



Missoula County Trails Bond Program

Level II Application

Project Title: Woody Mountain Overlook and Lolo Hillside Trails

Part A – Applicant’s Checklist

Use the application checklist to verify that **all required documents** are included in this application in the order listed below. All sections must be completed to meet minimum qualifications.

- ☒ Part A – Applicant’s Checklist
- ☒ Part B – Application Summary Form
- ☒ Part C – Project Details (narrative response to project questions)
- ☒ Part D – Project Budget Description and Forms (all forms must be completely filled out and signed)
- ☒ Part E – Acknowledgement of Open-Space land designation
- ☒ Part F – Attachments (identify each attachment in the table of contents cover page and list attachments in the following order)
 1. Evidence of property ownership/legal access (legal documentation)
 - i. N/A
 2. Documentation of opposition and responses (if applicable)
 - i. N/A
 3. Evidence of commitment from funding partners (cash match/in-kind match support letters)
 - i. Letters of Support
 4. Photos of project area
 - i. Added
 5. Site map(s), printed copy. Additional project location maps or GIS shape files will be accepted.
 - i. Radius Trail Solutions map, West Riverside Park Trail map, Lolo Hillside Map
 6. Other relevant materials
 - i. N/A



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Part B – Application Summary

Applicant Information

Name of Applicant: Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation	
Address: 127 E Main St, Missoula, MT 59802	
Primary Contact: Kelsey Phillips	Title: Parks, Trails & Recreation Specialist
Telephone: 406-258-3426	Email: kphillips@missoulacounty.us

Project Information

Project Title: Woody Mountain and Lolo Hillside Trails	
Surface Type: Natural Surface	Planning Region: West Riverside & Lolo
Project/Trailhead Location (Geocode, Lat/Long, etc): West Riverside Park (04-2201-16-3-11-07-0000) & Lolo Belltower Subdivision (04-2092-27-3-10-03-0000)	
Bond Program Request: \$62,619	Bond Program Request as % of Total Project: 81%
Secured Funding Total: \$15,000	Total Project Amount: \$77,619
Has your organization previously received Missoula County Trails Bond funding? Yes	



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Part C – Project Details (Scored out of 100 points)

Please respond to the following questions completely but as concisely as possible. If attachments apply to a question, please fully answer the question and include a reference to the attachment in Part F.

Point assignments will be used as a guide for project recommendations, and no minimum score is required for project approval.

C-1 Access and Connectivity – (25pts.)

- 1. Describe the project goal, scope, and expected results. Be specific. Discuss the primary outcomes that project will provide, the intended route, and connections.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

The goal of this project is to expand equitable access to outdoor recreation by constructing a new natural surface trail from West Riverside Park in Bonner, Montana, to a scenic overlook on the slopes of Woody Mountain. The project will create a safe, sustainable, and accessible recreation opportunity within one of the community's only developed parks while connecting visitors to the area's rich natural, cultural, and historical resources. The project will construct a moderately challenging natural surface trail beginning at West Riverside Park and climbing to an overlook on Woody Mountain. At the trailhead, an interpretive kiosk will provide visitor orientation and introduce the site's natural, cultural, and historical significance, highlighting the area's Indigenous heritage, Bonner-Milltown's history as a mill town, and the geologic legacy of Glacial Lake Missoula, enriching the visitor experience and creating opportunities for environmental and historical education.

Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation recognizes that equitable access to outdoor spaces is essential to the physical and mental well-being of all residents. West Riverside is a rural, unincorporated community that has been identified through county planning and demographic data as an underserved area with lower median household incomes and fewer close-to-home recreation opportunities than much of the urban Missoula Valley. By investing in recreational infrastructure at West Riverside Park, this project will reduce barriers related to transportation, cost, and travel time while providing a high-quality outdoor experience within walking or short driving distance for many local residents.

The trail's design (a relatively short but moderately challenging route to a scenic overlook) will accommodate a broad range of users, including families, older adults, hikers, runners, and individuals seeking convenient access to nature without specialized equipment or extensive travel. A conceptual trail map discovered in Missoula County's archived planning files demonstrates that community interest in a formalized trail up Woody Mountain has existed for many years, underscoring the long-standing demand for this recreation opportunity.

The project is expected to increase visitation to West Riverside Park, expand opportunities for outdoor recreation and healthy lifestyles, and strengthen residents' connection to the area's unique history and landscape through interpretive features. It will also support the local recreation-based economy by encouraging visitors to explore nearby businesses and attractions in the Bonner-Milltown area.



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While this project represents the first phase of trail development, it has been designed with future connectivity in mind. The proposed route has the potential to become an important segment of a larger regional trail network through future connections to Woody Mountain and Marshall Mountain, pending coordination with adjacent landowners and land management agencies. These future connections would further improve community mobility, expand recreational opportunities, and strengthen equitable access to public lands throughout the greater Missoula Valley.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

The goal of this project is to create a connected neighborhood trail system that provides Lolo residents with safe, convenient access to parks and open space while formalizing existing social trails into a sustainable, well-signed public trail network. The project will connect the developer built trail within the Belltower Subdivision, located off Highway 93 at the site of the former Lolo school and historic bell tower, to several existing Missoula County park properties situated on the hillside above the subdivision.

The proposed trail system will utilize existing social trails where appropriate and construct approximately 0.8 miles of new trail to complete critical missing connections between parks, neighborhoods, and open spaces. The resulting "lollipop"-style trail will provide a 1.2-mile loop beginning in the Belltower Subdivision, climbing through the hillside parks before returning via a loop at the top of the neighborhood. Because much of the desired route is already established through informal public use, construction will primarily focus on formalizing these alignments, improving trail sustainability, and creating safe, clearly defined connections.

In addition to trail construction, the project will include complementary amenities such as trailhead kiosks, maps, trail crossing signage, and wayfinding markers to enhance navigation, improve safety, and educate users about the trail network. These features will create a cohesive recreation experience and encourage responsible use.

The primary outcomes of the project include improved neighborhood connectivity, expanded access to public parks and open space, and the creation of a safe, sustainable trail network that serves residents of all ages. By linking the Belltower Subdivision with multiple County park properties, the project will transform a series of disconnected parks and informal trails into an integrated recreational corridor, providing Lolo with a valuable community asset that encourages walking, hiking, outdoor recreation, and active transportation.

- 2. Describe the intended or anticipated group of users for this trail project. Provide an estimate of the number of trail users per year along with an explanation for how this figure was calculated. Data from other similar facilities and use-cases can be referenced to estimate use projections.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

The intended users of the proposed Woody Mountain Trail include residents of the Bonner–West Riverside community, visitors to West Riverside Park, and outdoor recreationists from throughout the greater Missoula area. The trail is designed to serve a broad range of users, including hikers, trail



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runners, families, older adults, and individuals seeking a convenient, close-to-home outdoor experience. The moderately challenging natural surface trail and scenic overlook will appeal to both recreational users and those interested in the area's cultural, historical, and natural resources through the project's interpretive features.

Missoula County estimates that the completed trail will receive approximately 11,676 user visits annually and 32 users daily. This estimate is based on visitation patterns observed at a comparable neighborhood and community park trail system (Sousa Trail) in the City of Missoula that provides a short scenic hiking opportunity, as well as the existing popularity of West Riverside Park for picnicking, playground use, and community events. The addition of the park's first dedicated natural surface trail, scenic overlook, and interpretive amenities is expected to substantially increase visitation by attracting both existing park users and new visitors seeking a short destination hike. The estimate also reflects the trail's proximity to Bonner, East Missoula, and Missoula, where residents frequently seek convenient outdoor recreation opportunities close to home.

Long-term use is expected to continue increasing as awareness of the trail grows and as future phases potentially connect the route to Woody Mountain and Marshall Mountain, creating an important link within a larger regional trail network. Existing community interest in a formalized trail to Woody Mountain further supports the expectation that the trail will become a well-used recreational and educational destination for both local residents and visitors.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

The proposed Lolo Hillside Trail will primarily serve residents of the Lolo community, including families, walkers, hikers, runners, and individuals seeking convenient access to neighborhood parks and open space. Because the trail begins within the Belltower Subdivision and connects several existing Missoula County park properties, it is intended to function as a neighborhood recreation amenity that encourages daily use for exercise, dog walking, nature appreciation, and informal outdoor recreation. The trail's loop design and accessible location off Highway 93 will also attract visitors from surrounding neighborhoods and the greater Lolo area.

Missoula County estimates the completed trail will receive approximately 24,542 user visits annually and 67 users daily. This estimate is based on visitation patterns observed at a comparable neighborhood and community park trail system (Cherry Gulch Trail) in the City of Missoula that provides a short scenic hiking opportunity, as well as the existing popularity of Lolo hillside parks for outdoor recreation. This estimate is also informed by use patterns observed at other Missoula County neighborhood park trails, where well-connected, easily accessible loop trails receive consistent year-round use due to their proximity to residential areas. Formalizing existing social trails, improving wayfinding, and creating continuous connections between parks are expected to increase visitation by making the trail network safer, easier to navigate, and more inviting for a broad range of users.

3. *Describe how the project improves the overall Level of Service for Trails, as identified in the 2012 [Parks and Trails Master Plan \(p 52\)](#) for each of the following objectives as applicable:*
 - a. *Connectivity within communities*



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- b. Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands*
- c. Connectivity with other communities*
- d. Access and connectivity to an existing trail network*
- e. Access and connectivity to natural and community resources*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

This project directly supports the 2012 Parks and Trails Master Plan by improving access to recreation, strengthening local connectivity, and laying the foundation for future trail connections within the Bonner–West Riverside community.

a. Connectivity within communities:

The proposed trail will expand recreation opportunities within West Riverside Park, one of the community's only developed parks, by creating a new destination trail that connects park visitors to a scenic overlook on Woody Mountain. The project provides nearby residents with a convenient, close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunity, reducing barriers related to transportation, cost, and travel time while improving the overall level of service for an underserved rural community.

b. Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands:

While this project does not directly connect to adjacent public lands, it establishes the first phase of a trail corridor with the potential for future connections to Woody Mountain, Marshall Mountain, and other surrounding public lands. These future connections will be pursued through coordination with adjacent landowners and land management agencies as opportunities arise.

c. Connectivity with other communities:

Although the project primarily serves the West Riverside and Bonner communities, it will create a regional recreation destination that attracts visitors from throughout Missoula County. As future trail connections are developed, the corridor has the potential to strengthen recreation linkages between neighboring communities and regional destinations.

d. Access and connectivity to an existing trail network:

The project expands the existing recreation opportunities available at West Riverside Park by adding a new trail where no formal trail currently exists. While the trail is not immediately connected to a larger regional network, it has been planned to accommodate future expansion and integration with broader trail systems serving the Missoula Valley.

e. Access and connectivity to natural and community resources:

The project significantly improves public access to the area's natural, cultural, and historical resources. The trail will provide access to scenic viewpoints overlooking the Blackfoot and Clark Fork river valleys while interpretive features at the trailhead will connect visitors with the area's Indigenous heritage, Bonner-Milltown's history as a mill town, and the geologic story of Glacial Lake Missoula. By creating opportunities for recreation, education, and outdoor learning within one accessible location, the project strengthens community connections to the landscape and fosters a greater appreciation of the region's unique history and natural environment.

Lolo Hillside Trail:



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The proposed Lolo Hillside Trail directly advances several of the Level of Service for Trails objectives identified in the 2012 Parks and Trails Master Plan by creating meaningful connections between neighborhoods, parks, and open space while improving public access to recreational opportunities.

a. Connectivity within communities:

The project significantly improves connectivity within the Lolo community by linking the developing trail in the Belltower Subdivision to several existing Missoula County park properties on the hillside above. By formalizing existing social trails and constructing key missing trail segments, residents will be able to travel continuously from Highway 93 through multiple parks and neighborhoods using a safe, designated trail system.

b. Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands:

The project connects users to multiple existing Missoula County park properties that are currently difficult to access as a cohesive system. Formal trail connections will improve public access to these lands while encouraging sustainable use and reducing reliance on informal, user-created trails.

c. Connectivity with other communities:

While the primary purpose of the project is to improve neighborhood connectivity within Lolo, the trail will provide a community-wide recreation amenity that is easily accessible from Highway 93 and can serve residents throughout the greater Lolo area. The project does not directly connect separate communities but strengthens the local trail network that supports regional recreation.

d. Access and connectivity to an existing trail network:

The project transforms a collection of existing social trails into a connected, sustainable trail network. Approximately 0.8 miles of new trail will complete missing links, resulting in a continuous 1.2-mile "lollipop" loop that integrates existing informal routes with newly constructed trail segments. Trailhead kiosks, maps, wayfinding signs, and trail crossing signage will further improve navigation and user experience.

e. Access and connectivity to natural and community resources:

The completed trail will provide residents with convenient access to neighborhood parks, open space, and hillside natural areas while encouraging outdoor recreation close to home. By connecting residential neighborhoods with public parklands, the project creates opportunities for walking, hiking, running, nature appreciation, and healthy outdoor activity. The addition of interpretive and wayfinding amenities will further enhance the trail as a community resource, making it easier for residents and visitors to explore and enjoy the connected park system.

4. Describe any historic, cultural, and scenic resources found in the project area. How will this project enhance these resources?

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

The proposed Woody Mountain Trail will provide access to a landscape rich in historic, cultural, and scenic resources while enhancing public understanding and appreciation of the area's significance. Beginning at West Riverside Park, the trail will climb to a scenic overlook on the slopes of Woody Mountain, offering panoramic views of the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers, the



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Bonner-Milltown community, and the surrounding mountain landscape. These views showcase the distinctive geology of the region, including the legacy of Glacial Lake Missoula, one of the defining geologic events that shaped western Montana.

The project area also contains important cultural and historic resources. The Bonner-Milltown area has a rich history as one of western Montana's most significant mill communities, with deep connections to the region's timber industry and settlement patterns. In addition, the landscape has long been important to Indigenous peoples, whose history and enduring relationship with the area predate Euro-American settlement by thousands of years.

The project will enhance these resources by providing opportunities for interpretation and education rather than altering or impacting the resources themselves. A trailhead kiosk will introduce visitors to the area's natural, cultural, and historical significance by highlighting the Indigenous heritage of the landscape, the history of the Bonner-Milltown community, and the geologic story of Glacial Lake Missoula. This interpretive feature will encourage visitors to better understand the significance of the surrounding landscape, foster stewardship of the area's cultural and natural resources, and create a richer, more meaningful recreation experience. By providing safe public access to these viewpoints and educational opportunities, the project will transform an underutilized landscape into a destination for outdoor recreation, environmental education, and heritage interpretation while preserving the character of the site.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

The project area contains historic, cultural, and scenic resources that contribute to the identity of the Lolo community. The trail begins in the Belltower Subdivision, located on the site of the former Lolo school, where the historic bell tower remains a recognizable community landmark. This location provides an important connection to the community's history and serves as a meaningful gateway to the trail system.

As the trail climbs the hillside through multiple Missoula County park properties, users will experience scenic views of the Lolo Valley and surrounding mountains while accessing natural open spaces that are currently connected primarily by informal social trails. Formalizing these routes will allow visitors to enjoy these scenic resources while reducing the proliferation of user-created trails and associated impacts to the landscape.

The project will enhance these historic and scenic resources by creating a safe, well-defined trail network that improves public access while protecting the surrounding environment. Trailhead kiosks, maps, wayfinding signs, and other interpretive amenities provide opportunities to highlight the history of the former Lolo school site and the significance of the remaining bell tower, while encouraging visitors to appreciate the area's natural beauty and recreational opportunities. By connecting neighborhoods to these community assets, the project will foster greater awareness, stewardship, and enjoyment of Lolo's historic and scenic landscape.

C-2 Project Readiness – (15 pts.)



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1. *Discuss the ownership and legal access to the proposed project site. Detail any third-party rights, easements, or other encumbrances that exist. Provide supporting documentation proving ownership, legal access or permission. Provide a site map in Part F.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

West Riverside Park, which includes the parcel extending up the side of Woody Mountain where the trail will be constructed, is owned and operated by Missoula County (site map attached in Part F).

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Missoula County is the sole owner of the park parcels through which the trail will be constructed (site map attached in Part F), and the road segments between park parcels are in the Missoula County ROW. Upon completion, Missoula County will assume responsibility for the parkland and associated trail in the Belltower Subdivision and provide for its ongoing operation and maintenance.

2. *What planning work related to design, engineering, and scoping have been completed to date? What remains?*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

A contractor visited the site with Parks, Trails & Recreation staff last fall to evaluate the proposed alignment, develop a conceptual trail design, and prepare preliminary cost and trail length estimates. Community outreach has also begun, with the project concept and timeline presented at a West Riverside Community Picnic during the summer.

Construction of the excavator-built portions of the trail is planned for spring 2027 using awarded FWP Trail Stewardship Program grant funds. Following completion of remaining project fundraising, the final hand-built switchbacks to the overlook will be constructed by an MCC crew in summer 2027, along with installation of the trailhead kiosk and interpretive panel.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation has completed preliminary planning for the proposed Lolo Hillside Trail. Planning to date has focused on identifying the desired trail network, evaluating existing social trails and potential alignments, and determining the critical connections needed to link the Belltower Subdivision with surrounding County park properties and open space. The project scope, approximate trail mileage, loop configuration, and locations for supporting amenities such as kiosks, maps, crossing signage, and wayfinding markers have also been identified.

The project has been intentionally scoped to utilize existing social trails where appropriate, minimizing new disturbance while improving sustainability, safety, and accessibility. Approximately 0.8 miles of new trail construction has been identified as necessary to complete the key connections within the approximately 1.2-mile loop system. This preliminary planning has established the overall trail concept and provided a clear framework for design and construction.

Remaining work includes finalizing trail alignments and completing detailed design and engineering as needed, including field verification, grade and drainage considerations, and construction specifications.



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The County will also finalize the locations and design of trailhead kiosks, maps, crossing signage, and wayfinding markers. Prior to construction, the project will undergo any necessary environmental, permitting, and site review processes, followed by preparation of final construction documents and contractor scoping. These steps will ensure the completed trail system is sustainable, safe, well-integrated with the surrounding parks and neighborhoods, and appropriate for long-term public use and maintenance.

3. What is the expected timeline for initiating and completing the project?

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

Trail construction utilizing an excavator (funded by a 2026 FWP Trail Stewardship Program grant) is anticipated to begin in Spring of 2027, depending on contractor availability and seasonal conditions. The timeline for this first phase of trail construction is estimated to last approximately one month. The scope of work will include:

1. Excavation to create the trail bench, ensuring proper drainage and slope stability.
2. Trail construction using an excavator along the primary alignment, shaping a sustainable tread through the shale-based terrain.
3. Hand-finishing of steeper trail sections near the overlook by a Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) crew to ensure safe, durable final surfacing – this will likely occur in Summer 2027

Upon completion of construction, the County will conduct a final inspection and project closeout to ensure compliance with design and environmental standards. Installation of interpretive panels at the trailhead kiosk will occur concurrently or immediately following trail completion, as conditions allow. All reimbursement requests and final reporting will be submitted by Fall 2027, allowing adequate time for review, financial reconciliation, and public celebration of the completed project.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Project planning and final design will continue through 2026, with necessary site review, permitting, and construction scoping completed in preparation for implementation. Contractor bidding is anticipated during Winter 2026–2027, with trail construction expected to begin in Spring or Summer 2027.

Construction will focus on formalizing existing social trail alignments, constructing approximately 0.8 miles of new trail, and completing the connections that create the approximately 1.2-mile neighborhood loop. Trailhead kiosks, maps, crossing signage, and wayfinding markers will be installed as part of the project. Construction is anticipated to be completed during the 2027 field season, with final project closeout and any remaining site restoration or signage work completed by the end of 2027.

C-3 Project Design (10 pts.)

1. *Describe the surface type, length, width, trail amenities, and lifespan of project construction materials.*



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Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

The proposed project will construct a new hiking trail within West Riverside Park, a 16.3-acre community park located in the Bonner–West Riverside–Milltown area of Missoula County, Montana, about 6 miles east of Missoula. The park currently features a baseball field, playground, park pavilion, picnic tables, and a large barn available for community events. It is situated at the base of Woody Mountain, with park property extending upslope to a flat knob that provides an excellent overlook of the surrounding valley and confluence of Blackfoot and Clark Fork Rivers. The planned trail will create a new, sustainable route from the park’s developed area to this natural viewpoint. The proposed trail will be approximately 2,360 feet (0.45 miles) in total length, with a total elevation gain of 425 feet. The overlook trail will average an 18% grade, reflecting the site’s natural topography and providing a short, moderately challenging hike that leads to a scenic destination and adds variety to local trail opportunities. In addition, a short 0.25-mile loop trail at the base of the overlook trail will provide a more accessible opportunity with minimal elevation change, bringing the total length to 0.7 miles. The trail tread will be approximately 48 inches wide and constructed primarily using native materials to blend with the surrounding landscape. The terrain consists largely of natural surface dirt and shale, which provides a firm, well-drained base suitable for long-term tread stability and minimal maintenance.

The trail is intended for non-motorized use (primarily hiking and walking) and will be open year-round with seasonal limitations depending on weather conditions. However, since the trail location is south-facing, snow build up is typically minimal at this elevation, providing access well into the colder months. At the trailhead, a kiosk and interpretive panel is planned to highlight the area’s Indigenous heritage, Bonner-Milltown’s history as a mill town, and the geologic legacy of Glacial Lake Missoula, enriching the visitor experience and providing educational value. The kiosk will also further support visitor orientation and highlight the site’s natural, cultural, and historical significance. Together, the trail’s moderate challenge, convenient location, and scenic destination will provide an accessible, close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunity for residents and visitors alike.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

The proposed Lolo Hillside Trail will include approximately 1.2 miles of trail, consisting of approximately 0.8 miles of new trail construction and formalization and improvement of existing social trail alignments. The trail will be designed as a sustainable, natural-surface hiking and walking trail appropriate for neighborhood access, hiking, and other non-motorized recreation. Trail width will be finalized during detailed design and will be sized to provide safe, comfortable passage while minimizing impacts to the surrounding landscape.

The completed trail will form a 1.2-mile “lollipop”-style loop connecting the Belltower Subdivision with several Missoula County park properties and open spaces. Trail amenities will include trailhead kiosks with maps and informational materials, trail crossing signage, and wayfinding markers. These features will improve navigation and safety while encouraging responsible use of the trail network. The natural-surface trail and associated drainage and tread improvements are expected to provide long-term service with routine maintenance. Signage, kiosks, and other trail amenities will be constructed from durable, weather-resistant materials designed for outdoor conditions and are expected to have a useful lifespan of approximately 10–20 years or longer with appropriate maintenance and periodic replacement of individual components as needed.



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2. *Describe any design considerations being made to enhance accessibility for disabled or people reliant upon a mobility device to access trail facilities?*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

The project has been designed to improve equitable access to outdoor recreation by creating a safe, sustainable trail experience within one of West Riverside's only developed parks. While the natural surface trail is moderately challenging due to the terrain and is not intended to meet ADA accessibility standards, several design elements have been incorporated to maximize accessibility for the widest possible range of users. The trail will be relatively short, well-defined, and sustainably constructed to provide a predictable and durable walking surface appropriate for many hikers, families, older adults, and visitors with varying abilities. The project also includes a 0.25-mile loop near the trailhead with minimal elevation change, providing a more accessible trail experience for users of varying abilities and mobility levels.

An accessible trailhead kiosk will provide orientation, wayfinding, and interpretive information, allowing visitors who may not be able to complete the entire trail to engage with the site's natural, cultural, and historical resources. By locating this recreation opportunity within walking or a short driving distance of an underserved rural community, the project also improves accessibility by reducing transportation, cost, and travel barriers that often limit access to outdoor recreation.

Although the steep topography prevents the trail from being fully accessible to people reliant upon mobility devices, the project has been planned with inclusivity in mind and represents an important step toward expanding recreation opportunities for residents who currently have limited access to nearby public trails. Future phases that connect this trail to a broader regional trail network will continue to improve access and recreation opportunities for the community.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Accessibility will be considered throughout the trail design and construction process to provide the greatest practical access for people with disabilities and those who rely on mobility devices. Final trail alignments will be evaluated to incorporate sustainable grades, minimize unnecessary steep sections, and provide a stable, consistent trail surface where feasible. Existing social trails will be formalized and improved where appropriate to create safer and more predictable routes than the informal paths currently available.

Trailhead kiosks, maps, wayfinding markers, and crossing signage will be designed and located to be readily accessible and easy to understand. During final design, the County will evaluate opportunities to incorporate accessible trail segments and connections where site conditions allow, while balancing accessibility with the hillside terrain, natural features, and sustainable trail construction practices. These considerations will help ensure the project provides meaningful recreational access to residents of varying ages and abilities.

3. *Discuss any major site modifications or structures included in the design such as excavation, relocation of utilities, bridges, retaining walls, etc. and why they are needed.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:



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Major site modifications are expected to be limited. Construction will primarily involve minor excavation and grading needed to construct approximately 0.70 miles of new trail. No major structures, utility relocations, bridges, or retaining walls are currently anticipated. A trailhead kiosk and interpretive panel will be installed to support safe and cohesive use of the trail network.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Major site modifications are expected to be limited. Construction will primarily involve minor excavation and grading needed to formalize existing social trails and construct approximately 0.8 miles of new trail connections. No major structures, utility relocations, bridges, or retaining walls are currently anticipated. Trailhead kiosks, signage, and wayfinding markers will be installed to support safe and cohesive use of the trail network.

4. Will this project address safety issues? If yes, how so?

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

Yes. By adding trailhead amenities such as a kiosk and signage, Missoula County will provide users with current trail information and condition updates, emergency response protocols, and wildlife reminders, helping promote safe and responsible trail use.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Yes. The project will address safety issues by adding trailhead amenities, including kiosks with trail information and signage at trail crossings and neighborhood intersections. These features will provide users with current trail conditions, emergency response information, and wildlife reminders, while clearly identifying trail crossings and helping reduce conflicts with road traffic.

5. Describe surrounding natural resources at the site, including predominant vegetation and wildlife species, habitat areas, water and other natural resources. Discuss impacts to these resources as a result of this project and describe how they will be protected.

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

West Riverside Park is located at the base of Woody Mountain in the Bonner–West Riverside area of Missoula County, where the landscape transitions from riparian river corridors to dry foothill slopes. The proposed trail traverses a steep, shale-dominated hillside characterized by native grasses, shrubs, and scattered ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. The surrounding area provides habitat for a variety of common wildlife species, including deer, bighorn sheep, small mammals, birds, and other native wildlife that utilize the adjacent upland and riparian habitats. The nearby Blackfoot and Clark Fork Rivers further contribute to the area's ecological diversity by supporting important aquatic and riparian ecosystems.

The project has been designed to minimize impacts to these natural resources while improving the long-term sustainability of public access. Constructing a defined 48-inch-wide trail bench will concentrate visitor use on a single, purpose-built alignment, reducing the creation of informal social trails that can fragment vegetation, disturb wildlife habitat, and accelerate erosion on the steep hillside. By formalizing the route, the project will minimize trampling of native vegetation and reduce soil displacement in an area where loose shale is particularly susceptible to disturbance.



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The trail will be constructed using appropriate excavation and hand-finishing techniques to create a durable tread that efficiently sheds water. Because the underlying material is predominantly shale, significant drainage issues are not anticipated; however, the professionally constructed alignment will further reduce erosion and sediment movement by discouraging unmanaged foot traffic across the slope. Following construction, the trail will be incorporated into Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation's routine maintenance program to preserve tread stability, monitor erosion, and address maintenance needs as they arise.

Additional measures will further protect surrounding natural resources. Existing bear-resistant trash receptacles at the trailhead will continue to minimize litter and wildlife attractants, helping protect nearby upland and riparian habitats. An interpretive panel at the trailhead will educate visitors about the area's natural history, geology, and responsible recreation practices, encouraging stewardship and helping reduce future resource impacts. In addition, park regulations requiring dogs to remain on leash or under reliable voice control will help minimize wildlife disturbance, reducing the potential for dogs to harass or displace the local bighorn sheep population and supporting the continued use of adjacent habitat by this sensitive species. Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation consulted with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks regional biologists to review the proposed trail alignment and discuss potential mitigation measures. Based on their recommendations, the project will include additional trail signage reinforcing Missoula County Parks' regulations requiring dogs to be leashed or under voice control to help minimize disturbances to wildlife. Overall, the project will improve public access while protecting the site's ecological integrity by reducing unmanaged disturbance, stabilizing the hillside, and promoting long-term conservation of the park's natural resources.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

The project area is located on the hillside above the Lolo Belltower Subdivision and includes several existing Missoula County park properties and open spaces. The area contains natural hillside vegetation and habitat that supports a variety of common wildlife species. Because much of the proposed route follows existing social trails, the project is designed to minimize new disturbance to surrounding natural resources.

Approximately 0.8 miles of new trail will be constructed to complete key connections, while existing social trails will be formalized where appropriate. Construction will be limited to the trail corridor and necessary amenities, with efforts made during final design and construction to avoid sensitive vegetation, habitat areas, and other natural features. Sustainable trail alignments and construction practices will be used to reduce erosion and long-term impacts to the hillside. Trail users will also be provided with wildlife reminders and responsible recreation information through kiosks and signage. Ongoing maintenance and monitoring will help protect the surrounding resources and ensure the trail remains a sustainable community asset.

6. *Is this project part of a larger conservation easement acquisition project? If so, describe the conservation values and public benefits/value of the land, easement or water resource.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail: No.

Lolo Hillside Trail: No.



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C-4 Project Support (20-pts.)

1. *Summarize your organization's history of involvement with this project.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation has led the planning and development of the Woody Mountain Overlook Trail project from its earliest stages. Staff identified the opportunity to improve recreation access at West Riverside Park while highlighting the area's unique natural, cultural, and historic resources. The department coordinated a site visit with a trail contractor to evaluate the proposed alignment, develop a conceptual trail design, and prepare preliminary cost estimates.

Community outreach began with the presentation of the project concept and timeline at a West Riverside Community Picnic, where residents were invited to learn about the proposed trail and provide feedback. The department also secured a 2026 Montana FWP Trail Stewardship Program grant to fund the initial excavator-built portion of the trail and continues to pursue additional funding to complete the project.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Missoula County has been involved in the development and stewardship of the park properties that form the foundation of this project and has recognized the opportunity to better connect these public lands with the surrounding Lolo community. Over time, informal social trails have developed through public use of the hillside parks and open spaces, demonstrating an existing community demand for neighborhood trail connections. The County has identified the need to formalize these routes and establish sustainable, clearly defined connections between the parks, the Belltower Subdivision, and surrounding neighborhoods. Through planning for the project, the County has identified approximately 0.8 miles of new trail construction needed to complete critical gaps in the existing network. This project represents the next step in Missoula County's efforts to improve connectivity and access to its park properties in Lolo.

2. *Discuss any efforts to obtain public input, disseminate public information, develop partnerships, and garner community support specifically related to this project. For regional trails, the process needs to include notification and/or involvement of residents from adjacent communities.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation has worked to build strong community partnerships and local support for this project, recognizing that collaboration is essential to creating a successful and well-used public trail. A conceptual trail map discovered in the County's archived planning files demonstrates that community interest in a formalized trail up Woody Mountain has existed for many years, reflecting long-standing local demand for improved outdoor recreation opportunities in the Bonner–West Riverside area.



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The project will engage several key local and regional partners whose collaboration will strengthen its educational value, community impact, and long-term stewardship. Friends of 2 Rivers, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting a safe, healthy, and enriching environment for the communities surrounding the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers, will serve as a primary community partner. Their involvement will include assisting with community outreach, supporting volunteer engagement during trail construction and maintenance, and helping promote the project throughout the community. Their long-standing commitment to conservation and recreation initiatives provides strong grassroots support and ensures the project reflects local interests and priorities.

An interpretive panel at the trailhead kiosk will be developed in partnership with local historians, educators, the Bonner Milltown History Center, and Friends of 2 Rivers. Together, these partners will help create accurate and engaging educational content highlighting the area's Indigenous heritage, Bonner-Milltown's logging history, and the geologic story of Glacial Lake Missoula, enriching the visitor experience while strengthening connections to the region's cultural and natural resources.

The project also provides opportunities for meaningful public engagement after construction. The local summer lunch program, which regularly utilizes West Riverside Park for youth activities, will be able to incorporate trail-based recreation and interpretive learning into its programming, encouraging healthy outdoor activity and fostering an appreciation for public lands stewardship. In addition, Missoula County and its community partners will organize volunteer trail stewardship days to support ongoing maintenance and provide opportunities for residents to take an active role in caring for this community asset. Public information about the project will be shared through Missoula County's website, social media platforms, partner organizations, and community outreach efforts, ensuring residents remain informed throughout project implementation and have opportunities to participate in volunteer events and stewardship activities.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Missoula County has worked to build community support for this project by recognizing and responding to existing public use of the hillside parks and informal social trails in Lolo. As the project moves forward, Missoula County will continue to engage the local community and provide opportunities for public input. Future trail plans will be presented at a Lolo Community Council meeting, allowing residents to review the proposed alignments, trail amenities, and connections and provide feedback before implementation. This outreach will also help ensure that the project reflects community needs and priorities while providing an opportunity to share information about the benefits and responsible use of the new trail system.

The County also recognizes the importance of partnerships in creating a cohesive neighborhood trail network. Through continued coordination with local residents, community organizations, and other project partners, Missoula County will work to build community support and ensure the resulting trail system is safe, sustainable, well-signed, and responsive to local needs.



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3. *Is this project identified in any planning documents, from site specific plans at the smallest scale to regional or statewide plans at the largest scale? If so, name each plan and discuss how your project aligns with any related elements.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

A conceptual trail map (attached) discovered in Missoula County's archived planning files demonstrates that community interest in a formalized trail up Woody Mountain has existed for many years, underscoring the long-standing demand for this recreation opportunity.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

The proposed hillside trail in Lolo is consistent with the 2012 Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan, which identifies improved internal trail connectivity as a priority for the Lolo community and specifically recommends exploring connections among neighborhood and community parks. The Plan also recognizes the opportunity for well-designed natural surface trails in Lolo's parks to provide hiking and walking opportunities while connecting parks across the community. The proposed project advances these recommendations by creating a natural-surface trail connection through the hillside area, improving local connectivity and expanding access to nearby parks and recreation opportunities.

4. *Discuss any objections or opposition to this project. Include any letters, petitions, news articles, or other documents evidencing opposition. What has been done to address concerns and how has the opposition responded?*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

No formal objections or organized opposition to the project have been identified. During project planning, concerns were raised regarding potential impacts to local wildlife, particularly bighorn sheep that inhabit the surrounding area. To address these concerns, Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation consulted with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks regional biologists to review the proposed trail alignment and discuss potential mitigation measures. Based on their recommendations, the project will include additional trail signage reinforcing Missoula County Parks' regulations requiring dogs to be leashed or under voice control to help minimize disturbances to wildlife. These measures have addressed the concerns raised, and no further opposition has been expressed.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

To date, Missoula County has not received any formal objections or opposition to the proposed project. However, formal public outreach specific to the project has not yet begun, so the County recognizes that additional feedback may be received as the project is shared more broadly with the community.



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As the project moves forward, Missoula County plans to bring future trail plans to a Lolo Community Council meeting to provide information about the proposed trail alignments, connections, and amenities and to solicit feedback from residents. This outreach will provide an opportunity for community members to raise questions or concerns and for the County to consider and address them during project development. At this time, there are no known concerns or opposition requiring resolution, and the County will continue to monitor and respond to public feedback as formal outreach begins.

C-5 Project Match (20 pts.)

- 1. What percentage of the project cost has been secured versus how much remains? What are your plans for raising additional funds? Attach documentation for all match funding secured to date in Part F. What is your contingency plan in case pending funding requests are not granted? If this project is part of a larger multi-phased project, all of the match shown in this application must be dedicated to this phase.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail & Lolo Hillside Trail:

Approximately twenty percent (20%) of the total project cost for both the Woody Mountain Overlook Trail and Lolo Hillside Trail has been secured to date. This funding comes from FWP's Trail Stewardship Program Grant, from which \$15,000 was awarded for the Woody Mountain Overlook Trail; this grant requires a 10% local match. The remaining eighty percent (80%) of project costs will be raised through Missoula County Trails Bond funding. Additionally, while not technically considered match, the Lolo Hillside Trail project seeks to build upon the privately funded trail development in the Belltower Subdivision.

C-6 Maintenance (10 pts.)

- 1. Describe the long-term maintenance plan for the trail facility.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

Following project completion, Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation will assume full responsibility for the trail's ongoing maintenance and long-term stewardship. Routine maintenance activities such as trail clearing, tread upkeep, and vegetation management will be incorporated into the County's annual maintenance calendar and operating budget, ensuring the trail remains safe, functional, and enjoyable for users year-round. Based on current projections, tread maintenance and vegetation clearing are anticipated to cost approximately \$1,500–\$3,000 every 5–8 years, depending on seasonal conditions and observed wear. These periodic maintenance efforts will include reshaping sections of the trail as needed and removing encroaching vegetation to maintain the designed width and drainage function. Due to the shale-based nature of the terrain, drainage issues are not anticipated, which will help minimize long-term maintenance costs.

Maintenance activities will primarily occur during the spring, summer, and fall seasons, when weather conditions allow for efficient field work. The existing infrastructure at West Riverside Park, including a maintained parking area and bear-resistant trash receptacles, will continue to support trail use and reduce operational demands related to litter or parking impacts. Through established staffing, budget



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planning, and integration into the County's existing parks maintenance program, the County is well positioned to ensure the long-term sustainability and stewardship of this new recreational asset.

Lolo Hillside Trail:

Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation will incorporate the trail into its existing park and trail maintenance program. Routine maintenance will include regular inspections, vegetation management, drainage and tread repairs, removal of debris or hazards, and periodic maintenance or replacement of signage, kiosks, and wayfinding markers. Staff will monitor trail conditions and address erosion, drainage, or other issues as they arise to maintain a safe and sustainable trail surface. Because the project will formalize existing social trails and use sustainable trail construction practices, the completed facility is expected to be manageable through routine long-term maintenance.

Part D – Project Budget

1. *Provide an estimated general line-item project budget (accounting table or similar format) and, a brief explanation of each line item. The budget shall track the project from design development through construction to maintenance.*

Woody Mountain Overlook Trail:

- Estimate from Radius Trail Solutions for the excavator portion of the trail is \$16,520; plus an additional \$4000 for the lower 0.25-mile loop
- MCC crew hitch for hand-digging portion of the trail is \$16,000
- A small trailhead kiosk with interpretive panels is estimated to cost \$4,400
- 5% project contingency of \$2,046
- Total project cost is \$42,966
- See attached project budget

Lolo Hillside Trail:

- Estimate based on prior Radius Trail Solutions Woody Mountain Overlook Trail estimate for trail construction at \$7 per foot of trail (4,224 ft of trail x \$7) is \$29,568
- 5 small wayfinding signs (estimate of \$72 per 15x20" sign at Big Bear) is \$360
- 4 vehicle crossing signs (estimate of \$72 per 15x20" sign at Big Bear) is \$288
- 2 large maps (estimate based off similar Big Sky Park kiosk map for \$143 each) is \$286
- 1 small kiosk is \$2,500
- 5% project contingency of \$1,651
- Total project cost is \$34,653
- See attached project budget



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Part E – Acknowledgment of Open-Space Land Designation

Facilities built with Parks and Trails Bond funds must be designated as open-space land in accordance with [Montana Code Annotated, Section 76-6-104](#). This requirement is to ensure that public money is spent in accordance with the law and in a manner that provides public open-space. Under the law, “open-space land means any land which is provided or preserved for: (a) park or recreational purposes; (b) conservation of land or other natural resources...”

Instructions: Complete the form below by substituting your project information for all placeholder parts indicated by the italicized text in brackets. The landowner must sign the form in the presence of a notary public (see next page).

We, ____ *{property owner(s)}* ____, own the real property for which *{applicant}* ____ has requested funding from the Missoula County Parks and Trails Bond. That request, titled the *{title of project}* ____ Project, is described in the attached legal description and map. The *{title of project}* ____ project will be used for recreational purposes including: *{e.g.: trail construction, and use, signage, parking; etc.}* ____ *{Property owner}* ____ and *{applicant}* _____ recognize and appreciate that Missoula County has designated or will designate the specific land outlined in the *{project name}* _____ project as open-space land as defined by the Montana Code Annotated in Section 76-6-104.

Part E, continued

N/A as a Missoula County property.



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Part F – Attachments

Use this as the table of contents cover page for the required application attachments. Attachments in this section are supporting documentation to the questions answered in Part F. To receive the full amount of points available for each question, sufficient supporting documentation must be attached. List all attachments in order, by name/title and by page number.

1. Evidence of property ownership/legal access (legal documentation)
2. Evidence of community support (letters of support)
3. Documentation of opposition and responses (if applicable)
4. Evidence of commitment from funding partners (cash match/in-kind match support letters)
5. Exhibits (renderings, photos, site maps, etc.)
6. GIS shapefile, if applicable
7. Other (clearly title: acquisition documentation, if applicable, or other supporting documents)

Acknowledge the minimum qualification components listed below. All components are required to meet minimum qualifications:

- ☒ All items listed in Part A - Application Checklist are included in the application.
- ☒ All questions are answered in Part C; all documents are attached for Part F.
- ☒ All budget forms are attached.
- ☒ Property Owner has reviewed the application and approves of the project.
- ☒ Funding match is provided.

Applicant certifies that all items are included in the application and that all information submitted is true to the best of their knowledge.

Applicant Signature: Kelsey Phillips

Date: 9/3/26

Property Owner Signature: Nicholas Zanetos

Date: 9/3/26