

Future Fisheries Improvement Program Funding Recommendations- Summer 2026

009-2026 Cameron Creek Beaver Mimicry (Ravalli County).

Cameron Creek is a tributary to the East Fork Bitterroot River located about 3 miles northeast of Sula, where the channel is incised with high fine-sediment loads, warm summer temperatures, and limited habitat complexity for Westslope cutthroat trout. The project will install up to 200 beaver-dam analogs along roughly 2 miles of stream, combined with brush-bank stabilization at tall, eroding banks, intensive riparian plantings, beaver-mitigation structures at culverts and an irrigation diversion, and a grazing management plan that protects recovering vegetation. These actions are designed to mimic natural beaver activity by slowing and spreading flows across the valley bottom, rebuilding floodplain connectivity, trapping fine sediment, raising groundwater levels, and increasing pool frequency and riparian shading, thereby improving thermal resilience and spawning and rearing habitat for native Westslope cutthroat trout in the East Fork Bitterroot system.

Project Name	Cameron Creek Beaver Mimicry
Request	\$33,770.00
Match	\$123,447.00
Total Project Cost	\$160,522.00
% FFIP Request	21%
Construction Schedule	Not described
Requested Items	Low-tech beaver dam analogs, brush bank treatments, riparian plantings, beaver mitigation devices, and associated implementation costs.
FWP Notes	FWP supports the project and had all questions answered by applicant.
Panel Recommendation	Fully fund (motion to approve application 009-2026 if riparian fencing is included)

010-2026 Darkhorse Creek Aquatic Passage (Beaverhead County).

Darkhorse Creek, an upper Big Hole River tributary near Skinner Meadows southwest of Dillon, is crossed by Forest Road 381 on an alluvial fan where three undersized culverts and the road prism function as a levee, disrupting natural fan processes, blocking fish passage, and increasing sediment delivery to Darkhorse Creek and the Big Hole River. The project will construct a 46-foot by 19-foot arch culvert upstream where the creek is confined to a single-thread channel, remove the existing road prism and culverts, and restore the riparian fan surface with willow cuttings harvested by volunteers. By relocating the crossing and re-establishing a connected, appropriately sized channel and floodplain, the work is intended to open roughly 2.5 miles of cold-water spawning and thermal-refuge habitat and reduce chronic sediment loading to a drought-sensitive reach of the Big Hole.

Project Name	Darkhorse Creek Aquatic Passage
Request	\$14,080.00 reduced to \$7,500
Match	\$320,728.00
Total Project Cost	\$334,808.00
% FFIP Request	4%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026 / Summer 2027
Requested Items	Arch culvert installation, road-prism and culvert removal, channel and fan restoration, revegetation, and construction oversight.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project. It appears to have a good cost: benefit ratio
Panel Recommendation	Fully fund for \$7,500 (motion to approve application 010-2026 for the reduced ask of \$7,500)

011-2026 Gallatin River Restoration (Gallatin County).

This project targets five heavily used recreation sites along the Upper Gallatin River between Buffalo Horn Creek and Buck Creek on Custer-Gallatin National Forest lands south of Big Sky, where decades of unmanaged vehicle access, dispersed parking, and braided user trails have caused streambank trampling, loss of riparian vegetation, and chronic erosion into a nationally recognized wild-trout river. The proposed work will stabilize eroding banks, restore roughly six acres of riparian habitat with native vegetation, close more than 1,100 feet of user-created roads and trails, and construct designated parking areas, hardened access paths, and boulder barriers that concentrate use in durable locations. By directly addressing recreation-driven disturbance while maintaining public fishing and boating access, the project aims to reduce sediment inputs, improve shading and habitat complexity, and increase the long-term resilience of wild rainbow trout, brown trout, mountain whitefish, and native Westslope cutthroat trout in the Upper Gallatin corridor.

Project Name	Gallatin River Restoration
Request	\$54,229.10
Match	\$269,992.14
Total Project Cost	\$324,221.24
% FFIP Request	17%
Construction Schedule	Sept 2026 – June 2027
Requested Items	Bank stabilization, riparian planting, closure of user created roads and trails, development of designated parking and hardened access points, and associated construction costs.
FWP Notes	Overall a good project for angler access and/or an angler access program. There is concern that the proposed improvements are unlikely to make a measurable difference to fish habitat without instream work.
Panel Recommendation	Partially Funded (Motion to partially fund application 011-2026 for \$12,500 exclusively for the “revegetation” called out in the budget)

012-2026 Hound Creek restoration (Cascade County).

Hound Creek is a key Smith River tributary northwest of Great Falls where vegetation clearing for hay fields, intensive livestock use, and historic beaver removal have produced an incised channel, a 6–8 foot vertical eroding bank that has migrated about 70 feet since 2005, loss of floodplain connectivity, and substantial fine sediment delivery to Hound Creek and the Smith River. The project will realign approximately 910 feet of channel away from the unstable bank, construct new pools and riffles with large wood and 5,000 willow cuttings, create about two acres of connected floodplain and side channel habitat, and exclude cattle from the riparian corridor with permanent wildlife friendly fencing while providing controlled water gaps. These actions are designed to reduce lateral erosion and sediment loading, restore woody riparian cover and floodplain function, and improve spawning and rearing habitat so Hound Creek can better support trout recruitment to the Smith and Missouri rivers.

Project Name	Hound Creek restoration
Request	\$53,524.00
Match	\$154,868.00
Total Project Cost	\$238,392.00
% FFIP Request	22%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Channel realignment, large wood habitat structures, floodplain and side channel construction, riparian fencing and water gaps, and associated construction costs.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project. This is an important stream in an area that has not received a ton of work and has a long term restoration plan.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (Motion to approve application 012-2026)

013-2026 Kamperschroer Spring Creek Resubmittal (Beaverhead County).

Kamperschroer Spring Creek is a spring-fed tributary to the Big Hole River near Wise River that offers cold, stable flows but currently supports only limited successful spawning because earlier channel designs and hydrologic changes left the stream over-wide and shallow, unable to transport fine sediment, with pools filled and gravels embedded. The resubmitted project will narrow and reconstruct roughly 1,600 feet of channel using imported quarry rock and clean spawning gravel, stabilize new banks with salvaged sod, and install mature willow transplants along about 720 feet of pool margins to provide critical juvenile cover and habitat complexity. By matching channel geometry and substrates to current flow conditions and increasing both spawning and rearing habitat, the project is intended to transform this high-potential spring creek into a consistent source of juvenile brown and rainbow trout that support recovery of depressed Big Hole River populations.

Project Name	Kamperschroer Spring Creek Resubmittal
Request	\$88,431.93 <i>Previous award: \$63,076</i>
Match	\$36,600.00
Total Project Cost	New request total: \$124,924.93 Total project cost (both applications): \$366,232.00
% FFIP Request	Resubmittal request: 70%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026

Requested Items	Channel reconstruction, imported rock and spawning gravel, bank sod, willow transplants, and associated construction and revegetation costs.
FWP Notes	FWP agrees that this is a very important project in a high priority area. Travel cannot be included in the ask.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 013-2026) 10 yes, 1 abstain

014-2026 Lower Cottonwood Creek Restoration Phase 1 (Powell County).

Lower Cottonwood Creek, a Nevada Creek tributary in Powell County, has experienced historical channel straightening, floodplain disconnection, irrigation-related dewatering, and riparian conversion that increased bank erosion, warmed summer temperatures, and simplified habitat, contributing to listed impairments for sediment, temperature, and altered flow. Phase 1 of restoration will realign approximately 3,700 feet of channel into a more sinuous, historic valley position, install large wood structures, reconnect floodplain surfaces, implement dense willow and cottonwood plantings, and integrate a grazing plan coordinated with upgraded irrigation diversions and a prospective instream flow lease. These measures are intended to restore channel stability and floodplain function, improve riparian shading and habitat complexity, and expand suitable Westslope cutthroat trout habitat, ultimately increasing wild trout production to Nevada Creek and the Blackfoot River.

Project Name	Lower Cottonwood Creek Restoration Phase 1
Request	\$74,500.00
Match	\$461,164.90
Total Project Cost	\$535,664.90
% FFIP Request	14%
Construction Schedule	Not described
Requested Items	Channel realignment, wood structures, floodplain grading, riparian plantings, diversion upgrades, and grazing management implementation.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project and appreciates the projects broader ecological considerations.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 014-2026)

015-2026 Marsh Creek Restoration (Lewis and Clark County).

Marsh Creek, a tributary to upper Little Prickly Pear Creek about six miles west of Canyon Creek, has been straightened and channelized across agricultural land, with long-term cattle grazing reducing riparian vegetation, increasing erosion and channel incision, and a poorly installed culvert creating head cuts and likely blocking spawning rainbow trout. The project will realign and restore about 1,350 feet of channel through a meadow reach, convert an incised G-type channel to a more stable B-type form, replace the perched culvert with a bridge and cattle crossing, and exclude livestock from most of the stream corridor except for a designated watering area. By reducing erosion, rebuilding riparian cover, and re-establishing fish passage and more natural hydraulics, the work is intended to improve spawning and rearing habitat, enhance connectivity with Little Prickly Pear Creek, and support a stronger wild rainbow trout fishery.

Project Name	Marsh Creek Restoration
Request	\$18,332.50
Match	\$18,332.50

Total Project Cost	\$36,665.00
% FFIP Request	50%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Channel reconstruction, bridge and cattle crossing, livestock exclusion fencing, and riparian planting and stabilization.
FWP Notes	FWP recognizes this project as both impactful and important with a great return on investment, but the application needs a budget and better description of design for consideration.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 015-2026)

016-2026 Parsons Slough Irrigation Change (Madison County).

Parsons Slough is a spring-fed tributary to the Jefferson River near Waterloo Bridge northeast of Whitehall, where an irrigation ditch currently diverts 3–8 cfs of cool water, causing unstable water levels and periodic dewatering in a critical spawning and thermal-refuge channel and entraining juvenile trout into the ditch system. The project will move the remaining irrigation point of diversion from Parsons Slough to a new Jefferson River pump site, retire about 1.3 miles of open ditch, install a buried mainline and risers to supply the existing hand-line system, and formalize a water-management agreement between FWP and the landowner. Eliminating the diversion from Parsons Slough is intended to stabilize instream flows, preserve cold-water refuge, prevent fish loss to ditch entrainment, and improve trout recruitment to one of the most severely dewatered reaches of the Jefferson River near Waterloo.

Project Name	Parsons Slough Irrigation Change
Request	\$36,265.98
Match	\$98,965.98
Total Project Cost	\$135,231.96
% FFIP Request	27%
Construction Schedule	July 2026 – September 2027
Requested Items	Jefferson River pump station, buried pipeline, ditch retirement, power-line relocation, and associated construction and installation costs.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project. It is an important fishery and potentially an impactful project, but it will require a water lease questionnaire to complete the application.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 016-2026)

017-2026 Red Rock Creek Fish Removal Project (Jefferson County).

Red Rock Creek, a tributary to the Boulder River between Butte and Basin, supports a core population of non-hybridized Westslope cutthroat trout that is increasingly threatened by upstream invasion of rainbow trout, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, and hybrids, along with widespread brook trout. The project will construct a treated-lumber fish barrier near river mile 3.4, salvage genetically verified Westslope cutthroat trout from upstream reaches, and implement two years of rotenone treatment to remove non-native and hybrid fish from approximately 10 miles of habitat before restocking with salvaged fish. By eliminating the source of hybridization and securing a large, isolated reach for native cutthroat, the project is intended to establish a

self-sustaining conservation population that can serve as a donor for other Missouri headwaters efforts while maintaining a publicly accessible stream for anglers to pursue native trout.

Project Name	Red Rock Creek Fish Removal Project
Request	\$23,420.00
Match	\$56,545.00
Total Project Cost	\$80,165.00
% FFIP Request	29%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Wooden fish barrier construction
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project, and it meets the long term goals for WCT management.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 017-2026)

018-2026 Red Rock Creek Stock Water System (Beaverhead County).

Along Red Rock Creek in the Centennial Valley west of Lima, beaver-driven changes in surface-water distribution and limited upland stock-water infrastructure have made water supply unreliable in one pasture, encouraging cattle to concentrate in riparian areas and increasing the risk of bank trampling, vegetation loss, and sediment inputs in a primary Arctic grayling spawning stream. The Red Rock Creek Stock Water System will connect an existing 140-foot well to two tire tanks using about 700 feet of pipeline and a solar pump as part of the Centennial Valley Arctic Grayling CCAA grazing plan, which emphasizes short-duration fall use of riparian pastures. Providing reliable off-stream water will allow gates to riparian zones to remain closed outside planned grazing, improving bank stability, riparian vegetation, and water quality and temperature for Arctic grayling and other native fishes while sustaining ranch operations.

Project Name	Red Rock Creek Stock Water System
Request	\$34,250.00
Match	\$34,250.00
Total Project Cost	\$68,500.00
% FFIP Request	50%
Construction Schedule	NA
Requested Items	Pump and solar power system, approximately 700 feet of pipeline, and two tire stock-water tanks.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project and it helps meet the strategic goals within the Big Hole Watershed. More information is requested about the riparian species composition and potential for willow colonization.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 018-2026)

019-2026 Rock Creek Headgates (Beaverhead County).

Rock Creek, a Big Hole River tributary in Beaverhead County, contains three aging irrigation diversion structures that currently impede fish passage and limit the ability of water users to precisely manage withdrawals during low flows, reducing instream flow and access to spawning and thermal-refuge habitat for Arctic grayling and other native fishes. The Rock Creek Headgates project will reconstruct these diversions with new screw gates, squash culverts and flumes sized for fish passage, bed-stabilizing rock structures, and limited ditch cleaning to

ensure accurate measurement and flexible, reduced withdrawals when flows are low. By removing partial barriers and improving late-season flow management within the framework of the Big Hole Arctic Grayling CCAA, the project is intended to enhance grayling and trout habitat, maintain working-lands irrigation, and support a more resilient wild-fishery in the Big Hole system.

Project Name	Rock Creek Headgates
Request	\$48,000.00
Match	\$48,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$96,000.00
% FFIP Request	50%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	New screw gates, squash culverts, flumes, rock bed aggradation structures, and limited ditch cleaning.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project as it helps meet the strategic goals within the Big Hole Watershed. More information is requested about the riparian species composition and potential for willow colonization. Please provide more details on the diversion locations (e.g. aerial maps of each location showing diversion placement).
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 019-2026)

020-2026 Ruby Creek Stock Water System (Beaverhead County).

In upland pastures near Ruby Creek, a Big Hole River tributary, limited stock-water infrastructure forces the landowner either to keep irrigation ditches running or to leave gates open into riparian pastures, resulting in continuous grazing pressure that degrades banks, riparian vegetation, and instream conditions important for Arctic grayling and other salmonids. Under the Big Hole Arctic Grayling CCAA, the Ruby Creek Stock Water System will complete a well-based development consisting of a pump, solar power system, and two stock tanks supplied by about 800 feet of pipeline. By providing dependable upland water and enabling a grazing strategy that emphasizes longer rest periods in riparian pastures with short-duration fall use, the project is expected to improve bank stability, reduce sediment and thermal stress, and support grayling conservation while maintaining agricultural productivity.

Project Name	Ruby Creek Stock Water System
Request	\$20,000.00
Match	\$35,500.00
Total Project Cost	\$55,500.00
% FFIP Request	36%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026–Summer 2027
Requested Items	Pump and solar power system, two stock tanks, and approximately 800 feet of pipeline.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project, as it helps meet the strategic goals within the Big Hole Watershed. More information is requested about the riparian species composition and potential for willow colonization.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 020-2026)

021-2026 Upper Jefferson River Restoration (Madison County).

On the Jefferson River about five miles north of Twin Bridges near the confluence with Hells Canyon Creek, a disconnected side channel, sediment accumulation at the tributary mouth, and repeated gravel excavation and temporary rock-barrier installation to maintain irrigation delivery have degraded habitat, increased sediment disturbance, and limited fish passage into a critical spawning tributary. The Upper Jefferson River Restoration project will reconnect roughly 1,500 feet of side channel, regrade about 1,250 feet of conveyance channel, replace temporary diversion and failing headgate infrastructure with a permanent fish-friendly structure, construct a brush-matrix feature at the Hells Canyon Creek confluence to maintain depth and transport sediment, and stabilize eroding banks along approximately 7,700 feet of river corridor. These actions are designed to restore self-sustaining channel processes, improve connectivity between the Jefferson and Hells Canyon Creek, reduce chronic disturbance, and enhance spawning and rearing habitat and flow reliability for trout in this biologically important reach.

Project Name	Upper Jefferson River Restoration
Request	\$60,000.00
Match	\$1,300,080.00
Total Project Cost	\$1,574,057.00
% FFIP Request	4%
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026 – Winter 2027
Requested Items	Side-channel reconnection, conveyance channel regrading, diversion and headgate replacement, confluence brush-matrix feature, and bank stabilization.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project. It appears to be a good cost benefit, but a more detailed budget is requested. Please provide information regarding the riparian buffer.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 021-2026)

022-2026 Upper O’Brien Creek Restoration Project (2nd request) (Missoula County).

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 (2nd request)
Request	\$25,605.00 <i>Previous award: \$44,222</i>
Match	\$15,000
Total Project Cost	New request total: \$40,582.86

	Total project cost (both applications): \$272,055.08
% FFIP Request	63% resubmittal request
Construction Schedule	Fall 2026
Requested Items	Additional construction funding for channel, floodplain, wood, road, and riparian components of the Upper O'Brien Creek restoration project.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project and it does meet the overall goals of the FWP.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 022-2026)

023-2026 Wasson Creek Channel Maintenance Flow (Powell County).

Wasson Creek, a small tributary to Nevada Spring Creek near Helmsville in the Blackfoot River drainage, historically suffered from severe dewatering, livestock-related bank damage, channel straightening, and loss of channel-forming high flows, which flattened the hydrograph, reduced spawning gravels and complexity, and eliminated Westslope cutthroat trout from a dewatered reach. Building on restoration and a minimum instream flow lease first implemented in 2004, this proposal funds a 10-year agreement to continue a minimum base flow of at least 0.75 cfs and to forego diversions during key spring runoff periods so bankfull “channel maintenance” flows can move through the system. Maintaining both low-flow and high-flow components of the hydrograph is intended to sustain geomorphic processes that sort gravels, maintain pools and riffles, reconnect floodplain surfaces, and support continued recovery of Westslope cutthroat trout populations that rear in Wasson Creek and Nevada Spring Creek and recruit to the middle Blackfoot River.

Project Name	Wasson Creek Channel Maintenance Flow
Request	\$30,000.00
Match	\$130,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$160,000.00
% FFIP Request	19%
Construction Schedule	N/A – 10-year water agreement
Requested Items	Ten-year channel-maintenance flow agreement (minimum base flow and periodic bankfull flows) and associated transaction/implementation costs.
FWP Notes	FWP supports this project. It is an important fishery and potentially an impactful project, but it will require a water lease questionnaire to complete the application.
Panel Recommendation	Fully Fund (motion to approve 023-2026)