

**FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION***All sections must be addressed, or the application will be considered invalid***I. APPLICANT INFORMATION**A. Applicant Name: Ryan KreinerMailing Address: 730 ½ Montana StreetCity: Dillon State: MT Zip: 59725Telephone: 406-531-5861 E-mail: rkreiner@mt.gov

B. Contact Person (if different than applicant): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Landowner and/or Lessee Name (if different than applicant): Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**II. PROJECT INFORMATION**A. Project Name: Mono Creek Fish Removal ProjectRiver, stream, or lake: Mono CreekLocation: Township: 3 South Range: 12 West Section: 33Latitude: 45.529818 Longitude: -113.085817 *Within project (decimal degrees)*County: BeaverheadB. Purpose of Project: *(high level, focus on why the project is important)* \_\_\_\_\_

Mono Creek contains a core (>99%) population of westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) which is threatened by hybridization with rainbow trout (RB) and Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT). Genetic samples collected in 2023 confirmed that a population of core WCT (99.8%) still exists in the headwaters and that hybridization rates increase downstream, with no apparent barrier in between. In consultation with the FWP geneticist, it was determined that the remaining core WCT should be salvaged and the more heavily hybridized component downstream be removed. A wooden barrier (Figure 1) constructed at river mile 0.4 would isolate close to five miles of habitat for core WCT. After construction of the fish barrier, two years of fish removal using rotenone would be employed. Following successful removal, the stream will be repopulated using salvaged fish from Mono Creek and could possibly use smaller numbers of fish from adjacent populations. Based on existing fish densities, the restored population would likely exceed 4,000 fish and would be considered secure.

The primary management goal for westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in Montana is to ensure the long-term self-sustaining persistence of the subspecies in its historical range. In the Missouri River drainage, this goal will be achieved when secure WCT populations are restored to 20% of their historic tributary distribution. Non-native trout pose the single greatest threat to the persistence of WCT in the Upper Missouri River basin. It is critical to protect the 24 remaining core populations of WCT in the Missouri River headwaters by installing a fish barrier and removing hybridized fish from the project area with rotenone. WCT conservation has been formally prioritized by Montana state law (Montana Code Annotated; MCA§ 87-5-107; MCA § 87-1-702; § 87-1-201[9][a]), in Montana Fish Wildlife & Park's (FWP) Vision and Guide, and in a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FWP and 18 other signatories from state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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

A wooden barrier will be installed at river mile 0.4 on Mono Creek to exclude non-native fish. After construction, the remaining core WCT will be salvaged and transferred out of the drainage. The stream above the barrier will be treated with rotenone for two years and confirmed to be fishless using environmental DNA (eDNA). Once confirmed, salvaged fish will be transported back to the drainage. In the past ten years, region 3 has installed 18 wooden barriers to protect WCT populations.

Timeline:

Fall 2025- Barrier Construction

Summer 2026: Fish Salvage and first rotenone treatment on Mono Creek

Summer 2027: Second rotenone treatment on Mono Creek

Summer 2028: Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys will determine if fish removal was complete. Localized removals may occur if results dictate.

Fall 2028: Salvaged WCT will be returned to Mono Creek



Figure 1. Wooden barrier on Cottonwood Creek in the Beaverhead subbasin. This barrier was installed in 2020 and the stream above the barrier was treated with rotenone for two years. The project was successful, and this population is now considered protected. The barrier on Mono Creek would be a similar design.

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

This project will protect the core population of WCT from hybridization with nonnative trout species. This project will alleviate the cause by removing hybridized trout with rotenone and excluding further colonization with a fish barrier.

- E. Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated (project extent): 4.5 miles  
 Length/size of impact, if larger than project extent (e.g., stream miles opened): 4.5 miles

F. Project Budget Summary:

**Grant Request (Dollars):** \$ 41,590\* (see below)

Matching Dollars: \$ 17,318

Matching In-Kind Services:\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*salaries of government employees are not considered matching contributions*

Other Contributions (not used as match) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Project Cost:** \$ 58,908

*\*Fundraising has been affected by federal funding complications. Applicants will continue to identify potential matching sources and if successful, would request reduced reimbursement from an FFIP award.*

G.

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

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

- ☐ Extent of the project, including context (relation to major landmark or town)  
☐ Indication of public and private property  
☐ Riparian buffer locations and widths (if applicable) and grazing locations

I. Attach project plans:

- ☒ Detailed sketches or plan views with the location and proposed restoration  
☐ 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:

**Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest**

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. Yes ☒ No ☐  
*\*If it is a water leasing project, describe the length of the agreement.*

This fish barrier will be located on land administered by the US Forest Service. Both the USFS and FWP are committed to maintaining the barrier for greater than 20 years. Based on similar designs used in the area for irrigation structures, the life expectancy is 30-50 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.*

The project is within a grazing allotment administered by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Grazing will continue but is not anticipated to have negative impacts on the project. The area is grazed on a rotational schedule and the riparian habitat is healthy. Many of the 18 wooden barriers constructed over the past ten years are located within grazing areas. The primary threat to the Mono Creek population is hybridization. Once that threat is removed, the population will thrive.

- 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?

Yes. The success of the initial rotenone project will be determined by eDNA surveys in 2028 after two years of treatment. Following repopulation, the stream will be electrofished after five years to determine if the salvaged fish have fully seeded the available habitat. If necessary, WCT from additional populations may be used to supplement the population and serve as a genetic rescue.

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

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

Westslope cutthroat trout

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

The primary threat to Upper Missouri River WCT is competition and hybridization with nonnative trout. This project will protect and enhance the wild population of core WCT which are threatened by hybridization with nonnative trout.

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

It is expected that the restored population will eventually exceed 4,000 fish (>1,000 WCT per mile). Mono Creek is a publicly accessible stream with open terrain for casting. This project will provide anglers the opportunity to catch Montana's State Fish in a beautiful setting near the paved Pioneer Scenic Byway.

- 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 will provide a unique opportunity to catch aboriginal WCT in southwest Montana. Core populations of WCT (>99% WCT) occupy less than 10% of their historic habitat in the Big Hole River.

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

This project will move us closer to our regional goal of restoring WCT to 20% of their historic distribution. Our current priority is to protect all remaining at-risk populations of core WCT. Once protected, this population will serve as a donor source for future projects.

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?

No

**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: 5/11/2025

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 <a href="mailto:FWPFFIP@mt.gov">FWPFFIP@mt.gov</a> (electronic submissions must be signed) For files over 10MB, use <a href="https://transfer.mt.gov">https://transfer.mt.gov</a> and send to <a href="mailto:mmcgree@mt.gov">mmcgree@mt.gov</a>
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# BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

Both tables must be completed or the application will be returned

PROJECT COSTS					CONTRIBUTIONS			
WORK ITEMS (Itemize by Category)	NUMBER OF UNITS	UNIT DESCRIPTION *	COST/UNIT	TOTAL COST	FUTURE FISHERIES REQUEST	MATCH (Cash or Services)**	OTHER (Not part of this application)	TOTAL
<b>Personnel***</b>								
								\$ -
								\$ -
								\$ -
								\$ -
								\$ -
								\$ -
								\$ -
			Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Travel</b>								
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
			Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Construction Materials****</b>								
Wooden Barrier	1	barrier	\$29,090.00	\$ 29,090.00	29,090.00			\$ 29,090.00
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
			Sub-Total	\$ 29,090.00	\$ 29,090.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,090.00
<b>Equipment, Labor, and Mobilization</b>								
Mobilization	105	Miles	\$100.00	\$ 10,500.00	10,500.00			\$ 10,500.00
Labor	20	hr	\$100.00	\$ 2,000.00	2,000.00			\$ 2,000.00
Rotenone	14	gal	\$187.00	\$ 2,618.00		2,618.00		\$ 2,618.00
Potassium Permanganate	500	lbs	\$7.00	\$ 3,500.00		3,500.00		\$ 3,500.00
eDNA	75	sample	\$96.00	\$ 7,200.00		7,200.00		\$ 7,200.00
Genetics	100	sample	\$40.00	\$ 4,000.00		4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
				\$ -				\$ -
			Sub-Total	\$ 29,818.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 17,318.00	\$ -	\$ 29,818.00
<b>TOTALS</b>				\$ 58,908.00	\$ 41,590.00	\$ 17,318.00	\$ -	\$ 58,908.00

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

## BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

**All of the columns in the budget table and the matching contribution table MUST be completed appropriately or the application will be invalid.** Please see the example budget sheet for additional clarification.

\*Units = feet, hours, inches, etc. Do not use lump sum unless there is no other way to describe the costs.

\*\*Can include in-kind materials. Justification for in-kind labor (e.g. hourly rates used). Do not use government salaries as match. Describe here or in text.

\*\*\*The Review Panel suggests that design and oversight costs associated with a proposed project not exceed 15% of the total project budget. If design and oversight costs are in excess of 15%, applications must include a justification or minimum of two competitive bids for the cost of undertaking the project.

\*\*\*\*The Review Panel recommends a maximum fencing cost of \$1.50 per foot. Additional costs may be the responsibility of the applicant and/or partners.

APPLICATION MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS				
(do not include requested funds or contributions not associated with the application)				
CONTRIBUTOR	IN-KIND	CASH	TOTAL	Secured? (Y/N)
Montana FWP	\$ -	\$ 17,318.00	\$ 17,318.00	N
	\$ -		\$ -	
	\$ -		\$ -	
	\$ -		\$ -	
	\$ -		\$ -	
	\$ -		\$ -	
<b>TOTALS</b>	\$ -	\$ 17,318.00	\$ 17,318.00	

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS				
(contributions not associated with the application)				
CONTRIBUTOR	IN-KIND	CASH	TOTAL	Secured? (Y/N)
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTALS</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	



# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

## Future Fisheries Improvement Program

### *Appendix: FWP Statement*

Project Title: Mono Creek Fish Removal and Barrier

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

The Mono Creek fish barrier is a Fisheries Division priority project as spelled out in the Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Strategy for the Missouri River Headwaters in Southwest Montana. This strategy provides a prioritization framework for conserving extant westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) with populations that are >99% WCT being the highest priority. Mono Creek is home to a >99% WCT population that is threatened by hybrids with higher levels of non-native genes immediately downstream. The fish barrier will isolate the WCT in Mono Creek and protect it from potential hybridization and the hybrids in the system will be removed. Once restoration is complete, it is likely that the WCT In Mono Creek will be secured, accomplishing the primary goal of the strategy. The project will also be another step in accomplishing the goal of restoring to WCT to 20% of their historically occupied range as spelled out in the State-Wide Fish Management Plan.

Mono Creek is located entirely on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. It runs through an alpine meadow adjacent to the Pioneer Mountain Scenic Byway. The stream is small, but it has wide deep pools with relatively large fish. The stream likely does not receive much angling pressure due to its size. However, once the project is complete, anglers will have access to catch non-hybridized WCT in a stream that is completely open to public fishing. Montana anglers also benefit because projects like these will ensure that WCT are not listed in the future as a threatened species which could bring angling restrictions.



Name of FWP Biologist Jim Olsen

Date: 4/30/25

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

# Mono and Lacy Fish Barriers Project (66551) Decision Memo

USDA Forest Service  
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest  
Wisdom Ranger District  
Beaverhead County, Montana

## PROJECT LOCATION

The Mono and Lacy Fish Barriers project is located approximately 15 air miles east of Wisdom and 11 miles north of Polaris, Montana in Beaverhead County. Proposed barriers will be in the Pioneer Landscape, Pioneer Scenic Byway Management Area. The legal location is Township 3 south, Range 12 west, Sections 6 and 33 of the Montana Principal Meridian. Both fish barriers are within Wisdom Ranger District and the West Pioneer roadless area boundary as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

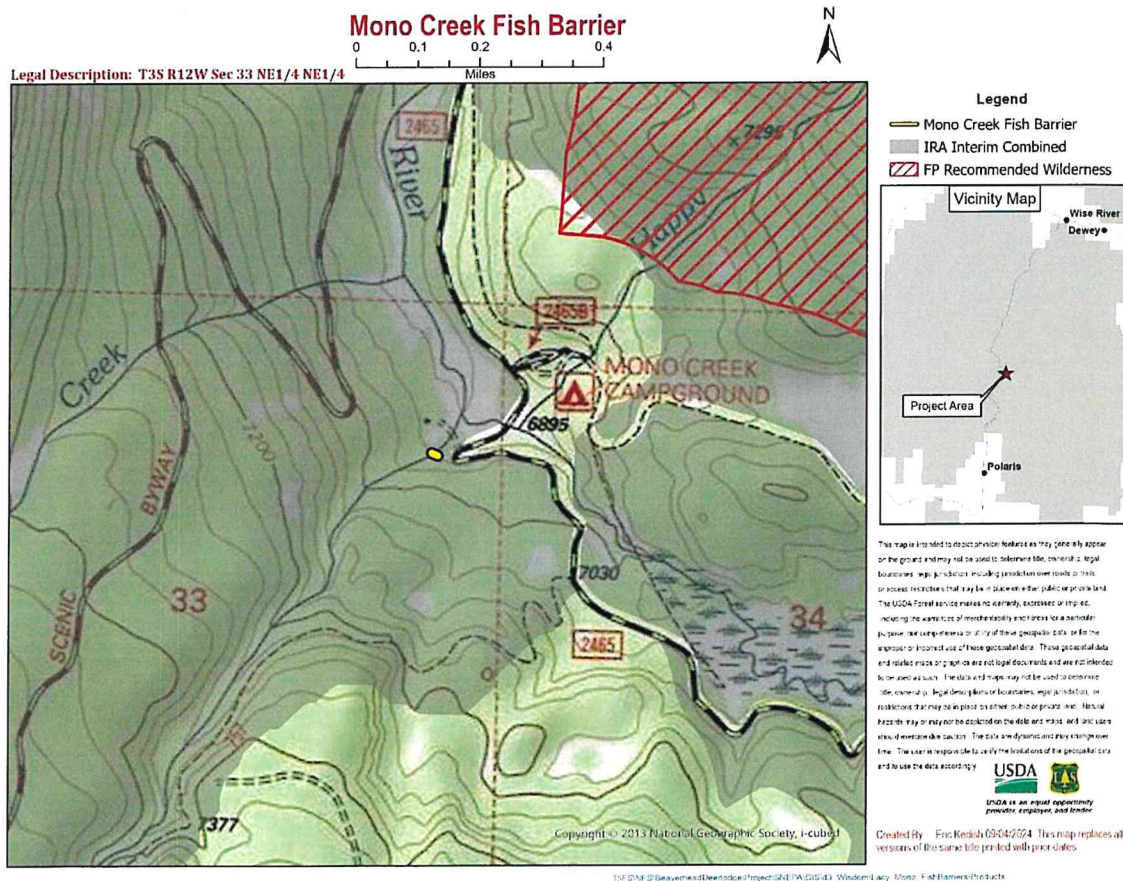


Figure 1. Map showing the location of proposed fish barriers on Mono Creek.





## PROPOSED ACTION

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The Forest Service proposes to construct two wooden fish barriers using standard practices, one on Mono Creek and another on Lacy Creek. The expected lifespan of a treated wood fish barrier is 30 to 40 years.

This is project number 66551.

The Forest Service will construct one barrier in each stream channel with funding provided by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Fish barrier construction is usually completed in 4 to 5 days in late summer or fall when stream flows are low and Westslope Cutthroat Trout are no longer spawning. Proposed barriers will be similar in design to those depicted in Figure 3 and Figure 4 and built with treated lumber. This design resembles a pin and plank structure like an irrigation diversion.



*Figure 3. Example of Forest Service constructed wooden plank fish barrier. View from downstream looking upstream.*





*Figure 4. Example of Forest Service constructed wooden plank fish barrier. Photo view is from upstream looking downstream.*

The opening of the structure and height of the drop created will be specific to the site characteristics of each stream. Fill and riprap necessary for the construction of the barrier will be primarily obtained on-site. If sufficient material is lacking on-site, commercial grade material will be brought in to protect stream characteristics. Riprap will be placed downstream of the structure and a riprap or concrete apron will be placed in the bed of the stream immediately downstream of the structure to prevent erosion and undercutting.

Work would be completed using an excavator and dump truck that will traverse off road within 300 feet of existing open-motorized roads. All existing open-motorized National Forest System roads used to access fish barrier locations are outside the West Pioneer roadless area. Polaris Road is 150 feet from the Mono Creek fish barrier location. The Lacy Creek fish barrier is approximately 300 feet from Forest Service road 1299.

Preliminary design criteria or Forest Service required mitigations identified to date include:

- Project-related storage of fuels and toxicants within riparian conservation areas is prohibited. Refueling within riparian conservation area will be prohibited except for emergencies, in which case refueling sites must have an approved spill containment plan.
- Prior to entering the project area, all equipment must be free of plant seeds and propagules and wet or hardened mud to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive nonnative plant species. Equipment includes but is not limited to pickup trucks, dump trucks, and excavators.
- Equipment operating in riparian conservation areas must have a spill containment kit to minimize impacts from leaks that may occur during operation, such as hydraulic hose ruptures.

- Drafting sites must have spill containment equipment on site.
- If western toads are observed in the project area, they will be moved outside of the area to minimize potential impacts.
- All construction and maintenance activities will occur when soils are dry to minimize soil compaction and rutting.
- Construction activities will cease if rutting greater than 1 inch deep occurs outside of the barrier footprint.
- If cultural resources site or artifacts be discovered during project implementation the forest archaeologist should be immediately notified.
- Should human remains be discovered during project implementation, cease operations and immediately contact the forest archaeologist.

## DECISION

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We have decided to authorize construction of Mono and Lacy Fish Barriers as described above. This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement, or an environmental assessment, as categorized in Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations chapter two, part 220.6 (e)(25),

*“Forest and grassland management activities with a primary purpose of meeting restoration objectives or increasing resilience. Activities to improve ecosystem health, resilience, and other watershed and habitat conditions may not exceed 2,800 acres.”*

This category fits the activities above because the action would contribute to conservation of Westslope Cutthroat Trout by eliminating non-native trout migration into native habitat, increasing population resilience. This project also meets the collaboration requirement of the category because it is funded by and designed in collaboration with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. In addition, these fish barriers address needs identified the interagency Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Strategy for the Missouri River Headwaters of Southwest Montana completed in April 2024, which is a large-scale effort to protect the species from genetic deterioration. No extraordinary circumstances preclude the use of this category.

Appendix A: Review of Extraordinary Circumstances and



Appendix B: Other Laws support my determination that no extraordinary circumstances exist.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

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This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions on October 29, 2024. On November 7, 2024 a scoping notification bulletin was sent by email to 436 individuals, organizations, and businesses. The bulletin included information on how to access the scoping letter, which included information on how to view and comment on the proposed action. The proposed action and map were posted to the project website <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=66551> on November 7, 2024. One comment in support of the project was received during the 29-day scoping period that ended on December 5, 2024.





## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

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This decision is not subject to administrative review and may be implemented immediately<sup>1</sup>.

## CONTACT

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Questions regarding this project and additional information can be obtained by contacting Michael Gatlin at the Dillon Ranger District, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, Montana 59725; or by e-mail at michael.gatlin@usda.gov.

## SIGNATURE AND DATE

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 12/09/2024

KRISTEN THOMPSON

Wisdom District Ranger

We make every effort to create documents that are accessible to individuals of all abilities; however, limitations with our word processing programs may prevent some parts of this document from being readable by computer-assisted reading devices. If you need assistance with any part of this document, please contact the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest at 406-689-3243.

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<sup>1</sup>The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-76; January 17, 2014) directs that the 1992 and 2012 legislation establishing the 36 CFR 215 (post-decisional appeals) and 36 CFR 218 (pre-decisional objections) processes shall not apply to any project or activity implementing a land and resource management plan that is categorically excluded under NEPA. The Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79; February 7, 2014) repealed the Appeals Reform Act (P.L. 102-381) and directs that the pre-decisional objection process established in the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2012 shall not apply to categorically excluded projects or activities.





## APPENDIX A: REVIEW OF EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

In accordance with Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations chapter 220, the Responsible Official considered the following resource conditions in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action would warrant further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement.

### Finding of No Extraordinary Circumstances

#### 1. Sensitive, threatened, endangered, and proposed species:

##### Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat

Table 1. Effects determinations federally listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species or designated critical habitat.

Determination	Species
No effect	North American wolverine, grizzly bear, and Canada lynx, whitebark pine, Bull Trout, Bull Trout Critical Habitat

##### Forest Service sensitive species

Table 2. Effects determinations for sensitive species known or suspected to occur on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Determination	Species
No impact: no positive or negative effects to species	Greater sage-grouse, harlequin duck, little brown myotis, northern bog lemming, Arctic Grayling, western pearlshell, Paiute dancer, all sensitive plants and pollinators not listed in the next row
May impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population of the species: effects are expected to be insignificant, unmeasurable, or discountable, extremely unlikely.	Western Toad, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, northern Rocky Mountain refugium caddisfly, Western Bumble Bee, <i>Agoseris lackschewitzii</i> , <i>Botrychium crenulatum</i> , <i>Botrychium lanceolatum</i> , <i>Botrychium paradoxum</i> , <i>Botrychium simplex</i> , <i>Mimulus primuloides</i> .

#### 2. Floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds:

##### FLOODPLAINS

Executive Order 11988 of 1977 defines floodplains as, "... the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters including flood prone areas of offshore islands, including at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent [100-year recurrence] or greater chance of flooding in any one year."

Activities are proposed in the floodplains of both Mono and Lacy creeks. The project will be implemented at a time of year when flood events are unlikely. The channel will be hardened to prevent damage during high flow events and there will be no change to floodplain characteristics beyond the stream channels. Any impacts to floodplains would be minimal because the scale of the project is so small in the context of these watersheds and their associated floodplains.

##### WETLANDS

Executive Order 11990 defines wetlands as, "... areas inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and under normal circumstances does or



would support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas such as sloughs, potholes, wet meadows, river overflows, mud flats, and natural ponds.”

A wetland delineation was not completed for this project, though there is potential for wetland feature presence where actions are proposed. Any impacts would be small-scale and insignificant.

#### **MUNICIPAL WATERSHEDS**

Forest Service Manual 2542.05 defines municipal watersheds as: “A watershed that serves a public water system as defined in the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S. Code sections 300f, [and what follows]); or as defined in state safe drinking water statutes or regulations.”

Mono and Lacy creeks are not municipal waters so this project will have no effect to municipal watersheds.

#### **3. Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas:**

There will be no effect to these resources because the project area does not overlap any portion of any congressionally designated area managed by the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

#### **4. Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas:**

The project is within the West Pioneer Inventoried Roadless Area which is 29,710 acres in total. Activities within the roadless area boundary will impact less than 10 acres of land on the edge of the roadless area. The proposed action is anticipated to have no effect to most roadless characteristics, very slightly improve diversity of plant and animal communities, and maintain habitat for TES and species dependent on large undisturbed areas of land. The magnitude of effect on roadless characteristics is extremely slight due to the small portion of the roadless area impacted and the proximity to the roadless boundary and open motorized routes as well as the Pioneer Scenic Byway.

#### **5. Research natural areas:**

There will be no effect to these resources because the project area does not overlap any research natural area or special interest area.

#### **6. American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites:**

As required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the proposed area of potential effect was surveyed by Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Heritage staff. No American Indian or Alaska Native religious or cultural sites are known to the area of potential effect.

#### **7. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas:**

No archaeological sites or historic properties or areas were found within the area of potential effect during field surveys. A negative inventory report will be sent to the Montana State Historic Preservation Office as outlined in the Programmatic Agreement regarding negative



inventory and no historic properties affected undertakings in the state of Montana. Standard protection measures and mitigations for unexpected discoveries will be followed as outlined in the Programmatic Agreement regarding negative inventory and no historic properties affected undertakings in the state of Montana.





## **APPENDIX B: OTHER LAWS**

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### **Clean Air Act**

Under this Act, areas of the country were designated as Class I, II, or III airsheds for “Prevention of Significant Deterioration” purposes. There will be no air quality impacts as a result of this decision.

### **Clean Water Act**

The intent of the Clean Water Act is to restore and maintain the integrity of waters. The Forest Service complies with this Act through the use of best management practices. This decision incorporates best management practices to ensure protection of soil and water resources and complies with the Clean Water Act and State water quality standards.

### **Endangered Species Act**

See Appendix A: Review of Extraordinary Circumstances of this document for a summary of the effects of this project to Endangered, Threatened, or Candidate Species for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. The summary is based on a more thorough analysis available in the project record. This project is consistent with the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

**Sensitive Species** - This direction requires analysis of potential impacts to sensitive species and the Regional Forester approved sensitive species list of 2023. See Appendix A: Review of Extraordinary Circumstances, for a summary of the effects of this project to Region 1 sensitive species. The review of potential effects to sensitive species from this decision has been completed and the analysis documented in the project file.

### **Federal Noxious Weed Control Act**

The act provides for the control and management of nonnative weeds that could harm agriculture, commerce, wildlife, or public health. Noxious weeds have and will continue to be managed where the project is implemented as part of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Noxious Weed Program. The project complies with this law.

### **National Environmental Policy Act**

Implemented in 1970, this Act requires public involvement and consideration of potential environmental effects. This decision memo and the project record provide documentation of compliance with this Act.

### **National Forest Management Act**

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan was approved in 2009, as required by this Act. The Forest Plan has been reviewed in consideration of this project and the project meets all applicable management direction, including consistency with all applicable standards.

On April 9, 2012, the Department of Agriculture issued a final planning rule for National Forest System land management planning. None of the requirements of the 2012 Rule apply to projects and activities on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, as the 2009 Beaverhead-Deerlodge Forest Plan was developed under a prior planning rule (Code of Federal Regulations 2020a). Furthermore, the 2012 Rule explains, “[The 2012 Rule] supersedes any prior planning



regulation. No obligations remain from any prior planning regulation, except those that are specifically included in a unit's existing plan. Existing plans will remain in effect until revised" (Code of Federal Regulations 2020a).

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

The project will have "No Effect" on cultural resources and therefore consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office is not required.

### **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**

This project will impact less than 10 acres of land. There will be no known substantial losses of migratory bird habitat expected from the implementation of this proposal.

### **2002 Roadless Conservation Rule**

The January 2001 Roadless Conservation Rule was established to provide, within the context of multiple use management, lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the National Forest System in 36 CFR 294 subpart B. The Roadless Rule focused on protecting the values or features that are often present in and characterize IRAs. The roadless area characteristics were evaluated for this project and available in the project record.

This Roadless Rule prohibits the sale, cutting, or removal of timber and road construction and reconstruction within inventoried roadless areas, with limited exceptions. This project proposes no roads or timber cutting within inventoried roadless areas.

No degradation of roadless area characteristics were identified in review of this project as documented in the project record and described in [Appendix A: Review of Extraordinary Circumstances](#). The project complies with the 2001 Roadless Conservation Rule.

### **Sensitive Species, Forest Service Manual 2670**

This direction requires analysis of potential impacts to sensitive species and the Regional Forester approved sensitive species list of 2023. See [Appendix A: Review of Extraordinary Circumstances](#), for a summary of the effects of this project to Region 1 sensitive species. The review of potential effects to sensitive species from this decision has been completed and the analysis documented in the project file. The project complies with Forest Service Manual 2670.

### **Environmental Justice**

Executive Order 12898 requires that federal actions consider the potential of disproportionate effects on minority and low-income populations in the local region. The terms minority and low-income are defined in the Environmental Justice Review document available in the project record using departmental regulations and from the CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality, 1997 #33830).

During a five-year period from 2018 to 2022, the average percent of total population for all minority races and low-income people and families in Beaverhead County were compared to averages at the State of Montana scale. Beaverhead County meets the criteria for an environmental justice community based on race but does not meet the criteria for people or families below the poverty level needed to identify a low-income population.

In 2023, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest transitioned from hard copy paper mailings to electronic messaging to notify the public of projects and opportunities for public participation.



Over 800 individual letters were mailed to individuals, local officials, permittees, not for profit organizations, and other potentially interested parties. Hundreds of recipients signed up for this form of communication. This system was used to initiate the public scoping process for the project, as described in the decision memo. The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest continues to encourage all members of the public, including minority populations, to participate in the NEPA process by subscribing to the existing electronic messaging system or indicating an alternative form of notification. At the time of this analysis, no alternative form of notification has been received from anyone. For these reasons, the project complies with EO 12898 and will not disproportionately adversely impact the environmental justice community identified for Beaverhead County based on race. The figures for Beaverhead County do not meet the five percent threshold for people or families below the poverty level needed to identify a low-income population. The project complies with EO 12898.

#### **Other Laws or Requirements**

The proposed action is consistent with all other Federal, State, and/or local laws or requirements.



# Terrestrial Wildlife Report

District: Wisdom

Project Name: Lacey Creek and Mono Creek Fish Barriers

Date Prepared: 10/24/24

Prepared By: Brendan Aiken

## Summary for Decision

For threatened, endangered, and proposed species, there are no effects to North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), and Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*). The project is limited in time and area, occurs directly adjacent to existing wheeled motorized routes, does not occur in critical habitat, and will not alter habitat beyond the existing condition. There are no recorded sightings of wolverine, grizzly bear, or lynx in the project areas. Implementation will be completed in late summer or early fall outside of critical periods for each species. The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Food storage order applies to all project activities.

For similar reasons stated above, there are no effects to Region 1 Forest Service Sensitive Species or Management Indicator Species for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

## Proposed Action

This project is needed to protect and conserve two native at-risk populations of Westslope Cutthroat Trout (WCT) in Mono and Lacy Creeks by building fish barriers to protect them from non-native fish downstream. This project will help achieve the goal of restoring or securing WCT to approximately 20% of its historic range in the Big Hole drainage. A fish barrier on Mono Creek will protect approximately 4 miles of habitat for WTC. And a fish barrier on Lacy Creek will protect an additional 5 miles of habitat.

Suitable fish barrier sites have been identified on both streams. The proposed barriers will be similar in design and constructed of treated lumber, which resemble a pin and plank structure like an irrigation diversion. The opening of the structure and height of the drop created would be specific to the site characteristics of each stream. Fill and riprap necessary for the construction of the barrier would be primarily obtained on-site. If sufficient material isn't present on-site, then commercial grade material would likely be brought in. Riprap would be placed downstream of the

structure and a riprap or concrete apron would be placed in the bed of the stream immediately downstream of the structure to prevent erosion and undercutting. Work would be completed using an excavator and dump truck that will traverse off road within 300 feet of existing open-motorized roads. Access will likely be through existing dispersed camping areas along the road. The expected lifespan of a treated wood fish barrier is 30 – 40 years. Barrier construction is usually completed in 4-5 days. The construction time frame is in late summer or fall when stream flows are low and cutthroat are no longer spawning.

## **Assessment Background**

The biological assessment conforms to legal requirements set forth under the Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2671.4 and section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended (ESA; 19 U.S.C. 1536 (c), 50 CFR 402.12 (f) and 402.14). Section 7(a)(2) requires that federal agencies ensure any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of federally listed species, or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat.

The biological evaluation address Region 1 Forest Service Sensitive Species known to occur on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest as required by the Forest Service Manual 2672.4 and determines whether the implementation activities would lead toward federal listing by the ESA.

The management indicator species (MIS) addresses three wildlife species used as “indicators” for ecosystem conditions. These are species present in an area selected because their population changes are believed to indicate the effects of management activities. Effects to populations are based on changes in habitat availability against forest plan thresholds as indicated by the Forest Service Manual 2620.

These assessments are based on the best available scientific information and current data on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

## **Biological Assessment**

Table 1 displays endangered, threatened, and proposed wildlife species on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest as determined by the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service on October 23, 2024 (USDI FWS, 2024). If the action permits the use of the Region 1 programmatic screening document (screens) for Canada lynx and/or grizzly bear (USDA FS, 2020), use of the screens is noted within Table 1 and no further analysis is required in this document. Effects for those species are disclosed within Appendix E of the screens document within the project record.

An effect determination will be made for all species and designated critical habitat within the project area. The determinations are as follows:

- No effect (NE): no impacts (positive or negative) to listed species or resource.
- May affect, but not likely to adversely affect (NLAA): effects are beneficial, insignificant (unmeasurable), or discountable.



- May affect, likely to adversely affect (LAA): effects from the action are adverse or detrimental.
- May affect, beneficial effect (BE): effects to listed resources are entirely beneficial.
- Not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species (NJ): effects are beneficial, insignificant (unmeasurable), or discountable to a proposed species.
- Likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species (J): effects are adverse or detrimental to a proposed species.

**Table 1. Threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species considered for analysis.**

Species	Status	Species present?	Habitat present?	Determination	Comments
Grizzly bear ( <i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i> )	Threatened	Yes	Yes	NE	There is no effect to this species and therefore no additional analysis is required.
Canada lynx ( <i>Lynx canadensis</i> )	Threatened	No	No	NE	There is no effect to this species and therefore no additional analysis is required.
North American wolverine ( <i>Gulo gulo luscus</i> )	Threatened	Yes	Yes	NE	There is no effect to this species and therefore no additional analysis is required.

## Biological Assessment Effects Analysis

### **Grizzly Bear:**

Sites selected for fish barrier installation are adjacent to existing roads open to wheeled motorized use and there will be no permanent or temporary road construction. No activities associated with this project are within grizzly bear secure habitat as both barrier sites are within 100 feet of existing motorized routes. The project will not result in an increase in public use or user type.

The project will be completed in late summer or early fall outside critical behavioral periods including denning, spring emergence, hyperphagia, and mating. All work will occur during daytime hours. Construction of each fish barrier will occur in an area less than ¼ acre and animals would be able to avoid disturbance effects in adjacent habitat.

The project will result in no change to foraging behaviors. Seeding or planting of any grasses, shrubs, or forbs, including species considered grizzly bear forage, will not occur within this project. Barrier construction occurs outside of high-quality spring habitat and will be conducted in the late summer or early fall.

This project will follow the forest wide food storage order (Order # 02-00-22-02) and has no need for site-specific attractant storage provisions.

As a result of all the factors discussed above, there will be 'No Effect' to grizzly bear.

### ***Canada Lynx:***

Sites selected for fish barrier installation are adjacent to existing roads open to wheeled motorized use and there will be no permanent or temporary road construction. Both barrier sites are within 100 feet of existing motorized routes. The project will not result in an increase in public use or user type.

The project area is not located within lynx habitat and lacks forest stand structure components that support lynx or snowshoe hare. Vegetation will not be removed in the construction of either barrier. The project will be completed in late summer or early fall prior to winter snowfall and will have no impact on snow depth, density, or persistence.

All work will occur during daytime hours. Construction of each fish barrier will occur in an area less than ¼ acre and animals would be able to avoid disturbance effects in adjacent habitat. Lynx movement will not be impeded by the completed barriers.

As a result of all the factors discussed above, there will be 'No Effect' to Canada Lynx.

### ***Wolverine:***

Sites selected for fish barrier installation are adjacent to existing roads open to wheeled motorized use and there will be no permanent or temporary road construction. Both barrier sites are within 100 feet of existing motorized routes. The project will not result in an increase in public use or user type.

This project does not occur within denning, maternal, or primary dispersal wolverine habitat and will not present a barrier to wolverine movements through the landscape. The project will not contribute to increased recreational activities including over snow activities. The project will be completed in late summer or early fall prior to winter snowfall and will have no impact on snow depth, density, or persistence. There would be no effect on potential prey (carrion) population levels because of the project.

As a result of all the factors listed, there will be 'No Effect' to Wolverine.

## **Biological Evaluation**

Table 2 displays Region 1 Forest Service Sensitive Species as of November 2023 (USDA FS, 2023).

An effect determination will be made for all species expected within the project area. The determinations are as follows:

- No impact (NI): no effects (positive or negative) to species.
- Beneficial impact (BI): effects are wholly beneficial.
- May impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or the species (MIIH): effects are expected to be insignificant (unmeasurable), or discountable (extremely unlikely).
- Will impact individuals or habitat with a consequence that the action may contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species (WIFV): effects are expected to be detrimental and substantial.

**Table 2. Region 1 Forest Service Sensitive Species considered for analysis.**

Species	Species present?	Habitat present?	Determination	Comments
<i>Birds</i>				
Greater Sage-Grouse ( <i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> )	No	No	NI	There have been no known sightings in the analysis area. There is no effect to this species and therefore no additional analysis is required.
Harlequin duck ( <i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i> )	No	No	NI	There have been no known sightings in the analysis area. There is no effect to this species and therefore no additional analysis is required.
<i>Mammals</i>				
Little Brown Myotis ( <i>Myotis lucifugus</i> )	Yes	Yes	NI	There have been several sightings 5 miles from the analysis area. Potential roost sites, maternity sites, and hibernacula do not exist within the project area. Barrier construction is limited to daytime hours and effects are expected to be insignificant and discountable.
Northern bog lemming ( <i>Synaptomys borealis</i> )	No	No	NI	There have been no known sightings in the analysis area. There is no effect to this species and therefore no additional analysis is required.

## Biological Evaluation Effects Analysis

No additional effects analysis is required.

## Management Indicator Species

Table 3 documents effects to management indicator species as described in the Forest Plan. No specific determination language is required, although the effects from the action that may influence forest-wide habitat or population trends is disclosed.

**Table 3. Effects to Management Indicator Species for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.**

Species	Indicator	Effects from the Action
Rocky Mountain Elk ( <i>Cervus canadensis</i> )	Forest-wide elk security habitat and population	Although some individual elk may be disturbed by activity during implementation, there are no effects to forest-wide elk security habitat or population trends.
Mountain Goat ( <i>Oreamnos americanus</i> )	Forest-wide winter habitat integrity and population	Mountain goats or mountain goat habitat are not affected by the action, thus no effects to forest-wide winter integrity or population trends are expected.
North American wolverine ( <i>Gulo gulo luscus</i> )	Winter habitat integrity	This species is analyzed in more detail in the biological evaluation, although winter habitat integrity is not affected by the action. No effects to forest-wide winter habitat or population trends are expected.

### Cumulative Effects

Under the ESA, future state or private activities not involving federal activities that are reasonably certain to occur within the action area are subject for consideration for cumulative effects. As there is “no effect” to the species in Table 1, there are no cumulative effects under the ESA.

Under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976, past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities that overlap in time and space with the proposed action area are subject for consideration for cumulative effects. There are no cumulative effects to wildlife species analyzed in this document under NFMA.

### Other Wildlife Issues

There are no additional wildlife issues for this project.

### Design Features

This project will follow the forest wide food storage order (Order # 02-00-22-02).

### Forest Plan Compliance

Table 4 documents project compliance with the Forest Plan. Standards are abbreviated for this document.

**Table 4. Project compliance with the Wildlife Forest Plan standards.**

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Compliance Documentation</b>
1. From October 15 to December 1 Hunting Units that exceed the open motorized road and trail density objective will have no net increase in designated open motorized road and trail (OMRTD) mileage.	Project has no net increase in hunting unit OMRTD.
2. Landscapes that exceed the open motorized road and trail objective will have no net increase in designated open motorized road and trail mileage.	Project has no net increase in landscape OMRTD.
3. Mechanical vegetation treatments will follow snag direction as outlined within this standard.	Project does not include vegetation management.
4. Do not reduce the number of live trees greater than 10.0 inches dbh per acre in regeneration harvest treatment units (to provide future snags) below 0.9 live trees/acre in the lodgepole vegetation category.	Project does not include regeneration harvest.
5. Sheep allotments in the Gravelly Landscape that become vacant will be closed to sheep grazing or the vacant allotment may be used by an existing Gravelly Landscape sheep permittee, with no increase in permitted use.	Project is not within Gravelly Landscape sheep allotments.
6. The Grizzly Bear Amendment applies to only the Beaverhead- portion of the BDNF and is incorporated as Appendix G	Project follows grizzly bear direction as outlined in Appendix G.
7. The Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction (NRLMD) is included in Appendix G, and will apply to the BDNF as described in the Northern Rockies Lynx Management Record of Decision.	Project follows lynx direction as outlined in Appendix G.
8. Within 18 kilometers of documented active or inactive sage grouse leks, do not remove sagebrush within 300 meters of riparian zones, meadows, lakebeds or farmland, unless site- specific analysis indicates such removal promotes achievement of the sagebrush habitat goal. Springs developed for livestock water in these areas must be designed to maintain free water and wet meadows.	Project does not remove sagebrush.
9. Mitigate, through avoidance or minimization, management actions around known active nest sites of threatened, endangered, proposed candidate, and sensitive bird species, if those actions would disrupt reproductive success during the nesting period. During project planning consider applicable science regarding species needs (such as nesting periods and buffers) and site-specific considerations. This standard also applies to Great Gray Owl and Northern Goshawk.	Project will not affect known active nest sites of threatened, endangered, or sensitive birds, including great gray owl and northern goshawks.
10. When closing entrances to abandoned mines, determine whether suitable habitat for bats exists, and where it does, provide access for bats.	Project does not involve mine entrance closure.
11. Implement the most current National Fish and Wildlife Service Terms and Conditions for wolves in the northwest Montana recovery area (west of I-15 and north of I-90) until the gray wolf is delisted.	Wolves are delisted and are addressed as a sensitive species (refer to the biological evaluation section).

Standard	Compliance Documentation
12. Provide habitat for species requiring large woody debris in forested habitat types (lodgepole – 6 pieces per acre with small end diameter equal to or greater than 8 inches and 10-ft long; Douglas-fir – 6 pieces per acre with small end diameter equal to or greater than 12 inches and 10-ft long).	Project does not include regeneration harvest.

## References

- [USDA FS] United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. 2020. Programmatic Biological Assessment for activities that are not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx, grizzly bear, and designated Canada lynx critical habitat. USDA Forest Service, Region 1. Missoula, MT. December 1, 2020. 73 pp.
- [USDI FWS] United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. 2024. Threatened, Endangered, and Candidate Species for the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest 10/23/2024. Ecological Services, Montana Field Office. Helena, MT. 12 pp.



Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest  
Ranger District:

*Always keep a copy of this completion memo in the project file.*

To: District Ranger,  
Cc: Project Manager,  
From: Archaeologist,  
Date:  
Project Name:  
Project Number:

Legal Description:

**A cultural resource review for the above named project is completed. The results are as follows:**

\_\_\_ NO FIELD INVENTORY NECESSARY

- \_\_\_ This project is not an "undertaking" within the meaning of Section 106.
- \_\_\_ The nature of this undertaking is such that no ground disturbing activities are anticipated
- \_\_\_ Previous archaeological inventory is sufficient to demonstrate the project has a very low probability of affecting cultural sites.
- \_\_\_ The Heritage Program "SIS" indicates a low probability for the occurrence of heritage properties in the project area.

\_\_\_ CLASS I (literature/quad.map search) inventory completed.

\_\_\_ FIELD INVENTORY COMPLETED

**Results:**

- \_\_\_ No sites located inside project area.
- \_\_\_ Site(s) (\*\*) located inside project area.
- \_\_\_ Site(s) located \*\* feet outside project area.
- \_\_\_ Site Lead

**Recommendations:**

\_\_\_ The project may proceed as planned, now or at any time in the future. ***If cultural resource sites or artifacts are discovered during project implementation the Forest Archaeologist should be notified immediately.***

\_\_\_ The project should not proceed until the site has been evaluated for its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places through the Section 106 consultation process with the Montana SHPO. SHPO has up to 30 days to comment on this undertaking.

***In compliance with the Region 1 Programmatic Agreement between the Forest Service and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer a formal Section 106 consultation report documenting this undertaking will be completed following the field season. Should you have any questions concerning heritage issues please contact me at ayme.swartz@usda.gov.***

**Signed:**