

GREAT FALLS PARKS & RECREATION

RIVER'S EDGE TRAIL IS A GEM OF THE CITY

After 25 years, Wicks is retiring, but the trail will continue growing

Jenn Rowell

jrowell@greatfallstribune.com

Abigail Lichliter and Lonnie Hill can frequently be found on Great Falls' River's Edge Trail either out for a run or a bike ride. "You can feel seclusion and be immersed in the environment" while being in the city, Lichliter said.

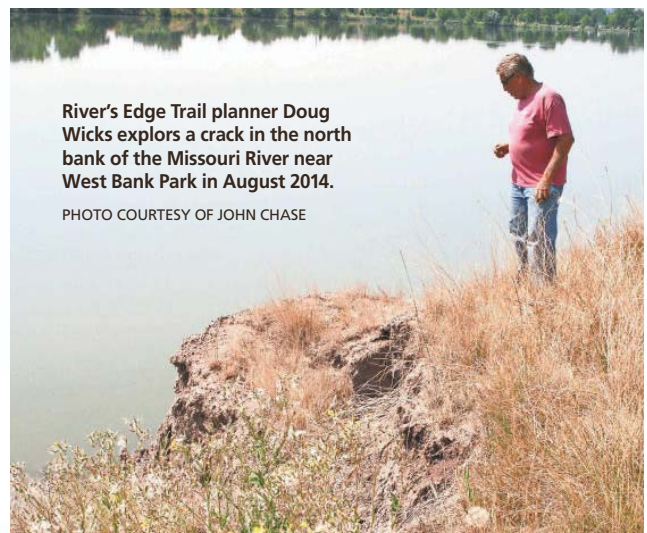
"Because it's so long, it's accessible to everybody," Hill said. No matter where you live in the city, you can typically access the trail easily.

After a quarter century of work led by a small group of dedicated residents, things are changing for the River's Edge Trail.

Doug Wicks has retired as the driving force behind much of the work that has gone into developing the trail, which is now a 25-mile-long paved city path, plus another 35 miles-plus of gravel or dirt trail.

But with Wicks retired, the work won't end. The trail will continue to grow in 2016 as a \$1.56 million venture will relocate part of the trail to keep it along the river across the road from Applebee's, the Great Falls Tribune and the Electric City Water Park.

See TRAIL, 4A



River's Edge Trail planner Doug Wicks explores a crack in the north bank of the Missouri River near West Bank Park in August 2014.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN CHASE

MORE ON THE RIVER'S

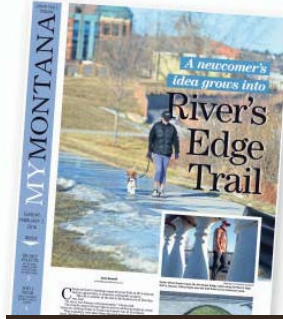


Top: Pedestrians walk their dogs along Black Eagle Memorial Island in January. TRIBUNE PHOTO/JULIA MOSS

SEE TRAIL, 4A

MORE ON THE RIVER'S EDGE TRAIL

- » See My Montana to read about how the trail began in the late 1980s.
- » Check out the Tribune's photo gallery of people on the trail through the years at www.gftrib.com.
- » Check out an interactive timeline showing how the trail has grown at www.gftrib.com.



Top: Pedestrians walk their dogs along Black Eagle Memorial Island in January. TRIBUNE PHOTO/JULIA MOSS

RIVER'S EDGE TRAIL BY THE NUMBERS

25	35	27
miles of paved urban trail	miles of gravel and dirt trail	years the community has devoted to the trail