



# Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

## Future Fisheries Improvement Program Fact Sheet

(Updated 2/20/2015)

### *Background and history*

In 1995, Montana Legislature created the Future Fisheries Improvement Program (FFIP), to restore essential habitats for the growth and propagation of wild fish populations in lakes, rivers, and streams. In 1999, the Legislature expanded the FFIP by adding funding from the Resource Indemnity Trust Fund (RIT) and directing a portion of the funding to projects that specifically enhance bull trout and cutthroat trout, with emphasis on mineral reclamation projects. In 2013, the RIT funding was expanded to all cover of Montana's native fish species.

### **Funding**

Funds used to implement the FFIP originate from the sale of Montana fishing licenses. A portion of the funding also comes from interest generated from Montana's RIT Fund.

### **Eligibility**

Habitat projects benefiting wild fish, originating from virtually any source, will be considered for funding. This includes (but is not limited to) landowners, anglers, civic groups, conservation districts, or governmental agencies.

### **Use of funds**

Program funding may be provided for costs of design/build, construction, and maintenance of projects that restore, enhance, or protect habitat for wild fishes. Funding cannot be used for administration, coordination, overhead, monitoring, watershed assessments, design alone, or contingency costs. Preference will be given to projects that restore habitats for native fishes.

### *How do I apply?*

#### **Application forms**

Application forms are available on FWP's webpage at:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/habitat/fish/futureFisheries/default.html>. They are also available by request from FWP. To obtain an application form, for help completing the application, or for assistance developing a project, contact the Future Fisheries Improvement Program Officer in Helena (444-2432).

#### **Procedures**

There is no limit to individual grant requests, but grants are awarded based on available funding. Typically, funding ranges from \$150,000 to \$350,000 for each individual grant cycle. Cost sharing is not mandatory but *strongly* encouraged and makes a project more competitive.

#### **Project eligibility**

Applicants must demonstrate that the project will have public benefits and accomplish one or more of these items:

- Improve or maintain fish passage
- Restore or protect naturally functioning stream channels or banks

- Restore or protect naturally functioning riparian areas
- Prevent loss of fish into diversions
- Restore or protect essential habitats for spawning
- Enhance stream flow to improve fisheries
- Restore or protect native fish populations
- Improve fishing in a lake or reservoir
- Other types of projects that restore or protect habitat for wild fish populations

Projects must also be conducted with approval of the landowner on whose property the project is being completed, and they may not interfere with water or property rights of adjacent landowners.

### **Submittal**

Applications may be submitted at any time but must be received **before** December 1 and June 1 of each year to be considered for the subsequent funding period. Applications must be sent to FWP at the address below. Electronic applications are preferred but must be signed. If submitting a hard copy application, we strongly encourage applicants to include a copy of the application in electronic copy format. We will post all the applications we receive onto the FFIP webpage to provide the opportunity for public review and comment.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Fisheries Division  
1420 E. Sixth Ave.  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701  
[mmcgree@mt.gov](mailto:mmcgree@mt.gov), (406) 444-2432

### ***What next?***

After each application deadline, the FFIP review panel will meet and evaluate eligible projects. Criteria include:

- Public benefits to wild fisheries
- Long-term effectiveness
- Benefits to native fish species
- Expected benefits relative to cost
- In-kind services or cost-sharing
- Importance of the lake or stream
- Local support and participation
- Addressing the cause of degradation rather than the symptoms
- Sensitivity to needs of other wildlife species (e.g., wildlife friendly fencing)

If you would like to attend the FFIP review panel meeting, please contact the FFIP officer (444-2432) to determine the location and time. The review panel and FWP will then submit a list of recommended projects to the Fish & Wildlife Commission for consideration. Final project approval is the responsibility of the Commission.

### **Project Administration**

Each approved project sponsor must enter into a written agreement with FWP. Grant funds must be used only for purposes described in the final project agreement. The FFIP functions as a reimbursement program, where project sponsors submit invoices to FWP for payment. Itemized invoices of expenses and receipts approved by the applicant are required.

### **Evaluating project success**

Completed projects will be monitored over time to ensure compliance and evaluate the public benefits to wild fisheries.