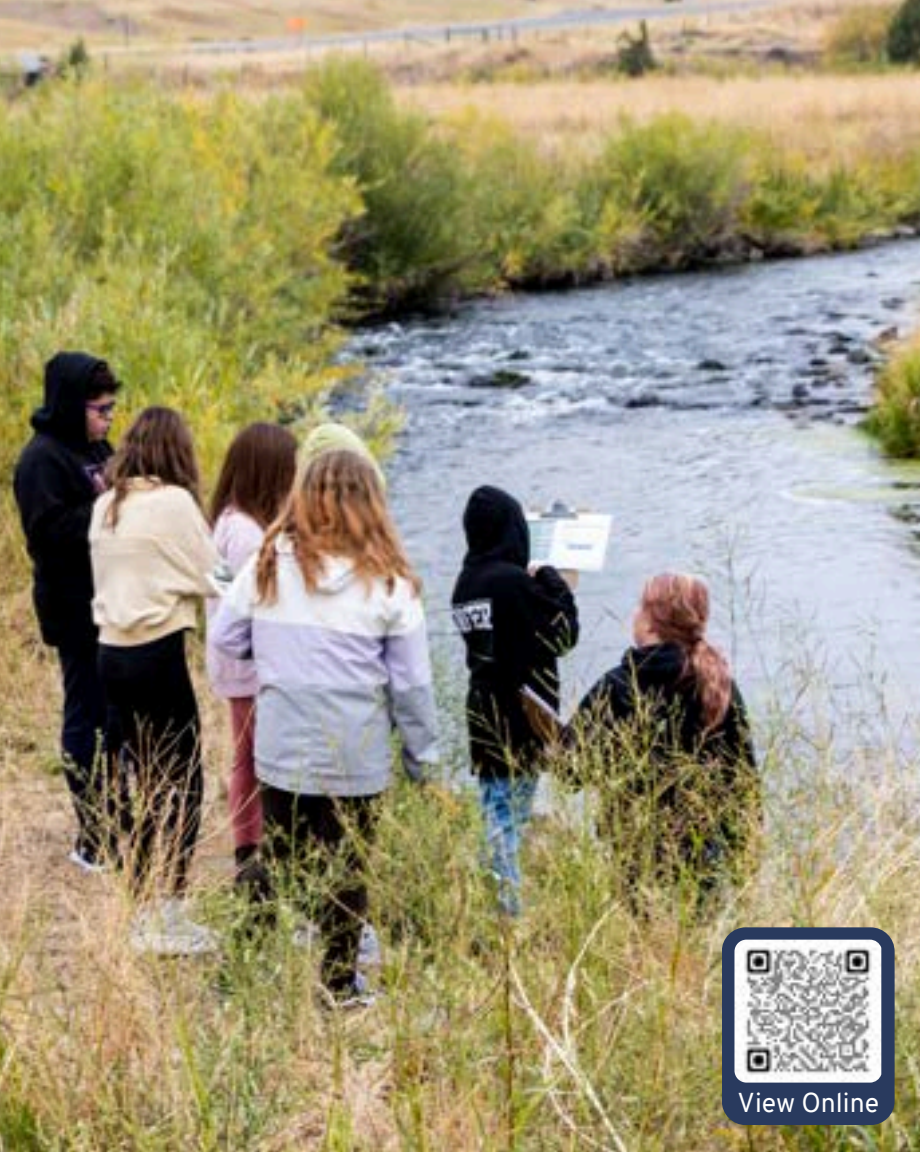




RIPPLE  
THE CENTER FOR EDUCATION & ECOSYSTEM STUDIES

2025

*Annual Report*



View Online

## OUR MISSION

Expanding environmental literacy and stewardship through field-based science and research experiences.

## OUR VISION

We envision a future filled with scientifically literate, responsible, environmental stewards empowered to create a more resilient Montana.

## OUR VALUES:



### Stewardship

We exist to ensure sustainable futures.



### Trust

We communicate factual information that the public can trust.



### Science

We encourage curiosity in ourselves and others through scientific inquiry.



### Education

We promote scientific literacy through place-based experiential learning.



### Inclusion

We strive to provide accessible science for all.



# A Letter from the Team

2025 was our first full year as Ripple: The Center for Education and Ecosystem Studies, and not the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP). CFWEP now exists under the broader umbrella of Ripple's programming. This first year has already started to open new doors and new opportunities to create ripples of change in the communities we serve. Through it all,

our core mission remains strongly rooted in the story of the Clark Fork Watershed. During 2025, we strengthened this mission by working closely with affiliate faculty, collaborating with Montana Tech's departments and centers, and private foundations. 2025 was also a year of development. We made large strides on many ambitious projects throughout the year. To highlight a few:

- We finalized and launched a Low-Tech, Process Based Restoration (LTPBR) course for landowners. The first cohort of landowners have completed the course, several of which moved to permit and begin their own restoration projects.
- We led the development of an extensive, cross-watershed curriculum for the ongoing EcosySTEM project. This curriculum will go on to help teachers, students, community members, and fellow professionals understand the nuances between ecosystems and communities across Montana.
- We held our first annual Stormwater Festival to complement our annual Clean-Up Blacktail Stream days. This festival served to inspire stewardship and brighter futures by educating over 250 Butte students on stormwater, civil/environmental engineering, and environmental science.

We extend a special thank you to all of our partners - past, present, and future. You have helped drive our progress each and every year.

In 2025, Ripple said farewell to our Executive Director, Rayelynn Brandl. Rayelynn will now serve as the Executive Director of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts. We also said farewell to our Director of Program Services and Evaluation, Chris Pavlovich. Chris will now serve as a teacher coach for Kamehameha Schools in Hawaii. We are incredibly happy we had the good fortune to work with both Rayelynn and Chris, and we're excited to see the new heights they reach in the next stages of their careers. Dr. Robert Pal will serve as Ripple's Interim Director until an official replacement is selected.

In 2026, Ripple's team will be working relentlessly to build on 2025's accomplishments. This means anything from new LTPBR projects that engage students to more cross watershed collaborations. Finally, we look to you. If you believe in Ripple's mission to further scientific literacy and you want to help build a will for passionate, environmental stewardship in Montana's Youth, please consider making a donation. Every partnership and donation will be key to a sustainable future for Ripple's work. **Here's to 2026. We thank you for your on-going support!**

Sincerely,

*Robert, Tammy, Dalit, Logan, & Sam*

# Achievements

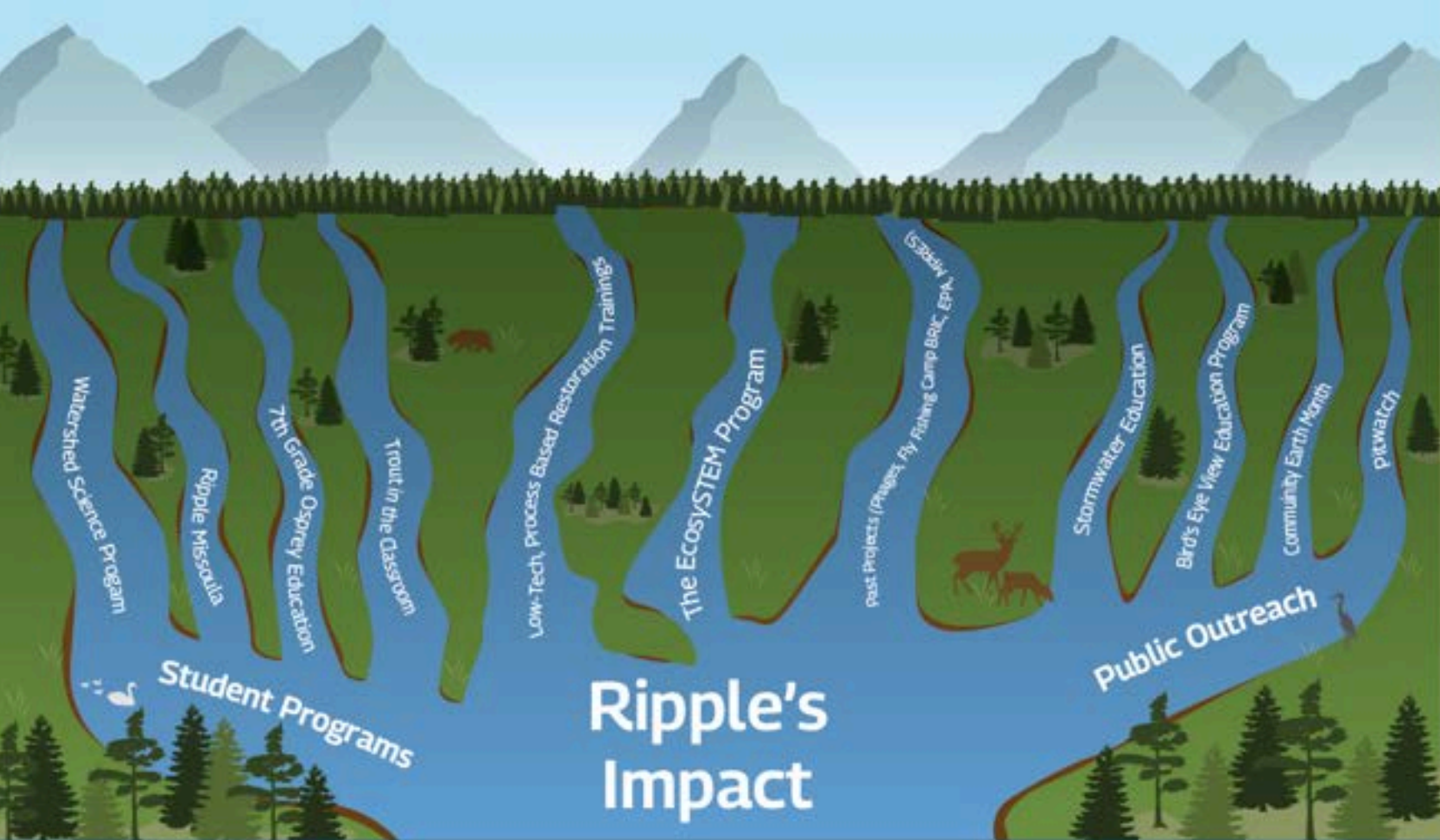
116% Increase  
in New  
Individual &  
Business  
Donors

Hosted  
Innagural  
Stormwater  
Festival in  
Father  
Sheehan  
Park

Decreased  
Overall  
Spending in  
2025 by  
26% vs 2024

Added 24  
New In-Kind  
Donors -  
Raising  
Over  
\$17,000

Submitted  
8 New  
Contracts &  
Grants



# Ripple's Impact

Our programs reach students, teachers, and community members. Each program acts as a tributary, joining together to create a wider impact.

# 2025 by the numbers

7th Grade Osprey Pilot Program

**546**

Students Taught

Restoration Tours

**274**

People

**10**

Different Groups

Watershed Science Education Interns

**7**

University of Montana Students

Watershed Science Program

**1,142**

Students Taught in

**33**

Clark Fork Classrooms

Trout in the Classroom

**238**

Students Taught in

**14**

Rural Classrooms

Conservation & Public Outreach

**347**

Community Members Engaged



Earth Month &  
CUBS Week

**819**

Students & Community  
Members Involved

Low-Tech Process Based  
Restoration

**7**

Landowners Engaged

PHAGES

**5**

Teachers Trained

**545**

Students Reached

Greater Yellowstone  
EcosySTEM Project

**8**

Teachers Engaged

**983**

Students Reached

Bird's-Eye View  
Education Program

**277**

Community Members  
Engaged

Learn more about our programs at [ripplemt.org](http://ripplemt.org)



# 2025 Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to helping our programs run smoothly and effectively. Thank you to everyone who has given their time to Ripple this year:

Aidan Anderson • Ellen Belford • Whitney Blacklock • Judy Boyle • Sarah Busmire • Ethan Butler • Vanessa Chapman • Terri Daily • Matt Donaldson • Christina Eggensperger • Colleen Fink • Lillian Gordon • Mya Green • Joe Griffin • Geffen Guscio • Zach Heffernan • Mason Hilkemann • Gabrielle Jawer • Therese Kuntz • Lexi Leffler • Carl Leitert • Arianna Line • Dylan Livingston • Jacqueline Marez • Mark Mariano • Bradie Matt • Keefer McGree • Sara McKitrick • Alexandria Michalsky • Sarah Mootry • Grace Mulholland • Stephanie Murphy • Evan Norman • Jen Norman • Ellie Ross • Kim Snodgrass • Ashely Stepniak • Megan Terry • Shayla Utzinger • Annika Wickstrom • Logan Wray

# 2025 Teacher Awards & Accolades

Ripple works with some of the leading teachers in the state. One of those teachers has been recognized for their outstanding work this year! Congratulations to:

*Dr. Linda Rost - 2025 Montana Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Finalist*



# STRATEGIC GOALS

Looking to the future, Ripple is preparing for more growth. We made good progress on the strategic goals we set for ourselves in 2025. These goals will guide our efforts through 2026 and 2027 as we bring in new projects and expand existing programs.



Secure  
sustainable  
& diverse  
funding



Attract,  
train, &  
retain top  
talent



Extend  
Partnerships  
and Program  
Outreach



Build and  
Broaden  
Research  
Activities

# Funding Structure



Ripple's funding transition plan rolled out in 2022. Our goal is to balance funding sources from four areas: 25% from NRD, 25% from state and federal grants; 25% from small contracts and fee for service programming; and 25% from corporate and individual sponsors. Since the inception of this plan in 2022, we have made significant strides in these areas. For 2025, we decreased overall spending from NRD, and contract and fee-for-service programming remained steady at \$180,633, or approximately 72% of the \$250,000 target. Our state and federal grant funding declined in 2025 due to federal grant renewals and new proposals

being halted amid government changes. Individual and corporate donors are up by 116% from 2024. The change in this area represents a strategy change taken by the team to request larger donations from foundations rather than small, one-time requests.

As federal funding prospects for 2026 appear to continue to shift, we are adjusting our funding plans accordingly. We continue to pursue private foundations that align with our work while also exploring additional funding opportunities. We are collaborating with state government to assess whether a viable path exists for direct funding for Ripple beyond the NRD settlement dollars, and we are working closely with Montana Tech to align with their new strategic plan. Our team will continue to need your support this year, but we are determined to provide excellent service for Montana's students. Thank you to all of our donors who have supported us in 2025. If it is within your means, please consider us for your giving in 2026. To make a donation or share other ideas with us regarding future projects, please reach out via our website at [ripplemt.org](http://ripplemt.org).

# 2025 Donors

Our work is possible because of the generosity of our donors. We are grateful to everyone who financially contributed to Ripple this year.

## Cash Donors

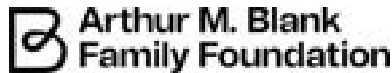
\$1000+ Clearwater Credit Union, Colleen Elliott & Chris Gammons, Joe Griffin & Sherry Vogel, Bill & Sidni Markovich, Sara Rouse, Water & Environmental Technologies, Yellowstone Bighorn Research Association

\$500-\$999 LeAnn Adams, Eddie Amberg, Rayelynn Brandl & Jim Holodnick, Tammy Gordon, Kiwanis Club of Missoula Sentinel, Park County Community Foundation

\$250-\$499 Rhonda Coguill, Les & Stephanie Cook, Joybulation LLC, Linda Moore, Doug & Patti Neal, Justin Ringsak, Rachel Robinson, Josh Vincent, Cass Weber, Toni Woods

\$100-\$249 Lance Allen, Brad & Francene Archibald, Janice Basso, Judy Boyle, Bill & Susan Callaghan, Tim & Carleen Cassidy, Padraig Cunneen, Rick & Kris Douglass, Rachel Dupree, Steve Gammon, Barbara Greogvich, Sarah Hamblock, Fred & Bev Hartline, Nestor Hill, Mark & Jennifer Hislop, Misty Jonas, Mount Ellis School, Stephanie Kazmierczak, Carrie Keane, Danna Kindt, Julie Kling, Samuel Klusmeyer, Kathleen Luce, Cody Moore, Shannon Moyle, Chelsea O'Connell, Annette Rinehart, Dale Sexton, Hannah Telling, Phil Telling

## 2025 Funders



## In-Kind Donors

\$1000+ Butte Auto, Main Street Uptown Butte, Pintler's Portal Hostel, Washoe Park Trout Hatchery

\$500-\$999 Bids with Hats, Fairmont Hot Springs, Old Works Golf Course, University of Montana Grizzly Athletics

\$250-\$499 Adventure Montana, Butte-Silver Bow Civic Center, Forge Hotel & Barclay II, Headframe Sprints & Manufacturing, David Hutchins, Sharon Leigh & Richard Miles, MT Department of Transportation, Montana Learning Center, Pizza Ranch, University of Montana Bird Ecology Lab, Water & Environmental Technologies, Work Your Pack

\$100-\$249 Anaconda ACE Hardware, Anaconda Outdoors, APOC World, Beautiful Life-Anaconda, Bedrock Sandals, Rayelynn Brandl & Jim Holodnick, Covellite Theater, Derailed Bike Shop, Good Food Store, Highland View Golf Course, Hungry Hill Art Center, Kayla Lappin, M&M Cafe, Missoula Urban Demonstration Project, Tom Mocilac, Montana Natural History Center, Montana Therapeutic, National Wildlife Federation, onX, Orangetheory Fitness, Rib & Chop House, Roxy Theater, Runners Edge, Monica Schwemin, Science Mine, Shawn O'Donnell's, Taco Del Sol & Pita Pit, Woods' Rose Wellness Center

## Executive Leadership Team

Ripple's Executive Leadership Team, a volunteer committee of community leaders dedicated to helping us expand our funding sources.

Dr. Tim Elgren - *Montana Tech Provost*

Dr. Steve Gammon - *Montana Tech (retired)*

Brad Archibald - *Pioneer Technical Services*

Maggie Davis-Welch - *Butte Broadcasting, Inc.*

Rick Edwards - *NorthWestern Energy*

Elizabeth Erickson - *Water and Environmental Technologies*

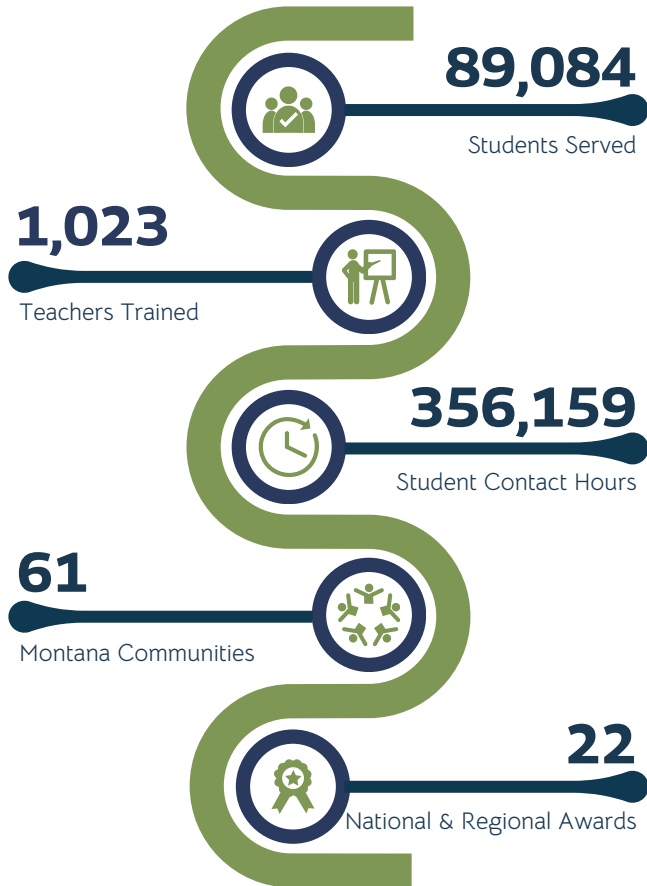
Jeremy Fleege - *Montana Resources*

Sidni Markovich - *Markovich Inc.*

Matt Vincent - *Rampart Solutions*

# TOTAL SERVED SINCE 2005

For All Ripple Direct Programming



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Butte, Montana 59701

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## Staff

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Ripple's work is made possible by...

