



MITIGATION Minute

NOVEMBER 2022

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Grant Application Deadlines Approach

Please note the following grant application deadlines. Be aware that some of the opportunities for funding have been extended as noted below. Once you submit your **Notice of Intent**, MT DES Mitigation Coordinators will help you navigate through the grants system.

Upon completion of your application, we will review, rank, and assign projects to the appropriate funding opportunity. Find the Notice of Intent on our website:

<http://des.mt.gov/Mitigation/Mitigation-Program>

State Competitive:

[DR-4608 Winds](#)

Due to MT DES: Nov. 28, 2022
Funding available \$341,704

[DR-4508 COVID](#)

Due to MT DES: Dec. 30, 2022
Funding available \$4,773,990

DR-4623 Richard Springs Fire

Due to MT DES: Dec. 30, 2022
Funding available \$339, 528

Nationally Competitive:

[BRIC22](#)

Due to MT DES: Dec. 16, 2022
See [NOFO](#) for funding amounts

[FMA22 Flood Mitigation](#)

Due to MT DES: Dec. 16, 2022
See [NOFO](#) for funding amounts

Mitigation is defined by FEMA as "...sustained action that reduces or eliminates long- term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects to include the ongoing effort at the Federal, State, Tribal, local, and individual levels to lessen the impact of disasters upon communities, infrastructure, and the economy."



WEBSITE: DES.MT.GOV



Ninemile Creek Restoration

Montana DES partnered with Missoula County and Trout Unlimited to complete phases five and six of the Ninemile Creek restoration project.

Ninemile is a placer-mine impacted stream where large-scale dredge operations from the early 1900s produced tailing piles and streamlined the natural creek.

Placer mining decimated the natural floodplain and historic fish habitat while also reducing the natural aquifer storage in the Ninemile creek drainage.

Restoration will remedy these issues along with benefiting downstream residents by protecting property and crops.

Diverse Partners Make Large Project a Reality

According to Paul Parson, TU restoration coordinator, "Trout Unlimited has been very fortunate to have a diverse group of partners to complete this large-scale placer mine restoration project."

The stream corridor was converted from an incised, straightened creek channel bound by 20-foot-high placer mine piles to a vast floodplain with wetlands and a functioning stream channel.

"We couldn't have restored Ninemile Creek without help from the following: FEMA, MT DES, DNRC, DEQ, FWP, Missoula County, Lolo National Forest, Westslope Chapter of Trout Unlimited, National Forest Foundation, and Ninemile Landowners," stated Parson.

A FEMA grant for \$1.2 million was awarded to Missoula County in May 2020 to assist with completion of phases five and six of the seven-phase project.

Funding for this grant is provided through FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, which is designed to assist states, U.S. territories, federally recognized tribes, and local communities in implementing a sustained pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation program.

"WE ARE PROUD TO PARTNER WITH THE MONTANA DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND MISSOULA COUNTY ON THE NINEMILE CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT. THIS IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW FEMA, THE STATES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN COME TOGETHER TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES MORE RESILIENT," SAID FEMA REGION 8 ADMINISTRATOR, LEE DEPALO.

Restoration Progress

At a glance, phase five included:

- 150,000 cubic yards (13,000 dump trucks) of abandoned placer mine material moved and regraded into floodplain and wetlands
- 5,200 feet of channel construction
- 25 acres of floodplain and wetland creation
- 65,000 willow cuttings installed in the new streambanks and floodplain

"The work on phase six is currently underway and will be completed by the end of October. The major earthwork, mine pile removal, wetland grading and new channel construction is complete. Final grading and revegetation will take place in October," according to Parson.

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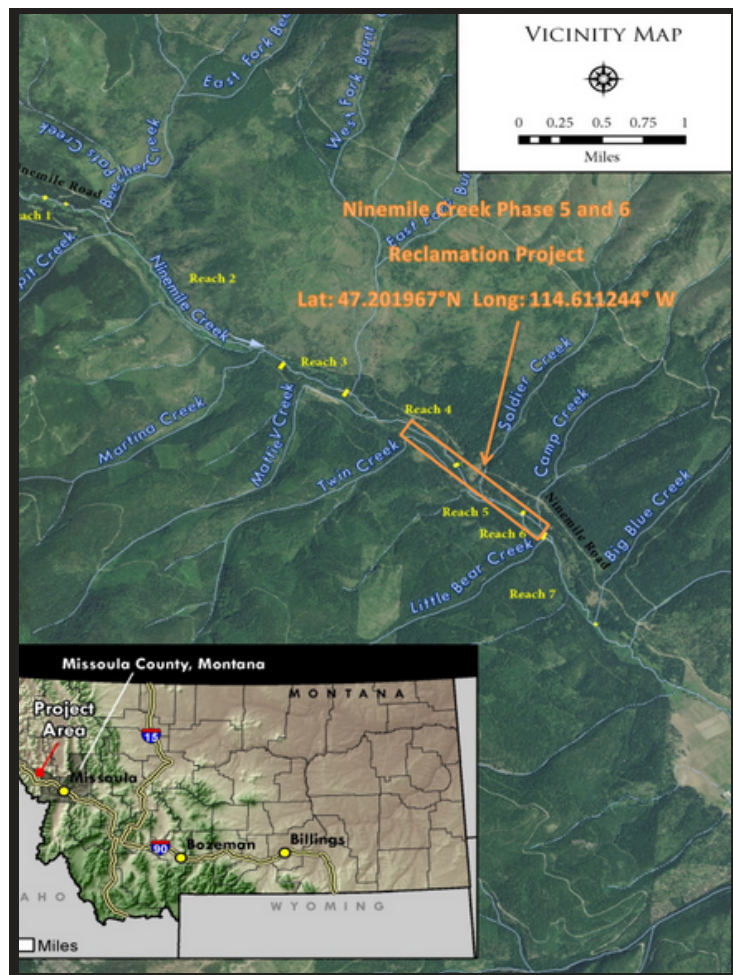
Phases five and six restored approximately 1.5 miles of severely damaged valley bottom along reach four, five, and six. (See project area map.)

But for every mile of restoration, around one-acre feet of additional groundwater now enters Ninemile Creek each day at base flow. The work also has reduced the sediment load by 860 tons a year.

"We only have the 7th phase left to complete the entire project. This will hopefully be funded and ready to go in 2024," said Parson.

"Ninemile Creek used to generate so many trout, people referred to it as a fish factory." "Runoff from mines in the area has impaired the watershed, but they're getting cleaned up, and we're seeing a great comeback," Parson concluded.

Ninemile Creek's restoration is just one of many projects championed by Trout Unlimited which has built a legacy of accomplishments through advocacy and building strong coalitions with multiple local, state, and federal agencies. MT DES was honored to work with Trout Unlimited, Missoula County, and FEMA to partner in preserving Montana's natural resources for future generations.



Fuel Mitigation Efforts Minimize Damage in Grizzly Gulch and Mount Helena Fires

Coordinated efforts among local, state, and federal land management agencies to reduce wildfire fuels helped minimize fire damage in two Helena area blazes late last summer. Fire mitigation kept The Grizzly Gulch fire burn area to about 25 acres and the Mount Helena fire area to about 18 acres.

Governor Gianforte stated in a DNRC press release, "Active forest management is critical to reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, and we're committed to working with our partners to bring more private, state, tribal, and federal acres under management."

Last summer, contractors worked to reduce combustible fuel by increasing the space between trees and raising the height from the forest floor to the canopy. The plan is to burn the piles of woodland fuels during more favorable weather conditions this fall and winter.

The August fires iterated the message of how real the threat of fires can be. "They [the public] not only got to see the tactics that were deployed, but the citizens got to see the effect of active forest management on fire behavior," stated Brad Langsather, open lands manager, Helena Parks, Recreation, and Open Lands Department.

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New Mitigation Coordinator



AMANDA AVARD

Mitigation Coordinator at MT DES

Amanda Avard, military veteran, has been working for the State of Montana for a little over three years. She started as a Preparedness Grants Coordinator, and she recently began working as a Mitigation Coordinator. Before starting her journey with MT DES, Avard worked at MT DPHHS.

Prior to working for the State of Montana, she specialized in commercial interior design and ran her own design business. Avard also taught several classes at Helena College where she was able to share her knowledge and experience with interior design program students. Avard's passion for art started from a very young age, and she has had the honor of having two pieces of work selected for display in Cairo, Egypt.

Avard and her husband of 14 years have two brilliant kids. She enjoys hiking, gardening, trying new recipes, camping, and sitting by a warm campfire.

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Fire Fuel Mitigation

In areas like Helena, where jurisdictional boundaries often overlap, fuel reduction management can be more complicated because national forest land, State, local and private lands are intermingled.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) director, Amanda Kaster, has announced an expansion to the Good Neighbor Authority agreement between DNRC, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest.

"Under the expansion, \$238,000 in funding will treat up to 1,270 acres of Forest Service ownership in the Ten Mile-South Helena and Middleman areas," Kaster stated in a recent press release provided by the DNRC.

The funding is administered through the U.S. Forest Service with money from the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Additionally, the Montana Forest Action Plan and Forest Service 10-Year Fire Reduction Strategy are both aimed at working across jurisdictional lines and increasing the pace and scale of fuels and forest health treatments to address the severity of wildfires, according to a news release from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC).

Through coordinating partnerships at local, tribal, state, and federal levels, Montana is advancing its goals to mitigate natural and hazardous disasters which helps to prevent loss of life, property, and infrastructure. According to FEMA, for every mitigation dollar spent, taxpayers save \$6 in future disaster recovery costs.

This story is based on a news release from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and reporting by the *Independent Record's* Phil Drake, who can be reached at philip.drake@helenair.com or 406-231-9021.

FEMA (2018, June). *Mitigation Saves Fact Sheet*
[Fact Sheet PDF].
<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/IF10244.pdf>

