

Bitterroot National Forest Annual Report 2017



Project Title: Watershed Improvement through Sediment Reduction in Upper Sleeping Child Creek	
Organization: Bitter Root Water Forum	
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Bitter Root Water Forum efforts in 2017 focused on monitoring, modeling, and education.

In June, Heather Barber gave a presentation on the Water Forum's partnership role in the Bitterroot National Forest's Darby Lumber Lands project as part of the GMR meeting organized by Cole Mayn. Heather then accompanied BNF representatives on a tour of the project area. The Water Forum was honored to receive an "Outstanding Partnership Award" from Forest Supervisor, Julie King (pictured below).



With the assistance of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Bitterroot National Forest (BNF) Hydrology Technician, Marilyn Wildey, the Water Forum developed a Monitoring Report for this project (see Attachment A). This Monitoring Report addresses the results of modelling erosion along forest roads, estimated stream crossing fill volume, and photo points for this project. These parameters and methods were outlined in a Sampling Analysis Plan that the Water Forum created with the assistance of DEQ.

Using the Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP): Road Batch Model and stream crossing fill estimates it was determined that this project reduced the sediment entering Sleeping Child and Rye Creeks by 172.55 tons annually, roughly 9 dump truck loads of sediment per year. Photo point monitoring showed that the decommissioned roads are recovering well and vegetation is establishing.

As a way to expand project reach and educate citizens about this and other areas of concern in the watershed, the Water Forum completed two publications, an Annual Report and Fall Newsletter, which were mailed to 700 community members. These publications featured information on the *Watershed Improvement through Sediment Reduction in Upper Sleeping Child Creek & Rye Creek* project, non-point source pollution, and the work of the Water Forum. The modeling results allowed us to demonstrate the impact of this project to citizens in terms that are easy to understand (ie. 9 dump truck loads of sediment per year). Drone footage and images captured this year have been used to update the Water Forum's outreach video to highlight the effectiveness of this and other restoration projects.

On several occasions throughout the year, Heather and Katie Vennie, Water Forum Program Coordinator, met with Cole Mayn to discuss possibilities for additional work to be completed as part of the Stewardship Agreement. The Water Forum hopes to engage in additional road decommissioning work to benefit priority watersheds. It had been determined that no arrangement will be made until the Draft EA of Darby Lumber Lands Phase 2 is made public and discussion can be had as to which portions of the project are most applicable to advancing the mission of the Water Forum.