

Future Fisheries Improvement Program

Future Fisheries Improvement Program Funding

Winter 2026

1. [001-2026 Big Hole Tributary Reconnection, Phase 2 - Alder Creek \(Beaverhead County\)](#). Alder Creek is a cold water tributary that enters the Big Hole River upstream of Wise River, MT. Currently, Alder Creek is entirely diverted during irrigation season. The purpose of this project is: 1) to reconnect Alder Creek to the Big Hole River, and 2) create a siphon that will help a water rights change that would use Big Hole water for irrigation instead of Alder Creek. The reconnection of this river will provide cold water input into the Big Hole and potentially provide thermal refuge for Arctic grayling, mountain whitefish, brown trout, rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and sculpin species. The project will consist of 90 feet of channel construction to reconnect Alder Creek and the Big Hole, with channel designed to pass 100-year flood events as well as accommodate fish passage at base flow.

Project Name	Big Hole Tributary Reconnection, Phase 2 - Alder Creek
Request	\$107,425.00
Match	\$152,705.00
Total Project Cost	\$260,130.00
% FFIP Request	41%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials, mobilization, labor, taxes, bonds and insurance
FWP Notes	The application is missing an instream flow questionnaire; overall, the project could be highly impactful for the trout fishery, where water and water temperature is a limiting factor.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Funded (motion to approve application 001-2026)

2. [002-2026 Lower Grant Creek Restoration](#). Grant Creek is a cold water tributary to the Clark Fork River. The confluence of this river is just west of Missoula. Its upper reaches support a population of federally listed bull trout, and the lower reaches receive seasonal pulses of rainbow and westslope cutthroat trout in the spring, and brown trout in the fall. In the project area, overgrazing and land management led to a disconnected floodplain, diminished riparian vegetation, and deterioration of the main channel. The project will specifically focus on lower Grant Creek near Kelly Island with the goal of restoring floodplain connectivity, improving riparian vegetation, and increasing channel complexity. The project will include 2,534 feet of bank treatment, 4,609 feet of fencing, constructed wetlands, and a grazing management plan to protect the newly improved riparian habitat. The improved riparian habitat will also shade the river and help provide thermal refugia for fish species. Much of the project will involve restoring riparian habitat in what is currently an agricultural corridor.

Project Name	Lower Grant Creek Restoration
Request	\$50,000.00
Match	\$340,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$390,000.00
% FFIP Request	13%

Construction Schedule	Summer 2026 – Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials and labor
FWP Notes	The application was revised from Summer 2025, confined by floodplain permitting requirements. Project should contribute to the trout fishery in the Clark Fork. Cost/benefit appears to be appropriate.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Funded (motion to approve 002-2026)

3. [003-2026 Madison River Side Channel Restoration - Hyde Creek](#). Hyde Creek is a historical side channel that lost consistent connection to the Madison River, as it is located below Hebgren Reservoir and experienced altered flow regimes. This project aims to restore and enhance approximately 5,300 feet of Hyde Creek. This project will include reestablishment of floodplain, excavating multiple 6-10 foot wide channels. Native gravels and boulders will be placed to create riffle-pool sequence and maintain a flow velocity of 1-2ft/s and a gradient of $\leq 0.3\%$ to promote spawning and rearing habitat for wild trout and improving forage opportunities. FWP monitoring will include spring and fall redd counts, PIT tagging, electrofishing mark-recapture surveys, and vegetation establishment surveys.

Project Name	Madison River Side Channel Restoration - Hyde Creek
Request	\$100,000.00
Match	\$204,144.08
Total Project Cost	\$304,144.08
% FFIP Request	33%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials, labor
FWP Notes	Good monitoring plan; project is important for trout fishery. Side channel habitat is limited on the Madison River.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Funded (motion to approve 003-2026)

4. [004-2026 Marshall Creek Culvert Removal and Habitat Restoration](#). Marshall Creek is a second order tributary of the Clark Fork River in Missoula County and supports a healthy population of westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) with high genetic purity. In the project area, a series of culverts are affecting fish passage. The goal of this project is to remove one of three undersized culverts, and to restore 1/4th mile of instream fisheries habitat through the addition of large and small woody debris. The project will take place on public land located on Missoula County property (formerly Marshall Mountain Park, acquired in 2023.) Sections both upstream and downstream of the culvert will be reconstructed with a slope of ~6% maintained by a grade control step pools. Work also includes reconnection of the floodplain with a bankfull width of 8 feet and a bankfull depth of 1.5 feet.

Project Name	Marshall Creek Culvert Removal and Habitat Restoration
Request	\$12,930.00
Match	\$9,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$25,820.00
% FFIP Request	50%
Construction Schedule	2026 (not specified)

Requested Items	Construction material, mobilization, and labor
FWP Notes	It would be helpful for the applicant to expand on future phases, including the remaining two culverts. Please confirm that passage barriers exist below the project area, to protect the WCT. Marshall Creek is an important stream for WCT.
Panel Recommendation	Fully funded (motion to approve 004-2026)

5. [005-2026 Upper O'Brien Creek Restoration Project](#). O'Brien Creek is a tributary to the Bitterroot River that supports a cold-water fishery including both native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in its upper reaches, and non-native WCT hybrids, brook trout, and brown trout in its middle and lower reaches. In the project area, the historic alterations to the watershed have resulted in heavily degraded stream which was heavily incised, lacked woody debris, and lacked connection to the floodplain. The goals of this project are to 1) improve in-stream aquatic habitat, 2) reduce sediment loading, and 3) restore floodplain connectivity/processes. Woody debris will be added into the system to enhance habitat complexity. The road will be moved away from the stream the stream will be re-contoured to address the sedimentation issues. This site is also part of a long-term monitoring project in collaboration with the University of Montana.

Project Name	Upper O'Brien Creek Restoration Project
Request	\$44,222.00
Match	\$181,250.86
Total Project Cost	\$231,472.86
% FFIP Request	19%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials, equipment and labor
FWP Notes	The location is important for native fish conservation; monitoring plan is good.
Panel Recommendation	Fully funded (motion to approve 005-2026)

6. [006-2026 Lower Racetrack Creek Restoration Project](#). Racetrack Creek is a tributary to the Clark Fork River, with brown trout spawning reported in the lower reaches of the river. Currently, a pin and plank irrigation structure is a likely barrier to fish swimming upstream. The associated irrigation ditch is unscreened. Along the lower 0.5 miles of Racetrack Creek, the plan is to install over 4,000 ft of fencing along the creek and 2 off-stream stock tanks to remove cattle grazing from the lower 0.5 miles of Racetrack Creek. Habitat improvement plans include installing 12 wood habitat enhancements, 800 feet of streambank treatments, and floodplain grading. Three rock weirs will be used to replace the diversion and non-functional fish ladder, and a corrugated fish screen will be placed into the irrigation channel to eliminate potential fish entrainment.

Project Name	Lower Racetrack Creek Restoration Project
Request	\$75,000.00
Match	\$340,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$390,000.00
% FFIP Request	13%

Construction Schedule	Summer-Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials, mobilization and labor
FWP Notes	It would be helpful if the applicant could describe the use of poured concrete in the step pool (design plan page 12), how it has functioned in previous projects, and how it addresses fish passage. Please provide more information on the fencing costs, and the line item for water gaps. Overall, this is an important fishery for recreational trout species and westslope cutthroat trout.
Panel Recommendation	Fully funded (motion to approve 006-2026) request about information about fish entrainment

7. [007-2026 Tenmile Creek Barrier](#). Tenmile Creek is a tributary to Deep Creek in the upper Missouri and is one of 47 remaining westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) populations left in the Big Hole drainage. Located 10 Miles SW of Anaconda, this stream has a high genetic purity population of WCT. Tenmile creek currently has brook trout negatively affecting WCT populations. Non-native rainbow trout located in two lakes in the watershed have shown evidence of spilling over into Tenmile Creek. The goal of this project is to conserve native cutthroat trout through construction of a fish barrier on the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management area. This barrier will be built of treated lumber like many other barriers installed throughout SW Montana, and through the Future Fisheries program. After the barrier is completed, WCT would be salvaged from the stream, and non-native fish (stream and lakes) will be treated with rotenone. After the removal of non-native trout, WCT will be restocked back into the stream. Additionally, Arctic grayling and WCT will be introduced into the two nearby lakes.

Project Name	Tenmile Creek Barrier
Request	\$23,420.00
Match	\$25,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$48,420.00
% FFIP Request	48%
Construction Schedule	Summer-Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials, mobilization and labor
FWP Notes	This project has good long- and short-term goals and monitoring. It is critical WCT habitat, a priority project, and contains genetically significant fish with an immediate threat to hybridization.
Panel Recommendation	Fully funded (motion to approve application 007-2026)

8. [008-2026 Christiansen Creek Fish Barrier](#). Christiansen Creek is located 11 Miles NE of Wisdom, MT, in the Big Hole drainage. This stream is home to a population of westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) with high genetic purity. Currently, brook trout are also in the stream and have eliminated WCT everywhere but the headwaters of Christiansen Creek. As brook trout expand, WCT decline. The goal of this project would be to create a treated lumber barrier to exclude non-native fish. This barrier will be similar to many other wooden barriers installed throughout SW Montana that are inexpensive and easier to install, protecting populations more quickly. After the barrier is placed, WCT would be salvaged from the stream, and non-native fish will be treated with rotenone. After the removal of non-native trout, WCT will be restocked back into the stream.

Project Name	Christiansen Creek Fish Barrier
Request	\$23,420.00
Match	\$25,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$48,420.00
% FFIP Request	48%
Construction Schedule	Summer-Fall 2026
Requested Items	Construction materials, mobilization and labor
FWP Notes	The project is a priority for FWP, as it would protect a conservation population of WCT. The wooden barrier offers a cost effective solution.
Panel Recommendation	Fully funded (motion to approve application 008-2026)