



## YELLOWSTONE RIVER STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

### FUND GOVERNANCE

#### What is the campaign?

The Yellowstone River Stewardship campaign was developed as a way to engage the community, out-of-state visitors, and businesses to give back to projects that support the overall health and vitality of the Yellowstone River, from its source in Yellowstone National Park to its confluence with the Missouri River in North Dakota. The Yellowstone River directly supports our quality of life, drives tourism, and is key to the regional economy. However, a number of critical issues and recreational pressures threaten the river's vitality, and a lack of funding prevents the Yellowstone River community from addressing many of those challenges. The Yellowstone River Stewardship campaign is a voluntary, grass-roots effort created to engage the community to provide funding to support badly needed projects that support the resiliency of the Yellowstone River. This is a great way for everyone to get involved to ensure a healthy river for years to come.

All proceeds from the campaign will be invested in conservation and restoration projects that will improve water quality, fish habitat, late season flows and floodplain connectivity, and address recreational pressures. These funds will go towards priority on-the-ground projects implemented collaboratively with local nonprofit organizations (Montana Freshwater Partners, Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group, Park County Environmental Council, Trout Unlimited and others) working in



partnership with Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Custer Gallatin National Forest, and Bureau of Land Management. Examples of potential projects include public fishing access enhancements, river etiquette signage, riparian restoration, and recreational use monitoring.

### Why is a stewardship campaign needed?

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is one of the last sizable and relatively intact temperate ecosystems on earth. The lifeblood of this region is the iconic Yellowstone River, the longest undammed river in the continental United States. However, the Yellowstone Watershed is not immune to change. [Climate change](#) is causing increased air temperatures, decreased snowpack and earlier spring runoff for the Yellowstone River and its tributaries. At the same time, our river systems are experiencing [unprecedented recreational pressure](#) and changes in land use, putting increased demands on our water resources and native fish and wildlife.

As the Yellowstone River experiences greater and greater use, there is a need for all users to pitch in for management, restoration and stewardship costs. The [historic flooding event in June 2022](#) has only increased this need.

The current management system does not provide enough funding to keep pace with the growing pressures on Montana streams and rivers. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks receives virtually no general funding to steward our critical river resources. It must rely on fishing licenses, federal excise taxes paid on fishing gear, and commercial use fees paid by commercial fishing guides and rafting companies rather than general funds to maintain fishing access areas. That money then is distributed across the state.

[Locally led recreational use studies](#) from 2020 and 2021 found that there has been a significant increase in non-fishing recreational use of the Yellowstone River. Alongside use increases, our communities have experienced spikes in litter and human waste at the fishing access sites and along the river stretches, trespassing on private property, and conflicts at the fishing access sites.



The campaign is an easy, community-based way for all river users to show their support of the river, and highlights why Montana Freshwater Partners is starting the Yellowstone River Stewardship campaign: to increase funding for needs specific to the Yellowstone River.

### Where does the money go?

A fund has been established through Montana Freshwater Partners, a 501c3 non-profit organization based in Livingston, Montana. All proceeds from the campaign (less administrative costs) will go to projects to protect the health and resiliency of the Yellowstone River and continuing high-quality recreational use. Projects will be selected collaboratively at the beginning of each year through the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group's Fish, Wildlife and Recreation Committee and other partner organizations that are involved. The primary factors influencing project selection are:

- ★ Ecological benefit to the river and watershed;
- ★ Partnership engagement and matching contributions; and
- ★ Public benefit, education and outreach opportunities

The goal for the near future is to have projects listed on the website with a way for donors to select which project they would like their funds to go to. All donations will be tax deductible and a donation receipt letter will be provided to each donor. MFP will place all funds in a dedicated Stewardship Fund Account, track donations separately to ensure all funds are used for their intended purpose, and share each project's funding status with partners.

### Reporting

Fund balance and project status will be reported to the Fish, Wildlife and Recreation Committee quarterly. An annual report will be prepared and shared summarizing the current year's activities, projects and expenditures.

### Why MFP?



Montana Freshwater Partners has been working on the Yellowstone for over 10 years. The work began with implementation of two channel migration easements in Lower and Middle Yellowstone (near Sidney and Forsyth). We have also been involved with the Upper Yellowstone Watershed Group (UYWG) as a key partner since 2016 when the PKD whitefish kill occurred. We hosted the Yellowstone River Symposium which brought together various stakeholders to address issues related to the river and catalyzed the UYWG group efforts which are ongoing today. We are also leading the Yellowstone Project Prioritization Plan which is an important effort to identify restoration, riparian planting, beaver mimicry, soil health, and other opportunities to keep the Upper Yellowstone and Shields Rivers clean, cold and connected.

Montana Freshwater Partners commits to the following:

- \* Provide transparency for each project and communicate changes in project status to partners and public
- \* Publicize projects through online platforms and newsletters to partners
- \* Provide annual updates to all business partners and campaign sponsors and partners
- \* Strive to secure and maintain positive landowner and partner relationships

Link to website: <https://freshwaterpartners.org/get-involved/protecttheyellowstone/>

Link to instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/givebackyellowstone/>

## **PARTNER ORGANIZATION AGREEMENT**



The Yellowstone River Stewardship campaign is a collaborative opportunity for partners working hard to protect the Yellowstone River to support a funding campaign to help implement local projects. Partnership and collaboration are key to the success of this campaign. Because of that, we want to be clear and transparent about what this partnership entails.

Partner Organizations shall:

- Promote and support the campaign through social media platforms, member lists and supporters in positive manner
- Commit to financial or capacity support within the means of your organization
- Provide organization logo to be displayed on stewardship campaign website and marketing materials
- Add stewardship campaign logo and donation link to your website or other means
- Participate in annual meeting to set funding priorities each year

Montana Freshwater Partners shall:

- Acknowledge and recognize partner organizations through social media platforms, member lists and campaign promotion
- Add partner logo to be displayed on stewardship campaign website and marketing materials
- Communicate and report on campaign funds and project implementation on quarterly basis

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Partner Organization and Contact Signature

Date



The Yellowstone River Stewardship campaign gives people who value their experiences on the Yellowstone River a chance to give back to the resource through local business partners. Business Partners understand their bottom line improves when the resource is healthy and people are recreating on the Yellowstone River. People understand that active conservation and restoration efforts improve the resource and make the Yellowstone River the iconic river that it is. Together, we can sustain this beautiful place economically and ecologically for future generations.

There are multiple ways businesses can engage and support the Yellowstone River Stewardship campaign. The following describes different opportunities (please select all that apply):

- Be a participating business and have a poster and sticker stand on front counter/store front in business, encouraging customers to donate and receive a sticker
- Add a round up option to point of sale transactions for credit card sales
- Sign up for 1% of all sales to go into campaign
- Sign up for opt-out option (1% of sale is added to bill and customer has to opt-out)
- Donate a lump sum amount annually into fund

Under this agreement, Business Partners agree to actively support and promote the campaign within their means. For any reason, they may opt out of this agreement through written notice.

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Business Partner Contact Signature

Date

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Business Name

### **Who is Montana Freshwater Partners?**



**MONTANA**  
**FRESHWATER**  
**PARTNERS**

Montana Freshwater Partners (MFP) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization working to protect and restore Montana's rivers, streams and wetlands to benefit fish, wildlife, and local communities. We are a small but mighty team based in Livingston, Montana and for more than a decade, the Yellowstone River has been a primary focus of our organization. We also run the state's wetland and stream mitigation program under the Clean Water Act.





# MONTANA FRESHWATER PARTNERS

**GIVE BACK TO THE  
YELLOWSTONE**

SCAN ME

SCAN ME

SUPPORT NOW

*Protect the Yellowstone*

**GIVE BACK TO THE  
YELLOWSTONE**

**DO YOU LOVE THE YELLOWSTONE?**

Many of us do! It's one of the world's **most iconic, and longest free flowing rivers**. However, in just the last few years, the river has experienced unprecedented pressure that is impacting its health and vitality.

**DO YOU WANT TO SEE IT STAY HEALTHY?**

The Yellowstone River Stewardship Campaign is an easy, community-based way for all river users who love and enjoy spending time on the Yellowstone to show their support.

**ARE YOU WILLING TO HELP KEEP IT THRIVING?**

A fund has been established in partnership with the organizations listed below to pay for projects that directly benefit the health and resiliency of the Yellowstone River.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT



## MONTANA FRESHWATER PARTNERS

Montana Freshwater Partners is a non profit organization that works to enhance and preserve the vitality, health and resiliency of Montana's rivers, streams and wetlands.

[FRESHWATERPARTNERS.ORG](http://FRESHWATERPARTNERS.ORG)

