

Fleshman Creek project gets \$98K boost from FWP

By Chronicle Staff

Park County this week received a \$98,100 grant from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to help pay for restoration work along Fleshman Creek.

Fleshman Creek runs through Livingston and is a major spawning tributary for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout.

The money will be combined with other state and federal money already dedicated to the \$3 million Fleshman Creek Urban Restoration Project.

The project's goal is to create a community resource, create and protect habitat, improve water quality and reduce the creek's tendency to flood surrounding neighborhoods by restoring it to a more natural state, according to a Montana Department of Natural

Resources and Conservation report.

To accomplish that, a number of partners are working together to replace and align culverts and remove the "many restrictions on the flow of Fleshman Creek through Livingston, from Sacajawea Park to Mayor's Landing," according to the local Trout Unlimited chapter. Other work includes restoring creek beds and reintroducing native plants.

Livingston and Park County schools have also been involved in the work.

"The well-situated outdoor learning environment offered in and around Fleshman Creek correlates well with Livingston School District educational lessons and curriculum goals," according to the application for the FWP grant. "Just outside the doors of the schools, teachers and students have conducted several studies and performed volunteer works" along the creek, including water quality,

macro-invertebrate and plant research.

A citizens' panel reviewed the grant application and recommended the project be funded. The Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission then approved the funding March 10.

The grant falls under FWP's Future Fisheries Improvement Program, a 15-year effort to "create and implement a statewide voluntary program that promotes fishery habitats and spawning areas" in the state's rivers, lakes and streams, ultimately enhancing natural reproduction.

Other funding, in-kind equipment and labor donations for the creek project have come from: U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Park County Road Department and Joe Brooks Trout Unlimited Chapter #25.