

# Missoula Conservation Lands Management Plan

## PLANNING PROCESS

### Working Group Packet



## City Of Missoula PARKS AND RECREATION SPRING-FALL 2009

*"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we begin to use it with love and respect"* -Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

*"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."* –Gaylord Nelson, Former governor of Wisconsin and Co-founder of Earth-day.

*"Parks and gardens alone cannot solve the problems faced by our cities, but they are crucial to the health of urban communities. We need to take seriously the evidence that open space counts in human lives and that places where we live can be places of hope."* –Martin Rosen, President of Trust for Public Lands

*"Scientific research has finally caught up to what many people have intuitively known for a long time. Recreation helps children develop skills, character and functional independence. It nourishes a person's physical, emotional and spiritual health, and cultivates a love affair with the natural world that motivates people to defend and protect it".*

– Rick Potts, National Parks Service

# **CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **WORKING GROUP INFORMATION**

### **MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS**

The City of Missoula's Conservation Land system has grown significantly in the last 20 years. Acquisitions, donations and access easements have all contributed to the expansion of these valuable public assets. Most of this growth occurred following the passage of an open space bond in 1995. This 5 million dollar bond allowed Missoulians to purchase many important open space cornerstone properties and save them from development. However, while funds were available for land acquisition little was allocated for land management so consequentially; management of these lands has lagged behind their purchase. It wasn't until 2005 that the Conservation Lands Division within the Parks department was funded at a level adequate to manage most aspects of our conservation lands.

A good management plan sets a vision, with principals, goals and priorities to help guide management and ensure continuity between years and administrations. In Missoula, management plans have been developed for individual properties but no plan has been designed that addresses the Conservation Lands System as a whole. In 2008, Missoula's City Council voted to fund the development of a comprehensive management plan for the conservation lands system. As the majority of these lands were purchased by Missoula's citizens it was the feeling of the Parks and Recreation Department that citizens would have a strong voice in determining principals by which these properties would be managed. In addition to two public open houses, a citizen's working group and a technical advisory committee was formed to ensure a progressive and well-rounded final product.

### **PRODUCT/OUTCOME OF PLANNING PROCESS**

Upon the completion of the planning process the Parks and Recreation Department will receive a management plan that outlines the visions and principals by which all of Missoula's conservation lands will be managed. The plan will also set management priorities for individual properties and projects as well as attainable goals for the system and department as a whole. Recommendations including potential funding sources, changes to Parks infrastructure and suggestion that increase efficiency within the Conservation Lands Division will expedite the attainment of these priorities and goals. All management recommendations in the plan will be based on sound science as well as lessons learned over the past fifteen years of conservation lands management in Missoula.

### **ROLE AND PRODUCTS OF THE WORKING GROUP**

The Working Group will be composed of 20 members who have been selected based on criteria determined by the Steering Committee. The Working Group will study factors pertaining to, and make written recommendations to, the City and its consultant, on various aspects of Conservation Land management planning. Recommendations shall incorporate Assumptions stated at the initiation of the planning process.

#### **Working Group tasks:**

- (1) To review and synthesize information from the Parks Staff, Technical Advisors and the Consultant, pertaining to the lands and their surroundings, as well as existing and future natural, cultural and recreational resources and associated management needs.
- (2) To make recommendations on existing plans, policies, procedures, rules and adequacy of existing facilities or improvements as it relates to demand.
- (3) To make recommendations on guiding principles and criteria for development of management practices and land uses.
- (3) To make recommendations on logical phasing of priority projects.
- (4) To explore useful and realistic funding mechanisms and recommended strategies for obtaining these funds.
- (5) To make recommendations on methods and options for engaging the public after plan adoption.
- (6) Community outreach including but not limited to involvement and synthesis of public comments as well as presentations to Park Board and City Council.

## **ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL GROUP**

The Technical Group will include individuals with specific expertise related to any aspect of the project. The scope of work of the Technical Group will be:

- (1) To brief and provide the Working Group and City Staff and Park Board with technical and scientific information throughout the process.
- (2) To provide background information on such matters as historic and existing conditions of conservation lands; current and projected uses and management regimes; infrastructure costs; risk assessments of management priorities and other information as needed.
- (3) To provide input on management recommendations from Consultants and the Working Group.
- (4) To provide support for public meetings held by consultants.

## **AVAILABLE BACKGROUND INFORMATION (to be provided at meetings as needed)**

- (1) Scientific findings from research related to natural and recreational resource management specific to Missoula conservation lands.
- (2) Supporting documentation (eg. maps, legal documents, surveys of flora/fauna/users, educational materials) of natural, cultural and recreational resources on city Conservation Lands and neighboring properties.
- (3) Historical information on uses and conditions of specific open space properties.
- (4) Site-specific reviews of the individual conservation lands to assess health of native habitats.
- (5) Site-specific management plans and updates.
- (6) Estimated cost of particular management activities and development of essential infrastructure.
- (7) Review of current and projected land management and recreational use patterns as they pertain to public conservation values and priorities.

## **ASSUMPTIONS**

- (1) While the values and principles by which we manage Missoula's Conservation Lands will remain consistent throughout the years actual on the ground management should be adaptive and flexible to incorporate new ideas, scientific findings and community needs.
- (2) Missoula's Open Space lands are valuable public assets. Management should promote community stewardship, responsible recreation and outdoor education.
- (3) Not all properties in the system should be managed under the same set of conservation values and principles, though all lands and the impacts should be considered when making land management recommendations. Areas that provide critical native habitat, and/or are of high conservation value should be managed accordingly.
- (4) During the process criteria for determining new trail construction, trail closures/rehabilitation, and appropriate types of on-trail recreation will be developed.
- (5) The Conservation Lands Division is relatively young and underfunded; efficiency, cost-effectiveness and long-term maintenance should be considered during all aspects of plan development.
- (6) Capital improvements at trailheads and to conservation lands that address the land values and Missoula's population growth and associated recreation demands will be addressed in the recommendations.
- (7) Public enjoyment of conservation lands is critical to promote continued support of future open space acquisitions

# Conservation Lands Planning Process

Working Group	Public/Political Groups	Steering Committee	Technical Group
20 members appointed by Park Board based on criteria as outlined in the application	Mayor Council City Parks Board Open Space Advisory Committee Mt. Jumbo Advisory Committee Greenough Park Advisory Committee Media	Parks Dept Staff: Morgan, Donna, Jackie, Rob (Lead contact is Morgan) Park Board Member and CLTWG liaison: Kevin Verlanic Consultant from ERG: John Maclean Public Process Facilitator: Ginny Tribe Msla. County Weed Dist. Director and CLTWG liaison: Jerry Marks	Missoula County Extension Agent GIS Specialist Rattlesnake Land Trust Rep. Fire Ecologist Plant Ecologist FWP Wildlife Biologist U of M Noxious Weed Manager U of M Recreation Manager City Fire, Police, Animal Control and Public Works Departments Other professionals as needed or requested

# Missoula Conservation Lands Management Plan Timeline

(More details as timeline matures)

## ACTION

Steering Committee Organized  
Deadline for Proposal Submittals  
Working Group App. and Criteria Finalized  
Interview and Select Consultants  
Negotiate Agreement and Terms  
Council Approves Agreement

Advertise Working Group Positions  
Working Group Application Closes  
Steering Committee Recommends Working Group  
Park Board Approves Working Group

1<sup>st</sup> Working Group Mtg.  
1<sup>st</sup> Public Open House  
2<sup>nd</sup> Working Group Mtg.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Working Group Mtg.

Drafting Main Components of Plan  
4<sup>th</sup> Working Group Mtg. Initial Review of Draft Plan  
2<sup>nd</sup> Public Open House  
Revision of Draft Plan for Final Reviews  
5<sup>th</sup> Working Group Meeting

Present Plan to City Council

## DATE

DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>  
DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>  
JANUARY 2<sup>ND</sup>  
JANUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>  
JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>  
JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>

JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>

MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>  
LATE-MARCH 2009  
APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>  
1<sup>ST</sup> WEEK OF JUNE

JUNE to LATE-AUGUST  
LATE-AUGUST  
EARLY to MID-SEPTEMBER  
MID to LATE- SEPTEMBER  
LATE-SEPTEMBER

EARLY-OCTOBER

## **Conservation Lands Management Plan: Adoption and Implementation**

*Plans provide vision, direction, and priorities for the City. The Plan, when adopted by Park Board and City Council, directs staff work plans, use of resources, short and long range budget planning and development, and capital improvements. Plans also provide support for Staff actions in the field. Plans that are well supported by the Public, allow for ongoing public engagement while acknowledging the diversity of the people and the lands.*

### ***Public Process Outline:***

Because public involvement is a core value of the Parks and Recreation Department and the City, the Conservation Lands Management Plan will be developed in concert with the Public. A Citizens Working Group will provide key exchanges and dialogue on matters to be addressed by the Plan. The Working Group members will provide outreach and communications with the general public.

In order to gain public involvement, there will be two public open houses. The format for these Open Houses will allow for an open exchange of ideas and information. In addition, each Working Group session, will allow for Public Comment.

Public Process will continue following the delivery of the final recommended Conservation Lands Management Plan to the Park Board and City Council.

### ***Adoption of Plan:***

The Conservation Lands Management Plan will be forwarded to the City Park Board when the Working Group has come to consensus on their recommendation. The Staff, Consultants, and existing advisory and technical groups shall have provided comment and review throughout the process. Upon reaching consensus on the final set of recommendations the DRAFT Conservation Lands Management Plan will be forwarded to the City Park Board for approval.

The City Park Board shall notify the public of its' intentions to review and potentially approve the Plan as provided by the Working Group. The Park Board may choose to make additional edits to the Plan before approving and recommending approval to the City Council. Upon Park Board approval, with or without edits, the Plan is forwarded to the Conservation Committee of City Council.

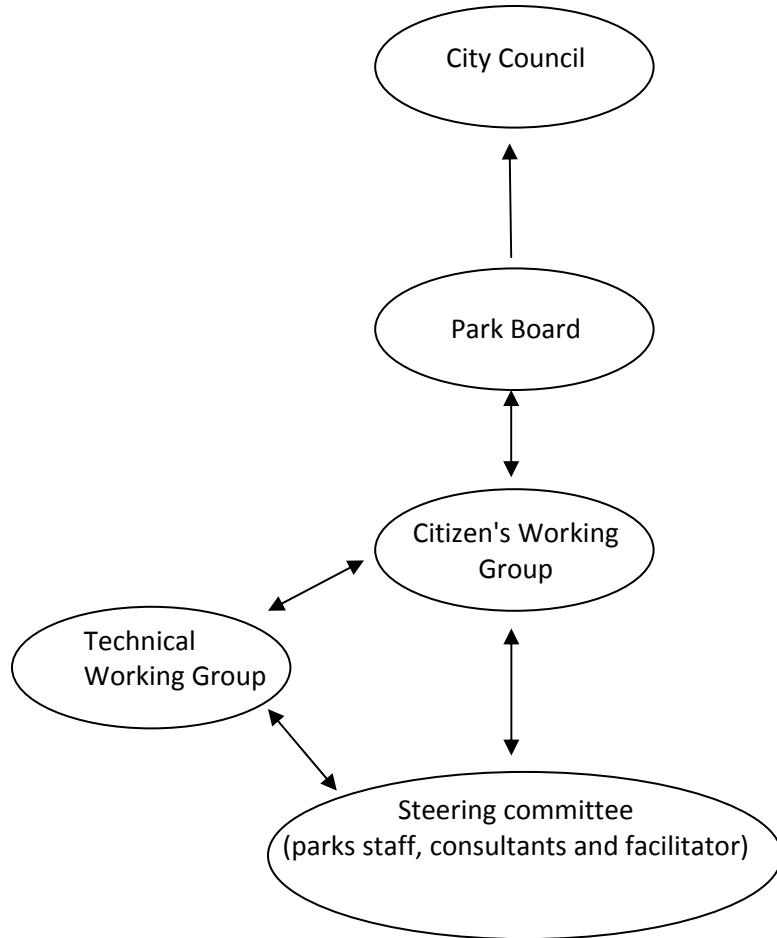
The Conservation Committee will be presented the Plan as approved by Park Board. The Working Group and Staff will be asked to make the presentation to Conservation Committee. The Conservation Committee will set a Public Hearing at a regular City Council Meeting. Following the Public Hearing the Council will then determine whether to approve the Plan, with or without additional changes.

Once the Plan is approved, Staff will then begin implementation of Plan priorities as resources allow.

### ***Implementation of Adopted Plan:***

This plan will help direct the management of all conservation lands in Missoula. All previous management plans for individual properties will be incorporated into the development of this plan. Upon adoption, the Conservation Lands Management Plan will replace all existing plans. Recommendations from the consultant, citizen's working group and/or technical advisory group concerning implementation and oversight of the plan will be taken into consideration by parks staff following adoption of the document by City Council. Work plans and budget priorities will be established based on the adopted Plan. Your involvement and support will have last impacts on our place and those who live here. ***Thank you!***

# Model for Recommendation and Adoption of Missoula's Conservation Lands Management Plan



## **CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN (CLMP) PROCESS**

City of Missoula

### **Citizen Working Group (Convening/Charter Meeting)**

March 2, 2009

#### **Session Summary**

#### **PROCESS OBJECTIVES**

1. Explore aspects of a Management Plan for Missoula's Conservation Lands.
2. Within the Working Group's Charter, develop consensus recommendations to Missoula Parks & Recreation Department and the Park Board.

#### **SESSION OBJECTIVES**

1. Convene the Conservation Lands Management Plan (CLMP) Citizen Working Group.
2. Come to collective understanding of the Working Group's Charter and the collaborative process.
3. Establish Group governance.
4. Learn about the Conservation Lands and get started on the process.

#### **WORKING GROUP MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Spencer Bradford	Allen Byrd	Scott Hauser
Aaron Kindle	Jake Kreilick	Stephanie Lauer
Peter Lesica	Bert Lindler	Kathleen Kennedy
Colleen Matt	Wendy Ninteman	Kylie Paul
Michael Pecora	Graham Roy	Steve Shelly
Dave Spildie	John Weyhrich	
Virginia Tribe (Facilitator)		

#### **TECHNICAL ADVISORS PRESENT**

Donna Gaukler	Gregory Kennett
Johnny MacLean	Morgan Valliant

#### **COMPLETED AGENDA ITEMS**

##### **Convening the Citizen Working Group**

See Attachment for Working Group Charter and responsibilities; other roles; process descriptions; and Parks & Recreation assumptions and expectations

**Parks & Recreation Presentation – What we need to know collectively about Missoula’s Conservation lands at this point in time...**

(Power Point presentation will be available on Parks & Recreation website and sent to Working Group members)

**Getting Started on a Collaborative Framework**

**Working Group Governance**

- Discussion climate:
  - Demonstrate respectful behaviors and show value for other opinions.
  - Address the topic at hand – issues, not persons.
  - Raise your hand to be recognized by the facilitator.
  - Manage your own communication – length, emotion, body language, etc.
  - Turn off electronic devices – or ask the permission of the Group.
  - Allow the facilitator to keep us on topic – and keep a “shelf” for issues that are tangential to the process.
- Decision making:
  - Make sure everyone has enough information to feel comfortable making a decision and supporting a decision.
  - Recognize that when it comes time to make a decision, everyone will be asked if they can support it. If an individual disagrees, he/she has a responsibility to say so.
  - Strive for “consensus”. The facilitator will use an interest-based process to try to reach consensus.
- Attendance:
  - Be present at every meeting unless there is an emergency. If you cannot make a meeting, notify Ginny, Morgan, or Donna.
  - Recognize that absence implies agreement with those present – no proxies or rehashing issues that were completed in your absence.
- Media contacts:
  - Working Group members will direct media inquiries regarding the process to Morgan.
  - Parks and Recreation will develop talking points for Working Group members to use at Public open houses.

### **First Cut at Guiding Principles**

- We believe in protecting, restoring and enhancing natural resources.
- We believe quality recreation experiences should be available to citizens.
- We believe that public engagement in the process will lead to a more durable and wise outcome.
- We believe that scenic and aesthetic values are part of our quality of life.
- We believe that our Conservation Lands offer excellent educational opportunities and that informed, educated citizens are more supportive of sound management practices.

### **Important Questions for the Process**

- How do we apply an ecosystem view to the Conservation Lands including the social dimension?
  - How do we address neighborhoods' sense of ownership for properties in their areas?
  - How do we enfranchise the public for management?
  - How do we use the Conservation Lands to foster current and future stewardship?
- What uses are appropriate for different Conservation properties and why?
  - How do we define/address different types/sizes, etc., Conservation properties?
  - What priority restoration needs exist and where? How do we maintain and conserve areas that don't need restoration?
  - What criteria/decision process should be used to prioritize restoration, recreation, conservation and where do individual properties fit in that prioritization?
  - How should we address fire as a tool and as a threat?
  - What are the different users of Conservation Lands and what properties are important to them?
    - What user conflicts exist and what are the tools needed to address user conflicts? Where are users compatible?
    - Where should we maintain access? Where/how do we regulate access?
    - What should be the criteria/triggers/threshold for capacity and restrictions? What should that process look like?
- Should the focus be shifted from acquisition to restoration?
  - What criteria should we use to make the decision regarding acquisition versus ongoing management needs and restoration?
  - Where do we think we are today regarding acquisition versus restoration and where do we want to be?
  - How might this Plan address the needs and future of agricultural lands in the area? Do they fit in "Conservation Lands"?
- What is the capacity of the City and public to implement the Plan – now and in the future?

### **Additional Data Needs**

- Sizes, types, specific locations, conditions/descriptors of individual Conservation properties
- Other pertinent Management Plans
- Types of users/user activities on different Conservation Lands; current user conflicts; available tools/promising practices for managing user conflicts
- Applicable regulations, expectations, etc., regarding specific Conservation properties
- Areas/issues connected to restoration; restoration priorities; costs related to restoration

### **Planning for the First Public Open House**

#### **What do we want to know from the public?**

- What are the most positive characteristics of Missoula's Conservation Lands?
- Which Conservation Lands/kinds of Conservation Lands do you use the most?
- What issues or experiences positively impact your enjoyment of our Conservation Lands? What issues or experiences negatively impact your enjoyment of our Conservation Lands?
- What are the most important reasons to have Conservation Lands in Missoula?
- What are your greatest concerns with the current management of our Conservation Lands?
- Does Missoula need to invest more in the management of Conservation Lands and if so, where and why?

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Parks & Recreation personnel will:
  - Plan and make arrangement for the Open House including ways to solicit public comment;
  - Develop materials including talking points for Working Group members;
  - "Set up" the Public Open House;
  - Summarize comments from the public.
- Working Group members will attend the Open House and help "staff" it in terms of working with/conversation with the public in attendance.

#### **Date and Location**

Thursday, March 19, 6:30-8:30pm at Council Chambers. Working Group should arrive no later than 6pm.

## Where do we go from here?

### **Affirming/Setting the Calendar**

- The Working Group will meet in the Southgate Mall Community Room (5:30 light supper; 6:00 – 9:00 PM) on the following dates:
  - Monday, April 27
  - Wednesday, June 3
  - Final meeting dates will be set as the process advances.
- A first public open house will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 at the City Council Chambers on 140 W. Pine Street. **Working group members should arrive by 5:30 to receive directions and roles.**
- A second open house will be held prior to the final Working Group meeting.

### **“Homework”**

- Come to the April 27 Working Group meeting prepared to present and explain your “agenda” for the process.
- Visit a few of the Conservation Lands – preferably a mix of large and small parcels.
- Review these notes and continue to think about guiding principles and important questions for the process.
- Identify 5-7 people with whom you will have casual conversation about the Conservation Lands and their management – over the length of the process.

Missoula Parks and Recreation Press Release  
[www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org)  
721-PARK (7275)

For more information:

Morgan Valliant  
Conservation Lands Manager  
552-6263

Donna Gaukler  
Parks and Recreation Director  
552-6265

For immediate release, March 6, 2009 through March 19, 2009

Parks and Recreation seeks input on managing open space

From weeds to wildflowers, from signs to trail design, when it comes to the City's open space, everybody has an opinion. Missoula Parks and Recreation wants to hear your opinion at a public open house on Thursday, March 19, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in City Council Chambers, 140 W. Pine St. The Open House is part of a public process to develop a management plan for the City's conservation lands.

Parks and Recreation, along with a citizen working group and consultants, is currently drafting a management plan for the City's approximately 3500 acres of conservation lands. While the "big three" properties of Mt. Jumbo, Mt. Sentinel and the North Hills comprise around 80 percent of this acreage, a significant amount of property is also located in the South Hills and Target Range areas (about 365 acres) and throughout the Rattlesnake and Clark Fork drainages (about 170 acres.) The plan will set the vision, principals, goals and priorities to help guide management of City conservation lands for the next 10 to 15 years.

Citizen input is vital to the planning process. Missoulians have invested significant resources in conservation lands through the 1995 and 2006 Open Space Bonds, and Parks and Recreation wants to hear citizens' questions and ideas about recreational uses of open space, weed and wildlife management, trail routing, accessibility, seasonal closures, maintenance, policies and more. "The public's values, interests, requests and concerns are of great value to Parks and Recreation as it begins the planning process," says Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler.

If you can't attend the open house, please complete an online survey at [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) from March 19 to April 6. (Hard copies of the survey will be available upon request, phone 721-PARK.) The Conservation Lands Working Group will also accept public comment at their April 27 and June 3 meetings, at 7 p.m. Those meetings will be held at the Southgate Mall Community Room. Comments may also be mailed to Morgan Valliant, Missoula Parks and Recreation, 100 Hickory Street, Missoula, MT 59801 or [mvalliant@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:mvalliant@ci.missoula.mt.us). More information

about the Conservation Lands Management Plan and opportunities for public comment can be found at [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org).

**(end)**