



Cost-Share 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: Missouri River Softshell Turtle Population Status

Date: 11/20/2024

Explain how this Project addresses a specific Project 2188 License Article(s): This is a priority 1 proposal because it meets 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)

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

The current 2024-2028 5-year Missouri River Fisheries Plan filed with FERC lists a recommendation to perform frequent populations surveys for the spiny softshell turtle. The last survey and population analysis was performed in 2017.

Article 417 – Great Falls Reservoirs & Tailwater. Item 4...

The licensee provided manpower and equipment in cooperation with MFWP, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the US Bureau of Reclamation to conduct the first-ever comprehensive inventory of the distribution and abundance of spiny softshell turtles (SST) in the approximate 250-mile reach of river from Morony Dam to Fort Peck Reservoir. The standardized survey involved setting baited traps for three consecutive nights at 2-mile intervals along the river during 2006-2008. The licensee also provided field assistance and funding (through the Madison-Missouri Wildlife TAC) for a cooperative study with the US Bureau of Reclamation using radio telemetry to determine seasonal movements and habitat selection by SST in the river below Morony Dam. This study was conducted in the approximate 43-mile river reach between Fort Benton and Coalbanks Landing during 2007-2009. More recently, the licensee joined with USFWS, BLM, and USBR to fund a project to determine seasonal SST movements, habitat preferences, and nesting behavior in an approximate 50-mile reach between Fred Robinson Bridge and Stafford Ferry.

Results of the population estimate experiment indicate that the turtle population can be estimated/monitored with good accuracy in the Judith section using a crew of only two people (preferably one from NWE and one from FWP) for two

weeks during late July/early August. This survey should be repeated annually or on alternate years if time allows to build a good baseline dataset and gather more documentation regarding the longevity question.

Project Sponsor (submitted by): Jesse Hankins - BLM

Location of Proposed Project:

Narrative - Missouri River – select sampling locations from Fort Benton to Judith Landing

Geocode (in decimal degrees ex 46.89743) Lat; 47.705153° Long: -109.707983°

Total Project Cost: \$15,000

TAC Funds (Cost-Share) Requested for Project: \$7,500

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

Replicate the 2017 spiny softshell turtle population-monitoring project performed by NWE and FWP. Replicate the 2017 Jay Rotella data analysis. (Jay Rotella, 2018. Spiny Softshell Turtles Abundance Estimation: 2017).

Investigate and report incidental catches or observations of other species of turtle.

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

Maintain population status information, longevity, and growth of known age individuals. Investigate and report incidental catches or observations of other species of turtle.

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

Replicate the 2017 population monitoring project. Same methods and objectives as recommended by the current 5-year plan.

NWE would contract directly with MSU for data analysis and preliminary report.

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

Data collection July-August 2025. Data analysis and report August-December 2025.

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

BLM will perform field sampling

MSU will perform data analysis and preliminary report.

NWE will provide some equipment and funding for data analysis

VI. Project budget must include amounts for the following:

- Direct Labor
- Travel and Living
- Materials
- Other Direct Expenses
- Direct Overhead*
- All cost-share sources and amounts, including estimation of “in-kind” contributions

BLM will provide travel, equipment and perform field investigations. Estimated cost for this work is \$7,500

***NorthWestern Energy TAC funds will not be used for agency overhead on projects that do not fund personnel. Applications for materials and equipment should not contain overhead.**

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?

This project will result in a data analysis and summary report prepared by MSU. That report will be integrated into a complete report by BLM.

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:
No CRM resources would be affected by this project.

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 9 March 2016.

Summarize here how you will comply with Montana water rights laws, policies and guidelines:
No water rights would be affected b 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

Manager, Hydro License Compliance

Andrew.Welch@NorthWestern.com

☎ 406-444-8115

☎ 406-565-7549

208 N. Montana Ave

Suite 205

Helena, MT 59601