



MITIGATION Minute

SEPTEMBER 2025

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Gallatin County Fuel Mitigation Program Builds Response Capacity

Gallatin County Emergency Management's Fuel Mitigation program, funded through FEMA, focuses on red card training and homeowner fuel reduction.

Gallatin County launched its Wildfire Mitigation Crew in 2024 with three key goals:

- Reduce wildfire risk in the county,
- Build wildfire response skills in local student firefighters, and
- Increase the county's overall wildfire response capacity.

When not working on fire incidents, members of the mitigation crew's day-to-day work focuses on fuel reduction on homeowner's properties to increase Gallatin County's fire preparedness in the Wildland Urban Interface and protect homes. Members are also red carded as wildland firefighters and can support both local and national fire response.

When the Nixon Gulch Fire ignited north of Manhattan in July, the fire was quickly contained, but the county's mitigation crew was able to step in and monitor the fire overnight, ensuring it was fully contained and posed no further risk. Because the mitigation crew was available to support and mop up the fire, local volunteer firefighters were able to return home rather than remain on scene.

The Nixon Gulch Fire response showcased exactly how the fuel mitigation program was envisioned to work: volunteer departments respond quickly to suppress the fire, and the mitigation crew provides extended support to ensure full containment and readiness for the next incident.



WEBSITE: [DES.MT.GOV](https://des.mt.gov)

City of Three Forks Flood Mitigation Project - Result of Multiple Partnerships

Three Forks, MT is located near the confluence of three major rivers, The Madison, Jefferson, and Gallatin which form the headwaters of the Missouri River. Formerly known as "Bridgetown" because of its 23 bridges within a 3-mile radius, Three Forks inherently carries significant risk for flooding.

Following new flood mapping in 2018, which painted an unfavorable future for community residences and businesses alike, the City of Three Forks sought mitigation solutions and partnerships.

Working with the MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (MT DNRC), Headwaters Economics, and Great West Engineering, the city selected a flood conveyance channel project as the preferred solution. This project was the most cost-effective solution and will provide the greatest flood risk reduction. Additionally, the channel has the smallest area impact, which equates to less environmental, permitting, and right-of-way negotiations.

The conveyance channel project will remove 946 structures from the 1% annual chance Jefferson River floodplain with eight of those structures being critical facilities. The project will also protect five properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and most residences within the City of Three Forks will be removed from the Jefferson River floodway. The projected cost savings to damaged residences if a flood were to occur totals \$60+ million in today's dollars.

The \$5.5 million dollar project required a diverse funding structure which includes private funding from Headwaters Economics, a Federal Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant, Montana State Resiliency Funding, and local funding through a Special Improvement District. The \$1.4M non-federal cost share associated with the FMA Grant was funded through Special Improvement District funding and the Montana State Resiliency Fund, managed by MT DES.

The City of Three Forks is currently finalizing the design and permits for the project while working on securing easements with two landowners. Project construction is expected to start early in 2026.

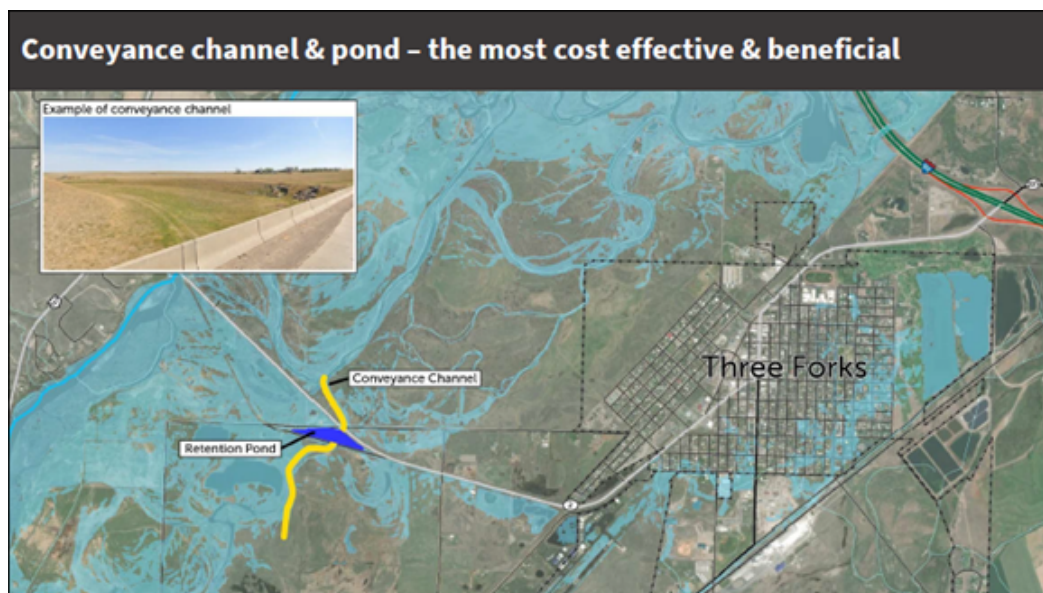


Photo courtesy of Headwaters Economics.

Mitigation Funding Opportunities for 2025

Funding Opportunity	Funds Available	Application Deadline
DR-4801	*\$380,210	Oct. 11, 2025 (1 st extension)
DR-4813	*\$424,520	September 23, 2025 (requesting extension)

**Current Estimated Amounts*

If you are interested in any open mitigation funding opportunity, please complete a NOI (Notice of Intent) located on the [Mitigation Grants page](#) on the MT DES website and submit it to the Mitigation team. Once we receive your NOI, we will reach out to you to further discuss project eligibility and the application process.

FEMA Updates National Flood Insurance Program Guidance Documents

FEMA has updated three [National Flood Insurance Program](#) guidance documents to reflect an ongoing effort to deliver clear direction in an easy-to-understand format. Updates to the program's [Flood Insurance Manual](#), [Claims Manual](#), and the [Standard Flood Insurance Policy Commentary](#) clarify existing instructions and guidance. They also provide new information to enhance program implementation.

The updated Flood Insurance Manual will apply to flood insurance policies issued on or after Oct. 1, 2025. The Claims Manual and the Standard Flood Insurance Policy Commentary will apply to flood insurance claims occurring during the 2025 hurricane season.

FEMA regularly updates National Flood Insurance Program guidance documents. The agency's goal is to make the program's products and processes easy to understand, enabling insurance professionals to provide policyholders with excellent customer experience.

These updates aim to clarify any existing guidance and offer new instructions to help improve the implementation of program interpretations and processes.

The three updated documents do not change flood insurance coverage or supersede the terms and conditions of the Standard Flood Insurance Policy. The guidance in these manuals reflects the National Flood Insurance Program's existing underwriting requirements, its current underwriting methodology, claims guidance and interpretation of the Standard Flood Insurance Policy related to claims handling. The documents are available online at [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov).

MT REGIONAL HMP ANNUAL UPDATE 2025

MT DES Mitigation is offering in-person *MT Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) Annual Update Workshop Sessions* across the state to provide technical assistance and support during this plan maintenance phase. *The Workshop Sessions will assist with:*

- Re-evaluating hazard rankings
- Updating changes in capabilities and vulnerabilities
- Review of the Mitigation Actions table
- Identifying new areas of developments

The workshop is open to all stakeholders and Emergency Management representatives from participating Tribes, Counties, Cities, and Towns. Registration will close one week before the scheduled workshop date.

For any questions, please connect with the MT DES Mitigation Team.

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CENTRAL REGION

Wed, 09/03/25: Havre, MT [302 4th Ave. Havre, MT 59501]
Wed, 09/10/25: Lewistown, MT [121 8th Ave. S., Lewistown, MT 59457]
Wed, 09/24/25: Great Falls, MT [521 1st Ave NW, Great Falls, MT 59404]
Start: 10am End: 3pm (coffee and lunch provided)



WESTERN REGION

Tue, 11/04/25: Missoula, MT [Site TBD](#)
Wed, 11/05/25: Livingston, MT [Site TBD](#)
Wed, 11/12/25: Butte, MT [Site TBD](#)
Fri, 11/14/25: Kalispell, MT [Site TBD](#)



EASTERN REGION

Wed, 01/07/26: Glasgow, MT [Site TBD](#)
Wed, 01/14/26: Glendive, MT [Site TBD](#)
Thu, 01/15/26: Miles City, MT [Site TBD](#)
Fri, 01/21/26: Billings, MT [Site TBD](#)

Workshop Registration Links

Central	Workshop Series: Central MT Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Annual Update 2025
Western	Pending link
Eastern	Pending link

State & Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Updates

State Plan Update:

- Approved and Adopted

Western Regional Plan Update:

- Base Plan: FEMA Approved
- Annexes/Addendums: Pending Municipality Adoptions

Central Regional Plan Update:

- Base Plan: FEMA Approved and Adopted
- Annexes/Addendums: Approved and Adopted

Eastern Regional Plan Update:

- Base Plan: FEMA Approved
- Annexes/Addendums: FEMA-APA: Pending Local Adoptions
- Receiving adoption resolutions

To obtain updates on HMP status, please view the [MT Regions HMP Status Tracker](#).

Training Opportunities

- **2025 DNRC Floodplain Resource Seminar.** Save the Date. November 12-14th. Virtual training event for 3-4 hours per day.
- **Floodplain Bootcamp Sessions.** Start: January 2026. More information coming soon. POC: Shylea.Wingard@mt.gov.
- **National Fire Academy – Pilot offering of Wildland Urban Interface: Fire Adapted Communities.** December 1st-5th. Must apply through the NETC Online admissions: [P0664 - Wildland Urban Interface: Fire Adapted Communities I](#).

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