

# BITTERROOT FOCUS WATERSHED STAKEHOLDER MEETING—MAY 6, 2020

## Resources and Action Items

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### ***Introductions***

Jason Lindstrom ([Jason.Lindstrom@mt.gov](mailto:Jason.Lindstrom@mt.gov)), FWP: A resource for identifying projects and fisheries data collection; assistance with developing Future Fisheries grant applications

Wendy Weaver ([wweaver@montanaaquaticresources.org](mailto:wweaver@montanaaquaticresources.org)), Montana Aquatic Resources Services: A potential funding resource through in leau fee mitigation program.

Valerie Kurth ([VKurth@mt.gov](mailto:VKurth@mt.gov)), DNRC's Water Planner for Clark Fork & Kootenai River Basins: A resource for coordination support

Tom Reed ([tom\\_reed@fws.gov](mailto:tom_reed@fws.gov)), Lee Metcalf Wildlife Refuge: A key landowner on Threemile and North Burnt Fork Creek and largest shareholder on Supply Ditch

Shane Stack ([sstack@missoulacounty.us](mailto:sstack@missoulacounty.us)), Missoula County Public Works: Has a focus on the balance between growing Lolo and maintaining water quality

Robert Ray ([rrey@mt.gov](mailto:rrey@mt.gov)), DEQ Nonpoint Source Program: A resource for Bitterroot Headwaters information.

Michael Howell ([bitterrootriverprotection@gmail.com](mailto:bitterrootriverprotection@gmail.com)), Bitterroot River Protection Association: A resource for volunteer water quality monitoring. Currently has monitoring locations along the mainstem and eastside tributaries. This summer will add westside tributaries to network.

Marilyn Wildey ([mwildey@fs.fed.us](mailto:mwildey@fs.fed.us)), Michael Jakober ([mjakober@fs.fed.us](mailto:mjakober@fs.fed.us)), and Cole Mayn ([cole.mayn@usda.gov](mailto:cole.mayn@usda.gov)), Bitterroot National Forest: Interested in growing partnerships and delisting streams. A potential resource for Collaborative Forest Landscapes Restoration Projects. While they are a major landowner in the watershed, they are interested in pursuing cross-boundary collaboration.

Melissa Schaar ([mschaar@mt.gov](mailto:mschaar@mt.gov)), DNRC Water Management Bureau: Completing a multi-year study on the Lolo Watershed; a draft will be published on the website in a few months.

Kurt Vause ([kurt.vause1@gmail.com](mailto:kurt.vause1@gmail.com)), American Water Works Association: A resource for identifying potential funding opportunities for projects that protect sources of drinking water.

Peter Brumm ([Brumm.Peter@epa.gov](mailto:Brumm.Peter@epa.gov)), Environmental Protection Agency: A resource for national perspectives on what's worked or hasn't

Kent Myers ([kent.myers@bresnan.net](mailto:kent.myers@bresnan.net)), Bitterroot Conservation District: A resource for 310 permits and the Board's diverse expertise evaluating project's impacts on streams. A governmental organization that could sponsor grants that are not eligible for nonprofits. Also a resource for trust with Bitterroot landowners.

Andrea Price ([andrea@brwaterforum.org](mailto:andrea@brwaterforum.org)) and Heather Barber ([heather@brwaterforum.org](mailto:heather@brwaterforum.org)), Bitter Root Water Forum: A resource for engaging the community, and supporting watershed education and restoration.

Andy Ulven ([Andrew.Ulven@mt.gov](mailto:Andrew.Ulven@mt.gov)), DEQ Solid Waste Program: A resource for septage land application sites. Interested in learning more about monitoring ongoing in the watershed so that their program can incorporate.

Donny Ramer ([dpw@cityofhamilton.net](mailto:dpw@cityofhamilton.net)), Public Works Director for City of Hamilton: A resource for making projects happen; a partner on the Skalkaho Bend project along the Bitterroot. Interested in protecting water supply for the city, and within the Bitterroot River.

Christine Brissette ([Christine.Brissette@tu.org](mailto:Christine.Brissette@tu.org)), Bitterroot project manager for Trout Unlimited: A resource for implementing projects, bringing stakeholders together, and compiling funding. They also provide a national-perspective, and have in-house expertise.

Dustin Walters ([dwalters@fs.fed.us](mailto:dwalters@fs.fed.us)), Lolo National Forest: A resource for implementing projects in the Upper Lolo and northern tributaries.

Jed Whitely ([jed@clarkfork.org](mailto:jed@clarkfork.org)) and John DeArment ([john@clarkfork.org](mailto:john@clarkfork.org)), Clark Fork Coalition: A resource for implementing water quality and quantity projects on the westside tributaries. A resource for monitoring in the Bitterroot.

Josh Viall ([Joshua.Viall@mt.gov](mailto:Joshua.Viall@mt.gov)), DEQ Training and Technical Assistance: A resource for wastewater treatment optimization

Kelly Arnold ([karnold@rc.mt.gov](mailto:karnold@rc.mt.gov)), Sanitarian at Ravalli County Environmental Health: Strength as a regulator, which provides opportunities to interact with the public.

Kristy Fortman ([Kristy.Fortman@mt.gov](mailto:Kristy.Fortman@mt.gov)), DEQ TDML and Nonpoint Source Programs

Stacy Welling ([stacy.welling@usda.gov](mailto:stacy.welling@usda.gov)), NRCS: A resource for technical assistance and cost share for agricultural projects. Just submitted a Targeted Implementation Plan proposal for water quantity, irrigation efficiency in the Burnt Fork drainage.

Andy Efta ([james.efta@usda.gov](mailto:james.efta@usda.gov)), regional USFS hydrologist: Technical and program support throughout northern forests.

## ***New ideas from the Bitterroot Watershed Restoration Plan Update***

***(58 minutes into the video)***

The Water Forum will be partnering with Trout Unlimited on a Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart grant focused on improving understanding of the needs of irrigators. They will establish an “Irrigators Working Group,” and consolidate data from existing reports to produce something comprehensive, digestible, and actionable.

New tributaries and the Bitterroot mainstem were added as focus areas in this update.

Andrea Price ([andrea@brwaterforum.org](mailto:andrea@brwaterforum.org)) seeks feedback on gaps that she identified remain in the WRP:

- What are cities and counties’ priorities for resource conservation: stormwater, roads and septic maintenance or improvement needs?
- What are other stakeholders’ goals and metrics they would like to track? Currently, goals only represent the Water Forum’s.
- What other projects have been implemented in subwatersheds that are not accounted for in the WRP?
- What are your ideas for the next update?
- A need for improved understanding of streams that are not impaired and guidance for protecting them.
- A need to improve monitoring capabilities to better understand when projects are moving the needle; specifically interested in compiling the data already out there.

The Bitterroot River Protection Association mentioned that their organization could help with monitoring specific to projects.

Montana’s Watershed Restoration Plans can be found at:

<http://deq.mt.gov/Water/SurfaceWater/319Projects>

- The 2020 Bitterroot River WRP:  
[http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WPB/Nonpoint/Publications/WRPs/Bitterroot\\_WRP\\_FINAL\\_01132020.pdf](http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WPB/Nonpoint/Publications/WRPs/Bitterroot_WRP_FINAL_01132020.pdf)
- The 2018 Miller Creek WRP:  
[http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WPB/Nonpoint/Publications/WRPs/Miller\\_Creek\\_WRP-Final.pdf](http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WPB/Nonpoint/Publications/WRPs/Miller_Creek_WRP-Final.pdf)
- The 2013 Lolo Creek WRP:  
[http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WPB/Nonpoint/Publications/WRPs/LoloWRP\\_Final.pdf](http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WPB/Nonpoint/Publications/WRPs/LoloWRP_Final.pdf)

## ***Lessons learned from North Burnt Fork Creek project development***

***(1 hr 20 min into video)***

Trout Unlimited's study found that the Supply Ditch generally contributes flow an cooler water to North Burnt Fork Creek, helping dilute nutrient pollution and lower stream temperatures.

Through the Lee Metcalf, one project development option that is clear is a need for riparian revegetation. However, it's unclear whether the short or long path is the better option for water quality.

Christine Brissette ([Christine.Brissette@tu.org](mailto:Christine.Brissette@tu.org)) seeks feedback on what the nutrient data indicates, and how water quality data, river morphology, and fish passage might guide project development.

Trout Unlimited's report on this study can be found here:

[http://mtwaterqualityprojects.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/140031858/2020VWQMP\\_North%20Burnt%20Fork%20Creek\\_Final%20Report\\_TroutUnlimited.pdf?force\\_download=1](http://mtwaterqualityprojects.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/140031858/2020VWQMP_North%20Burnt%20Fork%20Creek_Final%20Report_TroutUnlimited.pdf?force_download=1)

## ***Funding brainstorm: matching federal dollars, and featuring MT Aquatic Resources Services***

***(1 hr 52 min into video)***

Hannah forgot to mention, but funding agencies recently updated a list of Watershed Funding Opportunities. It can be found on the 319 Program's webpage

(<http://deq.mt.gov/Water/SurfaceWater/319Projects>) under "Guidance for Funding Recipients":  
[http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WQInfo/Documents/Watershed%20Restoration/WatershedFunding\\_04082020.pdf](http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Water/WQInfo/Documents/Watershed%20Restoration/WatershedFunding_04082020.pdf)

Also, in case you missed it, visit this webpage to watch videos and review materials from the 2020 Grant Writing Workshop: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/resource-development/resources-and-training>

Learn more about MARS projects at [montanaaquaticresources.org/mars-projects/](http://montanaaquaticresources.org/mars-projects/)

Wendy has received 3-4 inquiries for wetland credits in the watershed within the last 6 months; plus anticipating a project at the Hamilton Airport to go forward. Once funding becomes available, Wendy would reach out to local organizations seeking project information. Once a credit sale occurs, MARS has 3 years to start a project. Ideally, projects are identified before the credit sale occurs. Keep Wendy aware of potential upcoming projects to determine if they'd be a good fit.

Keep a look out for an upcoming Call for 2020 Pre-Project Planning Mini-grants. These funds are intended to help generate on-the-ground water quality project applications AND pursue venues for increasing capacity and sustainable funding streams.

## ***Mainstem monitoring results***

***(2 hr 17 min into video)***

A 2019 Monitoring Report will be published this summer, and in 2023, Clark Fork Coalition will publish a trend analysis for the Bitterroot River (similar to what they've done for the Clark Fork River, see here: <https://clarkfork.org/our-work/what-we-do/monitor-watershed-health/nutrient-monitoring/>).

Discussions this morning indicate a need to compile data throughout the watershed; perhaps these monitoring or trend reports can help fill this role. John DeArment ([john@clarkfork.org](mailto:john@clarkfork.org)) seeks feedback how to best do this.

### **Headwaters monitoring results**

**(2 hr 34 min into video)**

Headwaters sediment monitoring found that none of the streams evaluated met sediment targets except for Reimel creek, which met one parameter. Monitoring indicates that Buck and Ditch Creek have gotten worse, and Reimel has improved. A sediment reassessment has been proposed for Reimel. A new or improved phase of best management practice implementation is needed for the other impaired streams; such as road BMPs, streambank stabilization, improving riparian revegetation

Michael Jakober pointed out that there are PIBO sites on the East Fork Bitterroot near the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness boundary, and on the West Fork above the dam. He also mentioned the BNF and FWP annually monitors all the temperature sites used in the TMDLs. Robert should follow up with Jason Lindstorm about these reports.

Robert Ray ([r-ray@mt.gov](mailto:r-ray@mt.gov)) seeks feedback, especially from the Bitterroot National Forest, on the draft TMDL Implementation Evaluation. It will be sent to stakeholders soon. Robert also noted that this TMDL Implementation Evaluation began with the BNF submitting a list of projects implemented; if you have similar lists of projects that may inform a stream's delisting, we want to know!

### **Community Readiness Assessments (2 hr 53 min into video)**

An example community readiness assessment can be found at:

[www.missoulaclimate.org/uploads/4/3/2/6/43267085/communityreadinessreport\\_climatesmartmsla\\_spring2016.pdf](http://www.missoulaclimate.org/uploads/4/3/2/6/43267085/communityreadinessreport_climatesmartmsla_spring2016.pdf)

Eric Trum ([ETrum@mt.gov](mailto:ETrum@mt.gov)) seeks stakeholder feedback on:

- Their support generally on conducting a community readiness assessment
- Their ideas of how to define the "community" of interest. All of the Bitterroot except Missoula County? The Hamilton area? Irrigators and producers?
- Their ideas of who key informants, that could speak for the community as a whole, not individual opinions, might be.

### **Bitterroot River Nutrient Protection Plan (3 hr 9 min into video)**

Hannah Riedl ([Hannah.Riedl@mt.gov](mailto:Hannah.Riedl@mt.gov)) seeks feedback on specific components of the Plan, including:

- Activities that could still be implemented to resist nutrient impairment
- Measures of success (i.e., that high quality nutrient waters are still being maintained)
- Planned responses if measures of success indicate a deviation from maintenance of the Bitterroot's high-quality condition (e.g., a need to increase utility rates and improve stormwater/wastewater treatment; an outreach campaign to inform local communities about this change.

Feedback is especially important from cities and counties, as these are the stakeholders not as well represented within the Bitterroot Watershed Restoration Plan, which does include protection of the mainstem Bitterroot as a focus.