

Missoula County Media Release

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Missoula County Awards \$39,000 in Grants to Fund Park, Recreation Improvements

Residents throughout Missoula County will enjoy much needed upgrades and maintenance to parks, playgrounds and trails – and even a new open-air skating rink – thanks to nearly \$39,000 in matching grants awarded by the Parks and Trails Advisory Board.

The Seeley Lake Regional Outdoor Center for Kinetic Sports (ROCKS) used \$10,000 in matching grant funds to put the finishing touches on a new open-air ice rink located at the elementary school's athletic fields. The rink enjoyed its grand opening last Saturday, with more than 200 people coming out to skate and enjoy hot chocolate and other treats.

“Kids here don’t have as much opportunity to be active during the winter months,” said Garry Swain, a ROCKS board member who helped jump start the project about a year ago. “This gives them another outlet to get down there and just have a ball, for free.”

Four other grants, which range from \$1,500 to \$12,000, will help fund critical capital and maintenance projects to improve parks, trails and recreation areas through the Parks and Trails Matching Grants Program. They will help fund the following projects in 2019:

- \$1,500 to perform maintenance on the playground and double tennis courts located in Seeley Lake Community Park (Seeley Lake Elementary School District No. 34)
- \$12,000 to install wayfinding markers, benches and/or tables, and finance placement of portalets along the Bitterroot Trail (Bitterroot Trail Preservation Alliance)
- \$4,500 to apply weed and feed lawn treatments and install an irrigation system for the play area east of the barn at Hellgate Lions Park in Bonner (Friends of 2 Rivers)
- \$8,800 for general maintenance of East Missoula Lions Park (East Missoula Lions Club)

The Parks and Trails Matching Grants Program leverages partnerships with local nonprofits and community groups to maintain county parks and other public recreation areas. In these partnerships, the Parks and Trails Advisory Board provides planning assistance and funding, while the partner organization matches those funds through a combination of project expenses, in-kind donations and volunteer service hours.

“Awarding the matching grants is always an exciting time of year, because we get to see what types of outdoor recreation projects county residents are prioritizing,” said Parks and Trails Coordinator John Stegmaier. “It is truly remarkable what our community partners are able to achieve through their own determination and use of these matching funds.”

For more information, call Stegmaier at 406-258-3458 or email jstegmaier@missoulacounty.us. More information on the Matching Grants Program also is [online](#).

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