



Minutes

Montana State Parks & Recreation Board Meeting

Travelers' Rest State Park

February 20, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

Parks & Recreation Board Members Present: Angie Grove, Chair; Jeff Welch, Vice-Chairman; Scott Brown; Mary Sheehy Moe and Betty Stone via telephone.

Staff Present: Randy Arnold, Chet Crowser, Pat Doyle, Loren Flynn, Coleen Furthmyre, Loren Flynn, Dave Landstrom, Sara Scott, Beth Shumate, Ken Soderberg, Dustin Temple and Zach Zipfel; Tim Aldrich (Fish and Wildlife Commissioner).

Guests: February 20, 2018 – See Parks file folder for sign-in sheet.

Topics:

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Minutes from the October 24, 2017 Board Meeting
3. Approval of Board Expenses
4. Board Member Reports
5. Director's Report
6. Administrator Report
7. 2020/21 Parks' Budget Priorities and Zero-Based Budget Update – Final
8. Forest Management Plan – Final
9. Land Exchange to Increase Lake Frontage at Lake Mary Ronan State Park – Endorsement
10. Explore landowner relationship/public access opportunities at Fort Owen State Park – Endorsement
11. Update from Montana State Parks Foundation
12. Parks in Focus/Strategic Plan Update
13. 2017 Volunteer of the Year
14. Heritage Resources Biennial Report Update
15. Holt Property Update
16. Milltown State Park and Bonner Development Group Property Update
17. Public Comment – For Issues Not On This Agenda
18. Adjournment

1. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Grove called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes from the October 24, 2017 Board Meeting

Action: Vice-Chairman Welch moved and Member Brown seconded to approve the October 24, 2017 minutes. Motion passed. 5-0

3. Approval of Board Expenses

Action: Member Brown moved and Vice-Chairman Welch seconded to approve the Parks & Recreation Board expenses. Motion passed. 5-0

4. Board Member Reports

Member Brown reported he had a good discussion with Regional Park Manager Doug Haberman regarding the work that is scheduled to be done at Makoshika State Park (SP); anxious to get the work done.

Vice-Chairman Welch stated he attended the Parks in Focus dinner, meeting and tour (Missouri Headwaters and Lewis and Clark Caverns SPs).

Chair Grove stated that she also attended the Parks in Focus dinner, tour and meeting; she and Vice-Chairman Welch are members on the Commission so there is Parks and Recreation Board representation; Member Brown also attended; educational process for the Commission and the public; the reason the full Board is not on the Commission is because the Commission anticipates there will be recommendations and decisions for the Board to make; will be up to the Board to implement, follow and monitor these recommendations and any decisions made. Asked by the Montana Trails Coalition to speak at their March 29 meeting about the Board, Parks in Focus and other exciting things happening within state parks; if any Board members have any comments she would like to share with the Coalition, please let her know.

Member Sheehy Moe reported she is an ex officio member on the Smith Advisory Council; Council has met once since the last Board meeting; meeting scheduled for February 22 has been cancelled; primary issue is the level of use, the impact it is having and how to balance it.

5. Director's Report

Dustin Temple, Chief of Administration, stated that Director Williams is attending the State Land Board meeting in Helena and she apologizes she cannot be in attendance. The Department is having an All-Staff meeting, which has never been done, on April 11-12 in Helena; meeting is to share the Departments mission and vision, from the Vision and Guide, and hopefully all employees can find a place for themselves within the Department; Director Williams will be sending out invitations to the Board soon; hope all can attend. The Department has recently gone through a Financial Compliance Audit; a couple issues were found specific to Parks that will be corrected and will improve record management; the audit also recommended the Department come up with a mid-level management training; the budget division has been reorganized. Temple introduced and welcomed Beth Shumate as the new Parks Administrator.

6. Administrator Report

Beth Shumate, Parks Administrator, gave a brief work background history on herself; looking forward to the challenges. The outdoor recreation economy is officially a big deal. On Wednesday, February 14, the Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA report) released numbers detailing the economic power of the outdoor recreation industry, showing it comprises 2 percent (\$373.7 billion) of the entire 2016 U.S. Gross Domestic Product; It's an impressive figure that puts it on the scale of industries like construction (4.3 percent); legal services (1.3 percent); agriculture, including farming, forestry, and fishing (1 percent); and, most significantly, mining, oil, and gas extraction (1.4 percent). The report also stipulates that the outdoor industry is growing by 3.8 percent, a faster rate than the overall economy (2.8 percent); the report was two years in the making, initiated when President Obama signed the Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act. Signed in 2016, it directed the federal agency to measure the outdoor economy with the same tools it uses to chart other industries and the economy as a whole. Attend the Outdoor Recreation Confluence in Colorado; there are currently eight offices of outdoor recreation across the nation (which includes Montana); on January 24, 2018, the eight offices convened in the first biannual Outdoor Industry Recreation Confluence; the conference focused on

collaboration, friendly competition, and four main components that each office can bring to their respective states—economic development, conservation and stewardship, education and workforce training, and public health and wellness; Rachel VandeVoort is Montana's Office of Outdoor Recreation director.

The Parks In Focus kick-off meeting was held last week in the Three Forks area; the Governor of Montana established the Parks in Focus Commission as a public-private collaboration to strengthen the state park system and to ensure that the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has the resources, capacity, and expertise to implement the Montana State Parks and Recreation strategic plan. The purpose of the Montana Parks in Focus Commission is to provide expert, independent recommendations for the FWP to implement the Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. The principle focus will be on implementation of the three recommendations from that plan: developing diversified revenue streams, growing strategic partnerships, and building an engaged constituency for state parks. Parks in Focus will deliver results and accountability to the Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, while ensuring the financial, operational, and cultural challenges facing state parks are addressed under the management of the FWP. The Commission, consists of 12 volunteer professionals, will develop an inclusive process that welcomes engagement from all relevant partners to shape the substance for this new initiative and will operate in a collaborative, transparent manner. The Commission will be active for a term of 12 months and will hold four public meetings around the state to discuss leading issues, gather robust public input and ideas, and develop a framework for making recommendations in a final report. The Commission also will convene work groups to develop a deeper understanding of core challenges facing state parks and explore related solution concepts; the work groups may include members of the Commission, FWP staff, and outside experts. The Commission is coordinated by two advisors, Deb Love and Ben Alexander of Resources Legacy Fund (RLF); they will work closely with the Governor's Office, FWP leadership, State Parks staff, the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board, and the Montana State Parks Foundation. The advisors will provide day-to-day support for the Commission and its activities. The advisors will prepare draft and final recommendation reports for the Commission to review, assess, revise, and adopt. The draft recommendations report will be completed by the end of September 2018, with the final recommendations report will be completed by December 2018. The final report will be submitted to the Governor, Legislature, FWP, and Parks and Recreation Board.

The Parks Performance Audit Report is almost completed; the Department will meet with the Legislative Audit Division soon to discuss the audit findings; audit will be brought to the Board at the April Board meeting.

Matt Marcinek, Region 3 Regional Park Manager has retired; will be missed by all. The Parks Management team will be meeting tomorrow to discuss zero-based budgeting. The AmeriCorps Program has started for this year; the program has contributed 20,700 hours annually. Working on the significant maintenance burden across all state parks. Continuing to address the need for warden presence in state parks. Trying to find solutions for Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) lease payments. Addressing on how to adequately staff the new Milltown State Park.

7. 2020/21 Parks' Budget Priorities and Zero-Based Budget Update – Final

Beth Shumate, Parks Administrator, presented the following Parks Priorities for the Fiscal Years (FY) 2020-21 biennium include:

- Restore and expand existing staffing and funding for parks programs, operations and maintenance, law enforcement and grants to benefit outdoor recreation throughout Montana. Adequately staff the Smith River Program.
- Implementation of the Governor's 'Parks-In-Focus' initiative, to include exploring new and innovative funding opportunities. Seek outside funding and work in support of state and national efforts to secure funding for parks management and outdoor recreation.

- Continue to implement, Charting a New Tomorrow: Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan – 2015-2020.
- Remain a relevant and recognized component of Montana’s growing outdoor recreation economy.
- Familiarize the newly appointed Parks and Recreation Board members with Montana’s parks system.
- Continue the successful AmeriCorps Program, which has provided site presence and community outreach for the parks system statewide.
- Prior to the 2019 Legislature, complete and subsequently implement the outcomes of the ‘zero-base’ budgeting exercise.
- Effectively address the significant deferred maintenance needs that exist throughout the parks system, resolving all public health and safety needs first.
- Continue to address the need for warden presence in state parks during key public visitation periods.
- Continue to find solutions for DNRC lease payments and needs.
- Manage the recreational grant programs which support local clubs, communities, and organizations statewide for snowmobile, OHV, trail, and recreational facility development.
- Conclude development efforts for Milltown State Park including adequate staffing needs and operations.

Dustin Temple, Chief of Administration explained the Executive Planning Process (EPP) (in detail) begun for the 2019 Legislative Session. FWP’s internal process involves establishing priorities that will drive preparation of proposed budgets. The Board’s role at this time is to review and approve the Parks Division priorities. Between February and June (2018), the Department will develop budgets based on the approved priorities and submit them to the Governor. The Parks and Recreation Board will continue to be an integral part of setting the direction for the Parks Division for the biennium. The Department will strive to implement the State Park budget priority restoring and expanding existing staffing and funding for parks programs as the budget allows; a number of the funds were caught up in the 5% reduction exercise the state government went through. Earmarked funds (snowmobile, OHV etc.), asking to receive these funds back seems like a fair request; these funds are fiscally in good shape. The Smith River has its own source of soft funding; needs include .65 FTE and operating funds in order to meet the increased public demands and public safety; is not part of the Parks “Big 4”. At the 2017 session, Parks did not get a major maintenance package; working on putting something together for the next session as funding allows.

Chair Grove asked if that is to get the Smith River back to the level where it was or additional funding?

Temple stated the Department is just trying to get back to where we were.

Chair Grove asked if there have been any changes or more discussions regarding more warden presence in State Parks?

Shumate stated she has had conversations with the Enforcement Division and the allocation process they go through; still working through the details.

Temple explained the Law Enforcement Division had a funding shift in the 2017 session to due Pittman-Robertson (PR) funding issue; PR can only be used for wildlife related purposes; 30% of the warden’s time has to be dedicated to wildlife.

Chair Grove asked if the Board still would like to receive enforcement updates or if they have any additional questions. She would like to continue to get updates from the Department on how enforcement is addressing state parks; has been an ongoing conversation.

Member Sheehy Moe asked how long has the Smith River funding been separate and does the fee revenue pay for personnel?

Temple stated the fee system goes back to 1989; does not know when the corridor enhancement account was created, possibly mid-1990s; movement of all fee revenue into the corridor enhancement program is relatively new (2017 Session); fee revenue does pay for personnel; all revenue prior to the 2017 session was mixed into the Parks miscellaneous revenue account.

Chair Grove asked if there have been any solutions with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) leases.

Temple stated the discussions are in the early stages, at the Director's level.

Member Sheehy Moe stated she was going to speak against the motion; concerned about the Smith River component; understands the Department has fees to help the Smith River, but when funds are used for personnel, it is a mistake to separate out and isolate personnel in that way, from what otherwise is a state agency.

Temple explained due to the number of sites in the corridor, particularly Camp Baker and Eden Bridge, that were acquired by licensing money, any revenue from those sites have to be used in a particular manner and cannot be comingled, otherwise the Department will get a diversion finding from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Chair Grove explained according to personnel it was a mindful decision; the resources have seen a significant increase in use; wanted to make ensure there were capabilities at the corridor.

Temple stated this is not uncommon; the Department has FTEs that are funded with all particular colors of money; there are specific earmark programs of funding sources dedicated to a certain activity.

Motion: Member Brown motioned and Member Sheehy Moe seconded the Board approve the Parks Division priorities for the 2019 Legislative Session, as presented.

Vice-Chair Welch stated the Department is not looking at the people using the lands (i.e.: fishing access sites, state parks, non-consumptive recreation); big challenge we are facing.

Chair Grove, Vice-Chair Welch and Shumate discussed how funding is appropriated; other recreational opportunities within the Department and how all divisions can/should work together; would like to have a presentation from all divisions at the next Board meeting.

Action on Motion: Motion passed. 5-0

8. Forest Management Plan – Final

Jason Parke, FWP Forester, explained Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) has prepared a Forest Management Plan (Plan) for forested land administered by FWP. Nearly 200,000 acres of forested lands are distributed amongst 157 different sites including Fishing Access Sites (FAS), Fisheries Conservation Areas (FCA), Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Wildlife Habitat Protection Areas (WHPA), and State Parks (SP) (30 sites/14,200 acres of forest). This is a programmatic plan designed to provide consistent management direction and guidance for developing property-specific forest management plans, implementing forest management projects, and identifying forest management priorities. This Plan applies to all forested land under fee-title ownership administered by FWP. In § 87-1-622(1), Montana Code Annotated (MCA), the legislature directed the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) and the Parks and Recreation Board (Board) to adopt forest

management plans for lands under their jurisdiction. Accordingly, this Plan will also be submitted to the Commission for final approval at their April meeting. Regional Park Managers Dave Landstrom and Chet Crowser helped to develop the State Park section of the plan. The Plan has undergone review by mid-level managers across all three divisions and by the Legal Unit. Public comment on the Draft Plan was accepted from August 17, 2017 through September 18, 2017; the Plan was available on the FWP website, a press release was issued, and a letter was sent to interested parties; five comments were received including three from individuals, one from a sportsman group, and one from another state agency; two comments directly supported the Plan and the remaining comments offered suggestions. The underlying principal of the plan was to maintain ecological integratory and managing natural forest conditions; forest lands under FWP ownership would benefit from a consistent approach to planning, identifying priorities, and managing individual forested properties. The filter approach described in the Plan would help assure forest management decisions are well informed and objective-based.

Vice-Chair Welch asked if there were future improvements to be done in State Parks (i.e.: new bike trail, develop Fish Creek State Park) what impact would this have on the plan.

Parke stated the plan only provides an approach for taking the next step of development implementation; doesn't direct any specifics.

Vice-Chair Welch and Parks discussed the plan in more detail.

Chair Grove asked Parke coordinates with the Forest Service and/or used parts of their plan.

Parke stated partnerships and collaborations are important aspects of the plan; have cooperative agreements with other agencies; need to meet legislative mandates.

Vice-Chair Welch stated he would like to hear from a Regional Park Manager on how they feel this will work on the ground.

Dave Landstrom, Region 1 Park Manager, believes this plan will become a reference document for State Parks; worked with Jason to identify different settings in all the different types of Park; recognizes there will be differences in FWP properties across the state; will be a useful document, particularly when applying for grants or funding.

Motion: Vice-Chair Welch moved and Member Brown seconded the Board adopt the Forest Management Plan as presented, allowing Fish, Wildlife and Parks to proceed with implementation of the Plan.

Member Stone stated she is abstaining from the vote; did not have the information prior to the meeting to review the plan documents.

Action on Motion: Motion passed. 4-0

9. Land Exchange to Increase Lake Frontage at Lake Mary Ronan State Park – Endorsement

Dave Landstrom, Region 1 Park Manager explained Montana State Parks staff have been approached by an adjacent property owner regarding a land exchange that would result in the addition of approximately 215 – 280 feet of shoreline being added to Lake Mary Ronan State Park for public use. The proposal could benefit the public, if appraised values for the subject parcels are compatible. Lake Mary Ronan State Park is the only guaranteed public access point to this 1,512-acre lake; the lake receives approximately 21,000 angler days annually, making it one of the most popular fishing lakes in Region One. The state park received 25,309 visits in

2016, and is an extremely popular camping and angling park. The current day use portion of the park is quite small, and the additional shoreline footage would provide for the opportunity to develop additional shore fishing opportunities, while reducing congestion at the park's current boat launch area. The neighbor owns four consecutive lakeshore parcels immediately north of the state park boundary, and would like to increase the width of the northern most three parcels by moving the property boundary east, and exchanging all or part of the southern-most lot with FWP for inclusion in the state park. The Department would adjust the boundary lines of lots 20, 21 and 22 of the Lake Mary Ronan Lakefront Tracts from between 56' to 93' eastward into an undeveloped region of Lake Mary Ronan State Parks in order to create room for a private drain field. In return, and based on the appraised value of the land acquired by the neighbor, FWP would receive all or part of lot 23 to be included into the park, thus adding up to 280 feet of shoreline. There would be no financial transaction, so costs would be associated with appraisals, surveys, and administrative fees associated with title work. A standard Montana Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) process, including a public scoping and public comment period would be conducted upon endorsement from the Board, and completion of the due diligence research.

Member Brown asked what impact would it have on the view of the Park if they are going to develop.

Landstrom stated from what he understands they intend to develop a residential lot on one of the properties and drain field on another; cannot guarantee there will not be a visual impact, if there is, it will not be significant.

Member Sheehy Moe asked if part of the review will involve drain field affects and environment impact on the drain field, is the shore line accessible, and who would bear the cost.

Landstrom stated the Department would conduct MEPA review and Lake County would also conduct an environment impact survey of some kind. The entire lake shore is riparian and has vegetation; not a beach by any means; is accessible; is characteristic of the rest of the shore line. Historically, the cost would be split, but do due budget shortfall, the landowner may have to pay the cost; will have discussions upon moving forward.

Motion: Member Sheehy Moe moved and Vice-Chair Welch seconded that Montana State Parks proceed with the evaluation and possible exchange of property with an adjoining property owner to add public shoreline footage to Lake Mary Ronan State Park.

Chair Grove asked for public comment.

Desera Towle, Friends of Fort Owen, increasing this shoreline is critical; limited space; supports motion; suggests having a deed restriction so it cannot be developed and look at the covenants.

Vice-Chair Welch thanked Towle for her comments; very important issues she brought up.

Action on Motion: Motion passed. 5-0

10. Explore landowner relationship/public access opportunities at Fort Owen State Park – Endorsement
Chet Crower, Region 2 Park Manager, explained Fort Owen State Park (FOSP) is the site of many "firsts" in Montana history and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Despite this historical importance, successful management of the site has been challenged by the small size of the park itself (~1 acre), an access road that is shared by the surrounding ranch, and existing parking capacity that can serve only 1-2 vehicles. In recent years, the previous landowner and the public have faced increasing frustration regarding the balance of appropriate public access and respectful public use of the park in relation to the adjoining private property. Near the end of 2017, the ranch property surrounding the park was purchased by a new owner who promptly approached FWP with a keen interest in finding solutions to management of the state park that balance both public and private

interests. Preliminary conversations with the new owner have indicated a willingness to explore an array of potential long-term and short-term options for improved management of the park, up to and including the potential for acquisition of additional property for inclusion as part of FOSP. The Department is asking for Board approval to move forward to explore improved park management opportunities that might resolve public and private landowner concerns. Exploring options for improved management of FOSP has been considered for decades. The existing scenario presents an opportunity to address long-standing concerns while enhancing both private and public benefit. Have had and continue to have conversations with the community of Stevensville and the newly formed Friends of Fort Owen (FOFO) group. Public involvement required as part of Departmental efforts to explore opportunities with the new landowner would be completed as applicable and results reported back to the Board for consideration in final decision making.

Chair Grove asked for public comment.

Margaret Gorski, President FOFO, introduced members FOFO members (Jacki Smartt, Sue Kardaras, Desera Towle, Chris Weatherly and Ruth Baker) and Fort Owen Ranch manager, Kent Smartt. Important to the community of Stevensville as an educational resource, a tourism asset and a historical value. Physical limitations constrain the ability to manage the site and grow it into its potential. Physical remains of the Fort are still on site which add value to the property. The FOFO group was put together a year ago as a result of the Parks Strategic Plan process; have been meeting on a regular basis with Chet Crowser and Loren Flynn. The new landowner is much more empathetic to understanding the value of the asset to the community and the state.

Desera Towle, FOFO, FOSP is a great opportunity when talking about zero-based budgeting; FOSP has a small maintenance budget; need to do a total reevaluation; acquiring this area would be like acquiring a new park.

Kent Smartt, Fort Owen Ranch manager, the time is now to start investing in the park; molding more than the park itself; willing to help out and look at the whole picture.

Chair Grove stated the Board appreciates having these conversations and opportunity.

Randy Arnold, Region 2 Supervisor, have established a good relationship with the landowner regarding access to the river; the river and access was historically robust; over recent years it was almost eliminated; with the change in ownership, we know have a private land fishing access site (FAS) agreement with the landowner which allows the public access to the river; FWP is now responsible for equipment accessing the river; in conversations with the landowner about a long term ownership of the property in perpetuity. FWP as one agency is approaching this as one agency, while State Parks is having their own funding challenges, himself and Chet Crowser have been working and communicating regularly with the landowner, the City of Stevensville and other interested parties collaboratively.

Chair Grove asked if the Board will have the opportunity to look at the FAS during the afternoon tour.

Arnold stated yes, that it is not a problem.

Chair Grove stated there is a lot of recreational opportunity at this site; appreciates Randy working with State Parks.

Vice-Chair Welch asked if FOFO have been involved with both the FAS and Parks conversations.

Unknown, stated yes, the group has been involved with the FAS and Parks discussions.

The Board and FOFO had a lengthy discussion on Fort Owen challenges and past activities.

Chair Grove asked Crowser to speak about the classification policy and FOSP and if that will be part of this process.

Crowser stated the initial phase is to set up relationships with one another that can sustain future conversations; staff needs to do some collective work to see where the classification policy sits and whether it will be helpful in considering what happens in the future; much different day today, with a different set of opportunities for tomorrow that could warrant the Department pursuing if that is what the Board would be interested in doing.

Vice-Chair Welch stated this is the exact reason why the classification was done; the point of the classification was how to break the status quo; thinks it is fantastic that everyone is in attendance in support of this property; commends everyone that is involved; great news for the park. Margaret Gorski has been a champion of parks for a long time; good to see her at the meeting.

Motion: Member Stone moved and Member Sheehy Moe seconded that Fish, Wildlife and Parks work with the new landowner to explore opportunities, up to and including possible acquisition of additional state park property, to enhance public access and address private landowner concerns for improved management of Fort Owen State Park.

Member Sheehy Moe stated she is impressed with the partnership; very exciting.

Action on Motion: Motion passed. 5-0

11. Update from Montana State Parks Foundation

Coby Gierke, Montana State Parks Foundation (MSPF), stated the Foundation has accomplished since the last Board meeting; paid for a survey at Sluice Boxes State Park that determined a property boundary that was unknown; facilitated funding for the third Smith River State Park ranger position, the state was reimbursed the entire funding for that position in November 2017 from the Lee and Donna Metcalf Foundation, thanks to Mike Maloy; paid the DNRC lease at the Madison Buffalo Jump State Park thanks again to the Lee and Donna Metcalf Foundation; paid for the material acquisition for the Lone Pine State Park visitor kiosk this allows State Parks to keep their general operating fund whole and maintained while MSPF helps them find additional sources of funding for things that they cannot afford to do on their own. MSPF raised funds in 2017 from donors and signing up individuals to join the Foundation statewide; it was a lot of work but had a successful year-end giving campaign; fortunate to receive an individual gift from Jim Scott as a matching program for other dollars to come in. Have done a lot of outreach in Eastern Montana as well to strengthen communications with them and let them know they are included in State Parks conversations. Have a lot of outreach and upcoming events across the state sponsoring a film at the Big Sky Documentary Film Fest tonight in Missoula, several community pint nights, fundraiser for Milltown State Park on March 28 or 29 (10-year anniversary of the dam removal). Major fundraising projects the Foundation is currently working on are: Milltown State Park fundraising and grand opening, Lone Pine State Park (3) visitor center information kiosks, The Kids in State Parks Transportation Program, Sluice Boxes State Park boundary survey and Makoshika State Park trail redevelopment. Continuing ongoing conversations with state leadership to develop a more strategic plan of what projects are going to be targeted, how they are going to be funded and what it takes for a projected to be selected. MSPF with the help of local Friends Group, can create a unified message to the Legislature.

Chair Grove and Gierke discussed the Memorandum of Understand (MOU) between the Foundation and State Parks; need to keep the process of communication going; need to address how the Board will approve capital projects prior to implementation.

12. Parks in Focus/Strategic Plan Update

Deb Love, Parks in Focus (PIF) Advisor, gave an introduction on the Parks in Focus Commission; toured several parks and saw the opportunities and challenges of State Parks is facing. The Commission consists of 12 volunteer professionals appointed by Governor Bullock and will be active for a term of 12 months; the Commission is designed to strengthen the state park system and to ensure that FWP has the resources, capacity, and expertise to implement the Montana State Parks and Recreation strategic plan. The principle focus will be on implementation of the three recommendations from that plan: developing diversified revenue streams, growing strategic partnerships, and building an engaged constituency for state parks. The Commission held their first meeting last week; toured Headwaters and Lewis and Caverns SP and held the meeting at the Visitor Center at Lewis and Clark SP; a lot of great enthusiasm in the meeting; Governor Bullock attended; important opportunity for the Commission to get on the same page; the goal for the first meeting was to identify a series of work streams that need to be completed over the course of the next 12 months and to form work groups to develop a deeper understanding of core challenges facing state parks and explore related solution concepts; looking at internal and external communications; want to make sure employees have the support they need not only to do their jobs, but to make Montana State Parks a great state agency. Committed to working closely with the Parks and Recreation Board.

Margaret Gorski, President FOFO, how is PIF reaching out to other recreation providers across the state for being engaged in the conversation; any other way to comment other than the website?

Ben Alexander, PIF Advisor, the Commission is working on communication and outreach strategy that will include reaching out to user groups, local elected officials, business owners, community leaders, recreation providers and the Office of Outdoor Recreation with the Governor's office. Chair Grove and Vice-Chair Grove have Deb's and his contact information if anyone wants to speak to them directly.

Chair Grove stated there are four meetings scheduled throughout the year and they are open to the public; the public is encouraged to attend and make comments.

Love explained there are three more meetings scheduled this year; the next meeting is scheduled for May 11th at in the Kalispell area; other meetings are scheduled for September 21st as Makoshika State Park and the last meeting will be held at First Peoples Buffalo Jump on December 14th; all meeting information is located on the chartinganewtomorrow.com website.

Member Sheehy Moe stated to her, the most intriguing of the three prongs of activity is building an engaged constituency for state parks; has PIF explored that topic in any receptivity; would also like to receive updates on any activities.

Love stated the Commission is just starting to scratch the surface on this activity; PIF recognizes the need for a more broader, organized, constituency on behalf of Parks, which includes Friends Groups, but also recognize the opportunity to strengthen the ties with recreational users, motorized and non-motorized users, community leaders and tribal partnerships; looking at other opportunities like highlighting the importance of trails, recreation and parks as part of the conversation of public and community health well-being and expand the constituency to include hospitals and health care foundations.

Dave Landstrom, Region 1 Park Manager and Love discussed what PIF looks at doing with private/public partnerships.

13. 2017 Volunteer of the Year

Ken Soderberg, Acting Chief of Operations, stated in 2017 1,435 volunteers provided 48,815 hours of service to the Montana State Parks Division. These volunteers served as campground hosts, greeted and provided information to visitors at visitor centers; assisted with education and interpretive programs; assisted with special-events and helped with a wide variety of special projects. Each year Regional Park Managers receive nominations from field managers to be recognized as their regions individual or volunteer group of the year. Consideration is given to volunteers or volunteer groups based on the following criteria: nominees that have exhibited a strong commitment and personal interest in the park or parks division program they serve; how the nominee makes a difference to the public they serve; how the nominees help make a connection between the local community and the park or parks division programs; the nominees level of service provided to a critical component of the park operation; and the nominee's personal commitment and determination to volunteer and serve. The Regional Service Award recipients for 2017 are:

Bob Hill: Logan State Park Volunteer for the past eight summers and performs his volunteer duties, including customer service, and grounds and facility maintenance, in exchange for being able to fish every day, all summer long.

Missoula Snookers: Provided groomed snowmobile and multiple-use, winter trails for the public at both the Garnet Mountains and Lolo Pass trail areas near Missoula, Montana.

CRH-Trident Cement Plant Staff and Management:

Staff and Management have been outstanding partners in the 6-year effort to develop and build an exciting new trail along the Missouri River at the north end of Missouri Headwaters State Park. The new Trident-Peregrine Birding Trail gives visitors access along the Missouri River, benches have been provided for birders to sit and observe the many bird species who use the limestone cliffs across the river. CRH-Trident graciously donated staff time, machinery, crushed limestone trail materials and cement for the various components of this amazing project.

Naomi Burbach: Makoshika State Park trail steward and walks the trails in the park at least four times a week. She also helps with events. Naomi led a full moon hike before our annual event and the next day helped with set up and the race for our Buzzard Day event. She also helped at Medicine Rocks State Park during the 60th Anniversary event. She helped set up for the event and took photographs. Naomi has also helped guiding our Makoshika State Park mascot, Mak the robotic dinosaur, around for local and state park events.

14. Heritage Resources Biennial Report Update

Sara Scott, Heritage Resources Program Manager, explained Montana State Parks manages over 227 archaeological and historical sites throughout its 55 state parks; approximately 60 percent are pre-contact archaeological sites while 40 percent are historic in origin; 32 sites are either officially eligible or listed in the National Register of Historic Places or are designated National Historic Landmarks (NHL). It is estimated that approximately 60 percent of the state park land base has been inventoried for heritage resources. In compliance with the reporting requirements of MCA 22-3-424(4) enacted in 2011, the status, condition, stewardship efforts, and maintenance needs of these 32 sites are documented in this summary report. Because the National Register significance of the remaining 191 sites has yet to be determined, these sites are not discussed. As funding is hopefully generated through biennial reporting as the original SB3 Bill intended, these resources will be evaluated for their archaeological and historical significance and will be included in future reports; until heritage program funding increases to accomplish this work, these sites will likely remain unevaluated. This is the fourth cycle for our required biennial report with all four state park reports identifying a significant need for additional qualified

heritage staff and funding; no additional funds or staff have been provided in connection with our reporting efforts; hope in the future this scenario improves and the Department welcomes advocacy from heritage partners and organizations to ensure state parks secures adequate financial support for our state's most significant heritage sites; PIF effort should help strengthen financial support for the state park system. Total agency expenditures on stewardship efforts for all 32 state park heritage sites totaled \$2,908,609 for the 2016-2017 reporting cycle; administrative staff time related to all heritage parks totaled \$1,528,712.

In February 2017, the Parks Board approved the Heritage Resources Strategic Plan for 2017-2024; the plan outlines tasks to be completed each of the seven years; this is the 4th Strategic Plan. For 2017-2019, there are nine work items slated for completion; these items, the costs associated with them, and internal staff's ability to complete them will be addressed; Heritage plan tasks for 2017 include the establishment of a Heritage Leadership Team which was created at the end of 2017; tasks for 2018 include holding an annual heritage meeting with all heritage park managers, completing emergency protocols for Class 1 and 2 heritage parks, and establishing protocols so that artifacts can be safely and securely displayed in state park visitor centers; these tasks can be successfully accomplished by internal staff; two of the five tasks for 2019 are complex and include comprehensive data analysis that requires the assistance of consultants to be successfully achieved; the more complex tasks include a status audit of all heritage site data (over 220 sites) and consolidating artifact collection data into a centralized software platform; remaining tasks for 2019 including developing alternative management strategies for Class 4 heritage parks, developing stronger heritage skills recruitment criteria for heritage park managers, and establishing lending agreements with curation centers to facilitate artifact displays in our visitor centers. Heritage resources touch a diverse group of stakeholders, and stakeholder engagement was a key component of developing the heritage plan. Key points of engagement throughout included: Informational email; online forum; website resources; survey on program and processes; stakeholder workshop; and public review of the Draft Heritage Resources Strategic Plan (December 2016). All outreach was geared toward obtaining feedback on the types of tasks and priorities the heritage program should focus on and are reflected in the task list for each of the seven years targeted by the plan. Completing the plan tasks outlined for 2018-2019 will involve funding to hire consultants for specific tasks.

Chair Grove asked if there is any information on how other states fund cultural and preservation activities.

Scott stated Idaho does have a Preservation Society; the Department also works with the National Park Service for funding.

Chair Grove, Temple and Scott discussed the possibility of asking the Legislature for funding for these types of projects.

15. Holt Property Update

Chet Crowser, Region 2 Park Manager, explained Travelers' Rest State Park is currently a 65-acre site located in Lolo, Montana. The park is a NHL that holds Native American significance, is the only archeologically verified campsite of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and has grown increasingly popular with Lolo residents for day-to-day recreational opportunities. In Fall of 2015, the family who owns the 20.54 acres immediately adjacent to the park's western boundary approached the division with an interest to sell the parcel for inclusion in the park. An endorsement proposal was presented to the Board at their February 24, 2016 meeting where approval was given to acquire an option to purchase the property. The Department signed a first one-year purchase option September 2, 2016 and extended that option for a second year in 2017 with the current expiration being September 2, 2018. The location of this parcel immediately adjacent to the park entrance and visitor center makes it a highly visible and significant potential addition to Travelers' Rest State Park. If the division does not consider this acquisition, the land could be sold and because of the lack of zoning, could be used for an array of commercial or industrial activities that may directly affect the aesthetics of the park and/or visitor experience. The Department conducted

an appraisal of the property in December of 2016, with a value assessed at \$940,000. The division has tentatively set aside existing Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) funds for approximately half of that amount with efforts to identify funding for the remaining amount ongoing.

Member Brown asked if the family could get any tax benefits by donating part of the property to offset the costs.

Crowser explained there could be something in their estate planning; from what he understands the property owners have not been interested in donative value associated with this project, they have in previous donations they made to the park.

Bruce Bugbee, Holt family representative, strongly supportive of the Park system; appreciates effort the Board and Department is doing; the community struggles with finding public space for birthday parties, weddings and family reunions.

Board Members, Shumate and Crowser had a lengthy discussion on logistics of the property and property boundaries.

Margaret Gorski, FOFO, the value of this original planning lays within the Lewis and Clark Gateway.

16. Milltown State Park and Bonner Development Group Property Update

Chet Crower, Region 2 Park Manager, explained the Bonner Learning Park (BLP), owned by the nonprofit Bonner Development Group (BDG), is a 36-acre parcel along the Clark Fork River, adjacent to Milltown State Park; the park was originally donated by Champion International and developed in the mid-1990s to serve as a small, local park. The park remained open until 2006 when it closed to the public with the advent of the Superfund cleanup construction work. While cleanup work is now complete, public access to the park has been limited with access permitted only to the Bonner School for field trips. Much of the property is situated on the north side of the Clark Fork River but a corner does extend across the river to the southwest. Existing Milltown State Park properties share both upstream and downstream boundaries with the BLP. The property includes river frontage and several park amenities such as a stone and timber-framed picnic shelter with built-in grill, a vault toilet, a kiosk, a sun dial, a built-in spotting scope, a short trail network and a small space for limited parking. At the June 15, 2016 meeting, the Board approved the Department negotiate with BDG to consider the donation of the BLP for inclusion in Milltown State Park. BDG has offered to donate the property to FWP and working with Missoula County, several aspects of the Department's due diligence process have been completed or are currently underway. As snow melts this spring, work will continue in earnest to determine final evaluation steps and an updated timeline. Upon completion of evaluation and due diligence, an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the acquisition would be written and distributed for public comment; this information will be compiled and presented to the Board for final action at a future meeting.

Chair Grove and Crowser introduced Bruce Hall and Bruce Star from BDG; have been instrumental partners in this project.

Crowser stated there is general maintenance that needs to be done in the park; shooting for June 23rd for the grand opening.

Chair Grove thanked Travelers' Rest State Park staff for hosting the meeting and giving a quick tour of the Park. Asked Pat Doyle, Parks Marketing and Communication Manger, to bring a marketing plan back to the Board on how the Department is marketing Parks for the next season, on a state and regional level, and how the Department of Commerce is doing to promote State Parks; would like to receive the information around April 1st. There a several policies the Board needs to clarify, update or possibly create; will be reaching out to Board members over

the next month. Need to start exploring concessionaire management and policies. Would like to challenge all the Board members to attend the grand opening of Milltown State Park; some state parks are starting to have activities, encourages Board members to reach out to their Regional Park Manager and Park Managers on activities happening in their area. Since the next Board meeting is with the Fish and Wildlife Commission, thinks it would be beneficial for Department staff to come talk about how coordinating management, efforts and resources is important as a Department as a whole.

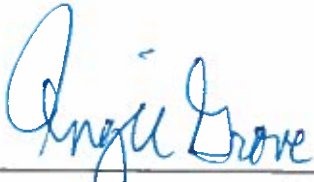
17. Public Comment – For Issues Not On This Agenda

No Comment

18. Adjournment

Motion: Vice-Chair Welch moved and Member Brown motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed. 5-0

Chair Grove adjourned the meeting at 2:41 PM.



Angie Grove, Chair



Martha Williams, Director