



MONTANA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: April 17, 2015

Agenda Item: Acquisition for trail corridor for Lower Blackfoot River trail

Division: Parks

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background (Brief description of the issue, decision to be made, history, etc.): In August 2013, the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board gave approval to Montana State Parks to pursue a riverfront trail easement along the lower Blackfoot River to connect two parcels of the new Milltown State Park. The department owns and manages a strip of land along the lower Blackfoot River from the confluence with the Clark Fork River to a point just above the pedestrian bridge, in the area known as the Milltown Gateway. Upstream, three quarters of a mile from the bridge, is another 47-acre parcel acquired in 2010 for Milltown State Park. The trail would begin at the Milltown Gateway and head upstream toward the Blackfoot park boundary near the site of the old Bonner Dam, approximately 4000 feet. Funding was allocated in the 2013 Natural Resource Damage Program Long-Range Plan to pursue trail acquisition and to develop a trailhead at the Milltown Gateway, near the pedestrian bridge.

In the time since the original approval, new owners have acquired the property and indicated an interest in a fee title land transfer rather than the granting of a public access easement.

Public Involvement Process & Results (Brief description of the type of public involvement and summary of what we heard from the public): If approved by the Board, an Environmental Assessment on the trail corridor acquisition would be written and distributed for public comment.

Alternatives and Analysis (Brief description of alternative solutions with analysis of the pros and cons of each):

Alternative # 1: The department would pursue acquisition of a trail corridor on the subject property.

Alternative # 2: No action. Montana State Parks would not pursue an acquisition and no trail would be built along the lower Blackfoot River. Milltown State Park parcels at the Gateway and on the Blackfoot would remain separated. Funding earmarked for this acquisition would be returned to the program.

Agency Recommendation and Rationale (Brief description of our recommendation to the Board and the reasons for it): Montana State Parks recommends approval by the Board to proceed with the acquisition of a trail corridor along the Blackfoot River at Milltown State Park. The acquisition would allow a trail to connect two pieces of public land along the Blackfoot River and offer access to public land for hiking, biking, fishing, hunting and other recreation for future generations.

Proposed Motion (Draft language the Board could use to adopt the agency recommendation): I move to direct the Division to initiate negotiations, appraisal and public comment on this proposed trail corridor acquisition.