

# Missoula County Media Release

**Contact: John Stegmaier**

*Parks & Trails Coordinator*

[jstegmaier@missoulacounty.us](mailto:jstegmaier@missoulacounty.us)

406-258-3458

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## **Fort Missoula Regional Park Phase 2 Hosts Grand Opening Celebration This Week**

The public is invited to enjoy free family activities, live music, sports, games and more during the Fort Missoula Regional Park Phase 2 Grand Opening Celebration Thursday, July 26.

The event will run from 6 to 10 p.m. and feature games, crafts, sports and other activities for all ages. City and county officials will host a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Meadowlark Shelter at 6:30 p.m., followed by live music from local all-ages rock band The Salamanders from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Other highlights of the celebration include the Mascot Parade around the park's trail system at 7:15 p.m. and a multi-media rock show by local band Yip!Yeah! at 9 p.m. at The Commons. Throughout the evening, families can tour the new park and playgrounds, play kickball and lawn games on the new softball diamonds, try pickleball or tennis on the new courts or enjoy many other activities. A complete schedule of events and activities is [online](#).

The grand opening marks the completion of the \$38 million Fort Missoula Regional Park, a joint city-county project funded by the \$42 million Parks and Trails Bond that county voters approved in 2014. Phase 1 of the park opened in 2017.

“The completion of Fort Missoula Regional Park is the result of many years of dreaming, planning and hard work by many in the community,” said County Commissioner Jean Curtiss. “Not only is the park unique nationally because of its location in the midst of a historic district, it will also provide a beautiful place for residents and visitors to recreate for years to come.” FMRP is expected to draw between 24,000 to 60,000 visitors a year who will contribute between \$1.4 million and \$3.1 million to the local economy.

Park features completed during Phase 2 construction include the Meadowlark Shelter, a 1,500-square-foot timber and stone picnic/events shelter; Mac's Playground, a fully-inclusive adaptive playground; seven softball diamonds, including five lighted fields; the Home Plate Grill full-service concession; The Greens picnic shelter and lawn games area; The Commons social recreation area, eight resurfaced tennis courts and 22 pickleball courts. The park also includes an outdoor fitness center with nine workout stations, basketball courts, lawn volleyball, a preschool playground inside the softball complex, historical interpretation, trails, restrooms and parking. The Sgt. Bozo Dog Park, also part of Phase 2 construction, will open later this year.

Residents are encouraged to walk or bike to the grand opening if possible. The public is invited to join the Missoula Bike Ambassadors for a group ride via the Bitterroot Trail and South Reserve pedestrian bridge that will depart at 5 p.m. from Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park. Cyclists also can join

the ride at the intersection of the Bitterroot Trail and Mary Avenue when the group rides through between 5:30 and 5:40 p.m.

Parking will be available in the South Avenue and Fort Missoula Road lots of the park, as well as in the northwest corner of the Community Medical Center campus and at Big Sky High School. Shuttles will run from Big Sky High School to the park approximately every 15 minutes from 5:45 to 9:15 p.m. On-street parking is not permitted on South Avenue or Fort Missoula Road.

Visitors should note that while the park is open, some of the grassy areas have not fully filled in yet, as weather conditions over the past several months have not been conducive to seed germination and vegetation growth.

“Though some of the grassy areas may not meet expectations for users, we want folks to have access to the many features in the park that are ready to use,” said Donna Gaulker, Missoula Parks and Recreation director. “We need both the fall and spring growth seasons to reach our goals for the grasses, and we appreciate visitors helping with this by staying off them for now.”

The park’s grand opening is sponsored by Jackson Contractor Group, Inc., Knife River Corporation, Musco Sports Lighting, OZ Architects and Axis Physical Therapy. Radio sponsors include U104.5 FM and The Trail 103.3 FM.

Partnering organizations for the event include Missoula County Parks, Trails and Open Lands; Missoula Parks and Recreation; Let’s Move Missoula, The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula; Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History; Clyde Coffee; Buffalo Wild Wings; Barnes and Noble; Coldstone Creamery; Painting With A Twist; REI; Kornutopia; Missoula Fencing Association; CASA of Missoula; Mismo Gymnastics; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Muse Comics; Missoula Taekwondo; Big Sky ATA; Costco; USTA Tennis; Childbloom Guitar; Championship Training; Three Rivers Pediatric Dentistry; United Way of Missoula County; American Lung Association and the Missoula Public Library.

For more information, call 721-PARK or visit [AtTheFort.org](http://AtTheFort.org).

