



Montana FWP Community Pond Program | Winter 2023 Update





History of the Community Pond Program

The Community Pond Program (CPP) was developed in the early 2000s to enhance fishing opportunities in or near Montana communities. The FWP Fisheries Division established this grant program to provide funding to construct or improve public fishing ponds. Since 2004, over 50 projects have been funded and 40 have been completed, expending over \$400,000.



Program Operations:

- The CPP is managed by the Future Fisheries Coordinator, within FWP's Fisheries Division
- Authority for the CPP is requested each legislative session
- Funding for the CPP comes from FWP's license dollars

Program Priorities: Projects are intended to take place in areas that meet the definition of a *Community Pond*, or a small waterbody in close proximity to a town or group of people. Projects must result in an angling enhancement that will positively affect the relationships among a group of people and its visitors.

Project preference is given to projects that create or enhance opportunities for youth or family angling and angler education. Improvements that enhance the angling experience for individuals with disabilities are highly desirable.

Project Eligibility: State agencies, cities, counties, angler groups, civic organizations, or other community-based organizations are eligible to sponsor a project. Sponsors must be working with a representative of Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks—usually a fisheries biologist.

The project sponsor is responsible for providing the property or access to the property where the project is located. Projects may be located on private property, but public fishing access must be guaranteed through easements or binding written agreements.



Use of Funds:

- Community Pond Program funding may be used for costs of design, construction, repair, or enhancement of ponds for which public angling is a primary purpose. Improvements that enhance access or safety for individuals with disabilities may also be funded.
- **Funds may be used only for those portions of the project that are necessary to create or enhance angling opportunity.**
- The project must be located near a community and should involve a pond-sized waterbody.
- Funds may not be used for acquisition of property.
- Project sponsors are responsible for routine maintenance of the completed project.

Notable Requirements:

- A minimum 30% match is required, which can be in the form of in-kind materials, in-kind labor, or money.
- All projects must comply with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and any applicable laws and regulations. Project sponsors are responsible for attaining any permits, including water rights.
- Projects may not be completed in a 100-year floodplain unless approved by the local fisheries biologist. They may not affect jurisdictional wetlands.

Program Achievements and Success Stories

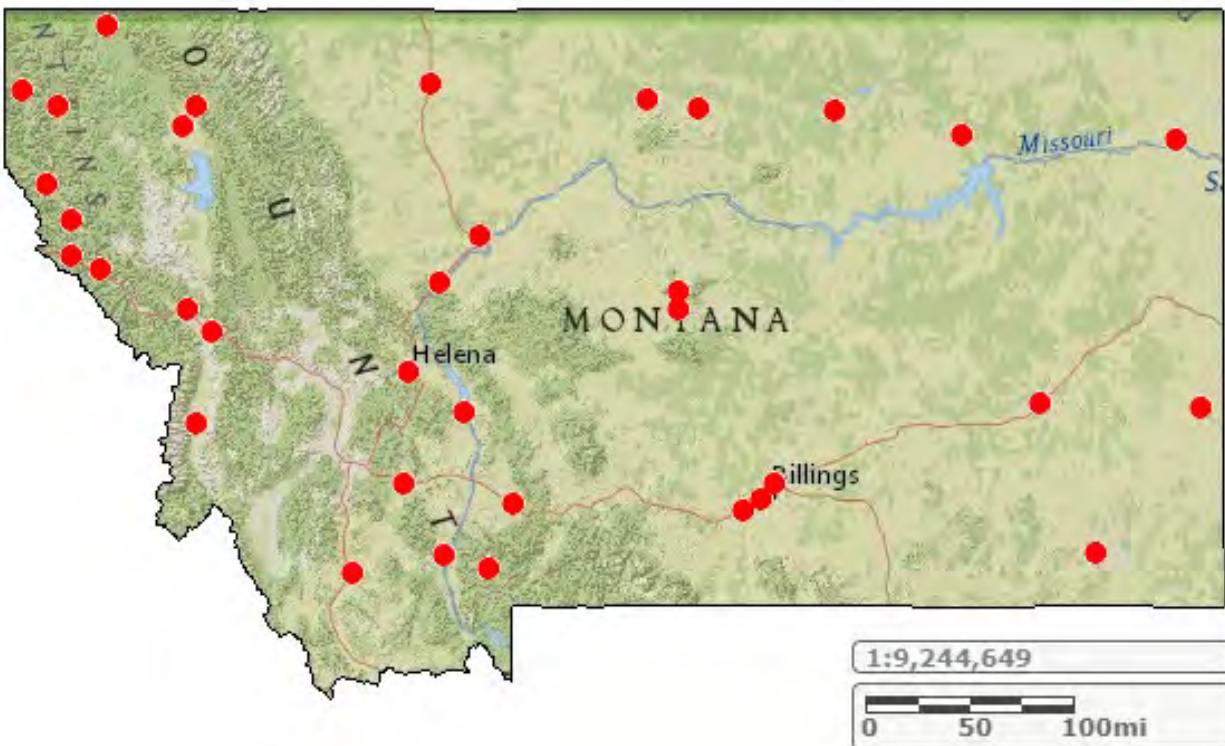


Figure 1. Map of Community Pond Program project locations, 2004-2022



Table 1. Community Pond Projects, from inception (2004 to 2022)

CPP#	PROJECT NAME	AWARD YEAR	LOCATION	POND SIZE (AC)	PROGRAM FUNDS SPENT	IMPROVEMENTS
001-2004	Hamilton Pond (Hieronymous Park)	2004	Hamilton	2	\$7,000	Walking bridge
002-2004	Whitehall (Piedmont) Pond	2004	Whitehall	1.5	\$20,000	Pond construction
001-2005	Hamilton Pond (Hieronymous Park)	2005	Hamilton	2	\$2,579.00	Water control device
002-2005	Saddlebrook Pond	2005	Malta	0.5	\$3,220.00	Public restroom
001-2006	Silver Lagoon (McCormick Park)	2006	Missoula	1.97	\$27,500	Pond deepening, pond liner and bridge
001-2007	Carter Ponds	2007	Lewistown	52	\$50,000	Rebuilding the dams
001-2008	Wadsworth Pond	2008	Great Falls	42	\$11,500	Handicap-accessible dock
001-2009	Frog Pond	2009	Trout Creek	11.3	\$5,000	Handicap-accessible dock
002-2009	Silver's Lagoon (McCormick Park)	2009	Missoula	1.97	\$8,496	Enhance habitat, education
001-2010	Blacktail Meadows	2010	Dillon	14	\$3,000	Fishing access, cattail removal
002-2010	Beaver Creek Lake	2010	Havre	179	\$16,000	Handicap-accessible pier
001-2011	Frenchtown Pond*	2011	Frenchtown	22	\$4,045	Enhance habitat
002-2011	Pelican Point Pond*	2011	Cascade	21.4	\$833	Enhance habitat
003-2011	Pine Grove Pond	2011	Glasgow	5	\$2,230	Handicap-accessible pier
004-2011	Spring Meadow Lake*	2011	Helena	14	\$15,462	Handicap-accessible dock
001-2012	Beaver Creek Lake	2012	Havre	179	\$15,000	Handicap-accessible sidewalk
002-2012	H.C. Kuhr Reservoir	2012	Chinook	27	\$25,000	Spillway repair
003-2012	Roericks Kids Pond	2012	Broadus	0.1	\$6,000	Pond widening
001-2013	Indian Road Pond	2013	Townsend	2	\$5,000	Pedestrian bridge repair
002-2013	Pine Grove Pond	2013	Glasgow	5	\$1,500	Handicap-accessible piers
003-2013	Libby Pond	2013	Libby	1.9	\$25,000	Pond construction
001-2014	Laurel Pond	2014	Laurel	20	\$759	Repair aerators
001-2015	Big Casino / East Fork habitat*	2015	Lewistown	111.0	\$494.14	Habitat enhancement
006-2015	Thompson Falls SP pond	2015	Thompson Falls	1.1	\$10,000.00	Expand pond
001-2016	Troy Fish Pond shade improvement	2016	Troy	2.5	\$2,000.00	Handicap fishing platform
002-2017	Culbertson Community Pond	2017	Culbertson	2.0	\$12,500.00	Pond construction
003-2017	Joels Pond	2017	Billings	12.0	\$8,800.00	Fishing walkway
005-2017	Spotted Eagle Lake fishing Jetty	2017	Miles City	29.0	\$8,779.00	Fishing jetty



CPP#	PROJECT NAME	AWARD YEAR	LOCATION	POND SIZE (AC)	PROGRAM FUNDS SPENT	IMPROVEMENTS
002-2018	Piedmont Pond fishing shelter	2018	Whitehall	1.5	\$2,792.00	Fishing shelter
004-2018	Roosevelt Park fish pond improvements	2018	Troy	2.0	\$13,379.40	Handicap-accessible dock and benches, signs
005-2018	St Regis fishing pond enhancement*	2018	St. Regis	1.0	\$5,170.00	Pond deepening, access, platforms
001-2019	Columbia Falls Family Fishing Pond Access, Restoration, and Vegetation	2019	Columbia Falls	1.1	\$5,508.00	Shoreline revegetation, fishing access
002-2019	HC Kuhr Road Access Improvements	2019	Chinook	27.0	\$12,793.00	Improve fishing access
001-2020	Baker Lake handicap accessible fishing dock	2020	Baker	93.0	\$20,000.00	Handicap-accessible dock
002-2020	Columbia Falls River's Edge Park	2020	Columbia Falls	1.1	\$3,000.00	Informational kiosk
003-2022	Frenchtown Pond State Park All Abilities Dock	2022	Frenchtown	20.0	\$35,000.00	Handicap-accessible dock
005-2020	Home Run Pond ADA access improvements	2020	Glasgow	1.0	\$2,500.00	Support piers, signage
007-2020	Lake Sheloole Improvement Project*	2020	Shelby	2.0	\$10,960.00	Dock installation
001-2021	Big Casino Bank Rehabilitation*	2021	Lewistown	17.0	\$960.00	Habitat enhancement
004-2021	Savenac Pond Improvements*	2021	Haugan	1.2	\$1,596.00	Informational kiosk
002-2022	Ennis Lions Club Park Pond Improvement	2022	Ennis	0.6	\$4,860.18	Handicap-accessible access and facilities, aeration repair
003-2020	Eureka fairgrounds fish pond	2020	Libby	0.8	In progress	Pond liner sealant
006-2020	Lake Elmo	2020	Billings	64.0	In progress	Habitat enhancement
003-2021	Lake Elmo Habitat Improvement Supplement	2021	Billings	64.0	In progress	Habitat enhancement
005-2021	Wadsworth Pond Water Level Enhancement	2021	Great Falls	41.3	In progress	Improve dam infrastructure
001-2022	Big Sky Owners Association Pond Development	2022	Big Sky	2.5	In progress	Dredge and recontour pond
004-2022	Glen Lake Outlet Restoration	2022	Bozeman	16.0	In progress	Habitat enhancement
TOTAL COMMUNITY POND DOLLARS EXPENDED					\$416,215.57	

*Program expenditures were less than the awarded grant



Selected Community Pond Program Success Stories



Above: Big Casino Reservoir

Below: Lake Shel-oolle

Big Casino Creek Reservoir near Lewistown is 17 acres in size and is an FWP Fishing Access Site. The shoreline around the primary access point was eroding due to wave action and created a 3-4' cutbank that made angling access difficult, especially for less mobile anglers. This project rebuilt the shoreline to address the erosion and improve angler access. The rock should provide some near-shore habitat that is accessible to anglers.

Grant funding awarded (2021): \$6,500 (*\$960 expended*)

Project cost: \$14,960



Below: Home Run Pond

Lake Shel-oolle is a 2-acre pond located near Shelby. Despite being only ½ mile north of town, the lake was never developed to provide better fishing access. The shorelines are rocky and have weeds, and access can be difficult. This project installed a floating dock to improve fishing opportunities. Kids fishing days are expected to increase with the improvement.

Grant funding awarded (2020): \$12,500 (*\$10,960 expended*)

Project cost: \$20,176



Home Run Pond is a 1-acre pond located in the community of Glasgow. The pond had an ADA-accessible fishing platform that failed. This project replaced the support piers and installed new signage. The pond is very popular has high angling use. These improvements brought the ADA-accessible fishing platform into compliance.

Grant funding awarded (2020): \$2,500

Project cost: \$3,615



Above: Rivers Edge Park Pond

Below: Baker Lake

Rivers Edge Park Pond is a newly constructed pond in Columbia Falls, approximately 1.1 acres in size. A 2019 project restored the grounds that were damaged or disturbed during construction by re-seeding and creating ADA-accessible roads and paths. This project installed angling-related educational signage.

Grant funding awarded (2020): \$3,000
Project cost: \$7,298.90



Below: Ike's Fishing Pond

Baker Lake, located in the town of Baker, is 93 acres in size and is connected to Iron Horse Park. After a tornado in 2016 caused significant destruction, the lake and its infrastructure were improved. This project installed an ADA-accessible handicap fishing dock that extends 48 feet and connects to the adjacent Millennium Walkway. This project completed coverage of the three public shorelines with fishing docks.

Grant funding awarded (2020): \$20,000
Project cost: \$42,747



Ike's Fishing Pond is a new pond that was built within the town of Culbertson. The project supported pond construction and created new public fishing opportunities. The pond is 0.4 acres in size with a target depth of 15 feet. The pond was opened to the public in 2021.

Grant funding awarded (2017): \$12,500
Project cost: \$25,500



Spotted Eagle Lake is a 24.6-acre pond located in Miles City. The project created a 100-foot fishing jetty to enhance kids fishing access and ADA compliance. Clean, crushed concrete was used for an inner capsule and rip-rap was used to line the structure and create habitat for fish and aquatic insects. It is very popular with kids and families and provides options for anglers with disabilities.

Grant funding awarded (2017): \$8,779
Total project cost: \$15,913.10

Above: Spotted Eagle Lake

Below: Joel's Pond



Joel's Pond is a 1-acre pond located in Billings. The project developed a pond and recreational area including a fishing dock, canoe launch, and an ADA-accessible access trail.

Grant funding awarded (2017): \$8,800
Total project cost: \$17,909.86

Conclusion:

Community Pond projects are typically developed by community groups, sportsman's clubs, or city/county governments. This leads to a large amount of community support and buy-in for projects that have high benefits for local anglers. Matching dollars average 62% of the total project cost, extending the value of CPP dollars. Since 2003, nearly fifty project grants valued over \$600,000 have been completed or are in progress, matched with other funds for an impact over \$3.1 million.

The CPP provides an opportunity for local communities, many of which are underserved, to be able to make highly impactful improvements to angling access and success. These projects are close enough to a community that a kid could walk or ride a bike to go fishing. Many improvements provide disabled access or make the angling experience better. As a result, many barriers to fishing are eliminated and angling opportunities are possible for many people that cannot go elsewhere.