

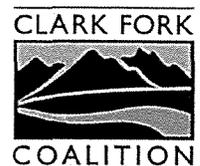
Expanding Watershed Restoration Capacity in the Upper Clark Fork Basin

Proposal to the
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Grants Program for FY 2014
Funding Opportunity Announcement No. R14AS00038



Submitted by: Clark Fork Coalition
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date: 6/6/2014

Applicant: Clark Fork Coalition

Application location: Missoula, Missoula County, Montana

The Upper Clark Fork River watershed (UCF) provides the headwaters that feed the entire 22,000-mile Clark Fork system, which in turn are the headwaters of the massive Columbia River basin in the northwest United States. This basin is key to overall aquatic health in the northern Rockies, as its health and resilience impact the entire Clark Fork River system, including the people and wildlife that call it home. Through this project, the Clark Fork Coalition (Coalition, or CFC) proposes to expand its staffing and capacity in order to address the significant water resource challenges currently impacting the UCF, including chronic dewatering, poor water quality, and contamination from previous mining activities. CFC will do this by reaching a greater diversity of stakeholders to enhance cooperative approaches to water resource challenges, identify watershed needs and develop win-win solutions, reduce inter-stakeholder conflict related to water use, and further study the hydrology and flow limitations in the watershed. The activities described in this proposal will allow for the expansion of an existing watershed group (the Coalition), and will also further watershed management project concepts that are tailored to the reconstruction and improvement of water resources in the UCF. These concepts are grounded in the understanding that landscape-scale restoration work will help counter the broader threats of species extinction, climate change, urbanization and over-allocation of water resources, and will help achieve sustainable resource conservation in the Clark Fork and throughout the Northern Rockies, while sustaining agriculture and strengthening the economy of the basin's towns and communities. This work will be guided by two restoration plans already in place for the UCF, but will also include reevaluation of these plans, updates as needed to reflect the dynamic nature of large-scale watershed restoration efforts, review of program effectiveness and goals, and incorporation of broad stakeholder input into plans and projects to improve water management in the UCF. The project is expected to last two years, beginning in January 2015, with an estimated completion date of December 31, 2016.

II. BACKGROUND DATA

The 3,710 square-mile Upper Clark Fork River watershed is located in west-central Montana (see map) and encompasses portions of Missoula, Ravalli, Granite, Powell, Lewis & Clark, Deer Lodge, Jefferson, and Silver Bow Counties. It flows from the headwaters near Butte and tributaries in the Anaconda-Pintler, Flint Creek, Sapphire and Garnet mountain ranges, 120 river miles down to the confluence of the Blackfoot River just above Missoula. The headwaters of the Upper Clark Fork include designated wilderness areas such as the Anaconda-Pintler, large roadless areas in the Sapphire Mountains-Rock Creek area, and significant blocks of rugged uplands in other regional ranges. These wilderness blocks provide critical migration corridors for an abundance of wildlife species. Large ranches dominate the valleys and population density is low: the towns of Philipsburg, Drummond, Deer Lodge, Anaconda, and the city of Butte holding a majority of the population.

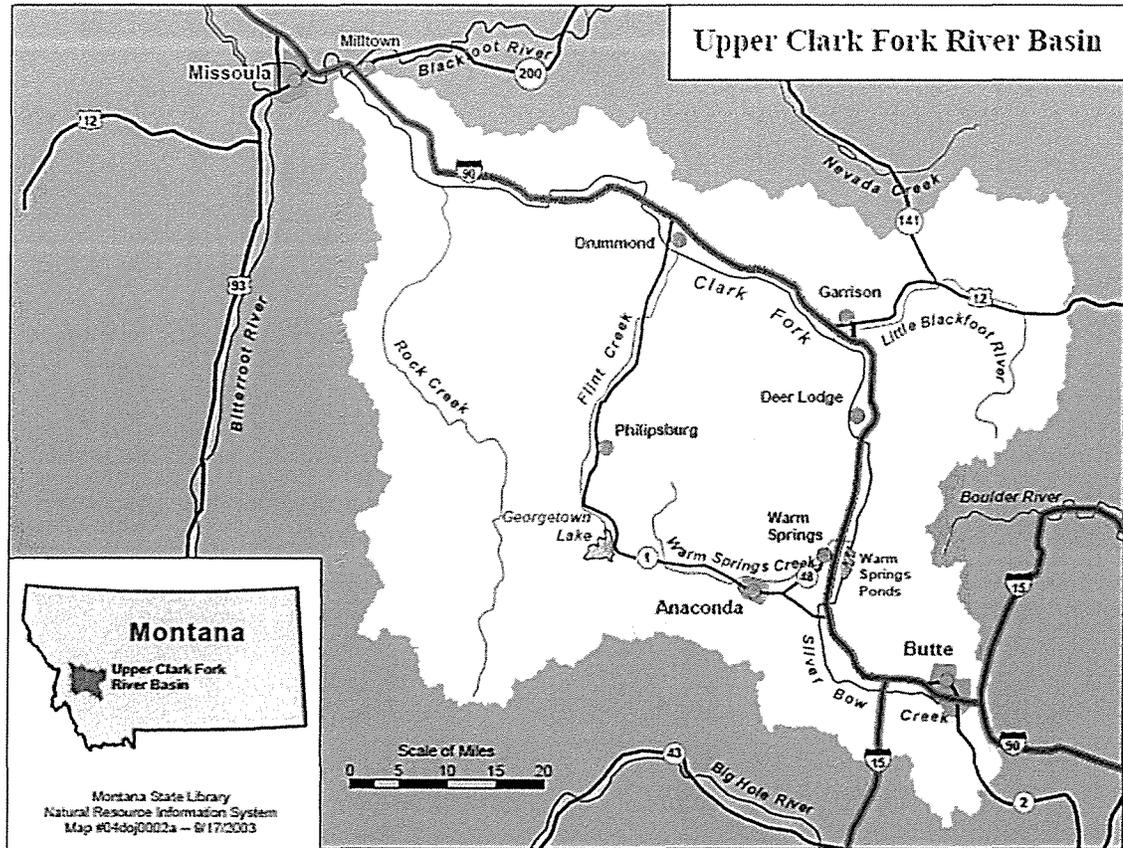


Figure 1

The Upper Clark Fork basin has a 150-year history of intensive mining, forestry and agriculture. Aquatic and riparian resources of the upper basin were severely injured by the discharge of mining, milling and smelting wastes into the river's headwater streams at Butte and Anaconda, especially from the late 1800s through 1911. Contamination from tailings and other wastes severely damaged fish, wildlife, and floodplain soils and vegetation, and high levels of arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead and zinc remain in riverbank and floodplain soils, stream sediments, and in aquatic life. As a result of this contamination, 22 miles of Silver Bow Creek and 120 miles of the Clark Fork River from Warm Springs to Milltown were declared Superfund sites in the mid-1980s, and are currently undergoing large scale cleanup and remediation.

While this mining history is a major part of the restoration challenges and opportunities in the basin, agriculture and forestry are the dominant land uses in the Upper Clark Fork today, and these activities also have impacts on current aquatic ecology issues. Municipalities, industry, and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) also play a key role in ensuring the health of the watershed. For example, USFS manages nearly 50% of the watershed within the Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Lolo National Forests, and national forest lands include a majority of the forested headwater stream systems and provide critical refuges for native fish. Meanwhile, the majority of the land holdings and water rights in the valleys are controlled by agricultural producers, especially beef cattle producers.

The UCF watershed faces a complex set of ecological and restoration challenges as a result of the mix of uses described above. These include:

- Heavy metals contamination, which impact water quality and aquatic life
- Lack of ecological connectivity, which impairs the ability of fish to seek refuge or move seasonally for migration and spawning
- Dewatering of the mainstem and tributaries (Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks identifies 42 dewatered tributaries in the UCF and 87 miles of mainstem river)
- Increased water temperatures caused by dewatering, widening of stream channels, and loss of riparian cover
- Sediment and siltation, related especially to livestock grazing, forest road density, and destabilized stream banks
- Excessive nutrients from municipal wastewater discharge
- Habitat degradation from heavy grazing, logging, and road building practices
- Aquatic invasive species
- Non-native trout out-competing natives, such as federally threatened bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout, a species of concern in Montana

For more than six years, the Coalition and its partners have worked to return aquatic conditions in the Upper Clark Fork River to their full ecological potential. The central challenge is how to successfully and collaboratively restore a healthy aquatic ecosystem in the river and its tributaries, while sustaining productive livestock grazing, irrigated agriculture, forestry and improved recreation.

Through this proposal the Coalition seeks to expand its capacity to improve communication and outreach throughout the basin, increase understanding of ecological conditions and more precisely identify areas of greatest need for restoration, and identify water conservation methods that will encourage collaboration between different stakeholders throughout the watershed.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Overview of goals and approach: Through this project, the Coalition proposes to expand its staffing and capacity in order to meet water resource challenges specifically in the Upper Clark Fork watershed. The goals of this project are to reach a greater diversity of stakeholders in order to enhance cooperative approaches to water resource challenges, collaboratively define the nature and extent of watershed needs and develop win-win solutions, increase collaboration among stakeholders, potentially reduce inter-stakeholder conflict related to water use, further study the hydrology and flow limitations in the watershed, and increase regional buy-in to enhancing and improving water resources. The Coalition shall achieve these goals by increasing staffing in order to reach more stakeholders, increase participation in local water group planning efforts, increase its contributions to identifying problems and devising restoration plans to address those problems, and increase its assistance to local water user groups to bolster watershed-wide capacity to improve water resources.

B. Description of applicant: The Clark Fork Coalition (CFC) is a nonprofit, grassroots watershed restoration group based in Missoula, Montana that works to protect and restore the Clark Fork River basin. Along with its many partners, CFC works to achieve this mission by using a science-based, community-focused approach to engage people in the crucial work of cleaning up and caring for their watershed. CFC implements on-the-ground river restoration work, protects water quality, reviews and comments on policies and proposals impacting water quality and quantity, and works to heal the dewatered Clark Fork River and its tributaries through innovative water conservation activities. The Coalition is guided by a 15-member board of directors, whose backgrounds and interests represent wildlife and environmental groups, recreation and tourism, livestock and agriculture, private property owners, and responsible land and economic development within the basin. The Coalition's work is informed by a diverse base of supporters who include landowners, businesses, students, teachers, families, rural and urban watershed residents, foresters, state and federal employees, environmental advocates, wildlife and fisheries experts, river guides, anglers, boaters, and other water recreationists, industry representatives, local leaders, elected officials, and many others. CFC routinely partners with local, state, federal, and tribal entities, gleaned their input and cooperation on projects and policies that contribute to the ecologic, social, and economic health of the Clark Fork River watershed.

Since 1985, the Clark Fork Coalition has been at the forefront of protecting and restoring the Clark Fork River basin and has a solid record of accomplishments promoting the sustainable use of the Clark Fork River and its tributaries, as well as improving the health and resiliency of the watershed. Key accomplishments include initiating a large-scale cleanup and restoration of the Upper Clark Fork to remove legacy mine waste, removal of Milltown Dam and restoration of the Clark Fork-Blackfoot confluence, rewatering and reconnecting tributaries to mainstem rivers and returning billions of gallons of water to chronically dewatered streams, improving water quality and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat by working with private landowners on stream restoration projects in the Bitterroot, Ninemile, and Upper Clark Fork drainages, and engaging thousands of people in river stewardship through comprehensive watershed education and volunteer programs.

The Coalition's decision-making process intentionally takes into account the diverse perspectives of its members, staff, and board members. While consensus decision-making is not explicitly defined in the Coalition's bylaws, in practice, decision-making at the Coalition is highly inclusive, collaborative, and respectful of the diversity of viewpoints included among its directors, staff, and members.

C. Eligibility of Applicant: The Clark Fork Coalition meets the eligibility requirements of this program in the following ways:

- *The members, supporters, staff, and directors of the Coalition are directly affected by the quality and quantity of water in a watershed:* The people and businesses that make up the Coalition call the Clark Fork basin home. These stakeholders rely on the river and its waters for work, play, and as the basic source of life. When the river and its tributaries are polluted, degraded, or de-watered, the Coalition's members are directly impacted, whether it is loss of water for agricultural use, river closures, or health impacts. The group is fully invested in the sustainable protection of the resource.

- *The Coalition is capable of promoting the sustainable use of water resources:* The Coalition has nearly 30-year record of accomplishments in the watershed, as outlined above. Its many years of success and strong community support across western Montana have made it an influential voice in protecting and restoring the water resources within the Clark Fork basin.

- *The Coalition is located in Missoula, Montana*
The Coalition is an existing watershed group, based on the definition of a watershed group as described in this Funding Opportunity Announcement, as outlined above.

D. Goals: The primary objectives of the Clark Fork Coalition are to protect and restore the Clark Fork River watershed. The goal of this project, and the reason the Coalition is seeking funds through the WaterSMART program, is to expand the Coalition staff by one full-time position in order to enhance its capacity to address water resources issues in the Upper Clark Fork, a critical, but currently underserved sub-watershed in the Clark Fork River basin. The Coalition's objectives for this project include: 1) hiring a permanent, full-time Restoration Specialist to focus on outreach and water resource issues in the Upper Clark Fork drainage; 2) increasing the number of landowners, ranchers, and other water users in the Upper Clark Fork who are actively engaged in improving management of water resources; 3) increasing collaborative efforts to address water resource issues in the UCF, as well as the collective capacity of existing water user groups to address water resource needs; 4) expanding flow characterization capacity, including monitoring and data interpretation, to increase understanding of the hydrology and flow limitations in the watershed; 5) reducing (where possible) water use conflicts in the UCF; 6) improving reliability of water resources, ecological conditions for fish and wildlife, stream conditions, water quality, and instream flow in creeks and streams in the UCF.

Need for the project: For more than six years, the Clark Fork Coalition has worked closely with the state, irrigation groups, and a variety of other entities to ensure the availability of clean water for aquatic ecosystems and water right holders in the Upper Clark Fork. With funding from the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) and the Columbia Basin Water Transaction Project (CBWTP) -- a program of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) -- the Coalition has worked with irrigators and land owners to develop a sustainable working relationship with a diversity of water users in the area during times of low flow. Through voluntary diversion reductions, water delivery and system efficiency improvements, and storage infrastructure maintenance, CFC and its partners have improved the ecologic resiliency of the upper watershed and begun to reduce intra-basin conflict through collaboration and communication.

Through its work with the NRDP and CBWTP, CFC has identified a number of priority areas for restoration based on the extent of water quality impairments, lack of suitable spawning habitat for native and threatened fish (such as the westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout), and severely and chronically dewatered reaches of the Upper Clark Fork River and its tributaries. The Coalition and its partners have begun to identify and address some of the priority streams and tributaries identified in the state's restoration plan (see Figure 3), but currently there is insufficient capacity in the basin to adequately address the diversity of interests and scale of proposed restoration proposed in the Upper Clark Fork River Basin.

With an additional restoration staff member, CFC will be able to forge new relationships throughout the existing headwaters project area and increase the collective capacity to address these watershed needs. The Coalition has the existing administrative support and infrastructure to ensure this additional capacity can be applied as efficiently as possible and result in the greatest gains for the people and water resources of the UCF. Further, the Coalition's partners in the area have indicated that additional staff support from the Coalition would help them meet their goals.

E. Approach: *(Note: The Coalition has already established a mission statement, bylaws, and articles of incorporation, and has hired staff to carry out its work.)*

- *Information Gathering & Identifying Problems and Needs in the Watershed:* To plan for future restoration efforts within the Upper Clark Fork basin it is important to identify the areas of the greatest need. As part of its outreach efforts, the Coalition will collect additional streamflow and ditch seepage data to help all entities and partners working in the UCF to determine where the greatest limiting factors exist in the river system, and which irrigation groups have the most potential for high impact flow restoration work. Although a few USGS gaging sites exist on the Clark Fork River and its tributaries, these datasets often present an incomplete picture of where the greatest flow limitations exist and which water groups operate the largest irrigation systems. CFC will conduct additional flow and temperature monitoring in the Upper Clark Fork River and major tributaries to record a snapshot of the discharge along the length of the river during late summer, as well as longitudinal measurements to determine seasonal periods of lowest flows. After areas of highest concern are identified, CFC will work with funders, partners (i.e. landowners, irrigators, and conservation groups), as well as local, state, and federal wildlife and regulatory entities to fine-tune the existing basin-wide watershed restoration plan to identify amenable partners for potential projects, and to establish multi-season monitoring sites to determine areas of where water conservation activities are needed most.

- *Conducting Outreach and Expanding Membership:* CFC will meet with local landowners, water user groups, local conservation organizations, and the local Conservation District to expand the number of stakeholders engaged in stream restoration and water conservation projects in the UCF. The Coalition will make every effort to ensure the diversity of views and needs in the Deer Lodge Valley are accounted for in these outreach efforts, and will ensure transparency and open communication to foster an atmosphere of cooperation and communication between diverse interests in the watershed. Outreach will include introducing stakeholders to the organization and its work (and its partners' work) in the UCF, introducing project managers, and discussing watershed needs and the kind of services the Coalition and its partners can offer. (Services include planning water management strategies and conveyance efficiency improvements, serving as a liaison to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to increase on-ranch efficiency, assistance in acquiring funding, and providing information on the current Superfund clean-up.)

Some of this outreach is already underway. For example, the Coalition has begun conversations with the West Side Ditch Company (see attached letter of support), the largest

water user group in the Upper Clark Fork, to assist them in collecting more information about their proposed piping project, securing unanimous support from their members, and investigating potential funding avenues. This water user group does not have any paid staff and is actively seeking the assistance of the CFC to assist them in meeting their goals of modernizing their canal system and improving the river flows that are affected by their current use.

Funding from the WaterSMART program will help the Clark Fork Coalition continue to meet with irrigation groups, as well as hold one-on-one conversations with stakeholders in the area in order to increase communication about restoration projects and needs, reduce potential conflicts, increase the number of individuals and groups working to improve water resource conditions, and increase mutual understanding among water users in the basin.

- *Developing (Refining) the Watershed Restoration Plan:* A number of watershed restoration plans currently exist for the Upper Clark Fork Basin. The Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) *Aquatic Restoration Plan* guides Superfund restoration efforts throughout the headwaters region of the basin, focusing on the cleanup of legacy mine waste and subsequent flow augmentation to work toward a vibrant fishery. This Plan has undergone a number of iterations, its final version adopted in 2012.

The Clark Fork Coalition's *Aquatic Restoration Strategy for the Upper Clark Fork Basin* identifies a broader approach to ecologic rehabilitation throughout the basin. This strategy focuses on integrating science-based ecologic restoration measures with a community and institutional strategy to establish good landowner partnerships. This CFC planning document identifies similar problem areas as the NRDP guide, and emphasizes that the restoration process consists of four basic steps: 1) Assessment and prioritization; 2) Protection of high-quality habitats; 3) Restoration of impaired habitats; and 4) Monitoring and adaptive management.

In addition, in 2013, CFC conducted a synoptic flow survey to provide a baseline measurement of present flow along the Upper Clark Fork River. This dataset has been instrumental in improving the hydrologic characterization of one high priority reach of the watershed; it is a baseline understanding from which CFC and its partners are improving. CFC and its partners also maintain regular streamflow gaging stations or project areas on four of the ten streams that have flow limitations to warrant Priority 1 status for restoration by NRDP. And CFC has tackled monitoring and projects at several Priority 2 locations where access has been simple and cooperation come naturally.

What remains to be done is diligent, grassroots, outreach, monitoring, and stakeholder coordination to identify the most effective projects for coming years. Additional streamflow data collection is also needed to track flow rehabilitation and assist in the reallocation of resources as priority areas shift. Further, an expansion of the consistently recorded monitoring network throughout the basin will provide better insights for project availability, feasibility, and efficacy. Funding through the Bureau of Reclamation Water SMART program will allow this work to proceed.

- *Creating a Plan of Action:* Once staff is retained to conduct the outreach and investigation detailed in this grant proposal, the Coalition will create a plan of action focusing on consultation and collaboration with existing and new water users and landowners, further

development of planning documents, and hydrologic characterization of the area, with an emphasis on tracking restoration progress.

- *Developing a Final Report:* The Coalition will complete and submit a final report in accordance with grant requirements.

F. Timing: The project will span a two-year period from January 2015 to December 2016, with an expected completion date of December 31, 2016.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

A: Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope (30 Points)

A1. Watershed Group Diversity: The Clark Fork Coalition's staff, board, partners, and supporter base are made up of a diverse collection of stakeholders comprised of US Forest Service employees, ranchers, partner conservation groups, business owners, educators, sustainable land developers, fishing and whitewater outfitters, tribal members, and economic development specialists. The Coalition also manages and is part-owner of a working cattle ranch located near Galen, Montana in the Upper Clark Fork River basin. The ranch gives the Coalition a real-world understanding of the challenges facing irrigators and land managers in the area, and lends credibility to activities that the Coalition endorses. The ranch also serves as a foothold for communication with other ranchers throughout the region, and a forum for community outreach and collaboration efforts.

The Coalition's member base extends throughout the Clark Fork basin and includes a mix of more urban, recreation-focused interests in and around the city of Missoula, as well as stakeholders in the upper and lower regions of the watershed, which are more typically characterized by agricultural, forestry, and other uses.

CFC has a long history of collaborative work with these various stakeholders. For example, the Coalition works closely with private landowners, ranchers, and irrigators to help impaired creeks throughout the watershed that are located on private lands. It works with conservation districts, weed districts, water users groups, and county extension offices to assist in outreach and education work and to enhance its work with private landowners and ranchers. CFC works with state and federal agencies, who are integrally involved in its restoration efforts, as well as with watershed and conservation organizations (local, regional, and national), who are an invaluable source of expertise. In addition, the Coalition frequently works with business and industry leaders, elected officials, scientists and researchers, educators, local business owners, community groups, youth groups, educators, and many other constituencies.

The Coalition also works closely with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on the Flathead Indian Reservation (and typically includes tribal representation on its board). The Coalition is currently partnering with the tribe on several issues, including large-scale water negotiations with local, state, and federal authorities and water right holders.

In the Upper Clark Fork, the Coalition will continue to work with diverse interests to ensure all key stakeholders are included in restoration efforts. As part of this commitment, CFC recently conducted stakeholder interviews in the UCF to glean more information about needs and concerns among the basin's residents. CFC also routinely hosts tours of its Deer Lodge Valley cattle ranch, offers tours of Superfund cleanup project areas to explain the project and

its potential impact on landowners and ranchers, meets one-on-one with local ranchers (dubbed “Superfund Supper Clubs”), hosts and attends social events in the valley, and recently created an Upper Clark Fork Communications Strategy to help ensure its outreach efforts are successful.

To communicate our efforts (and those of our partners) to stakeholders in the region and to enhance opportunities for discussion and collaboration, the Coalition relies on a variety of media, including newsletters, blogging, frequent e-mail outreach, a newly redesigned website, and appearances on local radio programs. CFC’s work is also occasionally featured in the regional news media, which have featured restoration projects, as well as programs on our working ranch that involve local students in stream restoration and other locally relevant, hands-on projects.

A2. Geographic Scope

The Clark Fork Coalition is well established as a consistent voice for the river throughout its watershed above Lake Pend Oreille. The organization advocates for the health of the river from its headwaters near the continental divide, to its discharge into Lake Pend Oreille, and for responsible land use within its 23,000 square-mile basin.

Specifically, for the purposes of this grant, the work performed by the Clark Fork Coalition restoration team will be focused on the upper Clark Fork River basin, in HUC #17010201. See maps below:

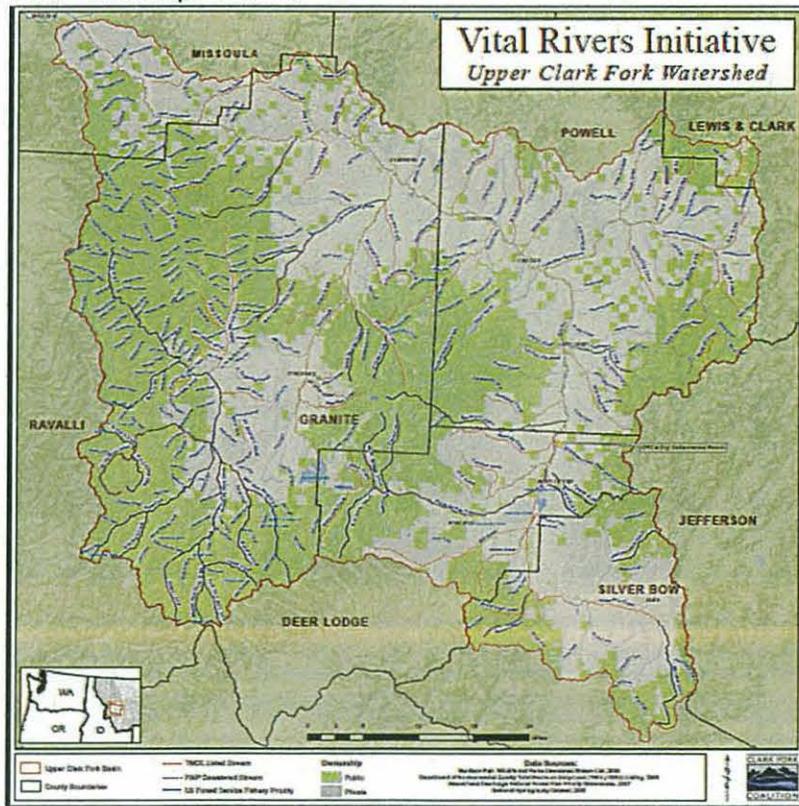


Figure 2 Boundaries of Upper Clark Fork watershed

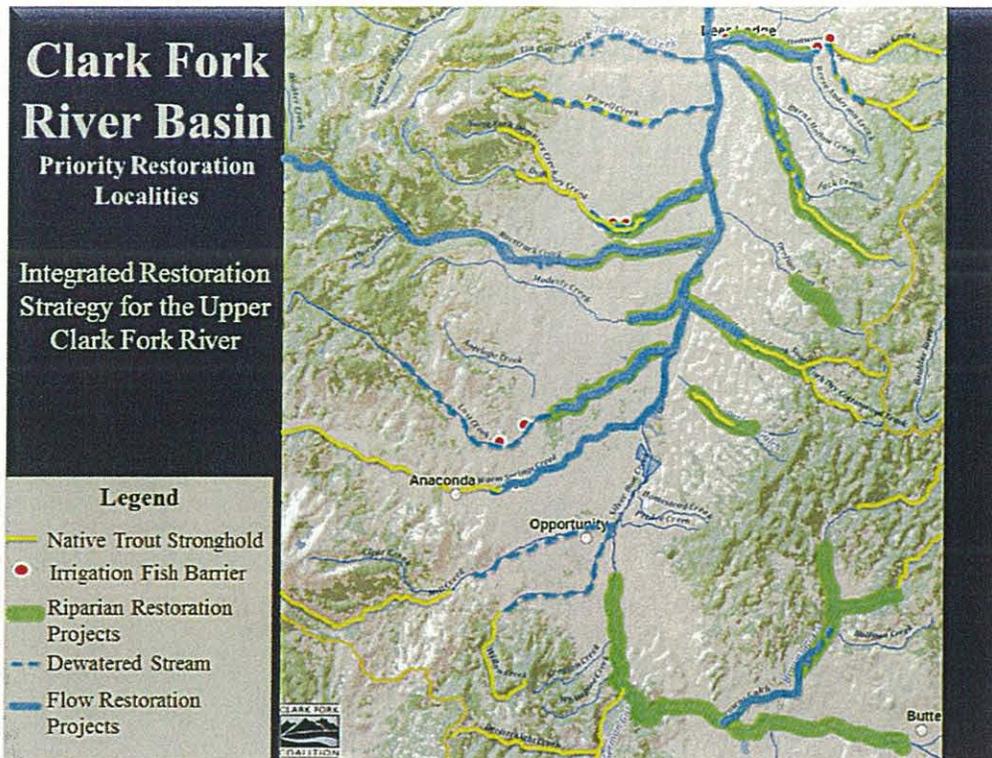


Figure 3 Primary focus areas for outreach and restoration efforts in the UCF.

Extensive restoration infrastructure, such as water monitoring and landowner networks, currently exist throughout the most damaged reaches of the Clark Fork River headwaters, and multiple public and private entities, including the Watershed Restoration Coalition (comprised of local landowners and ranchers), Trout Unlimited, and state and federal agencies, are active in restoration efforts. But additional outreach and stakeholder engagement is necessary in order to address the full scope of water management issues in the basin. Through this project the Coalition will identify and work with additional stakeholders among the agricultural users, forestry interests, municipalities, and industry, focusing primarily on the highest priority tributaries in a 30-mile section of river extending from Warm Springs, MT to Deer Lodge, MT.

To communicate these efforts to stakeholders the Coalition will utilize the outreach media discussed in section IV.A.1. above.

B: Addressing Critical Watershed Needs (30 Points)

B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

The Upper Clark Fork River has been identified by State and Federal agencies as limited by sufficient streamflows and water quality and is a high priority for restoration. In addition to the water quality issues caused by historic mining activities that characterized the region for nearly a century, the river suffers from extreme localized water shortages as a result of inefficient irrigation and over appropriation. In dry years these low flows occasionally lead to intense conflicts over water supply, and frequently degrade the spawning habitat quality for the threatened bull trout and native westslope cutthroat trout. (Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has identified the Upper Clark Fork River basin as critical bull trout spawning habitat.)

This project will address the following issues:

Water Quality: Heavy metals mining and refining in Butte and Anaconda resulted in more than a century of mining waste, tailings, and heavy metal-laden effluent being discharged into Silverbow Creek and other small streams that make up the headwaters of the Clark Fork River. Unsafe levels of arsenic and other heavy metals has been sampled along the stream banks and detected in drinking water miles downstream, and large swaths of the riparian corridor cannot support vegetation due to heavy metal deposits. In the mid-1980s, the US Environmental Protection Agency listed the area between Butte, Montana and Milltown, Montana, along the Clark Fork River as one of the largest Superfund sites in the country. Clean-up of heavy metal contamination along 46 miles the Clark Fork watercourse is underway, and the State of Montana has begun reclamation projects in this same corridor. Currently, through a damage settlement with BP Arco, the State is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in the removal of these contaminated soils and is reshaping the river's floodplain and future.

In addition, aquatic habitat suffers from sedimentation and siltation caused by unsustainable livestock management, destabilized streambanks, and areas of high forest road density. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recognizes 8 streams within the upper watershed as having significant TMDL issues, but the Coalition recognizes that several unlisted streams, such as Browns Gulch and Dry Cottonwood Creek, suffer from suspended load impairment as well. Nutrient enrichment contamination stemming from water treatment plant effluent downstream of population centers in the watershed also contribute to noxious algae and benthic ecology alterations in the mainstem Upper Clark Fork.

Water Supply Issues: Numerous flow studies have identified severe dewatering in the Upper Clark Fork River as an important issue facing watershed restoration experts. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has conducted multiple studies in the region which identify diminished flows as detrimental to aquatic health and categorizes 42 tributaries as dewatered in the Upper Clark Fork, as well as 87 miles of the mainstem river. This work has been corroborated by assessments made in the NRDP and CFC Upper Clark Fork planning documents, and was further confirmed in the 2013 UCF synoptic run completed by CFC.

Dewatering degrades the overall quality of the aquatic environment in multiple ways. Dewatering of the mainstem exacerbates key water quality and habitat issues in the Clark Fork by reducing dilution of nutrients, allowing water temperatures to become elevated, and reducing dissolved oxygen concentrations. In tributaries it contributes to increased water temperature, loss of habitat connectivity, reduced water quality, loss of spawning habitat, degraded environments for native fish (which prefer colder water), and other problems. It also causes problems for agricultural producers and leads to conflicts among water users.

NRDP has identified the highest priority for restoration as the Clark Fork River between Galen and Deer Lodge, Montana, and in conjunction with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks established a 50 cfs minimum instream flow target for that reach of the river. As an example of the work that remains to be done in this area, in 2013, the discharge of the Clark Fork River dropped to as low as 12 cfs below one of the major irrigation diversions in the upper river.

Threats to Endangered Species: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks have identified 275 miles of critical habitat for bull trout (currently listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act) throughout the Upper Clark Fork and Flint Creek basins. The agency reports that native bull trout populations tend to be depressed throughout the region, but that resilient populations are present in Flint Creek and Warm Springs Creek, near Anaconda. A 2010 report by FWP biologists states that it is “important to secure these strongholds [in Warm Springs and Flint Creek] to sustain the genetic attributes those populations may represent. Long-term protection of water quality and quantity, especially satisfactory thermal conditions, are amongst the most important elements of the recovery strategy in the upper Clark Fork River corridor.” Identifying water conservation projects that have potential to improve water temperatures and available habitat will greatly aid in the future recovery of this species.

Evolution of watershed needs and issues over time: During initial cleanup efforts, extensive heavy metal contamination throughout the basin was a top priority of stakeholders and agencies in the UCF. High levels of arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, and zinc precluded a vibrant fishery regardless of flow conditions. In a 1985 report for the Clark Fork River Symposium, FWP biologist Dennis Workman presented results of a trout population survey that evaluated fish density and habitat concerns in the upper reaches of the river. The report indicated preliminary recovery of non-native trout populations after initial water chemistry remediation was enacted in the mid-1970s, and success stories within the basin are already apparent. Restoration efforts in Silverbow Creek have been extremely successful. Once an inhospitable creek due to poor water quality, the stream has been reclaimed into healthy aquatic habitat which now hosts angling for native trout. In 2013 excavation of contaminated soils began as part of the Superfund cleanup along the upper river, and promises to improve riparian habitat and water chemistry over the coming decade.

Despite progress toward the restoration goals of the NRDP and Clark Fork Coalition, the river still bears a legacy of impacts from mining practices, riparian habitat degradation, and stretches of catastrophically low flows. While water quality has steadily improved over four decades, water supply and temperature have emerged as the limiting factors to ecologic resiliency.

B2. Watershed Group Contributions that Address Watershed Needs or Issues

The CFC’s primary contributions to addressing water quantity issues has been and will continue to be through community outreach (bringing together diverse interests) and providing technical assistance to identify projects that restore streamflows and support the diverse needs and uses of the watershed. The Coalition aims at once to reclaim damaged and inhospitable habitat, and to ensure that sufficient clean, cold water is available throughout the year to support a vibrant fishery and thriving local communities. To do this CFC works to both conserve flows, and to improve water quality and ecological resilience, as described below:

Enhance Water Conservation: The Clark Fork Coalition understands the need to utilize irrigation water to sustain agriculture in the Deer Lodge Valley. At the same time it recognizes that many of the irrigation systems in this area could be made much more efficient, thereby reducing impacts to the fishery conditions in these waterways. CFC has met with major irrigation groups

in the area to devise creative ways to balance water uses and fishery needs by improving irrigation efficiency and replacing aging infrastructure.

For example, CFC is working with the West Side Ditch Company, which operates a 13-mile long canal system in the valley, on a possible project to pipe sections of their ditch irrigation system and return the savings to the river (see the attached letter of support). The Coalition has also worked with large irrigation districts to repair diversions, line canals, and install pipelines to greatly reduce maintenance and operation costs while leaving a significant volume of conserved water in the stream.

Through this project, CFC will explore the many similar opportunities in the UCF by meeting with landowners, ranchers, and water-users to discuss and negotiate these potential water-saving projects, which are of increased importance in a time of climatic changes and historic droughts.

Improving Water Quality and Ecological Resiliency: The Clark Fork Coalition has worked closely with the NRDP to facilitate the excavation and removal of contaminated slicken deposits along the Upper Clark Fork River as part of Superfund cleanup, and its Dry Cottonwood Creek Ranch will serve as a testing ground for the first stage of redevelopment. CFC has also initiated efforts on this property to completely redesign the irrigation system to maximize production and water savings to the river. Initial demonstration projects such as this help to improve the viability of agricultural operations while also improving water quality and ecological resiliency.

Rehabilitation of instream flow presents one of the largest challenges in western conservation work, and it is essential that when the water stays in the river, the riparian ecosystem and soil chemistry is conducive to supporting life. CFC leads volunteer riparian replanting efforts, and encourages water lessors to install riparian fencing in order to offset the damage caused by cattle as they drink water directly from the source. CFC is also actively involved in the removal of fish barriers along the stream, and the funding and installation of fish screens on large diversions. Without connectivity between the mainstem river and its tributary spawning habitat, a vibrant fishery cannot flourish. All of these diverse activities combined will serve to improve the ecological resiliency of the Upper Clark Fork Basin.

Reduced Potential for Water Conflicts: The Clark Fork Coalition has worked to reduce water conflicts in the Upper Clark Fork River basin by increasing water supply and by decreasing irrigation demand during the most contentious times of year, although there is still a great deal more work to be done. Water conservation efforts allow for more water in the stream, which serves at once to provide clear and cold freshwater habitat and allow senior water users to exercise their rights. CFC also works to decrease irrigation consumption by offering water right leasing opportunities to irrigators who are willing to temporarily fallow fields during dry year in exchange for crop replacement funds. The Coalition strives to reduce water conflicts through open communication, collaboration, and the know-how and ability to incite large scale infrastructure and efficiency improvements.

For example, the Coalition worked with the Tin Cup Irrigation District to repair and expand an aging reservoir on Tin Cup Creek. The retention structure had been in poor condition and was a public safety concern, and is situated within designated Wilderness. The Coalition team worked closely with irrigators, state and federal agencies, and wilderness advocacy

groups to develop a plan to repair and expand the capacity of the reservoir by several hundred acre-feet. The irrigators benefitted from an affordable fix to a looming water supply issue, and the creek benefitted from a portion of the increased capacity being reserved for instream flow.

One of the main goals of this project is to assist in identifying projects like the Tin Cup Reservoir, and increasing stakeholder communication and investment with the objective of conserving water for use by a wide variety of stakeholders. Through more open dialogue, better information and future investments in key projects, it will be possible to reduce conflict by meeting the both irrigation needs and minimum flows to sustain the fishery resource.

C: Implementation and Results (30 Points)

C1. – Project Planning: The Clark Fork Coalition conducts and supervises restoration efforts throughout the Clark Fork River basin in accordance with two watershed restoration plans: the *2012 Aquatic Restoration Plan (ARP)* put forth by the Montana DNRC Natural Resource Damage Program, and the *2011 Aquatic Restoration Strategy for the Upper Clark Fork Basin (ARS)*, developed by the Clark Fork Coalition.

Each of these plans was developed to assist in guiding and shaping the efforts of the collaborative groups responsible for the reconstruction of the Clark Fork River watershed. The plans include prioritization of different reaches of the mainstem of the river and several of its tributaries based on fishery science from state and federal agencies. The plans identify the extensive water quality contaminations due to previous large-scale mining in the basin. Contamination includes heavy metals, and toxic concentrations of arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, and zinc, which are found throughout the floodplain. These plans also identify roadblocks to the health of the river, such as a large network of unpaved roads, which contribute substantial sediment to tributaries, especially in the headwaters and upland areas of the watershed, and a well-established nonpoint source nutrient pollution issue stemming from wastewater treatment facilities in Butte, Deer Lodge, and Anaconda.

Both Restoration Plans provide solutions to the water quality issues, most of which are dependent upon maintaining and improving available streamflows. The NRDP and CFC plans both point to low flows, high temperature, and significant heavy metal contamination as the primary limiting factors to a vibrant fishery. Both plans detail the need for excavation and active remediation of heavy metals, as well as the critical social element of collaboration and partnership-building that will be necessary to improve instream flow and river health.

While the NRDP Restoration Plan provides an extremely detailed look at the long range restoration efforts within the contaminated Clark Fork River headwaters area, the ARS attempts to identify project goals in specific portions of various tributaries to the mainstem river. CFC and the NRDP Long Range Guidance Plans address water quality issues and flow augmentation projects throughout the basin, beyond the scope of the headwaters. The CFC Strategy adds to this by addressing abandoned road reclamation projects and toxic nutrient levels downstream of population centers.

The restoration projects undertaken by the NRDP and CFC restoration plans include opportunities for public outreach and information dissemination through web-based information clearing houses, project area tools, and the availability of staff to answer questions and engage with members of the public. Information describing restoration progress is

currently distributed through periodic newsletters, e-mail announcements to supporters, news coverage throughout the basin, and publicly attended Q and A meetings held at the CFC office.

The State of Montana's Natural Resource Damage Program and the Clark Fork Coalition work closely to guide and implement the sustainable remediation of injury to the Clark Fork watershed. The watershed planning documents that shape these restoration efforts each conform to the nine criteria for EPA's criteria for Watershed-Based Plans.

While these planning documents currently direct the work of the Coalition and its partners in the UCF, it is important to note that with large-scale and long-term macro-restoration projects, such as are presented by the Clark Fork River, planning efforts need to be dynamic and flexible. One of the goals of this project is to evaluate the progress of restoration efforts in the UCF to help ensure that these plans remain relevant and can continue to serve the needs of the basin's residents.

C2 – Readiness to Proceed

The Applicant is currently ready to proceed with the plan of action as proposed in the Technical Proposal of this application, and no major difficulties are anticipated to performing or accomplishing this work. The Coalition currently employs a staff person on a temporary basis who would be well suited to carry out the tasks described above, but full funding for this position is not secured beyond December 2014. The Coalition envisions expanding the scope of this position to include the outreach and data gathering that it determines is essential to improve watershed conditions in the UCF, as described above. Funding of this request will be a great help to ensuring that the work and investments to date by the Coalition and its partners can continue, and that the Coalition can respond to the request of its partners to increase its support for stream restoration projects in the region.

An estimated schedule of major tasks to be completed during the proposed two-year grant period is provided below (costs for these activities, and the readiness of cost-share contributions, are explained in the Funding Plan and Budget Table sections of this proposal):

2015:

Winter: Hire and train restoration specialist; acquaint with project history, previous outreach efforts, social/ecological landscape in existing and potential project areas; introduce to current contacts, landowners, and other partners; review monitoring plans.

Spring: Maintain partner relationships, continue project identification, implement any necessary changes to monitoring protocol before summer season; attend CD and landowner meetings throughout the basin; evaluate geographic extent of restoration effort area; review outreach activities; assist in implementing outreach plan, focusing on widening representation of affected stakeholders.

Summer: Implement monitoring component of information-gathering process; continue to monitor restoration benchmark criteria throughout the project area; monitor progress in expansion of outreach and inclusion of greater diversity of stakeholders.

Fall: Evaluate monitoring flow and temperature data and identify project-level areas of need within newly expanded geographic area; revisit and continue to develop outreach and geographic expansion plans; continue to meet with partners and stakeholders.

2016:

Winter: Review recommendations to expansion plan, with special consideration for changes in partner diversity and intra-basin collaboration; review project-scale restoration priorities; review CFC Aquatic Restoration Strategy to track benchmark metrics and reassess priority areas if needed.

Spring: Implement revised outreach and geographic expansion plan; continue to attend CD, irrigation group, landowner, and other partner/stakeholder meetings; revisit historic monitoring data and identify areas of need for more detailed flow and temperature monitoring; continue outreach efforts and project identification.

Summer: Continue monitoring flow and water temperature within high-priority reaches of the UCF; review data to delineate project-level improvements to aquatic habitat, sustainable water diversion, and intra-basin collaboration; continue to monitor restoration benchmark criteria throughout existing network and newly expanded potential restoration areas; monitor progress in outreach expansion; continue to meet with key stakeholders.

Fall: Continue monitoring effectiveness of watershed group expansion using established benchmarks and stakeholder diversity and investment; prepare final report.

D: Watershed Group/Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Nexus (10 Points).

The Clark Fork Coalition is a partner in water temperature modelling efforts being undertaken by the U.S. Forest Service in conjunction with the Great Northern Land Conservation Cooperative to better understand future impacts to aquatic habitat as a result of climate change. The project is a northwest-wide temperature modelling study that requires significant data contributions from around the watershed. CFC is actively involved in the collection and vetting of data to contribute to the LCC investigations on the Lolo National Forest and will continue our work as a key partner in this effort.

IV.D.7. Letters of Support:

- See the attached letters of support from the State of Montana Natural Resource Damage Program and West Side Ditch Company.
- Watershed Group Resolution: See the attached watershed group resolution approved by the Clark Fork Coalition Board of Directors approving the submission of this grant application on 6/4/14.

IV.D.8 Required Permits or Approval

No permits or approval are required to the applicant's knowledge to proceed with the proposed project.

IV.D.9 Funding Plan

1. **Funding requested from other Federal Partners:** The Coalition has applied for funding through the Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP – a project administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), a portion of which will cover outreach efforts related to flow restoration in the Upper Clark Fork in 2015. The Coalition will apply \$10,000 of this federal funding towards this proposed watershed group expansion in the Upper Clark Fork River in 2015, and another \$10,000 in 2016 under an additional grant. CFC has received funding through CBWTP annually for approximately 10 years and has a high

degree of confidence in receiving these funds. Funds for the CBWTP program originate with the Bonneville Power Administration, but are considered federal because they are distributed through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

2. **Monetary contributions towards project match:** Non-federal cash match will be contributed to the project by the State of Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) and grants from private foundations supporting the Coalition’s work in the Upper Clark Fork. The NRDP has approximately \$20 million dollars to dedicate to water conservation efforts in the Upper Clark Fork Basin and have issued a number of contracts to CFC to begin identifying projects, work with landowners, and collect additional streamflow data. CFC will apply \$10,000 of these funds over the two-year grant period toward this project. In addition, the Coalition receives funding from various foundations for its work in the Upper Clark Fork, including the LOR Foundation and the Liz Claiborne Art Ortenberg Foundation. The Coalition will utilize \$10,000 of these funds as match towards this project over the 2-year grant period.

3. **In-kind costs incurred prior to the project date:** The Coalition is not proposing to apply in-kind costs to this project.

4. **Provide the entity and amount of funding that will be provided by funding partners. Provide letters of commitment if available:**

A. State of Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (non-federal): \$10,000 match: Status: Contracts secured through three separate task orders (available on request). NRDP has also provided a letter of support for the project - see Attachments.

B. Private Foundation grants received by the Coalition (non-federal): \$10,000 match: Status: \$5,000 secured for 2015 via already-awarded multi-year grant; additional \$5,000 for 2016 to be applied for from a long-term Coalition funder (20+ years) who is highly likely to continue to fund this work.

C. Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (federal): \$20,000 non-matching funds, but which contribute to the overall success of the program: Status: Proposal submitted, awaiting final decision, expect award by July 2014.

Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources.

Funding Sources	Funding Amount (in dollars)
Non-Federal Entities:	
State of Montana Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP)	10,000
Grants from private foundations	10,000
Non-Federal Subtotal:	\$20,000
Other Federal Entities:	
Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP)	20,000
Other Federal Subtotal:	\$20,000
Requested Reclamation Funding:	\$100,000
Total Project Funding:	\$140,000

IV.D.10 Budget Proposal

See next page.

Table 2. Budget Proposal

Budget Item Description	Computation		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	\$/Unit	Quantity		
Salaries and Wages				
Restoration Specialist	16.83	~3,930	hours	66,128
Project Manager	27.98	~1,330	hours	37,170
Stream Restoration Director	29.81	~277	hours	8,260
Fringe Benefits				
Restoration Specialist	3.53	~3,930	hours	13,872
Project Manager	5.88	~1,330	hours	7,830
Stream Restoration Director	6.26	~277	hours	1,740
SUBTOTAL:				\$135,000
Travel				
Trips from Missoula, MT to Deer Lodge, MT: 43 trips (~208 mi RT)	\$0.56	8,929	miles	\$5,000
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS				\$140,000

Budget Narrative:

Summary: The proposed budget targets investments in Clark Fork Coalition staff capacity to expand our watershed group coordination with diverse stakeholders, planning and project identification efforts in the Upper Clark Fork Basin. In order to effectively bring together diverse interests in the watershed, we are proposing to add a full time Restoration Specialist position to perform coordination and planning. In addition, both the Clark Fork Coalition Project Manager and Restoration Director are seeking additional resources to assist with this increased focus and investment in outreach and project identification in the Upper Clark Fork. This added watershed group capacity will strengthen partnerships currently in development and include a wider variety of interests as we seek to fine mutually agreeable solutions for addressing future water supply issues in the basin.

1. Salaries and Wages

a. *Restoration Specialist:* This proposed full-time position will dedicate 95% of their time towards the watershed coordination and planning efforts outlined in this proposal, with a base compensation rate of \$16.83 per hour. (With benefits included at 21%, this rate is \$20.36 per hour – see Benefits details below). This position is essential for the Clark Fork Coalition to effectively reach and bring together diverse audiences in the Upper Clark Fork Basin. In addition, this position will support water quantity studies which will inform and focus future iterations of our watershed restoration plan. No salary increases are currently proposed.

b. *Project Manager:* The Clark Fork Coalition proposes to focus the efforts of an existing project manager specifically towards this effort and support the work of the Restoration Specialists. The Project Manager is paid at a base rate of \$27.98 per hour (or \$33.86 per hour with benefits included at 21% - see Benefits details below). Approximately 30% of the current Upper Clark Fork Project Manager’s time will be dedicated to stakeholder meetings, project identification efforts and updating the existing restoration plan. The leadership and support by this Project Manager is essential in tying in existing relationships developed with stakeholders in the basin. The remaining portion of this Project Manager’s time that is not part of this grant is dedicated to implementing water conservation projects. No salary increases are currently proposed.

c. *Restoration Director:* The Restoration Director at the Clark Fork Coalition assists in restoration planning efforts, key stakeholder meetings, coordination with our many watershed partners, and the implementation of projects. The Restoration Director will spend approximately 7% of his time on this project, and is paid at a base rate of \$29.81 per hour (or \$36.07 per hour with benefits included at 21% - see Benefits details below). Although no BOR funding is proposed to specifically support this position, we plan to use match sources identified in the budget to cover this staff time to help meet the goals of this proposal. This position is essential for defining organizational goals and updating our existing restoration plan for the basin. No salary increases are currently proposed.

2. Fringe Benefits: The Clark Fork Coalition offers fringe benefits to all of its regular full-time and eligible part-time employees. These benefits are not provisional to this application. Benefits include health insurance, contributions to a retirement plan (matched up to 3%), paid holidays, an optional Flex benefits program, and paid time off. In combination, these benefits add approximately 21% to each employee’s base hourly wage.

3. Travel: In order to meet with a diverse array of stakeholders in the Upper Clark Fork Basin, regular travel is necessary from our office located in Missoula, MT to attend meetings and maintain regular communications in the Deer Lodge, MT area (located in the heart of the Upper Clark Fork watershed). We calculate that 43 trips (approximately 1 trip every 2 weeks) will be necessary to meet with stakeholders in the area to accomplish the tasks

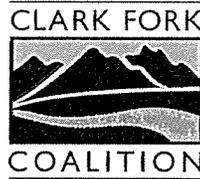
outlined above. The approximate driving distance of each trip is 208 miles, reimbursed at the current federal rate of \$.56/mile.

4. **Indirect Costs:** The Coalition is not including indirect costs in its cost estimates for this proposal.

5. **Total Cost:** The total cost of the proposed project is \$140,000 of which we are proposing to supply \$20,000 in matching funds and an additional \$20,000 in federal dollars through the CBWTP program (as described above). We are requesting \$100,000 from the BOR to support this effort.

Index of Attachments:

1. SF 424 A
2. CFC Board Resolution
3. Proof of CFC Bylaws
4. Proof of CFC Articles of Incorporation
5. Letters of Support from West Side Ditch Company and Natural Resource Damage Program



CLARK FORK COALITION RESOLUTION

Board of Directors Meeting June 4, 2014

Approval of Application for Grant Funds from the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management FY2014 Grants Program, Funding Opportunity Announcement #R14AS00038

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Clark Fork Coalition (Coalition) identifies Karen Knudsen, Executive Director of the Coalition, as possessing the legal authority to enter the Coalition into contractual agreements and financial and legal obligations associated with the receipt of a Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) award.

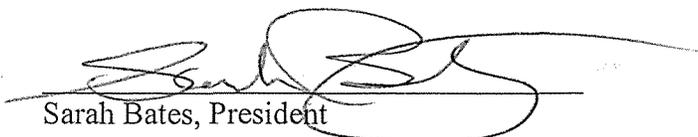
RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Board of Directors verifies the capability of the Coalition to allocate over two years the sum of \$20,000 from private funding sources to the proposed project, "Expanding Watershed Restoration Capacity in the Upper Clark Fork Basin."

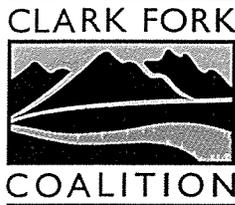
RESOLVED FURTHER, that if the Coalition is selected to receive funds through the CWMP it will work with the Bureau of Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a financial assistance agreement.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Board of Directors supports the application for the project, "Expanding Watershed Restoration Capacity in the Upper Clark Fork Basin," as it furthers the Coalition's mission to protect and restore the Clark Fork River watershed.

I, Sarah Bates, certify that I am the duly elected and acting President of the Clark Fork Coalition, a not for profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Montana. I further certify that the resolution set forth above was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Clark Fork Coalition at a duly noted meeting on June 4, 2014 and that said resolution has not been modified or rescinded.

Executed in Missoula, Montana the 4th day of June, 2014.


Sarah Bates, President



BYLAWS • 2013

Clark Fork Coalition Bylaws

Last Revised, January 27, 2010

Article I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Clark Fork Coalition (herein referred to as Coalition).

Article II. Administration and Offices

The Coalition is incorporated as a not for profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Montana. The Coalition's principle office shall be located in Missoula, Montana. The Board of Directors (herein referred to as board) may establish field offices to conduct its business.

Article III. Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the organization is to protect and restore the Clark Fork-Pend Oreille watershed, and other purposes as allowed by law and as approved by the board.

The Coalition protects the basin's quality waters from the effects of hard-rock mining, toxic wastes, nutrient pollution, unchecked development, sedimentation, and irrigation depletion. The Coalition is leading the effort to restore waters in the Clark Fork River basin, which have been severely contaminated by mining and smelting wastes. The Coalition is also committed to improving fish habitat and riparian zones throughout the basin. To achieve its goals, the Coalition develops and promotes innovative policies; monitors and influences government agencies and industry; organizes public participation; educates its members and the public; reviews and comments on technical and legal documents; negotiates with, and builds alliances among diverse interest groups; and takes legal action when necessary.

Article IV. Membership

- A. Definition: A member is any individual, family, organization, or business who supports the purpose and goals of the Coalition as outlined in Article III, and who pays dues to the Coalition.
- B. Term: Membership terms shall correspond with the annual payment of dues for various membership categories.
- C. Termination: If the board believes a member does not support the purpose and goals of the Coalition as outlined in Article III, the board may remove that member from the membership rolls by a two-thirds vote of the directors.

Article V. Meeting of Members

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STATE OF MONTANA

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ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT

OF

CLARK FORK COALITION, LIMITED

We, the undersigned, President and Secretary, respectively, of Clark Fork Coalition, Limited, a non-profit corporation, organized under the laws of the State of Montana, and located in Missoula, Montana, hereby certify as follows:

- 1. The name of the corporation is "Clark Fork Coalition, Limited."
- 2. A meeting of the members was held on October 8, 1994 to amend the Articles of Incorporation of "Clark Fork Coalition, Limited".
- 3. There are 1,000 members. The meeting was attended by 11 members who voted unanimously to amend said Articles.
- 4. The Certificate of Incorporation of the corporation is hereby amended by the following resolution, adopted by the members of the corporation:

ARTICLE I.

Name. The name of the corporation is The Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Coalition.

ARTICLE II.

Designation. The corporation is a public benefit corporation.

ARTICLE III.

Purpose. The purposes of the corporation are to:

Natural Resource Damage Program
State of Montana
1301 E. Lockey
Helena, MT 59620

May 27, 2014

Clark Fork Coalition
140 S. 4th St. W. #1
Missoula, MT 59807

**RE: Letter of Support for the Clark Fork Coalition – Cooperative Watershed
Management Grant**

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to express our support for the Clark Fork Coalition – Cooperative Watershed Management Grant application that will be under consideration for funding by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grant Program. We support this effort by the Clark Fork Coalition to expand their watershed group capacity in the Upper Clark Fork River in order to work collaboratively with a variety of interests, including agricultural water groups and state agencies.

Following the settlement of Montana V ARCO in 2008, the State of Montana, Department of Justice Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) developed a *Final Upper Clark Fork River Basin Aquatic and Terrestrial Resources Restoration Plan* in December of 2012. This plan provides a roadmap and funding allocations for future restoration efforts in the historically mining damaged and dewatered Upper Clark Fork River Basin. The NRDP is currently working in partnership with the Clark Fork Coalition and other entities to identify and further develop a number of water conservation opportunities. We believe the Bureau of Reclamation could be a significant cost share partner in the future through the WaterSmart grant program. There are numerous water conservation opportunities currently identified in the area that would benefit from their technical assistance to advance planning efforts and refine our restoration plan. Additional capacity from the Clark Fork Coalition to meet with our agency and work cooperatively with us to advance restoration planning efforts will assist us greatly.

We believe this watershed group is highly deserving of being funded. Thank you for your time and consideration of this effort.

Sincerely,



Tom Mostad
NRDP Environmental Science Specialist

West Side Ditch Company
1644 Greenhouse Road
Deer Lodge, MT 59722

May 21, 2014

Clark Fork Coalition
140 S. 4th St. W. #1
Missoula, MT 59807

RE: Letter of Support for the **Clark Fork Coalition – Cooperative Watershed Management Grant**

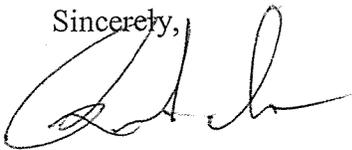
To Whom It May Concern:

The West Side Company is a Montana corporation that holds significant water rights to the Clark Fork River and experiences high ditch seepage losses along our 13 mile long canal system. We are writing to express our support for the Clark Fork Coalition – Cooperative Watershed Management Grant application that will be under consideration for funding by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grant Program. We support this effort by the Clark Fork Coalition to expand their watershed group capacity in the Upper Clark Fork River in order to work collaboratively with a variety of interests, including agricultural water groups.

There are numerous water conservation opportunities currently identified in the area, including Phases 1-4 of our West Side Ditch Piping Project which would benefit from their technical assistance to advance planning efforts. The West Side Ditch Company has been considering piping sections of our ditch system for over 10 years and recently participated in a preliminary engineering study with the Bureau of Reclamation. The Ditch Company has a strong interest in applying to the WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grant Program in the future to support implementation efforts. Additional capacity from the Clark Fork Coalition to meet with our Ditch Company and work cooperatively with us to advance planning efforts will assist us greatly.

We believe this watershed group is highly deserving of being funded. Thank you for your time and consideration of this effort.

Sincerely,



Rick Cline
President
West Side Ditch Company