

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation**  
**MINUTES**  
**Meeting of the Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Date: June 19, 2017**

**Members of the Board in attendance:**

Jim Buechle Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Mary Ruby,

**Members of the Board not in attendance:**

Pete Woll

**Also in attendance:**

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

**Others Present:**

Walter Kuhn – Bigfork Advisory  
Paul Mutascio – Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork  
Cliff Kipp – Foys/Herron Advisory  
Linda Tutvedt – Foys/Herron Advisory  
Orrin Webber – Foys/Herron Advisory  
Richard Lauer – Foys to Blacktail Trails  
Mark Christensen – Flathead Area Mountain Bikers  
Rebecca Briber – Flathead Area Mountain Bikers\  
Alex Hogle – True North, LLC / Foys to Blacktail Trails

**Call to Order**

A meeting of the Board of Directors for Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation was held in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana on June 19, 2017. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, Chairman Fisher presiding.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the May 1, 2017 of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

**Jim Buechle moved to approve the May 1, 2017 Board minutes.**

**Mary Ruby seconded the motion.**

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

**Public Comment**

Orrin Webber commented that nothing but thistle is growing on a piece of property along Cemetery Road in Kalispell. Superintendent Jed Fisher is aware of the situation, which is in a construction zone, and is working with the landowners to resolve the concern.

**County Athletic Complex Report**

This matter was moved to the bottom of the agenda to accommodate time constraints of Superintendent Fisher.

### **Bigfork Advisory Report**

Walter Kuhn said there was no sanctioned use of Sliter Park during the recent Whitewater Festival that occurred over the Memorial Day weekend. All camping took place on PacifiCorp property. Jed reported that Sliter Park was a mess. A wedding party was permitted and their deposit was not returned.

Jed reported that senior citizens and the library had previously been eying Potoczny Park as one of many potential expansion sites, however another property called the Ark is now a possibility. The Ark is a better alternative and is approximately 8 acres.

Jed reported that during a sale process it was discovered that a property on Shawnee Drive did not have legal access through the park. There may be about 12-18 properties with the same concern and documents for easements are being reviewed. This will give the Department an opportunity to address parking concerns along Shawnee.

**CFBB 2017 Agreement** – Paul Mutascio and Walter Kuhn reviewed electrical repairs made at Sliter Park, paid for by CFBB. Lines went from direct bury to new conduit and involved the stage and other lights. The Agreement is essentially the same as last year with the exception of a reduction in the donation from \$3,500 to \$2,500 in consideration of CFBB expenses which are estimated to run from 8-10K, including wages for an independent contractor to assist with maintenance and custodial jobs.

**Elise Robocker moved to approve the 2017 Sliter Park Agreement between the Community Foundation for a Better Bigfork and Flathead County Parks and Recreation Department.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

### **Foys/Herron Advisory Report**

Cliff asked if FTBT can be notified of plans to spray weeds. Gordie responded that this work is frequently weather driven and difficult to schedule.

National Trails Day was a success with 27 volunteers from the public for a total of 128 volunteer hours. Turnout was strong for both youth and adults. Work accomplished included: closed social trail; brushed encroaching vegetation; existing trails buffed; and FCPR property boundary signs installed.

Foy's Lake Access footpath seems to be getting worse and could use improvement. Gordie said that any major improvement would launch ADA requirements resulting in a substantial cost increase. Money had been budgeted but Gordie did not know if the funds had been redirected to another need. Beach and dock improvements are scheduled.

The question came up regarding the possibility of all income for Herron Park to be combined into the maintenance fund housed with Flathead Community Foundation. Gordie said all money collected goes into revenue and is applied toward maintenance. The stables "mandatory" donation generates a few hundred per year.

Linda reported that the recent dressage and jumping event was successful. There is another event coming up on July 1<sup>st</sup>. A lot of the meadow area remains soggy.

**Flathead Area Mountain Bikers – Volunteering at Herron** – Mark Christensen and Rebecca Briber are part of a 200 member non-profit trail advocacy group would like to have an agreement with the County to volunteer time at Herron Park. The organization performs approximately 600 hours of trail work each year. Dick Lauer suggested that groups such as mountain bikers, Foys to Blacktail Trails and Parks & Rec meet to get under one umbrella to discuss short term concerns and little jobs. Jed indicated that the biggest concern with

volunteers is motorized equipment, which is not okay. The topic has been discussed several times at the State level without success. A training session is necessary to satisfy County requirements.

Cliff indicated that the Herron/Foys Advisory Committee can provide the umbrella for interested user groups and volunteers – just let him know how they can help.

**Herron/Foys Community Forest Plan** – Recently Jim Watson and FTBT approached Alex Hogle for help with an update of the Foys/Herron Community Forest Plan. Alex narrated the history of Herron Park, its growth into a regional 4-season park, and its diverse user groups. There is an opportunity to develop a master plan for the entire park in conjunction with a grant requirement to update the Community Forest plan. The updated plan will include such topics as a vision for the park; weed & trail maintenance; terrain/slope of the trails; and user conflicts. Remaining grant funds in the amount of 14K should cover the cost of the plan. Alex met with Jed and Gordie and discussed the opportunity, and scoped interest and buy-in. It needs the Board's support to pursue.

Angela Wells of DNRC phoned to request the Board's support of the update of the Herron/Foys Community Forest Plan update.

**Jim Buechle moved to support update of the Foys Community Forest Stewardship Plan and to expand the scope of the project to include an update of the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including Herron Park.**

**Elise Robocker seconded the motion.**

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

**Issues with Dogs at Herron Park** – Cliff Kipp reported that David Girardot was invited to their last meeting. It appears that concerns with off-lease dogs has tailed off. The biggest mover of the needle is to have a presence there. The trail signs that indicate 'say hi and pass wide can up revised to include information about dogs and trash. Additional trash cans are needed in locations agreeable to Gordie, which can be emptied by volunteers. The goal is getting people to form habits through various means including social media & input from individuals and user groups. Progress needs to be monitored. Another suggestion was to have a Park enforcement presence one day per month.

### **Foys to Blacktail Trails Report**

Dick Lauer walked Birch Creek and noted there are still soggy areas. The 4<sup>th</sup> Herron Half event went well with 220 entrants. On July 8<sup>th</sup> Bear Classic is hosting a mountain bike fundraiser with 300+ participants expected. Parking remains a concern. Dick and Gordie will meet to discuss it. It is hoped that the trail from Herron to Blacktail Mountain will be complete by mid-August, depending upon the availability of volunteer help.

### **Weed Department Report**

**Weed Management Agreement with City of Columbia Falls** – Columbia Falls City Manager Susan Nicosia has drafted a Weed Management Agreement which outlines the goals and objective of noxious weed management within the geographical limits of the City's Planning and Zoning Jurisdiction. This agreement is ready for signature and has been reviewed by the Department, the City of Columbia Falls and the County Attorney.

**Elise Robocker moved to approve the Weed Management Agreement dated May 15, 2017 between Flathead County Weed District and the City of Columbia Falls.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

### **Church Slough Improvement**

Gordon Jewett reported that there has been discussion regarding installation of a floating dock and restrooms at Church Slough. A meeting with Jed, Gordie and resident Dennis Carver was held to discuss areas of concern and potential improvements to the park. There are 6 parking spaces at the park and when those are filled, people park their vehicles along the roadside. Potential issues with a floating dock are being investigated.

### **County Athletic Complex Report**

The Department is working on a scaled-down version of the business plan, using guidelines provided by the Finance Department.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjourn**

**Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:25AM.**

**Elise Robocker 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, July 10, 2017** at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

### **Documents Submitted to the Board:**

June 14, 2017 correspondence from Alex Hogle regarding Opportunity with Herron Park/Foy's Community Forest Management Plan

CFBB 2017 Agreement

5/1/17 Weed Management Agreement between Flathead County and City of Columbia Falls