

## **RICK HUBBARD SARGENT INNOVATION AWARD DESIGNEE**

2022

Trout Unlimited — Bozeman

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The third Rick Hubbard Sargent Innovation Award was made to Trout Unlimited (Bozeman, Montana) for their innovative work to create a functional water exchange (Water Bank) to serve the Gallatin watershed that balances emerging water needs with increasing streamflows while preserving the areas agricultural heritage.

In the Gallatin Basin, water supplies are limited, over-appropriated, and stretched thin. New water permits are prohibited in the Gallatin, encouraging developers to use permit-exempt wells as a water supply, which further saps groundwater resources and intercepts already limited streamflows. Though agricultural lands are being developed at a rapid pace, historic water rights are being hoarded against uncertainties, rather than transferred to new users — a situation know as “buy and dry.” Meanwhile, administration of water rights in Montana is extremely complex, expensive, and unpredictable, which further discourages transfers of water rights.

The water bank — The Gallatin Water Trust — will be an independent, non-profit venture with a working board that will: build a water right portfolio through purchases and donations, provide a forum for exchanging water rights in a manner that balances ecological, agricultural and municipal water demands with the goal of ultimately securing more water for streams, wetlands, and the wildlife that depends on clean, cold water.

Trout Unlimited — Bozeman received \$5,000 as a contribution towards the formation of The Gallatin Water Trust.