

**Flathead County Weed/Parks & Recreation
Board Meeting
311 FFA Drive – Kalispell MT 59901
Conference Room**

**Revised Agenda
Monday, December 3, 2018
8:30 AM**

- Call to Order
- Approve Previous Minutes
- Public Comment
- Parks & Recreation Department Report
 - Foys Herron Advisory Committee
 - Foys to Blacktail Trails MOU Discussion
 - Trails Plan Update DRAFT Discussion
 - DNRC Chainsaw Training
 - School District 5 Donation
 - Lake Park Addition Tree Planting
- Weed Department Report
- Other Business
- Matters of the Board
- Adjourn

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: December 3, 2018

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Elise Robocker, Mary Ruby, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All members of the Board were present.

Also in attendance:

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

Others Present:

Amanda Davey – Flathead County Parks & Recreation Department

Gabe Dillon – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Linda Tutvedt – Foys/Herron Advisory Committee

Diane Medler – Kalispell Convention & Visitors Bureau

Randy Sundberg – Many Lakes Homeowners Association

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 December 3, 2018. The meeting convened at 8:30AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the November 5, 2018, meeting of the Flathead County Weed, Parks & Recreation Board of Directors were distributed to the members of the Board.

Mary Ruby moved to approve the November 5, 2018 Board minutes.

Jim Buechle seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

Randy Sundberg noticed there was discussion about Many Lakes parks in past minutes and was surprised he was not included in the discussion. Jed stated that through surveys and public comment, residents of Many Lakes had previously weighed in. Since that time, the possibility of surplus and sale of some of the Many Lakes parks has been reconsidered, but ultimately the Board came back to same decision – there will be no surplus and sale of any park property in Flathead County – not just Many Lakes.

Recently, a real estate agent presented an offer to purchase County property adjacent to Bass Lake in Many Lakes on behalf of a private party. The Board made a field trip to review this property.

Randy was concerned that one person's complaint not affect any ultimate decision. The vast majority of people in Many Lakes want the parks there left alone. County Commissioners decided not to surplus & sell park property with water access in July of 2016 and Randy would like a copy of the letter regarding this.

Randy is on the Flathead Firewise Council and stated it is generally recognized that the fuel within Many Lakes is excessive and is a powder keg waiting to blow up. He invited anyone interested to attend a gathering at the

Creston gym on the 3rd Saturday in April to discuss grant possibilities. Anything the County Parks Department can do to assist with fuel reduction would be appreciated – even one or two trees per year. Randy asked for basic maintenance of these parks. The biggest thing is to provide one access point to each of the lakes.

Three years ago, Randy contacted the Department regarding a former deer trail on County property by East Bass Lake, which was being used as a road. Since that time, the deer trail has turned into a full-blown road and is now being used by logging and excavation equipment. For three years he has been trying to get Department to do something and expects caretakers of public lands do their job.

Linda Tutvedt of Flathead combined Training Association reported that old dangerous jumps have been removed and the group now has a member who is a trained jump builder. Life is good in Herron Park.

Parks & Recreation Department Report

Amanda Davey reported on recent and current Recreation Department events.

Recent Programs:

Adult Woman's Fall Basketball (consistent with previous years)
Adult Men's Fall Basketball (turned away teams)
Adult Flag Football (consistent with last year)
Youth Flag Football (consistent with last year)

Current Programs:

Adult Woman's Basketball (expecting same number as last year)
Adult Men's Winter Basketball (more teams than last year but at maximum capacity for gym time – turning teams away)
Sykes Lil Hoopsters – 4/5 year olds (tripled the participants from last year – the inaugural year)

Upcoming Programs:

Dodgeball Tournament (inaugural year)
Blizzard Bowl Softball (annual tournament)
Youth Lil Hoopsters – 1st/2nd grade girls & boys; 3rd/4th grade girls

School District 5 was moved up on the agenda in the interest of Amanda's time.

○ **School District 5 Donation (Kalispell Elementary Gym Equipment Proposal)** – Jed reported that this Board previously approved up to 20K for School District 5 gym equipment. In discussing this decision with the County Commissioners, the preference was to increase the amount to 80K, which would make more sense due to program needs of the County Recreation Department. Programs continue, while realizing we don't have our own facilities. Amanda said the Department is on the fence of losing gym time and the increased donation would help solidify time requirements for programs. There will be a certain amount of unwritten goodwill as a result of this donation because the Department has not paid for time in over 30 years of using school district gyms. The Department has approximately 290K in cash-in-lieu account.

Mary Ruby move to increase the donation to School District 5 from 20K to 80K.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

Discussion was had regarding getting this done and moving on.

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

○ **Foys Herron Advisory Committee** – There was no one present from Foys Herron Advisory Committee.

- **Foys to Blacktail Trails MOU Discussion** – County Attorney Caitlin Overland submitted an updated version that was emailed to the Board and a copy presented today. A paragraph was added stating that the Parks Board needs to approve items that go before the Commissioners.

Mary Ruby moved to approve the most current version of the Memorandum of Understanding Between Flathead County, Montana, and Foy’s to Blacktail Trails Inc.

Elise Robocker seconded the motion.

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

- **Trails Plan Update DRAFT Discussion** – Elise Robocker stated that this document has taken 1 year of work and has been totally reviewed. It is just a guideline – nothing is required. Jim Buechle stated that he needs more time to study the statistics in the plan – some without supporting facts and figures. Jim would like to see need more detail provided, for example, the 3 million generated from trail use needs to include hard numbers. Mary Ruby responded that the numbers are there and the survey is there. She is happy to answer any questions that Jim has. Jim would like to see this Plan be brought to the Board at the February meeting.

Gabe Dillon commented that this plan has detailed information regarding costs to build and maintain trails. This detail was alluded to in the current plan but was not developed.

President Woll stated that he has reviewed this document two or three times. It is important that the plan clearly state that the Parks Department has priority in reviewing issues relative to trails. He requested that the following be revised:

- **Chapter 3: Administration and Funding**, remove statistics from Yellowstone, pages 12 & 13 “Table 1: Maintenance Checklist Compiled from Other Community Plans”, and the accompanying reference asterisked on page 13; replace with Flathead County statistics;
- Remove “**Appendix K: Trail Specifications**” which reference Iowa trails, and the accompanying reference on page 74; replace with Forest Service trail standards, as is the current practice.
- Revise all references to out of area statistics and replace with Flathead County statistics, if available.
- Remove “**Appendix L: Draft Trails Coordinator Job Description**”.

Jim Buechle questioned the reliability of the statistics regarding money brought into the Valley by trails and also the trail use numbers.

Diane Medler stated that Headwaters Economics is a reputable national firm that incorporated user surveys and data collected at Whitefish Trails to determine the impact of trails. They use statistically correct processes and formulas. The Institute of Tourism & Recreation Research at the University of Montana surveyed trail users as well, who are approachable and willing to give detail. They did the Helena trails study and do non-resident visitor research which gives the economic impact and visitations numbers for the state and counties. We are a tourism economy and our trails are of economic value to current and new residents as well as visitors.

The Kalispell Chamber participates in a group called the Associated Chambers which includes Polson; Eureka; Evergreen; the Convention and Visitors Bureaus in Whitefish & Kalispell; Glacier National Park; and the Forest Service. They meet once per month with a focus on trails. Diane participates with the PATHS committee to represent the City of Kalispell Chamber and the Convention and Visitors Bureau. They have worked on and helped fund the Crown of the Continent website, which provides community trail plans. Flathead County is seen as a leader and a strong advocate for trails. It is viewed as a popular thing for the County to bring everyone together to develop this plan, which she endorses.

A new 300 unit RV park approved in Kalispell advertises that the main reason for their location is access to the Rails to Trails system. In addition, Flathead National Forest is working on 24 new miles of trails called the Crystal Cedar Project. This revised plan is a resource manual and it is known that trails will ultimately be built

by the community. Diane encouraged the County to move forward and provide the leadership to help stakeholders and community groups.

Mary stated that it is very important to understand what Diane said. We are pushing off many agencies who worked hard for 18 months. All parties have had copies of the Plan since the end of September. It is anticipated to have a revised version with today's edits by the end of December. If there are any other concerns and or clarification needed, please provide this to Mary so a decision may be made

Jim Buechle moved to table a decision regarding the Trails Plan Update until the February meeting and after all updates are completed.

Clyde Fisher seconded the motion.

Mary Ruby and Elise Robocker voted nay.

President Pete Woll broke the tie with an aye vote.

There being no further discussion – the motion was carried.

The Oftedahl family has offered to sell to the County property adjacent to Plum Creek land, private land, and Herron Park. The property is around mid-500 acres with some access concerns. The Oftedahls would like to see the property be a public land trust and the County is mulling it over as to what this would mean. The County cannot write a check. Foys to Blacktail trails has the capacity to maintain current trails. Flathead Land Trust wants to have Foys to Blacktail Trails help as well for land by Smith Lake. Jed stated that we need to further explore the offer and spread the word.

○ **DNRC Chainsaw Training** – This topic is a “no go” due to volunteers and liability insurance concerns. This may be addressed in the spring when the timing is more appropriate to determine which trees will be affected.

○ **School District 5 Donation** – This item was moved up on the agenda.

○ **Lake Park Addition Tree Planting** – It was the Department's intent to keep this job in the private sector and to plant this fall, however, all landscape companies are shut down for the season. This matter will be addressed in the spring.

Weed Department Report

It has been an excellent year. More revegetation was accomplished than in the past. The Road Department has been good about notification for disturbed areas. The new tractor is being prepped. The staff is laid off for season.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Matters of the Board

There were no matters of the Board.

Adjourn

Jim Buechle moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:28AM.

Mary Ruby seconded the motion.

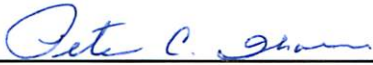
There being no discussion and all in favor – the motion was carried.

The January 2019 meeting has been cancelled. The time and place of the next meeting is **Monday, February 4, 2019** at 08:30 AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

Memorandum of Understanding Between Flathead County, Montana, and Foy's to Blacktail Trails Inc, file CO edits, MOU edited _011_2018.PDF 356KB

Approved:



Pete Woll, Board President

2/11/19

Date