

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND RECREATION PROJECT
FY2026 GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

Project Name: Fort Benton Canoe Launch Levy Trail

Reservoir or River Segment: Fort Benton Canoe Launch County(ies) Chouteau

Site Name (or project location): Fort Benton MT Canoe launch extension to River Street

Applicant Name: Jenice Fugere

Position and Agency: Treasurer – Fort Benton Trails Committee

Telephone: (406) 855-7675

Email: Jfugere54@gmail.com

All projects are required to have a Project Sponsor to be considered for funding by the River Fund. Project sponsors serve as active members of Missouri-Madison Regional Working Groups and will consult with applicants on projects. Sponsorship denotes that the proposed project meets the basic criteria for consideration (below). A project that does not meet the basic criteria or does not have a project sponsor will not be scored by the Regional Working Group.

Project Sponsor Name: Bob Pasha, Clay Riehl, Rick Darlington - Chouteau County Commissioners

Position and Agency: Chouteau County Commissioners

Telephone: (406) 622-3631

Email: _____

The Basic Project Criteria below must be met for a project to be considered for funding:

1. The project is consistent with the FERC Project 2188 License.
2. The project occurs in the Missouri-Madison Project Area.
3. The project must be consistent with or support management plans in the Project Area
4. The project provides a public recreation benefit.

Refer to the Grant Application Instructions for further clarification on these criteria.

Awarded River Fund grant funds or NorthWestern Energy matching funds may be used for the purchase of materials, supplies, and equipment, or to pay contractor services or other non-agency project components. Project funds may not be used to pay agency or applicant overhead expenses, such as agency staffing costs for design and engineering, project management, or administrative expenses. Funds may be used to pay costs for contracted design and engineering, as appropriate. Accounting of project expenses must be included in status reports provided for the annual River Fund Board meeting.

Requests for review of draft applications must be submitted two weeks prior to the submission deadline.

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Project Cost Breakdown and Financial Request:

Complete the financial section below by providing total project cost (to the nearest dollar), contributions by applicant and cooperators, request for NorthWestern Energy match of agency funds (see detailed instructions), and River Fund Grant request. Document in-kind contributions by public agencies for determination of NorthWestern Energy match request. A description of funding sources and in-kind contributions should be included in the Project Description.

	<u>Nearest Whole Dollar</u>	
Total project cost:	\$76,282	
Applicant Contributions – cash	\$1,000	
Applicant Contributions – value of in-kind:	\$900	
Other Contributions – Please list by source:		
Destination Fort Benton	\$15,000	
Lippard Clawiter	\$500	
	\$	
	\$	Percentage of Total Project Cost:
Total Applicant and Other Contributions:	\$17,400	23%
NorthWestern Energy Match Request:	\$3,750	5%
River Fund Grant Request:	\$55,132	72%
Proposed Project Implementation Period:	1 year	

1. Has this project been previously submitted for funding consideration by the River Fund Board, either as a separate project or part of another project? Yes X No

If yes, please identify which years the application was submitted and, if the project was previously funded, list the amount funded by year.

2. **Project Description:** Provide a description of the proposed project. Be sure to include specific project elements that are planned, and any associated cost detail.

Fort Benton currently has a levee trail that extends from the Fort Benton Motorboat ramp, past the Grand Union, under the 13th Street bridge, down to the BLM Interpretive Center. The Fort Benton Trail committee would like to extend this levee trail from the Interpretive Center to the Fort Benton Canoe Camp. This would enable campers easy walking/biking access to downtown Fort Benton as well as provide the community with a longer trail with beautiful riverside views. Currently, there is no direct path, and visitors have expressed a desire for clear directions to downtown.

The portion of the path from the Interpretive Center to the Fairgrounds will necessitate walking along the street as the owners of the property along the river expressed a strong desire to Not have people walk behind their houses along the river. Our plan is to provide signage on the street for this portion to direct visitors. It will also be beneficial to provide some dusk to dawn solar lighting that is motion activated for brightness. This lighting would preserve and hold power until dawn and minimize bright lights in the residential area. These lights will be needed from the campground all the way to the Interpretive Center as this area has little to no lighting.

The focus of the trail committee would be to develop a paved path (.25 Miles) from where River Street meets edge of the fairgrounds, to follow along the river to the fence at the campgrounds. The Chouteau County Fairboard supports the development of this trail as it will enhance their present site and proposed expansion of the campground. The Fairboard has assisted the Trail Committee in marking and mowing the proposed path from River Street to the Campground. We have consulted with Fish Wildlife and Parks and received their requirements and approval for the Project.

In addition, it would be beneficial to provide some dusk to dawn solar lighting (motion sensor) and some wayfinding signage from the interpretive center, by the street in the residential area, and along the river to the Boat launch Campground at the Fairgrounds.

A map of the proposed project is attached. The Outline in red is the section the Trail Committee would like to gravel and pave.

3. **Project Phasing:** Briefly discuss whether the project could be phased over more than one year or construction season.

It would be optimal to develop this trail extension in one year. The contractors have confirmed that it is possible to develop a gravel trail the first year and pave the trail the next. Thus having a paved trail in two years. It would be optimal to add the lighting and signage the first year as this area has little to no lighting.

4. **Cultural Resource Management:** Cultural Resource Management (CRM) requirements for any activity related to this Project must be completed and documented to NorthWestern Energy as a condition of awarded River Fund grant funds or NorthWestern Energy matching funds. Grant and matching funds may not be used for any land-disturbing activity, or the modification, renovation, or removal of any buildings or structures until the CRM consultation process has been completed. Agency applicants must submit a copy of the proposed project to a designated Cultural Resource Specialist for their agency. Private parties or non-governmental organizations are encouraged to submit a copy of their proposed project to a CRM consultant they may have employed. Private parties and non-governmental organizations may also contact the NorthWestern Energy representative for further information or

assistance. Applications submitted without this section completed will be held without any action until the information has been submitted.

Summarize how you will complete requirements for Cultural Resource Management.

The Fairboard has a Cultural Resource Management Study that was completed and used for the expansion of their campground. If this is not adequate for the purposes of the grant, the Fort Benton Trails Committee will ensure a study is performed.

5. **Scoring Criteria.** Respond to the following Scoring Criteria. Put answers in the cell after ►.

5.1 Does the project occur at a 2188 license site?

This project does occur at a 2188 license site. It is at the far reach of the Great Falls Region and will extend the current levee from the Fort Benton Motorboat Launch to connect the levee to the Fort Benton Canoe Camp.

5.2 Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site. Describe if the project will meet operation and maintenance needs. Higher points awarded to projects that are higher priority and are not a recurring expense. Lower points awarded to projects that are low priority and/or have been previously funded. It is unlikely that the timeframe of River Fund would address emergency operation and maintenance needs but could support non-emergency operation and maintenance needs.

This will be an expansion of an existing trail. If we phase the project over two years, there will be some maintenance to the trail before it can be paved. Once the trail is paved, there should be minimal maintenance. Signage and solar lights will have minimal maintenance.

5.3 Project involves collaboration with other agencies or organizations. Identify project partners other than NorthWestern Energy or River Fund, if any, and describe their participation. Document all funding sources and all in-kind support and services to a project, because all are sources of partnerships and in-kind contributions from public agencies qualify for calculation of NorthWestern Energy matching funds. If there are no project partners, explain why.

Cash Contributions will be solicited from the Lipard Clawiter Foundation and Destination Fort Benton. Destination Fort Benton has been awarded the Pilot Community Tourism Grant for 2 years (2025-2027) with the possibility of extending this to a 5-year program. Destination Fort Benton has set aside a portion of this grant for a “Grant within a Grant” to provide matching funds for local non-profit organizational projects. It is acknowledged within the Destination Fort Benton committee that extending trails is a vital part of making Fort Benton attractive for tourism and for the welfare of the community.

We will also utilize volunteer “in-kind” support to prepare the path for leveling and graveling, devise a gate to the fairgrounds, install solar lighting and signage. Chouteau County Fairboard supports the Trail Committee’s project by mowing and clearing the trail site. The local school has “Longhorn Days” in May every year for local students to give back to their community by providing labor to perform tasks from cleanup to other repair and maintenance. These local students can trim weeds around the trail.

5.4 Project provides a benefit to public recreation in the Project Area and addresses specific issues and goals of the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan (CRP). Identify how the project provides a benefit to public recreation and describe how the project specifically addresses issues and goals in Chapter 2-1 of the CRP.

The Levee Trail extension will add an additional 1/4 mile to our present trail. A number of community members in Fort Benton walk the full length of the levee trail on a daily basis. Extending the trail will enhance everyone's ability to exercise and enjoy the walk along the river. Adding lighting to the proposed extension will provide safety for those that walk after dusk (especially in the winter). Directional signage will provide visitors directions to all the various destinations along the levee trail from the campground to the Motorboat Launch and back.

- 5.5 Project responds to a clearly identified need. Describe and document the need for this project and how the project would address that need. Cite specific sources, as possible, to establish need and support the project. Discuss consequences if the funding request is unsuccessful. For a new construction or acquisition project, identify how post-project, long-term costs (such as site maintenance and management) will be provided.

There is not an easily discernable way to get to the downtown business district except by driving or walking in that general direction once out of the Fairgrounds (see yellow trail on the enclosed map). The path along the river will provide easy walking/biking access between the Canoe Launch Campground and the existing levee trail from the Fort Benton cement ramp (boat launch) to the Interpretive Center. Wayfinding signs will provide directional guidance for visitors.

- 5.6 Project design options have been considered, estimated, and a preferred design selected. Well-designed projects reduce occurrences of budgetary overages, design changes, and additional complications. Discuss the current design phase for this project, demonstrate that the project has been well vetted, and include cost estimates.

The path has already been laid out, measured and bids for the work acquired. At this point it is a mowed path along the river.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks personnel have reviewed our plan and provided their approval. The County Fairboard has worked with us on selecting the path location and preparing it by clearing and mowing the path.

- 5.7 Project supports or protects other resources and is consistent with or supports resource plans in the Project Area. Describe how this project will protect resource values (such as public access, water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources) and support other resource and agency plans, including Project 2188 License plans and land use and land management plans in place in the Corridor. Management plans should provide justification for the project.

This project partners perfectly with the Chouteau County Fairboard's current project to expand the Canoe Launch Campsite. Per the Fish, Wildlife and Parks recommendation, the trail will be set back far enough from the river's edge to avoid encroachment of the river on the embankment.

6. Insert map(s) showing the location of the proposed project, drawings and design work related to the project, and a reasonable number of photos (as available) here.

6.1 A Map of the proposed Fairground Loop is attached. The focus of this project is the trail in Red that goes from the Fence at the campground to the entrance to River Street. The portion in yellow represents camper's current route to the downtown.

Budget for Trail

Fairground Loop Lighting

Lighting will be solar generated with a motion sensor feature that will reduce light pollution impact, yet provide adequate lighting when activated by motion.

• Lighting	12 lights	\$189.99 ea	\$2271.48	
• 4 x 4 x 12' treated post	12	\$28.00 ea	\$ 336.00	
• Quick Crete	10	\$7.50 ea	\$ 75.00	
• Labor	12	\$50 per pole	<u>\$ 600.00</u>	
• Total Lighting				\$ 3,282.48

Fairground Loop Grade & Gravel – Jens Jensen \$18,000.00

Sub-Total (Total if Paving is 2nd phase, year 2) *\$21,282.48*

Fairground Loop Pave = United Materials – Great Falls \$55,000.00

Total Project \$76,282.48



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Fairground Loop

Total Length 0.66 mi Elev. gain 3 ft

Route 1

Length 0.25 mi Elev. gain 0 ft

Route 2

Length 0.11 mi Elev. gain 0 ft

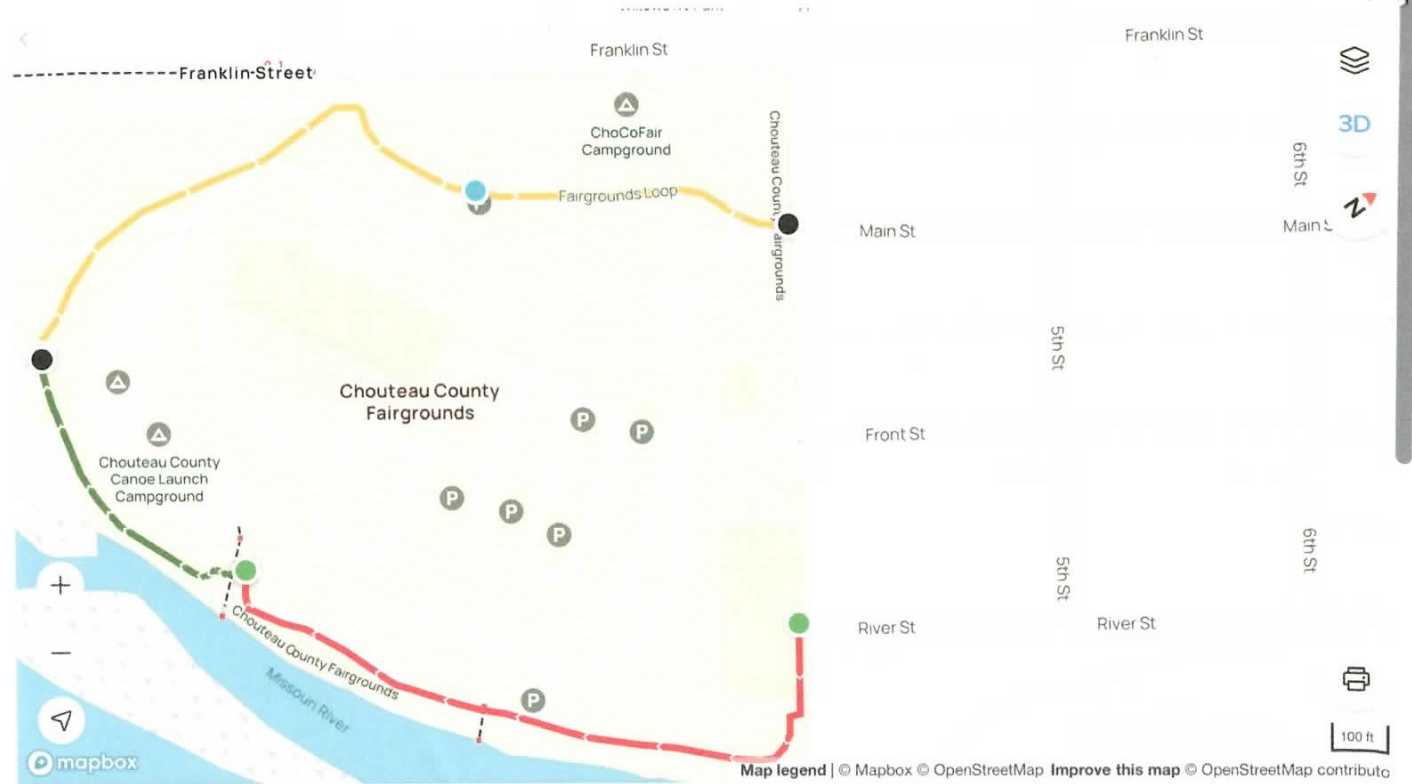
Route 3

Length 0.30 mi Elev. gain 3 ft

Draw on map

Upload from file

Edit map



100 ft

2,631 ft

Distance: 0.5 mi
Elevation: 2,631 ft
Grade: 0%

2,628 ft

0.7 mi



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Chouteau County, Montana

P. O. Box 459
FORT BENTON, MONTANA 59442
TELEPHONE: 406-622-3631
FAX: 406-622-3012

COMMISSIONERS

Robert J. Pasha, Chairman
Clay Riehl
Rick Darlington

CLERK

Lana K. Claassen
REGULAR MEETINGS:
Every Monday and the first and
third Tuesday of the month
following the first Monday.

September 3, 2024

TO: Lori Holleman, Chouteau County Fair Manager

RE: Letter of Support of Development of Fairground Property

Dear Ms. Holleman:

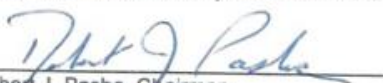
The Chouteau County Commissioners are in support of a recreation development project that will expand camping opportunities, especially for large RVs and motorcoaches at the Canoe Campground in Fort Benton.

1. Chouteau County owns the property in question and the Commissioners are in support of the development of said Fairgrounds Property to expand the Canoe Campground.
2. Understanding that a large-scale site clean-up will be required as a component of the development project, the Commissioners also support the site clean-up as permitted by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.
3. Once developed, the Commissioners recognize and accept that on-going management and maintenance of the expansion will be the responsibility of Chouteau County.

We encourage a request for funding from the Missouri-Madison River Fund and Northwestern Energy matching funds for this important development project.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Chouteau County Commissioners


Robert J. Pasha, Chairman


Clay Riehl, Commissioner


Rick Darlington, Commissioner

City of Fort Benton



1204 Front Street
P.O. Box 8 Fort Benton, Montana 59442
Phone: (406) 622-5494
Fax: (406) 622-5496
cofbmayor@gmail.com

Missouri-Madison River Fund Board
c/o NorthWestern Energy

Date: August 25, 2025

Dear Missouri-Madison River Fund Board,

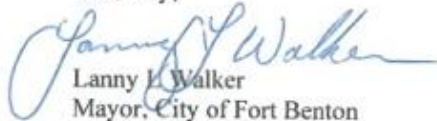
I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Canoe Launch Levy Trail project in Fort Benton, Montana, as proposed by the Fort Benton Trail Committee. This initiative represents a vital enhancement to our community's recreational infrastructure and aligns perfectly with the goals of the Missouri-Madison River Fund Recreation Project.

Fort Benton is a gateway to the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument and a historic hub for river-based recreation. The proposed improvement to enhanced trail access, will significantly improve the experience for paddlers, campers, and visitors exploring the Missouri River corridor.

The Canoe Launch Levy Trail project not only promotes outdoor recreation but also strengthens our local economy and preserves the cultural and environmental heritage of the region. By investing in this project, the River Fund will be supporting a community deeply committed to stewardship, accessibility, and the long-term vitality of Montana's river systems.

I urge you to give this proposal your full consideration and offer your support to a project that will benefit residents and visitors alike for generations to come.

Sincerely,


Lanny L. Walker
Mayor, City of Fort Benton

Birthplace of Montana