



MITIGATION Minute

APRIL 2023

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Before Rattlesnake Creek Dam Removal in Missoula, MT. Photos courtesy of Trout Unlimited.

Rattlesnake Dam Restoration Project Reaches Final Stages

The Rattlesnake Dam mitigation and restoration project has entered its final stages with continued vegetative stabilization, work on trails, and informational kiosks through this summer and fall. The project includes new trail connections and public access points and reconnects ten miles of habitat for fish and wildlife.

The lower Rattlesnake Creek Dam was constructed in 1901 to be the primary water source for Missoula. However, in 1983, the dam was rendered inoperable due to drinking water quality concerns, and the city's water supply was transferred to groundwater wells.

After the City of Missoula acquired the water system and all associated infrastructure in 2017, they undertook a system-wide maintenance review. Based on the age and condition of the dam, there was an unacceptable risk of failure and impacts to property and infrastructure downstream. According to a FEMA estimate, if Rattlesnake Creek Dam had failed, it could have caused more than \$6 million in damage.

The final result was removal of all manmade structures, 1,000 feet of stream channel restoration, and five acres of wetland and floodplain creation. Trout Unlimited has provided a [timelapse video of the dam removal and restoration project](#) which offers a visual timeline of the restoration process.

News from Montana DNRC Floodplain



DID YOU KNOW?

Montana DES State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Sara Hartley (Above), and DNRC Floodplain State NFIP Coordinator, Traci Sears (Right), have worked closely this past year on the June 2022 flood response and recovery efforts. Their collaboration includes agency coordination, floodplain permitting, waterway debris removal, communication and outreach about FEMA programs and mitigation grants. Teamwork makes the dream work.

Flood Recovery and Response Workshops

DNRC Floodplain will host comprehensive flood recovery and response workshop series. Each exercise will build progressively off the previous flood training.

- Flood Exercise #1: Spring Flooding Training – May 18th, 2023, 8:30 – 11:00 am
- Flood Exercise #2: Flood Prep Basics – TBD: Fall/Winter timeframe
- Flood Exercise #3 – Communication and Planning – Fall/Winter timeframe
- Flood Exercise #4 - Community Tabletop Exercise - June 2023

For more information on this series, please reach out to the Montana DNRC Floodplain CAP team.

DNRC Reminds Montanans to Buy Flood Insurance Now

Recent snow melt is creating localized flooding around the state serving as a reminder that large-scale flooding could be in the future. DNRC recently issued a press release reminding the public to prepare and purchase flood insurance.

“Most homeowners’ insurance does not cover damage caused by flooding and many Montanans were caught off guard last year when their homes and properties flooded,” said Traci Sears, DNRC's Flood Insurance Manager.

“In most cases flood insurance must be purchased 30 days prior to a flooding event, so now is the time to buy insurance or check in with your agent for available coverage.”

Flood insurance is available in most parts of Montana through the National Flood Insurance Program for property and homeowners, businesses, and renters. Contact your insurance agent to learn more about NFIP policies. Private flood insurance is also available and may offer different coverage options and price points.

To learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program, visit: <https://www.floodsmart.gov/> or click here to read about insurance coverage and find more contact information: [Why Do I Need Flood Insurance?](#)



TROY DOWNING

CSI

COMMISSIONER OF SECURITIES & INSURANCE
OFFICE OF THE MONTANA STATE AUDITOR

INSURANCE BEFORE & AFTER A FLOOD

FLOODS IN MONTANA

"Our agency stands ready to offer all available resources to help property owners file claims, mitigate future risks, and work with consumers and insurance companies to rebuild these communities."
—Commissioner Troy Downing

Take steps to protect your home, family, and financial security throughout the year, and take extra precautions when flooding is predicted in your area. The best way to protect your home and belongings from flood damage is to purchase flood insurance—don't let your hard work be washed away.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE A FLOOD

■ GET FLOOD INSURANCE

Most homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage. Do an annual "insurance check-up" with your agent to make sure you have the right coverage and amounts of coverage.

■ KNOW YOUR FLOOD RISK

Look up your address in the Flood Map Service Center (msc.fema.gov/portal/search) to learn if you live, work, or travel in areas prone to flooding.

■ TAKE A HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY

Take photos or videos of all major household items and valuables. Documentation may also include receipts and material swatches from any home updates. Retain these items in a safe place because they are important when filing insurance claims.

■ STORE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Save copies of birth certificates, passports, medical records, and insurance papers in a safe, dry place. Keep original documents in a watertight safety deposit box.

STEPS TO MINIMIZE YOUR FLOOD LOSSES

■ ELEVATE AND ANCHOR UTILITIES

Elevate and anchor your critical utilities, including electrical panels, propane tanks, sockets, wiring, appliances, and heating systems.

■ WATERPROOF YOUR BASEMENT

Install a water alarm and maintain a working sump pump to protect your basement. Install a battery-operated backup pump in case of power failure.

■ CLEAR DEBRIS FROM GUTTERS

Make sure that you clear any debris from gutters and down spouts to avoid an accumulation of water.

■ ELEVATE OR MOVE YOUR FURNITURE

When flooding is predicted or imminent, move furniture and valuables to a safe place, such as an attic or the highest floor of your home.

DOCUMENT DAMAGE & START CLEAN UP

■ TAKE PHOTOS AND VIDEOS OF THE DAMAGE

This includes structural and personal property damage on the inside and outside of your home, before discarding items. Remember to take photos of the insides of closets and cabinets. Your adjuster will need evidence of the damage to prepare your claim.

■ RECORD APPLIANCE SERIAL NUMBERS

Take photos of the serial numbers for large appliances, such as washers, dryers, and refrigerators damaged in the flood.

■ KEEP SAMPLES OF DAMAGED ITEMS

Keep samples of carpeting, wallpaper, furniture upholstery, window treatments, and other items for your adjuster. The type and quality of material may impact the amount of your claim.

■ CONTACT REPAIR SERVICES

If the building's electrical, water, or HVAC systems are damaged you should initiate repairs. Consult your insurance adjuster or insurance company before you sign any cleaning, remediation, or maintenance agreement.

■ KEEP FLOOD RELATED RECEIPTS

If possible, provide flood related receipts to your adjuster to document damaged property for your flood claim.

If you have questions or need help with a problem regarding your claim following a flood, contact our Policyholder Services Division at 406.444.2040 or visit csimt.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?

When flooding is imminent or predicted, National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policyholders are eligible to receive up to \$1,000 to purchase loss avoidance supplies like tarps, sandbags, and more.

State & Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HIRA) Updates

State Plan Update:

- Ongoing work on draft plan

Western Regional Plan Update:

- Mitigation Actions Workshop completed Jan. 17-20
- Update status on past mitigation actions
- Continue building new actions
- Ongoing work on draft plan

Central Regional Plan Update:

- Ongoing work on draft plan

Eastern Regional Plan Update:

- Mitigation Action Workshop completed April 3-7
- Update status on past mitigation actions
- Continue building new actions
- Ongoing work on draft plan

Watch for additional HIRA Information coming soon on our website and via email.

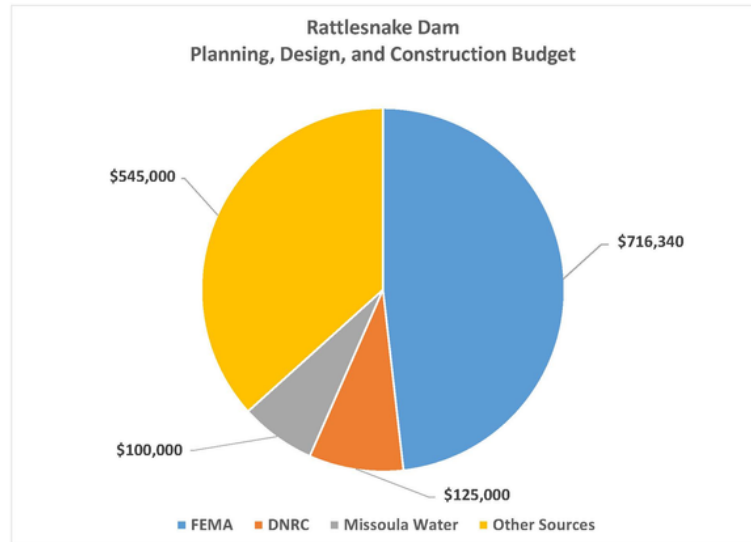


DR-4655 Flood Funding Update

The state application deadline for MT DES to have all HMGP DR-4655 project sub-applications submitted to FEMA is June 14, 2023. Current available funding for the DR-4655 HMPG program is \$8,861,073. This FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is tied to the June 2022 flooding Disaster Declaration; therefore, the seven flood-affected counties -- Carbon, Park, Stillwater, Treasure, Yellowstone, Flathead, and Sweetgrass will receive priority application status. The HMPG program provides funding to state, local, tribal and territorial governments so they can develop hazard mitigation plans and rebuild in a way that reduces, or mitigates, future disaster losses in their communities. For more information, please contact one of MT DES' Mitigation Coordinators.

Rattlesnake Dam

To tackle a project this large, the City and Missoula Water formed a partnership with external organizations, such as Trout Unlimited, the Watershed Education Network, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.



Graphic source: EngageMissoula.com.

The public-private partnership successfully applied for several grants, receiving substantial funding from the Montana DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, and the Open Rivers Fund, a program of the Resources Legacy Fund supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

"WE'VE HAD MORE THAN 25 DIFFERENT ENTITIES SUPPORT THIS PROJECT FROM FUNDERS TO PARTNERS TO SUPPORTERS.

~ Trout Unlimited Program Manager, Rob Roberts

FEMA chose this project as one of its Hazard Mitigation Assistance Division's 2020 Success Stories. According to Region 8 Mitigation Division Director Jeanine Petterson: "It's important to identify opportunities where partnerships can really strengthen local communities. We hope others see the potential and the power of public-private relationships, and that we can serve as an example to remove other aged dams and keep communities safe."

Rattlesnake Dam

Public recreation and sustainable stream access is planned once the site restoration is complete. The project also creates benefits for floodplain water storage through floodplain and wetland creation and reconnecting a migratory corridor in Rattlesnake Creek for Bull Trout, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Missoula Parks and Recreation Conservation Manager, Morgan Valliant said, "This project is not only vital to protecting native and threatened fish species, but it also reconnects major terrestrial wildlife corridors along Rattlesnake creek and meets our communities' public recreation goals in the area."

Rattlesnake Creek Dam is just one example out of hundreds of other barriers that pose potential risks to local communities. According to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, 70% of dams will be past their 50-year life spans by 2025. With the help of the University of California, Davis Center for Community and Citizen Science, the Rattlesnake Creek Dam partnership will be turned into a model for future restoration efforts throughout the Western United States.



Resources:

"Hazard Mitigation Assistance Division Year in Review." Retrieved April 7, 2023, from https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_hma-2020-year-in-review-summary_031821.pdf

"Rattlesnake Dam Removal Project." *Engage Missoula*. Retrieved April 7, 2023, from <https://www.engagemissoula.com/rattlesnake-reservoir-restoration>

Senate, U. (2017). Association of State Dam Safety Officials Testimony of the Association of State Dam Safety Officials to the Environment and Public Works Committee. <https://damsafety.org/sites/default/files/ASDSO%20TestimonyFlood%20Control%20InfrastructureMarch%201%202017.pdf#:~:text=Nearly%20half%20of%20our%20nation%E2%80%99s%20dams%20are%20already>

After the 2020 Rattlesnake Creek Dam Removal in Missoula, MT. Photos courtesy of Trout Unlimited.

Goodbye and Thank You, Hannah!

MT DES wants to thank Hannah Shultz, Mitigation Coordinator, for her service and commitment to Montana's communities.

Hannah was the Project Manager for the Central Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Process.

Hannah started at MT DES in August of 2021 after completing her degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management and working at the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. She also served as an AmeriCorps Member with American Red Cross working as a Community Preparedness Specialist.

One of the things Hannah enjoyed most about working at MT DES was building lasting relationships with County DES coordinators which influenced her decision to move her career toward Community Outreach.

Although she will be missed, MT DES extends our best wishes to Hannah as she begins her next journey with DNRC Water Resources Division as a Floodplain Mapping Outreach Coordinator.



Hannah Shultz, Mitigation Coordinator, MT DES

UPCOMING TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

MT Geohazards Workshop Series

Ft. Harrison, MT -- April 26, 2023; 9:30AM - 4:30PM & April 27; 9:30AM - 11:30AM.

FEMA P-154, Rapid Visual Screening of Buildings for Potential Seismic Hazards
Ft. Harrison, MT -- Thursday, April 27, 2023, 1:00PM-5:00PM

FEMA-395, Earthquake Safety and Mitigation for Schools
Ft. Harrison, MT -- Friday, April 28, 2023, 9AM-12PM

Point of contacts:
Yann Gavillot --
ygavillot@mtech.edu or
Andrew Long --
andrew.long@mt.gov.

DNRC & MT DES Flood Exercise - Save the Date

Focus: Local Emergency Manager & Floodplain Administrator Coordination & Communication -- April 27, 2023. Register at <https://forms.office.com/g/rPLiHY8c2Z>

L0212: HMA Developing Quality Applications

St. Vincent Healthcare, Billings, MT

May 2-5, 2023. Register using the new form at

[Off-Campus-Online-Application-Job-Aid.docx \(live.com\)](#) or use the QR code

On FEMA's EMI application portal, for "Head of Organization," please list Michael Bourquin, michael.bourquin@mt.gov



MT DES EM Forum

May 9-11 at Helena Great Northern Hotel

To see the agenda and register, visit [EM Forum 2023 \(mt.gov\)](#).

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