



## **Minutes**

### **Montana State Parks & Recreation Board Meeting**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Helena, MT 59620

June 15, 2016

Parks & Recreation Board Members Present: Tom Towe, Chair; Jeff Welch, Diane Conradi; Jeff Hagener, Director FWP

Parks & Recreation Board Members Attending Via Conference Call: Doug Smith

Parks Staff Present: Chas Van Genderen, State Parks Administrator; State Parks Staff, Melissa Baker, Chief of Operations/Assistant Administrator; Mike Volesky, Chief of Operations

Guests: June 15, 2016 – See Parks file folder for sign-in sheet

Topics:

- 1. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance**
- 2. Approval of April 21, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes**
- 3. Approval of April 21, 2016 Board Expenses**
- 4. Board Member Report**
- 5. Director’s Report**
- 6. Staff Report**
- 7. Public Comment Not on Agenda**
- 8. FWP Vision & Guide 2016-2026 – Informational**
- 9. Land Reconciliation - Informational**
- 10. Bonner Learning Park Donation - Endorsement**
- 11. National Register of Historic Places Nomination / Medicine Rocks – Endorsement**
- 12. Park Fee Rule – Informational**
- 13. Classification Prioritization Implementation – Informational**
- 14. Makoshika Lake Naming – Informational**
- 15. Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants – Final**
- 16. Approval of Capital over \$5,000**
- 17. Parks Foundation - Informational**

## **1. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Towe called the meeting to order at 8:40am and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **2. Approval of the Parks & Recreation Board Meeting Minutes of April 21, 2016**

*Action:* Chairman Towe moved and Jeff Welch seconded the motion to approve the April 21, 2016 minutes. Motion carried.

## **3. Approval of Parks & Recreation Board: April 21, 2016 Board Expenses**

*Action:* Chairman Towe moved and Jeff Welch seconded the motion to approve the April 21, 2016 Parks & Recreation Board expenses. Motion carried.

## **4. Board Member Reports –**

Chairman Towe reported he visited Marias River Park. It was very beautiful with amazing views. It is not well developed and has no campgrounds. He also visited Fort Assiniboine by Havre, Montana. It was the largest military fort in Montana at one time. It was in operation from 1879 to 1911. About a third of the buildings are still intact and many are open for visitation. It is run by the Agriculture Experiment Station presently. Member Conradi reported she visited China in April with the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce. They had a great meeting with Max Baucus. It was mind boggling from a tourism standpoint. The historical resources are incredible. She learned how very important it is to protect heritage and history for generations to come. Member Welch reported he wanted to roll out his report in regards to the increasing pressures on our recreation amenities in this state and the need for more opportunities in managed recreation. He was on a back country campsite on Yellowstone Lake. He could see the need for more paddling type trails. He had some frustration with trying to obtain a cancellation permit on the Smith River. He believes there is a better way of doing this system and believes it should be automated. Member Smith reported he stopped by Brush Lake a couple of weeks ago and met the new Manager there. He is doing a wonderful job.

## **5. Director's Report –**

Director Hagener reported they are in a busy year end close out season and continue to prepare for the new session. All visitation is very busy. Grizzly bear season is very active on the Rocky Mountain Front right now. There is a good deal of activity with federal funding sources. We currently have a Quiet Water petition out. The Commission is trying to get ahead of this issue.

## **6. Staff Report –**

Chas Van Genderen, Parks Division Administrator, reported June is National Public Lands month. June 4<sup>th</sup> was National Trails Day and we had a number of events throughout our parks. Last weekend was Buzzard Day at Makoshika and next month is Bannack days. Year to date we are up 32 percent in our visitation from January through May. We have a number of projects underway; working hard to have the bicycle campsites complete by early July, working to pave

the switchbacks at Makoshika this fall, we continue to work on Hell Creek to continue dialogue as to what the future of this park will be. We are also doing the archeological clearance on the flood impoundment that was proposed for Bannack State Park. In May, Mr. Van Genderen attended the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals Conference in Boise, Idaho to accept on behalf of the board an award for the National Project Excellence for our Strategic Plan. Chairman Towe asked Mr. Van Genderen to comment on the Corps of Engineers attitude on Hell Creek. Mr. Van Genderen reported when he was in Boise, Idaho, he met with the Chief of Natural Resources from Washington DC. He was told there is no funding for the Corps of Engineers because they are doing the same thing we are doing as an organization and they said their limited resources are going where their visitation is highest and this is not necessarily in a place such as Fort Peck. We have started conversations with Senator Daines, as well as Representative Holmlund to help bring about an awareness of what the Corps opportunities are.

**7. Public Comment Not On Agenda**– No public comment.

**8. FWP Vision & Guide 2016-2026 – Informational –**

Director Hagener reported we have had a lot of employee turnover and the last time the department has taken an internal look at what the agency was about was in the mid to late 90s. So many things have changed since this time, so he felt it was appropriate to put together an effort to create a vision and guide for the next ten years. A group of people within the department was put together called *Fifteen and Forward* and they created FWP Vision & Guide 2016-2026. This report was shared with the Commission last week and we are currently rolling this out to the staff. Mike Volesky, Chief of Operations, reviewed the FWP Vision and Guide for 2016-2026 and the process of how it was created. It was designed to be a guide, internally and externally, for policy discussions, budget allocations, new funding requests, planning, legislative, etc. Copies of this document were distributed to the board and a video was also shown.

**9. Land Reconciliation – Informational**

Director Hagener reported he was requested at the April Parks & Recreation Board Meeting to put together a working group to look at land reconciliation issues. Tom Towe, Mary Sexton, Dan Vermillion (Commission Chairman), Richard Stuker (Commission Vice Chairman), Chas Van Genderen, Tom Reilly, Eileen Ryce, Ken McDonald, Paul Sihler, Sue Daly and Adam Brooks were appointed to the working group. He is hoping to have some direction on West Shore by September 15<sup>th</sup>. The others are longer term issues that will take more discussion. We are looking for solutions and how we can move forward.

**10. Bonner Learning Park Donation – Endorsement**

The Bonner Learning Park (BLP), owned by the nonprofit Bonner Development Group (BDG), is a 25-acre parcel along the Clark Fork River, adjacent to Milltown State Park. The BLP (also

known as the Two Rivers Community Park), was donated by Champion International and developed in the mid-1990s. The park served as a small, local park until 2006 when it closed to the public with the advent of the Superfund cleanup construction work. While cleanup work is completed, public access to the park has been limited with access permitted only to the Bonner School for field trips. Most of the BLP property is located on the north side of the river, except a corner that extends across the river to the southwest. Milltown State Park is the immediate upstream and downstream neighbor to the BLP. The property includes river frontage and several park amenities such as a stone and timber-framed picnic shelter/group use shelter with built-in grill, a vault toilet, a kiosk, a sun dial, a built-in spotting scope, a short trail network, a restored train car, and a small space for limited parking. Recent informal discussions between Montana State Parks (MSP) and BDG staff have indicated a willingness to explore a potential donation of the park parcel. No public involvement to date. If endorsed by the board, and upon completion of all due diligence, an Environmental Assessment would be completed and distributed for public comment prior to final approval by the board. The Department recommends approval by the Board to proceed with the formal consideration of this parcel of land.

Public Comment: Bruce Hall, Executive Director of the Bonner Development Group and Bob Sellers, President, (BDG) were present to answer question in regards to this donation. Bruce said they acquired the land in 1994 from Champion International, which is now International Paper. The land was available and requested donation of the property and then reclaimed the site and opened to the public and in 2006, the park was closed. They have invested about \$250,000 in developing the site with much of the labor being volunteer work. Mr. Hall said that his organization will probably sunset in the next five years and hope that the State can take over the site for long-term ownership and upkeep. He brought a packet of information about the property and BDG and asked that the Board review the information.

***Action:** Member Welch made the motion we begin consideration of working out the donation with this group. Motion carried unanimously.*

## **11. National Register of Historic Places Nomination / Medicine Rocks – Endorsement – Information**

Over the past year, with the assistance and support of MSP and the Montana SHPO, Tim Urbaniak prepared a National Register nomination for Medicine Rocks State Park. Medicine Rocks State Park, which the board toured in 2014, contains prehistoric petroglyphs along with thousands of names, dates, symbols, and pictures all of which document continued human presence in the park from 1000 years ago through historic and modern times. As Tim Urbaniak stated “the history of our nation is literally written upon the landscape here.” The abundance of inscriptions and the fact that they so explicitly express our broad and varied human experience as Americans make this park worthy of listing in the National Register of Historic Places. MSP plans to submit the National Register nomination to the Montana Historic Preservation Review Board at their next meeting in September 2016. If the Review Board approves the nomination, the park will be formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places shortly thereafter.

Melissa Baker, assistant administrator and chief of operations of the Parks Division, said that the Montana Antiquities Act already requires us to consider the effects of historic or paleontological resources on any development or actions that we take. There is not an increased requirement under this nomination. Decisions are still based with MSP and we work with the SHPO.

National Register listing elevates the status of the park to a nationally recognized heritage site. The listing will also increase funding, tourism, grant opportunities and marketing opportunities for the park. We would also coordinate with our heritage resources program leader to see if there are any changes happening in the park. Montana does have a number of historic places in the park system and outside of the park system.

## **12. Park Fee Rule – Informational**

The Biennial Fee Rule is a two-year rule that establishes recreational use fees for state park lands. The current fee rule was last approved by the State Parks and Recreation Board on October 15, 2014. The current timeline for proposal and passage of the Biennial Fee Rule is such that its implementation occurs after camping reservations have been received for the effective year. This results in lost revenue and inefficiencies in implementation. By shifting the timeline for proposal of a new fee rule to April (currently August) and approval to June (currently October), implementation of the fee rule can take place prior to the opening of the 9-month camping reservation window resulting in increased revenue, greatly improved field processes, and better customer service.

Melissa Baker, assistant administrator and chief of operations, said our purpose in coming to the Board with the Park Fee Rule with a proposal is to extend the current rule until next June. That would allow us time to do due diligence on various factors mentioned above and allow the division to bring a new proposal for fee rules in April, 2017, for adoption in June. We will have to open this to public comment at that time. At the last Board meeting, the Board approved the administrative park use rules (ARM) and those rules have, in the past, been captured in the fee rule. Now that the fee rules are an ARM rule, we need to take those out of the use rule so that we don't have two different versions of use rules and it will greatly simplify the fee rule. There also have been some adjustments in the hiker/biker camping fee rule, which would be included in the new rules.

Chairman Towe said that he agreed that shifting the rules' timeline to April for proposals, adoption in June, and implementation in September was acceptable.

## **13. Classification Prioritization Implementation – Informational**

Goal A of the 2015 Strategic Plan required that the division manage significant, relevant and accessible parks in a manner that is consistent with available resources. As part of meeting that goal, the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board passed the Classification and Prioritization Policy in December 2015. In January, the internal Classification Policy Implementation Team was chartered. In April, 2016 staff reported to the board Phase I of the process and drafted

recommendations for alternative management strategies for Class 4 Parks. Staff is now in the process of communicating with various stakeholders around the state relating to the redirection we are making. This information was sent to the board in May and the tables and speaking points staff will be using. The Classification and Prioritization Policy was the subject of a 31 day public comment period prior to its passage. Stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the policy is active and ongoing.

Chas Van Genderen said that in an effort to be transparent, staff has begun conversations with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Water Resources about Ackley Lake and Painted Rocks. In Beaverhead County, we have three parks there and Bannack is going to be a clear beneficiary of this policy. Beaverhead Rock and Clarks Lookout are going to be challenged by this policy. We have to engage County Commissions so that they hear about this from us first. We are not taking down anymore signs until we do the re-naming. We have a CPI team meeting next week and that group will talk about new names and the reallocation of resources. Soon we are going to talk about our Class 3 Parks and how to re-direct funds. We will cut from the bottom and reinvest in the top. That process continues to be underway.

Chairman Towe said that contact with local, state and federal agencies is very important.

#### **14. Makoshika Lake Naming – Informational**

In 2015, a previously undetected lake was discovered in Makoshika State Park. The lake was formed by a massive, 50 foot landslide that has been collecting rain and snow runoff over the last few years. Aerial photographs of the park show that the lake did exist prior to June 2014. The lake is approximately 28 yards wide and 200 yards long, with a maximum depth of 5.3 feet and is located one mile east of the park road on a line running roughly southeast from the group use shelter. Reaching the lake is a strenuous, difficult hike. This area of the park sees very limited visitation, as noted by a newly formed lake being undetected for two or more years. When the lake was first discovered, concerns of a flash flood and its effect on the Town of Glendive were raised, in the case of a large rain event and the dam failing to adequately hold back the lake. To address public concern, State Parks staff contacted the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Water Resources Division to have the landslide inspected by a dam expert and to determine the risk level to the Town of Glendive and to Makoshika State Park. After inspection, it was determined that the dam hazard was insignificant and that there was no risk of a catastrophic event. In January of 2016, the Glendive Ranger Review approached Montana State Parks about having a lake “naming” contest, to give the newly formed lake an official name. This prompted Parks staff to research what naming policies are in place for naming park features. It was discovered that current naming policies do not cover the unique situation of naming a newly formed land feature, which was created naturally. Having the lake named in a contest would raise awareness for Makoshika State Park and its array of unique backcountry experiences that the park offers.

Chas Van Genderen said that the naming policy that the Department has currently is related to fish and wildlife commission policy and the Director is responsible for naming sites. Chas would like to know what the Board's desire is to develop new policy and update old policy.

Chairman Towe recently received a call from a reporter from the Glendive Ranger Review who thought it would be a good idea to name the new lake. Chairman Towe thought that the current policy for naming criteria wasn't inconsistent with what Parks would need. If we were to let the City of Glendive proceed with a contest, as long as it was consistent with the naming criteria, he thought that would be doable. Chas said that the policy would go beyond naming just a lake; others may want to name things with new names. Director Hagener said there hasn't been an issue, except with the specific name of a person. There is a restriction that you can't name anything within 10 miles of the state capital after a living person, but that doesn't apply across the state. He said there is an allowance in the policy for a contest to be held to name the lake. Chairman Towe thought that as long as we are in compliance with the current policy, the City of Glendive could pick a name and the Board would reserve the right to approve the name. It was also felt that if the names of participants could be added to the Parks Foundation database that would also be good. Chas said that we could build off the existing policy guide and update it for Parks' specific needs. The Board would have the right to review the policy in three years, also. Chairman Towe said we would respond affirmatively to the people in Glendive to have a naming contest and then the policy could be updated as staff time permits. There was no public comment.

**Action: First Motion:** *Chairman Towe moved to approve the City of Glendive running a contest to name this lake in Makoshika and subject to our final approval provided that they provide us the names of all of the participants. Motion carried unanimously.*

**Action: Second Motion:** *Chairman Towe moved to ask the staff to draft a policy that would be specifically tailored to Parks using as a general starting point the policy that is now in place for site naming of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks back to a meeting when it is convenient for them to do so. Motion carried unanimously.*

### **15. Land & Water Conservation Fund Grants – Final**

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) dollars are federal funds available to the states for improvements which benefit outdoor recreation. The funds received by Montana are typically split between improvements at state park sites and a grant program to benefit outdoor recreation facilities in Montana communities. A condition of the program is that sponsors provide a 50 percent cost match for their respective projects. For the most recent grant cycle opportunity, a total of 10 qualifying LWCF community grant applications were submitted for the following projects:

- Town of Ekalaka           Swimming Pool Replacement           \$150,000
- City of Miles City       Sports Complex Upgrade               \$ 41,603

• City of Harlowton	Playground Equipment Replacement	\$ 24,000
• City of Billings	Playground Equipment Replacement	\$125,000
• City of Livingston	Park Development	\$ 46,000
• Montana FWP	Outdoor Gazebo – ‘Montana Wild’	\$ 60,000
• Butte/Silver Bow Co.	Swimming Pool Upgrade	\$150,000
• City of Bozeman	Restroom Addition	\$125,000
• City of Whitefish	Whitefish Trail – Trailhead Facilities	\$150,000
• City of Troy	Community Park Upgrades	<u>\$ 25,168</u>
	Total	<b><u>\$896,771</u></b>

The standard 30-day public comment opportunity will be conducted following Board action. Given the nature of the proposed projects (maintenance of existing public facilities, upgrade of playground equipments/aquatic facilities, improvements to existing local government managed parks, etc.) is expected that any public comments received will be supportive. Note that due to the time required for formal approval in the federal process, all notifications to project sponsors are qualified as being ‘tentative.’ It is recommended that the Board approve the award of the 10 community LWCF projects as proposed.

**Action:** *Member Welch moved to approve these awards of the LWCF projects as proposed. Motion carried by a quorum vote of three of the five members. Member Conradi recused herself. Member Sexton was not present.*

**16. Approval of Capital Over \$5,000**

Per the Parks and Recreation Board Policy adopted in December 2013, Board approval is required for unanticipated funding commitments exceeding \$5,000 within the Parks Capital Program. For this meeting, the Milltown project has a pending capital funding increase commitment. As the Milltown State Park project predates the Board, the entire project and its current status will be reviewed. The Milltown State Park project dates back to the 2007 time period, with the first funding appropriations provided via the 2011 Legislative Session. It has taken time for the site clean-up efforts completed and the legal access route resolved to a conclusion. The project is nearing the point when it will be ready to be publicly bid. The funding sources for the park development are:

• NRDP Grant (Ph. I)	\$ 927,530
• Housing and Urban Development Grant (Federal)	\$ 730,500





and constituency building. The Foundation has applied to be a beneficiary as a part of the State Employees Charitable Giving Program.

2. Advocacy - We have begun an initiative to help Parks get more attention in the upcoming legislative session and have started discussions with lobbyists to see if we have any opportunities in this session and, in the long-term, to get more support for funding, status and awareness for State Parks. The Foundation has asked for matching funds from Friends Groups to help support this initiative. So far, Bannack, Makoshika, Our Montana and TRPA have committed funds to hire lobbyists for this session with a better voice for Parks.
3. Projects – We had a conversation with MSU about the Three Forks area parks and connecting heritage and improved recreation aspects of the Missouri Headwaters, L&C Caverns and Madison Buffalo Jump. Jeff Welch, Marne Hayes and Matt Marcinek met with Tom McNab from the Community Design Center, as well as Agriculture, Engineering and Architecture departments. The Foundation recently received the work from MSU. The Foundation has not reviewed it yet, but they are excited about this project.
4. Communications – The Foundation has about 2,000 people they communicate with via e-mail about once a month to keep them updated. One such e-mail informed the network about the event they hosted with Louis Benetes of Colorado. He came and spoke at the Division Meeting in March. The Foundation was able to host him at Big Arm State Park and talk about the role that State Parks plays in outdoor recreation economy in Montana. This event was published by some of the larger daily newspapers in Montana. The Foundation sent out a piece entitled, “Four Most Endangered Parks,” which got a lot of attention. They were using these iconic parks as an example of the crucial improvements that the Foundation understands exists for the system. “Parks and Adequate Funding” was the latest e-mail discussing the recent poll by U of M, “Crown of the Continent and the Greater Yellowstone Initiative.” It was a poll to find out the public’s opinion of the value of public lands to the economy and the value of outdoor recreation to the state. Governor Bullock hosted events in Billings, Bozeman and Great Falls about the idea of an office of outdoor recreation and also a public access specialist position. The Foundation had an opportunity to host a member of the Candidas Foundation at the Madison Buffalo Jump and this was an opportunity to possibly bring a potential funder into the system.

Member Conradi said that they spend about \$2,200 a month from license plate funds and bring in between \$2,400 to \$3,100 a month on license plates. The Foundation has raised about \$27,000 in private money so far.

Member Conradi asked about the framework of the donation policy for Parks and asked for an update on how people can contribute directly to a park. Chas Van Genderen said that the Accounting staff is working on the policy. Director Hagener said that money that goes directly to

the Foundation belongs to them, but money given to the Department must go through the State Accounting procedures. Chas Van Genderen said that we would like to see donation boxes placed in parks, but if a state employee “touches” the money that has to go through State accounting procedures, The Foundation can accept money online at any time, but money donated in a specific park must be covered by the policy. Chas said he would get back to the Board with a definite answer.

Adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

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Tom Towe, Parks Board Chairman

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Jeff Hagener, Director FWP