

CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN (CLMP) PROCESS

Missoula Parks and Recreation

Citizen Working Group (Meeting 2) AGENDA

April 27, 2009 (Meeting 2); Southgate Mall

5:30 PM (Light supper) 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Public Comment Period – 7:00 – 7:20 PM

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. Learn from the "trap lines" and Work.
2. Continue the review and discussion of data and "findings"

AGENDA ITEMS 6:00 – 8:30 PM

- Introduction to the session:
 - Brief review of process objectives and Working Group charter; tonight's objectives and agenda; "housekeeping"
 - Quick member roundtable for sake of observers
 - Affirming Working Group governance
 - Homework "agendas"
- Information and data:
 - Response to "additional data needs" from Parks and Recreation
 - Overview of Public Open House comments
 - Working Group member "findings" from Conservation Lands visits
- Completing the Collaborative Framework:
 - Sharing "conversations" with others
 - Determining "interests" that need to be considered; finalizing guiding principles
 - Organizing "important questions" into elements that should be addressed/resolved in the Management Plan; drafting Management Plan objectives
- Where do we go from here?
 - Affirming the calendar
 - Homework, tasks and assignments

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.

CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN (CLMP) PROCESS

Missoula Parks and Recreation

Citizen Working Group (Meeting 2) MINUTES

April 27, 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.

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WORKING GROUP MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

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

TECHNICAL ADVISORS PRESENT

Donna Gaukler	Gregory Kennett	Morgan Valliant
Jerry Marks	Mary Manning	

COMPLETED AGENDA ITEMS

Additional Data

Parks and Recreation personnel distributed the following to information to help Working Group members as they performed their tasks during the session:

- Summary of the March 19, 2009 Public Open House Comments
- Synopsis of the Conservation Lands Division Recreation user Study

Working Group Member Observations/"Findings" regarding their Conservation Lands Site Visits

- There seems to be an absence of connectivity among the parcels – even those that are close to each other.
- Managing these lands is a huge challenge – small , large, quality, less quality sites.
- Weeds are a problem particularly in some areas and will be a continual management challenge.
- Inappropriate – maybe even illegal uses are occurring. Users seem to ignore the signs explaining the regulations (e.g., dogs off leashes). There are great opportunities for education and interpretation supporting that education.
- Work is needed in some places to restore/maintain ecological systems.
- The parcels represent diverse values and diverse users.
- Lots of people seem to ignore/disregard signs and enforcement is very difficult because areas are not patrolled. What role might peer pressure be able to play?
- Many Conservation Lands are in close proximity to neighborhoods and schools – with opportunities to engage them in care/education, etc. of those parcels. People who use areas generally care about the area.
- The Tower Street site is impressive – you don't know you're by a city.
- What do we expect from and for the smaller areas?
- Obviously, cooperation with adjoining and nearby land owners is important to successful management.
- There are access issues with some of the small parcels. Access might not be there – or adjoining landowners may have "hidden" it. Do we want those areas to have increased access? Are there "marketing" opportunities?
- People seem "to kind of do what they want..." regardless of signage. At the same time, user-made trails often happen for a reason (i.e., mud, water, etc.).
- There are education opportunities on the small parcels. Should those areas be designated for particular purposes/objectives?
- Do all the Conservation Lands need to be managed for ecological purposes? Might there be some other options (i.e., greenhouses; shelters for larger groups; rental opportunities; community gardens, etc.)?
- The Conservation Lands clearly need a useful dog policy and education to go with it.
- Parking is a problem in some areas with obvious overflow on nice days. Where do we want parking – how much – Where not...?

- Areas like Tower Street are “loved” by the neighbors and they have “ownership” in them. They don’t necessarily want additional use on those sites.
- The homogeneity of users is high compared to other places – people here have a high regard for conservation.
- The pocket parks/smaller parcels are valuable in terms of open space, user opportunities, ecologic niches, wildlife habitat, neighborhood building, etc. There are lots of opportunities related to smaller parcels.
- The trails on Mount Jumbo have widened significantly. People really appreciate the wildlife values on Jumbo.
- It’s hard to find many of the smaller parcels – we need a map to work with in this process.
- Smaller parcels provide great opportunities for schools.
- The parcels in the South Hills are pretty impressive in terms of vegetation and grasses – and habitat.
- Doggy bags seem to be working and could be used for further education.
- There is an obvious need for interpretation at many sites.
- The parcels are very diverse and that’s great.
- There are still open space opportunities in the Miller Creek area – where a “cornerstone” could be acquired to fill out the Open Space Plan.

Working Toward a Completed Collaborative Framework

Draft Guiding Principles

1. We believe that conservation and recreation are not necessarily mutually exclusive on Conservation Lands.
2. We believe that each conservation parcel needs to be inventoried for its conservation and recreation values.
3. We believe that Conservation Land managers (technical advisors) should assess and prioritize conservation and recreation values for each parcel and base *current and long-term management strategies on those decisions for each parcel*.
4. We believe that consideration should be given to potential other uses and the community as a whole.
5. We believe that, *as a system of natural parks and open spaces, Missoula’s Conservation Lands can serve a variety of uses and purposes, but all uses/purposes ,may not be served on every parcel*.
6. We believe that this Plan should be designed in a way that allow *flexibility to address changes in future conditions that may demand management adaptations*.

Draft Guiding Principles cont.

7. We believe that *regular monitoring and evaluation of the conditions of Missoula's Conservation Lands* needs to be a critical part of their management.
8. We believe that management of *individual* parcels should consider, *recognize and honor* the intent of the original acquisition agreements.
9. We believe that, from time to time, recreational *and other* uses might need to be restricted in order to protect conservation values and other users.
10. *While we believe that offering users incentives for good behavior can be an effective management tool, we recognize it doesn't replace the need for enforcement of management plan restrictions.*
11. *We also recognize that conflict may occur between users and user groups and that this Plan will not be able to successfully address every conflict situation.*

**Draft (Not consensus among the group – will finalize at the next meeting)
Organizing “Important questions” into Elements that need to be
Addressed/Resolved in the Conservation Lands Management Plan**

1. *What role should ecological integrity play in management of Missoula's Conservation Lands?*
2. *What role should habitat restoration play in management of Missoula's Conservation Lands?*
3. *What criteria or decision making process should be used to determine the type and level of recreation allowed on individual Conservation Lands?*
4. *What criteria or decisions making process should be used to regulate use of the Conservation Lands by organized groups (i.e., those sponsoring races; nonprofits; commercial enterprises, etc.)?*
5. *What are the existing formal and informal agreement and commitments regarding management of Missoula's Conservation Lands?*
6. *How do we establish priorities for management and acquisition?*
7. *How can we develop a funding program to support the management needs of our growing Conservation Lands program?*
8. *What are the opportunities for partnerships between schools, neighborhoods, and Conservation Lands?*

Draft Goals (Desired End Results based on the Important Questions)

The Conservation Lands Management Plan should result in:

- Recognition of the ecological importance of Missoula's Conservation Lands and acknowledgement of their recreational importance to our community.
- A framework for criteria-based decision making and prioritization based on the characteristics of each individual parcel.
- Criteria that can be used to assign individual Conservation Lands to categories based on their ecological integrity.
- Criteria that can be used to assign individual Conservation Lands to categories based on their recreation values.
- Identification of the highest and best use of each parcel based on the parcel's individual characteristics.
- References to existing agreements and commitments.
- Identification/description of place-based educational opportunities that assist educators in meeting school districts' standards.
- An adaptive management approach that accommodated the unique qualities and challenges associated with each parcel.
- Identification of funding strategies/opportunities in both the public and private sector.
- Criteria for allocating funding among competing priorities.

Thoughts/ideas about Conservation Lands "Categories"

Size:

- Large
- Small

Character

- Developed
- Undeveloped

Thoughts/Ideas about Conservation Lands Values

- Vegetation condition
- Access "risks"/threats (weeds, etc.)
- Wildlife use/habitat
- Connectivity (to adjacent wildlands)
- Vegetation type (rarity, uniqueness)
- Rare species

Recreation Values to be balanced with Conservation – Consider the concept of “no net loss”.

- Biking
- Hiking
- Dogs
- Horses
- Neighborhood use
- Hang gliding/paragliding
- Trail running (large events)

Where do we go from here?

Affirming/Setting the Calendar

- The Working Group will meet on the following dates at a location to be announced:
 - Wednesday, June 3
 - Final meeting dates will be set as the process advances.
 - A second open house will be held prior to the final Working Group meeting in the fall.

Homework

- Come to the June 3 Working Group meeting with your agenda for the process in a form that can be taped to the table.
- Please review the pertinent Plans that Morgan sent online.
- Please continue to think about the draft products in these notes and be ready to complete them at the next meeting.
- Continue to visit other Conservation Lands if possible.
- Continue to have casual conversation about the Conservation Lands and their management with the 5-7 people you identified.