

# Parks and Trails Master Plan

Missoula County



Approved by Missoula County Parks Board  
March 8, 2012



## Acknowledgements

The Missoula County *Parks and Trails Master Plan* was developed by the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program and Rural Initiatives Office with the technical assistance and design help of PROS Consulting, LLC, and ETC/Leisure Vision Institute. Special thanks go to the many residents, park users, and community leaders for their insight and support throughout the duration of this study.

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## Executive Summary

Missoula County has a history as rich as its rugged scenery and residents. Five large valleys, two major rivers, and multiple mountain chains comprise the landscape of one of the more picturesque counties in the American West. Formed in 1860, Missoula County was originally a part of the Washington Territory then became a part of the Idaho Territory in 1863. In 1864, the Montana Territory was formed and Missoula County became one of the 11 original counties of Montana.

Today, Missoula County is home to 109,299 residents<sup>1</sup> making it the second most populous county in the State of Montana even though there is only one incorporated city within its boundaries. Approximately 60% of the total population of Missoula County resides in the City of Missoula, while the remaining 40% live in the rural settings and small communities located throughout the County. These residents are diverse and active recreationalists<sup>2</sup>, making Missoula County one of the recreation “hot spots” of the state.

The Parks and Trails Program (“Program”) of Missoula County is unique in the nationwide parks and recreation industry. The Program is small with only one full time employee, and yet is responsible for the management of 91 separate park sites distributed throughout more than 12 different communities and major residential areas of the County. The success and favorable reputation of the Program throughout the County is a product of genuine and thoughtful community relations and productive partnerships. This *Parks and Trails Master Plan* renews the approach of the Program that has previously been directed by the 1997 *Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan*, carrying forward elements that remain relevant to current circumstances and replacing or updating strategies, tactics and policies that are no longer applicable. This new plan supports the future of the Program through the continuation and expansion of these and many other successful traditions.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan update has been developed under the following guiding principles and objectives:

- Sustainably grow the best practices and quality services of Missoula County
- Serve the relevant park and recreational needs of existing and new residents of Missoula County
- Further position the County as a state-wide and national destination, while recognizing the importance of County sites and facilities for local residents
- Enhance partnerships and funding opportunities in both the public and private sectors
- Leave a positive legacy for current and future generations of Missoula County residents

### MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS TODAY

The Missoula County Parks and Trails Program plays a pivotal and important role in a network of recreation providers in the region that includes City of Missoula, the State of Montana and substantial federal lands, and exhibits numerous qualities and best practices as a public service. A few quick facts regarding the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program are listed below:

- Missoula County Parks and Trails Program manages 91 park, greenway and open space sites; a variety of recreational amenities and assets; special use facilities; and nearly 45 miles of natural and improved surface trails.
- Missoula County Parks and Trails Program has awarded over \$559,000 in matching grant funds to local communities for park and community projects since 1983.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 U.S. Census.

<sup>2</sup> Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. 2008. Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2012.

- Missoula County Parks and Trails Program owns and/or oversees major assets in most local communities such as the Swan Valley Community Center in Condon, Lions Park in Seeley, Clinton Community Center in Clinton, East Missoula Lions Park in East Missoula/Bonner, Big Sky Park and Fort Missoula Regional Park in Missoula, and Lolo Beach Park in Lolo.
- Missoula County Parks and Trails Program is one of the few methods in Missoula County through which public parklands and trails are acquired and managed for public recreation as a direct impact from development.
- Missoula County Parks and Trails Program is operated by only one full-time employee with part-time administrative support and an annual operating cost of \$3.32 per county resident per year. This was found to be lower than other similar counties in the United States by as little as \$1.98 per resident and as much as \$13.86 per resident per year.<sup>3</sup>

### A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

While there are many aspects of the 1997 *Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan* that remain guiding principles and goals of this master plan, there have also been changes in the county over the last 14 years that this plan must address for the future. The foundation of meeting the needs and interests of residents in the future is outlined in the vision and mission statements of the Program.

#### Vision Statement of Missoula County Parks and Trails Program

The vision of Missoula County Parks and Trails Program is to promote personal health, social well-being, and economic benefits that improve the quality of life in Missoula County.

#### Mission Statement of Missoula County Parks and Trails Program

It is our mission 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.

### LOGICAL FLOW OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The process of developing the *Parks and Trails Master Plan* followed a logical path for responsive community planning, and involved the major components illustrated in the diagram below. It is important to note that public and community input was an ongoing element of the planning process and continued throughout the entire project. Summaries of public and community input, the site and facility assessments, and the needs analysis are provided in this report. Full versions of the *Comprehensive Assessment Report* and *Needs Analysis Report* are separately bound supplements to the master plan report.



<sup>3</sup> Cost per resident was evaluated for Coconino County, AZ (pop. 134,421), Lewis and Clark County, MT (pop. 63,395), and Boone County, KY (pop. 118,811). Parks and trail expenditures per resident in Missoula County is between 37% and 81% lower than these examples.



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

### MAINTAINING WHAT WE HAVE

There are many great examples of quality Missoula County parks and trails throughout the parks and trail system. A number of Missoula County facilities are cornerstone assets in small, local communities. It is important to protect and maintain the quality and integrity of these community assets and operational practices. These include:

- Strong and productive partnerships with local communities, user groups, and non-profit organizations
- Signature assets in multiple communities throughout the County
- Improved surface trails supporting recreation and commuter use
- Superb community relations
- Neighborhood and conservation parks in small communities throughout the County
- Successful matching grant program
- Vigilance in attending to natural resource threats – invasive plants and insects
- Diversity of sites and amenities



***East Missoula Lions Park***

### IMPROVING WHAT WE HAVE

While there are many things the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program does exceptionally well, there are a few opportunities to improve the quality of assets and amenities in the system. These include:

- Improved park and site signage
- Addressing site encroachment and misuse
- More clearly defined development and subdivision regulations relating to parks and trails
- Improved public access to some sites
- Facility and amenities repairs at some sites
- Upgrading existing parks to include enhancements and other improvements



***Ball Field at Clinton Community Center***

### DEVELOPING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Missoula residents are generally active and interested in quality recreation opportunities and the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program can play a significant role in meeting current and future needs. The following new development projects have been identified as relevant to the interests and needs of the communities, are relevant for the County to be focused on, and feature a high probability of success:

- Trails that improve connectivity within communities
- Trails that connect communities to neighboring and adjacent public lands
- Regional trails that connect communities throughout Missoula County
- Recreational assets (playgrounds, picnic areas, sports fields, etc.) as deemed necessary to support community needs



***Paved trail in Seeley***



### ENHANCING OPERATIONS

The Missoula County Parks and Trails Program is known for being a frugal and responsive public service, as seen in their very low staffing and creative partnerships to support a multitude of sites and responsibilities. The following key strategies can help to guide the Program over the next 10 years in continuing its tradition of excellence while appropriately growing to meet community needs:

- Encourage additional interest and creativity in the matching grants program
- Establish more consistent guidelines for County subdivision regulations, park dedication, trail development, and cash-in-lieu of land dedication that reflect best practices
- Expand funding support for capital and operational needs aligned with community expectations and priorities, including establishing a close working relationship with a non-profit fund development partner
- Appropriately grow staff support for the Program to accommodate increased responsibilities and community demands
- Enhance inter-departmental partnerships

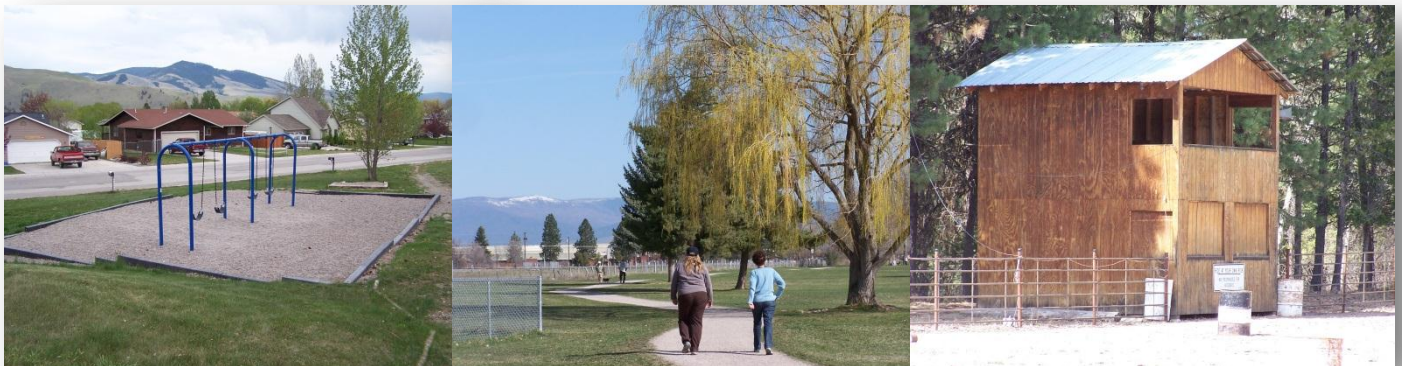


*Community meeting in Frenchtown*

### CORE SERVICES OF THE MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS PROGRAM

The functional core services of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program are:

- **Site and Infrastructure Stewardship**
  - Parks, facilities, and trails
- **Health**
  - Access to recreational opportunities that can provide for personal wellness
- **Safety**
  - Site and facility maintenance
- **Community Heritage**
  - Conservation of parks and diverse habitats



*Left to right: Westview Park (Lolo); Fort Missoula Regional Park (Missoula); Swan Community Center Rodeo Arena (Condon)*



## Overview of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program

The communities served by the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program have undergone significant change since the 1997 Parks Master Plan, as has the Program itself. Below is a summary of the Program as of FY 2010.

### GENERAL

	FY 2010
<b>Total Operating Expenses<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>\$362,203</b>
<b>Total Full-Time Employees</b>	<b>1.125</b>
<b>Total Park Sites</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>645.5 acres</b>
<b>Total Trail Mileage (approximately)</b>	<b>45 miles</b>
<b>Total Number of Park Acres per Full Time Employee</b>	<b>573.78 acres</b>
<b>Average Annual Park Operations Cost per County Resident</b>	<b>\$3.32</b>
<b>Average Annual Matching Grant Funds Awarded (FY 2005 – 2010)</b>	<b>\$32,904</b>
<b>Total Matching Grant Funds Awarded (since 1983)</b>	<b>\$559,418</b>
<b>Acres of County Park Land per 1,000 Residents</b>	<b>5.90 acres</b>
<b>Total Acres of Public Park/Conservation/Recreation Lands per 1,000 Residents<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>15,310.4 acres</b>

### MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS

	Quantity	Acreage
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>77.6 acres</b>
<b>Community Parks</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>92.8 acres</b>
<b>Regional Parks</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>217.3 acres</b>
<b>Greenways / Open Space Parks</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>95.5 acres</b>
<b>Conservation Parks</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>162.4 acres</b>
<b>Total Parks</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>645.6 acres</b>

### MISSOULA COUNTY TRAILS

	Quantity	Mileage
<b>Natural Surface Trails</b>	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>10.10 miles</b>
<b>Improved Surface Trails (paved)</b>	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>34.73 miles</b>
<b>Total Trails</b>	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>44.83 miles</b>

### ADDITIONAL QUICK FACTS

- Partnerships and matching grants with local communities, user groups, and stakeholder organizations are the key to Missoula County maintaining such low staffing numbers and capital expenses given the size of the county park and trail system.
- Most County parks are acquired through land dedication per county subdivision regulations, as provided for by State law.
- As of March 2011, Missoula County residents pay less per year to support the annual operational costs of County Parks and Trails than they do for a single gallon of gasoline.

<sup>4</sup> This includes all operating expenses for the maintenance of the parks and trails system, budgeting for large capital projects, and savings carried over annually.

<sup>5</sup> This is inclusive of all public lands, including those that are not accessible for public recreation such as agricultural lands, lands for timber production, and protected habitat.

## Integrated Planning

There are numerous plans either recently completed or in-progress in Missoula County at the time in which this *Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan* was being developed. It was critical that this plan be coordinated with the related regional planning efforts to integrate appropriately with ongoing priorities, standards, and practices of the County. These plans and planning projects have produced numerous strategies and outcomes that have positively influenced and supported parks and trails in Missoula County. The following plans and/or related planning teams were considered in the Missoula County parks and trails planning process.

- **Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan (1997)<sup>6</sup>**
- **Tower Street Park Complex Management and Utilization Plan (1998)**
- **Lolo Area Regional Plan (2002)**
- **Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area (2004)**
- **Fort Missoula Regional Park Master Plan (2004)**
- **Fort Missoula Design Development Plan (2006)**
- **Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan (2006)**
- **Missoula County Growth Policy (2006)**
- **Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008 – 2012 (2008)**
- **Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan (2008)**
- **Montana Legacy Project (2010)**
- **PLACE Project (2010)**
- **Seeley Lake Area Regional Plan Update (2010)**
- **Missoula Active Transportation Plan (2011)**
- **Other adopted community and neighborhood plans**



**Lakeside Park (Lolo)**

<sup>6</sup> The *Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan* completed in 1997 is updated by this current master plan.



## Chapter 1: Summary of Community Input

There has been extensive public input and participation in the Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan process from April 2010 to January 2011, with additional input opportunities and public meetings yet to be scheduled. The input process was designed to accommodate the differences between individual communities, as well as to maximize the accessibility of the planning team for the public. As a result, a total of 13 leadership interviews and stakeholder focus groups and seven community meetings were conducted throughout Missoula County as the foundation of public participation.

In addition to the leadership interviews, focus groups, and community meetings, the public input process included a statistically-valid household survey that was conducted for both residents in the unincorporated areas of the County and residents within the City of Missoula. These representative samples and results were organized so that responses from residents outside of the City of Missoula had equal statistical validity and could be analyzed separately from resident responses from within the city. This was an important element in the public input process to ensure that the interests and needs of county residents were not overshadowed by the needs of city residents.

### 1. 1 QUALITATIVE INPUT SUMMARY

#### INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

The qualitative data collected included multiple leadership interviews, focus groups, and community meetings. A summary of the public input opportunities to date is provided below:

- Thirteen (13) leadership interviews and focus groups were conducted to be representative, but not exhaustive of interests affecting the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program. These sessions included:
  - County and local elected officials
  - Local representatives from federal and state agency stakeholders
  - Administration and Program leadership of Missoula County
  - Leadership of City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Program
  - Parks and trail user and stakeholder groups
  - Business leaders from throughout the county
  - Representatives from Community Councils
- Seven (7) community meetings were conducted throughout Missoula County in order to capture representative interests, needs, and priorities of residents through each of the communities where Missoula County parks and trails are located. These meetings were organized and promoted in coordination with local community council meetings, and were held in:
  - Condon (Swan Valley)
  - Seeley Lake
  - Bonner (included outreach to residents in Clinton, Turah and East Missoula)
  - Missoula
  - Evaro
  - West Valley
  - Lolo





## GENERAL FINDINGS

There were numerous findings derived from the interviews, focus groups, and community meetings and often many differences were noted between communities and stakeholder groups. The following general findings are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather a summary of prevailing and overall themes heard in the process.

Every community is different and subsequently has different specific needs; however there are many needs and interests that are common to communities.

- Trails are a valued asset in most communities, although some communities experience user conflicts between types of trail users with disparate needs.
- Connectivity within communities, and to adjacent public lands is important.
- Connectivity with other communities in Missoula County is important.
- Open space for conservation and wildlife are important.
- There is generally a lack of awareness among residents about the number and location of Missoula County parks in their communities.
- There are numerous stakeholders in Missoula County that share the responsibility for managing public recreation lands and opportunities, and therefore related planning should be cooperative.
- The prevalent use of local partners to develop, maintain, and manage county parks and trails is extremely successful.
- The matching grants administered by the Missoula County Parks Board are highly valued in communities, although there is a need for more awareness of the grant program.
- Some county parklands are a management challenge involving one or more of the following issues:
  - Noxious weeds
  - Harmful and/or invasive insect infestation of trees
  - Property encroachment
  - Lack of reliable access
  - Unusable terrain
  - Illegal dumping and/or parking
  - Illegal hunting



*Photo previous page: Community meeting in Condon. Photos this page left to right: Focus group in Seeley; Community meeting in Frenchtown*





## 1.2 QUANTITATIVE INPUT SUMMARY

### HOUSEHOLD SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Missoula County and the City of Missoula conducted a Community Survey from October through December of 2010. The purpose of the survey was to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within Missoula County and the City of Missoula. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Missoula County and the City of Missoula. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

The Consultant Team (PROS Consulting and Leisure Vision) worked extensively with Missoula County and City of Missoula officials in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system. Leisure Vision mailed surveys to a random sample of 3,500 households throughout Missoula County and the City of Missoula. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 766 completed surveys, with at least 385 from residents living in Missoula County but outside of the City of Missoula, and at least 381 from residents living in the City of Missoula. These goals were far exceeded, with a total of 1,107 surveys having been completed, including 453 from residents living in Missoula County but outside of the City of Missoula, and 654 from residents living in the City of Missoula. The results of the random sample of 1,107 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-2.9%.

	GOAL	ACTUAL	% OF GOAL
Total Responses	766	1,107	145%
County Residents	385	453	118%
City Residents	381	654	172%

### KEY FINDINGS

The summary report of the household survey results provided over 979 pages of detailed respondent and cross-tabulation data. The summary that follows captures the key findings of this report.

### VISITATION

- Overall visitation of County parks or trails (76%) is slightly higher than the national average of 72%. Overall visitation of City parks or trails (86%) is considerably higher than the national benchmark of 72%. Households with children are the biggest visitors to City and County parks or trails.
- County-only respondents (not including City residents) also boast high visitation above the national average, with a slightly higher visitation of City parks than County parks. Again, households with children are the most frequent visitors to City and County parks or trials.

A table summarizing the responses of all residents (City and County/non-City) is provided on the following page.

○ All Residents

Household Type	County Parks	City Parks
Children Under 10	88%	96%
Children 10-19	88%	96%
No Children - All Adults 20-54	79%	88%
No Children - All Adults 55 & over	55%	71%
All Households	76%	86%

## SATISFACTION

- Both City and County parks and trails have high satisfaction. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of all respondents are very or somewhat satisfied with the maintenance of County parks or trails, and 89% of households are very or somewhat satisfied with the maintenance of City parks or trails they have visited.

○ All Residents

	County Parks	City Parks
Very Satisfied	46%	49%
Somewhat Satisfied	43%	40%

## AMENITY USAGE

- Hiking trails (50%) is the facility that households use the most. Playgrounds (24%) are next, followed by river access (24%), paved commuter trails (23%), and pool/water parks (19%).
- Fully 74% of households who are willing to pay \$50 or more to acquire open space and construct new trails and facilities used hiking trails. In comparison, only 36% of households who are not willing to pay any money to pay to acquire open space and construct new trails and facilities use hiking trails. Clearly hiking trails have a big impact on the level of voter support.

○ All Residents – Percentage that use these facilities the most in the last 12 months

Ranking	All Residents	All residents	\$50 or more	\$30 - \$49	\$20 - \$29	\$10 - \$19	None
1 <sup>st</sup>	Hiking trails	50%	74%	54%	52%	47%	36%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Playgrounds	25%	24%	27%	29%	27%	21%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	River access sites	24%	30%	24%	25%	26%	19%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Paved commuter trails	23%	25%	29%	25%	27%	16%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Pool water parks	19%	16%	22%	19%	21%	18%



## REASONS FOR NOT VISITING OR USING PARKS

- In 3 out of 4 types of households, “too busy” was the biggest reason preventing household from using facilities or programs more. In 2 out of 4 types of households, “too far from home” was the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest reason preventing household throughout the County from using facilities or programs more. “Use other state and federal lands” was significantly less of a barrier for households with children under 10 than other types of households.
- **All Residents (County and City Residents)**

Ranking	All Residents	All residents	Households with Children under 10	Households with children 10-19 (none under 10)	Households with no children and adults 20-54	Households with no children and adults 55+
1 <sup>st</sup>	Too busy	36%	41%	47%	38%	24%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Too far from home	24%	31%	21%	24%	21%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Use other state or federal lands	22%	11%	19%	30%	25%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Not interested	16%	7%	9%	20%	23%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Do not know what is being offered	15%	17%	14%	22%	8%

## PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND NEED

- The type of household has a big impact on what programs are used the most. Youth sports are the first and second most used programs for households with children, but not in the top 5 for adult only households.
- The only program that is in the top 5 most used programs for all household types are special events. Adult fitness is in the top 5 most used program in all household types except households with children only 10 and under. All other program types are listed in only 2 or less household types.

## SOURCES FOR INFORMATION

- Newspaper, from friend and neighbors, park guides and brochures, and radio were ranked among the five most frequently used marketing sources for all household types. The park website was ranked among the five most frequently used marketing sources for all households types except those with ages 55+. The use of websites at 34% is significantly higher than the national benchmark, while the use of program guides is significantly lower than the national benchmark.

A table detailing responses for all residents (including County and City residents) is providing on the following page. A number of sources are listed which only City parks utilize to promote facilities and events, but it is recognized that many County residents rely upon those sources to learn of park and recreation opportunities in the area.

Ranking	All Residents	%	With children Under 10	%	With children 10-19	%	No children -adults 20-54	%	No children - adults 55+	%
1 <sup>st</sup>	Newspaper	48%	From friends & neighbors	48%	Park website	49%	Newspaper	46%	Newspaper	58%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	From friends & neighbors	43%	Park Website	45%	Newspaper	49%	From friends & neighbors	44%	From friends & neighbors	35%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Park Guides & Brochures	39%	Park Guides & Brochures	44%	Park Guides & Brochures	48%	Park Guides & Brochures	36%	Park Guides & Brochures	33%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Park Website	34%	Newspaper	40%	From friend & neighbors	46%	Park Website	36%	Radio	19%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Radio	27%	School flyers & newsletters	35%	School flyers & newsletters	31%	Radio	19%	Cable Television	18%

### FACILITY NEEDS

- Residents indicated that their top five facility needs were natural surface hiking and biking trails (80%), river access sites (69%), natural area / wildlife habitat (69%), paved commuter trails (64%), and group pavilions / picnicking areas (62%). The top 10 facility needs varied slightly from County residents and City residents.

#### County Residents

Ranking	All Residents	All residents
1 <sup>st</sup>	Hiking/biking trails	75%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	River access sites	69%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Natural areas/wildlife habitats	66%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Pool/water parks	57%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Group pavilions/picnicking	57%
6 <sup>th</sup>	Paved commuter trails	54%
7 <sup>th</sup>	Outdoor performance venues	49%
8 <sup>th</sup>	Playgrounds	48%
9 <sup>th</sup>	Exercise/fitness facilities	44%
10 <sup>th</sup>	Gyms or indoor rec facilities	41%

#### City Residents

Ranking	All Residents	All residents
1 <sup>st</sup>	Hiking/biking trails	84%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Paved commuter trails	70%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Natural areas/wildlife habitats	70%
4 <sup>th</sup>	River access sites	68%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Group pavilions/picnicking	67%
6 <sup>th</sup>	Pool/water parks	64%
7 <sup>th</sup>	Outdoor performance venues	61%
8 <sup>th</sup>	Playgrounds	56%
9 <sup>th</sup>	Exercise/fitness facilities	49%
10 <sup>th</sup>	Cultural facilities	48%



## MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS

- Acquire land for conservation value is an action that is significantly more important for households willing to pay \$50 or more to acquire open space and construction of new trails than for households willing to pay less than that amount. Detailed survey results on this question are available in the summary report of the household survey.
- Overall, maintaining existing land with passive facilities is the number one action for all of types of households willing to pay to acquire open space and construct new trails and facilities.

## WILLINGNESS TO PAY

- Seventy percent (70%) of all residents would support paying more each year than they are currently paying to acquire open space and construct new trails, wildlife habitats, and recreation facilities.
  - 66% of County residents
  - 73% of City residents

*The yellow column indicates the financial range that exhibited the greatest support in each sample area.*

	\$50 or more	\$30 - \$49	\$20 - \$29	\$10 - \$19	None
All Residents	16%	15%	17%	22%	30%
County Residents	13%	13%	17%	23%	34%
City Residents	19%	16%	16%	22%	27%

- Seventy-seven percent (77%) of all residents would support paying more each year than they are currently paying to maintain existing open space, parks, trails, wildlife habitats, and recreation facilities.
  - 72% of County residents
  - 80% of City residents

*The yellow column indicates the financial range that exhibited the greatest support in each sample area.*

	\$50 or more	\$30 - \$49	\$20 - \$29	\$10 - \$19	None
All Residents	14%	15%	19%	28%	23%
County Residents	10%	12%	19%	31%	28%
City Residents	17%	18%	18%	27%	20%



### 1.3 COMMUNITY VALUES MODEL

The Consultant Team synthesized findings from a comprehensive public input process to develop a framework for guiding the development of recommendations and strategies for the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program. The *Community Values Model* features recommended strategies that are aligned with five major categories of best practices: Community Mandates, Standards, Program/Services, Business Practices, and Community Outreach and Partnerships.

This strategy matrix is a building block for recommendations in the master plan, and represents the prevailing messages the consultant team and staff collected from stakeholder and public input. The Community Values Model has been developed to reflect the political and economic conditions that impact the County, and to validate the vision and mission of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program. These strategies are not listed in priority order.

<b>Community Value 1: Community Mandates</b>	
<b>Maintain and enhance park and trail facilities and programs to promote community interaction, healthy lifestyles and safety.</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	Care for and enhance the quality of current park sites, facilities, and amenities of the Missoula County Parks and Trails system.
<b>Strategy</b>	Provide parks and trails that reflect the ability to serve a diverse public.
<b>Strategy</b>	Upgrade park and trail facilities to address management challenges and to meet the needs of current users.
<b>Strategy</b>	Continue to enhance safety and security in parks and trails that encourages positive use of community amenities.
<b>Strategy</b>	Pursue responsible new improvements of the parks and trails in areas of the greatest growth and unmet needs.
<b>Strategy</b>	Leverage a variety of resources to support capital and operational needs of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program.

<b>Community Value 2: Standards</b>	
<b>Update and utilize standards for acquisition, development, design, operations, and maintenance of park and trails.</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	Utilize consistent standards for acquisition of new park lands, trails, or park amenities.
<b>Strategy</b>	Utilize consistent design standards in park and facility development for landscaping, amenities, and infrastructure.
<b>Strategy</b>	Establish standards and parameters for partnerships within both the public and private sectors to augment the capital and operational resources of the Program.
<b>Strategy</b>	Enhance communications in marketing and promotions of county parks and trails to improve community awareness of programs, services, and facilities, as well as to diversify usage of amenities and expand public feedback opportunities.
<b>Strategy</b>	Maintain consistent and updated standards for asset and amenity management in order to maximize and expand their useful lifespan.
<b>Strategy</b>	Maintain local, state, and national recognition as a best practices organization.
<b>Strategy</b>	Maintain compliance with all existing and applicable laws and regulations.



### **Community Value 3: Programs and Services**

**Provide balance and consistency in delivery of programs and services by meeting the needs of the diverse communities within Missoula County.**

<b>Strategy</b>	Enhance the matching grant program administered by the Missoula County Parks Board to improve the quantity and quality of applicants and awards.
<b>Strategy</b>	Establish a regional trails collaboration program that can advance the pursuit of trails that connect communities within Missoula County.
<b>Strategy</b>	Establish a special events policy to establish consistent guidelines, and to proactively manage local efforts to host special events at Missoula County park sites.
<b>Strategy</b>	Develop an interpretive signage program that appropriately interprets the significance of the natural, cultural and historic resources of parks and landscapes within Missoula County.

### **Community Value 4: Business Practices**

**Manage park and trail facilities and programs that support the financial goals and policies of the Parks and Trails Program.**

<b>Strategy</b>	Establish alternative funding policies and procedures that support capital and operating expenses.
<b>Strategy</b>	Maximize the capability of new and existing technology to enhance business practices.
<b>Strategy</b>	Develop a financial plan for programs, services, and facilities that appropriately balances public funding support with earned revenues, and that balances affordability and entrepreneurialism in the programs and services of the Program.

### **Community Value 5: Community Outreach and Partnerships**

**Maximize resources through mutually acceptable partnerships that leverage parks, trails, and open space development and program opportunities.**

<b>Strategy</b>	Develop a formalized on-going community outreach strategy to expand awareness of parks and recreation services offered to the community
<b>Strategy</b>	Develop a sustainable partnership with an established non-profit organization to leverage private sector funding to support select capital projects and programs.
<b>Strategy</b>	Review and update terms of agreements with existing partners utilizing Missoula County parks and facilities for public or private events.
<b>Strategy</b>	Play an active role in the network of park, trail, and recreational services and opportunities available to residents, organizations and businesses in Missoula County.

*Photo opposite page: Trail leading to Donovan Park (Turah)*









## Chapter 2: Summary of Comprehensive Assessments

The objectives of the assessments performed by the Consultant Team were to provide the foundation on which relevant and realistic recommendations were made in the *Parks and Trails Master Plan*. These objectives were:

- Identify existing site and operational conditions
- Identify potential areas for improvement or enhancement
- Provide defensibility for future recommendations

The contents of this *Comprehensive Assessment Report* are a basic description of existing conditions, known constraints, observed best practices, and areas for improvement.

The following key findings are the prevailing issues noted by the Consultant Team defining the current site and operating conditions of Missoula County parks and trails. There are additional detailed findings not referenced in this summary that are outlined throughout the sections of the *Comprehensive Assessment Report*.

### THE COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS PROGRAM IS OVER-EXTENDED

The Missoula County Parks and Trails Program (MCPTP) is a small program within the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office, but has an extensive presence throughout the county. The program is responsible for overseeing 91 sites or parcels of Missoula County lands, as well as numerous trails which are an actively growing asset in most communities. The MCPTP consists of 1.125 full-time equivalent employees, which operate as a part of an annually budget of approximately \$250,000 from tax revenue, fund transfers in, and lease payments. These annual budgetary means are primarily generated by a one mill levy established in 2000, which produces \$200,000 of the total annual budget. One of the early findings of this project is that the MCPTP is already over extended, and additional expectations for what the program can manage or achieve in the future will require additional funding.

### MANY COUNTY PARKS ARE A MAINTENANCE CHALLENGE

While there are a few Missoula County parks that are tremendous assets for local residents and the region, the vast majority of county parks are small parcels of land sprinkled throughout subdivisions and residential areas throughout the county. Most of these lands have been acquired through subdivision requirements and state statutes for developers to provide parklands as a component of their developments. In the past there have been inconsistent standards by which lands were considered suitable for county parks; therefore, resulting in many parcels being acquired for parks that were otherwise undesirable for development. As a result, many county parks are oddly shaped, in awkward or inconvenient locations, have limited or no access, and feature difficult terrain.

Due to MCPTP limited means and resources, many of these parcels are managed as best as they can be and have developed a number of management challenges including, but not limited to noxious weeds, illegal dumping, insect infestation and mortality in conifer tree cover, and encroachment by neighbors.

### PARTNERSHIPS MAKE IT POSSIBLE

As a result of the limited resources of the MCPTP, the great jewels of the park system are a result of successful partnerships with local communities, non-profit organizations, and other public agencies including County schools. Examples of these parks that operate under successful partnerships include, but are not limited to:

- Fort Missoula Regional Park and Big Sky Park in Missoula
- East Missoula Lions Park and Canyon View Park in East Missoula

- Bonner Kelly Fields\*
- Hellgate Lions Park in West Riverside
- Lolo Beach and Lolo Community Ball Fields\* in Lolo
- Donovan Park in Turah (owned by the State of Montana and leased by the County)
- Clearwater Park (Lions Park) in Seeley Lake
- Swan Valley Community Ball Park and Swan Valley Community Center in Condon (the ball park is owned by U.S. Forest Service, managed by Missoula County through a special permit, and leased to American Legion)

*\*Owned by others, but assisted by County park funds*

Besides these specific examples, there are numerous county parks that are maintained by volunteers and neighbors for purposes of keeping a safe and usable open space for families and individuals. These volunteers provide support in many functions including, but not limited to mowing, providing and maintaining park assets and amenities, managing litter and trash control, trail development and maintenance, and providing security monitoring.

### COMMUNITY NEEDS VARY WIDELY

One of the most notable observations made early in this project is the diversity and variety of community needs that vary throughout the county. The distinct communities feature unique interests, capabilities, and capacity that can be served by the Missoula County Parks and Trails Programs. For instance, residents in Condon / Swan Valley are supportive of their county parks, but do not seem to be as interested in developing additional trails as their neighbors to the south in Seeley Lake. The needs and interests of residents in the Clinton / Turah area are different than those of the Frenchtown / Huson area, and of residents in Lolo or Missoula.



*Community meeting in Bonner*

### LACK OF COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS

Throughout the process of visiting each of the Missoula County parks and conducting interviews and focus groups with leadership and user groups throughout the County, it became clear there is a general lack of community awareness of County park assets among residents. While there are a few individuals and groups that are well attuned to the County parks in their area, for the most part residents are not aware of the county parks near them or can distinguish county parks from other public parks. This is largely due to the limited resources of the MCPTP to promote or provide signage at parks, as well as the manner in which the county has inherited many of the properties in the park inventory. Residents who have purchased land or a home in a subdivision may not be aware that the empty lot down the street is actually a county park. Nor would these residents necessarily know of other parcels located in other subdivisions in their communities. Some of the parks are seen more as common areas separating backyard fences than as a County park or open space asset. It will be important in the future to stimulate advocacy and support for parks that are central in each park region as community assets.





## Chapter 3: Summary of the Needs Analysis

The needs analysis is the summary of findings from the process to determine the relevant parks, recreation and trail needs of communities and residents throughout the County, and prioritizing those needs based on community input and the results of the comprehensive assessments. A full report of the needs analysis is located in the appendices of this master plan, with this section of the master plan providing a summary of the analysis and findings.

### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

In order for a needs analysis to be thorough, multiple types of data and information are taken into account. The following data was reviewed, evaluated, and analyzed for Missoula County:

- Multiple forms of public and community input
  - Leadership and stakeholder interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Community meetings
  - Statistically-valid household survey
- Existing site and facility conditions
- Existing financial conditions
- Current and projected demographic characteristics of county residents
- Prevailing local, statewide, and national trends
- Technical analysis –analysis to determine equitability and accessibility of parks and trails

### 3.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The needs analysis in a master planning project is the pivotal step in which preliminary recommendations are developed. This is an important point in the planning process where the strategic direction of the Program for the next 10 years begins to emerge with more clarity and definition. The result of combining all of these various forms of data and information into the needs analysis ensures that the foundational principles listed below are followed and met:

1. Identified needs reflect the interests and demands of the communities and residents being served;
2. Identified community needs are appropriate and relevant to the mission, purpose and capability of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program; and
3. Need prioritization is a balance between what is politically palatable and economically feasible, resulting in recommendations that are realistic while still ambitious.

### 3.3 KEY FINDINGS

#### THE COUNTY RESIDENT POPULATION IS DYNAMIC AND ACTIVE

The results of the community input process to date, as well as the demographic and trends analysis revealed that the population of Missoula County is among the more dynamic in the State of Montana in terms of growth, diversity and recreational participation.

#### COUNTY PARKS PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Missoula County Parks and Trails are highly valued assets in communities throughout the county, and often are only possible through successful and beneficial partnerships with local organizations and residents. The role and potential of county parks and trails has evolved over the last 10 years, and will continue to evolve over the next 10 years to serve recreational needs of local residents in a complementary fashion with other public recreation and conservation lands in the region.

### RESIDENTS ARE OPEN TO EXPANSION

The community input process revealed that most county residents are open to the expansion of the Missoula County Parks and Trails System in certain areas of interests and with certain priorities. In fact, according to the results of the statistically-valid household survey conducted in association with this project 70% of all residents would support paying more each year to acquire open space and construct new trails, wildlife habitats, and recreation facilities. The majority of respondents were open to paying between \$10 – 19 more each year to support these priorities.

### SITE AND FACILITIES SUPPORTING PASSIVE RECREATION ARE THE PREDOMINANT INTEREST

There is a diversity of recreational interests in the County, and thus the need for diverse sites and facilities to support them. Passive recreation needs are typically self-guided experiences that require little or no development of infrastructure, as compared to active recreation which can be development-intensive. While there are diverse recreational interests among Missoula County residents, the predominant needs can be classified as passive recreational opportunities – picnic areas, playgrounds, river/creek access, and trails.

### PARK UPGRADING CAN BE A SUCCESSFUL OPTION

Another key finding gleaned from community input was the desire to limit or avoid duplication of benefits provided by the multiple other public park and recreation providers in the region. To this point, the majority of county parks play a similar role in communities as those managed by other entities (i.e. U.S. Forest Service; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, etc.) in providing greenways and open space for self-guided recreation. While it is important to maintain the role and value of county parks as greenways and open space in local communities, the county can also be successful pursuing select opportunities to upgrade some undeveloped parks to a neighborhood parks. Additionally, some parks may present good opportunities to upgrade from open space or undeveloped neighborhood park to a developed neighborhood park, or upgrade a neighborhood park to a community parks. Overall this can potentially provide a more robust and complementary level of service to residents by addressing their recreational needs more holistically while avoiding redundancy.

## 3.4 DEMOGRAPHICS ANALYSIS

One component of the needs analysis for the Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan is a review of the prevailing demographic characteristics of Missoula County and the relevant trends that are affecting public interests and needs related to the core services and functions of the county parks and trails program.

This demographic analysis provides a basic understanding of the population characteristics of Missoula County using data from national databases. The analysis that follows identifies multiple demographic characteristics of interest for this project including:

- Overall size of the County population by individuals, households, age segments, and race
- Economic status and spending power demonstrated by household income statistics
- Prevailing discretionary spending behavior of County residents
- Influence of demographic trends on recreation participation



## MISSOULA COUNTY DEMOGRAPHIC QUICK FACTS

- The total population of Missoula County has increased by approximately 14% in the last decade from 95,802 in 2000, to a projected 109,336 in 2010. It is projected to grow another 7% in the next five years to 117,182 in 2015.
  - Missoula County (non-city)
    - 2000 = 38,363
    - 2010 = 44,009
    - 2015 = 47,764
  - City of Missoula
    - 2000 = 57,439
    - 2010 = 65,327
    - 2015 = 69,418
- The population of Missoula County outside of the City of Missoula appears to have grown a higher percentage than the population within the city.
  - Missoula County (non-city) = 15% from 2000 to 2010, 9% from 2010 to 2015
  - City of Missoula = 14% from 2000 to 2010, 6% from 2010 to 2015
- The number of households in Missoula County (total) has grown by approximately 14% from 2000 to 2010, while the number of families has only grown by 10% in that time period.<sup>7</sup> This same trend is reflected for residents within the City of Missoula, with household growth at approximately 13% from 2000 to 2010, and 7% from 2010 to 2015.
- The median household income of Missoula County (total) residents appears to have grown by approximately 23% from 2000 to 2010, while median home value has increased by an estimated 83% indicating a potential growing issue with affordable housing. These estimations are limited by the fact they are based on linear regression projections calculated before the greatest effects of the 2007-2010 economic recession were realized. Presumably, the greatest disparity between these projections and current statistics is in median home value which has fallen dramatically in the last 24 to 36 months throughout the United States. Current statistics collected within the last 12 months were not available at the time of this study.
- In 2010, the population of Missoula County residents outside of the City of Missoula are slightly older than residents within the city.. The largest age segment of county residents (total) are those aged 35 – 54 years (27%), while the largest segment of residents within the city are aged 20 – 34 years (31%). This is attributed to the University of Montana in the City of Missoula.
- The median age of county residents (total) has increased from 33.2 years in 2000 to 34.8 years in 2010, and is projected to increase to 35.7 years by 2015.
- The gender balance of Missoula County residents remains fairly equal (49.9% / 50.1%), with slightly more females than males in both 2000 and 2010.
- The 2010 population of Missoula County is predominantly White (92.1%), and is similar amongst City residents (91.4% White).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Families are defined as one or people living together either married or of the same bloodline or legal family status. Households are just one or more persons living in the same residence regardless of any family relations.

<sup>8</sup> Persons considered of Hispanic Origin are also considered to be racially classified as White. This is a common classification practice utilized by the U.S. Census and other demographic databases.

### TOTAL POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS FINDINGS

The total population of Missoula County is estimated to be 109,336 in 2010, comprised of 43,872 total estimated households. The population of the City of Missoula accounts for approximately 60% of the County population with an estimated 65,327 residents in 2010.<sup>9</sup> This is comprised of 27,557 total estimated households. A table summarizing the population of both Missoula County and City of Missoula is provided below. Note that non-city populations and households are growing faster than those of the city or the county as a whole. These illustrate the population as accounted in the 2000 U.S. Census, an estimate for 2010, and projection for 2015.

*Total County, City-only, and County-only (non-city) Population and Households: 2000 - 2015*

	Estimated County Population	Estimated County Households	Estimated County (non-city) Population	Estimated County (non-city) Households	Estimated City Population	Estimated City Households
2000	95,802	38,439	38,363	14,208	57,439	24,231
2010	109,336	43,872	44,009	16,315	65,327	27,557
2015	117,182	47,115	47,764	17,732	69,418	29,383
Growth from 2000 to 2015	21,380	8,676	9,401	3,524	11,979	5,152
% Change from 2000 to 2015	22.3%	22.6%	24.5%	24.8%	20.9%	21.3%

*Source: ESRI and U.S. Census*

### KEY TOTAL POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD FINDINGS

The key findings of the total population and household analysis for Missoula County are detailed as follows:

1. While the population of the county is growing, it appears the population outside of the City of Missoula is growing faster. This is likely attributed to population growth immediately outside the city limits of Missoula, but within the urban area.
2. The population of the City of Missoula is a large portion (60%) of the Missoula County population.
3. Usage and demand of county park and trail facilities and services will increase as the residential population grows leading up the year 2015. The large amount of other public lands and recreational opportunities (state and federal) in the area helps support the recreational demand of residents as the population grows.

### AGE AND RACE

A review of the age distribution of residents within Missoula County and the City of Missoula yields the finding that the largest age segment in 2000, as well as the 2010 and 2015 projections in Missoula County are those aged 35-54 years. The largest age segment of residents within the city is consistently those that are aged 20-34 years which is likely attributed to the University of Montana being located in Missoula. While it appears both populations are aging somewhat (as reflected by the growing proportion of the population in the older age segments), the population of county seems to be aging faster than that of the city. The largest areas of perceptible growth in these statistics are in residents over 55 years of age, and the largest area of perceptible decline are those aged 35-54 years. The race of residents living within Missoula County is predominantly White. Approximately 91.4% of the resident population in Missoula County is estimated to be White in 2010, including 92.1% of residents within the City of Missoula. This includes the subset of residents that are of Hispanic Origin (3.1% in the county and 3.3% in the city). The second and third largest racial groups in the county are American Indian (3.0%) and Two or More Races (2.4%).

<sup>9</sup> Missoula County and City of Missoula population statistics are provided by the ESRI databases and are an estimate based upon straight-line linear regression from the 2000 census. These figures tend to be accurate within a +/- 2.5% margin of error.





### KEY AGE AND RACE FINDINGS

The key findings of the age and race analyses for Missoula County are detailed as follows:

1. In 2010, approximately 23% of Missoula County residents are over the age of 55 years, and approximately 25% are under the age of 20 years.
2. The largest age segment of county residents in both 2000 and 2010 are those aged 35-54 years (29.7% in 2000; 26.7% in 2010). The largest age segment of city residents in both 2000 and 2010 are those aged 20-34 years (30.9% in 2000; 31.2% in 2010).
3. The fastest growing age segment in the county and city populations are residents over the age of 55 years.

These findings are significant to the master plan in that while The racial composition of Missoula County residents is diverse, but predominantly White (which includes persons of Hispanic origin). County parks and trails should be designed and managed to appeal to residents of diverse interests, backgrounds and cultures.

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

The relative affluence of residents within Missoula County has grown from the year 2000, and is projected to continue to grow as we approach 2015. Approximately 33% of the residential population within Missoula County in 2000 earns a household income of above \$50,000, while this income group represents approximately 42% of the population in 2010, and 48% 2014. Approximately 10% of households in 2010 earn an income of \$100,000 or more, with the average household income in 2010 being \$52,944. This represents an increase of nearly 21% in average household income since 2000, with the largest growth being those in the \$50,000 - \$74,000 and \$75,000 - \$99,000 annual household income brackets. These findings indicate that residents in Missoula County are predominantly middle class with limited flexibility in household spending as a result of their household income. This is significant to the recommendations of this report in order to ensure that envisioned capital and operational projects remain at a relatively low cost to residents.



*Benches, tables and pavilion at Westside Little League fields at Big Sky Park (Missoula)*

### 3.5 PARKS AND RECREATION TRENDS ANALYSIS

Montana and many other western states are widely considered to be an outdoor adventure paradise due to its rugged landscapes, pristine wilderness, millions of acres of public lands, and relative remoteness. The Missoula County Parks and Trails Program predominantly provides lands and facilities that are geared toward outdoor, nature-based activities versus traditional sports (league sports, bat and ball sports, etc.). This summary of the trends analysis provides a basic overview of the prevailing trends in the industry locally and nationally that are most relevant to the Missoula County program.

#### OUTDOOR RECREATION IN MONTANA

Montana is a state rich in outdoor recreation resources, and Missoula County contains many coveted natural resources for recreational use. While there is considerable demand for traditional sports in the urban area of Missoula, most county residents in the smaller communities enjoy outdoor recreation such as trail sports and activities as a part of their daily lives. This summary of current trends in Montana focuses on the recreational activities that are more prominent throughout all of Missoula County and that are most relevant to the facilities and services of the county parks and trails program. The data for recreational trends in Montana has been taken from two major sources:

1. 2008-2012 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
2. 2010 Economic Impact Survey of Visitors to Montana State Parks

#### KEY ISSUES

The Montana SCORP report published by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department found nine key issues faced by Montanans in the 2008-2012 study<sup>10</sup>.

1. Inadequate swimming pool facilities to serve local needs.
2. Insufficient quality and quantity of recreational facilities for youth.
3. Need for continued access to, and maintenance of, rural backcountry trails and use areas for hiking, biking, skiing, equine, and motorized (off-highway vehicle, snowmobile) recreation.
4. Need for increased miles and maintenance of urban and rural trails.
5. Insufficient access for water-based recreation.
6. Need for upgrades to provide more ADA-compliant outdoor recreation facilities.
7. Lack of awareness of the SCORP, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, and other resources available to local entities for outdoor recreation facilities.
8. Insufficient funding, staffing and partnerships at every level (local, tribal, state, federal) to manage and maintain outdoor recreation facilities.
9. Need for additional funding for LWCF grant program, and simplification of the process.

Missoula County is Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department Region 2, which also contains Deer Lodge, Granite, Mineral, Powell and Ravalli Counties. Therefore, all local trend information will either be reported as data from Region 2 in the SCORP or Economic Impact Survey, or from the household survey conducted in Missoula County for this project.

#### PHYSICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION

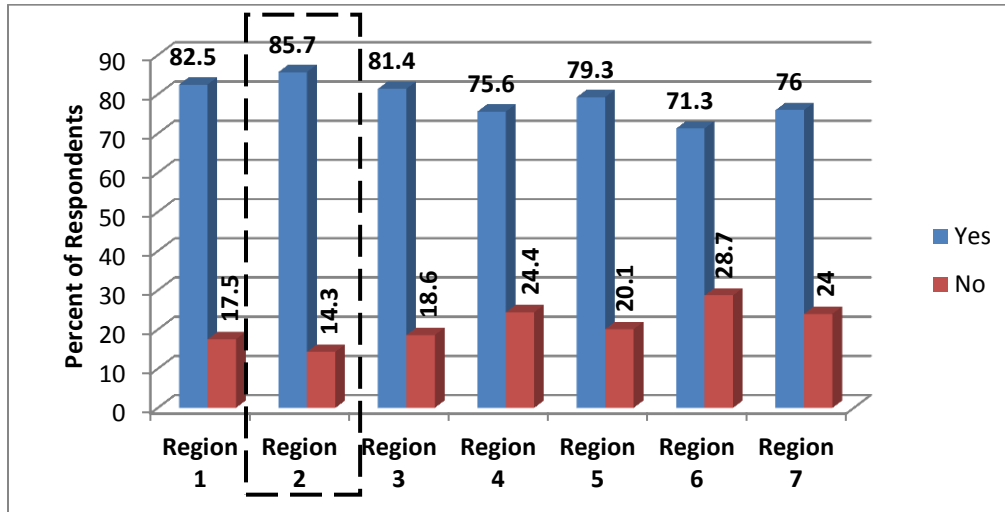
According to the 2008 Montana SCORP, the resident population of Region 2, including Missoula County, is the most physically active population in the state. The excerpt and graph on the following page taken from the SCORP illustrates this.

<sup>10</sup>Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. 2008. Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2012.



As part of the general health section in the 2002 survey, participants were asked the following question: “During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises, such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening or walking for exercise?”<sup>11</sup>

**Recreation Participation by Region (2002 survey featured in 2008 SCORP)**



This finding is supported by the household survey conducted in Fall 2010 for this project in the results that overall visitation of County parks or trails (76%) is slightly higher than the national average of 72%. Overall visitation of City parks or trails (86%) is considerably higher than the national benchmark of 72%. All households with children are the biggest visitors to City and County parks or trails.<sup>12</sup>

**Percent of Missoula County Residents Visiting Local Parks and Trails**

Household Type	County Parks	City Parks
Children Under 10	88%	96%
Children 10-19	88%	96%
No Children - All Adults 20-54	79%	88%
No Children - All Adults 55 & over	55%	71%
All Households	76%	86%

## LOCAL RECREATION PREFERENCES

The 2010 Economic Impact Survey of Visitors to Montana State Parks asked respondents to indicate which recreational activities they participated in, on or near a state park while visiting the state park in which they were surveyed. This data was compared to results from visitors surveys conducted in 2002. Of the 20 activities listed, those showing an increase in participation from 2002 to 2010 are listed in the table on the following page. Percentages are those of respondents who indicated “yes” they had participated in these activities.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. 2008. Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2012.

<sup>12</sup> Leisure Vision / ETC Institute. January 2011. Citizen Survey Finding Report.

<sup>13</sup> Bureau of Business and Economic Research. 2010. 2010 Economic Impact Survey of Visitors to Montana State Parks. University of Montana.

*Region 2 Participation Rates in Outdoor Activities*

Activity	Participation		Activity	Participation	
	2002	2010		2002	2010
Picnicking, day use	51.0%	51.1%	Non-motorized water sports	13.0%	17.7%
Day hiking	40.0%	44.5%	Bicycling	5.0%	7.2%
Fishing	29.0%	34.5%	Jogging, running	6.0%	7.1%
Motorized lake sports	22.0%	24.9%	Driving OHV or motorcycles	4.0%	5.0%

The relevance of these findings to Missoula County are amplified in the results of the household survey conducted in association with this project. The survey found that hiking trails is the recreational facility / amenity that households use the most. Playgrounds are next, followed by river access, paved commuter trails, and pool/water parks.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, residents indicated that their top five facility needs were:

1. Natural surface hiking and biking trails (80%)
2. River access sites (69%)
3. Natural area / wildlife habitat (69%)
4. Paved commuter trails (64%)
5. Group pavilions / picnicking areas (62%)



***Photos above:*** Fishing at Lolo Beach Park (left), Mountain biking in the Rattlesnake (right)

<sup>14</sup> Leisure Vision / ETC Institute. January 2011. Missoula County Citizen Survey Finding Report.





## Chapter 4: Park Classifications and Level of Service Standards

There are 91 parks in the Missoula County Parks and Trails System, totaling 645.5 acres that serve varied and diverse needs within each community. The first requirement of performing any analysis as to the level at which parks serve communities within Missoula County is to classify and organize the park system to define the role each major site or facility plays in meeting community needs.

There are multiple methods that can be and are frequently used to determine the community need for park and recreation facilities and programs. The most common and universally accepted approach to a level of service analysis originated with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) in the 1980's when the organization began establishing norms for the amount of park lands or park amenities a community should strive for based on population. The latest NRPA standards published in 1990 compares the supply of facilities against demand, as measured by the total population of a community.<sup>15</sup> These guidelines are typically reflected as the number of facilities or park acreages per a measureable segment of the population. An example of this may be a minimum of 10 acres of total park land for every 1,000 residents.

This master plan utilizes a level of service analysis to establish reasonable and prudent standards for park lands and park amenities in Missoula County over the next 10 years. The reality of current and local economic conditions is that the County is not in a position to pursue large expansion or growth in the parks in the next decade, although there is tremendous interest in trail development. There are specific areas of need where appropriate development of new parks or park amenities, or development of parks should be considered in order to meet the demands and expectations of residents.

The level of service standards developed in this master plan were derived from the combination of multiple analyses and reflect national and local best practices, the relevant needs of local communities, financial constraints of the County, the limited opportunity for acquiring land for new parks, and alternative providers / recreational sites in the County. Ultimately, these standards should be used to provide defensibility and data for leadership of the County to make decisions about facility and asset priorities, but *should not* be taken unilaterally as the sole determinant of how the County will invest in the park and trails system over the next 10 years.

### 4.1 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

A park classification system must utilize key characteristics or descriptive factors of each site including the intent and/or mission of sites, predominant types of site usage, and appropriate performance measures unique to each category of park classification. Proper integration of a robust park classification system that utilize these criteria to organize and distinguish the diverse purposes served by county parks will help to guide the Program in the years to come as a key component of this master plan.

These classifications are used as a foundation to determine level of service standards of parks and facilities throughout the county. In addition, these standards can support the development of a high quality park system by addressing current and emerging recreation trends and public need. The following factors are utilized to distinguish county parks and recreation sites:

1. Park Size – defines the relative size of the park in acres, including ratio of land to per capita population.
2. Service Area – details the service area of the park as defined by its size and amenities.

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<sup>15</sup> Lancaster, R.A. (Ed.). (1990). Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.

3. Maintenance standards - details the required / expected standard of maintenance required at the park dependent upon usage levels and degree of facility development.
4. Amenities – Describes the level of facility and/or amenity development that is present, including whether the amenities are considered as “active” or “passive” recreational assets. Active recreation assets are those that typically require specific programming for optimal utilization, such as ball fields, sports complexes, and sport courts. Passive recreation assets are those that typically are used in self-guided, un-programmed activities such as a trails, open space, and picnic areas.
5. Performance – Establishes performance expectations of the park as reflected in annual operational cost recovery (revenue generation), and annual use of major facilities within the park.

Using these criteria, the Missoula County system has been classified into the five categories described below. Each of these park area categories provides a different type of environment and public use, and also has distinctive maintenance and habitat management goals and requirements.

1. Neighborhood Parks
2. Community Parks
3. Regional Parks
4. Greenways / Open Space
5. Conservation Parks
6. Trails

The descriptions that follow provide greater detail in the distinguishing qualities of each of the five major park classifications listed above. These points of distinction are reflective of industry best-practices and adopted to improve the organization and management of parks with diverse amenities, aspects and performance measures.

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are intended to be easily accessible by adjacent neighborhoods and should focus on meeting neighborhood recreational needs, as well as preserving small open spaces in residential or commercial areas. Neighborhood parks are smaller than community or regional parks and are designed typically for residents who live within a one mile radius. Neighborhood parks, which provide recreational opportunities for the entire family, often contain landscaped areas, benches, picnic tables, playgrounds, and small turf areas. Passive recreation activities are predominant at neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood parks generally range from 0.1 to 3 acres depending on the community and the area.

- **Length of stay:** 30 minutes to one hour experience
- **Amenities:** Basic amenities for picnicking and for play. Restrooms should be common, as well as occasional pavilions/shelters.
- **Revenue producing facilities:** None
- **Signage:** Limited signage throughout the park
- **Landscaping:** Limited landscaping throughout the park
- **Parking:** Little to no parking
- **Other goals:** Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods; integrated color scheme throughout the park; loop trail connectivity; safety design meets established standards.





## COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are intended to be accessible to multiple neighborhoods and beyond, and meet a broader base of community recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks are generally larger in scale than neighborhood parks, but smaller than regional parks and are designed typically for residents who live within a three to five mile radius. When possible, the park may be developed adjacent to a school. Community parks often contain facilities for specific recreational purposes: athletic fields, tennis courts, picnic areas, reservable picnic shelters, sports courts, permanent restrooms, large turf and landscaped areas, and a playground. A mixture of passive and active outdoor recreation activities often take place at community parks.

Community parks generally range from 1.5 to 10 acres depending on the community and available space. Community parks serve a larger area – radius of 5 miles – and contain more recreation amenities than a neighborhood park.

- **Length of stay:** Two to three hour experience
- **Amenities:** A signature facility (i.e., trails, sports fields, large shelters/pavilions, playground, sports courts, water feature); public restrooms, parking, security lighting, ball field lighting are possible support features
- **Revenue producing facilities:** Limited
- **Signage:** Signage throughout the park
- **Landscaping:** Limited landscaping throughout the park
- **Parking:** Sufficient to support optimal usage
- **Other goals:** Community parks can include unique amenities or facilities that may draw users from a larger service area

## REGIONAL PARKS

A regional park typically serves multiple communities, residents within a town or city, or even across multiple counties. Depending on activities and amenities with a regional park, users may travel as many as 45-60 miles or 60 minutes for a visit. Regional parks usually include both the basic elements of a neighborhood park, combined with amenities similar to a community park. In addition, regional parks can feature specialized facilities including, but not limited to athletic facilities, sport complexes, and special event venues. Regional parks range in size from 15 to 150 acres, and should promote tourism and economic development by enhancing the economic vitality and identity of the entire region.

- **Length of stay:** Two hours to all day experience
- **Amenities:** Multiple signature facilities (i.e. athletic fields, outdoor recreation/extreme sports amenities, sports complexes, playgrounds, reservable picnic shelters, recreation center, pool, gardens, trails, specialty facilities); public restrooms, concessions, and special event site.
- **Revenue producing facilities:** No less than two; park designed to produce revenue to assist in off-setting operational costs
- **Signage:** Signage throughout the park including entrance, wayfinding, regulatory and interpretive
- **Landscaping:** Strong focal entrances and landscaping throughout the park, only flora native to the site should be considered
- **Parking:** Sufficient for all amenities; can support a special event with a regional draw
- **Other goals:** Regional parks are generally the epicenter of many recreation programs and community events, and frequently draw visitors / users from a regional service area. These facilities are often considered major economic and social assets in a community.

### GREENWAYS / OPEN SPACE

Greenways / Open Space are recreation or natural areas which are usually complimentary to a regional trail system, or to another greenway or open space. These areas can include diverse recreational opportunities that are managed such as multi-use trails (pedestrian, mountain biking, equestrian), fishing areas along creeks or rivers, or just open space. Traditionally, greenways/open space serve both a conservation and interpretive purpose for habitat preservation and responsible recreation. The service area of trails / greenways / open space depends on size of the park: 0 – 3 acres = 2 miles; 4 – 10 acres = 5 miles; 11 – 30 acres = 10 miles.

- **Length of stay:** Two hour to four hour experience
- **Amenities:** Multi-use trails, appropriate outdoor recreation venues dependent on the relevant natural features
- **Revenue producing facilities:** None
- **Signage:** Strong signage throughout including entrance, regulatory, and wayfinding/directional
- **Landscaping:** Limited landscaping at entrances and only flora native to the site should be considered
- **Parking:** Limited; capable of supporting use of the site and connected trail system
- **Other goals:** Designs should support pedestrian activity and multi-use trail systems; linked to major trails systems

### CONSERVATION PARKS

Conservation parks are sites and park parcels that preserve sensitive natural and/or cultural resources. This can include hillsides, wooded areas of native trees and flora, grasslands, riparian areas, historic sites, and more. Typically, conservation parks are a minimum of five acres in size in order to provide a habitat area of sufficient size to reasonably support native wildlife, but not always. Some conservation parks may be smaller and still retain this designation because of the unique natural or cultural resources located there. Conservation parks feature limited or no development, and should provide a tranquil setting for user experiences in the outdoors. Conservation parks may not be suitable to serve active recreation in new residential or commercial developments.

- **Length of stay:** Two hours to all day experience
- **Amenities:** Limited or none; usually only trails
- **Revenue producing facilities:** None
- **Signage:** Signage throughout including entrance, regulatory, and wayfinding/directional
- **Landscaping:** Limited or no landscaping at entrances and only flora native to the site should be considered
- **Parking:** Limited or none; capable of supporting safe and ecologically responsible use of the site

### TRAILS

Missoula County trails serve diverse recreational opportunities that are managed as multi-use trails (pedestrian, mountain biking, equestrian). There are additional trails in the County on non-County lands that provide for authorized uses not served by Missoula County such as ATV/OHV trails and snowmobile trails. Typically, Missoula County trails are either unpaved, natural surface trails within parks or connecting neighboring parks and neighborhoods, or are paved trails that are aligned with public roadways for purposes of recreational use and for non-motorized commuting.





Tables detailing the classification of Missoula County parks based upon these five categories of site and facility types is provided below and on the following page.

Neighborhood Park Inventory		Acreage
Priority Park*	Seeley Lake	5.0 acres
Pinecone Park	Turah	2.1 acres
Hampton North Park*	Turah	1.3 acres
Hampton South Park*	Turah	3.9 acres
McDowell Park*	East Missoula	1.1 acres
Canyon View Park	East Missoula	0.9 acres
Gateway Gardens Park*	East Missoula	3.85 acres
Siesta Acres Park*	Rattlesnake Area	0.96 acres
Syringa Park*	Rattlesnake Area	2.05 acres
Ponda Rosa Acres Park*	West Valley	2.7 acres
Cottage Court Park*	Target Range/Orchard Homes	0.12 acres
Schmautz Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	4.2 acres
Capy Court Park*	Target Range/Orchard Homes	0.7 acres
New Meadows Park	West Mullan Road Area	8.8 acres
Golden West Park	West Mullan Road Area	4.8 acres
Scotty Park*	Miller Creek Area	2.4 acres
Raelene Park*	Miller Creek Area	4.2 acres
Bridge Park*	Miller Creek Area	1.6 acres
Kelsey Park*	Miller Creek Area	1.1 acres
Invermere Park*	Miller Creek Area	0.9 acres
Lost Mine Park*	Miller Creek Area	7.7 acres
Oral Zumwalt Park*	Miller Creek Area	6.8 acres
Dorie Park	Lolo	1.6 acres
O'Connell Park	Lolo	0.7 acres
Avalon Meadows Park	Lolo	0.46 acres
Tyler Park*	Lolo	1.7 acres
Allomont Park*	Lolo	0.88 acres
West View Park	Lolo	0.4 acres
Shelby Park	Lolo	4.6 acres

*\*These parks are currently undeveloped neighborhood parks that appear as open space in their current condition, but have been envisioned to be enhanced with limited and appropriate amenities in the future.*

Community Park Inventory		Acreage
Swan Valley Community Ball Park	Swan Valley	5.0 acres
Swan Valley Community Center	Swan Valley	5.1 acres
Lions Park / Clearwater Park	Seeley Lake	3.3 acres
Clinton Community Center	Clinton	5.0 acres
Donovan Park	Turah	10.71 acres
East Missoula Lions Park	East Missoula	3.7 acres
Missoula Development Parks	Missoula	60 acres

Regional Park Inventory		Acreage
Fort Missoula Regional Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	63.3 acres
Big Sky Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	154.0 acres

Greenways / Open Space Inventory		Acreage
Wallace Creek Park	Clinton	4.3 acres
Sliderock Park	Turah	6.3 acres
Leischner Park	Turah	2.1 acres
Hidden Heights Park	East Missoula	4.1 acres
Khanabad Park	Rattlesnake Area	1.1 acres
Alvina Park	Rattlesnake Area	0.54 acres
Greendale Park	Rattlesnake Area	0.22 acres
LA Hamilton Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	1.83 acres
Mulberry Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	0.1 acres
Rosecrest Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	9.6 acres
Utility Parcel	West Mullan Road Area	4.8 acres
Council Hill Park	West Mullan Road Area	2.9 acres
Mockingbird Park	Miller Creek Area	0.8 acres
Ravenwood Hills Park	Miller Creek Area	22.0 acres
Chappelle Park	Miller Creek Area	0.54 acres
Riverwood Meadows Park	West Mullan Road Area	2.0 acres
Meriwether Park	Miller Creek Area	3.1 acres
Trails End Park	Miller Creek Area	1.4 acres
Ranchette Park	Miller Creek Area	2.1 acres
Greenwood Park	Lolo	3.1 acres
Lolo Greens Park	Lolo	0.5 acres
Lewis and Clark Park	Lolo	4.4 acres
Upper Ridgeway Park	Lolo	0.4 acres
Barclay Park	Lolo	1.0 acres
Ridgeway Park	Lolo	1.8 acres
Highmore Park	Lolo	0.8 acres
Cap De Villa Park	Lolo	3.8 acres
Claremont Park	Lolo	2.1 acres
St. Johns Park	Lolo	2.9 acres
Brighton Park	Lolo	1.2 acres
Cumberland Park	Lolo	2.0 acres
Cascade Park	Lolo	1.7 acres



Conservation Park Inventory		Acreage
Mission-Swan Park	Swan Valley	12.5 acres
Alpine Meadows Park	Swan Valley	3.7 acres
Drew Creek Park	Seeley Lake	37.0 acres
Clinton Conservation Park	Clinton	20.0 acres
Hellgate Park	Turah	6.2 acres
Sunwood Park	Turah	5.0 acres
Piney Meadows Park	West Valley	9.3 acres
Whispering Pines Park*	Evaro	6.3 acres
Tom Green Memorial Park	Rattlesnake Area	8.9 acres
Bugbee Nature Area	Rattlesnake Area	8.5 acres
Dinsmore River One Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	1.9 acres
Stone Riverfront Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	5.0 acres
Double R Acres Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	4.2 acres
Dinsmore River Four Park	Target Range/Orchard Homes	1.2 acres
Ravenwood Park	Miller Creek Area	3.4 acres
C Bar C Estates Park	Miller Creek Area	2.3 acres
Canyon Village Park	Miller Creek Area	3.5 acres
Thayer Memorial Park	Lolo	3.4 acres
Allen Park	Lolo	7.3 acres
Lolo Beach Park	Lolo	11.0 acres
Lakeside Park	Lolo	1.8 acres

*\*This park is currently classified as a conservation park, but recommendations within this plan target this park for potential development akin to a neighborhood park in the future.*

Missoula County Trail Asset Inventory							
Trail	Community	Mileage	Type*	Trail	Community	Mileage	Type*
7 <sup>th</sup> Street	Missoula	1.36	PS	Tom Green Connector	Missoula	0.32	NS
Clements	Missoula	1.27	PS	Ravenwood Park Trail	Missoula	0.75	NS
South Avenue	Missoula	2.27	PS	Missoula County Dev. Park	Missoula	7.0	PS
Humble	Missoula	0.26	PS	Highway 12 Path	Lolo	1.4	PS
River Pines / North	Missoula	0.74	PS	Riverside Park Loop (Lolo Beach)	Lolo	0.25	PS
Spurgin	Missoula	0.8	PS	Riverview Drive	Seeley Lake	0.7	PS
Mullan Road	Missoula	2.8	PS	Boy Scout Road	Seeley Lake	0.7	PS
Cote Lane	Missoula	0.87	PS	Frenchtown Frontage Road Trail	West Valley	3.8	PS
Fort Missoula Park Loop	Missoula	0.88	NS	Bonner-Turah Loop	Turah/Bonner	6.26	PS
Big Sky Park Loop	Missoula	1.7	NS				

\*PS = Paved Surface; NS = Natural Surface

## 4.2 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

There are multiple methods that can be and are frequently used to determine the community need for park and recreation facilities. The most common and universally accepted approach to a level of service analysis originated with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) in the 1980's when the organization began establishing norms for the amount of park lands or park amenities a community should strive for based on population. The latest NRPA standards published in 1990 compares the supply of facilities against demand, as measured by the total population of a community<sup>16</sup>. These guidelines are typically reflected as the number of facilities or park acreages per a measureable segment of the population.

This master plan utilizes a level of service analysis to establish reasonable and prudent standards for park lands and park amenities in Missoula County over the next 10 years. This process helps to identify areas of need for development of new park amenities or new trail projects that should be considered in order to meet the demands and expectations of residents throughout the county.

The level of service standards developed in this master plan were derived from the combination of multiple analyses and reflect national and local best practices, the relevant needs of each community, financial constraints of the County, and alternative providers in the region (i.e. City of Missoula, federal and state land agencies). Ultimately, these standards should be used to provide defensibility and data for direction of the Program and the County to make decisions about facility and asset priorities, but should not be used as the sole determinant of how the County will invest in the park and trail system over the next 10 years. In other words, these standards should be used as a decision making tool and not as recommendations by themselves.

### MISSOULA COUNTY LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The level of standards analysis is a review of the inventory of parks and major park assets in relation to the total population of the study area. There are multiple approaches to determine standards that are appropriate for each community, thereby making it a complex analysis to establish relevant standards for the Missoula County.

In order to establish an appropriate set of standards for the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program, the Consultant Team utilized a four-step method as described below:

1. Established current level of service standards for existing parks and recreation sites and amenities, and projected future needs based upon projected population growth to maintain these standards.
2. Reviewed the inventory of park land and green space, and recreational amenities provided by alternative organizations in the county (i.e City of Missoula, federal and state land agencies).
3. Performed the level of service standards analysis unique to each major community/region in which county parks and trails were located so that unique standards could be developed for each community based upon their needs, priorities, and supporting circumstances (i.e. financial, public support, availability of other public lands, etc.)
4. Developed standards collaboratively between the Consultant Team and management staff from Missoula County Parks and Trails Program to project future needs based upon current standards, local trends, public input, and best practices in similar communities around the United States.

<sup>16</sup>Lancaster, R.A. (Ed.). (1990). Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.





## CURRENT INVENTORY

There are 91 parks totaling 645.5 acres in the Missoula County Park System. This system includes the following park types and major amenities:

Park Type	Quantity
Neighborhood Parks	<b>29 parks, 77.6 acres</b>
Community Parks	<b>7 parks, 92.8 acres</b>
Regional Parks	<b>2 parks, 217.3 acres</b>
Greenways / Open Space	<b>32 parks, 95.5 acres</b>
Conservation Parks	<b>21 parks, 162.4 acres</b>
Amenity Type	Quantity
Natural surface trails (mileage)	<b>10.10</b>
Improved surface trails (mileage)	<b>34.73</b>
Diamond Ball Fields	<b>25</b>
Rectangle Sports Fields	<b>4</b>
Basketball Courts	<b>7</b>
Tennis Courts	<b>8</b>
Volleyball Courts	<b>2</b>
Pavilions / shelters	<b>10</b>
Picnic Areas	<b>22</b>
Playgrounds	<b>11</b>
Restrooms	<b>10</b>
Natural aquatic access area	<b>14</b>
Equestrian facilities	<b>3</b>
Horseshoe Pits	<b>14</b>
Batting Cages	<b>1</b>
Dog Park	<b>1</b>
Archery Range	<b>1</b>
Concession Stand	<b>4</b>
Multipurpose Indoor Space	<b>2</b>
Gardens	<b>1</b>
Ice Skating Area (outdoor)	<b>1</b>

A summary table of current level of services standards for parks by type is provided below for Missoula County as a whole. This reflects the Missoula County park inventory only, and does not include the park acreages of other public or private providers. This table is also featured on page 53 as a component of the total level of service summary following the regional level of service analyses.

### **Current Level of Service Standards by Park Type – Missoula County Total**

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>
Neighborhood Parks	77.6	0.71
Community Parks	92.8	0.85
Regional Parks	217.3	1.99
Greenways/Open Space	95.5	0.87
Conservation Parks	162.4	1.48
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>645.6</b>	<b>5.90</b>

**RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS BY COMMUNITY**

Recommended level of service standards were developed for Missoula County Parks and Trails unique to each community in which parks and trails are located and are a priority. These standards are based on the following:

1. Public interests, needs and priorities gathered in the community input process
  - a. Community meetings
  - b. Focus groups and interviews
  - c. Household survey
2. Inventory of county park lands and trails in the area
3. Inventory of non-county park lands in the area
4. Capacity for growth
  - a. Financial
  - b. Land availability
  - c. Public interests
  - d. Population growth / demand
5. County-wide priorities

The most dramatic recommended level of service standards noted for each community will likely be the recommendations around neighborhood parks, community parks, and trails. These recommended standards have been developed with the following goals and objectives in mind to meet community needs:

**PARK STANDARDS**

- The prominence of other public lands available in or near each community that are passive recreation-based open space, means that many of the county park lands that are similarly classified are redundant to meeting the community's needs.
- It is not the intent of this analysis to suggest that additional parks be acquired, but rather that some existing county greenways and open spaces may more effectively meet community needs by being upgraded to a neighborhood or community park.
- Similarly, some existing neighborhood parks may be upgraded to a community park for enhanced use.
- County parks often are a major provider of traditional recreation amenities in small, local communities and therefore nominal growth or development of amenities such as basketball courts and ball fields are projected as communities grow.
- These are standards to strive to achieve over the next 10 years through direct County action and partnered initiatives.

Numbers (quantities) listed in the tables on the following pages indicate the inventory required by 2015 or 2020 to meet the recommended standard based on corresponding population projections. These are cumulative, not additive, recommendations. In other words, calculations for 2020 based on recommended standards assume that the calculations for 2015 have not been achieved. Numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.



## SWAN VALLEY COMMUNITY

Estimated 2010 population = 597

Swan Valley has four Missoula County Parks – two community parks and two conservation parks. These sites total 26.3 acres, which provides a total of 44.05 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 6.50 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is considerably less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards due to the current absence of neighborhood parks and a growing population.

Recommended level of services standards in Swan Valley were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Low density resident population – the resident population is small and not expected to grow significantly.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is less interested in more park lands than they are in improvements to enhance usage of their current sites.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	0.0	-	1.00	0.61	0.63
Community Parks	10.1	16.92	3.50	(7.95)	(7.90)
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	0.0	-	1.00	0.61	0.63
Conservation Parks	16.2	27.14	1.00	(15.59)	(25.67)
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>44.05</b>	<b>6.50</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

### PARKS

Mission-Swan Park  
Swan Community Ball Field  
Swan Community Center  
Alpine Meadows Park

**SEELEY LAKE COMMUNITY****Estimated 2010 population = 2,207**

Seeley Lake has three Missoula County Parks – one neighborhood park, one community park and one conservation park. These sites total 45.3 acres, which provides a total of 20.53 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 6.50 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is considerably less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards due to the current size of the existing community park and a slow growing population.

Recommended level of services standards in Seeley Lake were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Low density resident population – the resident population is small and not expected to grow significantly.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is most interested in trails and connectivity, but can also benefit from enhancements to existing park lands.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	5.0	2.27	1.00	(2.64)	(2.47)
Community Parks	3.3	1.50	3.50	4.97	5.54
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	0.0	-	1.00	2.36	2.53
Conservation Parks	37.0	16.76	1.00	(34.64)	(34.47)
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>20.53</b>	<b>6.50</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

**PARKS**

Lions / Clearwater Park

Priority Park

Drew Creek Park





## CLINTON / TURAH COMMUNITY

Estimated 2010 population = 2,215

The Clinton and Turah communities have 11 Missoula County Parks, featuring a mix of neighborhood, community and conservation parks, as well as greenways and open spaces. These sites total 66.9 acres, which provides a total of 30.20 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 6.50 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is considerably less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards due to the low presence of neighborhood parks and a slow growing population.

Recommended level of services standards in Clinton / Turah were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Low density resident population – the resident population is small and not expected to grow significantly.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is most interested in trails and connectivity, and in improvement to existing park sites.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	7.3	3.30	1.00	(4.94)	(4.79)
Community Parks	15.7	7.09	3.50	(7.45)	(6.91)
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	12.7	5.72	1.00	(10.32)	(10.17)
Conservation Parks	31.2	14.09	1.00	(28.84)	(28.69)
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>30.20</b>	<b>6.50</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

### PARKS

Clinton Conservation Park  
Clinton Community Center  
Wallace Creek Park  
Sliderock Park  
Donovan Park

Leischner Park  
Pinecone Park  
Hellgate Park  
Hampton South Park  
Hampton North Park

Sunwood Park

## POTOMAC / GREENOUGH AREA

Estimated 2010 population = 1,732

The Potomac / Greenough Area in this report does not include the Bonner / East Missoula communities, and currently does not have any Missoula County Parks and Trails. County parks can be considered and developed in this area as residential developments occur in the future. Trail standards have been provided to support regional trail development efforts.

Current conditions and circumstances in the Potomac / Greenough Area do not warrant additional parkland in the area at this time. The school and community lands provide opportunities for area residents for indoor and outdoor recreation. In the past, the County has partnered with the community to assist with capital projects on the school and community lands.





## EAST MISSOULA / BONNER COMMUNITY

Estimated 2010 population = 2,189

The East Missoula and Bonner communities have five Missoula County Parks – two neighborhood parks, one community park and two greenway / open space parks. These sites total 13.7 acres, which provides a total of 6.16 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 6.50 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is considerably less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards for community parks and conservation parks.

Recommended level of services standards in East Missoula / Bonner were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Resident population – the resident population is more dense in this area due to the proximity to Missoula, and has the nearby park assets of the Missoula area.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is most interested in trails and connectivity, and possible improved river access.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	5.9	2.67	1.00	(3.53)	(3.39)
Community Parks	3.7	1.69	3.50	4.42	4.91
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	4.1	1.87	1.00	(1.78)	(1.64)
Conservation Parks	0.0	-	1.00	2.32	2.46
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>6.16</b>	<b>6.50</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

### PARKS

McDowell Park

East Missoula Lions Park

Canyon View Park

Hidden Heights Park

Gateway Gardens Park (AKA Hellgate Park)

**MISSOULA AREA COMMUNITY<sup>17</sup>****Estimated 2010 population = 88,232**

Reporting current level of service standards for the Missoula Urban Area is more complex than the other planning regions of the County. In 2004, a *Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area* was completed and adopted by both the City of Missoula and Missoula County. The 2004 master plan was well-prepared and addressed the current inventory of parks, trails, and recreational amenities within the urban area including the City and surrounding neighborhood developments within a three mile radius of the City's boundaries. The 2004 plan also featured a level of service analysis for both the City and the Urban Area.

The 2004 level of service analysis for the Missoula Urban Area was based on the 2000 population from the U.S. Census Bureau of 57,053 city residents and an estimated population of 83,348 residents living in the urban area as defined in the plan. The Missoula Urban Area was defined in the 2004 master plan as a geographic district encompassing a three mile radius outside the city limits of Missoula, which is not the same service area reported in this *2011 Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan* for the Missoula Area Community. In other words, this 2011 plan does not include the East Missoula and Bonner area as a part of Missoula Area Community.

It is important to utilize the levels of service derived in 2004 and adopted by the City and the County to develop recommended level of service standards in this 2011 master plan that are unique and only apply to the inventory of County park assets – not to be confused with City assets or the combined inventory of City and County assets.

The 2004 plan reported two levels of service standards that are relevant to address in the County's 2011 master plan – neighborhood and community parks. All other standards provided in the 2004 plan were for amenities within the City of Missoula Park and Recreation System, and included Fort Missoula Recreation Area. These standards were based on the 2000 population and the inventory of 2004.

<b>2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for Greater Missoula Level of Service Standards – Urban Area</b>		
<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Inventory</b>	<b>Level of Service Standards</b>
Neighborhood Parks	154.61 acres	1.9 acres per 1,000 residents
Community Parks	344.0 acres	4.1 acres per 1,000 residents

Other level of service standards reported in the 2004 plan only applied to the City of Missoula based upon the 2000 population and 2004 inventory. These are provided in the table below as a reference.

<b>2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for Greater Missoula Level of Service Standards – City of Missoula</b>		
<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Inventory</b>	<b>Level of Service Standards</b>
Soccer Fields	7	1 per 8,151 residents
Football Fields	7	1 per 8,151 residents
Ball Fields	22	1 per 2,594 residents
Basketball Courts	13	1 per 4,389 residents
Tennis Courts	31	1 per 1,841 residents
Pools	2	1 per 28,529 residents
Ice Rinks	1	1 per 57,057
Neighborhood Parks	140.0 acres	2.5 acres per 1,000 residents
Community Parks	344.0 acres	6.0 acres per 1,000 residents

<sup>17</sup> These recommended standards for the Missoula Area only apply to County parks, recreation and trail assets in the Urban Area, and are not intended to apply to the City of Missoula park and recreation system inventory.





The primary reasons why the level of service standards developed in this 2011 *Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan* for the Missoula Area Community are different for the Urban Area than those identified in the 2004 are:

1. The geographic region defined as the Urban Area is different in the 2011 County plan. This is because the prevailing and necessary approach of the County plan for analyzing each of the planning areas was different than the approach taken by the Urban Area plan in 2004.
2. The level of service standards have been developed exclusively for the inventory of County park and recreation assets to complement the other public park and recreation assets in the area, including those of the City of Missoula.

Levels of service standards for the Missoula Area (not including East Missoula and Bonner) as identified in 2011 based upon the 2010 U.S Census 2010 and ESRI are detailed in the tables on the following page. These are not intended to apply to the inventory of City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department within the City.

### **Missoula Area Community Recommended County Level of Service Standards**

The Missoula Area community has 41 Missoula County Parks featuring a mix of neighborhood, community and conservation parks, as well as greenways and open spaces. These sites total 415.5 acres, which provides a total of 4.71 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 3.85 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, open space and conservation parks.

Recommended level of services standards in the Missoula area (not including the City of Missoula) were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- High density resident population – the resident population is large and grows more steadily than in other regions of the County.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the interests of the community are diverse and include all spectrums of the County Parks and Trails Program.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives



Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	46.4	0.53	0.50	0.81	4.11
Community Parks	60.0	0.68	0.75	10.75	15.71
Regional Parks	217.3	2.46	2.00	(28.63)	(15.42)
Greenways/Open Space	53.0	0.60	0.50	(5.86)	(2.56)
Conservation Parks	38.9	0.44	0.50	8.31	11.61
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>415.5</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>4.25</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

#### PARKS

Siesta Acres Park	Rosecrest Park	Scotty Park
Syringa Park	Capy Court Park	Invermere Park
Khanabad Park	Schmautz Park	Raelene Park
Tom Green Memorial Park	Double R Acres Park	Bridge Park
Bugbee Nature Area	Dinsmore River Four Park	Kelsey Park
Alvina Park	New Meadows Park	Meriwether Park
Greendale Park	Golden West Park	C Bar C Estates Park
LA Hamilton Park	Utility Parcel	Lost Mine Park
Dinsmore River One Park	Council Hill Park	Canyon Village Park
Stone Riverfront Park	Ravenwood Meadows Park	Trails End Park
Cottage Court Park	Mockingbird Park	Ranchette Park
Mulberry Park	Ravenwood Hills Park	Oral Zumwalt Park
Fort Missoula Recreation Area	Ravenwood Park	Missoula Development Park
Big Sky Park	Chappelle Park	



## VARO COMMUNITY

Estimated 2010 population = 1,027

The Varo community has one Missoula County Parks. This conservation park totals 6.3 acres, which provides a total of 6.13 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 6.50 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards for neighborhood and community parks, and open spaces.

Recommended level of services standards in Varo were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Low density resident population – the resident population is small and not expected to grow significantly.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is satisfied with the current County lands inventory in the region, but is interested in improved surface trails to connect to nearby communities.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	0.0	-	1.00	1.07	1.11
Community Parks	0.0	-	3.50	3.74	3.89
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	0.0	-	1.00	1.07	1.11
Conservation Parks	6.3	6.13	1.00	(5.23)	(5.19)
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.13</b>	<b>6.50</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

### PARKS

Whispering Pines Park

**WEST VALLEY AREA COMMUNITY (FRENCHTOWN, NINEMILE AND HUSON)****Estimated 2010 population = 5,900**

The West Valley Area communities of Frenchtown, Ninemile and Huson have two Missoula County Parks – one neighborhood park and one conservation park. This totals 12.0 acres, which provides a total of 2.04 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 3.00 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. This would involve potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards for neighborhood and community parks, and open spaces.

Recommended level of services standards in West Valley were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Resident population – the resident population is larger than in some regions and there are limited County park sites in the area.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is most interested in trails and connectivity, but can also benefit from potential additional park lands.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	2.7	0.46	0.50	0.53	0.85
Community Parks	0.0	-	0.50	3.26	3.58
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	0.0	-	1.00	6.51	7.16
Conservation Parks	9.3	1.58	1.00	(2.79)	(2.14)
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>3.00</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

**PARKS**

Piney Meadows Park

Ponda Rosa Acres Park





## LOLO COMMUNITY

**Estimated 2010 population = 7,207**

The Lolo community has 24 Missoula County Parks featuring a mix of neighborhood, community and conservation parks, as well as greenways and open spaces. This totals 59.5 acres, which provides a total of 8.26 acres of Missoula County park lands per 1,000 residents that live in the community (2010). Recommended minimum level of service standards are 3.00 acres of County park lands per 1,000 residents, including standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, greenways/open space, and conservation parks. Even though the total acreage recommended level of service standard is considerably less than the current level of service, there would be potential park acquisition or development required to meet the new standards for community parks.

Recommended level of services standards in Lolo were determined with the following variables and assumptions:

- Magnitude of other public conservation and recreation lands in the region
- Resident population – the resident population is larger than most other regions in the County and grows steadily.
- Community input, values and expressed needs – the community is most interested in trails and connectivity, and in enhancements to existing parklands.
- County resources are limited to acquire additional park lands except through development dedications or other innovative funding initiatives

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Standards  <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2015 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards	2020 Calculated Need (Acres) Based on Recommended Standards
Neighborhood Parks	10.3	1.43	1.00	(2.44)	(1.65)
Community Parks	0.0	-	1.00	7.90	8.69
Regional Parks	0.0	-	-	-	-
Greenways/Open Space	25.7	3.57	1.00	(17.80)	(17.01)
Conservation Parks	23.5	3.26	1.00	(15.60)	(14.81)
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>8.26</b>	<b>4.00</b>		

*Note: numbers in parentheses indicate inventories that exceed the recommended standard.*

### PARKS

Lolo Beach Park  
Greenwood Park  
Lolo Greens Park  
Lakeside Park  
Dorie Park  
O'Connell Park  
Tyler Park  
Allomont Park  
Avalon Meadows Park

Lewis and Clark Park  
Upper Ridgeway Park  
Barclay Park  
Ridgeway Park  
Highmore Park  
Cap De Villa Park  
Claremont Park  
St. Johns Park  
Brighton Park

Cumberland Park  
West View Park  
Cascade Park  
Shelby Park  
Thayer Memorial Park  
Allen Park

**MISSOULA COUNTY TOTAL**

Estimated 2010 population = 109,336

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Site Type (Park Classification)	Total County Parks (Acres)	Current Missoula County Standards <i>Acres per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>
Neighborhood Parks	77.6	0.71
Community Parks	92.8	0.85
Regional Parks	217.3	1.99
Greenways/Open Space	95.5	0.87
Conservation Parks	162.4	1.48
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>645.6</b>	<b>5.90</b>

**TRAIL LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS**

The major level of service recommendations around trails has been developed to support the following needs:

- Connectivity within communities
- Connectivity to nearby or adjacent public lands
- Connectivity with other communities (regional trails)
- Complementary natural surface trails within existing county parks to augment the area's recreational opportunities

Level of service standards for natural surface trails are intended to support development of recreational trails within County parks for hiking, biking, or other non-motorized use. Natural surface trails for motorized use are often more appropriate for non-County lands, such as National Forests, BLM lands, or State lands. This is because of the limited size of County parks and often their location as well.

Level of service standards for improved surface trails are intended to support the development of regional trails connecting communities. For example, standards for Swan will roughly support the completion of a trail connecting Condon to Seeley Lake. Standards for Seeley Lake will roughly support a regional trail that connects Seeley Lake to the Potomac/Greenough planning region. This can also include connections to existing and planned regional trails such as the Milwaukee Trail. Trail mileages calculated in this level of service standards analysis may not exactly equal mileage between specific communities, but will be approximate and close. Adjustments to trail projects as funding is available to exactly match distances between communities can be a priority of the Park Board on each trail development project.

These are goals to strive to achieve over the next 10 years through direct County action and partnered initiatives.



## NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL STANDARDS

County Park Planning Region	Total County <u>Natural</u> Surface Trail Miles	Current Missoula County Natural Trail Standards  <i>Miles per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Natural Trail Standards  <i>Miles per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2020 Calculated Need (Miles) Based on Recommended Standards
Swan Valley	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.26
Seeley Lake	0.00	0.00	2.00	5.05
Potomac / Greenough	0.00	0.00	2.00	3.76
Clinton / Turah	0.25	0.23	2.00	4.53
East Missoula / Bonner	0.25	0.11	2.00	4.67
Evaro	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.22
West Valley (Frenchtown and Huson)	0.00	0.00	0.25	1.79
Lolo	2.00	0.28	1.00	6.69
Missoula Area	7.60	0.09	0.15	7.54
<b>Total Trail Miles</b>	<b>10.10</b>			<b>37.51</b>

## IMPROVED SURFACE TRAIL STANDARDS

County Park Planning Region	Total County <u>Improved</u> Surface Trail Miles	Current Missoula County Improved Trail Standards  <i>Miles per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	Recommended Missoula County Improved Trail Standards  <i>Miles per 1,000 Residents in 2010</i>	2020 Calculated Need (Miles) Based on Recommended Standards
Swan Valley	0.00	0.00	7.50	4.71
Seeley Lake	1.40	0.63	7.50	17.55
Potomac / Greenough	0.00	0.00	7.50	14.09
Clinton / Turah	2.00	0.90	7.50	16.85
East Missoula / Bonner	4.26	1.95	7.50	14.19
Evaro	0.00	0.00	7.50	8.33
West Valley (Frenchtown and Huson)	3.80	0.64	3.50	21.27
Lolo	1.4	0.19	2.00	17.14
Missoula Area	23.02	0.28	0.50	25.45
<b>Total Trail Miles</b>	<b>34.73</b>			<b>139.58</b>

### SUMMARY OF LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS ANALYSIS

In summary, these recommended level of service standards for each major community/region within Missoula County, and the corresponding calculations yield the following key results for meeting community needs in the next 10 years:

1. The largest areas of need will be for improved surface trails.
2. Upgrade a proportion of existing county greenways/open space to a neighborhood park classification through site and amenity enhancements. This includes the development of additional passive, self-guided recreation such as pavilions, picnic areas, playgrounds, and river/creek access.
3. Upgrade a proportion of existing county greenways/open space to a community park classification through site and amenity enhancements. This includes the development of additional multi-purpose, rectangular sports fields and basketball courts for some communities to enhance recreational opportunities available in the area.
4. Develop natural surface trails within county parks or connecting to county parks are a need in the next 10 years.

These recommended standards and calculations should not be utilized as a sole determinant for future decisions and priorities of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program. Rather, they are a helpful tool to compare the existing inventory against projected population changes, and to account for public input in each major community of the county.

### 4.3 PRIORITIZED NEEDS SUMMARY

This *Prioritized Needs Summary* section of this report summarizes the park and program priorities for the Missoula County Parks and Trail Program from which specific tactics will be developed in the *Parks and Trails Master Plan*. These needs were identified by the Consultant Team based upon industry best practices and were derived from the findings of the following previous analyses:

- Comprehensive site, facility, and program assessments
- Extensive public input
- Interviews with leadership and staff of Missoula County, City of Missoula, and State and Federal agency representatives
- Focus groups with key stakeholders, user groups, and community leadership
- Demographics and trends analysis
- Park classifications and facility standards analysis

Each need has been assigned a priority level as primary or secondary to support future project sequencing, investment of public resources, and meeting community expectations. The priority assignment for each need is not a measure of importance. Needs indicated as a primary priority should be considered to be addressed in one to five years, and secondary needs are recommended to be addressed sometime over the next six to ten years.





### PRIORITIZED FACILITY NEEDS

Park and Trail / Facility Need	Recommended Priority Assignment
Develop multi-use trails within communities	Primary
Develop multi-use trails that connect communities to adjacent and/or nearby public lands	Primary
Develop multi-use trails that connect communities to each other in the county (regional trails)	Primary
Enhance neighborhood and community parks in certain communities and areas	Primary
Improve county park signage program	Primary
Improved access to existing county parks where access is limited or non-existent	Primary
Improve existing and develop new picnic areas at county parks	Secondary
Improve existing and develop new pavilions/shelters at county parks	Secondary
Improve existing and develop new playgrounds at county parks	Secondary
Improve existing and develop new river / creek access areas at county parks	Secondary
Improve existing sport and athletic facilities at county parks	Secondary
Improve existing and develop new special event venues at county parks	Secondary

### PRIORITIZED PROGRAM NEEDS

Program Need	Recommended Priority Assignment
Enhance partnership program to engage alternative providers in the community as a network of recreational opportunities in Missoula County	Primary
Enhance matching grant program to improve the quality and quantity of applications and awarded projects	Primary
Enhance and modify existing acquisition and development standards to improve the future growth and sustainability of Missoula County parks and trails	Primary
Develop partnered programs that improve the health and lifestyles of residents	Secondary
Improve the quality and accessibility of youth programs through partnerships	Secondary
Improve the quality and diversity of programs for adults of all ages through partnerships	Secondary
Improve the quality and diversity of programs for residents with special needs through partnerships	Secondary
Enhance programs that promote safety in the community	Secondary
Develop and support programs that celebrate the significance of natural and cultural resources of Missoula County (i.e. interpretive signage, naturalist programs, etc.)	Secondary
Support new programs that will engage whole families in recreational experiences	Secondary
Support programs that promote and draw tourism to communities in the county	Secondary









## Chapter 5: Summary of Recommendations

The *Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan* is a living document that provides a framework for guiding Missoula County Commissioners, the County Parks Board, and County staff in managing the Parks and Trails Program over the next 10 years. This plan is based on extensive and thorough public involvement process conducted over the period of one year (April 2010 to May 2011) in communities throughout the County, and includes a statistically-valid household survey of residents. The public input process revealed ideas, priorities, values, needs, interests, and concerns of residents, many of which varied widely among individuals and among different communities. There were also many similarities of what the residents of Missoula County desire from their County Parks and Trails Program today and in the future.

This master plan works to responsibly address the needs that are relevant and appropriate to the County; position the County to improve the provision of parks and trails in the future; and work to meet the prevailing needs that are unique in each community.

### 5.1 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations have been developed in two major areas of focus – general recommendations for the Program on the whole and local recommendations for each of the planning regions. These recommendations are briefly summarized below and on the following page.

#### 1. Develop consistent park signage

The Missoula County Parks and Trails Program should develop a consistent signage program to clearly and tastefully distinguish park sites, as well as provide usage rules and regulations when they apply.

#### 2. Adopt park and trail acquisition and development standards

Recommendations for updated park and trail acquisition and development standards have been provided for consideration to be incorporated into the subdivision regulations of the County, and to improve the overall quality of future park sites and trails acquired through future residential development. Additionally, a formal process for County Commissioners to accept trails as a County asset and to assume maintenance responsibility is recommended.

#### 3. Enhance existing parks through upgrading

There are opportunities to develop or enhance existing parks with new or updated amenities and features. For example, some existing Missoula County parks which are currently designated as a neighborhood park may better serve the surrounding residents if enhanced with amenities that make it more of a community park. Similarly, some open space/greenway parks may have a opportunities to be more of a neighborhood or community park without losing the benefits of undeveloped open space. Park development through upgrading can be a simple process to improve park quality and equity in unincorporated areas of the County. This is especially true in areas that are experiencing population growth. This can help the County avoid new park acquisition and development as their sole strategy for enhancing the presence County parks in local communities.

#### 4. Establish a regional trails district

One of the most exciting and ambitious recommendations of this master plan is the pursuit of regional trails that connect communities throughout the County. This has been universally expressed as a need and priority among residents. The most feasible and sustainable approach for developing and maintaining regional trails throughout Missoula County is with a focused trails district.

**5. Enhance the matching grant program**

The matching grant program is a great success for Missoula County Parks and Trails Program, and can be enhanced with improvements in the number and diversity of grant requests. The recommendation to improve the overall number and quality of grant applications is to remove the \$4,000 limit for applicants. The Parks Board will retain authority to grant dollars at any level they deem appropriate within the limits of the available funds, but with greater flexibility. This should encourage and enable grant applicants to submit larger and more involved projects for consideration.

**6. Adopt maintenance and management standards**

Recommended maintenance and management standards should be adopted to support the efforts of the Program to improve the upkeep of park sites and trails, as well as to address ongoing maintenance challenges with some sites.

**7. Diversify funding support and recruit a dedicated fund development partner**

Missoula County should diversify the funding support provided to the Program by multiple means explained further in the funding and revenue section of this plan. Additionally, Missoula County needs support and assistance in acquiring the funds to support the capital and operational demands of the Program beyond just reliance on the taxpayers. The organization of a dedicated fund development partner can be a critical part of a robust funding approach.

**8. Park divestiture**

There are a few sites in the Missoula County system that may have better potential use than a public park. These parks have been identified in the assessment report and this master plan, and should be considered for divestiture in a way that supports the County in reinvesting in other County park and trail assets in the immediate area. Park divestiture must involve a focused public input process for each site.

**9. Transfer responsibility of parks within the city limits of Missoula**

There are several County parks located within the city limits of Missoula, often with little or no distinction made by residents of city versus county parks. Due to the extremely limited staff and resources of the County Program and the need for consistent rules, regulations and policies, it is recommended that ownership and/or management of County parks within the city limits of Missoula be transferred to the City of Missoula unless special circumstances are present.

**10. Continue with organizational development**

While frugal and thrifty management of the County funds for the operations of the Program will always remain a core value, the limited staff (1.125 full time employees) inhibit the ability of the County to fully meet community needs. Limited additional staff or contract employees are recommended to meet the public's stated needs for enhanced services of the Program.

**11. Community-based site planning**

All of the park sites in the Missoula County system could benefit from site-specific planning to improve layout and performance. This can include something as simple as a site schematic, to a fully engineered site plan. The benefits of this include, but are not limited to appropriate landscaping and plantings, addressing noxious weed and invasive insects, proper layout of park amenities (playgrounds, picnic areas, pavilions, sports facilities, etc.) to enhance site performance, and to meet community needs. Most importantly, the site planning process can reflect priorities and interests of local communities and their proposals to upgrade or enhance existing amenities and structures.



## 5.2 LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous recommendations have been developed for specific parks and trails within each community of Missoula County. These recommendations were derived from detailed site assessments, public workshops and involvement, level of service standards analysis, and interviews with stakeholders and leaders in the County. For parks in the Missoula County system that do not have specific recommendations featured in this master plan, a subsequent public involvement processes may reveal additional community needs and park issues.

The specific local recommendations are provided on the following pages and are organized by region. These recommendations are featured in capital priority “bundles” that are further described in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 of this master plan.

### SWAN VALLEY

#### 1. Mission-Swan Park

Verification of the park’s location and boundaries is recommended as the Swan River is a dynamic waterway and has possibly shifted to make the Mission-Swan Park inaccessible without a river crossing.

#### 2. Swan Valley Community Ball Field

Improve management and enforcement of the use and operation of the concession stand within the context of the special use agreement with the U.S. Forest Service and American Legion to explore conditions under which concessions could resume.

#### 3. Swan Valley Community Center

Residents have expressed that a major priority for the rodeo arena at the community center is to install bleachers. Replacement of the public restrooms is needed.

#### 4. Alpine Meadows Park

This County park is somewhat secluded, located at the end of a cul-de-sac in a residential area, and not well known by residents. Consider a separate public process to test the community’s support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

#### 5. Possible new park

A small community park could be a valued asset by residents, local natural resource organizations, and the school.

### Regional Trails

The regional trail initiative should have its northern terminus within Missoula County north of Condon, and extend southwards along Highway 83 towards Seeley Lake.

### SEELEY LAKE AREA

#### 1. Priority Park

Priority Park features tremendous potential as a community asset, but currently is only an undeveloped parcel on a small creek. This park could provide limited and low impact recreation opportunities such as a small pavilion and possible interpretive play equipment.

#### 2. Drew Creek Park

Drew Creek Park is a public park that is accessed via private roads belonging to the Double Arrow Land Owners Association. Public access should be secured, or the County may consider a separate public process to test the community’s support to divest of this park.





### 3. Possible new park

Residents have indicated the interest in a small park located near the center of the Seeley Lake community that can serve as a common gathering area, host special events such as a farmer's market.

#### Community Trails

Trails are a major priority for residents in Seeley Lake. Residents have expressed interest in trails that connect major focal points in town with existing trails and with public lands outside of town for improved walkability and bicycle safety. The "Connecting the Community" trail plan has been partially completed in Seeley Lake to create a cohesive approach to trail development. Trail connections between Priority Park, the high school, the elementary/intermediate school, Clearwater (Lions) Park, and the visitor center area are recommended. Additional trails extending to existing trailheads to the east and west on public lands are recommended. Finally, complementary trail use guidelines have been developed and are provided as an appendix to this plan. These guidelines can be used as a starting point in developing County policies to address potential user conflicts and safety concerns that arise between motorized and non-motorized trail use.

#### Regional Trails

The regional trail initiative should connect from the trail extending from Condon along Highway 83 to the intersection of Highways 83 and 200.

### **CLINTON / TURAH COMMUNITY**

#### **1. Clinton Conservation Park**

Clinton Conservation Park is among the largest County parks outside of the Missoula area, and features high quality trails along the Clark Fork River. Neighboring residents are not supportive of high vehicle traffic or park use, and the public access to this park is currently very limited. There is no park signage and no designated access points to this property, albeit public access does exist in certain locations. Improving public access to this site is important.

#### **2. Clinton Community Center**

The Clinton Community Center features a community center building that appears to be in good condition, and a diamond ball field with bleachers that is severely deteriorated. Improving the condition of the ball field, including the dug-outs and bleachers would dramatically improve the quality and safety of this public asset.

#### **3. Wallace Creek Park**

The only recommendation for this site is to address the noxious weed issue.

#### **4. Donovan Park**

Donovan Park includes a diamond ball field, bleachers, and storage shed that are in good working condition. The vault restrooms located at the park are old and deteriorated and should be replaced.

#### **5. Leischner Park**

This park is only accessible through an easement that is no longer physically evident. Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

#### **6. Pinecone Park**

Pinecone Park plays an important role as a neighborhood park in a residential area, and should be considered to be upgraded to a community park with development of new or improvement



of existing recreational amenities. Specifically, development of a playground and pavilion, and improvement of the basketball and volleyball courts will dramatically improve this park asset.

**7. Hellgate Park**

Hellgate Park is another great example of a greenway/open space park located among residences. A bench or two located along the natural surface trail to and along the Clark Fork River is recommended.

**8. Hampton North and South Parks**

Both of these parks appear to be undeveloped lots in a residential area, and they are relatively close in proximity to Hellgate Park. Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

**9. Sunwood Park**

Sunwood Park is a conservation park with limited use options due to the wetland nature of much of its terrain. Vegetation management is recommended to improve the health of the forested area.

**Regional Trails**

Trails extending east of Clinton to the Missoula County line could allow for regional trail connections from outside the County. New trails along Interstate 90 that connect to existing paved trails in Turah are recommended.

**BONNER / EAST MISSOULA COMMUNITY**

**1. McDowell Park**

This park appears to be an undeveloped lot in a residential area that provides nominal benefit as a public asset. Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

**2. Gateway Gardens Park (a.k.a. Hellgate Park)**

This park is located within the city limits of Missoula and should be considered to be transferred to the City.

**3. Possible new park**

Residents have indicated the interest in a small park located on the Clark Fork River for accessing the river in a more environmentally sound and safe manner.

**Community Trails**

Through the efforts of planning the new state park, recreational and commuter trails have been a focus of the area. Residents have expressed interest in trails that connect major focal points in-town with existing trails and parks, and improve safety along Highway 200. It is recommended that trails connect to the school, as well as with the Kim Williams Trail. Additionally, a trail connection to a potential future river access site and to possible new residential developments in the area is advisable.

**Regional Trails**

The regional trail initiative can connect Bonner to East Missoula, and then extend north from Bonner towards Seeley Lake and the Swan Valley. Bonner can serve as a crossroads of the regional trail system with sections coming from Clinton/Turah in the east, going to Missoula in the west, and Seeley Lake in the north.



## MISSOULA AREA COMMUNITY

### Rattlesnake Area

Most of the County parks in the Rattlesnake area are within the city limits of Missoula. Transfer of the following parks to the City of Missoula are recommended:

- Syringa Park
- Khanabad Park
- Bugbee Nature Area
- Alvina Park
- Greendale Park

#### 1. **Siesta Acres Park**

This park appears to be an undeveloped lot in a residential area that provides nominal benefit as a public asset. Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

### City of Missoula / Target Range Area

#### 1. **Dinsmore River One Park**

Ownership of this park is questionable and needs to be verified.

#### 2. **Stone Riverfront Park**

Ownership of this park is questionable and needs to be verified.

#### 3. **Fort Missoula Regional Park**

This park has the greatest diversity of recreational amenities of any County park. City and County lands make up the Fort Missoula Regional Park. Implementation of the master plan, including securing design development plan for the County-owned portion of the park, would improve many of the current amenities and activity areas.

#### 4. **Big Sky Park**

At 155 acres, Big Sky Park is the largest Missoula County Park and is managed through use and lease agreements with non-profit and community organizations. Development and management of the park is guided by the management and utilization plan prepared for the park. Improvements, which should be considered by the lease holders, include improvements of the bleachers, announcer's stand, and scoreboard of the Westside Little League Association. Limited expansion of the stalls and amenities of the equestrian park as outlined in the management and utilization plan for the park is recommended. Users and lease holders have expressed concern that the park is not and cannot be dedicated as a public park. It is recommended that some form of park dedication or commitment be made by the County to protect Big Sky Park from alternative uses in the future so leaseholders would be more likely to invest in their facilities.

#### 5. **Capy Court Park**

This park is an undeveloped corner lot in a residential area. A separate public process should be considered to review whether this site should be developed as a neighborhood park with play equipment and picnic tables, or to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

#### 6. **Double R Acres Park**

Ownership of this park is questionable and needs to be verified.



## **7. Dinsmore River Four Park**

Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

### **West Mullan Road Area**

#### **1. New Meadows Park**

It is recommended that New Meadows Park be upgraded from a neighborhood to a community park. This would entail the improvement of existing amenities, development of additional amenities, prominent site signage, and improved access to the site. Amenities to be considered are improved play equipment, a full size basketball court, a sand volleyball court, multiple picnic tables, a multi-purpose rectangular sports field, and a possible BMX pump track. Additionally, this park should feature a loop trail that goes around the site.

#### **2. Golden West Park**

Golden West Park consists of diamond ball field which is in need of maintenance and repair. Improvement to the site should include renovation of the infield and outfield, backstop, fencing, and dugouts. It is also recommended that this park be connected by the trail to New Meadows Park along Cote Lane.

#### **3. Utility Parcel**

Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

#### **4. Council Hill Park**

This park is an undeveloped, irregularly shaped lot in a residential area. Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

### **Miller Creek Area**

#### **1. Mockingbird Park**

The only recommendation for this park is site signage.

#### **2. Ravenwood Hills Park**

Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to either transfer this park to the City of Missoula, or sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

#### **3. Ravenwood Park**

Ravenwood Park features a linear open space that is popular for area residents to hike and walk in. A natural surface walking trail that meanders the length of the park would enhance use. Due to the terrain and topography of the site, a natural surface trail would need erosion control measures designed into it.

#### **4. Raelene Park**

Raelene Park is an undeveloped parcel in a residential area that would be well suited for limited recreational use. It is recommended to transfer this park to the City of Missoula and consider a disc golf or FOLF course on this site.

#### **5. Lost Mine Park**

Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

## 6. Canyon Village Park

Canyon Village Park is located along Miller Creek and features a grazing lease on a portion of the property. The grazing leaseholder is required to assist with noxious weeds.

## 7. Ranchette Park

This park features heavily used river access to the Bitterroot River. The only recommendations for this site are more prominent signage identifying it as a County park and improvement to the river bank (bank stabilization) to slow the erosive effects of river access traffic. Any improvement to the river bank at the access site should take seasonal flooding into account in design.

## 8. Oral Zumwalt Park

Adjacent landowners to this park adamantly discourage parking and access, the site features a closed gate, and the landowner to the south uses the park via an easement for access to their property. Improved public access is recommended or consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

### Community Trails

Community connectivity is a major priority for residents in the Missoula area, much of which is being addressed in the Missoula Active Transportation Plan. To complement the Active Transportation Plan, small trail segments that connect major parks and park areas are recommended. Specifically, the following connections are recommended:

1. Fort Missoula Regional Park, Big Sky Park, the Big Sky High School and to Reserve Street
2. Big Sky Park to Double R Acres via roadside trail link along Spurgin Road

### Regional Trails

The Missoula Active Transportation Plan (MATP) will address many trail projects that integrate with a potential regional trails initiative in the County. The two major recommendations of the MATP for regional connectivity in the Missoula Area is to develop a paved trail from Missoula to Lolo, and to extend the paved trail along Mullan Road to Frenchtown. These trails would provide the connectivity from the central area of the County to communities in the south and in the west. Regional trail concepts such as the Milwaukee Trail should be explored and developed where feasible. Additionally, regional trails should be completed heading east towards Bonner, Turah and Clinton. Missoula should become the "hub" of regional trails that extend outward to communities along major highways in the County.

## **EVARO COMMUNITY**

### 1. Whispering Pines Park

This is the only County park in the vicinity of the Evaro community, and appears to be rarely used. This site is a small abandoned quarry site and features opportunity to become a neighborhood or community park with limited development. Recommendations for this site are to develop a small gravel parking lot, picnic tables, small pavilion, play equipment, and trails through the wooded areas of the park.

### Community Trails

The only community trail connections recommended to be considered in Evaro are trails that connect from the community to the Legacy Project lands.

### Regional Trails

The regional trail initiative can connect Evaro north to Arlee along Highway 93/200, and southwards to a potential future trail connection along either Interstate 90 or West Broadway Street west of the





Missoula International Airport. This would connect Evaro with the Missoula Area and lead to future trail connections to Frenchtown and beyond.

## **WEST VALLEY AREA**

### **1. Piney Meadows Park**

Piney Meadows Park is a small gem in the Ninemile planning area of Missoula County. This park is located on Ninemile Creek with a portion of the access behind the fire station leased to the Frenchtown Fire District. This park has great potential as a greenspace with limited development. A natural surface trail from the fire station to the north bank of Ninemile Creek, and a possible bridge over the creek so residents can safely access the majority of the park that is located on the south side of the creek is recommended. One or two benches and a possible picnic table in the park would provide a place for residents to enjoy the setting and surrounding landscapes.

### **2. Ponda Rosa Acres Park**

This small park is located on the Clark Fork River, and is the westernmost Missoula County park. Given the community needs for river access, this park could be considered for a sustainable river access site. This would include developing prominent site and regulatory signage, a slightly larger gravel turn-around, steps or a managed slope towards the river, and a natural surface trail to the river's edge. Consider a partnership with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to manage as a fishing access site.

## **Community Trails**

Plans to construct a community trail between the Frenchtown Elementary School and Houle Creek Road are underway. Construction is expected in 2012.

## **Regional Trails**

A regional trail initiative can connect the communities of the West Valley area to points east in Missoula County, and possibly become the connection for future trails coming from the west into the County from Mineral County. The specific regional trail connections recommended in this plan are to extend the existing paved trail along Interstate 90 westward to Nine Mile Road at a minimum, and possibly to Ponda Rosa Acres Park. Additionally, a connection with Frenchtown headed east along Mullan Road could connect with similar trail development efforts heading west along the same roadway.

## **LOLO COMMUNITY**

### **East Side of Lolo**

#### **1. Lolo Beach Park**

Lolo Beach Park is a highly valued river access site and provides substantial access to the Bitterroot River for wade or bank anglers, swimmers, and recreational paddlers. A group pavilion with picnic tables will enhance the park as a social gathering area. Improve access to the stairs in the park and consider erosion control.

#### **2. Lakeside Park**

This park provides access to a small fishing pond in a neighborhood, but does not feature parking. Tasteful and prominent site signage that communicate the lack of parking at the park is recommended.

#### **3. Allomont Park**

Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.



**4. Lewis and Clark Park**

This site is currently used for gravel storage by Missoula County Public Works Program. Transfer of this park to the Public Works Department, given its limited value as a park asset, could be considered.

**West Side of Lolo****1. Barclay Park**

Consider a separate public process to test the community's support to sell this property and utilize the proceeds from the sale to reinvest in other County parks in the area.

**2. Ridgeway Park / Highmore Park**

These parks connect to make a sizeable linear park with heavily wooded areas and steep topography. Possibly a well-designed natural surface trail for hiking or walking could be developed in the parks to enhance use.

**3. Cascade Park**

This park is a large parcel located between the residential areas west and uphill of Lolo and Lolo School below. The site features numerous informal trails developed by youth walking to school. Erosion control measures due to the topography of the site is needed, as well as improved trails and pathway.

**4. Claremont Park / St. Johns Park**

These two parks also provide a sizeable parcel of land that features steep slopes and informal trails. Trail development efforts to control the impacts of residents walking downhill on the slopes of the parks are recommended.

**5. Cumberland Park**

This park also provides a sizeable parcel of land that features steep slopes and informal trails. Trail development efforts to control the impacts of residents walking downhill on the slopes of the parks are recommended.

**6. Westview Park**

Westview Park is the only developed neighborhood park on the west side of Lolo and has had recent improvement projects on-site. A picnic pavilion and restrooms are recommended.

**7. Shelby Park**

Shelby Park is an open space southwest of Lolo along Mormon Creek Road. A small pavilion to provide shade for one of the existing picnic tables would enhance use of the site.

**Community Trails**

Connectivity internally for Lolo is problematic because the community is divided by Highway 93. The most fruitful community trail projects would be:

- Connection from Lolo Beach Park along Lakeside Drive to Tyler Way/Highway 93
- Connections from west side parks to Lolo School
- Connections among neighborhood and community parks on the east side of Lolo
- Explore connections within the community such as from Mormon Creek Road to existing trail on Highway 93 and Travelers Rest State Park

**Regional Trails**

The regional trail initiative can connect Lolo northward to Missoula and tie into the existing trail that extends southward along Highway 93. Other trail connections extending from Lolo include a connection to Fort Fizzle along Highway 12 with future extensions to Fish Creek and Lolo Pass.



## Chapter 6: Operations and Management Manual

The operations and management manual section of the *Missoula County Parks and Trails Master Plan* provides strategic guidelines and recommended tactics for advancing the Program over the next 10 years, and is also constructed to be a useful reference guide for daily management of the Parks and Trails Program. The recommendations contained in this manual are derived from a thorough review of the Program's administration and management, the culture and values of Missoula County, and best practices in the parks and recreation industry from around the United States. The manual contains the following major areas of focus:

- **Policy and Procedural Recommendations** – A detail of recommendations pertaining to policies and procedures of the Program and how they are administered.
- **Organizational Recommendations** – A detail of organizational recommendations addressing the functionality and structure of the Program.

### 6.1 POLICY AND PROCEDURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Missoula County should consider the following recommendations:

1. Improve the ability of Missoula County to manage the quality of lands received and to expand the ability of Missoula County to pursue trail development projects through County and State subdivision development regulations.
2. Establish a mechanism within the Missoula County to coordinate and support the development and maintenance of eligible and approved trail projects throughout the County.
3. Establish guidelines for multi-use trails and trail systems within Missoula County.
4. Consider transfer, sale and exchange of certain County parks.
5. Strengthen existing and develop new partnerships with leaseholders, user groups and stakeholders to enhance the quality of Missoula County parks and trails.
6. Establish more consistent maintenance standards for Missoula County parks.
7. Establish management policies to maintain and enhance the quality of Missoula County parks and trails.

These recommendations are further explained in detail in the sections that follow.

#### 1. IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF MISSOULA COUNTY TO MANAGE THE QUALITY OF LANDS RECEIVED AND TO EXPAND THE ABILITY OF MISSOULA COUNTY TO PURSUE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THROUGH COUNTY AND STATE SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS.

##### ACQUISITION CRITERIA

Park land acquisition or protection, through the subdivision dedication process, purchase, or land exchange is a critical component of an effective parks system. Without appropriate land, it is difficult to provide the recreational opportunities and experiences required by County residents and to adequately protect important habitats. Only then at great expense can development transform a poorly chosen piece of land into a quality park.

The County must thoughtfully consider each acquisition. The following questions evaluate potential acquisitions. These criteria are based upon the land's general location (rural or urban) and its classification. A proposed acquisition need not meet all listed questions to be acceptable, and some questions are more important than others. The list is meant to provide guidelines for making educated choices.

## RECREATION PARKS

### **Basic Attributes**

1. Is the land of an appropriate size and shape?
2. Is the character of the land (topography, drainage, soils, etc.) appropriate?
3. Does the land have inherent economic value comparable to the lands adjoining it?
4. Is this land suitable, upon development, to provide the recreation experiences needed in the area?
5. Would the use of this land (as guided by its classification) harm the natural environment?

### **Location**

1. Is the land in an appropriate place?
2. Would this land contribute to the equitable distribution of parks in the planning region?

### **Access**

1. After dedication, would this land, upon casual observation, be easily identifiable as a public park?
2. Will the land be appropriately accessible to the public?

### **Developments**

1. Is the supporting infrastructure (utilities, access, etc.) available in the appropriate form and scale needed?
2. Is the land free of infrastructure (high-tension power lines, sewage lagoons, etc.) that would limit appropriate park uses?
3. Is the land free of easements (drainage, effluent disposal, mineral extraction, motorized access, etc.) that would limit appropriate park uses?
4. Does the land have any special cultural or historical significance?

### **Hazards and Costs**

1. Are there physical hazards, limitations or restrictions that would hinder the intended use of the land?
2. Would the benefits offered by this land outweigh the potential liabilities?
3. Would the benefits offered by this land outweigh foreseeable maintenance costs?

### **Contribution to the Park System**

1. Does the land complement other nearby park lands?
2. Does the land serve as a linkage or corridor to other park lands?
3. Do non-motorized travel-ways exist between this park and residences, schools, and other parks and open space?

### **Harmonious Existence with Built Environment**

1. Would the use of this land (as guided by its classification) conflict with adjacent land use?
5. Does adjacent land use conflict with the intended uses of this land?



## CONSERVATION PARKS

### **Physical Landform**

1. Does the land contain a riparian area?
2. Does the land contain unique geomorphic features?
3. Is the landform essentially in its natural state, or can it be returned to such a state?

### **Flora and Fauna**

1. Does the land serve an important biological purpose in the area?
2. Is the majority of the vegetation native to the area?
3. Is the habitat unique to the area?
4. Does a diversity of plant species exist on the site?
5. Does a diversity of animal species exist on the site?
6. Is the land large enough and of high enough quality to provide self-contained habitat?
7. Does the land provide for wildlife linkages to other habitat areas?
8. Do any sensitive or rare plant or animal species live on or use this land?
9. Does the land buffer adjacent lands that contain sensitive or rare plants or animals?
10. Is the habitat largely unaltered from its natural state, or can it be restored to such a state?

### **Human Uses**

1. Will human use of this land harm the natural habitat?
2. If the land is intended to serve as a non-motorized linkage to other areas, is it suitable for such a purpose?
3. Does the land provide educational opportunities?
4. Is the land threatened by other uses?

### **Contribution to the Conservation Land System**

1. Is the land in an area identified as having important resources?
2. Does the land link other conservation lands?
3. Does the land contribute to the diversity of conservation lands in the area?

### **Harmonious Existence with Built Environment**

1. Does (or will) adjacent land use degrade the naturalness of the land?
2. Will it be possible to prevent intrusions from exotic plants, domestic animals, and other threats?

## **1A. SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS**

State law (MCA 76-3-621) gives the Board of County Commissioners the power to choose suitable locations for parks after consultation with the Park Board and subdivider.

The Missoula County Subdivision Regulations (amended November 17, 2010) contain provisions for park land dedication and cash-in-lieu of land dedication. These provisions are detailed in Article 3 – Subdivision Design Standards, Section 8: Park and Open Space Requirements. Within this section, Missoula County details the priorities for park and open space preservation and development as related to residential subdivision development. Specifically, the required park land dedication provisions include the following objectives<sup>18</sup>:

1. Preserve and protect wildlife habitat, species of special concern and their habitat, agricultural uses, historical and cultural features, scenic views, natural drainage areas and systems, and other desirable features of the natural environment, such as healthy long-lived trees, topography, significant plant communities, ground and surface water, wetlands, and riparian areas;
2. Provide open space areas for conservation or passive recreation;

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<sup>18</sup> Missoula County, *Subdivision Regulations* (November 17, 2010).



3. Provide active recreational areas for use by residents of the development and, where specified, the larger community;
4. Meet the goals of the Missoula County Open Space Plan, the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, the 1997 Missoula County Parks and Conservation Lands Plan and the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area.
5. Provide areas for social interaction and livability;
6. Arrange open space to be accessible and functional for use by the residents of the development and where specified, the larger community; and
7. Protect sensitive environmental features and natural areas by providing landscape buffers within open space areas.

The regulations provide detailed guidance and policy organized into the following sub-sections of the subdivision regulations:

- Section 3.1.1 - Parkland dedication exemptions
- Section 3.1.2 - Requirements of park dedication
- Section 3.1.3 - Alternative requirement for park land dedication
- Section 3.1.4 - Park locations
- Section 3.1.5 - Cash donation or land dedication
- Section 3.1.6 - Park design standards
- Section 3.1.7 - Park design recommendations
- Section 3.1.8 - Park dedication waiver

#### **Current Challenge:**

The challenge with current regulations is that the design standards for what constitutes quality park lands are not adequately detailed. Ambiguity has resulted in the dedication of multiple county parks that are largely unusable as public parks. Recommended changes to County regulations are intended to improve the quality of dedicated parklands in newly developed subdivisions as usable public parks with meaningful recreational value, as well as provide an alternative to subdivision developers to engage in trail development projects in lieu of parkland dedication.

The following recommendations provide policy considerations that would require adoption by the Board of County Commissioners to be successful, and would require support from the Missoula County Parks and County staff.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. **Modify existing design standards detailed in Missoula County Subdivision Regulations Article 3, Section 8.6 – Park Design Standards, to include more specific requirements for park design, size and dedication options as a result of subdivision development.**

Specific design standard examples the County may consider as a starting point for revising subdivision regulations are provided as a supplement to this plan.

2. **Consider formulating and adopting a park development fee associated with cash-in-lieu of land dedication donations that provides financial resources for Missoula County to develop dedicated parklands in subdivisions, versus relying solely on the County taxpayers as a whole to fund park development in subdivisions.**

Park development fees associated with cash-in-lieu of land dedication in subdivision regulations are beginning to become more accepted as a measure of fairness for who is expected to bear



the financial burden of park development in new residential areas. John Crompton, Ph.D., of Texas A&M University recently published “An Analysis of Parkland Dedication Ordinances in Texas” and noted,

*A problem with ordinances that contain only the land and fee in lieu elements is that they provide only for the acquisition of land. The additional capital needed to transform that bare land into a park is borne by existing taxpayers. In some instances, the result is that the dedicated land is never developed into a park and remains sterile open space which detracts from a community's appeal rather than adding to it. This led...communities to expand their ordinances to incorporate a park development fee element to pay for the cost of transforming the land into a park.<sup>19</sup>*

**3. Formalize the alternative for subdivision developers to provide trail development in lieu of parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu of land dedication donation.**

**1B. TRAIL RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

Trails along roads and highways are often constructed either within the road right-of-way, or on parcels with negotiated easements. In the case that trails are constructed in rights-of-way, the County should verify ownership of the right-of-way and affected current or future trail. Inter-local agreements regarding trail ownership and maintenance should be established between Missoula County and other right-of-way owners (city, state, or federal) where trails are constructed or accepted by the County that are not within County right-of-ways.

**2. ESTABLISH A MECHANISM WITHIN THE MISSOULA COUNTY TO COORDINATE AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF ELIGIBLE AND APPROVED TRAIL PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.**

**EXPLORE A MISSOULA COUNTY TRAILS DISTRICT OR SIMILAR PROGRAM**

Based on the community and public input received, the development and maintenance of additional trails within Missoula County has emerged as one of the primary areas of focus and interest for residents. Due to the nature of the County, rural communities, and distribution of resident population there are constraints placed on the County as a whole to engage in ambitious trail development projects that would eventually produce regional trails connecting communities. Similarly, the local economies of small communities and the County as a whole have changed in the last five to ten years, producing greater strain on the financial capacity of all entities. Therefore, the most realistic alternative for Missoula County to pursue regional trail development that will connect communities throughout the County is to explore a mechanism with a unique focus and a dedicated funding source.

Many counties that have regional trails systems have developed a trails district to support the associated development requirements. Sometimes this includes multiple counties, and usually is funded through a tax initiative. Public agencies receive the value of this Trails District from the focused support of economic development from hiking, bicycle and equestrian users. Regional trail systems are becoming very popular in many areas of the United States including the St. Louis market with the Great Greenway Trails System, in North and South Carolina with the Thread Trail System, in Pennsylvania and Maryland with the Allegheny Highlands Trail, in Virginia with the Spearhead Trail, West Virginia with the Hatfield and McCoy Trails, and multiple examples in California.

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<sup>19</sup> Crompton, John L., “An Analysis of Parkland Dedication Ordinances in Texas.” Journal of Park and Recreation Administration 28.1 (Spring 2010): 70-102.

### 3. ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR MULTI-USE TRAILS AND TRAIL SYSTEMS WITHIN MISSOULA COUNTY.

Multi-use trails are in high demand in Missoula County, although diverse trail uses can sometimes become contentious and problematic in a community. It is recommended that Missoula County adopt multi-use trail guidelines in order to take a proactive role of managing safety and user conflicts on County trails. These policies should support equitable user experiences in diverse uses, and respect the constraints and preferences of each user group. Detailed suggested multi-use trail guidelines are provided as a supplement to this master plan.

### 4. CONSIDER TRANSFER, SALE AND EXCHANGE OF CERTAIN COUNTY PARKS.

#### 4A. TRANSFER OF COUNTY PARKS WITHIN MISSOULA CITY LIMITS

There are several Missoula County parks that are located within the city limits of Missoula, resulting in inconsistencies in use policies, regulations and jurisdiction. These parks are most often undeveloped greenways or open space, and in some cases involve limited recreational amenities such as a trail, picnic table, or small play equipment. The Missoula County Parks Board and Board of County Commissioners should work collaboratively to transfer ownership of these parks to the City of Missoula. Specifically, this would include the following, but other parks may be identified in the future:

1. Gateway Gardens (a.k.a Hellgate Park) – East Missoula
2. Syringa Park – Rattlesnake Area
3. Khanabad Park – Rattlesnake Area
4. Bugbee Nature Area – Rattlesnake Area
5. Alvina Park – Rattlesnake Area
6. Greendale Park – Rattlesnake Area
7. Chappelle Park – Miller Creek Area
8. Scotty Park – Miller Creek Area
9. Ravenwood Hills Park – Miller Creek
10. Ralene Park – Miller Creek

#### 4B. SELLING COUNTY PARK LANDS

Selling of dedicated County Park Lands is, rightly so, a difficult, intensive, and expensive process. There are few instances where such sale of park lands may be desirable; however, it is important to have a policy to objectively determine the need for selling of any park.

#### SALE PROCEDURES

The County may attempt to sell parks individually or as a group. For any parks considered for sale, the following five criteria will be considered before proceeding:

1. **Lack of Conservation Value.** In the judgment of the Park Board, the park must hold little conservation value.
2. **Lack of Recreation Value.** In the judgment of the Park Board, the park must hold little recreation or potential recreation value. Factors to consider include its use or potential use (even into the distant future) as: an active or passive recreation area, a trail, visual open space, or a buffer from roads or other intensive land uses.
3. **Liability.** The park's cost (both in maintenance and in potential liability) must outweigh the benefits it provides or may provide to County residents.
4. **Local Support.** Residents in the park's immediate vicinity (as defined on a case-by-case basis) must be supportive of sale.



5. **Cost.** The value obtained from the sale, added to the projected long-term savings of not owning the parcel, must exceed the cost of disposing of the parcel.

The County Park Board does not have authority to sell park property. If the park in question meets the above criteria, then the Park Board will recommend that the Board of County Commissioners sell the land. If the Commissioners choose to sell the land, they will do the following (as dictated by MCA 7-16-2324, 7-8-2511, and other applicable statutes):

1. Appraise the land and establish a fair market value
2. Post a public notice on the intentions to sell the land, and hold a public hearing regarding the sale.

If sale is still desirable, the following steps would take place:

3. If the land is within an incorporated city or town, secure the approval of the governing body.
4. Post notice four weeks in advance of the public auction to sell the land.
5. Hold a public auction, at which bids of no less than 90% of the appraised value of the land will be accepted.
6. If the land does not sell at the auction, conduct a private sale at any time after the auction for a price not less than 90% of the land's appraised value.
7. Place the proceeds of the sale into the park fund and use them in the manner prescribed for cash received in lieu of park dedication.

#### **4C. EXCHANGING COUNTY PARKS FOR OTHER LANDS**

It may sometimes be desirable to exchange County park lands for other lands to be used as parks. While a number of reasons may exist for exchanging park lands, the tool is probably best utilized for purposes of park land consolidation.

The County acquires most park lands through the subdivision process; consequently, due to park land dedication laws, many of these lands are of small sizes (often less than one acre) best suited for neighborhood parks. While neighborhood parks are an important part of communities park systems, they do not provide all of the opportunities presented by larger acreages.

Therefore, it may be desirable, in neighborhoods or communities with an overabundance of neighborhood parks and a shortage of community parks, to exchange these neighborhood park lands for more desirable parcels. Specifically, several small parcels could be exchanged for a larger parcel that would be used as a community park.

This same concept could be used for consolidating small parks into one larger conservation park that would better protect sensitive lands.

#### EXCHANGE PROCEDURES

For any parks considered for exchange, the following criteria must first be met.

1. **Net Gain in Opportunities.** In the opinion of the Park Board, the new land to be acquired should provide for more recreational opportunities or conservation values than those which will be lost from the lands given up. A general utilization plan for the new park should be developed to help determine this.
2. **Local Support.** Residents in the vicinity must be supportive of the exchange.

The County Park Board does not have authority to exchange park property. If the proposal meets the above criteria, then the Park Board will recommend that the Board of County Commissioners commence

with the exchange. If the Commissioners choose to exchange the lands, they will do the following (as dictated by MCA 7-16-2324, 7-8-2512, and other applicable statutes):

1. Appraise all lands. Ensure that the traded lands are of equivalent value. Any difference in value may be equalized by a cash payment.
2. Post a public notice on the intentions to exchange the lands, and hold a public hearing regarding the exchange.

If the exchange is still desirable, the following steps would take place:

3. If the lands are within an incorporated city or town, secure the approval of the governing body.
4. Place any proceeds from the exchange into the park fund and use them in the manner prescribed for cash received in lieu of park dedication.

## **5. STRENGTHEN EXISTING AND DEVELOP NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH LEASEHOLDERS, USER GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS.**

### **5A. PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS**

#### **Current Challenge:**

The success of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program is largely due to the diversity of working partnerships with non-profit organizations and user groups to manage and maintain park sites. These partnerships appear to be managed on a case-by-case basis with little consistency or standards to help protect the County and its interests.

#### **Recommendation:**

Develop partnership standards for current and future leaseholders and other partners. The following partnership standards are recommended for all current and future leaseholder and partnership agreements:

- All partnerships should require a written working agreement with measurable outcomes that hold each partner accountable to the desired outcomes and will be evaluated by the Program on an annual basis.
- Depending on the level of investment made by the partner, the partnership agreement can be limited to months, a year, or multiple years.
- All partnerships should track direct and indirect costs associated with the partnership investment to demonstrate the level of equity each partner is investing.
- Each partnership should exhibit a partnership culture that focuses on planning together on a yearly basis; communicating regularly on how the partnership is working; and annually reporting to each other's board or owners on how well the partnership is working and the results of their efforts to the taxpayers of Missoula County.

If any of these partnership standards are not met, the Park Board may evaluate the partnership and consider to discontinue or terminate it.

### **5B. LEASING COUNTY PARKS**

While County parks are generally available for public use at no charge, there are certain situations when leases for special uses are necessary. This can occur when one individual or group will receive much greater benefits from park usage than would the general public, and the general public has no immediate interest in the land.





## TYPES OF LEASES

The following policies will better guide the Park Board in granting leases for County parks. The policies differ depending upon if the proposed purpose of lease is for an optimal recreational use, non-optimal recreational use, or non-recreational use.

### **Recreational Uses**

The Park Board should first determine if the proposed lease or special permit for recreational use would provide for the optimal use of the park. The determination can be guided by this plan, public comment, and staff assistance. If, after this guidance, uncertainty exists, then the use should be considered non-optimal. Different policies exist for optimal and non-optimal recreational uses.

#### Optimal uses

- The Park Board will consider incentives to the lessee to develop and maintain the land as proposed.
- The Park Board will consider a lease or permit for a length of time most desirable to the lessee and within the statutes of the State of Montana.
- The land will be leased for a minimal fee to non-profit organizations. A fair rental amount will be charged to for-profit organizations
- The lessee must have insurance that removes all liability from the County.
- A public meeting must be held before any lease or permit is granted, and comments taken regarding the above issues and any other relevant concerns.
- After the lease or permit expires, and is not renewed by decision of either party, the land must be reclaimed to its previous condition as detailed in the lease agreement.

#### Non-optimal uses

- The proposed use must not substantially alter the landscape, nor may it harm the natural environment.
- The lease or permit must be proposed for no more than three years. If an optimal use of the land is proposed at a later date, then the lease for the non-optimal use will not be renewed.
- After the lease or permit expires, and is not renewed by decision of either party, the land must be reclaimed to its previous condition as detailed in the lease agreement.
- The land will be leased for a minimal fee to non-profit organizations. A fair rental amount will be charged to for-profit organizations.
- The lessee must have insurance that removes all liability from the County.
- A public meeting must be held before any lease or permit is granted, and comments taken regarding the above issues and any other relevant concerns.

### **Non-Recreational Uses**

For all non-recreational uses, the following criteria should be met before granting a lease or special use permit:

- The proposed use must not interfere with a public interest in the land.
- The proposed use must not substantially alter the landscape or harm the natural environment.



- The lease or permit terms shall be in accordance with the laws of the State of Montana. The Park Board may set shorter terms if it desires. If an optimal use of the land is proposed at a later date, then the lease for the non-optimal use will not be renewed.
- After the lease or permit expires, and is not renewed by decision of either party, the land must be reclaimed to its previous condition as detailed in the lease agreement.
- The Park Board will charge fair-market value for the lease or permit. Revenue will be used for park development, maintenance, or acquisition in the planning region where the funds are generated.
- The lessee must have insurance that removes all liability from the County
- A public hearing must be held before any lease or permit is granted, and comments taken regarding the above issues and any other relevant concerns.

### **Unpermitted Uses**

For policies regarding unpermitted and undesirable uses of park land, refer to the policy entitled “Clearing Encroachments on County Parks”.

## **5C. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS**

Some park developments and maintenance is beyond the abilities of local organizations and must be performed by skilled and organized professionals. An example of this is the Fort Missoula development and maintenance completed under contract with the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department. Other one time contracts may include well digging, electrical or plumbing installation, timber harvesting, landscaping, surveying, architectural drawings, or heavy equipment use. It may be possible for other parks in the Missoula Valley to be developed and maintained, under contract, by the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department or other entities.

The Park Board will support these contractual agreements to the extent that they meet the goals and criteria identified in this plan.

## **6. ESTABLISH MORE CONSISTENT MAINTENANCE STANDARDS FOR MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS.**

### **6A. MAINTENANCE STANDARDS**

#### **Current Challenge:**

There are inconsistent maintenance standards used to monitor and manage sites, facilities and infrastructure at Missoula County parks.

#### **Recommendation:**

Develop maintenance standards that can be applied to all County park sites whether they are managed directly or in concert with lease holders and other partners. These standards do not have to be stringent, just consistent in order to protect the safety of park users. The maintenance standards below are brief examples of high level requirements.

- Establish maintenance standards for each type of amenity based on established expectations of the visitors to the parks and to meet customer service requirements for a well maintained parks system. These standards can also vary by park or asset type, such as day use facilities, community centers, and regional parks.
- Train County staff and partners on maintenance standards for care to meet the expectations of the visitors to the County park system.
- Upgrade the amenities that have the highest level of use first to keep the sites well valued in local communities



- Seek outside funding and resource support to fund improvements for each park.
- Seek the local communities to engage in “clean up, fix up” events and days to keep the parks in prime position to support a strong visitor base appeal.
- Inspect sites and facilities on a seasonal basis to evaluate adherence to maintenance standards at a 90% or greater level of compliance.
- Management of forested areas should be in accordance with the policies and practices approved by the Park Board, and best practices utilized by other notable forest management agencies (local, state, and federal).
- Management of noxious weeds should be in accordance with the policies and practices approved by the Park Board, and best practices utilized by other notable forest management agencies (local, state, and federal).
- Management of encroachment and misuse issues.

## **6B. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES**

Although the matching-funds programs have been very successful, the Park Board lacks funding to develop and maintain all park lands in the County. Development and maintenance of only one or two parks can often put a drain on a community or neighborhood resources. For these reasons, the Park Board has prioritized the types of parks and the types of projects to which it will provide funding and support. Each region may have different needs that may not always follow these priorities. However, if projects from the same region compete for funds, preference will be given to the project that fulfills the Park Board’s priorities.

### TYPES OF PARKS

#### **Regions outside the Missoula Valley**

The following are the *types* of parks that will receive development and maintenance priorities in each region except the Missoula Valley. They are listed in priority order. A discussion of park types and their definitions begin on page 31 of this document.

1. Development and maintenance of a quality community park.
2. Development and maintenance of neighborhood parks.
3. Maintenance and restoration of conservation parks.
4. Expansion of an existing community park or development of a second community park.
5. Protection of lands identified as having important conservation values according to the degree that they are threatened.

#### **Missoula Valley Region**

The following are the *types* of parks that will receive development and maintenance priorities in the Missoula Valley. They are listed in priority order.

1. Development and maintenance of the Fort Missoula and Big Sky regional parks.
2. Development and maintenance of a quality, active recreation-based community park in each area.
3. Development and maintenance of neighborhood parks.
4. Maintenance and restoration of conservation parks.

5. Protection of lands identified as having important conservation values according to the degree that they are threatened.
6. Development and maintenance of a quality, nature-based community park, possibly as part of an active recreation-based park, in each area.

#### TYPES OF PROJECTS

The types of projects funded are as important as the types of the parks in which they are completed. Routine maintenance and upkeep of parks is difficult for organizations. It is easier to recruit volunteers or solicit donations for major facility improvements than it is to get assistance with grass cutting, tree irrigation, or other basic upkeep. The Park Board will provide incentives to projects that deal with basic maintenance. When an organization has demonstrated that it can maintain the park in a quality condition, then the board will consider providing assistance with the construction of additional facilities.

Considering the individual needs of each park, proposed projects that substantially comply with the following will have the highest priority (items are listed in alphabetical order):

- Are supported by additional funding from other agencies or organizations.
- Have a guaranteed source of continued funding.
- Increase disabled access.
- Increase the diversity of recreation opportunities in the region, area, or neighborhood.
- Increase the quality and/or amount of natural habitat.
- Involve extensive community or neighborhood participation and support;
- Reduce or eliminate liability.
- Reduce the overall maintenance requirements of the park, or make the park easier to maintain.
- Require low maintenance.

### **7. ESTABLISH MANAGEMENT POLICIES TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF MISSOULA COUNTY PARKS AND TRAILS.**

#### **7A. DISABLED ACCESS**

Development of a quality parks system requires that all users, of all abilities, have access to at least the basic components of that system. A few, if any, County parks provide opportunities for the mobility impaired. Meeting the needs of this population, and the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, will take a number of years. Implementation is based on a system that designates the highest priority park needs as follows:

1. Access to the park, including adequate parking and trail system.
2. Access to each major site or facility within the park.
3. Access to restrooms and drinking fountains.
4. Access to other remaining sites and programs within the park, which are appropriate and will not fundamentally change the site or program, its flora and fauna, and the recreation experiences available there.

#### **7B. NAMING COUNTY PARKS**

Not every County park requires a sign indicating its name. Signs can impress a feeling of formality which may not be appropriate for every park. Signed names are appropriate at community parks, and may be



appropriate at some neighborhood parks, or when there is a special need to identify the park as public land.

The Park Board has authority to name County parks, giving deference to the wishes of those developing the park or local residents. The guidelines below suggest ways of choosing names for placement on signs or for internal reference:

- Community's name (for community parks).
- Significant local geographical feature.
- Name of a prominent historical resident, interest, or event.
- Name of an organization that has developed and/or maintains the park.
- Name of neighborhood or subdivision (for neighborhood parks).
- Name of an adjacent school.

### **7C. RECOGNIZING DONORS**

Missoula County usually contributes only a small share of the money and time needed for park development. Local organizations, residents, and businesses, who provide assistance should be recognized. The Park Board strictly controls advertising in County parks, it recognizes proper recognition of donors, which the following guidelines help address.

- All signs must be approved by the Park Board.
- If a number of donors are recognized for general park improvements and maintenance, one sign should be used.
- Any sign recognizing multiple donors should be of a similar size and shape as a sign that names a park or posts regulations.
- Contribution meriting signed recognition will be recommended by those developing the park.
- Donors of specific facilities or structures (such as benches, water fountains, etc.) can be identified by a small, unobtrusive plaque or engraving on or near the structure.
- Park Board assistance with development of parks other than those owned by the County should be recognized in an appropriate manner.

### **7D. MEMORIALS**

Parks and park programs are meaningful places to memorialize deceased citizens who have given special service to the community. The Missoula County Park Board permits memorials to be placed in County parks that meet the eligibility requirements, including possible approval by the Missoula County Commissioners. Monetary memorials in the form of memorial funds or contributions to an existing park or conservation organization are strongly encouraged. Guidance for determining the appropriateness or priority of a memorial is provided below:

- Park Board discussion regarding a possible memorial should be delayed until three months after the person's death.
- A person who dies while performing a public service should receive priority for memorialization.
- Persons who have contributed exceptional services to their community could be memorialized.
- It is not recommended to change the name of an established park. New parks which are named after a person should be maintained in an acceptable fashion.
- Trees or benches, accompanied by a small plaque, are ways to memorialize a person within a park. They should be placed in parks that are well-maintained.





## 7E. ENCROACHMENTS

Many County parks are accessed by narrow walkways between developed housing lots. Also, parks and trails are sometimes situated in a fashion that does not clearly delineate their boundaries. It is often difficult to discern these parks and trails from adjacent private property, and some people may feel they cannot use them. The lack of distinction between County park land and trails and private property seems to have several causes:

1. **Barricading of access.** Some access points and parks have been fenced and/or marked as private property.
2. **Storage or other inappropriate use.** This encroachment is usually in the form of woodpiles, parked vehicles or boats, or other storage.
3. **Lack of a visual boundary between parks and private property.** Some adjacent landowners maintain the park land as they do their own property—usually in the form of mowed, irrigated turf grass. Sometimes there is no fence line, shrub line, or other delineation of the property boundaries. This can cause the park land to appear to be private property.

While removing encroachments from public land is necessary, two factors should be considered: government interference with private property, even when the property illegally resides on public land, is a sensitive issue; and, some encroachments are more harmful than others. With these issues in mind, the following policies and assistance from the County attorney will help remove encroachments from County park land and trails.

### CLEARING ENCROACHMENTS

Encroachment will be identified through use of the Park Lands and Trails Inventory and Classification, visitation, and/or receiving complaints from the public. Three steps will occur before initiating formal action:

1. A thorough check to determine that the land is County-owned and that no easements/leases exist that would allow the encroachment in question.
2. A visual inspection by staff to determine if the encroachment indeed exists. Photographic documentation will be obtained.
3. A determination as to the severity of encroachment and the immediacy of response needed.

The actions required are obviously quite different for each situation. General plans for removing encroachments are outlined below.

### **Barricading of Access**

A few landowners have barricaded public access to County park land by means of fences. These landowners may or may not be aware of the boundaries of the park land. In either case, such hindrance of public access to public lands is unacceptable. After all steps have been taken to determine that the land is in fact owned by the County, and that the landowner does not have a legal right to barricade access, the following steps should be taken to remove the barricade.

1. Personally meet with the appropriate landowner.
2. Send a certified letter from the Park Board to the landowner barricading access. This letter would:
  - inform of the location of the park land in question (and show the boundaries on a map).
  - inform that barricading public access to the park is illegal.



- request that the landowner, within thirty days of receipt of the letter, remove the barricade and restore the property to a condition similar to that of the adjacent park land or trail.
- 3. Check for removal of the barricade after thirty days of receipt of the letter.
- 4. If the barricade has not been removed within thirty days, negotiate further with the landowner through the County attorney's office.
- 5. If the landowner will not remove the barricade, the County will have it removed at the land owner's expense unless otherwise directed, and the site restored.
- 6. Design and place an appropriately sized sign that indicates the land is a Missoula County park.

### **Storage or Other Inappropriate Uses**

Landowners who use adjacent park land for storage or other personal use may be unaware that the land is in fact County-owned, or may simply find the land "convenient" for their uses. The following steps should be taken to clear these encroachments.

1. Personally meet with the appropriate landowner.
2. Send a certified letter from the Park Board to the landowner responsible for encroachment. This letter would:
  - inform of the location of the park in question (and show the boundaries of the park on a map).
  - inform that the Park Board feels this encroachment hinders public use of the park, and is illegal.
  - request that the landowner remove the encroachment within two weeks of receipt of the letter.
3. Check for removal of the encroachment after two weeks of receipt of the letter.
4. If the encroachment has not been removed within two weeks, telephone the owner responsible for encroachment.
5. If an agreement cannot be reached, then further legal actions should be pursued.

### **Lack of Visual Boundary**

Some landowners maintain County park land in a manner similar to their own property (especially when the park is a narrow "trail" bordering their lot). While this maintenance is a benefit to the County, and certainly should not be discouraged, it sometimes makes the park appear to be private property (due to the lack of a visual border between the two properties). In this instance, the following steps should be taken to both encourage continued maintenance and to make the access and park boundaries more obvious to the public.

1. Send a letter from the Park Board to the landowners adjoining the park and/or maintaining the park. This letter would:
  - inform of the location of the park in question (and show the boundaries of the park on a map).
  - offer thanks and appreciation for maintaining the park land and beautifying the neighborhood.
  - state concern that the public may not realize the property is a park, and may thus be discouraged from using it.
  - offer to purchase low-maintenance landscaping materials (trees, shrubs, timbers, large rocks, etc.) for placement on the park to delineate the property boundary. These



improvements could be installed/planted and maintained by the property owners currently maintaining the park, with Park Board funding when appropriate.

2. Meet with the landowners within a week after sending the letter. If one or more landowners are interested in the improvements, proceed with specific plans for the site. The landscaping design selected should be both low-maintenance and selected to fit the needs and character of the particular site and neighborhood.
3. If no landowners are interested in the improvements, consider placing an appropriate sign indicating the walkway and adjacent park is Missoula County Park Land. Actions should not be taken that would cause the landowner(s) to stop maintaining the park.

## 7F. FOREST HEALTH AND NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT

Managing forest health and eliminating noxious weeds on County lands and in other park lands is a high priority of the Park Board. Developing a forest management and weed management policy is beyond the scope of this plan, as many complex issues must be carefully considered. Future development of such policies will help the Board best consider alternatives for individual sites. Meanwhile, weed management grants are available from the Park Board to assist local organizations and communities to address noxious weed issues on park lands.

## 6.2 ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The current staff and structure of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program is limited. Pursuit of many of the recommendations and strategies contained within this master plan will require enhancing the current Program's organizational capacity. This can be achieved through a number of means:

- Additional staff (dedicated or shared)
- Contract labor
- Volunteers

### ADDITIONAL STAFF

The current staffing of the Program is 1.125 full-time employees. This consists of a Program Coordinator and a shared administrative assistant. This staff is also supported by leadership and planning staff of the Missoula County Rural Initiatives Office, of which the Program is a part. To meet the needs and interests expressed by the community, it is recommended to grow the staff of the Program in a limited and controlled fashion. This is being addressed in an interim step by request to the County for an additional 0.5 full time employee in FY 2012 to assist in implementing the initial stages of this master plan. As progress is made, the following additional staff are recommended.

### 1. DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

This can be a dedicated or shared position that is focused on the coordination of funding and finance resources to support the capital and operational needs of the Program. This employee would be expected to pursue partnership opportunities linked to financial or capital resources, generate successful grant pursuits, coordinate fund development activities and campaigns, and support the financial resource requirements of the Program through other relevant means.

### 2. TRAILS COORDINATOR

This can start as part-time and evolve to a full-time position responsible for the coordination of County trail development projects. This employee would be expected to coordinate local and regional trail projects for the Program, oversee trail maintenance and repair projects as they are assigned, and support the Development Coordinator in the pursuit of funding resources dedicated to trails.



### **CONTRACT LABOR**

The Program currently utilizes contract labor for various functions including, but not limited to mowing and landscaping, environmental response, and other park management requirements.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are a major part of current operations of the Program and are generally organized within user groups and leaseholders to meet the needs of an individual park or park asset. It is recommended that the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program consider developing a volunteer program that is county-wide and organizes work-days at parks throughout the system. This would incubate a source of labor support and awareness around meeting site and facility needs system-wide.



## Chapter 7: Capital Improvement Plan

The *Capital Improvement Plan* section of the master plan is the culmination of facility and asset recommendations derived as priorities over the next 10 years. These recommended capital projects are aligned within the vision, mission, and core values of the Program, and have been preliminarily scoped based upon the findings of the assessments and needs analysis reports.

### 7.1 CAPITAL PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

The master plan includes detailed and multi-faceted analyses into the current conditions of the Missoula County park facilities and infrastructure, the demographics and trends relevant to the residents of the area, substantial public input and meetings, and additional need analyses. This process has yielded defensible recommendations for capital projects that can maintain and enhance the current quality of facilities available to residents of the Missoula County, as well as work to better meet the needs of visitors to the local communities.

Overall, this *Capital Improvement Plan* can be utilized as a guideline for future improvements and development with flexibility to be altered and updated as needed.

### CAPITAL PROJECT PRIORITY ASSIGNMENT

Recommending priorities for capital projects over the next 10 years is a challenge due to all the factors that influence how a project can go from a recommendation to a reality. The suggested prioritization of capital projects was developed based upon a number of dynamic factors including, but not limited to:

1. Potential capital costs of the project
2. Potential operating costs of the facility or asset once completed
3. Current financial capacity of Missoula County, as well as potential financial capacity available through grants, partnerships, and regional coordination
4. Public need and interests
5. Current political and economic conditions of the local area

Previous sections of this master plan address specific funding and finance alternatives that should be explored as a means to support these projects during both the development and operational phases. The final section of this master plan will organize these projects by their recommended priority status as a suggested action plan over the next decade.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PRINCIPLES

Development principles for parks include those that support the programming, planning, and design of facilities and assets to meet the needs of residents of the service area(s) and classifications within the overall parks system. The design of sites and facilities should be driven to create an enriched visitor experience including ease and diversity of use. This pertains to the ingress and egress as well as the circulation once the destination has been reached and participation has commenced. Three principles associated with the visitor experience can be summarized as follows:

- Sense of Arrival
  - Highway / street signage
  - Entrance(s)
  - Landscaping
  - View and aesthetics
- Aesthetic and Functional Signage
  - Directional
  - Safety and management
  - Interpretive





- Architecture and Use
  - Design with natural surroundings
  - Site circulation
  - Mixed use
  - Visitor satisfaction
  - Supports revenue generation where appropriate

Most activities associated with parks is designed around a desired length of experience. A blend of passive and active recreational opportunities extends the length of experience and increases the frequency of participation by users.

## 7.2 CAPITAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN







The pages that follow detail a recommended sequencing of capital projects for Missoula County Parks and Trails over the next 10 years. The sequencing of these projects was determined by public input, community survey, and factors that reflect best practices in the parks and recreation industry. These factors are (not in priority order):

1. Creates or improves connectivity with trail enhancement or development
2. Optimizes use of a key facility or valued asset in the community
3. Optimizes usage of other key facilities in the community
4. Distributes County parks more equitably
5. Improves balance in facility/park types
6. High or increasing demand
7. Protects/manages open space
8. Improves park connectivity to communities
9. Partner and/or land is available
10. Targets underserved population
11. Improves current operations
12. Consistent with community survey and public input findings
13. Repairs or improves existing facility

Capital projects have been bundled into priorities for efficiency in this implementation plan. Projects should be unbundled from these priorities for practical purposes throughout the implementation phase. **Estimated capital costs are based upon the experience of the consultant team and are provided as a broad range to account for options for amenities that could be included in the scope, different means and methods for construction, industry inflation, and other variable costs that could be associated with each priority bundle.**

Potential capital costs only apply to the specific amenity, facility, or feature described in the recommended capital priority, and do not include grants, other outside funding sources, or cost sharing that could otherwise reduce the total costs to the County.


Estimated capital cost ranges are:


\$ 	= \$0 - \$50,000
\$ 	= \$50,000 - \$250,000
\$ 	= \$250,000 - \$500,000
\$ 	= \$500,000 - \$1,000,000
\$ 	= \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000
\$ 	= \$5,000,000+





**SHORT TERM CAPITAL PRIORITIES**


The following capital priorities are identified to be the first tier of focus for facility enhancement and development over the next one to three years, and are not listed in an order of importance.

<b>Capital Priority 1:</b>	<b>Develop multi-use trails within communities</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Develop multi-use trails with appropriately authorized usages in communities, assisting to connect major focal points, parks, and other areas of interest. This would include, but not be limited to projects in Seeley, Bonner / East Missoula, Missoula, Evaro, Frenchtown, and Lolo.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>1 to 3 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 2:</b>	<b>Missoula County park signage program</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Develop a consistent park signage program to (1) identify County parks more prominently, (2) provide safety and usage guidelines and regulations, and (3) provide limited, but high quality interpretation of the natural and cultural significance of select sites.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>1 to 3 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 3:</b>	<b>Complete design development plans for County-owned portion of Fort Missoula Regional Park</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Coordinate with the City of Missoula to complete design development plans of County-owned portions of Fort Missoula Regional Park per the master plan.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>1 to 3 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 4:</b>	<b>Upgrade existing community parks</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Upgrade and/or develop amenities at community parks as identified in the local recommendations. This includes projects detailed for Swan Valley Ball Park, Swan Valley Community Center, and Clinton Community Center, as well as site planning and community-driven enhancement and upgrade projects.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$  (County costs only)	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>1 to 3 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 5:</b>	<b>Upgrade existing neighborhood parks</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Upgrade and/or develop amenities at neighborhood parks as identified in the local recommendations. This includes projects detailed for Pinecone Park (Turah), New Meadows Park (West Mullan Road), Golden West Park (West Mullan Road), and Shelby Park (Lolo), as well as site planning and community-driven enhancement and upgrade projects.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>1 to 3 years</b>



## SHORT TERM CAPITAL PRIORITY IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for organizing short term capital priorities:

### 2012 – 2013

- Develop and install County park signage for 50% of County park sites
- Complete design development plans for County-owned portions of Fort Missoula Regional Park
- Organize funding packages and initiatives to support Missoula County costs to complete identified short term capital projects
- Identify specific community parks as targets for improvements and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs
- Identify specific multi-use trails within communities for potential development and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs
- Identify specific neighborhood parks as targets for improvements and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs

### 2013 – 2014


- Develop and install County park signage for remaining 50% of County park sites
- Begin development of Fort Missoula Regional Park per the adopted master plan
- Complete selected community park improvements
- Complete first tier of selected trail development projects
- Complete selected neighborhood park improvements
- Reorganize projects not completed due to funding or resource limitations and establish a revised timeline for these projects to be addressed





*Paved trail between Clinton and Turah*

**INTERMEDIATE TERM CAPITAL PRIORITIES**

The following capital priorities are identified for facility enhancement and development over the next three to seven years, and are not listed in an order of importance.

<b>Capital Priority 6:</b>	<b>Develop multi-use trails that connect to adjacent or nearby public lands</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Develop multi-use trails in communities that connect communities to adjacent or nearby public lands as identified in the local recommendations of this master plan. This would include, but not be limited to projects in Seeley Lake, Evaro, and Lolo. Specific authorized trail usage should be identified.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>3 to 7 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 7:</b>	<b>Improve / upgrade selected greenways / open space parks</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Upgrade and/or develop amenities at selected greenways / open space parks as identified in the local recommendations. This includes, but is not limited to projects detailed for Mission-Swan Park (Swan Valley), Priority Park (Seeley Lake), Clinton Conservation Park, Hellgate Park (Turah), Ravenwood Park (Miller Creek), Raelene Park (Miller Creek), Trails End Park (Miller Creek), Ranchette Park (Miller Creek), Piney Meadows Park (West Valley), Ponda Rosa Acres Park (West Valley), and Lolo Beach Park.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>3 to 7 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 8:</b>	<b>Improve existing athletic, sport and play amenities</b>		
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Upgrade athletic, sport and play amenities at regional, community, and neighborhood parks as identified in the local recommendations and not already addressed. This also includes projects that have evolved to become a priority since the adoption of this master plan, as well as those identified by local communities.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>3 to 7 years</b>

**INTERMEDIATE TERM CAPITAL PRIORITY IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are recommendations for organizing intermediate term capital priorities:

2013 – 2014

- Organize funding packages and initiatives to support Missoula County costs to complete identified intermediate term capital projects

2014 – 2015

- Identify specific greenway/open space parks as targets to be upgraded to either a neighborhood or community park and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs
- Identify specific trail connections between communities and nearby or adjacent public lands for potential development and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs




- Identify specific recreation and play amenities as targets to be upgraded or improved and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs


#### 2015 – 2018


- Complete selected greenway/open space park upgrade projects
- Complete selected trail development projects
- Complete selected recreation and play amenity park improvement projects
- Reorganize projects not completed due to funding or resource limitations and establish a revised timeline for these projects to be addressed

#### **LONG TERM CAPITAL PRIORITIES**

The following capital priorities are identified for facility enhancement and development over the next 10 years, and are not listed in an order of importance.

<b>Capital Priority 9: Complete Fort Missoula Regional Park</b>			
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Coordinate with the City of Missoula to complete development of Fort Missoula Regional Park per the recently completed master plan as adopted.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>5 to 10 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 10: Develop a Missoula County Regional Trail System</b>			
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Develop multi-use trails with appropriately authorized usages in communities, connecting communities throughout Missoula County as identified in the local recommendations of this master plan. This would include, but not be limited to projects in Swan Valley, Seeley Lake/Potomac, Clinton/Turah, Bonner/East Missoula, Missoula, Evaro, West Valley, and Lolo areas. Recommended phasing of regional trail projects by planning area is below: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. West Valley</li><li>2. Bonner/East Missoula</li><li>3. Lolo</li><li>4. Seeley Lake/Potomac</li><li>5. Clinton/Turah</li><li>6. Evaro</li><li>7. Missoula</li><li>8. Swan Valley</li></ol>		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>5 to 10 years</b>

<b>Capital Priority 11: New park development</b>			
<b>Recommended Scope:</b>	Develop new Missoula County parks as identified in the local recommendations of this master plan, as well as those opportunities that evolve since the adoption of this plan from subdivision development or otherwise.		
<b>Estimated Capital Cost:</b>	\$ 	<b>Timeline:</b>	<b>5 to 10 years</b>



**LONG TERM CAPITAL PRIORITY IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are recommendations for organizing long term capital priorities:

2012 – 2016












- Organize funding package and initiative to support Missoula County cost proportions to complete development of Fort Missoula Regional Park per the adopted master plan
- Organize funding packages and initiatives to support Missoula County costs to complete identified long term capital projects
- Begin the process of planning regional trails to connect communities, and building strong advocacy locally for the projects
- Establish priority areas for new park development where additional residential or commercial development is expected

2016 – 2022

- Complete Fort Missoula Regional Park per the adopted master plan
- Identify regional trail projects as targets to be developed and encourage matching grant applications from those communities to share capital costs
- Complete selected regional trails and new park development
- Reorganize projects not completed due to funding or resource limitations and establish a revised timeline for these projects to be addressed

**SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED CAPITAL PRIORITIES**

The matrix below details a summary of the recommended capital priorities, the estimated capital costs, and the recommended timelines for implementation.

Capital Priorities	Description	Estimated Capital Cost	Timeline
<b>Short Term Priorities</b>			
Capital Priority #1	Develop multi-use trails within communities	\$ 	1 to 3 Years
Capital Priority #2	Missoula County park signage program	\$ 	1 to 3 Years
Capital Priority #3	Complete design development plans for Fort Missoula Regional Park	\$ 	1 to 3 Years
Capital Priority #4	Upgrade existing community parks	\$ 	1 to 3 Years
Capital Priority #5	Upgrade existing neighborhood parks	\$ 	1 to 53 Years
<b>Intermediate Term Priorities</b>			
Capital Priority #6	Develop trails that connect to adjacent or nearby public lands	\$ 	3 to 7 years
Capital Priority #7	Improve/upgrade greenways/open space parks	\$ 	3 to 7 years
Capital Priority #8	Improve existing athletic, sport and play amenities	\$ 	3 to 7 years
<b>Long Term Priorities</b>			
Capital Priority #9	Complete Fort Missoula Regional Park	\$ 	5 to 10 years
Capital Priority #10	Develop Missoula County Regional Trail System	\$ 	5 to 10 years
Capital Priority #11	Develop new parks as needed	\$ 	5 to 10 years

*Photo opposite page: Clark Fork River from Ponda Rosa Acres Park (West Valley – Frenctown/Huson)*







## Chapter 8: Funding and Revenue Strategies

The purpose of the funding and revenue strategies section of the master plan is to assist Missoula County in maximizing its financial sustainability of the Parks and Trails Program and guide the financial planning process for the next five to ten years. The information provided was from a workshop assessment completed in March of 2011 with key staff, Missoula County Parks Board Members and key administrators of the County.

### 8.1 FINANCIAL POLICIES

The Program does not appear to have written policies for managing the financial operations. While Missoula County is unique in many ways, many best-in-class programs or departments have policies that assist in both daily and long term decisions. These policies typically address:

- Pricing
- Partnership
- Sponsorship
- Scholarships
- Volunteers

**Pricing policies** establish guidelines for pricing of programs and services. It is likely that the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program will rarely if ever have the occasion where sophisticated pricing schedules are required; however there are circumstances where the Program collects fees or payments for land or amenity usage. Pricing policies can be a guide for cost recovery from fees and charges, peak and off-peak pricing, and tiered pricing based on levels of service as it applies to park usage, reservations, programs and services.

**Partnership policies** establish guidelines for agreements with partnering entities to assure that there is equity in the partnership to benefit both parties. The guidelines usually include a description of the types of partnerships (public/public, not-for-profit/public and public/private) that are compatible with the community values and a summary of services that are best suited for partnering.

**Sponsorship policies** establish guidelines for agreements with entities that are interested to sponsor specific events, programs and services. The guidelines should include the type of events and programs that the Program will consider for a sponsorship. Sponsorship pricing and identification/recognition are also established and included in the policy.

**Volunteer policies** provide operating guidelines recruiting, training, managing, and tracking volunteer efforts. Volunteer guidelines include responsibilities, minimum standards, and rules of operation.

### 8.2 FUNDING OPTIONS

In order to continue to build and maintain the park system, the Program should pursue funding sources presented in this section for operations and capital improvement projects.

New, sustainable funding sources are essential to implementing the master plan. The Program has relied heavily on taxes, and some developer fees, to support the system. The key for the future is to diversify sources of funding to accomplish the initiatives in this master plan. These sources need to be committed on a long-term basis to assure a continuing income stream. There is significant potential to increase revenue to operate the parks and recreation services, while still meeting the objectives of providing affordable public recreation opportunities. The following are suggested funding options that can be considered by Missoula County specifically for parks and trail projects and initiatives.



## **PARK FOUNDATION**

A foundation partnership is a joint development funding source or operational funding source between the park foundation and the park government agency. The foundation operates as a non-profit working on behalf of the public agency to raise needed dollars to support the vision and operational needs of the Program for the future.

The dollars that are raised from the foundation are tax-exempt. These types of foundations are non-profit organizations established with private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues that the park and trail system needs to address. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of park related items, etc. The foundation can be an incredible funding source for the Program over the next 15 years if established correctly and with the right staffing to raise significant dollars for the Program for the future.

Private Donations may also be received in the form of funds, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued. A park and trail foundation in Missoula County could generate \$500,000 to a million a year if set up and managed correctly based on similar type of counties with similar wealth.

## **FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**

Friends associations are a form of a foundation but are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and their special interest.

## **FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT AND SEEK IRREVOCABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS**

These trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than \$1 million in wealth. They will leave a portion of their wealth to a park agency in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over a period of time and then is available for an agency to use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs that are designated by the trustee.

## **CORPORATE/PERSONAL GIVING**

Corporate and personal giving is a process where the Program Coordinator seeks corporate leadership funds via a foundation partner or through personal contact to support a specific project or a specific operational goal that helps the Program to manage forward. These gifts can come in the form of a financial gift for a year or up to five years to support the park system for the future. Many park agencies develop a park fund raising event to appeal to private corporations' leaders to support the park system as part of their fee to come to the event. This gives great support and recognition to the park system and supports needed "causes" to keep the system managing in a positive direction.

## **GRANTS**

The grant market continues to grow annually. Grant writers and researchers are required to make this funding source work financially. Missoula County should hire a part-time or full-time fund development coordinator with experience in developing grants for the Program to support land acquisition and capital projects. Matching dollars are required for most federal grants and some state grants. The type of grants available to the County are listed below with the agency that administers those funds:

- Community Transportation Enhance Program grants (CTEP) – Montana Department of Transportation
- Safe Routes to Schools – Montana Department of Transportation
- Land and Water Conservation Grants – Montana State Parks
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) – Montana Department of Commerce
- Casino foundation grants

- Recreational Trail Program grants – Montana State Parks
- Development grants through community foundations to support specific park projects
- Redevelopment grants to support parks and facilities that increase revenue from the value of property or from activities that create sales and tourism taxes
- Storm water grants that the limit storm water runoff through parks
- Trail Enhancement Grants for regional trails systems through the state and federal system

### **REGIONAL TRAILS DISTRICT**

Many counties that have regional trails systems have developed a trails district to support costs and management requirements for development and maintenance. Sometimes this includes multiple counties, and usually is funded through a bond issue and/or various tax initiatives. A trails district can also be a major impetus for raising external financial support from foundations, individuals, corporate sponsors, grants, and more.

### **DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTION TO PARKS**

Many counties seek developer contributions for park land and also for development of trails that could run through their property. The developer sees the value to the sale of their houses and they put in the trail connection as part of their contribution. This can be in the form of a linear trail or loop trail that mirrors the County's specifications.

### **DEVELOPER CASH-IN-LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION FEES**

Montana state law allows counties to accept cash-in-lieu of land dedication of park land, and Missoula County currently uses this strategy to help with new park land development. This program can help counties move away from small developed parks in subdivisions by seeking the cash value of the property to buy the type of land that supports the County's goal for land acquisition and park development. This is very popular and allows counties to put enough cash together to buy larger tracts of land that can support many recreation opportunities in one setting. Park development fees should be considered to be a part of the cash-in-lieu of land dedication calculation.

### **SALE OF PARK PROPERTY**

Many counties have excess property in their inventory that they cannot develop, or would have a more suitable use than as a public park. These counties often have successfully sold land to other developers with the intent of using the dollars to support the development of parks in the area where the land is sold. This increases the value of existing parks that are developed and lets smaller properties not suitable for park use on a community wide basis to be sold.

### **PARK AND TRAILS DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCES**

Counties typically put on a millage increase every 10 years to support development of new parks and trails, and improvements to existing parks and trails. This provides the opportunity for the Park System to demonstrate how well they are meeting the community's needs through a voter approved millage. In the last five years in the United States, 93% of all park-related bond issues and millage issues have passed. Communities understand the value of parks if given the opportunity to vote on an increase.

A millage increase of at least two (2) mills is recommended to be considered for supporting the financial needs of the Program. This could generate approximately \$400,000 annually in additional resources that the Program can use for some of the smaller capital projects detailed in this plan.

### **PARK BOND ISSUE**

Counties typically seek park bond issues to support unmet needs in the county. The key is to seek what is unmet and to deliver a capital bond project that serves a variety of types of users and needs in the





County. Even in the worst economic downturn bond issues have been passing because communities see that they are the direct recipient of the money that benefits them and their families on a personal basis.

### **CTEP FUNDING**

The Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is a Montana program, administered by the Montana Department of Transportation, who directs Federal funds for transportation related projects designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of Montana's intermodal transportation system. The CTEP allows for the implementation of a variety of non-traditional projects, and has been popular for local jurisdictions to support trails.

CTEP and other federally funded projects located within the boundary of the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must be included in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and associated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Missoula Office of Planning and Grants, Transportation Division, coordinates the development of the LRTP and TIP for the MPO.

### **FRANCHISES, LAND LEASES AND TAX INCREMENT FINANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **CATERING PERMITS AND SERVICES**

This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to an agency. Many agencies have their own catering service contracts in place and receive a percentage of dollars off the sale of their food and drinks for a percentage of gross dollars. This would likely be most suitable for Fort Missoula Regional Park and Big Sky Park.

#### **PRIVATE CONCESSIONAIRES OPERATING WITHIN A LAND LEASE**

Contract with a private business to provide and operate desirable recreational activities financed, constructed and operated by the private sector, with additional compensation paid to the agency through a land lease. These land leases can come in the form of a restaurant, retail operation, day care centers, or sports parks.. Land leases are usually based on 15% of the value of the land plus a percentage of gross from the operation on an annual basis.

#### **FRANCHISE FEE FOR UTILITY**

Many park and recreation agencies have sold the development rights below the ground to utility companies for fiber optic lines, water, sewer and electricity lines and cable services on linear-foot basis.. King County in Seattle sold the development rights below their greenway network and generates \$300,000 a year from the utilities involved.

#### **REGIONAL "CANNED" EVENTS**

Many county park systems have bought canned special events that have produced large amount of revenue for their Program. The County can support the event with volunteers and the event is put on by the private franchised agency for a set access fee paid by the County from which the County gets a percentage of gross revenues from the event. Events like these have reliably and regularly produced similar size counties to Missoula \$300,000 a year in net revenue.















#### **TAX INCREMENT FINANCING**

TIF Districts are very popular with counties to support park related improvements that can include trails, golf courses, special use facilities and general park improvements. The intent is that if the improvement(s) enhances the property values surrounding the amenity because of what it brings in the form of recreation opportunities, then TIF options are appropriate. This is a very popular way to support development of new park or enhancing existing parks in the County.







### 8.3 FUNDING CONCLUSION

The Program should seek external funding sources to provide additional resources to enhance and maintain the quality of the facilities and services. The Program can periodically review the funding model to consider new and enhanced funding opportunities. The results of the community survey indicated that 70% of County residents were supportive of paying more each year to acquire new parks and construct new trails and recreation amenities. Seventy-seven percent (77%) were supportive of paying more each year to maintain existing parks, trails, and recreational amenities. The range of additional annual costs that had the most public support was \$10 - \$19 per year. If diversified funding options were implemented in this range involving each resident over 18 years of age, this has the potential of providing \$880,000 - \$1,672,000 annually to support debt service or direct costs for park and trail development, improvement and operations. This would be independent from additional funding obtained through foundation support, grants, and other earned revenue opportunities.

#### FUNDING MATRIX SUMMARY

Funding Option	Capital Funding	Operational Funding	Annual Funding Potential
Park Foundation	X	X	\$ 
Grants	X		\$ 
Countywide Trails District	X	X	\$ 
Developer Parkland Dedications*	X		\$ 
Develop Cash-in-lieu of land dedication*	X		\$ 
Sale of Park Property*	X		\$ 
Park Dedicated Funding Sources (millage)	X	X	\$ 
Park Bond Issue*	X		\$ 
CTEP*	X		\$ 
Catering Permits and Services		X	\$ 
Private Concessionaires / Land Leases	X	X	\$ 
Franchise Fee for Utility	X	X	\$ 
Regional Canned Events	X	X	\$ 
Tax Incremental Financing*	X		\$ 

The relative funding potential is provided as a range based on a review of the capacity of Missoula County Parks and Trails Program to mobilize funding in the options detailed above. The ranges are:

\$ 	= \$0 - \$50,000
\$ 	= \$50,000 - \$250,000
\$ 	= \$250,000 - \$500,000
\$ 	= \$500,000 - \$1,000,000
\$ 	= \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000
\$ 	= \$5,000,000+

*Photo opposite page: C Bar C Estates Park (Miller Creek)*







## Chapter 9: Strategic Action Steps

This final chapter of the master plan has been developed as a tactical tool for planning and executing actions aligned with the approved strategies of the Program in meeting community needs and interests over the next 10 years. These actions and strategies have been tested against and support the core services of the Missoula County Parks and Trails Program. These core services are:

- **Site and Infrastructure Stewardship**
  - Parks, facilities, and trails
- **Health**
  - Access to recreational opportunities and personal wellness through fitness
- **Safety**
  - Site and facility maintenance
- **Community Heritage**
  - Conservation of parks and green space

### 9.1 STRATEGIES OF THE MASTER PLAN

There were 24 key strategies identified through the public input process associated with this master plan update that were detailed previously in the Community Values Model on pages 18 and 19.



*Piney Meadows Park (West Valley)*



## 9.2 ACTION STEPS

All the strategies and recommendations of this *Parks and Trails Master Plan* are detailed in the tables that follow. Some actions are shown independently and some are in bundles.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: SHORT TERM

Actions / Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Policy and Procedural Recommendations</b>		
<b>Subdivision regulations</b> – begin the process of review, potential modification, and adoption of amended subdivision regulations as determined appropriate.	County Staff County Parks Board County Planning Board County Commissioners	County operations
<b>Missoula County Trails District</b> – begin the process to explore the concept of organizing a special district focused on regional trail system development with an established dedicated funding source.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations Park bond issue(s) Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Transfer of County parks</b> – continue the process of transferring ownership of County parks within the city limits of Missoula to the City.	County Staff City Parks Staff County Parks Board City Council County Commissioners	County operations
<b>Multi-use trail guidelines</b> – begin the process of review, potential modification, and adoption of multi-use trail policies and guidelines.	County Staff County Public Works County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Partnership and maintenance standards</b> – begin the process of review, development and adoption of enhanced partnership and maintenance standards.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Trail standards</b> - Develop criteria for use as a tool to evaluate and prioritize proposed trail projects.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Enhance the matching grant program</b> – enhance the matching grant program by eliminating the \$4,000 application request limit to encourage more creative and expansive proposals.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Organizational Recommendations</b>		
<b>Additional staff</b> – pursue additional staff as recommended and as needed to remain aligned with the organizational needs of the Program.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations
<b>Volunteers</b> – pursue development of enhanced volunteer program to develop Friends groups and county-wide volunteer efforts.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Capital Project Recommendations</b>		
<b>Develop multi-use trails within communities</b> – develop project plans for multi-use trails within communities as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>County park signage program</b> – begin development of a county park signage program as recommended, as well as consistent park rules.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations



**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: SHORT TERM (CONTINUED)**

<b>Actions / Recommendations</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
<b>Capital Project Recommendations</b>		
<b>Complete Fort Missoula Master Plan</b> – work to initiate completion of the Fort Missoula Regional Park Master Plan over the next three to five years. Coordinate with City of Missoula.	County Staff City Parks Staff County Parks Board Friends Groups User Groups	County operations
<b>Upgrade existing community parks</b> – develop project plans to upgrade community parks as recommended, including community-driven projects.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations Excess land sales Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Upgrade existing neighborhood parks</b> – develop project plans to upgrade neighborhood parks as recommended, including community-driven projects..	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations Excess land sales Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Develop Missoula County Regional Trail System</b> – begin project plans to completion of a countywide regional trail system that connects communities as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations Park bond issue(s) Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Site Planning</b> – begin the process of developing site plans for each County park, and include community-driven priorities where possible.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations Foundations and grants Private sector support

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: INTERMEDIATE TERM**

<b>Actions / Recommendations</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
<b>Policy and Procedural Recommendations</b>		
<b>Continuation of previous actions</b> – continued work to complete and/or implement policy and procedural recommendations as appropriate.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations
<b>Organizational Recommendations</b>		
<b>Continuation of previous actions</b> – continued work to complete and/or implement organizational recommendations as appropriate.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Capital Project Recommendations</b>		
<b>Develop multi-use trails that connect to public lands</b> – develop project plans for multi-use trails that connect to adjacent or nearby public lands as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Improve / upgrade selected greenways / open space parks</b> – develop project plans to upgrade greenways and open space parks as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Develop Missoula County Regional Trail System</b> – continue project plans to completion of a countywide regional trail system that connects communities as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations Park bond issue(s) Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Continue to enhance facilities on community and school lands</b> – continue the practice of enhancing and making improvements to community and school lands via matching grants and other capital development opportunities.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: LONG TERM

Actions / Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Sources
<b>Policy and Procedural Recommendations</b>		
<b>Continuation of previous actions</b> – continued work to complete and/or implement policy and procedural recommendations as appropriate.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations
<b>Organizational Recommendations</b>		
<b>Continuation of previous actions</b> – continued work to complete and/or implement organizational recommendations as appropriate.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations
<b>Capital Project Recommendations</b>		
<b>Complete Fort Missoula Regional park</b> – work to initiate completion of the Fort Missoula Regional Park over the next 10 years. Coordinate with City of Missoula.	County Staff City Parks Staff County Parks Board Friends Groups User Groups	County operations Regional canned events Park bond issue Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>Develop Missoula County Regional Trail System</b> – continue project plans to completion of a countywide regional trail system that connects communities as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board County Commissioners	County operations Park bond issue(s) Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support
<b>New park development</b> – develop project plans for new park development as recommended.	County Staff County Parks Board	County operations Park bond issue(s) Franchise and lease fees Foundations and grants Private sector support



*Family of Canada Geese in the Bitterroot River (Lolo)*

## Appendices to the Parks and Trails Master Plan

There have been multiple research and analysis reports, technical studies, and GIS maps developed as a part of the Missoula County *Parks and Trails Master Plan* process. The following supplemental reports are provided as appendices to the master plan.

**1. Comprehensive Assessment Report**

A summary of the key findings from the site, facility, program, and financial assessments performed on Missoula County Parks and Trails from March 2010 through November 2010.

**2. Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey Findings Report**

A summary of the survey process, instruments, and findings of the Missoula County and City of Missoula community surveys conducted in association with this master plan from October 2010 to November 2010.

**3. Needs Analysis Technical Report**

A summary of the key findings from the community input process, demographics and trends analyses, and the technical needs analyses of relevant parks and trail needs of Missoula County residents.

**4. Missoula County Parks and Trails Map Book**

A complete map book of Missoula County parks within planning regions, communities and as individual sites.

*Photo opposite page: Piney Meadows*



