

2011 MRPA Merit of Excellence Award
Doug Wicks
Great Falls, Montana

Doug Wicks was honored with the Montana Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) Citation of Merit Award, Thursday, September 29 during the annual MRPA Conference held in Billings Montana. Unable to attend the Awards Banquet, Doug was presented with the award at the Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting on Monday, October 10.

Doug Wicks is president of Recreational Trails, Inc., a non-profit corporation that has been working with city, county, and state agencies for 21 years to develop and extend the River's Edge Trail. He is a part-time Trail consultant for the City Planning Office, and is a Trail volunteer the rest of the time.

Involved since the Trail's inception in 1990, Doug has been the driving force behind taking the Trail from an idea in to reality. Doug had the vision to see what a tremendous asset a Trail along the Missouri River would be and provided the passion, persistence and hard work to start the Trail with its modest beginnings and build it to its current grandeur.

Doug has secured funding from a variety of sources to make the 44 mile Trail a reality over the twenty-one year span. He has orchestrated and participated in the construction, maintenance and beautification of the Trail contributing thousands of hours of labor and promotion and coordinating wide spread community participation.

River's Edge Trail is owned by the City of Great Falls and maintained by the Park and Recreation Department under the guidance of Parks Superintendent Giles Salyer

Doug's almost uncanny ability to bring public and private partners together has made the Trail a success. He's secured hundreds of thousands of dollars for Trail development, thousands of volunteer hours, and has a continual flow of offers of donations to help the Trail. Without him, the Trail would not be the "crown jewel" of the community that it is today.

Doug's noted accomplishments with River's Edge Trail have significantly contributed to the physical and aesthetic improvement of Great Falls, promoting health and wellness, increasing tourism, and positively impacting the economy; and his dedication to the Great Falls community and parks and recreation as a whole, made him a worthy recipient of the MRPA Citation of Merit Award.