

**FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATION**

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

- A. Applicant Name: Mountain River Consulting L.L.C.
- B. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 84
- C. City: Trego State: MT Zip: 59934
- Telephone: (406) 882-4752 E-mail: unclebuds@interbel.net
- D. Contact Person: Todd Butts
- Address if different from Applicant: _____
- City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
- Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____
- E. Landowner and/or Lessee Name (if other than Applicant): Weyerhaeuser Company
- Mailing Address: 2050 US Highway 2 W
- City: Kalispell State: MT Zip: 59901
- Telephone: (406) 892-6368 E-mail: Brian.sugden@weyerhaeuser.com

II. PROJECT INFORMATION*

- A. Project Name: Thompson River Riparian Restoration
- River, stream, or lake: Thompson River
- Location: Township: 25N Range: 26 & 27W Section: 8, 18, & 24
 Latitude: 47.9098 Longitude: -115.0300
- County: Sanders
- B. Purpose of Project:
- The overall purpose of this project is to improve riparian vegetation conditions, summertime stream temperatures, improve instream fish habitat, improve migratory habitat, and the quality of connectivity among local populations of bull and cutthroat trout. The proposed project is within the Thompson River Conservation Easement Area.
- C. Brief Project Description: _____

The project will improve both fish populations and fishing in the upper Thompson River by improving the contribution of the inner riparian vegetation community to the aquatic community. This improvement will be in the form of lower summer stream temperatures, and improved inner riparian terrestrial insect production. To what extent is somewhat difficult to predict, but there can be no argument that a healthy and vigorous inner riparian vegetation community will have a positive impact on fish populations and fishing.

D. Will the project increase public fishing opportunity for wild fish and, if so, how?:

The project could increase public fishing opportunities for wild fish if the improvement in the inner riparian vegetation community translates into more wild fish in the river. Currently the upper Thompson river has both wild and non-native fish species. Although I believe that the fish community as a whole will be positively impacted by improving the condition of the inner riparian vegetation, it would be unreasonable for me or anyone else to state that the fishing opportunities for wild fish would for sure be increased as a result of this project.

E. The project agreement includes a 20-year maintenance commitment. If you are unable to meet this commitment, please explain why:

Weyerhaeuser as both maintained and expanded this project since its inception in 2003. However, it is impossible to say that Weyerhaeuser would be able to honor that maintenance commitment considering the multiple variables including budget and land ownership that could come into play in the future. I can say that Weyerhaeuser will maintain the project as long as the retain ownership of the land. The project area is within the Thompson-Fisher Conservation Easement, and will remain so in perpetuity.

F. What was the cause of habitat degradation in the area of this project and how will the project correct the cause?:

Cattle grazing, and clearing of native riparian vegetation to create riparian hay and pasture lands were the original cause of the habitat degradation. The riparian areas within this project are fenced, and are no longer grazed, or cultivated for hay production. Both the fencing, and land management strategies currently in place within the project area will continue to remain in place into the foreseeable future.

G. What public benefits will be realized from this project?:

Public benefits which will be realized from this project include a healthy and vigorous inner riparian plant community, improved contribution from the riparian community to the aquatic community, lower stream temperatures, improved streambank stability, improved fish habitat, and improved water quality.

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

No. The water and/or property rights belonging to the private land which is adjacent to the riparian plots in section 24, will not be impacted by this project.

I. Will the project result in the development of commercial recreational use on the site?: (explain):

No. The entire project area lies within the Thompson-Fisher conservation easement. The conservation easement does not allow for the development of commercial recreational use on the site.

J. Is this project associated with the reclamation of past mining activity?:

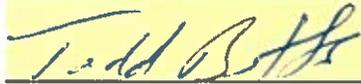
No.

Each approved project sponsor must enter into a written agreement with the Department specifying terms and duration of the project.

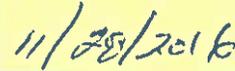
IV. AUTHORIZING STATEMENT

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:



Sponsor (if applicable):



***Highlighted boxes will automatically expand.**

**Mail To: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Habitat Protection Bureau
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701**

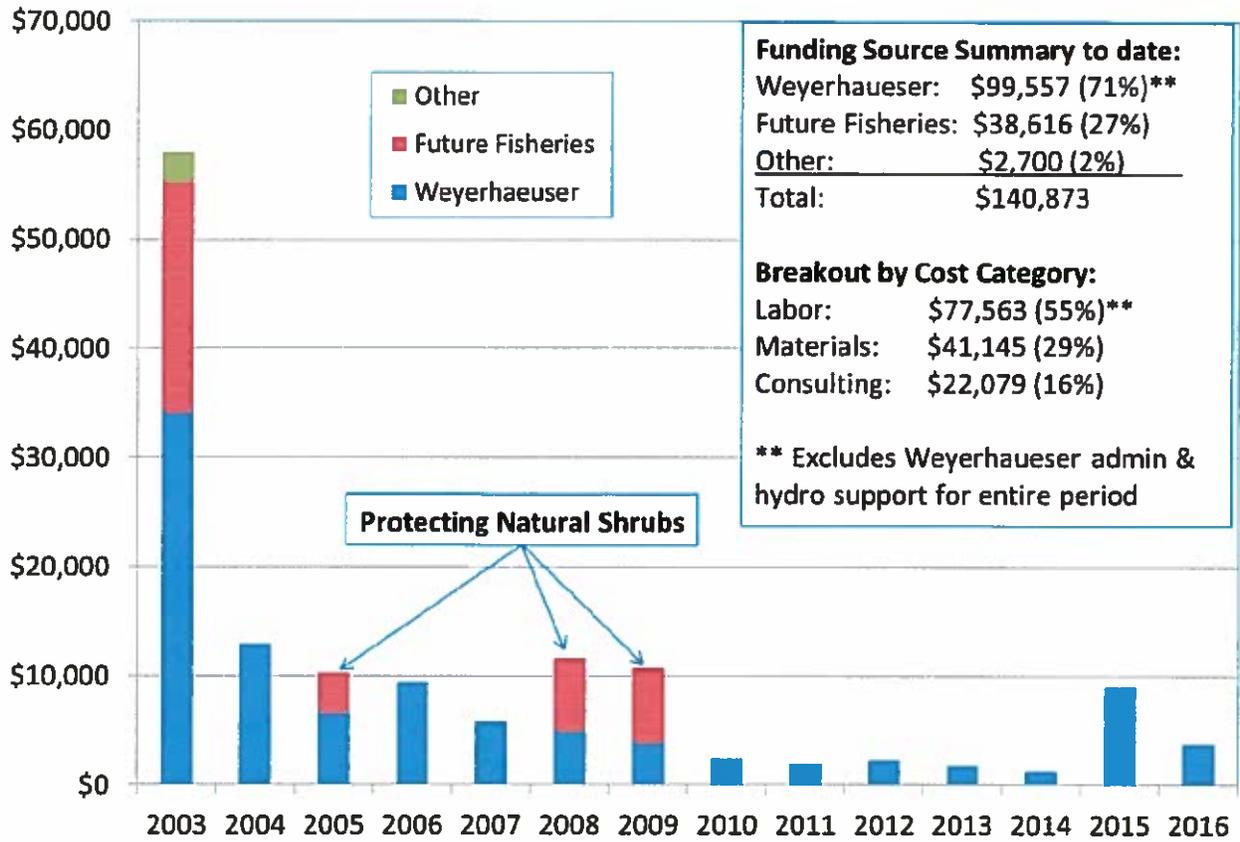
**E-mail To: Michelle McGree
mmcgree@mt.gov
(electronic submissions MUST be signed)**

**Incomplete or late applications will be returned to applicant.
Applications may be rejected if this form is modified.**

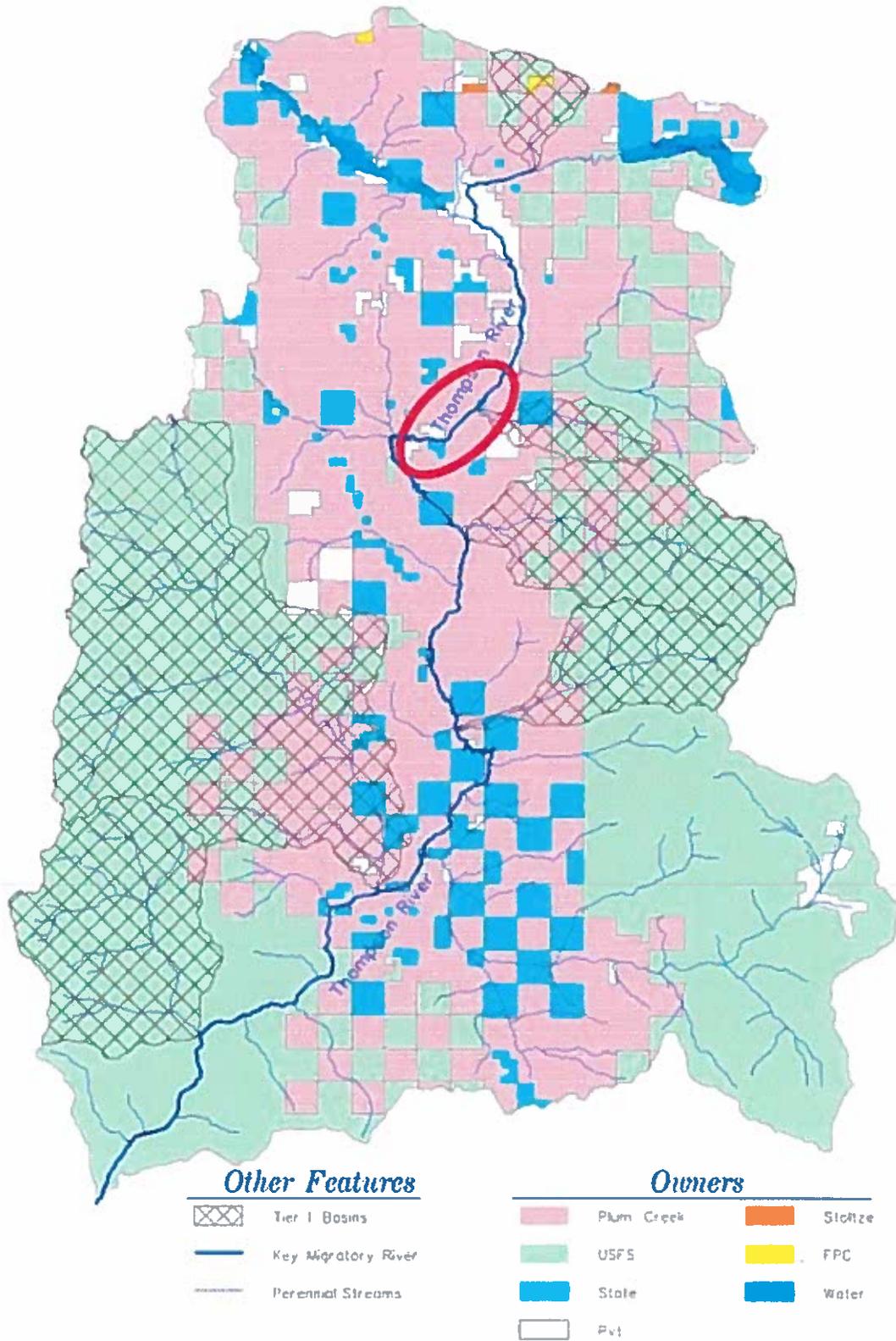
*****Applications may be submitted at anytime, but must be received by the Future Fisheries Program office in Helena before December 1 and June 1 of each year to be considered for the subsequent funding period.*****

Attachment A – Thompson River Riparian Restoration Project expenditure by source, year, and category, 2003-2016.

Thompson River Restoration Expenditures by Year by Source



Attachment C. Location of project in Thompson River Basin.





Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Ryan Kreiner
Lower Clark Fork River Fisheries Biologist
PO Box 148
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
406.827.9320

Dear Michelle McGree:

I am writing this letter in support of the Thompson River Riparian Restoration project proposed for the upper Thompson River in Sanders County, Montana. The applicant, Mountain River Consulting L.L.C. and Weyerhaeuser, requests \$5,000 of the total project cost of \$10,000 from Future Fisheries.

The Thompson River is the Lower Clark Fork River's most popular trout fishery accounting for approximately 13,000 angler days in 2015. It is also home to several strong Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout populations. Temperature and sediment in the upper river have been identified as limiting factors for trout populations, and this project is an attempt to address those issues. Historically, agricultural clearing and riparian timber harvest have removed much of the streamside vegetation. Additionally, the Thompson River is heavily roaded and a stronger riparian forest will help dissipate sediment delivery.

The proposed project is a continuation of past revegetation work. The current proposal would:

1. Plant/protect more Alder shrubs in the inner riparian between existing plots in order to "connect" plots.
2. Supersize browse protectors on the best of the shrubs in the inner riparian of the existing plots (we have already done some of this).
3. Continue maintenance/expansion of the protection of naturals on the upstream end of the project (Murr Creek to below Shroder Creek bridge).

I encourage you to contact me with any questions about the project. I have worked closely with the project applicants and can assure you they are dedicated to improving the riparian condition of the Thompson River.

Sincerely,

Ryan Kreiner



Location • 2050 Hwy 2 West • Keispeil, Montana, 59901

406-892-6368

brian.sugden@weyerhaeuser.com

November 22, 2016

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Habitat Protection Bureau
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Future Fisheries Review Committee,

Subject: Thompson River Restoration Project

We are writing in enthusiastic support of the Future Fisheries Grant request by Todd Butts with Mountain River Consulting. The Thompson River Restoration Project has been in progress for 13 years, and has been a fantastic success and partnership. With grazing exclusion of the river in the early 1990s, followed by the shrub planting, and protection of naturals, the recovery on the upper river has been dramatic. Every year the number of fly-fisherman present on the river continues to increase. Plum Creek and now Weyerhaeuser has been financially committed to the project since its inception and has ensured that necessary maintenance has been conducted. The Future Fisheries program has made four previous grants to this project (2003, 2005, 2008, and 2009) totaling \$38,616. Your committee got a first-hand look at the project during a field inspection in 2009, and the work was well received. While we will continue to ensure maintenance of what we have accomplished, Todd is looking to make another "push" to expand the shrub community using methods that have been validated over the past 13 years of the project.

We hope that our successful collaboration with Montana FWP and the Future Fisheries Program can continue with a 2017 grant on this project.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian D. Sugden".

Brian Sugden
Forest Hydrologist