

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

**Agenda
Monday, June 17, 2019
8:30 AM**

- Call to Order
- Approve Previous Minutes
- Public Comment
- Parks & Recreation Department Report
 - Flathead Lake Access Improvement – Richard Kehr
 - Request for Advertising Signs at Herron Park – Linda Tutvedt
 - Foy's to Blacktail Trails Report on Volunteer Work – Gabe Dillon
 - Trails Plan Update Report
 - Vendors in County Parks - Discussion
- Weed Department Report
- Other Business
- Matters of the Board - Personnel
- Adjourn

Flathead County Weed/Parks/Recreation

MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Meeting Date: June 17, 2019

Members of the Board in attendance:

Jim Buechle, Clyde Fisher, Samuel Harworth, Jessica Treweek, Pete Woll

Members of the Board not in attendance:

All Board members were present.

Also in attendance:

Jed Fisher, Superintendent; Michele Haarr, Clerk

Others Present:

Gabe Dillon – Foys to Blacktail Trails

Richard Kehr – Flathead Lake Access Initiative

Scott Treweek – Sassy T Farms

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 17, 2019. The meeting convened at 8:32AM, President Woll presiding.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the May 6, 2019, meeting 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 6, 2019 Board minutes.

Jessica Treweek seconded the motion.

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

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Parks & Recreation Department Report

◦ **Flathead Lake Access Improvement – Richard Kehr**

Richard Kehr, retired from Swan Lake District Ranger, Flathead National Forest, gave some background information regarding the group he represents - Flathead Lake Recreational Access Partnership. Private development around Flathead Lake is limiting opportunities for public and tribal access to the lake. Additional access on the lake shore is needed to meet current and future demand for developed recreation opportunities such as boating, camping, and day use. Parties involved include Dave Landstrom, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Jim Marsh, retired US Forest Service and Department of Defense.

The purpose of this partnership is to:

- Document the cooperation between the parties in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to secure and improve public and Tribal recreational access to Flathead Lake in accordance with specified provisions as stated in the latest draft MOU.

This MOU was reviewed by legal 9-12 months ago and to date, no one has signed off on it.

- Secure and improve for the long term the network of public and Tribal recreation sites to meet the demand for access to Flathead Lake, and support local communities.
- Develop private/public/Tribal partnerships that provide financial sustainability for the management and operation of these sites.

The Request of Flathead County and the Park Board includes:

- Participation in this collaborative effort.
- This effort is not asking the County to expand its park system. However, the opportunity will be available to the County in the future if it chooses to do so.
- Collaborative participation to expand tribal and public access to Flathead Lake. Future property acquisitions will likely be assigned to the entity that is most appropriate for long term ownership and management for access by tribal members and the public.

The Board had several questions and Superintendent Jed Fisher informed Mr. Kehr that a few years back a group identified every lake access including rights-of-way. Kehr stated that the group is looking at all opportunities but their real target is for larger footprints, and possible adjacent properties. Currently, the focus is on Flathead Lake and the key is getting organized for this. They are not limited to Flathead County but it's a little early to know for sure. There would be two tiers of partners – major and broader/private entities. Jed suggested that perhaps they could expand on existing concerns which may be considered a priority and easier to sell. Kehr responded that it is a balancing act and they don't want to miss opportunities.

The argument regarding loss of tax dollars when acquiring property was posed. Mr. Kehr stated that maybe there would be a return with user fees and services. It was pointed out that the map provided is missing County sites. Kehr said they stayed away from specific parcels because it's really early in the game, and he was unable to say how much is tribal, however, most is private.

It is undermined who would provide maintenance although there are several possibilities. Mr. Kehr stated that they are not looking to put a financial burden on the County.

◦ **Request for Advertising Signs at Herron Park – Linda Tutvedt**

Linda was unable to make this meeting and the topic will be placed on the July Board agenda.

◦ **Foys to Blacktail Trails Report on Volunteer Work – Gabe Dillon**

Gabe reported that the Mother's Day poop scoop event was better than last year. There was maybe one-tenth the amount of the prior year.

Gabe provided a written summary of work performed for National Trails Day, June 1, 2019, which included clearing trails, removal of a jump and repair of that trail; finalizing trail tread on the Notch Trail; staining remaining picnic tables near the stables; and bagging of approximately 30 pounds of Houndstongue. Someone built a jump on the Notch Trail, which was removed, and one week later it was reinstalled.

Corridor thinning on the Notch Trail took approximately 70 hours with 20 – 25 volunteers – a good value for grant writing.

Jed reported that both Gabe and Orrin Webber try to help as much as possible, however, we can't allow private parties to operate equipment – it has to be government applicators on government land to avoid liability concerns.

◦ **Trails Plan Update – Set Plan Review Date**

Progress is being made on a revision of the Trails Plan. Legal did not consider the previously submitted document a “plan”, although it provided useful information, it did not review current County responsibility and included a limited cost analysis. We are currently asking the questions “What can the County do?” “What can the County afford?” “How many trails are the responsibility of the County?”. Over a period of time, many existing trails were established through Planning and Zoning.

There are over 20 boxes located in Records that need to be reviewed for maintenance agreements. Once a complete list is compiled, the draft update will be presented to the Board. At this time, there are approximately 27 – 33 miles of trails identified as County responsibility. \$1,600 per mile is the cost for basic maintenance that includes weed control, mowing, plowing, weed eating, etc. \$29,000 per mile is the estimated cost for paved trails over a 10-year period. Capital Improvement Project money may have to deal with deferred maintenance – we are checking into this. We are not taking care of about ½ of the parks due to budget constraints and there is not much cash-in-lieu money coming in. We must get a handle on what we have before we build more trails. It is anticipated that a completed plan will be in place by the end of the summer. After that the plan will be reviewed by Planning and Zoning, and ultimately by the Commissioners.

The County has matched its Gateway to Glacier Trail commitment in this year’s budget. By comparison, Glacier National Park has 740 miles of trails with 8 million deferred maintenance, an annual budget of 2 million, and 60 employees. Of a 6 million budget, 1.4 million comes from outside sources.

◦ **Vendors in County Parks – Discussion**

Do we or don’t we allow vendors in County Parks? We have not heard back from the County Attorney on this matter but anticipate some feedback prior to the July meeting.

Weed Department Report

The DOT contract is almost completed. The BPA contract is up and running, as is work for the City of Kalispell and Columbia Falls. The crew is fully staffed and busy. Mowing started last week and all County rights-of-ways are typically wrapped up in August.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Matters of the Board - Personnel

The meeting was closed at 10:00am for personnel matters and convened at 10:12am.

Adjourn

Jessica Treweek moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:12AM.

Sam Harworth seconded the motion.

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

Upon conclusion of the meeting, the Board disbanded at the direction of Superintendent Jed Fisher. The time and place of the next meeting is **Tuesday, July 23, 2019** at 8:30AM in the conference room at 311 FFA Drive, Kalispell, Montana.

Documents Submitted to the Board

Richard Kehr – map, MOU between MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks & Flathead Land Trust, presentation summary

Foys to Blacktail Trails – National Trails Day Work Summary

Approved:

Pete C. Woll
Pete Woll, Board President

7/23/19
Date