

**Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation**  
**MINUTES**  
**Board of Directors**  
**Meeting Date: December 5, 2011**

**Members of the Board in attendance:**

Elise Robocker, Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Ray Sanders

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

Jim Watson

***Also in attendance:***

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

***Others Present:***

Tom Esch – Foys to Blacktail Trails  
Skip Gilmore – Bigfork Advisory Committee  
Erik Hansen – Aquatic Invasive Species Workgroup  
Cliff Kipp – Foys to Blacktail Trails  
Caryn Miske – Aquatic Invasive Species Workgroup  
Pete Skibsrud – Citizen  
Tamara Tanberg – Lakeside Advisory Committee  
Andy Young – Herron/Foys Advisory Committee

**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 December 5, 2011. The meeting convened at 8:32AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the November 7, 2011 meetings 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 November 7, 2011 minutes.**

**Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.**

**There being no further discussion ~ and all in favor, the minutes were approved.**

**Public Comment**

Tom Esch of Foys to Blacktail Trails distributed a plat schematic of Herron Park and adjacent property – **see Attachment A** – and reported the closing of a Phase II of the Herron Park land acquisition. This closing took place November 30<sup>th</sup> and adds 60 acres to Herron Park. The purchase price of 414K was funded by two grants – 70K from the Recreational Trails Program and 40K from Canyon Ferry Trust – along with donations from corporate sponsors such as Plum Creek, Pacific Steel, Valley Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, and many individuals.

Reversionary language in the Grant Deed states that if the County fails to comply with certain restrictions the right to immediate possession of the property shall revert to The Conservation Fund. The new addition borders Plum Creek property, which has easements for a trail to Blacktail Mountain.

The group has approximately 2,000 donors, a core of 20 people with a board of 9 people. They have already accumulated 70K toward Phase III, which they hope to complete in 2012.

### **Pending Aquatic Invasive Species Threats & Funding – Caryn Miske, Erik Hansen**

Caryn Miske, Executive Director of the Flathead Basin Commission, introduced herself and gave a brief history of the group and their efforts to eradicate and/or control aquatic invasive species, which include animals, plants and pathogens. Plants are the primary focus, which puts Flathead County Weed Department directly within the scope of activity. The group was formed in 2008 and has since worked with some not-for-profit groups, along with many federal, state, county, and city governmental agencies. They have been instrumental in getting laws passed dealing with aquatic invasive species. The Flathead County Commissioners have twice turned down requests for financial assistance in helping to defray the cost of hiring a consultant, Erik Hansen.

Erik Hansen, a former employee with the Department of Agriculture, introduced himself and reviewed his background as an outside expert. He stressed that taking action in water is new and complicated and it is anticipated that there will be public resistance to it. Permits are required; however the procedures and responsibilities remain unclear, with no particular governmental agency wanting to take lead status. Mr. Hansen recommended development of a cooperative weed management area to share resources and facilitate action and planning toward a long-term solution.

Superintendent Jed Fisher first clarified that all department funds are committed for the fiscal year and any cooperative effort requiring funds would have to be considered in the 2012 budget. He added that aquatic invasive species could be a huge concern and in the short time the Weed District has been dealing with it they have had great cooperation. Mr. Fisher stated that he is also concerned with the possibility of the Flathead County staff applying herbicides to the water. He recommended that the Flathead Basin Commission submit a work program and budget to the Weed Department and they will submit a grant using their help as contracted services.

**Clyde Fisher made a motion to pursue grant money for a cooperative effort to eradicate and/or control aquatic invasive species.**

**Jim Buechle seconded the motion.**

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

In parting, both Hansen and Miske thanked the department for their swift action and cooperation in eradicating and controlling Eurasian Watermilfoil at Beaver Lake.

### **Old Steel Bridge – Pete Skibsrud**

Pete Skibsrud informed the board that he purchased a 140' section of the old steel bridge and would like to work with the Parks Department if there is an interest in using the bridge at one of the County Parks. After discussion, it was agreed that Superintendent Fisher obtain and report back to the board more detailed information regarding the structural integrity and cost to install.

### **Bigfork Advisory Report**

Skip Gilmore questioned whether the Parks & Recreation Department has received money from the baseball group. He will follow up with their representative.

Each spring, the Forest Service holds a training seminar. Mr. Gilmore suggested using this group to assist with clean up at Potoczny and Aero Lane Parks. This suggestion was endorsed by Superintendent Jed Fisher, who indicated any volunteers would need to complete a training session and work needs to be done by hand only – without any equipment or tools.

The Swan River Road trail effort has been positive with grants funds awarded and money collected. Among the many donations was 13K from a local Rotary group. The trail work is progressing and is almost down to Swan River.

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

Andy Young reported a meeting was held one month ago and there is nothing new to report. They are pleased, excited, and grateful to hear of the 60 acre addition to Herron Park.

Mr. Young checked in on the progress of the Foys Lake access improvement design. Superintendent Fisher reported that it is on the desk of the lead planner, who is very busy and fits it in as time allows.

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that access to the sled hill will be opened as soon as there is enough snow.

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

Cliff Kipp reiterated that Phase II of the Herron Park land acquisition was complete as reported earlier in the meeting by Tom Esch.

Trail maps will be updated next spring. There was a lot of good feedback from trail users whose suggestions will be incorporated into the new map. Mr. Kipp requested that any signing standards be forwarded to him. This board will have a chance to review the map prior to printing.

Overall, it has been a good year. Trail counters have been updated and are supplying more solid user numbers. Kipp offered to assist with winter grooming if needed. He finished by saying he was pleased with our partnership and feels good about things.

### **Lakeside Advisory Report**

Tamara Tanberg thanked the board for transferring residual funds from the tennis court construction. She added that the United States Tennis Association has supplied the liability insurance for the next year.

Ms. Tanberg further reported that there is a lot of action on trail work in Lakeside using CTEP funding. Superintendent Jed Fisher commented that there are only 2 CTEP trail priorities in Flathead County – Lakeside and the Swan Trail in Bigfork.

Mr. Fisher stated that the donors of Volunteer Park, Bruce Ennis and Maggie Davis, are pleased with the appearance and ongoing maintenance. Mr. Ennis recently contributed money for paint supplies and a tree replacement.

### **Middle Forks Advisory Committee**

There was no one present.

## **New Ordinance – No Overnight Vehicles in County Parks**

Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reported that he would like to add a new ordinance provision under the Flathead County Park Rule Enforcement Rules & Regulations – “0-5.2 No person shall place any vehicle, trailer, camper, or boat on park property to display for sale or leave unattended overnight.”

**Jim Buechle made a motion to endorse ordinance “0.5-2 - No person shall place any vehicle, trailer, camper, or boat on park property to display for sale or leave unattended overnight.”**

**Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.**

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

## **Grant Applications Submitted**

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that the department has recently submitted two grant applications to the Department of Agriculture – one in the amount of \$33,305 for continuing the Cooperative Tansy Ragwort Project work and the other in the amount of \$41,786 for aquatic invasive species. In addition, the department will submit a grant application to the Department of Natural Resources in the amount of \$5,100 for aquatic invasive species work recently completed at Beaver Lake; and a County Special grant application in the amount of \$7,500 to fund a seasonal office assistant during the summer months.

## **Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **Adjourn**

**Jim Buechle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:48AM.**

**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, January 9, 2011 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.