

Valley Soil & Water Conservation District



North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition

**USBR WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program
Phase I Funding Opportunity R22AS00163**



Photo 1, Lake Cascade, a USBR Reservoir. Photo by L. Long



Photo 2, Big Payette Lake, a deep natural lake. Photo by Angie Smith.

**Applicant and Project Manager
Valley Soil & Water Conservation District
Durena Farr, District Manager
PO Box 580 Cascade, ID 83615
Durena.Farr@id.nacdnet.net (208)382-3317**

ACRONYMS

HAB	Harmful algal bloom (aka cyanobacteria, toxic algae)
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
IDWR	Idaho Department of Water Resources
Lake Cascade	Cascade Reservoir (name changed in 1999)
NFPR Subbasin	North Fork Payette River Watershed
NOFO	USBR Notice of Funding Opportunity
TMDL	Total maximum daily load of pollutant
USBR	United States Bureau of Reclamation
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	United States Forest Service
VSWCD	Valley Soil and Water Conservation District
Watershed Coalition	North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition
Watershed Restoration Plan	North Fork Payette River Watershed Restoration Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Project Location & Background	2
Watershed, Reservoirs and Lakes Sub-basins	2
Location Map	3
Water Quality	3
Technical Project Description.....	5
Applicant Category:.....	5
Eligibility of Applicant:	5
Goals:	6
Approach:	6
Evaluation Criteria	7
Evaluation Criteria A – Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope (30 Points).....	7
Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity	7
Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope.....	9
Evaluation Criterion B — Addressing Critical Watershed Needs (35 Points)	10
Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues	10
Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues	13
Evaluation Criterion C—Implementation and Results (25 points)	16
Sub-criterion No. C1—Project Implementation.	16
Sub-criterion No. C2—Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts ..	18
Evaluation Criterion D - Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (10 points).....	19
Sub-criterion No. E2. Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities:	19
Budget Proposal.....	20
Table 1.—Total Project Cost Table	20
Table 2 Budget Proposal	21
Budget Narrative	22
Conflict of Interest Disclosure	24
Certification Regarding Lobbying	24
Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement	24
Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance	24
Required Permits or Approvals.....	25
Letters of Support	25
Official Board Resolution.....	25
Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)	25

APPENDIX A - Resolution and Forms..... A
APPENDIX B - Letters of Support..... B
APPENDIX C – Supporting Documentation C

Executive Summary

Applicant: Valley Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD)

Location: Cascade, Valley County, Idaho

Date: March 30, 2022

VSWCD will form a diverse North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition and develop a Watershed Restoration Plan. The North Fork Payette River Watershed, headwaters to the Snake and Columbia Rivers, is located in west-central Idaho. It drains rugged forested land with agricultural and mountain communities on its valley floor areas. Beneficial uses of the watershed include domestic and agricultural water supply, cold-water aquatic life, salmonid spawning, downstream salmon flow-augmentation, primary and secondary contact recreation, and hydro-electric power.

The Problem: Important lakes and streams within the watershed are impaired, failing to meet Clean Water Act standards. In addition, water supply exacerbated by “extreme drought”, is not keeping up with demand regardless of many conservation practices install over the past 30 years. The watershed is currently experiencing immense environmental pressures from increased population, drought, agriculture, recreation and climate change. It is vulnerable to further water quality degradation and needs increased regional coordination. Lake Cascade is a USBR designed and managed reservoir experiencing increased harmful algae blooms, health advisories, children with swimmers itch and dogs experiencing symptoms (and death) of cyanotoxin poisoning; a worry some condition. Our watershed is complex and dynamic; the cumulative effects of pollutants and other environmental processes are real - individual entities cannot manage or solve the problems alone.

The Solution: A watershed wide coordinated approach is needs order to improve and protect water quality. A cooperative Watershed Coalition of diverse stakeholders would provide perspective, interchange of ideas, prioritization, and added restoration funding opportunities. A comprehensive Watershed Restoration Plan would provide decision-makers knowledge, and galvanize community leaders and stakeholders. The plan provides benefits of qualifying for and leveraging much needed multi-funding sources. A coalition, with the overall objective of reducing pollutants and increasing the watershed resilience to anthropogenic activities, would not only provide shared knowledge, technical and physical support, but also create a synergy or momentum to truly make progress.

VSWCD, established in 1957, has a long and successful history of delivering a variety of conservation projects throughout the watershed by collaborating with federal and state agencies, local units of government, non-profits, irrigation districts and private landowners. Because of these successes the VSWCD is viewed by the County, IDEQ and others as the most appropriate entity to form and lead the proposed “North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition”.

Why it Matters: Water quality is key to our health, drinking water, recreational economy, fish habitat, agricultural industry and our communities’ way of life. The lakes and rivers provide immense aesthetic and mental health benefits and recreational opportunities including dozens of lake-shore youth camps, swimming, fishing and boating, all which help support the local economy. The North Fork Payette River Watershed is a valuable natural resource, but only if it is healthy. As you will read herein, our water quality is degrading. With the help of WaterSMART and ambitious and bold stakeholders we can make "transformational" changes together.

Project Location & Background

Watershed, Reservoirs and Lakes Sub-basins

The North Fork Payette River Watershed (see Figure A) is located in a moderately high elevation valley between West Mountain and the Western Salmon River Mountains. The basin (HUC 17050123) has a complex surface water system with an abundance of streams, lakes and reservoirs that ultimately flow into the Payette-, Snake- and Columbia Rivers. The watershed is ~113 miles in length and drains a 927 square mile area. A major portion is steeply sloped forested land, while the areas adjacent to the reservoirs and major tributaries are predominantly gentle-sloped land and wetlands. Elevations range from 2,810 feet at the south end of the watershed near Banks to ~9,000 feet in the peaks of the northern mountain watershed drainage divide. Elevation of the Long Valley floor (most populated area) is approximately 4,850 to 5,050 feet.

Agriculture dedicated to farming and seasonal pastures are the major operations found in the low-lying valley areas. The largest county export by mass weight is water flowing downstream from the North Fork Payette River.

Two major water bodies, Big Payette Lake and Lake Cascade are centerpieces of the watershed. Lake Cascade, the 4th largest in Idaho, is a USBR designed reservoir fondly called “the Mile-High Playground”. Big Payette Lake, a deep glacial lake, is the drinking water source for the community of McCall and the focal point of McCall’s recreation-based economy. The lake with its clear-looking water is the attraction to the landscape, and considered the “Crown Jewel” of Valley County.

Big Payette Lake, Upper Payette Lake, Granite Lake, and Box Lake are natural lakes modified with dams. Other water storage basins used in the sub-basin proper are Little Payette Lake, Boulder Reservoir, Boulder Lake, and Louie Lake. Many smaller impoundments are also scattered about the watershed. The stored waters in these lakes and reservoirs are used for domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water aquatic life, salmonid spawning, downstream salmon flow-augmentation, primary and secondary contact recreation, and hydro-electric power and by irrigators locally and downstream in Gem, Payette, Washington, and Canyon Counties.

The lakes and river offers a wealth of recreational opportunities, including boat ramps providing access for canoeing and kayaking, pleasure boating, pontooning, jet-skiing, windsurfing, water-skiing, and sailing. Depending on the season, there is excellent open-water and ice fishing in the lakes, as well as sandy beaches for sunbathing and swimming.

Location Map

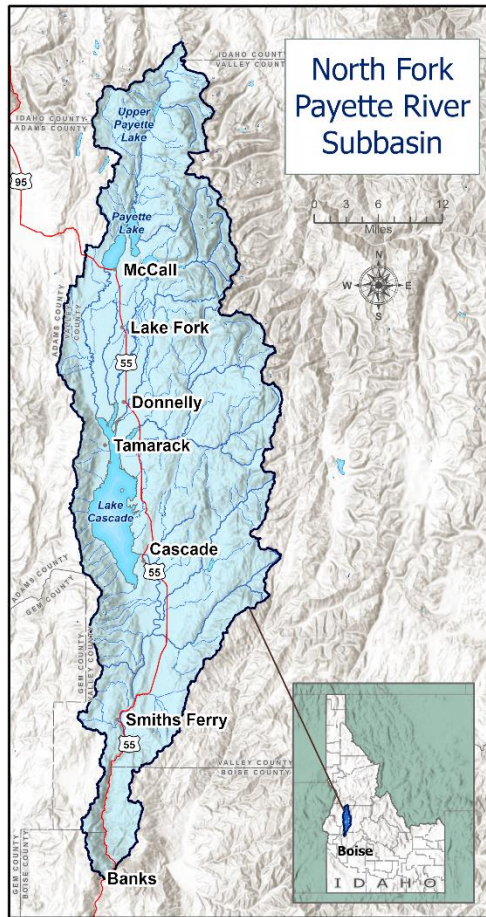


Figure A, North Fork Payette River Watershed

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) in which the proposed group will work: HUC17050123 -- North Fork Payette River Subbasin (watershed), Valley & Boise Counties, Idaho.

Area: ~927 sq.mi (see Figure A)

Length: ~113 miles flows north to south

Population: 10,700 (2019 Valley County). Summer population more than doubles, as the county is the most important vacation area for the southwest portion of Idaho and Southeast Oregon.

Water Quality

Currently, our watershed is experiencing unsustainable environmental pressures and with the absence of regional coordination; it is vulnerable to further water quality degradation.

As early as 1995, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) identified the waters of Lake Cascade as impaired for failing to meet Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) list of 303(d) impaired waters standards (primarily phosphorus) creating Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs, toxic algae or cyanobacteria). Workgroups were formed by VSWCD in the late 90s to reduce pollutant loading. The groups working together were successful but disbanded in late 2000s after water

quality improved and funding waned. Since 2018, Lake Cascade experienced four consecutive summer seasons of harmful algal blooms, which resulted in lake restrictions, reports of dogs experiencing symptoms of cyanotoxin poisoning and Health Advisory posting. These events and associated losses sparked public attention to the unhealthy conditions of the waters giving rise to splinter conservation groups, a scattering of agency responses, newspaper articles (see Appendix C) and calls for renewed action.

Upstream in the watershed, Big Payette Lake (a deep natural lake and primary source of drinking water for the City of McCall) experienced a proliferation of algae, aquatic weeds, increasing phosphorus content, increasing water temperature, oxygen deficiencies and diminishing water clarity. Reports of dogs becoming ill by drinking lake water alarmed residents and visitors alike. Recent IDEQ lake bottom sampling detected cyanotoxins produced by benthic-cyanobacteria resulting in an unprecedented cautionary health warning for north lake users. Big Lake Payette drains into Lake Cascade via the North Fork Payette River.



Photo 3, 2019 Lake Cascade with Harmful Algae Bloom (aka toxic algae) four years in a row. (photo by L Long)

The Covid-19 Pandemic is creating an extraordinary influx of people into this vulnerable rural mountain area due to new opportunities to telecommute and improve lifestyles in less developed open-spaces. New development pressure (annual county building permits increased by 65% in the past five years) is; 1) straining vital services (i.e. sewer capacity, housing, and hospital space), and 2) changing land-use (threatening water quality and their designated beneficial uses).

To aggravate the rise in water temperature, 2021 experienced a countywide drought declaration classified by the U.S. Drought Monitor as an “Extreme Drought” condition. Lower inflows, lower lake levels, stagnant flows and more heat waves create warmer water, high algae growth conditions and poorer fish habitat. So far this year, we are 20% below normal snowpack.

The degrading water quality of Lake Cascade (see Photo 3) and Payette Lake is creating cyanobacteria blooms primarily from nutrient run-off from the surrounding land uses. According to IDEQ reports, some of the lakes and streams do not meet Clean Water Act standards so TMDLs (total maximum daily load) were established for Cascade Reservoir, West Mountain tributaries to

Cascade Reservoir, Tributaries to Lake Payette, Big Creek, Boulder Creek, Willow Creek, Clear Creek, Fall Creek, Gold Fork, North Fork Payette River, Mud Creek, and Round Valley Creek. New and expected growth and development will further concentrate these impacts. Reports indicate some contributing factors to nutrient loading, sediment and/or temperature include but are not limited to:

- Numerous poorly maintained septic systems rather than central treatment facility systems.
- Nutrient-laden waste and sediment generated by animal grazing.
- Excess nutrients from irrigation field drainage returns.
- Urban runoff of excess fertilizers, hydrocarbons, pesticides, nutrients, pathogens, salts, heavy metals, and thermal changes from drainage systems.
- Dust with natural phosphorus from unpaved roads.
- Internal reservoir bottom organic decomposition.
- Internal reservoir release of phosphorus due to sediment disturbance from wind and boat generated wave action.
- Sediment laden with natural phosphorus caused by erosion of streambanks, roads, pasture and timber harvesting runoff.
- Leaking wastewater treatment pond liner.

The voluntary water quality improvements to achieve IDEQ established phosphorus reduction TMDLs have been a focal point of the VSWCD’s activities for over 20 years. Phosphorus is the fuel that feeds cyanobacteria (aka toxic algae, harmful algal bloom) in this area. Lake Cascade, one of Idaho’s prime recreation facilities, attracts thousands of visitors each year. Since 1993, there has been substantial progress and setbacks in implementing the Lake Cascade TMDL to reduce phosphorus loading. Reduction progress is from both point-source improvements such as removal

of treated wastewater from the North Fork Payette through the VSWCD-led J-Ditch project, and waste treatment modifications at the McCall Fish Hatchery. Non-point source improvements on agriculture, forest and Urban/Suburban interface lands include minimal cattle/riparian buffer zone fencing, changes in farm practices and riparian restoration. Improvements are still needed as many of the farm/ranches operate the same way they did over a half a century ago with inefficient flood irrigation, inefficient delivery systems (i.e. leaking unlined canals), and high nutrient content irrigation return water.



Photo 4, Big Payette Lake shoreline bloom of Volvox algae. People with raw water intakes complain of taste and odor issues.(photo by D. Simmons).

This past year Big Payette Lake experienced pet health issues sparking citizens' concerns about proliferation of algae (see Photo 4) and aquatic weeds, increased phosphorus content, higher water temperature, oxygen deficiencies and diminishing water clarity. Recent

IDEQ lake bottom sampling detected cyanotoxins produced by benthic-cyanobacteria resulting in an unprecedented cautionary health warning for lake users.

The past has shown that Big Payette Lake is vulnerable to water quality degradation from anthropogenic activities including lakeshore development.

Technical Project Description

Applicant Category: VSWCD is submitting this request as an existing entity to establish a new North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition with a diverse set of stakeholders within the watershed. Therefore, while we are applying as a **New and Existing Watershed Group**, we anticipate that our needs related to outreach, pre-planning, and information gathering will be closer to those of a New Watershed Group. In addition, this proposal is focused on USBR NOFO Tasks A Watershed Group Development, and Task B Watershed Restoration Planning (we are not applying for Task C at this time). VSWCD has limited work force and funding resources, so volunteers, diverse stakeholders, agencies and consultants for watershed planning are essential.

Eligibility of Applicant: VSWCD is a non-regulatory, local unit of government consists of one full-time person and a board with five locally elected supervisors. Its mission is to encourage cooperation among landowners, government agencies, private organizations and elected officials to protect and develop multiple and beneficial uses of our natural resources. VSWCD operations are open and transparent to the public. There are 50 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Idaho, that are the primary non-regulatory entities to protect, sustain and improve Idaho's soil, water and other natural resources. They are separate legal entities (not agencies) of State government. (See Appendix C, VSWCD 5-year Plan)

VSWCD would be the entity responsible for the leadership, development and coordination of the newly formed North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition through the 2-year period, after such time the Coalition may become a self-sustaining entity. VSWCD has an established history and record of accomplishment of leadership and programmatic success in this watershed dating back to 1957. The driving force behind this proposed coalition was generated by a VSWCD lead "NFPR Watershed Summit" webinar series conducted a year ago which pointed out the need for improved

water resource management. Over 150 participated... including three local city Mayors' and our State Governor.

Goals: The overriding goal is to improve water quality and protect natural water resources. Water is too precious to squander! In today's world, it is evident that tragedy can be avoided if people come together. The immediate goal of the North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition is to establish a diverse collaborative group of stakeholders to discuss, inform, strategize, prioritize and coordinate watershed planning and interests ultimately creating a North Fork Payette River Watershed Restoration Plan that provides a pathway to restore, maintain and enhance water quality in the watershed (watershed restoration activities). Pollution point sources in the watershed are monitored by IDEQ so the primary focus is on non-point sources and their cumulative effects, in addition to anthropogenic pressures. The State of Idaho has adopted a non-regulatory approach to control non-point sources so attracting and engaging stockholders is imperative.

Approach: The approach is to assist and/or compliment other watershed efforts to restore beneficial water uses within the North Fork Payette River Watershed. This program would be guided by the overarching objective of reducing pollutants and increasing the watershed's resilience to anthropogenic activities. Our approach is hands-on as if this effort were the last exertion to save our watershed from further degradation. Therefore, our collaborative approach for a coalition is multi-faceted and includes Task A: Organize a Diverse Coalition of Stakeholders and Task B: Create a North Fork Payette River Watershed Restoration Plan. The process would:

1. Provide information - build off former reports, monitoring programs and first-hand experiences.
2. Provide the Vision - reduce pollutant sources, conserve water, improve thermal resilience of waterways and protect natural water resources.
3. Talking openly and respecting differing opinions.
4. Overcome stakeholder's reluctance for involvement in a "bureaucratic process".
5. Provide momentum - mobilize, inform, inspire and build consensus among stakeholders.
6. Support focus groups formed within the coalition for sub-watersheds.
7. Initiate action – revise schedule, identify funding, create outline and draft plan.
8. Document the outcome – produce the "North Fork Payette River Watershed Restoration Plan".
9. Because our watershed is dynamic, the plan would be written as a living document with a framework for updates, changes, or adjustments for future modifications as conditions change.

VSWCD has a long and successful history of delivering various conservation projects throughout the watershed, partnering with federal and state agencies, local units of government, non-profits and private landowners. Because of these successes the County, IDEQ and others view VSWCD as the most appropriate entity to lead the North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria A – Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope (30 Points)

Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity

“Please describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the watershed group will include a diverse array of stakeholders, including outreach to stakeholders or collaborating with other groups or partners.

Efforts to recruit a diverse consensus based group of stakeholders for the coalition would be made to the maximum extent practical. Cooperative outreach by VSWCD is ongoing with various work groups and potential stakeholders attending a pre-proposal meeting on February 14, 2022. A couple potential stakeholders helped prepare this submittal. In accordance with Criteria A, formation of the North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition would cover the 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC 17050123) as defined by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Formation of a steering committee and stakeholder outreach and recruitment workgroup will be one of the first orders of business to establish a broad-based, diverse membership. Announcements’, newspaper and multi-media releases, and direct contact would provide information. An explanation would be provided of how the program will improve their area of operation (i.e. funding opportunities), why they should become involved (i.e. improved decision-making skills), what they are asking to do (i.e. interchange of ideas) and what the program will accomplish in the community.

Both open and direct verbal invitations would be made to the following types of stakeholders:

VSWCD (team lead) USBR, USFS, NRCS, USFWS IDEQ, IDFG, IDWR, ISDA, IDL and Idaho Parks & Rec. Nez Perce tribe Big Payette Lake Water Quality Council Cattlemen’s Association Farm Bureau Local Ranchers and Farmers Friends of Lake Cascade City of Cascade, Donnelly, and McCall Water User groups (i.e. Irrigation companies and Irrigation districts) Educators	3 Recreational Water and Sewer Districts Conservation Groups (i.e. Trout Unlimited, Wildlife Federation, ICL, United Payette, etc.) Payette Land Trust Chambers of Commerce Lake homeowners associations Valley County Waterways Advisory Committee Valley County Waterways Management team Idaho Power Tamarack and other developers Citizens (unaffiliated) Payette River Rafting Organizations Improve lake stagnation flush rate Etc.
--	---

- “A description of the stakeholders within the watershed that affect or are affected by the quantity or quality of water within the watershed (“affected stakeholders”).”

Water quality and quantity is important to the stakeholders invited to participate in the Watershed Coalition as described below:

1. **Public land and resource managers** - A large portion of the watershed is in federal ownership (USDA, US Forest Service, Payette National Forest, Boise National Forest). Lake Cascade is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Additionally, other federal and state agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Fish and Game, Idaho Parks and Recreation, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) have resource responsibilities in the watershed. US Forest Service manages a large portion of the lands in the watershed and operates a number of grazing allotments, campgrounds and boat launches adjacent to the waters. Forest fire impacts to water quality have historically been ruinous and are a significant concern. Similarly, Idaho

Department of Parks and Recreation operate numerous parks and boat launches that attract thousands of visitors every year.

2. **Municipalities** - The incorporated cities of McCall, Donnelly, and Cascade are located directly adjacent to either Payette Lake or Lake Cascade. Each of these municipalities has a Chamber of Commerce. Urban runoff accounts for a significant amount of nutrient loading.
3. **Hydropower** - Idaho Power operates a hydropower facility at the dam on Lake Cascade and performs cloud seeding in lower southern watershed mountain ranges.
4. **Agriculture** –
 - a. **Irrigators** - At least 5 irrigation districts or companies within the watershed utilize waters to irrigate approximately 22,112 local acres of farm land. Several irrigation companies exist downstream of the watershed with water rights. Lake Cascade is a USBR reservoir constructed in 1948 to provide flood control, irrigation water for farming, and it has provided recreation to both residents and visitors. The water user groups have a powerful voice in water policy changes and will be included in the stakeholder outreach.
 - b. **Livestock grazing** - dominates agricultural endeavors in the watershed and water is key to this venture. Approximately 38,219 acres in the watershed are dedicated to summer pasture. Agriculture is a valuable economic driver and key component to watershed restoration.
5. **Recreationists** - The spectacular natural scenery of towering mountains, lakes and dense forests attract thousands of visitors. Many of the visitors to the North Fork Payette River waters come to boat and fish in lakes and float rapids in the river. Several hundred-thousand recreationists visit the area annually in all seasons to fish, swim, boat, and admire the waterway scenery. The recreation industry touches all three Chambers of Commerce, which have supported VSWCD in past programs.
6. **Private Developers & Landowners** - A large number of permanent and part-time residents live in rural settings and new construction has significantly increased. Some of these properties are served by private wells and use septic tanks. Residents within the boundaries of the South Lake Recreational Water and Sewer District will be essential partners in the watershed Coalition.
7. **General Public** – we have a wealth of resources in our community with concerned citizens willing and able to volunteer. With the harmful algal blooms starting in 2018 citizens have begun to organize conservation groups and have undertaken citizen science water and cyanobacteria monitoring efforts to augment limited resources of IDEQ. Volunteers, some with scientific and engineering skill sets, bring renewed energy and excitement. They also bring increase community ownership making projects easier to gain local support. It is also home to Lake Cascade State Park, which offer over 2,000 campsites and a boat ramps for launching craft and offers hiking, mountain biking, and bird watching.

- “For New and Existing Watershed Groups, if the group does not already represent the full stakeholder diversity of the watershed, provide details on how you plan to target affected stakeholders to ensure that your group will represent a diverse set of stakeholders within the watershed.”

Recruitment of new members would be accomplished through direct contact, public meeting notices, newsletters, and outreach materials. A recruitment team would be organized for outreach programs. As indicated at the beginning Sub-criterion No. A1, the key to our recruitment will be to show new members how a strong organized group and interchange of ideas can make a difference to their specific area of interest and decision-making skills. For example, how the influence of

Watershed Coalition can leverage multiple funding sources for a landowner or farmer who wants to convert from labor-intensive, less eco-friendly flood irrigation to pivot sprinkler or drip irrigation.

- “Any other support demonstrating that the watershed Coalition will include a diverse membership.”

The attached Letters of Support offer strong evidence that forming a watershed coalition for the North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition and developing a Watershed Restoration Plan is supported. In addition to the agencies and groups listed above the following groups or entities will enhance the discussion and diversity of a newly formed watershed collaboration: UI Extension, UI McCall Outdoor Science School, Payette River Land Trust, Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation & Development Council, Central West Economic Development Council, Tamarack Resort, Brundage Resort, Jug Mountain Ranch, McCall-Donnelly High School, Cascade High School. VSWCD has participated with each of these groups either through 319 water quality grants, school outreach or previous focused meetings and maintains positive working relationships.

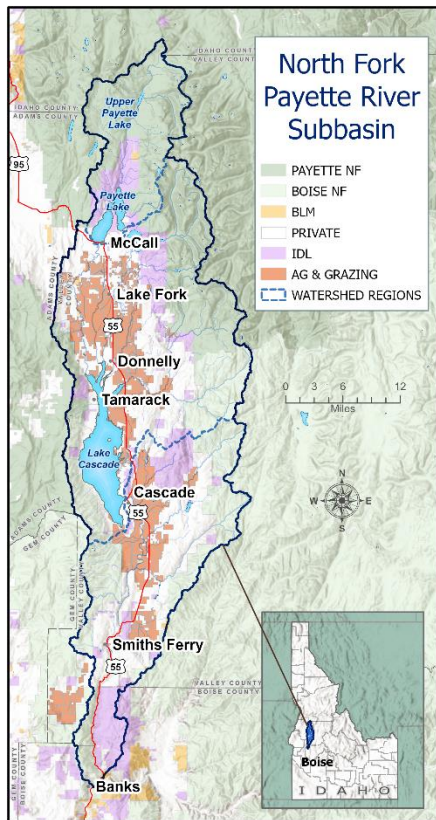


Figure B, NFPR Watershed land ownership

Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope

- “Provide a map illustrating the geographic boundaries of the area in which the watershed group will work.”
- “The map should also identify the location or boundaries of the stakeholder groups within the area”.

VSWCD works diligently to ensure the full geographic scope of the North Fork Payette River Watershed is targeted for outreach and land ownership is represented as depicted in Figure B. Sub-watershed areas have similar and differing issues, priorities and needs. Local stakeholder workgroups will come from these different locations and would compose focus groups within the coalition for sub-watershed areas. Downstream watershed stakeholders, many holding senior water rights, will be active participants in the coalition.

Much of the graphical area is forest wilderness with distinct population centers of McCall, Donnelly, Cascade and Smiths Ferry, which individually possess unique operating and cultural styles. These areas have both similar and unique issues related to their geographic location. The strength of

this Watershed Coalition would emerge as stakeholders gain an understanding of the benefits of working together. We would have an opportunity to demonstrate that the positive natural resource actions of one community may benefit another. We are no longer able to operate in an environmental vacuum.

The incorporated Idaho cities of McCall, Donnelly, and Cascade are located directly adjacent to either Big Payette Lake or Lake Cascade as displayed above on Figures A and B. Approximately 4,602 people live in these three cities according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Total population estimates for Valley County as of July 2019 reports 10,700 people living within the watershed. Each of these

municipalities also has a Chamber of Commerce to be included in outreach.

Because of VSWCD newsletters, meetings and newspaper articles these entities are well aware of water quality issues and will be integral to the Watershed Coalition.

- Describe the extent to which the planned membership of the watershed Coalition will represent the full geographic scope of the area in which the group intends to work.

VSWCD has a strong working relationship with state and local agencies, many of which have expressed interest in becoming team members. Most of the water resources are used by agriculture, power and recreation industries. As such, the focus of recruitment will be to bring in action oriented people from those industries that recognize water as too precious to squander. The coalition will address the competition and sharing of assets inside the watershed. Coalition membership will NOT be limited or exclusive and would be transparent. It is also noteworthy to mention that VSWCD board members represent a varied group representing, conservation, forestry, irrigation, farming and cattle grazing.

- Describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the Watershed Coalition will target stakeholders that represent the full geographic scope of the area in which the watershed Coalition will work.”

An outreach and recruitment plan will be one of the first orders of business to establish a broad-based, diverse membership. Initial meetings among the watershed coalition will address whether or not all stakeholders have been contacted in order to seek their participation, and if not, establishment of a recruitment focus team to complete stakeholder outreach. Ensuring this step is complete before moving forward with other activities will help ensure that the group functions through a participatory process in which each stakeholder is able to exercise decision-making power from the very beginning of the coalition formation.

Key elements will be getting out announcements’ and disseminating information with a frank discussion of how the program will improve their area of operation (i.e. funding opportunities), why they should become involved (i.e. improved decision-making skills), what they are asking to do (i.e. interchange of ideas) and what the program will accomplish in the community.

- “Describe why you have chosen to work within the watershed area you described.

The vision is to include the entire watershed area since each area can affect other areas, especially downstream cumulative effects. In addition, some issues such as soil erosion affects the entire watershed and need regional solutions, while other issues (i.e. flood irrigation) are unique to specific geographic areas of the watershed. However, from a practical standpoint and aside from logging in forests, most activities in the watershed are located within 3 miles of the lakes or river shorelines. This is the zone of most influence and adverse impact to water quality, and in reality, includes almost all non-forest lands within the watershed.

Evaluation Criterion B — Addressing Critical Watershed Needs (35 Points)

Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

- “Please describe in detail the critical issues or needs occurring within the watershed.
- Provide quantitative and qualitative support to describe the severity of the critical issues or needs.”

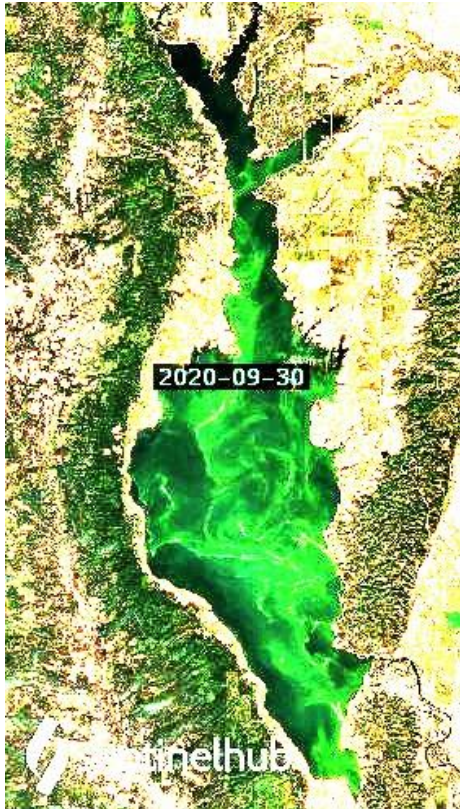
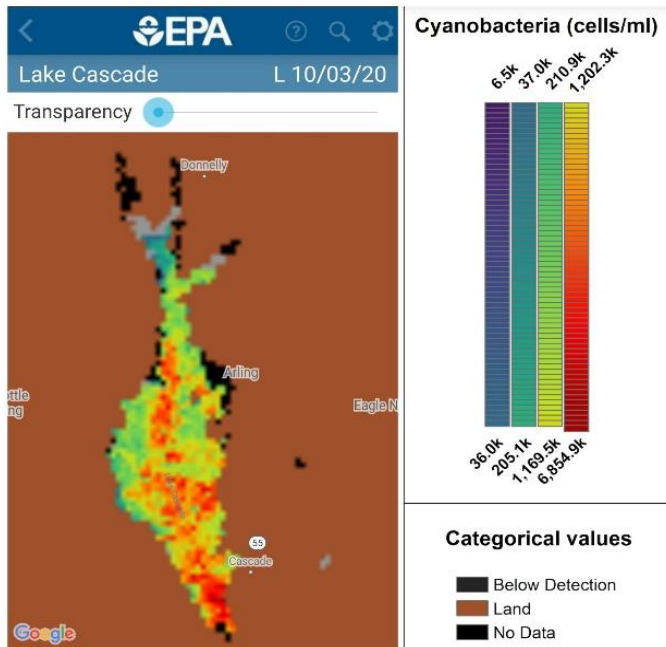


Photo 5, 2020 satellite view of Lake Cascade Harmful Algae Bloom (hyper-eutrophic condition), typical of 4 consecutive years.

The critical watershed issues are eutrophication (the process by which our bodies of water, or parts of it, becomes progressively enriched with nutrients, particularly phosphorus, see Photo 5), water temperature, and sediment and lack of an effective action plan to implement corrective measures. The waterways are critical to the economy and health of the area supporting vast federal, state, private forested lands, irrigated agricultural operations and three municipal incorporated cities.

Two major bodies of water, Big Payette Lake and Lake Cascade, are part of the watershed and are heavily used by recreationists and provide irrigation water storage, hydro-power and municipal drinking water. VSWCD has a library of technical documents authenticating both sampling and analysis data obtained over the years and Implementation Plans. As early as 1995, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) identified the waters of Lake Cascade and many tributaries as impaired. TMDLs were later established for Cascade Reservoir, West Mountain tributaries to Cascade Reservoir, Tributaries to Lake Payette, Big Creek, Boulder Creek, Willow Creek, Clear Creek, Fall Creek, Gold Fork, North Fork Payette River, Mud Creek, and Round Valley Creek. The TMDLs have not been achieved and are critical to the health of the waterways.

Four consecutive years of Harmful Algal Blooms, pet health and death issues, children with



“swimmers itch”, and health advisory postings for Lake Cascade and Cautionary Notice for cyanotoxins in Big Payette Lake attest to the decline in water quality and need for action.

Aside from the library of technical documents, quantitative examples of cyanobacteria mass concentrations in the lakes are illustrated in Figures C through F which sparked public concern about the water quality giving rise to splinter citizen conservation groups, like Friends of Lake Cascade, United Payette, Big Payette Lake Water Quality Council, and calls for actions to address the issue (see Appendix C, Star News editorials and features).

Figure C, Typical summer/fall season USEPA CyAN weekly satellite cyanobacteria bloom



Serving Ada, Boise, Elmore and Valley Counties

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
707 N. Armstrong Pl.
Boise, ID 83704-0825
Phone 208-327-8639
cdhidaho.gov

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
August 13, 2021

Central District Health issues public health advisory for Cascade Reservoir due to Harmful Algal Bloom

Valley County, Idaho – Central District Health (CDH), in conjunction with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), has issued a public health advisory, effective immediately, for Cascade Reservoir due to the presence of cyanobacteria, also known as a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB).

DEQ will continue conducting surveillance through satellite imagery, on-site observation, and will continue with weekly water sampling of Cascade Reservoir.

People and animals can get sick if they swim, wade, or play in or near HAB-contaminated water, eat contaminated fish, shellfish, or use contaminated drinking water.

When recreating near or in any surface water with a health advisory in effect, take the following precautions for yourself and pets:

- Avoid swimming, wading, or other activities. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water.
- Do not drink or cook with water containing a bloom. Boiling and filtering the water can increase the risk.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling fish caught in water experiencing a bloom. Cyanotoxins can accumulate in fish and the risk to people is being researched. Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption. If people choose to eat fish from this area, filet the fish and remove all of the fat, skin, and organs before cooking.
- Clean with potable water as soon as possible if water contacts skin or pet fur.

Figure D, Typical of the last 4 seasons. Health Advisory for Harmful Algal Bloom.



Figure E, IDEQ Cautionary warning of cyanotoxins in Big Payette Lake.

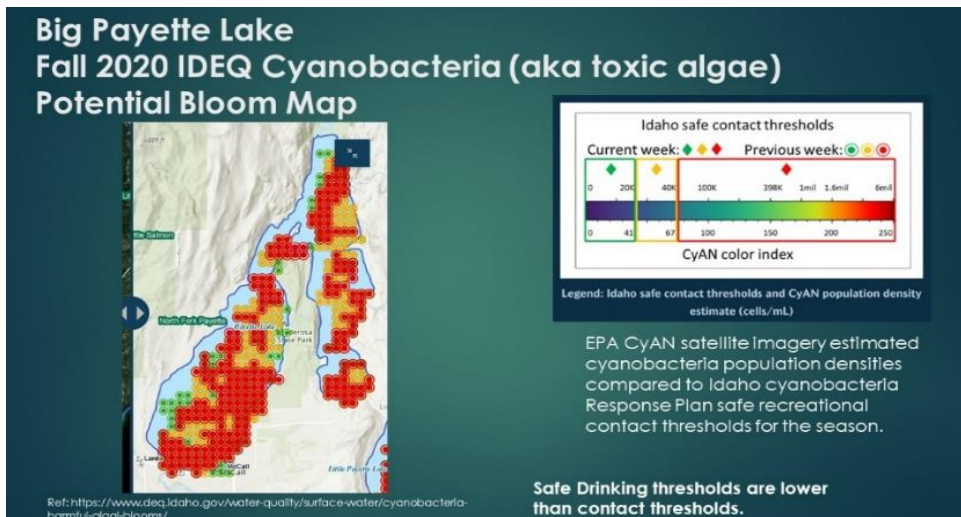


Figure F, Cumulative summer seasonal indications of cyanobacteria above IDEQ contact threshold in Big Payette Lake.

Some of the larger critical restoration needs confronting the watershed include:

Consistent water quality monitoring including tributary temperatures	Irrigation drainage return filtration
Water conservation plans	Alternative grazing water sources (off river/lake watering source for livestock)
Urban and Ag Stormwater runoff filtration	Sewer treatment effluent leaks into the river
Public education (Layperson’s Watershed Guides)	Sewer treatment facility capacity and service area expansions
Septic system leaching	Wetlands restoration
Animal waste management	Lake flow control
Dust suppression on unpaved roads	Drought mitigation planning
Erosion sediment retention	Inventory streambank erosion and canopy
Canal lining	Drinking water filtration
Invasive species	Shoreline wave erosion
Conversion from flood to sprinkler irrigation	Aquifer sustainability
Warming water trends	Riparian surveys

Lake Cascade has reached ecological capacity and currently has no remaining natural resiliency to annual nutrient loading and eutrophication. Big Payette Lake is a phosphorus sink with emerging algal problems indicating declining ecological resiliency and needs preemptive measures.

- [“Applicants should consider contacting Federal, state, and local agencies; non-governmental organizations; and other affected stakeholders to discuss what critical issues are affecting the watershed.”](#)

Contacting and partnering with federal and state agencies is routine for VSWCD; agencies often attend our board meeting. USBR has been helpful in providing fencing materials to keep cattle from entering the lake. IDFG has helped with fencing, and National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has been helpful with the EQIP Program for local agricultural farms. The USEPA and IDEQ have been helpful with 319 and Source Water grants in the past. All these efforts are appreciated, but a coordinated Watershed Coalition is needed to identify and prioritize projects and find funding to support additional efforts.

Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

[Task A - Water Group Development: Describe the Task A Watershed Group Development activities that will be completed as part of this grant project and explain why these activities are an important step for addressing the critical watershed needs and issues in the watershed discussed in subcriterion No. B1. Explain why establishment of a New Watershed Group or further development of an Existing Watershed Group is important for the addressing the critical watershed needs and issues in the watershed area?”](#)

The overriding message is simple: improving water quality while managing water resources responsibly. Our strategy is to build a strong foundation of consensus in the Coalition...it is important because of the complexity of watershed issues in different sub-watershed areas. The need to solve problems with a variety of viewpoints and know-how is needed. For example; many farmers are reluctant to implement conservation measures because they don’t understand available funding sources or don’t want to get involved in process...a trusting workgroup of peers with expertise from local experiences can solve this problem.

Over the course of 2 years, beginning with the award of this grant, VSWCD will primarily utilize funding to develop a new non-regulatory, collaborative NFPR Watershed Coalition and begin planning and establishing priorities. More specifically, grant funds will allow:

1. Conducting well organized, facilitated and meaningful coalition-building meetings.
2. Developing a mission with goals, bylaws, protocols, organization chart and milestone mapping.
3. Team building and skill sharing including a field trip to visit watershed impairments.
4. Outreach to establish a broad-based, diverse membership and various focus teams (communications, recruitment, funding, etc.).
5. Establishment of a website for information dissemination.
6. Creation of a recruitment team with outreach plan and information materials (e.g., brochures, advertisements, Facebook, etc).
7. Conducting quarterly full session meeting and intermittent breakout specific issue technical workgroups.
8. Providing notices and advertisement of upcoming meetings.
9. Conducting pre-planning activities, including outlining a Watershed Restoration Plan of action, researching existing plans related to the watershed, collecting baseline information, and identifying restoration needs for the watershed.

Why it's important: Technical solutions abound, but in the end, implementation with stakeholders is where things really matter. Best Management Practices and Implementation Plans in Idaho rely on voluntary programs that struggle with costs, lack of understanding or apathy. Establishing a new diverse Watershed Coalition that can help solve problems is critical to the success in this watershed. It is through the diversity, size and strength of trusting stakeholders that the Coalition will have knowledge and influence to obtaining funding and develop buy-in from stakeholders. The Plan will outline a process and path for working with stakeholders to implement (BMPs) and other watershed improvement strategies. In addition, the watershed is too complex and needs multi-expertise that is not available in one agency or group. We cannot operate independently of one another without duplicating efforts, overlooking cumulative impacts of pollutants, affecting downstream interests or wasting funding.

- *If the watershed group will build on previous partnership building efforts, describe these efforts and how the watershed group will expand upon them through this grant.*

As mentioned earlier, two decades ago, considerable efforts were made to implement TMDL phosphorous reduction programs and considerable achievements were accomplished. No former CWMP funding was provided. As funding diminished, so did the efforts. The relevant background reports are identified later in “Sub-criterion No. C2—Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts”. This coalition and plan will build on past studies and experiences with a new generation of motivated individuals, utilize new information technology, leverage updated science and technology, exploit funding experience and improved organizational skills.

Task B - Watershed Restoration Planning: Describe the Task B Watershed Restoration Planning activities that will be completed as part of this grant project and explain why these activities are an important step for addressing the critical watershed needs and issues in the watershed discussed in subcriterion No. B1.”

As the Coalition begins to function as outlined in Task A above, funds will also be used to:

10. Organize, facilitate, gather and synthesize information regarding spatial relevance and different watershed issues and compile teams; at comprehensive technical team of

- dedicated stakeholders in each sub-watershed.
11. Reach out across each watershed segment to expand stakeholders.
 12. Hold meetings to identify problem-solving strategies to resolve issues and data gaps.
 13. Develop and implement replicable procedures for documenting watershed priorities and concerns of diverse stakeholders and interest groups that affect and are affected by the watershed.
 14. Technical writing workgroups and publish a draft NFPR Watershed Restoration Plan.
 15. Create a Watershed Restoration Plan that establishes procedures, results, and **actions** regarding specific steps watershed managers can take to improve the integration of stakeholder priorities and concerns and turn them into targeted watershed adaptation strategies. This Master Plan identifies the steps necessary to make a positive impact on our watersheds water quality.

- “How does the Coalition plan to gather information regarding the critical issues and needs of the watershed.”

Critical issues in this watershed differ by sub-watershed area so focus teams need to be established. Information would be gathered by contacting government agencies, talking to stakeholders, reviewing existing files and literature research, and analyzing activities. We plan to build off previous state implementation plans, some of which are decades old.

Interviews of watershed group members and stakeholders would be conducted to gain an idea of individual projects that would improve the watershed. The Coalition will also use estimated load reductions and IDEQ’s established TMDLs and the NRCS best management practices to determine priorities for the watershed.

The Watershed Coalition would develop a consensus-based priority matrix (see example Figure G) within the watershed restoration plan that visually shows the low-hanging fruit (easy-to-accomplish) targets that need more immediate actions and identify longer term projects.

- “Will the Coalition identify opportunities to resolve conflicts? If so, how?”

The coalition will strive for a consensus based decision-making process. Conflict resolution is highly dependent upon good communication skills and we will use an independent facilitator or meetings. Once individual watershed projects are identified and priorities within identified, the Watershed Coalition can utilize mapping tools and begin identifying overall critical watershed goals, and rank projects based on TMDL calculations, cost estimates and overall benefit to the watershed. By having broad representation within the Coalition, the risks for watershed integrity can be identified and quantified. An effort would be made to understand various stakeholder perspectives and concerns of any project and identify common ground. A willingness by one or both parties to compromise would be sought and dissenting views will be respected. Ultimately as a last resort, if the group consensus cannot be achieved, a final review and determination will be made by the VSWCD Board of Supervisors.

- “Will the Coalition complete an analysis to prioritize issues within the restoration plan?”

Yes, a hierarchy of complexity and benefit will be determined using a simple prioritization matrix approach. Many questions will be evaluated such as; does it reduce the TMDL? is it practical? does it conserve water? how much will it cost? is it compatible with local policies? is it politically feasible?, etc. Overall prioritization will be a critical task for the success of the

collaborating given the many various stakeholders with their individual priorities (see example format Figure G).

Task C - Watershed Management Project Design: Project design phase is too early for the new NFPR Watershed Coalition so we are not seeking funding for Task C at this time.

Evaluation Criterion C—Implementation and Results (25 points)

Sub-criterion No. C1—Project Implementation.

Applicants should describe their plan for implementing the proposed scope of work. Please include an estimated schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work. The schedule should include: Major tasks, Milestones for each task, Start and end dates for each task and milestone, Costs for each task.

See the following CWMP Schedule, Figure H and cost Budget Proposals Table 1 and 2.

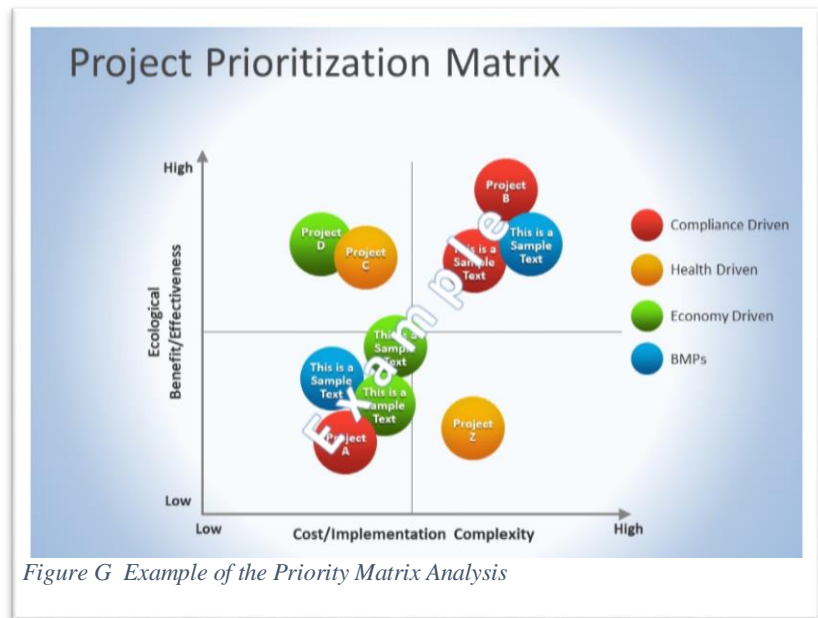


Figure G Example of the Priority Matrix Analysis

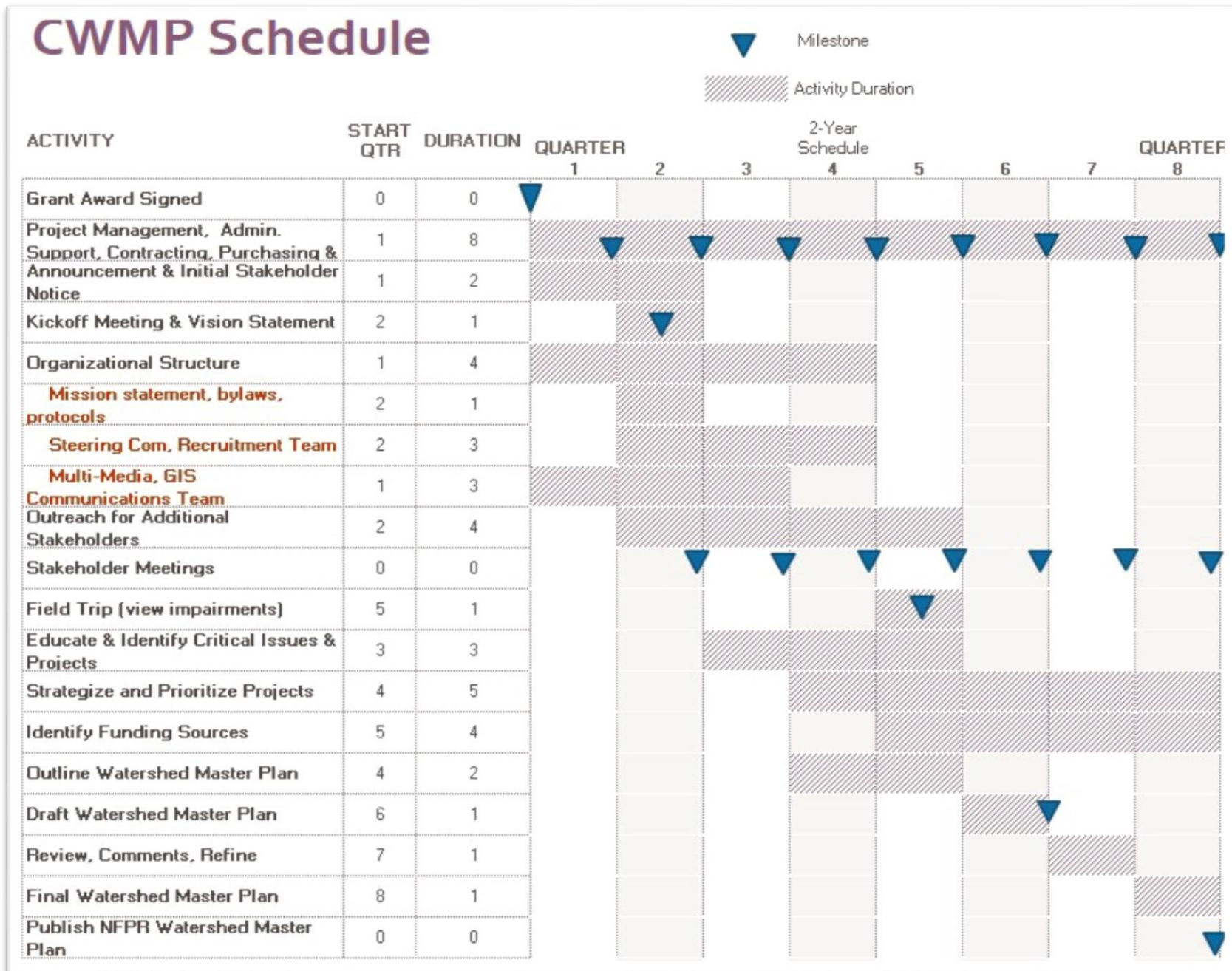


Figure H, Estimated Schedule of Events

Sub-criterion No. C2—Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts

“Please describe how the proposed activities of the watershed Coalition will complement or meet the goals of relevant Federal, state or regional planning efforts.

Applicants should describe how the proposed activities of the watershed Coalition will complement or meet the goals of applicable Federal, state or regional water plans. Reclamation suggests that Coalitions contact Federal, state, or local agencies in your area to identify existing goals and plans relevant to the watershed Coalition. Please reference any relevant plans, but do not include these plans as part of this application.”

This portion of the application speaks to the core of what VSWCD strives to achieve with the WaterSMART grant funding and with IDEQ. VSWCD has a close working relationship with IDEQ for achieving TMDL goals outlined in the 2000 Implementation Plan for Lake Cascade.

We will initially share all Federal, state, local agency and citizen goals and plans with the Watershed Coalition. Much of the watershed pollution is from non-point sources so the new Watershed Restoration Plan will follow guidelines provided in the USEPA “Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect our Water” for sections applicable to our Watershed.

VSWCD hosted two broad agency, municipal and citizen outreach community meetings to share results of IDEQ’s Lake Cascade Five-year review and Payette Lake’s monitoring review results. Attendance at both meetings, initiated and organized by VSWCD and IDEQ, were well represented by Federal, State, regional and local agencies. In addition, VSWCD lead the North Fork Payette River Watershed Summit, a four part technical current-conditions watershed review, webinar series with over 150 participants. Now, this same effort would expand in order to proceed to the next step of identifying and coordinating each of the agencies’ goals, workplans, and project plans for the North Fork Payette River Watershed to address stakeholder issues.

We all need to know what each other is doing and what the challenges, funding sources, goals, and plans they are facing. A piecemeal solution to our watershed challenges is both ineffective and expensive; it’s not working. Coming together as a collaborative and organized coalition will not only provide much needed knowledge, technical and physical support, but also create a synergy or momentum to truly make progress within this watershed. We cannot operate independently of one another and be effective.

List of Agencies with existing plans relevant to the watershed

- USBR 2001 Lake Cascade Resource Management Plan: Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment
- USBR 2002 Lake Cascade Resource Management Plan
- NRCS Best Management Practices
- IDEQ Big Payette Lake Monitoring Plans, Lake Cascade Monitoring Plan, North Fork Payette River Monitoring Plan
- IDEQ 2000 Implementation Plan for Lake Cascade
- IDEQ 2007 North Fork Payette River Watershed TMDL Implementation Plan
- US Forest Service, Payette National Forest, Boise National Forest Plan
- Idaho Department of Lands Idaho Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Stormwater Best Management Practices for Idaho Cities and Counties

Evaluation Criterion D - Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (10 points)

Sub-criterion No. E1. Climate Change:

- “Please provide specific details and examples on how the project will address the impacts of climate change and help combat the climate crisis. “

2021 experienced a countywide drought declaration classified by the U.S. Drought Monitor as being in an “Extreme Drought” condition. Lower inflows, lower lake levels, stagnant flows and more heat waves create warmer water, high algae growth conditions, and poorer fish habitat. This classification has not changed and our watershed is currently below normal for snowpack and precipitation.

Warming waterway temperatures and low stream flows from drought conditions have a significant impact on harmful algal growth (eutrophication) and fish habitat. In some tributaries, water is diverted for irrigation leaving streams dry, so water conservation projects are needed and are an expected outcome of the Watershed Restoration Plan. Forest fires change water chemistry with ash deposits and runoff erosion. Proposed projects to improve our water quality and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, protect public health, conserve water, and provide watershed biodiversity will be outcomes of the planning process.

“Cyanobacteria blooms” amplify the release of methane from inland waters and our main goal is to reduce blooms and improve water quality. We anticipate projects to help make the lakes and rivers more resistant to warming and harmful algal blooms to include: Cloud seeding evaluation, water conservation, algal reductions, changing irrigation points of water diversion, changes in farming from flood irrigation to pivot sprinklers (which naturally cools the ambient air temperature), improved wastewater management, planting trees along rivers for water cooling shade and bank erosion control, wetland restorations to increase biodiversity, better logging management, changes in lake water residence time, as examples. These are typical anticipated outcomes of the Watershed Restoration Plan.

In addition, this project will convene in-person and video conferencing (Zoom) meetings to limit stakeholder travel and reduce carbon footprints for those out of town stakeholder.

- Does this proposed project strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change? Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?

Yes, this project strengthen water supply sustainability by improving water quality, initiating water conservation programs, improving irrigation water efficiency and increasing resilience to warming as indicated above. Several of our city governments indicate that they would like to implement water conservation programs as part of the Watershed Restoration Plan.

Sub-criterion No. E2. Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities:

Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community? Benefits can include, but are not limited to, public health and safety by addressing water quality, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities.

Valley County is an Equal Opportunity Employer and VSWCD operations comply with county standards of practice.

Valley County is also listed as Medically Underserved per section 330 Public Health Services Act Improving water quality and removing toxic algae threats in these headwaters benefits the health and safety of 700 miles of local and downstream river-front communities.

Historically production agriculture was a larger part of the economic strength of this valley after World War II. Today, because of a short growing season and limited returns, many landowners simply cannot afford to invest in more efficient sprinkler irrigation systems. Many of the ranches operate the same way they did over half a century ago.

Budget Proposal

Table 1.—Total Project Cost Table

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$198,220
Costs to be paid by the applicant	\$0.00
Value of third-party contributions	\$0.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 198,220

Table 2 Budget Proposal

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	\$/UNIT	QUANTITY	QUANTITY TYPE	2-year TOTAL COST
Project Manager, D Farr	\$ 30.00	1800	Hours	\$ 54,000.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 9.00	1800	Hours	\$ 16,200.00
Travel	\$ 0.58	2500	Mile	\$ 1,450.00
Material & Supplies				
Laptop	\$ 1,600.00	1	Each	\$ 1,600.00
Printer & Scanner & Answering System	\$ 1,100.00	1	Each	\$ 1,100.00
Projector	\$ 900.00	1	Each	\$ 900.00
Supplies, software, paper, pencils)	\$ 4,000.00	1	Each	\$ 4,000.00
Printing, postage, and mailing brochures	\$ 2.00	1400	per stakeholder mailing	\$ 2,800.00
CONTRACTORS:				
Program Administrator	\$ 25.00	2080	Hours	\$ 52,000.00
Facilitator	\$ 28,800.00	1	Each	\$ 28,800.00
GIS, Surveys, Mapping	\$ 5,650.00	1	Each	\$ 5,650.00
Multi-Media	\$ 6,000.00	1	Each	\$ 6,000.00
Other - Meeting location, supplies, draft and final report	\$ 4,000.00	1	Each	\$ 4,000.00
Catering	\$ 500.00	9	event	\$ 4,500.00
Indirect Costs	10%	1	Fed approved rate:	\$ 15,220.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED				\$ 198,220.00

Budget Narrative

Salaries and Wages

VSWCD Project Manager (PM) will be the team leader for kicking off this project, relying heavily on volunteer support, a steering committee and contract employees. The PM (Durena Farr) will manage the grant and board notifications. PM time would be allocated to all aspects of the project not covered by the services contracted for the execution of this project. VSWCD will hold all contracts with our funders and will contract all outside services according to State and Federal procurement policies. Staff time for each objective will be directed towards:

- Board member, steering committee and stakeholder coordination
- Business procurement, contracting and bill payment administration
- Meet with agency personnel, landowners, water users, recreationists, etc.
- Production of quarterly reports and materials relating to watershed issues
- Hosting regularly scheduled in-person and virtual stakeholder planning meetings

The two-year part-time salary request which includes inflation is for \$54,000.

Fringe Benefits

Employee fringe benefit of workers compensation, federal and state taxes, vacation , holidays, sick days at 30% of base salaries.

Travel

VSWCD asks for \$1,450 for travel as program personnel would meet with at least two other watershed groups to identify effective strategies for diversifying and increasing board participation and capacity. Project funds would be used to pay for mileage for project members while traveling and we anticipate a couple meetings in Boise with agency stakeholders. In addition, a bus would be included for one field trip to observe watershed impairments. There is an allocation for travel for stakeholders who may not have money for travel in their respective budgets. We have many stakeholder who live two hours away so efforts would be made to incorporate Zoom type meetings where possible to limit their expense and carbon footprint.

NFPR Watershed is in a relatively remote location. State and Federal agencies based out of the Boise metropolitan area will have several hours of travel to and from the area. It is the desire of VSWCD to accommodate as many collaborating agencies and stakeholders as possible for this project. Travel reimbursement is based on GSA rates. VSWCD recognizes the challenges of travel during the social/meeting restrictions associated with COVID-19 and a desire to reduce carbon footprint. Therefore, VSWCD will also provide access to meetings and workshops via telephonic and teleconference opportunities.

Supplies and Materials

VSWCD is requesting funds for printing, and printing materials including educational information, and outreach information. This includes mass mailings to prospective stakeholders. VSWCD is also requesting office supplies, which include, but are not limited to one laptop, scanner, copier, answering system, Zoom account, and adequate office supplies etc. This request is for \$10,400 for the duration of the grant.

Contractors

VSWCD is requesting five separate contract services:

The Planning Facilitator (PF) would communicate with the stakeholders on a periodic basis throughout the project period. The Planning Facilitator will develop a meeting PowerPoint, agenda and educational documents to be used for meetings and outreach in gathering stakeholders to develop both trust and interest in the NFPR Watershed planning process. We anticipated quarterly coalition meetings and several breakout focus group meeting and a field trip in between. This contract will be awarded \$28,800 for the duration of the grant.

Program Administrator (PA) – The part-time contract employee PA will assist the PM and PF by coordinated and compile a complete list of all possible stakeholders and participants as well as a technological mailing list that is available for all board members and stakeholders. The PA will be responsible for meeting preparation, coordination and the program schedule, facilitating discussion, handing out brochures, note taking and educational needs to generate open discussions. The PA will research, gather and distribute data, review existing plan(s), and continually draft a Master Watershed Plan Outline from meeting notes while providing the stakeholders with research and data associated with materials and information from both stakeholders and partners during the process. The Plan Administrator will help with the quarterly reports, coordinate a draft and final plan approved by the stakeholders and have both electronic and paper versions for distribution at the end of the grant. This is a part time position and this contract will be awarded \$52,000 for the duration of the grant.

Multi-Media Coordinator - The project will have website and Facebook pages for public information/input and stakeholder access to documents. The website would also be used for document collaborative editing. The media coordinator will update information on a weekly basis. Multi-media also includes setup of audio visual and video conferencing technology for meetings. This contract will be awarded \$6,000 for the duration of the grant.

GIS & Mapping Specialist- We anticipate maps and graphic needs for reports and public and stakeholder communications. A dashboard would be created for surveys and automatically stream the results from surveys or other data using numbers, graphics, open-ended text response lists, etc. This contract will be awarded \$5,650 for the duration of the grant.

Catering- A catering service will be contracted to provide beverage service and light meals for at least eight larger meetings and several smaller workshop meetings. Sustenance keeps energy levels up during meeting. This contract is estimated at \$500 per event to cover catered beverage and light food services. This estimate is based on recent workgroup meetings where catering services have been by VSWCD.

Other Meeting and Supplies- VSWCD anticipates hosting larger meetings at a local board room building as well as maintaining smaller office space for board meetings and breakout focus workgroups. Depending on extent of public involvement, VSWCD may need to secure more convenient auditorium meeting space for larger public gatherings and/or locations with better technology service. This line item includes printing of final documents. This request is for \$4,000 for the duration of the grant

Indirect Costs

The VSWCD does not have a federally approved indirect cost rate agreement, therefore a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (including salary/wages, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, and up to \$25,000 of each subcontract) has been calculated and included in the budget.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.112, applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

VSWCD has no actual or potential conflict of interest per FAIR requirements.

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

VSWCD has not and will not pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this grant application or approved grant. See attached forms SF-424, Appendix A.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

VSWCD has no overlap between the proposed project and any other active or anticipated proposals or projects in terms of activities, costs, or commitment of key personnel. The key difference in this Watershed Restoration Plan is that it uses previous reports and technical data from others to prioritize projects, obtain stakeholder buy-in and determine funding sources for implementation.

This grant application is not in any way duplicative of any proposal or project that has been or will be submitted by VSWCD or the coalition for funding consideration to any other potential funding source—whether it be Federal or non-Federal.

Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

This Phase I WaterSMART program consists of group meeting, thought processes, planning and technical writing and will not disturb the ground, water or environmental or cultural resources. Specific answers to H.1. questions are provided below:

• *Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)?*

No. This project is just to create a coalition and watershed plan. There will be no on the ground work, field sampling or monitoring involved in this Phase I WaterSMART planning process.

• *Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area?*

Bull trout is the only fish species we know of in watershed listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Other species like Gray wolf, North American Wolverine, Canada lynx, Monarch butterfly, and Northern Idaho ground squirrel are threatened. This Phase I WaterSMART planning process does not have field activities and would not impact species; but, outcomes and future programs would likely help threatened or endangered species.

- *Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States”?*

There are wetland complexes within the watershed, but this is a planning program that does not impact wetlands. Hopefully, some of the outcomes from planning will help protect wetlands.

- *When was the water delivery system constructed?*

There is no water delivery system with this Phase I WaterSMART planning process.

- *Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)?*

No parts of an irrigation system will be modified by this Phase I WaterSMART planning process.

- *Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?*

No, there are no buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

- *Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations?*

No. There is no work being done that would have adverse effect on low income or minority populations.

- *Will the proposed project limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands?*

No. This Phase I WaterSMART planning process has no effect on the land, but is to create a watershed plan.

- *Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?*

No. This Phase I WaterSMART planning process is just a watershed plan and does not include any on the ground or water work.

Required Permits or Approvals

No permit or approvals are required for this Phase I WaterSMART planning program.

Letters of Support

See Appendix B for Letter of Support.

Official Board Resolution

See Appendix A for the VSWCD signed Board Resolution for this grant application

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

SAM registration currently active thru December 28, 2022

DUNS: 078605994

APPENDIX A - Resolution and Forms

Official Board Resolution

SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance

SF-424A Budget Information

SF-424B Assurances

SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (NOT applicable)

APPENDIX B - Letters of Support

Letters of Support represent a wide variety of interest within the watershed. These letters represent the commitment to participate in the North Fork Payette River Watershed Coalition efforts and the projects that evolve from a diverse coalition.

1. Valley County Board of County Commissioners
2. Nez Perce Tribe - Department of Fisheries Resource Management
3. Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission
4. Idaho Department of Fish and Game
5. Trout Unlimited
6. City of Donnelly
7. City of Cascade
8. Lake Irrigation District
9. Big Payette Lake Water Quality Council, Inc.
10. United Payette
11. North Lake Recreational Sewer and Water District
12. South Lake Recreational Water and Sewer District
13. Idaho Conservation League
14. Horizons' Lifestyle and Education Team
15. University of Idaho Extension
16. Payette Endowment Lands Alliance
17. Friends of Lake Cascade
18. Gold Fork Irrigation District, Ltd

APPENDIX C – Supporting Documentation

VSWCD 5-year Plan

McCall Star-News Articles