

OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ABBREVIATED MINUTES
March 14th, 2013
4:00 – 6:00 pm

Present:	Adam Liljeblad	Matt Barnes	Absent:	
	Ethel MacDonald	Dan Spencer	Gary Knudsen	Patrick Duffy
	Gabe Millar	Tim Aldrich	Maureen Bookwalter	
	Anna Noson		Jenny Tollefson	
	Beth Hahn, Park Brd Rep		Mary Manning	

Also Present: Jackie Corday, Open Space Program Mgr, Morgan Valiant, Conservation Lands Mgr, Sarah Richey, FVLT

Morgan Valiant, Conservation Lands Manager

Morgan gave OSAC members a yearly update presentation that he said he had already given to CLAC, Park Board, City Council, and the County Weed Board.

Morgan first went over the highlights of 2012 projects:

- 1) Expansion of Research & Monitoring Program. – Council approved in 2012 to hire a full-time researcher to assist Morgan with trail use data, baseline plant monitoring, and other such research. He just hired Chris Carlson for the position.
- 2) Cultivated new Partnerships – Morgan is working with Run Wild Missoula, Mountain Bike Missoula, UM Society of American Foresters and others to help carry out work on conservation lands. The bike group will monitor and maintain the Mo-Z trail on Sentinel and the Forester group has adopted 25 acres on the Marshall Canyon acquisition to conduct research.
- 3) Completion of Greenough Park Survey – This has been an on-going project for decades as surveying the park was a directive of the Greenough Park Court Decree. The survey revealed 26 encroachments that range from minor to major. Morgan and Jackie will be working together to resolve the encroachments over the course of the year.
- 4) Stats on Weed & other projects:
 - Pulled 19.5 acres of weeds on Mt. Jumbo and in the South Hills.
 - Sprayed weeds on 785 acres on Mt. Jumbo, North Hills, Mt. Sentinel, the Rattlesnake Greenbelt and in multiple parks in the South Hills. Leafy spurge and Dalmatian toadflax are the main targets and showing signs of success.
 - Planted 992 native forbs, grasses, trees and shrubs on Mt. Sentinel, Mt. Jumbo, Bancroft Pond, Greenough Park, and the North Hills.
 - Removed invasive Norway maples, Siberian Elm, and Golden willows from 2.5 acres in Greenough Park, Bancroft Pond, and the Tower Street Conservation Area.
 - Grazed weeds on 886 acres on Mt. Sentinel and Mt. Jumbo in 94 days as compared to 930 acres in 150 days in 2006. Also, 2012 was the first years since 2006 that the North Hills did not need grazing due to the progress made there.
 - Spread 1690 lbs of native grass seed over 110 acres – this is not nearly enough and thus Morgan has asked Council for more funds
 - 508 volunteers worked 2,639 hrs to equal roughly \$40k in value
 - Almost a mile of trail built in the South Hills
 - Thinned 45 acres of forest on Mt. Jumbo

Dan asked how does Morgan deal with adjacent privately owned weedy lands? Morgan said he has met with the Peschels who own most of the land connected to the North Hills open space to talk to them about grazing. They have agreed to let the sheep Morgan manages graze on their land this year. He also works with the County Weed District to approach landowners to let them know there are state grants available to help pay for spraying.

5) Record year for Grants:

- \$136,740 from DNRC for forest mgt
- \$15,000 from County Weed District and \$15,000 from Conservation District
- \$9,205 for sheep grazing research
- \$4,000 for weed control on Mt. Sentinel and South Hills (Dept of Ag)
- \$1,654 donation from citizen for planting trees in South Hills
- This totals \$181,599. His total budget from City General Funds is \$293,705, so the grants represent .62 cents raised per general fund dollar

6) Other Misc Highlights:

- The green house for growing native plants expanded from 450 sq.ft. to 1170 sq.ft. thanks to a grant from the Conservation District. Morgan's goal is to get a full-time seasonal staff person to run it.
- North Hills grazing has been very successful – Dalmatian toadflax and spurge have plunged in numbers, but other weeds will fill in if it is not re-seeded.
- Research showed that spring seeding was more successful on grazed plots than just seeding in the fall.
- CLAC worked on Farviews Trails Plan which was then adopted by the Park Board.
- CLAC also spent many hours drafting a policy for allowing some events on conservation lands – Park Board began their review of CLAC's draft and will likely adopt something by late spring.

Morgan then went over the list of projects planned for 2013:

- Moving and restoring the Mt. Jumbo sheep pin to another location on Mt. Jumbo
- ??? I think he got sidetracked by questions at this point

Adam asked about trail braiding in the North Hills and what could be done. Jackie updated members on Jim Habeck and Mary Manning's emails and communication that lead to the Parks Department preparing signs for trailheads to inform the public about the issue. Morgan said the signs have been installed, but things more long-term education will be needed to make a difference. He said CLAC will be tackling this issue next. He noted that poor trail construction holds ice and water so its critical to get it built right the first time. Beth asked if the Open Space Bond could be used to address trail problems and Jackie informed members that it cannot be used for maintenance or repair. Morgan said that things to consider include closing trails during the worst times for mud and getting "adopt a trail" programs going.

County Open Lands Stewardship Award – Tim informed members about this award and that OSAC had nominated Jim Cusker for the award a couple years ago. However, since Jim serves on OLAC, he was not considered. Members discussed other possible nominations, but did not come to any conclusion.

We adjourned at about 6:00pm.