envirothon* – Heidi Crum and Karl Christians, DNRC
 - The North American Envirothon, formerly known as Canon Envirothon, is an international competition (United States and Canada) for high school students. The winners from each state will come to Montana to compete on subjects dealing with

aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and soils with a specific focus on rangeland management. There will be approximately 600 high school students coming to Montana to compete. The national/international competition is August 4-10, 2013. North American Envirothon is asking for \$25,000 for training materials, transportation (to shuttle the students from Bozeman to their "problem" site), and food. The \$25,000 equals a 6% stake in the event. They did mention that they can operate with reduced funding.

- *Upper Teton Watershed-Riparian Improvements* – Sally Heiser and Alan Rollo (by phone), Teton River Watershed Group
 - The Teton River Watershed Group requested \$62,120 to repair riparian conditions along the Teton River. The sites that they want to work on are some of the worst in the 32 miles of riverbank that is still left to work on, from the 35 miles identified in the 2003 TMDL. The site has heavy livestock traffic, creating various issues, including: over-grazing, trampling, and bank erosion. The three sites contribute to between 65-75% of the sediment load. They will be working with three different landowners, and will center the educational component towards 20+ landowners to demonstrate what it takes to improve a riparian habitat. Alan clarified that they plan to use wildlife friendly fences.
- *Muddy Creek Tributaries Riparian Improvements* – Alan Rollo, Sun River Watershed Group
 - The Sun River Watershed Group is asking for \$73,520 to work with ten producers to work on erosion issues and install approximately 5,000 feet of wildlife friendly riparian fencing. They plan to work on sites that have erosion issues and will show the most success.
- *Lower Gallatin Watershed Restoration Plan* - Sierra Harris, Greater Gallatin Watershed Council
 - The Greater Gallatin Watershed Council is requesting \$30,000 to write a watershed restoration plan. They are planning on using a watershed wide approach to write their restoration plan. Once they have the plan written and approved, they will jump into the implementation phase. They hope to have very little lag-time between writing the plan and implementation. They have done a wetlands integration project before, therefore they have modeled the outline for this plan on their previous success. They have a good working relationship with the community as they have previously worked with Christian Schmidt on the TMDL process.
- *Volunteer Monitoring-Addressing Shared Statewide Goals* – Adam Sigler and Katie Kleehammer (both via phone), MSU Extension
 - MSU Extension has worked with a wide range of groups, including the Sun and Teton Watershed Groups, the Crow Tribe, the Greater Gallatin Watershed Council, the Madison Watershed Group, and the Musselshell Watershed Coalition. They are requesting \$25,000 for volunteer monitoring support and baseline assessment. The monitoring task associated with the application is to create a Sampling and Analysis Plan development procedure written and other document preparation.
- *Protecting Bozeman's Surface Waters* – Dustin Johnson, City of Bozeman
 - The City of Bozeman is requesting \$22,000 to work on Bozeman (Sourdough) Creek within an urban watershed. The creek is on the 303(d) list for E.coli, total nitrogen, total phosphorus, and sedimentation/siltation. There is a fair number of outreach activities associated with this application, and the City of Bozeman has reached out to several

potential partners (the Gallatin Local Water Quality District, Montana State University, and many others). Dustin stated that they would be able to work with reduced funding.

- *Storm Water Conference* – Nikki Sandve, Montana Watercourse
 - The Montana Watercourse coordinated the 2012 conference and is in the beginning stages of planning the 2014 Montana Storm Water Conference. They are requesting \$18,040 to supplement other funding sources they have in place (including registration fees). They have found that the last conference was very well received with lots of speakers, 138 attendees (including people from other states), 11 scholarships, and three tours on the final day. The changes they want to make for the upcoming conference are: stronger outreach to developers and commissioners, clearly identifying responsibilities of the Meeting Advisory Committee, and secure continuing education credits. Nikki said that they could continue to plan the conference with a reduced budget.
- *Lost Horse Creek Streamflow Enhancement* – Andy Fischer, Clark Fork Coalition
 - The Clark Fork Coalition is hoping to address the nonpoint source pollution in Lost Horse Creek by addressing the in-stream flow, reducing sedimentation, and keeping it connected to the Bitterroot River. They are requesting \$106,000. They are planning to work with the Ward Irrigation District to reach a minimum flow agreement, complete some of the final engineering structure, monitor the streamflows and temperatures, and improve the management of the water and commit to providing a minimum flow of ten cubic feet per second below the diversion that will be installed. The Clark Fork Coalition has collaborated with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Morrison-Maierle, and the Ward Irrigation District for this project. They are arranging a meeting with at least 20 landowners in the area to ensure community participation.
- *Watershed Restoration Plan Implementation, Education & Outreach* – Heather Mullee (via phone), Bitter Root Water Forum
 - Originally the Bitter Root Water Forum was applying for funding for Cameron Creek, however, they have since found funding for that particular project. Now they are requesting \$18,950 for the watershed restoration plan implementation and education and outreach. They are working to develop a local committee to get the best picture of how to develop a watershed restoration plan in the area. The second part of the project is to provide citizens with information about nonpoint source pollution, including two volunteer days to get folks on the ground and help them see what can be done on their land. When asked, Heather stated that they are targeting sediment, temperature, and nutrients.
- *Upper Little Blackfoot River-Metals Restoration Strategy* – Casey Hackathorn, Trout Unlimited
 - Trout Unlimited is asking for \$20,000 to develop a restoration strategy in the Upper Little Blackfoot. The river flows west in to the Clark Fork towards Garrison. There is a near genetically pure population of cutthroat trout. They are working with the Department of Environmental Quality's Abandoned Mines program and the Helena National Forest to have a metals restoration strategy incorporated into a future watershed restoration plan. The panel advised Casey to look at the groundwater issues as well as the surface water, and to watch for potential plugged-adit failures.

- *Upper Ninemile Creek Mine Reclamation* – Rob Roberts, Trout Unlimited
 - Trout Unlimited is requesting \$300,000 to reclaim a placer-mined area on Ninemile Creek. The area spans 500 acres, with ten different landowners and is the main cause of sediment production in Ninemile Creek. The starting point is a one-mile reach on the upper end of Ninemile Creek. In preparation for the reclamation project Trout Unlimited has spent four years collecting data working with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Missoula County, private landowners, Montana DEQ, and multiple other sources. The panel questioned several aspects of the project, including the budget breakdown and the use of engineered log jams instead of a stronger vegetation component.

- *Park County Natural Resource Education and Outreach Program* – Kristen Wester and Nelson King (via phone), Park County
 - Park County is asking for \$9,925 to do public outreach in the Shields Valley. They are focusing on the entire impact (environmental, social, economic, etc.) of potential oil and gas development occurring in the county. Park County already has secured funding from the Maki Foundation and are pursuing additional funds to expand their project to make it regional, and eventually, statewide. They plan to host three workshops to educate the general public about nonpoint source pollution and the impacts of land-uses on water quality. The workshops will draw connections between fracking and water supply.

- *East Fork Bitterroot River, Watershed Improvement Project* – Heather Whiteley (via phone), Trout Unlimited
 - Trout Unlimited is requesting \$40,000 to decommission four miles of road which will reduce threats to forest health. They are partnered with the Bitterroot National Forest. This is a priority project for Trout Unlimited because it will reduce road densities and stream crossings. The Bitterroot Headwaters TMDL recommends that the forest service reduce road sediment by 42%. Since there are limitations on the monitoring methods available, Heather spoke with Elena Evans and they settled on the Watershed Erosion Prediction Model. Heather re-evaluated the cost per mile expense after the first meeting for this grant proposal. She stated that the Bitterroot National Forest will be able to decommission roads for approximately \$4,200 a mile, as opposed to \$9,000-\$10,000 a mile.

Discussion of Proposals and Project Ranking/Funding Discussion

Starting with the Education and Outreach applications the ranking and funding recommendations are as follows (working from high to low scorings as ranked by the Review Panel):

- Effective Watershed Coordination
 - The panel suggested to fully fund Montana Watershed Coordinators Council's application.
- 2014 Montana Storm Water Conference
 - The panel suggested to fully fund the Montana Watercourse's application.
- Volunteer Monitoring
 - The panel stated that this application had a really high administrative component, and that this could possibly get reduced. Also, they noted that there was money budgeted to work with two groups, however, there was only one group secured. Upon further review, the panel suggested partially funding the application at greater than 50%.

- Mini-Grants
 - The panel members recalled that Jan stated that in years past the Mini-Grants contract has returned some money to DEQ. With this in mind, they suggested partially funding the application at greater than 50%.
- North American Envirothon
 - The main discussion point the panel had was that the North American Envirothon does not seem to directly address nonpoint source pollution/issues, but the organizers are precluded from discussing the “problem”. However, the problem addresses soil and aquatic resources, and does address rural agricultural producers, and most of the participants are from rural areas. The panel stated that it is an honor for Montana to be the host state for the national competition, and therefore they agreed to partially fund the application at greater than 50%.
- Bozeman Water Supply
 - The panel stated that the application does not address how big of a problem the various sources of pollution are; for example, a large component of the application is for events to clean up pet waste in local dog areas, but it wasn’t clear how much of a problem pet waste is on water quality. On a positive note, it is good to see the City organizing to address water quality issues. The panel recommended partially funding the application at less than 50%.
- Park County
 - The main discussion regarding this project application is that the target audience is residents and school children, not the individuals/groups that may be directly involved with oil and gas development in the area. The panel did not get a good sense of what the environmental issues and impacts of concern were and was concerned that the applicants did not articulate the specific nonpoint sources that would be addressed. The panel also discussed that while socio-economic issues are important, the intent of the 319 program is for direct NPS issues and that other funding sources may be more appropriate for this project. After much discussion the panel recommended not funding this application.

The Watershed Restoration grant application rankings and funding recommendations are as follows:

- East Fork Bitterroot River Watershed Project
 - The discussion for this project focused on modeling versus sampling for the monitoring portion. Robert stated that DEQ has recommended the modeling approach for other grants, with success. The panel recommended fully funding this application.
- Upper Little Blackfoot River Metals Restoration Strategy
 - Dean stated that he is surprised how low the estimate came in for this project. The panel recommended fully funding this application.
- Lower Gallatin Watershed Restoration Plan
 - The only issue that the panel came up with is that this project tends to run the gamut for costs. Regardless, the panel recommended fully funding this application.
- Upper Ninemile
 - The panel stated that the placer cleanups cost quite a bit less than the mine cleanup projects do, and that this is a big project, but is a good bargain. Several members of the panel stated that they did not want to pay for engineered log jams and want to see significantly more revegetation work. Finally, they stated that they would prefer to see

them tighten up the riparian corridor. The panel recommended fully funding the project.

- Lost Horse Creek Streamflow Enhancement
 - The panel stated that this project could have a significant positive impact on Lost Creek without groups having to go back each year and work on the creek. It was clarified that the creek is not a TMDL stream. The Clark Fork Coalition will need to clarify exactly what they are going to do through the scope of work. This is more of a hydromodification, in-stream flow project, than anything else. The panel would like to see a stronger monitoring component to the project. The panel recommended fully funding this application.
- Watershed Restoration Plan Implementation and Restoration Project for the Bitter Root Water Forum
 - This project includes two project implementation designs. The panel questioned the benefit of nonpoint source pollution reduction to fund these kinds of activities. They recommended having the education and outreach activities directed more towards promoting BMPs. The panel recommended fully funding this application.
- Upper Teton Watershed Riparian Improvements
 - The panel made note that the proposal was not strongly written, and would like to know the specifics of the location of fencing. They suggested keeping the fence off of the edge of the stream, and to run a simple BEHI model to estimate the erosion load reductions. The panel recommended partially funding this project at greater than 50%.
- Muddy Creek Tributaries Riparian Improvements
 - Some of the panel members were not convinced of the number of landowners that Alan said he could contract with by the end of the year. While the Sun River Watershed Group does have an active volunteer monitoring group, the panel thinks that the \$26,000 for education and outreach projects can be reduced. The panel recommended partially funding this project at greater than 50%.

Next Steps

Robert Ray's group will get together in the following days to determine dollar amounts to be awarded to the various applicants. They will then send letters of intent to award to the applicants. After that, the assigned project manager will start working with the groups to write the contracts. Finally, the grant package will be submitted to Peter Ismert and work on the biological assessments.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:45pm.