

Missoula County Media Release

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Friends of 2 Rivers Receives 2019 Parks and Trails Stewardship Award

The Missoula County Parks and Trails Advisory Board will present the 2019 County Parks and Trails Stewardship Award to Friends of 2 Rivers at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 16, at Hellgate Lions Park, located at 1305 Haaglund Drive in Bonner. The annual award recognizes individuals and organizations who have dedicated multiple years of service to creating and improving public recreation facilities across Missoula County.

Since it was founded in 2002 to pursue removal of the Milltown Dam and restoration of the river, FO2R has played an important role in the advocacy and stewardship of parks and trails. The group actively participated throughout the Milltown Dam removal planning and championed numerous causes, including community connectivity. Constructing the paved trail that links Milltown to Turah was one of their key initiatives at that time. Additionally, FO2R sought to retain the rich history of Milltown as a turn-of-the-century lumber town while working to create something enduring for future generations to enjoy. Their vision and advocacy were realized through the creation of Milltown State Park, which officially opened to the public in 2018.

"Over the years, many different Friends of 2 Rivers board members have actively promoted efforts to enhance local cultural, social, natural and recreational resources," said FO2R's Judy Matson. "Although the faces change and numbers wax and wane, a constant is our mission to promote a safe, healthy and enriching environment for the communities at the confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot Rivers. Friends of Two Rivers continues its mission by supporting the activities of local groups and individuals whose purpose is to enhance the development of the community."

More recently, FO2R partnered with Missoula County to serve as the site steward of the Hellgate Lions County Park in West Riverside. In this role, FO2R manages rentals for an events center, two baseball fields, a picnic shelter and a small playground.

"Friends of Two Rivers thinks holistically and inclusively," said Tom Aldrich, the Parks and Trails board member who nominated FO2R for the award. "They just do the work without much need for reassurance or direct support. They do it because it's the right thing to do."

For more information, call John Stegmaier, parks and trails coordinator, at 258-3458 or email jstegmaier@missoulacounty.us.

Additional information on FO2R is online at <https://www.friendsof2rivers.org/about-us.html>.
Information on Hellgate Lions Park, including facility rental, is at <http://hellgatelionspark.com/>.

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The Missoula County Parks and Trails Advisory Board monitors and evaluates issues relating to county parks and trails, and reports to the Board of County Commissioners with its recommendations. The board advises commissioners on administering the County Parks and Trails Program; establishing park and trail policies, rules and public use requirements; reviewing and implementing plans, policies, programs, and regulatory and non-regulatory tools that support or impact parks and trails; and ensuring the most effective and efficient use of park funds.