

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Board of Directors

Meeting Date: March 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 members were present.

Also in attendance:

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Gordon Jewett, Assistant Superintendent; Steve Robinson, Education and Compliance Officer; and Michele Haarr, Clerk

Others Present:

Edd Blackler – Bigfork Advisory Committee
Tia Celentano – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race
Mark Christensen – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race
Cindy Ercoline – Kila Community Park
Tom Esch – Foys to Blacktail Trails
Bradley Gibbons – Parsons Tractor
Chuck Hunt – Flathead Wildlife Inc
Warren Illi – Flathead Wildlife Inc
Tom Murphy – Flathead Industries
Larry Parsons – Middle Forks Advisory Committee
Mary & Alan Ruby – Gateway to Glacier Trails
Jim Vashro – Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Elaine Wilson – Lakeside 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 March 4, 2013. The meeting convened at 8:32AM, Chairman Sanders presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the February 4, 2013 meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Clyde Fisher made a motion to approve the February 4, 2013 minutes.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Aquatic Invasive Species – Beaver Lake

Superintendent Jed Fisher advised that staff will check for the presence of Eurasian Watermilfoil at Beaver Lake as soon as possible this spring. Jim Vashro indicated that Fish, Wildlife & Parks has divers available to help with this effort. The mats were pulled last fall and a few plant fragments were found when they were cleaned. After determination of the status of the Lake, a meeting will be called for the Aquatic Invasive Species group.

Herron Park Permit Request – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Heather Cauffman & Tia Celentano are requesting the Board's consideration of a Permit Application and Facility Use Agreement for an event that was declined by the Parks Superintendent, Gordon Jewett. The request is for a 24-hour mountain bike race to be held at Herron Park on August 31, 2013. The race would run a full 24 hours with teammates taking turns to complete the designated race route loop. The object is to work with a team to complete the most loops.

Superintendent Fisher stated that there are concerns about keeping the park open for 24 hours and that approval would set a precedent for all County parks.

Tia Celentano introduced herself and distributed information regarding the proposed 24-hour race. The event is being held to promote awareness of those in the Flathead Valley who are living with life altering conditions. The presentation addressed concerns such as biking at night, accidents, safety guidelines, race marshals, helmets, conduct, course markings and lighting. Anticipated turnout is for 300, with 100 racers. Mark Christensen stated that the plan is for a 15-mile loop and emergency medical staff would be available and equipped with radios. Tom Esch of Foys to Blacktail Trails indicated that this event was discussed with their board and it is welcome. Board member Elise Robocker commented that this type of activity is very common, popular, and well attended.

After discussion it was agreed to deliver the information to the County Attorney for review prior to submitting the proposal to the Commissioners.

Pete Woll made a motion to forward the 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race proposal to the County Attorney for review and comments, which will be considered by this Board prior to being addressed with the Commissioners.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

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

Kila Community Park – Advisory Committee Appointments

Requests to serve on the Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee were received from Cindy Ercoline, Valerie Ann Beebe, Ann Keenan and Cynthia Frech-Kennedy.

Elise Robocker made a motion to appoint Cindy Ercoline, Valerie Ann Beebe, Ann Keenan and Cynthia Frech-Kennedy to the Kila/Smith Lake Advisory Committee.

Jim Buechle made a motion to amend the motion to include Jeff Hutten as an Advisory Committee member.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Cash-in-lieu requests were made for a total of \$15,000 and include a spotting scope \$9,125; a picnic table \$1,500, and benches \$3,500.

Flathead Wildlife, Inc – Flathead Lake Public Access

Flathead County Commissioners forwarded correspondence dated February 8, 2013, received from Flathead Wildlife, Inc. Superintendent Jed Fisher explained that this group has been involved in protecting public access on Flathead County water bodies and they have identified 7 unmarked County owned lake access parcels on the north portion of Flathead Lake. He further explained that this is a Road & Bridge Department concern much like Bigfork dock and Breezy Point. In the event property is sold, proceeds are required to be put into the immediate area.

Warren Illi of Flathead Wildlife Inc introduced himself and stated that the identified sites collectively total over 400 feet of lakeshore, which at \$5000 to \$6000 per front foot amounts to approximately 2 million in value which is currently used by adjacent private landowners rather than the general public. Flathead Wildlife is asking the County to take action to mark and open these sites for public use or sell them to provide funding for more usable lake access sites.

MT Biological Weed Control Coordinator – Position Creation

The Board reviewed a proposal to create a statewide bio-control coordinator for the State of Montana. The request was received from Bryce Christiaens of the Missoula County Weed District on behalf of the Biological Weed Control Working Group. A \$250 - \$500 annual donation was requested to support the position.

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that Flathead County releases its own bio-control and tracks results and did not see the value in this position relative to Flathead County.

Jim Buechle made a motion to decline the funding request for a statewide bio-control coordinator.

Pete Woll seconded the motion.

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

Church Slough Flood Plain Permit

Superintendent Jed Fisher reported that a draft of the floodplain permit has been completed and is being reviewed by staff, Planning & Zoning and attorneys. It is anticipated that once the permit is approved Church Slough boat ramp may be reopened.

Bigfork Advisory Report

Cash-in-lieu request: Edd Blackler presented an estimate for construction of a perimeter path around Lake Hills Park in the amount of \$5,220.

Mr. Blackler suggested creation of a small parking area on the south end of the park, which has a flat area that could be developed.

Sports groups that use Carlyle Johnson, Aero Lane & Potoczny Parks have started to have sign up meetings and staff is planning to have a meeting with all groups to discuss rates, schedules, and park regulations.

Foys/Herron Advisory Report

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

Foys to Blacktail Trails

Tom Esch reviewed the history of land acquisition at Herron Park:

320 acres Initial size
+40 acres Phase I 2010
+60 Acres Phase II 2011
+ 50 acres Phase III 2012 – being held for Community Forest 400K grant match, expected to transfer to Flathead County this year.

Cash-in-lieu request: Foys to Blacktail Trails is not requesting cash-in-lieu money this year, however, a sizable request is anticipated next year, when Phase VI occurs which will finish the project.

Mr. Esch reviewed the results of the Foy's Community Forest Education Workshop that took place in January. The meeting included 23 attendees and discussed target groups and their educational needs, logistics, work groups, common themes, priorities, issues and opportunities. Identified priorities are: forest management, wildlife management, baseline research for class projects, and self-led teacher activities. Some of the identified concerns include emergency vehicle access, bathrooms, permit policies for educational programs by private groups and human impact. Another meeting is planned this year.

National Trails Day is June 1st and a large turnout is expected at Herron Park.

Mr. Esch concluded by thanking the Board for the vibrant County parks and for the good working relationship.

Lakeside Advisory Report

Elaine Wilson stated that the Lakeside parks are in good shape overall and has maintenance requests for Ben Williams tennis courts and Bierney Creek access.

Ben Williams Park – There is a need to extend power and water to the tennis courts. Silt is moving down the court surface and needs to be routinely hosed down. Grass seeding needs to be done.

Bierney Creek – There is a substantial amount of erosion and run-off from Hwy 93. Kids have been using the slope to slide down to the beach. Grass mats and seeding on the slope was recommended to encourage kids to use the path.

Cash-in-lieu request: \$2,225 for purchase of a see-saw type piece of playground equipment for Ben Williams Park, manufactured by Kompan called "Blazer".

Middle Forks Advisory Committee

Cash-in-lieu request: \$3,675 for installation of a FOLF or disc golf course at Belton Stage Park.
\$30,000 for a donor dedication/recognition wall for Gateway to Glacier Trail and the Jim Dupont dedication gateway.

Larry Parsons stated that a disc golf course this would be an inexpensive and low-impact option for enhancing the value of the Belton Stage Park and attracting more visitors. The Advisory Committee would work with the Board for design of the course and installation of the equipment. If any heavy equipment is needed Larry Parson's tractor business would provide assistance. Parsons introduced Brady Gibbons, an employee of Larry Parson's tractor.

In addition, road improvement from the highway into the Park was suggested.

Mr. Parsons is a resident of West Glacier and thanked the Board for their support of the Gateway to Glacier/Jim Dupont Memorial Trail. Recent fundraisers have been well attended and have an added benefit of fellowship and camaraderie.

Alan Ruby of Gateway to Glacier Trails reported a meeting with Superintendent Jed Fisher and Alex Hogle of Planning & Zoning regarding CTEP timeline requirements. In addition to the 68K already raised, a substantial amount of matching funds is required – 56K by the end of May, 28K by the end of September and 28K in 2014. It is important to stay on the fast track for fundraising in order to meet these goals. At a recent event people came from as far away as Havre and a pie sold for \$100. The plan is to approach key philanthropists for contributions and the group is requesting \$30,000 of cash-in-lieu funds. The group will secure a location and recognize that these permanent structures have to be outside the highway right-of-way.

Other Business

- Equipment Rates – Flathead County Weed & Parks Department – Assistant Superintendent Gordon Jewett reviewed proposed equipment rates.

Jim Buechle made a motion to approve proposed Equipment Rates as stated herein stated

Equipment	Hourly Rate	Details
Mower – Roadside	\$80/hr	
Mower - Park	\$75/hr	inc truck & trailer
Dump Truck	\$100/hr	
Dump Truck & Low Boy Trailer	\$200/hr	round trip
Spray Truck	\$75/hr	does not inc herbicide
ATV Sprayer	\$65/day	
ATV Sprayer	\$75/hr	w/truck for grants & state work
Snow Groomer	\$100	inc truck, trailer, snow cat groomer

Notes: This schedule reflects 1 man per hour for labor. Additional men would be charged at the rate of \$30 per hour per man.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

- Crown of the Continent Workshop Report – Education and Compliance Officer Steve Robinson attended this workshop on February 27, 2013. The genesis of the workshop was a Presidential Memorandum signed in April, 2010, which established the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and to reconnect Americans to the outdoors.

Some of the topics discussed were improving coordination and cooperation across boundaries; prioritizing terrestrial invasive species for eradication that could be an action item for transboundary inter-agency collaboration; and defining priority areas of conservation concern based on terrestrial invasive species threat.

- Weed Legislation – SB 301 was distributed to the Board. As discussed in the last Board meeting, there are ongoing concerns with expediting the enforcement process and having it be effective.

Commissioner Gary Krueger attended a recent staff meeting and is contacting legislators to discuss the matter.

- Sportsman's Bridge – Elise Robocker questioned the status of a pedestrian path along the Sportsman's Bridge in Bigfork, wherein the pedestrian walkway is not separated from traffic. Superintendent Jed Fisher will review the matter and report back.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:23AM.

Clyde Fisher 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, April 1, 2013 at 8:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board:

Permit Request – 24-Hour Mountain Bike Race

Letter – 2-8-13 Flathead Wildlife, Inc

Email – 2-13-13 Statewide Bio-Control Weed Coordinator Position

Document – DRAFT Church Slough Flood Plain Permit

Document – DRAFT SB 301