



Minutes

Montana State Parks & Recreation Board

Makoshika State Park, 1301 Snyder Avenue, Glendive, MT 59330

June 18, 2014

Parks Board Members Present: Tom Towe, Chair; Diane Conradi; Jeff Welch; Mary Sexton;

Doug Smith; Jeff Hagener

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Jeff Hagener, Director; Chas Van Genderen, State Parks Administrator; and State Parks Staff

Guests: June 18, 2014- See Parks file folder for sign-in sheet

Topics of Discussion:

1. **Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Approval of Minutes of April Board Meeting**
3. **Approval of Board Expenses**
4. **Board Members Report**
5. **Director's Report/Staff Report**
6. **Award Recognition 30 Years at FWP**
7. **Public Comment Not on Agenda**
8. **John Keck- 2016 NPS Anniversary and Opportunities for Expanded Collaboration**
9. **State Parks in FWP Region 6**
10. **Operational Update**
11. **Strategic Plan Process Update**
12. **Presentation on Brands by Member Welch**
13. **State Park User Fees**
14. **Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Grants**
15. **Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants**
16. **Capital Project**
17. **Parks Lands**
18. **Lewis & Clark Caverns/Thompson Falls State Park Permanent Easement**
19. **Acquisition of new Park lands**

1. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Tom Towe called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of the Park Boards Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2014

Action: Vice Chair Sexton moved and Member Conradi seconded the motion to approve the April 9, 2014 minutes. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Parks Board Expenses

Action: Chairman Towe moved and Member Welch seconded the motion to approve the Parks Board expenses. Motion Carried.

4. Board Member Reports – tours, conversations, questions, etc

Chairman Towe reported he attended Strategic Plan focus meetings at Pictograph Cave and Glendive, that meeting was less attended. Visited Medicine Rocks and Pirogue Island State Park; Yellowstone National Park over Memorial Day weekend, spend time visiting Travelers Rest, Beavertail Hill, Anaconda Smokestack, Lost Trail State Park.

Vice Chairwoman Sexton attended the Great Falls Strategic Plan focus meeting, well attended, great conversation on the direction of parks.

Member Conradi reported she attended the Kalispell Strategic Planning focus meeting, well attended, good constituents of people and interests. Concern of note from meeting: law enforcement, how the different police forces respond to the kinds of things that happen in heavily used campgrounds; also potential for partnerships, brought up several time, counties looking for assistance with trails. Lastly, visited Fish Creek with FWP Commissioner Gary Wolfe, Region 2 Parks and Wildlife staff; discussed opportunities, challenges, and how the area is being used now and potential for the area. Opportunity to enhance recreational area and preserve the habitat; to further improve all attributes of the area by putting more developed camping.

Member Smith attended Montana Archeologist Society (MAS) Annual meeting in Hamilton, visited Travelers Rest and Fort Owen State Park, walked the grounds of the Daily Manson. The Bitterroot has growing retired population expect increase demands on recreational activities in that area, property in the Bitterroot to watch for, Sleeping Child Hot Springs. Sara Scott gave key note speech at MAS, reviewed the Work Project Administration (WPA) project in the 1930's, very few artifacts remain. Visited Pictograph Cave State Parks discussed with Sara Scott and Jarret Kostrba management issues. April attended Strategic Planning Meeting in Glasgow and Glendive, low attendance; toured through Wyoming visiting Cody Wyoming, Hot Springs State Park the largest visited State Park, Dinosaur Museum, Legend Rock State Park and Fossil Butte National Monument. Meeting with Montana Tourism to visit Makoshika State Park and travel north.

Member Welch reported he spent time at Bannack, Beaverhead Rock and Clark Canyon State Park got a management perspective of the parks; improved understanding of the flooding issue, mitigate potential for future, and understand the fire issue. Drove by Graycliff Prairie Dog Town State Park many times on the way to Billings, finely stopped and visited, why is it a state park? Spent time in San Francisco, great model of parks, on how they operate. Plan to attend Great Outdoors week, in Washington DC; premiere video by National Outdoor Leadership

School (NOLS) Expedition Denali; the first team of African Americans who attempted to summit the highest peak in North America; on the importance of connecting young people of color with the outdoors.

5. Director's/Staff Report

Jeff Hagener, Director FWP reported weather changes constantly in Montana, past 2 months we went from FAS closures along the Yellowstone and Bitterroot, due to flooding to drought meetings, water levels have come back up including Smith River; water levels are constantly watched. Attended the 75th Parks Celebration concert at Lewis & Clarke Caverns State Park, good attendance, encourage people to understand the parks, show off partnerships we have and musicians helping out. Continuing to work through budget process; agency is dependent on user fees, major issue on continuing to keep revenue up. Last Legislative Session passed House Bill 2 a requirement to reduce FTE or equivalent dollar amount of FTE by four percent by next session, total agency needs to reduce by 26-28 FTE. Lastly, working with Governor's Office on Smith River Advisory Council, set up through executive order but are appointed by FWP Director and serve at the pleasure of the Director but are approved by the Governor's Office; Vice Chair Sexton will sit on the council as a member of the board. Several issues looking at: bear issues, human waist, and use of corridor; council will be first to look at issues.

Chas Van Genderen, Administrator for Parks Division reported nice spring weather kept the parks very busy, campgrounds were full Memorial Day Weekend, 19% increase in campsite reservation system from last year, increased revenue. Chairman Towe and Van Genderen spoke at Tourism Advisory Council about the state park system and challenges parks have, overall positive process and opportunity. Completed 2 field schools one at Madison Buffalo Jump an archeology field school done in partnership with University of Montana, 81 tee-pee rings identified, significant site, next year possibility for two field schools with University of Montana and Montana State University. The second completed field school was by Mr. Tim Urbaniak, at Bannack State Park, 3D scanning of all the buildings, each building is an artifact, 3D scanning helps data management. Mr. Tim Urbaniak asked me to ask the Parks Board to consider Medicine Rocks to be listed on the National Register of Historic places. July 10th, State Parks will speak to the Environment Quality Council (EQC), speaking on progress of State Parks board, member Conradi will join, topics to discuss: board retreat in February, steep learning curve, questions that have come forth, activities board members are evolved with, strategic plan listening session, and policies questions: acquisition and CAPTIL development issues. Lastly, staff members visited Oregon State Parks to learn about their maintenance system, working internally to improve maintenance standards; looking to develop a formal maintenance management system.

6. Award Recognition 30 Years at FWP

Thirty year award presented to Doug Habermann

7. Public Comment Not On Agenda

Mike Garcia, Director of Voices of Montana Tourism, nonprofit advocacy group focusing on educating, communicating and shaping perception of tourism in the state of Montana, do this by engage legislators, policy influencer such as Parks Board members, and general public through communication efforts to focus on the economic impact tourism has on the state. Focus area shape how people perceive why tourism is successful to Montana due to tourism promotion that the state manages and funds. Opportunities to grow, how can we increase promotional funding and to what end? Working with the following groups: Office of Tourism, Regions CVB, Historical Society, Heritage Commission, State Parks, Historical Properties, Montana Arts Council

Lengthy discussion with Chairman Towe.

Member Welch stated he is on the Voices of Montana Tourism Committee.

Jerry Jimison, Mayor of Glendive, welcome to our great community. Address couple issues: one road, Snyder Ave, into Makoshika State Park, rain storm took out culvert, FWP and City of Glendive, shared cost to replace culvert. Friends of Makohika, local support group, City of Glendive always willing to help, committed to putting water at campsite.

Jim Swanson, Friends of Makoshika, delighted Parks Board is here. Thank you for the lifetime memberships. Friends started 1986; purpose was to meet and try to do a better job with the park. The park was conceived in 1952, taken care by highway department, continued lengthy discussion on the history and upcoming maintenance projects in Makoshika State Park. Would like to add drinking water and a dump station, Glendive is a destination.

Carla Hansley, Missouri River Country, here today to support State Parks and Voice of Montana and Tourism Matters, think about North East Montana.

8. John Keck- 2016 NPS Anniversary and Opportunities for Expanded Collaboration

John Keck, National Park Service, welcome Parks Board, on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS), Parks Board will be an important partner for NPS, one more asset to accomplish some of the goals we all share. State Parks and local parks are visited more than National Parks, how can we work more effectively; big organization ignored how to help state and local parks, busy with managing own assets. Upcoming opportunity, 2016 NPS celebrating 100th Anniversary, focus will be “find your park”, visitors do not know the difference between National Parks and State Parks. Setting up series of meetings around the country, talk about how parks should be shaped and see what direction the NPS needs to go. Key issues for NPS: relevance and diversity need to get engaged with current times, social media, and new technology.

Chairman Towe asks about his title on his business card: Wyoming, Montana State Coordinator and Eastern Wyoming Group Superintended?

Keck replied Eastern Wyoming Group Superintended, people at Fort Laramie, Devils Tour, park staff at Little Big Horn and Big Horn Canyon report to me.

Keck and Chairman Towe continued a lengthy discussion about parks and monuments.

9. State Parks in FWP Region 6

Tom Flowers, FWP Regional 6 Supervisor, discussed with the board, more park opportunities in Region 6. Second largest region in FWP with almost 20% of the state, currently 26% public land, most ground is private and opportunity for public recreation is limited. One State Park in Region 6, Brush Lake State Parks; no dedicated person for State Parks, no one for people to contact.

Vice Chair Sexton states most recent parks were started by local effort and groups. Are there similar local efforts by non-profits or communities who have real enthusiasm for a certain spot; that would put money time and effort into its designation?

Flowers responded Region 6 does not have any person in the area for outreach.

Chairman Towe asked if there is a need for a campground.

Flowers responded yes, there is potential for a campground.

Chairman Towe asked are there any historic sites in Region 6 we should focus on.

Flowers read a list of sights Region 6 identified.

10. Operational Update

Roger Semler, Assistant Administrator gives parks operational update, Parks & Recreation Planning: January 2014-18 Montana Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan completed, strategic planning process included series of nine public focus groups. Work continues on the Fish Creek State Park draft management plan and implementing a visitation metrics survey. Public Safety; 2013 Montana State Parks Public Safety Report & Incident Summary has been distributed to the Board and key department staff. On April 25th parks staff administered life-saving CPR & AED to a colleague who suffered a heart attack. The response team will be recognized at the August Board meeting. Proposed Commercial Use ARM Rule; public comments are being accepted through June 13th, public hearing was held on June 3rd, summary of comments will be provided at this meeting. AmeriCorps Program: 18 members serving in all five regions, 14 different locations. Received grant funding in the competitive pool for 2015, will allow the program to add two more members and commitment of funding support from TRPHA and the Bannack Association. Volunteer Program: hosting volunteer open houses and training sessions, 38 campground hosts for the 2014 peak season. Interpretation and Education: school field trip reach over 20,000 students annually, on May 13 and 14th

broadcasted series of “Indian Education for All” programs from Chief Plenty Coups State Park reaching 1,074 students in 18 schools across Montana. Campground Reservation Program: On-line reservations available at 20 campground parks and 4 day use parks, 18% increase in facility reservations made from January - April 2014 (3,681 reservations) compared to January - April 2013 (3,113 reservations). Heritage Resource Program: Madison Buffalo Jump State Park hosted a University of Montana field school for archeology students for two weeks in May, resulting in a number of significant finds. The University will provide a full report.

Chairman Towe asked if there are any incidents on the incident report that need attention by the Parks Board.

Semler responded, all issues are important to Parks because it affects visitors experience; areas of concern DUI, BUI, domestic concerns, use of unlicensed OHV on public roads, disturbance of heritage or cultural assets.

Member Conradi says she wants to know how public safety works and the differences between park wardens vs. ex-officio wardens.

Semler suggests we organize a work session at the August meeting, to include a basic understanding: What are public use regulations? What are our expectations of appropriate behavior? So the board understands what you are allowed to do in a state park. Followed by how we handle and respond to issues.

Chairman Towe requests the following to be put on the August agenda the information Member Conradi requested as well as a report on the change of FTE.

Director Hagener acknowledges; also responds public safety, very complex, been proposals in legislation to give enforcement more authority, do not have authority in drugs, alcohol, minors under the influence.

Member Welch states brands are important if you have a bench mark level of quality, will have fewer issues.

11. Strategic Plan Process – Informational

Maren Murphy, Parks Planner explains creating an updated strategic plan for the park system, process will update the 1998 strategic plan through a series of public involvement processes, employee input, and board consideration; process is expected to be concluded by the end of 2014. Focus group meetings held in 8 locations around the state from April 21 to May 2: Glasgow, Glendive, Billings, Kalispell, Missoula, Whitehall, Helena, and Great Falls, 117 people signed in at the meetings across the state. Discussed the values of the state parks system, identified changes and opportunities to enhance the system, and addressed challenges related to funding and management actions. Executive summary shared at the Parks Board meeting and posted online at stateparks.mt.gov, full notes will be available for each of the meetings. Public

engagement for the planning process includes: stakeholder conversations with key stakeholder groups, public comment period that allows all Montana citizens to consider draft direction, public comment summary on the draft plan to be provided to the board, public comment on the final plan when the board considers the final document. Draft outline of strategic plan presented at August Board meeting, draft Strategic Plan strategy presented at October board meeting then put out for public comment.

Chairman Towe asked do you think there was enough participation from the communities.

Murphy replied; yes believes over full scope of all the meetings received a good idea of the issues, values, concerns; 117 people does not represent Montana but what we were looking for at this level, to engage stakeholders in discussion.

Van Genderen added the three topics discussed at the February meeting were enhancing revenue stream, more consistent funding packages, engage constituents, and strategic partnerships. Three things Van Genderen is talking to stakeholders about. Parks staff is working hard to meet board expectations.

12. Presentation by Board Member Jeff Welch

Full presentation is attached.

Member Welch gave a presentation on brands stating Parks Board spends a lot of time discussing strategy, but tactics are equally important; how are we going to do things. Need to set and meet a promise; to package it to tell a story of; significant, relevance, and accessibility to all Montanans.

13. State Park User Fees – Information

Roger Semler, Assistant Administrator explains user fees in preparation for proposing an updated Biennial Fee Rule at the October 2014 Board meeting. Actions taken to date include conducting an internal staff dialogue regarding potential changes to the fee rule, completed comparability research of recreational user fees in neighboring state park systems, federal public lands and private entities. Survey includes an analysis of camping fees, day use/entry fees, lodging, facility, tour and special event fees, fee differentials (spatial and temporal) and fee discount programs. Will hold strategic conversations to further seek feedback on user fees, will request additional guidance from the Board on this concept; intent of adopting a Biennial Fee Rule no later than the December Board meeting.

Chairman Towe encourages Semler to keep to the timeline and submit the recommendation

14. Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Grants – Final

Tom Reilly, Assistant Administrator explains federal RTP grant program involves trail-related projects in Montana. Montana solicits and awards \$1.4 - \$1.6 million in RTP funds to sponsors statewide, annual grant awards typically involve approximately 50- 60 individual projects, grants awarded to trail projects sponsored by local communities, private clubs and organizations, state entities, and federal agencies. Types of projects are development of new

trails, installation of latrine facilities at trailheads, snowmobile trail grooming, and heavy maintenance on existing rails. Grant cycle total of 89 applications were received totaling \$3.94 million. Applications have been scored, input sought from the citizens State Trails Advisory Committee (STAC), and narrowed to 58 grants for the \$1.6 million. Public was provided opportunity to comment on the full list of RTP grants beginning in mid April. Notice was provided via press releases and website, 27 public comments were received at the close of the public comment period on May 21, 2014.

Alternative 1: award the recommended 58 RTP grants for the current cycle per the scoring and recommendations of the citizens STAC. The total award amount would be \$1.6 million.
Alternative 2: not award the RTP funds via the established grant program this cycle. Recommendation to award the proposed RTP grants as scored and recommended by the citizen STAC to the 58 grant sponsors statewide.

Action: The Parks Board move to concur with the department's approval of the Recreational Trails Program grants for 2014.

Chairman Towe asked for public comment

Bruce Rierson, Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association (MTVRA), RTP Selection Committee Member stated community involvement is important and helps with the breaking down selection process.

Reilly added community support means money; grants are 80%-20% community match.

Member Conradi abstained.

Action on Motion: Motion Carried

15. Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants – Final

Tom Reilly, Assistant Administrator explained Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars are federal funds available to the states to make improvements which benefit outdoor recreation. The funds received by Montana are typically split between improvements to state park sites and a grant program to benefit outdoor recreational facilities in Montana communities. A condition of the program is that sponsors provide a 50% cost match for their respective projects. For the most recent grant cycle opportunity, a total of 6 LWCF community grant applications were submitted for the following projects; Gallatin County Parks Gallatin Regional Park (Ph. II) \$75,000, City of Hardin Heimat Park restrooms \$75,000, City of Helena Playground Equipment Replacement \$42,414, City of Lewistown Swimming Pool Rehabilitation \$75,000, City of Sidney East Playground Area Renovation \$32,603, City of Billings South Park Playground Renovation \$75,000. Soliciting public input and comment on each community LWCF grant application is the responsibility of the respective applicant prior to submittal. Each applicant conducted a public involvement process for their respective projects. Proposed projects: maintenance of existing facilities, upgrade of playground equipment/swimming pools, work in existing local government managed park areas, the public comments generated were minimal. All the proposed projects were supported in the local communities. Alternative 1,

award the recommended 6 community LWCF projects in the amount of approximately \$375,000 as submitted. Alternative 2, not award the available LWCF funds to the community projects. Recommend awarding the proposed LWCF grants for the 6 community outdoor recreational projects as submitted.

Action: The Parks Board moves to concur with the department's approval of the stateside Land and Water Conservation fund grants for 2014.

Member Welch and Reilly had lengthy discussion about LWCF funding and disconnect between what the project needs are.

Administrator Van Genderen explains the federal law that was passed.

Chairman Towe asked for public comment.

Action on Motion: Motion Carries

16. Capital Project – Informational

Tom Reilly, Assistant Administrator explains each Legislative Session funding is provided via the HB 5 process for capital improvements at State Parks sites throughout Montana; funds are utilized for major maintenance, park improvement, and site development projects on a priority basis as determined by Helena Park's staff and the Regional Park Managers. In accordance with Board Policy on Capital projects passed at the December 2013 meeting, this agenda item provides an update on the higher-profile capital projects that will be in-work this summer and into the fall months. For the larger capital projects, all have gone through or will go through the public involvement process prior to being implemented. The majority of the annual Parks MM projects selected are typically excluded from the public comment process due to the routine nature of the projects.

17. Parks Lands – Information

Tom Reilly, Assistant Administrator gives an informational overview on park lands; over the years there have been many transactions and funding types involved with the acquisition of the lands for which make up Montana's 54 State Parks and 'affiliated lands'. Some sites are the result of several individual land acquisitions occurring over many years. Additionally, there have been many funding sources utilized for these acquisitions, depending on available funding, the perceived appropriateness of the funding at the time, and other factors. Several State Park sites (or portions of sites) that appear to have been purchased utilizing License Account or federal Pittman-Roberts funds, majority of these transactions occurred in the 1960's and often involved License Account funds being matched 50/50 with the available federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies. Two sites have been purchased as Fishing Access Sites and entirely with License Account funds. The sites were subsequently incorporated into the State Park system. The department is actively working to verify accuracy of records, address any areas of conflict and make adjustments in designation and ownership as appropriate.

Van Genderen explains this is a response to Member Conradi request on who owns what lands in the agency. This is how do we best manage and improve the parks discussion.

Chairman Towe asks do we have to do something with is or is it a real issue.

Director Hagener responds there is an audit system; we have had federal audits that have questioned use of sites that is used primarily not for fishing or hunting uses.

18. Lewis & Clark Caverns/Thompson Falls State Park Permanent Easement - Final

Thompson Falls State Park, situated in west-central Montana on the Clark Fork River, 2 miles northwest of the town of Thompson Falls. The 2014 annual lease rate on this 29-acre parcel is \$12,663.77. Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park, located in southwest Montana in Jefferson County, was designated Montana's first state park in 1941. The 2014 annual lease rate on this 640-acre parcel is \$4,773.60. This proposal is to purchase of permanent easements on state trust lands within the two parks, eliminating annual lease payments, Montana State Parks would pay full market value of the properties and hold easement over all surface rights, DNRC would retain mineral rights. The current appraised value of the DNRC lands at Thompson Falls State Park is \$275,000 and \$640,000 for trust lands in Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park. One half of the Thompson Falls State Park easement would be funded by Avista Utilities (\$137,500). A draft environmental assessment (EA) was released for public review and comment from April 7, 2014, through May 7, 2014; document was posted on the Montana State Parks website, through a statewide press release and with legal notices area newspapers. No public comments were received. The preferred Alternative, purchase of permanent easement on state trust lands within Thompson Falls and Lewis & Clark Caverns State Parks. The no-action alternative would result in continuation of FWP paying annual leases for state trust lands within Thompson Falls and Lewis & Clark State Parks or FWP purchases a perpetual easement for either Thompson Falls or Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park, but not both. Montana State Parks recommends that the Board approve purchase of permanent easements for both of these state parks units for the following reasons: both state park units are important units to the Montana State Park system, permanent easements will create long term management stability, and will make capital investments more sound, the cost of these easements is based on the full market value of these parcels. With current resurgence of land prices, these may be the best prices we see for a very long time, and an opportunity to defer the overall cost to the department through the financial contribution of Avista Utilities.

Action: The Parks Board move to direct Montana State Parks to seek final approval from State Land Board for the purchase of permanent easements on state trust lands within Thompson Falls and Lewis & Clark Caverns State Parks.

Chairman Towe asks for public comment.

Action on Motion: Motion Carries

19. Acquisition of new Park lands – Informational

Chas Van Genderen, Administrator for Montana State Parks is working to improve operational stability as Parks develop the strategic plan and look to the upcoming legislative session. Understanding multi-faceted funding, behind the acquisitions of the public lands the Parks Division manages is critical to that process, some of the lands that are managed by the Parks Division were initially acquired through funding sources from other FWP divisions and/or state government agencies. Montana State Parks is one of the largest and least well funded in the Rocky Mountain West per the HJR 32 EQC report. The state as a whole, wrestles with acquisition of lands for various park and recreation oriented uses including new state parks or easements for trails or parking. Challenges are significance, priority, funding, staffing, development, political perception, geographic distribution, site designation, and public use; have begun dialogue on how to address this ongoing but complex concern. February board discussed changing statute and has since moved away from that consideration but continues to ponder how to best address the issue. Two alternatives have been identified: no action, allow this issue to remain unresolved by not formally taking broad action and dealing with the issue as it surfaces before the department, the board, the executive and the Legislature or Develop Board Policy on acquisition, direct staff to continue to deliberate the issue and consider developing Montana State Parks and Recreation Board policy to guide future decision making for the department and the board.

Member Conradi and Member Smith are interested in assisting with the development of board policy.

Member Conradi suggests Board Policy to Evaluate Proposals.

Member Smith says it's not just new state parks but increasing the current small parks.

Member Welch says there needs to be a fiscal component to the evaluation criteria.

Vice Chair Sexton suggests a parallel path approach, needed to deal with current park lands that do not meet the criteria that are not relevant, significant, and accessible.

The next meeting will be held August 19 & 20, 2014 at Travelers Rest State Park, Lolo Montana.

Motion for adjournment.

Adjourn at 2:40p.m.