

Clearwater Watershed Restoration Plan

Applicant: Clearwater Resource Council
P.O. Box 1471, Seeley Lake, MT 59868

Project Manager: Caryn Miske
P.O. Box 1471, Seeley Lake, MT 59868
caryn@crcmt.org
406.677.0069

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Background Data.....	4
Project Location.....	5
Project Description/Milestones.....	6
Applicant Category.....	6
History.....	6
Applicant Eligibility.....	7
Goals & Objectives.....	8
Approach.....	9
Eligible projects.....	10
Evaluation Criteria.....	15
Budget.....	27
Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance.....	32
Required Permits and Approvals.....	33
Official Resolution.....	34
Letters of Support.....	35

Executive Summary

Submittal date: November 13, 2019

Applicant name: Clearwater Resource Council

Address: P.O. Box 1471, Seeley Lake, MT 59868

Duration: The project will be completed within two years of the date of the grant award. Estimated completion in 2021, dependent upon the date of award.

Project Location: The proposed project is not located on a Federal facility.

Project summary: The Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) will develop a watershed restoration plan for the Clearwater watershed, located in Missoula County, Montana. The watershed has unique natural resource values as it forms the southernmost portion of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE), which extends from the Highwood River in Alberta to the Blackfoot River in Montana. The NCDE is also known as the “Crown of the Continent” and has a high global conservation status. BOR funds will be used to accomplish specific project activities including initial community outreach; assembling existing information and identifying data gaps; obtaining necessary baseline data; and identifying and prioritizing specific watershed restoration projects. The goal of the plan is to guide future on-the-ground activities and enable CRC to prioritize its funding most efficiently and effectively. CRC’s proposed project contributes to accomplishing the goals of the water SMART FOA by (1) facilitating dialogue amongst diverse stakeholder groups to develop local solutions to complex water quality issues; (2) improving community relationships by restoring trust amongst stakeholders with historically divergent views; and (3) creating a plan to facilitate conservation stewardship and public-private partnerships.

Background Data

Watershed Description

The Clearwater has unique natural resource values as this watershed forms the southernmost portion of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE), which extends from the Highwood River in Alberta to the Blackfoot River in Montana. The NCDE is also known as the “Crown of the Continent” and has a high global conservation status. In addition, the watershed has unique cultural values to both the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Blackfeet Nation who called this area the “backbone of the world.”

Moreover, together with the Swan Lake region, and the Lincoln Ranger District, the Clearwater has unique landscape connectivity value, linking the Bob Marshall, the Lincoln Scapegoat and the Mission Mountain Wilderness areas

Locally, the Clearwater is known as the “Chain of Lakes.” These glacially created lakes, from north to south include: Rainy Lake, Lake Alva, Lake Inez, Seeley Lake, Salmon Lake and Placid Lake. The Clearwater, located in Missoula County, Montana, is still relatively pristine in nature, and hosts a variety of endangered species.

Source of water supply: Clearwater River

Current water uses

Current water users include agricultural, municipal, domestic, instream uses and industrial uses, based in part on data derived from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/seeley-lake-mt/>. More specifically the largest industries in Seeley Lake, MT are manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting and construction. It is important to note that surface waters from Seeley Lake still serve as the primary drinking water source for local residents.

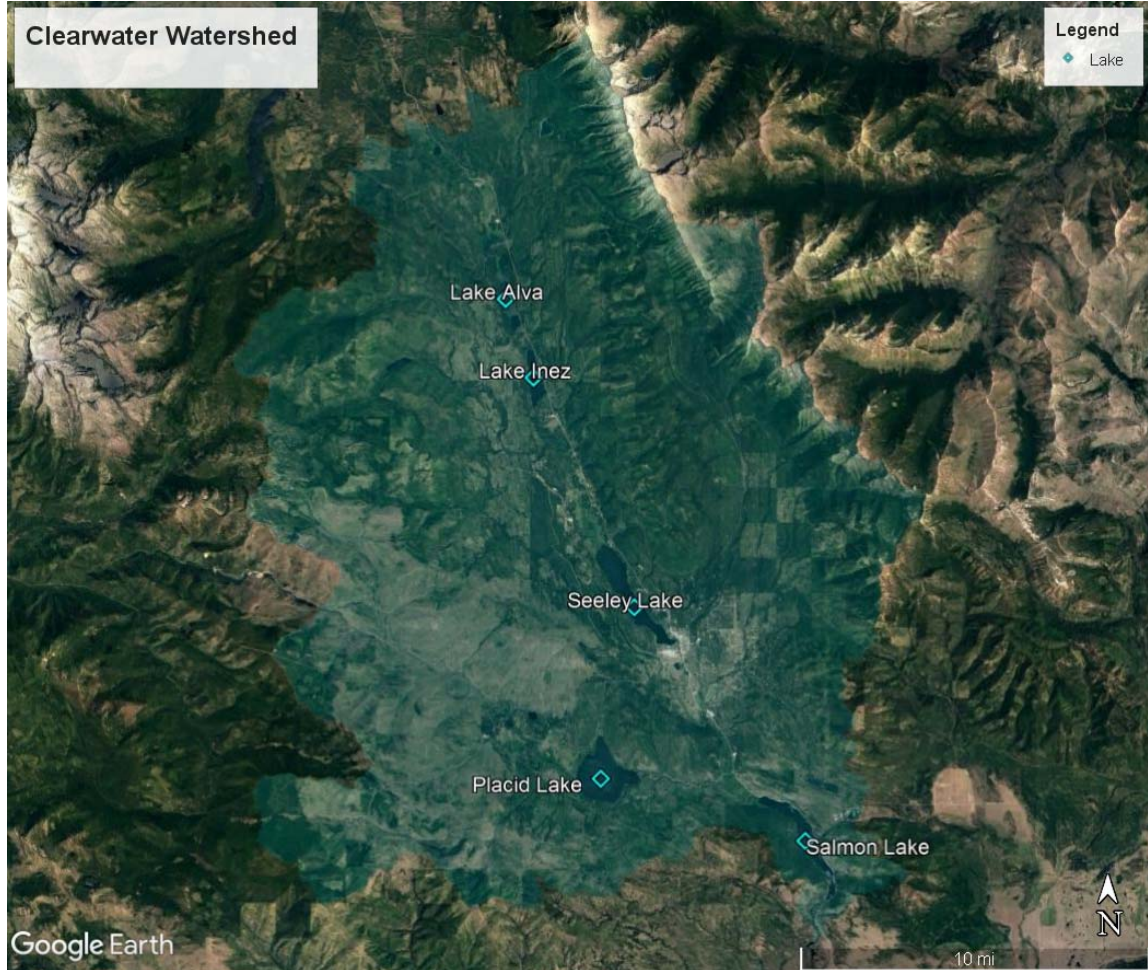
Types of water issues in the watershed

The types of water issues in the watershed are varied, and include but are not limited to: water quality issues low dissolved (DO) oxygen levels resulting in episodic anaerobic conditions at certain lakes/locations; endangered species concerns including habitat issues related to bull trout and trumpeter swans; environmental issues related to excessive nutrient loading in Seeley Lake, the main drinking water source for the community of Seeley Lake; nutrient loading related to forest fires; potential dewatering at the mouth of Seeley Lake; and issues related to aquatic invasive species (AIS), focusing on (1) prevention of zebra and quagga mussel introductions; and (2) prevention of invasive fish species being introduced into bull trout habitat due to failing dam infrastructure on private lands.

Past BOR grants: CRC has no past working relationships with Reclamation.

Project location

The Clearwater watershed is located in the State of Montana in Missoula County. Seeley Lake is the largest town located in the heart of the watershed. The map below depicts the geographic location of the area in which the CRC will work.



Technical project description and milestones

Applicant Category

CRC is seeking funding as an Existing Watershed Group. We choose to apply under that Applicant Category since the CRC was established has an established track history of programmatic success in the Clearwater watershed.

Brief history: When and How CRC was initiated

In 2003, a group of people in Seeley Lake met at the Seeley Lake Rural Fire Department and began work on a community fire plan. This plan was completed in 2004, but its creation and implementation revealed to the group that a local organization focused on natural resource management was needed for the community. The group planned initial meetings and invited all interested stakeholders. Through continuing discussion, the CRC was formed in 2005.

Initial efforts focused on addressing risks of wildfire, maintaining sustainable forestry, maintaining the diversity of wildlife in the Valley, evaluating potential future land uses, and reducing the spread of noxious weeds. One of the first efforts for CRC's board involved working with local, state, and federal agency personnel to establish the Seeley Lake Fuels Mitigation Task Force. Over the years the Task Force has been successful in revising the Fire Plan and acquiring several million dollars in county, state and federal grants to engage and support landowners in conducting fuel mitigation projects throughout the watershed, as well as helping coordinate interagency fire and fuel mitigation efforts. Over 10 years later, CRC continues to serve as the leader in the watershed in facilitating fuels mitigation projects.

Another project taken on early in CRC's history was the potential future status of Plum Creek Timber Company lands in the Valley. With Plum Creek actively divesting its lands, the future status of its land holdings was a significant concern from both the potential loss of working forests as well as potential impacts for substantial new development that could adversely impact the Valleys' important wildlife resources and corridors, as well as access to recreation. CRC initiated discussions with Plum Creek and in coordination with the Ecosystem Management Research Institute (EMRI), prepared a landscape assessment of the Clearwater watershed. Based on this assessment, CRC identified areas of the Valley with high resource values as well as other areas where potential development was more compatible. CRC used these results to seek a revision of the Seeley Lake Regional Land Use Plan by the Seeley Lake Community Council, an activity that took four years to get through the approval process. The plan was ultimately approved by the Missoula County Commissioners and the potential adverse impacts of the Plum Creek land divestment was averted.

In the early years, CRC also established an Invasive Weeds Task Force and with the assistance of EMRI prepared the Clearwater Valley Coordinated Invasive Weed Strategy. CRC acquired grants and worked with cooperators to map and treat invasive species.

Ongoing CRC projects or efforts currently under way

In addition to the fuel mitigation efforts and the coordinated invasive weed strategy discussed above, the CRC's ongoing projects/efforts include:

- Air quality (focusing on education efforts to mitigate the impacts of wood stove/wood smoke during the winter months);
- Aquatics (volunteer lake and stream monitoring programs);
- Aquatic Invasive Species (monitoring and volunteer inspection program at boat ramps);
- Coordinated Forest Management (initiative seeks to link vegetation management across ownerships and ensure that all agencies, local businesses and community members undertake management actions in a way that makes sense across the landscape); and
- Landscape restoration (Southwest Crown of the Continent Collaborative Forest Restoration Project is a 10-year effort focused on reducing the risk of fire on National Forest lands and restoring forest and aquatic ecosystems. This initiative is one of 10 collaborative efforts funded across Forest Service lands across the county designed to engage local communities in restoration efforts).

The programs related to previous watershed planning activities include:

- The Seeley Lake Regional Land Use Plan, which was updated in 2008 to include an aquatic component;
- CRC's aquatic program which has generated some initial, but limited baseline data; and
- CRC's AIS program which focuses on monitoring and prevention efforts.

No watershed specific planning has been undertaken by CRC to date.

Eligibility of Applicant

CRC meets the eligibility requirements, as described in Section C.1. Eligible Applicants as noted below.

- CRC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization;
- CRC and its members are significantly affected by the quality of water in the Clearwater watershed¹;
- CRC is capable of promoting the sustainable use of water resources²;

¹ The applicant and its members are located within and rely upon the waters of the Clearwater watershed for drinking water supplies; tourism revenues; and the protection and fish and wildlife habitat, including habitat for threatened and endangered species.

² As demonstrated by its work in facilitating the passage of the Seeley Lake Regional Land Use Plan.

- CRC is located in Montana;
- CRC is an existing watershed group (a grassroots, non-regulatory legal entity that meets the definition of a watershed group as described in Section A.2 of the FOA.)³

Applicant's role in the Existing Watershed Group

The applicant represents the watershed group Clearwater Resource Council.

Goals: Preliminary goals and objectives of CRC

Goal 1: Broaden Community Involvement in Watershed Planning to develop an informed constituency

Objective 1: Reach at least 5 new stakeholder groups that have had limited engagement with CRC to date.

Objective 2: Enhance community outreach by attending up to 10 events and meetings to better garner community support for watershed planning.

Objective 3: Host a minimum of five watershed planning meetings to identify the issues of concern to local stakeholders.

Goal 2: Develop and Adopt a Scientifically Defensible Watershed Restoration Plan to prioritize and drive on-the-ground restoration efforts

Objective 1: Undertake baseline research and address data gaps to inform watershed planning effort.

Objective 2: Engage with scientific community, and in particular the Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS), to vet issues and prioritization efforts.⁴

Objective 3: Develop milestones/benchmarks to ensure the plan is finalized within the two-year planning window.

Goal 3: Safeguard drinking water supplies

Objective 1: Ensure adequate baseline and ongoing monitoring efforts are in place for Seeley Lake to monitor nutrient loading.

³ CRC addresses water availability and quality issues within the Clearwater watershed, promotes the sustainable use of water resources in the watershed, makes decisions on a consensus basis, and represents a diverse group of stakeholders.

⁴ CRC currently partners with the FLBS on AIS-related monitoring efforts.

Objective 2: Work with the Seeley Lake Sewer District to incorporate sewer and associated land use planning issues into the watershed restoration plan.⁵

Goal 4: Protect aquatic habitats to ensure both terrestrial and aquatic T&E species persist in the watershed

Objective 1: Compile maps related to T&E habitat for selected species.

Objective 2: Map and develop a plan to address habitats impaired by aquatic vegetation and invasive plant species.

Objective 3: Develop a plan to address DO levels in selected lakes to ensure anerobic conditions do not threaten native fish species.

Objective 4: Assess dam management at Placid Lake to identify possible solutions to sporadic dam breaks which could lead to invasive fish species being introduced into native bull trout habitat.

Approach

CRC's planned approach for completing watershed group development and restoration planning activities can be summarized as follows:

- **Community outreach:** CRC will engage in enhanced community outreach to engage those key stakeholder groups with limited CRC exposure to date. Outreach will include attendance at selected community events and meetings (e.g. the local chamber of commerce); use of electronic media including facebook, instagram and twitter; media publications and placements; and interfacing with community groups with broad based membership or reach, such as the Seeley Lake Community Council and the Seeley Lake Community Foundation.
- **WRP meetings:** CRC will host a series of community-based meeting to identify the most pressing watershed restoration issues. Meetings will also include federal, state, local and tribal representatives, along with academic and non-profit participants. The meetings will be inclusive in nature and designed to facilitate community trust and consensus building.
- **Compilation of existing data:** CRC will review our existing planning documents, along with federal, state, local and tribal planning documents to compile all relevant information and to identify data gaps.
- **Filling basic data gaps:** CRC will fill the basic data gaps identified to craft a scientifically defensible plan. If a significant data gap(s) are identified beyond the scope of what the BOR grant can accommodate, such data gaps will be addressed in a subsequent phase of the project.

⁵ CRC is currently partnering with the Sewer District on a water quality education and outreach grant application.

- **Review of relevant BMPs:** Once priorities are identified, relevant BMPs will be reviewed for each issue area to better inform the next iteration of community meetings.
- **Scientific consultation:** Scientists at both agencies and the University of Montana will be consulted to ensure the plan is both rigorous and robust in terms of issue identification and project prioritization.
- **Draft Watershed Plan:** Based on the input and information collected as per the steps above, CRC will prepare a draft watershed restoration plan with prioritization matrix and relevant GIS maps.
- **Final Watershed Plan:** The draft plan will be reviewed by stakeholders, and additional community meetings will be held to discuss the draft plan. Comments will be incorporated as appropriate. The plan will then be finalized within the two-year planning window.

CRC will focus on the following Task Areas as described in Section C.3.1., Eligible Projects, as noted below:

Task A - Watershed Group Development:

- Conducting stakeholder meetings/outreach to establish broad-based, diverse membership.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- Identify under-represented stakeholder groups and their representatives.
 - Undertake outreach to under-represented stakeholder groups.
 - Attend up to 10 community-based events and meetings to better connect with under-represented stakeholder groups, including but not limited to the Seeley Lake Community Council, the Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce, Seeley Lake Community Foundation, etc.).
 - Convene a pre-watershed restoration plan community meeting to discuss watershed restoration planning goals and objectives and develop community trust.
 - Advertise the watershed restoration planning process and meetings using a combination of electronic media including facebook, instagram and twitter; and print publications and placements.
- Conducting pre-planning activities, including researching existing plans related to the watershed.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- research existing CRC plans to compile relevant information;

- research and review relevant agency plans (federal, state, local and tribal) to compile relevant information;
- Undertake data gap analysis to determine minimum baseline data needed for robust plan development; and
- Interview key scientists (both agency and academic) to ascertain any significant data gaps, research or modeling needs.

Task B – Watershed Restoration Planning:

- Completing a watershed restoration plan and conducting water quality studies needed to provide baseline information about the watershed.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- Water quality studies needed to provide needed baseline information on the five major lakes in the watershed, including but not limited to chlorophyll-a, total dissolved Nitrogen and Phosphorous, DO, conductivity, turbidity, etc.
 - A study commissioned by CRC (Lake Water Quality, Trophic Status and Potential Loading Sources for Clearwater Lakes, prepared by Vicki Watson of the University of Montana, May 2012) confirmed the need for additional water quality monitoring in order to adequately inform any WRP to be developed. Report excerpts are noted below:
 - The TMDL summarized issues on Seeley and Salmon lakes and recommended further monitoring, a more detailed review of available data to determine appropriate monitoring parameters and frequency, compilation of sufficient data for a watershed loading and lake response model, and better definition of nutrient source loadings.
 - Need for the Study Multiple factors at work in the Clearwater Basin demonstrate the need for a better understanding of lake and stream conditions as well as a coordinated WRP to manage and restore elements of the watershed that may degrade water quality.
 - Seeley and Salmon lakes have been a focus of water quality concern in the past. Both lakes were listed for water quality impairment in 1996 but removed from listing by MTDEQ in 2006 citing a general improvement in nutrients, dissolved oxygen and Secchi transparency. In the 1970's the lakes and tributaries of the Clearwater were believed to have water quality problems associated with heavy logging and other watershed activities (Streebin et al., 1973; EPA 1977). EPA (1977) concluded that the nutrient loading for Seeley Lake was consistent with a mesotrophic system somewhere between “acceptable” and “dangerous” based on the Vollenweider ratings. EPA recommended that a land use study be conducted to determine whether significant reduction of

non-point source nutrient inputs can be accomplished. Also of concern was a history of extensive logging and road construction and elevated organics, siltation or nutrient concentrations in watersheds, such as Deer Creek, West Fork Clearwater and Richmond Creek (Streebin et al., 1973). Monitoring has been insufficient to clearly resolve these concerns (MT DEQ 2008). Little is known about linkages between forest management and water quality in the lakes, but erosion related to roads has been identified as a potential source of nutrient loading (MT DEQ 2004). The EPA Lake Eutrophication Study (EPA 1977) identified Deer Creek and the upper Clearwater River, as major sources of nutrient loading to Seeley Lake in 1974- 75. Both Deer Creek and the West Fork Clearwater River are currently 303(d) listed for water quality impairment. Recent data suggest Deer Creek could still be an important source (MT DEQ 2008; and this report). Construction of more homes (and septic systems) and failing older septic systems near the lakes could contribute to continued problems as well (McLeod and Aune 2004; Vince Chappel, Seeley Lake Sewer District personal communication of unpublished data). Warming associated with a changing climate might lead to fundamental changes in hydrology and nutrient cycling with synergistic effects on eutrophication within the Clearwater system lakes (e.g., Markensten et al., 2010).

- Prepare draft plans as noted in WRP meetings section below.
- Prepare final plan.
- Conducting mapping and other technical analyses, including obtaining data and developing goals and benchmarks for the restoration plan.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- Compile necessary GIS data to map
 - aquatic habitat for selected T&E species (including mapping where restoration is needed);
 - habitats impaired by aquatic vegetation/invasive plant(s);
 - land use planning area related to proposed sewer district for Seeley Lake;
 - anerobic areas in five key lakes; and
 - other maps as needed.
- Obtain adequate baseline data for Seeley and Salmon Lakes to better monitor nutrient loading.
- Assess dam breaches at Placid Lake to identify possible solutions to sporadic dam breaks which could lead to invasive fish species being introduced into native bull trout habitat.
- Assess dewatering of Seeley Lake at its outlet;

- Develop a set of goals, objective and benchmarks as part of the WRP..
- Interview existing watershed group members and stakeholders to gain an idea of projects that would improve the watershed.

AND

- Working with watershed group members, landowners, Federal agencies, and state or local governments to determine how the watershed can be improved.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- CRC will host a series of meetings to identify the most pressing watershed restoration issues. Meetings will also include federal, state, local and tribal representatives, local stakeholders, academics and non-profit participants. The meetings will be inclusive in nature and designed to facilitate community trust and consensus building. In addition to the meeting noted above, a minimum of five meetings will be held:
 - Initial Watershed Restoration Planning meeting (year 1): presentation of research related to the existing plans (see above); and initial identification of issues and data gaps.
 - Second Watershed Planning Meeting (year 1): presentation of findings from the initial meeting with a rough outline of possible watershed restoration plan. Stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input.
 - Conduct interviews as needed of relevant stakeholders (focusing on scientific experts) that were unable to directly participate in the first two watershed planning meetings.
 - Third Watershed Planning Meeting (year 1): The revised outline would be fleshed out into a rough draft plan, with the understanding that additional baseline data would be provided, and plan would be amended as needed to reflect this new data. Again, stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input.
 - Conduct interviews as needed of relevant stakeholders (focusing on scientific experts) that were unable to directly participate in the third watershed planning meeting.

- Fourth Watershed Planning meeting (year 2): A draft document would be provided to stakeholders incorporating and being informed by the baseline data collected in year 1 and 2 and relevant BMPs. Again, stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input.
- Conduct interviews as needed of relevant stakeholders (focusing on scientific experts) that were unable to directly participate in the fourth watershed planning meeting
- Fifth Watershed Planning meeting (year 2): The final draft document would be presented and discussed. Again, stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input. After this final comment period, the plan would be finalized.
- Reviewing watershed-specific best management practices established by Federal, state, and local government agencies.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- Once the watershed planning group identifies potential issues for inclusion in the watershed restoration plan, CRC will research relevant BMPs.
- BMPs identified will be compiled into a document for review at the fourth planning meeting.
- BMPs will be adjusted to reflect unique local needs, and will be incorporated into the planning document.
- Developing general watershed management project concepts or performing an analysis of the watershed to identify and prioritize watershed management projects.

Specific activities to be undertaken:

- CRC will identify and develop general watershed management project concepts to be incorporated into the outline of watershed restoration plan.
- Concepts will be amended as needed based on stakeholder input.
- The CRC will facilitate the identification of management projects as noted above. Projects will need to meet predetermined thresholds in order to be included in the plan.
- Identified projects will be prioritized using a matrix developed by CRC with input from the academic community, and input from the stakeholder group.

Evaluation criteria

EVALUATION CRITERION A— WATERSHED GROUP DIVERSITY & GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity

Affected Stakeholders

CRC will represent the maximum diversity of interests across the watershed, including representatives of the different sectors that exist within the watershed including:

- agriculture;
- industry (forestry, manufacturing and construction);
- federal agencies (USFS, USFWS and USGS);
- tribal agencies (culture committees and Dept. of Natural Resources);
- state (MT FWP, MT DEQ and MT DNRC);
- local (Missoula County Weed District, Missoula County Conservation District and Seeley Lake Community Council, Seeley Sewer District);
- community organizations (chamber of commerce, Seeley Lake Community Foundation)
- tourist and recreation groups;
- environmental organizations (Trout Unlimited, Audubon);
- universities (University of Montana/Flathead Lake Biological Station); and
- private landowners.

No hydropower producers are located within the Clearwater watershed. Given the forested nature of the watershed, livestock production in the watershed is limited.

Current CRC membership

The majority of CRC members include watershed residents (either full or part-time) with heightened interest in natural resources and conservation. CRC recognizes that the current membership is not fully representative of the affected stakeholders within the watershed. Therefore, a portion of the work under this proposal will focus on enhancing group diversity.

Plan for targeting affected stakeholders

To ensure that the CRC watershed group will represent a diverse set of stakeholders the following actions will be undertaken:

- Identify under-represented stakeholder groups and their representatives.
- Undertake outreach to under-represented stakeholder groups.
- Attend a minimum of 10 community-based events and meetings to better connect with under-represented stakeholder groups, including but not limited to the Seeley Lake Community Council, the Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce, Seeley Lake Community Foundation, etc.).

- Convene a pre-watershed restoration plan community meeting to discuss watershed restoration planning goals and objectives and develop community trust.
- Advertise the watershed restoration planning process and meetings using a combination of
 - electronic media including facebook, instagram and twitter;
 - traditional print publications and placements;
 - CRC newsletter;
 - CRC promotional materials (which will be revised in the spring of 2020); and
 - Joint CRC/Seeley Sewer District outreach materials (grant pending).

Other support demonstrating CRC will include a diverse membership

When CRC previously spearheaded the regional planning effort in the watershed related to the divestiture of Plum Creek lands (see above), the organization was successful due to its ability to be inclusive. Given our past experience, we can employ a variety of outreach tools to ensure the watershed restoration planning effort is equally inclusive.

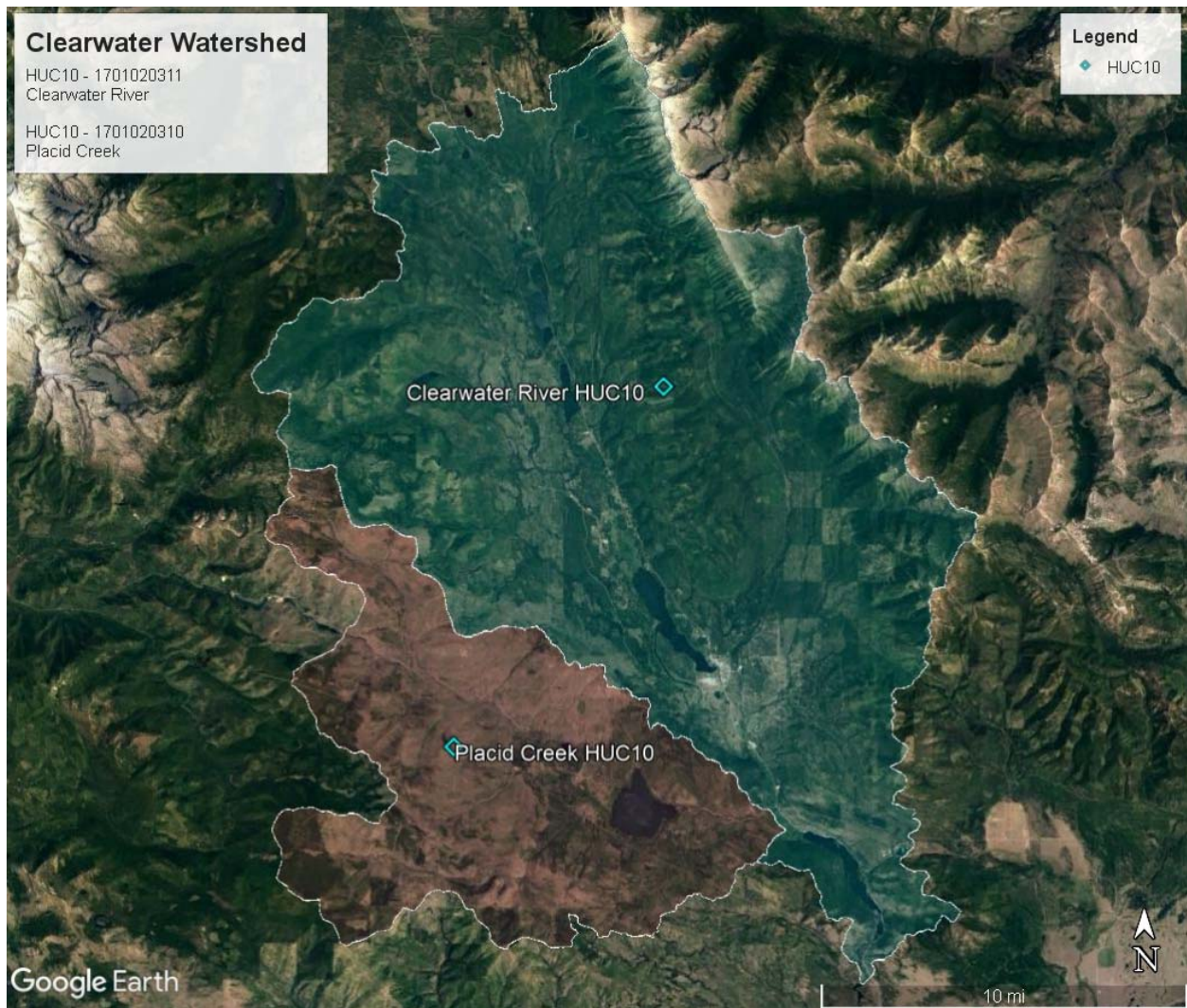
Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope

CRC will target stakeholders and project concepts for a medium sub-basin sized watershed. Rather than focusing on one 8-digit HUC, CRC will focus on two 10-digit HUCS, as these two HUCs combined represent the full extent of the watershed where CRC works.

HUC 1701020311 Clearwater River is an area of 603 square kilometers that contains 4 of the 5 major lakes.

HUC 1701020310 Placid Creek is an area of 238 square kilometers that is home to the largest by volume of the lakes in the Clearwater watershed.

Map illustrating the geographic boundaries of the area in which CRC will work.



All of the stakeholder groups listed in sub-criterion No. A1 above are located within, or work within, the watershed. All of the stakeholder groups listed have worked in some capacity with CRC, with the following exceptions:

- Agriculture; and
- Manufacturing.

These two groups will be targeted through outreach, along with tourism businesses, community organizations and tribal agencies to facilitate greater levels of involvement.

The planned membership of the watershed group will represent the full geographic scope of the area in which CRC intends to work.

To ensure that the watershed group will target stakeholders that represent the full geographic scope of the area in which CRC will work, stakeholder locations will be mapped in advance of the initial watershed planning meeting. If any geographic gaps are detected, additional outreach will be undertaken to obtain full geographic representation.

EVALUATION CRITERION B — ADDRESSING CRITICAL WATERSHED NEEDS

Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

The critical issues or needs occurring within the watershed include, but are not limited to:

- Declining ecological resiliency -- based on aquatic conditions in several key lakes, which include reduced DO levels, increased nutrient loads due to development and forest fires and the overabundance of aquatic vegetation/invasive plant species, ecological resiliency has been reduced which can adversely impact native fish species;
- Structural impairments – dam breaches on Placid Lake are of concern as the dam works to protect native bull trout populations. When the dam is breached, it is possible for non-native fish to enter Placid Lake, which would adversely impact bull trout populations.
- Water supply -- excessive nutrient loading in Seeley Lake, the main drinking water source for the community Seeley continues to be a pressing community concern. This fall a toxic blue-green algae bloom was detected on Seeley Lake. Such water quality conditions threaten both the human population and that of T&E species such as resident trumpeter swans.
- Endangered species issues - low dissolved (DO) oxygen levels resulting in episodic anaerobic conditions at certain lakes/locations pose a threat to native fish species such as bull trout⁶.
- Dewatering – dewatering at the mouth of Seeley Lake during drought years poses concerns related to water quantity.
- Invasive species – given that the Clearwater is in the Columbia River system, it is imperative to prevent the introduction of invasive zebra and quagga mussels in the watershed.
- TMDLs – continue to be an issue in the Clearwater watershed, and the lack of data makes it difficult to determine the status of non-listed lakes. A study commissioned by CRC (*Lake Water Quality, Trophic Status and Potential Loading Sources for Clearwater Lakes*, Vicki Watson, University of Montana, May 2012) confirmed the need for additional water quality monitoring. Report excerpts are noted below:
 - The TMDL summarized issues on Seeley and Salmon lakes and recommended further monitoring, a more detailed review of available data to determine appropriate monitoring parameters and frequency, compilation of sufficient

⁶ The USFWS, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks all have management plans in place to project bull trout populations.

data for a watershed loading and lake response model, and better definition of nutrient source loadings.

- Need for the Study Multiple factors at work in the Clearwater Basin demonstrate the need for a better understanding of lake and stream conditions as well as a coordinated WRP to manage and restore elements of the watershed that may degrade water quality.
- Seeley and Salmon lakes have been a focus of water quality concern in the past. Both lakes were listed for water quality impairment in 1996 but removed from listing by MTDEQ in 2006 citing a general improvement in nutrients, dissolved oxygen and Secchi transparency. In the 1970's the lakes and tributaries of the Clearwater were believed to have water quality problems associated with heavy logging and other watershed activities (Streebin et al., 1973; EPA 1977). EPA (1977) concluded that the nutrient loading for Seeley Lake was consistent with a mesotrophic system somewhere between "acceptable" and "dangerous" based on the Vollenweider ratings. EPA recommended that a land use study be conducted to determine whether significant reduction of non-point source nutrient inputs can be accomplished. Also of concern was a history of extensive logging and road construction and elevated organics, siltation or nutrient concentrations in watersheds, such as Deer Creek, West Fork Clearwater and Richmond Creek (Streebin et al., 1973). Monitoring has been insufficient to clearly resolve these concerns (MT DEQ 2008). Little is known about linkages between forest management and water quality in the lakes, but erosion related to roads has been identified as a potential source of nutrient loading (MT DEQ 2004). The EPA Lake Eutrophication Study (EPA 1977) identified Deer Creek and the upper Clearwater River, as major sources of nutrient loading to Seeley Lake in 1974- 75. Both Deer Creek and the West Fork Clearwater River are currently 303(d) listed for water quality impairment. Recent data suggest Deer Creek could still be an important source (MT DEQ 2008; and this report). Construction of more homes (and septic systems) and failing older septic systems near the lakes could contribute to continued problems as well (McLeod and Aune 2004; Vince Chappel, Seeley Lake Sewer District personal communication of unpublished data). Warming associated with a changing climate might lead to fundamental changes in hydrology and nutrient cycling with synergistic effects on eutrophication within the Clearwater system lakes (e.g., Markensten et al., 2010).

Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

CRC plans to positively contribute to the management of the issues and needs of the watershed through the proposed activities outlined in this proposal.

Task A - Water Group Development:

The stakeholder outreach and partnership building will be conducted as follows:

- Conducting stakeholder meetings/outreach to establish broad-based, diverse membership. Specific activities to be undertaken:
 - Identify under-represented stakeholder groups and their representatives.
 - Undertake outreach to under-represented stakeholder groups.
 - Attend up to 10 community-based events and meetings to better connect with under-represented stakeholder groups, including but not limited to the Seeley Lake Community Council, the Seeley Lake Chamber of Commerce, Seeley Lake Community Foundation, etc.).
 - Convene a pre-watershed restoration plan community meeting to discuss watershed restoration planning goals and objectives and develop community trust.
 - Advertise the watershed restoration planning process and meetings using a combination of electronic media including facebook, instagram and twitter; and print publications and placements.

Conducting watershed restoration planning meetings. Specific activities to be undertaken:

- CRC will host a series of meetings to identify the most pressing watershed restoration issues. Meetings will also include federal, state, local and tribal representatives, local stakeholders, academics and non-profit participants. The meetings will be inclusive in nature and designed to facilitate community trust and consensus building. In addition to the meeting noted above, a minimum of five meetings will be held:
 - Initial Watershed Restoration Planning meeting: presentation of research related to the existing plans (see above); and initial identification of issues and data gaps.
 - Second Watershed Planning Meeting: presentation of findings from the initial meeting with a rough outline of possible watershed restoration plan. Stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input.
 - Third Watershed Planning Meeting: The revised outline would be fleshed out into a rough draft plan, with the understanding that additional baseline data would be provided, and plan would be amended as needed to reflect this new data. Again, stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input.

- Fourth Watershed Planning meeting: A draft document would be provided to stakeholders incorporating and being informed by the baseline data collected in year 1 and 2 and relevant BMPs. Again, stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input.
- Fifth Watershed Planning meeting: The final draft document would be presented and discussed. Again, stakeholders would be able to comment on the plan at this meeting and would be provided with a comment period to submit written comments and provide additional input. After this final comment period, the plan would be finalized.

The level of stakeholder outreach will contribute to the management of the critical watershed issues and needs by ensuring community buy-in early in the process. It will also allow us to build trust and develop a broader local constituency for local restoration efforts.

Question: If the watershed group will build on previous partnership building efforts, how the watershed group will expand upon them through this grant?

Answer: NA as CRC has not previously engaged in watershed restoration planning.

Question: Will CRC establish relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands, or advocating for increased access to the Department lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreation?

Answer: CRC is open to working with all stakeholder groups and will conduct outreach throughout the watershed to engage all interested parties.

Task B - Watershed Restoration Planning

Question: How does the group plan to gather information regarding the critical issues and needs of the watershed?

Answer: Obtaining input from a variety of stakeholders, including government agencies at watershed planning meetings; contacting individual agencies/scientists as needed; literature research; and monitoring activities.

Question: Will the group use science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment?

Answer: Yes, CRC will use best practices and will build an adaptive management component into the WRP so that the plan can be readily amended and kept relevant.

Question: Will the group identify opportunities to resolve conflicts?

Answer: Yes, by employing a variety of conflict resolution tools including but not limited to: creating mutual understanding; identifying needs for me/them/us; focusing on individual and shared needs to find common ground; identify root causes; use the fishbone diagram, if necessary; generate options to build a solution; etc.

Question: Will the group complete an analysis to prioritize issues within the restoration plan?

Answer: Yes

Question: If the watershed group will build on previous efforts, describe these efforts and how the watershed group will expand upon them through the proposed work.

Answer: CRC has not previously engaged in a WRP process, therefore previous efforts cannot be built upon.

Question: Will the group establish relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands, or advocating for increased access to the Department lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreation?

Answer: CRC is open to working with all stakeholder groups and will conduct outreach throughout the watershed to engage all interested parties.

Task B - Watershed Restoration Planning

Question: How does the group plan to gather information regarding the critical issues and needs of the watershed (e.g., contacting government agencies, talking to stakeholders, literature research, monitoring and modeling activities)? Will the group use science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment? If so, how?

Answer: Obtaining input from a variety of stakeholders, including government agencies at watershed planning meetings; contacting individual agencies/scientists as needed; literature research; and monitoring activities.

Question: Will the group identify opportunities to resolve conflicts? If so, how?

Answer: Yes, by employing a variety of conflict resolution tools including but not limited to: creating mutual understanding; identifying needs for me/them/us; focusing on individual and shared needs to find common ground; identify root causes; use the fishbone diagram, if necessary; generate options to build a solution; etc.

Question: Will the group complete an analysis to prioritize issues within the restoration plan?

Answer: Yes.

Question: If the watershed group will build on previous efforts, describe these efforts and how the watershed group will expand upon them through the proposed work.

Answer: CRC has not previously engaged in a WRP process, therefore previous efforts cannot be built upon.

EVALUATION CRITERION C— IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

Sub-criterion No. C1—Understanding of and Ability to Meet Program Requirements

The technical proposal outlines the proposed plan for implementing the scope of work. The estimated schedule below shows the stages and duration of the proposed work. The task start and end dates are based on a 24 month timeframe, irrespective of the actual contract date.

Major Tasks	Milestones	Start/End Dates	Costs per Task (hourly rates only)
Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community mtg attendance completed; • A minimum of 5 new stakeholder groups confirmed; • Stakeholders mapped to confirm geographic diversity; • Outreach efforts completed (electronic & other) • Pre-planning mtg completed. 	Months 1-6	\$7650
Watershed Planning Meetings	Meetings 1-5 completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mtg 1 ■ Mtg 2 ■ Mtg 3 ■ Mtg 4 ■ Mtg 5 	Month 21 - Month 7 - Month 9 - Month 12 - Month 15 - Month 21	\$12000
Compilations of Existing Data	Data summary report (including identification of data gaps – presented at WRP mtg 1)	Months 1-6	\$5000
Filling Data gaps	Data reports	Months 7-18	\$6600
Review of BMPs	BMP report	Months 1 3-14	\$4000
Watershed Plan	Outline (presented at mtg 2) Initial Draft Plan (presented at mtg 3) Revised Draft Plan with maps (presented at mtg 4) Final Draft Plan (presented at mtg 5)	Month 9 Month 12 Month 15 Month 21	\$18,000
Reporting	Quarterly and Final Reports	ongoing	\$6600

Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts

The proposed activities of CRC will complement or meet the goals of relevant Federal, state or regional planning efforts. Such plans may include but are not limited to:

- The CRC proposal addresses numerous components of the State of Montana Water Plan, including but not limited to meeting numerous state recommendations such as: “Support Proactive, Coordinated Efforts to Reduce Invasive Species and Protect Endangered Species in Montana” and “Expand Support for Basin and Community Based Watershed Planning.”
- The CRC proposal addresses a portion of the State of Montana’s Drought Plan by examining the issue of episodic dewatering at Seeley Lake.
- The CRC proposal meets EPA’s criteria identified in the U.S Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Nonpoint Source Management Program, as the proposal calls for enhanced partnerships; the development of explicit goals, objectives and strategies; and includes protection for both impaired and non-impaired waterbodies.
- The CRC proposal meets EPA’s criteria for Watershed-Based Plans as the CRC proposal focuses on building partnerships; characterizing the watershed; and setting goals and identifying solutions as per EPA recommendations.
- Bonneville Model Watershed Program calls for addressing data gaps, which this proposal would accomplish.

Applicants should describe how the proposed activities of the watershed group will complement or meet the goals of applicable Federal, state or regional water plans.

E.1.4. Evaluation Criterion D— Department of the Interior Priorities

CRC’s watershed restoration proposal meets the following DOI priorities:

1. Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt

- a. Utilize science to identify best practices to manage land and water resources and adapt to changes in the environment;
- e. Foster relationships with conservation organizations advocating for balanced stewardship and use of public lands;

CRC will use science to assist with issue identification, data gap needs, identification and selection of BMPs and the prioritization matrix. In addition, CRC will welcome all organizations to participate in the watershed planning process regardless of ideological orientation.

3. Restoring trust with local communities

- a. Be a better neighbor with those closest to our resources by improving dialogue and relationships with persons and entities bordering our lands;
- b. Expand the lines of communication with Governors, state natural resource offices, Fish and Wildlife offices, water authorities, county commissioners, Tribes, and local communities.

CRC will welcome all individuals to participate in the watershed planning process, and will improve dialogue by fostering guidelines for civil discourse, and undertaking communication building exercises, if necessary, to build trust. In addition, the lines of communication with a variety of governmental offices and agencies will be increased as we undertaken our outreach and series of community meetings.

Project budget

Budget proposal

Project Budget				
Budget Item Description	\$/Unit	Quantity	Quantity Type	Total Cost
Salary/Wages				
Executive Director	\$60,000/\$30.00	800 hrs.	\$24,000	\$24,000
Program Manager, Heidi Sedivy	\$50,000/\$25.00	954 hrs	\$23,850	\$23,850
GIS Technician	\$35,000/\$17.00	240 hrs.	\$4080	\$4800
Research Assistant	\$25,000/\$12.00	600 hrs.	\$7200	\$7200
Fringe Benefits				
Full-time employees				\$19,950
Travel				
Trips to Missoula (10)	114 RT x .58		\$661.20	\$661.20
Travel within basin			\$338.80	\$338.80
Supplies and Materials				
3500		1	\$3500	3500
600				1600
Other				
Water Quality Monitoring	6 lakes	Frequency rate 4	Sample sites 60	\$5,100
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS				
INDIRECT COSTS				
De minimis	10%	\$90,000		\$9,000
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS				\$100,000

Budget Narrative

The budget proposal does not include any project costs that may be incurred prior to award.

The wages and salaries for staff are noted in the table above. A cost breakdown per overall task is provided below:

Major Tasks	Milestones	Start/End Dates	Costs per Task (hourly rates only)
Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community mtg attendance completed; A minimum of 5 new stakeholder groups confirmed; 	Months 1-6	\$7650

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders mapped to confirm geographic diversity; • Outreach efforts completed (electronic & other) • Pre-planning mtg completed. 		
Watershed Planning Meetings	Meetings 1-5 completed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mtg 1 ■ Mtg 2 ■ Mtg 3 ■ Mtg 4 ■ Mtg 5 	Month 21 - Month 7 - Month 9 - Month 12 - Month 15 - Month 21	\$12000
Compilations of Existing Data	Data summary report (including identification of data gaps – presented at WRP mtg 1)	Months 1-6	\$5000
Filling data gaps	Data reports	Months 7-18	\$6600
Review of BMPs	BMP report	Months 1 3-14	\$4000
Watershed Plan	Outline (presented at mtg 2) Initial Draft Plan (presented at mtg 3) Revised Draft Plan with maps (presented at mtg 4) Final Draft Plan (presented at mtg 5)	Month 9 Month 12 Month 15 Month 21	\$18,000
Reporting	Quarterly and Final Reports	ongoing	\$6600

Benefits associated with above expenditures

Community Outreach: The expenditures for staff to enhance community outreach efforts will result in a more diverse stakeholder group, with the likelihood of a higher level of community buy-in for future restoration efforts.

Total: \$7650

ED 100 x 30 = \$3000

Program Manager: 186 x 25 = \$4650

WRP meetings: Meetings are a necessary part of the WRP process. These meeting will allow us to get input on potential restoration projects, data gaps and prioritization. In addition, the meetings will give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the WRP as it progresses, rather than being present with a fait accompli at the conclusion of the planning process.

Total: \$12,000

ED 200 x 30 = \$6000

Program Manager: 240 x 25 = \$6000

Includes meeting preparations and post meeting follow up.

Compilation of existing data: Existing data will be used as the foundation of the WRP. Without assembling existing data, new data would need to be collected, which would be far less cost effective.

Total: \$5000

ED 50 x 30 = \$1500

Program Manager: 140 x 25 = \$2500

Filing data gaps: Addressing data gaps for water quality is of particular importance, as the watershed has no uniform baseline dataset.

Total: \$6600

ED 40 x 30 = \$1200

Program Manager: 116 x 25 = \$2900

GIS Technician 80 x 17 = \$1360

Research asst. 100 x 12 = \$1200

Review of BMPs: Reviewing BMPs will allow us to learn from others rather than “recreating the wheel.” Such a review is far more efficient than trying to develop scientifically sound solutions independently.

Total: \$4000

ED 40 x 30 = \$1200

Program Manager: 112 x 25 = \$2800

Development of WRP: Developing a WRP represents the crux of the project, without which, the project would be useless.

Total: \$18,000

ED 300 x 30 = \$9000

Program Manager: 300 x 25 = \$7500

GIS Technician 40 x 17 = \$680

Research asst. 68.33 x 12 = \$816

Reporting: As per the BOR grant requirements, CRC must submit all required reporting documents.

Total: \$6600

ED 80 x 30 = \$2400

Program Manager: 168 x 25 = \$4200

Fringe Benefits

As 25% rate was used to determine fringe which includes: vacation, sick, holiday, payroll taxes, insurances, unemployment tax and the employers portion of social security and Medicare.

Travel

Travel costs are estimated for the purpose of this proposal. Based on past experience, over a two year period, staff will incur several hundred dollars in travel costs within the Basin. However, it is virtually impossible to forecast each 10-20 miles trip this early in the process. In addition, we estimate 5 trips to Missoula each year, as Missoula is the County seat, and many of the agency and university contracts that we will be working with are based out of Missoula. For each trip to Missoula, we assume 1-2 staff traveling over the course of a single day. We do not anticipate lodging costs, but a small amount may be allocated for per diem expenses. Include purpose of trip, destination, number of persons traveling, length of stay, and all travel costs including, per diem, lodging, and miscellaneous travel expenses. All travel and per diem will be reimbursed at the federal rates posted at that time.

Materials and Supplies

Supplies and materials are needed for office use, research and meetings. We anticipate that the majority of the funds will be allocated for printing costs for WRP meetings. Over a two-year period, we anticipated a minimum of \$500 per year in printing costs based on past experience. The remaining funds would be used for postage, purchasing office supplies related to the project, and general informational materials to highlight the WRP program planning effort.

Purchase of hydrolab unit (\$3500). To date, much of the necessary water quality data has not been collected because CRC lacks a hydrolab unit. The purchase of the unit is a small cost as compared to the wealth of baseline provide it will generate.

Other Expenses

Water Quality monitoring will be undertaken to supplement baseline data, with a total cost of \$5100 to offset monitoring expenses.

Indirect Costs

CRC does not have a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate. Therefore, a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs was used. With \$90,000 in direct costs, the indirect rate totaled \$9,000.

Funding plan: NA

Environmental and cultural resources compliance

No environmental or cultural resource compliance issues will be triggered by this proposal as demonstrated below.

- Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? No
- Please briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. None
- Please also explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts. None
- Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? Yes If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project? No
- Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States”? Yes If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have. None
- When was the water delivery system constructed? CRC will not be interfacing in any way with the water delivery systems in the watershed.
- Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? No. If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously. NA
- Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? NA, see above.
- Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area? Potentially tribal sites, but CRC will not disturb these in any way.
- Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations? No
- Will the proposed project limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands? No

- Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area? No

Required permits or approvals

No permits or approvals are required to bring this project to successful fruition.

Official resolution

Official Resolution Clearwater Resource Council November 12, 2019

On November 12, 2019, the board of the Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) unanimously agreed upon the following:

- CRC fully supports the waterSMART grant application being submitted to Reclamation on November 13, 2019;
- CRC will provide the amount of funding and/or inkind contributions specified in the funding plan;
- CRC will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a grant or cooperative agreement;
- Jon Haufler, Board President, has legal authority to enter into an agreement with Reclamation.

Letters of Support

(begin on next page)

Bureau of Reclamation
Financial Assistance Support Section
Attn: Ms. Alisha James Mail Code: 84-27814
P.O. Box 25007 Denver, CO 80225

November 12, 2019

Re: Letter of Support for Clearwater Resource Council Watersmart Grant Application

Dear Ms. James:

I am writing in support of the WaterSmart grant application submitted by the Clearwater Resource Council (CRC) in November 2019. Water resources are the lifeblood of the Seeley Lake and surrounding communities' economy. Our lakes and streams are the primary attraction that brings people to our towns and supports local businesses. The Clearwater chain of lakes is also home to a variety of sensitive species including bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and trumpeter swans. Unfortunately, our waterways are facing many threats and challenges ranging from climate change, nutrient loading in Seeley Lake, aquatic invasive species, and impacts of fires on water quality.

CRC will use the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) grant to develop a water quality plan for the Clearwater watershed. Given the multiple challenges facing water quality in the valley, a watershed plan will help them identify, prioritize, and begin to address these issues in a systematic way. In addition, a detailed and scientifically defensible watershed plan would enable partners to obtain additional funding for restoration projects ranging from nutrient reduction efforts to habitat restoration improvements.

CRC has been monitoring water quality in this basin, in cooperation with the Southwestern Crown Collaborative, for the past eight years. They have gained valuable insights into which streams are producing the most sediment and nutrients into the downstream lakes during that time. CRC has also lead efforts to ensure aquatic invasive species are not introduced to our lakes. Developing a plan to protect our biodiversity and improve water quality is essential to our local economy, especially in light of changing climatic conditions.

CRC has been a proven leader in protecting our water resources and working with local citizens, agencies, and landowners. They have the data and knowledge of the status of our ecosystems to develop an effective water quality management plan. We recognize the important need for the plan and are confident that, with support from BOR, CRC can bring stakeholders together to develop such a plan. We enthusiastically endorse CRCs pending grant application.

Sincerely,

Jim Burchfield, Co-chair Southwestern Crown Collaborative

cc: J. Wallenburn, CRC



November 12, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to lend my strong support to the Bureau of Reclamation Watersmart Grant application being submitted by the Clearwater Resource Council to develop a comprehensive watershed plan.

The Clearwater Chain-of-Lakes is a unique blend of working, recreation and conservation lands in the heart of the Northern Rocky Mountains. The Clearwater Resource Council has a proven track record of leading their community on projects that address conservation and natural resource needs in their area. Whether it is mitigating the impact of climate change, or increased sediment loading in Seeley Lake, the Clearwater Resource Council is ready to assist its community in finding solutions. A comprehensive watershed plan would not only provide a tool that would assist them in identifying and prioritizing issues but also allow them to begin to address those issues in a systematic way.

I know that the Clearwater Resource Council is ready and capable of taking on this important task, which is why I urge you to support them in this grant proposal. Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bryce Christiaens'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Bryce Christiaens
District Manager
Missoula County Weed District
406.258.4217



BIG SKY LAKE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 405
Seeley Lake, MT 59868

November 10, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The Board of Directors for Big Sky Lake Homeowners Association (BSLHA) enthusiastically supports the Clearwater Resource Council application for a Bureau of Reclamation Watersmart Grant. BSLHA is comprised of 73 homeowners whose properties surround a small lake in the Clearwater valley. Our homeowners recreate throughout the valley; they value the special natural qualities of this area while taking seriously the responsibility to care for the long-term health of our lakes, rivers and forests. Association members have benefited from the many conservation efforts provided by Clearwater Resource Council and trust its leadership.

The value of a comprehensive watershed plan for the Clearwater Valley is clear. Each lake, river, and stream in the area has its own conditions and issues. Homes and private property dot the shores of some lakes and rivers while others have only public campgrounds or no development. On some lakes motor boating is allowed; others allow only people-powered boating or have no boating access. Conditions affecting water quality differ for each lake and stream. A watershed plan could clarify needs and comprehensively address issues and possible solutions for the waters of the Clearwater valley.

BSLHA homeowners appreciate the CRC mission to sustain and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Clearwater Watershed. We've seen CRC's efforts to keep the waters in our valley clean and healthy and to control invasive plants and animals. We wish to protect this exceptional area of many lakes and streams, abundant wildlife and forests, and grand scenery for our children and future generations. The uniqueness of the Clearwater valley must be safeguarded.

Sincerely,

William Nichols, President
The Board of Directors of Big Sky Lake Homeowners Association

secretary4bsl@gmail.com

November 11, 2019

Bureau of Reclamation
Watersmart Grant Program

Dear Program Administrator

I am writing on behalf of the Salmon Lake Homeowners Association in support of the Clearwater Resource Council application for a Watersmart Grant. Salmon Lake is the most downstream lake in the Clearwater Chain of Lakes. Consequently all activity upstream, whether beneficial or detrimental has the potential to influence the quality of Salmon Lake. There are certainly many factors influencing the quality of water in the drainage. It is our understanding that this grant will be used to develop a comprehensive watershed plan and prioritize projects for funding to enhance water quality.

Salmon Lake is obviously important to those of us that own homes on its shore. But it is also one of the most popular lakes for recreation in the western part of Montana. Its proximity to Missoula, the beautiful forest covered mountains and the quality of the water all contribute to making Salmon Lake and the entire Clearwater Chain of Lakes an important recreational and economic resource.

We hope the work resulting from this grant will help maintain and enhance the quality of the drainage.

Sincerely

Chris Hunter for Cary Gosselin, President Salmon Lake Homeowners