

FY2024 [THUD/EDI] Appropriations Request – City of Rock Springs, Wyoming

SECTION: 1 (ORGANIZATION INFORMATION)

Organization Name: City of Rock Springs, Wyoming

Street Address: 212 D Street

City, State, Zip Code: Rock Springs, WY 82901

Phone Number: (307) 352-1500

Website: <https://www.rswy.net/>

Type of Entity: Municipality

Cosponsoring Organizations:

SECTION: 2 (CONTACT INFORMATION)

Appropriations Point of Contact

Please note that our staff may need to contact this person outside of normal business hours.

Full Name: Paul Kauchich

Street Address: 212 D St

City, State, Zip Code: Rock Springs, WY 82901

Business Phone Number: (307) 352-1540

Cell Phone Number:

E-mail Address: paul_kauchich@rswy.net

Head of Your Organization (if different than point of contact):

Full Name: Max Mickelson (Mayor)

Street Address: 212 D St

City, State, Zip Code: Rock Springs, WY 82901

Business Phone Number: (307) 352-1510

Cell Phone Number:

E-mail Address: mayor@rswy.net

DC Based Point of Contact (if applicable)

Full Name: Clay Boothby

Organization/Firm: Merchant McIntyre Govt. Relations

Street Address: 1634 Eye Street, NW, Suite 200

City, State, Zip Code: Washington, DC 20006

Business Phone Number: (202) 595-4923

Cell Phone Number: (202) 595-4923

E-mail Address: cboothby@merhcantmcintyre.com

Press Contact (if applicable): N/A

Full Name:

Business Phone Number:

Cell Phone Number:

Email Address:

SECTION 3: REQUEST DETAILS

Short Title for Request:

Bitter Creek: Flood Control Restoration Project

Priority of this Request:

#1

Clearly state what this programmatic/language request would do in one sentence (Max 25 words):

A section of Bitter Creek will be restored to decrease flooding, provide recreational trail access, increase housing and economic growth, and restore the natural ecosystem.

Problem/Issue Statement (Max 250 words):

The flooding at Bitter Creek has historically been a problem for Rock Springs residents and businesses. The creek has been channelized and re-routed in some locations and continues to be an area that is ignored and often considered a dumping ground. Furthermore, its floods are also unpredictable and notably large and furious when they occur. Such issues have prevented the area from being embraced by the community. Due to their location within the floodplain, federal limits on property improvements restrict renovation and revitalization of this area. Through this federal investment and local funding, it will remove these areas from the floodplain, allowing many properties to be improved to provide much needed housing and economic growth.

Specifically, Bitter Creek currently causes residential neighborhoods and commercial/retail areas to be designated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood plain. This designation puts severe restrictions on development opportunities, requires property owners to pay additional, sometimes costly flood insurance premiums, and negatively affects community image. A primary purpose of the plan is to reconstruct the creek channel to contain flood events so that properties now shown in the flood plain can be removed from the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and the restrictions attached.

Request Description:

The proposed Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is located along a portion of the Bitter Creek, which exists approximately ½ mile upstream of the confluence of Sweetwater Creek and Bitter Creek. The Bitter Creek is the primary drainage that runs through the City of Rock Springs and serves the community with its population of roughly 23,000 people. The proposed project, which will involve the restoration of approximately ¼ mile of Bitter Creek, will serve multiple purposes. First, the creek channel shall undergo regrading to establish stabilized creek banks which will serve to increase the flood carrying capacity of the Bitter Creek. Secondly, pathways will be constructed adjacent to the creek which will provide recreational trail access to the public, while also providing City personnel access to the creek for sustainable maintenance. Finally, the project will serve to restore the natural ecosystem of Bitter Creek by removing invasive and noxious vegetation and establishing native and wetland vegetation to improve wetland ecology for wildlife and the community.

Phase 1 of this project was completed in December 2022 with a total project cost of \$5,477,696.40. \$3,927,136 of this funding came from the Abandoned Mine Land grant program, matched with \$1,550,560.40 from City funding sources. Phase I of this project worked to improve the intersection of Bitter Creek and Sweetwater Creek and easterly up to the bridge on the Belt Route. The City has plans for Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the Bitter Creek Restoration Project.

The Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is the second part of this multiphase plan by the City of Rock Springs to remove several hundred properties and a large portion of the City from the floodplain. Specifically, phase 2 will implement improvements from the Belt Route Bridge near Choptstix to the next bridge easterly at Dewar Drive. Many of these properties exist in lower income areas of the City. Due to their location within the floodplain, federal limits on property improvements restrict renovation and revitalization of these areas. By removing these areas from the floodplain, many properties could be improved to provide much needed housing and economic growth.

Request goals and expected outcomes:

Once fully complete, the project will include the following:

- Controlling flooding and eliminating the potential for further damage to vulnerable residential and commercial retail areas;
- Removing barriers to economic development and property improvements;
- Eliminating costly flood insurance premiums for residents;

- Creating an environmentally and aesthetically pleasing stream system throughout the City;
- Restoring the natural ecosystem of Bitter Creek by removing invasive and noxious vegetation and establishing native and wetland vegetation to improve wetland ecology for wildlife and the community.
- Improving connectivity with and enhancing the City's existing trails and parks systems; and
- Developing new pedestrian trails for recreational use.

Which appropriations bill and section do you think best suits your request?

THUD- EDI

Please list other House Members to whom you are submitting your request:

N/A

Please list any Senators to whom you are submitting your request:

N/A

What other organizations might be in favor of your request? Those that might be opposed?

Sweetwater County, City Council/Parks and Recreation, Western Wyoming Community College, Plaza Mall, Urban Renewal Agency

Businesses in Support of this Project: Autozone, Auto Spa Car Wash, Orielly Auto Parts, Big O Tires and First Choice Ford

No other organization will be opposed to this project as it is nothing but beneficial to the community and will not harm or burden any groups.

What state and local entities are supportive?

Sweetwater County, City Council/Parks and Recreation, Western Wyoming Community College, Plaza Mall, Urban Renewal Agency

Businesses in Support of this Project: Autozone, Auto Spa Car Wash, Orielly Auto Parts, Big O Tires and First Choice Ford

How does this request relate to Wyoming?

Flooding can cause significant damage to infrastructure, property, and businesses. If flooding is mitigated in Rock Springs, it can prevent or reduce the damage in the whole region, ultimately reducing the economic impact of such disasters on the state as a whole. This, in turn, can lead to savings in terms of relief and recovery efforts. Additionally, as previously mentioned, Bitter Creek flooding currently causes residential neighborhoods and commercial/retail areas to be designated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood plain. This designation puts severe restrictions on development opportunities, requires property owners to pay additional, sometimes costly flood insurance premiums, and negatively affects community image. If the creek channel is reconstructed, properties now shown in the flood plain can be removed from the Flood

Insurance Rate Map (FIRM). This will decrease the costs to homeowners in the area and allow more residents of Rock Springs to be better positioned economically. This will also allow for increased economic development and property improvements that will grow and expand the whole area, creating a better image for the region as well as increased retail activity and as a result, economic growth.

Finally, this project will improve connectivity with and enhance the City's existing trails and parks systems by adding new pedestrian trails for recreational use. Adding more trails to the park system will likely attract more tourists and can bring in more revenue for the state's tourism industry, including accommodations, restaurants, retail shops, and other businesses that cater to visitors. A thriving tourism industry can create jobs and generate economic activity, ultimately leading to a positive impact on Wyoming's economy.

Has this, or any similar request, been submitted in prior years? If so, please specify what fiscal years and to which House and Senate Offices:

N/A

Community Project Funding Request

Note: Rep. Hageman will be accepting requests only which pertain to hard infrastructure projects in the state of Wyoming. Due to member limit on Community Funded Project requests, Rep. Hageman cannot guarantee that all requests will be selected. Please note the [detailed guidance](#) and the [accounts](#) which are eligible for Community Funded Project requests. When submitting Community Funded Project requests, please include any additional information which will help Rep. Hageman when considering projects.

Agency and Account:

THUD-EDI

Description of the project:

The proposed Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is located along a portion of the Bitter Creek, which exists approximately ½ mile upstream of the confluence of Sweetwater Creek and Bitter Creek. The Bitter Creek is the primary drainage that runs through the City of Rock Springs and serves the community with its population of roughly 23,000 people. The proposed project, which will involve the restoration of approximately ¼ mile of Bitter Creek, will serve multiple purposes. First, the creek channel shall undergo regrading to establish stabilized creek banks which will serve to increase the flood carrying capacity of the Bitter Creek. Secondly, pathways will be constructed adjacent to the creek which will provide recreational trail access to the public, while also providing City personnel access to the creek for sustainable maintenance. Finally, the project will serve to restore the natural ecosystem of Bitter Creek by removing invasive and noxious vegetation and establishing native and wetland vegetation to improve wetland ecology for wildlife and the community.

Phase 1 of this project was completed in December 2022 with a total project cost of \$5,477,696.40. \$3,927,136 of this funding came from the Abandoned Mine Land grant program, matched with

\$1,550,560.40 from City funding sources. Phase I of this project worked to improve the intersection of Bitter Creek and Sweetwater Creek and easterly up to the bridge on the Belt Route.

The Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is the second part of this multiphase plan by the City of Rock Springs to remove several hundred properties and a large portion of the City from the floodplain. Specifically, phase 2 will implement improvements from the Belt Route Bridge near Choptstix to the next bridge easterly at Dewar Drive. Many of these properties exist in lower income areas of the City. Due to their location within the floodplain, federal limits on property improvements restrict renovation and revitalization of these areas. By removing these areas from the floodplain, many properties could be improved to provide much needed housing and economic growth.

Funding level request:

Funding Request: \$3,500,000.00

Total Project Cost: \$6,496,735.22

Project's federal nexus:

According to the Fiscal Year 2023 guidance, EDI community project funding may be used for economic and community development activities, including land or site acquisition, demolition or rehabilitation of housing or facilities, construction and capital improvements of public facilities (including water and sewer facilities), and public services. This project will make economic development and property improvements to restore public land that will in turn, rehabilitate housing and community facilities down the line.

In Fiscal Year 2023, multiple projects with similar purposes were funded through the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development – Economic Development Initiative Subcommittee. For example, in Illinois, 750k was given to the 'Lake Bluff Downtown Flooding Mitigation Project.' Additionally, \$2 million was invested in the 'Eatontown Community Flood Mitigation Project' in New Jersey. Two \$4 million flood mitigation projects, 'Jose Marti Park and Neighborhood Flood Mitigation' and '8th Street Neighborhood Flood Mitigation', were also funded in Miami, Florida.

Information about the proposed recipient of the funding:

Rock Springs is a city of 23K in Sweetwater County, Wyoming. Rock Springs is the 5th most populated municipality in Wyoming. The primary industry in Rock Springs is oil and gas. Major pieces of infrastructure include I-80, US-30, US-191, and the Rock Springs-Sweetwater County Airport. Rock Springs is home to Western Wyoming Community College, the Sweetwater County Events Complex, and "Wyoming's Big Show." Rock Springs is known as the "Home of 56 Nationalities" due to a historical influx of immigrants working in mines and on railroads. Every year, the City hosts an International Day festival.

Does this project have community support which can be demonstrated with evidence?

Yes. This project has a great deal of community support. This project has been in development for over 15 years. In 2007, a steering committee was formed to plan the phases, scope of work, and justification for the project. Public involvement in the project has been strong since then. Letters of support are forthcoming.

Community Project Funding prompts in the database for EDI:

Request

Project Title: Bitter Creek Flood Control Restoration Project

Project Description:

The proposed Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is located along a portion of the Bitter Creek, which exists approximately ½ mile upstream of the confluence of Sweetwater Creek and Bitter Creek. The Bitter Creek is the primary drainage that runs through the City of Rock Springs and serves the community with its population of roughly 23,000 people. The proposed project, which will involve the restoration of approximately ¼ mile of Bitter Creek, will serve multiple purposes. First, the creek channel shall undergo regrading to establish stabilized creek banks which will serve to increase the flood carrying capacity of the Bitter Creek. Secondly, pathways will be constructed adjacent to the creek which will provide recreational trail access to the public, while also providing City personnel access to the creek for sustainable maintenance. Finally, the project will serve to restore the natural ecosystem of Bitter Creek by removing invasive and noxious vegetation and establishing native and wetland vegetation to improve wetland ecology for wildlife and the community.

The Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is part of a multiphase plan by the City of Rock Springs to remove several hundred properties and a large portion of the City from the floodplain. Many of these properties exist in lower income areas of the City. Due to their location within the floodplain, federal limits on property improvements restrict renovation and revitalization of these areas. By removing these areas from the floodplain, many properties could be improved to provide much needed housing and economic growth.

Estimated Start Date: June 2024

Estimated End Date: December 2024

Request Information

Amount Requested for FY24: \$3,500,000

Total Project Cost: \$6,496,735.22

FY24 President's Budget Request Amount: N/A

FY23 Enacted Amount: N/A

Can the project obligate all funds within 12 months after enactment?

Yes

Request submitted to another subcommittee this fiscal year?

No

Project/Recipient Information

Is the funding requested by a governmental or non-profit organization?

Yes, The City of Rock Springs

Recipient Point of Contact: Paul Kauchich

Recipient Phone Number: (307) 352-1540

Recipient Email Address: paul_kauchich@rswy.net

In which congressional district is the recipient located?

Wyoming's At-Large District

Recipient Legal Name: The City of Rock Springs, Wyoming

Recipient Address: 212 D St, Rock Springs, WY 82901

Is project address same as recipient address? If no, address of project?

Disclosure and Transparency

Project Information URL: <https://www.rswy.net/department/division.php?structureid=30>

Request Explanation (purpose and why it is a valuable use of taxpayer funds):

The purpose of this project is to decrease flooding, provide recreational trail access, increase sustainable Maintenance, and restore the natural ecosystem. The proposed project will fund an essential phase of the overall Bitter Creek Restoration Project. This project is a valuable use of taxpayer funds because it is critical for the economic development and the environmental restoration of the City of Rock Springs. Once fully complete, the project will include the following: Controlling flooding and eliminating the potential for further damage to vulnerable residential and commercial retail areas; Removing barriers to economic development and property improvements; Eliminating costly flood insurance premiums for residents; Creating an environmentally and aesthetically pleasing stream system throughout the City; Restoring the natural ecosystem of Bitter Creek by removing invasive and noxious vegetation and establishing native and wetland vegetation to improve wetland ecology for wildlife and the community; Improving connectivity with and enhancing the City's existing trails and parks systems; and Developing new pedestrian trails for recreational use.

Supplemental Questions

What are the benefits of this project and why is it a priority?

The Bitter Creek Restoration Project Phase 2 is a priority for the City because of the disastrous effects flooding has had on the community, both physically and economically. The flooding at Bitter Creek has historically been a problem for Rock Springs residents. Flooding can cause significant damage to infrastructure, property, and businesses. The creek has been channelized and re-routed in some locations and continues to be an area that is ignored and often considered a dumping ground. Furthermore, its floods are also unpredictable and notably large and furious when they occur. Such issues have prevented the area from being embraced by the community. As well, Bitter Creek currently causes residential neighborhoods and commercial/retail areas to be designated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood plain. This designation puts severe restrictions on development opportunities, requires property owners to pay additional, sometimes costly flood insurance premiums, and negatively affects community image.

The community recognizes the direct economic development benefits of incorporating Bitter Creek into the community and making it an asset and focus point. The plan will reconstruct the creek channel to contain flood events so that properties now shown in the flood plain can be removed from the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and the restrictions attached. This will decrease the costs to homeowners in the area and allow more residents of Rock Springs to be better positioned economically. This will also allow for increased economic development and property improvements that will grow and expand the whole area, creating a better image for the region as well as increased retail activity and as a result, economic growth.

If flooding is mitigated in Rock Springs, it can prevent or reduce the damage in the whole region, ultimately reducing the economic impact of such disasters on the state as a whole. This, in turn, can lead to savings in terms of relief and recovery efforts. The project will also have environmental benefits, as it will serve to restore the natural ecosystem of Bitter Creek by removing invasive and noxious vegetation and establishing native and wetland vegetation to improve wetland ecology for wildlife and the community.

Lastly, the benefits of this project include improved connectivity. It will enhance the City's existing trails and parks systems by adding new pedestrian trails for recreational use. Adding more trails to the park system will likely attract more tourists and can bring in more revenue for the state's tourism industry, including accommodations, restaurants, retail shops, and other businesses that cater to visitors. This is a priority for the City, as a thriving tourism industry can create jobs and generate economic activity, ultimately leading to a positive impact on Wyoming's economy.

Who are the community partners participating in this project? Have local community development organizations with prior experience with HUD programs been consulted?

This project has a great deal of community support. This project has been in development for over 15 years. In 2007, a steering committee was formed to plan the phases, scope of work, and justification for the project. Public involvement in the project has been strong since then. Letters of support are forthcoming.

Institutions/Organizations in Support of this Project: Sweetwater County, City Council/Parks and Recreation, Western Wyoming Community College, Plaza Mall, Urban Renewal Agency

Businesses in Support of this Project: Autozone, Auto Spa Car Wash, Orielly Auto Parts, Big O Tires and First Choice Ford

Has the request been submitted to another Subcommittee or Committee this fiscal year? If yes, which one(s)?

No

Is this project consistent with the primary objective of the community development program? Please describe who the project is intended to benefit.

According to the Fiscal Year 2023 guidance, EDI community project funding may be used for economic and community development activities, including land or site acquisition, demolition or rehabilitation of housing or facilities, construction and capital improvements of public facilities (including water and sewer facilities), and public services. This project will make economic development and property improvements to restore public land that will in turn, rehabilitate housing and community facilities down the line.

The project will directly benefit the citizens currently living in the flood plain by decreasing the costs to homeowners and creating new opportunities for property improvements and renovation. It will also benefit the entire city of Rock Springs through economic growth, community connectivity, and environmental restoration.