



*Rafting on the Lower Blackfoot River.  
EPA funding supported restoration of the Blackfoot River watershed.*

# Rough Waters Ahead

## The Impact of the Trump Administration's EPA Budget Cuts on Montana's Waterways

*Montana's waterways supply drinking water and recreation opportunities, but mining, logging and other human activity has polluted the state's rivers and lakes. The Environmental Protection Agency has been vital to restoring Montana's waterways to health, holding polluters accountable and supporting research for stronger protections. That work is in jeopardy because the Trump administration has proposed cutting the EPA's budget by 31 percent.*

## Clean Water in Montana Requires a Strong EPA

Montana's waterways are being protected and restored to health with funding and effort from the EPA. For example, the EPA has worked to:

- **Keep pollution out of our waterways:** The Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the EPA have collaborated since 2003 to set limits on sediment pollution and restore damage caused by overgrazing in the Bitterroot watershed, where the Bitterroot River is the third-most heavily fished trout river in Montana. The watershed is on the path to recovery; for example, Meadow Creek, a stream in the Bitterroot headwaters, had so improved by 2016 that the state no longer classifies it as impaired. It now offers healthy habitat for aquatic life.
- **Hold polluters accountable:** After a century of mining and smelting, Silver Bow Creek's waters were so toxic that the creek had no fish. In 1983, the EPA designated the Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area on the upper Clark Fork as a Superfund site.

The agency has enforced and overseen the creek's cleanup by Atlantic Richfield Company and 25 other polluters, helping to return a wild and native trout fishery to Silver Bow Creek. The EPA continues to oversee the final stages of cleanup and long-term monitoring of the area.

- **Restore waterways to health:** Logging and grazing in the Swan River Valley dumped sediment into the valley's creeks, threatening native bull trout populations. **The Montana Department of Environmental Quality used EPA funding to support Swan Valley Connections' work** to educate landowners about forestry practices that counter erosion and protect bull trout, which helped to cut sediment loading by at least a third, resulting in better river conditions.
- **Conduct research and educate the public:** An EPA-funded research team at Little Big Horn College and Montana State University found metal, nitrate and bacterial contamination from polluted groundwater and streams in hundreds of Crow Reservation homes. The research team's findings **allowed members of the Crow tribe to better understand drinking water threats and obtain tools to protect public health.**

## More Restoration Work Needed

Water quality in Montana has greatly improved in recent years, but the job is not done. Thousands of miles of Montana's rivers and streams are still too polluted for fishing, swimming or drinking, and the costly cleanup of the state's 17 Superfund sites continues. Now is not the time to hobble the EPA's essential work or to cut the funding it provides for state and local efforts to protect Montana's waterways.



The EPA helps fund the Montana Department of Environmental Quality's water pollution control program, which sets pollution limits to restore waterways like those in the Bitterroot River watershed.



Bull trout are vulnerable to sediment pollution. The EPA collaborates with Montana landowners to restore creeks and protect bull trout habitat in the Swan River Watershed from the impacts of logging.

## The Proposed Budget Cuts Target EPA Grants Programs that Help States to Ensure Clean Water

Program (most recent year of funding for which data are available)	Funding in most recent year	Estimated lost funding due to proposed Trump admin. cuts
Water Pollution Control Grants (FY16)	\$2,404,000	\$721,200
Nonpoint Pollution Control Grants (FY16)	\$893,706	\$893,706
Drinking Water Protection and Enforcement Grants (FY17)	\$1,360,000	\$408,000
Superfund-Related Grants (FY17)	\$3,497,656	\$1,049,297
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,155,362</b>	<b>\$3,072,203</b>

## Full Funding for the EPA

To build on the progress of recent decades and ensure that our waterways are safe for swimming, fishing and other uses, funding for the EPA and the state and local efforts it supports should be increased, not cut. For example, aging drinking water and sewage infrastructure across the nation are in need of replacement, at a cost of \$600 billion over the next 20 years. The agency needs resources to establish pollution limits that protect human health, and to make sure that polluters abide by those pollution standards. The EPA also needs funding to continue its critical role in supporting cleanup of past pollution and restoring damaged rivers and streams so that they can provide clean water. Ensuring that people who live, work and play in Montana have continued access to clean water requires full funding for the EPA.

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