

Contact:

Nathan McLeod, Sr. Landscape Architect

mcleodn@ci.missoula.mt.us

(406) 552-6261

Morgan Valliant, Ecosystems Services Superintendent

valliantm@ci.missoula.mt.us

(406) 552-6263

600 Cregg Lane

Missoula, MT 59801

www.missoulaparks.org



MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release through December 30, 2023

Residents invited to comment on design concept for Marshall Mountain Park through December 30

The City of Missoula and its partners have extended the deadline for residents to view and comment on proposed design concepts for Marshall Mountain Park via a brief, online [public comment survey](#) through December 30, 2022. The design concept is the first step in developing a master plan for the park.

Project partners have launched the park planning process at the request of residents and elected officials to help answer questions about development and maintenance costs should the community acquire the park for public ownership.

Early next year, City and County elected officials will consider whether to preserve 320 acres on Marshall Mountain as public open space for \$1.92 million. Funding for the purchase could come from the 2018 Open Space Bond and additional sources like grants, donations, and public-private partnerships. As in all open space acquisitions, the purchase would be subject to an extensive public process with numerous opportunities for citizen engagement. The master park plan and accompanying financial information will help inform the community's decision.

Marshall Mountain Park is located at the former Marshall Canyon ski area that closed in 2002. The park opened to the public in 2021 thanks to a generous arrangement with property owners Izzy Dog, LLC and Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT). The City has a short-term lease on Izzy Dog's 160-acre base area parcel and a use agreement with FVLT for the 160-acre mid-mountain parcel. The \$1.92 million acquisition price would include both parcels.

Parks and Recreation's Ecosystem Services Associate Director Morgan Valliant says the park design concept is a preliminary collection of ideas to address natural resource conservation at the site and the community's recreational needs. "The design concept and master park plan will reflect the priorities residents identified in last year's [shared community visioning](#) process, and the survey will tell us which design elements we should incorporate into the final master plan."

Valliant says project partners will use the community feedback gathered from the survey to start work on the master park plan. "The master park plan is the long-range vision for the future development and programming of the park and its resources. The Marshall master plan will include the preliminary information City and County elected officials have asked for, like phased development strategies with estimated construction costs, a feasibility study and a detailed business plan. The master plan helps identify park features our community could choose to develop in the future as funding becomes available." Funding for park development could come from grants, state and federal programs and public-private partnerships.

The survey allows residents to comment on scalable design elements that can succeed at different investment levels, Valliant says. Residents will evaluate proposed base area features like a multi-use loop trail built to adaptive standards, event areas, indoor space for future programming, and an early phase trail plan to connect the base area to mid-mountain. The trail layout was designed to reduce user conflict and accommodate visitors with varying skill levels and abilities.

The Marshall Mountain project team is working with a variety of community partners, including the neighboring communities of East Missoula and Bonner/Milltown, Missoula County, Friends of Missoula Parks and hundreds of community members to secure this area for future generations. Valliant hopes more residents will join in the effort to preserve Marshall Mountain as public land.

"Marshall Mountain is a unique project on a tight timeline. Our community has been given the opportunity to save an important piece of Missoula's history and develop the park in phases to meet our ever-growing recreational needs. Many public and private entities are working to save Marshall, but the public doesn't own the mountain yet. The Master Park Plan is critical to acquisition and fundraising efforts. If you care about Marshall Mountain, now is the time to get involved," Valliant said.

The [Engage Missoula site](#) includes the draft design concept and survey, the shared community vision developed in 2021, park rules and trail maps, detailed site inventory maps and images. Please complete the survey by December 30.

For more information, email Missoula Parks and Recreation at parcsrec@ci.missoula.mt.us or phone 721-PARK (7275.)

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