



2024

TrailLink Unlimited 

Guides



**River's Edge  
Trail (MT)**  
*Montana*



## River's Edge Trail (MT)

Montana

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Many groups collaborated to create the scenic and wild River's Edge Trail: the city of Great Falls, Cascade County, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana Department of Transportation, PPL Montana, and Recreational Trails Inc. And the result is stunning. The trail meanders through a picturesque landscape along the bluffs above the Missouri River in the local footsteps of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Though the explorers passed through here more than 200 years ago, much of the landscape remains unchanged—except that the Missouri has been dammed, and you'll see first-hand those dams along this trek.

The pathway, which was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 2018, starts at the visitor center at Broadwater Bay in Montana's city of Great Falls, heading

through town and linking parks and points of interest along the river, including a waterslide park, boat launches, a skateboard park and open spaces on both sides of the Missouri River. You'll also be able to cross the river on a former Milwaukee Railroad bridge that was converted for trail use.

The trail sections in the city are paved and ADA accessible; other sections of the trail, along the reservoirs, are gravel or single- and double-track trail. In the city, the trail has benches, tables, shelters, drinking fountains and information kiosks. The trail segments on both sides of the river bank are linked by the Weissman Trail Bridge, Eagle Falls Memorial Bridge and the Cochrane Dam crossing.

In addition to the historical aspect of the trail, the city of Great Falls, with its magnificent falls and great rock cliffs, provides a compelling backdrop for the River's Edge Trail. The same waterfalls in the canyon of the Missouri River that forced an arduous portage of the Lewis and Clark Expedition provide today's trail users with spectacular views of the downtown area, the river canyon and distant mountains.

Much of the River's Edge Trail is located on portions of the former Great Northern and Milwaukee Railroad lines that ran through the area. As the trail continues east, the urban environment gives way to a more wild feel. This section enters the carved river canyon on a part of the former Great Northern Railroad right-of-way that hugs the canyon wall. Here the River's Edge Trail passes a boxcar and caboos trailhead display and passes Black Eagle Falls before entering Giant Springs State Park. Tunnels and trail segments link to the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, the Montana State Fish Hatchery and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Headquarters and Visitor Center. The wheelchair-accessible trail continues through the State Park to an overlook of Crooked Falls.



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**States:** Montana

**Counties:** Cascade

Length: 55miles

**Trail end points:** Great Falls (Visitor's Center)  
to Morony Dam Rd. (Morony Dam on the  
Missouri River)

**Trail surfaces:** Asphalt,Gravel

**Trail category:** Rail-Trail

**Trail activities:** Bike,Inline

Skating,Fishing,Wheelchair

Accessible,Walking,Cross Country Skiing

## Parking & Trail Access

The trail has 12 trailhead parking areas. Urban portions of the trail are plowed as necessary during the winter. Free trail maps are available at the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, Giant Springs Visitor Center, the Park & Recreation Department and local bike stores. Visit the trail's website (see link under "Related Content") for more information about parking and access.

