

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND  
RECREATION PROJECT  
APPLICATION FORM FY2018**

Project Name: **Giant Springs Trout Hatchery Visitor Center and Show Pond Improvements**

Reservoir or River Segment: **Great Falls Area** County(ies): **Cascade**

Site Name: **Giant Springs Trout Hatchery Visitor's Center & Show Pond**

Applicant Name and Agency                   **Ryan Derr Fish Wildlife and Parks**  
Position (if applicable)                   **Fish Hatchery Manager**  
Address   **4801 Giant Springs Rd, Great Falls, MT 59405**  
Telephone #                                   **406-452-5734**  
E-mail: **rderr@mt.gov** \_\_\_\_\_

Project Sponsor:

A Project Sponsor is required in order to submit an application to the River Fund. Project sponsors serve as active members of Missouri-Madison Regional Working Groups, and include representatives of the U.S. Forest Service; Bureau of Land Management; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; local government; Madison, Gallatin, Broadwater, Chouteau, Lewis and Clark, or Cascade Counties; NorthWestern Energy and the Bureau of Reclamation. Visit [www.missourimadison.com](http://www.missourimadison.com) for a list of current Regional Working Group members.

Project Sponsor Name **Vicki Robinson**

Agency and Position: **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Fishing Access Site Program Manager**  
Address: **4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, MT, 59405**  
Telephone # **406-454-5854** E-mail: [vrobinson@mt.gov](mailto:vrobinson@mt.gov)

Complete the financial section below by providing total project cost, contributions by applicant and cooperators, request for NorthWestern Energy match of agency funds (see detail on page 2 of this application), 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.

Financial Support

Total Project Cost:	\$ 9,000
Applicant Contributions:	
Giant Springs Hatchery	\$ 500 (in-kind)
FAS Program	\$ 500 (in-kind)
FWP R3 Parks	\$ 600
Giant Springs State Park	\$ 200 (in kind)
Other Contributions - Please list by source:	
NorthWestern Energy Match Request:	\$ 1,800 _____
River Fund Grant Request:	\$ 5,400 _____
Proposed Project Implementation Period:	Summer/Fall 2018 or sooner

**MISSOURI-MADISON RIVER FUND  
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APPLICATION FORM FY2017**

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? 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. Is the proposed project at one of the Project 2188 license sites identified in the Missouri-Madison MOU and listed on page A2-2 of the Comprehensive Recreation Plan? No
3. **Project Description:** Provide a brief (½ page) description of the proposed project.

**Giant Springs Trout Hatchery is in Great Falls next to Giant Springs State Park. The two facilities share utilities and roads and the individual parcels are inter-twined. Annual visitation for both areas is over 500,000 visitors a year. The hatchery needs to update the area by making improvements to existing public use areas of the hatchery. This will be done by updating current interpretation displays in both the visitor center and the show pond area. These new displays will enhance the areas with updated materials and be built with materials that will hold up to the elements for years. The goal of this project is to make improvements to the heavily visited area that will provide a family friendly area for the public to visit. Everyone likes to fish, but some may not understand what the function of the state hatchery consists of. Hatchery staff put in over 100 hours of planning and construction towards updating the visitor center in 2016. The hatchery budget does not include funding to regularly maintain and make improvements to the visitor center. In 2017 the hatchery's budget was cut by \$30,000 to support the unfunded AIS program. Both the Fisheries Division and Hatchery Division are dealing with budget cuts to current and future operating budgets. The hatchery would like to continue to upgrade the newly remolded visitor center by adding more displays of historic items and information on the importance of hatchery existence. Staff also want to add public amenities to the show pond such as benches, new garbage can and trash bags, and interpretation displays. The show pond area currently does not have anywhere to site down while viewing the river/show pond. By adding a bench or two, we will allow everyone a chance to sit down and enjoy the view. Our aging population, people with young children or people with limited mobility will appreciate the chance to spend more time in the show pond area now that they can rest longer. This new amenity will bring new users to the area to enjoy the outdoors. Another aspect of the project will be to gravel the road in front of the show pond and raceways to provide a more durable and safe walking area for the high number of visitors who fish, watch birds and enjoy walking the river trail. The new gravel on the road will not only provide a more stable walking surface, but it will also provide a better surface for the hatchery equipment that is used for loading fish throughout the year. The existing road has lost most of its gravel and turns into mud during the wet seasons. This causes safety issues for the public and drainage problems that may harm the resources. With major cuts to the hatchery budget, the hatchery cannot afford to make these upgrades using its existing operation funds. By making these additions to the hatchery visitor center, show pond, and roadway, the**



**hatchery will be providing a place for more folks to come recreate along the Missouri River corridor.**

4. **Cultural Resource Management:** Cultural Resource Management (CRM) requirements for any activity related to this Project must be completed and documented to NorthWestern Energy (pursuant to Article 425 of the FERC Project 2188 License) prior to expenditure of River Fund grants and NorthWestern Energy matching funds for any land-disturbing activity or the modification, renovation, or removal of any buildings or structures. 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. River Fund grant and NorthWestern Energy matching fund payments, for those projects approved by the Board, will be withheld until this CRM information has been submitted. Summarize how you will comply with CRM requirements and provide evidence of completion to NorthWestern Energy.

**Fish, Wildlife and Parks Design and Construction division is required to obtain clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) before any project is started. That letter of approval will be on file and available to NorthWestern Energy. FWP must also do a search the Montana Natural Historical Preservation (MNHP) database to find any species of concern. No work will be started until FWP receives a letter of approval.**

5. Respond to the following Scoring Criteria in no more than two (2) additional written pages on 8.5 x 11 inch paper, with 1-inch margins on all sides, in a font not smaller than 11 point. Be sure page numbers are included in a footer within the margin of each page.

### **Scoring Criteria**

- 5.1 *Project is for operation and maintenance of an existing recreation site or an existing Project 2188 license site.* Describe how the project would support O&M needs at an existing recreation site that are over and above day-to-day site maintenance. Needs may include measures to open a site for public use as well as minor repair; facility upgrade, reconstruction, and replacement; and major site rehabilitation.

**The hatchery and show pond area is located in a Project 2188 license site. The site is owned and managed by Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Hatchery Division and a very popular area with over 500,000 visitors annually. These upgrades are above and beyond hatchery means due to significant budget cuts that occurred in 2017 and may remain in effect for future years. The visitor center and show pond is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The hatchery staff has the responsibility to manage both facilities on top of their hatchery duties. This operation is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. There are no funds left to put towards the popular visitor center and show pond. With a cut of \$30,000 from this year's budget, it has left the hatchery in a very tight situation. The isn't any option to spend funds on benches or displays when fish must be fed and utility bills must be paid. Overall, this project is very small compared to some, but the impact to the site will be seen and appreciated by every visitor. This small project will bring Giant Springs Trout Hatchery show pond and visitor center a place that will be visited by thousands of people each month.**

- 5.2 *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.

**Giant Springs Fish Hatchery visitor center and show pond upgrade partners will be internally through Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The hatchery will partner with the FAS program and State Parks program to help complete this project. FAS contributes equipment and maintenance staff time to help with the upkeep of the site. With the hatchery being located next to the Giant Springs State Park, the park staff has a wealth of knowledge about the site and how it came to be. Parks also contributes by providing excellent weed prevention tactics for the hatchery grounds. The total contribution from the FAS program will be \$500 in kind services and \$200 in kind services from State Parks, as well as, \$500 from hatchery staff.**

5.3 *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. Describe how specific issues and goals in Chapter 2-1 of the CRP would be supported.

**The hatchery visitor center, show pond, and River’s Edge trail and riverside road are open year–round for public recreation. The roadway is a very popular site for fishing, bird watching, and hiking. There is just a natural flow of foot traffic to start at the park, go to the hatchery show pond and then either hike on the trail or get in your car and view the river as you drive.**

**The hatchery provides public recreation through the distribution of fish up and down the Missouri River corridor. There are two reservoirs that Giant Springs Fish Hatchery is dedicated to that are a project 2188 site and those are Rainbow Reservoir and Hauser Reservoir. These two sites are stocked with over 155,000 catchable rainbow trout that provide recreation to thousands of resident and nonresident anglers. This project will aid in public outreach on the importance of hatcheries and help get anglers of all ages interested in recreation areas such as the Rainbow Reservoir and Hauser Reservoir.**

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

**Some ways this project will improve the quality of visitor’s experience is by adding places to sit, by providing updated and visually appealing displays and more detailed exhibits to educate people. This project will also make road/walkway improvements that will protect the natural resources, including improve water quality, enhance fisheries and cultural resources. This will be done by improving the gravel road/walkway for staff and users. This element of the project provides a safer place to visit for people of all ages and mobility levels. Some displays are outdated and it is imperative that we update and provide more interpretive and educational opportunities for visitors.**

*To support agency and NGO initiated projects in cooperation with interested private landowners to maintain open space and agricultural lands and to mitigate effects of new development in a manner that is mutually acceptable to landowners and recreationists.*

*Inter-relationship Between Recreation Uses and Other Resources*

**The comprehensive plan says it best that “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.”*

*As the plan states, “issues that fall outside of the primary recreation focus, but which are inter-related included the following: 1) water quality, 2) water quantity, 3) Air quality, 4) Cultural resources, 5) fisheries, 6) riparian vegetation and associated wildlife habitat, 7) economic development related to tourism and recreation.”*

**The hatchery show pond and visitor center contributes to tourism and the overall recreation experience. The focus is obviously, fisheries development, however, there would be no recreation experience or tourism boom if hatcheries were not available.**

<i>Continue to improve and expand recreation opportunities that offer universal accessibility.</i>
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**The entire show pond area is concrete with a concrete walkway all the way to the visitor center. Both areas have universal access to easily maneuver in and out of both areas. The garbage can and displays will be placed in a way that someone in a wheelchair can easily use.**

5.4 *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.

**With angling numbers starting to decline and younger anglers becoming interested in other activities besides outdoor recreation, the need for this project to be completed is essential. Montana’s fisheries play such vital role in outdoor recreation that projects like this can spread a wealth of knowledge among all ages and can help to provide a long-lasting impression on future anglers to carry on their fishing traditions. The hatchery provides tours to over 1500 school children every year and continues to grow year after year. Over 2000 students, special interest group, and the public will get a tour from hatchery staff each year and the more information the hatchery can provide the more support the public will have for future outdoor recreation projects like this one. Post project costs will not be an issue. Hatchery staff, FAS staff, and Park staff will help provide the upkeep and maintenance of the site through a hatchery budget. If the project funding is not successful, the public will be denied a free recreation opportunity to learn about the Montana Hatchery system and lose out on an improved family friendly show pond. There are many families in need that are looking for free outdoor activities that they can spend an afternoon. Our goal is to bring out as many people to our sites as possible. The lack of benches to sit on mean that some people cannot spend time at the show pond. If someone is in a wheelchair they may not have the opportunity to see rainbow trout up close. Without new gravel on the road, drainage and erosion will get worse and the public will continue to struggle with the mud and weeds while they fish, watch birds, and walk the river side trail. Water quality and user experience will suffer and more damage will continue to overcome the area in need. Universal access will be limited due to the rough surface and the development of mud puddles. Those puddles will continue to grow as time goes on. If this project is not funded then access may be restricted for special populations, hatchery operations, fish habitat and other educational information will be lost. The show pond needs a more welcoming feel to match that of the park since they share borders.**

5.5 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 and include cost estimates.

**This will be a one phase project. Once all materials have arrived at the hatchery, they will be installed by hatchery and FAS staff. The hatchery and FAS staff will have all equipment and tools needed to complete this project in a timely manner. The benches and garbage can will be installed and mounted into the concrete in the show pond area first. The interpretive signs will be mounted to the chain-link fence, three inside the fence and one upon entry to the show pond area. The gravel will be brought in over the course of two or three days and will be used to resurface the existing road. The visitor center glass case and interpretive signs will be installed by hatchery staff and will be permanently mounted to the interior walls.**

**Visitor Center:**

- Hatchery Bureau Brochures/Maps \$1500.00
- Glass Display Case \$1200.00
- Interpretative signs \$500.00

**Show Pond Area:**

- Interpretative signs \$2100.00
- 2 Benches + Shipping \$1200.00
- Garbage Can + Shipping \$500.00
- Gravel and Labor along roadway around the Show Pond \$2000.00



*Interpretive Panel - broken, old and outdated*



*Example of bench style*

5.6 Project supports or protects other resources and is consistent with or supports resource plans in the Project Area. In addition to project-related benefits under #3 above, describe how this project will protect resource values (such as public access, water quality, fisheries, wildlife, habitats, and cultural resources) and support other resource plans, including Project 2188 License plans and land use and land management plans in place in the Corridor.

**By providing funds for this project, the public and resources will benefit from it via improved access, improved water quality, cultural resources and education. With the addition of several interpretative signs, the public will be educated on the importance of how hatchery work contributes to the overall picture with fishery management in Montana. The visitor center provides a historic timeline of how things were done in the past and how things are done now. By creating a positive environment in the visitor center and show pond, the public will gain a better knowledge base on how hatcheries can take pressure off wild fish strains and provide a recreational sport for all ages to enjoy. By upgrading the road around the hatchery, this will help preserve about ¼ mile of public access for fishing, bird watching, and hiking, as well as allowing access for hatchery distribution trucks to load and deliver fish to many recreational sites up and down the Missouri River corridor.**

- Attach map(s) showing the location of the proposed project, drawings and design work related to the project, and photos (as available) at the end of the application.



Photo of gravel road needing to be resurfaced on the north side of the hatchery



Aerial photo of amenities to be added to show pond area



Photo of where the new amenities will be placed in the show pond and the old signs will be removed

7. Planning Acknowledgement:

By submitting this application, and with an award of grant funds, applicant agrees that all permitting and planning requirements, such as NEPA and MEPA and cultural resource compliance, will be completed *prior to expenditures of awarded funds*. Furthermore, all design, layout, and contractual requirements will be completed in a timely manner.