



NorthWestern Corporation  
d/b/a NorthWestern Energy  
3010 W. 69<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sioux Falls, SD 57108  
[www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**NorthWestern Energy and The Missouri-Madison River Fund Trust announce funding for 2017 public recreation improvement projects**

**Butte, Mont. – January 6, 2017** - NorthWestern Energy and the Missouri-Madison River Fund have announced funding awards for eleven public recreation improvement projects on the two rivers where the company operates nine of its 12 hydroelectric facilities.

A combination of \$62,481 from NorthWestern and \$363,123 from the the Missouri-Madison River Fund will be combined with \$150,424 from agency and private partners to complete eleven projects totaling \$576,028. In addition, NorthWestern Energy will contribute more than \$427,000 for operation and maintenance efforts at many existing recreation sites in 2017 as required by the Project 2188 (Madison-Missouri River) FERC License.

“Recreation facilities and opportunities will be enhanced on the Missouri and Madison rivers through completion of eleven competitively selected projects in 2017,” said Jon Jourdonnais, Leader - Hydropower License Compliance. “NorthWestern Energy and its employees are proud to continue to support this collaborative private-public effort to improve recreation facilities and opportunities on these great rivers for all Montanans.”

2017 funded recreation projects include:

- Replacement of the boat ramp at McAtee Fishing Access Site on the Madison River;
- Construction of a maintenance building and installation of an electric gate at Giant Springs State Park in Great Falls;
- Paving of the entrance road at Black Sandy State Park on Hauser Lake;
- Completion of a new drinking water system at Palisades Recreation Area on the Madison River;
- Printing of an updated bathymetric map of Hebgen Lake;
- Improvements to sections of a recreation trail at West Bank Park in Great Falls;
- Construction of a trailside shelter along the south shore of Cochrane Reservoir in Great Falls;
- Installation of new information kiosks at four Fishing Access Sites along the Missouri River;
- Upgrades to the Causeway Fishing Access Site at Hauser Lake;
- Rehabilitation to one section of the historic walking bridge in Fort Benton.

The Missouri-Madison River Fund, a \$6.6 million trust fund for public recreation, was created through the collaborative efforts of NorthWestern Energy; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Bureau of Land Management; Madison, Gallatin, Broadwater, Lewis & Clark, Cascade and Chouteau counties; and numerous other public and private partners. This year marks the eleventh year in which earnings from the trust have been awarded to recreation improvement projects through the River Fund program. Since 2007, nearly \$4.7 million has been awarded by the River Fund and the utility in support of 97 projects totaling nearly \$7.5 million in recreation enhancements in the Missouri-Madison Corridor.

Created as a public-private partnership to meet public recreation needs along the Madison and Missouri rivers, the River Fund supports ongoing efforts to protect and enhance recreation from Hebgen Reservoir downstream to Fort Benton, excluding the Toston and Canyon Ferry hydroelectric plants and the river segment between them. River Fund awards for qualifying projects will continue on an annual basis, with grant awards in December.

A list of projects can be found under the “River Fund” tab at <http://www.missourimadison.com>, a website dedicated to the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan. More information about NorthWestern Energy and its hydroelectric facilities can be found at [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com).

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#### **About NorthWestern Energy (NYSE: NWE)**

NorthWestern Energy provides electricity and natural gas in the Upper Midwest and Northwest, serving approximately 678,200 customers in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. More information on NorthWestern Energy is available on the company's website at [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com).

#### **Media Contact:**

Claudia Rapkoch  
(866) 622-8081  
[claudia.rapkoch@northwestern.com](mailto:claudia.rapkoch@northwestern.com)

#### **Investor Relations Contact:**

Travis Meyer  
(605) 978-2967  
[travis.meyer@northwestern.com](mailto:travis.meyer@northwestern.com)