

## Public Communication and Education

Goal: Montana's are more aware of the need to protection and restoration of wetlands and riparian areas for the functions and values they provide to all Montanans.

Objective 1: Increase the awareness and understanding of the valuable ecological, economic, and public safety functions that wetlands provide.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Support public outreach efforts that involve wetlands and riparian areas	- Develop a science based multi-media campaign highlighting the importance of Montana's wetlands and riparian areas.	- Outreach metrics from multi-media campaign. - Number of copies of resources distributed - Changes in involvement in the Montana Wetland Council	X	X	X
	- Develop a "Wetland Treasures of Montana" highlighting wetland resources across the state and their importance.			X	
	- Support public outreach efforts of the Montana Wetland Council and its partners.		X	X	X
b. Provide technical assistance to the public regarding wetlands	- Develop and distribute resources that help the public understand wetlands and the regulations affecting them.	- Click rates of downloadable materials - Events materials distributed at and interest. - Dollars spent and leveraged on resource materials.	X	X	

Objective 2: Increase Montana’s Natural Resource Professionals ecological and regulatory knowledge of wetlands and riparian areas.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Support the Education and Outreach efforts of the Montana Wetland Council	- Plan, hold, and lead two state-wide Montana Wetland Council meetings	- Number of participants in Montana Wetland Council meetings	X	X	X
	- Contribute to and distribute the Montana Wetland Council Newsletter	- Click rate of Education and Outreach articles in the Montana Wetland Council Newsletter	X	X	X
	- Provide training workshops for federal, tribal, state, and local government agency staff and other professionals.	- Number and attendance of workshops	X	X	X
	- Support partner’s trainings, conferences, and workshops for resource professionals.		X	X	X
b. Increase the awareness of wetlands in other Montana Department of Environmental Quality programs	- Develop and incorporate wetland outreach materials for Watershed Restoration Planning outreach efforts in <i>Focus Watersheds</i>	- Use of wetland outreach materials in <i>Focus watersheds</i> - The benefits of wetlands for water quality are clearly incorporated into a <i>focus watershed’s</i> watershed restoration planning documents.	X	X	
	- Provide trainings and assistance on incorporating wetlands considerations into other CWA and non-CWA programs.	- The number/acreage of wetland projects receiving 319 funding - Number of trainings provided to CWA and non-CWA programs - Number of DEQ projects that explicitly incorporate restoration or protection of wetland benefits	X	X	

## Monitoring and Assessment

Goal: Wetland Monitoring and Assessment data is used to inform local planning, protection, restoration, and landscape-level decision making.

Objective 1: Wetland Monitoring and Assessment data are used to inform DEQ decision-making and planning projects.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Integrate wetland monitoring and assessment into the water quality planning	- Define DEQ's needs and goals for meeting Clean Water Act (CWA) and Montana Water Quality Act (MWQA) objectives for wetlands.	- DEQ identifies wetland needs and supports wetland actions that help accomplish CWA and MWQA objectives - Incorporation of wetland monitoring and assessment information into water quality databases - Standard protocol for wetland assessment is approved and adopted by DEQ	X		
	- Develop core wetland indicators that are relevant to DEQ's objectives		X		
	- Design data management system that supports wetland integration into DEQ water quality planning		X	X	
	- Develop standard analyses of wetland monitoring and assessment data to inform DEQ water quality planning		X	X	
	- Collaboratively integrate wetlands into DEQ's water quality planning process		X	X	
b. Functional assessment data is used in used in review of projects and permitting at DEQ	- Identify DEQ program decisions and long-term environmental outcomes that will benefit from a wetland functional assessment data	- Long-term environmental outcomes are identified - Accepted wetland functional assessment for department actions - Accessibility of wetland assessment data for water quality planning	X	X	
	- Develop a functional assessment of wetlands for using in review of projects and permitting at DEQ		X	X	
	- Collaboratively integrate wetland functional assessment data into projects and permitting at DEQ.			X	X
	- Incorporate wetland assessment data in to DEQ's CWAIC		X	X	

c. Effectively use Montana’s non-degradation to protect wetlands.	- Collaborate with DEQ sections that use nondegradation policies to better understand how to better use the policy to protect wetlands	- An accepted nondegradation guidance document for protecting wetlands - Increased use of nondegradation policy to protect wetlands		X	X
	- Develop guidelines to better use DEQ nondegradation policies for protection of wetlands		X	X	X

Objective 2: Wetland Monitoring and Assessment data are used to inform planning, protection, and restoration at the local level.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Effectively convey DEQs wetland assessment data to inform local planning, protection, and restoration	- Develop public friendly documents to explain the results and recommendations of wetland assessment data	- Click rate on digital materials - Number of documents produced and distributed - Use rate of tools	X	X	X
	- Develop user friendly tools accessing wetland assessment data that can be used to inform planning, protection and restoration at multiple spatial scales.	- The benefits of wetlands for water quality are clearly incorporated into a <i>focus watershed’s</i> watershed restoration planning documents - The number/acreage of wetland projects receiving 319 funding		X	
	- Develop multi-media outreach campaigns incorporating Monitoring and Assessment data to support DEQ’s work in <i>Focus Watersheds</i> .		X	X	
b. Support the Outreach efforts of the Scientific Needs and Education and Outreach Montana Wetland Council Working Groups	- Provide resources and trainings for Wetland Council partners to help better disseminate their information to local officials and interested parties.	- Number of trainings offered - Number and sectors attending trainings	X	X	X
	- Provide training workshops for local government agency staff and other professionals on using monitoring and assessment data.		X	X	X
	- Support partner’s trainings, conferences, workshops, and outreach efforts for resource professionals.		X	X	X

## Wetland Water Quality and Regulatory

Goal 1: The State of Montana’s wetlands are better protected and insulated from the continual shifts in levels of protection afforded under the Clean Water Act.

Objective 1.1: Plan and develop State and Department policies and regulations to protect the benefits wetlands provide our communities, the environment, and economy.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Plan and research wetland water quality standards and their use in Montana	- Gather and evaluate information and guidance on wetland water quality standards.	- Number of meetings held regarding wetland water quality standards - number of white papers reporting on the evaluation of the feasibility of wetland water quality standards in Montana	X		
	- Consider “wetlands” in the definition of “state waters” to ensure that they are legally included in the scope of the state’s water quality standards (WQS).		X		
	- Review current WQS beneficial uses, narrative criteria, and nondegradation to determine if they are meeting Wetland Programs’ objectives.		X		
	- Evaluate the feasibility to establish wetland-specific designated uses.		X		
	- Evaluate the feasibility to establish narrative criteria to regulate physical and hydrologic modifications to wetlands.		X		
	- Evaluate the feasibility to better define DEQ nondegradation policies for wetlands, requiring full protection of existing uses (functions).		X		
	- Evaluate the feasibility of all state delegated CWA and MWQA programs at DEQ to incorporate WWQS into		X		

	their processes and the potential effects.				
b. Develop wetland water quality standards for Montana	- Develop wetland water quality standards.	- Finalized wetland water quality standards - Guidance documents on use of wetland water quality standards	X	X	
	- Develop guidelines to better use DEQ nondegradation policies for wetlands		X	X	
	- Develop guidelines to use WWQS as basis for evaluating impacts to wetlands through the Subdivisions review process.		X	X	
	- Develop guidelines to use WWQS as basis for making and tracking wetland regulatory decisions.		X	X	
	- Develop guidelines to use WWQS for evaluating wetland mitigation and compensation projects as part of the Interagency Review Team.		X	X	
	- Develop guidelines to use WWQS as basis for evaluating wetland restoration and protection projects as part of the Non-Point Source 319 project review.		X	X	

Objective 1.2: Incorporate wetland protections and wetland water quality standards into programs at the Montana DEQ to better protect the benefits wetlands provide our communities, the environment, and economy.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Integrate wetland water quality standards into Department policies and regulations	- Incorporate WWQS into DEQ’s existing 401 Certification Program to enhance the current conditions, provisions, or prohibitions.	- Number of times WWQS are used - Comparative statistics of pre-post WWQS and effect on aquatic resources.		X	X
	- Incorporate the evaluation of WWQS into Wetland Programs monitoring and assessment activities.			X	X
	- Incorporate the effect of new development on WWQS as part of the Subdivisions review process.			X	X
	- Incorporate the evaluation of WWQS in other permitting programs within the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.			X	X
	- Develop a tracking database to better understand the use and impact of WWQS.				
b. Work with the 401 Certification Program on bolstering certifications of federal permits to better protect state aquatic resources.	- Develop clear, fair, and enforceable conditions for certification of federal permits	- Wetlands types and locations affected and protected through 401 certification conditions - Understanding of the spatial distribution of impacts	X		
	- Develop online spatial dataset of 401 certifications for improved project tracking		X		
	- Cumulative effects analysis of 404 permitting and 401 certification and potential development of localized 401 conditions in highly impacted areas.		X		

Goal 2: The professionals in Montana are more informed on the policies and regulations affecting wetlands in Montana.

Objective 2.1: Increase the knowledge and awareness of State of Montana Employees on the policies, regulations, and certifications affecting wetlands.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Develop trainings and provide assistance to DEQ staff on state and federal policies and regulations affecting wetlands.	- Provide guidance on how to identify jurisdictional waters and wetlands, regulatory program requirements, regulated activities, and wetland protection	-Number of wetland delineations or consultation performed for DEQ - Document times DEQ’s nondegradation policy was used to protect wetlands.	X	X	X
	- Provide technical expertise in the form of conducting wetland delineations to support enforcement of MWQA violations.		X	X	X
	- Provide guidance on to programs on how nondegradation can be used to further protect Montana’s wetlands.		X	X	X

## Voluntary Restoration and Protection

Goal: DEQ's and Montana's land and resource managers have the resources and opportunities to cooperatively restore, conserve, and protect its aquatic resources and associated uplands.

Objective 1: Integrate restoration and protection of wetlands into the business practices of applicable programs at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Incorporate wetlands as a means to protect and improve water quality and quantity	- Integrate wetlands into DEQ's water quality planning process	- Number of wetland projects/acres supported by 319 funding - Number of wetland projects identified as viable DEQ projects	X		
	- Identify wetland restoration projects that can support proposed 319 restoration projects		X	X	
	- Identify programs and opportunities at DEQ where wetland restoration can be incorporated (e.g. Brownfields, AML)		X	X	
	- Incorporate wetland restoration proposals into funding recommendations resulting from enforcement actions.			X	X
	- Develop and provide wetland restoration, management and protection guidance to other CWA and WQA programs.			X	X
b. Increase the capacity of the Wetland Program to conduct voluntary restoration projects.	- Develop prioritization tools that help identify wetlands based on the benefits they provide for water quality and quantity.	- Number of wetlands projects identified as viable using prioritization tool - Number of voluntary wetland restoration projects undertaken in Montana - Increased number of available funding sources for voluntary restoration	X	X	
	- Develop a voluntary restoration component within the current state wetland program at DEQ that researches, develops, promotes, and		X	X	

	demonstrates the principles and values of ecological wetland restoration.				
	- Identify funding sources to support wetland restoration to protect and improve water quality and quantity.		X	X	X

Objective 2: Provide and develop resources for Montana’s land and resource managers so that they can more effectively restore, conserve, and protect Montana’s aquatic resources.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Support the Montana Wetland Council Restoration Working group	- Identify and disseminate BMPs to protect and passively restore wetlands	- Number of partnerships developed through Montana Wetland Council contacts - Number of rare, important, and vulnerable wetlands identified and protected.	X	X	
	- Build collaborative partnerships to protect and restore wetlands		X	X	X
	- Identify and prioritize for restoration/protection rare, vulnerable, or important wetlands.		X	X	
b. Support and work with other state, federal and tribal government agencies on wetland restoration.	- Identify BMPs for agriculture, development, forestry, and other activities to protect and passively restore wetlands and disseminate this information.	- Numbers of aquatic resources protected or restored on state-managed lands.	X	X	
	- Develop an active wetland and riparian restoration program on state-owned and state-managed lands.			X	

## Planning and Policy Actions

Goal: Local, state, tribal, and federal governments are knowledgeable, well equipped, and supported to conserve and protect wetland and riparian resources, function, and values as they plan, develop, and implement programs and policies.

Objective 1: Integrate wetland and riparian area conservation, management, and restoration into local, state, tribal, and federal planning processes.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
Support the Water and Land Use Planning and Policy Working Group of the Montana Wetland Council	- Develop and provide webinars promoting sustainable and innovative means of integrating aquatic resource protection into planning processes.	- Number of Webinars provided - Number and cross-section of webinar participants - Partners worked with on planning	X	X	X
	- Support partners work to incorporate aquatic resource protections in to their planning documents and activities.	- Number of actions taken by the Water and Land Use Planning and Policy Working Group - Number of new partnerships developed	X	X	X

Objective 2: Engage local and tribal governments and state and federal agencies in protecting vulnerable aquatic resources, including floodplains and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
Assist decision makers to conserve and protect vulnerable aquatic resources	- Provide trainings and on-site technical assistance	- Number of trainings provided - Dissemination of Montana-based solutions and the number of adoptions. - Number of new local ordinances adopted - Number of newsletter articles and their click rates.	X	X	X
	- Coordinate and organize interested participants to develop Montana-based solutions to fill the federal gaps in protection for wetlands and other vulnerable aquatic resources.		X	X	X
	- Work to incorporate the protection of vulnerable aquatic resources into model local ordinances.		X	X	X
	- Publish Wetland Council Newsletters that keeps partners informed of current policies, how it may affect their work, and Montana based solutions.		X	X	X

## Sustainable Wetland Program Financing

Goal: The Wetland Program continues to build and strengthen its communication, leadership, networking, and funding mechanisms to ensure its and the Montana Wetland Councils vitality, effectiveness, and longevity.

Objective 1: The wetland program has adequate funding and resources to continue to be wetland leaders in the State of Montana

Strategy	Potential Actions	Key Performance Indicators	Short-term Action (1 – 3 years)	Mid-Term Action (3 – 5 years)	Long-Term Action (5 – 10 years)
a. Develop additional funding sources within Montana DEQ to support the Wetland Program and its work.	- Identify and pursue additional opportunities for DEQ Wetland Program funding and institutionalize the Wetland Program as a component of DEQ water resource responsibilities.	- Changes in Wetland Program funding levels - Decrease in reliance on WPDG funds for core Wetland Program functions	X	X	
	- Identify programs with impacts to wetlands and riparian areas or programs with opportunities to financially support wetland program activities.		X	X	
	- Evaluate the feasibility for using funds from permitting activities to support wetland program activities.		X		
b. Provide resources for Montana wetland council participants to conduct and accomplish actions outlined in our State Wetland Plan.	- Provide competitive small project assistance contracts to advance the goals and objectives of the Strategic Framework and leverage partners to assist DEQ in meeting water quality goals.	- Number of wetland projects/acres supported by 319 funding - Number of projects supported through small project assistance contracts	X	X	X
	- Work with partners to develop financial incentives to perform landscape conservation and restoration			X	X
	- Work with partners to develop projects that are applicable for 319 funding.		X	X	X