

PPL Montana commits \$1.2 million for fisheries, wildlife and river habitat

As part of its commitment to environmental stewardship and conservation, PPL Montana this year will provide \$1.2 million to support 40 fisheries, wildlife and habitat conservation projects within the Madison-Missouri River corridor.

“The program is part of PPL Montana’s objective to protect, mitigate, and enhance fisheries, wildlife and river habitat resources along a 550-mile-long corridor of the Madison and Missouri rivers from Yellowstone National Park to the headwaters of Fort Peck Reservoir,” said Jon Jourdonnais, PPL Montana’s manager of Hydro Licensing and Compliance.

“Started in 2000, this stewardship program has been very effective and is an excellent model of collaboration and success with state and federal resource agencies in meeting river conservation objectives,” he said.

“One of the real advantages is that PPL Montana provides private funds, which are essential for securing additional matching funds from state and federal grant programs,” Jourdonnais said. “This greatly multiplies the dollars available for fisheries, wildlife and river habitat restoration in this biologically rich and diverse watershed.”

PPL Montana funding this year leveraged an additional \$1.7 million in outside matching funds and in-kind resources from state, federal and private sources for a total of \$2.9 million for river resource stewardship in 2010.

The largest wildlife enhancement project approved for 2010 is the continued restoration of the O’Dell Spring Creek and associated wetlands in the Madison River Valley near Ennis. Since 2004, PPL Montana has been working alongside landowners, government agencies, conservation groups and private industry to restore



The O’Dell Creek wetlands restoration project will again receive PPL Montana support.

the O’Dell Creek wetlands. PPL Montana sponsored “Restoring the Treasure,” a 17-minute film that highlights the cooperative restoration effort that began in 2003. The film can be viewed under the video library tab at www.pplmontana.com.

Other wildlife and habitat projects include wetland enhancements near Fort Benton, cost sharing for protection of riverside lands through the Federal Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program, streamside vegetation protection on lower O’Dell Creek, and riverine reptile and amphibian research and management.

Fisheries enhancement projects in the Missouri drainage include design and construction of barriers on small streams to protect native westslope cutthroat trout, restoration of a spring creek along the Sun River, riverbank restoration near Great Falls and Craig, and flow restoration in Hardy Creek.

Research projects include investigation of Missouri River trout movements and spawning below Holter Dam;

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Get to know the PPL Montana Community Fund Advisory Board members

Montana Currents is introducing members of the PPL Montana Community Fund Advisory Board, a group dedicated to making a difference in the lives of Montana families and their communities.

Twice a year, PPL Montana's Community Fund awards grants to non-profit groups to address quality-of-life issues related to education, the environment and economic development.

As a major company with 500 employees in Montana, PPL Montana is committed to working with Montana communities and this board to improve the quality of life for today and tomorrow.

Meet Jeffrey Welborn

State Rep. Jeffrey Welborn (R-Dillon) serves constituents of the 72nd district in Beaverhead County in the Montana House of Representatives. A lifelong Beaverhead County resident and a fourth-generation Montanan, he owns a trailer sales and truck equipment dealership in Dillon, a cow-calf operation in Beaverhead County, and a contract auctioneering firm that specializes in business equipment, personal property and large-scale fundraising auctions.

Welborn has served on boards of Montana agriculture, auctioneering

and landowner sportsman groups, traveling extensively to the Pacific Rim and European Union countries on trade missions representing the agriculture and tourism industries on behalf of Montana business owners. He joined the PPL Montana Community Fund board in September 2009 and will serve a two-year term.

How do you see the role of the Advisory Board?

I appreciate the broad range of people and backgrounds on the board. I better understand how it takes many different sets of eyes and ears to match the need for funding in the areas of education, environment and economic importance in the communities served by PPL Montana. The application process does a very nice job of spotlighting the good work of these applicants as well as awarding the funding to help them in their endeavors. Serving on the board is a great way to expand your knowledge about the many deserving nonprofit organizations serving their communities and state.

What do you hope to accomplish during your term on the board?

This is truly what good corporate citizenship is all about, and I am very fortunate to have a seat at the table



when helping to decide where this money can be put to the most beneficial use in the communities of Montana. I look forward to my time on this board and getting to better know the rest of the members from all across Montana. I want to thank PPL Montana for doing this good work, and I consider it an honor to help make a real difference in so many lives.

What are your other interests when you're not working with Community Fund grants?

In my spare time, I love to travel, especially by motorcycle, cook for friends and large groups in my take anywhere outdoor kitchen, camp in the mountains and help in the efforts of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Funding *(continued from page 1)*

survival of rainbow trout stocked in Holter Reservoir; biology of softshell turtles; and spawning movements of pallid sturgeon, paddlefish and sauger in the Missouri River downstream from Great Falls.

Fisheries projects in the Madison River area include restoring habitat on Wigwam and Teepee creeks, restoring native westslope cutthroat

trout and grayling in the upper Missouri drainage, and tracking rainbow trout spawning in the Madison River.

"The river corridor is immense, and a portion of our annual funding is dedicated to providing resources and equipment to monitor enhancement project effectiveness and make adjustments where necessary," Jourdonnais said.

The stewardship program meets the requirements of PPL Montana's Project 2188 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission license and its Memorandum of Understanding with state and federal agencies to monitor and offset resource impacts from the eight hydroelectric plants and one reservoir the company owns on the Madison and Missouri rivers.



Cofferdam at Hebgen dam takes shape.



PPL Montana reports progress at Hebgen Dam

Work to repair the damaged intake structure at PPL Montana's Hebgen Dam was suspended temporarily for the coldest time of the year.

Additional work will continue early this year, weather permitting, with the goal of completing a cofferdam and the reconstruction of the intake structure.

"We're pleased with the progress that has been made and look forward to spring when we can finish the cofferdam, which is about 95 percent complete," said David Hoffman, director of External Affairs for PPL Montana. "The work has been done safely and is in keeping with PPL Montana's goal to protect fisheries and public recreation, which are critical to the summer tourism season in the Madison Valley."

The cofferdam will create a watertight seal that will give workers access to normally submerged areas of the intake structure, allowing them to make permanent repairs.

The intake structure will be rebuilt with hydraulically controlled gates. Damage to the intake structure was caused by the failure of stoplogs in one of the intake bays in August 2008. Stoplogs, timbers similar

to railroad ties, had been used to regulate water flow from the intake structure.

Some of the other design features of the new intake structure will include a secondary emergency shutoff gate; a large gate at the bottom for emergency flow needs; and a single bay replacing the current four bays. The structure itself will be anchored to the rock face behind it.

The work at Hebgen Dam has had no effect on lake levels or river flows, but for safety reasons the area around the dam has been closed to the public. The dam has consistently remained safe and stable, according to engineering inspection results and on-site monitoring equipment, Hoffman said.

"We're targeting fall 2011 for completion of the project, with removal of the cofferdam in 2012," Hoffman said.

PPL Montana operates the Hebgen Dam to regulate the flow of water into the Madison-Missouri system, balance the needs of recreational users of Hebgen Lake and to protect important river resources downstream on the Madison River.

PPL Montana employees make a difference with recycling programs at Colstrip plant

Nearly 12,000 pounds of cardboard was picked up for recycling recently at the Colstrip power plant, another victory in the plant's efforts to recycle cardboard and keep it out of landfills.

"We're proud of this environmental project, which we started in 2007," said Wayne Burke of PPL Montana, who works in the warehouse at Colstrip. "Since then the cardboard waste that would have been dumped in 10 industrial-sized trash bins every week now is being recycled."

Each bale of cardboard weighs about 900 pounds, and it takes up to a month to fill the trash bins.

Burke works with the plant's recycling company, Golden Steel & Recycling Inc. of Billings, which supplies a cardboard baler as part of its contract with Colstrip.

"We bale the cardboard and store it outside for pickup," Burke said. "This is a good environmental thing to do, plain and simple. All of us in the warehouse feel pretty good about this, especially when we see thousands of pounds of cardboard being baled for reuse."

PPL Montana employees at Colstrip also manage a program to recycle white office paper and aluminum cans, helping people with disabilities at the same time.

Colstrip produces nearly 20,000 pounds of scrap office paper a year, which, along with all the empty cans, is turned over to Eastern Montana Industries, a nonprofit

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Recycling program *(continued from page 3)*

corporation that provides jobs to people with disabilities and designs programs to help them remain independent.

As part of its environmental stewardship in town, PPL Montana sponsors an oil recycling station where residents can dispose of used motor oil free of charge.

The Colstrip Steam Electric Station Community Fund, supported by all six plant owners, donated funds to help Colstrip High School start a recycling program in 2009. PPL Montana employees also help the Frank Brattin Middle School's recycling program by volunteering to deliver aluminum cans, paper, plastic and catalogs to the Pacific Steel & Recycling center in Billings.

PPL Montana is the operator and one of the six companies that own the Colstrip power plant, about 100 miles east of Billings.



A bale of cardboard at the Colstrip plant awaits recycling.

