

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Board of Directors

Meeting Date: November 4, 2013

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Ray Sanders, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All Board members were present.

Also in attendance:

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Gordon Jewett, Assistant Superintendent; and Michele Haarr, Clerk

Others Present:

Fred Smith – Wolf Creek Weed Concern

Sharon Hopkins – Bigfork Advisory Committee

JR Johnson – Wolf Creek Weed Concern

Cindy Ercoline – Kila Advisory

Peter Leander – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race

Heather Cauffman – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race

Mark Christensen – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race

Tia Celentano – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race

Cliff Kipp – Montana Conservation Corps and Foys to Blacktail Trails

Mary Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trail

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors, Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation, was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana, on November 4, 2013. The meeting convened at 8:32AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the October 7, 2013 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Jim Buechle made a motion to approve the October 7, 2013 Board minutes.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

Public Comment

JR Johnson and Fred Smith requested an update on weed enforcement activity in the vicinity of their respective properties at Wolf Creek Drive in the area around Swan School and to the east. Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that the area had been defined and mapped; weed inspections were performed and non-compliant landowners were contacted. Because the concern was limited to a one major landowner, it was determined that a grant request for control efforts was not appropriate at this time. Education and Compliance Officer Steve Robinson was directed to provide a detailed update to Mr. Johnson and Mr. Smith.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Sharon Hopkins requested that a meeting be set up to include the Bigfork Advisory Group, the County and PacifiCorp, the lessor for Sliter's Park. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Sliter's Park lease being

executed with Citizens for a Better Bigfork. If this is a viable option the County would give notice of its intent to terminate the current agreement with PacifiCorp. Superintendent Jed Fisher will schedule the meeting.

Ms. Hopkins requested a contact list of representatives of the various sports groups who use Bigfork Parks. Peter Leander requested contact information for those groups who have not yet paid their park user fees.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Foys/Herron Advisory Committee.

Herron Park 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race Report

Tia Celentano, Heather Cauffman, Mark Christensen and Peter Leander appeared on behalf of the 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race, a recent event at Herron Park. Ms. Celentano reported there were 48 participants and a total of 75 – 90 attendees including the pit crew. Proceeds from the event were donated to two charities which assist disabled and/or handicapped individuals.

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed two letters that had been received, one which expressed concerns with excessive noise and another about a hiker with an un-leased dog who was using the same trail as the race participants, in spite of the availability of the Family Trail, which was left open to hikers. In addition, there was a report of an equestrian who was riding in the meadow around the campsites with the statement that she wanted her horse to become accustomed to people and dogs. There was discussion regarding limiting other uses during special events.

Cliff Kipp spoke in support of the race. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett made several visits to the site during the event and was satisfied with the outcome. It was generally agreed the race was very well organized and executed and all concerns can be successfully managed at future events. Superintendent Fisher requested that all concerns be addressed in a letter to the Board who could then review and address it during the winter months. Vendors and parking will be part of the discussion for next year's bike race.

Foys to Blacktail Trails

Cliff Kipp reported a successful FireWise forestry demonstration held at Herron Park held on October 24th. Mr. Kipp will meet with County staff this week to review RTP trails grant reimbursement data. The group will be looking at current signing to determine what needs to be done next year. Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett requested that all boundary signs in place to assist with citations to pet owners who have dogs running loose. Residual funds from the 2010 grant that is not spent on signing will be used for the kiosk.

Kipp reminded the Board that the Foys Community Forest Management Plan needs to be approved by December and will ultimately be presented to the County Commission for their approval. It was suggested that the Foys/Herron Advisory Committee be the group that participates in this effort.

Kipp reiterated the suggestion to have volunteers work through Flathead County. Montana Conservation is willing to assist with the required volunteer training.

Kila Advisory Report

Cindy Ercoline reported that "Pack In/Pack Out" signing will be installed next spring.

Adoption of Park Name – Kila Community Park

Pete Woll made a motion to adopt the name Kila Community Park for the new Kila park.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett will order the sign which will be placed parallel to the highway.

Lakeside Advisory Report

There was no one present from the Lakeside Advisory Committee.

Middle Forks Advisory Committee

There was no one present from the Middle Forks Advisory Committee.

Mary Ruby reported the award of two additional grants to the Gateway to Glacier Trail effort– 10K from Burlington Northern and another from Whitefish Community Foundation – the amount will be made known this Thursday. In addition, the Montana Department of Transportation plans to build a new bridge over the South Fork in 2017, which will include a separated walking and bike path. Ground breaking for the gazebo will begin in early spring 2014.

Revised Weed Management Plan

Superintendent Jed Fisher reviewed the draft of the revised Weed Management Plan with the Board. Specific attention was called to two pages which mention waterways and aquatic noxious weeds. Fish, Wildlife and Parks recently became the governing authority over aquatic invasive species control. The Flathead County Weed Department will consider aquatic concerns on a case-by-case basis and will diligently report any concerns as they are discovered. The present management does not apply herbicide directly to the water.

Use of Electronic Receipt for Certified Mail

Michele Haarr reported on a plan to use an online mail service for certified mail. The rates are \$5.51 vs. \$6.11 with an option to omit the return receipt for a total of \$4.26 per certified letter. A return receipt may be purchased at a later date if it appears that a court case must be filed. The Weed Department typically sends 3 letters to each non-compliant landowner. The new process will be to send a 1st letter and if there is no response a 2nd letter will be sent by the County Attorney's office. If there is still no response the courts become involved. If necessary, a 3rd letter is sent and the courts are involved once again. We are hopeful that this new approach will motivate landowners to become educated and conscientious in weed management.

Other Business

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that more time will be dedicated to issuance of citations to those with dogs that are allowed to run free.

Adjourn

Clyde Fisher made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07AM.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

There being no discussion and all in favor ~ the motion was carried.

The time and place of the next regular meeting is Monday, December 2, 2013 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.