

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: April 3, 2017

Time: 4-6pm

Headwaters meeting room, 600 Cregg Ln., Missoula, MT 59801

Members Present: Chris Ryan, Karen Sippy, Beverly Dupree, Giles Thelen, Kathleen Kennedy, John Pierce, Carol Fischer

Others Present: Morgan Valliant, Conservation Lands Manager, Corena Maurer, Administrative Assistant, Liz Bradley, Fish Wildlife & Parks, Don Sokoloski and Jim Habeck

Minutes

- Public/Guest comments on items not on the Agenda – Jim Habeck spoke about shoreline remnants of a glacial lake.

Action Items:

- Approve minutes from the [March 6, 2017](#) meeting – Chris Ryan moved to approve the minutes as posted. The motion passed unanimously.
- Review public comments on [South Hills Spur Recreation Plan](#). Make recommendations to the Missoula Park Board for final adoption of plan.

Mr. Valliant gave an overview of the plan.

Mr. Sokoloski had many questions and concerns. He is an adjacent property owner. Some of the topics he introduced were gated access, Barmeyer property lines, Arnica Neighborhood Trail Access, Arnica Road owner access, public access points, and dog regulations.

Mr. Valliant and the committee discussed the topics Mr. Sokoloski presented.

Mr. Sokoloski also asked how many parking spots would be at the bottom of the trail.

Mr. Valliant stated from 6-8.

Mr. Sokoloski asked if the trail would be closed at night. Mr. Valliant stated the standard hours of 6am – 10 am would be posted.

Mr. Habeck discussed the use of the word recreation and educating the public on being gentle with public lands.

Mr. Habeck's submitted public comments were discussed by the committee. Signage and signage language was discussed.

Ms. Bradley from Fish, Wildlife and Parks, discussed the elk activity on the area. Ms. Bradley states the elk appear to be active above the area and does not appear to be a critical habitat for elk winter use.

Possible winter closure was discussed.

Skiing was brought up. Skiing is allowed on all Open Lands.

Gate number and placement was heavily discussed. The committee consensus was to add a gate at the City ownership line with a possible move to the cul-de-sac in the future.

Fences and use of herbicide/weed treatment were also among the items discussed.

The committee suggested several additions/edits to the South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan. These suggestions are located on the attachment to these minutes titled "South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan" with the additions/edits from the committee in red.

Mr. Valliant also reported on public comments that did not result in changes to the plan. They are attached to these minutes and titled "South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan Public Adoption Process."

Beverly Dupree moved to recommend the South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan with the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee Meeting changes to the Missoula Park Board for final adoption of the plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items:

- Summer Field Trip – possible locations and scheduling – the South Hills Spur and Syringa Park were possible suggestions for the summer field trip. The first Monday in June was suggested as a good date for the field trip. Mr. Valliant will contact the committee with the final decision. The field trip will be posted on the City calendar.

Future items:

- Review Recreation Management Plan for new open space acquisitions on the Clark Fork River upstream of the Tower St. Conservation Area - Tabled
- Review updated weed management strategy and noxious weed list for conservation Lands – Tabled

Changing the closure/open date on Mt. Jumbo was suggested to be added to future items.

Announcements:

- No CLAC meetings May-August.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Submitted by: Corena Maurer

South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan

The South Hills Spur recreation management plan describes priorities and management on the South Hills Spur Property to balance recreational impacts with conservation goals. This plan also describes the trail system, trail use designations, public access points, and signage locations. While section 3 of the South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan describes specific actions to protect special resources on the Property, management of all other natural and cultural resources on site is directed by the Conservation Lands Management Plan, Missoula Parks and Recreation Department (MPR) policies and various City ordinances. The South Hills Spur Property is a Conservation Land and broad land management goals for the Property are defined in the Conservation Lands Management Plan.

The South Hills Spur properties (175 ac.) were acquired by the City through a series of property donations and land acquisitions facilitated by Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT). There are several legal documents which direct management decisions on the South Hills Spur property. These include the following access easements: DeMarois driveway, Stone Mountain Access Road, the Barmeyer's driveway, and the City's administrative access across the Barmeyer's property; a management agreement to protect Missoula's viewshed of the scenic overlook; and a grazing lease on the Southwestern corner of the property (locations shown on Map 1). In 2016, an inventory of natural resources, natural history and human use was completed by the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department (MPR) and the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee ranked resource values on the Property. In February 2016, the Missoula Parks and Recreation Board designated the Property as a *Park Preserve* as defined in Missoula's Conservation Lands Management (CLM) Plan. These legal documents, inventories and the management priorities described for a *Park Preserve* provided guidance for the development of this recreation management plan. Copies of all documents are available upon request.

1. Naming:

Assigning names to specific trailheads and trails is an important component of wayfinding on City Conservation Lands. The intent of the following recommendations are to supply basic place names for the Property and to recognize donations of land and access easements which made this project possible. Future naming rights on this Property should follow the official naming policy adopted by the MPR Department and Board.

The Barmeyer Family: For decades the Barmeyer family managed their property for wildlife habitat and have allowed adjacent neighbors to recreate on their property. This South Hills Spur conservation project began with the donation of 97 ac. from the Barmeyer family. It was this donation that encouraged adjacent landowners to also sell their properties for public Open Space. As part of this project the Barmeyer family also placed a conservation easement

on the 43 ac. they retained adjacent to the South Hills Spur Property. The Barmeyer family currently has an easement across City property to access their residence (shown on Map 1).

To memorialize the Barmeyer's donation and long history of responsible land management and open public access the MPR recommends naming the trailhead on Pattee Canyon Drive the "Barmeyer Trailhead" and the main loop trail around the property they donated to the City as the "Barmeyer Loop Trail". See Map 1.

Mike Sousa: Many of the properties purchased as part of the South Hills Spur project were either slated for development or highly developable. This greatly increased the value of these properties and complicated fund-raising efforts. When FVLT purchased 40 acres from Mike Sousa as part of the project Mr. Sousa donated a significant amount of the appraised value of the property and sold the property below the appraised value. During negotiations, Mr. Sousa requested, through FVLT staff, something on the property be named after him in recognition of his donation.

To memorialize Mike Sousa's donation the MPR recommends naming the trailhead at the end of the DeMarois' driveway the "Sousa Trailhead". See Map 2.

The South Hills Spur Property: Between 2015 and 2017 as land conservation efforts in this area of the South Hills progressed the name "South Hills Spur" was created by FVLT and used to raise awareness and support for the project. FVLT is still actively working to preserve more land in this area as part of their "Mt. Dean Stone Project", as described in Map 2. An additional 73 acres due south of the South Hills Spur property have already been purchased with the intent to sell this land to the City if the City is able to secure additional Open Space bond funds in the near future.

Given the nature of land acquisition in this area and the potential for expansion of this Conservation Land system the MPR recommends that the Missoula Parks and Recreation Board explore options to rename the South Hills Spur property before it officially opens to the public.

2. Trails, Trailheads and Signage:

Trails and Trail Use Designations: In the Fall of 2016, CLM staff mapped multiple potential trail routes across the South Hills Spur Properties. The trail routes depicted in Map 3 conform to trail construction guidelines adopted by MPR. In total, this plan recommends establishing approximately a 3.64 mile trail system on the South Hills Spur property. All trail

routes except those labeled on Map 3 as “Potential Route A &B” have been walked and surveyed for impacts to native plant communities, appropriate grade, and compliance with potential trail-use designations. Both potential Route A & B are located on gradual terrain and utilize portions of existing roads/trails. To reduce potential trespass onto adjacent private property, if all other things are equal (eg. slope, resource impacts, construction costs, etc.) Route B should be selected for construction over Route A. If it is determined that Route A is the best route justification for this decision should be presented to the Missoula Parks and Recreation Board for approval before construction of that section of trail.

The 2016 Property inventory documented a significant amount of trails and roads already on the Property. Approximately, 2.64 miles of this trail system will require new construction and 1 mile of trail will require improvement of existing trails/roads. To reduce impacts to natural resources 1.8 miles of pre-existing trails and roads will be closed and restored. All trail construction and trail/road restoration is broken into rough phases and described on Table 1 and Map 3.

Table1: A schedule for trail construction and closure/restoration of existing trails and roads. Works described in Phase 1 is planned for 2017 with Phase 2 in 2018. Implementation of Phase 3 is dependent on funding, needs and/or agreements with adjacent landowners.

PHASE 1		
<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	<i>LENGTH (miles)</i>
Close & Rehab	Road	0.75
	Trail	0.47
TOTAL:		1.22
Construct	Non-motor. Trail	1.08
	Ped.-only Trail	0.94
TOTAL:		2.02
PHASE 2		
<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	<i>LENGTH (miles)</i>
Close & Rehab	Road	0.04
	Trail	0.28
TOTAL:		0.32
Construct	Non-motor. Trail	0.89
	Ped.-only Trail	0.06
TOTAL:		0.96
PHASE 3		
<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	<i>LENGTH (miles)</i>
Close & Rehab	Road	0.27

	Trail	0.00
	TOTAL:	0.27
Construct	road	0.09
	Non-motor. Trail	0.13
	Ped.-only Trail	0.45
	TOTAL:	0.67

Restoration of existing trails and roads will vary according to the level of natural regeneration. In most cases, covering the trail/road bed with wood slash to dissuade public use and planting bare soil with native plants to improve revegetation will be required. The road which wraps around the knoll (due south of the Scenic Overlook, Map 1) is an exception. This road is a scar on the landscape and provides an excessive and circuitous route for City maintenance vehicles which will occasionally access the site. Re-contouring and replanting this road to match the existing landscape will be necessary to protect viewshed values, improve recreational experiences and reduce long-term road maintenance costs. Demolition and restoration of this road and construction of a replacement access road is scheduled for Phase 3 of trails plan implementation.

This property provides an important link between neighborhoods in Missoula’s South Hills and Pattee Canyon road. Only a few acquisitions or easements would be required to expand this trail system further up the flanks of Mt. Dean Stone or connect it to existing public trails on Mt. Sentinel. This Plan includes a non-motorized thru-trail connecting the Sousa trailhead to the Barmeyer trailhead (Map 3). Completion of this thru-trail is anticipated to take two years (phase 1&2). To reduce the potential for usage of existing trails scheduled for closure and/or trespass onto adjacent private property public-non motorized trails scheduled for completion in Phase 1 will be designated as pedestrian-only until the thru-trail connecting the Sousa trailhead to the Barmeyer trailhead is complete. An additional non-motorized spur trail connects this thru-trail to road systems that climb south onto areas currently owned by FVLT. Construction of this spur trail is described in Phase 3 and it’s construction would be dependent on agreements with FVLT or future property acquisitions by the City.

Pedestrian-only trails are described on the east side of the property, extending to the scenic overlook, and connecting to the road systems that climb south onto areas currently owned by FVLT (Map 3). The east side of this Property is the steepest part of the property and trail construction will be challenging. CLM Plan trail guidelines allow for ped-only trails to be constructed at a steeper grade, with narrower treads, and with switchbacks of tighter radii than what is required for non-motorized trails. Constructing ped-only trails on the east side of the Property will allow for construction of a more direct route with fewer disturbances, and will decrease trail construction costs. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the South Hills Spur Property is the grassy knoll which provides a scenic overlook of the Missoula Valley.

Managing recreational use to the scenic overlook may become especially challenging as this location will likely experience a high level of use. To reduce the potential for user conflict, trail widening and potential impacts to native flora this out-and-back trail has been designated as pedestrian only.

Trailheads and Signage: Locations for all trailheads and approximate placement of signage is depicted on Map 4. Trailhead construction and sign placement schedules coincide with the trails they serve as outlined in Map 3.

This plan recommends development of two Secondary Trailheads and one Neighborhood Access point (Map 4). As defined in the CLM Plan, the development of Secondary Trailheads include standard MPR trailhead information signs, parking for 2-8 vehicles, a trail map, bike rack, trash cans and a mutt-mitt dispenser. Neighborhood Access Trailheads contain basic informational signage but additional infrastructure is dependent on need. With permission from the Barmeyer Family, -residents of the Arnica neighborhood have accessed portions of the South Hills Spur property for decades. When the Barmeyer family transferred the majority of their property to the City Arnica Dr. residents lost the access point they historically used. While there is significant support from Arnica Dr. residents for access to the South Hills Spur property Arnica Drive is a privately owned and construction of the “Arnica Neighborhood Access” may be dependent on an agreement with adjacent landowners.

Directional signs across the property will be constructed of wood routed with place names, directional arrows, and mileage to match MPR standard directional signs already installed across other Missoula’s Conservation Lands. At intersections of non-motorized & Pedestrian-only trails additional trail use signs will be posted with directional signage. In order to limit trespass onto private property and to comply with legal access easements additional signs to restrict public access are necessary at three locations: along the City’s administrative access; on the Stone Mountain Access Road; and on the Barmeyer’s Driveway. The purpose of trail closure signage is to notify the public of trail closures and restoration efforts. This signage is temporary and will be removed following successful restoration of closed trails. The development of interpretative signage on the Scenic Overlook is discussed in subsequent sections.

As described in the CLM Plan (Goal 2, policy 2.8) the MPR department should work to educate the public about responsible recreation, land management actions and land stewardship ethics on Missoula’s Conservation Lands. Signage on the Property should communicate resource values, encourage resource protection and responsible use. Within the first few years of public use it will be important for CLM staff to monitor impacts to natural resources, user conflicts and compliance with posted rules and regulations. Negative use patterns should be addressed immediately before they become established.

3. Additional Considerations:

Inventories conducted by CLM employees and resource values documented in the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee's "New Parcel Score Sheets" identified multiple natural and social resources which should be considered in management of this parcel. Information from these inventories was critical in the development of the recreation management strategies described in sections 1 & 2 of this document and documented additional site-specific considerations are necessary to balance potential recreational impacts with conservation values outlined in Missoula's CLM Plan.

Development of the Scenic Overlook: As documented by the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee and based on current public use patterns on the Property the scenic overlook is a potential destination for future recreationists. To protect scenic values around the Scenic overlook special protection zones limiting the construction of certain infrastructure (eg. shelters, statues, restrooms, trash receptacles, some trails) were documented in a management agreement between FVLT and the City. According to City inventories the knoll surrounding the scenic overlook contains some of the most intact rough fescue grasslands and crypto-biotic crusts on the property. Unfortunately, road building, the installation of multiple power boxes to prepare the property for development, and damage from decades of unauthorized vehicular use have degraded grasslands on top of the knoll. Site-specific plans to remove road and utility infrastructure and restore native plant communities must be developed. To limit future unauthorized vehicular access to the South Hills Spur Property the MPR department should work with other road easement holders and neighboring landowners to install a gate at an appropriate location along the Stone Mtn. Access Road (Map 2).

Construction of the Scenic overlook trail should include placement of unobtrusive physical barriers (eg. small-boulders, wooden rails etc.); and include signage to limit the potential for trail braiding and/or off-trail traffic by recreationists (and their dogs). As an out & back trail this trail should be sufficiently wide to allow for two pedestrians to pass without stepping off trail. At the Northern terminus of the trail unobtrusive physical barriers should be placed to denote the end of the trail. The placement of interpretative signage at this location will also help define the "end of the trail" while educating the public about the area. The MPR department should work with local non-profits to develop content and funding for interpretative signs at this location, with content to be approved by the MPR Board. Rock boulders that double as benches, blend into the landscape (versus constructed wooden benches) and require no maintenance will provide a place for quiet reflection. Final placement of all signage, benches and trails in this area must minimize impacts on scenic and natural resource values and should not violate the FVLT/City management agreement. To further limit potential for disturbances to this location the Parks and Recreation Department will not permit special events on the trail to the Scenic overlook.

Protection of Important Habitats: Several of the habitats documented in our inventory will require additional measures to limit damage from construction of recreational infrastructure and/or protect them from future recreational impacts. A natural seep with unique plants and potential habitat for native herptiles is located where the main trail crosses the Barmeyer's driveway. Trail construction should be located as far from the seep as possible. Site surveys for rein orchids will be conducted within the trail corridor and these plants will either be avoided or transplanted outside the trail corridor. All trail construction directly uphill from the seep should implement temporary erosion controls to prevent sedimentation into the collection pool adjacent to the road. Use of rock-underdrains, French drains, rock-burritos or culverts may be necessary if trail construction crosses "seepy" ground.

Approximately, .7 miles of new trail construction on site is located within intact, near pristine rough fescue grasslands. Native plants will be salvaged from the trail corridor during trail construction and transplanted into trail edges; onto adjacent trail closure/restoration areas; or held-over in the MPR greenhouse for future use on the Property. All bare ground generated from trail construction will be repeatedly seeded with a site-specific native seed mix until native plants establish. New trails will be walked annually for a minimum of 2 years and non-native invasive plants within the trail corridor will be chemically treated or mechanically removed per, best practices and the CLM Plan.

The Barmemyer Trailhead is located adjacent to but roughly 20 ft. above Pattee Creek. Pattee creek contains a resident population of genetically pure Westslope cutthroat trout, a State species of concern. During construction of the trailhead it may be necessary to implement temporary erosion controls to reduce the potential for run-off into the Creek. A parking area is already constructed at this location. Regrading this parking area may be necessary to ensure it drains away from the Creek. In general, there are no good locations for the public to access Pattee Creek on City Property and access to the creek should be discouraged. A new post and rail fence will need to be built around the parking areas/trailhead to limit public access to Pattee Creek. Additionally, if vehicular trespass up the Barmeyer's driveway repeatedly occurs a new access gate may need to be installed at Pattee Canyon Drive.

Domestic Dog Restrictions: The MPR inventory of natural resources on the Property documented only two wildlife species of concern present on the property, the Cassins Finch and Olive-sided flycatcher. Both of these birds prefer open woodlands and forest edges and nest in coniferous trees. It is unlikely that either species would be impacted by domestic dogs (or public use) on the Property. While off-leash dogs can cause impacts to vegetation along trails this is most often associated with trails on open-flat terrain with high levels of dogs use. With the exception of the Scenic Overlook trail no trails on the Property are located on flat ground. Currently, the Property is located outside the City limits where no leash laws exist for

domestic dogs, but eventually the property will be annexed into the City Limits. Unless future monitoring efforts document a valid reason for dogs to remain on-leash the MPR department recommends designating the South Hills Spur Property as an “on-voice restraint” area as defined in Missoula City Ordinance 6.07.020.

Potential for Seasonal Closures: The MPR resource inventory on the South Hills Spur Property documented no critical habitats or essential resources for native plants and wildlife which would necessitate a seasonal closure. City staff, Fish Wildlife and Parks (Mt. FWP) biologists and CLAC members did document occasional use of the Property by elk in the winter but the overall use of this property for winter range is not well documented. Reports from local residents who live in the area further document occasional winter use of the property by elk. Mt. FWP biologists do not believe that the South Hills Spur property is a critical part of the [redacted] elk herd’s winter range and do not believe that a winter closure on these 174 ac. is necessary to protect this herd. Future acquisitions of public lands further up the flanks of Mt. Dean Stone or into the upper Miller Ck. drainage may include areas which are critical winter range and should be managed accordingly. MPR and Mt. FWP staff are working to Efforts to better understand the importance of the flanks of Mt. Dean Stone as elk winter range and these data will help inform potential management actions on future acquisitions. are underway. At this time, MPR staffs do not recommend placing any seasonal closures on the South Hills Spur Property. However, if public acquisition of Open Space up the flanks of Mt. Dean Stone continues there may be a need to impose seasonal closures if these future acquisitions include areas critical for winter range.

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Comment [MV1]: FWP will review this section and provide name of elk herd and comments by this thursday

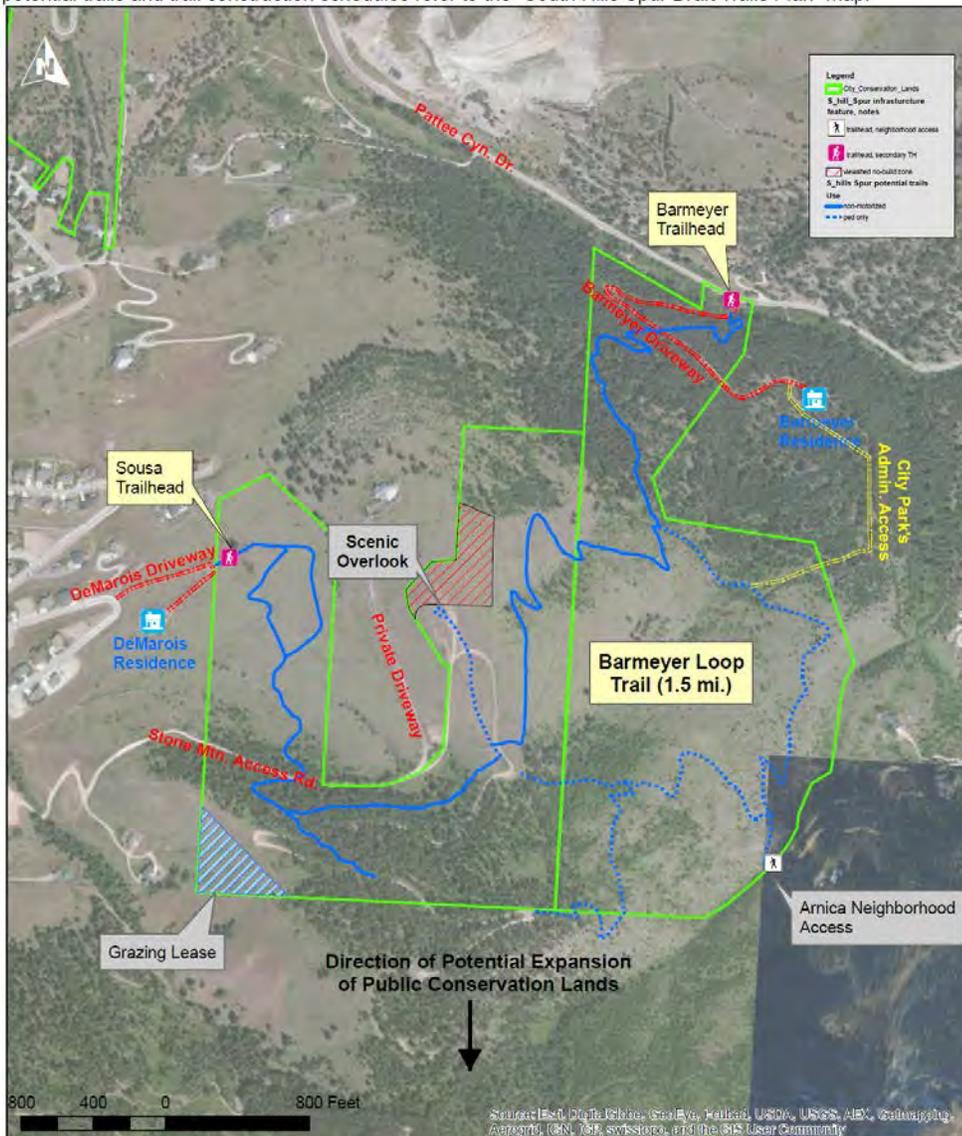
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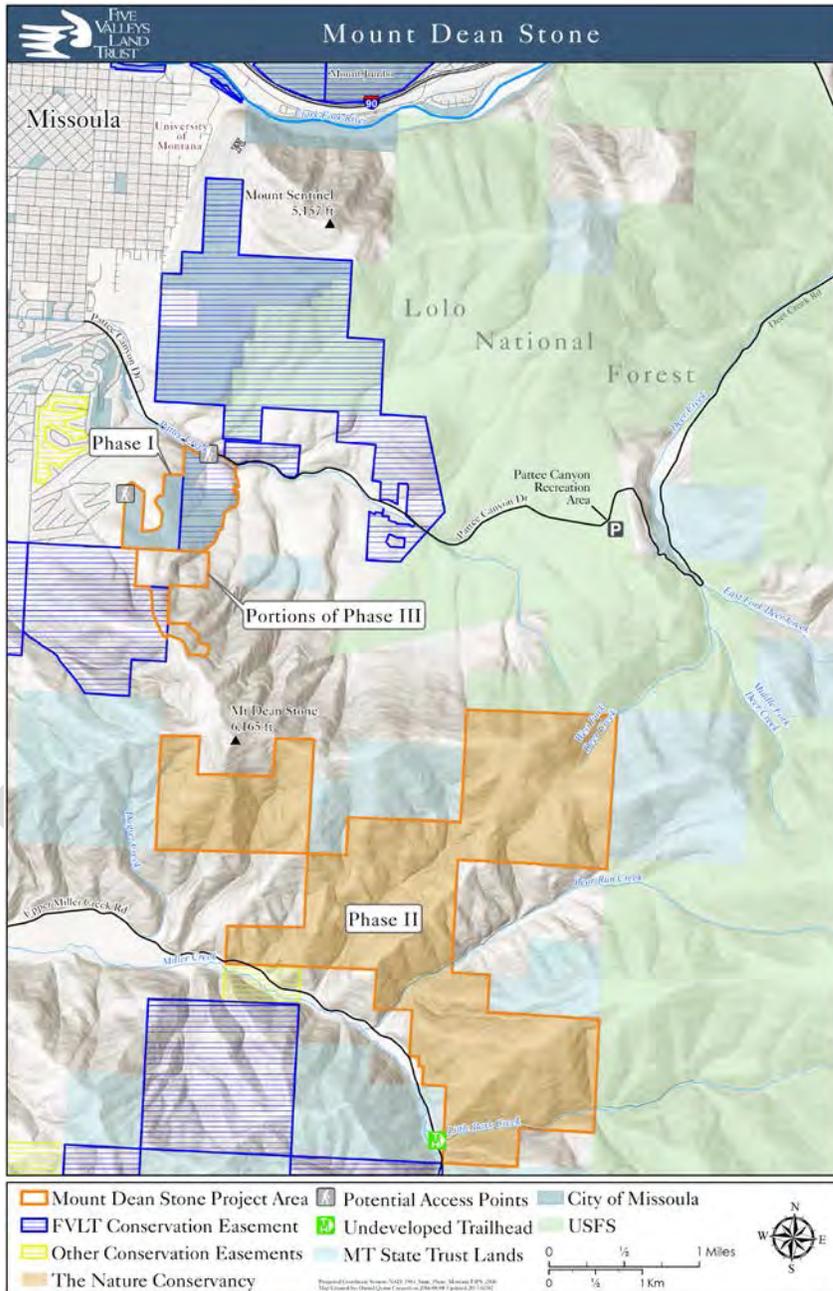
MAP 1:

SOUTH HILLS SPUR RECREATION PLAN ORIENTATION MAP

This map depicts landmarks, potential place names and potential trails on the South Hills Spur Property. All place names in yellow text boxes are proposed for adoption by the Missoula Parks & Rec. Board. Only one of the two potential routes adjacent to the Sousa Trailhead will be constructed. For a full description of potential trails and trail construction schedules refer to the "South Hills Spur Draft Trails Plan" map.



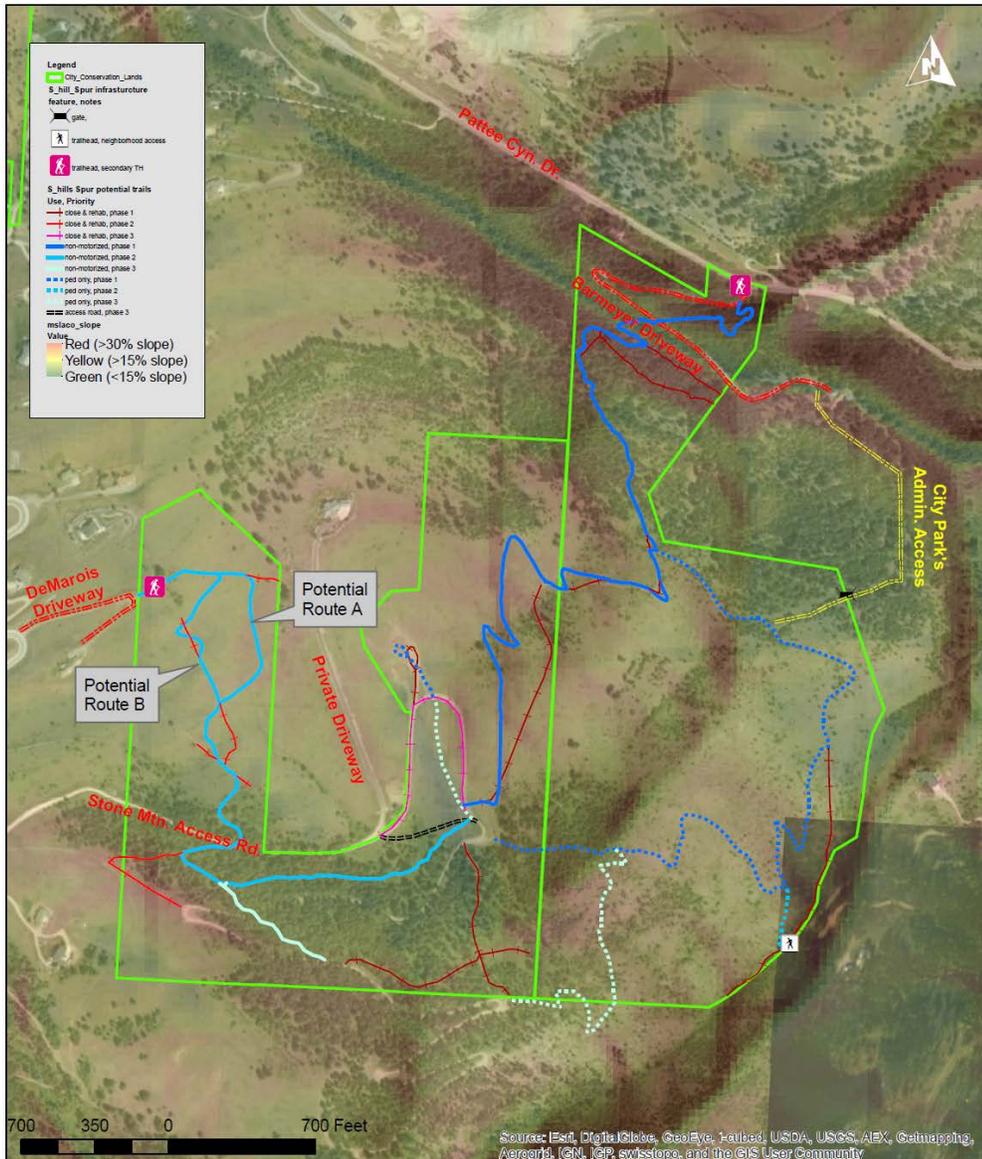
MAP 2:



MAP 3:

SOUTH HILLS SPUR RECREATION PLAN TRAILS MAP

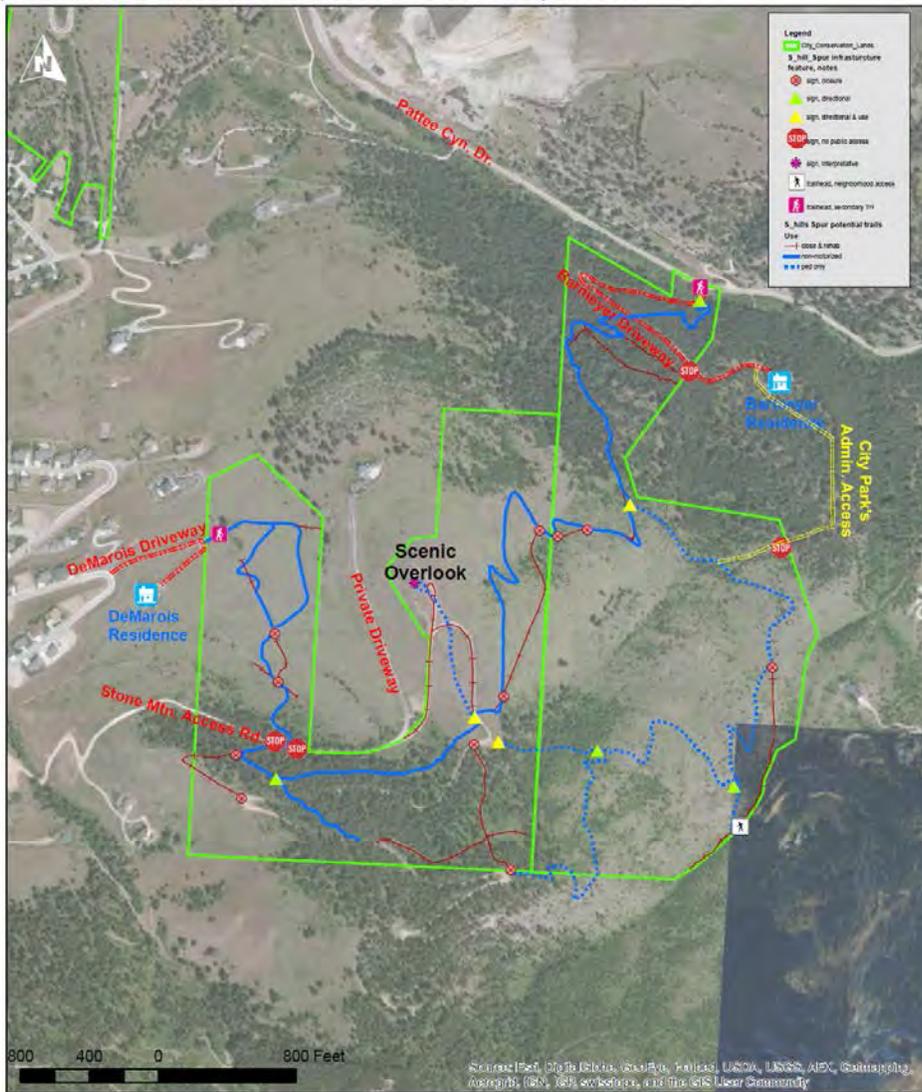
This map depicts trail routes, trail-use designation, and trailheads. Phase 1 work will be conducted in 2017 with Phase 2 in 2018. Phase 3 is dependent on funding, needs, and/or agreements with adjacent landowners. Only one of the two potential routes adjacent to the Sousa Trailhead will be constructed. Both route options need to be walked and assessed to determine suitability. Completion of all work is dependent on available resources and favorable environmental conditions.



MAP 4:

SOUTH HILLS SPUR RECREATION PLAN SIGNAGE MAP

This map depicts trailhead type, sign type and locations of this infrastructure. Level of development for Secondary Trailheads and Neighborhood Access Trailheads is defined in the Conservation Lands Management Plan. The majority of this signage will be posted in Phase 1&2 of trail construction. Closure signage is not permanent and will be removed when closed trails are sufficiently recovered.



South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan Public Adoption Process

Incorporation of Public Comment Received in Spring 2017

The South Hills Spur properties (175 ac.) were acquired by the City through a series of property donations and land acquisitions facilitated by Five Valleys Land Trust. In 2016, an inventory of natural resources, natural history and human use was completed by the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department (MPR) and the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee (CLAC) ranked resource values on the Property. In February 2016, the Missoula Parks and Recreation Board (MPB) designated the Property as a *Park Preserve* as defined in Missoula's Conservation Lands Management (CLM) Plan. Throughout Winter 2016-17 MPR staff utilized CLAC's New Parcel Resource score sheets, internal inventories, legal documents and goals defined in the CLM plan to develop the South Hills Recreation Management Plan (the Plan).

Development of the South Hills Spur Plan included opportunities for public comment at 5 separate public meetings (3 CLAC and 2 MPB meetings) February and April 2017. In March 2017, a 15-day public comment period was advertised on-line and comments were actively solicited from user groups, neighboring landowners, partnering agencies, City council members, neighborhood councils, and homeowners associations. On April 3, 2017, at their regularly scheduled public meeting CLAC reviewed all public comments and made edits to the Plan. The majority of the Public comment received resulted in constructive edits and addition of content to the Plan. This edited version of the Plan was forwarded to the MPB for review and adoption at their April 11, 2017 public meeting. This rest of this report documents which public comments did not result in changes to the Plan and provides justification for why the recommendations in these public comments were rejected.

In general all public comments which did not result in changes to the Plan fell into 4 categories.

- 1) Vegetation management
- 2) Restriction of types of public use
- 3) Restrictions of season of use
- 4) Prevention of public trespass onto adjacent private property

Vegetation Management: Two comments focused on the tools used to manage vegetation (primarily noxious weeds) on the property. Vegetation management priorities and goals are dictated by the CLM plan and not the South Hills Spur Recreation Plan. The South Hills Spur Plan does briefly mention surveying newly constructed trails for non-native invasive plants and immediately removing them mechanically or with spot applications of herbicide to prevent these weeds from invading pristine native grasslands. This "early detection & rapid response" is recognized in scientific literature and land management policies as a best management

practice for preventing the degradation of native habitats by invasive plants. It was determined that no changes to this policy should occur based on these comments.

Restriction of certain types of public use: One comment received recommended the Property be closed to dogs to reduce impacts to wildlife on the property. Wildlife protection on City Conservation Lands is an important goal of the MPR department, CLM Plan and the Missoula public (report available upon request). The negative impacts of dogs on wildlife have been well documented in the scientific literature. While closure of the South Hills Spur property to dogs would certainly reduce impacts on wildlife such a restriction would set a precedent. Currently, no City parkland (or other City-owned lands except certain public buildings) are closed to dogs but the MPR department does have the authority to temporarily close parkland to dogs for wildlife protection. Research of historic wildlife records and on-site surveys on the South Hills Spur failed to identify any State or federally listed wildlife “species of concern” which would be negatively impacted by dogs (S. Hills Spur Resource Inventory available upon request). While the MPR department and the CLAC recommend that the South Hills Spur remain open to dogs, the Plan was edited to include the importance of creating educational signage emphasizing responsible recreation, clearly stating rules and regulations, and monitoring future wildlife use on site. Additionally, per CLM program standards mutt-mitts for removing dog waste, trash cans, and a Lend-a-Leash kiosk will be installed at all trailheads on the property.

Another comment received recommended that the South Hills Spur be closed to bikes to reduce costs of trail construction, potential for collisions with cars at road crossings, and creation of rogue trails. Bike trails do typically cost more to construct than pedestrian-only trails however these costs are offset by the benefits described in Section 2 of the Plan. The one road crossing depicted in the Plan is across a very low-volume private-use dirt road, trail design including speed checks and clear sight lines at this road crossing will further reduce any risk of collisions with cars. A 2015 inventory of over 70 miles of trails on Missoula’s Conservation Lands documented no significant difference between the amount of rogue trails between pedestrian-only and public non-motorized trail systems. It is the policy of the CLM program to maintain accurate up-to-date inventories of unofficial user-made trails and to close and rehabilitate them.

Restrictions of Season of Use: Several comments received helped further document the use of the South Hills Spur by elk and some of these comments recommended closing the Property to all public use during the winter. Much discussion about the importance of this property for winter range occurred at the April 3, 2017 CLAC meeting and between MPR staff and Mt. Fish Wildlife and Park wildlife biologists. Following CLAC’s April meeting additional explanations were added to Section 3 of the Plan to expand why, at this time no seasonal closure to protect wintering elk is recommended on the South Hills Spur Property.

Prevention of Public Trespass onto Adjacent Public Property: Three individuals made recommendations to restrict the potential of public trespass onto adjacent private property. These comments included recommendations to move/install gates, post signage and install fencing along property boundaries, locate trails away from property boundaries, and fence along trails to encourage people to stay on-trail. Based on these comments language was added to the Plan for MPR staff to work with neighbors on placement of a gate along the Stone Mtn. Access road and to locate trails on the Western portion of the South Hills Spur away from private property lines. Prior to development of the Plan a request for funds from the Open Space Bond to clearly mark all property lines with metal fence posts was approved however the MPR department does not plan to construct fences along these boundaries. Fencing, even “wildlife friendly fencing”, does degrade wildlife habitat and is costly to construct and maintain. Montana is a fence-out State and it is an individual property owner’s responsibility to clearly mark and/or fence their property boundaries to restrict trespass onto their property. The MPR department does strive to be a good neighbor and commonly works with adjacent property owners to share the costs of fencing along shared property lines. However, it is the preference of the MPR department that fences are not erected on Missoula’s Conservation Lands. To limit the chance of trespass onto adjacent private Property the MPR department works to locate trails away from property boundaries and implements policies prohibiting off-trail recreation. On the rare occasions when user-made trails encourage trespass onto adjacent private property MPR staff has posted signage notifying the public that they are trespassing in addition to the other measures to close and rehabilitate the user-made trail.

Public Comments on the South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan

3/21/2017 13:35 Peter Lesica Lower Rattlesnake Neighborhood Council

It appears that adequate caution is being proposed to protect natural resource features. However, I did not see mention of weed control or resource monitoring. I am not in favor of broadcast weed spraying or using sheep. Spot spraying and biological control are acceptable. Grasslands near trails should be monitored for off-trail hiking impacts and weed increase.

3/22/2017 10:36 Jim Habeck Lewis & Clark Neighborhood Council

Drop, or reduce the use of the "R" word. Certainly drop "Recreation" from the area's title. It's made clear the area is designated as a "Park Preserve" and management is for protecting the area's natural flora-fauna values...some portions are native bunchgrass prairie. And if any public use is made the SH Spur area it is to enjoy and learn from the natural values. Signage should emphasize.."If you can't be gentle, stay out!" Sticking the word "Recreation" into the area's label [field-trailhead signs too?], is well known from past experience in Missoula's open space lands [North Hills complex especially] to trigger..if not encourage...high public visitor usage.levels is allowed, and kinds [even joggers running 3 abreast,,+ bikers? on narrow trails] to cause damage. The CLAC management plan's page 1 vision statement is..."First, Do No Harm!" Especially as it's designated as a park preserve. And don't kid the public about setting aside grass clumps to later be replaced after trail construction...that has simply not worked in other places [Waterworks Hill good example, but even trail area above Orange St I-90 exit, and not in the hot seed testing plots.]. Regards, Jim Habeck

3/25/2017 12:06 John Harrison Neighborhood Council Unknown/Not Applicable

Please acknowledge receipt, thanks.

1. Issue: Protection of critical habitats or essential resources for native plants and wildlife.

Comment: The draft South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan does not recognize the existing critical habitats or essential resources for native plants and wildlife. Specifically, this area has been an elk wintering area for approximately 25-40 elk. Additionally, white tail and mule tail deer live in this area and birth young in the spring. Birds of prey (notably the Red Tail Hawks and Great Horn Owls), fox, and coyote frequent the area. Occasionally black bear, cougars, turkeys, and weasels are seen in this area too.

Recommendation: limit public use of proposed recreation area to summer and fall to avoid placing unnecessary pressure on the wildlife during winter range occupation and spring birthing season.

Impact: In areas where mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk winter, especially during harsh winters, disturbance by non-motorized and human activity and free-ranging dogs can have adverse impacts upon wintering ungulates (Missoula CLMP 2010, para 4.2.2.1 Impact of Human Disturbance, Displacement, p.51)

2. Issue: Protection of wildlife from domestic dogs.

Comment: Dogs, especially unleashed dogs, in the areas such as this create the opportunity for wildlife to be harassed by domestic dogs. The proposed South Hills Spur Recreation Area has exceptional wildlife presence close to the city. This is because restricted access to private property has offered wildlife protection from human traffic and interaction, that would otherwise spoil wildlife activity. A Colorado State University study postulates: "dogs are avid chasers, and through chasing could displace wildlife from their habitats, particularly when certain species, such as deer, perceive dogs as predators and avoid areas where they could be chased. Ungulates and herbivores are thus susceptible to disturbance by dogs, additive to two predation pressures already present by native carnivores such as mountain lions and coyotes."

Recommendation: Do not allow dogs in this area.

Impact: The presence of dogs along recreational trails correlates with altered patterns of habitat utilization by several wildlife species. Also dogs could wander on private property adjacent to this proposed public recreation area.

3. Issue: Trespass on Private Property

Comments: Property owners have the right to both privacy and to prevent public access to their property. Allowing public access to this open space will create two areas of concern for adjacent property owners with regards to trespassing. First, Stone Mountain housing development via a vis Dean Stone Drive ends at private property in the vicinity of the cul-de-sac. The creation of this recreation area would likely increase unattended access from Dean Stone Drive cul-de-sac resulting in trespass on private property. Although the private property road is properly marked, people today occasionally attempt to trespass on what they think is an access road to public property (aka Spanish Peaks Trail). Trespassing will significantly increase if/when the recreation area is finalized and more people want to find public trail access. Second, people using the recreation area will wander off the designated trails and either deliberately or inadvertently trespass on private property (e.g. to get a photo, explore, picnic, chase their dog, etc). Furthermore, ancillary problems caused by increased public traffic are littering and dumping garbage. The City will create an undue burden on the private property owners unless appropriate mitigation to trespassing is accomplished.

Recommendation: Install appropriate signage and gates at main access roads to prevent deliberate or inadvertent trespassing by people who trying to access to proposed recreation trails via private property roads; and install appropriate fencing and gates on public-private boundaries.

Impact: Creating an undue burden for property owners adjacent to the proposed recreation area; potential littering and high probability of increased criminal trespass.

Reference:

(a) MISSOULA CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN, City of Missoula Parks and Recreation, August 4th, 2010

(b) <http://ci.missoula.mt.us/1038/27550/New-Open-Space-For-Missoula> (South Hills Spur Recreation Management Plan) 23 March 2017

(c) "The Effects of Dogs on Wildlife Communities", Lenth, Brennan, and Knight, Colorado State University for Boulder County Colorado Open Space and Mountain Parks; February, 2006

3/28/2017 11:51 Kathleen Todd Neighborhood Council Captain John Mullan

Hello,

I ask that you please consider implementing an organic management plan in this proposed open space rather than using the standard herbicides usually implemented for vegetation and weed control. I plan to come to City Council about or current herbicide use within city limits in parks and public spaces. I recommend that Parks and Rec maintain this newly acquired open space without the use of Herbicides and consider using it as a control experiment for other forms of weed removal and control. Perhaps to use as an example for the future. Thank you for taking public comment on this newly acquired parcel of open space. Expect to hear more from Missoulians on the issue of Herbicide use. Thank you.

Kathleen Todd,

Spokesperson

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3/28/2017 18:21 Nancy Jo Connell Neighborhood Council Farviews/Pattee Canyon

RE: South Hills Open Space Draft: Appreciate all the thought and planning. Great job! I'd like to make one suggestion re dogs. As an Arnica resident I've run these trails daily for almost 30 years, with my dogs off leash, so am pleased with the on-voice restraint proposal. However, I have also been attacked twice, on other trails, and am often shocked at how many dog owners with aggressive dogs seem nonchalant about their behavior. I would like to suggest signage that addresses this, and perhaps even has some "teeth" in it (if that is allowed!) regarding dog behavior. At dog parks one often sees signs that say something like "Only socialized, well-behaved dogs are welcome", etc. What if we had a sign that said something like "Socialized, well-behaved dogs, who respond to voice restraint, are allowed off leash. Aggressive dogs, and/or dogs not responsive to voice restraint, must be leashed AT ALL TIMES. Violation of this is subject to a fine of _____". I know there's issues about Pattee Canyon not having leash laws right now, but I have some thoughts of how this might be done - and of course I don't know anything about how/when fines are allowed, etc. Just wanted to put this out there for discussion. Thanks for listening!

03/29/2017 11:49 Pete Nazelrod Neighborhood Council Farviews/Pattee Canyon

1. Private Road (noted as "Stone Mtn. Access Rd" in draft plan); this in fact is a private access road for the benefit of previous private property owners which is trespassed frequently by the public. A gate has been installed to prevent this. It is my request to have the gate moved to a more safe location at the start point of the road, the lower public cup-de-sac. This location is more visible and has enough surface area for a vehicle to turn around safely. Also, the draft plan shows a trail crossing the road within the Sousa parcel. The location is heavily treed with high banks making crossing a danger. I recommend further investigation of a better location and/or trail restrictions to prevent a vehicle hitting some one

crossing. Keep in mind, the road is difficult to maintain during cold, snowing weather and a quick stop does not happen. You further clarified that the only planned use of the road is for periodic city maintenance crew, except for work crews which will be used during the construction phases. All other access is restricted, specifically public access.

2. Fixed Infrastructure: no fixed except at the trail heads.

3. Seasonal Closure: I recommend seasonal closure of the conservation area. The area supports a wide range of animals. We have seen black bear, wolf, red fox, mountain lion, turkeys, red tail hawks, sage grouse, deer and elk. Particular concern is the migrating herd of elk, which we guess is around 50 head. These elk appear to come from the Miller Creek area to the south and appear once or three times a year (depending on the severity of the winter). The herd frequently beds on the knob, the portions of treed road and around my house. I will forward pictures showing the elk and sign of elk in another email. My daughter took a short video of elk crossing the road. The email will show a red fox in our yard. The pictures and video are from this past winter and the winter before (2016-17 and 2015-16). The essence of conservation lands is to keep and improve eco-systems, a seasonal closure of the area will allow the elk herd to continue using this environment. Not closing the lands will scare and push the elk away from the area.

4. Non-Motorized trail use: I recommend/request the trail system be restricted to walking trails. The topography is steeply graded, bikes and horse trails will require more trail building than foot traffic. Also, as noted in item one, bikes move faster which will make an unfortunate vehicle encounter more severe. Also, mountain bikers tend to make roue trails of their own, increasing erosion and damage to plant life. The area maintains a healthy native plant environment which needs to be preserved.

5. Reclamation Plan: I support the reclamation programs outlined in the draft plan and will offer fill material for use.

6. Hours of Use: I understand the hours of use will be roughly 6 am-10pm.

7. Sousa Potential Trail Route Map 3. I support the Route 'B' from the draft plan. This is the more gradual graded of the two. Also, Potential Route 'A' is more visible from my home and further encroaches into the native grass meadow.

8. Restrictions: I understand the city restricts the following: fires, fireworks, camping, overnight use, hunting and alcohol. This list is not all inclusive, just the items we discussed.

I submit the following to be included in the public record and to be seriously considered for the final management plan.

Thanks, Pete Nazelrod

03/29/2017 10:45

Adina Roe

Neighborhood Council Unknown/Not Applicable

Just wanted to give you some feed about access for the property on dean stone

A few of the concerns that I have.

During winter months there is a herd of elk that come down behind our houses, and people having access will cause stress on them, there is also turkeys and all kinds of wildlife that will be effected during hard months the gate that is on Spanish peaks drive should be installed at start of road, as it is dangerous turn around where the gate is now

Not sure what plan is, if there is going to be a fence or something to keep people on trails

Thanks

Brad and Adina roe