APPENDIX B.

CASE STUDY OF A SUCCESS STORY: MISSOULA'S TRAIL SYSTEM

Missoula's Trail System:
A Case Study of a Trails Success Story

Missoula's trail system spans a broad range of landscapes and offers myriad opportunities for outdoor recreation and alternative transportation, accessing city parks, open space along the Clark Fork Riverfront, and connecting to the Lolo National Forest.

The Missoula Trails Project began in 1990 and eventually spawned the *Feet First Non-Motorized Transportation Program.* The program is guided by the Missoula Non-Motorized Transportation Steering Committee, which meets monthly with the Project Manager. This group represents the public interest, and is made up of a representative from the sponsoring agencies, along with staff from City and County departments such as Engineering, Transportation and Land-Use Planning. Sponsors of the Feet First Program include the City of Missoula, the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, and the University of Montana (Missoula), with support from FWP's Region 2 staff and the Lolo National Forest. An Oversight Committee comprised of the mayor and agency heads meets several times a year for updates and direction setting.

The program focuses on implementing the Non-Motorized Plan, securing funding, acquiring rights-of-way, and constructing trails with volunteers and/or contract labor and services. Also, the Committee reviews developments and subdivisions for impacts on trail planning, and encourages development of trail segments as part of the infrastructure of all developments. The City is in the process of adopting a system of trails standards, as well, to address different levels of development and the standards for each level, based on the amount and types of use. Beyond the City limits, the County Surveyor has established standards for projects the County supervises. The ultimate goal is the realization of an area-wide non-motorized circulation system. Additionally, the community would like to improve disabled access.

Trail-related land use conflicts are being addressed via land stewardship and management programs, which are being developed by the Planning Department and other interested parties, particularly the Open Space Advisory Committee. Existing ordinances will be adapted to address the level of trail access needed for various user groups, as well as to protect sensitive resources. Educational efforts are a key component of trail-related resource protection.

Public involvement has been integral to the success of the program. Project proposals are first submitted by interested groups and individuals, then rated by the Steering Committee using a variety of criteria. Each project is coordinated by the Feet First program, and is a cooperative effort between local government agencies and various private partners. The public is involved in each stage of the process, from conceptualization to project completion.

The City passed an Open Space Bond in 1995. The funds were intended to help finance the planned Bicycle Commuter Network, in addition to the purchase of hundreds of acres on Mt. Jumbo, a landmark resource area near downtown (this has been accomplished). The Bicycle Commuter Network is intended to connect Missoula's major east-west and north-south arterials.

Mount Jumbo's major resource value is open space and habitat preservation, but there are many opportunities for hiking (especially informal hiking opportunities).

The Missoula Parks and Recreation Department incorporates trail maintenance into its regular activities, including winter snow removal on trails and sidewalks. Street Department personnel and equipment are sometimes enlisted for trails-related work beyond the scope of the Parks and Recreation Department's ability. The City also instituted an Adopt-a-Trail Program in the fall of 1996. Several local groups already maintain local trails on an informal basis under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Department. Law enforcement is handled by the City and County police departments. Transient camps along remote areas of some trails are the worst problem.

Another group involved with the City's trail system is the Missoula Neighborhood Network, which is an affiliation of neighborhood councils. This group and similar groups in the county maintain close communication with the Feet First Program regarding their interests and goals. Additionally, the Montana Conservation Corps has been a vital partner, providing both paid and volunteer labor for trail construction, maintenance, tree planting, and coordinating student work groups in the classroom and at trail sites. Returned Peace Corps volunteers and folks from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) also play important roles, as do schools and private corporations.

A diversity of funding sources are used for the Missoula trail system, including donations of labor and materials, corporate sponsorships, lease fees for private use of public land, the fuel tax, state administered grant programs, Missoula Redevelopment Agency tax increment funds, and a small trails fund established by a local donor.

(Note: Special thanks to Mary Jean Gillman with Missoula's Feet First for help putting this profile together.)