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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NorthWestern Energy and The Missouri-Madison River Fund Trust announce funding for 2016 public recreation improvement projects

Butte, Mont. – January 11, 2016 - NorthWestern Energy and the Missouri-Madison River Fund have announced funding awards for seven public recreation improvement projects on the two rivers where the company operates nine of its 12 hydroelectric facilities.

A combination of \$139,227 from NorthWestern and \$349,869 from the the Missouri-Madison River Fund will be combined with \$201,602 from agency and private partners to complete seven projects totaling \$690,698. In addition, NorthWestern Energy will contribute more than \$410,000 for operation and maintenance efforts at 32 existing recreation sites in 2016 as required by the Project 2188 (Madison-Missouri River) FERC License.

“Recreation facilities and opportunities will be enhanced on the Missouri and Madison rivers through completion of seven competitively selected projects in 2016,” said Jon Jourdonnais, Leader - Hydropower License Compliance. “NorthWestern Energy and its employees are proud to continue to support this collaborative private-public effort to improve recreation facilities and opportunities on these great rivers for all Montanans.”

2016 funded recreation projects include:

- Repair of a landslide at the Rainbow Overlook in Great Falls;
- Upgrading site amenities and delineating use areas at Spring Creek Campground on Hebgen Lake;
- Chip sealing asphalt surfaces at Devil’s Elbow Campground and Clark’s Bay Day Use Site on Hauser Lake;
- Replacing a pedestrian bridge over Whitmore Ravine in Great Falls;
- Installing trail amenities such as benches and shelters on a new birding trail at Missouri Headwaters State Park;
- Replacing latrine’s at Black’s Ford Fishing Access Site on the Lower Madison River;
- Drilling a new well for drinking water at Palisades Recreation Area on the Upper Madison River.

The Missouri-Madison River Fund, a \$6.7 million trust fund for public recreation, was created through the collaborative efforts of NorthWestern Energy; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; U.S. Forest Service; U.S. Bureau of Land Management; Madison, Gallatin, Broadwater, Lewis & Clark, Cascade and Chouteau counties; and numerous

other public and private partners. This year marks the tenth year in which earnings from the trust have been awarded to recreation improvement projects through the River Fund program. Since 2007, nearly \$4.3 million has been awarded by the River Fund and the utility in support of 86 projects totaling nearly \$6.9 million in recreation enhancements in the Missouri-Madison Corridor.

Created as a public-private partnership to meet public recreation needs along the Madison and Missouri rivers, the River Fund supports ongoing efforts to protect and enhance recreation from Hebgen Reservoir downstream to Fort Benton, excluding the Toston and Canyon Ferry hydroelectric plants and the river segment between them. River Fund awards for qualifying projects will continue on an annual basis, with grant awards in December.

A list of projects can be found under the "River Fund" tab at <http://www.missourimadison.com>, a website dedicated to the Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Plan. More information about NorthWestern Energy and its hydroelectric facilities can be found at www.northwesternenergy.com.

About NorthWestern Energy (NYSE: NWE)

NorthWestern Energy provides electricity and natural gas in the Upper Midwest and Northwest, serving approximately 678,200 customers in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. More information on NorthWestern Energy is available on the company's website at www.northwesternenergy.com.

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