



Missoula County Trails Bond Program Level II Application

Project Title: Confluence Gateway Initiative

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.

- X Part A – Applicant's Checklist
- X Part B – Application Summary Form
- X Part C – Project Details (narrative response to project questions)
- X Part D – Project Budget Description and Forms (all forms must be completely filled out and signed)
- X Part E – Acknowledgement of Open-Space land designation
- X Part F – Attachments (identify each attachment in the table of contents cover page and list attachments in the following order)
 - 1. Evidence of commitment to long-term maintenance (official letter or resolution)
 - 2. Evidence of property ownership/legal access (legal documentation)
 - 3. Evidence of community support (letters of support – maximum of 10)
 - 4. Documentation of opposition and responses (if applicable)
 - 5. Evidence of commitment from funding partners (cash match/in-kind match support letters)
 - 6. Photos of project area
 - 7. Site map(s), printed copy. Additional project location maps or GIS shape files will be accepted.
 - 8. Other relevant materials

*Completed applications can either be mailed to Missoula County Parks and Trails, 200 West Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802 or emailed to: CountyParks@missoulacounty.us.
Faxes will not be accepted.*



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Part B – Application Summary

Applicant Information

Name of Applicant: Five Valleys Land Trust

Address: 120 Hickory St. Suite B, Missoula, MT 59801

Primary Contact: Jenny Tollefson

Title: Stewardship Director

Telephone: (406) 549-0755

Email: jenny@fvlt.org

Fiscal Sponsor(s) Information

(If applicable. Additional partners should be discussed in Part C5: Project Match of the application.)

Name:

Address:

Contact:

Title:

Telephone:

Email:

Partner Responsibilities:

Project Information

Project Title: Confluence Gateway Initiative

Surface Type: natural surface-gravel

Planning Region: Clinton/Turah

Project/Trailhead Location (Geocode, Lat/Long, etc.): The Confluence Gateway Initiative project will take place on Five Valleys Land Trust's Rock Creek Confluence property located in Township 11 North, Range 17 West, Section 12 approximately 6 miles southeast of Clinton, MT. The main trailhead is located on Rock Creek Road, approximately one mile south of the I-90 Rock Creek Exit (Geocode 04-1978-12-2-01-07-0000).

Bond Program Request: \$100,000

Bond Program Request as % of Total Project: 20%

Secured Funding Total: \$ 379,000

Total Project Amount: \$ 479,200

Has your organization previously received Missoula County Trails Bond funding? NO



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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.*

Five Valleys is requesting \$100,000 from the Missoula County Trails Bond Program to support the Confluence Gateway Initiative. This funding will be used to construct one-third mile of new pedestrian trail and associated public access infrastructure, including an accessible toilet shelter and parking. The new trails will connect to an existing universal trail network on the property, resulting in over a mile of pedestrian trail at the Confluence property.

Five Valleys purchased the Rock Creek Confluence in 2012 to protect and restore habitat and to provide safe, legal public access to the Confluence area. Over the past ten years, Five Valleys has restored damaged and degraded habitat; installed parking areas, trails, and interpretive signs; built education and research partnerships; and worked with neighbors and community volunteers to steward the land. Today, people come from far and wide to experience the beauty of the Confluence area, to connect with nature and with each other, and to participate in educational programs and volunteer events.

In recent years, Five Valleys has focused on improving access to the Confluence for people with disabilities. In 2022, Five Valleys contracted with nationally recognized universal trail experts at Penn Trails LLC to develop a conceptual trails plan for the property. This plan calls for upgrading the existing trail and expanding the trail network and associated infrastructure following Universal Access Best Management Practices. The goals of the Confluence Gateway Initiative are to:

1. Make the Rock Creek Confluence property a welcoming place for people of all ages and abilities.
2. Using Universal Access Best Management Practices, create a pedestrian trail network that provides varying levels of accessibility including a core network of wheelchair accessible trails and a complementary network of single-track trails and mowed paths.
3. Provide the appropriate level of trail-related infrastructure and visitor support services needed to protect ecological resources and ensure a safe and positive experience at the site.
4. Provide visitors with a high-quality, accessible interpretive experience.

It its entirety, the Confluence Gateway Initiative will include construction over a mile of gravel, universal trail; construction of a progressive access trail to Rock Creek; construction of a wheelchair-accessible viewing pavilion, picnic tables, and benches; ADA trailhead parking area improvement and expansion; interpretive signage and audio interpretation; and restoration of a historic cabin.



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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.*

Improving access to the outdoors is core to Five Valleys' mission and strategic goals. Five Valleys has been managing the Rock Creek Confluence property for public access since 2012. The property lies at the gateway to the world-renowned Rock Creek drainage, where thousands of visitors come every year to enjoy the scenery and outdoor recreation opportunities. The Confluence property is the first stop for visitors as they exit I-90, setting the stage for their Rock Creek experience. It is an easy-to-access, popular destination for locals, community organizations, and visitors who come to walk, access Rock Creek for fishing, and participate in educational programs.

Partnerships are the key to success at the Rock Creek Confluence. A wide variety of agencies, community organizations, public schools, and other partners use the property on a regular basis. Five Valleys' acquisition was made possible by funding partnerships with Missoula County and the State Natural Resource Damage Program. Subsequently, we formed restoration partnerships with the Clark Fork Coalition, Trout Unlimited, Missoula College, and the University of Montana. We have also built education and research partnerships at the Confluence with the Montana Natural History Center, the UM Bird Ecology Lab, the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium, the YMCA, UM, MSU, and many others. In our land management and interpretive work, we have forged partnerships with many organizations including Summit Independent Living, NRCS, Missoula County, the Rock Creek Protective Association, the US Forest Service, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Visitation to and use of the Confluence property has increased during Five Valleys' 11 years of ownership. During 2023, Five Valleys monitored visitor use using a pedestrian trail counter. During a nine-month period, the trail counter logged 3,000 foot traffic visitors and 350 wheeled visitors (wheelchairs, strollers, etc.). This number does not include the 300 school children who visited the property for education programs with our partners in 2023, nor does it account for visitation to the east side of the property, where Five Valleys maintains a second trailhead and parking area. The universal trail development and associated visitor support services planned for Confluence Gateway Initiative will help to meet this growing demand.

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*

The Confluence Gateway Initiative will create connections to nature and open space within the lower Rock Creek community. Historically, lower Rock Creek residents have been limited to walking along Rock Creek Road for exercise and fresh air. This is a busy, and often dangerous, road – especially during the busy tourist months. The Confluence Gateway Initiative aims to provide a network of safe, accessible, public trails for residents and visitors.



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b. Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands

The Confluence Gateway Initiative will improve access to Five Valleys Land Trust's Rock Creek Confluence property, a 300-acre property managed for habitat protection and public access. The project will also improve public access to the Clark Fork River, Rock Creek, and adjacent USFS lands.

c. Connectivity with other communities

The Confluence Gateway Initiative does not provide for regional trail connectivity. However, it does provide a public access opportunity for the Clinton community that compliments the work underway by Missoula County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands to redevelop the Clinton Community Park. While the Clinton Community Park offers a developed outdoor recreation site in town, the Confluence Gateway Initiative offers Clinton residents the opportunity to enjoy a rural, accessible nature trail in the scenic Rock Creek drainage, close to home.

d. Access and connectivity to an existing trail network

With a 2023 grant from the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP), Five Valleys is currently constructing a 0.3-mile universal trail that extends from the parking area on Rock Creek Road to a historic cabin and restored wetland. Funding from the Missoula County Trails Bond Program will allow Five Valleys to expand the universal trail network at the Confluence property by an additional ~0.54 mile, adding a loop option to the existing out-and-back trail. It will also connect to paths that provide public access to USFS lands, Rock Creek and the Clark Fork River.

e. Access and connectivity to natural and community resources

The Confluence Gateway Initiative will expand universal access to the rich variety of cultural and natural resources at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Clark Fork River. When Five Valleys purchased the Confluence property in 2012, there was an eight-acre constructed pond on the property that was part of a planned residential development. In the years since, Five Valleys has worked to restore the site and convert the constructed pond to a natural, groundwater-fed wetland that is now teeming with life. Funding from the Missoula County Trails Bond Program will be used to construct a loop trail around a restored wetland. With separate funding, Five Valleys will also construct a wheelchair-accessible observation platform on the new trail.

There are currently 11 interpretive signs on the property that showcase the natural history, culture, and conservation history of the Rock Creek and Upper Clark Fork River watersheds. During the Confluence Gateway Initiative, Five Valleys will develop and install additional interpretive signage along the new trail routes. We will also install solar audio posts to provide an accessible interpretive experience for visitors who are blind or who have low vision.

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

Funding from the Missoula County Trails Bond Program will support construction of a universal trail to access important cultural, historic, and scenic resources at the Rock Creek Confluence.

Cultural Resources: The Confluence property is located on the traditional homeland of the Séliš and Q̓lispé people. Five Valleys worked closely with the Séliš - Q̓lispé Culture Committee to develop and install interpretive signage that informs visitors about the importance of this place and the surrounding landscape to the Séliš and Q̓lispé people.



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Historic Resources: Five Valleys has also worked to preserve the homesteading and settlement history of the property through our interpretive materials and by restoring a historic 1920s-era cabin that will be accessible to people using wheelchairs and to school children participating in education programs. Our partners in the cabin restoration project are historic preservation experts from the Friends of the Upper Rock Creek Historic District who have generously donated their time and expertise to the project.

Scenic Resources: In its funding and management agreement for the Confluence property with Missoula County, Five Valleys committed to managing the property in a way which protects the scenic views of the property for members of the public. The scenic values of the property have improved dramatically in the ten years of Five Valleys' ownership, due in large part to the weed management and habitat restoration work we have completed. The Confluence Gateway Initiative is designed to showcase the scenic resources of the property, including the dramatic views of the Rock Creek and Clark Fork River drainages.

C-2 Project Readiness – (15 pts.)

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.*

Five Valleys Land Trust owns and manages the Rock Creek Confluence property and has full legal access. See attached FVLT ownership map and Confluence Gateway Initiative map.

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

In 2020, Five Valleys organized and hosted a free Universal Trails Workshop for western Montana land trusts, agencies, and non-profit partners, including Missoula County PTOL staff. The workshop was taught by nationally recognized universal trail experts from Penn Trails LLC. Building on this workshop, Five Valleys brought Penn Trails staff back to the Confluence in 2022 to develop a conceptual trails plan for the property. The plan calls for expanding the trail network following Universal Access Best Management Practices and includes trail specifications and detailed station logs that outline prescriptions for each section of the trail. Five Valleys began plan implementation in fall 2023, breaking ground on the first 0.3 mile of universal trail. In 2024-25 we continued construction of nearly a mile of universal trail around a restored wetland. We are ready to complete the final phase of the Confluence Gateway Initiative in 2025-26 as soon as we secure funding. The proposed trail layout is depicted in the Confluence Gateway Project Map (attached to this proposal).



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3. *Permits may be required for your project. For example, a trail located in close proximity to streams or wetland areas will require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE 404) permit. List any known permits required by your project and the status of obtaining those permits. Itemize anticipated costs for any known permits, government fees, and consultants in Part D (Budget Form).*

Five Valleys consulted with the Missoula Conservation District and the Missoula County Floodplain Administration Program to determine permit needs for the Confluence Gateway Initiative. We have secured a 310 permit from the Conservation District for construction of the Rock Creek Progressive Access Trail and plan to begin construction this summer. Next, we will apply for a Missoula County Floodplain Permit for the Eastside Universal Trail and parking area improvements.

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

The Confluence Gateway Initiative is being completed in phases through 2026. Phase 1 is complete, Phase 2 will be complete in summer 2025, and Phase 3 will be complete by December 2026. The estimated timeline the proposed Missoula County Trails Bond Program-funded portion of the project is as follows (note that summer 2025 work may be delayed if fire danger is too high):

Summer 2025

- Submit floodplain permit application
- Site visits with contractors; finalize construction plans and layout
- Excavation and construction begins-Clark Fork River Overlook Trail and Rock Creek Progressive Access Trail

Fall 2025

- Clark Fork River Overlook Trail and Rock Creek Progressive Access Trail completed
- Westside parking area improvements begin
- Weed treatment along trail corridors
- Reseeding of disturbed areas

Spring 2026

- Eastside parking area improvements and universal trail construction begin

Fall 2026

- Project complete

5. *What opportunities may be lost if this project is not funded at this time?*

We are hopeful for full funding to complete the final phase of the Confluence Gateway Initiative. Five Valleys is committed to investing in accessibility improvements at the Confluence property and has raised significant private funds to bring to the project. Missoula County invested in this project with Open Space Bond funds when Five Valleys purchased the property in 2012. Now, the Confluence Gateway Initiative represents an opportunity for Missoula County to invest in improving access to the outdoors for County residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. If the project is partially funded, we will prioritize trails and trail-related improvements on the west side of the Confluence property to connect with the existing trail network. If no funding is secured, accessibility at the 300-acre Confluence property will be confined to the



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universal trails that currently exist on the westside of the property.

C-3 Project Design (10 pts.)

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

One of the primary goals of the Confluence Gateway Initiative is to reduce Five Valleys' current maintenance burden by building better-designed, sustainable trails, parking areas, and associated improvements. All new trails at the Confluence property will be designed to be as accessible as possible to the widest possible range of users while minimizing impacts to the environment. Universal trails are 72" wide and require excavation and removal of material, compaction, installation of weed barrier, and up to 6" of new road base and 6" of new tread. New universal trails will be built to the following universal design specifications:

- Managed use: year-round pedestrian universal trail
- Designed use: light vehicle/UTV (for trail maintenance and power-driven mobility devices)
- Length: 0.5 mile
- Width: 72 feet
- Trail Material: Aggregate bed, non-woven geotextile layer, 3/4-inch minus tread, uniform, firm, and stable for universal access
- Target linear grade: 5% or less
- Short pitch maximum: 8.33%
- Maximum pitch density: 30% of the trail
- Maximum cross slope: 3%
- Sight distance: minimum 50 feet

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

Five Valleys recognizes that access to the outdoors is a focal point of the economic activities, recreational pursuits, and spiritual lives of many Montanans. The physical and mental health benefits of time spent in nature are well-documented, and the demand for outdoor recreation opportunities is growing. The need to improve access to the outdoors for people living with disabilities is particularly urgent. An estimated 13% of Americans have a disability and rural residents are more likely than their urban counterparts to experience a disability.

Located less than a mile from I-90 and with an ADA-accessible parking area, toilet facilities, and trailhead on a county highway, the Confluence property provides a place where everyone can reap the physical and mental benefits of time spent outdoors without having to dedicate hours to travel or dollars for the gas or gear needed to access more remote destinations. Elderly and disabled residents of the rural lower Rock Creek community are among the most active users of the Confluence trail system. Their engagement has helped Five Valleys to understand the need for trail improvements at the site.



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The Confluence Gateway Initiative is entirely focused on improving the safety and quality of the visitor experience at the Confluence property for people with disabilities. We are taking advantage of the relatively flat terrain on the property – a unique asset in the otherwise very rugged Rock Creek drainage – to construct a network of universal trails and associated amenities that will be accessible to all visitors. We have worked closely with Missoula-based Summit Independent Living over the past decade to understand the opportunities and growing need for non-paved, accessible trails outside of an urban setting. Brenden Dalin, Summit’s Independent Living and Recreation Specialist, is currently serving as a project manager advising Five Valleys on accessibility improvements at the Confluence and will continue to be involved during final phases of trail construction.

The Confluence Gateway Initiative is unique in that it will expand non-paved, wheelchair-accessible trail mileage in this rural setting. This level of accessibility has the double benefit of making the trail suitable for nearly any user—including older adults, school groups, and families—and providing access to nature for all.

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.

No modifications will be needed. The main complexity in this project lies in the logistics and associated cost of excavating and removing material from the trail bed and hauling in up to 12 inches of new trail bed and tread material. For this reason, universal trails are significantly more expensive to build than natural surface, single track trails.

4. Describe how the project will be implemented once all funding has been attained. Explain your process for choosing vendors, materials, systems, etc. Attach any detailed maps, photos, or renderings illustrating the project design and vision.

Construction: The Penn Trails conceptual plan illustrates the general project design and vision. The trail will be constructed by professional contractors selected and overseen by Five Valleys. Five Valleys has a strong track record of vetting and managing trail building contractors, having overseen the construction of 15+ miles of trail, including multi-user, universal, and single track, in the last 5 years. This total includes the 2020 RTP-funded House of Sky Trail, the 2023 RTP-funded Confluence Gateway Trail, and the 2024 TSP-funded Wetland Discovery Loop Trail.

Five Valleys Contact: Five Valleys’ Stewardship Director, Jenny Tollefson, will oversee the project. Jenny has 20+ years of experience in ecology, land and public access management, and conservation easement stewardship. She has worked for Five Valleys since 2011 and oversees management of the Rock Creek Confluence property.

Project Management: Five Valleys will continue to work with Summit Independent Living as a project advisor and consultant on day-to-day trail construction. Summit has been closely involved with universal trail development at the Confluence property, and their expertise has been critical to ensuring the trail is not only designed for, but is usable by, people with disabilities. Summit is currently working with Five Valleys on construction of the RTP-funded Confluence Gateway Trail and supports expansion of the Confluence Universal Trail Network (see attached letter). Brenden Dalin, our main contact and Summit’s Independent Living and Recreation Specialist, has extensive universal trail experience including managing the RTP-funded Placid Lake State Park Universal Trail.



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

Yes, the Confluence Gateway Initiative is entirely focused on improving the safety and quality of the visitor experience at the Confluence property for all users. See Question C-3(2) for more information.

6. 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. (Data from the [Missoula County Practical Landscape Assessment for Conservation and Enhancement \(PLACE\)](#) Resource Atlas can serve as a potential resource for attaining this information.)

There are three general habitat types on the Confluence property: upland forest, grassland/pasture, and riparian/wetland. The property runs along the Clark Fork River and touches a back channel of Rock Creek in the far southwest corner. Much of the grassland/pasture habitat was disturbed by previous land uses, including preparations for the residential subdivision. Five Valleys has been working to restore damaged and degraded habitats since purchasing the property in 2012. The former ornamental pond is now a natural, groundwater-fed wetland. The new universal trail network at the Confluence property is designed to showcase this wetland and views of the Clark Fork River.

The purpose of the Confluence Gateway Initiative is to concentrate human use on a well-designed, sustainably constructed pedestrian trail network, thereby reducing impacts to the natural environment. We do not anticipate any significant direct or cumulative impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic life and/or habitats as a result of this project. We have consulted with the MTFWP nongame biologist and Audubon Society representatives on the trail route to minimize impacts to nongame species and habitats. The property will only be open during daylight hours, which will help to preserve wildlife security. There may be some minor, short-term direct impacts, however, during construction/implementation due to the presence of equipment and ground disturbance.

There are no surface water resources along the trail corridor that could be impacted by trail construction. One of the new trails, the Rock Creek Progressive Access Trail, will be situated on the slope above a wetland area in the Rock Creek floodplain. Five Valleys has secured a 310 permit from the Missoula Conservation District for this trail. Overall impacts to soil quality, stability and moisture will be minimal.

New universal trails will be built using USFS Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG) and Universal Access Design Best Management Practices which emphasize trail sustainability. Following construction, any bare soil will be reseeded with native grass seed. Impacts to vegetation cover, quantity and quality will be negligible. The two new universal trails will be located in very disturbed areas that are mostly gravel or non-native grasses. Five Valleys has been working to revegetate these sites, and we will mitigate impacts of trail construction by spraying weeds and reseeding disturbed areas with native grasses after construction is complete. Unique, endangered, or fragile resources will not be affected by the project. The project site is slowly being restored by Five Valleys' seeding and planting efforts. We monitor the vegetation and manage noxious weeds annually.



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7. *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.*

No.

C-4 Project Support (20-pts.)

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

Five Valleys purchased the Rock Creek Confluence in 2012 to protect and restore habitat and to provide safe, legal public access to the Confluence area. The \$1.6 million acquisition was made possible by funding from the Missoula County Open Space Bond Program (\$400K), the State Natural Resource Damage Program (\$400K), and a wide variety of individual donors and private foundations. With its purchase, Five Valleys committed to protecting the following conservation values:

1. Scenic views of the property, the Clark Fork River and the Rock Creek Valley for members of the public;
2. Significant relatively natural habitats for native plants, fish, and wildlife, which are important to the ecological integrity and functions of the Rock Creek and Upper Clark Fork River Valleys;
3. Environmental related education and research opportunities to promote the welfare and interests of the general public; and
4. Recreational opportunities for the general public, including enhanced access to public lands and waterways.

Over the last 11 years, Five Valleys has made great strides in cleaning up and restoring degraded portions of the property. We are now focused on improving the public access experience to the Confluence for people of all abilities, and specifically on upgrading and expanding the universal trail network following Universal Access Best Management Practices.

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.*

During the conceptual planning phase for the Confluence Gateway Initiative, Five Valleys solicited community and partner input through surveys and open houses. In 2022, we conducted an open house with Penn Trails staff in attendance. We are committed to maintaining open communication with neighbors and partners about our plans for the property, and have already made some adjustment to the plan to accommodate interests and priorities of the lower Rock Creek community. Letters of support representing local, regional, and state entities are attached to this application.



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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.*

The Confluence Gateway Initiative is specifically identified in Five Valleys 2021-24 Strategic Business Plan (specifically embedded in our goal to “Expand Equitable Access to Community Open Spaces”). The project helps to meet the goals of the 2022 Missoula County Pathways and Trails Masterplan and the 2007 USFS Open Space Conservation Strategy. The project also helps to meet the six goals of the 2020-24 Montana State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan:

- **Promote Outdoor Recreation Opportunities for All Montanans:** The project supports outdoor recreation for people of all abilities and mobilities.
- **Enhance Public Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities:** The project improves front country access and helps unlock public access to Rock Creek and USFS lands.
- **Support Economic Vitality of Communities and State:** The project supports Montana's outdoor recreation economy by increasing accessibility in the world-famous Rock Creek drainage, which draws thousands of visitors each year.
- **Improve Quality of Life Through Outdoor Recreation Experiences:** The project helps engage senior, youth, and health-challenged populations in healthy outdoor recreation by providing easy, broadly accessible access.
- **Adapt Outdoor Recreation for a Changing Environment:** The project utilizes sustainable trail design that will be durable and low maintenance.
- **Honor Montana’s Outdoor Legacy:** The project provides opportunities to connect with our outdoor legacy, learn Séliš-Q̓lispé and European settler history, and appreciate area ecology and conservation.

4. *Briefly discuss support from entities and user groups that are supporting the project in ways other than cash or in-kind contributions. A maximum of ten support letters should be attached in Part F and clearly labeled on the section cover page. All letters should be dated within the last two years.*

Letters of support representing local, regional, and state entities are attached to this application. The attached letter from the State Natural Resource Damage Program is a copy of the letter provided for Five Valleys’ MTFWP Trail Stewardship Grant Application in January 2024. It is included here as written, as it illustrates NRDP support for universal trail construction at the Confluence.

5. *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?*

Five Valleys has heard no opposition or objections to the Confluence Gateway Initiative.



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C-5 Project Match (20 pts.)

1. *Describe any partnerships providing cash or in-kind contributions. Attach all partner support letters in Part F and clearly label on the section cover page. All support letters committing a match must indicate that the match will remain available through the project timeline.*

See Project Match Documentation materials attached to this application.

Confluence Gateway Initiative Budget	
Missoula County Trails Bond Request	\$100,000 (application pending)
Montana FWP Trails Stewardship Program Grant	\$100,000 (secured-see attached contract)
Montana FWP Recreational Trails Program Grant	\$90,000 (secured-see attached contract)
Missoula County Community Parks & Recreation Grant	\$15,000 (secured-see attached contract)
Montana Forever Funds-Five Valleys Land Trust	\$160,000 (FVLT donor-restricted fund for Confluence Gateway Initiative)
Montana FWP Nongame Program	\$4,200 (secured for audio interpretation)
Paradigm3 Architects (in kind)	\$5,000 (secured-see attached agreement)
Penn Trails, LLC (in-kind)	\$5,000 (secured-see attached invoice)
Total Project Budget	\$479,200

2. *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.*

80% of the Confluence Gateway Initiative project cost has been secured and 20% remains (see Question 1 above). Five Valleys' request for \$100,000 from the Missoula County Trails Bond Program will allow us to complete the Confluence Gateway Initiative by the end of 2026. If we do not receive funding, Five Valleys will delay the final phase until funds are available.



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C-6 Maintenance (10 pts.)

1. *Describe the long-term maintenance plan for the trail facility. Estimate the annual costs to maintain the facility, how those numbers were calculated, how you intend to fund maintenance, and who will be responsible for maintenance.*

The primary goal of the conceptual trails plan developed by Penn Trails LLC for Five Valleys is to reduce Five Valleys' current maintenance burden by building better-designed, sustainable trails. Trail design, layout, and construction will take advantage of natural topography to create grade reversals and opportunities for water to shed off the trail. Following construction, Five Valleys' long-term maintenance plan for the universal trail network at the Confluence is summarized as follows:

Responsible party: Five Valleys will be responsible for all trail maintenance. Five Valleys employs on-site caretakers and a Land Steward who will provide day-to-day maintenance, including removing encroaching vegetation, managing noxious weeds, weed-whacking grass along trail edges, leaf blowing or raking pine needles off the trail, and replacing gravel as needed.

Funding: Trail and trail-related infrastructure maintenance costs are and will continue to be a regular line item in Five Valleys' annual operating budget. We anticipate ~\$1000/year in trail maintenance costs.

Volunteers: Five Valleys has a long history of engaging community volunteers to assist with trail maintenance, including Boy Scouts, corporate volunteer groups, and youth groups. This volunteer approach not only saves on costs, it also provides valuable community outreach opportunities for individuals and organizations wishing to provide service.



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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.*

See attached project budget.

2. *Provide similar information for your project's long-term maintenance plan. Attach supporting evidence for long-term maintenance funding in Part F.*

Maintenance funds will come from donor-restricted gifts in Five Valleys' Montana Forever Fund and Five Valleys' annual operating budget.

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, Five Valleys Land Trust, own the real property for which Five Valleys Land Trust has requested funding from the Missoula County Parks and Trails Bond. That request, titled the Confluence Gateway Initiative project, is described in the attached legal description and map. The Confluence Gateway Initiative project will be used for recreational purposes including: universal trail construction. Five Valleys Land Trust recognizes and appreciates that Missoula County has designated or will designate the specific land outlined in the Confluence Gateway Initiative project as open-space land as defined by the Montana Code Annotated in Section 76-6-104.



Missoula County Trails Bond Program Level II Application

Part E, continued (Notarized page is included with original Level 2 application)

Sign in presence of notary public

Land Owner Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Additional Owner Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Notary Signature: _____

[Notaries must complete the following, if not part of stamp.]

(Notarial Seal)

Printed Name: _____

Notary Public for the State of: _____

Residing at: _____

My Commission expires: _____, 20____

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____



Missoula County Trails Bond Program Level II Application

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.

Five Valleys Land Trust Application List of Attachments

Note: Updated map, project budget, and additional project match documentation secured since the last Level 2 application submitted (TSP Grant; Missoula County Community Parks & Recreation Grant) are included here. Attachments included with the original Level 2 application are not included.

1. FVLT Letter of Org Commitment 2024 (attachment page 1)
2. 2012-12-20 LEMB-FVLT warranty deed RECORDED (attachment pages 2-5)
3. FVLT Confluence ownership map (attachment page 6)
4. FVLT letters of support (attachment pages 7-9)
5. Project Match Documentation (attachment pages 10-15)
6. FVLT Confluence Gateway Initiative Photos (attachment page 16)
7. Confluence Gateway Initiative map (attachment page 17)
8. Confluence Gateway Initiative Full Project Budget (attachment page 18)

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

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

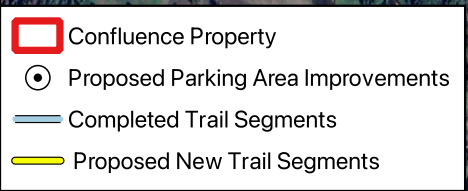
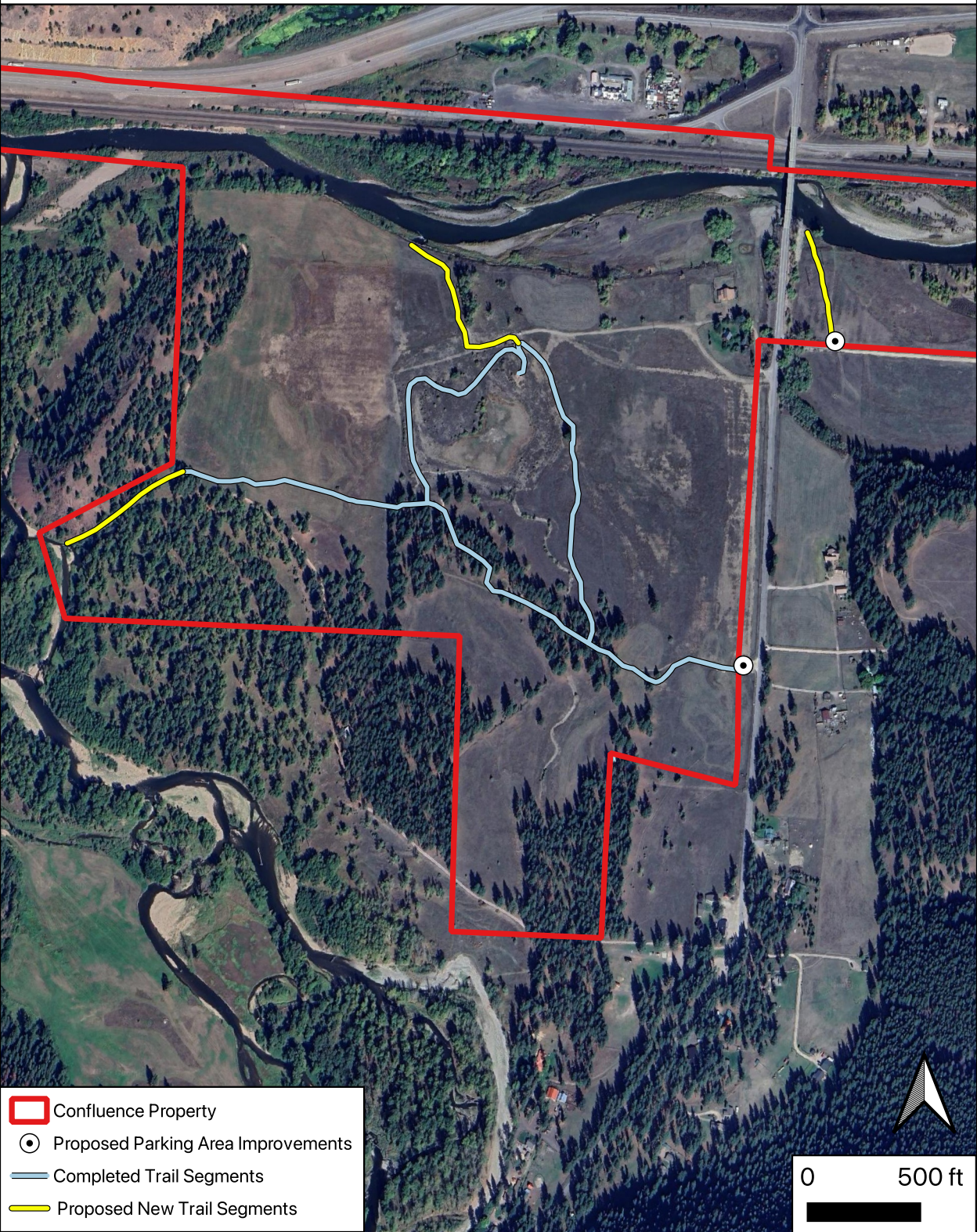
Applicant Signature: 

Date: June 6, 2025

Property Owner Signature: 

Date: June 6, 2025

Five Valleys Land Trust Confluence Gateway Project



Rock Creek Confluence Gateway Initiative - Project Budget 2023-2026				
	Budget Amount	Amount Secured	Amount Remaining	Funding Sources *
Planning & Design				
Confluence Universal Trail Conceptual Plan	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	Penn Trails LLC (in-kind \$5K); FVLT
Universal Trail Construction				
Phase 1 Montana FWP Recreational Trails Program Portion	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$0	MTFWP-Recreational Trails Program
Phase 2-Montana FWP Trail Stewardship Program Portion	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	MTFWP Trail Stewardship Program
Phase 3-Missoula County Trails Bond Portion	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	Missoula County Trails Bond Program
Project management-Summit Independent Living	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$0	FVLT
Progressive Access Trail Construction				
Rock Creek Progressive Access Trail	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000.00	Athletic Brewing; Missoula County Trails Bond
Public Access Infrastructure				
Accessible viewing pavilion	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$0	Paradigm 3 Architects (in-kind); Missoula Co. Community Parks Grant; FVLT
Westside parking area expansion & improvements	\$40,000	\$30,000	\$10,000	Dick Anderson Construction (in-kind); FVLT; Missoula County Trails Bond Program
Eastside parking area improvements	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000	Missoula County Trails Bond Program
Picnic tables & benches	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0	FVLT
Interpretation				
Interpretive planning and signage	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$0	Missoula Co. Community Parks Grant; FVLT
Audio description services/solar audio posts-Phases 1 and 2	\$10,500	\$10,500	\$0	MTFWP Nongame Program (in-kind); FVLT
Historic Preservation				
Pete's Cabin stabilization project	\$11,700	\$11,700	\$0	Friends of Upper Rock Creek (in-kind)
Restoration				
Weed treatment (projected 3 years)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	FVLT
Reseeding (projected 2 years)	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	FVLT
Maintenance				
Universal trail maintenance (projected 5-10 years)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	FVLT
TOTAL	\$479,200	\$379,200	\$100,000	
<i>* FVLT funds are donor-restricted gifts in the Montana Forever Fund committed to the Confluence Gateway Initiative. FVLT will continue to pursue private foundation grants to offset the use of and extend the life of the this fund.</i> <i>* Note: FVLT staff and volunteer time are not reflected in this budget.</i>				



**FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS MONTANA TRAIL STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM
PROJECT AGREEMENT**

TSP2410

THIS AGREEMENT, entered into this 4/19/2024, by and between Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the governmental agency of the State of Montana designated to act for the State of Montana, for the purpose of implementing the Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program, with its principal place of business at 1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, Montana, hereafter called the "Department", and the Five Valleys Land Trust, 120 Hickory St, Missoula, MT 59801, hereinafter referred to as the "Recipient".

Program funds shall be used on the Confluence Universal Trail Network Project.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the Recipient desires to conduct the Confluence Universal Trail Network Project and to comply with the reimbursement requirements as a recipient of the amount approved by the Department for this trails project; and,

WHEREAS, the Department desires to administer the grant to the Recipient of said project and to determine satisfactory completion and performance;

WHEREAS, to further conservation and development of Montana's trails, the Department encourages the Recipient to highlight the Trail Stewardship Grant Program in press releases, social media posts, or other marketing materials.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the covenants to be performed by each party on behalf of the other, as hereinafter set forth, it is hereby understood and agreed by and between the parties hereto as follows:

1. That the Recipient will conduct the following described trail project in accordance with the plans and specifications approved with the Project Application submitted to the Department.
2. That the Recipient is ready to proceed on its project. Recipient will initiate project immediately upon execution of this Agreement and complete said project on or before October 15, 2026. Final request for reimbursement must be received no later than December 31, 2026. Any program funds associated with this project that are unexpended and which have not been requested for reimbursement by this date will be lost to the Recipient.
3. The Recipient guarantees that it has funds necessary for the implementation of this project, that it will pay for said project, and will request reimbursement for allowable costs only in accordance with program guidelines and which are approved in the Project Budget (Appendix A) and paid for by the Recipient. Upon receipt of satisfactory billing documentation from the Recipient, the Department agrees to reimburse the Recipient the allowable funds expended by

the Recipient. The Department's share approved at this time shall not exceed **\$100,000.00**. If changes to the project occur after executing this Agreement, the Recipient will provide an amended budget and Project Cost Information from their TSP application showing adjustments based upon the grant amount identified herein and explaining any changes in the scope of the project in the description text following said amended budget information. The amended budget information, if applicable, will be completed by the Recipient and uploaded in Grant management software program and must be completed prior to the return of the signed Project Agreement.

4. The Recipient acknowledges that flexibility between budgeted categories is permitted up to 10% of the total award. Expenditures differing by more than 10% must be approved by amendment in writing requested to the Trail Stewardship Program Manager and submitted through the grant software program.
5. The Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program allows 7% of total direct costs to be identified as administrative costs. Recipient acknowledges it is only eligible for administrative costs as part of this Agreement if it was included with the original application.
6. The Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program is a 90% trails program/10% Recipient cost-share program. At the time/s of request for reimbursement by the Recipient, the Recipient will account for Recipient funds expended and value of in-kind contributions, with the Recipient's share being not less than 10% of costs incurred. The Recipient total required match is not less than **\$10,000.00**.
7. The Recipient agrees to provide the Department with all reports and certifications, including accounting reports, receipts and vouchers as requested and in the form and upon the dates requested either prior to commencement of the project or at any time during the project. The Recipient also agrees to follow accounting procedures satisfactory to the Department and to provide, upon request at any time during the project, a financing commitment indicating that continued funds will be available for completion of the project as proposed in the referenced plans and specifications, and to reimburse the Department for any and all overpayments on this project. In addition, the Recipient agrees to allow Legislative, Department or State Auditors access to its records for the purpose of determining that this grant is administered in accordance with grant terms and conditions and, upon request, to provide the Department with a copy of any such audit.
8. Purchase of Goods or Services. It is recommended that Recipients follow the following purchasing guidelines for purchase of "Goods or Services." Goods and services typically include purchase of such things as trailhead or trailside facilities, signs, rental of equipment or facilities, contracted labor for maintaining, rehabilitating, planning, or engineering of trails. The purchase of goods and services should be sought using local businesses or regional businesses near the project site where available.
 - a. For goods or services costing over \$5,000 it is suggested that a limited solicitation process is utilized. This includes cost proposals, by fax or written format, from at least three prospective vendors if possible.

9. In-kind labor. Volunteer time and attendance records are necessary to claim in-kind labor as a match. The hourly reimbursement rate for volunteers is \$25 per hour.
10. Winter Grooming Rates. Recipient must maintain time and mileage records for winter grooming operations to claim winter grooming equipment rates. These rates are used in lieu of receipts for trail groomer equipment expenses such as oil, fuel, and general maintenance and repairs. Current winter grooming rates are as follows:
- Utility sled used for trail grooming: \$20.00 per hour
 - Large groomers (i.e. PistenBully): \$120.00 per hour
11. Use of Property. Recipients may request use of property reimbursement (i.e., horse trailers, pack animals, motorized or non-motorized OHVs or boats) based on the date the property was in use utilizing the state approved rates.
12. The Department may unilaterally terminate this Agreement upon refusal by the Recipient to allow access to records necessary to carry out the legislative audit and analysis function set forth in Title 2, Section 7, Part 5, Montana Code Annotated.
13. The Recipient shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the award and performance of this Agreement, any contract related to this Agreement, or in the administration of its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. The recipient shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of contracts. The recipient's DBE program, as required by 49 CFR part 26 and as approved, is incorporated by reference in this Agreement. Implementation of this program is a legal obligation and failure to carry out its terms shall be treated as a violation of this Agreement. Upon notification to the recipient of its failure to carry out its approved program, the Department may impose sanctions and may, in appropriate cases, refer the matter for enforcement under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and/or the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1986 (31 U.S.C. 3801 et seq.)
14. The Recipient will participate in reporting as a condition of acceptance of the funding. A final report is due by the end of the second month after submitting a final reimbursement request or after the project award term ends, whichever is first. Performance Plan reports are due in the Grant management software program system on the following schedule:

Reporting Period	Status Report Due Date
July 1 – June 30	September 30

15. The Recipient will participate in a risk assessment conducted by the Department prior and during the Agreement term.
16. The Recipient will participate in onsite monitoring conducted by the Department. Department may conduct onsite monitoring visit(s) with Recipient during this Agreement to ensure project goals and objectives as outlined in the Project Application are on track. Department may also

request the meeting(s) as problems arise. Department may schedule the monitoring visit with Recipient. Recipient's failure to participate in any monitoring visits, missing or rescheduling two consecutive monitoring visits, or Recipient's failure to make a good faith effort to resolve problems may result in termination of the Agreement.

17. The Recipient further agrees that this trail project will be available to the general public.
18. Recipient has reviewed and agrees to comply with the Project Progress and Final Report Requirements (Appendix C) attached to this Agreement. Appendix C is hereby incorporated into and made part of this Agreement.
19. Recipient shall provide the Department, State of Montana, Legislative Auditor, or their authorized agents access to any records necessary to determine Contract compliance. State may terminate this Agreement, without incurring liability, for Recipient's refusal to allow access as required by this section. (18-1-118, MCA.)
20. Recipient shall create and retain all records supporting the Confluence Universal Trail Network Project for a period of three (3) years after either the completion date of this Contract or termination of the Contract.
21. Recipient shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the State of Montana and the Department and their elected and appointed officials, agents, and employees, while acting within the scope of their duties as such, from and against all claims, demands, causes of action, liabilities, damages, judgments, expenses or fees, including the reasonable cost of defense thereof and attorney fees, arising or awarded in favor of Recipient's or its subcontractor's employees or agents or third parties for bodily or personal injuries, death, damage to property, or financial or other loss resulting or allegedly resulting in whole or part from (i) the services performed under this Agreement or (ii) other acts or omissions of Recipient and/or its agents, employees, representatives, assigns, or subcontractors.
22. It is understood and agreed by both parties that a failure to comply with any of the points listed above can result in a voiding of this Agreement and a loss of further Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program assistance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Department has caused its name to be subscribed thereunto duly authorized and the Recipient has caused its name to be subscribed by its proper officers, thereunto duly authorized, on the day and year first above written.

TSP RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION

Five Valleys Land Trust

Jenny Tollefson, Stewardship Director, Five Valleys Land

By: Trust

Printed Name of Recipient Project Coordinator

Jenny Tollefson

Signature of Recipient Project Coordinator

Date: 5/1/24

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

By: Tom Lang, Recreation and Trails Specialist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Tom Lang

Signature of Agency Representative

Date: 4/19/2024

Approved as to Legal Content

By: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Legal Counsel

Marty Tuttle

Signature

Date: 4/9/2024

**Missoula County Parks and Trail Advisory Board
Community Parks and Recreation Grant Program – FY2025**

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN
MISSOULA COUNTY
AND
FIVE VALLEYS LAND TRUST**

This Agreement by and between **FIVE VALLEYS LAND TRUST** and Missoula County provides that:

WHEREAS, the Missoula County Board of County Commissioners and the Missoula County Parks and Trails Advisory Board have determined that there is a need to assist various organizations within Missoula County with park **development**; and

WHEREAS, the Recipient has requested and received approval for assistance from Missoula County; and

WHEREAS, the County resolves that the attached application for assistance and conditions for use and payment of **capital** funds are integral parts of this Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS AGREED, that the specific terms of this Agreement are as follows:

Missoula County agrees to provide up to \$15,000 in funds for **improvements** as delineated in Attachment A after the required documentation has been received. The Recipient will provide at least 25% of the total project using cash expenditures, volunteer labor, volunteer services and/or donated materials. This use of funds is contingent on the Missoula County Parks and Trails Advisory Board being recognized for its contribution to the development and the Recipient agreeing to maintain these and other improvements in the park.

It is understood by the Recipient that the funds are pursuant to a grant and that any contracts or other agreements entered into by the Recipient in order to carry out the project for which funds are granted is solely an agreement between the Recipient and the contractor to which Missoula County is not a party.

**Seating within a wheelchair accessible wetland viewing pavilion,
interpretive signage, and audio interpretation along a new,
universal trail at the Rock Creek Confluence property.**

The Missoula County contact for this Agreement is **Bethany Gunther** at the County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands Program.

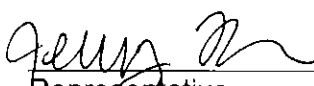
Any proposed deviations or amendments to this Agreement must be submitted to the contact at least ten (10) days prior to a Parks and Trails Advisory Board meeting. Their

recommendation will then be considered for approval by Missoula Board of County Commissioners.


Reimbursements for eligible costs under this Agreement may be obtained on submission of a detailed report in a format prescribed by Missoula County in Attachment B. Funds must be spent before **June 30, 2026**.

This Agreement may be amended, modified, or terminated upon thirty (30) days written notification by either party or the mutual written consent of both parties.

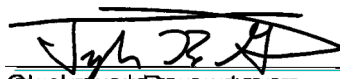
FIVE VALLEYS LAND TRUST

 2/7/25
Representative Date

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

 2/20/2025
Chair 9F2FD34FCC41E9C2B2D512DC93A576B2 Date

ATTEST:

 2/20/2025
Clerk and Recorder C1406476D66BE7E4B19465F4B77 Date