

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT

March 30, 2011

9:35–10:00 am

140 West Pine Street

Members Present: Marilyn Marler (chair), Pam Walzer, Bob Jaffe, Renee Mitchell, Jon Wilkins, Dick Haines, Cynthia Wolken, Ed Childers, and Lyn Hellegaard

Members Absent: Dave Strohmaier, Stacy Rye

Others Present: Donna Gaukler, Lisa Moisey (County Park Board), Bill Carey, (County Commissioner)

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

A. Approve minutes.

Minutes of March 23, 2011 were approved as submitted.

II. FINAL CONSIDERATION AGENDA ITEMS

III. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

IV. REGULAR AGENDA

1. Presentation by County staff of the County Parks and Trail public opinion survey results. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Donna Gaukler) (Referred to committee: 03/28/11)(**REMOVE FROM AGENDA**) ([Survey](#)) ([PowerPoint](#))

Missoula County and the City of Missoula conducted a Community Survey from October through December of 2010. The purpose of the survey was to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within Missoula County and the City. The survey was designed to obtain valid statistical results from citizens throughout the County and City. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Donna – I would like to thank the County Commissioners and County Park staffs for including the City in this effort as city residents are also county residents. The survey provides valuable information which we will use in conjunction with the Master Park Plan of 2004 for planning and priorities for the future.

Bill Carey – The County is in the process of updating our lands plan and as part of the effort we included the survey on parks and trails to help guide in development for the next decade and to glean insight into the needs for city and county residents.

Lisa Moisey – the goal was to provide information as one element of the planning process. Missoula County has 87 parks on 575 acres with 33 miles of non-motorized trails. Trails were a new component of the survey which provided important information. It was decided to partner with City parks as County wide data includes city residents and provide much more in depth information. The survey was professionally administered by Leisure Vision a division of ETC Institute.

Summary response results:

- 3500 household survey mailed –
- Total responses back = 1,107, - 100% over goal of 766 respondents

Park visitation - All households with children are the biggest visitors to City and County parks and trails

- Missoula higher than national average which is @ 72%
- County - 76% county residents had visited a park
- City – 86% of city residents have visited a park in last year

Level of satisfaction –

- 89% somewhat or very satisfied with city/county park maintenance

Facilities with highest use - top 3 for both city and county residents

- Hiking trails
- River access sites
- Paved commuter trail

Most frequently used – City residents

- Caras Park
- McCormick
- Bonner
- Greenough
- Fort Missoula
- Splash/Currents
- Playfair Park

Use inhibitors –

- Too far
- Too busy
- Use other lands
- Not interested
- Did not know availability

Ways people learn about parks, facilities and programs -

- Newspaper, still most used
- Park website
- Friends
- Radio

Most needed programs – or how likely to participate in various recreation program in the future –

- Adult fitness and wellness programs – important except with households with young children
- Special events rank high along with youth programming
- History and nature based program
- Pre-school programs – camps and parent tot programs. Missoula Parks and Recreation used information from the survey to design programs related to youth for summer 2011 recreation guide.

Need for facilities –Out of the 29 facilities listed the following ranked the highest in need -

- Hiking, biking trails
- River access
- Natural area
- Paved commuter trails
- Group pavilions and picnic areas

Most important actions regarding – Acquisition, maintenance and development -

- Maintain existing lands with passive facilities was number one choice for both City and County residents
- Acquire conservation lands
- Maintain urban forests
- Develop connected trail system

Resource allocation – if citizen had another \$100 they could allocate to parks, they would spend it on:

- Improvement and maintenance of existing parks, trails
- Acquisition of open space
- Acquisition of new trails

Additional annual costs:

- 70% of all residents would pay some amount more to acquire open space and build new trails and recreation facilities.
- 77% would pay some amount more to maintain those facilities.

The Survey provided the following information:

- Use of parks and trails in Missoula is higher than national average
- Majority of citizens are satisfied with parks but there is room for improvement.
- The City and County share the same needs
- Trails are important to all residents.

Survey information will be used for

- 2011 County Parks and Trails Master Plan
- Affirms the efforts of the active transportation planning project
- Supplement parks and trail grant applications
- Coordinate efforts with Community councils and other agencies

Discussion:

There was limited discussion with several committee members asking Lisa to clarify some of the information or for more information. The survey and results will be posted on several web sites, including the City's web site.

HELD/REFERRED OR ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS –

1. Information on Trail Projects ([memo](#)).—Regular Agenda (Marilyn Marler) (Referred to committee: 08/23/2010)
2. Annual tree planting program update. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Renee Mitchell) (Referred to committee: 01/24/11)
3. Reorganization of conservation lands advisory committees. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Marilyn Marler) (Referred to committee: 11/08/10)
4. Proposal to amend the development agreement between the City of Missoula and Missoula County High School District for Riverfront parcels of land. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Donna Gaukler) (Returned from Council floor: 02/28/2011)

V. NON-AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am.