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Permanently protecting rivers in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

Application Date	5/24/2024		
Applying Organization	Gallatin River Task Force	Grant Type	Member Directed
Requested Amount	\$20,000.00	Project Name	Permanently protecting rivers in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem
Contact Name	Kristin Gardner	Project Location (State or Territory)	MT
Contact Title	Chief Executive and Science Officer	Project State/Province	MT
Contact Email Address	kristin@gallatinrivertaskforce.org	Project Multiple Locations	
Notes		Status	Submitted
		Created By	Kristin Gardner, 5/24/2024, 1:40 PM

Organization Details

Organization Name	Gallatin River Task Force	Annual Operating Budget	\$1,900,000.00
Applying Contact	Kristin Gardner	Tax Status/Organization Type	501c3 Organization
Staff Size	5	Main Phone	406-993-2519
Total Membership	450	Website Address	https://gallatinrivertaskforce.org
BIPOC-led	No	Address	1700 Lone Mountain Trail Big Sky, Montana 59716 United States
C-Suite Staff			

Proposal Questions

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| <p>1. Purpose/History Of Organization</p> <p>The mission of the Gallatin River Task Force is to partner with our community to lead conservation and inspire stewardship of the Gallatin River Watershed. Our organization began as a grassroots effort to ensure that the Gallatin's water was not decreasing in quality after a permit was obtained to discharge wastewater directly into the river. After over 20 years of rigorous water data collection, we have a robust data set with which we chart the course</p> | <p>2. Final Success</p> <p>Permanent protection of 384 river miles within the pristine Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem by designating segments of 20 streams as parts of the National Wild and Scenic River System.</p> |
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for the sustainable future of the Gallatin River and its contributing waters as climate change, development, record visitation, and other factors continue to threaten the river's health. Our programmatic work to address current and future threats water in the Gallatin Watershed fall into three buckets: water monitoring, restoration and conservation, and advocacy and outreach.

3. Location Details

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem spans 22 million acres across three states and contains two national parks, five national forests, and a complex network of other state, federal, Tribal, and private lands. As one of the last nearly intact temperate ecosystems on earth, it is still home to the majority of its native wildlife, from the iconic grizzly bear to the prized Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The ecosystem holds the headwaters of major river systems that support lands across the American West. Climate change is perhaps the most urgent and existential threat to the entire ecosystem.

Mitigating and adapting to the challenges of a changing climate will require intentional, committed, community-supported solutions. A recent climate assessment revealed that in the coming years Greater Yellowstone's summers will get drier, annual average temperatures will get warmer, and more precipitation will fall as rain instead of snow in late winter and early spring. That means a decreasing snowpack, earlier runoff, and less water availability – leading to warmer streams that will stress fish. With more water falling as rain instead of snow, the region's reliance on snowpack as crucial long-term water storage will be significantly jeopardized. The impacts of snowpack and water storage changes on agriculture, recreation, public health, wildlife, and the economy are hard to overstate.

4. Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

Our timeline to achieving final success in a perfect world would be 2024. The Montana Headwaters Legacy Act has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Jon Tester. We have been told that they expect a hearing for our bill in the Senate Committee of Energy and Natural Resources this summer. Our focus has been on gathering support from organizations and individuals that have influence on Senator Steve Daines, who is chair of the committee.

Once we have a hearing date, we will put together a package of support letters and begin a campaign to ignite supporters to call Senator Daines to vote for markup of the bill. In the meantime, we continue to have weekly strategy calls and are setting up meetings with groups that we believe have influence on Senator Daines and Congressman Zinke. Over the next few months, we plan to meet with:

- Stillwater/Sweetgrass County Commission
- Governor Gianforte
- Trout Unlimited
- Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators
- Representative to engage veterans
- Northwestern Energy (we have verbal support but want to obtain written support)
- Donors to Senator Daines and Congressman Zinke

In addition to the above outreach, we are planning a Facebook live event with Senator Tester and a river trip with Congressman Zinke.

We will have a quarterly strategic planning session in July to update our strategies for the next year based on successes of previous year and feedback we have received from our meetings with the delegation. If we do not see the bill come out of committee in 2024, we will convene in early January to update our strategy moving forward.

It is difficult to understate the economic and recreational impacts if our project succeeds. We know that current data shows Montana's outdoor recreational economy as a \$3.9 billion contributor to economic output and contributing 30,000 jobs.

5. Key Decision Makers	<p>The key decisionmakers that we are trying to influence are the Montana delegation: Senator Tester, Senator Steve Daines, Congressman Ryan Zinke and Congressman Rosendale. We visit their offices in Washington at least once a year. During those meetings, we garner feedback from the delegation on their concerns about the bill and their suggestions to address their concerns. The outcome of these meetings sets the stage for our strategy to secure their support</p> <p>Senator Tester supports the legislation and has introduced the bill in congress twice. We have 4-6 calls a year with Senator Tester and his staff to gather feedback on our strategy. In addition, we regularly conduct a bipartisan poll to better understand public support. The last two polls have indicated 85% and 83% support for the MHLA. We believe that if we can continue to show significant public support this will help influence Senator Daines and Congressman Zinke.</p>	6. Elevate Voices	<p>Indigenous people are the original stewards of Montana's rivers. As part of our outreach efforts to build the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act, we visited with the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council in 2022 to present the bill and garner feedback and questions. The Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council is representative of the following Tribes: Blackfoot Tribe, Chippewa Cree Tribe of Rocky Boy, Fort Belknap Indian Community, Fort Peck Tribes Assiniboine-Sioux, Crow Tribe, Little Shell Tribe of Montana, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, Eastern Shoshone Tribal Council, Northern Arapaho Tribal Council, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Piikani Nation. Following our meeting, the RMTLC officially endorsed the MHLA in 2022.</p>
7. Measurable On-Ground Outcomes	<p>Over the next year, we hope to achieve the following measurable outcomes: 1) a hearing for the Montana Headwaters Legacy Act (MHLA) in the Senate Committee of Energy and Natural Resources, 2) Senator Daines votes to support the MHLA, 3) Representative Zinke publicly supports and sponsors a companion bill in the House, 4) Governor Gianforte publicly supports the MHLA, and 5) we have markup and passage of the MHLA out of committee.</p>	8. Evaluate Your Progress	<p>Ultimate success is the MHLA is signed into law. We will evaluate our progress and success by whether or not we accomplish the measurable outcomes listed in Question #7. In addition, we evaluate progress by the # of endorsements, # of Op-Eds, # of Letters of Support for a hearing, # of outreach events, and # of outreach event attendees.</p>
9. TCA Funding Plan	<p>We plan to use the funding from The Conservation Alliance to support our strategies to move this bill into law. These strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings with Senator Tester • Working with stakeholders to write and submit Op-Eds • Reaching out to supporters to secure or update their letters of support • Presentations to stakeholders • Meetings with Gianforte • Congressmen Zinke business roundtable or boat trip • Meetings with influencers of Senator Daines and Congressmen Zinke • Trips to Washington to meet with delegation • Marketing and outreach to increase public support and encourage contacting the Montana delegation to support the MHLA 	10. JEDI Efforts and Impact	<p>Our organizational values are built on the assumption that good management is intentional, equitable, and transparent. Our staff has attended training in equity and belonging. This training has helped us take steps to open conversations about race, gender, age, exclusion, oppression, and all the other topics that can be uncomfortable, politicized, and deeply personal to talk about. Some of these steps include reading the CoEquity Consulting Definitions Guide which provides a starting point for using shared language together, exploring implicit bias through the Harvard's Implicit Bias Test, and exploring systems thinking and how our systems, culture, and worldview are informed and reinforced by processes outside of ourselves. This training is the first step in helping our organization prioritize and advocate for inclusive and equitable approaches and outcomes.</p>
11. Confidential Items	<p>There is nothing in our proposal that must be kept confidential</p>	Other Relevant Application Details	