

A scenic landscape photograph showing a small, shallow creek flowing through a lush green field. The creek is bordered by tall grasses and some rocks. In the background, there are rolling hills and a range of mountains under a clear blue sky. A line of trees is visible on the left side of the image.

# Lessons learned in Project Development

## North Burnt Fork Creek

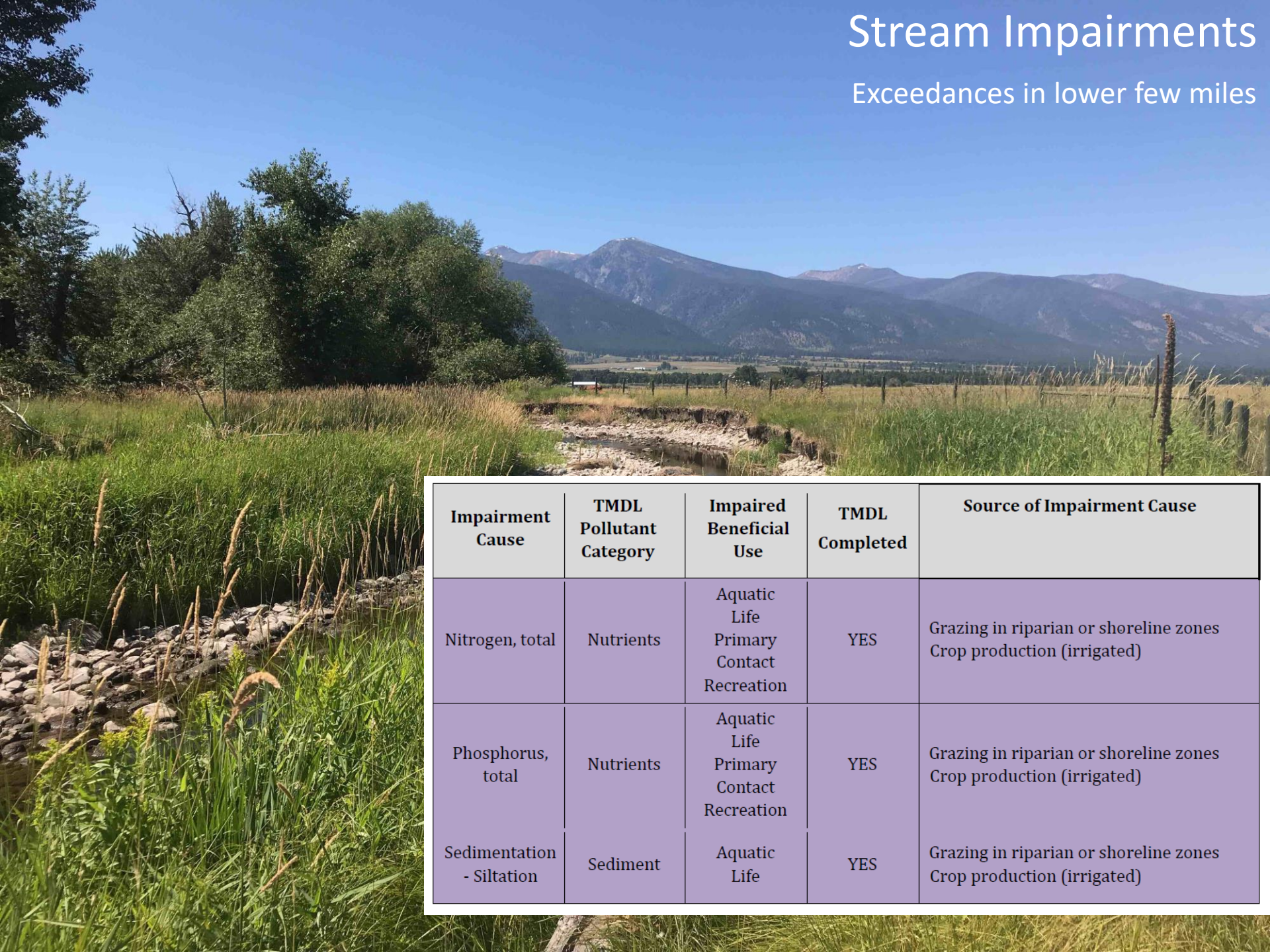
Christine Brissette  
Trout Unlimited





# Stream Impairments

Exceedances in lower few miles



Impairment Cause	TMDL Pollutant Category	Impaired Beneficial Use	TMDL Completed	Source of Impairment Cause
Nitrogen, total	Nutrients	Aquatic Life Primary Contact Recreation	YES	Grazing in riparian or shoreline zones Crop production (irrigated)
Phosphorus, total	Nutrients	Aquatic Life Primary Contact Recreation	YES	Grazing in riparian or shoreline zones Crop production (irrigated)
Sedimentation - Siltation	Sediment	Aquatic Life	YES	Grazing in riparian or shoreline zones Crop production (irrigated)



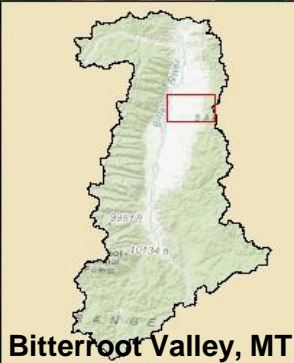
Channel re-route

Supply Ditch  
Diversion

Supply Ditch

North Burnt Fork Creek

Stevensville



Legend

- Bitterroot River
- Stevensville
- Supply Ditch
- Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge
- North Burnt Fork Creek



0 0.5 1 Miles





# Supply Ditch Crossing





**April 2019**  
**+ 60 cfs**







## **Common Summer Conditions:**

Flow: 0.5-1cfs

Temperature: 65-75 degrees





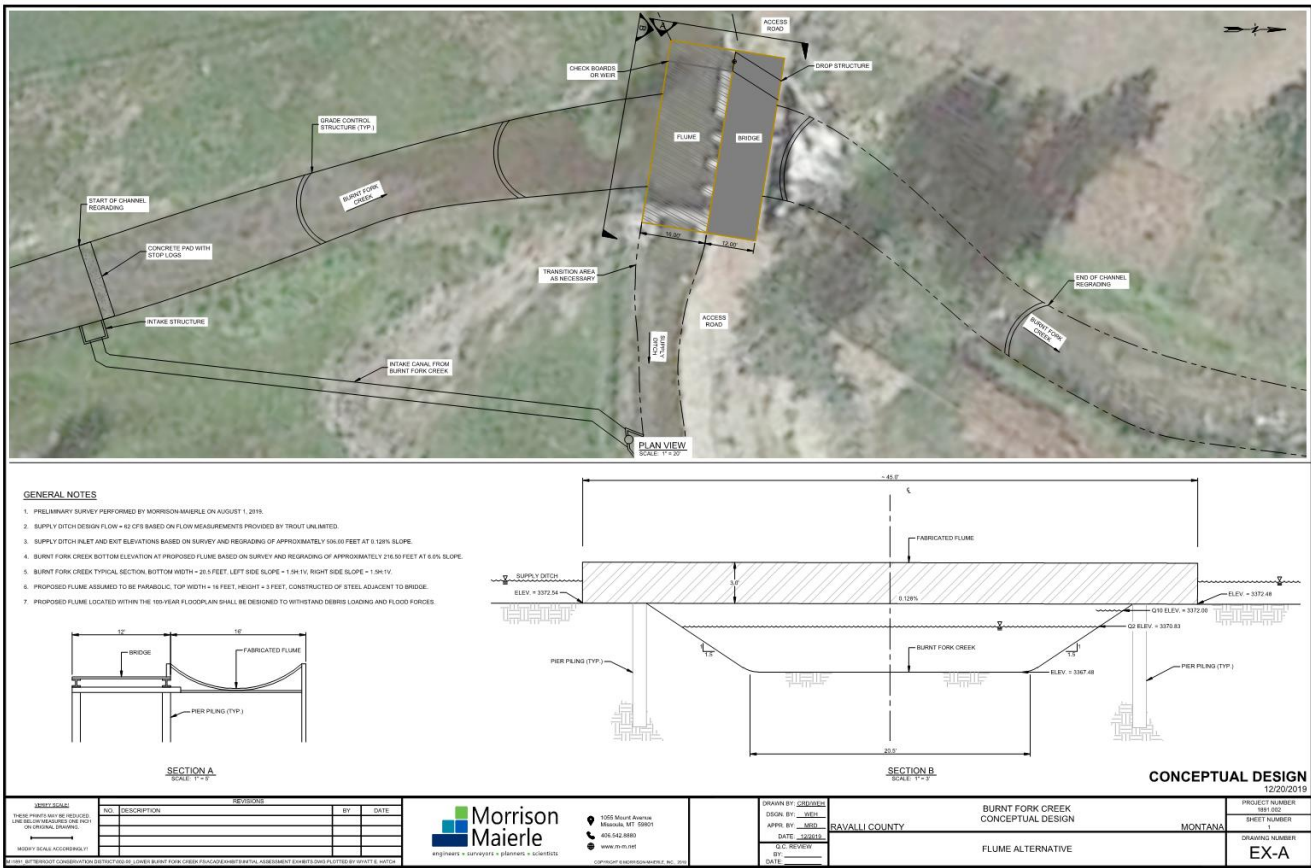
## Low Flows (July 2019)



# Potential Project

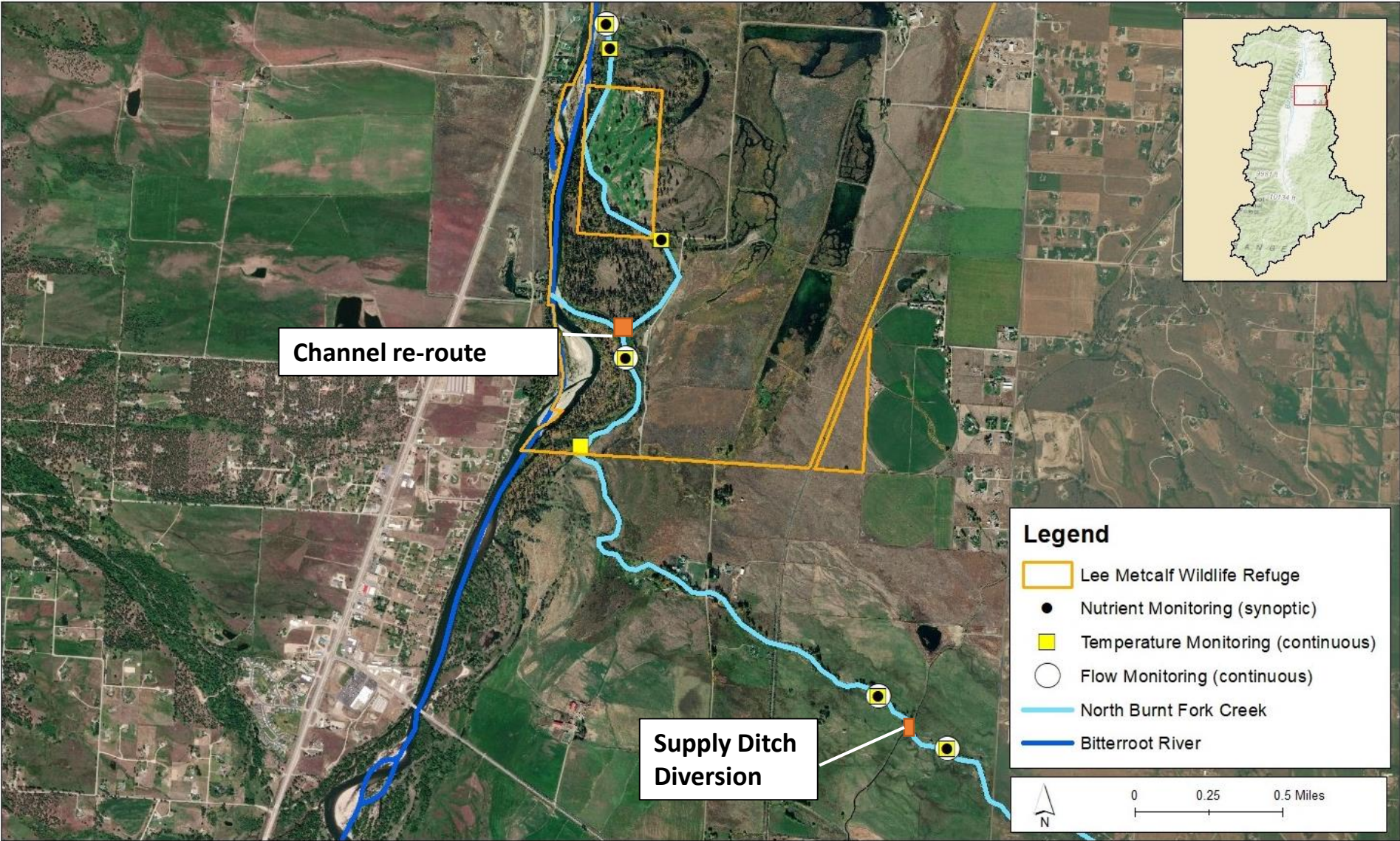
Can we upgrade Supply Ditch infrastructure to:

- Eliminate co-mingling of stream and ditch water
- Eliminate passage barriers
- Allow full management of irrigation water (improve?)





Lower Burnt Fork Monitoring





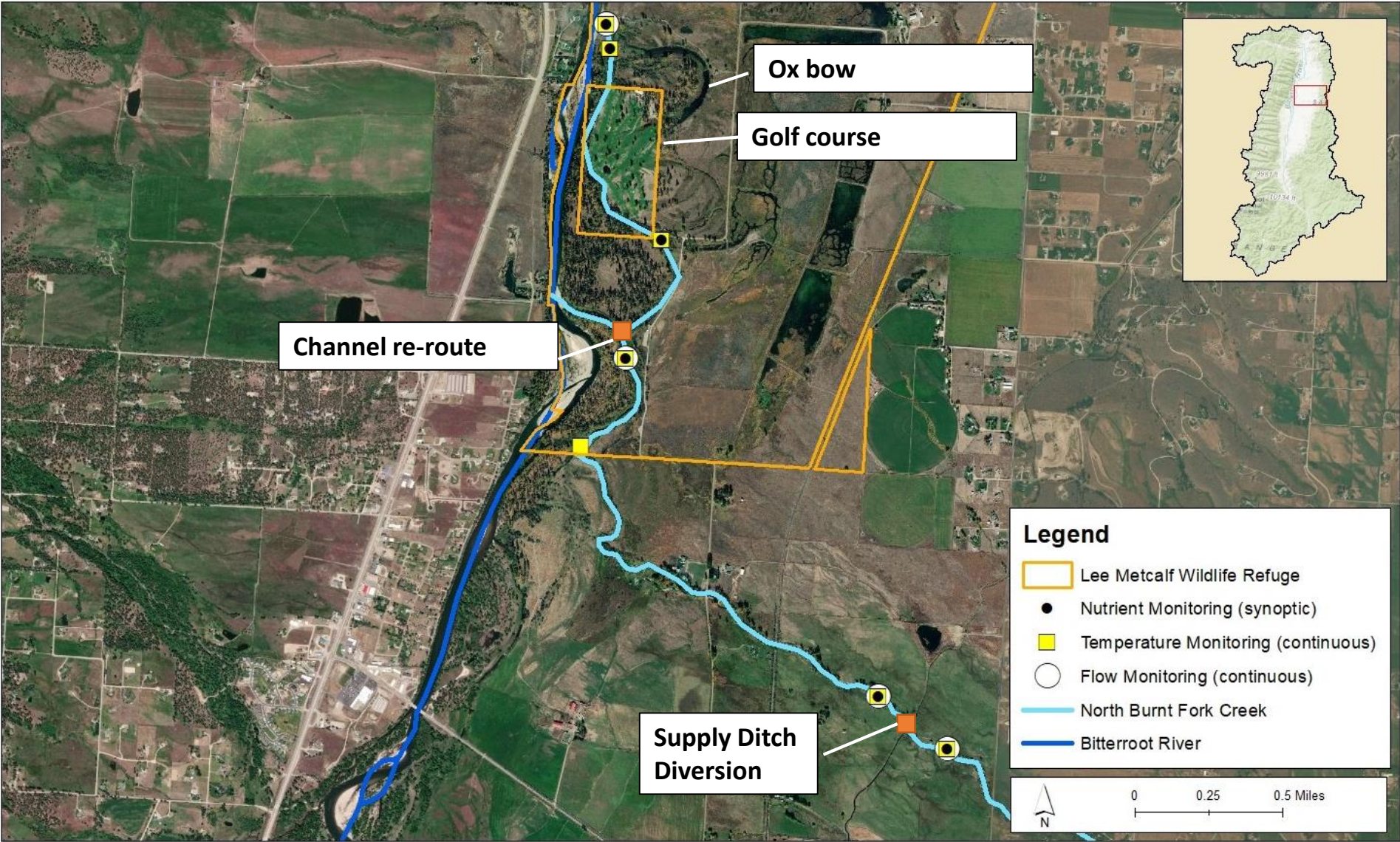
# Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge





# Flow, Temperature and Nutrient Monitoring: August, Sept, Oct







## Lower Burnt Fork Monitoring



Nutrients: TN,TP, TSS, Nitrate+Nitrite



# Results

	Supply Ditch (Upstream-Downstream)	Lee Metcalf (Upstream-Downstream- north path)
Temperature (summer)	 <p>65-75 degrees. Below Supply generally 2 degrees cooler than above. <b>Supply Ditch</b> water cooler. Increased flow.</p>	   <p>60 degrees with cold GW inflows Lack of riparian cover. <b>Groundwater</b> near golf course decreases temp. Oxbow increases temp.</p>
Flow (summer)	 <p>Supply Ditch inefficiencies slightly augment streamflow</p>	 <p>Substantial groundwater inflows in lower ¾ mile <b>(August: 1 cfs to 12 cfs along northern channel)</b></p>

- Supply ditch leakage augments temperature and flow. **Infrastructure upgrades need to consider this.**
- Lee Metcalf: North path has increased flow (good) and temp (bad). Some cold refugia. **Lots of riparian restoration opportunities to limit solar exposure with either path.**





# Results

	Supply Ditch (Upstream-Downstream)	Lee Metcalf (Upstream-Downstream- north path)
TSS	↑ Doubles, Max=2-8mg/L	↓ ↑ Increase begins at split
TN	↑ All samples under water quality standards	↑ ↓ All samples under water quality standards
TP	↓ Aug & Sept samples exceed water quality standards at both sites. <a href="#">Dilution</a>	↓ ↑ Aug & Sept samples exceed water quality standards above Golf course. <a href="#">Dilution</a>

## Nutrients:

- TP is high throughout lower Burnt Fork
- Supply Ditch can diminish water quality (TSS, TN), but also dilutes high TP. [Alternatives to spilling?](#)
- Lee Metcalf: ?





## Next Steps

- Supply Ditch: On hold – resource benefits are complex, Ditch benefits are not obvious.
- Lee Metcalf:
  - Survey & Design.
  - Use data to determine best path from temperature, water quality, flow & geomorphic perspectives .