

## SECTION 5. RECREATIONAL/EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

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By improving fisheries or wildlife populations and habitats, the proposed actions in the aquatic and terrestrial resources restoration plans (Sections 3 and 4) will improve associated fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and other recreational services. This section separately covers the funding, proposed actions, and implementation of recreation-dominant projects, or those for which recreational features and benefits are the major focus of the project scope and budget. Section 5.1 covers the determination of the budget for recreation projects and Section 5.2 covers the proposed recreational actions and implementation. The analysis of alternatives for recreational services was covered in the analysis of aquatic and terrestrial resource alternatives contained in those plans (Sections 3.1 and 4.1, respectively). Thus, recreational projects are focused in the same injured areas and Priority 1 and 2 resource areas as covered in the aquatic and terrestrial preferred alternative identified in those plans.

In 2023, education was added to this section with the request for additional funding by the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program previously funded in the 2012 Final Process Plan provisions. With the improvement of aquatic and terrestrial resources, the education of the public of these actions is an important component in establishing stewardship of the restored resources that should help in the long-term success of the implementation of this restoration plan.

### **5.1 Recreation Project Funding**

Based on provisions in the *2011 Long Range Guidance Plan* and *2012 Process Plan*, the following are the key factors specific to recreation projects that the State relied on in developing its proposed plan for the enhancement of recreational services:

- That by restoring or replacing the injured natural resources of the UCFRB, some of the recreational services lost due to those injuries will also be restored.
- That recreational projects must be natural resource-based and offer resource benefits in addition to recreational benefits.
- That general preferred types of recreational projects that offer resource benefits include those that: 1) prevent resource degradation by the user public; 2) enhance existing recreational projects; and 3) provide fishing and hunting access in a resource-protective manner.

The secondary nature of recreation projects to resource projects reflected in these key factors is also reflected in the policies and guidance of the past UCFRB Restoration Fund Grants Program, which gave strong preference to restoration projects over replacement projects.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with those policies and guidance, about \$16.3 million of the UCFRB Restoration Funds approved for past projects, or 12%, was approved for funding recreation projects.<sup>2</sup> The results of the public scoping process reiterated this secondary nature, as judged by the comparatively low number of recreation-dominant proposals, which had budgets totaling less than 5% of the total estimated budget of all abstracts submitted through the public scoping process.<sup>3</sup>

In 2012, based on the secondary importance of recreation projects to resource projects, the aquatic and terrestrial restoration needs far exceeded available funds, and on the low proportion of funding for recreation projects reflected in past and prospective future expenditures summarized above, the State proposed that the total budget allocated for recreational projects be about 10% of the available funds, or \$6.5 million.

In 2018, the State solicited for projects with recreation components associated with aquatic and terrestrial Priority 1 and 2 areas or in the aquatic and terrestrial injured resource areas for which the State made restoration claims, with a focus on restored or remediated areas. The funds available for allocation in 2018 were more limited than in 2012, so eligible projects which focused on restored or remediated areas were funded to the extent possible. As a result, the total amount of funding awarded to recreational projects was \$0.00 in 2018.

In 2023, the State solicited for projects with recreation components associated with aquatic and terrestrial Priority 1 and 2 areas or in the aquatic and terrestrial injured resource areas for which the State made its restoration claims, with a focus on restored or remediated areas. The funds available for allocation in 2023 were more limited, so eligible projects with a strong preference for projects focused on restored or remediated areas were funded to the extent possible. The total amount of funding awarded to projects with recreation component was approximately \$2.9 million in 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> The preference for restoration over replacement was reflected in the policy criteria specified in the NRDP's *UCFRB Restoration Plan Procedures and Guidance* document (originally published in 2000 and revised in 2002, 2006, 2007) that served as the framework document for the grants program and also in the NRDP's 2003 guidance for recreational grant projects (<https://dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/guidancerecreationalprojects.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> See Table 4-2 contained in Appendix A. While a similar table summary of past funding in the *2011 Long Range Guidance Plan* indicated recreational projects totaled 8% of approved project funding through 2011, this percentage increased to 12% after adding the additional \$8 million approved to complete the Silver Bow Creek Greenway project in that *Plan*, of which \$5.5 million was for recreational access features.

<sup>3</sup> The \$6.8 million total estimated budget in the concept proposals for these recreational-dominant projects is 4% of the estimated total budget of \$163 million for the abstracts submitted through the public scoping process.

## 5.2 Proposed Actions and Implementation

In 2012, of the 74 concept proposals submitted by the public that met legal and project location eligibility requirements, only three were recreation-dominant projects (abstracts #3, 25, and 37), with an estimated budget of \$8.3 million (see Appendix A).<sup>4</sup> Three other abstracts offered general ideas that included recreational enhancement features (abstracts #69, 73, and 75), but without specific budgets. In addition to ideas offered by the public, FWP suggested seven other recreational projects (abstracts #G2a, b, c and #G3a, b, c), which are summarized in Attachment 5-1, with an estimated total budget of about \$7 million for consideration. In addition, several of the public scoping abstracts that are incorporated into the State's proposed resource restoration actions involve fishing access as part of easement or acquisition efforts (abstracts #7, 48, 50 and possibly #52).

In 2012, working within the \$6.5 million budget limit, the State determined its proposed actions for recreational enhancement by considering how well these concept proposals matched the key aspects of desirable recreational projects identified in Section 5.1, plus further consideration of the NRD evaluation criterion, particularly technical feasibility, costs-effectiveness, and cost: benefit relationship. Due to limited funding, work in injured areas was given the highest priority.

In 2018, concept proposals submitted by the public that met legal and project location eligibility requirements, only four were recreation-dominant projects (abstracts #102, 103, 104, and 105), with an estimated budget of \$1.3 million (see Appendix A).

In 2023, three concept proposals were submitted by the public that met the legal and project location eligibility requirements. Abstracts #122, 123, and 124) had an estimated budget of \$4.3 million (see Appendix A).

The State determined its proposed actions for recreational enhancement by considering how well these concept proposals matched the key aspects of desirable recreational projects identified in Section 5.1, plus further consideration of the NRD evaluation criterion, particularly technical feasibility, costs-effectiveness, and cost: benefit relationship. Due to limited funding, projects associated with aquatic and terrestrial Priority 1 and 2 areas or in the aquatic and terrestrial injured resource areas for which the State made restoration claims, with a focus on restored or remediated areas, were given the highest priority.

In 2023, the State required all recreational based projects provide matching funds equal to 25% of the total project costs. Matching funds need to be specific to the proposed project and provided over a similar timeframe as proposed project. Additionally, activities covered by matching funds need to meet the legal threshold for Restoration Funds. Matching funds can be in-kind contributions or committed non-NRDP funds. If a project is approved, the percentage match

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<sup>4</sup> Two other abstracts that were recreation-focused (#5a and #70) did not meet eligibility screening criteria.

commitment for the cash and in-kind match will be documented in the project file. For cash matches, a document of the cash transaction is required, whereas for in-kind matches, a summary is required as part of the final project report.

## **5.2.1 Recreational Enhancements in Injured Areas**

### **Silver Bow Creek Mainstem**

The State does not propose any additional recreational enhancements along the Silver Bow Creek mainstem due to the sufficiency of past funding. The *2011 Long Range Guidance Plan* approved an additional \$8 million for completion of the Silver Bow Creek Greenway project, which will provide a passive recreational corridor and access features and associated recreational services along 22 miles of Silver Bow Creek between Butte and Warm Springs Ponds. Of the total \$23.6 million approved for the Greenway project, approximate \$13 million, or 47%, is for recreational enhancement features. The other 53% is for ecological enhancement features and acquisitions. The sufficiency of past funding for recreational service projects along the Silver Bow Creek mainstem is also somewhat reflected by the lack of any public or state-generated concept proposals for recreational enhancements in this area.

In 2023, the Greenway Service District proposed completing two of the four remaining sections of the Greenway trail that will connect Butte to Opportunity along the Silver Bow Creek corridor (#123). This proposal is in addition to the \$8 million in funding that was provided to the Greenway Service District in 2012 as part of the UCFRB Final Process Plan. The two sections of the trail proposed to be completed are through Durant Canyon and from the I-90 rest area to Stewart Street in Opportunity. The proposal estimates the cost to complete the construction of these two sections of trail, plus 5 years of operation/maintenance and administration costs, to be \$3.5 million.

In 2023, the State proposes to allocate \$2.5 million to the Greenway Service District to for the construction of the two sections of trail proposed, \$500,000 from the Aquatic fund and 80% of the reimbursement funds from Parrot Tailings project, after the first \$500,000 goes to Silver Bow Creek, go to Greenway Service District, not to exceed \$2.0 million. -If the reimbursement funds from Parrot Tailings project is not be enough to provide up to the \$2 million, the State will use funds allocated for Aquatic and Terrestrial resources to ensure the GSD receives up to \$2.5 million for the construction of two trail sections or the cost of the construction of these two trail sections, whichever is less. The intent of the State's revised proposal is to ensure funding for the construction of these two trail sections, up to a total of \$2.5 million, is available regardless of the amount available from the Parrot Tailings project. If Aquatic and Terrestrial funds are needed and used to fund the GSD as part of the 2023 revision, NRDP will determine and select the funds that will have the least impact on project implementation. The State will reimburse those Aquatic and Terrestrial funds used to fund the GSD with UCFRB Restoration Fund interest accrued between 2023 and the next revision of the Restoration Plans.

The additional funding with the balance of funding remaining from the 2012 allocation is estimated to be sufficient to complete these sections of trail. The State also requires that the Greenway Service District provide a minimum of a 25% match to this funding allocation, or \$625,000. The State also requires written confirmation from the Greenway Service District the infrastructure built with UCFRB Restoration Funds will be maintained and operated with non-State of Montana natural resource damage funds.

### **Clark Fork River Mainstem**

Milltown State Park: In 2012, funding was approved of up to \$2.45 million for additional recreational enhancements at the Milltown State Park located at the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers.<sup>5</sup> Of this, \$1.2 million is for completion of the basic park development and infrastructure needs at the Confluence and Gateway portions of the Park (abstract #G3a). Another \$1.2 million is for additional construction of the trail and other recreational features in the reservoir area, for easements/acquisitions that would provide access to recreational and education features along the Blackfoot River, and for five years of additional operation and maintenance beyond the 5-year start-up operation and maintenance funds provided via an earlier grant (abstract #G3b). These enhancements are considered to be cost-effective and vital aspects to completion of the Park and fit the key aspects of desirable recreational projects specified in the *2012 Process Plan*. These proposed public access and management components complement the restoration objectives at the Milltown site by assisting in the management of public access/use. The remaining \$50,000 would be for removal of the remaining portions of the Stimson Dam at Bonner to eliminate this recreational hazard to river floating (abstract #G3b).

The \$3 million proposed pedestrian bridge (abstract #G3a) is not included in this restoration plan because it offers minimal, if any, resource benefits, is high cost with uncertain recreational benefits, and is not considered cost-effective at this time because of remaining uncertainties.

In 2018, FWP proposed funding for additional recreational enhancements at the Milltown State Park (#105). These enhancements are access at the Bonner Development Group property that is being acquired by FWP, development of access through the abandoned railroad tunnel near the location of the former dam, and development of water supply at the Confluence area. These projects will increase public access to the restored reservoir area and are considered to be cost-effective, are important aspects to increase access to the Park and fit the key aspects of desirable recreational projects requested in 2018. Due to lack of available funds to allocate, in 2018, the State did not allocate funding to assist with completion of this project.

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<sup>5</sup> Past approved UCFRB Restoration Funds for recreational access features at the Milltown State Park total about \$1.6 million (see Table B-2, Appendix B) of the total \$2.7 million approved for the Park.

In 2023, FWP proposed funding for the relocation of the Overlook trail and interpretive area (#124) due to geotechnical instability of the cliff face where the Overlook trail is located. FWP proposed to relocate the Overlook trail and interpretive area approximately 75 feet from the current location onto a more stable area. In addition, funds were requested to securely block off the old railroad tunnel located beneath the Overlook trail to eliminate trespass into this unstable area. The capital costs requested to complete this work was estimated at \$225,000. FWP also requested additional funding (\$200,000) for operation and maintenance of the Milltown State Park. In 2023, the State allocated \$225,000 for the capital improvements associated with the relocation of the Overlook trail interpretive area, and closure of the railroad tunnel.- The State also requires that the FWP provide a minimum of a 25% match to this funding allocation or \$55,230. The State also requires confirmation from FWP the infrastructure built with UCFRB Restoration Funds will be maintained and operated with non-State of Montana natural resource damage funds.

Fishing Access Sites: In 2012, funding was approved for \$1 million to be allocated for the construction of or upgrade of up to ten fishing access sites along the Clark Fork River mainstem from Warm Springs Ponds to Milltown, with about \$850,000 for site developments such as park areas, latrines, and boat launches, and \$150,000 for land acquisitions/easements (abstract #G2a). Of the ten sites, six are already located on publicly-owned lands. These fishing access sites were all identified in the State's guidance of encouraged recreational projects in the *2012 Process Plan*. The criteria used for site selection and funding estimates are well-founded based on other State fishing access sites statewide. While FWP has the ability to acquire and manage fishing access sites, FWP is not required by law nor funded through its legislatively appropriated budget for these proposed activities. The FWP plans to complete 1 to 3 FAS per year.

In 2018, due to complications, delays, permitting and social issues, increases in construction costs and underestimating the 2012 actual costs of acquisition and development of FASs, FWP requested an additional \$600,000 to complete the FASs along the Clark Fork River (#102). Due to lack of available funds to allocate, in 2018, the State did not allocate funding to assist with completion of the FASs originally proposed in 2012.

Deer Lodge Trestle Community Park: The State proposes funding of up to \$1.4 million to develop a river side recreational park and trail system within Deer Lodge as proposed by Powell County (abstract #37). Funding would be contingent upon DEQ's determination of adequate completion of site remediation activities associated with the old Milwaukee Roundhouse and that these enhancements do not conflict with DEQ's planned Clark Fork River remediation activities. A possibility of cost-savings exists as part of the coordination with these remediation activities. Major features to be funded include: riverside park development, construction of a pedestrian bridge and boat ramp, and repairs to the trestle bridge. These funded components fit the guidance provided in the *2012 Process Plan* for recreational projects and the end-use as a riverside park fits well with the State's integrated remediation and restoration work in this area.

Drummond Riverside Park: The State proposes funding of up to \$100,000 for the acquisition and trail development proposed by the Drummond Kiwanis Club of the 38-acre property located along the Clark Fork River at Drummond for use as a fishing access and wildlife viewing site (abstract #3). State approval is needed of the due diligence, the title work, and an appraisal documenting a purchase price at or below fair market value. In addition, funding would also be dependent on FWP's involvement in developing a management plan for the property to ensure protection of the nearby great blue heron rookery from disturbance. While a nearby fishing access site does exist, the expanded recreational and resource benefits of this acquisition are considered commensurate with costs.

### 2018 Trails Master Plan

The Powell County Planning Department proposes funding \$120,000 for the development of a trails master plan for Powell, Anaconda Deer-Lodge and Granite counties (#103). The County would hire a contractor to manage the project across the tri-county region. The contractor would evaluate existing recreational-focused master plans, interview stakeholders and potential partners, conduct an inventory of current developments and proposed restoration activities to produce a visionary document with different options and alternatives to enhance existing recreational projects. The final document would highlight potential linkages and high-priority areas, as well as increase coordination and dialogue between partners and stakeholders. Potential project partners may include the Anaconda Sportsmen, Powell County Parks Board and Trails Subcommittee, Anaconda Trails Society, Granite County, Deer Lodge County, MT DEQ, MT FWP, MT DNRC, the National Park Service. Due to lack of available funds to allocate, in 2018, the State did not allocate funding to assist with completion of this project.

### 2018 Anaconda Trail

The Anaconda Valley Trail Assoc. proposes funding \$200,000 to be allocated to the West Valley Trail in Anaconda (#104). The trail will be located on the remediated railroad bed, now owned by Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) that is parallel to Montana Highway 1. The trail is a \$500,000 project and is included in the MDT plan. MDT will grant the West Valley Trail an indefinite easement and complete the construction. The \$200,000 requested from the Restoration Fund would be for supplies and materials. Due to lack of available funds to allocate, in 2018, the State did not allocate funding to assist with completion of this project.

### 2023 Multi-County Recreational Corridor

In 2023, Powell County, in association with Granite, Deer Lodge, and Silver Bow counties, proposed to complete a recreational corridor planning process to utilize existing recreational features and plan for new features to connect a corridor from Warm Springs to Drummond (#122). This planning process is part of a larger plan to connect the recreational features from Butte to the Idaho border. Powell County requested \$210,900 for the proposed project planning with the anticipation that a portion of the funding could go to implementation. This project coordinates with funding provided to Powell County in 2012 for the Old Yellowstone Trail as well as the Silver Bow Creek Greenway trail system. Powell County indicates they have requested over \$600,000 in grant funding from other sources for this project. In 2023, the State allocates \$210,900 to Powell County for this project. The State also requires Powell County to provide a minimum of 25% match (or \$52,725) to this funding allocation. The State also requires confirmation from the Powell



County the infrastructure built with UCFRB Restoration Funds will be maintained and operated with non-State of Montana natural resource damage funds.

## **5.2.2 Recreational Enhancements in Priority 1 and 2 Resource Areas**

Hafner Dam and Washoe Parks: The remaining funding of \$1.5 million would be allocated to recreational improvements at the Hafner Dam or Washoe Park that were proposed by Anaconda Deer Lodge County and the Washoe Park Foundation (abstract #25). The State worked with these entities to identify which of the requested \$6.8 million in recreational enhancements for these two areas could be funded with this \$1.5 million.<sup>6</sup> This required an analysis of what enhancements best fit the funding requirements of being natural-resource based and of resource benefit. This project was completed in 2017.

The other recreational projects proposed via the concept proposals submitted by the public or generated by the state for Priority 1 and 2 resource areas were proposed fishing access sites on the Little Blackfoot River and Flint Creek. FWP proposed one fishing access site on the Little Blackfoot River for an estimated budget of \$82,000 (abstract #G2b), and four fishing access sites on Flint Creek for an estimated \$328,000 (abstract #G2c). The State believes that this conceptual project is of lower priority than the Hafner/Washoe proposal given the latter project's proximity to a large community and substantial project development efforts already completed. Funding of this fishing access site could be accomplished with any leftover funds that remain from the \$1 million proposed for development/implementation of the fishing access sites on the Clark Fork River.

## **5.2.3 Summary of Proposed Recreation Projects and Funding**

Pursuant to provisions of the *2011 Long Range Guidance Plan* and the *2012 Process Plan*, funding of recreational projects will come from either the Aquatic or Terrestrial Priority Funds based on the proportion of the project costs attributable to aquatic or terrestrial restoration. Table 5-1 provides a further budget breakdown for each of the proposed recreational enhancement projects based on the State's judgment of these proportional benefits. All the proposed recreational enhancement projects were primarily aquatic-related, rather than terrestrial-related.

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<sup>6</sup> The proposed budget for Washoe/Hafner proposals was not provided in the initial 2012 abstract submittal. Via supplemental information provided to the NRDP dated 8/13/12, ADLC/Washoe Park Foundation outlined \$2.7 million for potential NRD funding for the Hafner Dam project and \$4.1 million for the Washoe Park area.

**Table 5-1. Summary of Proposed Recreational Enhancements**

<b>2012 Abstract ID #</b>	<b>Proposed Recreational Enhancements</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Amount</b>	<b>Aquatic Priority Funds</b>	<b>Terrestrial Priority Funds</b>
G3a, b, c	Milltown State Park <u>Ongoing, 2023</u>	\$2,450,000	75% - \$1,837,500	25% - \$612,500
G3a	Bonner Dam Removal <u>Completed</u>	\$50,000	100% - \$50,000	\$0
G2a	Clark Fork River Mainstem Fishing Access Sites* <u>Ongoing 2023</u>	\$1,000,000	100% - \$1,000,000	\$0
37	Deer Lodge Trestle Park <u>Completed</u>	\$1,400,000	75% - \$1,050,000	25% - \$350,000
3	Drummond Riverside Park <u>Completed</u>	\$100,000	50% - \$50,000	50% - \$50,000
25	Washoe and Hafner Dam Parks <u>Completed</u>	\$1,500,000	50% - \$750,000	50% - \$750,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6, 500,000</b>	<b>\$4,737,500</b>	<b>\$1,762,500</b>
<b><u>2018 Abstract ID#</u></b>				
102	FWP FAS	\$0	\$0	
103	Trail Master Plan	\$0	75% - \$0	25% - \$0
104	Anaconda Trail	\$0	50% - \$0	50% - \$0
105	Milltown State Park	\$0	75% - \$0	25% - \$0
<b><u>2023 Abstract ID#</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed Recreational Enhancements</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed Funding Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Aquatic Priority Funds</u></b>	<b><u>Parrot Reimbursement Funds</u></b>
<u>122</u>	<u>Multi County Trail</u>	<u>\$210,900</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>0%</u>
<u>123</u>	<u>SBC Greenway Trail</u>	<u>\$2,500,000</u>	<u>20% - \$500,000</u>	<u>80% - \$2,000,000</u>
<u>124</u>	<u>Milltown State Park</u>	<u>\$225,000</u>	<u>100%</u>	
	<b><u>2023 TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>\$2,935,900</u></b>		

*\*As set forth in Section 5.2.2, fishing access site locations could be considered on the Little Blackfoot River and Flint Creek, should leftover funds be available after development/implementation of suitable fishing access sites on the Clark Fork River mainstem.*

### **Implementation of Proposed Recreational Projects**

The State will coordinate with the entities that proposed the recreation projects listed in Table 5-1 to accomplish project development and implementation of those projects. All of these entities, with the exception of the Drummond Kiwanis Club, are county or state governmental entities. Section 6 provides further details on how this work would be accomplished through contractual agreements with these entities. For most of the proposed projects, the cooperating entity only sought NRD funding for the project implementation components, with project

management costs to be covered by other funds. Consistent with the acquisition process set forth in Section 6, easement/acquisitions would require subsequent consideration by the Advisory Council, Trustee Restoration Council, and public, and then approval by the Governor following completion of needed title and appraisal work.

### **5.3 Education**

#### **Clark Fork Watershed Education Program**

In 2023, the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program proposed \$2.2 million in funding to continue the Program's education component for another four years (#125). This funding would continue to educate the students of the basin and provide time for the Program to develop its long-term funding strategy to make it a self-sustaining program. CFWEP's funding previously was through the Final Process Plan where \$4 million was placed into a separate fund to be allocated to the program for funding a minimum of 10 years and maximum of 20 years. In 2023, the State allocates \$1,000,000 to CFWEP to continue its education program for a minimum of two years through the 2025/2026 school year. The State also requires that CFWEP provide a minimum of 50% in matching funds per year.