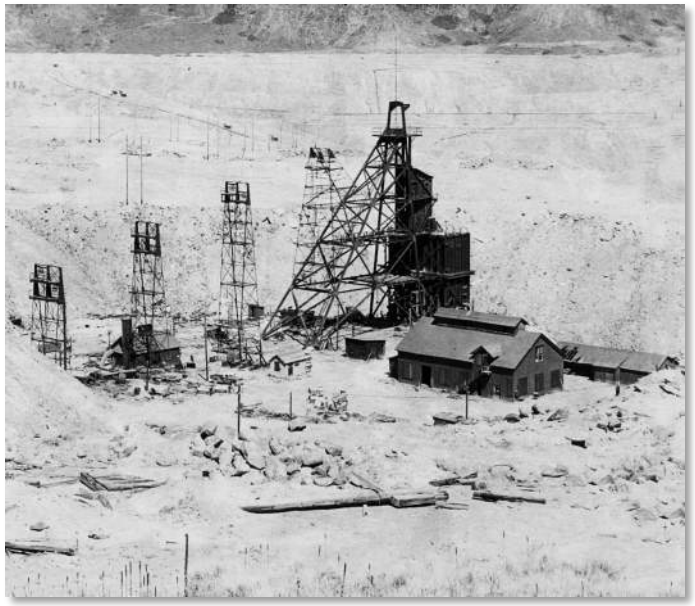
Clark Fork River Restoration and Access

Approve the professional services contract with RESPEC Company, LLC in the amount not-to-exceed $245,616

Background and History

For most of the 19th and 20 centuries, **the Clark Fork was a working river**, supporting industry, transportation, agriculture, and mining, all of which left their mark on the river.

With the removal of Milltown Dam, cleanup of mining wastes, and dramatic improvements in water quality, the Clark Fork has undergone a renaissance.



River Recreation

After many years of neglecting the Clark Fork, Missoula has turned to face the river, which to residents and visitors alike is now considered **one of our community's greatest assets.**

In 2018 surveyors counted an average of **58 floaters per hour** at the Madison Street Footbridge

Bank Erosion

Out of the city's newfound love of the river, a new potential threat has emerged. A dramatic increase in recreational use of the river, particularly through the urban stretch in Missoula, has **created significant erosion problems.**

Building On Past Progress

Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Needs Assessment 2018 (PROST) Household Survey:

What features or programs did the most households want to use?

81% Wanted river access sites

What were the most supported maintenance, acquisition, and improvement/restoration actions?

88% Restore river, stream, and lake natural habitats

Top-Five Desired Improvements

1. Natural areas/wildlife habitat
2. Dirt trails for hiking, biking, and running
3. River access sites
4. Paved trails for walking and biking
5. Outdoor/environmental education

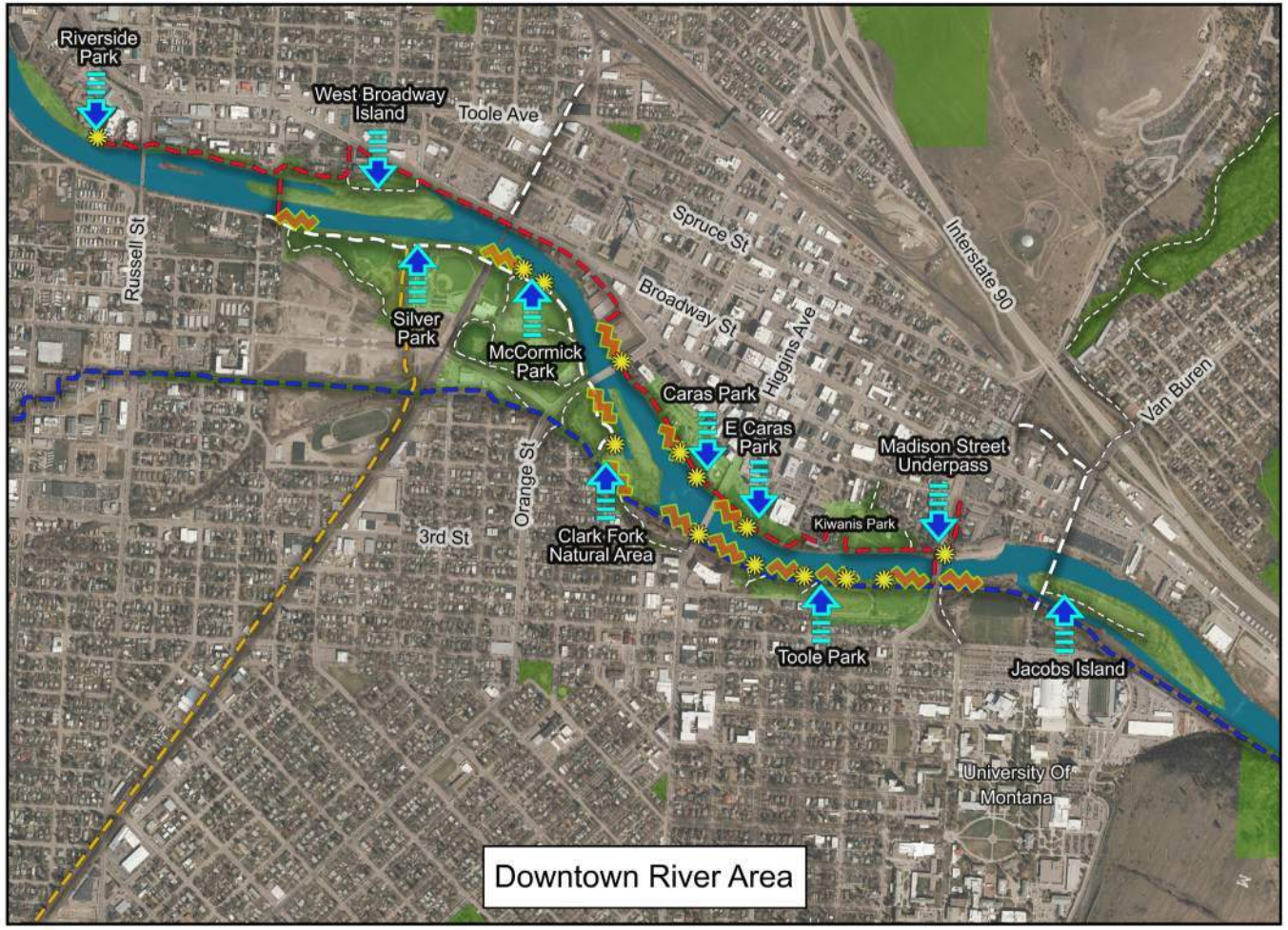
Building On Past Progress

A **community river-visioning process** was launched in 2014 with participation from multiple agencies and stakeholders, all of which agreed that river access and streambank health were at the forefront of issues to be addressed.

In fall 2015, the City of Missoula, Water Quality Department, and Clark Fork River Coalition secured funding and hired RESPEC to evaluate and categorize riverbank and riparian conditions along the south bank of the Clark Fork River though downtown Missoula.

Clark Fork River Access Improvement and Restoration Plan

February 24th 2021



LEGEND

- Milwaukee Trail
- Ron's River Trail
- Bitterroot Trail
- Other Trails
- Existing City Parkland
- Existing Popular River Access
- Proposed River Access Improvements
- Proposed Bank Restoration

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Locations are approximate

Proposed river access improvements and bank restoration sites were selected using the site definitions and selection criteria

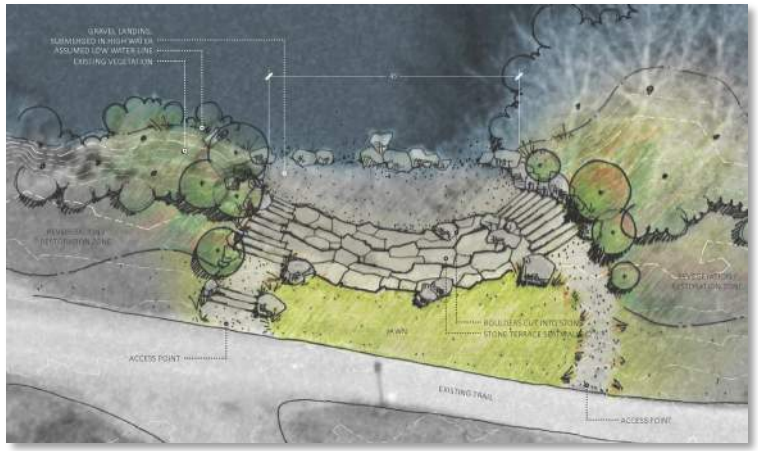
0 1/10 2/10 4/10 Miles

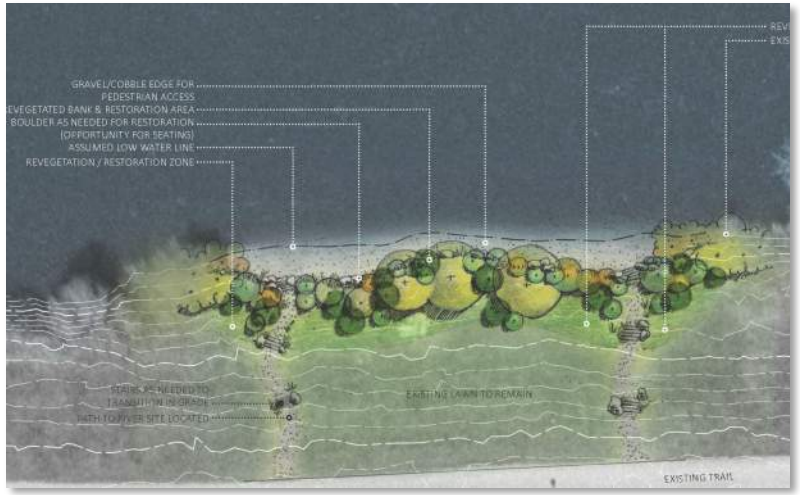
N

Building On Past Progress

Conceptual-level river access and restoration treatments were completed in 2016 for 34 identified sites

New project area includes South and North banks of the river, from Riverside park to Ben Hughes Park.





Building On Past Progress

Planning documents included bank stabilization and habitat restoration concepts for many locations within the project area.

Toole Park River Access Concept

Caras Park River Access Concept (From North Riverside Parks and Trails Plan)

Moving Forward

Following a Request for Qualifications (FRQ) the RESPEC team was selected as the most qualified team to take the conceptual plans created in 2016 and develop the designs into a 100% bid ready, permitted project.

Project Goals

1. Inventory and monitor river bank erosion and identify user made access locations along the river
2. Create/Affirm the site selection criteria for river bank restoration and/or access enhancements that was developed in 2015
3. Design and construct an intuitive system of walk-in river access points for a variety of river users which encourage responsible recreation and promote the health and aesthetics of the Clark Fork river
4. Design and implement a restoration program to sustainably restore impacted river bank locations throughout the project area, and potentially beyond

Project Funding

The 2018 Missoula County Open Space Bond was approved by Missoula County residents during the November 2018 General Election. The bond measure included up to $1.5million for development of sustainable river access and riparian restoration along the Clark Fork River within the Open Space planning boundaries.

$225,000 was allocated for Phase 1 of the Clark Fork River Restoration and Access project to develop construction ready and permitted designs.

The remaining bond funds will be leveraged with other potential funding sources and will be used for project construction.

Project Funding

Clark Fork River Restoration and Access Professional Services Contract Details

Design and engineering fees not to exceed: $198,080
Construction Administration and project Bidding in an amount not to exceed: $47,536 (optional)

Total Contract Not to Exceed Amount: $245,616

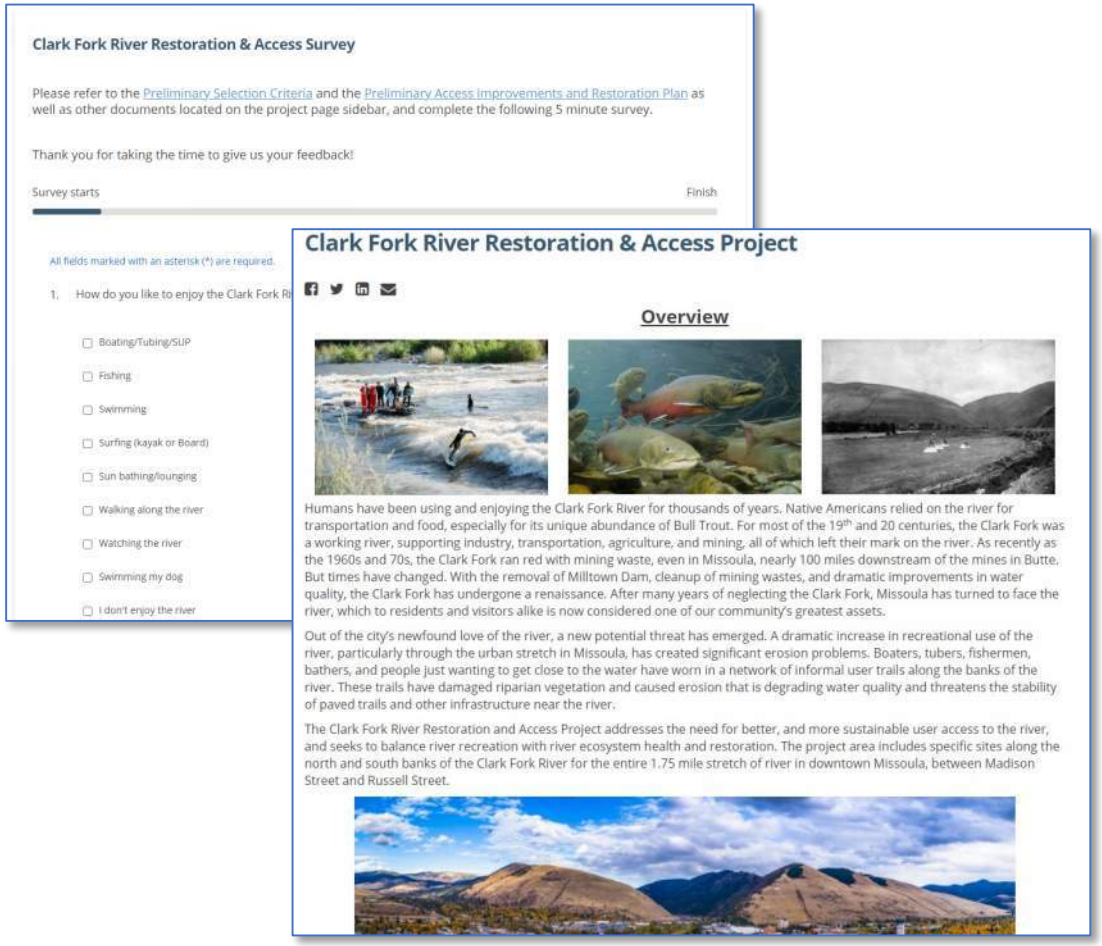
Next Steps

Missoula City Council Approval—Pending

Public Process:

- March 9th-31st "Virtual" Open House (Round 1)
- April 2021 Stakeholder Meetings (Round 1)
- Fall 2021 "Virtual" open House (Round 2)
- Fall 2021 Stakeholder Meetings (Round 2)

Engage Missoula



Clark Fork River Restoration & Access Survey

Please refer to the Preliminary Selection Criteria and the Preliminary Access Improvements and Restoration Plan as well as other documents located on the project page sidebar, and complete the following 5 minute survey.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback!

Survey starts — Finish

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

1. How do you like to enjoy the Clark Fork Ri

- Boating/Tubing/SUP
- Fishing
- Swimming
- Surfing (kayak or Board)
- Sun bathing/lounging
- Walking along the river
- Watching the river
- Swimming my dog
- I don't enjoy the river

Clark Fork River Restoration & Access Project

Overview

Humans have been using and enjoying the Clark Fork River for thousands of years. Native Americans relied on the river for transportation and food, especially for its unique abundance of Bull Trout. For most of the 19th and 20 centuries, the Clark Fork was a working river, supporting industry, transportation, agriculture, and mining, all of which left their mark on the river. As recently as the 1960s and 70s, the Clark Fork ran red with mining waste, even in Missoula, nearly 100 miles downstream of the mines in Butte. But times have changed. With the removal of Milltown Dam, cleanup of mining wastes, and dramatic improvements in water quality, the Clark Fork has undergone a renaissance. After many years of neglecting the Clark Fork, Missoula has turned to face the river, which to residents and visitors alike is now considered one of our community's greatest assets.

Out of the city's newfound love of the river, a new potential threat has emerged. A dramatic increase in recreational use of the river, particularly through the urban stretch in Missoula, has created significant erosion problems. Boaters, tubers, fishermen, bathers, and people just wanting to get close to the water have worn in a network of informal user trails along the banks of the river. These trails have damaged riparian vegetation and caused erosion that is degrading water quality and threatens the stability of paved trails and other infrastructure near the river.

The Clark Fork River Restoration and Access Project addresses the need for better, and more sustainable user access to the river, and seeks to balance river recreation with river ecosystem health and restoration. The project area includes specific sites along the north and south banks of the Clark Fork River for the entire 1.75 mile stretch of river in downtown Missoula, between Madison Street and Russell Street.

Thank You

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