



MONTANA **FWP**

**Montana State Park and Recreation Board  
Meeting Minutes**

MT WILD – 2668 Broadwater, Helena, MT  
June 20, 2019

**Parks & Recreation Board Members Present:**

Angie Grove, Chair; Mary Moe, Vice-Chair; Scott Brown; Erica Lighthiser; Betty Stone.

**Staff Present:**

Director Williams, Rhea Armstrong, Chris Dantic, Pat Doyle, Coleen Furthmyre, Craig Hageman, Dave Landstrom, Joe Naiman-Session, Tom Reilly, Beth Shumate, Ken Soderberg, Tamara Tollett and Zach Zipfel.

**Guests:** Mike Atwood, Bett Hill, Mitch King, Cody McDonald, Deborah Perkins, Leo Perkins, Kristi Powell, Kay Sild, Bob Walker and Mimi Wolok.

**Topics:**

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Approval of Board Minutes**
3. **Approval of Board Expenses**
4. **Board Member Reports**
5. **Administrator Report**
6. **Forestry 2018 Annual Sustainable Yield Calculation – Time Change**
7. **Recognition of Parks and Recreation Stewards/Volunteers**
8. **Legislative Update and Budget Overview – Time Change**
9. **Parks Capital Projects**
10. **Classification and Investment Strategy Policy**
11. **Flathead Lake State Park – Big Arm Unit Permanent Easement Acquisition**
12. **Public Comment For Issues Not On This Agenda**
13. **Adjournment**

**1. Call to Order – Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Grove called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Approval of Board Minutes**

Chair Grove stated she is going to hand out draft minutes from the May 10, 2019 meeting; the minutes from the last meeting (June 20, 2019) have not been completed. The Parks and Recreation Board Secretary (Coleen Furthmyre) will be on leave later this summer, so sometime in the next two weeks we will have a Board conference call and approve all the minutes. If you have any comments on the draft minutes that are done so far, please give them to Coleen before she finalizes them and sends them out to the Board again.

**3. Approval of Board Expenses**

Chair Grove stated the fiscal year (FY) 2019 Board budget, year-to-date expenses and balance are included in the Boards packet. She did speak with Dustin Temple about the balance that the Board currently has. A new fiscal year begins July 1, 2019 and will start over with a new \$20,000 budget. The money that is left in the current account will revert to the revenue funds.

Chair Grove asked if anyone has any questions on the Parks and Recreation Board budget.

Category	FY19 Budget	Year to Date Expenses	Balance
Honorarium	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 650.00
Food	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 250.62	\$ 749.38
Supplies and Materials	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 192.99	\$ 807.01
Communications/Postage	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel:			
In-state	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 3,424.73	\$ 12,575.27
Out-of-state	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 20,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,218.34</b>	<b>\$ 14,781.66</b>

**Action: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Brown seconded to approve that the Parks & Recreation Board approve the FY 2019 expenditures as presented.**

Chair Grove asked if there was any discussion on the motion.

**Motion passed. 5-0**

**4. Board Member Reports**

Member Stone stated she does not have anything to report.

Member Lighthiser reported she attended a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) planning meeting in Billings; great attendance from Parks and got to meet constituents from that neck of the woods; great roundtable discussions on different recreational topics and things that are important to the next strategic planning session. Participated in the National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy launch event in Three Forks; the launch event was for the nationwide rail-trail they are proposing that would go from Washington D.C. to Washington state and go through Montana; a lot of park individuals were there including Bob Walker; chance to meet a lot of great folks. Visited Lewis and Clark Caverns this week and went on the wild cave tour; if you have never been on it, it is really fantastic; got to see areas of the cave that you normally don't see in the regular tour; they are now offering more accessible tours for families and for people who need special accommodations; great move for the Caverns to offer more variety tours for different user groups.

Member Brown reported himself and Ken Soderberg, Parks Chief of Operations, met to talk about the Donor Policy for Montana State Parks. This subject came up at the October Board meeting when Jeff Welch was on the Board; Jeff had just returned from taking his oldest daughter back East to look at colleges and saw many examples of where donors had given to the colleges and the acknowledgements they got for those donations. This sparked a conversation on the State Parks Donor Policy and how to recognize people who contribute to State Parks. Jeff, Ken and he worked on the policy in October, and since then Ken and he met and worked on it some more; it is at a point now to determine whether it

should be a State Parks Donor Policy or a Department wide Donation Policy. He and his wife have a place in Bozeman and drive by Greycliff Prairie Dog Town State Park all the time; the prairie dogs are fat, sassy, friendly and good as ever.

Vice-Chair Moe reported she attended the Smith River Advisory Council meeting about a month ago; she is an ex-officio because she is the representative from District 3; the Smith River continues to be in high demand; one of the topics under consideration was a way to address some disgruntlement among Montanan's that the odds of them getting a permit has decreased as the demand, particularly from out-of-staters, have increased; she did not hear any viable solution to this problem; it's always good to remind folks that much of the surrounding area of the Smith River is United States Forest Service (USFS) land; it was an interesting discussion because the demand for the Smith River floats are so high; there is also an increasing concern about how to deal with the waste problem on the Smith River and what the alternatives are for that; all in all it was a good meeting. Attended (as her grandchildren call it) the herb garden planting at First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park; a lovely park with an amazing panoramic view. Giant Springs State Park is starting its summer trivia nights; very accessible and lovely state park in the summer; she is planning on becoming "Jeopardy James" of the Giant Springs Jeopardy Night.

Chair Grove reported that unfortunately she has not been to any state parks; her focus as been more on Board and legislative activities; have a had a couple key Board meetings in the last few months and wrapping up legislative session. She did take the month of April off and went to the desert; if you ever go ride your bikes or do anything in Fruita, Colorado, there is a lovely park eight miles north called Highline Lake State Park; when the manager found out she was from Montana State Parks, he came and found her and they spoke for three and one half hours (she has a long list for Ken after the conversation); very interesting, there are issues across the West that we are all dealing with; it's nice to hear some of the same issues are everywhere; what was amazing to her was their resource allocation is a little higher than ours which she will be addressing later; the park has two enforcement officers, a park manager and a staffed visitor center. Attended an event near Spring Meadow State Park on Prickly Peak land with Governor Bullock; the event recognized Montana Conservation Corp (MCC) volunteers, which where middle school children; they were sealing picnic tables, doing trail maintenance etc.; it was fun to have sixth graders who were starting on their volunteer career path and the conservation aspect.

## **5. Administrator Report**

Beth Shumate, Parks Administrator stated now that the 2019 legislative session is over, our priorities are clear for the next year and a half. For her report, she wanted to focus on some of the progress that we have made over the course of the past six months, along with a quick update on some forward-looking initiatives. Dustin Temple, FWP Chief of Administration, he will provide a more thorough legislative update on the fiscal side of the legislative session and she will be focusing more on the policy and programmatic impacts. Prior to the 2019 session, even as we awaited the Parks in Focus Commission's final recommendations, as an agency we began initiating many of the protocols and processes that were ultimately recommended under the leadership of representatives across Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). Parks Division staff members worked tirelessly from within to rebuild the credibility of Montana State Parks by undertaking a number of measures. The 2019 legislative session was extremely successful for parks, trails and outdoor recreation across the state. The restoration of our operations funding will allow us to stabilize our operations and tackle some critical maintenance projects and priorities over the course of the next biennium. It will also provide some assistance as we look to implement the revised classification policy. It was a true team effort; lots of folks rolled up their sleeves and made it happen, especially the Director's Office thinking of innovative ways to address some of our major concerns that

we've had across the parks system, and especially from our Parks and Recreation Board Chair, Angie Grove, who worked tirelessly every day. The list of legislative accomplishments are:

**Senate Resolution 27: State Parks and Recreation Board Confirmations:** Appointments: Angie Grove, Chair (Northwest Region), Erica Lighthiser (Southwest Region), Betty Stone (Northeast Region) Reappointments: Scott Brown (Southeast) and Mary Moe (North Central).

**House Bill 436:** Increases construction project cost threshold requiring Park Board approval from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Thanks to Representative Hamlett for carrying this important legislation.

**Senate Bill 24:** Sponsored by Terry Gauthier: Provides for a modest increase in the optional Light Motor Vehicle registration fee that benefits State Parks, Fishing Access Sites (FAS), and trail-based recreation across Montana. The optional fee currently provides nearly 40 percent of the annual operating revenue that State Parks rely on. In addition, it will create a state trails program termed "Made in Montana", to support additional outdoor recreation infrastructure in all trail related needs. There was a great team effort to foster this bill with a wide range of support. Even more significant, this is the first broad-based recreation funding in the state of Montana; the Montana Trails Coalition (MTC) led this effort and the successful legislation definitely elevated their profile

**House Bill 229:** Sponsored by Brad Hamlet: Clarifies that dinosaur bones and fossils are part of surface estate or surface rights, not subsurface or mineral rights. This bill makes it clear that paleontological artifacts located in state parks such as Makoshika are the property of the State of Montana, not various subsurface rights owners within our parks.

**House Bill 423:** Sponsored by Edward Buttrey: Provides discounted state park camping opportunities for veterans across Montana. Making camping in State Parks more affordable to veterans and is a great outcome, and one that we hope will encourage more veterans to participate in camping and take their families outdoors.

**Senate Bill 70:** Department led bill sponsored by Pat Flowers: Removes Missouri Headwaters State Park from the "primitive parks" designation. Removing Missouri Headwaters from the "primitive parks" list is a critical first step in allowing Park Managers to be more proactive in managing growing demand for recreational opportunities while addressing environmental impacts and complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Hearings for this bill were attended by Three Forks community members, FWP regional staff, representatives from the Montana Independent Living Project, various nonprofits, local small business and community leaders.

**Senate Bill 338:** Sponsored by Terry Gauthier: Provides funding for construction of the Montana Heritage Center, the new home for our Montana Historical Society. Establishes a funding source for the Historic Preservation Grant Program, which we will hopefully be able to benefit from for some of our historic preservation efforts.

**House Bill 652:** This provides funding and authorization for capital infrastructure projects and includes \$1.3 million for the Makoshika State Park waterline project. This was an amazing surprise and achievement to us and is a great opportunity to improve this important park and increase a service level that we currently do not have.

**House Bill 243:** Has a direct impact to the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Grant Program and allows for a 10 percent match instead of a 50 percent match, by eligible applicants, which can be derived of in-kind donations or cash. It also provides for an allowance of a grant advance of 50 percent.

**House Bill 355:** This establishes a summer motorized recreational trail pass and a recreational grant program from those trail pass proceeds while also revising non-resident temporary snowmobile permit fees and trail pass fees.

Shumate stated Dustin Temple will be in later this afternoon and will give a more thorough fiscal legislative report especially in regard to House Bill 5, House Bill 2, House Bill 695 which is also an agenda item with Big Arm and a permanent easement and House Bill 10. Some recent hires in the Parks and Recreation Division: Alex Shoules, Giant Springs State Park Park Manager; Seth Shtier, AmeriCorps Program Manager; Loren Flynn, Region 2 Regional Park Manager; Tom Shoush, Hell Creek State Park Park Manager; Joe Naiman-Sessions, Stewardship Program Manager and Kyan Bishop, Parks and Recreation Planner.

Shumate explained and gave an update on Outdoor Recreation:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) recent awards of \$1.3 million to a variety of community projects.
- In the midst of the SCORP planning effort with the University of Montana to develop the draft goals and recommendation. A draft version will be brought to the Board at the September meeting as an information item; we will then proceed with a public comment opportunity.
- The OHV Advisory Council approved the OHV grant awards and will total \$152,000 to ten recipients and projects across the state.
- Received federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) fund allocations totaling approximately \$1.5 million for fiscal year 2019. Unallocated RTP funds from prior grant cycles were added into the FY 2019 grant cycle to fund a total of \$1.76 million that was awarded to 49 new trail projects across the state.
- The Snowmobile Program is holding their annual appropriations meeting this weekend in Helena, where all 26 snowmobile clubs will attend and present their needs for the next grooming season. The grant awards are consistent in this program, normally total around \$410,000 per year. With the recent authority approved during the 2019 legislature, groomers will be purchased this summer for Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association and the Beaverhead Club out of Dillon.
- Through the Snowmobile Program and RTP, significant efforts have been made to support avalanche education and awareness in the past few years. An area of concentration has been in the Cooke City area, a popular snowmobiling destination. Additional weekend courses and avalanche beacon parks are offered throughout the Cooke City area and efforts the past two seasons have resulted in no snowmobiling deaths. Coalition for Recreational Trails, which is a national non-profit organization, has chosen the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center as the winner of the Annual Achievement Award for outstanding use of Recreational Trails Program funds in the Education and Communication category. The award was presented on June 11th in Washington, D.C. at a special awards ceremony on Capitol Hill

Shumate explained some of the key initiatives:

- Continuing to take proactive steps toward reintegrating the Parks Division into FWP by instituting a spirit of collaboration in all that we do as shared vision;
- One of the ways that we can improve our reintegration efforts both internally and externally is through our Citizen Advisory Councils (CAC). The Board now has a very detailed CAC analysis within your board meeting binders based on an inquiry as to what kinds of connection, involvement, or influence might exist across the CACs related to parks and recreation topics. The cover memo explains the background, organizational structure and membership details. The spreadsheet displays some of the commonalities and differences across the Region and CAC.
- Another way that we are working to reintegrate parks into the overall department is by realigning our parks districts with our FWP administrative boundaries. The first step in this process is to provide some additional presence and assistance in the eastern part of Montana, as we all know, has a huge gap. We are using existing resources to try and address a critical need in providing support to both the Billings and all eastern region Parks. Having the Regional Park Manager (RPM) based in Miles City will be a more efficient way for an RPM to travel to parks and for staff to travel to meet with the RPM in a reasonable timeframe. It also begins to address the re-establishment of parks administrative presence in the Region 7 office which will be very beneficial.
- Other initiatives include implementing several important Parks Division policy measures, such as our Classification and Investment Policy, and updating and accessing our fee structures across the commercial and non-commercial use fees across the Park system; the Board will be updated on the fee structure at the September meeting.
- Conducting critical information-gathering efforts across external stakeholders to help us develop and foster more strategic partnerships, and to ensure we are aware of and can plan for visitor preferences and demands; this will include a revised visitation methodology as well as an economic impact study that will be conducted next year.
- Continuing to lay down a solid foundation for Parks Division management and operation practices to ensure that we have appropriate processes and procedures in place, and that we fluidly embed evidence-based decision-making mechanisms into our work; and,
- Developing short, medium and long-term funding strategies to more strategically identify resources to address unmet needs and to guarantee we have the capacity to stabilize and build for the future of the Parks system.

All of these initiatives provide us with important strategies for how we can continue rebuilding to meet the demands of the public.

Shumate stated in closing, she would like to take a moment to recognize our incredibly dedicated maintenance and park management staff across the parks system. Their efforts aren't always recognized and if they weren't present to fix some of the major breakdowns each and every day, our parks would

be in disrepair and not available for all to enjoy. A couple of quick stories that were submitted to share with the Board:

- Region 1 Park Manager, Dave Bennetts discovered that the showers at Whitefish Lake State Park (WLSP) were leaking badly. This was after we had already opened for the season, and the maintenance crew was dealing with challenges all over the region. The maintenance supervisor diverted to WLSP, and four long days later had the showers working again. He had to cut out cinder blocks, using a hammer drill to free the copper piping and the valves themselves from the mortar; he had to be very careful not to damage the copper piping and then plumb new valves into place, creating a cavity in the wall where the old valves were left and then plumb new valves into place. Once the valves were plumbed in place, he then had to mortar a front wall in the cavity he had to create, then structure needed to install the valve control and trim that into place. This was a 40-hour project just to repair some shower valves.
- Lewis and Clark Caverns maintenance usually takes two to three days to start the campground and cave area water systems. They do so the week before staff training, then have to leave faucets dripping and empty the pipeline from the pump to the top of the hill every night the weather forecast is freezing. If there is an issue with that top pipe losing pressure, someone has to walk up the steep hill to determine the problem, then they have to haul any materials up and down the steep grade by foot to remedy the problem, which is exactly what happened this year, yet all systems were up and running on time.

Chair Grove gave a shout out to Region One and Region Three, particularly the Regional Park Managers; gave the Board amazing legislative support during the session; your outreach was amazing; there were plenty of frantic calls; definitely fired up your constituencies; nice work.

Chair Grove asked Shumate for a list of legislation and bill sponsors for Board members; asked the Board members to send a personal thank-you notes to some of the legislator's; would be a nice thing to do; a long list of people we need to thank. Need to start talking more about outdoor recreation in the Board meetings; unless someone objects, this will be a regular item on the agenda.

Chair Grove stated she is super excited to hear about the reintegration; that is a big step; having a presence in eastern Montana is amazing. Thanked Parks staff for all their hard work; they are amazing!

Vice-Chair Moe asked on the trail's element of SB 24, is there a plan?

Shumate stated yes, there is a plan; the Department has already had an initial meeting with the MTC about a month ago and started talking about those initial steps that need to be taken, especially the rule making needs, grant guidelines and public outreach that needs to occur; a lot more planning needs to occur.

Vice-Chair Moe asked Shumate to let the Regional Managers know to inform the Board members when the CAC meetings are being held; she likes to attend when she is aware of them, but she doesn't always hear about them; important for the Board to be in contact with those groups.

Chair Grove stated at the next Board meeting she would like each Board member to have two recommendations for potential members for CAC in their area; Member Lighthiser had graciously volunteered to help with the CAC development; Member Lighthiser and herself will call the Regional

Supervisors and work the Kyan Bishop, FWP Park and Recreation Planner; would like to have this formalized by the next Board meeting; important the Board members get invited to each meeting; the meetings are very useful.

Vice-Chair Moe stated she is thrilled with how successful the legislative session was; feels good to know we can move forward with somethings that are so important. Everyone in attendance and Chair Grove's work during the session is very appreciated; very fast paced work and stressful; it has paid great dividends; particularly commends Ms. Shumate doing this during a difficult time, very appreciated.

Shumate thanked Vice-Chair Moe for her comment.

Director Williams stated she wants to thank the Parks Division staff, including Beth's leadership; she feels this session and beyond it, that we, at FWP are operating not only seamlessly but certainly in coordination; she doesn't perceive any separation now, but instead rolling up our sleeves and tackling issues that often transcend divisions. Look back at the legislative session; understand some of the actions the Department took to make it successful, what we can learn from it, what we might replicate and what we might change. A piece we have all hit upon is the CAC; some of the CAC that have newer, young, vibrant members that carry out all outdoor recreation messages, hunting, angling and trail usage; the robust support and engagement from the CAC, she thinks, had a lot to do with the success of the session because of their engagement with the legislators and the conversations they've had.

Shumate stated she will provide a more thorough report of the legislative performance audit; the Department has a status report that is due next week to the Legislative Audit Division (LAD); she will have a more thorough list of all the reintegration's accomplishments that we have had over the last two years; she will also be providing a Parks In Focus (PIF) implementation update as well for all of those recommendations as well.

Chair Grove asked Shumate if there is an audit committee date, are we are going to be asked to appear yet?

Shumate stated she is not aware of a presentation date; at this point, it is just more of a status and follow-up report.

Chair Grove explained that normally, the LAD doesn't do presentations on follow-up reports, but since she was unable to attend that actual report presentation, if we do get a date she would like to attend because she has not had an opportunity to meet that committee.

Chair Grove explained the agenda has been rearranged a little bit to accommodate some other meetings, so the first agenda item this morning is the Forestry 2018 Annual Sustainable Yield Calculation.

## **6. Forestry 2018 Annual Sustainable Yield Calculation**

Jason Parke, FWP Forester, stated the last time he was in front of the Board was in February 2018 to address the Forest Management Plan which was a legislative mandate. The item he is presenting today for the Board's consideration is another legislative mandate that the Department, Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) and the Board review and redetermine the Department's annual sustainable yield of timber from our forested department lands every five years. Initially, in 2011, the Legislature passed a bill that required the Department to commission a study to determine how much timber FWP could harvest from its forested lands. The annual sustainable yield is defined as "the quantity of timber



that can be harvested from forested department lands each year, taking into account the ability of forested lands to generate replacement tree growth...". In 2013, the contractor that FWP hired to do this study completed their report. The law at this time didn't require that the initial calculation be approved by the Board or Commission; this is why, in 2018, this item first came before the Board. The law further states that the annual timber sale requirement for the program may not exceed the annual sustainable yield. As such, FWP completed a report titled "2018 FWP Annual Sustainable Yield Calculation Update" which summarizes changes to FWP's forested land base, growth and annual sustainable yield potential for these lands, and provides a "redetermination" of the potential annual sustainable yield from forested department lands. FWP did not conduct a public involvement process in developing the report since it does not propose any programmatic or site-specific implementation. This report provides a review and redetermination of the annual sustainable yield for consideration by the Commission and Board. Actual yield (sale) of timber byproducts could be achieved through projects involving timber harvest and such projects would undergo public involvement as required by FWP policy and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The annual sustainable yield calculated by FWP for this 5-year review and redetermination was determined to be 4.2 million board feet per year in the short-term (<50 years) and 3.7 million board feet per year in the long-term (>100 years). This is an increase over the 2013 sustained yield calculation by 91 thousand board feet (MBF) per year in the short-term and 58 MBF per year in the long-term. FWP's forester conducted this calculation by extrapolating the potential growth and annual sustainable yield calculated by the contractor in their 2013 report to lands added to and subtracted from FWP's forested land base since 2013.

Member Brown asked if any Park lands have been looked at?

Parke replied, there are areas in Region 1 that are being looked at; started looking at Thompson Chain of Lakes State Park. On the planning end, legislation does give a little bit of direction on what the program should be, but it is fairly loose. Our opportunity is to look at these forested parks and lands and figure out how we need to manage them; hazard trees are a big issue in Thompson Chain of Lake State Park; if we remove those trees and sell those trees, that would be part of the sustained yield the legislation is talking about. Another law related to this program is the forest management account which the legislature created; the law allows the Department to deposit any revenue from the sale of timber and we can then use that money to do other forestry projects.

Chair Grove asked if the Board has any further questions.

Member Lighthiser stated she was a little bit surprised about the increase based on climate changes, increase in beetle kill and other standing dead issues we have with disease in our forest. How were these factors considered when the 2013 study was completed?

Parke explained the initial calculation was based on the forest management model; it is a computer model and it does its best to predict productivity on the lands, so it uses actual productivity site index for Montana lands that went into the model. It also has a management regime that tells the model what areas of forest are potentially available for timber removal. It is a mathematical model and it does the best that it can to incorporate fire, insects and disease. By no means is it perfect but it gives us a number and an idea of the potential.

Member Lighthiser asked if those were considerations that were factored into the modeling to begin with. Were there any updates or tweaks since 2013?

Parke stated his assumption was since we are doing management now, and have been doing management since 2010, the model management on the lands that he felt was appropriate to go ahead and extrapolate that. One consideration in doing this update is the cost; the initial cost of the study was right around \$500,000. If we were to go through this whole process again, just to do the update we would probably be looking at a substantial cost; it just didn't seem to make sense since we had that productivity data and we felt confident that we could do that extrapolation to go that route.

Chair Grove asked if the Board had any further questions.

**Action: Member Lighthiser moved, and Member Brown seconded that the Parks and Recreation Board approve the forestry annual sustainable yield calculation as presented by FWP.**

Chair Grove asked if there were any public comments on the motion.

**Motion passed. 5-0**

## **7. Recognition of Parks and Recreation Stewards/Volunteers**

Member Brown stated volunteers are very important to Montana State Parks. In 2018, volunteers provided 43,074 hours of service to State Parks, which is equivalent to 20.6 full-time equivalence (FTE) and worth about \$1.0 million. These numbers came from the independent sector, which is a nonprofit academic service. There was a total of 1,413 unique volunteers that worked in our State Parks in 2018. Volunteers provide a wide variety of work in State Parks including campground hosts, greeted and provided information to visitors at visitor centers; aided with education and interpretive programs; assisted with special-events and contributed towards a wide variety of special projects. Volunteers provide the face of State Parks; 60 percent of the volunteers are tour hosts. Thanks to all our volunteers for all the great work they do on behalf of State Parks.

Joe Naiman-Sessions, FWP Stewardship Education Program Specialist, explained each year Regional Park Managers (RPM) 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 nominee's level of service provided to a critical component of the park operation; and the nominee's personal commitment and determination to volunteer and serve.

Naiman-Sessions and Board Members recognized the following individuals/organizations:

**Region 1: Tom Keras.** Nominated by Brian Schwartz: I was so thankful to have had Tom as an Americorps member for this past season. Tom has been an exemplary employee and raised the bar for future members. His willingness and ability to handle any task I've thrown at him have been an outstanding benefit to Lone Pine State Park for the 2018 season. Some of the highlights from Tom's term are as follows: Implementing a Trail Steward program which has weekly resulted in hundreds of weeds being pulled, trails cleared of animal waste, and more community support for our park with a cadre of trail maintenance volunteers. Tom lead the charge for the school outdoor education programs. This included over 1,300 local school children from over 30 area schools. One of the local teachers said Tom was the best she had seen at Lone Pine, there have been some exceptional interpretive naturalists. Organized the first community open house for local partners and the public. This event drew roughly

100 people, connected us with new volunteers, and helped us to connect with the people we serve. Created multiple new education trunks and an ice fishing activity table. A key support member at special events to help with parking, presenting, and willing to do any task. He created and implemented QR code interpretive posts on the Lone Pine Trail system. I can't express in such a short space how much I appreciate what Tom has accomplished in the few months he has been with us. The accomplishments listed above are only a small portion of what he has done for us here. There are things I am sure I'm neglecting, and others I'm probably not even aware of. He has done "top-shelf" work and I am grateful for his commitment and contribution to the AmeriCorps legacy at Lone Pine.

**Region 2: Leo Perkins.** Nominated by Loren Flynn: Leo first came to Travelers' Rest State Park as an AmeriCorps member in 2013, where he worked to improve the volunteer program at the park. He must have liked what he saw, because he returned as a volunteer in 2014. As a retired teacher, Leo quickly became entrenched in our education program, which relies almost exclusively on volunteers to provide more than 5,000 hours of on-site, curriculum-based programming every year. Leo has become our most versatile volunteer educator, leading field trips on the archeological investigation that verified the Lewis and Clark campsite; using historical replicas to teach students about the Corps of Discovery; leading groups through the riparian habitat along Lolo Creek to learn about the importance of cottonwoods in our Montana ecosystem; and as a certified instructor in traditional games that helps teachers meet the Indian Education for All competent of the Montana Constitution. Leo provides these essential services with a broad smile and great enthusiasm. His passion to educate is invaluable to our park system, but more important to the 2,000 students from 20 communities that visit Travelers' Rest State Park every year. The connections he makes to the students help to create lasting memories of their experience in Montana's outdoors. Leo's dedication and generosity expand beyond his volunteer time for the education program. Leo and his wife, Deb, are active members and contributors to the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association; frequent attendees at public programs and volunteer training events; and champions of Travelers' Rest State Park in the western Montana community. We are proud to have Leo as a member of the Travelers' Rest family.

**Region 3: Denis and Julia Hill and Family.** Nominated by Rhea Armstrong: The Hill family has faithfully served two summers as volunteer campground hosts at Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park. In 2018, they were the sole hosts and signed up their adult children to serve in order to cover all seven days of the week. They found creative ways to increase camping revenue. They collected dump and shower fees during the Country Jam and Rockin' the Rivers concerts. Their split work shifts allowed them to best cover the campground both early mornings and late evenings resulting in more camping fees collected. They even donated the host stipend back to the park. They offered great services to Montana State Park customers. They lent their special battery to visitors who could not get an electric campsite but needed to run a C-Pap machine. They welcomed, oriented and educated visitors on a variety of things from park programs offered to rattlesnake or coyote alerts. I value their remarkable patience that makes them uniquely compatible with all age groups, class levels and nationalities. They are especially accommodating to the needs of the disabled. Their humor and common sense dispelled many situations ... even when Denis was bit by a dog off leash! They were firm but understanding with dog owners while never ignoring a single rule with their own pets. They did not flaunt authority, truly loved to serve the public, and were a joy to work alongside. Each year they thanked me for hosting them when in reality their services were invaluable! They thoroughly represent all that is good in a state park campground.

**Region 4: Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon.** Nominated by Clark Carlson-Thompson: Giant Springs had an area along a popular trail above the family fishing pond that was full of knapweed. The Upper

Missouri Breaks Chapter of the Audubon Society elected to adopt the trail. They provided numerous hours over the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2018 pulling weeds in their adopted area. Usually groups that adopt a trail are asked to do one day a year. UMBA certainly went above and beyond as they removed over 1000 gallons of weeds from the area during their many visits. The area looks much better without all the knapweed. The efforts of Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon have allowed park staff to focus their weed control efforts elsewhere in the park. The adopted area is an area of the park where spraying does not work, and the park does not have the staff to hand-pull all the weeds. UMBA's efforts have made the areas much more pleasant for visitors, as well as improved the plant communities.

**Region 5-8: Kristi Powell.** Nominated by Chris Dantic: Kristi Powell has been volunteering with Montana State Parks officially for five years. Kristi has lived in Glendive, MT for almost 30 years and loves Makoshika State Park. Kristi stepped up and led in many areas in 2018 from leading the local photography club and purchasing her state park photography permit to taking the lead and creating a website for Friends of Makoshika. Kristi led by example and purchased her annual photography permit for \$50 to set an example for future photographers who take photos of Makoshika State Park to make a profit. She also took the lead and created the Friends of Makoshika website. Kristi has been very involved with Makoshika State Park's annual Buzzard Day event. She has helped with the road race portion of the event and in 2018 she was contracted by Montana State Parks to take photos of the event which will be used for future state park promotional materials. Kristi has also donated many of her amazing state park photographs for Makoshika and Medicine Rocks state park projects. In 2018 Kristi also completed the BLM cultural heritage two-day training session. Not only Makoshika but also Medicine Rocks State Park needed to be monitored monthly for cultural disturbances to the sensitive cultural areas in those respective parks. This effort is part of the bi-annual SB3 Cultural Heritage report that is produced by Montana State Parks. By having Kristi properly trained we now have compliance in these two parks. As the current treasurer of Friends of Makoshika, Kristi has been dedicated to improving Friends of Makoshika in many ways from board organization to marketing. Setting aside time from her full-time job as the Dawson Community College bookstore manager has been impressive. She always makes time to help make Makoshika State Park the best park possible.

**Bob Walker.** Nominated by the Parks and Recreation Board: Chair Grove stated everyone is very excited about Senate Bill 24's success in the last legislative session. As everyone has pointed out, it was a team effort and there are a lot of people in the room that made that happen. What is most important to her was there was not even an opportunity for the team if it had not been for the efforts of Bob Walker. Mr. Walker in his professional life had lots of dedication for our outdoor recreation, but since he retired, he is even more dedicated to our outdoor recreation resources in Montana. He organized the MTC and he did an amazing job getting that group to agree to moving that proposal forward, and then if that wasn't enough, he had to convince Beth, Director Williams and the herself to buy into that program. Bob and she spent a lot of quality time at the Blackfoot working out the details. Without all those efforts we wouldn't even have had a bill. On top of that, he found us a great champion in Senator Gauthier. Up until that point it was all based on Bob Walker's efforts and his vision of ensuring that trails, FAS's and State Parks got additional support through the light motor vehicle registration bill. We, as a Board, felt like it was worth giving Bob the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Board. Thank you for everything you did.

Bob Walker, MTC, stated nothing happens without a team effort. There are 13 organizations that form the Trails Coalition. The only reason this bill came to the surface was through that cooperative effort. There was another individual, Noah Marion, the lobbyist from the Montana Wilderness Association; he took this on full-time; this bill would not have passed without him. There were 42 organizations that

stepped to the podium in both the House and Senate, to testify in favor of this bill; it ranged from the Montana Association of Realtors, to Blue Cross/Blue Shield, all the trails organizations, to Montana League of Cities and Towns. There were no opponents in any of the committee meetings. It was a great effort with a great team; we are not done; more to come.

Vice-Chair Moe stated the great joy of volunteering is that you do feel that special investment in something that you have worked that hard for. She was reminded as she was listening to these stories of a poem that describes the people we honored today *"I want to be with people who submerge in the task, who go into the fields to harvest and work in a row and pass the bags along, who are not parlor generals but move in a common rhythm when the food must come in or the fire be put out. The work of the volunteer is common as mud. Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust. But the thing worth doing has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident. Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums but you know they were made to be used. The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real."* Thank you to the volunteers, for doing real work that make our State Parks, our STATE PARKS.

Chair Grove stated Dustin Temple is running a little late, so we will move forward on the next agenda item, Parks Capital Projects.

## **8. Legislative Update and Budget Overview** (agenda item is postponed until later in the meeting)

## **9. Parks Capital Projects**

Tom Reilly, Assistant Administrator, stated this is the first time we have talked about capital since the session ended. For the Parks program and FWP and every other agency, the monies usually come via House Bill 5; these are capital funds which are different from our operations budget. The capital funds fund our grant programs, any line item projects we may have for specific work in state parks for large projects. For this biennium we have \$2.0 million of parks earned revenue that's intended to do just major maintenance types that are not specifically identified in legislation. Also, this session, we asked for and received \$200,000 from the Smith River Corridor Enhancement account to do stream bank stabilization work on the Smith River; it is primarily a project at Camp Baker. We also received \$1.3 million through House Bill 652, which is a bonding bill; the money is to do a water line project with the City of Glendive to extend the city/potable water into the park for a future campground development. Water is very hard to find in the Makoshika area; we had a well at the existing campground and it was very poor water and it reached the point where it would not pass the test and it wasn't worth pursuing anymore. To do a good campground at Makoshika, we need a good water source; this is the first phase of ultimately what we hope to be a new campground project. HB 436 was passed in the recent session, which raised the Board approval amount for proposed capital expenditures from \$5,000 to \$50,000. At the present time, given the capital funds appropriated this session, the following state parks have major projects exceeding \$50,000 to implement for this biennium. There were about 25 total projects we picked so far and there are more to pick. The projects below exceed the \$50,000 threshold and total about \$1.0 million. These projects are just estimates at this point; will be refined once the Design and Construction Division gets more into the project; some will require consultants.

- Big Arm - dock replacements; \$60,000
- Fort Owen - roof repairs; \$50,000.
- Clearwater Dump Station; \$50,000.
- Bannack - roofing, repairs, etc.; \$50,000

- Lewis & Clark Caverns - concession building repairs. \$100,000
- Elkhorn - roofing/foundation repairs; \$60,000.
- Smith River - streambank stabilization work; \$200,000.
- Makoshika - elevator repairs; \$50,000.
- Makoshika - fire protection; \$100,000.
- Makoshika - water line project (HB 652); \$1.3 million.
- Finley Point - county co-op road project; \$150,000 (Lake County road project).

The \$1.3 Makoshika project will require the Department to hire an engineering firm to design the project, an environment assessment will need to be completed and go through the public process. Hopefully will be underway next summer before the 2021 legislative session.

In the past, we received an allocation of road money just to do road work in state parks and work with counties. The \$150,000 road project in Lake County was proposed several years ago and the county was not ready to go with the project. This project is an upgrade to the road leading to Finley Point State Park on Flathead Lake. This is a much larger project than just the \$150,000; this is just what FWP is able to provide and help.

Vice-Chair Moe stated in the cover sheet it states an EA will be published and public comments invited for several of the projects. Yet, the Board is being asked to approve the projects prior to the public comment. Can you ease her concern about this issue?

Reilly explained this is a very typical process where the Board is approving FWP to proceed in advancing the project to get to that point. The Department still has to go through the due diligence (EA, Decision Notice etc.). Once this work is complete, the Department will return to the Board with that information.

Vice-Chair Moe asked, the Board at a later date, will look at the EA feedback?

Reilly explained the Board doesn't get involved in that process unless they want to or if there are problems or issues; it is all public information; the Department can provide updates to the Board on any of the projects.

Member Brown asked Mr. Reilly to tell the Board a little more about the water line at Makoshika.

Reilly explained the issue is the visitor center is on the edge town and we have city/potable water right up to the visitor center, but we don't have water inside the park. The Department did a study a few years ago to see what it would cost to get water all the way into the park and it makes sense to have the water line support the new campground.

Member Brown asked if the county is in alignment with this project.

Reilly stated yes, the preliminary work has already been completed with the county; there is a process that needs to be accomplished with the City of Glendive.

Member Brown stated this is going to be a great thing for Makoshika.

Member Lighthiser stated she recently had the opportunity to float the Smith River; she would like to hear more about the stream bank restoration project proposed at Camp Baker.

Reilly explained there are two ramps at Camp Baker; an upper and a lower ramp; Sheep Creek, which comes into the Smith River right across from Camp Baker, is slowly moving upstream towards the ramp; the bank has lost 15-20 feet in recent years. Most of the property is on private land; the rancher has been tolerant and accepting of tying their boats up and utilizing the river on his property; meeting with the rancher on Monday to talk about redoing this bank and see if he will agree to the project. The whole project is dependent on the landowner's permission. It will benefit both the floaters for a better place to stage and the landowner because he does not have to pay the cost.

Chair Grove asked if there is a timeline for legislation for Makoshika waterline.

Reilly explained there is no timeline; once it is in capital it doesn't expire at the end of the fiscal year. It is his goal to get the project well under way before the next session; for our own credibility and to benefit the capital we request the next time.

Chair Grove asked if the Smith River Advisory Council has any role in capital project approval; i.e. monitoring, EA process.

Reilly stated yes, the Council will be involved. It will be brought to them probably at the next meeting. Need to get the ok from the landowner before anything happens.

Chair Grove stated it would be very useful to keep the Board members notified of the projects happening around the state; get phone calls asking about them. Do we as a Board get periodic updates on capital projects or is there a way we can?

Reilly stated it would be a good thing to do at every meeting since the Board only meets three or four times a year. He likes giving updates, so the Board knows what is going on. There will be several more projects at the September meeting to talk about. Some of them are:

1. Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park with the Parks Foundation to do a shade shelter and some bike camps.
2. Cooney Reservoir bank erosion restoration at cottonwood campground
3. Fort Owen State Park
4. Bonner Development Group property near Milltown State Park
5. Clearwater Dump station

Chair Grove stated the Board would appreciate getting updates at the meetings along with any donations the parks receive; would be appropriate for the Board to send thank letters to the donors to express our appreciation.

Reilly pointed out that Mitch King from the Montana Outdoor Legacy Foundation was in attendance; they helped fund the elevator at Makoshika State Park.

Chair Grove asked Mr. King if he would like to say a few words.

King stated TransCanada has given a donation of \$30,000; working on the details now; looking forward to doing other things as we can.

Reilly provided the status of the three large capital projects funded via the 2017 Legislative Session:

- Lewis & Clark Caverns - electrical, lighting, handrail upgrade project; \$2,200,000 – Completed
- Bannack - replacement of townsite fire alarm system; \$1,650,000 - Completed
- Makoshika - upgrade of primary access road; \$2,073,000 – Still in process

Member Lighthiser commended the work that was done at Lewis and Clark Caverns; the handrailing is beautiful and nicely done.

Member Stone asked what happens if the project exceeds the estimated cost.

Reilly stated these costs are just estimates; they are never exact, but it is a starting place.

Member Stone asked if she makes a motion to approve capital projects and costs as listed then if the cost is different it has to come back to the Board?

Reilly stated that is correct; it wasn't the intent to nail down the exact numbers.

Vice-Chair Moe stated it would be good to have a place where the legislators and the public could look at projects and the status of the projects on the website. As a former legislator, when you've been involved in something, you always like to go see what your vote did. It would be good public relations to add this information to the website.

Chair Grove asked if there is a reason why we need to identify a specific cost, or would it be more useful to use a range? Is the legislation requiring that we approve a certain dollar amount or that we are just aware of all capital expenditures over \$50,000? It might be more useful that we know it's a range, so the Board is more prepared for any future discussions.

Reilly stated HB 436 states "review and approve construction projects that have an estimated cost of more than \$50,000." The Department makes a reasonable judgment for the cost of a project. If the cost is significantly higher, the Department should be back talking to the Board.

Chair Grove asked Zach Zipfel, FWP Legal Counsel, to weigh in on the conversation.

Zipfel stated it is up to the Board whether they prefer to have it expressed as a range, or just make it clear that the money we are presenting is an estimate. It doesn't really matter one way or another, particularly because we are now on the record discussing how we approach this. Going forward whatever number the Board sees is subject to change, and if it is changed, the Department will return to the Board and proceed accordingly.

Chair Grove stated she is suggesting adding "for an estimated range of cost" or something like that.

Member Brown stated he thinks "a range" sounds good. It gives the Board a little more information on what the cost might be.

Chair Grove stated if this information is going to be posted onto the website, she thinks it's important to have a range, so people understand that the Board knows the cost is just an estimate and the needle could move. Maybe not on all the projects, just the ones that have a higher probability, so it could be costs or estimated cost range.



Member Stone asked if the Board could approve the projects with estimated costs today and in the future Mr. Reilly would bring us ranges for future projects.

Reilly stated the Department could certainly do that. When the Environmental Assessments (EA) are done and public comment is solicited, the best estimate has to be used there as well. The Department doesn't know the actual cost until we get the private contractor's bid. The estimated cost is disclosed to the public.

Vice-Chair Moe stated she thinks the word "estimated" covers the possibility that it could be higher; it covers the concern that Member Stone initially raised. The Board would be wise to stick with what the best guess is at that time and when we have to modify, we will modify.

Member Stone stated she agrees. When you are putting things out for bid, it's better to use the estimated cost.

Member Brown asked if these projects are from the session?

Reilly explained the projects have come to light through the Facility Condition Inventory exercise in past years and is also with the Regional Park Managers/Park Managers knowing the needs in their parks. For example: the roof is leaking at Fort Owen State Park and roofing is needed at Bannack State Park to keep things preserved and stabilized. There are no real surprises as far as the list of \$20-\$30 million of needs we have statewide.

Chair Grove asked Mr. Reilly if he would talk about how the list is compiled at the next Board meeting when he gives his capital projects update so the Board has a little more background.

Reilly stated he would be happy to do that.

***Motion: Member Stone motioned, and Vice-Chair Moe seconded that the Parks and Recreation Board approve the proposed Parks Division capital projects and estimated costs as listed in the agenda item cover sheet.***

Chair Grove asked if there was any discussion or debate on the motion?

***Action on Motion: Motion Passed. 5-0***

## **10. Classification and Investment Strategy Policy**

Beth Shumate, Parks Administrator, stated Montana is a place where people have abundant opportunities to connect with outstanding State Parks, which offer a diverse range of experiences from important cultural and historic sites, recreational opportunities and those that highlight Montana's natural beauty. To help make it easier for visitors to distinguish between the wide array of options, we have developed this classification system for the state parks that we manage:

**Visitor Services:** The Department recognizes that several of our parks offer multiple kinds of experiences, but we focused on organizing our parks into one of three visitor experiences, *Natural, Heritage or Recreational* and were based on each park's predominant assets and historical precedence.

**Service Levels:** Each park is designated by a service level description, *Rustic, Core or Enhanced*, which is aimed at helping visitors more clearly anticipate what kinds of amenities are offered at each site.

The Department recognizes that visitors want a range of experiences and we are hoping that this new system of designations, members of the public, current and prospective partners, and other important constituencies will be able to better understand what to expect and how we are managing each site, now and into the future. This policy will also help guide our decisions around resource allocation and serve as a framework for better investments in parks across the state. A draft policy was presented to the Board at the February 22, 2019 meeting. Public comment was taken at the meeting and the Department conducted a 30-day public comment period, March 18, 2019 through April 18, 2019. Thirteen comments were received; six comments in support, seven comments were outside the scope of the policy and no comments in opposition were received. Comments were incorporated into the final draft; changes made because of public comment include the following aspects: Region 3 Citizen Advisory Council's comments: Service level designation descriptions from APPENDIX A have been added to the policy language for ease in understanding; assess classification designations because conditions and needs change; we will review the classification system every two years by evaluating the relevancy of service-level designations and experience categories. Comments from Friends of Ackley Lake State Park and Friends of Fort Owen: Inconsistent terminology, (has been addressed and is now consistent throughout), comments addressed the Decision Criteria which is key to the implementation of the policy, implementation updates will be on the agenda for future Board meetings and other comments relating to scarce resources and their allocation in the park system were added to the Purpose section of the policy. We refined the policy language to speak to the goals of providing a framework for the allocation of park resources while also providing better clarity for the internal versus external aspects of this policy. We have streamlined and renamed the Policy Guidance section, so it can be better used as a framework to guide management and investment strategies. Components of APPENDIX B have been included in Section 4, in an effort to keep the Division nimble in its investment strategy.

The Department has three alternatives: #1 - Approve the Draft Policy as written, #2 - Amend the Draft policy and #3 - Do not approve the Draft Policy. The Department recommends Alternative #1. based on the number of supportive comments received from the public and in-depth Board discussions held over the course of the past year.

Member Brown stated when he first read the Classification Policy it didn't seem to work and, as it has progressed, it is easy to see how it is going to help, especially from the parks standpoint. How will this policy interface and be incorporated into the new website for the public?

Shumate explained the Department is currently in the process of sending out a Request for Proposals to go out to bid for a redesign of our public website. What the Department is envisioning is more of a user guide listed on our website for all FWP sites. This is part of our implementation efforts, with the approval of this policy we can move towards that user guide we are envisioning.

Member Brown stated the public comments were very informative and could tell that people put a lot of thought into their comments.

Chair Grove asked if the Department could give an update at a future meeting on the process of the implementation plan and walk through a park plan for each type of park and how it will transfer into management and how that should provide a format for public comment at the local level?

Member Brown stated when he has been looking at websites of other states, Oregon has a fantastic website that has many options for its users. Recommends asking Oregon who did their website.

Shumate stated the Department will be researching other states and reaching out to other vendors during the redesign process.

Member Brown stated he wonders if there is some way the Parks Board could network with other Boards across the states; might have common issues; would really like to do this.

Shumate stated there are national conferences that provide some of those shared learning and networking opportunities. Will send suggestions out to the Board when they are available.

Vice-Chair Moe thanked Ken Soderberg, Parks Chief of Operations, for his patience in working through this policy; it has produced a good result.

***Motion: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Brown seconded that the Parks and Recreation Board adopt the Classification and Investment Strategy Policy as presented at today's meeting.***

Chair Grove asked if there was any discussion on the motion?

***Action on Motion: Motion Passed. 5-0***

Vice-Chair Moe thanked Margaret Gorski, Friend of Fort Owen, for her thoughtful and insightful feedback.

Chair Grove stated Margaret Gorski was a forest recreation planner and she was highly complementary and very impressed with this policy.

#### **11. Flathead Lake State Park – Big Arm Unit Permanent Easement Acquisition**

Darlene Edge, FWP Lands Unit, stated this has been a Department team effort for many years. The Parks Division has leased the Big Arm Unit of Flathead Lake State Park from Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) since 1966. The current annual lease structure will expire this year. She would like to thank DNRC, Mike Atwood and John Grimm, for working with the Department to pull this all together; they were very supportive and are paying for half of the appraisal. The first step in the scope of work is an appraisal of the property. The 2019 legislature passed House Bill (HB) 695, which authorizes FWP to purchase a permanent recreation easement from DNRC for the continued and permanent operation of a public recreation site at this important location. The estimated value to be approximately \$12.0 million which was based on a limited scope work appraisal done in 2014. The appraisal will be reviewed by DNRC, FWP and an independent review. As soon as the appraisal is completed, the application easement will be submitted to DNRC; the Department will conduct a cultural survey, which will be submitted with the application as well. Region 1 staff are working with DNRC to conduct a joint EA and public scoping. The current lease fee is \$24,250 and has a 4percent escalator each year. There will be three different appraisals with three different values. The parcels to be appraised are located in Lake County, Montana. Parcel 1 is the land that is currently leased by FWP. Parcel 2 is Parcel 1 plus additional acres located south of and adjacent to the Park. Parcel 3 is all the land described in Parcels 1 and 2 together but without any land west of Highway 93. (see map in the June 20, 2019 meeting folder).

Member Brown asked if the piece to the south is owned by DNRC as well?

Edge stated yes, it is owned by DNRC.

Chair Grove asked Ms. Edge to explain about Land Board approval and if the Board will be involved.

Edge explained that Conservation Easements (CE) no longer go to the Land Board. The acquisition would go to the Parks and Recreation Board and the Fish and Wildlife Commission for approval.

Zach Zipfel, FWP Legal Counsel, stated he believes this will not have to go in front of the Land Board from FWP's standpoint but DNRC will have an obligation to go to the Land Board. Will need to confirm this internally, does not have the statute in front of him.

Edge explained public scoping, the EA will go out and a lot of conversations will be had with many organizations and constituents to make sure everyone is on board with the acquisition. Once all of this is complete, the Department will come back to the Board for final approval.

Mike Atwood, DNRC Real Estate Bureau Chief for Trust Lands, stated the DNRC Director and the Governor stand firmly and are very excited about this acquisition. This is a win/win situation for all. DNRC is excited to be engaged and move this forward as a permanent solution for the park. It has been difficult because of the common school mandates. Following expiration, DNRC will revert to the standard lease appraisal rate formula, and the lease rate is expected to jump from \$18,000/year to as high as \$600,000/year. DNRC is excited to be engaged and move this forward as a permanent solution for the park. It has been difficult due to the mandates because this is common school trust land; DNRC is mandated to receive full market values on all common school trust lands.

Chair Grove stated DNRC and FWP Director and staff deserve a big thanks because this is a great solution for all.

Chair Grove asked if there are any questions.

***Motion: Member Brown moved, and Member Lighthiser seconded that the Montana State Parks and Recreation Board approve that the Department proceed with the evaluation and possible purchase of a perpetual recreation easement at Big Arm Unit of Flathead Lake State Park, for the continued operation of a public recreation site.***

Chair Grove asked if there is any discussion on the motion.

***Action on Motion: Motion passed. 5-0***

## **8. Legislative Update and Budget Overview**

Dustin Temple, Chief of Administration stated the person Chair Grove forgot to thank was herself because the initial challenge of a very long held assumption that led to the solution for funding for state parks came from her. Without this initial conversation where she challenged some reasoning he had, we wouldn't be here today. Roughly two years ago he was in the same exact room where we are at today with a different Board, a different Department and a very different outcome from the legislative session. The 2017 session was hard on the Department and State Parks. The Department lost \$4 million out of the Big Four Funds and a lot of changes in leadership. He is happy to report the Department is coming off maybe the most successful legislative session the Department can recall. He is much more optimistic

today about State Parks, where it is headed and the resources, we have than when he stood here two years ago.

Temple explained several bills and their effects on the State Parks:

**HB2: General Appropriations Act:**  
**\$400,000 Parks Operations Increase**  
\$300,000 Parks Earned Revenue  
\$100,000 Motorboat Fuel Tax

To cover increased costs the division experiences in weed spraying, toilet pumping, garbage services, and utility costs.

**\$300,000 Parks Equipment OTO**  
\$300,000 Parks Earned Revenue

One time only to purchase critical heavy equipment needed to maintain and repair infrastructure such as drain fields, campsite leveling, road maintenance and repair, removal of hazards, and snow removal at parks statewide.

**\$210,000 Recreation Snowmobile Groomers**  
\$210,000 Snowmobile Fuel Tax

To reinstate the biennial appropriation to purchase snowmobile trail groomers. The funding was fully spent in FY 2019 and therefore not captured as part of the 2019 base.

**\$1,000,000 Fund Switch**  
(\$1,200,000) Parks Earned Revenue  
\$1,000,000 General License  
\$200,000 Federal Dingell Johnson

A funding switch of \$1,200,000 from fund Parks Earned Revenue to General License and Federal Dingell Johnson. This is something the Department has not done before. What this does, based on a survey the Department did to quantify hunting, angling and boating use in the state parks, is general license account (money from the sale of fishing and hunting licenses) money was injected into the Parks Earned Revenue account.

**HB 5: Long Range Building Appropriations**

**\$2,495,000 Parks Projects**

Smith River Corridor	\$2,000,000	Smith River Corridor Enhancement
Parks Major Maintenance	\$2,000,000	Parks Earned Revenue
Milltown State Park Improvements	\$295,000	Parks Earned Revenue & Federal

**HB 10: Long-Range Information Technology Appropriations**

**\$10,000,000 Automated Licensing System Replacement**

\$2,500,000 State Special Revenue  
\$7,500,000 Federal Special Revenue

Parks will contribute to the financial cost, should be fairly minimal. Will use carry forward authority so it will not impact parks budget authority from year to year.

**HB 652: Long-Range Building Bonding Program**  
**\$1,300,000 Makoshika State Park Waterline and Fire Suppression**  
**\$1,300,000 State Capital Projects Account**

**HB695: Appropriate Funds to FWP for Recreation Easement**  
**\$12,000,000 Appropriate Funds to Purchase a Permanent Recreation Easement to Big Arm State Park**  
 \$5,823,000 General Licensing Account  
 \$4,677,000 Federal Special Revenue (Land and Water Conservation Fund and Dingle Johnson)  
 \$1,500,000 Parks Earned Revenue

The bulk of the funding is coming from the general licensing account. Without the support of the Fish and Wildlife Divisions and the traditional fish and wildlife groups (Trout Unlimited, Montana Wildlife Federation, etc.) across the state; this is their traditional funding source and they all supported this initiative recognizing the value of Big Arm State Park.

*Chair Grove* asked if the appraisal is lower than the \$12.0 million, will percentage adjustments be done across the board or will we try to mitigate the impact to the special revenue account?

*Temple* stated the licensing account would be rolled back; the licensing account is the most sensitive, the more we can minimize the hit to the general licensing account the better it will be for everyone.

*Grove* stated she has been meeting with the State Park Foundation and supporting their efforts to fundraise for this project; they will be trying to make some private donations to help mitigate the impact to the license account because the fish and wildlife groups were very supportive. Earlier this spring the Foundation did go to the Conservation Trust Foundation (CTF) and asked for a donation; if this project is successful, CTF will get an award from them.

*Temple* gave a brief synopsis of the revenue outlook for Parks moving forward and discussed the following:



*Member Brown* asked why the balance was \$8.0 million in 2018 and then down to less than \$2.0 million in 2019.

*Temple* stated it was due to legislative action at the 2018 legislative regular session and special session.

*Member Lighthiser* asked if there is a long-term plan for monitoring the fund switch and opportunities to continue to evaluate the funding that should go to that source?

Temple replied the Department will continue to monitor the fund; we have some obligations not only to State Parks but to hunters and anglers. We also have significant oversight from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to make sure that those license dollars are being expended in accordance with state and federal law rules and regulations.

Chair Grove asked for public comment on any of the action items on today's agenda.

Cody McDonald, County Commission for Judith Basin County, congratulated the Board on the Classification Policy, will work well. He is here representing Ackley Lake and the Classification Policy hit it "right on the nose" for Ackley Lake. He is trying to fit funding into the classification but the more he thought about it, it doesn't fit into the policy, it's more for the users. He is seeking help with funding for Ackley Lake. A Friends Group has been established and has been receiving some donations, but people want to see progress before they donate. Anything that is put into the park will be maintained by the Friends Group. Understands the Department has limited funds but would like to see a slight increase to the budget for improvements to the lake. The Friends Group would like to see the park improved in a lot of ways, they like the way it is but there are many things that could be done to make it better. The visitation is unbelievable. Have been working with John Taillie, Region 4 Regional Park Manager; he has put on a lot of miles and attends all the meetings.

Chair Grove stated the policy is called the Classification and Investment Strategy Policy, so Mr. McDonald's comments fit right in with the policy.

Member Brown asked Mr. McDonald what kind of projects are the Friends Group looking at?

McDonald explained they are looking at a pavilion of some sort, another vaulted restroom, additional shelters for the campsites, handicapped accessible dock and additional signage. Not really any big projects but a lot of smaller ones that would be a greater improvement to the park.

Member Brown stated in the public comments on the classification system, the Ackley Lake Friends Group came out in full force, was very impressive.

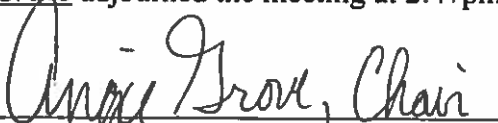
## 12. Public Comment For Issues Not On This Agenda

None

## 13. Adjournment

*Motion: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Brown seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed. 5-0*

Chair Grove adjourned the meeting at 2:47pm.

  
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Angie Grove, Chair

  
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Martha Williams, Director

