

MISSOULA RIVERFRONT BIKE TOUR

Currents Aqua. Center

1 Start/Finish

McCormick Park

2

ORANGE ST.

21

BROADWAY ST.

MAIN ST.

FRONT ST.

Caras Park

17 to 20

Clark Fork Natural Park

3

HIGGINS AVE.

15

Holiday Inn

12

13

11 Kiwanis Park

3RD ST.

6

4

5

14

MADISON ST.

10

9

8

7

John H. Toole Park



Parks & Recreation
City of Missoula • 600 Cregg Lane • 721-PARK

DASANI BLUE BIKES
READY. SET. RIDE. TREK

Missoula's Free
Bike Checkout Program
Visit Currents Aquatics Center in
McCormick Park for Details

Missoula's Riverfront

A Self-Guided Bike Tour



Points of interest correlate with numbered points on the accompanying map.

1. McCormick Park

McCormick Park was donated to the City of Missoula by the McCormick family, heirs to the estate of W.J. McCormick, one of Missoula's founders; and the Morris Silver Family in 1938 and '39. The first feature to be installed was the old swimming pool which was completed in 1939.

In 2003 the Parks & Recreation Department hired Rocking M Design, a local Missoula firm, to create a new master plan for McCormick Park that would include a new Aquatics/Community Center and would increase the net green space in the park.

Missoula voters passed a GO Aquatics Bond in November 2003. The aquatics project included four neighborhood splash decks and two waterparks. "Currents", in McCormick Park, is an indoor facility with waterslides, lap pool and splash features. "Splash Montana", in Playfair Park is an outdoor facility with waterslides, a lazy river, splash pool, volley ball courts, and full service concessions. This site will soon include a 50-meter lap pool as well.

2. MOBASH Skatepark

Missoula had no place designated for skateboarding as a legitimate recreational activity. In 2000, interested skateboarders got together, formed the non-profit Missoula Skatepark Association and started raising funds to build the park. The Missoula Redevelopment Agency contributed TIF funds toward the park and helped manage its construction. The site design and landscape plan was done by Abbotswood Design Group out of Coeur d'Alene, ID and the skate surface was designed and constructed by the Skatepark contractor/designer firm Grind Line. The park was named MOBASH, a combination of two family names who gave generously toward the building of the park.

The park was completed in the fall of 2006 and kicked-off with a bang when Tony Hawk showed up with other big name skateboard professionals for the park's grand opening. An estimated 10,000 people filled the park and participated in the event.

3. Clark Fork Natural Park and Garden City Islands

The Garden City Islands were established as a wildlife education area in 1995 by the City of Missoula and the Five Valleys Land Trust. They will be maintained to conserve their natural beauty and wildlife habitat into the future. These islands provide a wild place in the heart of our city and a unique opportunity of the study of nature. (From kiosk)

4. Old Milwaukee Depot

(From Old Milwaukee Depot flyer, Boone & Crockett Club.) The tracks of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway were laid across Montana between 1897 and 1909. The Milwaukee Railroad's splendid brick passenger depot was built in 1910. Its grandeur and stylistic sophistication are indicative of the railroad's importance to Missoula and Western Montana. Designed by architect J.A. Lindstrand, the depot is one of the finest examples of railroad station architecture in Montana.

The Boone and Crockett Club purchased the Old Milwaukee Depot to be used as its' national headquarters in 1992. Prior to this purchase, the Depot was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior in cooperation with the Montana Historical Society.

5. Milwaukee Trail Vision

The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway once serviced a line that stretched from Chicago, IL to Tacoma, WA, passing through Montana and the heart of Missoula. The Rail-to-Trails Conservancy recognizes and is promoting the significant opportunity that the Milwaukee Railroad presents; the ability to create a cross-continent rail-trail in the West.

In the 1970's the Milwaukee grade was officially abandoned and properties were sold off. The City of Missoula has converted some of the old Milwaukee Road right-of-way into the main east-west spine of its non-motorized Bicycle Commuter Network. This trail is made up of the Kim Williams Trail, the south shore of the Ron MacDonald Riverfront Trail system and the Milwaukee Trail. Currently the Milwaukee Trail's western end is at Russell Street and to the east the trail ends near the Bandmann Flats area. The City plans to continue acquiring corridor sections for trail expansion both to the east and west.

Missoula prides itself for being a bicycle and pedestrian friendly city. A network of commuter trails and smaller neighborhood and park trails connects Missoula's parks, shopping centers, civic centers, schools, places of work and places of play. The core of Missoula's Bicycle Commuter Network is built around two rails-to-trails conversions. The main north-south connection, the Bitterroot Branch Trail, runs parallel to its railroad namesake. The old Milwaukee Road serves as the east-west commuter connection. Both the Bitterroot Branch Trail and the Milwaukee Trail were designed by the local Landscape Architecture firm Kent Watson & Associates with engineering done by HDR Engineers.

6. Evelyn Borg Johnson Park

Evelyn Borg Johnson Park is a small triangular park on a hillside immediately south of the Boone & Crockett Club and west of Higgins Ave. The park was funded by the MRA and designed by local Landscape Architect James Pool of Wonder Land Landscape Architecture. The design, completed in 2002, includes an elevated stairway with a prairie planting underneath and a series of retaining walls, trails and colorful plantings. The park is a gateway to the Historic Southside Neighborhood.

7. Clark Fork Native Prairie in John H. Toole Park

John H. Toole was Mayor of Missoula from 1983 to 1986. Before and during his time as mayor, he was very supportive of park development in Missoula. He was influential in the creation of Island Park, now known as Caras Park, in the 1940's. Toole Park now has a track, practice field, restrooms and is home to the Clark Fork Native Prairie. A stroll along the prairie trails will reveal a glimpse into this valley's past. Aside from the native grasses, visitors can see many native forbs including arrowleaf balsamroot, purple larkspur and lupine, white yarrow, pink bitterroot, and purple Clarkia, to name a few.

8. Water-Wise Landscape Demonstration Garden

The Water-Wise Garden serves as a "living laboratory" of water-conserving techniques. Missoula receives an average of 13 inches of precipitation per year. Plants that need more water than this must be watered to survive. Since 50% of summer residential water use in Missoula is for watering lawns and gardens, water-wise gardening saves significant amounts of water. (From Water-Wise Landscape Demonstration Garden flyer.)

The Water-Wise Landscape Demonstration Garden is sponsored by Mountain Water Company, Missoula Parks & Recreation, Madeline Mazurski, Rainmaker, and Missoula Clark Fork Coalition. For more information please contact the Missoula County Extension Office at 721-4095.

9. Kim Williams Trail

This trail lies on top of the Old Milwaukee Road and serves as part of the City's main east-west commuter trail. It is heavily used by Missoula citizens and University of Montana students for transportation, and recreation of all types. As the trail heads east up Hellgate Canyon it enters a rich riparian zone. The trail is a good place to get an up-close glimpse of the Clark Fork River's natural beauty, its flora and fauna.

Kim Williams, the trail's namesake, was a well known naturalist and long-time Missoula resident who died in 1986. She was also a well known radio personality on National Public Radio. During her professional career she advocated environmental awareness and celebrated the natural wonders of the region.

10. Madison Street "Underbridge"

To better connect Missoulians on both sides of the Clark Fork River, MRA funded the "Underbridge" project. "The Bridge was designed and engineered by Beaudette Consulting Engineers/WGM Group/OZ Architects and constructed by Industrial Services of the Rockies of Frenchtown. The Bridge is a suspension bridge type structure with a pre-cast concrete deck. Construction began in August 2005 at a cost of \$1.25 million including design and engineering.

11. Kiwanis Park

This park was acquired by the Kiwanis Park Playground Association in the 1930's. By 1987 the Missoula Kiwanis Club had supplied the park with an ice skating rink, warming house and fireplace, tennis courts, volley ball court, basketball court and a baseball diamond. A re-design of the park was undertaken in 2003-04 by local landscape architecture firm, Kent Watson & Associates. The intent of the re-design was to create an attractive parking lot and to improve the walkway circulation in and around the park.

12. Bess Reed Park

In 1985 development of this park was funded with UDAG and MRA monies. Bess Reed, the park's namesake, was a noted Missoula communitarian. She worked as the Executive Secretary of the Community Chest, served on the District 1 School Board for 21 years, was State PTA Officer and President and Secretary of the Society for Crippled Children. She also served four terms as a State Legislator where she championed bills that aided children and schools as well as the Equal Rights Amendment. Bess Reed died in Missoula in 1984.

13. The LeVasseur Panels

In the 1930's the LeVasseur family lived at 313 East 1st Street near where Bess Reed Park is now. In 1936 a new concrete sidewalk was poured across the street from the family home. The young LeVasseur daughter played outside leaving footprints and scratches on the fresh concrete. That summer the daughter drowned in the Clark Fork River. Soon after, the family moved and the City renamed East 1st Street, LeVasseur Street. The sidewalk panels bearing her footprints were preserved and now lie in Bess Reed Park.

14. Mural "Untitled"

The mural "Untitled," is in Bess Reed Park on the south end of Clay Street. Volunteers and children of Big Brothers and Sisters painted this vibrant and humorous mural in 1997.

15. "Returnings"

The sculpture "Returnings" was installed on the East Side of the Higgins Street Bridge just north of the Clark Fork River. Created by Jeffrey Funk in 1989 as a project of the City of Missoula Public Art Committee, these three large bronze fish are a favorite among children.

16. Brennan's Wave

Missoula is home to a very active whitewater community who love Montana's rivers. The Clark Fork River, near Caras Park, contained an irrigation diversion made of chunks of old concrete and rebar. This diversion was not only eyesore but a hazard to those who floated the river through Missoula. In 1999, citizens organized to replace the old weir with one that would double as a recreational standing wave for kayakers. It took six years, but the group was able to raise the funding and build Brennan's Wave, named for Brennan Guth, a world class kayaker and local Missoulian who died in Chile on the Rio Palguin.

17. Glacial Lake Missoula

About 12,000 years ago, the valleys of western Montana lay beneath a lake nearly 2,000 feet deep. Glacial Lake Missoula formed as the Cordilleran Ice Sheet dammed the Clark Fork River just as it entered Idaho. The rising water behind the glacial dam weakened it until water burst through in a catastrophic flood that raced across Idaho, Oregon, and Washington toward the Pacific Ocean. Thundering waves and chunks of ice tore away soils and mountainsides, deposited giant ripple marks, created the scablands of eastern Washington and carved the Columbia River Gorge. Over the course of centuries, Glacial Lake Missoula filled and emptied in repeated cycles, leaving its story embedded in the land.

The horizontal lines etched into the hillside are evidence that a prehistoric lake once filled the valley. The parallel lines represent the ancient shorelines of Glacial Lake Missoula. The highest known shorelines are found at an elevation of 4,200 feet. (From the

Montana Natural History Center's "Glacial Lake Missoula and the Ice Age Floods", (www.glaciallakemissoula.org)

18. Caras Park

Before 1985 the area known as "Caras Park" was called "Island Park." The name came from the fact that a braid of the Clark Fork River used to flow around the north side of the park making it a literal island in the river. The old Island Park included a pavilion, ice skating rink, trails, a bandstand and plantings, many of which were washed away in floods during the early 1900's. When the Higgins Avenue Bridge was re-built 1961-62, the north braid of the river was filled in with soil from the main channel. Four and a half acres of the new land was dedicated to remain a city park. In 1985 the park was renamed "Caras Park" after the Caras family who helped the city obtain the new parkland and helped fund its development.

19. Ron MacDonald Riverfront Trail System

Ron MacDonald served as a board member of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency for over twenty years. During that time he was an untiring advocate for the development of riverfront parks and trails. His vision and advocacy on behalf of the public's interest in the riverfront is manifest in this trail system which bears his name. (From commemorative plaque in Caras Park.)

20. A Carousel for Missoula & Dragon Hollow

"If you will give it a home and promise no one will ever take it apart, I will build A Carousel for Missoula." That was the promise Missoula cabinet maker Chuck Kaporich made to the Missoula City Council in 1991. Kaporich, who had spent many childhood hours on the carousel at Columbia Gardens in Butte, Montana, had already carved four carousel ponies and had purchased an antique frame in thousands of pieces. Kaporich taught others to carve, mechanics began the process of restoring 16,066 pieces, painters were recruited, and Missoula began working together to create a treasure.

By Opening Day, May 27 1995, over 100,000 hours of volunteer time had gone into the construction of 38 permanent ponies, three replacement ponies, two

chariots, 14 gargoyles, gargoyle frames and mirror frames, and the largest band organ in continuous use in the United States, all within a jewel box building.

In the spring of 2001, over 4000 volunteers gathered to create Dragon Hollow Playarea next to the Carousel in just nine days. (From the commemorative plaque for A Carousel for Missoula and Dragon Hollow)

ASLA Rendezvous registrants will find a free carousel ride coupon in their registration packets.



21. Fox Site

This area, known locally as the "Fox Site" was once home to the Fox Theater, a Holiday Convenience Store, and the original Mustard Seed Restaurant. From 1890 to 1947 the site was used as a landfill. The in the late 1990's the City purchased the private lands in the area and by 2001 all existing structures had been demolished. The City has a grand vision that would celebrate the site's theatrical history. The site has been chosen to be future home of the \$60 million Missoula Community Performing Arts Center.

