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: Morony Trees, Fence & Pond Outlet

Date: Nov 1, 2023

Explain how this Project addresses a specific Project 2188 License Article(s): License Article 423 requires the development of a plan to monitor and enhance native plants and wildlife populations on the lands and waters associated with the project. The current 5-year plan (2023-2027) states restoration and enhancement of riparian lands and wetlands in the project area has been a primary goal of the wildlife and vegetation enhancement plan since the establishment of the program and the Wildlife TAC in 2000. The program has funded several projects to monitor and restore cottonwood forests along the Missouri River.

Provide justification for Priority 1, 2 or 3 (above) that you selected:
This is a priority 1 project dealing with wildlife habitat enhancement on the mainstem Missouri River.

Project Sponsor (submitted by): NorthWestern Energy

Location of Proposed Project:
Narrative; North shore of Morony Reservoir near Great Falls

Geocode (in decimal degrees ex 46.89743) Lat; 47.579998 Long: -111.070178

Total Project Cost: $7,347

TAC Funds (Cost-Share) Requested for Project: $7,347

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

The natural development cycle of cottonwood trees along the Missouri River in central Montana has been disrupted by main stem dams that buffer high river flows that traditionally would distribute cottonwood seeds. In years when cottonwood seedlings develop along the river bank, they are generally sheared off by ice within a few years. Deer and cattle also impact new seedlings. Beavers can

impact seedlings and mature trees. In 2021, NorthWestern Energy staff evaluated characteristics of large cottonwood forests along the Missouri River between Carter Ferry and Coal Banks Landing. The loss of mature trees (40 ft height) was mostly attributed to girdling or toppling by beavers, cut banks sloughing trees into the river and fire. Some of the stable cottonwood forests were located on river benches set back from the river where beavers, bank sloughing and ice shear were non factors.

The Morony Pond site is a good candidate to develop a mixed tree cottonwood forest for bird habitat because it is relatively close to the Missouri River, but is not vulnerable to ice shear and beavers impacting trees. The project is located on public land and the natural hydrologic features at this site offers a high probability of success for tree planting. Naturally volunteering trees at the site demonstrates the likelihood of success for tree planting.

NWE investigated the feasibility of enhancing this area for wildlife habitat. The ~25 individual tree sites could be fenced to protect each tree from deer browsing. The natural sub irrigation provides a high probability of success for tree planting. Although primarily focused on growing cottonwood trees, this site would be planted with a small number of ponderosa pine trees to provide habitat for other species such as great horned owl and bats. Approximately 80% of the trees planted would be cottonwood.

The pond outlet has been enhanced with plywood to increase head at the outlet, This material would be removed and replaced with stacked rock to provide a fortified outlet structure with a more natural appearance. Maintaining an increased pond head provides habitat for other wildlife such as waterfowl.

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

Develop a large stand of viable cottonwood and ponderosa pine trees along the Missouri River for wildlife habitat.

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

Plant approximately 25 trees along the seep periphery. Install 6 foot tall mesh fence around each tree site with steel T posts to hold in place. Remove old outlet structure and replace with stacked rocks.

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

Planting trees, setting fences and upgrading the outlet would be conducted in May 2023.

V. Personnel; who will do the work? Identify Project leader or principal investigator.
Montana FWP would conduct a MEPA to scope public comment on the project. NWE will contract an archaeologist to perform a class III CRM inventory and report. NWE will secure SHPO concurrence. NWE will contract the tree planting and outlet upgrades. NWE will conduct basic evaluations for success and prepare a report.

VI. Project budget must include amounts for the following:

Trees (25)	$ 568.00	
Fence/posts	$1278.50	
Install –labor/equip/mob	$2950.00	
Subtotal		$4796.50
Remove outlet wood, site prep	$ 400.00	
Materials (4yds rock)	$ 750.00	
Install-labor/equip/mob	$3000.00	
Subtotal		$4,150.00
Grand Total		$8,946.50

***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?

Success will be measured by the growth of cottonwood and ponderosa pine at the site. Pond outlet will be developed using structurally sound and natural looking materials. Annual plant survival count monitoring will determine success.

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:

In September 2023, NWE consulting archaeologist conducted a file search, site visit and class III inventory. No cultural, historic or archaeological resources were discovered from these efforts. NWE will submit a report to SHPO and request a concurrence letter.

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 will be effected.

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
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Figure 1. Morony Pond tree planing and outlet improvement project site. Morony Reservoir, Montana.

Figure XX. Morony Pond site proposed tree planting layout.

Figure XX. Morony Pond south view.

Figure XX. Morony Pond outlet, north view.

Figure XX. Morony Pond effluent zone, soth view.