# Cost-Share Proposal Form for NorthWestern Energy Project 2188 TAC Funds

Project 2188 (Madison-Missouri River) License proposed Protection, Mitigation and Enhancement (PM&E) projects should relate to an effect from the continued operation of one or more of NorthWestern Energy's (NorthWestern) nine hydro developments (Hebgen, Madison, Hauser, Holter, Black Eagle, Rainbow, Cochrane, Ryan and Morony Dams). PM&E projects are required to reduce or offset impacts to river resources from the continued operation of the hydro developments. 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:** 10/30/2026

**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.

This survey, including the frequency with which it occurs, is outlined in the NWE and FWP Monitoring Agreement, and the FERC License 2188 Five Year (2024-2028) Missouri River Fisheries Plan.

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

This creel survey evaluates angler catch rates and angler use on the Missouri River (Priority 1) and the lower 1 miles of the Marias River (Priority 2). Catch rates are valuable for corroborating trends in relative abundance observed during standardized sampling efforts and trends in angler use with the Statewide Mail Survey on those bodies of water.

**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: $105,365**

**TAC Funds (Cost-Share) Requested for Project: $92,655**

Other Associated Funding: $12,700

*Biologist (Holmquist) funded by FWP (50%) and another NWE project (50%)*
*-Administer and write reports (120 hours at $47.52 w/benefits)…….....$ 5,700*

*Shuttle Service- FWP Volunteers (Estimated Cost)……..$ 7,000*

## 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 and corroborate trends observed during standardized monitoring.

## 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 and other native species conservation efforts in the study area.
5. Compare 2027 results with data summaries from the 1977-78, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2023 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 2023 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. Anglers who fill out a post-card and return it will be entered in a drawing to receive prizes (gift cards).

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

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 2028…… Complete Report

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

Project Leader: Luke Holmquist
Fisheries Tech IV for 8 Months

**VI. Project budget with line items including 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**

Materials

Supplies and Materials (postage, prizes, printing costs)……..…..$ 3,000
Zoleo Satellite Messenger and Unlimited Plan…...……..……..….$ 430
Boat Gas (15 trips, 280 miles/trip, 4 mpg, $4.50/gal.) ...…….....…$4,988
Maintenance……..……...$ 2,000

**MATERIALS TOTAL……..….....$ 10,418**

Direct Labor

Tech IV ($36.51 for 1,400 hours)…….....$51,114

**LABOR TOTAL……...$51,114**

Travel and Living

½ Ton Truck Mileage ($0.5/mile and $17.80 daily usage fee)

Seasonal Truck (30 weeks, 300 miles/week)…..…$ 8,238
Volunteer Shuttle Upper (15 trips, 250 miles/trip).....$ 3,744
Volunteer Shuttle Lower (15 trips, 430 miles/trip)…….……..$ 5,094

Per Diem

Tech IV ($44.10, 8 days/trip, 15 trips)…...…….……....$ 5,292
Tech IV Tent Camp ($12, 3 nights/trip, 15 trips)……..…...$ 540
Volunteer ($32.90, 2 People, 15 trips)…..……..…….....$ 1,974

**TRAVEL AND LIVING TOTAL…….…..….$24,882**

Project funds to FWP……..…….. **$86,414**
Direct Overhead on Labor Only (12.23%):…….……**$ 6,251**
**TOTAL NWE FUNDING REQUESTED…….……..... $92,655**

***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?

*Final Report September 2028.*

*This project will be successful if the creel clerk is able to complete the survey similar to past surveys, enter data, and complete the project report.*

VIII. Cultural Resources. Cultural Resource Management (CRM) requirements for any activity related to this Project must be completed and documented to NorthWestern 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 NorthWestern representative for further information or assistance from NorthWestern's staff archeologist. 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 ground disturbance associated with this project.*

IX. Water Rights. For projects that involve development, restoration or enhancement of streams or 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 wetland development associated with 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

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
**O** 406-444-8115
**C** 406-565-7549