I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

A. Applicant Name: Clark Fork Coalition

Mailing Address: 140 S. 4th St. W. #1

City: Missoula State: MT Zip: 59807

Telephone: (406) 550-5503 E-mail: brian@clarkfork.org

B. Contact Person (if different than applicant): Andy Fischer

Address: Same as above

City: State: Zip:

Telephone: (406) 552-7513 E-mail: andy@clarkfork.org

C. Landowner and/or Lessee Name (if different than applicant): Patrick Waber

Mailing Address: 545 Wild Onion Ln

City: Deer Lodge State: MT Zip: 59722

Telephone: Available upon request E-mail:

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Project Name: Lower Racetrack Creek Restoration Project

River, stream, or lake: Racetrack Creek

Location: Township: 6 Range: 9 W Section: 9 N

Latitude: 46.284426 Longitude: -112.733941 *Within project (decimal degrees)*

County: Powell

B. Purpose of Project: *(high level, focus on why the project is important)*

The purpose of this project is to improve riparian habitat, fish passage and eliminate fish entrainment in the lower 0.5 miles of Racetrack Creek. This will be accomplished by fencing the riparian area to exclude livestock, performing bank treatments and installing habitat features, replacing a pin and plank diversion with a series of rock weirs and installing a fish screen on the irrigation ditch. The lower section of Racetrack Creek is heavily used by brown trout and other species for spawning and is one of the largest recruitment sources for fish in the Upper Clark Fork River.

C. Brief Project Description (attach additional information to end of application). Please include the anticipated construction schedule:

Racetrack Creek is a tributary to the Upper Clark Fork River (UCFR) approximately 12 river miles downstream of the confluence of the Mill-Willow Bypass and Warm Springs Creek (the headwaters of the Upper Clark Fork River). In recent years, fish populations in the UCFR have declined and Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) has documented frequent brown trout spawning in lower Racetrack Creek. Improving stream and riparian habitat will result in improved trout rearing habitat and help increase the survival of juvenile fish. This project will improve recruitment to the Upper Clark Fork River, which is a primary restoration goal of FWP and the Montana Natural Resource Program (NRDP).

The Clark Fork Coalition and NRDP, in collaboration with five landowners, are developing the Lower Racetrack Creek Restoration Project. This project will actively enhance instream and riparian habitats in the lower half mile of Racetrack Creek and fully fence off the lower creek and riparian areas. This will be accomplished by installing over 4,000 feet of fence along the creek, including water gaps and 2 off-stream stock tanks. Habitat enhancements include installing 12 wood habitat structures, 800 feet of stream bank treatments and floodplain grading enhancements. These habitat enhancements are intended to improve past damage from livestock grazing and channel modifications.

This project will also improve fish passage and entrainment at an irrigation diversion and ditch. Currently the lowest diversion on the creek (located within the restoration area) is a full spanning pin and plank dam with a non-functional fish ladder. We propose installing 3 rock weirs to replace this structure and allow for fish passage. In addition, we are planning to install a corrugated fish screen in the ditch to eliminate potential fish entrainment.

Construction is anticipated for Summer and Fall of 2026. Rather than break apart the habitat and fish passage/screening components as separate projects, it will be more efficient and less disruptive to have a single contractor mobilize once and complete all components of the project.

D. What was the cause of habitat degradation and how will the project correct the cause?

Cattle grazing has led to increased bank erosion and sediment loading. This project will exclude grazing completely from the lower 0.5 miles of Racetrack Creek, improve bank stability and habitat, and improve wetland and riparian condition.

An existing pin and plank irrigation structure is a likely barrier to fish swimming upstream and the associated ditch is unscreened. This project will install a more fish friendly diversion and fish screen in the ditch to eliminate entrainment.

E. Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated (project extent): 0.5 miles

Length/size of impact, if larger than project extent (e.g., stream miles opened): 2.5 miles

F. Project Budget Summary:

Grant Request (Dollars):	**$**	**75,000**
Matching Dollars:	**$**	**202,678**
Matching In-Kind Services:*	**$**	

**salaries of government employees <u>are not</u> considered matching contributions*

Other Contributions (not used as match)	**$**	
Total Project Cost:	**$**	**277,678**

G. Attach itemized (line item) budget – *see budget template*

H. Attach project location map(s) that include:

[X] Extent of the project, including context (relation to major landmark or town)

[X] Indication of public and private property

[X] Riparian buffer locations and widths (if applicable) and grazing locations

I. Attach project plans:

[X] Detailed sketches or plan views with the location and proposed restoration

[X] Pre-project photographs (GPS location strongly recommended)

[ ] If water leasing or water salvage is involved, attach a supplemental questionnaire (*https://myfwp.mt.gov/getRepositoryFile?objectID=36110*)

J. Attach support letters or statements of (e.g., landowner consent, community or public support). For FWP statement, attach provided template. List any other project partners:

FWP and landowner letters of support attached.

III. MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING (attach additional information to end of application):

A. A 20-year maintenance commitment is required*. Please confirm that you will ensure this protection and describe your approach. Attach any relevant maintenance plans.

Y	N
X	

**If it is a water leasing project, describe the length of the agreement.*

The CFC and NRDP will enter into project and maintenance agreements with all landowners. As part of these agreements, NRDP will financially support maintenance for 20 years.

B. Will grazing be part of or adjacent to the project? If so, describe or attach land management plans, including short term and long term grazing regimes. If the landowner is not the applicant, please describe their involvement in the project. *If you want assistance with grazing plan development, note your need.*

Grazing will be fully excluded from lower Racetrack Creek and the surrounding riparian areas. Stock water will be provided by a combination of water gaps and 2 stock water tanks. The landowners have provided letters of support and have been involved in the project planning and are aware of their future responsibilities for maintenance.

C. Will the project be monitored to determine if goals were met? If so, what are the short-term and long-term plans to assess benefits and lessons learned? Were pre-project data collected? Will monitoring information be shared with FWP?

FWP has been sampling this section of Racetrack Creek prior to the project and will continue to perform sampling to assess fish trends. Past data shows high densities of trout, particularly where intact habitat features exist in the lower reaches of Racetrack Creek. CFC also installed a flow and temperature monitoring station in 2025 and will continue to operate this to assess improvements in water temperatures or flow conditions.

IV. PROJECT BENEFITS (attach additional information to end of application):

A. What species of fish will benefit from this project?

The goal of the project is to enhance habitat for brown trout, however passage improvements may also benefit Westslope cutthroat moving to the upper reaches of Racetrack Creek to spawn. Largescale suckers, rocky mountain sculpin, mountain whitefish, longnose dace, and shiners are also present in the project area.

B. How will the project protect or enhance wild fish habitat?

The project will actively enhance trout spawning and rearing habitat in lower Racetrack Creek by reducing fine sediment and providing cover habitat and enhanced vegetation. This habitat will be protected from livestock impacts by new fencing. Three upstream fish passage and habitat improvement projects have been completed in partnership with FWP Future Fisheries and this section of Lower Racetrack Creek has been prioritized by FWP fisheries staff as the highest need in the creek. In addition, the CFC has acquired and is releasing instream flow from Racetrack Lake annually, which is improving flow and water quality conditions. There is year-round, high-quality flow within this reach of Racetrack Creek due to a combination of past flow restoration projects and the hydrology of this reach, which makes it an excellent candidate for additional habitat restoration work.

C. What is the expected improvement to fish populations, both short term and long term? How might the project translate to angler success?

Telemetry and otolith microchemistry studies have shown lower Racetrack Creek to be important spawning and rearing habitat for fish from the Upper Clark Fork River in a section where recruitment is limited. Fish will benefit from improved passage upstream and downstream during the summer drought periods when they move to cold water refuges in nearby tributaries such as Racetrack Creek. Fish populations will also benefit from lower entrainment risks in the ditch due to screening and less chance of mortality due to improved water flows in the river. Improved fish survival and success may translate to improved angler opportunities in the mainstem river where many of this fish spend portions of their life history.

D. Will the project increase public fishing opportunity for wild fish and, if so, how? Is public fishing allowed onsite? Is it allowed by permission? If not, describe how the public would benefit.

This project is all on private land. However, by enhancing brown trout spawning and rearing, the project will enhance recruitment to the Upper Clark Fork River, a popular sport fishery, which is publicly accessible by floating from upstream (Racetrack Pond FAS).

E. Aside from angling, what local or large-scale public benefits will be realized from this project?

The proposed improvements by the Lower Racetrack Habitat Enhancement will enhance habitat conditions for sport and native fish and support the agricultural economy. Preventing fish entrainment at the diversion and improving fish passage will also improve recruitment for native fish by preventing them from getting stuck and allowing them to access high quality upstream habitat. The project will also improve water security for the irrigation water user by replacing their aging diversion dam.

F. Will the project interfere with water or property rights of adjacent landowners? (explain):

No

G. Will the project result in the development of commercial recreational use on the site (including paid access)? Explain:

No

H. Is this project associated with the reclamation of past mining activity?

The most downstream end of the project area is withing the Clark Fork River Superfund Site. Contaminated areas within the Clark Fork River Operable Unit will not be addressed in this restoration project, but may be addressed during the superfund cleanup.

Each approved project applicant must enter into a written agreement with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks specifying terms and duration of the project. The applicant must obtain all applicable permits prior to project construction. A competitive bid process must be followed when using State funds.

V. AUTHORIZING STATEMENT

I (we) hereby declare that the information and all statements to this application are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge and that the project or activity complies with rules of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.

Applicant Signature:  Date: 14 November 2025

Submittal: **Applications must be signed and received on or before November 15 and May 15 to be considered for the subsequent funding period**. Late or incomplete applications will be rejected.

Mail to:	FWP Future Fisheries Fish Habitat Bureau PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701	Email:	Future Fisheries Coordinator FWPFFIP@mt.gov (electronic submissions must be signed) For files over 10MB, use https://transfer.mt.gov and send to mmcgree@mt.gov

FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

All sections must be addressed, or the application will be considered invalid

BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Both tables MUST be completed appropriately or the application will be invalid. Please see the example budget sheet for clarification.

PROJECT COSTS					GRANT REQUEST AND FUNDING			
Work Items (Itemize by Category)	**Number of Units**	**Unit Description***	**Cost/Unit**	**Total Cost**	**FUTURE FISHERIES REQUEST**	**Matching Contributions (Cash or In-Kind)*** **	**Other Contributions (Funds not used as match)**	**Total Funding**
**Units = feet, hours, cubic yards, etc. Do not use lump sum unless necessary.*								
Personnel								
Survey	1	Each	$7,607.00	$ 7,607.00		7,607.00		$ 7,607.00
Design	1	Each	$16,792.00	$ 16,792.00		16,792.00		$ 16,792.00
Engineering	1	Each	$7,086.00	$ 7,086.00		7,086.00		$ 7,086.00
Permitting	1	Each	$8,088.00	$ 8,088.00		8,088.00		$ 8,088.00
Oversight	1	Each	$20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	5,225.00	14,775.00		$ 20,000.00
Maintenance**	1	Each	$10,000.00	$ 10,000.00		10,000.00		$ 10,000.00
			Sub-Total	$ 69,573.00	$ 5,225.00	$ 64,348.00	$ -	$ 69,573.00
Travel								
Mileage				$ -				$ -
Per diem				$ -				$ -
			Sub-Total	$ -		$ -	$ -	$ -
Construction Materials								
Riparian fence (5 strand barbed wire)	1440	Linear foot	$ 7.00	$ 10,080.00		10,080.00		$ 10,080.00
Riparian fence (5 strand barbed wire with 4-ft woven)	990	Linear foot	$ 10.00	$ 9,900.00		9,900.00		$ 9,900.00
Jackleg Fence	1600	Linear foot	$ 15.00	$ 24,000.00		24,000.00		$ 24,000.00
Metal gates	4	Each	$ 1,200.00	$ 4,800.00		4,800.00		$ 4,800.00
Wire gates	4		$ 500.00	$ 2,000.00		2,000.00		$ 2,000.00
Water gaps	2100	Each	$ 2.00	$ 4,200.00		4,200.00		$ 4,200.00
Culverts	1	Each	$ 500.00	$ 500.00		500.00		$ 500.00
Instream wood	1	Lump sum	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00		25,000.00		$ 25,000.00
Rock (3' minus angular)	80	Cubic yards	$ 50.00	$ 4,000.00		4,000.00		$ 4,000.00
Rock (1' minus crushed rock)	22	Cubic yards	$ 50.00	$ 1,100.00		1,100.00		$ 1,100.00
Willow cuttings	5000	Each	$ 1.00	$ 5,000.00		5,000.00		$ 5,000.00
Willow exclosures	8	Each	$ 75.00	$ 600.00		600.00		$ 600.00
Headgate (24")	1	Each	$ 1,750.00	$ 1,750.00	1,750.00			$ 1,750.00
Rock (3' diameter)	65	Cubic yards	$ 75.00	$ 4,875.00	4,875.00			$ 4,875.00
Rock (18-24" diameter)	65	Cubic yards	$ 60.00	$ 3,900.00	3,900.00			$ 3,900.00
Rock anchor attachment, steel casing and steel channel and stop log	1	Lump sum	$ 1,250.00	$ 1,250.00	1,250.00			$ 1,250.00
Corrugated Fish Screen (5' Panel)	1	Each	$ 8,400.00	$ 8,400.00	8,400.00			$ 8,400.00
Screen box	1	Each	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	8,000.00			$ 8,000.00
Bypass Pipe	200	Linear foot	$ 8.00	$ 1,600.00	1,600.00			$ 1,600.00
			Sub-Total	$ 120,955.00	$ 29,775.00	$ 91,180.00	$ -	$ 120,955.00
Equipment, Labor, and Mobilization								
Mobilization	1	Lump sum	$5,000.00	$ 5,000.00	2,000.00	3,000.00		$ 5,000.00

BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Channel Realignment	310	Linear foot	$ 25.00	$ 7,750.00		7,750.00		$ 7,750.00
Construct Brush Matrix Streambank Treatment	800	Linear foot	$ 20.00	$ 16,000.00		16,000.00		$ 16,000.00
Floodplain Grading and Enhancement	120	Cubic yards	$ 5.00	$ 600.00		600.00		$ 600.00
Construct Willow Floodplain Bench	300	Linear foot	$ 10.00	$ 3,000.00		3,000.00		$ 3,000.00
Construct Willow Trench	325	Linear foot	$ 8.00	$ 2,600.00		2,600.00		$ 2,600.00
Construct Large Wood Habitat Structures	12	Each	$ 750.00	$ 9,000.00		9,000.00		$ 9,000.00
Remove Existing Fence	5200	Linear foot	$ 1.00	$ 5,200.00		5,200.00		$ 5,200.00
Reconstruct Irrigation Diversion	1	Each	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	10,000.00			$ 10,000.00
Install Fish Screen	1	Each	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	10,000.00			$ 10,000.00
Install Stockwater Tanks	2	Each	$ 7,000.00	$ 14,000.00	14,000.00			$ 14,000.00
Drill Stockwater Well	1	Each	$ 4,000.00	$ 4,000.00	4,000.00			$ 4,000.00
			Sub-Total	$ 87,150.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 47,150.00	$ -	$ 87,150.00
			OVERALL TOTALS	$ 277,678.00	$ 75,000.00	$ 202,678.00	$ -	$ 277,678.00

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

**For projects that include a maintenance request, it cannot exceed 10% of the total project cost.

***Match can include in-kind materials or labor. Justification for in-kind labor (e.g. hourly rates used) can be noted below. Do not use government salaries as match.

Additional budget detail:

APPLICATION MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Total should equal match listed above; do not include requested funds

CONTRIBUTOR	IN-KIND	CASH	TOTAL	Secured? (Y/N)
Montana Natural Resource Damage Program	$ -	$ 202,678.00	$ 202,678.00	Y
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
TOTALS	$ -	$ 202,678.00	$ 202,678.00	

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

Total should equal other contributions listed above; these are funds not specically matched to the Future Fisheries application

CONTRIBUTOR	IN-KIND	CASH	TOTAL	Secured? (Y/N)
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	

BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ -	$ -	$ -	
TOTALS	$ -	$ -	$ -	

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Future Fisheries Improvement Program

Appendix: FWP Statement

Project Title: Lower Racetrack Creek Restoration

Please describe the potential impact of the project, including the priorities of the Fisheries Division and the importance to Montana's anglers.

The goal of the Lower Racetrack Creek Restoration Project is to improve recruitment of brown trout from Racetrack Creek to the Clark Fork River. The project will occur in the reach of Racetrack Creek utilized by brown trout from the Clark Fork River for spawning and rearing. The project will accomplish this goal by improving habitat, addressing a partial passage barrier, and eliminating entrainment into irrigation infrastructure.

The fishery in Lower Racetrack Creek is characterized primarily by brown trout and several non-game native species like suckers and redside shiners and occasionally other trout species are present. The reach of Racetrack Creek downstream of Interstate 90 where this project will focus is impacted by degraded habitat, impacts from unrestricted grazing, passage issues related to infrastructure, entrainment, dewatering, and historic channel manipulation. Despite these many impacts numerous studies have shown the reach of Racetrack Creek between Interstate 90 and the Clark Fork River is an important spawning and rearing tributary for the Clark Fork River brown trout population.

The Upper Clark Fork River fishery upstream of Deer Lodge is primarily a brown trout fishery. This fishery was historically characterized by high abundances of brown trout. However, population declines over the past decade have reduced the abundances to the lowest levels on record since FWP began monitoring in the Upper Clark Fork River in the 1970's. FWP data show that this decline is due to a lack of recruitment of juvenile brown trout to the river. Recent studies examining where fish living in the Clark Fork River were born suggested that about 15% of the brown trout population in the Clark Fork River upstream of Deer Lodge were born in Racetrack Creek. FWP is in the process of conducting additional studies to determine the cause of the lack of recruitment. Enhancing and protecting known sources of recruitment has been a long-standing priority for FWP and other agencies working in the Upper Clark Fork and has become even more important since the population decline.

I believe this project is great fit for the future fisheries program. The project will take place on working lands with benefits to both the landowners and fisheries, it will benefit the angling public of Montana, help address FWP fisheries priorities in the basin, and improve the overall fish and wildlife values of the lower Racetrack Creek riparian corridor. Thank you for considering this funding request and please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns about the project.

Caleb Uerling
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Fisheries Biologist – Upper Clark Fork River
caleb.uerling@mt.gov 406-493-2694

Name of FWP Biologist Caleb Uerling Date: 11/7/2025

Please attach to the FFIP application and materials and submit according to listed deadlines.

October 30, 2025

Future Fisheries Improvement Program
FWP Fisheries Division
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Michelle McGree,

We are writing to share our support for the funding request for the stream restoration project which includes our property. This restoration will help us protect fish and wildlife. We will work with partners to protect Lower Racetrack Creek by maintaining fencing.

We look forward to implementing this restoration and seeing the creek restored. We feel this would be a lasting positive impact for Montana Fish and Wildlife and a benefit for the greater good of the Clark Fork watershed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chad Walker

October 29, 2025
Future Fisheries Improvement Program
FWP Fisheries Division
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Bailey Duxbury,

I am writing to express my strong support for the funding request for the stream restoration project that includes our property along Lower Racetrack Creek. This project represents an important opportunity to protect and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife in our area.

We are committed to working with project partners to ensure the long-term success of this effort, including maintaining fencing to protect the restored stream corridor. We believe this restoration will bring lasting ecological benefits—not only to our property, but to the broader Clark Fork watershed.

We look forward to seeing this project implemented and the creek brought back to health. Thank you for your consideration and for supporting restoration efforts that benefit both Montana's natural resources and its communities.

Sincerely,

Patrick Waber

October 30, 2025

Future Fisheries Improvement Program
FWP Fisheries Division
P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Michelle McGree,

We are writing to share our support for the funding request for the stream restoration project which includes our property. This restoration will help us protect fish and wildlife. We will work with partners to protect Lower Racetrack Creek by maintaining fencing.

We look forward to implementing this restoration and seeing the creek restored. We feel this would be a lasting positive impact for Montana Fish and Wildlife and a benefit for the greater good of the Clark Fork watershed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Probert

Charlotte Probert