

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND RECREATION PROJECT
FY2025 GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

Project Name: Hauser Dam and Beaver Creek Sign Improvement Project

Reservoir or River Segment: Hauser-Holter County(ies) Lewis and Clark

Site Name (or project location): Beaver Creek Access Site and Hauser Dam Access Site

Applicant Name: Mandy Alvino

Position and Agency: Recreation Specialist, Helena Ranger District, Helena–Lewis and Clark National Forest

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Project Sponsor Name: Rory Glueckert

Position and Agency: Recreation Program Manager, Helena–Lewis and Clark National Forest

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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 instruction), 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.

Total project cost:	<u>\$13,500</u>	
Applicant Contributions – cash	<u>\$3,500</u>	
Applicant Contributions – value of in-kind:	<u>\$1,000</u>	
Other Contributions – Please list by source:		
	<u>\$</u>	
	<u>\$</u>	
	<u>\$</u>	
	<u>\$</u>	Percentage of Total Project Cost:
Total Applicant and Other Contributions:	<u>\$4,500</u>	<u>33%</u>
NorthWestern Energy Match Request:	<u>\$4,500</u>	<u>33%</u>
River Fund Grant Request:	<u>\$4,500</u>	<u>33%</u>
Proposed Project Implementation Period:	<u>August 2025</u>	

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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 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.

- ▶ The Hauser Dam and Beaver Creek Sign Improvement Project includes replacing the interpretive panel on existing metal signs, each with a new interpretive panel (three at Hauser and three at Beaver Creek) and installing one new interpretive sign with base to the Beaver Creek site. The existing signs are aging and fading out, but the sign bases are in good working order (photos in section 6). The Forest Service will design the content for all signs, purchase the one new sign/base, and procure installation services for all seven signs (professional welder). The grant request is to fund the procurement of the other six sign panels.

Associated cost details:

	Forest Service	NWE Match	River Fund	Total
Design	\$1,000			\$1,000
Signs (7)	\$2,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$11,500
Installation	\$1,000			\$1,000
Totals	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$13,500

3. **Project Phasing:** Briefly discuss whether the project could be phased over more than one year or construction season.
- ▶ The project could be split into two phases, three signs at the Hauser side and four at the Beaver Creek side. The expenditures in this scenario would be roughly \$8400 for Beaver Creek side and \$5100 for the Hauser Dam side.
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.

- ▶ Most of the project does not include any ground disturbance only replacement of the sign face panels, not the sign bases. The additional sign at the Beaver Creek site would include digging a 2-foot by 3-foot hole for the sign base. A Forest Service archeologist will review the desired location of the new sign and determine if it is appropriate. If unidentified archeological sites or human

remains are discovered during implementation, work would cease in that area and the Forest Archeologist would be notified and the USFS Northern Region protocols for unanticipated discoveries and human remains would be followed during all phases and undertakings.

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?

- Part of the project is at the Hauser Dam Access Site (is a 2188 license recreation site) and part of the project is at the Beaver Creek Access Site (not a 2188 license recreation site).

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.

- Replacing these signs is a high priority for the Helena Ranger District and identified in our records as deferred maintenance. The signs are now physically difficult to read because they have been out in the elements for so many years and contain out of date company/logo information. The one new sign will help highlight the extensive partnerships of the Beaver Creek side of the project area, as described in item 5.5 of this application. While not a recurring expense, the life span of new sign panels is not indefinite but is estimated at 10-15 years.

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.

- There are no additional funding partners on this project, however improving the signs at these sites is a key piece of a larger collaborative effort in the Missouri River Corridor to enhance recreation opportunities and restore/conservate the natural, cultural, and social resources in the area. Criteria 5.5 speaks to these other resources and partnerships. The Forest Service is working with local schools to have a kids art contest which will be incorporated into the new sign at the Beaver Creek site, not a funding partner, but definitely a robust collaboration.

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.

- Improving the interpretive signs at both ends of trail 254 provides benefit to public recreation by enhancing a high-quality recreation opportunity between two recreation sites and providing conservation education to the recreating public. Historically, the use at the Beaver Creek Access Site has been primarily at the site itself in the form of fishing. The desires of recreationists have changed in recent years, and during non-peak fishing months more people are seeking an opportunity for a hike taking off from the Beaver Creek Access Site or the Hauser Dam Access Site. As described in the project description and below in criteria 5.5, the Forest Service has invested money and infrastructure to enhance the condition and capacity of the Beaver Creek Access Site, the trail connecting this site and the Hauser Dam site, and nearby natural resources (fisheries and watershed condition) to meet current and desired use. These efforts, and this sign improvement project are specifically designed to help implement the CRP vision of maintaining a wide spectrum of quality year-round recreational opportunities...consistent with established plans...and with protection of existing natural resources.

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.

- ▶ These sites serve as a conservation education clearinghouse for anglers and campers to learn about the natural resources, the river ecosystem and dam safety. These sites and the trail that connects them are attractive for day-use and weekend visitors from nearby communities, short term campers and large groups. The ecological integrity of Beaver Creek has been maintained while providing recreational opportunities for the public.

The Beaver Creek Access Site is located at the west end of Forest Service Road 138, adjacent to Beaver Creek where it joins the Missouri River. The site includes a hardened, gravel parking area for up to 30 passenger vehicles, shoreline access foot paths, two vault toilets, interpretive signage, site signs, and a bulletin board/kiosk. Forest Service trail 254 begins/ends at this site and parallels the Missouri River between Beaver Creek and Hauser Dam.

The Hauser Dam Access Site is at the Hauser Dam. The interpretive signs to be improved are on the east side of the dam itself, at the end/beginning of Forest Service trail 254. People using the trail from this end park on the west side of the dam and walk across to access the signs and trail.

The Forest Service, NorthWestern Energy, and many other partners have a considerable investment in this portion of the Missouri River. This sign improvement project can be considered the final piece to tie it all together and let the recreating public know what great work has been done and NorthWestern Energy's partnership in it.

- Forest Service capital improvement project, designed to manage the Beaver Creek site for high, concentrated use during spring and fall, and moderately high use during the summer. Funded by the Forest Service at almost \$200,000, this resulted in a much larger parking area, new vault toilet, new foot bridge, and picnic tables for the Beaver Creek site.
- Beaver Creek trail 254 restoration project is a River Fund project just completed (\$15,000).
- The Gates of the Mountains sign improvement project is also a River Fund project (\$11,500) that included the new site sign and information kiosk for the Beaver Creek site.
- The Beaver Creek Restoration Project is a jointly funded (\$1.2 million) project implemented by the Forest Service in partnership with NorthWestern Energy, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Trout Unlimited. The project restored 1.2 miles of lower Beaver Creek. The project started in 2020 and wrapped up in 2024.

If this funding request is not successful, the Forest Service will pursue other grant opportunities as they become available.

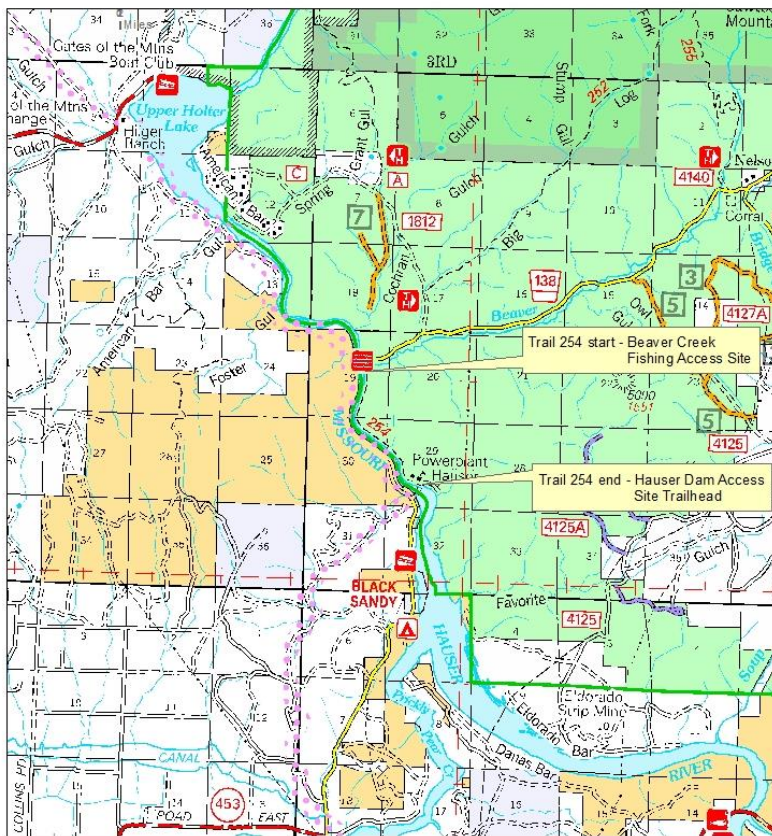
5.6 Project design options have been considered, estimated, and a preferred design selected. Well-designed projects reduce occurrences of budgetary overages, design changes, and additional complications. Discuss the current design phase for this project, demonstrate that the project has been well vetted,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

- ▶ The planning phase of this project started spring of 2024.
 - The Forest Service has identified the type and size of sign to use.
 - The content and design phase will be October through December 2024.
 - Procurement and production targeted for May 2025-July 2025 (cost in section 2).
 - Installation August of 2025.

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.

- ▶ Criteria 5.5 also demonstrates how this project supports and protects other resources. The relevant excerpts from the Helena – Lewis and Clark land management plan and Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan are included after the maps and photos section, labeled as “5.7 continued”.

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.



5.7 continued: Excerpts from the land management plan and CRMP

2021 Land Management Plan for the Helena – Lewis and Clark National Forest
 Plan Components – Missouri River Corridor (MISCOR)

The Missouri River is a nationally recognized river famous for its fishing, outstanding scenery, and the history present along it. The Missouri River Corridor has much historic and cultural significance. Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark passed through this corridor on route to the Pacific Ocean and back in 1805-06. Captain Lewis used the term “Gates of the Mountains” to describe these scenic and unique cliffs in the area. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, a nationally designated trail, is in the bottom of the corridor. Additionally, the historic Mann Gulch Fire Historic Landscape is located within the Missouri River Corridor area. This historic landscape is recognized on the National Register of

Historic Places and memorializes the loss of smokejumper fire fighters during the 1949 Mann Gulch fire. Recreation use of the Missouri River Corridor is year-round but particularly high during the summer months when water recreation is the most active throughout the corridor. A commercial tour boat operation offers boat trips up the river and there are many developed and dispersed recreation sites along the banks of the river. This area also provides access to the western portions of the Gates of the Mountain Wilderness. In addition, there are concentrations of cliff nesting raptors in this corridor.

Desired Conditions (BB-MISCOR-DC)

- 01** The developed recreation settings and opportunities along the Missouri River Corridor are ecologically sustainable and recreational user conflicts are minimal.
- 02** The Missouri River Corridor canyon appears largely natural.
- 03** The Missouri River Corridor maintains its historic and cultural features. Interpretation is available and enhances visitor experiences of the area.
- 04** Travelers within the Missouri River Corridor have opportunities to learn about the 1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Mann Gulch Fire, and to experience and appreciate the unique natural environment of the area. Trailside interpretation and related visitor information services enhance visitor appreciation of the outdoors, the natural resources, scenery, and cultural and historic values.
- 05** Developed recreation sites accommodate increased recreational use in the corridor while protecting the unique and important natural resources and historic and cultural features within the area.
- 06** Dispersed recreation opportunities along the river corridor allow for exploration and discovery with minimal environmental impacts and user conflicts.

Goals (BB-MISCOR-GO)

- 01** The operation, maintenance, and delivery of recreation along the Missouri River corridor is supported by strong partnerships and volunteer programs.

Guidelines (BB-MISCOR-GDL)

- 01** To protect and enhance the scenic quality of the area, management activities in the Missouri River Corridor should be consistent with the scenic integrity objective of high to very high.

Suitability (BB-MISCOR-SUIT)

- 01** The Missouri River Corridor is unsuitable for timber production. However, harvest may be used for other multiple use values such as providing for public safety and enhancing the recreational or aesthetic values of the corridor.

Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan

Condition and Capacity of Recreation Sites and Use Areas:

Intensive use of recreation facilities in the Corridor, especially during peak periods, can impact user experiences. Poor condition of both developed and dispersed recreation sites and use areas can negatively impact experiences in the Project Area. Increasing use of existing recreation sites and dispersed use areas creates management issues, including staffing, maintenance, and funding issues. For public land managers, that can exacerbate recreation site issues. When demand increases, there are associated questions about the long-term capacity and funding of existing sites and if and how new sites should be added.

Goal:

To provide safe and well-managed recreation sites and dispersed use areas that provide enjoyable user experiences across a spectrum of opportunities and seasons.

Inter-relationship between recreation Uses and Other Resources:

There are a number of factors and resources that directly or indirectly affect the quality of the recreation experience. Conversely, recreation use can also have a direct or indirect effect on other resources. Although the primary focus of the CRP is recreation, inter-related issues cannot be ignored.

Goal:

To encourage communication between technical committees on shared resource concerns and to cooperate with other committees and groups on partnership opportunities that advance shared goals.