

2023 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: Middle Missouri River Roving Creel Survey

Date: November 2, 2022

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

Article 417: 1) Protect and provide for the recovery of Threatened and Endangered species and other species of special concern in the Missouri River downstream of Morony Dam. 2) Monitor the relative abundance of the most common fish species in the Missouri River downstream of Morony Dam. 3) Provide assistance to FWP for ongoing evaluation of pallid sturgeon recovery in the Missouri River downstream of Morony Dam.

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

This radio telemetry project monitors fish movements in the Missouri River (Priority 1) and tributaries such as the Marias River, Teton River, and Judith River (Priority 2).

Project Sponsor (submitted by): Luke Holmquist, Biologist, MTFWP

Location of Proposed Project:

Narrative; Missouri River from Morony Dam to Fort Peck Reservoir; Lower Marias River (Below Tiber Dam); Lower Teton River

Geocode (in decimal degrees ex 46.89743)

Site: Morony Dam	Lat: 47.58159	Lon: -111.05972
Site: Tiber Dam	Lat: 47.58159	Lon: -111.09705
Site: Fort Peck Headwaters	Lat: 47.55384	Lon: -107.92449

Total Project Cost: \$80,817

TAC Funds (Cost-Share) Requested for Project: \$71,025 (includes \$4,890in overhead)

Other Est. Contributions to this Project: \$9,792

*Biologist (Holmquist) funded by FWP (50%) and another NWE project (50%)
-Administer and write reports (120 hours at \$39.93 w/benefits).....\$ 4,792*

Shuttle Service- FWP Volunteers (Estimated Cost).....\$ 5,000

I. Introduction; brief statement of project to be completed with pertinent background information.

Creel Surveys have been conducted every four years since 2003, with a previous survey performed in 1977-78. The survey provides valuable information regarding angler use, satisfaction, demographics, catch-rates, and the management of our valuable native and non-native gamefish populations. Repeated surveys every 4 years allow for FWP to gauge changes to these metrics over time.

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

1. Interview anglers that are encountered in the 205-mile study area.
 - Survey data gathered will include; angler origin, fishing methods, target species, catch and harvest by species, length and weight of harvested fish.
2. Collect information on previously tagged fish that are caught by anglers.
3. Evaluate the size and age structure of game fish populations in this reach.
 - Collect spines and/or otoliths for aging certain angler harvested game fish
 - Assess how well the data verify or refute the findings from our standard sampling efforts.
4. Provide public outreach regarding the pallid sturgeon recovery program in the study area.
5. Compare 2023 results with data summaries from the 1977-78, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 surveys.

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

A roving creel survey will be conducted on the 205-mile river reach, from Morony Dam to 20 miles downstream of the Robinson Bridge area. Study design will be similar to the 2019 study to best facilitate comparisons between surveys. Because of the remote conditions and special recreational management within the study area it takes 8 days to do a complete sampling run of the river with shuttle service. Anglers present in this reach will be contacted at access sites or on the river if they are using watercraft. Anglers will help fill out a survey form with angler information, numbers of fish caught, kept, and released, hours fished, angler satisfaction (with numbers and size of fish caught), and provide space for angler comments. Anglers who continue to fish for the day will be given a post-card to record their info for the rest of their day.

IV. Schedule; 2023

April Assemble gear and initiate survey
 May Conduct survey
 June Conduct survey
 July..... Conduct survey
 August Conduct survey
 September..... Conduct survey
 October..... Conduct survey (weather permitting) and summarize data
 November..... Conclude survey (weather permitting) and summarize data

 September 2024..... Complete Report

V. Personnel;

Project Leader: Luke Holmquist
 Fisheries Tech IV for 8 Months

VI. Project budget must include amounts for the following:

Materials

Supplies and Materials (postage, prizes, printing costs).....\$ 1,500
 Spot X Satellite Messenger Annual Plan.....\$ 360
 Boat Gas (15 trips, 280 miles/trip, 4 mpg, \$4.50/gal.)\$ 4725
 Maintenance.....\$ 1,250

 MATERIALS TOTAL.....\$ 7,835

Direct Labor

Tech IV (\$20.44/hr w/benefits, [\$30.37 for 1400 hours]).....\$42,518

LABOR TOTAL.....\$42,518

Travel and Living

½ Ton Truck Mileage (\$0.31/mile and \$249.60 monthly usage)

Seasonal Truck (30 weeks, 300 miles/week, 8 months).....	\$ 4,787
Volunteer Shuttle Upper (15 trips, 250 miles/trip, 8 months).....	\$ 3,159
Volunteer Shuttle Lower (15 trips, 430 miles/trip, 8 months)....	\$ 3,996
Per Diem	
Tech II (\$23, 8 days/trip, 15 trips).....	\$ 2,760
Tech II Tent Camp (\$12, 3 nights/trip, 15 trips).....	\$ 540
Volunteer (\$18, 2 People, 15 trips).....	\$ 540
 TRAVEL AND LIVING TOTAL.....	 \$15,782

Other Direct Expenses: None

Direct Overhead (11.5%): $0.115 * \$42,518 = \$4,890$

Total TAC funds requested: \$71,025

VII. Deliverables; Final Report September 2024.

How will “success” for this project be monitored or demonstrated?

This project will be successful if the number of anglers surveyed is similar to the number interviewed during past creel surveys.

VIII. Cultural Resources. No ground disturbance associated with this project.

IX. Water Rights. No wetland development associated with this project.