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MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release through December 23, 2023

[Residents invited to comment on design concept for Marshall Mountain Park](#)

Missoula Parks and Recreation invites residents to share their thoughts on a draft design concept for Marshall Mountain Park via a brief, online [public comment survey](#) through December 23.

Marshall Mountain Park, located at 5250 Marshall Canyon Dr., is open to the public thanks to a generous arrangement with current property owners Izzy Dog, LLC and Five Valleys Land Trust (FVLT). The park is comprised of the 160-acre base area parcel leased from the current property owners and the 160-acre mid-mountain parcel owned by FVLT. A community effort is underway to purchase both parcels in 2023 to preserve them for public use.

Parks and Recreation's Ecosystem Services Superintendent Morgan Valliant says the design concept is just the first step in developing a master plan for the park. "A design concept is an initial vision of what future development could look like at the park. It's a preliminary collection of ideas that reflect the community's recreational and resource conservation priorities as identified in last year's [shared community visioning](#) process. A design concept is fluid and can be tailored to community needs and available funding. The survey will tell us which elements of the design concept should be incorporated into the master park plan."

Valliant says the draft design concept identifies scalable programmatic and design elements that can succeed at different investment levels. Residents will have a chance to evaluate proposed base area features like a multi-use loop trail built to adaptive standards, event areas, an indoor space to support programming needs, and a primary trailhead that provides access to mid-mountain trails without conflicting with events in the base area. The early phase trail plan connects the base area to mid-mountain and provides a core trail system upon which future trails can be built. The trail layout was designed to reduce conflict between users and accommodate users with varying skill levels and abilities.

The design team will integrate public comment from the survey into the design concept and the master park plan. A master park plan serves as a long-range vision for future development and programming of the park and its resources. The master plan will include estimated construction costs, a feasibility study and an operational business plan to ensure that the proposed program is physically and financially feasible and to determine the best structure for operating and maintaining the park. In addition, a master park plan includes phased development strategies with a development timeline dependent on public process outcomes and available funding.

Nathan McLeod, Parks and Recreation's Senior Landscape Architect, says he's looking forward to hearing the community's thoughts on the draft design concept. "We've seen a lot of buzz around Marshall Mountain in the past year—in fact, 2022 has been a record-setting year. With thousands of people attending events, recreating on the property, and participating in the design and visioning process, it's clear that Marshall is important to our community. We hope to continue this record-setting trend during the current comment period. It's important to hear from as many folks as possible to ensure that the design concept meets the needs and expectations of the community."

In 2023, Missoula will have the option to purchase both the Marshall Mountain base area and the mid-mountain FVLT parcel for \$1,920,000. The purchase will be subject to the standard Open Space Bond acquisition processes, including a public process with numerous citizen engagement opportunities, culminating with a vote from City and County elected officials. Potential funding sources include but are not limited to grants, donations, public/private partnerships, and 2018 City-County Open Space bond funds.

The Marshall Mountain project team is working with a variety of community partners, including the neighboring communities of East Missoula and Bonner/Milltown, Missoula County, Friends of Missoula Parks and dozens of community members to secure the area for future generations. Valliant hopes more residents will join in the effort to ensure Marshall Mountain is permanently preserved as public land.

"Marshall Mountain is a unique project on a tight timeline. Our community has been given the opportunity to save an important piece of Missoula's history and build a regional facility to meet our ever-growing recreational needs. A large group of public and private entities are working to save Marshall, but the mountain isn't publicly owned yet. The Master Park Plan we're developing will be

incredibly important for our fundraising efforts. If you care about Marshall Mountain, now is the time to get involved,” Valliant said.

The [Engage Missoula site](#) includes the draft design concept and survey, the shared community vision developed in 2021, park rules and trail maps, plus detailed site inventory maps and images. Please complete the survey by December 23.

For more information, email Nathan McLeod at Missoula Parks and Recreation, mcleodn@ci.missoula.mt.us or phone 721-PARK (7275.)

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