11/18/2021

Jorri Dyer, Watershed Management Grant Program Manager

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

1539 11th Ave.

Helena, MT, 59601

RE: Bitterroot Front Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring Project

Dear Ms. Dyer,

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality Monitoring and Assessment Section submits this letter to express interest in the Bitterroot River Protection Association’s Watershed Management Grant proposal. DEQ supported the Sapphire Front Project through the Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program last year. Overall, DEQ supports volunteer monitoring groups who educate people about protecting water quality, engage communities in pollution prevention and restoration, and have goals to improve and maintain water quality.

DEQ has identified multiple streams in the Bitterroot as impaired, TMDLs have been completed and the Bitterroot was DEQ’s Focus Watershed the last three years. The Bitterroot River Protection Association has demonstrated success in monitoring water quality that will be valuable in guiding and focusing ongoing restoration projects related to the Bitterroot Watershed Restoration Plan and land management activities being conducted by the USFS.

Despite DEQ’s ability to fund analytical costs, our Volunteer Monitoring Program does not provide funding for staffing and oversight of local monitoring program costs that are needed to complete local monitoring objectives. DEQ’s 604b funding and DRNC’s grant program funding could be used to complement the other to ensure that resources are able to oversee local monitoring efforts and fund analytical costs. This Watershed Management Grant would help ensure implementation of effective water quality monitoring projects. We encourage a joint funding approach for this project.

Sincerely,

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Abbie Ebert, Volunteer Monitoring Lab Analysis Support Program Coordinator

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

1520 E. 6th Ave.

Helena, MT, 59601