

Missoula County

Media Release

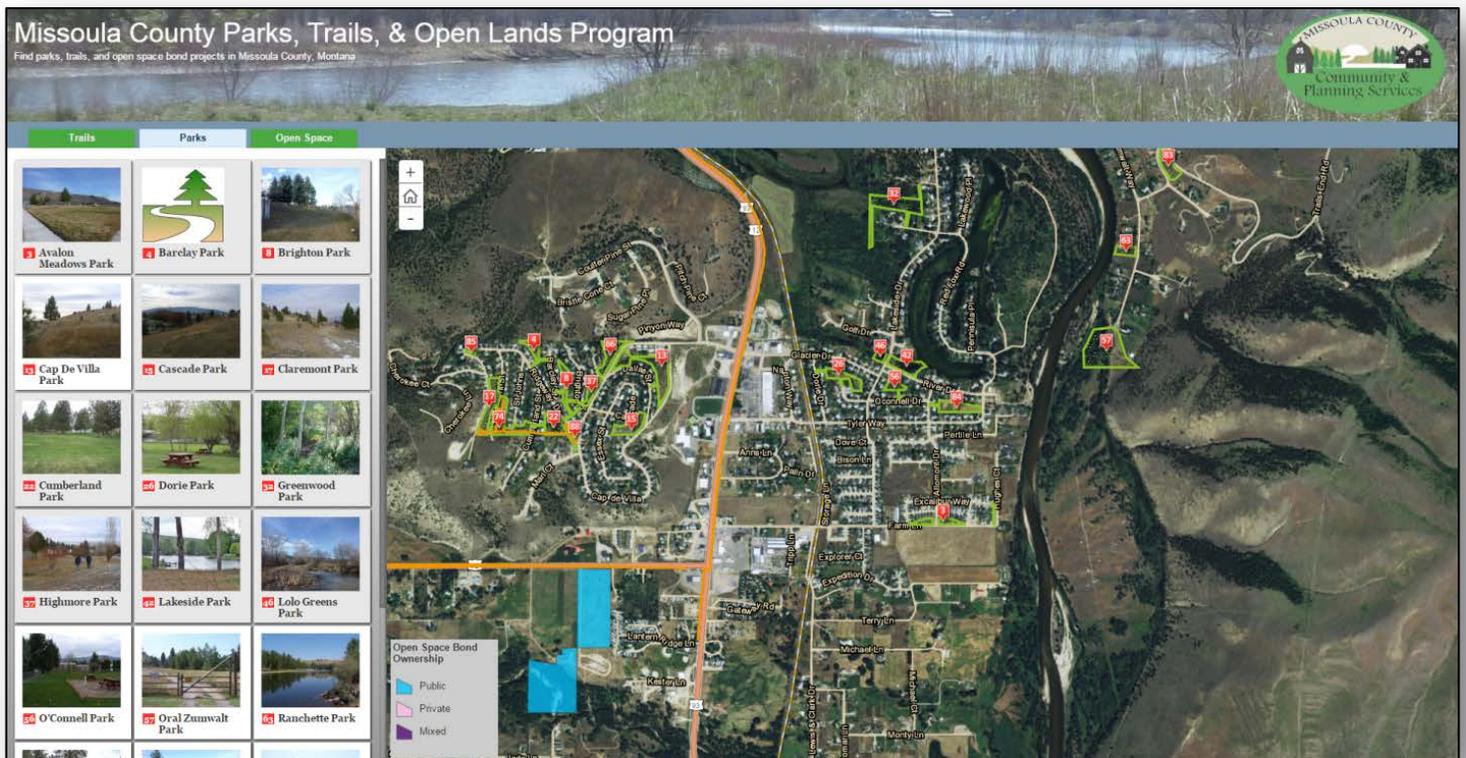
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County Parks, Trails & Open Lands Launch Online Map Tool

The Missoula County Parks, Trails & Open Lands Program has created an [online mapping tool](#) to make finding parks and trails simple and accessible to the public. This image-rich application works on desktop or mobile devices to encourage participation wherever the outdoor enthusiast may be browsing.

“A core component of the County Parks, Trails & Open Lands Program mission is to provide places where people can recreate throughout Missoula County,” Parks & Trails Program Manager, Lisa Moisey said. “This map will make it that much easier for Missoula County residents or visitors to locate nearby parks and trails. Users can also learn about how conservation easements - established with funding from the 2006 Open Space Bond - have been used to conserve working lands, protect water quality and wildlife habitat, and provide open space and scenic landscapes.”



The newly launched tool was developed after County Parks, Trails & Open Lands program staff determined additional efforts should be placed in showcasing County owned and managed recreation sites. Prior mapping was static and available only for download online. In addition, the database with information about recently built trails, such as the Bonner- West Riverside Trail and the Bitterroot Trail, needed to be updated after the completion of several projects.

“Once we were able to compile this data, we were further motivated to share it with the public,” Parks & Trails Coordinator, John Stegmaier said. “An online map seemed like the best format for presenting this data in one platform.”

It was also during this process that the County Parks & Trails Program merged with the County Open Lands Program. The Open Lands Program brought with it a great deal of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data from the landscape conservation accomplishments of the 2006 Open Space Bond.

“We got the idea to use a product called Story Maps from Aaron Wilson, a Planner at the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Office,” Stegmaier said. “He has extensive experience in designing similar efforts and knew that we could develop this application with our existing GIS software license. After taking the time to enter content and with the assistance of the County’s GIS staff, we were able to create this amazing map.”

An intern from the University of Montana assisted the Parks, Trails & Open Lands program by tackling the data management and content entry into the application. County GIS staff, namely Nate Rogers and Mike Snook, were then able to take this data and work through the technical implementation challenges without the need to hire outside consultants.

“This is great demonstration of what local partnerships can build,” Stegmaier said. “We are thrilled with the product and are fortunate to have worked with industry experts to deliver this application to the public.”

Parks, Trails & Open Lands staff encourage the public to share any comments or suggestions they have about the map.

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The County Parks, Trails, and Open Lands Program manages 91 parks and more than 40 miles of shared-use paths and trails. Our mission is to provide and maintain a sustainable system of parks and trails that protects a diversity of habitats and open space, where people of all ages may participate in activities blending passive and active outdoor recreation.