FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

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

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

A. Applicant Name: Nathan Jaksha

Mailing Address: 1534 9th Ave PO Box 200701

City: Helena State: MT Zip: 59620

Telephone: 406-495-3263 E-mail: nathan.jaksha@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): John Schachtner

Mailing Address: PO Box 531

City: Canyon Creek State: MT Zip: 59633

Telephone: (818) 482-1237 E-mail:

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

A. Project Name: Marsh Creek Restoration

River, stream, or lake: Marsh Creek (tributary to Little Prickly Pear Creek)

Location: Township: 12N Range: 6W Section: 17

Latitude: 46.79969 Longitude: -112.37089 *Within project (decimal degrees)*

County: Lewis & Clark

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

This project aims to improve stream habitat and flow on Marsh Creek, a tributary to upper Little Prickly Pear Creek. This project would be in the immediate vicinity of two recently completed restoration projects on the Grady Livestock property (Little Prickly Pear Creek) and an ongoing project on Marsh Creek immediately upstream, also on the Grady Livestock property. The Grady Livestock Marsh Creek restoration project has been approved for funding by Northwestern's Missouri River Technical Advisory Committee with an estimated project cost of $133,370. The combined projects will greatly improve fish passage and spawning habitat along with improved water savings on Marsh Creek. Rainbow trout within the Little Prickly Pear system will greatly benefit from these proposed projects and from previous work on mainstem Little Prickly Pear Creek.

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

Stream modifications will include channel realignment and stream restoration to reduce erosion and improve streambank habitat in the meadow stretch between the Grady Livestock property and the confluence with Little Prickly Pear Creek. The stream is mostly a G4 channel in the proposed area and will be restored to a B4 channel (similar to upstream project on Grady Livestock property). A perched culvert will also be removed and replaced with a bridge built with a cattle crossing. Livestock will be excluded elsewhere on the stream. Stream restoration will begin in the fall of 2026 along with restoration work on the upstream Grady Livestock property. In-stream work will be finished before the winter of 2026-2027.

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

The Marsh Creek stream channel has been straightened and channelized over time due to current agricultural practices (i.e., cattle grazing, hay production). The reduction of riparian vegetation due to cattle grazing has increased erosion rates and caused the stream to become incised within the current channel. Additionally, a poorly installed culvert has become perched creating major headcutting below the culvert potentially reducing fish passage for spawning rainbow trout.

E. Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated (project extent): Approx. 1,350 ft

Length/size of impact, if larger than project extent (e.g., stream miles opened): ¾ miles (w/ ongoing projects upstream)

F. Project Budget Summary:

Grant Request (Dollars):	**$**	**18,332.50**
Matching Dollars:	**$**	**18,332.50**
Matching In-Kind Services:*	**$**	

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

Other Contributions (not used as match)	**$**	
Total Project Cost:	**$**	**36,665.00**

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:

Northwestern Energy; Pat Barnes Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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
X	

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

FWP will monitor restoration work on Marsh Creek for all ongoing projects. Pre-restoration fish data has been collected on Marsh Creek to evaluate changes in fish community composition and changes in abundance. Additionally, maintenance will include a livestock grazing management plan to protect riparian vegetation and streambank health.

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 not be allowed in the stream (with the exception of a designated water crossing) for 5-years allowing for the reestablishment of riparian vegetation.

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?

The project will be monitored by FWP staff to determine if there are any improvements to the Marsh Creek fishery. Short-term goals are to improve flows and habitat on lower Marsh Creek while the primary long-term goal is to see successful reproduction by wild rainbow trout.

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

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

Rainbow trout, Rocky Mountain sculpin

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

The project will improve stream flows, watershed connectivity, and greatly increase the amount of quality coldwater fish habitat.

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

Spawning rainbow trout in the Little Prickly Pear system will have more spawning access that will ultimate bolster a natural reproducing stronghold population in the Upper Missouri River drainage.

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 promote wild fish reproduction within the Little Prickly Pear system which provides ample opportunities for anglers.

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

The greater Marsh Creek restoration efforts will also improve water savings within the Little Prickly Pear drainages, which is a benefit to wildlife, various agricultural commodities, and to other user groups utilizing the stream as a resource.

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

No, the project will tie in with other ongoing adjacent projects (Grady Livestock property) that will improve water usage efficiencies and will ultimately improving ranching practices nearby.

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: Nathan Jaksha Date: May 15th, 2026

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 bailey.duxbury@mt.gov

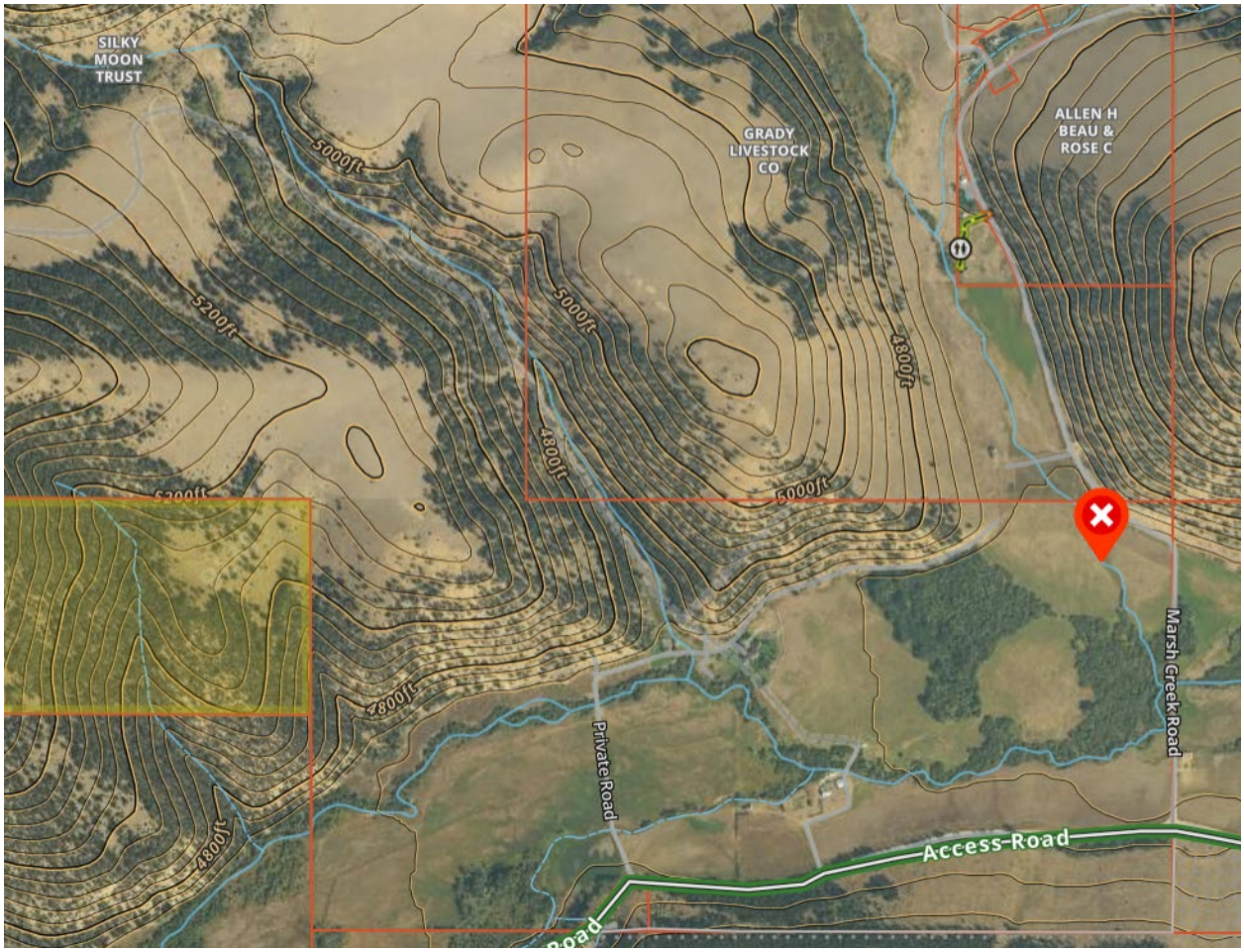

Figure 1. Map of proposed Marsh Creek restoration area (red waypoint) located six miles west of Canyon Creek, MT.

Figure 2. Photograph of incised channel on Marsh Creek within the proposed restoration area.

Figure 3. Photograph of perched culvert on Marsh Creek within the proposed project area.

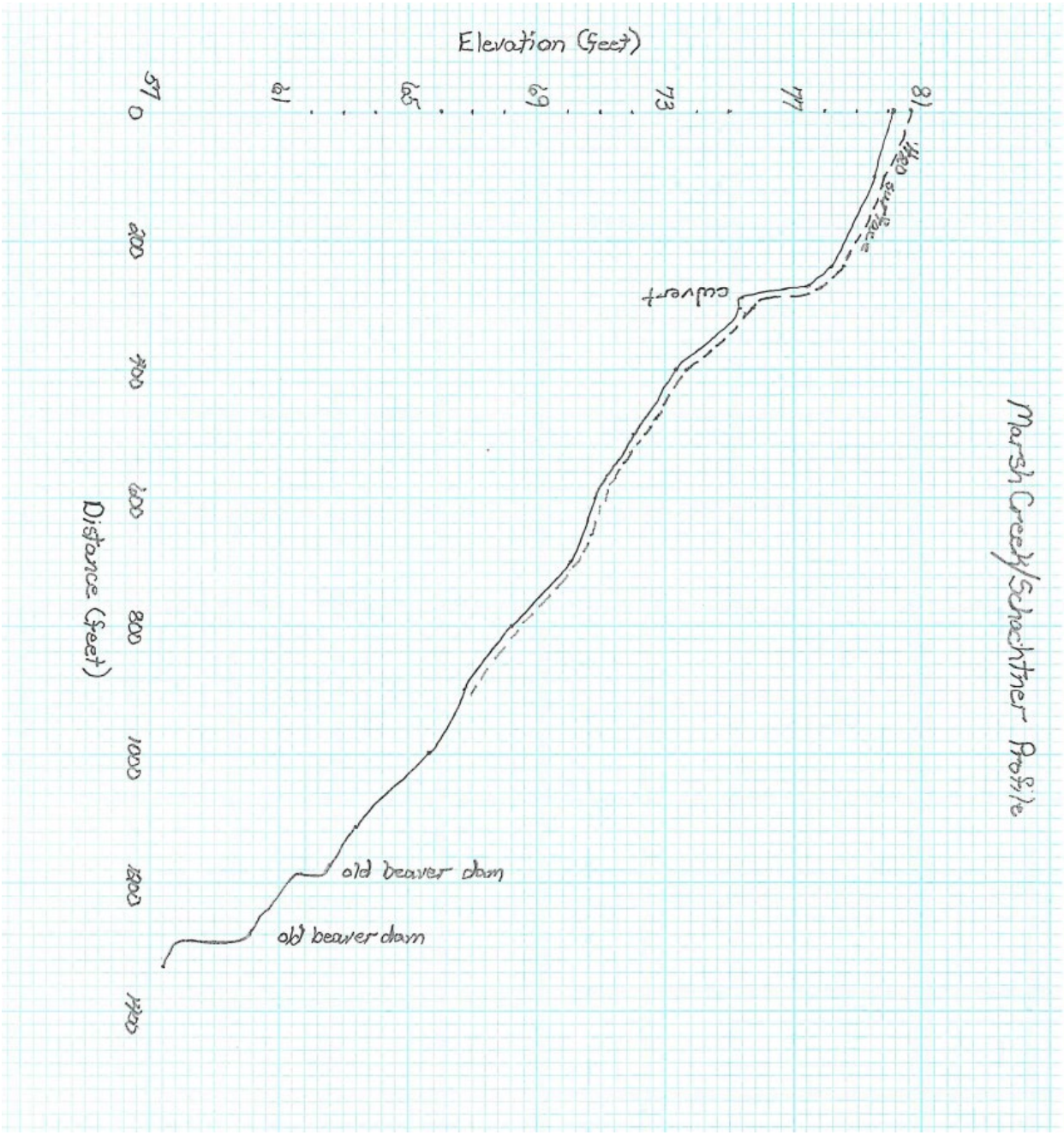

Figure 4. Long-profile of Marsh Creek in the restoration area.

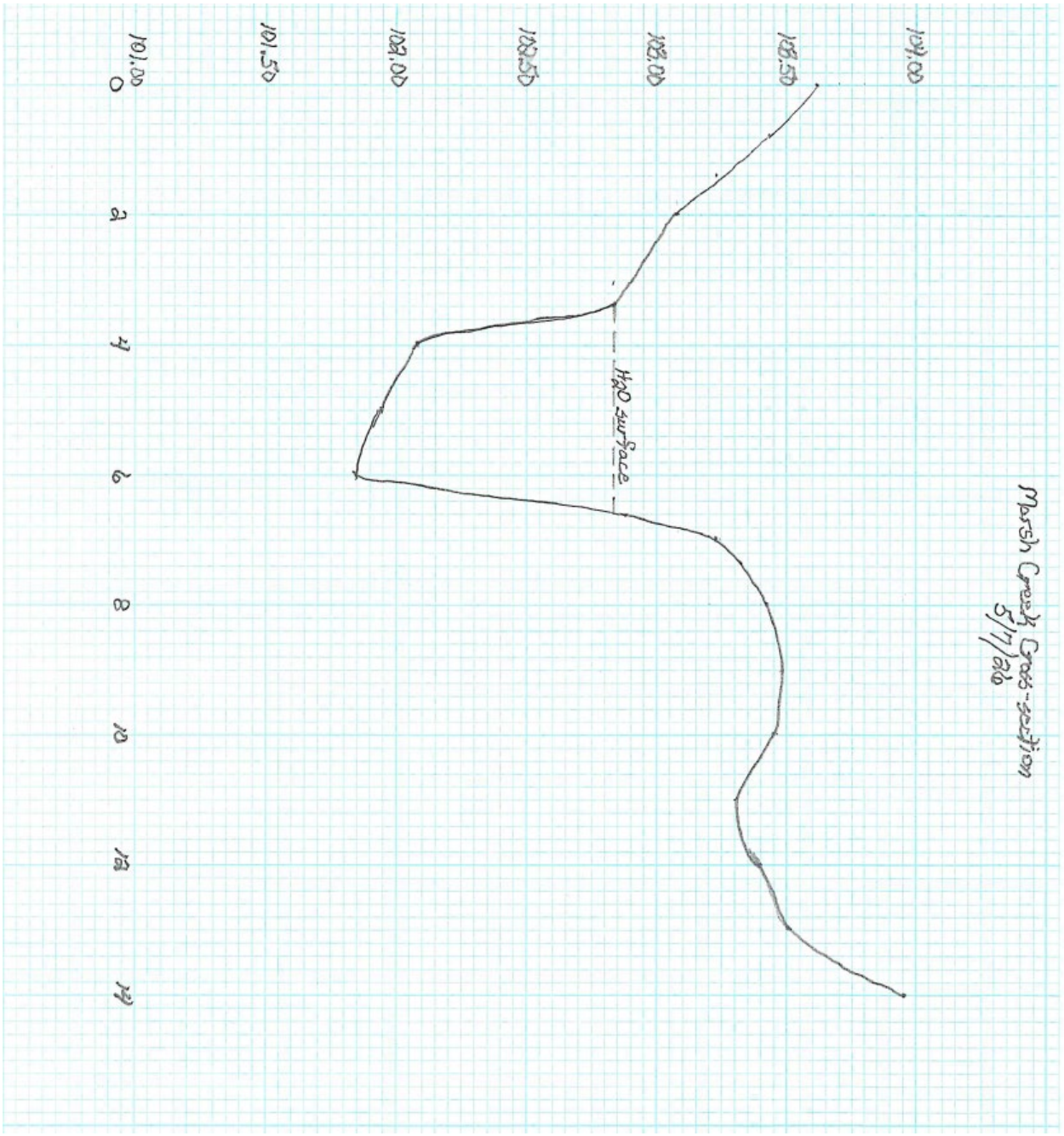

Figure 5. Cross-section of Marsh Creek in the proposed restoration area.