2025 Proposal Form for NorthWestern Energy (NWE) Project 2188 TAC Funds

Project 2188 (Madison-Missouri River) License Protection, Mitigation and Enhancement (PM&E) projects are required to offset impacts to river resources from the continued operation of one or more of NWE's nine hydro developments (Hebgen, Madison, Hauser, Holter, Black Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan and Morony Dams). PM&E projects need to be prioritized toward in-river or on-the-ground measures that directly benefit fisheries and/or wildlife populations and their habitats:

Priority 1: 2188 License projects which meet License Article requirements and PM&E for fisheries or wildlife populations or their habitats within the main stem Madison River (Hebgen Reservoir to Three Forks) or Missouri River (Hauser Reservoir to Fort Peck Reservoir)

Priority 2: 2188 License projects which meet License Article requirements and PM&E for fisheries or wildlife populations or their habitats in primary tributaries or on adjacent lands and, in doing so, provide PM&E for Madison River (Hebgen Reservoir to Three Forks) or Missouri River (Hauser Reservoir to Fort Peck Reservoir) resources.

Priority 3: 2188 License PM&E projects which meet License Article requirements by providing scientific or other tangible PM&E benefits to Madison-Missouri River fisheries or wildlife populations or their habitats. These projects must be located in the greater Missouri River drainage upstream from Fort Peck Reservoir, but not necessarily located on the main stem Madison River or Missouri River or their adjacent lands or primary tributaries.

All TAC project proposals must include the following information:

Project Title: Harley Creek Fish Barrier Construction

Date: 10/08/2025

Explain how this Project addresses a specific Project 2188 License Article(s):

Project addresses Article 417, #4. Protect and provide for the recovery of threatened and endangered fish species and other aquatic species of special concern in the Great Falls reservoirs and below Morony Dam.

Provide justification for Priority 1, 2 or 3 (above) that you selected:

Priority 3 – The goal of this project is to protect and subsequently expand a nonhybridized westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) population in Graveyard Gulch, which is part of the Harley Creek drainage. Harley Creek is a tributary of Belt Creek located approximately 1.7 miles north of the town of Neihart, MT. Construction of a fish barrier in Harley Creek would isolate the drainage from downstream nonnative fish populations. Removal of nonnative brook and hybrid trout from a 3.1-mile reach of Harley Creek and tributaries upstream of the proposed barrier would then allow for expansion of the Graveyard Gulch WCT population into this habitat. Following expansion, the WCT population in Harley Creek would occupy 5.1 miles of habitat increasing the population size >2,500 fish which would greatly increase the population's probability of long-term persistence.

Project Sponsor (submitted by): Alex Poole, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)

Location of Proposed Project: Harley Creek is a tributary of Belt Creek located approximately 1.7 miles North of Neihart, MT. The proposed barrier site is located on Lewis and Clark National Forest land approximately 0.5 miles upstream of the Belt Creek confluence (46.95004, -110.76521).

Geocode (in decimal degrees ex 46.89743) **Lat:** 46.95004 **Lon:** -110.76521

Total Project Cost: $59,230*
*Preliminary cost estimate

TAC Funds Requested for Project: $59,230

I. Introduction; brief statement of project to be completed with pertinent background information.
Graveyard Gulch, a tributary of Harley Creek, is one of five streams within the Belt Creek watershed that still supports a nonhybridized WCT population. However, the population is only compromised of an estimated 1,007 fish confined to a 2-mile reach above a bedrock barrier that has precluded the upstream movement of brook and hybrid trout. Although no nonnative fish have been detected above the barrier to date, the long-term viability of this feature is questionable given the relatively small drop height and potential step-pool formation around the feature. Construction of a fish barrier in Harley Creek downstream of Graveyard Gulch would isolate the drainage from downstream nonnative fish populations. Removal of nonnative brook and hybrid trout from a 3.1-mile reach of Harley Creek and tributaries upstream of the proposed constructed barrier would then allow for expansion of the Graveyard

Gulch WCT population into this habitat. Following expansion, the WCT population in Harley Creek would occupy 5.1 miles of habitat increasing the population size >2,500 fish which would greatly increase the population's probability of long-term persistence.

FWP is requesting MoTAC approve $59,230 for the construction of a fish barrier on Harley Creek. Additional funds for a seperate, similarly priced fish barrier project are being pursued from USFWS State Wildlife Grants.

II. Objectives; explicit statement(s) of what is intended to be accomplished.

Hire a contractor to construct a fish barrier isolating the Harley Creek drainage that would then allow for future removal of nonnative trout and expansion of nonhybridized WCT from Graveyard Gulch.

III. Methods; description of how Project objectives will be accomplished.

Hire R.E. Miller & Sons to construct a fish barrier following the design they provided.

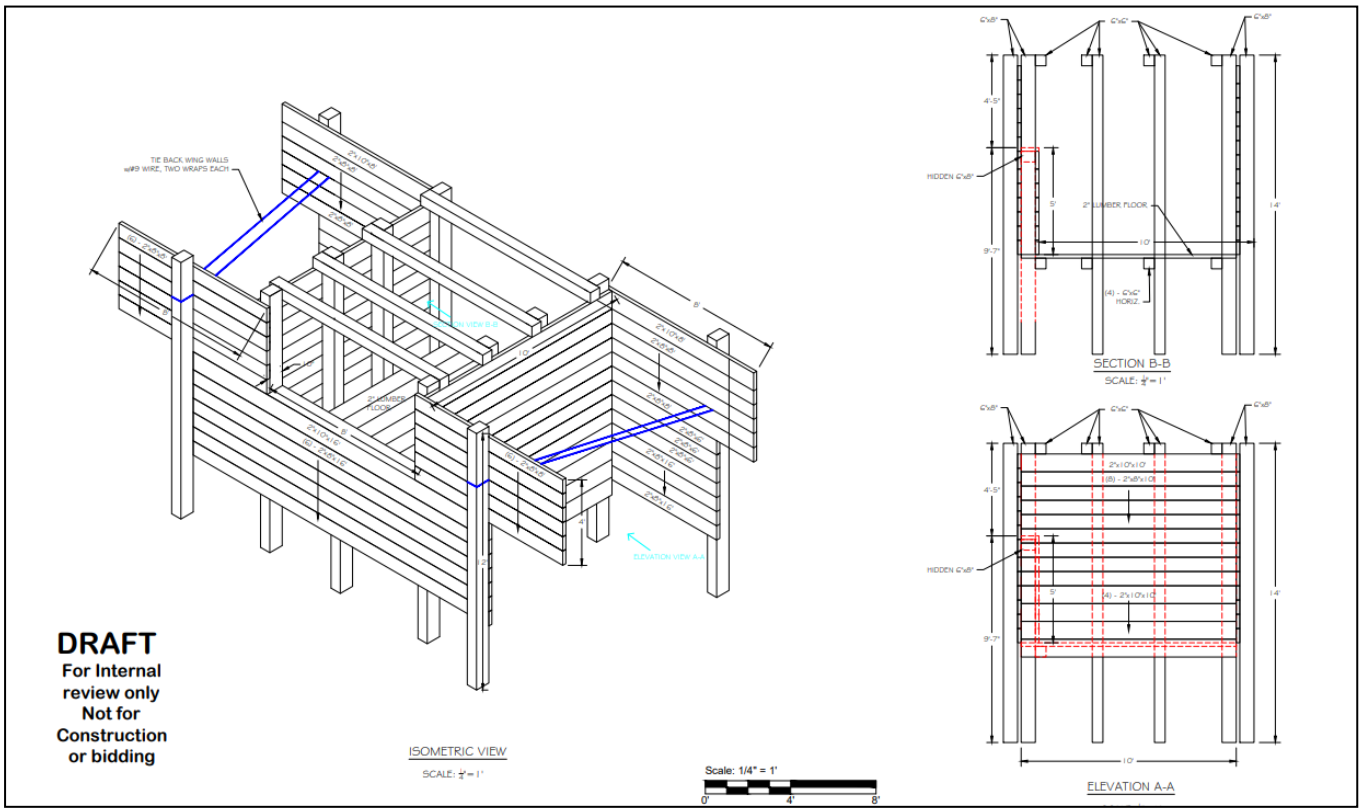

Figure 1. Draft design for pin-and-plank style timber fish barrier.

Figure 2. Completed pin-and-plank style timber fish barrier on Cottonwood Creek, Beaverhead subbasin.

IV. Schedule; when the Project work will begin and end.

The goal is to construct the fish barrier in 2026. Construction would likely begin in August during base flow conditions.

V. Personnel; who will do the work? Identify Project leader or principal investigator.

FWP (Alex Poole – Project Lead) will coordinate with the design/construction oversight engineer, contractor, and US Forest Service
FWP (Alex Poole) will coordinate with Ranger District personnel on NEPA compliance and other USFS requirements (if needed) related to construction of a fish barrier.
FWP (Kevin Harrington - Design & Construction Bureau) will provide construction oversight.
RE Miller and Sons – Construct Barrier.

VI. Project budget must include amounts for the following:

R.E. MILLER & SONS
EXCAVATING CONTRACTORS

OCTOBER 7, 2025

HARLEY CREEK - Fish Barrier

Materials

- 12'x4' treated lumber fish barrier
- 12" x 16' Galvanized I beam — $19,870

Equipment/Labor

- CAT 336 Excavator
- Dewatering / pump if needed
- Labor to build and install structure — $22,840

Mob/Travel

- Transport of equipment to job site
- Transport of material to job site
- Travel time to job
- Per Diem / Lodging — $16,520

Total Cost- $59,230

VII. Deliverables; describe work product (reports, habitat restoration, etc.) which will result from this Project. How will "success" for this project be monitored or demonstrated?

Work product will be summarized in an annual report. Construction of a fish barrier is the goal of this project. Success will be demonstrated when project reaches final completion as outlined in contract.

VIII. Cultural Resources. Cultural Resource Management (CRM) requirements for any activity related to this Project must be completed and documented to NWE as a condition of any TAC grant. TAC funds may not be used for any land-disturbing activity, or the modification, renovation, or removal of any buildings or structures until the CRM consultation process has been completed. Agency applicants must submit a copy of the proposed project to a designated Cultural Resource Specialist for their agency. Private parties or non-governmental organizations are encouraged to submit a copy of their proposed project to a CRM consultant they may have employed. Private parties and non-governmental organizations may also contact the NWE representative for further information or assistance. Applications submitted without this section completed, will be held by the TAC, without any action, until the information has been submitted.

Summarize here how you will complete requirements for Cultural Resource Management:

A cultural survey of the site selected for barrier construction will be completed by an independent contractor prior to any construction activities.

IX. Water Rights. For projects that involve development, restoration or enhancement of wetlands, please describe how the project will comply with the Montana DNRC's "Guidance for Landowners and Practitioners Engaged in Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities", issued by the Water Resources Division on 9March2016.

Summarize here how you will comply with Montana water rights laws, policies and guidelines:

No Montana or Northwestern Energy water rights laws, policies, or guidelines apply for this project.

All TAC Project proposals should be 7 pages or less and emailed (as a WORD file) to each of:

- Andrew.Welch@Northwestern.com
- Jon.Hanson@Northwestern.com
- Grant.Grisak@Northwestern.com

Further questions about TAC proposals or Project 2188 license requirements or related issues may be addressed to: Andy Welch, Leader Hydro License Compliance, NorthWestern Energy, 1315 N Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601; 406-444-8115 (office); 406-565-7549 (cell); Andrew.Welch@northwestern.com.