



MONTANA
**FRESHWATER
PARTNERS**

2023 **IMPACT
REPORT**

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Water Unites us All. It provides habitat for countless species of plants and animals. We need it to grow the food that nourishes us, to hunt and float and fish, and to survive. And it brings us calm and connects us to the greater world around us. But finding a sustainable relationship with our rivers, wetlands, and streams is harder than ever.

Since we were founded in 2011, Montana Freshwater Partners has worked to help Montanans coexist with our water resources. From the beginning, we've made sure the state doesn't lose the bounty of its abundant wetlands and streams. But a few years ago, we realized our work can go even bigger.

We've been expanding to focus on projects in our own backyard. After all, the longest free-flowing river in the United States—the Yellowstone—runs through Livingston, MT. When a record-breaking flood hit our community in June 2022, we stepped up to take a lead in the recovery efforts. Since then, we've worked with the city, county, and local watershed partners to help make our communities more resilient throughout the river system.

Last year's flood highlights threats that are already here and intensifying. Climate change, growth, and development all imperil the future of our waterways and the delicate balance of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Both in the Yellowstone River watershed and across the state of Montana, these forces are greater than they've ever been.

So we're at a critical juncture. We firmly believe that people can flourish in coexistence with our wetlands, rivers, and streams. But for that to happen, we need to rethink how we live along river corridors and form a sustainable relationship that promotes both the wildness of river systems and the well-being of the people that depend on them. We also know that to do this successfully, we must help elevate the voices of the indigenous people and tribal nations who lived here thousands of years before we did.

For the Love of Water,



A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Wendy Weaver'.

Wendy Weaver, *Executive Director*





Photo courtesy of Scott Johnson

“

**We are down to the last river.
We've shackled all the other great rivers
in this country - the Columbia, the Colorado,
the Missouri. The Yellowstone is worth
saving if only to show what a
free river looks like.**

- Jim Posewitz, 1978 *Life* magazine article



HOW WE **GIVE BACK TO THE YELLOWSTONE**

We've been working hard to safeguard the Yellowstone River since our inception in 2011. Our efforts on the Yellowstone have continued to expand, particularly in response to the record-breaking flooding that occurred in 2022. Some of our Yellowstone River Program highlights for 2023 include:

UPPER YELLOWSTONE AND SHIELDS PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PLAN

We've identified, ranked and prioritized over 48 projects that involve restoration, planning, outreach, and research needs in the Upper Yellowstone and Shields Watersheds. We're now working with partners to identify funding for design and implementation of the top-ranked projects. Ultimately the goal of the plan is to get more work done on the ground that will make our watershed more resilient in the face of climate change.

FLOOD RESPONSE

When the catastrophic flood hit our community last summer, we immediately stepped in to help coordinate the response with our local partners, as well as local, state, and federal agencies. We're working closely with

Park County and the City of Livingston to promote projects that boost community and river resilience to future flood events. This includes updating the Yellowstone channel migration map, providing education around flood and erosion risks, and identifying flood mitigation opportunities to enhance floodplain capacity and reduce damage to critical infrastructure from future flood events.

YELLOWSTONE SAFE PASSAGES

Yellowstone Safe Passages is a local coalition working on solutions that reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions on Highway 89 between Livingston and Gardiner. In 2023, we provided important data and recommendations to improve aquatic organism passage for a Highway Assessment led by YSP.

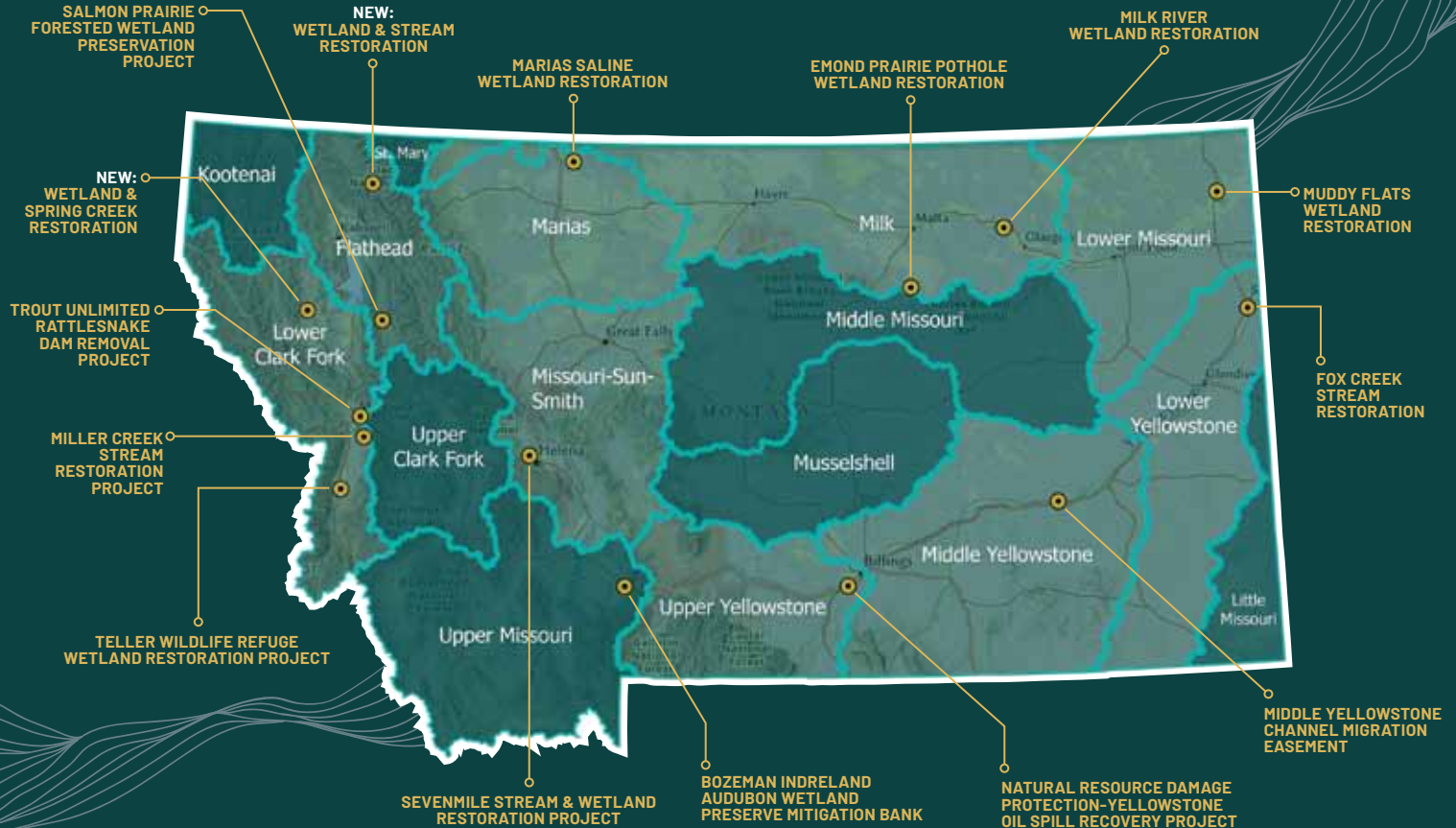
Photo courtesy of: Chris Boyer, Kestrel Aerial



OUR IMPACT IN CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION ACROSS MONTANA

MFP has been working diligently across Montana for over a decade to ensure no-net-loss of wetlands and streams under the Clean Water Act. Our organization operates the state's only in-lieu fee (ILF) wetland and stream mitigation program where we work to offset impacts to streams and wetlands in the same watershed. Our partners include land trusts, Tribes, state natural resource agencies, ag producers and other private landowners, watershed groups and NGOs.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



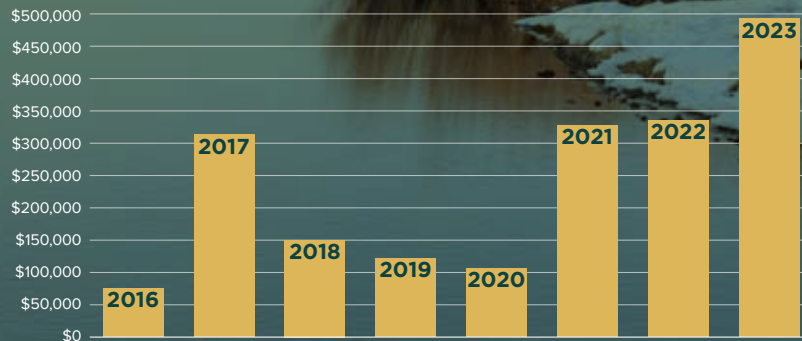
480 Acres of wetland
and riparian habitat
protected/restored

710 2023 donors
& supporters

3.51
Miles (18,552 feet)
of stream/river
protected/restored

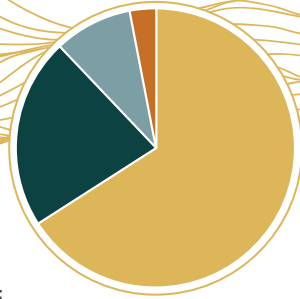
As of October 31, 2023

\$ Invested in Montanas Restoration Economy



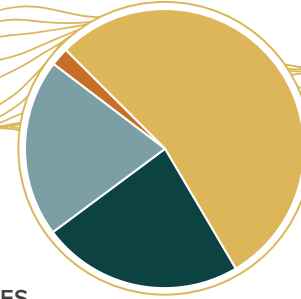
FINANCIALS

Through October 31, 2023



REVENUE

In Lieu Fee*	\$760,820
Program Income & Restricted Grants	\$257,228
Grants (unrestricted)	\$101,045
Contributions & Fundraising	\$36,421
TOTAL	\$1,155,514



EXPENSES

In Lieu Fee*	\$389,867
Programs & Contracted Services	\$164,848
Operations	\$153,705
Fundraising	\$10,281
TOTAL	\$718,702

*In-Lieu Fee wetland and stream mitigation program

OUR TEAM

STAFF

Wendy Weaver, *Executive Director*
Jeannette Blank, *ILF Program Director*
Leah Swartz, *Project Manager*
Ashton Bunce, *Project Manager*
Ellen Conley, *Finance Manager*
KynsLee Scott, *Digital & Communications Contractor*
Alecia Jongeward, *Give Back to the Yellowstone Coordinator*

BOARD

Marcus Pearson
Sarah Zuzulock
Amir Darabi-Noferesti
Kascie Herron
Tom Parker
Elizabeth Fairbank
Halle Neinhaus

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Karin Boyd
Pedro Marques
Matt Barnes
Ryan Richardson
Lisa Bay
Alexandra Latta

LIFE IN THE LAND

Connecting People and Place in Montana

THE UPPER YELLOWSTONE RIVER

a film from Stories for Action



Stories for Action

Sparking connection. Inspiring engagement.

A film about how local voices and the river itself
can guide the work for greater resiliency
of people and place.

www.lifeintheland.org/upperyellowstoneriver

LEGACY GIVING

Please Consider Supporting our Work



ONE-TIME GIFT Every contribution to Freshwater Partners powers our work to restore, enhance, and preserve Montana's aquatic ecosystems and water resources.



MONTHLY GIVING Set-up a monthly donation to protect Montana's water resources year-round.



LEGACY GIVING A legacy gift is one of the most impactful ways you can support Freshwater Partners and its vital work. You may be able to save on taxes, receive income for life or enjoy other financial benefits—all while protecting Montana's water resources for years to come.



To learn more about making a tax-deductible contribution or making a planned gift, **scan code** or contact Wendy at wweaver@freshwaterpartners.org.

Montana Freshwater Partners is a registered 501(c)(3) organization, EIN #45-2804436.
Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

THANK YOU

Our work and impact could not be possible without the generous support of those who donate financially to our organization.

Thank you to all the individuals, businesses, partner organizations, and foundations that make our work possible, with special thanks to the following organizations and businesses for their generous support.

Arthur M. Blank Foundation
Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership
Simms

Park County Community Foundation
Four Corners Foundation
Sacajawea Audubon Society

Defenders of Wildlife
American Bank
Pine Creek Lodge

Yellowstone Wood Boat Tours
Basecamp Construction



OUR MISSION

To restore, enhance and protect Montana's rivers, streams, and wetlands through science-based innovative programs that benefit our communities and the landscapes we live in.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Healthy and resilient aquatic ecosystems—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

2024 EVENTS

NATIVE PLANT SALE

Pre-order plants online
starting February 15 at:
[freshwaterpartners.org/
mfp-native-plant-sale](https://freshwaterpartners.org/mfp-native-plant-sale)

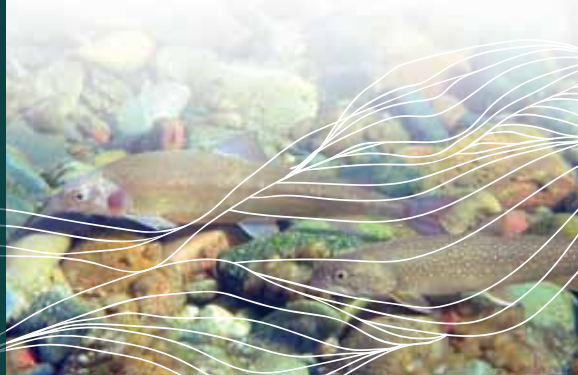
PREDICT THE PEAK

Launches April 22, 2024
Closes May 22, 2024

GIVE A HOOT

July 1-31, 2024

For more information on our
upcoming events, please visit:
freshwaterpartners.org





MONTANA
**FRESHWATER
PARTNERS**

P.O. Box 338, Livingston, MT 59047 | freshwaterpartners.org  