



Cost-Share Proposal Form for NorthWestern Energy (NWE) Mystic Project 2301 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Funds

Mystic Lake Hydroelectric Project 2301 Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement (PM&E) projects are implemented to offset impacts from the continuous operation of the hydroelectric facility. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) provides that NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) will uphold responsibilities for PM&E of the fisheries and aquatic habitats. NorthWestern is responsible for verifying that PM&E funds are authorized and spent for appropriate actions that comply with the intent and scope of the FERC license, the current Fisheries Monitoring Plan, and the MOU. PM&E projects must prioritize measures that directly benefit the fish and aquatic habitats in the Project area including West Rosebud Creek, Mystic Lake, West Rosebud Lake, and Emerald Lake. Proposed PM&E projects will be evaluated and prioritized by location to the Project and the overall benefit to fish and habitats to ensure minimization or offset of any adverse effects from the operations of the Mystic Lake Project.

All TAC project proposals must include the following information:

Project Title: Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) Technician 4

Project Sponsor (proposal submitted by): Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

Location of Proposed Project: West Rosebud Creek drainage; MFWP Region 5 headquarters

Total Project Cost: \$13,887; Montana MFWP will cover travel and per diem for associated projects

TAC Funds (Cost-Share) Requested for Project: \$13,887

Geocode (in decimal degrees ex 46.89743) Lat: 45.22552 Long: -109.76057

All proposals must include the following information:

- I. Introduction; brief statement of proposed project with pertinent background information.

Mystic lake is a high elevation lake (7,672 ft) that is the fourth lake in a chain of six (listed in order going downstream: Star, Silver, Island, Mystic, West Rosebud, and Emerald). This chain of lakes makes up the headwaters of West Rosebud Creek. West Rosebud Creek flows 25.1 miles and loses 2,144 feet of elevation as it meanders down to its confluence with East Rosebud Creek. Montana Fish, Wild & Parks (MFWP) manages West Rosebud Creek as a wild trout sport fishery and native fishery, while Mystic Lake, West Rosebud Lake, and Emerald Lake as wild and stocked sport fisheries. NWE has been assisting in funding a technician position with MFWP since the agreement was put into place to sample lake and stream fish populations, and conduct habitat surveys and plan habitat projects throughout the drainage. Additionally, the funding helps keep the fisheries technician as a full-time position.

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

MFWP monitors both game and non-game species to ensure to continuation of healthy populations of fish throughout the West Rosebud Creek drainage. This project will continue to fund long-term monitoring and project implementation to ensure that the fisheries resource of this drainage is protected and thrive for future generations to enjoy. Additionally, the technician will provide a report and presentation during the annual TAC meeting of fisheries related work associated with this project.

How does this project meet the intent of the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding to implement conservation measures of the Mystic Hydroelectric Project?

The MOU states that MFWP is responsible for adaptive management regarding fish populations in West Rosebud Creek and associated lakes. Funding the fisheries technician will help MFWP accomplish this goal by collecting data that is essential to inform management decisions and inform and plan future habitat projects.

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

Long-term monitoring will continue using scientific collection methods approved by the MFWP. Collection methods include mountain lake experimental gillnetting, experimental sinking and floating gillnets, angling, backpack electrofishing, bank electrofishing, and mobile electrode electrofishing. Additionally, MFWP may conduct habitat surveys, and plan and execute habitat improvement projects.

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

The funding for this proposal would be for calendar 2025, though this is part of ongoing long-term monitoring. MFWP follows a rotating schedule that consists of the primary fisheries sampling surveys (Table 1). For calendar year 2025, MFWP plans to complete the Mackay Flat electrofishing section of West Rosebud Creek, West Rosebud Creek fall redd count, and will be planning, coordinating, and potentially executing side channel studies/projects for 2025 and subsequent years.

Year	A	B	C	D	E
2021	X				X
2022				X	X
2023		X	X		X
2024	X				X
2025				X	X
2026		X	X		X
2027	X				X

Table 1: Sampling activities by year in West Rosebud Creek drainage, Montana.

A: Mystic Lake monitoring

B: West Rosebud Creek electrofishing between the dam and powerhouse (Upper and Lower bypass sections)

C: West Rosebud and Emerald lakes fish monitoring via gillnetting

D: West Rosebud Creek electrofishing below Emerald Lake (Mackay Flat section)

E: West Rosebud Creek fall brown trout redd survey

- V. Personnel; provide details of the personnel responsible for implementing and completing the project objectives using the allocated TAC funds. Identify the project leader and principal investigator. Additionally, please justify how the allocated TAC funds will be utilized to ensure successful implementation and completion of the project objectives.

MFWP Fisheries Technician 4 will be responsible for all scientific collection and implementation of fieldwork, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and presentations with the supervision of MFWP Biologist Bryan Giordano. Additionally, staff will coordinate and work with other TAC members throughout the project, and may conduct additional sampling and potential habitat projects in the drainage.

VI. Project budget must include amounts for the following: See attached budget spreadsheet

- Direct Labor- \$12,043
- Direct Overhead*- \$1,844
- Total- \$13,887
- All cost-share sources and amounts, including estimation of “in-kind” contributions- Equivalent time for sampling from MFWP biologist and technician 5 level, data and analysis review from biologist level, and coordination from biologist level. Additionally, MFWP will cover all travel and equipment expenses associated with normal sampling for the project.

***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; **all funded projects are required to submit an annual report by March 1 of the year following the project start. Annual reports will be prepared that summarize the previous year’s work and the proposed plan for the next year. The annual reports will be submitted to the TAC and posted on the Mystic Lake Project Coordination website (mysticlakeproject.com).**

Describe the work product (reports, habitat restoration, etc.) which will result from this Project. How will “success” for this project be monitored or demonstrated?

MFWP will produce a report associated with the project and a presentation for the annual TAC meeting. Additional demonstration of “success” for this project is difficult due to the project being annual monitoring of long-term monitoring sections. MFWP plans to work closely with the United States Forest Service (USFS) to develop habitat projects on USFS land downstream of Mystic Lake. These could include improving holding water or spawning habitats; however, these projects would be in their planning and data collection stages, and are unlikely to be implemented during the 2025 calendar year.

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:

As stated above, habitat surveys are being conducted with intentions of completing future habitat improvement projects; however, they are unlikely to be implemented during the 2025 calendar year. If habitat improvement projects occurred, MFWP and USFS would work jointly to ensure CRM requirements are met.

All TAC Project proposals should be 5 pages or less and emailed (as a WORD file) to each of:

- Andrew.Welch@NorthWestern.com
- Jon.Hanson@Northwestern.com
- Joe.Hagengruber@Northwestern.com

Further questions about TAC proposals or Project 2301 license requirements or related issues may be addressed to:

Andy Welch

Manager, Hydro License Compliance

Andrew.Welch@NorthWestern.com

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