

Maurice B. Weissman Trail Bridge Dedication Ceremony



PRESS RELEASE
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MAURICE B. WEISSMAN TRAIL BRIDGE DEDICATION CEREMONY

A short Dedication Ceremony, honoring Maurice Weissman and the Weissman family for their donation of the Weissman Trail Bridge, will take place at the west end of the bridge near the Missouri River Courthouse, at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 31. A one-of-a-kind memorial plaque will be installed and there will be short comments by Park & Recreation Director Marty Basta, Doug Wicks of Recreational Trails, Inc. and Jerry Weissman. Trail supporters and the general public are invited to attend.

98 years ago, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway announced new Daily Service between Great Falls and Lewistown. At Great Falls was a brand new depot, state-of-the-art freight houses and a magnificent new steel bridge over the Missouri River that connected Vaughn, Choteau, Fairfield and Agawam to the "Milwaukee Road" grid.

Today there is a celebration of the re-use of former Milwaukee Bridge NM-1138 which is now the popular and well used Weissman Trail Bridge. Despite its promising beginnings the Milwaukee was in and out of financial difficulties for many years. The company finally declared bankruptcy in 1980. Some of the structures, buildings and rights-of-way were sold to adjoining landowners, other railroads and private investors over the next decade. That is

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what happened to Bridge NM-1138, which was purchased in 1985 by Jerry Weissman at the urging of his father Maurice B. Weissman. The bridge was gifted to the City of Great Falls in 1997, for use by the fledgling River's Edge Trail, by Jerry Weissman, representing his family, in memory of Maurice B. Weissman.

It took a few years to convert the bridge for non-motorized use. River's Edge Trail advocate Wicks and Montana Conservation Corps crews spent three summers converting the bridge for public use. Images and articles from that project are available on the Recreational Trails, Inc. website www.thetrail.org in the History section.

The Weissman Trail Bridge was first opened to the public on the evening of July 4, 2002, as a vantage point for watching the fireworks display at West Bank Park. In August 2002, a Dedication Ceremony for the bridge honored the Weissman family gift, the Montana Conservation Corps crews that accomplished the transformation, and donors to "Planks for the Memories" capital campaign that financed the renovations.

Now, 10 years later, trail supporters have at long last completed the entrance towers at the west end of the bridge, and wish to finally install a bronze plaque honoring the man who had the wisdom to purchase the bridge in the mid-1980s. Had anyone else purchased this bridge, it would have likely just been concrete piers in the river when the River's Edge Trail came along to repurpose the structure in the late 1990s to become part of a community trail system.

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Supporting Documents



[Press Release - Weissman Trail Bridge Dedication](#) (182 KB) (PDF)

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