



**DECISION NOTICE**  
**on**  
**FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS**

O'BRIEN CREEK MEADOWS STREAM RESTORATION  
LITTLE BOULDER RIVER RESTORATION  
FLINT CREEK RIPARIAN RESTORATION PHASE 2B

April 20, 2023

**Proposed Action**

Through the Future Fisheries Improvement Program (FFIP), funding would be provided by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to three projects on 1) O'Brien Creek, Missoula County; 2) Little Boulder River, Jefferson County; and 3) Flint Creek, Missoula County. The projects are described below.

O'Brien Creek Meadows Stream Restoration. In the affected section of O'Brien Creek, habitat was degraded by historical removal of wood from the stream, straightening of the creek due to road construction, and an undersized culvert. The FFIP would provide funding to a project that proposes to address all of these issues by adding large woody debris habitat structures, restoring the creek to a new channel and floodplain, installing riparian plantings, and replacing the current culvert with a 20-ft open precast span culvert at the road crossing. The overall goal is to increase wild and native trout populations in the O'Brien Creek and Bitterroot River watersheds.

Little Boulder River Restoration. The FFIP would provide funding to a project that would address past land use activities that altered the stream, leading to highly eroded areas, degraded fish habitat, and disconnection from the floodplain. The proposed project intends to improve fish passage, reconnect the stream to its floodplain, and enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The Little Boulder River is a tributary to the Boulder River that supports populations of brown trout and rainbow trout. Westslope cutthroat trout also inhabit the stream but are located upstream, separated from downstream waters by a fish barrier.

Flint Creek Riparian Restoration Phase 2B. The FFIP would provide funding to a project that proposes to restore a 0.5 mile stream segment that has been impaired by past land use practices to a naturally functioning system that also maintains a livestock operation. This project improvements are expected to improve fish habitat for both native and nonnative fish species in Flint Creek and the Clark Fork River.

**Alternative Considered**

No action. The proposed action of funding these projects would not occur. The applicants would either not complete the improvements or would obtain funding from other sources.

**Montana Environmental Policy Act**

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment. The EA was available for public comment from April 3, 2023, to April 18, 2023. Legal notices



were printed in the Helena Independent Record and the Missoulian and the Draft EAs were posted on the FWP webpage: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notice>.

**Public Comment**

No comments were received during the public comment period.

**Decision Notice**

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft EAs based on public comment. The Draft EAs, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal. This is based on the lack of public comment and the positive benefits of this activity as outlined in each EA. I find there are no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with these projects. Therefore, I conclude that the EA is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. FWP will adopt the draft EAs as the final EAs and proceed with the projects as planned.

Thank you for your interest,

Eileen Ryce  
Fisheries Division Administrator  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks