

Memorandum of Understanding

between

USDA- Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

and

Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

I. Background

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners, American Indian Tribes, municipalities, counties, state, and federal agencies to conserve soil, water, air, plants, animals, energy, and human resources.

The DEQ's mission is to protect, sustain, and improve Montana's clean and healthful environment to benefit present and future generations. To achieve this mission, DEQ upholds state statutes, regulations, and legal policies that are applicable to the effort.

II. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to formalize the collaboration between NRCS and DEQ in the protection and enhancement of water resources in Montana.

III. MOU Term

This MOU Agreement will remain in effect until cancelled or terminated by either party.

IV. USDA- NRCS Responsibilities

NRCS will undertake the following activities:

1. NRCS will offer the DEQ an opportunity to participate in the development of internal planning policy, practice standards, and technical references related to animal feeding operations prior to implementation and/or formal publication.
2. NRCS will participate in the development of DEQ technical standards, technical references, and administrative rules related to animal feeding operations prior to implementation and/or formal publication.
3. NRCS will designate a collaborative process to nominate and select watersheds for water quality initiatives using the Water Activities Work Group (WAWG) to facilitate dialogue and engagement with the DEQ. WAWG is organized under the Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC) and also functions as the Water

Resources committee for the NRCS State Technical Committee. The designated process is presented in Figure 1.

4. NRCS will actively participate on DEQ's Agency Review Panel for 319 Grants as well as the WAWG to review and comment on pre-proposals for 319 program funding.

V. Montana DEQ Responsibilities

Montana DEQ will undertake the following activities:

1. DEQ will offer the NRCS an opportunity to participate in the development of technical standards, technical references, and administrative rules related to animal feeding operations prior to implementation and/or formal publication.
2. DEQ will participate in the development of NRCS internal planning policy, practice standards, or other technical references related to animal feeding operations prior to implementation and/or formal publication.
3. DEQ will participate in a collaborative process to nominate and select watersheds for NRCS water quality initiatives using the Water Activities Work Group (WAWG) and the NRCS State Technical Committee to facilitate dialogue and engagement with the NRCS. The designated NRCS process is presented in Figure 1.
4. DEQ will offer NRCS the opportunity to actively participate on the Agency Review Panel for 319 Grants to review and comment on pre-proposals for 319 program funding.

VI. Both Parties Agree to the Following Provisions

1. NRCS and DEQ will participate in the AFO/CAFO Partnership Work Group.
2. NRCS and DEQ leadership will meet on an annual basis to advance new ideas and opportunities to collaborate on the protection and enhancement of water resources.

VII. Funding

1. No obligation or transfer of Federal or State funds is associated with this MOU.

VIII. Modification and Termination

1. This agreement may be cancelled or terminated without cause by either party by giving (60) calendar days advance written notice to the other party. Such notification shall state the effective date of termination or cancellation.
2. Any and all amendments to this agreement must be made in writing and must be agreed to and executed by the parties before becoming effective.

IX. Effective Date and Signature

This MOU shall be effective upon the signature of authorized officials from the NRCS and DEQ. It shall be in full force until such time as it is terminated one party, or modified by the signature of both parties.

Signatures and dates



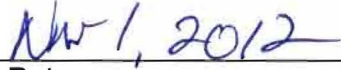
JOYCE SWARTZENDRUBER



RICHARD OPPEN

NRCS State Conservationist

DEQ Director



Date



Date



Figure 1. Schematic process to nominate and select watersheds for NRCS water quality funding using the WAWG to facilitate dialogue and engagement.

Note: WAWG – Water Activities Work Group is organized under the Montana Watershed Coordination Council. Membership includes agencies, watershed groups, and interested professionals. NRCS Assistant State Conservationist (Programs) administers financial assistance programs in Montana.