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: **Beaver Creek Wetlands Complex Maintenance**

Date: **November 11, 2026**

Explain how this Project addresses a specific Project 2188 License Article(s):
The proposed project is consistent with Article 423 of FERC License 2188 and the Project 2188 Wildlife Plan (2023-2027). Article 423 states that the "Licensee shall…after consultation with the appropriate agencies and other entities, develop a vegetation and wildlife monitoring and enhancement plan that includes specific goals, objectives, and standards to enhance native plants and wildlife populations on the lands and waters associated with the project." The goal of this project is to maintain and enhance existing riparian/wetland habitat adjacent to the waters associated with the Project (Madison River, Beaver Creek, and associated spring-fed streams).

Provide justification for Priority 1, 2 or 3 (above) that you selected:
Because this project meets a License Article (Article 423) requirement and maintains and/or enhances wildlife habitat along a primary tributary (Beaver Creek) and adjacent lands, it is a Priority 2 project.

Project Sponsor (submitted by):
Randall Scarlett, West Zone Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service, Hebgen Lake Ranger District, West Yellowstone, MT

Location of Proposed Project:
Beaver Creek Wetlands Complex, Custer Gallatin National Forest, Hebgen Lake Ranger District. The site is west of Beaver Creek and immediately south of State Highway 287.

Narrative

Geocode (in decimal degrees ex 46.89743) Lat: 44.860968 Long: -111.370100

Total Project Cost: $5,093

TAC Funds (Cost-Share) Requested for Project: **$2,400**

I. Introduction; brief statement of project to be completed with pertinent background information.
In the late-1980's, Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFW&P) and Custer Gallatin National Forest (CGNF) worked together to create a wetland complex along both sides of highway 287 near Beaver Creek. The wetlands complex is designated on Forest visitor maps as an official wildlife viewing site. The original project consisted of a combination of ditching, damming, and dredging along both sides of the highway. MFW&P and CGNF currently have a water right for the original project (Water Right # 41F-86524-00). Over time, muskrats have burrowed into the downstream levee at several locations. One such borrow resulted in a major breach (10' long x 6' wide x 4' deep) in 2015. This breach was repaired using Northwestern Energy Wildlife TAC emergency funding in Fall 2016. Once repaired, the target water level was restored in a matter of days. When the wetland filled to the target level following the 2016 repair, a minor breach was noted just south of the repaired breach. Due to the size of the breach and other factors it was not addressed at that time. During the summer of 2025, wildlife personnel monitoring thinning of encroaching conifers at the site and the condition of the outflow found that the levee had collapsed at the site and water had scoured a channel approximately 8' long x 6' wide x 3' deep through the dike. The current water level of the southern pond is approximately 1.5 feet lower than the target level. Without intervention, the existing breach is likely to expand during high runoff periods as the breach is lower than the engineered outflow of the wetland.

We are requesting funds to acquire appropriate fill material and supplies, rent a small skid steer and compactor, and implement repairs to the impounding structure to restore the water level to the original design level.

II. Objectives; explicit statement(s) of what is intended to be accomplished.
Project objectives include: 1) stabilize, plug, and compact the existing breach with native pit run material (6" minus); 2) install a layer of filter fabric across the new face; and, 3) where possible, transplant sedge mats stripped from below the levee to stabilize new rock/soil. If use of locally sourced sedge mats is not feasible, the site will be seeded using a weed-free native seed mix.

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

Once low-flow conditions occur, the inlets to the southern end of the wetland complex will be blocked using sandbags. Water north of Highway 287 will be directed east to Beaver Creek to draw down the water level of the wetland south of Highway 287. Material will be transported and stockpiled at the site using Forest Service vehicles and dump trailer. The breach will be accessed from the pullout adjacent to Highway 287. The skid steer will leave the roadway and follow the dike to the breach. If necessary, an excavator attachment would be used to dig down to ensure all undermined material/burrows are removed from the breach. Material will be placed in the breach and compacted thoroughly using a gas-powered compactor. The skid steer may be used to strip sedge mats, if available. Maintenance of the outlet, if needed, will occur at this time to ensure that water flows through both the outlet structure and the overflow channel, and does not impact Highway 287. Once the repair is completed, the diversions on the two culverts at Highway 287 will be removed and the wetland allowed to refill.

IV. Schedule; when the Project work will begin and end.
Work will occur during late summer and fall 2027. Repair activities will commence on or around September 1 after most migratory species have left the site. Prep and repair work are expected to be completed in 2 days.

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

The Project leader will be Randy Scarlett. Work will be accomplished by Randy Scarlett, TaylorJae Taber, and District staff (fire and non-fire). Time for Forest Service personnel to obtain permits, coordinate, and implement the project will be accounted for in the project budget.

VI. Project budget with line items including amounts for the following:

Category	Description	TAC	FS	In-Kind	Total
Direct Labor	FS Bio – 2 days	$0	$1,120	$0	$1,120
	WL Tech – 2 days	$0	$520	$0	$520
	Trails Crew – 2 days x 2	$0	$800		$800
	Skid steer operator	$350	$0	$0	$350
Travel and Living	FS vehicles & trailer	$0	$200	$0	$200
Materials/Supplies	Skid steer rental	$1,300	$0	$0	$1,300
	Tamper/compactor rental	$250			$250
	Misc. supplies (gravel, fuel, filter cloth, other)	$500			$500
Other Direct Expenses	None	$0	$0	$0	$0
Direct Overhead	2%	$0	$53	$0	$53
Total		**$2,400**	**$2,693**	**$0**	**$5,093**

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

***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?
Restoration of the water level of the wetland complex and stabilization of the impounding structure.

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:
The District Ranger has determined that all new disturbance lies within the area originally disturbed during construction of the wetland complex. A new archaeological survey is therefore not required.

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:
MFW&P and CGNF currently have a water right for the original project (Water Right # 41F-86524-00).

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


2027 Beaver Creek Wetland Repair
17
CABI
CREI
REFUGE PT
ON
20
21
Proposed Beaver Creek Wetland Repair
BEAVER CREEK
989
Ghost Village
Lake
29
28
N
0
0.13
0.25
0.5
Miles
Vantor


2027 Beaver Creek Wetland Repair
Highway 287
Breach
Microsoft, Vantor