Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Wetland Program Plan. 2011-2016.

Submitted to EPA Region VIII on 11/30/2010.
Revised and Resubmitted 1/3/2012.
Approved by EPA 1/19/2012.

The EPA Wetlands Division Headquarters encourages states and tribes to submit Wetland Program Plans (WPP) that outlines goals, actions, and a schedule for carrying out the actions and achieving the goals. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) presents this Wetland Program Plan to EPA Region VIII for approval based on collaborative Montana Wetland Council involvement from prior program planning (*Strategic Framework*) and other program planning: ASWM Assessment, ASFPM Assessment, internal DEQ program assessments, EPA's Core Elements Framework, adaptive program management principles, and best professional judgment.

As our **goals**, DEQ references *Priceless Resources: A Strategic Framework for Wetland and Riparian Area Conservation and Restoration in Montana 2008-2012.* (Montana Wetland Council, 1/08). (*Strategic Framework*). Several plans, documents, and approaches described below are described as background resources used to determine a **list of actions**. Next, we provide a **schedule** to carry out those actions and achieve our wetland goals.

GOALS

Montana's overarching wetland goal is: No overall net loss of the state's remaining wetland resource base (as of 1989) and an overall increase in the quality and quantity of wetlands in Montana. The following eight strategic directions from the state's *Strategic Framework* identify where DEQ and the Montana Wetland Council (MWC) will focus leadership, energy, activity, and resources in order to achieve its vision for the future. The following goals articulate what the Council will accomplish as the end result of its efforts.

Strategic Direction #1 Public Education: The MWC will increase efforts and direct resources toward improving the general public's knowledge of, appreciation for, and action taken to protect the valuable functions wetlands and riparian areas perform.
Goal: Montanans of all ages understand the value and function of wetlands and riparian areas, and have access to information that enables them to act effectively to conserve and restore these ecosystems.

Strategic Direction #2 Professional Training: The MWC will provide training and information for public and private resource professionals.
Goal: Public and private resource professionals are knowledgeable, trained, and prepared to integrate wetland and riparian conservation, management, and restoration into their work.

Strategic Direction #3 Mapping, Assessment, and Monitoring: The MWC will complete and maintain statewide mapping and condition assessment monitoring programs to conserve and restore wetlands and riparian areas.
Goal: Decision-makers, resource managers, and the public have up-to-date statewide National Wetland Inventory and National Riparian Maps in digital format, and rely on a field-based monitoring program that assesses the condition of these resources for making decisions about wetland conservation and restoration.

Strategic Direction #4 Restoration: The MWC will support and continue to work closely with the Montana Wetlands Legacy Partnership—the Council's key partner that fosters on-the-ground wetland net gain—and with others engaged in wetland and riparian conservation and restoration.
Goal: The state actively supports and encourages wetland restoration and conservation. Montana's conservation community has ample resources and works cooperatively to restore and conserve wetlands, riparian areas and associated uplands.

Strategic Direction #5 Local Government: The MWC will assist local government entities with planning and growth management information, resources, and tools needed to protect wetlands and riparian areas, particularly in regions with rapid population growth and development potential.
Goal: Local governments are knowledgeable, well equipped, and supported to conserve and protect wetland and riparian resources as they plan, develop, and implement programs and policies that enable them to cope effectively with rapid growth and development.

Strategic Direction #6 Vulnerable Wetlands: The MWC will research, assess and provide leadership to develop Montana solutions to protect vulnerable wetlands and other vulnerable aquatic resources.
Goal: The broader scope of Montana's water resources, including vulnerable wetlands and other vulnerable aquatic resources, are conserved and protected in Montana.

Strategic Direction #7: Public Policy: The MWC will track, assess, and inform state and national public policy proposals, decisions (legislative, administrative, and judicial), and actions that impact wetland and riparian area management, protection, and restoration in Montana.
Goal: National and state policy (legislative, administrative, and judicial) protects and conserves Montana's wetlands and riparian areas, recognizing the unique challenges of an arid, rural state with rapidly developing urban areas.

Strategic Direction #8 Montana Wetland Council Effectiveness: The MWC will create a more formal and effective organizational structure for the Montana Wetland Council, and obtain stable funding.
Goal: The Montana Wetland Council is an effective, action-oriented network of over 1,000 agencies, organizations, and individuals concerned about and working for the protection and restoration of Montana's wetland and riparian resources. The MWC

provides the statewide focus, leadership, technical information, and coordination to accomplish this critical work.

BACKGROUND RESOURCES USED TO DETERMINE ACTIONS

DEQ Leadership and Strategic Framework

The DEQ Wetland Program provides state leadership to conserve wetlands for their water quality, water quantity, habitat, and flood control benefits. The DEQ Wetland Program leads the Montana Wetland Council to implement the *Strategic Framework*.

"The Montana Department of Environmental Quality is the lead state agency responsible for developing an effective, comprehensive wetland program for Montana, as well as developing the capacity of state and local governments to protect wetland resources. This *Strategic Framework* documents the State Wetland Plan. It is consistent with EPA's Core Elements of a Comprehensive State Wetland Program." (Pg 3, *Priceless Resources: A Strategic Framework for Wetland and Riparian Area Conservation and Restoration in Montana 2008-2012*. (Montana Wetland Council, 1/08). (*Strategic Framework*).

The state's *Strategic Framework*, or state wetland plan, was developed with input from over five hundred Montana scientists, resource manager, landowners, educators, private business owners, and citizens and has been approved by Governor Schweitzer and his cabinet of natural resource agency directors. The five-year *Strategic Framework* includes eight strategic directions and individual actions to achieve the goals for each of the following eight strategic directions: 1) public education, 2) professional training, 3) mapping, assessment, and monitoring, 4) restoration, 5) local governments, 6) vulnerable wetlands, 7) public policy, and 8) Wetland Council effectiveness.

ASWM Wetland Assessment and Montana Water Quality Act Objectives

Using Section 106 funds, Montana DEQ contracted with the Association of State Wetland Managers (ASWM) to evaluate Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) tools that the State of Montana could use to improve the protection of wetlands and streams in Montana and provide better integration of CWA programs at Montana DEQ. Recommended program revisions include Level 1 – leveraging existing authority, Level 2 – strengthening the 401 certification program and an extensive set of appendices including Appendix E: program revisions Level 3 and 4. "*Increasing Protection for Montana's Wetlands and Riparian Areas: Challenges and Opportunities*" (Association of State Wetland Managers, 2/09). (ASWM Assessment) http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/Wetlands/PubsResourcesMainPage.mcpx

To address one of the ASWM Assessment recommendations and also address a short term activity from a DEQ report to EPA Region 8 titled "*Montana Statewide Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Strategy 2009-2019*" (DEQ, 2009), DEQ researched and drafted an in-house report titled "*Recommended Strategies for Achieving Montana Water Quality Act Objectives for Wetlands*" (DEQ 10/5/10 draft). As stated in the DEQ 2009 report (pg. 33) "... the highest priority short-term need for the Wetland Program is an overall program strategy that begins with the review

of existing Water Quality Standards and builds from there to align the program within the current structure of DEQ".

ASFPM Floodplain Assessment and Protecting Riparian Wetlands

Using 104(b)3 Wetland Program Development Grant funds, Montana DEQ contracted with the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) to evaluate Montana's floodplain management to better protect floodplains, riparian areas, and associated wetlands. Recommended program revisions include 1) implement a comprehensive state floodplain mapping program, 2) enhance internal state floodplain processes, 3) leverage existing program capabilities and authorities, 4) incorporate no adverse impact (NAI) concepts into Montana's statutes, administrative rules, and model floodplain management ordinances, and 5) enhance floodplain outreach and education. "Montana Floodplain Management Assessment: Strengthening Policies and Programs that Reduce Flood Risk and Protect Floodplains." (Association of State Floodplain Managers, 7/11) (ASFPM Assessment) http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/Wetlands/PubsResourcesMainPage.mcpx

A majority of Montana's wetlands are located in riparian areas and floodplains and it is these areas that are under most threat and impact from development and land use changes. Hence the emphasis and priority Montana places on protecting floodplain and riparian areas in the states wetlands program. By reference, MDEQ is including the twenty-four recommendations from the ASFPM Assessment in our Wetland Program Plan actions to address vulnerable wetlands.

EPA's Core Elements Framework and Adaptive Program Management

Shortly after Montana completed its year-long planning process to develop Montana's *Strategic Framework* and link our strategic directions to EPA's core elements, EPA embarked on revision to their long-standing core elements for comprehensive state and tribal wetland programs. The four documents above collectively address EPA's new Core Elements of an Effective State Wetlands Program document (http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm) which focuses on 4 core elements: 1) monitoring and assessment; 2) regulatory activities including 401 certification; 3) voluntary restoration and protection; 4) water quality standards for wetlands and Montana's priorities for wetland resource protection and restoration.

Adaptive program management values flexibility in addressing new or emerging issues, opportunistic leads, and leveraging resources to take maximum advantage of situations unanticipated during mid and long range planning horizons. Recognizing the role that adaptive management has in addressing complex and changing natural resource issues and political situations, the Montana DEQ Wetland Program Coordinator draws on 15 years of experience and involvement in leading the Montana Wetland Council, participation in other agencies and organizations wetland and riparian related pursuits, engagement at the national level as the past ASWM vice chair and board member, and 25 years of working on water issues for the State of Montana.

MONTANA DEQ WETLAND PROGRAM PLAN CORE ELEMENTS

Montana DEQ has identified six core elements important to achieve our wetland goals. Many of these core elements are interrelated and support each other. Montana DEQ Wetland Program Plan actions for each of these core elements are described below.

1. PUBLIC EDUCATON AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
2. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT
3. WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND REGULATORY
4. VOLUNTARY RESTORATION AND PROTECTION
5. LOCAL GOVERNMENT, VULNERABLE WETLANDS, AND PUBLIC POLICY
6. SUSTAINABLE FINANCES AND COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

LIST OF ACTIONS

PUBLIC EDUCATON AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING ACTIONS

1. Plan, hold, summarize, and lead the follow-up for three state-wide Montana Wetland Council meetings per year and typically attended by 50-70 individuals.

2. Produce quarterly electronic wetland newsletters for the Montana Wetland Council listserv currently distributed to over 800 interested individuals in Montana and linked to other listservs.

3. Update and maintain the Montana Wetland Information Clearinghouse website and Wetland Council listserv.

4. Create and provide two training workshops per year to federal, tribal, state, and local government agency staff and other resource professionals.

5. Provide technical assistance to ensure that wetland and riparian information and data including maps, reference conditions, restoration, protection and management techniques and options, monitoring and assessment data, and other resources are readily available to federal, tribal, state and local resource professionals.

6. Encourage attendance and provide scholarships for resource professional to attend state, regional, and national wetland and riparian area workshops, conferences and training on a wide range of issues.

7. Develop a science-based information campaign to deliver the message that Montana wetlands and riparian areas are important and valuable for their water quality, water quantity, habitat, and flood control benefits, but are a threatened and diminishing resource in need of protection and restoration.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT ACTIONS

1. Identify DEQ program decisions and long-term environmental outcomes that will benefit from a wetlands monitoring and assessment program. Define DEQ's needs and goals for meeting Clean Water Act (CWA) and Montana Water Quality Act (MWQA) objectives for wetlands. Specifically, identify programs that will ultimately use monitoring data for DEQ decision making and how wetland data can be used for comprehensive water quality planning.

2. Define DEQ wetland monitoring and assessment objectives and strategies. Specifically, identify monitoring objectives and define data needs and uses.

3. Evaluate how to integrate wetland monitoring and assessment into existing DEQ water quality monitoring and assessment methods.

4. Evaluate how the methods, core indicators and application of the National Wetland Condition Assessment can be integrated into existing DEQ water quality monitoring and assessment methods.

5. Evaluate developed core set of indicators used to represent wetland condition or a suite of functions from the MTNHP Montana Ecological Integrity Assessment method (June 2010), and the MDT Montana Wetland Assessment Method (revised March 2008), Ensure the indicators are relevant for DEQ's monitoring and assessment objectives and are scientifically defensible.

6. Review scientific validity of field monitoring and laboratory activities and methods. Select field assessment indicators and lab methods.

7. Accept or modify the existing MTNHP monitoring design to meet DEQ monitoring and assessment objectives, or develop new monitoring design to meet DEQ objectives as needed.

8. Review MTNHP reference condition and reference sites data to determine if this is appropriate for DEQ monitoring and assessment objectives. Enhance and/or refine as needed. Incorporate into the reference sites adopted by DEQ.

9. Design data management system that supports DEQ monitoring objectives and follows data quality assurance procedures and track monitoring data in EQuIS or other system that is compatible or integrated with DEQ water quality data.

10. Analyze monitoring data to inform DEQ decision making and address DEQ monitoring objectives. Such as make use of wetland monitoring and assessment on private and public lands for local watershed planning purposes. Report wetland information in the Water Quality Integrated Report.

WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND REGULATORY ACTIONS

1. Include “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) and other Clean Water Act (CWA) and Montana Water Quality Act (MWQA) programs and activities.

2. Enhance DEQ’s existing 401 certification program based on WQS and through the use of conditions, provisions, or prohibitions.

3. Gather and evaluate information and guidance on wetland water quality standards.

4. Evaluate the feasibility to clarify that the definition of “wetlands” used in Montana’s mixing zone rules applies to all state delegated CWA and MWQA programs and activities including WQS.

5. Provide technical expertise in the form of conducting wetland delineations to support enforcement of Montana water quality act violations and further integrate the protection of wetlands into Montana Water Quality Act programs at MDEQ.

6. Evaluate the feasibility to establish wetland-specific designated uses and use the protection provided for existing uses within Montana nondegradation policy to protect and maintain wetland functions.

7. Evaluate the feasibility to establish narrative criteria to regulate physical and hydrologic modifications that impact wetland functions, aquatic life and wildlife.

8. Evaluate the feasibility to better define DEQ nondegradation policies for wetlands, requiring full protection of existing uses (functions).

9. Tie 401 Certification and other permit mitigation ratios and credits to watershed restoration planning.

10. Provide guidance to the public on how to identify jurisdictional waters and wetlands, regulatory program requirements, regulated activities, and wetland protection.

11. Develop guidelines to use WQS as basis for making and tracking regulatory decisions.

12. Develop guidelines to use WQS as basis for evaluating restoration/protection projects and mitigation/ compensation projects.

13. Incorporate WQS into monitoring and assessment program.

14. Review WQS beneficial uses, narrative criteria, and nondegradation to determine if they are meeting DEQ’s objectives and refine WQS as needed.

VOLUNTARY RESTORATION AND PROTECTION ACTIONS

1. Create a wetland, stream, and other aquatic natural resource mitigation crediting program to increase the amount of restoration and deter avoidable aquatic impacts.

2. Integrate wetland restoration into nonpoint source watershed restoration plans for two pilot watersheds and evaluate and refine procedures to adopt within the DEQ nonpoint source program.

3. Develop a voluntary restoration component within the current state wetland program at MDEQ that researches, develops, promotes and demonstrates the principles and values of ecological wetland restoration.

4. Promote and demonstrate low cost and ecologically based voluntary protection methods to further protect and conserve Montana's wetland and riparian areas.

5. Develop, promote and demonstrate techniques and technical assistance resources for living with beaver and effectively using beaver as tool for restoring wetland and riparian areas.

6. Develop a network of natural high quality reference wetlands for all wetland types based on their type and landscape position. Develop restoration trajectories based on monitoring data from past and current successful wetland restoration projects.

7. Identify rare, vulnerable, or important wetlands and prioritize for restoration/ protection and identify and prioritize restorable wetlands.

8. Verify restoration techniques using ecological and/or functional monitoring and assessment tools. Provide clear, peer-reviewed guidance on appropriate restoration and management techniques, field indicators, performance standards, and success measures. Train restoration partners on guidance techniques.

9. Develop an active wetland and riparian restoration program on the more than 5 million acres of state-owned and state-managed lands and prioritize for water quality limited stream reaches and watersheds needing restoration.

10. Develop and provide wetland restoration, management and protection guidance to the DEQ open cut mining program, major facility siting act projects, storm water runoff program, and other Clean Water Act and Montana Water Quality Act programs.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, VULNERABLE WETLANDS, AND PUBLIC POLICY ACTIONS

1. Work with the Governor's Task Force on Riparian Protection and others to develop resources and provide targeted outreach about the importance of vegetative buffers, wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains and headwater streams for water quality, water quantity and flood control benefits. Advance public policy to protect these vulnerable resources.

2. Integrate wetland and riparian area conservation, management, and restoration into local, state, and federal watershed planning and assessment programs and processes.

3. Support the ASFPM Assessment recommendations (7/11) to map Montana's floodplains and riverine hazards (inundation, ice jam, lateral erosion), institute no adverse impact floodplain management, and identify and promote high standards to protect natural and beneficial floodplain functions.

4. Develop a channel erosion hazard and historic stream channel mapping and pursue funding to generate this data and for channel migration zone (CMZ) studies for local government land use decision-making and wetland and riparian protection approaches.

5. Research, develop, and distribute technical assistance resources to assist local government decision making to conserve and protect wetland and riparian resources and vegetative buffers.

6. Engage state and local governments in protecting vulnerable aquatic resources, including floodplains and groundwater dependent ecosystems. Provide training and on-site technical assistance.

7. Coordinate and organize interested Wetland Council participants and others to develop Montana solutions to fill the federal gaps in protection for wetlands and other vulnerable aquatic resources.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING AND EFFECTIVENESS ACTIONS

1. Identify and pursue additional opportunities for DEQ Wetland Program funding and institutionalize the Wetland Program as a component of DEQ water resource responsibilities involving the Clean Water Act and Montana Water Quality Act.

2. Identify programs with impacts to wetlands and riparian areas or programs with opportunities to support wetland and riparian area protection and restoration, such as storm water, 401 certification, TMDL's, nonpoint source, diversion dams, enforcement, water rights, gravel pit and mine restoration, impacts to buffers, and engage to identify resource protection and restoration solutions.

SCHEDULE

Montana DEQ's schedule for carrying out the actions and achieving our goals is based on a melding of the extensive planning work identified in the above actions, focus on EPA's Core Elements Framework, DEQ priorities, and the principles of adaptive program management and best professional judgment.

The different project areas and program development activities and unknown funding amounts and priorities may require adjustments to the action-specific schedule presented below. Some of these variables include state level Montana DEQ and Montana Water Quality Act programs, and DEQ staff resources, and at the federal level CWA section 319 non-point source and section 106 monitoring funds, and competitive Wetland Program Development Grants. In addition, Montana DEQ commitment to TMDL work and timelines may affect the Wetland Program Plan schedule. Finally, this Wetland Program Plan will use the principles of adaptive management in which actions often occur concurrently and results from one action spur new program development opportunities. Hence, this plan and schedule will be reevaluated internally on an annual basis.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Each WPP action has a current or prospective funding source identified for each year as follows:

S_c = Current state funds have been secured for this action
S_f = Future state funds will be pursued for this action
C = Current Wetland Program Development Grant funds have been secured for this action
F = Future Wetland Program Development Grant funds will be pursued for this action
O = Other potential funding sources

WPD Grant Period		FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015
Action	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1. Plan, hold, summarize, and lead the three state-wide Montana Wetland Council meetings per year.	*C*	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f
2. Produce quarterly electronic wetland newsletters for the Montana Wetland Council listserv.	S_c	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f
3. Update and maintain the Montana Wetland Information Clearinghouse website and Wetland Council listserv.	S_c	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f
4. Develop and provide two training workshops per year to resource professionals.	*C*	*C*	*O*			
5. Provide technical assistance on wetland and riparian areas to federal, tribal, state and local resource professionals	S_c	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f
6. Encourage attendance and provide scholarships for resource professionals to attend wetland related workshops, conferences and training.		*F*	*F*	*F*	*F*	*F*

7. Develop a science-based information campaign about the importance of Montana wetlands and riparian areas.			*F*	*F*	*F*	

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

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WPD Grant Period		FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015
Action	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
1. Identify program recommendations and long term outcomes that will benefit from a wetland M/A program.	S_c	*C*				
2. Define DEQ wetlands monitoring and assessment objectives and strategies.		*C*				
3. Evaluate how to integrate wetland monitoring and assessment into existing DEQ water quality monitoring and assessment methods.		*C*	*C*			
4. Evaluate how the methods, core indicators, and application of the National Wetland Condition Assessment can be integrated into existing DEQ water quality monitoring and assessment methods.		*C*	*C*			
5. Evaluate developed core indicators and ensure those are relevant for DEQ's monitoring and assessment objectives and are scientifically defensible.			*F*	*F*		

6. Review scientific validity of field monitoring and laboratory activities and methods. Select field assessment indicators			*F*	*F*		
7. Accept or modify current MTNHP monitoring design to meet DEQ monitoring and assessment objectives.			*F*	*F*		
Monitoring and Assessment continued…						
8. Review MTNHP reference condition and reference standards sites and data and determine if appropriate for DEQ monitoring and assessment objectives.			*F*	*F*	*F*	
9. Design data management system that supports DEQ monitoring objectives.						S_f
10. Analyze monitoring data to inform DEQ decision making and address DEQ monitoring objectives.						S_f

WETLAND WATER QUALITY STANDARDS AND REGULATORY

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WPD Grant Period		FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015
Action	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
1. Include "wetlands" in the definition of "state waters" to ensure that they are legally included in the full scope of the Montana Water Quality Act (MWQA) programs and activities.	S_c	S_f				
2. Enhance DEQ's existing 401 certification program.	*C*	*C*				
3. Gather and evaluate information and guidance on wetland water quality standards.	S_c					
4. Evaluate the feasibility to clarify that the definition of "wetlands" used in Montana's mixing zone rules applies to all state delegated CWA and MWQA programs.		S_f				
5. Provide technical expertise in the form of conducting wetland delineations to support enforcement of Montana water quality act violations and further integrate the protection of wetlands into Montana Water Quality Act programs at MDEQ.			*F*	S_f	S_f	S_f
6. Evaluate the feasibility to establish wetland-specific designated uses and use the protection provided for existing uses within			*F*	*F*		

Montana nondegradation policy.						

Wetland Water Quality Standards and Regulatory continued…						
7. Evaluate the feasibility to establish narrative criteria to regulate physical and hydrologic modifications that impact wetland functions, aquatic life and wildlife.			*F*	*F*		
8. Evaluate the feasibility to better define DEQ nondegradation policies for wetlands.			*F*	*F*		
9. Tie 401 certification and other permit mitigation ratios and credits to watershed plans.				*F*		
10. Provide guidance to the public on how to identify jurisdictional waters and wetlands, regulatory program requirements, regulated activities, and wetland protection.					*F*	*F*
11. Develop guidelines to use WQS as basis for making and tracking regulatory decisions.					*F*	*F*
12. Develop guidelines to use WQS as basis for evaluating restoration/protection projects and mitigation/ compensation projects.						*F*
13. Incorporate WQS into DEQ's monitoring and assessment program.						*F*
14. Review WQS beneficial uses, narrative criteria, and nondegradation to determine if they are meeting DEQ's objectives and refine WQS as needed.						*F*

VOLUNTARY RESTORATION AND PROTECTION

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WPD Grant Period		FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015
Action	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
1. Create a wetland, stream, and other aquatic natural resource mitigation crediting program.	*C*	*C*	*O*	*O*	*O*	*O*
2. Integrate wetland restoration into nonpoint source watershed restoration plans.	*C*	*C*	*C*			
3. Develop a voluntary restoration component within the current state wetland program at MDEQ that researches, develops, promotes and demonstrates the principles and values of ecological wetland restoration.		*C*	*C*	*F*	*F*	
4. Promote and demonstrate low cost and ecologically based voluntary protection methods to further protect and conserve Montana's wetland and riparian areas.		*C*	*C*			
5. Develop, promote and demonstrate techniques and technical assistance resources for living with beaver and effectively using beaver as tool for		*C*	*C*			

restoring wetland and riparian areas.						
6. Development of a network reference wetlands and restoration trajectories for all wetland types based on their type and landscape position.			*F*	*F*		
Voluntary Restoration and Protection Continued…						
7. Identify rare, vulnerable, or important wetlands and prioritize for restoration/protection and identify and prioritize restorable wetlands.			*F*	*F*		
8. Verify restoration techniques using ecological and/or functional monitoring and assessment tools.			*F*	*F*		
9. Develop an active wetland and riparian restoration program on state-owned and state-managed lands and prioritize for water quality limited streams.				*F*	*F*	
10. Develop and provide wetland restoration, management and protection guidance to the open cut mining program, major facility siting act projects, storm water runoff program, and other CWA and WQA programs.				*F*	*F*	S_f

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, VULNERABLE WETLANDS, AND PUBLIC POLICY

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WPD Grant Period		FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015
Action	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
1. Work with the Governor's Task Force on Riparian Protection and others to provide targeted outreach on the importance of wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains and headwater streams, and to advance public policy.	S_c	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f
2. Integrate wetland and riparian area conservation, management, and restoration into local, state, and federal watershed planning and assessment programs and processes.	*C*	*C*				
3. Support the DNRC floodplain program to map Montana's floodplains and riverine hazards, institute no adverse impact floodplain management, and promote high standards to protect natural and beneficial floodplain functions.			*F*	*F*		
4. Develop channel erosion hazard and historic stream channel mapping and funding needed to generate data.			*F*	*F*		

5. Research, develop, and distribute technical assistance resources to assist local government decision making to conserve and protect wetland and riparian resources and vegetative buffers.				*F*		
Local Government, Vulnerable Wetlands, and Public Policy continued…						
6. Engage state and local governments in protecting vulnerable aquatic resources, including floodplains and groundwater dependent ecosystems. Provide training and on-site technical assistance.				*F*	*F*	
7. Coordinate and organize Wetland Council and others to develop Montana solutions to fill the federal gaps in protection for vulnerable aquatic resources.				*F*	*F*	

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING AND EFFECTIVENESS ACTIONS

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WPD Grant Period		FFY2011	FFY2012	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015
Action	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1. Identify and pursue additional opportunities for DEQ Wetland Program funding and institutionalize the Wetland Program as a component of DEQ water resource responsibilities including the Montana Water Quality Act.		S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f
2. Identify programs with impacts to wetlands and riparian areas or programs with opportunities to support wetland and riparian area protection and restoration, such as storm water, 401 certification, TMDL's, nonpoint source, diversion dams, enforcement, water rights, gravel pit and mine restoration, impacts to buffers, and engage to identify resource protection and restoration solutions.		S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f	S_f

Amendments to MDEQ Wetland Program Plan 2011-2016. Submitted to EPA Region VIII on 12/6/13.

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O = Other potential funding sources

WPD Grant Period		**FFY 2011**	**FFY 2012**	**FFY 2013**	**FFY 2014**	**FFY 2015**
Action	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Public Education and Professional Training **#8:** Develop and provide floodplain design courses for engineers and ecologist that support riparian and floodplain ecological concepts and management strategies.					*F*	*F*
#9: Mentor and support graduate students to develop and initiate long-term ecological monitoring of voluntary wetland restoration sites, with a focus on wetland hydrology, soils, and vegetation.					*F*	*F*
Monitoring and Assessment **#11:** Develop a long-term ecological monitoring program at the Story Mill wetland restoration site to understand the effects of restoration activities on water quality and other resources.					*F*	*F*
#12: Participate in Montana Dept. of Agriculture's wetland monitoring program to determine pesticide effects on vulnerable wetlands and develop protection strategies.					*F*	*F*

Water Quality Standards and Regulatory Actions **#6–14.** Are on hold and will not be pursued.						