



MONTANA **FWP**

**Meeting Minutes  
Teleconference Meeting  
January 13, 2020**

**Parks & Recreation Board Members via telephone:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Mike Volesky, Chief of Operations; Pat Doyle; Candance Duran; Loren Flynn (via telephone); Coleen Furthmyre; Karla Mertens-Morse; Rachel Reckin; Tom Reilly; Ken Soderberg; Terri Walters (via telephone); and Zach Zipfel.

**Guests:** None

**Topics:**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of Board Minutes**
3. **Approval of Board Expenses**
4. **Board Member Reports**
5. **Administrator Report**
6. **Meeting Dates and Locations – Final**
7. **Bonner Development Group Donation Agreement – Final**
8. **Public Comment ~ For Issues Not On This Agenda**
9. **Adjournment**

**1. Call to Order**

*Chair Grove* called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

**2. Approval of the Board Minutes**

*Motion: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Brown seconded that the Park and Recreation Board approve the Board minutes for content and are factually accurate.*

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

**3. Approval of Board Expenses**

*Motion: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Brown seconded to approve the Parks & Recreation Board December 2019 expenses.*

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

**4. Board Member Reports**

*Member Brown:* Attended the Montana Outdoors and Economy seminar in Billings in December; one major topic was the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); learned a lot about LWCF and its importance, as well as Montana State Parks' important role of administering those funds. Met with representatives from the Billings Health Clinic and St. Vincent's Hospital to discuss the importance of health and trails, and the significance recreation can help the economy.

*Member Lighthiser:* Reviewed the final draft of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP); compliments to all the contributors to the report; loved the changes that were made; appreciates the

amount of effort that went into it and for incorporating the public comments into the final document. Attended the Region 3 Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) meeting in December; a lot of good discussions on different topics; encourages other Board Members to attend.

Vice-Chair Moe: Attended the Region 4 CAC meeting; a lot of interest in the parks and parks funding (SB 24, LWCF etc.); John Taillie (Region 4 Park Manager), gave a very good report on the improvements that have been made through the use of the different funds; good meeting; valuable group for us to interface with.

Member Stone: She has several items to report on regarding Hell Creek State Park, but she will save that for the March meeting.

Chair Grove: Attended CAC meetings the last several months; very useful; appreciates members attending those meetings; a lot of stuff happening not only with state parks but with outdoor recreation as well.

## **5. Administrator Report**

Beth Shumate: In 2020 we will be undertaking the process of updating our divisions strategic plan; timeline to deliver the final plan is November or early December, in advance of the 2021 legislative session; will share regular updates on the progress of the plan with the Board. SCORP has been finalized; the report identifies six high level goals and recommendations: 1) Promote outdoor recreation opportunities for all Montanans 2) enhance public access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities 3) support the economic vitality of communities in the state 4) improve quality of life through outdoor recreation experiences 5) adapt outdoor recreation for a changing environment and 6) honor Montana's outdoor legacy. The Parks Division newsletter was brought back to life thanks to Pat Doyle for his efforts; the newsletter will help keep everyone updated of the progress we are making and some of the neat things we have going on in our programs across the state. A couple projects we have been working on: Big Arm State Park: The Montana Legislature approved House Bill (HB) 695 which authorizes FWP to spend up to \$12 million to purchase a permanent recreation easement on the Big Arm Site, from the Department of Natural Resources (DNRC); have been jointly working with DNRC over the past few months to develop a draft Environmental Assessment (EA); public comment closed January 3; 26 comments were received, all in support. Fort Owen State Park: Appraisal efforts have been underway the past few months for the proposed acquisition and to address access issues; working on the EA for the entire project; should be released to the public soon. The Friends of Fort Owen continue to provide assistance, fundraising, community outreach and most recently secured a \$25,000 grant towards historic preservation efforts.

Chair Grove and Mike Volesky discussed who the Board Members should contact if they have any questions since Paul Sihler has retired.

## **6. Meeting Dates and Locations – Final**

***Motion: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Stone seconded to approve the following dates for the 2020 Parks and Recreation Board meetings:***

- Tuesday, March 10 – Bozeman
- Wednesday/Thursday, May 6-7 – Miles City HQ
- Wednesday, September 2-3 – Kalispell HQ
- Wednesday, December 9 – Helena HQ

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



## **7. Bonner Development Group Donation Agreement – Final**

*Beth Shumate:* The Bonner Development Group (BDG) property is a 33.5-acre parcel adjacent to Milltown State Park on the north side of the Clark Fork River. The site includes a picnic shelter, vault latrine, kiosk, and a short network of trails. The proposed acquisition/donation of this parcel has been presented to the Board on three previous occasions. The remarkable foresight, persistence, and collaboration that made the removal of a dam possible, remediation of hazardous waste, restoration of the Clark Fork River, and establishment of Milltown State Park has been a remarkable accomplishment that took decades to complete. The collaboration demonstrated by the tribes, individuals in the communities, local government leaders, non-governmental organizations, and agency partners allows us to consider opportunities well into the future. Pertinent to our Montana State Parks system and its future, Milltown State Park and the BDG property provide nature-based opportunity and demonstrate how our State Parks can pull together people, history, culture, and place all through outdoor experience and education. The site is located at the confluence of two important Montana rivers, the Blackfoot and the Clark Fork River at Bonner, Montana. This project will help protect riparian and recovering stream portions; provide access to the public for outdoor recreation and conservation education to inspire the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts and stewards of the land and water; remove inholdings by consolidating ownership and simplifying issues for future managers; and maintain relationships with the local communities that have been using this property for generations and desire to see it secured as public land so all can enjoy while providing educational learning opportunities for all ages and abilities, especially for the Bonner and other local Schools. The Bonner Learning Park fits right into our overall FWP and State Parks Mission and this project and donation would remove a critical in-holding to allow for seamless connectivity along the Clark Fork riverfront. An EA was issued for the proposed donation in November 2018; ten comments were received, all in support. We have worked with BDG over the past few months to remove all the barriers and to work towards a more permanent solution for access and a cost-share funding solution. BDG has also agreed to increase their original donation amount from \$75,000 to \$125,000 to assist with safety requirements to secure pedestrian access or for other maintenance and development needs at Milltown SP. Over the course of the past year, we have engaged in rather successful negotiations with Montana Rail Link (MRL) in order to work towards a more permanent solution for pedestrian access. Upon approval we will continue to proceed with the development of a site plan, with a focus on the parking area and continue discussions with MRL.

Board Members, Beth Shumate and Loren Flynn conversed on the BDG agreement, parking area and ADA compliance on the proposed donation.

*Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member brown seconded, that the Parks and Recreation Board approve the donation from the Bonner Development Group.*

Chair Grove asked for public comment. No comments were received.

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

## **8. Public Comment ~ For Issues Not On This Agenda**

None


## **9. Adjournment**

*Motion: Vice-Chair Moe moved, and Member Stone seconded to adjourn the meeting.*

*Motion carried. 5-0*

Chair Grove adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

  
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Angie Grove, Chair

  
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Martha Williams, Director