

Montana State Wildlife Grant Success Stories

In the five years since its inception, the State Wildlife Grant Program has played an important role in the conservation of Montana's wildlife. The following are some projects funded through State Wildlife Grants:

Management: Proactive Measures that Benefit Wildlife and People **Bear-proofing Effort on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation**

Grizzly bears are scavengers and when they eat food from dumpsters, it can lead to conflict with humans and result in the bear either being killed or removed from its home. This State Wildlife Grant funded project, done in coordination with the nearby Blackfeet Indian Reservation, provided nine bear-proof dumpsters to keep grizzly bears out of refuse areas. By keeping grizzly bears in their natural habitat, feeding on natural foods, both grizzlies and people benefit by eliminating potential conflict situations.

Research: Gathering Information to Take Action **Finding Fish in Montana's "Fishless" Streams**

Prior to 2001, thousands of miles of prairie streams in Montana had never been surveyed for fish. These streams were thought to be fishless but recent State Wildlife Grant funded surveys have shown otherwise. Survey crews have found 46 different fish species (26 of them native) living in the "fishless" prairie streams, as well as five different amphibian species and ten different reptile species. Few suspected the streams would be so biologically rich. Now, we know that when compared to western Montana's cold-water streams, which have just a few different fish species, the state's prairie streams are hugely diverse. With more knowledge we can make better, more cost-effective decisions to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.

Restoration: Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas **Arctic Grayling Restoration**

The arctic grayling in the upper Big Hole River in Montana are the last river-dwelling grayling population in the lower 48 states. Efforts to restore this beautiful fish to the Beaverhead, Ruby, Sun, and Missouri rivers are now underway with the help of State Wildlife Grants. Working with local landowners and conservation groups, the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department has been rearing and stocking grayling into the deep cold pools of Montana's rivers. This will help conserve the grayling before they become more rare and costly to protect.



Bear-Proof Dumpster, Photo Courtesy of Montana FWP



Little Elk Creek, Photo Courtesy of Montana FWP



Grayling Restoration at Sun River, Photo Courtesy of Montana FWP

Congress has appropriated \$6.5 million in State Wildlife Grants to Montana since 2001. This has been matched with at least \$1.4 million state and partner dollars.